

DEBATER
A EUROPA

Supplementum

15

jul-dez 2016

*GLOBAL TRENDS 2030:
THE FUTURES OF PORTUGAL
IN AND BEYOND EUROPE*

The Futures of Portugal in and beyond Europe

Álvaro de Vasconcelos

Centre of 20th Century Interdisciplinary Studies of the University of Coimbra – CEIS20

E-mail: amdevasconcelos@gmail.com

The universal is the local without walls

Miguel Torga

Broadly titled *Global Trends 2030: The Futures of Portugal*, the nine sessions of the Serralves Conferences sought to identify and discuss megatrends in the fields of politics, economy, technology and security, as well as their impact on the future of Portuguese democracy and on the quality of life of its citizens.

The debates focused around five global trends identified in previous reports: empowerment of citizens; cultural diversity; diffusion of power; polycentric world and sustainable development in a context of global warming.

The main conclusion of this exercise was that we are living in a transition period marked by huge uncertainty. Nevertheless, it can already be said that the trends on which many of Portugal's options were based, both at the internal and external levels, are undergoing profound changes. This is certainly the case with the political consensus that resulted from the democratic transition of the 1970s but it also applies to the two main pillars of Portugal's international integration: the European Union and transatlantic relations.

Within a context of increased volatility and greater variety of international frameworks, in the future, Portuguese citizens will be more dependent on the civil society and the local authorities, following a trend common to many other States. Nevertheless, the scale of the effort required to effectively manage this transitional stage may be unique to Portugal.

Five major global trends, along with seven corresponding questions, dominated the debates of the Serralves Conferences:

- 1) ***Empowerment of citizens*** – What are the political consequences of the crisis of representative democracy? Is participatory democracy the appropriate answer?
- 2) ***Diversity and identity*** – Diversity is a global trend but it is complemented by the assertion of identities. Which will prevail: the open society or the trend towards exclusive identities?
- 3) ***Diffusion of power*** – In a world of interconnected citizens, how does the weakening of the State impact government action? Can civil society and non-State structures offer an alternative?
- 4) ***Polycentric World*** – Must Portugal imagine its future with a fragile European Union and in a post-hegemonic world in which China and India emerge as new powers?
- 5) ***Climate change and human development*** – How can we ensure the citizens' quality of life within a framework of low economic growth and global warming?

This is the guiding framework from which we try to understand what are the alternate futures for Portuguese democracy.

Empowering civil society and the local authorities

Within the framework of the Serralves Conferences, four empowering factors were identified and discussed: new middle class; education; information society and women's empowerment.

Portugal is following the trend towards the empowerment of citizens, though at a slower pace when compared to countries such as Brazil and Spain, which emerged from dictatorial regimes, patriarchal societies and illiteracy, and where a new middle class was born in the 1970s and 1980s.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Portugal took a significant step forward with regards to human development. This was expressed in an improvement in the quality of life, in the reduction of illiteracy and in the access to secondary and higher education. In the 1960s, the literacy level was 61% for women and 71% for men. In the 2010s, these figures rose to 93% and 97%, respectively. The average literacy rate rose from 79.4%, in 1981, to 95.7%, in 2015. The 2009 PISA report named Portugal among the most advanced countries in the field of education, placing it in the same group of Germany, France and Great Britain.

The impact of the information society on the empowerment of the Portuguese citizens is less significant than in other countries, though it is still growing. A significant number of Portuguese citizens have access to the Internet: in 2002, 15.1% of the Portuguese population had Internet at home and this figure rose to 65% in 2014. Broadband coverage in Portugal increased from 7.9% (2003) to 63% (2014). In line with the European average (46%), 47% of the Portuguese Internet users have an account in a social network. According to data as of 2013, most of these users have a Facebook account (98%) but the number of those with Twitter accounts is much lower (9%). The

gap in the number of users with Facebook and Twitter accounts reflects the usage of these networks as socialization tools and social networks of friends, serving personal and recreational purposes, rather than acting as platforms for social activism. In Vila Nova de Gaia, at a conference attended by secondary school students, I found that the overwhelming majority did not use social networks with political purposes or to promote social causes – among 140 students, only one claimed to have written a post on the subject of the refugees.

Nevertheless, Portugal has also seen a rise of social activism in the social networks: suffice it to recall the “Screw the Troika” movement and the 2012 and 2013 demonstrations with a strong mobilization on the social networks. There is a trend towards a more political usage of these networks and to the strengthening of bonds with citizens from other countries, both within and outside Europe.

