

On the path of the Norte-Rio-Grandense¹ education: the emergence of scout practices in the city of Natal in the early 20th century²

Na trilha da educação norte-rio-grandense: a emergência das práticas escoteiras na cidade do Natal no início do século XX

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the emergence of scouting, in the city of Natal-RN, at the beginning of the 20th century, problematizing how this type of education, which was thought by Baden-Powell, for the reality of young English people, was received by the elite and local political authorities. To follow the path left by the scout education in the State of Rio Grande do Norte, we adapted information from the theoretical and methodological hypotheses of the New Cultural History, choosing as sources laws, government messages, newspapers, correspondence, and photographs, based in the theoretical considerations of Sirinelli (2003) about the intellectual concept, which enabled us to think about the founders of the Scouting in the city of Natal, and their network of sociability. The work showed that the emergence of Scouting in the city of Natal was a result of the initiative of intellectuals, whose social networks were determinant to implement and consolidate this model of education in the State.

Keywords: Education. Scouting. Natal. Intellectuals. Social networks.

1 Name given to those born in the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

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RESUMO

Este artigo tem por objetivo analisar a emergência do escotismo na cidade do Natal-RN no início do século XX, problematizando como este tipo de educação, pensada por Baden-Powell para a realidade de jovens ingleses, foi recepcionada pela elite e autoridades políticas locais. Para percorrer a trilha deixada pela educação escoteira no Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, nos apropriamos dos pressupostos teórico-metodológicos da Nova História Cultural e privilegiamos como fontes Leis, Mensagens de Governo, jornais, correspondências e fotografias, ancorados nas considerações teóricas de Sirinelli (2003) sobre o conceito de intelectual, que nos possibilitou pensar as figuras dos fundadores do escotismo natalense e suas redes de sociabilidades. O trabalho constatou que a emergência do escotismo na cidade do Natal foi fruto da iniciativa de intelectuais, cujas redes de sociabilidades foram determinantes para a implantação e consolidação desse modelo de educação no estado.

Palavras-chave: Educação. Escotismo. Natal. Intelectuais. Redes de sociabilidades.

Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, Brazilian urban centers were experiencing urban reforms, which were inspired by European and north american models of modernization. The urban transformations that were not restricted to technical aspects, was followed by attempts to modify the customs and habits of the inhabitants of these cities. One of the concerns of the leading groups of the Brazilian states was to adopt a cosmopolitan behavior, seen as an example of civilization and progress, and, thus considered suitable for a city that was in the process of modernization (SIQUEIRA, 2014).

The urban reforms carried out in the city of Natal, the capital of the potiguar state, at the beginning of the 20th century, aimed not only at the health aspect, but also at the beautification and modernization of the city, as well as at the discipline of the uses of this urban space, since, in the perspective of the republican elite administration, the city would represent the materialization of a whole era of progress and civility that emerged after the proclamation of the Republic.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Natal was a city seen as provincial and backward, with two neighborhoods, Ribeira and Cidade Alta, which had narrow and winding streets, whose spatial configuration embodied various functions (SIQUEIRA, 2014). As a result of that, the city urgently needed to be put on the

path of progress, not only through the urban apparatuses and devices, but also through the change of habits and customs of its inhabitants, so that Natal would become a civilized urban center, following the European model.

To achieve the dreamed progress desired for the elite of Natal and the Republican administration, the then governor Alberto Maranhão made investments to restructure the city's public space. Having ruled the state of Rio Grande do Norte for two terms (1900-1904/ 1908-1913), he dedicated himself to transforming the capital of the state into a modern and civilized city as the great European urban centers. To this end, he carried out several public works, namely: the projection of the third neighborhood of Natal, called "Cidade Nova"; the construction of the Carlos Gomes Theatre, which was concluded in 1904; the lighting using acetylene gas, in 1905; the implantation of the donkey tram, in 1909; the electric lighting, in 1911; the implantation of the electric tram and the construction of public gardens. Although the city of Natal did not undergo a radical urban intervention, it can be seen that the investments made during the above-mentioned government in favor of the reordering of public space helped to transform it, albeit slowly, giving it the contours and airs of a city that was moving towards progress (MARINHO, 2008).

The pattern of civility and progress that the local elites hoped for Natal, went far beyond structural changes, it implied a change of behavior, because "the population could not be stuck with habits seen by the elites as archaic, unhygienic or immoral. Therefore, it was necessary to bring to the people of the city of Natal standards of civility adopted by elite groups" (MARINHO, 2008, p. 57). However, this modernization and the resignification of the uses of urban spaces did not occur immediately; the habits and customs considered archaic coexisted with practices and conducts that, according to the speech of this elite, were not consistent with a modern city. It is precisely this speech that gave support to the establishment of Scouting in the city of Natal, conceived by the elites as an institution capable of physically and morally instructing its young members.

This article aims to analyse the emergence of Scouting in the city of Natal-RN at the beginning of the 20th century, problematizing how this educational model, conceived by an English general, was received by the elite and the political and educational authorities of Natal. For that reason, we appropriated the theoretical-methodological presuppositions of the New Cultural History, having as sources the laws, decrees, messages of government, trades, correspondence, newspapers, magazines and photographs; and a conversation with Sirinelli (2003), whose considerations on the intellectual concept were very important for the reflection about the founders of Scouting in the city of Natal and their social networks.

Pointing out the various meanings of the word “intellectual”, Sirinelli (2003) presents two perspectives about the term: the first, wider and socio-cultural, includes creators and cultural mediators, following the example of the writer, journalist and teacher; and the second meaning assumes a more restricted character, and is based on the knowledge about social engagement. “Such a concept is not independent from the previous one, since they are two elements of a sociocultural nature” (SIRINELLI, 2003, p. 243). Therefore, we have the two reasons to think about the founders of the Scouting in Natal’s city as intellectuals, considering their professional performances and their engagements in the life of the city of Natal through their involvements with the education and the scouting.

