

Portuguese democracy after the Revolution

- conference

- University of Massachusetts
cf conferences
Arx + México

- USA

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Portuguese democracy after the Revolution

Pauline
Hernandez
year 1990
Lipman
Bremen

A few ^{months} ~~days~~ ago, during
a seminar in Mexico in
which I had to speak
about the Portuguese experience
in the ^{recent} ~~last~~ years, a Mexican
scholar challenged me for
using the word revolution.

For him this word was
a "sacred" one that should
only be applied to great
land-marks of historical
change, like the French +
the Russian revolutions or the
^{process of} American independence.

What were the land marks established by the Port. revolution?

Were the changes occurred in Portugal significant and universal enough to allow us to speak of a Port. revolution?

What has ^{really} been transformed during the so-called revolutionary years?

Who were the "revolutionaries" in terms of the political + social forces?

It would take me a 3
whole day (and not one
hour session) to try to answer
these questions adequately.
But even unanswered,
I think they are a good
introduction to the theme
of today's session.

Questioning the word
"revolution" brings us back
to the turmoil of the months
that followed the military
coup which took place in
Portugal in April 74.

It is true that in
terms of results we can go on
discussing what was revolu-

tionary + what was not. ⁴
But nobody can deny that,
at least for 18 months -
April 74 to Nov 75 - Portugal
was a potencial revolutionary
space - where every thing
seemed possible, where all
the ideals of change seemed
to be at hand.

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For some the main "cause" 8
were the fundamental freedoms
regained after 50 years of
repression and censorship.

For others the main cause
was the betterment of their
living conditions in a situation
where social inequalities
were striking.

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For others the cause was
just the possibility to
be heard, to participate
in decision-making, at all
levels...

(Revolutionary here + space)
like light in a city
things appear + disappear

From all that what is 9
left?

Where did the dreams
become reality and where
did they remain in a pure
idealistic stage?

Let me mention just a
few facts which are ^{generally} ~~just~~
recognized as the fairies of
the revolution.

— End of colonial war
($\leftrightarrow$ to birth of 5 new
independent nations)

— Establishment of
formal democratic institu-
tions (Parliament, ^{New Constitution} Govern/
local powers, trade-unions,
free press)

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- Basic economic changes
(~~from economic monopolies~~
nationalizations, ~~and~~
reform, from latifundia to
land-reform)

- Opening to the world
(from a closed isolated
situation to relations with all
countries)

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It is ~~the~~ easy to state

such facts but it is even
easier to realize the
ambiguities that they
contain. And there lie
the frustrations of the
revolutionary period:

- Quick
- Decolonization / Flow of 200.000 refugees 11/12
- Democratic institutions / Gradual disenchantment of direct participation
- Economic changes / inflation unemployment state as entrepreneur
- Opening to the world / alignment with one political block

In fact those ambiguities are contradictions which, I believe, are universal and therefore can be found in other situations.

- The contradiction between ¹²the mechanisms of formal democracy
+ the people's participation

- The contradiction between endogenous development and
the pressure economic

~~force~~ forces, nationalize vs.
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• "strike" of foreign interests
• "monetarism" vs. ^{basic needs}
• self-sufficiency vs. ^{self-sufficiency} ~~dependence~~ ^{dependence} of external
aid (FDI)

- The contradiction between
the development of a cultural
identity + autonomy within
the context of nation +
the absorption by one of
the blocks (Soviet, West)

From all those questions, ¹³
I would take only the
question concerning the
identity of the agents of
change

who, in fact, were the
elements of change,

the social & + political
forces who ~~made the rest~~
were part + parcel of
the democratiz process?

~~11~~. The people who participated in the democratic process

In the first days of the revolution "the people" (in Port. "o povo") were a mythical reality which created a sense of brotherhood, companionship, trust & ^{collective} dynamism.

Its force was tremendous. Barriers fell down. New forms of relationship emerged. As the coup in April 74 blew up

the fundamental issue ²
of colonial war, other
contradictions present in
society blew up ^{very} soon
"the people" were taking over
old bastions of power and
privileges.

