

Floriano Peixoto and his Devotees: A Study of Republican Civic Culture (1891-1894)

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Abstract

The text addresses the phenomenon of florianismo in Brazil between 1891 and 1904, seeking to characterize some of its leading actors: positivist military officers. For this, the article analyzes some key episodes for understanding this movement, such as the consecration of Floriano Peixoto as leader of the group, his funeral and the Vaccine Revolt, some years later. It is highlight a military leader who united the civic ideal positivist with practices republican policies and their involvement in ordering visual images Floriano Peixoto to be used in cultural imprint civic-political. We analyzed the trajectory of the military officer Agostinho Raimundo Gomes de Castro.

Keywords

republic; florianismo; positivism; civic culture.

Introduction

This article discusses the phenomenon of florianism in Brazil between 1891 and 1904, and attempts to characterize a number of its key figures who consisted of military figures and positivists. A number of civic activities are analyzed, together with the cult of images used to consecrate Floriano Peixoto as a military leader, the commemorations of the anniversary of his funeral and the stirring up of florianistas in the Vaccine Revolt.

Attention is drawn to the leadership of some military figures who combined positive ideals with republican policies and their involvement in commissioning images which were used in cultural activities of a civic-political nature. A fuller analysis is conducted of the military career of Agostinho Raimundo Gomes de Castro and his devotion to fostering civic-cultural activities.

The purpose of this study is to discuss the national and republican sense of political belonging which is closely linked to cultural practices that encouraged an incipient civility, and needed images for people to look at. Our purpose is to show how florianistas were politically encouraged to support a visual recognition and admiration of their civic-republican hero, without which there would not have been the emotion required for an integration of collective policies.

Floriano Peixoto and “The People at his side”

Floriano Peixoto, the second military president, who was in office from 1891 to 1894, is regarded by historiographers as being the first great popular leader and politician in the history of the Republic. His supporters were both military figures and civilians called *florianistas*. They originated from popular groups and the middle class of the city of Rio de Janeiro, the young officer corps of the Military Academy of Praia Vermelha and the members of the Military Club. In the opinion of Queiroz, they were distinguished from other groups by their violent activities in the streets which they regarded as political practices. Penna adds that their adversaries were invariably people with leanings towards the monarchy; these consisted of foreigners, (mainly Portuguese traders) and the liberals called “casacas” [jackets], who were more concerned about their business than consolidating the republican regime. Simas points out that the image of Floriano Peixoto favored by his adherents, was a mixture of military glory, anti-Portuguese sentiments and an essential Brazilianness; he was also shown as an Indian and republican Christ (Queiroz, 1990: 46; Penna, 1999: 63; Simas, 1994; Saes, 2005; Muzzi, 2006).

The *florianist* propaganda spread the idea that the Marshal was not alone but had the ‘people’ at his side. This is what conferred legitimacy on his political and collective work. It was a “a dialectical relationship that was justified because Floriano Peixoto and the *florianistas* appropriated each other.” (Penna, 1999: 18). Among the *florianistas* there were positivists. Prominent among these were the adherents of the Positivist Church of

Brazil, henceforth described as PCB, under the leadership of Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes. These figures respected a genuine military leadership that arose from public acclamation, provided that the leader took on the task of guiding the people and governed wisely, without democratic pretensions involving elections and the contagion of voting. These last were viewed as unnecessary contrivances because according to the principles of Positivism, the natural laws that ruled society were already a given fact and did not depend on the will of men.

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All that was needed for a political direction was the enactment of measures by a wise leader. This leader was Benjamin Constant, according to the members of the PCB who urged him to proclaim a republican dictatorship when the Republic was established on 15th November, 1889 (Medeiros and Albuquerque, 1990: 41). Benjamin Constant did not agree to this suggestion. The members of PCB did not believe that Floriano Peixoto was the ideal leader but he had charisma with the public, as well as having been “positively” involved in the Proclamation of the Republic. Thus the support for the government of Floriano Peixoto on the part of the PCB was wavering because although they recognized that he was a strong and authoritarian leader (admirable traits in the opinion of the positivists), they denied him the opportunity to set up a republican dictatorship.

The energetic, authoritarian and centralizing measures of Floriano Peixoto added to his popularity. The handling of the crisis inherited from the government of Deodoro resulted in him being venerated by the people. The way he dealt with the Naval Revolt, the Federalist Revolution and the dissident State governors, led to him being dubbed with the nickname “the Iron Marshal.” His leadership in defense of the threatened republic led to him becoming known as “The Consolidator.” Despite the safeguards on the political ways of tackling problems adopted by Floriano Peixoto, the PCB positivists also shared this recognition and applied the name to the activities of his collaborators. As Lemos said:

This triumph was achieved at the right time thanks to the admirable enthusiasm displayed by our youth, the loyalty of our patriotic land forces, the unquestioned civic virtue of a handful of marine officers and the unshakable fortitude of the head of the nation, who has thus redeemed his errors and allowed us to forget his shortcomings as a statesman (Lemos, 1894: 19).

The opinions of the PCB positivists with regard to militarism changed a good deal during the First Republic and during the government of Floriano Peixoto, the critics were still not very censorious. When he published his article in 1892, Teixeira Mendes praised the military class and said that it would stand for the well-being of the Brazilian nation in the Proclamation of the Republic, by showing that it was not set apart from the rest of the country but rather, was involved in working with other groups.

It is the relationship between Floriano Peixoto, the positivists, and the *florianistas* that is of interest here. Floriano Peixoto was not a positivist, nor did he win their complete approval, as mentioned earlier. However, since he was a military figure, this meant that he was at least familiar with the basic principles of the doctrine. The familiarity of the military with positivist principles on the one hand, and their respect for a hierarchical system, discipline and order on the other, allowed the two groups to exchange common symbolic values, although this did not necessarily mean they supported the same ideas, practices or ways of tackling the nation’s problems. Showing esteem for public demonstrations of patriotism, civic ceremonies and solemn occasions in praise of national figures whom they admired, was a strategy shared by positivists and the military.