The emergence of natalense Scouting: an initiative by the intellectuals

Dear friend Henrique Castriciano. I would like to remember and ask your beautiful Brazilian soul for a great service: the creation of battalions of scouts in Rio Grande do Norte. In São Paulo we already have 8,000 Scouts; in Rio Grande do Sul, 2,000; in Bahia, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Santa Catarina the organization is under way. Shake, raise, and support the idea in Rio Grande do Norte. Tell to the illustrious Dr. Ponciano Barbosa, to all your friends, ignite and enthuse the press, the poets, all men of faith; promote conferences and newspaper articles; you should be the director and founder of the institution. In the meantime, I ask you not to mention my suggestion and my name in advertising, because the idea must come at the same time from various souls and various energies. It is indispensable that, in Rio on September 7, 1922, the centenary of Independence, there be a parade of 10,000 Brazilian scouts, from all the States. Fraternal hugs from your old admirer and friend Olavo Bilac (MELO, 1977, p. 117).

The letter we transcribed here, sent by Olavo Bilac, on 21 June 1916, promoted the establishment of scouting in the city of Natal. However, instead of addressing directly the head of the State, Bilac appealed to Henrique Castriciano, probably because the two were old acquaintances and cultivated a love for poetry³, that means that they were part of the same networks of sociability. Moreover, he believed that intellectuals were “responsible for the

³ Olavo Bilac prefaces the book “*Mãe*”, written by Henrique Castriciano, published in 1899. In 1900, at his friend’s request, Bilac prefaces the book “*Horto*”, written by his sister Auta de Souza.

defense of the homeland and the modernization of its structures”, he also used to say in his lectures that people “engage themselves in the nationalist cause” (ENGEL, 2012, p. 3).

Natural from Macaíba/RN, Henrique Castriciano was born in 1874,

[...] As a son of a traditional agrarian elite, he was a renowned intellectual, poet, writer and politician. He stood out as a great columnist in the newspapers, and as a person active in politics in the Potiguar region, he was holding the position of Secretary (1900-1910), State Attorney General (1908-1914), Vice-Governor of the State of Rio Grande do Norte (1915-1923). It was, however, in the chair of the Secretary of the government of Alberto Maranhão (1908-1913) that Castriciano obtained a greater political and economic support for the implementation of his projects in the field of education (RODRIGUES, 2007, p. 47).

As a member of the local elite, Castriciano was part of the idea of modernising the city and the potiguar state. However, for him, the much-desired modernisation of the city, as well as that of the whole country, could not be limited only to physical and structural aspects. He argued that this modernization should be followed by a political reform that would disseminate education, especially the one directed at women, since only then would Brazil be able to be like developed nations (OLIVEIRA; MARQUES NETO, 2015). Castriciano’s vision of modernization, as explained by Rodrigues (2007), comes from the perspective of a world formed by the authors to which he had access, and from the contact with other cultures, experienced through several trips abroad, mainly to deal with health, because he had developed tuberculosis.

According to Oliveira and Marques Neto (2015), it was on one of those trips to Europe, in 1909, to deal with health, that Castriciano took the opportunity to get to know the structure of European education and extend the research he had been developing for some years on women’s education. Although, it was especially when he was in Switzerland, visiting the *École Ménagère de Fribourg*, that he was able to see closely the importance of women’s education. For him, Switzerland was a model to be followed by Brazilians, as he argued that the socio-economic position that this country occupied on the world stage was a reflection of the incentive directed towards female education.

Upon his return from Europe, Henrique Castriciano articulated himself with other intellectuals from Rio Grande do Norte and founded, on July 23, 1911, the Teaching League of Rio Grande do Norte, which provided subsidies

for him to found the *Domestic school of Natal* in 1914, which was an educational institution for the female public, inspired by the Swiss Home School model, to “form a new type of civilized woman for a new society that was emerging with the first signs of social and economic development” (RODRIGUES, 2007, p. 83). The inauguration of the Home School was considered a symbol of modernization of the city, representing an innovation in local pedagogical practice, since the pedagogical ideology of the institution was based on the activist pedagogical model.

As part of the Brazilian intellectuals, Castriciano believed in a modernization of the country through education, however, he advocated an education that would also reach the female sex, since the republican ideology use to spread the idea that women should be educated to produce the Brazilian citizens who would lead the development of the nation. It was necessary to leave behind the customs and habits of the old slave regime and to instill in the society new habits consistent with a republican country that was modernizing itself.

It was at this time of transformation and modernization that scouting was introduced in the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, to intensify the attention given to the formation of the future republican citizen. In dialogue with the ideals of discipline and health of the bodies spread by sports, scouting was perceived by national and local elites as a solution to the vices and evils which afflicted modern society. Thus, scouting “provided to the youngest members of the elite a moral, physical and civic education” (MARINHO, 2008, p. 97). The encouragement of sports and scout practices reflects the concern of the elites and public authorities for physical and moral education of young people in this period:

For some time now, coinciding with the civic renaissance in the country, there has been a marked tendency for young people to group together in sports associations. I believe that this movement deserves encouragement, for the much it represents about initiative and its educative character. In spite of the recent foundation of all these associations, they are rendering a real service to the physical development of the young people. I have given them modest support, in the hope that they will be well adapted to their environment, and will acquire a more complex organization, in addition to the muscular robustness of the members, with a view to moral development, as is the case in Europe and North America with most of the similar associations. It obeys to this wise orientation, the scouting, the admirable institution of Baden-Powell, in which the members educate themselves at the same time physically and morally. For this reason, I have sought to support the Association of Rio-Grande-do-Norte Scouts, which already has 123 active members [sic] (RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 1918, p. 11-12).

