

Interpreting the Portuguese War of Restoration (1641-1668) in a European Context

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Abstract

The recent results of research into the War of Restoration (1641-1668), fought on the frontiers of the kingdom of Portugal, do more than merely annul the simplifying and anachronistic effects of the nationalist perspective, and have dimensions that can be linked to more general aspects of European History. This paper seeks to consider some of these aspects, discussing the nature of “nations”, studying the Portuguese case as a possible place for observing the reasons for the end of the hegemony of the House of Austria and, finally, analysing the use of war and fear as instruments in the social construction of the legitimacy for establishing the authority of the State.

Keywords

commemoration, estates, House of Austria, House of Braganca, legitimacy, nationalism, naturalization, Proclamation, Restoration, revolt

In my case, the prime motivation for researching the War of Restoration was to destroy the traditional – nationalist – image of that war as a special moment of conflict and as a time of demarcation between “nations”, based on feelings of mutual aversion and incompatibility. As was to be expected, the coup led by the nobles and the proclamation of the Duke of Bragança as king in 1640 soon gained a central importance in the construction of the Portuguese nationalist narrative. It was precisely this role that was the subject of a recent study by Luís Oliveira Andrade [Andrade, 2001]. The texts written about the Restoration have almost always limited themselves to reproducing the legitimising discourses of the Proclamation that were written at that time and provided a much-needed justification in view of the extreme gravity of the act of overthrowing one king in order to proclaim another. Above all, these justifications were based on the biblical representation of the “chosen people”, finally freed from the period of “long captivity” represented by sixty years of “foreign” rule. Placing the year of 1640 in this tradition turned this event into a work that was divine and not human. By

reproducing it in the contemporary age, nationalist authors transformed the war of 1641-1668 into a kind of war of “national liberation” after a long period of “occupation”. The specific requirements of propaganda were capable of producing a somewhat delirious anachronism. Thus, in the *History* written by General Ferreira Martins and published in 1945, we find the claim that “the military organisation which, at the time when Dom Sebastião I himself promulgated it, had met with a popular reaction that had made it extremely difficult to fully implement, was now [in the time of the War of Restoration] accepted without any misgivings by the Portuguese people, who were conscious of the need to subject themselves to every kind of sacrifice for the sake of national salvation”. Therefore, all fit and able men between the ages of 16 and 60 enlisted, and from amongst these were chosen the “professional soldiers paid by the Crown”. This was “the system of the ‘armed nation’, which had already been in force during the first dynasty and had been perfected with the adoption of the system of compulsory military service during the reign of Dom Fernando (re-established in 1641), which Dom João III supported and Dom Sebastião expanded, but which was now to be given an organic structure that was more in keeping with the requirements and needs of the time and very close to that of modern organisations”. [Martins, 1945, 144-145; the words in bold were similarly stressed in the original text.] The currents of thought that were situated within this perspective, being expressed in various articles of a patriotic nature, did not, however, leave us with any synthetic work that is worthy of mention. The so-called commemorative cycle of the “centenaries”, in 1940, gave rise to the publication of some sources, as was the case with the letters of the governors-in-arms of the Alentejo, but the only author who is worth mentioning here is Gastão de Melo Matos, who revealed an effective knowledge of the sources and made statements that ran completely counter to the intentions of exaltation displayed by those who were ideologically close to him. Particularly noteworthy is his study of the military life of André de Albuquerque Ribafria [Matos, 1954]

Instead of merely reproducing the effects of this standardised pattern of interpretation and extreme simplification of the conflict in keeping with the dogma of the omnipresence of the historical subjects of nationalism, recent research has revealed that there were various, diverse motivations to be found in the 17th century. The paradigm shift was initially effected by António Hespanha [Hespanha, 1989, 1993]. At the military level, research has, above all, highlighted the great difficulty in mobilising and organising armies and particularly in keeping them together. Soldiers were enlisted coercively and deserted en masse from the frontiers, imposing the need for so-called re-mobilizations (“reconduções”).¹ Many officers also absented themselves from their regiments and their companies, with or without the permission of their superiors, and – when called upon to return to their posts – declared that they were only remaining at the Court to await an answer to their petitions. Moreover, research has revealed the presence of various areas of conflict: between the estate of the *Povos*² and the military forces, the latter being accused of subverting local order and autonomy; between the military

¹ “Reconduções” literally means leading the enlisted soldiers from their homes back to the frontiers.

