

# The Governors of the “Estado do Brasil” and the “Estado do Maranhão” during the years of the Union of Crowns (1580-1640): Personal Networks, Circulation, and Political Development. An Approach

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As part of my doctoral thesis, I am going to try to carry out an original and novel investigation of the roles of the governors in Portuguese America (Brazil) at the time when it belonged to the Hispanic Monarchy (1580-1640). Through the different research projects, I will try to analyse the importance of the personal networks that the governors wove from a personal, political, and social point of view and their circulation within the occupied Atlantic space, that is, between the Iberian Peninsula and Portuguese America. On the other hand, I will study the repercussions these governors had on the political development that took place in the territory during the period of the Hispanic Monarchy in all its facets: Finance, Justice, and War.

My study is focused on the governor generals of the *Estado do Brasil* between 1580 and 1640 and the governors of the *Estado do Maranhão* between 1618 and 1640

## Methodology and State of the Field

To develop the project, I am conducting research across Spain, Portugal, and Brazil. In Spain, I have the main archive on the period of the Hispanic Monarchy, the *Archivo General de Simancas* (AGS). The documentation on our subject of study is mainly found in the following documentary collections:

- *Secretarías Provinciales (SSPP)*
- *Consejo de Estado (EST)*

- *Secretaría de Guerra y Marina*

Also important is the documentation of the *Archivo General de Indias* (AGI) in Seville, where I have information corresponding to the object of study. There, I found important documentation which gives us information on what was happening in Portuguese America from the point of view of Hispanic America, in this documentary collections:

- *Patronato*
- *Contaduría*
- *Audiencia de Buenos Aires*
- *Audiencia de Charcas*
- *Audiencia de Lima*
- *Audiencia de Quito*
- *Audiencia de Santa Fe*

Finally, finishing with the research in Spanish archives, I have information in the Archive of the Historical Library of the *Universidad de Salamanca*, where there is also valuable information in some of the manuscripts, in addition to the documentation I found in the main archives in Madrid: *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (AHN) and *Biblioteca Nacional* (BN).

In Portugal, I have to study the collections housed in the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* (AHU), the *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* (ANTT), the *Biblioteca de Ajuda* (BA), and the *Biblioteca Nacional* (BN), all of which are based in Lisbon.

Lastly, I have used documentation from Brazilian archives, specifically the two most important archives in Rio de Janeiro – the *Arquivo Nacional* (AN) and the *Biblioteca Nacional* (BN) – as well as archives in the cities of Salvador de Bahia, the capital and main city of Portuguese America during this period, and São Paulo. This search for documents in the different archives will be combined with the study of edited collections of primary sources, the main works that concern our research topic. First of all, we have the epistolary corpus of some of the governors, composed of the letters they exchanged with the monarchs (Gaspar de Sousa, Diogo Botelho and Diego de Menezes).<sup>1</sup> We also have some exceptional sources from people who lived at the time, such as the “*Historia do Brasil*” by Frei Vicente Salvador, who tells us what happened in the colony until 1627 or the *Diálogo de las Grandezas de Brasil* by Ambrósio Fernandes Brandão, a work written in the seventeenth century and whose latest translation into Spanish has just been published by Professor José Manuel Santos of the University of Salamanca.<sup>2</sup> Another work of these characteristics is entitled “*Livro que da razão do Estado do Brasil*”, attributed to Diogo Campos Moreno, who was sergeant-major of the *Estado do Brasil* between 1613 and 1617. Finally, we have the so-called “*Livro 1º and 2º do governo do Brasil*”, works that give us a very interesting overview of what it would be like to govern the colony, what it meant socially, and the personal interests that it entailed.<sup>3</sup> Of course, I cannot ignore the number of works written by the most important authors who have studied this period. To observe the general overview of Portugal at this time and what happened in terms of its incorporation into the Hispanic Monarchy, we find the works

of Fernando Bouza Álvarez, Rafael Valladares and Pedro Cardim, as well as, António Manuel Hespanha’s study of modern politics.<sup>4</sup> Other very important authors who have studied what happened in Brazil during the period of the Hispanic Monarchy are Stuart Schwartz and Charles Boxer.<sup>5</sup> In addition, we have some very important studies, such as the one on slavery and its circulation in the Africa-Brazil-Lisbon axis, by Luis Felipe de Alencastro, or the only study on the governors generals produced so far, by Francisco Carlos Cosentino, although only focused on the “regiments” given by the monarchs to some of these governors, while I will try to make a more holistic analysis of these governors during these sixty years.<sup>6</sup> We cannot forget one of the fundamental tools for the study of this period, the BRASILHIS database, where we can find a huge amount of bibliographical and documentary references, as well as a multitude of identified people who had some kind of relationship with Portuguese America during this period, reaching, today, around 5,000 entries.