Natal was a reflection of a national republican tendency to form the new citizen for the new society that was being built. Influenced by the medical speech in vogue at the time, the intellectuals of the potiguar sought to improve the race by means of physical and moral education, taking as their mirror the civilized nations and peoples, following the example of the “English, in whose schools the time of recreation consist exclusively of hygienic games”, since “[...] the social formation of the English people is based on physical exercises”[sic] (CASTRICIANO, 1916 *apud* ALBUQUERQUE, 1993, p. 325). To this end, it was urgent to change the habits of the people through public education, sports and scouting, shaping behavior from an early age.

It is important to point out that doctors exerted a great influence on Brazilian educational and practice, which was accentuated throughout the 19th century and became decisive in the first decades of the 20th century. Doctors came together around a national project that aimed to influence the hygiene of the Brazilian population. It was necessary to normalize the body of men and women from childhood, for this, the medical knowledge assumed a pedagogical character and entered schools to spread knowledge about health and hygiene, because this is “the place of changing habits, especially in the hygienic and food sector, encouragement of physical exercise and mental activity, emotional control, cleanliness of clothing care, prevention of diseases and accidents” (SOARES JÚNIOR, 2015, p. 49). The influence of the medical speech was also present in Scouting education, as the quotation below shows:

The Scouts’ school, one of the primary cells of the organism of civic education and national defense, has an aim that can be resumed in short lines [...]. This admirable school in the open air covers all the points contained in the programmer of modern pedagogy: first of all, medical instruction; the conservation of health through hygiene and medicine, and the normal and progressive development of all the functions of the body, through gymnastics and school games [sic] (BILAC, 1920, p. 29).

Besides reiterating the nationalist speech, Scouting also insisted on the prescriptions recommended by the medical speech which was propagated at that time. In this way, Scouting was related to hygiene and body control, which was fortified through the physical exercises of gymnastics and games. For Bilac (1920), Scouting was an innovative method, since it brought together innovations of modern pedagogy and medicine, thus offering a complete education for children and young people.

Vieira (2008) argues that, as a humanist and educator, who was aware of his role as a citizen trainer and builder of the new bourgeois in Brazil, Henrique Castriciano advocated unrestricted public education in mixed classrooms, and also encouraged the practice of sports and scouting in order to stimulate the moral and civic formation of young people, since both could be carried out together with nature, providing better physical and mental health for those who would be the future builders of the new homeland. Being one of the main interlocutors in the discussion about the progress and civility of the people, Castriciano said he was saddened when he observed that the Brazilians, especially the native ones, gave little importance to these issues and to these practices, which for him were regarded as civilized.

The concern with the cultural backwards, economic and social backwardness in the capital at the beginning of the 20th century was something that was often appearing in the speech of many native intellectuals, the press, politicians and the elite as a whole. For these individuals, the uncivilized habits of the native population were the ones responsible for this backwardness. These habits, regarded as outdated, were the legacy of a past that should be left behind in the name of progress and civilisation (VIEIRA, 2008). This concern justifies Henrique Castriciano's enthusiasm for Olavo Bilac's "patriotic appeal" and his urgent need to "insert the youth of the Rio Grande do Norte state into such a useful institution" (20 ANOS..., 1937, p. 4).

The Scouting, which was the most modern aspect of the education of young English people, was very well received in the city of Natal not only by intellectuals, but also by the then State Government, which did support it financially. The enthusiasm of Castriciano also influenced the expectations of Professor Luiz Soares and of the Comandante Monteiro Chaves, who was committed to help the Professor in the necessary preparations in order to create the first group of scouts in the city, because, as Sirinelli (2003, p. 246) points out, "every group of intellectuals is organised on the basis of a common ideological or cultural sensibility and affinities, which feed the desire and the taste to live together".

With the collaboration of Commander Monteiro Chaves and Professor Luiz Soares, Henrique Castriciano was responsible for organizing a meeting held at the Natal-Club, a space of sociability of the elite of the Natal's city, where the board of directors of the new institution was elected, composed by the intellectuals Antônio de Souza, Manoel Dantas, Moysés Soares, Sebastião Fernandes, Nestor Lima and Colonels Pedro Soares and Francisco Cascudo (MELO, 1977, p. 118), who worked in the capital as cultural mediators through their professions and social engagements. Thus, Henrique Castriciano was able to "raise" and "sustain" the idea of Scouting in the Potiguar capital, as Bilac had recommended.

Before the official opening ceremony of Scouting, an intense propaganda was carried out in the newspaper *A República*, with the purpose of spreading Scouting to the society of the Natal's city. Published on the front page of the newspaper, the column entitled, *Propaganda do escotismo*, had transcribed parts of the *Scouting Manual*, written by Baden-Powell, this column began to be published on June 1, 1917 and continued to be published during the month of July.

It is also worth noting that Castriciano was the editor of the newspaper *A República*, a newspaper that “despite being the voice of the state government, belonged to the Albuquerque Maranhão family, which dominated the political scene at the time” (CUNHA, 2014, p. 53). Thus, the newspaper was a privileged space for the dissemination of its ideas.

