

The International Politics of Democratization

Comparative perspectives

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Introduction

The changing context for democracy promotion

Nuno Severiano Teixeira

When this book was first conceived, the world looked very different. Even though the invasion of Iraq caused grave anxieties, the general view was that good governance and democracy to ensure popular participation and legitimization was the solution to the problems facing the developing world, and that international actors could encourage such processes. As points of reference, there was the experience of Latin America's emergence from dictatorship in the 1980s and 1990s and, of course, the European experience, be it that of Spain and Portugal in the 1970s or the more recent post-Cold War experiences of the Eastern European countries. It is now more than apparent that the issues involved are far more complex than was generally thought to be the case.

Not only has the United States had to take a long, hard look at its assumptions about "democratic peace" and the utility of pre-emptive intervention as a means of imposing such a "peace," but Europe, too, is being forced to reconsider its own assumptions as expressed through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and, more recently, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

Why has Europe been so uncomfortable with the democratic success of the AKP government in Turkey, despite its willingness to meet the requirements of the European Union for political reform in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria for accession and eventual membership? How will Brussels deal with the growing setbacks to the Orange and Rose Revolutions in the Ukraine and Georgia, not to speak of the difficulties now facing the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon? And how, finally, will it respond to the massive popular disaffection displayed by recent elections in Algeria and Morocco? One seemingly inescapable conclusion is that the European Union as an "external actor" must try to work out how to promote a democratic culture as an essential component of any process leading to genuine democratization; equally, uncomfortably, it must tackle the knotty problem of the relationship between political Islam and democracy.

In other words, for external actors, it is not "façade democracy" – the external manifestation of the trappings of democracy such as parliamentary institutions and electoral practices – that matters but rather the internalization of the "habits of heart and mind" to which de Tocqueville referred in discussing American democracy in the nineteenth century. Quite how this can be achieved within the

short time-spans that the political process normally allows is the quandary that European and American policy-makers find themselves facing increasingly when they work to influence domestic policy to encourage transitions to democracy in other parts of the world.

Past experience, whether it is recent experiences in the Middle East or the longer-term initiatives undertaken as part of the Barcelona Process, or the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Miami Summit, may no longer be adequate. Instead, a new and more profound re-evaluation of past experience and a more acute awareness of the contemporary political environment may prove to be the way forward.

It is for this reason that this book is so apposite. Written by some of the leading scholars of democratization and based on examples drawn from around the world, it seeks to identify those principles on which genuine democratic transition can be based. It shows the degree to which international actors, ranging from states to non-governmental players, have an influence on what were once thought of as exclusively domestic processes of political change. The book also looks at changes in foreign policy that have emerged from transitions to democracy. The contributors cover a selection of countries and regions relevant to the contemporary experience: Portugal and Spain in the 1970s and Eastern and Central Europe in the 1990s, Brazil and Argentina in Latin America from the early 1980s onwards, and various countries in the Arab world.

In the early literature on democratization, transition theories and models initially focused on domestic politics. The view was that endogenous factors were the fundamental drivers of political change, while the international dimension and the role of exogenous factors to the domestic scene were considered secondary or marginal. Such early theories were partially a reflection of the democratization experiences of the early democratizations of the “Third Wave” in Southern Europe and Latin America. These experiences were undertaken in the thick of the Cold War, and were thus dominated by the rigid logic imposed by two competing power blocs.

Furthermore, such experiments with democratization were highly risky in terms of security because they had the power to generate international instability. For that reason, they were rare, and their fate uncertain. Success depended more on domestic political capabilities than on international factors. It is hardly surprising, then, that the focus of analysis was initially on national states and that theoretical explanations centred on domestic forces and their political and institutional autonomy from international factors.

All this changed dramatically with the 1989 revolution and the post-communist transitions in Eastern and Central Europe. These new experiences drew attention to the impact of international factors on processes of democratization. This shift in practical reality corresponded to a theoretical shift as well, as traditional transition theories were broadened and reconfigured. Thus, in the more recent literature on democratization, the international dimension has become a central focus, and explanatory models are built around the central role of exogenous factors. With the end of the Cold War and the triumph of the

“Western model,” democracy appeared to become a universal norm: thus, while an exception thirty years ago, today democratization appears to be the rule. Indeed, the failure of democracy is regarded as a precarious and transient state of affairs, seen as a threat to international security and stability. Policies to “promote democracy” have become common international practice.

