

INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICS

[José Manuel Leite Viegas, Helena Carreiras and Andrés Malamud (editors), 2009, Portugal in the European Context, vol.I, Lisbon, CIES, ISCTE-IUL, Celta Editora]

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“Croatia needs 29 years to catch-up with Portugal and Spain,” a Croatian economist said in 2007. “30 years ago these countries were less developed than Croatia”, he concluded. He was repeating the mantra about benefits that membership in the European Union brought to Iberian Peninsula countries. *Institutions and Politics*, the first volume of the edition Portugal in European Context, explains and questions this mantra. The editors of the book, José Manuel Leite Viegas, Helena Carreiras and Andrés Malamud, collected articles that mostly accentuate the modernisation processes happening during Portugal's accession and membership in the EU, but also often indicate that these processes produce complex results. Also present here are detailed analyses of numerous Portuguese institutions. All of the authors are researchers in Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (CIES) at ISCTE-IUL, although four of them are associated researchers in CIES.

Comparative approach is strongly emphasised in the first part of the book entitled “Institutions, ideologies and political behaviours”. It provides the reader with an insight in Portugal's new political constellation. The first chapter “Supranational parliaments in Europe and Latin America: between empowerment and irrelevance” by Andrés Malamud and Luís de Sousa is very relevant for an analysis of institutions which have increasing influence on state policies, particularly in Europe. The European Parliament with its legislative and executive powers has “become the standard model for those who would undertake the mission of institutionalising regional integration” (p. 17-18). However the authors compared European Parliament with other developed supranational parliaments, namely four Latin American supranational parliaments, and came to conclusion that “only the European Parliament has developed a truly supranational character and been allowed to hold effective power thus far” (p. 25). Although this article competently compares features of five regional parliaments and finds thought-provoking reasons for great differences among them (for instance the fact that all Latin American countries have presidential regimes) it differs from the other contributions to this book as it does not refer to the Portuguese situation.

André Freire begins the chapter “Ideological identities in Europe: comparative perspectives of Portugal, Spain and Greece” with theoretical debates about the importance of the division between left and right orientation, tests these theories using data from European countries and puts a special emphasis on new southern democracies including Portugal. Freire shows, using European studies of self-placement on the left-right scale between 1976 and 2002, that “the evolution of left-right orientations do not present any general trend whatsoever and, as a result,

depends in large part upon factors which are specific to each country" (p. 45). The percentage of individuals who positioned themselves on the left-right scale remains stable in most countries analysed and increases in Portugal, Spain and Denmark. The results in new European democracies are especially interesting showing a recent stabilisation of ideological identities in Greece, as opposed to increase in Spain and Portugal. According to Freire, a shorter period of dictatorship in Greece explains that difference. However in 1990-2002 period, the ideological identities in Spain, Greece and especially in Portugal were lower than the European average in spite of the 1980s process of catching up with ideological self-placement in older European democracies.

José Manuel Leite Viegas and Sérgio Faria in their paper "Political participation: the Portuguese case from a European comparative perspective" state that in political participation, as well as in ideological self-placement, Portugal does not rapidly converge with other EU countries. The comparative research on political participation in 12 European countries shows that "in Portugal, public and political participation in the different forms is almost always below that of other countries, with the exception, in certain forms of participation, of the Eastern European countries: Moldova and Romania" (p. 57). All three countries have almost identically low participation through new forms —using the Internet for political contact, boycotting a product, and buying a certain product. This type of political participation clearly indicates modernisation of society, or lack of it, while Portugal's outlying in other types of political participation could be, according to the authors, explained by some political specificities. Thus low levels of protest participation are the result of party involvement in these sorts of actions.

While the first part of the book is characterised by synchronic comparison part II contains diachronic comparison of Portuguese institutions and public policies. In their paper "Social development policies: employment and social security" Luís Capucha, Elsa Pegado and Sandra Palma Saleiro distinguish five phases of the social development policies in Portugal. The first period after 25 April 1974 was defined by a foundation of the legal structure of the welfare state in the Constitution of 1976. Stabilisation period (1976-1986) indicated a two-sided result of Portugal's opening to international institutions: "austerity and macroeconomic stabilisation (associated with IMF and World Bank intervention), which was marked by heavy restrictions and severe setbacks in the previous dynamics of improving families' lives. However, this austerity did not prevent a series of changes directed at the 'Europeanisation' of the country" (p. 73). The "Europeanisation" of Portugal resulted with institutional development and creation of institutions as the District Centres of the Social Security, the National Health System and the Employment and Occupational Training Institute. Extension and growth period (1986-1994) was marked, among other measures, by anti-poverty policy initiated by European Commission. The new generation of active social policies (1995-2001) was an answer to growing poverty and unemployment. These policies were also initiated by EU, more precise by European Employment Strategy. A significant paradox in direct application of European policies to different countries is obvious here because of "priority for the creation of self-employment not being applicable to Portugal (which is already in