### **Why study the Governor Generals?**

I believe that it is important to investigate the role played throughout this period by the main political figure sent to Portuguese America to govern the territory. The post of governor general was essential, as he was the link between Madrid/Lisbon and the colonial territories, since he was the person in charge of combining the political guidelines and military strategies that emanated from the political centre. In addition, he was responsible for directing, nuancing, and even getting involved in the reformist project that was being attempted. In other words, he was the main imperial agent of the Monarchy in Portuguese America.

While in Spanish America the role of the Viceroy – the main political figure in the territory – has been extensively researched, there is an evident lack of study on the figure of the governor general in Portuguese America, especially during the period of the Hispanic Monarchy (1580-1640), a period in which there were a series of reforms in which this office played a fundamental role. Only the sadly deceased Francisco Carlos Cosentino in his work *Governadores gerais do Estado do Brasil (séculos XVI-XVII)* has worked specifically on this issue although it is true that we find other authors that have dealt with some of these governors, such as Professor José Carlos Vilardaga with Francisco de Sousa or some studies of the governor Diego Botelho.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the Viceroy of Goa, the main political office in Portuguese India, the governor general in Portuguese America did not obtain the office of Viceroy until the 18th century, only occasionally in the 17th century, which clearly shows the lesser importance of Brazil at this time with respect to the factories they owned in India.

## Research Structure

### Networks of the Governors

The personal and family networks that were formed in Portuguese America during this period is one of the fundamental themes on which our research is based.

I want to investigate the personal networks that were created around the figure of the different governors and what influence they had on the political development that took place in the colonial territory during this period. I will investigate the role of the governors in this development by following the political trajectories of these characters, reconstructing the personal networks that gravitated around them before and after their appointment, and

investigating the actions of these people in implementing the political reforms that were attempted in the Portuguese America. I do not want to focus only on the family networks of the governors, therefore it is also among our objectives to investigate the relation with some of the networks with members in the captaincies, such as the Sá in Rio de Janeiro.

But as I have said, I am not only focusing on the *Estado do Brasil*, but I am also trying to find out what happened in Maranhão, which is perhaps less known but also important. It is interesting to stop and find out what happened with the governors here. We find in this period four governors since the institution of the new *Estado do Maranhão*. The first was Diego de Cárcamo, of Spanish origin, a person close to D. Antonio, prior of Crato, rival of Philip II in his struggle for the Portuguese throne in 1580, nominated as the first governor of Maranhão although he finally did not occupy the position.

In 1624 the Crown appointed the second governor of the northeastern territory, the Pernambucan Francisco Coelho de Carvalho, member of the Albuquerque Coelho family, who was the first to occupy the post, and he held the position until 1636. It is important to clarify that, unless exceptional circumstances, the appointment as governor was for three years, which could be extended to six years.. For this very reason we find a letter dated June 1636, with the title "*nombramiento de personas p<sup>a</sup> el Gov<sup>o</sup> del Marañon*" which reads as follows:

*"The Princess Margaritta refers in her letter of 13 October 635, that you commanded it by another of the 6th of the past, that as the Governor of the Marañon has served in that post for nine years, and six years that the time for which it was provided has elapsed, and that she should propose*

to you people [...].<sup>8</sup>

He was succeeded by Jácome Raimundo de Noronha, who proclaimed himself circumstantial governor of Maranhão with the support of the chambers of São Luis and Belém after the death of Francisco Coelho in 1636. It is interesting to see how these political networks played an important role, since Jácome had engaged in a struggle with Francisco Coelho de Carvalho in 1634, as recently found documentation shows, when he wrote to the Court accusing him of the excesses the governor was committing, among other things of defrauding his majesty's treasury or of "insults, aggravations and threats".<sup>9</sup>

The last governor during this period was Bento Maciel Parente, defined in the sources as *"Fidalgo of your majesty's house, a very knowledgeable person of the Marañon and of all Brazil, of which he is a native, has served in those parts with valour and satisfaction for three years in the war of Pernambuco, with a good opinion, and may be fifty years of age."*<sup>10</sup>

He was *Capitão de Mar e Guerra* in the campaign for the conquest of Maranhão between 1615-1616, *capitão-mor* of the captaincy of Pará from 1621 to 1637 and finally he was appointed *Governador do Maranhão* from 1638 until his death in 1642.<sup>11</sup>

### Circulation

It is also essential to investigate the circulation of these governors in its two aspects: circulation as "cursus honorum", that is, what positions they occupied before and after reaching the post of governor in Portuguese America, and circulation as a movement, what was the route they took both between the Iberian Peninsula and Portuguese America, as several of them travelled to the Court, and within the American territory itself.

If we talk about circulation as "Cursus Honorum", I have noted that there were governors who played an important role in the Portuguese bureaucratic network. Some of them, such as Diogo Botelho, Diego de Meneses, Gaspar de Sousa and Luis de Sousa were advisors to the monarchs years after occupying the post of governor in the *Estado do Brasil*, people who were asked what to do before assessing any situation that occurred in Portuguese America. Some of them obtained rewards after their term as governor generals, like Francisco de Sousa, in 1607, who after his term, returned to Brazil with ample concessions as governor of the previously named *Repertição Sul*, or others like Gaspar de Sousa, who was amply presented with grants for himself and his family.