The empowerment of the Portuguese women can already be seen in the civil society and in the context of education, including in the universities, where they are in the majority on several fields. This phenomenon has yet to transpire to the political and economic contexts, though this is to be expected in the near future.

As is the case in other European countries, the Portuguese middle class, nowadays much more qualified, contests the lack of influence it exerts over the European decision-making process. The same middle class also questions the lack of political alternatives at the national level, though to a lesser extent than, for instance, in Spain, and calls for a more participatory democracy. The lack of expectations strongly impacted on the Portuguese middle class, as a result of the 2008 financial crisis and the adoption of austerity policies. According to the report *Empowerment and the future of democracy*¹, “If we take the middle class annual income to be between 6000 and 30 000 dollars², corresponding to an annual income between 5500 and 27 500 Euros, and then transpose these numbers to the Portuguese context taking into account the PORDATA figures on the distribution of households per income brackets, we can conclude that, among around 5 million households, about a fifth (849 358, in 2013) do not earn an annual gross income of 5000 Euros. From 2011 onwards, this number has significantly increased. In 2013, the gross annual income of about 70% of the Portuguese households was between EUR 5000 and 27 500”³. In view of both the current and the

¹ Report “The Futures of Portugal” by group I of the Serralves Conferences.

² The *Global Trends 2030* Report states that: “There are multiple applicable definitions of what constitutes membership in the middle class. The International Futures model that we use in this report focuses on per capita consumption expenditures rather than GDP per capita. In that model, middle-class membership is defined as per capita household expenditures of \$10-50 per day at PPP. **Goldman Sachs used a comparable GDP per capita of \$6,000-30,000 per year**, which yields a similar estimate of 1.2 billion middle-class people in the world in 2010. Kharas (OECD study) calculated the number of those in the middle class at 1.85 billion in 2009; Ravallion (World Bank) calculated that 2.64 billion people were in the middle class in 2005. b The source for this estimate is a 2008 Goldman Sachs study”.

³ <http://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Agregados+familiares+por+escal%C3%B5es+de+rendimento+IRS+Modelo+1++2-79>

projected growth rates, the poverty rate that has affected the Portuguese society is very likely to remain the same up until the end of this decade.

Nowadays, the new Portuguese middle class is deeply concerned with its present, choosing to emigrate if possible (around 500 thousand Portuguese citizens have emigrated since 2008) and looking at its future with uncertainty, in stark contrast to the consumerist optimism of the 1990s. This leads to a severe lack of expectations.

This situation has been accompanied by a progressive distancing from electoral activity, reflected in low and continuously decreasing turnouts, namely at referendums – none of them reaching the minimum turnout (50% plus one) to be legally binding. Thus, in their report, researchers conclude that “Democratic enthusiasm was short-lived and ‘civic anaemia’ has beset the last decades of our common life”⁴.

The voters’ actual ability to shape their future by voting is an underlying discussion. Based on a supposed observation of a lack of alternatives, the belief that voting is not a decisive factor in policy change weakens democracy and leads to civic anaemia, with citizens searching for other forms of action. Nevertheless, this does not mean we are moving towards a “voteless democracy”⁵, since there is no sign of any other way to guarantee popular sovereignty. On the contrary, we should expect the emergence of alternatives to the “voteless democracy” meant to guarantee the expression of the popular will.

Portuguese politics have always been dominated by PS (Socialist Party) and PSD (Social Democratic Party). From 1976 onwards, these two parties were always in power, whether in majority and minority governments or as part of coalitions that included the so-called central block PS-PSD (1983-1985). This expresses the citizens’ belief in a lack of alternatives. The three short-lived governments of presidential initiative were the only exception to the domination of the two major Portuguese political parties.

The collapse of the central block in the 2015 legislative elections is the first sign of the adaptation of the political system to the citizens’ demand for alternatives. The most likely scenario is that the political currents challenging the political monopoly held by the traditional parties will gather momentum, inclusively within the party structures of those parties. If the evolution towards a more participatory system is blocked at the national or European levels, populist political forces are also likely to emerge in Portugal.

Local and regional power will tend to become the basis for participatory democracy in Portugal, as is already evidenced in the participative budgets.

⁴ Report “Futures of Portugal” by group I of the Serralves Conferences.

⁵ Expression used by Paulo Rangel at the Serralves Conferences (session held on February 11, 2016, titled *The democratic challenge: Portugal and Europe*).

A more diverse country: the trend towards the assertion of minority rights.