Two days before the official ceremony, the newspaper *A República* announced the “great Scout's fest”:

Sunday, Natal will attend one of these parties that will be forever etched in the memory of the residents. More than 80 scouts in the correct uniforms, will swear the flag, the great part of the fine flower of the Natal youth, moved and fuller of the most holy patriotic uproar, will affirm in the public square their great love for this great land that is Brazil! The day after tomorrow's feast, for its elevation, speaks very loudly in favour of our civism. In a short time, thanks to the encouragement of the Governor of the State, the competence of Captain Monteiro Chaves and the persevering efforts of all the members of the Superior Council of the Association, we have been able to achieve what many of the great states of the federation have not been able to achieve, because they perhaps lack the patriotic cohesion that our leaders have been able to form in our social environment. Let us take pride in our work and continue to work with the sincerest enthusiasm for our immortal homeland. The oath will be taken on Sunday, on the 7 de Setembro Square, where various exercises will be carried out by the Scouts. The Association has decided not make any special invitations, but to ask the family's of Natal city to attend, in order to highlight the great civic celebration, which will begin at 4 p.m. [sic] (A GRANDE..., 1917, p.1).

“The great fest”, held on 24 June, was a ceremony to officially implement Scouting in the State, but certainly before that date there was a presentation to the Scout members about the teachings of Baden-Powell and the moral values which are in the Scouting Code, which, well before 24 June 1917, the scout members had already been introduced, and was already being practiced

in the city of Natal. One evidence of this is that the Scouts took part in the homage of the centenary of the death of Frei Miguelinho, which took place in the capital on 12 June 1917⁴.

With their khaki's uniforms, short trousers and socks almost at the knees, wooden sticks attached to their shoulders, on their backs they carried their backpacks with the Scouts' equipment. Those who had already made the promise, proudly wore the red scarves wrapped around their necks, while the aspirants wore the green scarf, so the Scouts introduced themselves to the people of the city, at a time when "the whole city was vibrating with the healthiest patriotism and the parties were taking place under the most intense enthusiasm" (MARANHÃO, 1950, p. 3). By choosing the civic moment of the festivities in honour of Friar Miguelinho for the first appearance of the Scouts, the organizers of the Scouting hoped to attract the attention of the people, so that they could attend the "Great Feast", which would be held soon.

After months of preparations, 24 June had finally arrived, the date was chosen to make scouting official in the Potiguar capital. The ceremony took place twelve days after the public appearance of the Scouts on a Sunday, which was a strategic day because it was considered a day of rest, without classes or work, so that the families of the city could gather and attend the 7th September Square to brighten up the "Great Feast of Civism":

Rarely has the people of the Natal's city seen such an exciting party as the one of yesterday. It was interesting to see the enthusiasm with which our people had come to the Sete de Setembro Square to enjoy, for the first time, the moving act of the oath to the flag by a group of young people who only feathered themselves and were already ready to serve the Homeland. Fortunately for our glory as Brazilians who shake the land that saw us born, we can exuberantly see that this extraordinary creation of scouting, which is a complete education of adolescents, must be a reality among us, in the words of Olavo Bilac, the magnificent poet to whom we owe undoubtedly, this giant step in favor of the regeneration of the

4 Born in the city of Natal, Frei Miguelinho was executed on June 12, 1817, in the city of Salvador, accused of the crime of lesa-majestade for having participated in the Pernambuco Revolution, also known as the 1817 Revolution, a movement of a liberal and republican character, which broke out on March 6, 1817. On the centennial of his death, several tributes were organized in the capital Potiguar, such as an outdoor mass, and the inauguration of a monument in the Praça André de Albuquerque. The tributes mobilized various sectors of the native population, such as authorities, officers of the National Guard, representatives of the press, schools, scouts, associations and the people.

national character. In a happy and blessed hour, everyone understood, the leaders, the public men, the men of responsibility's, those who have not yet disbelieved of better days for Brazil, that the cause of Scouting was not to be despised because, being as it really is, "the school of strength, skill and patriotism, and above all a school of honor", it had to be taken to heart and embraced with fervor so that it could produce the best fruits that we shall have to reap in the near future [sic] (A GRANDE...,1917, p. 1).

The newspaper *A República* on 25 June 1917 publishes on its front page a report entitled "A grande festa dos escoteiros "; in which it describes in detail the ceremony of the Scout, held on the previous day. In this report, Scouting is presented as a solution of the ills of the nation, as a cause to which all Brazilians should embrace, since it constitutes a true school of character in which the young norte-rio-grandenses and all Brazilian youth will be forged. The civic appeal to the youth is evident in the civic lecture, called *Salve Mocidade*, pronounced by Moysés Soares, on the day of the solemnity of foundation:

Hail youth! Source of faith and energy! To you we cry out the convict sons of Pedro Alvares! To you we turn, vibrating and feeling, in this corner of Brazil. Behold then, our defender, your solicitous eyes return to Brazil, and after these days of struggle and uncertainty, show us the blessed glory fruit of our efforts, generous, haughty and strong youth! Watch over us, the blossoming soul of the Fatherland, so that we may be worthy of this immense territory, of the glorious traditions, of the name and the fruit of our dear Brazil. Hail! [sic] (FESTA...1938, p.12).

Using the *Hail Holy Queen's* prayer, Moysés Soares calls the youth, whose souls would be formed by the values of honour, altruism, strength, discipline and patriotism, whose are considered essential for the regeneration of the national character and for the greatness of the Motherland. Scouting could:

Form the character of the child, "to water in his soul good actions that will grow in your youth and bear fruit at maturity", instill in the spirit the noble feelings, awake in your heart the love of the land, of the bello and of the good; to encourage the idea of altruism; and to take care of many other things which are related with the main purpose of this institution and are counted in its code, this are indispensable duties of those who are concerned about the destiny [sic] (A GRANDE..., 1917, p. 1).

Olavo Bilac was the greatest exponent of civism at the time, and he argued that scouting was a way of initiating the child into the ritual of obedience and of valuing the motherland. As the Scouting practice was associated with the civic-military ritual, it constituted a perfect education to introduce from an early age the military-popular relationship, because, for Bilac, the evils of the nation were associated with the lack of patriotism of the Brazilians, the fruit of a misguided education, and the solution to this problem was in education and in the quarters.