In short, the international dimension has become a decisive component of any theoretical explanation. It is hardly surprising, then, that analytical models have changed so radically, focusing on the international components of democratization instead. The contributions of scholars such as Philippe Schmitter and Geoffrey Pridham are essential texts in this respect, but the most central point reference is the work by Laurence Whitehead. From his original pioneering studies until the present work, he has not just developed a general model of democratization but also followed its historical evolution, integrating the multi-dimensional nature of the phenomenon in a global and systematic fashion.

This book, which is based on the proceedings of a Summer School organized by the Portuguese Institute of International Relations of the New University of Lisbon (IPRI-UNL) held in Óbidos, in Portugal, in 2003, opens with Laurence Whitehead’s examination of the evolution of the international politics of democratization from Portugal’s democratic transition in 1974 until the invasion of Iraq in 2003. It highlights three comparative and theoretical issues that have so far received inadequate attention. With the benefit of thirty years of hindsight, it reassesses prevailing interpretations of many key democratic transitions from an international politics perspective. It concludes by proposing a research agenda on these topics for the future and drawing some provisional conclusions.

More specifically, the chapter proposes three approaches for a comparative historical analysis of this evolution. The first lays increasing emphasis on the links between democracy and security, in contrast to earlier perceptions of democratization as liberation. The second considers the decline in the “counter-hegemonic potential” of democratization during the unipolarity of the 1990s as opposed to an ascendant vision of liberal internationalism. However, since September 11, 2001, the counter-hegemonic potential associated with genuinely free elections has reappeared, with particularly destabilizing implications for some of the new emerging democracies in the Middle East. The third deals with the narrower issue of whether democratization alters a state’s foreign policy and if so, in what way.

Philippe Schmitter then turns to the evaluation of the impact of democracy promotion and protection, as autocratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa liberalize, and as the democratic regimes in Central and Eastern Europe become consolidated. He suggests that there has been a constant rhetoric of democracy promotion but, until recently, little was done to consolidate such developments. One reason for this, he suggests, is that there was a general presumption that external actors could not and should not interfere. It was the comparative tranquillity of the democratic transition in Portugal that began to change this perception, together with the surprising way in which the Cold War and the authoritarian regimes in Eastern and Central Europe came to an end. He then

goes on to outline what he describes as “thirteen sceptical propositions” on democracy promotion and protection, and discusses ways in which they might be tested. His chapter concludes with a quantitative evaluation of democratization models for the Middle East and North Africa.

Geoffrey Pridham considers the role of international factors in Eastern and Central Europe in the post-Cold War world. Regime change in former Communist countries has been accompanied by far-reaching international change in which each has influenced the other, suggesting an overall dynamic of external-domestic interaction. Most importantly, this led to the reconfiguration of the international system with the disappearance of global confrontation and the structures that had marked the Cold War period from the late 1940s onwards. However, this, in turn, led to the emergence of new, more regionally focused, forms of international conflict, some of which – notably the wars in the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995 – influenced the nature of regime change, delaying transitions to democracy in the countries affected, and helping to buttress quasi-authoritarian regimes in Croatia and Serbia.

Geoffrey Pridham goes on to argue that, in the post-Cold War period, certain developments increased opportunities for democratization and highlighted the importance of international factors. These included the use of political, economic or financial conditionality by international organizations, democracy promotion as an aspect of national interest and security for regional actors, international human rights discourse; and, more recently, doctrines of intervention based on international ethics. At the same time, new information and communications technologies and their influence on socio-economic and political attitudes, given their potential for transnational networking, has increased the scope for a more immediate and widespread transmission of international influences than ever before, a development that has been facilitated by globalization. It is therefore no coincidence that the role of international factors in democratization since 1989 is now more clearly recognized. Indeed, democratization is itself an international phenomenon whose potential limits are still unknown.

Nuno Severiano Teixeira, the editor of the book and the convenor of the original conference, considers Portugal’s process of democratization and its foreign policy, re-examining this and other early transitions in light of new theoretical models and thereby highlighting the hitherto undervalued (and even ignored) role of the international dimension in Southern European democratization processes, namely the foreplanned transition in Spain and the transition through political rupture of the established order in Portugal. The goal is not to outline a model of the impact of the international context on the transition and on the process of democratic consolidation in Portugal or on the impact of democratization on the system of international relations; rather, it is to analyse the relationship between democratization and foreign policy in order to show how the former influenced the latter. The focus is on outcomes, rather than process – on foreign policy writ large rather than any specific aspects of what is a multidimensional affair.