Diversity is an increasingly common global trend. Though not very highlighted in EUIIS's report for ESPAS, this trend is clearly growing in importance, as evidenced in the works of the International Affairs Institute (IRI) of the University of São Paulo: "Diversity will continue to increase, transforming most countries into real Towers of Babel, with a huge multiplicity of historical, cultural, linguistic and religious identities and memories. The myth of the homogeneity of the so-called unitary states is being questioned and it is very likely it will be even more so in the next fifteen years. We have gone from a bipolar and politically heterogeneous world (democracy versus Sovietism⁶) to a world of huge distrust in political ideologies. This has also given rise to a great ideological pluralism, where no ideology, not even those religiously inspired, seems likely to achieve a global dimension."

The main factors of diversity are minority empowerment and the global migration flows. These are facilitated by the economic globalization and the continuing disparity in incomes and opportunities between countries, by the progress in means of transport, by the opening of borders and by demographic factors. The empowerment of citizens and its accompanying protest against the established powers facilitate the presentation of the demands of the cultural and religious minorities. Nowadays, it is easier, and it will be even more so in the future, to assert minority rights and question the old narratives. This is certainly the case of the issues of gender, human rights or cultural identities.

Emigration is currently one of a number of global trends, including the movement of individuals forced to abandon their homes due to wars, political persecutions and severe droughts. One particularity of this global movement of populations is its diversity, both with regards to the number of countries of origin and destination, as well as from a cultural, linguistic and religious point of view. Refugees from areas such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Somalia are arriving to Europe. According to the OECD, in 1990 there were 154.2 million migrants in the world and this number reached 231.5 million in 2013.

The global economic and financial crisis led to a decrease in emigration but did not stop the trend towards its globalization. Migration flows are becoming increasingly more varied, with regards both to countries of origin and of destination. With the emergence of migration flows in the South-South and even North-South directions, these flows are no longer limited to the South-North direction.

⁶ See Raymond Aron's *Paix et guerre entre les nations*, Calmann-Lévy, 8th ed. with a previously unpublished author's preface, 1984.

Demographic factors are extremely important in this global migration, in view of the rise in life expectancy in emerging countries, namely in Asia, and of the aging of populations in developed countries. According to the projections of Portugal's State Statistical Office (INE), the Portuguese population is very likely to decline by about 4.5% up until 2030. The aging of the Portuguese population has also been forecasted and the number of individuals over 64 is expected to rise 25% up until 2030.

In result of population movements, there is a global trend towards the assertion of diversity, which also affects Portugal. Historically a country of emigration, Portugal is nowadays also a country of immigration with a significant immigrant population: it amounts to 395 thousand individuals, that is 3.8% of the Portuguese population (data as of January 2015). Nevertheless, these figures are still well below the European average. For instance, Norway has an immigrant population of 10%, Sweden has an immigrant population of 7.5%, France has an immigrant population of about 6.6% and Spain has an immigrant population of 9.5%, corresponding to 4.4 million people. Hence, there is a tendency towards a significant increase in cultural diversity. The aging of Portugal's population will be accompanied by an increase in the immigrant population, which will foster cultural and religious diversity. Adding to this trend, one must consider the small but growing number of asylum seekers in Portugal: according to data of the Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR), in 2002 there were 180 asylum seekers in Portugal and this figure rose to 872 in 2015.

Portugal's cultural diversity was always a reality despite the country's difficulties in dealing with this fact, as historically attested by Muslims or Jews, or by ethnic minorities such as the gypsies. At present, this diversity is driven by immigration, leading to a parallel increase in religious diversity.

According to the 2001 census, 84.1% of the Portuguese population identified itself as Catholic. This figure decreased to 81% in the 2011 census. At the same time, according to a study of Universidade Católica, there was a significant increase in the number of evangelicals, who rose from 0.3 to 2.8% of the overall population between 1999 and 2011⁷. The last census shows a significant increase "in the number of people claiming to profess non-Catholic religions (from 188 489 individuals, in 2001, to 295 459, in 2011), including both the mentioned case of the evangelicals as well as other religions (Muslims, from 12 014 to 20 640; Jews, from 1773 to 3061; and other non-Christian religions, from 13 882 to 28 596 individuals)".⁸

⁷ <http://www.publico.pt/n1542295>

⁸ Report "The Futures of Portugal" by group II of the Serralves Conferences.

The claim that Portugal is a unified country from a cultural viewpoint, with the oldest fixed borders in Europe, is part of the country's fictional narrative. These arguments were thoroughly explored by the opponents of regionalization, who won the 1998 referendum.