The press and critics of the Marshal did not clearly distinguish between the *florianists*. In analyzing the literary environment of Rio de Janeiro, which comprised writers/militant critics of Floriano Peixoto and eminent *florianists* such as Raul Pompéia, Ferracin da Silva portrays an environment of fierce doctrinaire passions, violence and political persecution (Silva, 2001). Even the PCB positivists were regarded as *florianists*, although they denied they had any links with the upheavals and violence. During the Vaccine Revolt of 1904, the idea spread around that all *florianists* were positivists.

The unconditional support for the Republic united the positivists and *florianists*, even though their methods did not coincide. The positivists largely acted through the press which encouraged discussion, by stirring up feelings, controversy and public debate in seeking to impose their convictions through the strength of their ideas; the *florianists* concentrated on street action involving public demonstrations, disturbances and violent confrontations and less on words (Penna, 1997: 112). The radical nature of both groups meant that they were seen by their political opponents as acting in concert, however much the PCB positivists denied this association.

Civil activities were another factor that brought the *florianists* and positivists together or led them to be viewed as political partners. A survey that was carried out made it possible to draw up the following chart to show a list of commissioned orders that had Floriano Peixoto as their object or recipient of homage.

Name, type of image or object	Author	Involved in the order	Probable year of the image or order
Gold sword		Joaquim de Miranda e Horta	1894
Oil portrait of Floriano Peixoto		Silva Borges, dentist	1895
Oil portrait of Floriano Peixoto	Batut, Casa Fauchon, Paris		1895
Oil portrait of Floriano Peixoto		José Pedro Ferreira de Souza Coelho	1895
Oil portrait of Floriano Peixoto	Décio Villares		1895
Greenish-yellow tapes with photos of Floriano Peixoto			1895
Oil portrait of Floriano Peixoto		4th Artillery Battalion of the National Guard	1896
Oil painting to the Most Worthy		Commission for the exaltation of Marshal Floriano Peixoto	1900
Public monument	Eduardo de Sá	Commission for the exaltation of Marshal Floriano Peixoto	1901-1910
Plaster bust of Floriano Peixoto	Décio Villares	PCB	1900

The commissioned orders of images and festivities or dinners for inaugurations, as well as their use in public spaces or homes, completed the ritual of adoration of Floriano Peixoto and the enshrinement of his image as a great military leader (not just for his supporters but also for the public at large).

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It is clear that some kind of visual support was essential for a personalized and civic cult which could ensure that the visual memory of Floriano Peixoto would be preserved among many other national military heroes. These images were made public by the press and gave political publicity to the electoral campaign of 1894 and the first year of the government of Prudente de Morais, who had to endure fierce opposition on the part of the florianists. The images were thus an essential means of fostering a visual culture with popular political pretensions. Figure 1 below, shows a photo of a family with Floriano Peixoto in the background.



Figure 01:
Photograph
Photographer: unknown.
Collection: Social Communication
Museum, Hipólito José da Costa/RS

The photograph helps us to reflect on the kinds of uses that could be found for the pictures of republican leaders, particularly when it concerned paying homage to military figures like Floriano Peixoto. Far from being simply aimed at providing visual support for political ends, the pictures of the leaders in the first republican years, served as a kind of civic cult where they were merged with the decorative features of the living-room and were an object of meetings, festivities, toasts and dinners for inaugurations and indirectly encouraged meetings for political conversations. In the photograph, the fact that the portrait of Floriano Peixoto is in a central position in the heart of the family, conjures up the ideal figure of a consolidator and protector, either of his admirers like the florianist portrayed, or of the Republic.

Some Military Positivists: Militancy, Idealism and the Visual Arts

Among the different kinds of positivists, in the military environment, there were those who had been students of Benjamin Constant at the Military Academy which was dubbed by the students themselves as the Tabernacle of Science. Castro has shown how these students acquired a culture of scientificism which was based on Mathematics and was thus opposed to the Bachelor Law Degrees that were centred on classical studies. In the midst of the various *isms* which made up this culture of scientificism, was positivism which was regarded by some students as a religious cult and by others as only a scientific philosophy. Regardless of the belief of each student, the civic commemorations took place together; however, as the author shows, these commemorations were underpinned by the Religion of Humanity – the cult of worshipping these illustrious men (Castro, 1995: 52).

Hence, by possessing a public and political cult, positivism required artistic support to enable civic homage to be paid. In the efforts made to carry out these events, there were

images of some of the military figures involved in fostering artworks. Prominent among these was a former student of Benjamin Constant who declared himself to be a positivist: Agostinho Raimundo Gomes de Castro. Far from being a random choice, this figure was involved in civic homage of every kind, including the creation of public monuments. Gomes de Castro wrote about his activities and published books or articles about them or else argued about them in newspapers. In these writings it is possible to find replies to the following: first what positivism professed; second what it understood was meant by art; and third how positivism gave support to his activities in encouraging artistic work devoted to civic pride and political activities of republican militancy.

Two other military positivists were involved in promoting civic activities and the production of images of national heroes. Ximeno de Villeroy was also a positivist under the guidance of the PCB who paid homage to Tiradentes and was responsible for erecting a commemorative column in the house where the conspirator was born. Lauro Sodré, who was also a positivist, though completely separate from the PCB, granted an artistic pension to Carlos Gomes and presided over the commission for the monument to Benjamin Constant in Rio de Janeiro. It is worth noting how these military figures were involved in civic celebrations and the production of artworks and images in general, which was definitely the outcome of the influence of positivism, strengthened by the ritualistic customs of the army and an acute civic awareness, at the beginning of the Republic. In the correspondence of Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes, there are letters from other young military figures seeking guidance on various matters, contributing funds to PCB and reporting what steps they had taken with regard to the commemorations and images produced for the consolidation of a civic pantheon. The “spiritual” guidance of these positivist mentors was extended to personal matters – marriage, a military career and political life¹.

Renato Lemos analyzed the strategies of the PCB and some military figures to uphold the idea that Benjamin Constant was the Founder of the Republic, which entailed producing his biography (written by Teixeira Mendes), and by the activities of the constituent military deputies who were the former students of Benjamin Constant (Lemos, 1999). The argument for maintaining the national flag also acted as a catalyst for merging both groups, as well as their continuous joint efforts to hold civic ceremonies. In the same way, the members of PCB and some former students of Benjamin Constant, came together to organize the civic commemoration one year after his death. The disappointment of not being able to carry this out united them in defense of the positivist principle of separation between the Church and State, with regard to the cemeteries of religious orders.