There were special mo-
ments in which that feeling
of belonging, of going
forward towards a clean
future were the dynamic
force putting everyone
together (1st May 74
6th Oct 74)

This informal
unorganized participation
couldn't go on. From
the primordial symbolism
of "the people" we moved
into two directions:

- one of ~~intense~~^{strong} ideological
contents — it generated
the practice of the political
parties
processes

— one of less clear ideological
contents but determined
either by traditional
institutions (army, church)
new institutions (m-u)
or new social forces.

It would be impossible 4
to understand Port. demo-
cracy today without a
quick glance at all those
forces.

We can say that the
political practice of each
one of them raises issues
which go beyond the time
+ space of Portugal in these
past years.

Moreover, what has appeared
often in a very simplistic
view of ^{fight between} A ^{and} against B or
of ideological struggle has
been a much more complex

process. At every crucial ⁵
moment the different groups
and forces rearranged them-
selves in forms of inter-related-
ness which were part of
ever changing constellations
of centers of power and of
dynamism.

(The only correct analysis
that could be made of
this process is not an ideolo-
gical one. Rather, a
systemic analysis in which
society is viewed as a
living organism able to
rearrange itself anew every
time. Against most of

the comments made by $\neq$ 6
analysts inside + outside
P. I sustain that in P.
the whole process is less a
display of ideological contro-
versy than a continuous
reorganization of its alive
elements.

It is not my purpose to
do it here, but I consider
important to alert those
who are interested in the
P. process to the fact that
a new type of social change
took place there where
the categories of super-
-structures are not anymore
sufficient.)

Who were the "people"? 7

1) The political parties were, from the first weeks, decisive elements in the political sphere.

The more we have moved away from the original event of April 74, the more central they have become.

To such an extent that for some people they embody the totality of the democratic process. The sentence "democracy is the political parties" is a belief even of those who seemed to ~~be~~ have in their horizon the

primordial symbol of 8
the people.

Maybe because of the fact that they were new (before # 74 there was only one party who ruled the country for 50 years), they tended + still tend to occupy the entire political field at the top, as a total super-structure.

Four areas can be found in the family of the political parties:

a) the anarchist + populist⁹
left - mixture of very
small groups with nuances
as to $\neq$ moments of the
Soviet revolution or with
different views to the use
of violence (important to
notice that the Port. process
has no signs of violence,
one reason more to see it as
a vital process of a living
organism, rather than
an application of a hiper-
rationalized process).

coming now to a more
realistic outlook on society

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Their goal :

popular organiza/ of the
people where they are +
around their interests

Their climax:

the first 18 months of the
rev. until Nov 75, with
their symbolic leader Otelo.

Their meaning:

because of their ^{naïve} extremist
views (often naïve) they were
a voice challenging those
who were in other areas of
the left.

Their shortcoming: idealization
of their convictions,
of the link with the working
class;

Basic question: 11

how far can the extreme left exist ~~and~~ fulfil its role of challenger of fundamental options without falling into the myriads of groups who waste their energy?

b) the communist area, embodied mainly in the communist party

- the only political organization existing before 74,
- 40 years underground,
- with a very ~~thin~~ solid implantation in the workers milieu + among intellectuals (writers, artists)

(Important to notice that ¹²
in the beginning of the rev./
there was no militancy
against the communist party.)

Their goal: ~~to have the~~
Port. society guided by the
basic assumptions of Marxism
as practiced in the communist
countries + aligned with
USSR.

Their climax: March to
Nov. 75

taking over :: State apparatus
- trade-unions
- mass-media

(In that period starts
the anti-communist struggle.)

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Their meaning: because of role played by the ~~their commitment to~~ the working class in marxist analysis they do represent a voice of the workers, they have a unique capacity of mass demonstration + organization

Their shortcomings: the divisions in the left (they are responsible for the fall of the 1st constitutional govern, formed by socialists), their seizure of political power;

Basic question: is it ¹⁴
possible to use today the
method of analysis + political
praxis thought by Marx
in the intense period of
industrialisation in the United
Kingdom, as if so many
other changes wouldn't
have happened?