² *Povos* literally means “peoples”, in the sense of self-governing settlements; an estate composed by the elected representatives of the towns and larger villages having a specific right to political participation; with the ecclesiastical estate and the nobility, it constitutes the third estate of the *Cortes* meetings. It is not exactly a “social” representation, as we see when a member of the first nobility, the Marquis de Marialva, a Lisbon parliamentary representative, took his place as a pre-eminent member of the *Povos* estate in 1668. However, expressing local interests, this estate is the site of the political involvement of the local nobilities that ruled the municipal governments. It is the estate of second-rate nobility, commanding and at the same time receiving the pressure of the plebeians.

and the magistrates,³ the latter upholding the view that the king's power depended essentially on the goodwill of his vassals; between the *Povos* and the other two estates of the realm, the nobility and the clergy, over the question of the unequal distribution of the contributions "offered" at the meetings of the *Cortes* to sustain the war effort [Costa, 2001, 2002, 2004], a picture that does not essentially differ from the one that can be painted from the results of more recent research into the war at that time, which has been concerned with analysing the social effects of the conflict. The observations made here relate only to the war as fought within the kingdom itself, or, in other words, to the conflicts taking place within the European theatre of war, because the war did in fact have other effects on the dominions of the king of Portugal outside Europe.

But yet the war of 1641-1668 may prove to be of interest beyond the restricted field of "Portuguese History". It may well be of interest with regard to the social nature and historical role of "nations" in the context of the revolts that were organised against the projects of Olivares, and secondarily as a place for observing the failure of the "modernisation" of the Habsburg Spanish Empire. And, finally, as an illustration of the historical qualities of the perception of defence and the political use that was made of war and the fear of annihilation.

1. The aim of Portuguese separation from the House of Austria – and, in fact, of the other successful or merely attempted separatist movements at that time (the Netherlands, Catalonia, Naples) – was to defend the people's capacity of resistance to the innovations in taxation being introduced and consequently to safeguard the mechanisms of supervision over the destination of wealth and the existing means of production and reproduction of nobles in that territory.

Underlying all this were the ideals of a minimal administration, whose "influence" would be almost imperceptible to "society", and the maintenance of the king's estate within the limits established by the primary nobility that was close to him.

The revolt of the Portuguese nobility should be seen in the context of the situation at the end of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), marked by France's direct involvement in the conflict (1635) and by the increased pressure of the military demands made upon the Habsburg rulers in Madrid. As far as Portugal was concerned, Catalonia's insubordination made the difficulties arising from Felipe IV's favourite Olivares's attempts to impose the long-planned system of solidarity between the king's various kingdoms and dominions very real.

In 1640, in view of the increasing and ever bolder demands of Olivares's government, one part of the highest Portuguese nobility considered that rebellion was justified, together with the creation of a "natural" king, who would form a new apex for a network of protection at the level of the kingdom outside the Madrid government's supra-"national" framework of dominions. Another part of the principal Portuguese nobility, mainly consisting of the families residing in Madrid, chose to remain loyal to Felipe IV and to stay within the networks that foreshadowed the formation of an inter-"national" nobility linked to the ruling house and circulating within its various dominions. It should be noted that part of the Portuguese military that was to participate in the war of 1641-1668 had already had previous combat experience in Flanders, which confirmed this circulation of nobles

³ Men possessing law degrees and occupying posts of territorial royal justice and upper courts; a traditional controversy opposes men of the law to men of arms.

amongst the various territories ruled by the House of Austria. Even after 1640, Felipe IV was closely surrounded by a group of Portuguese nobles [Bouza Álvarez, 2000, 271-291].

However, the most interesting features to note are the anti-tax motivations that make it possible to explain the widespread “popular” support for a plot hatched by the nobility, in which there was also a surprisingly close consensus with regard to the king’s proclamation (being so unusual, this was considered to be a sign of divine intervention), continued well into the new dynasty, directly affecting the military actions taken by the government of Dom João IV. The resources that were successfully mobilised under his reign were limited by a social (and not just economic) ceiling. The revenue obtained through the new extraordinary tributes, “offered” to the king by the *Cortes* for this specific purpose and for a limited period of three years, was clearly incapable of sustaining a larger force, consequently removing the possibility of genuine tactical options. Although a debate was held about the defensive or offensive nature of the campaigns to be waged, there was objectively no possibility of changing the adopted course.