The Funeral of the Marshal

Floriano Peixoto died in June 1895 and left a letter to his supporters, “a political testament” which was to stir up future activities among them:

To you, who are young men who bear in your hearts an ardent and burning love for the fatherland of the Republic, and to you who eagerly undertake the duty of protecting and defending it from the insidious attacks of the enemy. It is said and is constantly being repeated, that it is consolidated and not in peril. Don't put your trust in this or allow yourselves to be taken by surprise. The agitation for restoration is slowly gathering pace, gradually and silently. So watch out! You call me the consolidator of the Republic. The consolidating forces of the grandiose scheme of Benjamin Constant and Deodoro are the National Army and a part of the Navy which has remained loyal to the Law and institutions [...] and the National Guard, there is the Police corps of the Capital and the State of Rio [...] and the youth of the civil and military schools [...] finally there is the great and glorious Republican Party, which by taking the form of patriotic battalions...²

His burial took place amid a good deal of commotion and was accompanied by a large popular demonstration which was until then confined to Rio de Janeiro to perpetuate the memory of a political cult figure. Luiz Edmundo, a journalist who was present throughout the solemn occasion, stated the following: "As far as I know, there has never been a civic pilgrimage before, which has managed to be so imposing. The funeral of Rio Branco was remarkable but did not have the same solemnity and magnificence of Floriano Peixoto, or even such a huge mass gathering of the people."³

His body was embalmed and laid to rest in the Igreja da Cruz dos Militares [Church of the Military Cross], and for the entire week was visited by huge crowds who passed by silently to look at the body. Extra flowers were sent from Petrópolis, Teresópolis and Nova Friburgo to replenish the wreaths after they withered. A cortège preceded the funeral march which was made up of the people and eleven Patriotic Battalions (comprising military and civilian figures who had previously taken part in the Armada Revolt to defend the government of Floriano Peixoto). Luiz Edmundo also spoke about the crowd:

A third of the inhabitants of the city, or perhaps more, attended the solemn procession of this cortège which took hours and hours to pass by. A huge crowd clustered on the pavements and choked the doorways and windows of the houses. I saw men in the streets on their knees and ladies crying. People clambered up the lamp posts, the posts of the telegraph wires and even on to the edges of the steep and high tiled roofs⁴

At the cemetery there were emotional speeches beside the tomb. There were solemn acts of reverence to the dead and in particular, political acts that were designed as publicity for the opponents and to reinforce the notion that the discourse of the Republic that had been inaugurated by Benjamin Constant and strengthened by Floriano Peixoto, had not been corrupted. These acts of homage included readings of poems such as that from the PCB Generino dos Santos "Brothers in arms together at the tombs of Benjamin Constant and Floriano Peixoto" written in 1895 and read together with numerous speeches at the edge of Floriano's tomb. Although he was paid homage by the poem, Benjamin Constant was also highlighted, as shown by the chronological position of his name in the title of the poem.

The first anniversary of the death of Floriano Peixoto also followed this apotheosis with a large civic procession through Rio de Janeiro with various representatives of civilian and military society in which the PCB stood out, together with the Military Club, the National Guard, the Federal Republican Party and the School of Medicine, among other associations. In the years that followed, there continued to be visits to the tomb of Floriano Peixoto on the anniversary of his death.

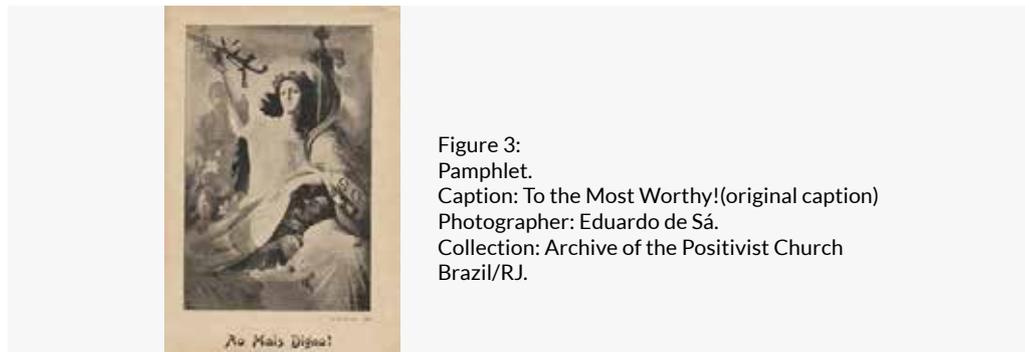


Figure 2:
Photograph in a cardboard frame.
Upper caption: Commemoration in Rio de Janeiro of the 1st Anniversary of the demise of Marechal Deodoro (Original caption).
Lower caption: the procession of the civic cortège from the front of Catete to the new Governor's palace (original caption).
Photographer: Daguerre Studio
Collection: Archives of the Positivist Church of Brazil/RJ.

It is worth taking note of the objects that were produced for these civic and funeral commemorations. Figure 2 is not just an image of a civic procession to the tomb of Floriano Peixoto on the 1st Anniversary of his death but illustrates how a photographic scene could be kept as a recollection; either to show the visits and picture or assemble the decorations of the living-room. In this case, since it concerns a public and political activity, it is more likely to be masculine than feminine and was perhaps intended to decorate the office. This kind of object makes us reflect on its uses and inclusion of everyday features and how the experience of the politician could extend beyond partisan and ideological disputes. The study of rituals provides us with a close look at the politician and the study of the production and uses of images and objects, supplements it.

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There follows another picture which is used as a political object; it was taken by the positivist artist Eduardo de Sá in 1900 and commissioned by the *florianists*. It concerns a representation of Floriano Peixoto on his deathbed: the frame was painted in oils above the screen after being photographed, lithographed and printed in small cards which were sent out on the annual commemorations of his death.



