

Portugal as a test-case for ~~com~~ democracy in modern times

1. The conditions which shape P. as a test-case



P. can be considered a test-case for dem. for ^{isolated} 5 reasons: its location, its "old age" as a State, its manageable size, its ^{"natural"} connection with other continents, its recent history as a State where democracy was ~~introduced~~ ^{imposed}. Each of these facts can certainly be found in other situations. However, the combination of all of them make up ~~a~~ a rather complex picture in which ^{it is possible to} we ~~can~~ detect the ^{accumulated} ~~combined~~ ^{cumulative} effect of several factors. ~~and the~~ Thus, P. becomes not only a country where many problems have to be faced but also a kind of laboratory from which ^{a few} ~~several~~ conclusions ^{can be drawn} + many questions formulated.

Should we add a sixth one: dependency on other ~~to~~ Eur. C., namely UK?

1.1. Its location

P. is situated at the most Western part of Europe. As one of our poets write in a fore-sighted manner:

"Europe - - - -

The face with which it looks
is Portugal."

This may be a romantic attitude, an attempt to disguise the feeling of isolation. As we cannot be the center, the crossroads, we make of ourselves the "face". But a place in Europe we must have!

Nobody goes there if not on purpose, deliberately. Nobody crosses P. by the way, going places. When some 40/50 years ago, the ships were still crossing the seas, other Eur. might have gone there to go on board to Brazil or to Africa. Such



is not the case any more.

The west + South Coast
~~are too~~ facing the Atlantic
Ocean. The south has,
however, a mediterranean
features: the trees (fig
trees, olive trees, the pines
you see in south coast of
France). The west coast
ranges from very sunny,
beaches with smooth
waves to some almost
rough spots ^{almost} as in Brehne
(France) to a beautiful
foggy ~~places~~ ^{pillars} where the
waves have often led
the fishermen to a tragic
encounter with death.

To face the sea is to
long for other places, "out
there"... Moreover, through
the centuries, the populat-
ion moved to the coast
so much so that the
distribution is now the
following between the littoral

pedir 1 de 3
cay as Porto Ex.
mor/barcos
na década 30/40
- e u' estrangeiros?

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mapas regionalizados
Rui Oliveira

and the interior:

Until the beginning of the 60's
radiating out from P. was
always through the sea.
Hence a first remark (tentative
in its observation): the sea as
frontier was difficult enough
to polarize the energies + the
capacities of the P. people.
The sea became a bridge,
though it was an obstacle.

Our poets have expressed
that attraction by the sea
in endless forms. At the
end of the XVI century, our
greatest epic poet said:

And today poets (such as
..... reinforce the
overwhelming presence of
the sea in the collective
imaginary universe of
the Portuguese people.

One of them expressed the
unspoken desire to leave, to
respond to the sea in the

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cf. Antologia
Novíssima,
e 2 ou 3 fichas
Camões



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following way:

"I searched for myself in the wind yet I found myself in the sea. Never did any ship leave the coast without me on board."

This contact with the sea is not a feature of Portugal alone. As Baudouin has documented all civilizations bordering the sea ~~took~~ had with it close ties which evolved into a special connection with the rest of the world. However, as far as ~~his~~ recorded history goes, ~~no~~ ^{Fundação Cuidar o Futuro} so extensively to the claims of the distance as P. did.

We will see later how this no-frontier became a source of connections with other lands.

(cf. livro s/
Mediterrâneo)



The other two sides of the Portuguese rectangle (the North + the East) ~~are in~~ have only one neighbour, Spain. Port. history can be said to be the formation of the first modern State in the Iberian Peninsula. Other parts of the Peninsula remained much longer small Kingdoms + only much later did they give birth to Spain as a modern State.

The one-neighbour situation is very similar to the one-brother in the family: privileged understanding as so many wars are common, yet many confrontations either through war or through disputes over the same achievements.

However several regions in P. are the natural continuation of their nearest regions in Spain: such is the case for Galiza + Miño, for (Estremadura) + Castilla, for Algarve + Andaluzia.

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cf. História de O. Marques



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This situation creates a feeling of isolation. Many Portuguese may not be aware of it, then as they are by the demands of everyday life. But this is a country where the people who come here come to stay. And how meagre is the probability ~~that~~ for every Portuguese to encounter somebody of another country!

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2. Portugal as an "old" State

In '83 I was received by the vice-PM of China Wan-Li, a rare + fine personality. For more than 1,5 hours (translation included) we discussed about the relations between our countries, the new developments in China, the ~~most~~ ^{most relevant} international ~~events~~ ^{issues}.

When I left him, I have expressed my gratitude for the fact that a leader of such a big country to have spent so much of his time receiving somebody who, at that time, was not even an official of her home-country. His answer was quick + enlightening:

"For us, Chinese, P. is an old state ~~with~~ with whom we can share the past + hence the future."



