WORKING PAPER 1

Continuity and change:

The foreign policy of Portuguese democracy

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The revolution of 25 April 1974 and the democratization process that it unleashed affected Portugal's foreign policy as well as its domestic policies, for while democratic Portugal introduced a social model and a new set of political institutions, it also resulted in the country adopting a new international outlook – one that was more sympathetic to the process of democratization.

After almost 30 years, the democratization process is as visible in Portugal's international orientation as it is in its domestic institutional structures – evidence that the transition to and consolidation of democracy has an identifiable international dimension that is reflected in the country's foreign policy.

Early theoretical studies of the transition to and consolidation of democracy adopted the thesis that domestic affairs were the fundamental driving forces directing the democratization processes[i]. More recently, however, new and disparate analyses have called attention to the importance of international factors[ii].

Some of these studies have attempted to develop a global analytical model that incorporates the increased structural interdependence between international and domestic factors in the democratization process.

The aim of this paper is much more modest, and is not based on any global model that relates the impact of international factors in the democratization process on the one hand, with the effects of democratization on the system of international relations on the other. Rather, this paper is a reflection on the importance of the foreign policy factor in democratization processes.

In this restricted analysis of foreign policy, the scientific debate on the democratization processes – i.e. the transition to and consolidation of democracy – focuses on two fundamental questions: firstly, the chronological relationship between transition and consolidation at both the domestic and external level; and secondly, the extent of the ruptures and or continuities in foreign policy before and after democratization.

In order to deal with these two problems, this paper is divided into two distinct parts. To begin with, we will examine the different phases of Portugal's international orientation, and will explore the geopolitical determinants and historical constants that have informed Portugal's foreign policy over time. This is followed by an exploration of the international dimensions of democratization; that is, its duration and the nature of the continuities and changes in Portugal's foreign policy.

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The international integration models

Whilst Portugal is a European country, it is also an Atlantic country. Small and on the semi-periphery of Europe, the fact that Portugal has a land border with only one country – Spain – has played an important role in the formulation of the country's foreign policy. In effect, Portugal's foreign policy has always reflected the country's geopolitical quandary: the choice between the European, or continental option, and the maritime, or Atlantic option.

From this geopolitical constant, and the continuous attempts to achieve equilibrium between the two options, there developed in Portugal a movement that was defined by the permanent variants in the country's foreign policy options and in the historical characteristics of Portugal's foreign policy and international orientation.

What are the historical constants of Portuguese foreign policy, how did they come to be, and how have they defined Portugal's international orientation?

Portugal's international outlook can be divided into three distinct phases.

During the first phase, which lasted until the fourteenth century, Portugal's foreign policy was determined in the context of an Iberian peninsula that incorporated five political units of roughly equal size and strength: Castile, Leon, Navarre, Aragon and Portugal. The struggle against Islam in the interior of the peninsula, and the scientific and technological limitations and lack of resources prevented the formation of sustained relationships with powers outside the peninsula. During the middle ages, Portugal's foreign relations developed within an Iberian context and in an international environment of almost natural equilibrium.

This situation was to change drastically during the fifteenth century, with the emergence of new geopolitical conditions and the long-term historical movements that defined the country's international position until the country's democratization. With the defeat of the Moors and the unification of Spain under the Catholic Kings, the Iberian Peninsula was transformed into two powers of unequal size and strength. Moreover, scientific and technological advances were beginning to make the development of durable extra-peninsular relations possible. From the medieval situation of equilibrium, a new disequilibrium forced Portugal to seek compensation elsewhere. The solution was found in the country's Atlantic coast, which furnished Portugal with the ability to sustain relations with countries outside the Iberian Peninsula. From that moment on, Portugal sought to balance the pressures of continental Spain with its search for the maritime compensation of the Atlantic [iii]..