Following Bilac's example, some educators argued that military education had purposes that included "the feeling of patriotism, the development of civic virtues, the instruction of habits, eugenics and corporal discipline" (SOUZA, 2000, p. 109), and Scouting was close to this type of education. Thus, it was inserted into this pedagogical ideal, and was identified "as another expression of militarism and nationalism in Brazilian education" (SOUZA, 2000, p. 105).

It should be noted that the military's, in general, were excited about Scouting. Some of them saw in the Baden-Powell movement a kind of preparation for military service, that is, a way to extend the influence of the army on children and young people. Moreover, in Brazil, Scouting has maintained a close relationship with the military since its early days. After having contact with the Baden-Powell movement during their time in England for a shipbuilding program, the military decided on their return to Brazil to organise the Boys Scouts Centre of Brazil, creating something similar of what they had seen in England. Among these military's, we highlight Lieutenant Eduardo Weaver, who studied and produced an article on Scouting, entitled *Scouts e a Arte de Scrutar*, published by the *Ilustração Brasileira* magazine on 1 December 1909 (CENTRO CULTURAL DO MOVIMENTO ESCOTEIRO, 2000). The history of the article was mentioned during three pages, and illustrated by seven photographs, through which Lt. Weaver portrayed the activities and the development of the English Boys Scouts. The article aimed to present to Brazilians the benefits of Baden-Powell's method, above all, the way of educating by playing, which were included games with physical activities practiced in the open air, and was seen as an efficient solution to solve universal problems related to the formation of young people.

Probably the innovations⁵ that were in the method proposed by Baden-Powell helped to attract the attention of Lieutenant Weaver and the Navy Fleet, who was on mission in England. However, we cannot be so naive as to

5 Inspired by the activist assumptions, Baden-Powell sought a way to educate children away from the artificial environment of the city, through outdoor activities that at the same time manipulated and respected global learning, bringing together intellectual and practical activities.

think that the militaristic aspect went unnoticed by these Brazilian officers and sailors, because we cannot forget that the Scouts was idealized by a British army general, and although their founder denies the militaristic bias, the Boys Scouts had several military characteristics, starting with the name, which refers to techniques used by the army:

Scouting has different tasks. Basically, it is the art or science of getting information. Before or during a war, getting information about the enemy's preparations, his strength, intentions, terrain, circumstances and movements is essential and vital for a commander to win the battle (BADEN-POWELL, 1986, p.15).

The wearing of the uniform is another characteristic which brings Scouting closer to militarism, as Baden-Powell himself explains (2006, p. 50), with regard to the clothing of Scouts:

The Scout uniform is very similar to that worn by my South African police soldiers when I was in command. They knew what was comfortable, useful and able to offer protection against bad weather. That is why the Boy Scouts have almost the same uniform as theirs.

Although Baden-Powell, as Herold Júnior and Vaz (2015) mentioned, explained that Scouting was based on the same foundations as modern pedagogical theories, he did not deny that his movement made use of collective practices, such as marches, parades, among others. However, he did not see this as a contradiction, since he claimed, for example, that "the march was not used because it was considered a disciplinary activity, as it was seen in the army. He advocated its use only to carry out the movement of the group in a more organized way" (HEROLD JÚNIOR; VAZ, 2015, p. 1016).

It is clear that Scouting is influenced by the military experience of its founder. We believe that it was these military features, which drew the attention of the officers and sailors of the Brazilian Navy to Scouting. Moreover, the military aspect has always important for the Brazilian Scout Groups, and this is a reflection of the way that Scouting has been absorbed and practised in Brazil, that is, in the tenuous line between pedagogy and militarism (HEROLD JÚNIOR; VAZ, 2015). The military characteristics were also observed in the scouting practised in the city of Natal:

At eleven o'clock, in front of the residence of Dr. Manoel Dantas, 128 scouts, wearing the first uniform, rigorously equipped, under the command of Captain Eider Ribeiro and the direction of the provisional instructor Professor Luiz Soares. After all the formalities, the scouts went down, in the most beautiful way, to Ribeira, going to Junqueira Ayres Avenue, and to the Sete de Setembro Square, where they saluted Ferreira Chaves, the governor of the state. It was a correct and solemn attitude by the scouts in front of the Palace, giving to the 7 de Setembro square an exceptional brightness. The Judge Ferreira Chaves received the salutations and watched the scouts' parade from one of the balconies of the Palace, which were highly acclaimed. They went down to the Security Battalion quarters, where they did with all the formalities the handing over of the flag entrusted to them [sic] (O 7 DE SETEMBRO, 1917, p. 1).

Natal's Scouting also had some characteristics related to militarism. This is noticeable in the above quotation, which deals with a report on the celebrations of the Seventh of September, held in the city of Natal in 1917. This report points out that the participation of the Scouts gave an "exceptional brilliance" to the parade. Like the military, the Scouts presented themselves in a proper uniform, saluting the National Flag and the governor of the state, Judge Joaquim Ferreira Chaves. As a synonym of order, discipline, civism and patriotism, the Scouts were the symbolism of the values propagated by the speech of the time, which sought in these concepts the regeneration of the nation.

The report also suggests that there was a close relationship between the scouts and the military. This was confirmed by the fact that the Scouts were under the "command" of Captain Eider Ribeiro and used a flag borrowed from the Security Battalion headquarters. Following a national trend, the Scouting of the city of Natal, mainly during the first years, had some military in its cadre of Scout instructors, responsible for some military characteristics of the Baden-Powell Movement.