Juan Carlos Pereira focuses on the international factors involved in the Spanish transition to democracy, particularly on internal political change and the

consequences it had for Spanish foreign policy. International factors in this context are seen from two perspectives: in terms of the impact of the international context on domestic actors and in terms of consequent changes in foreign policy which mirrored domestic political change, producing a democratic foreign policy. This approach involved a revision of the political science and international relations literature in Spain and abroad. Six main hypotheses that arise from the literature are considered: first, that international factors play a role in the origins, development and outcomes of transition processes; second, that such processes vary according to the “geo-historical” area under consideration – European transition processes are broadly similar, for example; third, that a transition from authoritarianism to a democratic state entails a transition in foreign policy; fourth, that such a transition in foreign policy occurs in the same way; fifth, that in the Spanish transition the international context was extremely important; and sixth, that there was also a transition in foreign policy in Spain, from Francoist authoritarianism to a democratic foreign policy.

Andrés Malamud, who examines the case of Argentina, argues that both the frequent democratic breakdowns and processes of re-democratization that followed in Latin America were linked to international factors. He describes the cycles of political instability in Argentina from 1930 to the present day, tracing their link to the international context. He then analyses the democratization process that took place during the 1980s in order to single out the international factors that influenced it. He concludes by examining the ways in which Argentina’s renewed democracy has affected its international environment, especially in the region in which it is embedded – the Southern Cone of South America.

Alexandra Barahona de Brito considers the role of the international environment on the democratization of Brazil. She points out that the international dimension was not very relevant in the early years of the transition to democracy in Brazil, but it did acquire some prominence after 1989. This was due to both the work of transnational networks of activists shaping key issue areas in order to affect the process of deepening democracy, and because the values permeating the international order of the post-Cold War period became internalized and part of the new Brazilian political scenario.

Lawrence Graham considers the situation in Central and South-Eastern Europe, arguing that two dates stand out in the reconfiguration of a region which for forty-five years was defined as Eastern Europe. They are 1989 and 2004, the former marking the ending of Soviet domination, itself a consequence of the outcome of the Second World War; and the latter best capturing the reconfiguration of Europe over the last decade with the expansion of the European Union from fifteen to twenty-five member states. Today, the old political landscape is gone and in its place are three distinct groups of states: the Baltic states in the North, the Visegrad group in Central Europe and then South-Eastern Europe as a separate unit. Graham argues that the way in which these countries were incorporated into the Soviet sphere of influence or the way in which they secured their autonomy from direct Soviet control after 1948, as much as their prior

historical experiences before the Second World War, is reflected in their realignment during 1989 and 1990 and how they have handled their external relations since.

Richard Youngs deals with the Middle East from a unique point of view by considering the relevance of international factors in democratic transitions in a context, such as that of the Middle East, where democratization has not yet occurred. He assesses the role played in the Middle East by a number of international factors, such as Western relations with authoritarian regimes across the region; the role of transnational networks; and the relationship between the global economy and the prevalence of rentier economic structures across the Middle East. He argues that, in each of these situations there are factors that have been influential in rendering democratization more difficult in the Middle East. Some of the standard categories of positive, pro-democracy international influences posited in the academic literature have either been weak or had the reverse effect in the Middle East. At the same time, he suggests that these international factors contain the potential for a more positive impact. Increasing variety and diversity within the Middle East, along with apparent changes in outside perspectives of the region, demand a more balanced assessment of the impact of international factors on the prospects for political change.

George Joffé suggests that there is an increasingly widespread view that the root causes of social and political tensions in the Muslim world, alongside economic failure, arise from poor governance. In the Middle East and North Africa in particular, the persistence of despotic regimes is adduced as the source of regional failure, quite apart from the specific political issues in the region or the economic problems associated with the rentier states resulting from dependence on hydrocarbon production as the source of economic wealth. There is thus growing pressure on Arab states to engage in the process of democratization, in the belief that this will, alone, provide the basis for a resolution of the region's problems. This, certainly, is the view of the neo-conservatives who currently dominate the foreign policy and intellectual establishment in Washington. As a result, it has also become the normative theme in much international relations discourse throughout the West and in the Middle Eastern and North African region itself. However, the real bar to democracy lies in its mode of legitimization which in the Western model requires populist support, but in the Islamic model refers to the divinity. Nonetheless, the classical Islamic model shares very similar values to those connected with democracy so there is no a priori reason why democratic pluralism cannot be established there. Indeed, contemporary thinkers in the Islamic world are anxious to develop indigenous political models which will be consonant with their Western counterparts. Success, however, will require a sensitivity on the part of international actors that is all too often missing.