However, empowerment and the diffusion of power are also powerful factors in the assertion of regional cultural diversity. Home to two of the most diverse regions in Europe with regards to social values, Minho and Alentejo, in the next years Portugal will not only have to learn to live with that diversity but must also take full advantage of it, both in cultural terms as well as in the strengthening of its relationships with the immigrants' countries of origin.

Diffusion of power: civil society, local power and regionalization.

The European and American reports both conclude that power is likely to become increasingly more diffuse. The European report concludes that "the production of public goods is no longer a monopoly of the states" and that in the information age there is an increasingly larger number of events taking place beyond the control of the most powerful states, as argued by Joseph Nye.

By 2030, we are likely to live in a polycentric world with a multitude of state and non-state actors, and where the "informal networks" will become increasingly more powerful. This is what Manuel Castells – who believes that society itself is made of networks in all "its key aspects of social organization and social practice"⁹ – calls network society.

Power is diffuse and governments must share it with regions, cities, non-state actors, the organizations of civil society and the social networks. All those who hold power testify to its fragility. According to Moisés Naim, "power is becoming weaker, as well as more ephemeral and limited"¹⁰. There is a relation between the empowerment of citizens and the weakening of the central government, despite of the governments' massive use of information technologies. These technologies are a powerful tool for controlling citizens' lives. However, the State does not hold a monopoly on them and cannot control their development. On one hand, the advances in the information society made it possible for the NSA to mount a huge espionage scheme affecting millions of citizens around the world. On the other hand, the development of the information and communication technologies allowed Edward Snowden to expose the NSA's program and led to the success of Wikileaks.

Non-governmental organizations broaden their field of action to almost all areas of human activity, in many cases successfully replacing state or international organizations. Such is the case

⁹ See Manuel Castells, *Network Society, a Cross-cultural Perspective*, 2004.

¹⁰ Naim, Moisés *The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn't What It Used To Be*, 2013.

of Doctors Without Borders, in the fight against Ebola, of the Bill Gates Foundation, in the fight against Malaria, or of the non-governmental humanitarian aid organizations, in Africa. Consider the importance of the Brazilian civil society, at the internal and global levels, and in areas such as education, health, environment or social cohesion. Governments in many countries have been transferring sovereign functions, such as security, to non-State organizations. Urban centres will increasingly resemble megacities and turn into centres of political and economic power. Faced with a weakened central power, national governance must necessarily be more inclusive and participatory, and pay greater attention to the expectations of the middle class. Democracies will also have to increasingly implement the principles of subsidiarity and of unity in diversity. Otherwise, if the democratic institutions do not adapt to the demands of the information society, the tendency towards fragmentation will prevail.

The Portuguese State, centralist in nature, will have to adapt to this trend. Other non-State actors with influence in several areas of political, economic and civil action will emerge and take on their own responsibilities.

In Portugal, the civil society's sphere of action was limited by the central role played by the political parties in the consolidation of democracy. PCP, a Leninist party, had a highly-centralized structure. However, at the same time, it used its local headquarters to intervene in a variety of civic domains (culture, social work, etc.), covering a vast extension of the country. The democratic parties created in its image and meant to oppose it established a close relationship with the civil society organizations. According to Tiago Fernandes, it was not uncommon "for trade unions and farmer organizations, for example, to go along with political party projects and for political parties – both on the left and on the right – to rely on the civil society in electoral mobilization processes"¹¹

Nevertheless, this scenario did not prevent a significant growth of the civil society organizations in Portugal after the Carnation Revolution, namely in the sports, social and religious areas. Though the percentage of citizens involved in these organizations is higher in Portugal than in Spain¹³, the figures are still much lower than those of other European countries. While the Portuguese civil society has close ties with the political power and still holds some influence, namely with regards to syndicalism, it has also lost some autonomy and the ability to define the political agenda.

The Portuguese civil society, still lacking in significant civic action, will tend to expand its reach to several fields of activity and to become more effective, especially in areas such as social development and human rights – whether in response to the weakness of the central government action in these fields, or encouraged by trans-European movements searching for Portuguese partners.