The number of Scouts who took part in the Seventh September parade also caught our attention, according to the report, was 128 in total. This leads us to deduce that the Scouting of Natal's city has gained a considerable number of supporters in a short period of time. To be more precise, in two months and fourteen days there has been an increase of approximately 60%, since, considering the number of Scouts present at the inauguration ceremony on 24 June, the number of members has increased from 80 to 128 in less than three months. This led us to the following question: who were these Scout members?

The sources that were analysed do not give us further details of who these members were, however, suggest that the first Scouts were a group of diverse social origins, where the children of the local elite were included, as Marinho (2008) pointed out, children of the military, workers and masons. Some of the Scout members were students of the Frei Miguelinho School Group, since “[...] in the position of director of this school, Professor Luiz Soares, enrolled twenty of his students in Scouting” (NA MARINHA..., 1944, p. 4). These students, as Pinto explained (2015, p. 50), “were generally the children of workers, masons, farmers, among others”. Therefore, it was these young people of different social origins who became members of the first group of native Scouts, the Brazilian Association of Scouts of Rio Grande do Norte.

The uniforms and equipment used by the first scouts were imported from London by order of the State Governor, Joaquim Ferreira Chaves, through the merchant Colonel Francisco Justino de Oliveira Cascudo. The importation of the uniforms and equipment suggests that, since its beginning, the Scouting practice has had the support of the political authorities of the State. The financial support given by these authorities made it possible for young people of humble origins, like the students from the Frei Miguelinho School Group, to become Scout members, since their parents would not be able to afford the costs of the uniform.

With regard to the association of Scouting practice with militarism, we believe that the implementation and consolidation of Scouting was conducted in the city of Natal by intellectuals, who made the Scouting developed in the Potiguar capital different from the Scouting practised in other states. Even though the name of a Navy commander appears on the base of the tripod of the Scouting organisation of the inhabitants of the city of Natal, we must consider that the Commander Monteiro Chaves also transited through the educational sphere, although this education took on a militaristic bias, since he was the director of the School of Aprendizes Marinheiro do Rio Grande do Norte and also used to walk in the same spaces of sociability as intellectuals⁶. It should also be pointed out that his participation in the Scouting activities was ephemeral, according to the news published in the newspaper *A República* on 6 July 1917, Commander Monteiro Chaves left the Scouting activities twelve days after the “Great Feast” which made official the practice of Scouting in the potiguar state, due to his transfer to the south of the country.

⁶ The analysis of the sources does not allow us to affirm that Commander Monteiro Chaves was an intellectual, however, everything indicates that he circulated in the same spaces of sociability as Henrique Castriciano and Professor Luiz Soares.

This means that the Brazilian Scout Association of Rio Grande do Norte was under the direction of Henrique Castriciano, and of Professor Luiz Soares, who besides being a teacher was a member of the Board of Directors. The former was not an educator by profession, but by conviction, and the latter was an “authentic teacher of morals and civics, he admirably in every day and every hour, he valued the word and the example” (MELO, 1968, p. 3). Later on, Henrique Castriciano also withdrew from the scouting activities, leaving it to Professor Luiz Soares to conduct the scouting in the city of Natal. It is in this context that the Association of Scouts of Alecrim (A.E.A) is founded.

Professor Luiz Soares and the consolidation of scouting in the city of Natal

Since the history of A.E.A. is intertwined with the history of its founder, it is necessary to reflect on the trajectory of Professor Luiz Soares, who, according to Alves (2012, p. 116), must consider the family, the social environment of origin, the group of belonging and temporary or lasting adhesions, since all of this is important for the process of becoming intellectual, because it is the “daily experiences that can mark sensitivity, choices, affinities, approaches and displacements that shape the design of the intellectual trajectory. In this trajectory he is taken as an individual inserted in multiple space-time dimensions”.

As a son of Lieutenant Colonel Lieutenant Colonel of the National Guard Pedro Soares de Araújo, an influential politician, and Ana Senhorinha Soares de Araújo, (both members of traditional families in the northern state of Guiana), Luiz Soares Correia de Araújo was born on January 18, 1888 in the city of Assú-RN. In Natal, he took the primary course at the D. Nila Câmara school and the humanities course at the Atheneu Norte-Rio-Grandense. He graduated from the Normal School of Natal on December 4, 1910, and was appointed on March 20, 1911 to direct the Almino Afonso School Group, located in the city of Martins-RN.

In the following year he was transferred to Assu to organise and run the Colonel José Correia School Group, which opened on 7 September 1911. In 1912, at the invitation of governor of that time, Alberto Maranhão, the teacher was removed to Natal to take over, on 21 April 1913, the direction of the Frei Miguelinho School Group. For Melo (1977, p. 118), Professor Luiz Soares “also managed to accomplish something very rare in the world: directing for 54 years (1913-1967) the same official school, in the district of Alecrim”, the Frei Miguelinho School Group.

He was also a member of the group of creators of the Teachers Association of Rio Grande do Norte (APRN), founded in 1920, which had as its aim the creation of schools, to defend the free and mixed public education to life and work; besides the defense of the rights of the category. It was also part of the direction of the *Pedagogium Magazine*, formulated in July 1921 to divulge the pedagogical ideas of the teachers, dividing, between the years 1921 and 1927, its direction with the teachers Amphilóquio Câmara and Francisco Veras. He performed this function in two more moments: in the year 1940 and during his administration as president of the Teachers Association of Rio Grande do Norte, between the years 1946-1951 (ALVES, 2016). He was also in charge of the edition of the *Ensino Magazine*, where the aim was the publication of guidelines on instruction (PINTO, 2015). Through these magazines, Professor Luiz Soares propagated his ideas about the value of scouting and encouraged his fellow teachers to “support this institution”, because, as Sirinelli (2003, p. 249) well observed, “the magazine, is a place of intellectual and affective relationship, at the same time a nursery and a space of sociability”.