What led to the formation of this social ceiling was the mistrust felt in relation to the use made of the extraordinary income. Without there being any decisive confrontation, the involvement of the armed forces in operations described as “raids on Castile”, i.e., initiatives intended to pillage the enemy territory, for which the militia groups were mobilised in the first years of the war, and the unexpected continuation of the state of war, only served to deepen the climate of suspicion as to the real motivations of the military officers. The proclamation of Dom João IV would only have been worthwhile if the fiscal and military pressure exerted by Olivares’s government, namely on the pretext of fighting against the rebellion of the separatist Catalonia, was not to be transformed into an equivalent pressure, on the pretext of a defence that had to be continued, without imposing the recognition of Dom João IV and the introduction of peace.

These “constitutional” constraints upon the new dynasty were illustrated most clearly by the friar Fulgêncio Leitão in his *Reduccion y restitucion del reyno de Portugal a la Serenissima Casa de Bragança* [published under the pseudonym of Juan Baptista Moreli, Turin, 1648]. He stated that the new king’s vassals neither feared nor cowered before the Spanish lions. What they did fear and what might cause them to cower was that there was no one who might redeem and save them, not from the enemy’s weapons, but from the oppression of the ministers who governed them, on the king’s behalf and with his authority. They begged to be released and redeemed, calling for government matters to be arranged in such a way that they would not fall into such a state of oppression again. Therefore, if the new king wished each of his vassals to be bold enough to take part in an attack upon an enemy squadron, if he wanted to resuscitate the deeds and feats of their ancestors that he had heard and read about when his glorious grandparents had been in government, if he wanted Portuguese valour to once again astound the world and terrify Castile, he should redeem them and free them from their vexations, from their injustices, in a word, from the tyranny with which Castile and its ministers, even though many of them were Portuguese, oppressed them. Leitão went on to say that the new king should take it for granted that he could not keep possession of the Crown that God had given him if he accepted the opinion of some who, availing themselves of the pretext of present necessities, which no doubt were many in these early times, advised him against relieving the people of the immense burden of tributes and taxes to which the imprudence, ambition, and cruelty of a favourite, and of scheming traitors – a reference here to Olivares - and the incapacity of a young prince, had condemned them.

Furthermore, Leitão made explicit the possible continuity between the anti-taxation rebellions under the kings of the House of Austria and a potential rebellion against the policies of the government of Dom João IV, if they did not differ from those of the previous government. The king should remember the cause of the uprisings that had occurred in his kingdom three or four years before his most fortunate acclamation, considering that those people had not risen up suddenly, but rather were greatly disposed to proclaim freedom after suffering the unbearable weight of the oppression of the Castilian government. If they had not yet rebelled this was because they feared that they might not achieve the unity and agreement of all and, notwithstanding this fear, when they saw that the affliction was worsening, they preferred to die immediately rather than day by day, and, not noticing the evils that they had initially feared, many made loud proclamations of their freedom, even though these proved unsuccessful. Remembering these examples, if he wished to conserve what God had given him, the king should seek to free his loyal vassals from the oppressions of the ministers who, if they were from the group of those who served in the time of his predecessor, should be most unaccustomed to the task (although not all, as he stressed), because all that they practiced at this time, being sovereign and absolute, was plunder, theft and injustice. In other words, they were unaccountable to other, higher ministers and not even to the king himself. In short, what befitted the acclaimed king was, heeding the bad end that had befallen the past government, to seek to put into practice the opposite, because were he to do so each of his vassals would place their possessions and their life in the service of the conservation of the “Royal person and State”, and would all acclaim him as a prince given by heaven and sent by God for their good [Moreli, 1648, 135-137].

This passage from the work by Leitão shows us how the new king was faced with an insuperable dilemma: in order to sustain the war effort that might save the new dynasty from the hostilities expected to be launched by Felipe IV in his attempts to recover the kingdom for his own dominions, he had to maintain or recreate the fiscal and administrative pressure that was necessary for the formation of armies, in this way provoking a deepening of the discontent felt by all those who had seen in the new king the person that had come to free them from the administrative and fiscal pressure that had become so unbearable in the time of Olivares, and thereby running the risk of embarking on a course that would lead to just as bad an end as had befallen the previous government. The king’s military capacity lay – it was said – in his capacity to keep up the spirits and courage of his vassals in coming to his defence through the bonds of gratitude founded upon his benevolence, which, above all, was manifested through the absence of any pressure to step up the military preparation of the kingdom.

