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Title: *Politics of colonial policy: The Overseas Council and the Brazilian military appointments (1660-1695)*

This study addresses the problem of military appointments in the Portuguese Atlantic Empire, in the second half of the seventeenth century. It consists in an institutional approach to the way the new dynasty of Bragança dealt with the much-desired and disputed right to appoint military posts to Brazil.

As recent historiography has shown, the right to appoint, nominate, or confirm positions or ranks (civil or military) was a very critical issue in Early Modern Europe and in its American extensions. This issue was particularly acute in the Iberian monarchies, where, in fact, it is fair to say that the power of some institutions could be measured by their capacity to exercise such right. In fact, according to Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, when the positions in question were of high-importance, there's no doubt it was a matter of major policy. Furthermore, the political appointments were a great opportunity to reinforce bonds and links of patronage, directly related to the exercise of political power. Therefore, not surprisingly, this prerogative was intensely pursued in the halls of power. Additionally, such political dynamics were greatly enhanced by the complex constitutional structure of the Portuguese regime, formed by a melee of Courts and Councils, bearing overlapping jurisdictions and (in part, due to that) always fighting for the king's attention.

Within the imperial framework, particularly in the case of the Brazilian captaincies, the control over the military appointments was mainly a dispute between the Overseas Council, established in 1642 to rule over all Portuguese ultramarine conquests, and the colonial governors, above all, the governor-general in Bahia. We believe this rivalry entangles, in some way, key answers to unveil the imbalances of power conveyed by the Portuguese colonial policy.

In this study, by following the way the monarchs of the new (if not fragile) dynasty responded to the disagreements between the Overseas Council and their principal colonial administrator, we aim to understand who had the control over the power to appoint military officers. In doing so, we hope to unravel not only the institutional mechanics of military appointments, but also to shed some light over the evolution of the distribution of political-military power in the administration of the Portuguese American Empire.

The *Consultas Mistas* of the Overseas Council, between 1642 and 1690, represent an indispensable resource for our goal. However, it is in the collections of Cartas Patentes granted by the Bahia governors in their own name (without any Court intervention), published in the *Documentos Históricos* (Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro), that we expect to find the coveted empiric substance/consistency. In fact, the quantitative analyses of these sources should provide a clear picture of the balance of power between the Overseas Council and the most important colonial administrator, especially in what regards the control over military appointments.

Keywords: Brazil, Overseas Council, military appointments, jurisdictional conflicts