In his concluding chapter to the volume, Laurence Whitehead argues that there are two ways to address the problems of the role for the international arena in democratization, one temporal and the other geopolitical. In terms of periodization, it would be instructive to contrast the first half of the 1990s – the

highpoint of international consensus and optimism concerning the pace and coverage of democratization around the world – with the first half of the following decade – a much changed international context, full of security fears and characterized by an “overstretch” of the rhetoric of democratization. In terms of geopolitical coverage, he contrasts the western hemisphere, strongly under the influence of the United States and its closest allies, with Europe – also influenced by developments in Washington and the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization but, above all, structured by the enlargement of the European Union itself. It is an argument that highlights the potential conflict between America and Europe over democracy promotion and its many related issues. The author argues that if the American paradigm is the key to spreading democratization, then Europe may have to learn to accept American power-projection as part of an imperfect bargain for the future.

It is a sobering point upon which to conclude, but it highlights the loss of optimism that has been generated by the past decade. There is now a debate about the way in which international actors can best influence the democratization process, in view of the unhappy experience of Iraq and the implications of the neo-conservative cast of American foreign policy. It could be argued that the role of external influence, in certain parts of the world, has been discredited by the policy of pre-emptive intervention. But Europe cannot ignore the implications for its own security of the growth of democratic governance along its periphery. It is condemned to encourage such developments and thus to engage in democratic transition. Its only problem remains how this might best be done – the question that this book addresses.

4 Portugal

Democratization and foreign policy

Nuno Severiano Teixeira

Introduction

The Portuguese Revolution of 25 April 1974 and the process of democratization that followed it affected not only domestic politics but also foreign policy. Newly democratic Portugal set up a new social model and new political institutions, and adopted a new model of insertion into the international system as the process of democratization evolved. Indeed, the more than three decades of democratic governance have left a clear mark on both domestic structures and Portugal's international position. In short, Portuguese democratization had an unequivocal international dimension and an impact on the country's foreign policy.

In the early literature, transition theories and models initially focused on domestic politics. The view was that endogenous factors were the fundamental drivers of political change. The international dimension and the play of exogenous factors were considered secondary or marginal.¹ Such early theories were partially a reflection of the democratizations of the first "wave" in Southern Europe and Latin America. Still in the thick of the Cold War, and thus dominated by the rigid logic imposed by two competing blocs, experiences with democratization were highly risky in terms of security because they had the power to generate international instability. For that reason, such experiences were rare and their fate uncertain. Success depended more on domestic political capabilities than on international factors. It is hardly surprising, then, that the focus of analysis was initially on national states, and that theoretical explanations centred on domestic forces and its political and institutional autonomy from international factors.²

All this changed dramatically with the 1989 revolution and the post-communist transitions of Eastern and Central Europe, as these called attention to the impact of international factors on processes of democratization. To this shift in reality, there corresponded a theoretical shift: traditional transition theories were broadened and reconfigured. In the more recent literature on democratization, the international dimension has become a central focus, and explanatory models are built around the central role of exogenous factors.³ With the end of the Cold War and the triumph of the "Western model," democracy became a

universal norm. An exception thirty years ago, democratization is now the apparent rule.⁴ Indeed, the failure of democracy is regarded as a precarious and transient state of affairs, so it is seen as a threat to international security and stability. Policies to “promote democracy” have become common international practice. In short, the “international dimension” has become decisive. It is hardly surprising, then, that analytical models changed so radically, focusing now on the international components of democratization. The contributions of Philippe Schmitter and Geoffrey Pridham are essential, but the most central reference is the work by Laurence Whitehead. From his pioneering study to the present, he has not just developed a general model but also followed the historical evolution and taken on board the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon in a global and systematic fashion.⁵

If one re-examines the first transitions in light of new theoretical models, it becomes clear that the international dimension of the Southern European democratizations was significant. This was the case of the pacted transition in Spain,⁶ and of the transition through “rupture” in Portugal. The goal of this chapter is to examine the Portuguese case. The aim is not to assess that case using an “outside-in/inside-out” all-purpose model (or, put differently, to examine the impact of the international context on the transition and the process of democratic consolidation,⁷ or of the impact of democratization on the system of international relations), but rather to undertake an analysis of the relationship between democratization and foreign policy. Thus, the aim is to know how democratization affects foreign policy. The focus is on foreign policy writ large, rather than any specific aspects of what is a multidimensional affair; equally, the focus is less on process than on outcomes.

Two questions are addressed in the domain of foreign policy analysis and have dominated the theoretical debate about democratization: first, whether there is a chronological “fit” between transition to and consolidation of democracy at the domestic level and foreign policy shifts; and second, the extent to which there is continuity or a rupture with past foreign policy options with the advent of democracy. The analysis is divided into three parts: the first examines historical foreign policy models and the way in which Portugal inserted itself into the international system; the second examines the international dimensions of the process of transition to and consolidation of democracy; and the third reflects on the relationship between democratization and foreign policy.