For this very reason, the pace of war between 1641 and 1668 was not determined by decisions taken by those in government, be they the members of the council of State or those of the council of War, the narrow group of councillors that were closest to the king and his secretaries of state, or the military leaders along the borders. In the end, little advantage was taken of the years 1643 to 1646, when the fighting capacity of the so-called “Ejército da Extremadura” was very weak, to the despair of those who advocated an offensive attitude at a time when the enemy’s attentions were greatly distracted by the difficulties created by the insubordination of Catalonia, and when advantage should have been taken of the negotiations taking place in Münster for peace in Europe [Cardim, 1998]. This reluctance to take the offensive did, however, continue, until the death of Dom João IV (1656). The weakness of the actions organised against Portugal until the signing of the “Peace of the Pyrenees” treaty with France in 1659 is a first indication of the reduced military and financial capacity of the

government in Madrid. Even after the rebellion of Catalonia had ceased to be such a major concern, attentions were not turned towards the Portuguese border as expected. In this way, the behaviour of the Portuguese government might appear to have been “irrational”, there being an evident need to take diplomatic advantage of any military victories that it might obtain. On the contrary, there continued to be a kind of imperfect truce. French diplomacy complained about this greatly reduced level of activity, since, throughout the 1650s, it was convenient for the French that the Portuguese should keep up their pressure when they were preparing to betray the cause of their ally. But the military insignificance of the Portuguese did not help in bringing about an alteration in its European diplomatic status. The “irrationality” of such a policy must, however, be seen in conjunction with the “rationality” of the above-described “constitutional” constraints upon the new king.

Under the first Duke of Bragança, Portugal was to clearly illustrate what appeared to be the fundamental contradiction of the “revolutions” taking place in the 1640s, that had as their aim to secede territories from the monarchy of Felipe IV: being motivated by the aim of abolishing in their territorial space the administrative and fiscal superstructure of the war, there was little legitimacy for organising the war in a modern, efficacious sense. This was what happened in the case of Catalonia, as suggested by Simón Torrés. As he says, against the opinion of those who see 17th-century Catalonia as “un estat complet”, we must consider that “Catalonia was not, and would hardly have had the opportunity to convert itself into, a state formation, by not having previously developed its own modern administrative and military structures.” [1992, 33] Seen from this perspective, its close proximity to France worked, in various ways, against the survival of the separation of Catalonia.

In view of this contradiction, the “revolutions of 1640” were condemned to failure from the outset. They would be inconsequential uprisings. This makes the Portuguese case even more interesting.

Despite not having taken advantage of the more favourable situation, the Portuguese “War of Restoration” paradoxically ended up being marked by the initiatives taken by the government of Felipe IV. The only relevant exception was the siege of Badajoz in 1658, though this proved to be a failure both because of tactical errors and because of the devastating effects of a prolonged siege upon the besieging force, eroded either by the flight of some of its army or by disease.

Seen from this perspective, the successive Portuguese victories at the battles of the Lines of Elvas (1659), Ameixial (1663) and Montes Claros (1665) may continue to be understood as a challenge to researchers. It should be noted that all these battles resulted from situations in which armies were formed in response to enemy invasions, as if it were only possible to form them when faced with the evidence of an effective attack near at hand. Furthermore, immediately after these successes, the armies spontaneously disbanded, disconcerting those who wanted to use them to undertake even more devastating attacks upon the enemy forces.

But this succession of victories requires an explanation. One possible answer to this situation has to do with the need to consider the role played by contingency. Battles are quintessentially moments when a “gamble” is taken, where everything can be decided and where unexpected factors may determine the final result. For this very reason, the “skill” of the generals was so important, without, however, proving to be insufficient in itself because other imponderable “accidents” were also important, such as the state of mind of the combatants. The decisive details of the battles, the methods used for bringing the forces together in a campaign and the means of financing adopted both during the regency of Dona Luísa de Gusmão and during the period of government by the Count of Castelo

Melhor, remain important subjects of research that should be taken to their limits through exhaustive consultation of the available sources.