The reverence for the dead, the cult to the memory of the deceased and the production of images was a means of establishing his entry into History. By means of these forms of memorial, Floriano Peixoto continued to govern the activities. “More than military, the Jacobin thinking shows a clear positivist influence in supporting the cult of the heroes and in the exaltation of Floriano whose figure has been uplifted by them to the status of a myth.” (Queiroz, op. cit: 79). Since Positivism did not cultivate any form of supernatural or mythological faith, or what could be called metaphysical beliefs, the cult of Floriano and other republican leaders, (notably Benjamin Constant), was a form of secular civil cult. Following Russian patterns, where there was a image-memory-cult-emotion matrix, which was widely employed to canonize the heroes of the French Revolution, this civic cult served – in a situation of political instability in Brazil in the first republican decade – as a strategy for establishing a unique image of a leader who incarnated features that could be admired and imitated – both republican and military.

In Figure 3, the bust of Benjamin Constant in the background of the picture, the republican allegory which raises the laurels of victory and the figure of Floriano swathed in the republican flag, strengthened the idea that the military rendered a service to the country by proclaiming the Republic. All these symbolic images had to be instilled into the minds of the people in the transition to a civilian government. Hence, the stirring up of *florianistas* was ‘civic-political’ and required commemorations and images as strategies of memory and a means of entrenching fixed ideas.

The mandate of the first civilian president, Prudente de Morais, did not run smoothly and this was aggravated by the *florianistas*; it culminated in a frustrated assassination attempt in November 1897 which involved key military figures in the movement. There was a rumour that this was a part of a conspiracy at the Military Club and was also a bid by the Vice-President, the *florianista* Manuel Vitorino Pereira, to form an interim government. There were insinuations circulating in the press that the PCB positivists were responsible to some extent, although only indirectly by “giving advice to the republican dictatorship, by wanting to suppress religious beliefs and by having corrupted the Christian spirit of our soldiers!” (Lemos, 1899: 53). On the strength of this, the government took energetic measures by banning the formation of patriotic battalion, closing down the Military Club and suppressing the demonstrations at the Military Academy.

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However, just when the third civilian mandate appeared to have crushed the *florianist* forces, in 1904 there was an attempt by the Military Club to deliver an *ultimatum* to President Rodrigues Alves and seize power with the support of the students from the Military Academy of Realengo and Praia Vermelha, but the action was thwarted by the government forces. The workers’ strikes in April and May and the Vaccine Revolt in October were contributory factors. In the same year, 1904, (and equally inflammatory), a campaign was launched by the *florianistas* and the positivists for a public subscription to erect a monument to Floriano Peixoto, in one of the most central points of Rio de Janeiro. This was largely the undertaking of the military union of *florianist/positivists* in the Honorary Commission of Marshal Floriano Peixoto and led by Agostinho Raimundo Gomes de Castro. There will be an analysis of this figure in the next section as an example of a military figure who combined positivist beliefs with *florianist* activities and who made ample use of commemorative acts as a means of spreading politico-civic ideas.

Agostinho Raimundo Gomes de Castro and the Promotion of Civic Culture

“Our patriot has a sophisticated and modest bearing and with his slim physique, friendly disposition and smoothly polished and attractive appearance, suggests a sensitive intellectual rather than someone pursuing an active life. Anyone looking at him closely without taking account of his civic struggles, would believe him incapable of standing up against danger, death, hatred and persecution. Another big mistake! (Sodré, 1905: 13)

These are the words of Lauro Sodré, when defending his friend and colleague Gomes de Castro at the plenary session of the military court in 1905, when he was being tried for taking part in an attempted military coup against the government of Rodrigues Alves, (in a plot organized at the Military Club). Gomes de Castro had been chosen to command the uprising of students at the Military Academy of Realengo, but had ended up being imprisoned by the commanding officer of the School. Years earlier he had commanded the Academic Battalion in Niterói to defend the government of Floriano Peixoto and had headed the military commission which was based in the territory of Acre. Lauro Sodré describes the activities of the military commander from the State of Maranhão and also draws attention to his devotion to activities of a civic kind. In the opinion of his friend, Gomes de Castro had a firm and unwavering bearing which made him unshakable in the defense of the Republic, even to the point of confronting Floriano Peixoto, when during his government an attempt was made to alter the national flag⁵, and with Júlio de Castilhos, when he was contemplating standing as a candidate for President of the Republic. A friend said that both these illustrious figures kept respectfully silent before

the audacious courage of Gomes de Castro. Despite the flowery rhetoric of Lauro Sodré, these were not the only confrontations in which Gomes was involved.

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Far from being a personal trait, Gomes de Castro's implacable nature was based on positivism. He combined the idealism of youth with a certain all-powerfulness derived from positivist scientificism and the courage to undertake actions that were appropriate for a military career. It is impossible to determine when positivism entered his life but members of his family had ties with the leaders of the PCB. His brother, Carlos Agostinho Gomes de Castro, belonged to the military navy and was a believer in the Religion of Humanity. Although he was not an affiliate of PCB he was an assiduous correspondent with their leaders and made contributions to the positivist cause. In the correspondence sent to Teixeira Mendes, there can also be found a large number of telegrams from Francisca Gomes de Castro, the wife of Gomes de Castro. In these messages, she requests the positivist apostle to pay a visit and bring words of comfort when her husband was ill, as well as inviting him to the weddings of several of her children.

In 1922, Gomes de Castro had nine children. All had names that followed a positivist tradition of paying homage to the deceased who were worthy of veneration. Rosália Beatriz, Marina, Clotilde, Sophia and Francisca Heloíza were names that recalled positivism; Branca Bathilde, Bathilde Mônica and Carmem, were probably names of women in the families; and José Bonifácio and Benjamin Constant were clearly names of civic homage. The godmother of this last was Maria Joaquina (the wife of Benjamin Constant) and his godfather Teixeira Mendes (the chairman of PCB).⁶

The relationship of Gomes de Castro with the PCB directors was always a blend of reverence and impertinence. He was well-read in positivism which gave him support for his civic practices but he never managed to win the approval of PCB because of his involvement in violent activities as a fanatical *florianist*. His correspondence with the leaders of PCB is not voluminous but there are some letters written in 1894 and 1895 that deal with positivist funds and later in the period 1911-1920, in the letters to Teixeira Mendes, address family matters and the question of a civic homage organized by the military which was the source of a serious divergence of opinion between them both. But this disagreement did not prevent the military officer from treating Teixeira Mendes as a mentor, friend, and confrère (an attitude that was customary for believers in positivism).