And for circulation as a movement, I want to study the journeys made between the Iberian Peninsula and Portuguese America, where I have been able to identify some governors who passed through the Castilian Court, people like Francisco de Sousa, who travelled explicitly to Madrid to ask for those concessions to try to find mines in Brazil, Diogo Botelho or Diogo de Mendonça Furtado.

Of course, I am also interested in the circulation within Portuguese America itself, a point that I am already getting into, since I am seeing how for much of the time they held office the governors were far from the place where they had to be, which was the capital, Salvador de Bahia, and for different circumstances we find them in Pernambuco, São Vicente, etc.

### Political Development

The powers of the *Governo-geral* and especially those of the governor general were defined by the regiments issued by the monarch.

In these sixty years, three regiments were

drawn up that reproduced the conditions that were established in Portugal and its overseas territories by the Hispanic Monarchy: one was granted to Francisco Giraldes in 1588, another to Gaspar de Sousa in 1612 and the last to Diego de Mendonça Furtado in 1621. In these three regiments, the powers granted to the governors increased, especially when it came to reinforcing their power in terms of defence and conservation of the territory in general, and the protection of the most important cities, particularly Recife and Salvador de Bahia.

Another of my objectives is to analyse the major events in Portuguese America in relation to what was happening in Europe at the time: what happened in 1588, the creation of a new court, the *Tribunal da Relação da Bahia*, the conquest and colonisation of Maranhão, the struggles with the Dutch and how, from 1625 onwards, everything changed and it seems that there was a constant "state of war", the laws on the indigenous people from 1609-1611, the visits of the Inquisition, what happened to the pau-brasil, sugar, and the economy, etc.

In short, I will seek to identify the role of this political figure within a bureaucratic framework which, in this period, had ample signs of change.

Therefore, I believe it is necessary to apply to this subject the advances that have been achieved in similar research in the case of Hispanic America, trying to carry out a holistic analysis when investigating the different governors who held office during the period of the Hispanic Monarchy through the prosopographical study and the insertion of the networks that these people formed around them and to see what importance they had in the political development of the time. With this research we intend to continue advancing

in what is, for some historians, a crucial period in the colonial history of Portuguese America.



## Endnotes

- 1 Gaspar de Sousa (Salvado, J. P., & Münch Miranda, S. *Cartas para Álvaro de Sousa e Gaspar de Sousa (1540-1627)* (Lisboa: Centro de História e Documentação Diplomática, 2001); Diego Botelho (Correspondência de Diogo Botelho (Governador do Estado do Brasil). Cópia paleographica extrahida da Torre do Tombo. *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, Tomo LXXIII, Parte 1, 1910); Diego de Meneses (Garcia, R. (1935). Correspondência do Governador D. Diogo de Meneses (1608-1612). En Garcia, R. (Org.). *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro*, 31-81).
  - 2 F.V Salvador, *Historia do Brasil, 1500- 1627* (São Paulo e Río: Weiszflog Irmãos, 1918); J. M. Santos Pérez, *Diálogo de las grandezas de Brasil (Edición crítica, traducción y notas)* (Madrid: Doce calles, 2020).
  - 3 J. P. Salvado and Münch Miranda, S. *Livro 1º do Governo do Brasil (1607- 1633)* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro de História e Documentação Diplomática, 2001).
  - 4 A. M. Hespanha, *Vísperas del Leviathan: instituciones y poder político (Portugal s. XVII)* (Madrid: Taurus, 1989).
  - 5 S. Schwartz, S. *Sovereignty and society in colonial Brazil: the High Court of Bahía and its judges, 1609- 1751* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).
  - 6 L. F. Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes: formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul. Séculos XVI- XVIII* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000); F. C. Cosentino, *Governadores gerais do Estado do Brasil (Séculos XVI- XVII): ofício, regimentos governação e trajetórias* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2009).
  - 7 J. C. Vilardaga, *São Paulo na órbita do imperio dos Felipes: conexões castelhanas de uma vila da América portuguesa durante a União Ibérica (1580- 1640)* (Tese de Doutorado) (USP, São Paulo, 2010).
- For Diogo Botelho, I recommend this classic work: M. T. Magalhães Crespo, *Diogo Botelho no Governo do Brasil (1602-1608)* (Lisboa: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, 1964).
- 8 All translations of the original documents from Portuguese into English are my own unless stated otherwise. AGS, SSPP, 1478, 353.
  - 9 AGS, SSPP, 1478, 109-110.
  - 10 AGS, SSPP, 1478, 353v
  - 11 <https://brasilhis.usal.es/es/personaje/bento-maciel-parente>

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- ### New Considerations
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