From this the historical permanencies of Portuguese foreign policy strategies emerged. Portugal's perception of its foreign policy option – between Europe and the Atlantic – was antinomian and often fraught with dilemma. Portugal beat a strategic retreat from Europe (from the perceived 'Spanish threat') and its foreign policy was increasingly dominated by the Atlantic option. This in turn led to the emergence of two long-term trends in the country's foreign policy: the

search for a privileged relationship with a maritime power (firstly with Britain, and then, after the Second World War, with the United States and NATO), and the colonial project (through Portugal's 'three' empires: India, Brazil, and then Africa). Taken as a whole, these factors led to a diversification of Portugal's extra-peninsular alliances with respect to Spain, and to a fundamentally bilateral diplomatic settlement that was based around the Lisbon-Madrid-London, then, after 1945, the Lisbon-Madrid-Washington triangle.

It was these strategic trends that determined the New State's foreign policy, from 1935 till the end of the authoritarian regime[iv].

These determinants were present in the regime's first foreign policy statements in 1935, when Salazar criticized the League of Nations' parliamentarism by restating his faith in Portugal's Atlantic vocation and his unwillingness to become involved in matters relating to central Europe. His stance was a reaffirmation of the traditional principles that had directed Portuguese foreign policy: support for the British Alliance; the Iberian Pact; and the intransigent defense of the colonial empire.

These very same principles that kept Portugal out of European affairs, which confirmed Portugal's Atlantic and Colonial vocation, and which resulted in the return of Iberian equilibrium through the construction of the Lisbon-Madrid-London triangle became the most important factors in determining Portuguese foreign policy throughout the 1930s and 1940s – and in particular during the Spanish Civil War [v] and the Second World War [vi]. It was a foreign policy strategy that was well defined through the alliance with Britain and the Iberian Pact with Spain.

These strategic objectives persisted during the post-Second World War period, leading Portugal to adopt and international outlook that suggested that the regime either did not understand, or could not accept the emergence of the new international order. The first example of this was with Portugal's reluctance to recognize the fact of Britain's substitution as the principal maritime power by the United States: this new reality was only accepted in the context of Portugal's attempt to join NATO. Secondly, the regime's mistrust of League of Nations' parliamentarism was demonstrated once more with the creation of the United Nations as the new international organization with a global vocation. Thirdly, the regime did not seem to understand that European reconstruction required a large degree of international cooperation that was only possible in an international context, just as it did not understand, and would not accept the General Assembly of the United Nation's belief in the principle of self-determination, with Salazar adamantly rejecting the any prospect of Portuguese desalinization.

These trends continued to determine the development of Portuguese foreign policy in three fundamental areas until the end of the regime in 1974: Atlantic security; the construction of Europe; and the colonial question.

Despite his traditional mistrust of the United States and his reluctance to recognize Britain's decline and the emergence of the Unites States as the hegemonic Atlantic power, Salazar was quickly forced to accept the new reality. The first sign of this change occurred with the signing of a bilateral agreement on military cooperation between Portugal and the United States – the Lajes Agreement – in February 1948. The final confirmation of the Portuguese regime's acceptance of the new multilateral international order was made when, despite Salazar's doubts, Portugal joined NATO in April 1949. The Lajes Agreement and Portugal's membership of NATO signaled Portuguese recognition of the United States' position as the new maritime power and the emergence of a new Alliance that, simultaneously, represented Portuguese foreign policy's response to the post-War international order and a reassertion of its Atlanticist tradition [vii].

Portugal's position regarding the 'European question' was entirely different, and was immediately made evident through Portugal's early doubts with respect to the Marshall Plan – doubts that led Salazar to refuse to participate in the Plan's first phase during 1947-8. While Portugal did participate in phase two, the country's foreign policy hedged its bets on European construction: it remained skeptical, whilst participating in organizations committed to economic cooperation. Portugal's attitude towards all integration and supranational projects remained one of 'hostility'. Its presence in economic Europe was pragmatic, while its rejection of any type of politically united Europe was strategic [viii].