However, regardless of these contingent factors, it is in itself significant that the confrontations did not have a more than likely winner, even before they took place. In fact, it is interesting to note how, a century later, the Count of Lippe once again repeated the impression that in the various confrontations of the 1660s the “Spanish” had not succeeded in attacking Portugal with more than twenty thousand men. Duarte Ribeiro de Macedo sought to turn this fact into part of a general “law” that impeded the formation of large-sized armies on the Iberian Peninsula, contrary to what happened in Italy or in Flanders, and which he considered to be rooted in the characteristic “sterility” of “Hespanha”. Although we cannot accept this explanation because of its overly simple and “naturalistic” nature – in a rudimentary fashion it showed the author’s interest in the relationship between war and economics that he then tried to develop further – we do find in it an expression of the difficulties encountered in trying to launch an attack upon Portugal. These were social difficulties – resistance to both recruitment and the payment of taxes – and geographical problems – the difficulty in organising, maintaining and moving the position of a large army close to the border, having the paradoxical effect of being able to equalise the forces of the two opponents. In this way, we may consider that Portugal’s “salvation” was in fact... Castile.

2. A broader and more “structural” perspective explains the survival of the “restored” Portuguese monarchy through the failure of the solutions devised by the Habsburg administration to obtain the means to sustain the “military revolution” in its dominions. [Thompson, 1995]. In this case, the war of 1641-1668 and its outcome assume particular importance not only within the historical theme that over time has been identified, in traditional terms, as the problem of the “decadence of Spain”, but also within European History in general, since the “Spanish” military defeats of 1659, 1663 and 1665 highlight the possibility of a regression in the process followed for the social and political sustenance of the ever greater military requirements. We know that there has been an increasing erosion of the anachronistic image of a “great power” that was projected upon the imperial mosaic under the reigns of Carlos V and Felipe II, with greater emphasis being given to the diversity of spaces, endowed with their own governmental autonomy, which they guarded most jealously. The “imperial” government combined extreme exuberance with a tremendous practical inefficacy. I.A.A. Thompson [1995] highlighted the failure of the financial solutions attempted for meeting the increasing costs of war:

By 1665, more of the ordinary and extraordinary income had been perpetuated as permanent, public revenues than ever before, and yet a progressively smaller proportion was reaching the government’s coffers. The state was eating its own tail. [...] When, on the death of Philip IV, royal authority also collapsed, the Spanish financial system collapsed with it. [...] Authoritarian solutions were attempted in Spain but they failed in face of the collapse of trade and tax revenues and of the ruralization of the economy that militated against the centralist extraction of resources. [Thompson, 1995, 287, 291]

Thompson’s conclusions are, however, always presented from the viewpoint of a regression in the process of political centralisation, a perspective that seems to be based on a reading of the orders being issued in the king’s name as indicating a certain administrative capacity. As far as the tasks of recruiting and organising forces that were imposed on the nobility in 1640 are concerned, this

situation led Thompson, for example, to characterise the process as a process of “refeudalisation”.⁴ Domínguez Ortiz described this as absurd, for, whenever possible, these nobles sought to avoid such obligations, preferring to renounce this supposedly greater power [Domínguez Ortiz, 1984, 110-111]. Meanwhile, we do not have any more detailed results from the research conducted into the war in these last few decades under the scope of the work of Spanish historians. We imagine that previously the period of “decadence” must have been demoralising from the nationalist point of view. We further suppose that, nowadays, the frame of reference used by researchers is different and that they conduct their studies without worrying about the “national” value of the discourse that they produce. But neither have foreign scholars tended to cover the period and themes in question. Both older studies [Domínguez Ortiz, 1960; Artola, 1982, 91-157] and more recent research have centred on the period of Olivares [John Elliott, 1986; Ruth MacKay, 1999; Jean-Frédéric Schaub, 2001] or, despite having the merits of venturing into inhospitable terrain, they have not dealt with this crucial question in the decisive period – the years from 1658 to 1665. [Cortés Cortés, 1985; Rafael Valladares, 1994; Lorraine White, 1986].