Historical models of international integration

Portugal is simultaneously a European and an Atlantic country. It is a small peripheral power with a geopolitical feature which weighs decisively on the formulation of its foreign policy: the possession of only one terrestrial frontier. For this reason, it has always experienced an unstable geopolitical balance between land and sea. These geopolitical realities and Portugal’s attempt to ensure a balance between them are what established the historically dominant features of Portugal’s foreign policy options and its place in the international

system. Portugal has adopted three models of insertion into the international system, each corresponding to a different historical period. Under the first, from the medieval period until the fifteenth century, Portuguese foreign relations operated within an Iberian peninsular framework, between five political units, all of them more or less similar in size and power: the peninsular kingdoms of Castile, Leon, Navarre, Aragon and Portugal. Because of the battle against Islam in the interior of the Peninsula, as well as resource and scientific-technological limitations, it was not possible to sustain extra-Peninsular relations. Thus, during the Middle Ages, Portuguese foreign relations were essentially intra-Peninsular relations in an international context of near “natural” equilibrium.

This dispensation changed dramatically from the fifteenth century onward, with the emergence of the geopolitical conditions and *longue durée* trends that reshaped the historical mode of Portuguese integration into the international system. The new model lasted for five centuries and ended, precisely, with the process of democratization. With the victory over Islam and the unification of Spain by the Catholic kings, the Iberian Peninsula was divided into two units of unequal size and power. At the same time, scientific and technological evolution permitted the sustained development of extra-Peninsular relations. Thus, a new peninsular imbalance replaced the medieval peninsular balance, and Portugal tried to compensate it by looking towards the Atlantic. Portugal engaged in an ongoing attempt to compensate for the continental pressure exerted by Spain with a maritime outlook.⁸

This dual reality is the pillar of the historically constant features of Portugal’s strategic options and foreign policy. The latter are characterized, first, by an antinomic attitude, one that tilts sometimes towards the Continent and sometimes towards the sea, one caught between Europe and the Atlantic. Second, as a result of the former, it is characterized by distance from Europe and the continent (perceived as “the Spanish threat”) and the predominance of a maritime orientation in external relations (the so called “Atlantic option”). Third, as a result of the above, Portuguese foreign policy and its international position are characterized by two long term trends: the search for special alliances with a maritime power (historically, the Anglo-Portuguese alliance, the US after the Second World War, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) at the multilateral level); and the colonial project (with the various cycles of Empire, ranging from India to Brazil and Africa). Fourth, as a result of all three of the above, it is characterized by the adoption of different extra-Peninsular alliances from those adopted by Spain, and a bilateral diplomacy based on the Lisbon–Madrid–London triangle (or the Lisbon–Madrid–Washington triangle after 1945).

These are the strategic options that shaped the foreign policy of the so-called authoritarian “New State” (*Estado Novo*) regime, and dominated Portuguese diplomatic culture from the Ambassadorship of Teixeira de Sampayo to that of Franco Nogueira, guiding Salazar’s foreign policy from 1935 to the end of his regime.⁹

The contours of Portugal’s foreign policy were already apparent in 1935. The regime was critical of the “international parliamentarism” of the League of

Nations, which was regarded as the political centre of the Continent and “opposed” to Portugal’s Atlantic vocation and the its distance from central-European issues; it reevaluated the traditional axes of Portuguese foreign policy, reaffirming the Anglo-Portuguese alliance and the Peninsular Friendship; and, last but not least, it adopted an intransigent defence of its status as a colonial empire.

These same principles – distance from European affairs, the affirmation of a Portugal attuned to the Atlantic and its colonies, and a balance based on the Lisbon–Madrid–London triangle – constituted the strategic pillars of Portuguese foreign policy in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly during the Spanish Civil War¹⁰ and the Second World War.¹¹ In this, the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance and the Iberian Pact were central features. This dispensation remained in place after the Second World War, and shaped the international positions adopted by Salazar. The dictator did not seem to understand – or accept – that a new world order was emerging. First, there was the decline of Great Britain and the emergence of the United States as a new maritime power, which was only recognized with accession to NATO. Second, there was the suspicious attitude towards the new international organization with a global reach, the United Nations – a dislike previously focused on the parliamentarism of the League of Nations. Third, Salazar did not see that the reconstruction of Europe called for international cooperation and could not be undertaken within a national framework only. Finally, he also failed to understand and accept the principle of self-determination (which carried the General Assembly of the United Nations), and he rejected decolonization out of hand.

These positions shaped the evolution of Portuguese foreign policy towards Atlantic security, European integration and the colonies up until the demise of the authoritarian regime.