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c) the socialist area , 15
embodied mainly in the
Socialist Party

- a melting-pot of every-
thing - former exiled people,
nostalgic minds from the
1st Republic, opportunists
from the right coming under
chelter against the sweeping
move of the ~~move~~ ^{center};
~~and~~ technocrats with a
desire for more social
justice, having in common
the ideal of ~~lib~~ freedom
rather than socialism;

Their goal

to establish in P. the
type of social-democracies
of Northern Europe and
to have ~~a~~ diversified
political alliances

Their climax

July 76-78 as first
Constitutional sovereign/s

Their meaning:

a space of freedom, without
almost any organization,
attempt of liberation from
alien forces

Their shortcoming:

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"socialism into brackets" during
their time in the soviet,
management of a capitalist
system without the know-how
of capitalist forces

Now, alliance with the right
Beriz question:

is it possible to hold
political power without
a global project for society,
without tackling basic
issues of goals for develop-
ment beyond the mere ^{+ deceiving}
attempt of "economic growth"?

(tragic question of the whole
left in Europe) is there any
difference if people don't
challenge the basic assumptions?

d) the right-wing area : 18

including the so-called
social democrats, the christian
democrats, the extremes right.

the goal :

in theory : ~~to make of P. a~~
~~country like~~ to give to the
entry in the EEC the highest
priority + to put P. on the
same economic level as
those countries

in practice : to reestablish
the privileges and to reinforce
the alliance with the
Western bloc, specially
with USA

the climax: 1980 until the ¹⁹
reelection of President Figueira
- majority in Parliament,
forming the sovereign
meaning: and now total control
of all bodies,
except PR

a cold assertion of the role
played by the economic
powers inside the country
+ capacity to deal with them
as well as affirmation of
stability in foreign policy

Shortcomings: recuperation of
past values, structures,
subordination to alien forces

Basic question:

is the conservative vote
of a majority the expression
only of good campaigns or
a desire for the father-figure?

• The situation of the 210
social forces is different.
They related more to the
alive elements, to the
social formations, to the
continuous production of
society by itself.

7) Armed forces: (abreviar)
"motor + guarantee" of the
spirit of the revolution
- in 74 to 76 had their
historical chance, but were
~~overstated~~ betrayed by
their own naïveté. ~~the~~
- in 80 preventing change
of constitution

Asset :- cohesion when 21
they started, ~~operating~~
in a discreet way
— political program not
linked with any ideology

Difficulties:

— internal democratization
invading the whole space
of democracy, (remnants of
a socio-professional recru-
dication)

— parallelism with
political parties

— extr. left

— PC

— right-wing

Question: As it is clear 22
that the MF ~~is~~ didn't
seize its historical moment
for a more direct intervention,
one can ask:

how far is it possible to
combine in a society two
sources of legitimate power
without seeming to belittle
the ~~representative~~ universal
suffrage?

This is so the more important
is so far as there is now
the potentiality for a
new movement cutting
across all party lines.

2) The Church (abbreviated) 23

from one side, thousands of Pans trained in all kinds of church organizations and spread out in all the forces from the left

from the other side, the more sociological criticism with the institutional church as the private

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Plays officially no role
+ no intervention as there is
separation between church
+ state.

practically, a period
of quiet and even acceptance
of important decisions (revision
of law of divorce)

followed by a period in ²⁴
the last two years during
which all means have
been used:

- hundreds of thousands
of people in demonstrations
of popular religion,

- 13.000 "meetings" every
Sunday

- Catholic radio, the
most heard, criticizing
every day the acts of the
left + the PR

- regional newspapers,
spreading out the same
information

The influence in the last ²⁵ two legislative elections is well-known, through a move called "Runs for vote".

Meanwhile, the Lams more linked to the spirit of Vatican II are trying to form a network throughout the country. (Sept. meeting)

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Question: in the Church we do have "the people". Isn't the Church the people of God? Is the church a place of such a pluralism that no ^{space} ~~guidance~~ for change is left? ~~Can the Church wash~~ Should the Church be dealt with as a real political force?

3) the mass-media :

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a vast game of ~~periodicals~~ newspapers, many of them having been nationalized, with their personnel changed at every turn of political events + another set of periodicals maintained by economic groups from Port. or by political powers from abroad

— Their morning display creates the ~~main~~ message

— they generate events giving importance to secondary facts + annullating others

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P. is a case-study in terms of $m-m$. So much has happened around the $m-m$! The use of $m-m$ as chains of transmission of political forces cannot be dealt with only in moralizing terms. It is a new evaluation of the $m-m$ as a fundação of the future which constitutes, in my mind, one of the key-questions at the end of this century. How to relate the power of the $m-m$ with the political power?