We are therefore faced with the incapacity of an imperial power, established in a variety of territories, to rise above the obstacles raised to the social accompaniment of the ever growing requirements of the so-called “military revolution”. This power was faced with all the “national” resistance movements, including those of Castile.

To present this confrontation as a conflict between nations, motivated by some “natural” animosity between them, is an absurd simplification. The different “peoples” could only be considered “nationalist” in the sense that they considered it useful for there to be a “natural king” who would protect them – because this king would be bound by the ties of the “love” that he had felt on becoming king – against fiscal innovations that could destroy their “molecular structure”, as I have already stressed. It should be noted that, later, the invocation of the sovereignty resident in the nation that was made at the moment of liberalism’s arrival, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, would also be levelled against the attack that, within society itself, was represented by the “absolute” state, accused of breaking pacts, or, in other words, of tyranny. Here, too, use was made of the pretence of re-establishing the bonds of love.

Attention must also be drawn to the 17th-century difficulties in overcoming the resistance to recruitment, the “people’s” unease in the face of the insolence of the military establishments and the use and abuse of enforced militias. These were all features uncovered in works by Fernando Cortés Cortés, Lorraine White and Ruth MacKay, researching the “Castilian” side, and in this way drawing closer to the cultural divisions detected on both sides of the frontier. Without excluding the fact that the war, viewed as a decisive conflict, made more “sense” on the Portuguese side than on the Castilian side, we nonetheless find in both camps a feeling of mistrust towards the military forces and the wish of the “people” to see themselves free of aggression, which, as far as the surviving local societies were concerned, came from the military forces on both sides.

⁴The idea of refeudalization is already present in his seminal work *Guerra y decadencia: gobierno y administración en la España de los Austrias* (written in 1976; Spanish edition Barcelona: Editorial Critica, 1981) where he acknowledges a decline in the royal capacity for levying the armies. He states that the initial ability of the royal administration to recruit men for the armies was later replaced by other methods, including intermediary authorities and even entrepreneurs.

The relationship established with the king was an openly contractual one: the new king of Portugal was expected to bestow the benefits that would justify the risks of separation from the previous dynasty. In other words, the aim was to enjoy a better life under the House of Bragança than under the rule of the Habsburgs. As has already been pointed out, the new king was not to create, under the pretext of defence, a military and courtly “superstructure” equivalent to the one that had mushroomed under Olivares and had consequently been rejected.

Later, nationalism would lead to the naturalisation of this contractual relationship, which would then conceal its consensual nature. Acceptance of the orders emanating from the king’s government would be presented as unconditional, because this government would then be responding, despite all eventual internal conflicts, to the defence of a “nature” that was resident in the nation. In fact, before nationalism brought about this “naturalisation”, “absolutism” had already been created, making use of the “naturalness”, considered to be indisputable, of the relationship between the subjects and the monarchy, founded upon the king’s exercise of a paternal guidance, the central metaphor of the phase of the “unlimited” power of kings. The “naturalisation” of the pact was, quite simply, its militarisation: in the specifically military type of subordination. Here orders cannot be called into question, for this would result in the death of all, both rulers and common people.

On the contrary, the relationship was a mediated one. The aim was to create a space of defence. In the case of the nobility, this was made quite clear by the accusation that the “constitution” of the kingdom, or in other words, the pact established between its nobility and the king, confirmed in 1581 by Felipe II. When analysed, the contents of this pact corresponded to the agreement that the property in the kingdom and its dominions that produced and added nobility would remain in circulation only within the Portuguese nobility. Despite the accusations that Felipe IV had broken this pact, the policy followed by Dom João IV was to confirm all the donations made by the previous kings, which seemed to run counter to the denunciation of these illicit acts.

The recreation of a “natural” king did, however, have significance for the broader sectors of the population, despite the fact that the act of acclamation was consciously organised as an act of the nobility, with the plebeians only appearing in a second phase, to fill the streets and execute (or complete the execution of) Miguel de Vasconcelos, that “*parvenu*” who was the shadow of a government that had dared to insult the principal nobility. The local nobility and municipal ruling elites, the urban middle classes and the common people, all wanted protection from the fiscal attacks that had been launched by the government of Madrid and which were expected to multiply.

But, when it proved necessary, already under the new and “natural” king, to create a system of defence against the threat from outside, such a motivation would also guard against the possibility of this same system giving rise to its own interests and becoming a focal point for an attack against the “society” for whose defence it had supposedly been created.