¹¹ Tiago Fernandes, *A Sociedade Civil*, Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation, February 2016. ¹³ *Ibidem*

The State tends to delegate duties, even those of a sovereign nature, to both non-State actors involved in civic actions and to the private sector. Non-state actors tend to assume an increasingly relevant role in a variety of areas belonging to the core activities of the State, such as health, education and security. Portugal has followed this trend with the growth of the private sector in the areas of health, education (with both public and private funding) and private security. The number of private companies working in the field of homeland security is unlikely to rise significantly, as is happening in Brazil, where this sector employs 500 000 workers. With regards to external security, the private sector is also unlikely to gain any significant weight.¹²

The diffusion of central power into both local and regional authorities is a very likely scenario, with the local power and the metropolitan or administrative regions taking on new responsibilities, including those related to international cooperation. Lisbon will continue to follow the trend of gathering a significant portion of the Portuguese population.

The pressure to decentralize central powers into regions will tend to increase. This, in conjunction with the weakening of the sectors of the central block that, in the 1998 referendum and in the name of national unity, stopped regionalization in the mainland, may once again put the issue of regionalization on the political agenda.

There is a tendency for the issue of regionalization to return to the political agenda, as a necessary step to overcome the regional disparities that have worsened in recent years¹³. The autonomy of Azores and Madeira is a testament to this fact. According to Luís Braga da Cruz, this will only be achieved “in the separation between the decentralized bodies and a politically legitimate structure for the coordination and planning of the regional territory. This political legitimacy will be the greater, the more it is based on direct universal vote”¹⁴.

The Portuguese border regions are likely to establish a deeper cooperation with their Spanish counterparts, where the assertion of autonomy is much stronger. Such is the case of Minho and Galicia: two regions united by strong cultural and economic ties.

Quality of life with low economic growth.

According to the reports on global trends, the fight against poverty and the economic growth necessary to achieve this goal will continue to be the focus of the emerging economies, especially in Africa, with millions of citizens living in poverty. Even though the human development indexes are improving, the fact is that quality of life will be seriously threatened by global warming, especially

¹² Report “The Futures of Portugal“ by Group III of the Serralves Conference

¹³ Luís Braga da Cruz, speech at the seminar *O poder local e a consolidação democrática*, Tunis, ARI- CMRC, May 2016.

¹⁴ Luís Braga da Cruz, *O Eixo Atlântico Perante o Portugal 2020*, Oporto, May 2016

by its impact on the shortage of water. There is still uncertainty surrounding the measures that governments will take to deal with this very serious threat to life on Earth. This action must be carried out urgently, still in this current decade, if we wish to prevent the disasters forecasted for the mid-21st century. The Paris summit revealed a current and almost universal awareness of the need to reduce dependence on fossil energy and to continue to invest in renewable energy sources. Still, civil society organizations warn us that much more needs to be done.

The belief that the solution to the challenges of sustainable development lies in technological innovation, namely in alternative energy sources and in biotechnology as part of a new industrial revolution, was expressed at the Serralves Conferences. Nevertheless, we cannot be sure this will be the case.

There are many differences between the Portuguese situation and the reality in the rest of Europe. Economic growth is not expected to have the same impact on the quality of life of the Portuguese citizens, particularly because the OECD is forecasting an annual growth rate under 1.4% until 2030. However, other studies point towards an annual growth under 1%. At the same time, Southern Europe, including the south of Portugal (Algarve and Alentejo) will be the area most affected by global warming.

In social terms, poverty increased in Portugal between 2005 and 2014, at this point affecting more than one quarter of the Portuguese households. In 2015, there was an important decline in this indicator. By contrast, the unemployment rate remains very high and it is still uncertain whether it will return to one-digit figures (according to the IMF, it will remain above 10% until 2020, with a great prevalence of long-term unemployment)¹⁵. Within the European framework, “In Portugal, income will no longer be distributed in a more uneven manner than happens in the rest of Europe. Not because Portugal will become more equal than it is today, but rather because Europe will become more uneven”¹⁶

With regards to education, great progress has been made since the 1980s, though serious qualitative and quantitative gaps still persist. If Portugal continues to invest in education, the country’s indicators should match those of the other OECD countries by 2030. Nevertheless, this does not mean this progress is enough to boost a significant growth in GDP. Thus, Portuguese qualified labour will continue to be drawn to other countries, as is already the case.

Portugal will very likely experience a low growth and will not accept the austerity measures the European Union intends to impose on the country. These are supposedly meant to resume growth but have only contributed to Portugal’s impoverishment. The neoliberal model that emerged from the Washington consensus is likely to be questioned and replaced by a sustainable development

¹⁵ Report “The Futures of Portugal” by group IV of the Serralves Conferences.

¹⁶ *Idem*.

model. However, this concept of sustainable development may also be questioned, in so far as it is based on a combination of GDP growth with environmental protection, which does not seem to be a very likely scenario at a global scale.