The adherents of PCB were expected to abide by a large number of requirements of a doctrinaire nature and few of them managed to fulfil enough of them to obtain a formal entry into the religious guild or to remain in it. But this did not prevent military figures like Gomes de Castro, (who were not formal sympathizers of PCB) from accepting advice either for their civic activities or on a personal level. For example, when a member of Gomes de Castro's family died in 1915, he begged Teixeira Mendes to pay him a visit and comfort him for the heavy blow caused by his bereavement. This shows how the heads of PCB had a network of extensive influences which went beyond the limited question of whether or not one was a sympathizer with religious positivism. This means that it is not enough to state that the military officers were not religious positivists because they did not observe all the sacramental practices that were required for formal entry into the PCB; they accepted the religious authority of the priests and attempted to experience positivism in a religious way, even if not institutionally. Their activities with regard to

artistic endeavours showed that they sought to foster the public cult of positivism. Gomes de Castro was responsible for overseeing some civic activities which were not countersigned by PCB, which is evidence that although he showed reverence to its leaders, he acted in an independent way in his positivist and political dealings.

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Positivism and recourse to insurrection is the title of a pamphlet issued by PCB in 1906, in response to the article *Positivism and the Right of Insurrection*, published in the newspapers by Gomes de Castro. In the article, he justified the insurrection of November, 1904 against compulsory vaccination in Rio de Janeiro. In doing this, he was one of the leaders who argued that Augusto Comte only condemned having recourse to revolutions when they were unjust, but when they represented a last resort against tyranny (as, in his view, was the Brazilian case), the citizens were clearly in the right. But what most angered the PCB positivists was the fact that the military officer had used his pamphlets to justify the insurrection and spoke as follows about 1904: "The magnificent articles of Sr. Teixeira Mendes himself, against despotism made me take up arms once again in defense of liberty." (Mendes, 1906: 23). This phrase of Gomes de Castro is revealing because it shows a conflict between the young idealistic military officer linked to the events of the proclamation of the Republic (and who subsequently took action in the Vaccine Revolt of 1904) and the orthodox stance of the PCB.

Gomes de Castro was representative of the young military officers who were active in the first years of the Republic. The following can be mentioned together with him: Ximeno de Villeroy, Barbosa Lima, Tasso Fragoso, Anibal Eloi Cardoso, with regular correspondents, Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes and contributors to positivist funds. They were all about 40 years old at the time of the Vaccine Revolt and felt betrayed by the excessive doctrinaire purism of the PCB leaders and for what Gomes de Castro called a "theory of passive obedience." (Ibidem: 107). The military officer's article in defense of insurrections ends with a manifesto in support of the independence of the PCB: although he did not deny that he owed a great deal to the teaching and religious preaching of Teixeira Mendes, Gomes de Castro stated that it did not need his vote or belief in its apostolic doctrine to be a positivist. The outcome of this bitter argument was that it led to Gomes de Castro being full of remorse and begging forgiveness from Teixeira Mendes and a few days later from the PCB. However, this dispute about having the competence to interpret the texts of Augusto Comte and of practices consistent with his doctrine, had already arisen, and included the question of how to promote artworks. Gomes de Castro and the PCB were also in dispute over their ability to carry out civic-cultural activities.

There are a surprising number of honorary commissions, societies, republican clubs and lists of subscribers who collected donations for various causes – the destitute mother of a dead military officer; the translation and publication of a book; the building of a public monument – and these all gathered intensity with the institution of the Republic. They were all forms of political involvement that extrapolated from the partisan political experience and acute civic sense that were found at the outset of the Republic. The historiographers who have covered the First Republic, have made little attempt to devote their research and analytical work to these kinds of political practices. Renato Lemos shows the wide range of organizations that Benjamin Constant was invited to integrate or which he adhered to on his own initiative (Lemos, op. cit.: 221 e 330). Following this example, a similar list has been drawn up for Gomes de Castro in the chart displayed below. This shows the commissions in which Gomes de Castro was involved, the positions

he occupied and the artworks that were produced. The references to these works does not mean they were ordered directly by the military authorities because it was not always the president of the commissions who organized them but rather the civic activities in which they took part, and that required these artistic objects. The research on the way this chart was prepared, revealed that the positivist artists Décio Villares and Eduardo de Sá – activists in PCB – played a key role in the commissions cited.

Year	Commission	Position	Artwork or object	Observations
1892	Civic Commemoration beside the tomb of the founder of the Republic		Picture and Bust of Benjamin Constant – Décio Villares.	Petition to the President of the Republic to hold the ceremony
1895	Honorary Commission of Marshal Floriano Peixoto.	President		Organization of pilgrims at the tomb of Floriano Peixoto.
1898	Positivist Action Group			Founded in Maranhão.
1899	Benjamin Constant Society – Commission for the return of the war trophies of Paraguay		Picture of Benjamin Constant in the Office – Eduardo de Sá	Return of the war trophies of the War of Triple Alliance in Paraguay. President of the Commission: Raul do Nascimento Guedes..
1900	Honorary Commission of Marshal Floriano Peixoto – 5th Commemoration	President	Busts of Tiradentes, José Bonifácio, Deodoro da Fonseca, Benjamin Constant and Floriano Peixoto	Civic cortège with biers to the tomb of Floriano Peixoto on 29th June, 1900.
1901	Member of the Board of Directors of the Military Club of Rio de Janeiro.	Secretary		Management 1901-1905. Also combined with the Drafting Committee
1901	Benjamin Constant Society – Commission for the commemoration of the Independence of Paraguay	Public Speaker		Picture of Francia Eduardo de Sá
1904	Honorary Commission of Marshal Floriano Peixoto	President	Monument to Floriano Peixoto – Eduardo de Sá.	Commissioned for the monument to Floriano Peixoto.
1904	Commission of the Monument to Monroe		Monument to Monroe	
1908	Honorary Commission of the Anniversary of the Flag of the Republic			
1911	Commission for the tomb of the Empress Leopoldina.	President	Mausoleum for the Imperial Family	Relocation of the mortal remains of the Convento da Ajuda to Santo Antonio. The Mausoleum was not built in accordance with the instructions of Gomes de Castro.