The 'European option' was the great novelty of democratic Portugal's great foreign policy – democracy was now a conditioning factor.

If integration into the Atlantic security system, and its refusal to participate in the construction of Europe are combined with the regime's intransigent defense of the colonial empire – with the outbreak of a 13 year war that was fought simultaneously in three different operational theatres, then we are able to define the strategic options of Portugal's foreign policy until the fall of the authoritarian regime [ix]..

These options correspond clearly with those of the second phase of Portugal's historical international position.

Firstly, the antinomian and dilemma fraught perception of the European and Atlantic options that attained paroxysmal levels by the end of the New State regime, led to the emergence within the political debate of two strategic options for the country: the Africanists on one side, and the Europeanists on the other.

Secondly, Portugal's deliberate remoteness from Europe, and the predominance of the Atlantic and colonial options were reflected both in its political positions and in the economic sphere. In the political arena, the regime developed a diplomatic strategy that was completely based upon the Atlantic option, and which involved the country's integration into NATO and its privileged relationships with Washington and London (this latter particularly in respect of the European question). In the economic sphere, Portugal's geo-economic strategy was, basically, ultramarine and colonial. Even when

pragmatism obliged the country to make an approximation towards European economic organizations, these approximations were made with a view to the strategic Atlantic option, and never to the continental. EFTA, and Portugal's entry into it is an excellent example of Portugal's position[x].

Thirdly, in respect of the constant diversification of extra-peninsular alliances, Portugal was always in the place that Spain wasn't. In the Atlantic, Portugal joined NATO while Spain remained excluded. In Europe, Portugal entered EFTA, while Spain was excluded.

Finally, and despite the increasing interdependence of international relations and the progressive multilateralization of the diplomatic corps, Portugal persisted with its bilateral diplomacy that was based on the Lisbon-Madrid-current maritime power triangle.

The democratization process in Portugal brought about the alteration of every aspect of Portuguese foreign policy: this and more. The transition to democracy and democratic consolidation in Portugal and Spain, and simultaneous international developments resulted, in only 12 years (from 1974-1986), in the complete disappearance of a set of foreign policy priorities that had defined Portugal's international orientation for 500 years.

In its international dimension, the democratization process in Portugal confirmed some continuity, but it also introduced change. The first and most important of these was the Europeanization of Portuguese foreign policy. This Europeanization was, in turn, to provoke an alteration in the country's international orientation.

The international dimension of democratization

With the end of the authoritarian regime and the transition to democracy, initiated on 25 April 1974, Portugal's foreign policy underwent a profound redefinition, in accordance with the program of the Armed Forces Movement (*Movimento das Forças Armadas,* or MFA). The MFA's program was basically represented by the formula Democratization, Decolonization, Development. Although the MFA program declared and guaranteed the fulfillment of all of Portugal's international commitments, it became apparent that the two simple principles, democratization and decolonization, implied a reinterpretation of commitments and a profound change in the external orientation of the Portuguese state.

Negotiations for decolonization began in 1974. Indeed, decolonization constituted the first great foreign policy challenge for the new regime[xi]. Various ideological perspectives on the issue were debated. A first tendency, based on General Spínola's book *Portugal and the Future,* continued to insist on a federal option. A second one, inspired by Melo Antunes, leader of the moderate left-wing elements of the Armed Forces Movement, sought to create an axis of nonaligned, Third World neutrality. Finally, Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves supported a pro-Soviet tendency.

From a political perspective, these ideological nuances can be divided into two basic positions. The first argued that self-determination did not mean automatic independence, and it pugnaciously defended Portuguese sovereignty over the territories until a referendum could determine their destiny. The second position was based on a direct link between self-determination and independence; it argued for the immediate transfer of powers to the liberation movements as legitimate representatives of the colonial peoples.