In the case of Portugal, what is at stake is not so much the pursuit of an alternative policy that limits growth but rather structural factors such as the aging of the population.

According to Edgar Morin, within a context of low growth and a lack of clear alternatives, after breaking the cycle of the 2008 crisis and the austerity policies, one possibility may be to break away from the illusion of development and put the emphasis on what we already have: on a better distribution of wealth, on improving quality of life, on alternative energy sources, on a revitalization of rural life, on a better use of leisure time, on education and science, and on the quality of our democracy.

Edgar Morin believes that the solution lies in the development of a plural and decentralized economy that invests in organic farming, in the promotion of biocoal, in fair trade and in “citizen companies.”

There is a global trend towards the drafting of sustainable development strategies that will attach great importance to a so-called green economy, in the hope that technological evolution may solve the environmental challenges. However, this trend is conditional on a new cycle of industrial development and on the accompanying possibility of returning to the high GDP growth rates, which is some view as a dangerous fantasy.

Authors such as Tim Jackson defend the concept of prosperity without growth: on one hand, environmental protection imposes limits on growth; on the other hand, GDP growth does not necessarily lead to a better distribution of wealth – in fact, the growth that preceded the 2008 financial crisis actually increased inequalities.¹⁷ This type of strategies used to face the challenges of climate change may favour Portugal’s specific conditions “in so far as they point towards the growing importance of the enjoyment of cultural, environmental and societal values, reducing pressure on resources, investing in renewable energy sources and strengthening social cohesion and harmony. They point towards the creation of products both excellent and simple, revaluing local contexts, on one hand, and strongly incorporating scientific knowledge, on the other hand, without adding the costs of working with very heavy industries.”¹⁸

In view of these economic prospects, Portuguese citizens face two scenarios: continue to accept the constraints posed by those who prescribe humiliating solutions to resume a growth that will never come, or participate along with others in a joint effort towards a new utopia: that of quality of life.

¹⁷ Tim Jackson. *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. 2009

¹⁸ Luísa Schmidt, Comments to the seminar *The Futures of Portugal*, Serralves, June 29, 2016.

Portugal in the World - beyond Europe.

The world is becoming increasingly more polycentric rather than multipolar, in the European sense of this term, when three or more nations decide on matters of war and peace achieving an unstable balance of power. This polycentric world - which will be even more so in the future - has a wide range of actors at the international level. The factors of polycentrism are, on one hand, the end of the hegemonic power of the United States and, on the other hand, the diffusion of power at a global level. The centers of power are multiplying, both at the global and regional levels, in large and medium States showing great ability to act, but also in sub-state entities, such as regions or cities, and in non-state entities, such as transnational networks or foundations with a global reach.

The end of Western hegemony

The relative decline of the United States and its European allies is the natural outcome of the emergence of other powers, namely China and India, that is, of the rise of Asia as the new centre of global power. This is the key conclusion to be drawn from the European and American reports. According to the European report, “The world of 2030 will be diffusely multipolar and polycentric. There will be a plurality of actors, and no single world power will play a hegemonic role. This will generate greater freedom of manoeuvre for all international actors and give middle powers a more prominent role on the world stage. Polycentrism will be accompanied by an economic power shift toward Asia, where over half of the world’s population will be concentrated by 2030”.¹⁹

The NIC report points to the same conclusion: “In a tectonic shift, by 2030, Asia will have surpassed North America and Europe combined in terms of global power, based upon GDP, population size, military spending, and technological investment. China alone will probably have the largest economy, surpassing that of the United States a few years before 2030”.²⁰ From an economic point of view, the trend towards the emergence of Asia, in terms of GDP, and the projections that combine several elements of power, the so-called material power, both point towards a decline: moderate, in the case of the USA, and much more pronounced within the European Union.

These indicators also point to the emergence of Brazil and there is a strong possibility this country will overtake Russia a few years before 2030. According to the American report, “In Latin America, the next 15 years probably will confirm Brazil’s position as the ‘colossus of the South,’

¹⁹ http://europa.eu/espas/pdf/espas_report_ii_01_en.pdf

²⁰ <https://globaltrends2030.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/global-trends-2030-november2012.pdf>

increasing its position relative to Mexico and Colombia— despite these countries’ overall good growth prospects.”

How can we imagine Portugal’s future in view of a fragile European Union and in a post-hegemonic world with China and India emerging as new powers?