1.3 Portugal as a country with manageable size

P. has 10 million people, has a clear shape + a surface bigger than Switz, NL, Belgil, Danmark, Austria, among others.

However the natural geography is extremely diversified. As a consequence there is a great richness of human qualities + ways of being. But this has also a negative side: there are profound asymmetries among the regions.

The natural resources are well tribulated + it is possible to make the equation cost/benefices of every endeavour.



The diversity combined with the size of P. make of it a micro-cosmos of many of the questions we are facing today in each society + in the world at large.

It does seem to me that it is appropriate to examine in depth what is happening in P.

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1.4. "Natural" connection with other continents

Because of its limit with the sea + since the centuries of the "discoveries", P. has had a natural connection with other continents.

The whole coast of W + E. Africa is marked by the passage of the Portug. people throughout the whole 15th century.

Brazil became since 1500 a cherished land to where many P. emigrated. Because of the policy followed + the very fact that the E. European P. had a fascination for the new country, the court was for a period early in the XIX century in Brazil and it was the Portug. King who resigning to his function in P. became the 1st emperor of Brazil.



Unbelievably so, a rather consistent contact was developed with Asia. First of all, with India, whose coast was full of P. presence. (The mythical role of India in the P's identity: "every time ^{a man} I faces the sea + fears it, it is I who come at the helm, with India lost".)

Moreover, Malacca in the coast of India + Maluco in the Chinese territory became key commercial + religious outposts to reach the Far East. (History of P's presence in Japan / rivalries of P. & Spain / of Jesuit + franciscans / of Catholic + protestant churches).



A - Democracy - the concepts

1.5. Where does Portugal stand?

My country comes from a long period of no democracy. In April 74 the army, deciding to stop the war it was fighting in Africa ^{against} the liberation movements of the colonies Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau overthrew the regime without any bloodshed.

A popular movement of un-precedent + unforeseeable vigour rose up. In all sectors of life, people overthrew the autocratic leaders, took matters in their hands + inaugurated a euphoric period of self-management. Everybody was emotionally bursting with anger against what it had seen. Few were aware of what they wanted to work for.



The armed forces movement had 3 clear goals & a program to put them into effect and a very conscious time-table to work out those 3 stages of peaceful evolution.

Decolonization / democracy / development were the 3 undeniable goals which ought to have rallied not only public opinion but also the determination of the political leaders, most of whom had been in exile or had worked for large part of their lives as oppositionists.

Decolonization was the only goal which, somehow for the force of circumstances, was fully achieved. (Integration of 700.000 returnees.)



II. The recent democracies
and the questions they pose
us to examine



1. Since several years, we have been the privileged witnesses of the restoration of democracy in several countries.

In Europe, Portugal, Spain + Greece overthrew ^{peacefully} regimes which had paralyzed the democratic process for years. The ^{attack} attempt on individual rights took many forms + became a concern of the small group of democratic countries. Each of these Eur. countries followed ~~their~~ its own path. Today they have ~~set~~ sound democratic institutions.

Later some Latin-Am. ^{countries} ~~countries~~ followed were able, through the action of very strong popular movements, ("directas, já" in Brazil - the greatest demonstration ever seen in history!;) the mothers of the Plaza de Naïo) + a favourable int'l context, to restore democracy.

Philipp. is one of the most interesting case. Not only the people's power ~~was~~ gained a momentum it possible to be repressed but the people recognized themselves in one personality, Cory Aquino, embodying by her personal history & her attitudes at the same time the traditional values and the desire for respect of human rights + for freedom.



In all these cases we see the combination of the important internal factors:
- people awakening to their rights + the formation of \neq forms of popular movements (in my own country, as all associations were forbidden this popular movement emerged after the ^{military} coup d'Etat took place;

in the Phil., on the contrary, the popular movement was a decisive factor to oust Marcos.

Basically, there was no \neq between these 2 popular movements - why, then, the support to Phil. and the suspicion towards the Portuguese ~~exp.~~ outburst?)



I would like to stress the D importance of the Catholic church in Brazil through the clear positions of the Bishops & the actions of the "base communities".

— The other factor of great importance is the acknowledgment of cynbolic leaders whose function is, most of all, to assure the cohesion of the nation and to be ready to take sometimes drastic action where this seems necessary.

No doubt that very seldom can a country rally around a single personality. ~~Leaders are~~ So, we can say that those two elements are needed for the drive leading to democratic process but they may ~~not~~ last. Let us see why.



2. The problems the new democracies are facing

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2.1. Demobiliza/ of people

Very often, during 84 + 85, (10y. after the establish/ of the P. democracy) I heard some of the people who worked with me say: "this is only last political battle". Indeed the picture is not bright. Let me just give you a glimpse of the P^o situation:

- 11% unemployed (75% < 25y.)
- real wages \leq 12% wages in 74 / inflation 40%
- negative rate of investment
- ext. debt of 15 billion
- 70% GNP
- 30% export