The second position won the battle, in a complex process that had an important impact on domestic politics. While the cease-fire was being implemented on the ground, the Portuguese Foreign Office initiated the first round of diplomatic negotiations. Guinea-Bissau, which had already unilaterally declared its independence in 1973, became the first country to receive international recognition from its former colonial power, in August 1974. Between that date and January 1975, the same process of transference of powers took place in all the former Portuguese colonies.

While the process of decolonization unfolded, Portugal faced the second foreign policy challenge, established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, the Eastern European countries, and the Third World. Albania and China presented greater difficulties, and relations were established only in 1979.

Decolonization, the widening of diplomatic horizons, and the end of international isolation, however, were not, in and of themselves, sufficient to define the new foreign policy guidelines of Portugal's democracy.

On the contrary, a silent battle over the objectives and strategic options of the country's foreign policy underlay the noisy struggles of the internal democratization process. Between April 1974 and January 1986, Portugal's foreign policy oscillated between two fundamental orientations, which also characterized two distinct phases: the transition to democracy, which corresponded to the preconstitutional period, dominated by the revolutionary process; and the consolidation of democracy, corresponding to the constitutional period, marked by the institutionalization and stabilization of the democratic regime[xii].

The preconstitutional period was characterized by a battle over the strategic options the country should adopt, by the exercise of parallel diplomacies, and by a concomitant lack of foreign policy definition. Despite the struggles, hesitations, and lack of clarity under the provisional governments, especially those dominated by the military, Portugal's foreign policy at this time was largely pro Third World, favoring privileged relations with the new countries that had recently emerged from Portuguese decolonization. This was a replay of Portugal's 'African vocation', which had been so dear to Salazar, only now it had a socialistic bent.

The constitutional period was characterized by the clarification of foreign policy and by the unequivocal and rigorous definition of the country's international position. Portugal fully assumed its role as a Western country, simultaneously European and Atlantic.

The Atlantic dimension implied the continuation of the historical aspects of Portugal's foreign policy and played an important role both at the level of foreign policy orientation and at the level of internal political stabilization. On the bilateral level[xiii], Portugal's Atlanticism was embodied in the tightening of diplomatic relations with the United States and the renovation of the Lajes Agreement in 1979 and 1983. With these agreements, Portugal extended the use of the Azores bases to the United States until 1991. In return, it was promised economic and military aid at a multilateral level, the Atlantic policy was expressed in the redefinition and renovation of Portuguese military commitments to NATO, which the African war effort had forced the country to abandon in the 1960s. The new commitments led to the organization in the army of the Independent Mixed Brigade (*Brigada Mista Independente*), later converted into the Air-Transported Brigade (*Brigada Aero-Transportada*), which replaced and reactivated the old Independent Army division and which essentially maintained its old objectives in NATO's missions in the southern flank of the Alliance. As for the navy and the air force, patrol missions were reinforced in the framework of NATO's IBERLAND and CINCIBERLAND, which a Portuguese officer was permitted to command[xiv].

The 'European option', however, was the great novelty in foreign policy after April 25, as well as the greatest challenge for democratic Portugal. After conquering anti-European resistance, the authoritarian African option, and the Third World temptation of the revolutionary period, Portugal clearly adopted the 'European option' from 1976 on. Now, however, it adhered to the political project, transcending the merely economic focus that had characterized the association agreements of 1972[xv]..

Portugal's rapprochement with the process of European integration began in 1976 with the country's entry into the European Council and the signature of the Additional Protocols to the 1972 agreement, which constituted a first step toward accession. Following a cycle of negotiations in various European capitals between September 1976 and February 1977, the first constitutional government formally solicited accession to the European Community in March 1977. The formal request for accession signified the abandonment of hesitations concerning a Portuguese formula for integration (pre-accession status or 'privileged association'). It also signaled the firm establishment of the 'European option'. It was a strategic option that decisively marked the future of the country and completed the international dimension of democratic consolidation.