There was, therefore, a dual definition, made in relation to two sources of aggression, from outside but also from inside, both based on the same pattern of illicit fiscal innovations. The war was seen as a confrontation in which the future of the warring parties would be decided. And the war was legitimate insofar as there was an evident need to reply to an aggressive attack – but only to this extent. For this reason, suspicion was raised about a war that would not lead to a clear definition and whose continuation would result in benefits for the officers involved in it. The various chapters of the estate of the *Povos* against the military in the *Cortes* of 1646 and 1653 highlighted the aim of destroying that possibility of the war becoming a “way of life”, kept going at the expense of the taxation levied and, in

the first few years, through the use of militia groups mobilised to undertake raids into enemy territory, whose only motivation was the gains to be made through pillaging. Such suspicions were not in fact unfounded. In 1654, when the king, backed the *Povos*, requested a ban on “incursions into Castile”, the military leaders alleged that the existing army was clearly sustained by the proceeds of the raids made into enemy territory [Costa, 2002].

It can therefore be concluded that the political field in Portugal was defined in relation to the conditions established for escaping the effects of the application of the project of imperial integration, albeit in a more limited version, initially formulated by Olivares and thereafter surviving as a shadow, and not as a conflict between “nations”.

In the final analysis, the success of Portugal’s separation from Spain derived from the clearly evident failure of the “military revolution” within the sphere of management of the “Spanish” government: the resources that could be mobilised in the 1660s to fight against Portugal were incomparably fewer than those that were imposed by the credit of Felipe IV. In this sense, all the “nations” of the “imperial space” defeated the government of Madrid on this occasion.

3. Another interesting dimension in this field of research that may transcend the confines of Portuguese history has to do with the links between the creation of the feeling of a threat and the maintenance of permanent forces and, consequently, the relationship between the authority of the “State” and the dominant forms of representation of time and death. If we consider that the imposition of war on the vassals and common people, as well as the fear of foreign aggression, represent central instruments in the “construction of the State” [Botero, 1992; Hyppolite, 1983], then this implies the spread of an “internalisation” of the threat of destruction as a risk that might manifest itself at any moment, which makes the continued mobilisation of a force intended to respond to such an eventuality a perfectly “rational” action. This was a process that, despite not being linear and cumulative, was only brought to an end in the 20th century, after the war of 1914-1918, with the “brutalisation” of societies [Mosse, 1999], having been culturally prepared by the heirs to Hegel’s doctrine about war as the creator of peoples or nations.

The political use of war has a dimension that can be illustrated in Giovanni Botero’s explanation of the “reason of State”. This is one of the ways of “restraining potential furor by keeping the people occupied”, and he says this, “because there is nothing that holds the souls of men in greater suspense than important wars”, whether these be defensive or offensive ones. War leads to concerted action amongst those taking part in it: the participants in a war are all those who have some valour and who “expurgate their humours against the common enemies”. As for the rest of the people, besides the services that they provide, they say prayers and make vows in return for victory and “are left suspended in the expectation of the events of war, in such a way that there is no room left in the souls of the subjects for revolts, for they are all, through their actions or thoughts, occupied in the venture”. [Botero, 1992, 81-82]

This function of war as a source of social discipline became a common idea amongst the authors of that time. The image is one of a purgative war and is compared to the exercise of the authority of medical activity upon an infirm body [Cornette, 1993, 91-93]. It was, for example, maintained in DeReal’s *Science du Gouvernement*:

“les politiques dont je parle, conclurent qu’il faut appliquer à la politique, cet aphorisme de la médecine, *qui veut qu’on attire au-dehors les humeurs peccantes du dedans et qu’il faut faire une*

guerre étrangere, pour en éviter une civile [the author's italics]" (the politicians of whom I speak concluded that it is necessary to apply to politics that medical aphorism, *which requires that one draws out the bad humours from within and that a foreign war must be waged in order to avoid a civil one.*)

But DeReal was a critic of such a tradition:

"il est incontestable que ce sont les guerres étrangères qui donnent ordinairement naissance aux guerres civiles et aux révoltes." (it is undeniable that it is foreign wars that ordinarily give rise to civil wars and revolts.) [DeReal, 1761,275].