excess in comparison with European patterns), special attention was paid to the fight against false self-employment" (p. 79).

In the chapter "Immigration policies in Portugal", Rui Pena Pires and Filipa Pinho also use diachronic analysis to differentiate phases of dealing with the immigration in Portugal. The first phase was preoccupied with the control of immigration flows and it is indicative that until 1995 there was no reference to immigration issues in government programs. Immigration policies were mostly influenced by EU (Schengen Agreement and internal security) and immigration was interpreted as threat in some Portuguese laws. In second phase which began with the election of socialist government in 1995 the problems of integration and of the extending immigrant's rights were put on the table.

Alan Stoleroff presents the studies conducted in the largest Portuguese companies in his paper "Company-level labour relations and the industrial relations system in Portugal". One of Stoleroff's explanations of absence of unions is that this "reflects present composition of the largest Portuguese companies which suffered major changes with the Europeanisation of the economy (growth of commercial and tertiary organisations and decrease in the average size of industrial companies) and with the changes in economic institutions (such as the dismantling of the state-owned industrial sector)" (p. 221). A consequence of the lack of union presence is, among other things, that only 55,2% of the largest companies confirmed existence of Health and Safety Committees which are obligatory in such companies.

In the chapter called "The Portuguese Armed Forces: changes and continuities at the turn of the millennium", Helena Carreiras offers theoretically best-grounded part of the book. Carreiras applies the most influential theories on changes in Armed Forces to examine the Portuguese Armed Forces within the paradigm of postmodern form of organisation. She concludes that the "analysis shows the coexistence of features of modernisation and of resistance to change, resulting in a situation which is paradoxical and generator of tensions" (p. 170). Also it is stressed that the mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina was especially relevant for the transformation of Portuguese Armed Forces at the international strategic level. Álvaro de Vasconcelos interpreted it as the Europeanisation of the Portuguese defence policy and Portugal's focusing on European issues rather than that of former colonies. But the Europeanisation was soon questioned by withdrawal of Portuguese soldiers out of Kosovo crisis and subsequent engagement in East Timor. The engagement in Kosovo was also perceived as a result of the diktats from Washington (Vasconcelos, 2000).

A similar analysis of influences of international relations on security policies exists in the article "Penitentiary risk and prohibitionist spirit" by António Pedro Dóres. He informs us that Portugal has one of the highest numbers of detainees, although it has one of the lowest crime rates in the EU. Dóres interprets this discrepancy as an influence of the United States' "war against drugs". Regrettably, the author does not analyse whether this American influence could be explained by the "Atlanticism versus Europe" dilemma that re-emerged in Portuguese politics in the mid-1990s (Hampson, 2000).

This collection of articles lacks a more informative introduction for foreign public. It should have briefly presented public debates and political processes

which shaped Portugal's transition. The influence of EU ideology on Portugal policies is visible in quite a number of contributions and it would have been more accentuated by the description of Portugal's accession to the EU. Also it is indicative that year 1995 meant an important shift in several policies analysed and, although the establishment of the Socialist government is mentioned, a non-Portuguese reader would profit from a broader explanation of the political context.

However the book *Institutions and Politics* provides the reader with many analyses that place contemporary Portugal in its European surrounding and unfold nation's recent history. Most of the papers indicate that Portuguese sociology began to fully establish itself after 25 April Revolution. Since Croatian sociology achieved a relatively high degree of institutional maturity at that time, one could conclude that this scientific endeavour by CIES shows as fast development of sociology as the Portuguese economic development. For sociological community in Croatia, which has been characterised by institutional fragmentation since 1990s, the ability of one Portuguese research institution to create rather comprehensive sociological analysis of its own society is quite impressive.

References

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