Salazar was suspicious of the US and reluctant to recognize the decline of British power and the rise of the United States as the new hegemonic maritime Atlantic power, but he was forced to acknowledge this changing reality. A first sign of the shift was the signature of the Lajes Agreement, a bilateral defence cooperation agreement between Portugal and the US dating from February 1948. At the multilateral level, the shift was signalled with the accession of Portugal to the Atlantic Pact in April 1949 despite all the reservations and resistance of Salazar. The Lajes Agreement and accession to NATO marked the integration of Portugal into the Atlantic security system, Portuguese recognition of the new maritime power, and emergence of a new alliance. They constituted Portugal’s foreign policy response to the new post-war international context and a return to its Atlantic traditions.¹²

The position of Portugal regarding Europe and European integration was very different, as indicated by the reservations about the Marshall Plan, which led Salazar to refuse to participate in the first phase of the Plan in 1947–1948. The dictator agreed to participate in the second phase, but the evolution of Portuguese foreign policy towards European integration was nonetheless marked by aloofness and ambivalence: Portugal participated in the economic cooperation

organizations, but remained hostile to integration or supranational projects. It participated in “economic Europe” for pragmatic reasons, but refused to have anything to do with “political Europe” for strategic ones.¹³ Further, the great novelty in Portuguese foreign policy was the “European option,” which was conditioned by a prior commitment to democratic governance.

This strategy – participation in the Atlantic security system, aloofness from European integration, the obstinate refusal to accept decolonization, and an intransigent defence of the colonies until the onset of the thirteen-year-long colonial wars fought on three simultaneous fronts – dominated foreign policy until the demise of authoritarianism.¹⁴ They are the central elements of the second historical model of insertion into the international system adopted by Portugal. First, there was the antinomic perception of Europe and the Atlantic, which culminated in a “paroxysm” with the end of the New State regime, as exemplified in the political debate between those advocating an African strategy and those favouring a European one. Second, there was aloofness from Europe and the predominance of the Atlantic and colonial policy option. This predominance was both political and economic. In the former sphere, the focus was on NATO and a special alliance or relationship with Washington and London, a policy implemented by a strategic-diplomatic apparatus entirely dedicated to the Atlantic sphere. In the latter, the apparatus was geo-economic and essentially focused on the overseas and colonial arenas. Even when Portugal was forced to work more closely with European economic institutions for pragmatic reasons, that rapprochement only occurred within the Atlantic (never a Continental) framework. The country’s accession to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) best exemplifies this strategy.¹⁵ Third, there was the constant effort to forge extra-Peninsular alliances other than those adopted by Spain. Portugal was always where Spain was not – in the Atlantic context, Portugal acceded to NATO while Spain did not; and in the European context, Portugal joined EFTA which Spain did not. Finally, despite increasingly interdependent international relations and the progressive multilateralization of diplomacy, there persisted the bilateral diplomacy based on the Lisbon–Madrid–maritime power triangle.

The Portuguese process of democratization altered national foreign policy entirely. However, it did more than that: the transition to and consolidation of democracy in Portugal and Spain on the one hand and changes in the international arena on the other led to the disappearance in only twelve years (1974–1986) of Portugal’s five-century-old historical position in the international system. Some things remained constant, but the Portuguese process of democratization also wrought changes in the country’s foreign policy. The first and most important of these changes was Europeanization, which itself altered the national model of insertion into the international system.

The international dimensions of democratization

With the demise of authoritarianism and the transition to democracy initiated on 25 April 1974, there was a profound redefinition of Portuguese foreign policy in

the spirit of the programme of the Armed Forces Movement (AFM). In shorthand, the latter was based on the formula “democratization, decolonization, development.” Although the AFM programme claimed to guarantee compliance with all of Portugal’s ongoing international commitments, democratization and decolonization clearly required a reinterpretation of old commitments and an overhauling of the foreign policy orientation of the Portuguese state. Decolonization negotiations began in 1974, and became the first major foreign policy challenge faced by the new regime.¹⁶ There were various contrasting ideological positions about decolonization: one, based on General Spínola’s proposal as outlined in his book *Portugal and the Future*, was federalist; another, inspired by Melo Antunes, advocated the creation of a neutral, non-aligned and Third World axis; and yet another, propounded by Vasco Gonçalves, was pro-Soviet. The various ideological nuances can be divided into two distinct political positions: the proponents of one argued that self-determination did not mean automatic independence, and were intransigent about Portuguese sovereignty until such a time as a referendum determined the fate of the colonies; proponents of the second view argued that self-determination did involve immediate independence and that there should be an immediate transfer of power to the national liberation movements as legitimate representatives of the former colonial peoples. This latter view won the day after what was a complex struggle with a not insignificant impact on domestic politics. A ceasefire was implemented in the field, and diplomatic negotiations initiated. Guiné-Bissau, which had declared independence unilaterally in 1973, was the first country to be recognized as a sovereign state by its former colonial power in August 1974. Between that date and January 1975, similar processes of transfer of power to national liberation movements – albeit with case-dependent variations – took place in all the former colonies.