At a global level, we are transitioning towards a polycentric and post-hegemonic world, with the relative decline of the United States. Europe will not be the centre of that world. Its conflicts and crisis have a regional nature that does not necessarily generate global tensions. Thinking in terms of war and peace, it can be said that the conflicts of the future will have a domestic nature, with a regional or even global dimension, such as the case of the Syrian conflict. The Ukrainian situation is an internal conflict with the hard intervention of Russia as a regional power and the soft intervention of the European Union.

Presently, European tensions, including those involving Russia, have an inherently regional nature, no matter how serious they get.

The unity of Europe as a guarantor of peace and stability in the continent is the major uncertainty threatening the European future. In the West, Europe’s unity requires the continuation of the integration project, as Portugal knows it since its EU accession, and implies a stable and cooperative relationship with Russia and the countries in the common neighborhood. The security policies of Portugal, NATO and the other EU Member States were based on these two assumptions and this was why the EU-NATO and the NATO-Russia cooperation mechanisms were established.

At present, these two assumptions have been shaken, mostly due to the re-emergence of nationalism both in EU’s Europe and in Russia. Bipolarism has returned to Europe with the Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea. Russia is strengthening its military force and NATO is strengthening its military presence in Eastern Europe. However, if the superiority of the conventional means of NATO countries makes a direct conflict very unlikely, the prospect of a number of dangerous indirect conflicts within the common neighborhood, associated with the assertion of identity-based nationalism and with the separatist tendencies of national minorities, now seems more plausible, especially with the crumbling of a common European future and the simultaneous weakening of the federative role played by the European Union. On another hand, secessionist tensions may increase in EU or NATO Member States, as can already be seen in Spain or in Great Britain.

Ever since its democratic consolidation, Portugal’s foreign policy, including its security policy, has been defined by three key elements: Europe as a cultural, democratic and economic destination; the United States and NATO as an ideological option in the face of Sovietism or as an access way to the dominant team; and Lusophony as a hallmark project. These options seemed to

complement each other and their development seemed certain. Within a polycentric world, all these options are currently being subjected to profound changes.

Facing a relative decline, the United States have already accepted we are living in a post-hegemonic era and that Europe, above all others, should be responsible for its own security. However, the common foreign policy and Europe's defense are currently harder than ever to guarantee. The European project is gradually approaching a system of "variable geometry", in which its founding members, facing centrifugal tendencies, move towards a hard core that does not include Portugal's participation. The development of this scenario on a European scale contributes to Portugal's marginalization not only within the context of Europe but also with possible repercussions on the relations with the CPLP countries. According to the conclusions of the Serralves Conferences, "the developments in countries like Brazil and Angola, which point to a downward trend, may be key elements of Portugal's external peripheralization in the EU framework"²¹.

Paradoxically (or not), the Portuguese external action beyond Europe may be driven by the global trend towards the assertion of identities and by the very likely expansion of the Portuguese language across the world. Portuguese is spoken by about 250 million people, a figure that will significantly increase during this century, possibly reaching 335 million speakers by 2050. It is worth highlighting the promotion and dissemination of the Portuguese language in a polycentric world. Portuguese is the language of an emerging power (Brazil) and has a transnational reach (it is the official language of 8 countries in 5 continents and the official language of several international organizations, etc.). These are relevant arguments for viewing Portuguese as "a language with quantitative significance in several types of international relations, as well in the global media, also standing out as one of the five languages most widely used in the Internet (See Internet World Stats) and in the social networks."²² With the second largest number of Twitter users and the fourth largest number of Facebook users, Brazil offers a very significant contribution to the importance of the Portuguese language in the social networks.

The Portuguese strategy beyond Europe will depend to a large extent on the consolidation of the country's relationship with Brazil, which means going beyond heartfelt rhetoric and establishing solid networks in all domains, including economy and culture, with a special focus on the relations between the corresponding civil societies. First of all, after the failure of the biregional project EU-Mercosul of the 1990s, bilateral relationships with Brazil must be strengthened. Given the weakening of regionalism in Latin America and in Europe, nothing suggests that this multiregionalist project may be resumed in the near future.

²¹ Report "The Futures of Portugal" by group V of the Serralves Conferences.

²² *Idem*

Joint strategies between Portugal and Brazil for the promotion of language and culture may have a significant impact, which will be amplified if they take on an Iberian-American dimension: Castilian is the second most spoken language in the world and the third most widely used in the Internet; it is in full expansion in the USA and is expected to reach 138 million speakers by 2050. Initiatives between Portugal, Brazil and Spain, even if weakened, may gain a significant international weight, which can be considerably increased if it is supported by European and Latin-American regional dynamics. Regionalism is a multiplying factor of international initiatives.