As an intellectual, Professor Luiz Soares had experiences through various areas: educational, political, military, among others, establishing what Sirinelli (2003) called *sociability*, commonly referred to as *networks* made up of places of production and affective and ideological values⁷. It is with the support of these networks of sociability that the Professor Luiz Soares consolidated the scouting of Natal and expanded it to the interior of the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

According to the Legislative Message presented to the National Congress by the state governor, Joaquim Ferreira Chaves, on 1 November 1918, the effective number of members of the Brazilian Scout Association of Rio Grande do Norte was 123. However, when the Association ended its activities in 1919, only twenty Scouts from the Frei Miguelinho School Group remained. In order to continue the “Scouting work”, Professor Luiz Soares brought together two more groups, which were made up of students from the aforementioned school group, founding on 14 July 1919, the Association of Scouts of Alecrim. Therefore, A.E.A was founded, exclusively, with students from the Frei Miguelinho School

⁷ As a social actor engaged in the life of the city, he reorganized the Ground Sports League of Rio Grande do Norte (1927), assuming its presidency. He founded a health center, the Policlínica do Alecrim (1944), becoming the first administrative council as president. He actively participated in the organization and installation of the Pharmacy and Dentistry College of Natal (1945). Implemented the Kindergarten, in the Frei Miguelinho School Group (1945). He was also an effective member of the Historical and Geographic Institute of Rio Grande do Norte, of the Potiguar Academy of Letters and of the State Council of Education of the state of potiguar. He was elected councilor with a large number of votes and also elected president of the city council (1950).

Group, boys of humble origin, residents of the district of Alecrim. It seems that this peculiarity characterized the A.E.A. over the years and influenced the social composition of the Scouts who came to form, later, in the city of Natal, as explained by the journalist Djalma Maranhão, in 1941:

Here in the city of Natal there is a fact that I cannot find an explanation. Few children come from the highest echelons of society and join the Scout Groups. Why? Simple ignorance of their parents. It is a prejudice that must be abolished. It is up to Professor Luiz Soares, head of the Rio Grande do Norte Scout Group, to campaign for this erroneous point of view to disappear (MARANHÃO, 1941, p. 3).

The fact that scouting has consolidated and expanded from the A.E.A. contributed to the stereotype that it was relegated to the poor part of the youth population. Another aspect that caught our attention is the reason for the name given to the Association. In this sense, the teacher claims that the name was given because the scouts' headquarters were located in the district of Alecrim. Although in 1919 the Scouts had not yet built their headquarters, they already had possession of the land. In addition, the A.E.A.'s provisional headquarters was in the Frei Miguelinho School Group⁸. We must also remember that the Scouts also resided in this location, a peculiarity which also has influenced the choice of this name.

The place where the A.E.A. headquarters was built was donated by the governor Joaquim Ferreira Chaves in 1918. However, the authorisation to build the headquarters was only granted in 1922. The Scouting had the support from the Federal and State Governments, which saw the Baden-Powell movement as a complement to the education of young people in Natal. Professor Luiz Soares appealed to the former governor of the state, the then Judge Joaquim Ferreira Chaves, who at the time was Minister of Justice, to mediate an audience with Epitácio Pessoa, head of the Federal Executive. The professor explains that his intention was to request a swimming pool, which would be built in Baldo, to carry out the scouting activities. Baldo was a natural lake where, in 1877, walls were

⁸ The practice of scouting demanded a spacious and open air place, so, initially, Henrique Castriciano gave up his property for the first meetings. Later, the meetings were transferred to the residence of Commander Monteiro Chaves, located at Apodi Street, in the Tyrol district. When he traveled to the South, the headquarters of the Brazilian Scouts Association of Rio Grande do Norte were transferred to the Frei Miguelinho School Group.

built to retain and accumulate drinking water for later distribution among the urban population of Natal. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, Baldo became a popular meeting place for the poor people, thanks to the appearance of another dam for the accumulation of water for domestic use (VIEIRA, 2008).

The prestige that Professor Luiz Soares had with the political elite caught our attention because the President Epitácio Pessoa still took his demands into consideration, authorizing Arrojado Lisboa, the then chief inspector of the Federal Inspectorate of Works Against Droughts, to designate the engineers Henrique Novaes and Moacir Avido to carry out a study in the Baldo region to determine the feasibility of the work. Both engineers were part of the Federal Inspectorate of Works Against Drought, which was subordinated to the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works. After being proved unfeasible, he was offered the construction of the headquarters of A.E.A. It is well known that Professor Luiz Soares was inserted in the networks of sociability that supported his scout project, including financially.

Built on street Fonseca e Silva, in the district of Alecrim, in Natal-RN, “considered poor for at the time” (PINTO, 2015, p. 33), the headquarters was inaugurated in June 1923, drew the attention of the residents and of the people who passed through that region, since it had quite spacious⁹ dimensions:

FIGURE 1 – FACADE OF A.E.A. HEADQUARTERS



SOURCE: Museu do Escoteiro do Rio Grande do Norte [1923?].

9 The sources analyzed do not specify the measurements of the headquarters, only the dimensions of the land where it was built, which is about 879 m2.

With a spacious and well-equipped headquarters, acquired due the financial support of the State and Federal Public Authorities, the A.E.A. had the aim of

the development between the childhood and youth, a dexterity and physical vigour, a spirit of initiative, a prompt decision, prudent and fruitful courage, civic spirit, a sense of solidarity, foresight, moral responsibility and honour in the self-interest and good of the country (SOBRE..., 1939, p. 2).