1912	Civic Commission of the Founder of the Republic	President		Subscription for a civic commemoration on 5/11/1912.
1913	Subscription for the monument of Benjamin Constant	Treasurer	Public Monument to Benjamin Constant – Décio Villares	The monument was not carried out for this commission. President of the Commission: Lauro Sodré
1921	Civic Cult to Maria Joaquina Botelho de Magalhães			Civic homage to the wife of Benjamin Constant

Gomes de Castro, who was 25 years old when the Republic was proclaimed, was actively involved in various kinds of political participation and formed various commissions. This was most striking in his presidency of the Honorable Commission of Marshal Floriano Peixoto, which was set up to organize annual visits to the mausoleum in the commemorations of the death of Floriano Peixoto and to erect his monument. The Commission brought together Catholic supporters, positivists, civilians, military officers, journalists and writers under the leadership of Gomes de Castro. An article in *Folha do Dia* (Rio de Janeiro) recognized that Major Gomes de Castro was the main organizer of the pilgrimages to the tomb of Floriano Peixoto, on 29th June, which were designed to maintain the fervour of this civic cult to the “great Brazilian”.⁷

As President of the Honorary Commission, Gomes de Castro added his personal stamp to events that had strong positivist connotations – for example, the 5th Civic Commemoration of the anniversary of the death of Floriano Peixoto, in 1900: a funeral cortège of five biers, each with different colors and busts. In the explanatory text, there are no references to positivism but the historical justification of the order of the cortège followed the positivist idea of a historic continuity between the Empire and the Republic (Castro, 1900). The key figures in the cortège also conformed with this pattern of continuity:

- 1º Bier: purple and green - Tiradentes
- 2º Bier: green and yellow - José Bonifácio
- 3º Bier: crimson and green - Deodoro da Fonseca
- 4º Bier: green and white - Benjamin Constant
- 5º Bier: gold and green - Floriano Peixoto

There are no references to the sculptors of the busts that appeared in the cortège, but all the signs are that they were made by Décio Villares. It is known that the PCB possessed these kinds of work in its collection but there is no indication of whether they were lent out for the ceremony. The busts that were used were usually made of polychrome gypsum because it is a lighter material and has a visual appeal on account of its color, but also because it allowed a large number of copies to be made.

In 1901, Gomes de Castro was a member of the Drafting Committee of the Board of Directors of the Military Club, which was reopened that year. In the minutes of the reopening ceremony, it is clear that the military officer had gathered together the objects that formed the heritage of collection when it was closed down in 1897 (Almeida, 1979), after the attempted assassination of Prudente de Moraes. However, they do not mention any artistic objects although since 1890 the Club had already possessed in its collection, portraits painted by Villares, of Deodoro da

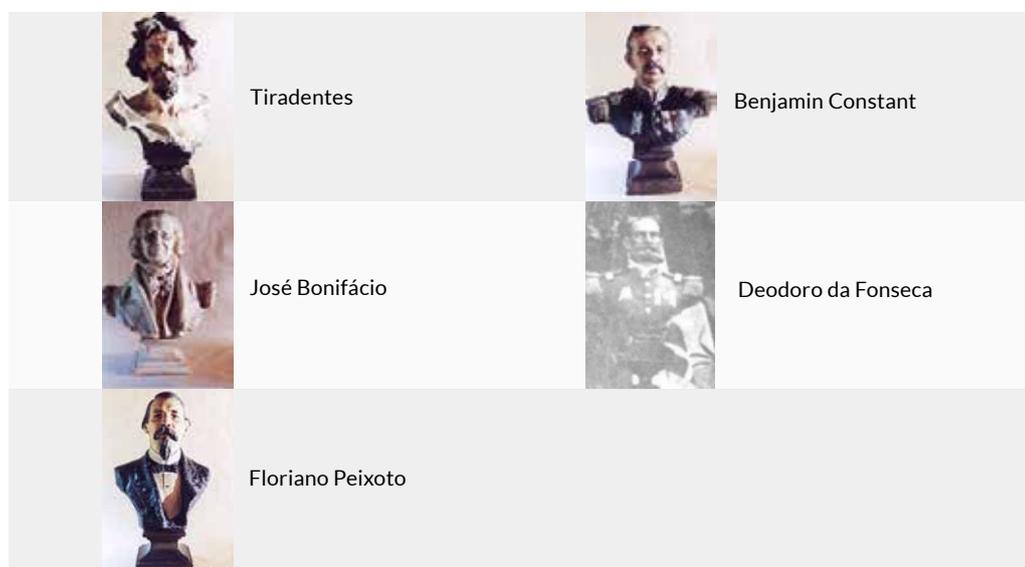
Fonseca and Benjamin Constant. The inventory in the Military Club and a study of the minutes show that Villares was the first artist to have works in the collection but this does not include any busts; thus the Honorary Commission may have had its own collection of busts.

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It is possible that artworks from the collection of the Military Club were kept at the headquarters of the Honorary Commission of Marshal Floriano, which was situated at 127, Rua do Ouvidor, when this was proscribed from 1897 to 1901. It is evident that the Commission held artistic objects in great esteem because in 1900, it held an exhibition showing the picture *José Bonifácio: the founding of the Brazilian fatherland*, by Eduardo de Sá. Three years later, his brother Francisco de Sá would lead the commemoration of the 8th Anniversary of the death of Floriano Peixotona with the same Honorary Commission (Sá; Cavalcanti; Guedes, 1903: 1).