With decolonization still under way, diplomatic relations were established with the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe and Third World nations, with the exception of Albania and China (the difficulties experienced with these countries were only resolved in 1979). However, decolonization, diplomatic opening and the end of international isolation were not the be all and end all of the new democracy’s new foreign policy orientation. In fact, as the noisy struggles that were part of the domestic process of democratization were waged, another, silent, struggle went on over the future goals and strategic options of Portugal’s foreign policy. Between April 1974 and January 1986, the country’s foreign policy oscillated between two basic paths that also marked two distinct phases: that of the transition to democracy or of the pre-constitutional period dominated by the revolutionary process; and that of the consolidation of democracy, corresponding to the constitutional period, or the institutionalization and stabilization of the democratic regime.¹⁷

The pre-constitutional period was marked by the struggle between various political forces over the foreign policy options available to Portugal. This was still the era of the Cold War, so the Western, Soviet and neutral or Third World models vied for supremacy, as a result of which there was no clear definition of

goals and means: parallel diplomatic efforts were made and foreign policy remained undefined. The next phase, initiated with the first constitutional government, was marked by the clarification of Portuguese foreign policy and an unequivocal positioning of Portugal in the international arena. The country wholly embraced its position as a Western country, with simultaneously a European and an Atlantic dimension. These, then, were the two fundamental aspects and true strategic options adopted by democratic Portugal, to which must be added a third: post-colonial relations with the new Portuguese-speaking countries.

For Portugal, the Atlantic dimension was the most enduring historical feature of national foreign policy – one which also played an important role in stabilizing domestic politics. Bilaterally, Portuguese “Atlanticism” was expressed through diplomatic relations with the US and the renovation of the Lajes Agreement in 1979 and 1983. With these agreements, Portugal granted so-called “facilities” to the US on its Azores bases until 1991 in exchange for economic and military “assistance.”¹⁸ At the multilateral level, the Atlantic dimension involved the maintenance and reinforcement of Portuguese participation in the Atlantic Alliance, and in the redefinition and renovation of Portuguese commitments to NATO military efforts, which it had been forced to abandon from the 1960s onwards because of the war in Africa. For the army, this reinforcement meant the constitution of a Mixed Independent Brigade (later renamed the Airborne Brigade), which replaced and reactivated the old Independent Army Division and still operates essentially according to its old goals when engaged in NATO missions on the southern flank of the Alliance. Navy and Air Force patrol missions were reinforced within IBERLAND, and the IBERLAND command was upgraded to the category of Commander-in-Chief (CINCIBERLAND) and placed under the command of a Portuguese officer.¹⁹

The “European option” was the most notable foreign policy innovation of the post-25 April era; it was also the single greatest external challenge faced by democratic Portugal. Once anti-European resistance had been vanquished in 1976 (the African “option” of the authoritarian regime and then the Third World “temptation” of the revolutionary period laid to rest), Portugal clearly opted for Europe. This time, however, Europe was not regarded simply from an economic (as it had been with the association agreements signed in 1972) but also from a political perspective.

The Portuguese rapprochement with European integration started in 1976 with accession to the Council of Europe and the signature of the Additional Protocols to the 1972 Agreement (itself seen as a preliminary negotiation for full accession). After a successful round of negotiations in various European capitals between September 1976 and February 1977, in March 1977 the first constitutional government formally requested accession to the European Community, signalling the end of all hesitation over the best formula for Portuguese integration (regarding pre-accession status, or the so-called “special association”). Thus, the “European option” had become a reality. It was a strategic choice that decisively marked Portugal’s future, and a centrepiece of the international dimension of the country’s democratic consolidation.²⁰

Two goals motivated the Portuguese government and justified that strategic option: first, the consolidation of democracy, which was ensured by Portuguese membership of the Community; and second, economic modernization and development, which were enhanced by the Community. Both goals – the first in particular – reveal the importance of the international context in the Portuguese process of democratization, if not during the transition phase then certainly during the process of consolidation of democracy.