Recognized as being a public utility by State Law No. 491 of 1 December 1920 (RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 1920), due to its high educational purpose, the A.E.A., under the direction of Professor Luiz Soares, was constituted as an educational space, not being restricted to the teachings of Baden-Powell, thus making available to its scouts a Professional School¹⁰, an educational¹¹ cinema, a game room, a medical office and a small chapel. It was also offered music education, being the first Scouting association in the country to have a music band called Charanga do Alecrim¹², which was a constant presence in the social events promoted in the capital and in the countryside of the state.

While performing his professional activities in Alecrim, Professor Luiz Soares lived daily with the social problems of the neighborhood and knew that something had to be done to change the reality of his students/scouts, residents of that locality. The concern for the future of his disciples led him to think about the A.E.A. beyond the scouting practices, he argued that it was necessary to give assistance to these boys and, above all, teach them to have “a useful means of earning a living”, so that they could have a trade and become productive workers, so he introduced, with the support of the federal and state public authorities, in that space, destined to the practice of scouting, the professional teaching, through the Alecrim Professional School, created by the Decree no. 176, of 24 April 1922.

The President Epitácio Pessoa, with the favorable opinion of the director of the School of Aprendizes Marinheiro do Rio Grande do Norte, authorized some machines to be sent to the Alecrim Professional School, that were not applied

10 Initially, the Alecrim Professional School, had workshops of shoe shop, locksmith's shop, funnel shop, carpentry shop. Later, the embroidery and sewing workshops, tailoring, making and typography were installed.

11 Professor Luiz Soares acquired a projector at Casa Kodak in Rio de Janeiro and installed an Educational Cinema at A.E.A. headquarters in 1928, the first in the city of Natal.

12 Created in 1918 by Professor Luiz Soares and having its instrumental sponsored by the State action, the band was formed by boys with ages ranging from nine to fifteen.

in the warehouse of that establishment. During this period, the headquarters of A.E.A. was under construction, so the machines were provisionally installed in the Frei Miguelinho School Group, on 12 June 1922. In mid-1923, “when the A.E.A. headquarters were ready, the machines were distributed in five A.E.A. rooms” (ESCOTEIROS..., 1982, p. 12).

As stipulated in the Decree No. 176, the Alecrim Professional School was maintained by A.E.A in cooperation with the State. Thus, its administration was left to Professor Luiz Soares, who established two shifts of operation for the aforementioned vocational school: morning and afternoon, lasting four hours each, without prejudice to the schedule of the Frei Miguelinho School Group. In this way, the students/scouts who studied in the morning shift, could, in the afternoon shift, learn a trade in the Professional School and vice-versa¹³. The government took care of the installation of the machines, as well as the payment of the respective masters.

Final considerations

The establishment of Scouting in the city of Natal is part of the expansion of Scouting in Brazil, a period characterized by a nationalist speech, which emphasized the importance of a physical and civic education of the childhood and youth for the moral development of the nation. Given the proximity of its pedagogy to nationalist values, scouting was pointed out by a group of intellectuals, educators and politicians as a school of morality and civism, in which the future citizens of the Motherland would be formed. Imbued with this idea, Olavo Bilac, as representative of the National Defence League, writes to his friend Henrique Castriciano to form battalions of scouts in his state. Thus, Castriciano joined his efforts to those of Professor Luiz Soares and Commander Monteiro Chaves, and together they founded the Brazilian Scout Association of Rio Grande do Norte in 1917.

During this period, the potiguar capital was going through a process of urbanization, which aimed, beyond the aspect of salubriousness, the modernization of the city and the discipline of the uses of this urban space, through a change of habits and customs of its inhabitants, because, in the

¹³ The Professional School of Alecrim aimed its teaching only to the A.E.A. Scouts and the students of the Frei Miguelinho School Group.

perspective of the local elite, only then would Natal become a civilized urban center, following the example of the European model. It was in this scenario that Scouting was welcomed by the intellectual, political and educational elites, who perceived it as an alternative for educating the future citizens of this city which sought to modernise itself.

Due to the departure of the other founder, Professor Luiz Soares took to himself the task of conducting scouting in his home state and founded the A.E.A. Involved in a network of sociability which included influential people, Professor Luiz Soares obtained the necessary support to consolidate scouting in the capital and in the interior of the state. Recognized as the patron of scouting in Rio Grande do Norte, through state law 9.940, of 11 May 2015 (RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2015), Professor Luiz Soares, who directed A.E.A between 1919-1967, was the greatest propagator of scouting in the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

The network of sociability was determinant for the implantation of scouting in the city of Natal, since it made possible the communication between Bilac and Henrique Castriciano, and his articulation with Professor Luiz Soares and the commander Monteiro Chaves and, later, the foundation of A.E.A and the consolidation of the scouting in the city of Natal. Moreover, the A.E.A was the place for the experiences of the educational ideas of Professor Luiz Soares, and this was important due the reason that the Scouting that was practiced on his premises was able to articulate the teachings of Baden-Powell to other educational practices, following the example of professional and musical teaching, and acquired unique outlines that distinguished him from the scouting practices of other states.

Nascimento (2004) noted that during the process of consolidation of scouting in Brazil, there were two types of militancy: the first group of militants was composed by the leaders who were concerned with learning the teachings of Baden-Powell, committed to practical actions, with the dissemination and implementation of scouting. The second, was made up of intellectuals, politicians and educators who had a vision of Scouting; however, they did not become involved in its daily practices, restricting their participation to its speech. Professor Luiz Soares fits into these two types of militants, since, as an intellectual, he was an active militant of Scouting, and he carefully studied the doctrine of Baden-Powell, he founded and spread Scouting in the potiguar state through the A.E.A.

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