The Republican Club or Benjamin Constant Society was formed by positivists who worked together with the support of funds to build the Temple of Humanity in Rio de Janeiro, and Gomes de Castro might have been the treasurer, because he sent a letter to Miguel Lemos in which he addressed the subject;⁸ he also commissioned works from Eduardo de Sá: in 1899, the picture *Benjamin Constant in his Office*, which was donated to the city of Asuncion, Paraguay⁹, and in 1901, the picture *Francia!*, to commemorate the Independence of Paraguay¹⁰.

These associations which very often had the same members, may have shared their collection of artistic objects, flags and standards. The picture *Francia!* was exhibited at the civic festivities of the Independence of Paraguay, organized by the Benjamin Constant Society in 1901, and included a set of ornaments in the saloon of the Polytechnic School where the event was held. The ornaments consisted of busts of Deodoro da Fonseca, Floriano Peixoto, Benjamin Constant and José Bonifácio, together with standards, flowers, the flags of the American nations and shields inscribed with the names of national leaders¹¹. The newspaper article which reports on the commemoration and describes the decorations in the saloon does not give any information about the sculptor of the busts but it is likely that they were the same as those in the funeral cortege organized one year earlier by Gomes de Castro, in homage to Floriano Peixoto. Pictures of the busts of Décio Villares are shown below, and these were perhaps used in the ceremonies organized by Gomes de Castro. The busts form a part of the collection of the Positivist Chapel of Porto Alegre, a branch of PCB, (except the bust of Deodoro da Fonseca, which was obtained from a photographic reproduction). The PCB had the same collection of busts.



In 1911, Gomes de Castro presided over the commission for the funeral monument of the Empress Leopoldina, which undertook the removal of her mortal remains from the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Ajuda to the Convent of Santo Antônio, both in Rio de Janeiro. He sent out an invitation of the solemn occasion to the PCB, who did not attend because they were not convinced that Dona Leopoldina had rendered services to the Fatherland and were thus against the reinternment of her mortal remains. When the subscription list was sent to the PCB, it was returned to Gomes de Castro, with the explanation that they could not take part in this civic ceremony for doctrinaire reasons. All these events were accompanied by the publication of long newspaper articles with replicas and triplicates on both sides and with the publication of pamphlets by the PCB¹².

The divergence of opinion was reflected in the burning question for the positivists: who should be paid homage in the funeral monuments and who should pay the homage. In the opinion of Gomes de Castro, the Empress should be paid homage with civic pride because she had played a decisive role in supporting national Independence. Testimonial evidence of this can be found in a comment by Menezes Drummond, a friend and confidante of José Bonifácio: "I was a living witness and can strongly affirm to contemporaries that Princess Leopoldina actively cooperated for the Independence of Brazil, both within and outside the country. Viewed from this standpoint, it is clear that Brazil owes her an eternal debt of gratitude."¹³ However, in the view of members of the PCB, the Empress was not so important to the country, and thus the homage should not be in the form of a civic ceremony but a family occasion confined to members of the imperial household.

Gomes de Castro planned to remove the remains of the Empress, provisionally, to the Convent of Santo Antônio until the Pantheon of the Imperial Family was ready at the São João Baptista Cemetery. In a letter to the Count and Countess d'Eu, he said that the monument would be sufficiently large to include the mortal remains of all the members of the imperial family and that Catholicism would predominate in his conception. In his report, he discloses that under his responsibility, a commission had been set up to erect the work and obtain the necessary funds from different government bodies and social groups¹⁴. In 1937, the body of the Empress was moved to a mausoleum inside the Convent of Santo Antônio, and built on the initiative of Friar Basílio Roewer and in 1957, it was again moved to the Monument of Ipiranga, in São Paulo. There is no information about why Gomes de Castro did not complete the project of the Pantheon; it is only worth stressing that it involved a number of doctrinaire factors to carry it out – civic reasons of gratitude to the imperial family for the contributions it had made to the Brazilian past.

Of all the commissions undertaken by Gomes de Castro, it was through his assistance in erecting a monument to Floriano Peixoto that he displayed most dedication. In this project, he was able to play the role of a positivist champion of artworks where the intellectual role and guidance of the artist was of crucial importance. In Figure 5, there are two photographs of the monument of Floriano Peixoto, a work by Eduardo de Sá. It is not our intention to discuss the monument, but it should be stressed that it concerns a work that commemorates the "multi-racial" composition of the Brazilian people and the course of history that had reached Floriano Peixoto, who carries a sword as the defender of the Republic¹⁵.

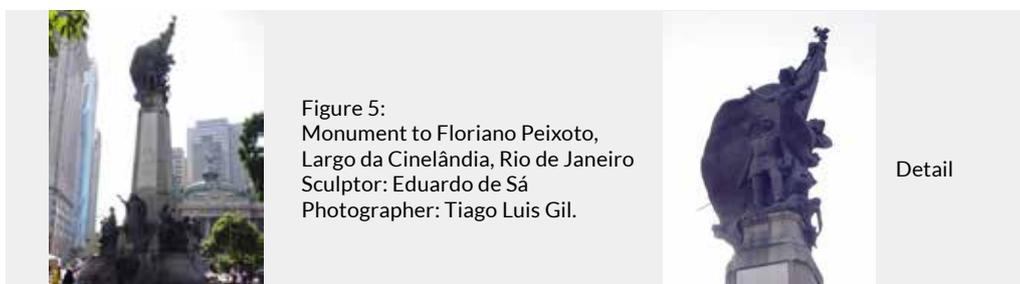


Figure 5:
Monument to Floriano Peixoto,
Largo da Cinelândia, Rio de Janeiro
Sculptor: Eduardo de Sá
Photographer: Tiago Luís Gil.

Detail

In 1910, when the monument to Floriano Peixoto was inaugurated, Gomes de Castro published a book which was a kind of report or rendering of accounts, of his memories of almost nine years in which he organized the project of building the monument. The introduction of the book — *A General Appreciation of Art* — reveals how Gomes de Castro interpreted a study by Auguste Comte on aesthetics (Comte, 1912). It was a didactic account of positivist aesthetics without which the monument of Floriano Peixoto could not be properly understood. Gomes de Castro thus shows himself to be a commissioner who was fully aware of the function of art, the role of the artist and the status of Floriano Peixoto in the historic attempts in Brazil to ensure he was paid homage in an appropriate way: through a monumental sculpture — the most aesthetic of the art forms, according to Positivism. When understood in this way, the art has a defined function: to commemorate the past and improve the present. A historical synthesis can be found in an account of the past that must be experienced, remembered and commemorated and a cast of characters that must be revered and viewed by means of images and thus allow Art to fulfil its social and political role. (Castro, 1910).