Hence, it is only right that Portuguese foreign policy should continue to strive for greater European cooperation, opposing any schemes that may marginalize Portugal within Europe.

The Futures of Portugal: Alternative Scenarios.

Alternative scenarios for Portugal's future depend to a large extent on the alternative scenarios for the EU, a project to which Portugal is deeply committed. Thus, four scenarios should be highlighted:

My Way: This is the doomsday scenario. The EU falls apart and resumes a regional and multipolar balance of power, with each State following its own path and being driven by strong nationalist and xenophobic ideas, especially those with an islamophobic nature. Within the framework of a block of southern states, Portugal is forced to forge alliances and Spain emerges as the top priority. However, the collapse of the EU contributes to Spain's disintegration, building up identity clashes and the threat of serious conflicts within the Iberian Peninsula. With the United States focusing on the Pacific and in managing conflicts in Eastern Europe, relations with countries outside the EU are weakened. Portugal resumes a policy of isolationism.

La Vie en Rose: The EU takes a federal jump in the economic, financial and political domains, solving its democratic deficit and creating conditions for citizens to participate in the European process. Portugal consolidates its integration and social policies become once again a priority for Europe. Europe becomes a serious player in the global governance. The United States' focus on Asia does not prevent the EU from promoting a regional area of peace, together with its Eastern and Southern neighbours. Portugal strengthens its relations with the Portuguese-speaking countries and plays a significant role defending the model of an open Europe, both from an internal and an external point of view.

Hegemonic Integration: Under German leadership, a group of states strengthens mutual cooperation, especially with regards to financial and economic issues. The other Member States continue to follow some policies, including the single currency, but hold no influence. The trend towards identity-based nationalisms accelerates. In the field of foreign and security policies,

European initiatives are few and timid, and have a very limited ability to contribute to stability in the EU neighbourhood. With regards to the defence policy, heavily dependent on the Franco-British axis, Brexit will lead to the pursuit of national policies lacking a European dimension. In this scenario, Portugal will neither be part of the hard core of the EU nor of the extra-EU cooperation mechanisms in the field of defence. Portugal returns to a position of relative isolation in Europe and in the world. Eurosceptic currents grow in importance, social difficulties are not overcome and the weight of the nationalist currents tends to increase. Portugal's European destiny is disputed by internal nationalist currents and the country's peripheral location limits its alternatives.

In this scenario, Portugal will look for other alternatives, both in the Iberian Peninsula and in Southern Europe, in general, as well as in the relations with the Portuguese-speaking countries.

More of the same - for how long? The most likely scenario for the next decade will gather elements from the two most different scenarios, prolonging the current climate of uncertainty that combines integration and disintegration factors. Still, this scenario cannot go on forever and the lack of democratic reforms and of clarification of the EU's future may stimulate the disintegration factors, leading Teresa de Sousa to rename this scenario as "slow death".²³

Under a German leadership, the future will see the progressive establishment of a hard core within the EU, while at the same time preserving the common institutional framework created by the Treaty of Lisbon. Europe's political reorganization will continue alongside the assertion of progressive trans-European movements and xenophobic nationalist movements. This is the preliminary stage – the time when other scenarios will take shape and it will be decided which one will thrive. Black swans may speed up the process in one direction or another. The arrival in power of a right-wing extremist party in a EU country or, on the contrary, the consolidation of European progressive forces following significant electoral victories, including in Germany, will determine whether or not the My Way scenario can be prevented. The ability of the Portuguese citizens to influence their own future will be less driven by governmental policies and more dependent on their ability to act in European networks. In this scenario, Portugal will be able to assert its specificity as a plural society that respects cultural and regional diversity, and has a unique experience of local democracy, in short, of the Open Europe model of the federal scenario. Portugal may continue to be part of all progress made with regards to integration, while at the same preserving its own voice.

In a world where uncertainty is a fact, making all forecasts a very difficult exercise, the futures of Portugal must be planned from what is already known, taking advantage of the empowerment of the Portuguese citizens and of the huge potential it gives them to shape their own future.

²³ Teresa de Sousa, Written comments to a first draft of this report, seminar *The Futures of Portugal*, Serralves, June 29, 2016.

The futures of Portugal are not solely dependent on the future of the European Union, though this is still the overarching framework for the 2030 horizon. They will also depend to a large extent on the Portuguese people and on their ability to both develop a model for their European integration and to think beyond Europe.

Article received on November 30, 2016 | Accepted December 12, 2016