(freedom to form one's own judgment,
vs. freedom of expression of a few)

4) ^{grass-root} base-groups :

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The most hopeful phenomena;
through them the "mythical"
reality of "the people"
survives without the power
struggle and the ideological
fight.

- associat~~ed~~ and organizat~~ed~~
of persons around their
interests + concerns;

- neighborhood commissions
creating better equipment,
or child-care centers

- workers committees within
enterprises; ~~cooperatives~~

- cooperatives of consumers,
of production, of cultural
events;

They were in 74/75 ²⁹
the great emergence of the
people. Apparently dis-
placed by the fight
among political parties
and the ~~not~~ ~~some~~ institutions
of the representative demo-
cracy, they are since 2
years in a new period.

Important meaning of
defining step by step
the project of society for
Portugal - they represent
a possibility to create with
imagine/ new forms of
direct intervention in public life.

Question:

how to develop, stimulate,
~~participate in~~ the basic
expressions of the people
when the political space
as such is occupied
in a visible way by the
polit. parties
and in a visible way
by economic interests?

how to formulate a new
theory of an intervention
which has no model?

5) Women

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Allow me to say something about the intervention of W. In terms of the law, it represented a fantastic leap with rights concerning family law; ~~legis~~ access, promotion + wages in paid work; and rights concerning maternity all included in the Constitution.

~~Was it a real change?~~

~~Yes + no.~~

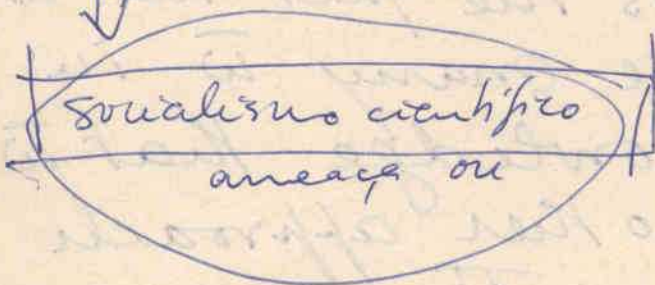
~~The laws were needed because the practice of the first two years ~~acted~~ made them imperative.~~

yet, the most important ³²
for me is the fact that at
this stage many $\bar{w}$ in
P. acknowledge that $\bar{w}$
have another approach
to politics. They care very
little about the super-struc-
tural game but care in
a very innovative way
about the politics of daily
life.

As a rather unique case,
there is at this moment in
P. a solidarity among $\bar{w}$
which didn't spring forth
first of all from a feminist
move but went side + side
with the whole process.

~~"men + $\bar{w}$ of average height
orbiting carefully into tomorrow"~~

TPA / safeguard of Constitu/



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II Challenges P. is facing now ($\equiv$ Problems)

① model of dev.

- priority to basic needs
~~type of products~~
(or) ~~of consumption~~
~~industrialist ideology / CEE~~
monetarism

- ~~destruction of production~~
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 - agriculture } ag. - aff.
 - industry } ind.or
selective production
for CEE

— self-reliance B

or
external aid (FMI)

— reorganization of labour

or
just wage reindexations
(Poland)

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② type of democracy
- mechanisms of formal
democracy

^{vs}
people participate /
(art 48)

- grass-root work
- self-management /
- polycenter (local ^{central})
- regionalise /
- social groups

— pyramidal structure D

vs.

holocenter

(sense of hierarchy,
concept of network)

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③ Cultural identity ^E
— to mime Eur. ^{technological} models
or to reinforce P. history
by short-cut
— elite

or
democratisation
of means of culture

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— to accept passively
information
or to exert social control
over in-in?

④ Autonomy + solidarity ^E
with other people
- autonomous voice in the
concert of nations

or
the absorption by one
of the blocks?

- privileged partners:
- Europe
 - N/S — Third World

- ambivalent situa/ of church
in 1974!

• "small groups" → not political
force
→ silence of institute/church
→ militancy of lay people

- ~~monopoly~~ Fundação Guadalupe Futuro