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to show how Floriano Peixoto entered the Brazilian civic pantheon after his death in 1895 and what kind of strategies were used by his followers to honour his memory. Both military figures and civilians were encouraged to take part in public celebrations which required the production of images, without which the memories, reverence and civic celebrations would not have been possible. It was also noted that the members of the Positivist Church of Brazil, under the leadership of Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes, together with military officers influenced by him, fostered cultural activities and ordered artworks and images in general and these were incorporated in their civic rites. The new republican regime of 1889 allowed various forms of political experience and militancy and this was exemplified by the activities of the *florianist* political military figure, Gomes de Castro. In his view, commissioning a picture or monument, planning a civic ceremony, fighting in a patriotic battalion or giving a speech in the Chamber, were mandatory political activities on the part of republican patriots.

The analysis of the civic-cultural activities organized by Gomes de Castro has allowed us to cast a more attentive glance on the first decade of the Brazilian Republic. Since he was an enthusiastic *florianist*, Gomes organized and was involved in activities which combined republican faith, civic culture and political action. The social environment and awareness of people in the first years of the Republic were a privileged stage for citizens who wished to experience the politics of the new regime. Whether the activity was a funeral or a festival, did not seem to matter since what was apparent was a euphoric desire for a political life ruled by doctrinaire beliefs which were not always precisely defined (though this does not apply to the military figure Gomes de Castro). What is of even greater value is when our glance includes an analysis of the political phenomenon of *florianism*, and the capacity that Floriano Peixoto had to stir up his supporters and critics in a radical way. Unlike Deodoro da Fonseca or Benjamin Constant, Floriano Peixoto did not allow any room for political moderation and perhaps this is the key to understanding republican political culture in its first years when it was characterized by a profound enthusiasm.

Only Getúlio Vargas, almost half a century later managed to attract civic/popular attention to the same extent, although this was by adopting another strategy for arousing the awareness of the citizens and cannot be compared to the spontaneous kind of attention

paid to Floriano Peixoto. However, the latter remained in power through the exhaustive production of images and carrying out collective activities in the streets and this required the involvement of republican citizens who were full of enthusiasm and driven by their emotions, whether to look at the images of the national heroes or join a civic parade.

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The political culture in the first republican decade was thus visual, sensory, and emotional and required the arousal of citizens. When we cease to look at history through the lens of the text-discourse and shift our gaze to political practices, it can be noted that images, commemorations, and cultural/civic events, were also charged with political ideas, only these were not expressed through the language of the text book. It can also be seen that the notion of political participation was far removed from the vote. After all, even illiterate citizens who had no vote, had a political experience when they looked at an image and tried to work out who was being portrayed, or else crowded the streets during the civic festivities. The *florianists* analyzed here were adept at fostering this republican culture which was intended to be popular. The citizens were in the streets and conscious of their ideas and strategies, as is shown by the florianist Gomes de Castro, or if they only wanted to see the procession pass by out of curiosity, this can be responded to by adjusting one's focus.

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Notes

1. Among the military personnel, the former students of Benjamin Constant, who corresponded with Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes, are: Agostinho Raymundo Gomes de Castro, Alexandre A. Leal, Aníbal Eloi Cardoso, Augusto Tasso Fragoso, Barbosa Lima, Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon, Carlos Agostinho Gomes de Castro, Inocêncio Serzedelo Corrêa, José Beviláqua, Lauro Sodré, Manoel Rabello, Pedro Dantas, Saturnino Cardoso, and Ximeno de Villeroy.
2. Apud CARONE, Edgar. *A República Velha – II evolução política (1889-1930)*. 4. ed. São Paulo: Difel, 1983, pág. 163.
3. EDMUNDO, Luiz. Apud SODRÉ, Nelson Werneck. *História Militar do Brasil*. 2. ed, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1968. p. 176.
4. Idem, *Ibidem*: 176.
5. On the positivist manifesto of the students from the Escola Superior de Guerra [Upper War Academy] against the idea of altering the national

flag. see: CARVALHO, 1990: 115.

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6. *Letter from Gomes de Castro to Maria Joaquina Botelho de Magalhães*. Rio de Janeiro. 27.02.1897; Natal. 15.11.1898; Maranhão (sic). 01.03.1897. Museu Casa Benjamin Constant/Inventário Maria Joaquina.

7. Major Gomes de Castro. *Folha do Dia*. 22.04.1910.

8. *Letter from Gomes de Castro to Miguel Lemos*. Rio de Janeiro. 08.12.1895. Arquivo IPB.

9. Painting of Benjamin Constant. *O Paiz*, s/d.

10. The Independence of Paraguay. *Jornal do Brazil*, 15.10.1901.

11. The Independence of Paraguay. s/r. 15.05.1901.

12. *Letter from Gomes de Castro to Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes*. Rio de Janeiro. 08.11.1911. IPB Archive and MENDES, R. Teixeira. *Continuing the social commemorations and the modern situation – reflections on the plan for a public subscription for the erection of a monument to the Empress D. Leopoldina and her descendants in the São João Batista Cemetery*. Rio de Janeiro, 1912. Arquivo IPB.

13. *Letter from Gomes de Castro to the Conde de Affonso Celso, President of IHGB*. Rio de Janeiro. 21.02.1922. Lata 565, Pasta 106. IHGB

14. *Letter from Gomes de Castro to the Conde and Condessa d'Eu*. Rio de Janeiro. 28.11.1911. Lata 479, Pasta 18. IHGB.

15. On the works of the positivist artists: LEAL, Elisabete da Costa. *Filósofos em Tintas e Bronze: arte, positivismo e política na obra de Décio Villares e Eduardo de Sá*. Rio de Janeiro: Tese de Doutorado, IFCS/UFRJ, 2006.

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