Two objectives lay behind this strategic option[xvi]. First, entry into the European Community ensured the process of consolidation of democracy. Second, it permitted modernization and economic development. The request for accession was followed by a long and complex process of negotiations that continued for almost a decade. The process culminated in June 1985 when Portugal signed the Treaty of Accession to the EEC. On January 1, 1986, Portugal became a full member of the European Community and signed the Single European Act.

Development of relations and ties of friendship and cooperation with other Portuguese-speaking countries was a continued preoccupation for Portugal from 1976 until the end of the 1980s. Both the government and the president spared no diplomatic efforts to improve relations with the Officially Portuguese Speaking Countries (*Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa,* or PALOP) [xvii]. The truth is, however, that Portugal's strategic option was now European. Without denying its Atlantic vocation, Portugal changed its place in the world, shifting its strategic priorities from Africa to Europe.

Continuity and change

There are two final points to be considered regarding the questions that were initially raised.

Firstly, with respect to the temporal dimension of the democratization process: is there any chronological coincidence between the transition and consolidation processes at the domestic and external level?

If there are any coincidences in the transition process, the same cannot be said with respect to the consolidation of democracy. In respect of the former, the end of the transition and the beginning of the constitutional period at the domestic level was accompanied with the clarification of Portugal's international status as a western country that was simultaneously Atlantic and European. As for the latter, the end of domestic democratic consolidation did not coincide with the consolidation of the international plan. If we accept that the former ended in 1982, with the revision of the Constitution and the National Defense and Armed Forces Law (*Lei de Defesa Nacional e das Forças Armadas*), the latter can not be said to have ended until Portugal's accession to the European Community in 1986.

Secondly, what remained the same and what changed in respect of the continuities and ruptures in Portuguese foreign policy?

The continuities that exist are concerned with structural and geopolitical elements and are found primarily in those areas of strategic interest that Portugal has maintained: the Atlantic, Europe and post-colonial relations.

There have been at least four changes.

Firstly, the antinomian logic has changed from the Atlantic to Europe. Today, the logic has no meaning and whose terms are complementary and not contradictory. As far as Portuguese foreign policy is concerned, to be Atlanticist has greater value within Europe, just as to be European has great value in the Atlantic – particularly in the South Atlantic where Portugal is developing its post-colonial relationships.

Secondly, in the Europe-Atlantic binomial, the geopolitical element has been retained, although the strategic priorities have been inverted. Traditionally, Portugal developed Atlanticist and colonial priorities, and sought continental compensations when the weight of the maritime vector became excessive. Now the reverse is true: the priority is Europe and the European Union, and to obtain greater influence Portugal has sought to rediscover and strengthen its Atlanticist position and its relations with its former colonies.

Thirdly, the democratization of Portugal and Spain has brought the two Iberian states closer in terms of their international positions. Between 1974 and 1975 Portugal decolonized. In 1979 Spain moved closer to EFTA, and in 1982 it joined NATO. In 1986, both Portugal and Spain joined the European Community. In 1990, both countries joined the UEO (1990), again, both simultaneously. In 1997, Spain entered NATO's military structure. This signifies that not only did Portugal's geo-economic machinery become more continental with its entry into the European Community, but also that the diplomatic strategies of both Spain and Portugal became ever closer to the extent that they now coincide. Put another way, nowadays Portugal and Spain both share, for the first time ever, the same extra-peninsular alliances: the European Union, NATO.

Finally, as a result of the increased interdependence of international relations and the increased importance of multilateral diplomatic organizations, bilateral Portuguese diplomacy has progressively diminished in favor of multilateralism, and which had resulted in Portugal's presence in strategically important multilateral organizations, such as the European Union in Europe, NATO in the Atlantic, and the CPLP in post-colonial relations.

In a long-term perspective, these changes, which may fairly described as being radical, have signaled the end of a historical model of Portugal's international integration and represent the first steps in the construction of a new European oriented foreign policy model.

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