The reign of Louis XIV has been taken as the most perfect example of the use of war to establish royal authority [Cornette, 1993].

Besides this role of staving off "civil war", a tradition was also handed down, either opposing this idea or complementing it, in which it was stated that a people that lived through a long peace would be looked down upon, it being necessary to wage war from time to time so that the soldiers would not lose their courage.

War as a political instrument was later to be given a more sophisticated form of legitimisation in the work of Hegel, who established a "constitutional" relationship between "peoples" as effective actors in history as a form of theodicy, and war. Peoples or nations are formed through military confrontation with others. What seems to act as the motivation for wars has to do with particular, accidental matters, but, besides these, there is something else that is important. War is the great proof of the life of peoples. It is through war that they show the outside world what they are inside and that they either assert their freedom or fall into slavery. It is also in fighting a war for his people that the individual rises above himself and that he experiences a sense of unity with the whole. The war that puts at stake the life of the whole is a condition for determining the ethical health of the people. Without the threat of war weighing upon it, a people risk the gradual loss of its sense of freedom, being lulled to sleep by habit and becoming immersed in the material life. A long peace may result in the loss of the nation. The metaphor of the winds that stir up the water and prevents it from becoming stagnant indicates that Hegel was not unaware of the images associated with the traditional thinking about the role of war. But he took it further: the metaphor of the people as an individuality led him to praise the negation of negation and the highest form of "freedom" that consists of not being a slave to life. Such a metaphor inscribes death in each individual as a risk and as a supposed form of effective salvation. The inscription of the nation in individuals was not, however, guaranteed. Therefore, in a famous passage, Hegel made it clear that, from time to time, through war, the government should violate the intimacy of private individuals and make them feel death as their lord and master [Hyppolite, 1983, 89-98].

This system, which was both the heir of the "reason of State" and simultaneously afforded it greater power, becoming firmly established in the political climate of the late 19th and early 20th century, was applied by the nationalist authors to the past, who simplified it and made it homogeneous, in keeping with this paradigm of war as a "creator" of "peoples".

Threat sustains discipline, survival legitimises death. But consistent discipline (and not just an episodic form of discipline, if it is possible to say that persistence is not inherent in discipline) presupposes a risk that is not simply a remote one and to which any foreseeable reply will only be conducted by ordinary means. The risk must, on the contrary, be anticipated, as well as the exceptional

means of responding to an attack. A distant threat is unproductive; the threat must be real and vital so that the State can be built from this.

The case of Portugal in the 17th century makes it possible to illustrate the behaviour of a “society” in which this legitimacy of there being an army of the permanent type was absent. It was absent when the war began, and it continued so when peace was obtained. Although one does not deny the possibility of the kingdom being the target of an outside attack, there seems to have been a prevailing conception of war and defence as being based on the sense of mistrust that was felt as to the formation of permanent forces. The existence of a permanent military force implied an administrative power that was equipped with sufficient means – and this meant that it was necessary to persuade “society” that not only were these means neither futile nor superfluous expenditures, but that they were also not launching an attack upon those that they were supposedly protecting.

The representatives of the estate of the *Povos* at the *Cortes* of 1668 and 1674 more or less clearly showed their intention to impose the complete demilitarisation of the kingdom. This position was opposed by the one that associated the possession of mobilised troops with the status enjoyed by the kingdom amongst foreign opinions and, therefore, in the world of diplomacy. It was a rudimentary form of the use of war in the construction of the “State”. The prince and his advisers propagated the supposed need to maintain some fighting capacity. Since the motivations for the kings’ actions related to maintaining their own status, namely the one that they enjoyed in the so-called diplomatic field, they were not understood by the common people, including those men that were sufficiently exceptional to act as the representatives of the *Povos* in parliament. The third estate saw this intention as being illicit and considered it to be a potential insult. There were two distinct points of view held about military forces in times of peace: that of the king’s “estate”⁵ and that of “society”.

The allegation of the threat of a military attack was not understood as justifying the existence of a military force mobilised on a permanent basis. Such a risk was understood as a pretext that was used to attempt to make the people pay tributes to sustain men who were not performing any useful role.

This acceptance cannot be seen therefore as a “natural” acceptance – it was the result of a long process of acculturation.

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⁵ i.e. the position of the king, whoever occupied this position.

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