The request for accession was followed by a long and complex negotiation process lasting for nearly a decade. The culminating point of that process took place in June 1985 with the signature of the Treaty of Accession to the EC. From 1 January 1986, Portugal became a full member of the European Community.²¹

The third foreign policy strategic dimension under democracy was the development of post-colonial relations. From 1976, Portugal's governments and presidents made unstinting efforts to re-establish and reinforce relations of friendship and cooperation with the new countries emerging after decolonization. From the early 1990s onwards, there was a normalization of relations between Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking African countries. The solidity of those relations and the international credibility of Portugal were important factors contributing to Portugal's mediating role in the Angolan and Mozambican peace processes. Brazil too became a foreign policy priority, and the 1980s were also the decade during which the Luso-Brazilian summit process was inaugurated.

At first, post-colonial relations evolved separately and exclusively at a bilateral level, but over time they also evolved multilaterally, with the establishment of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (*Comunidade dos Países Língua Portuguesa*, CPLP) in 1996.²² Africa and Brazil thus became active features of Portugal's foreign policy, which also gained a new meaning in the context of the European Union. Democratization may not have changed Portugal's place in the international system, but it did change the country's strategic priorities. Historically, Portugal had thought of itself as an Atlantic country and a colonial power, and when the balance shifted too far seaward, it sought to restore equilibrium through Europe. By contrast, Portugal is now a European country that seeks to gain advantages from its position in the Atlantic and relations with its former colonies.

Democratization and foreign policy

The Portuguese process of democratization had an international dimension and an impact on the country's foreign policy. How did regime change affect foreign policy, and what characterizes foreign policy under democracy? Let us begin by addressing the two questions posed in the introduction.

First, as regards the temporal dimension of democratization, did the external and domestic dimensions of the transition to and consolidation of democracy coincide in chronological terms? During the transition there was simultaneity,

but the same cannot be said of the period of consolidation. In the first instance, the end of the transition and the beginning of the constitutional period went hand in hand with the clarification of Portugal's international position as a Western nation that was both Atlantic and European. In the second instance, the end of the process of consolidation did not coincide with the consolidation of Portugal's position in the international arena: whereas the domestic process had ended by 1982 with the constitutional revision and the promulgation of the national defence and armed forces law, consolidation of Portugal's new international position only occurred in 1986, when the country acceded to the European Community.

As regards the issue of continuity or rupture in Portugal's foreign policy before and after democracy, what changed and what remained unchanged? The elements of continuity all result from structural and geopolitical elements and enduring areas of strategic interest: the Atlantic, Europe, post-colonial relations and, later, the Mediterranean. There have been at least four changes which are clearly a product of regime change. The first was the end of the antinomic Europe–Atlantic logic – it makes no sense today, as its terms are complementary rather than contradictory. Portuguese foreign policy has gained value within Europe because of the country's transatlantic relations, and its participation in European integration gives it greater power in the context of Atlantic relations. This is true not only for North Atlantic relations with the US and NATO, but also for South Atlantic relations with Brazil and the former African colonies.

Second, although the geopolitical equation remained European–Atlantic, there was an inversion of strategic priorities: in the past, Portugal had prioritized the Atlantic and the colonies, and a continental “compensation” had come into play only when the maritime dimension gained too much prominence. Now the reverse is true: the priority is Europe and the European Union, and Portugal seeks to boost its Atlantic position and post-colonial relations to strengthen its position within Europe.

Third, as a result of the arrival of democracy in Portugal and Spain, both peninsular states have moved towards increasingly similar international positions. Between 1974 and 1975, Portugal underwent decolonization. In 1979, Spain got closer to EFTA, and it joined NATO's political structures in 1982. In 1986, Portugal and Spain both acceded to the European Community, and in 1990 they acceded to the Western European Union (WEU). In 1997, Spain joined the NATO military structure. Not only did Portugal's geo-economic apparatus “turn continental” with accession to the European Community, but Portugal's and Spain's strategic diplomatic apparatus moved closer together to the point of coincidence. Succinctly, Portugal and Spain have the same extra-Peninsular alliances (the EU and NATO) for the first time ever in their histories.

Fourth, and finally, as a result of increasingly interdependent international relations and ever more intense multilateral activity, Portuguese diplomacy has become increasingly multilateral, which means that the country has a growing presence in the multilateral organizations working on its areas of strategic interest – the EU in Europe, NATO in the Atlantic, and the CPSC covering post-colonial relations.

These, then, are the changes wrought by democratization – changes that decisively and in some instances radically altered Portugal’s foreign policy. Over the short term, these changes characterize the general orientation of foreign policy under democracy. However, from a long-term perspective, their reach is greater: they are changes that forever altered the country’s historical place in the international system, and signalled the beginning of a new model of international insertion based on democratization and Europeanization.

Notes

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