

CHAPTER 41
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Portugal in the European Union: Chronicling a Transformative Journey

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Abstract

This chapter is concerned with chronicling and discussing critically the milestones in more than thirty-five years of Portugal's European integration experience, which mirror the growing pains and gains of a transformative journey that became an integral part of national identity. Taking stock of the Anglophone literature, it begins with a tour d'horizon to highlight the major issues and insights regarding Portugal's experience in the EU. This historic overview provides the necessary background for shedding a particular light upon the Portuguese Presidencies of the EU Council which, taken as a whole, evinces the evolutionary Europeanization path leading the country to embrace an ever integrated political EU. Portuguese authorities' incremental support to task expansion within the realm of security and defence stands out as a paradigmatic example of this. Before its concluding remarks, this chapter offers a view of future avenues and challenges for the field of research.

Keywords: Portugal, European Union, Europeanization, EU Council Presidencies, foreign policy

Introduction

At the time of the launching of the European project (1950s) exclusively open to the democracies of Europe, Portugal was under *Estado Novo* (New State) and the dictatorial regime led by António Oliveira Salazar. This determined fundamentally the country's exclusion from the foundation of the European Communities (ECs) and their first seminal decades of seminal existence. Such exclusion had a dual nature since it was not only conditioned by the refusal on the part of the ECs member states to accept the entry of an authoritarian regime into the political and economic integrative fold. It also resulted from the Oliveira Salazar's unwillingness to relinquish the multi-secular colonial empire and dilute the state sovereignty in a coagulating supranational organization. For Oliveira Salazar, Portugal's Atlantic nature imposed limitations to the country's cooperation with Europe (Pinto and Teixeira, 2004). This understanding was paradigmatic of the perceived incompatibility existing between the maintenance of the Portuguese overseas territories (Atlanticism), on the one hand, and a deeper European political cooperation/integration

(Europeanism), on the other. And, it inspired the country's participation in the creation of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960 orchestrated by the United Kingdom (UK) - the country's oldest diplomatic ally and privileged trade partner -, which helped to mitigate the relative isolation of Portugal from the deepening cooperation dynamic in full progress at the heart of Europe. Moreover, it allowed room for the establishment of a free trade agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1972, in the sequence of the second (successful) UK application to join the ECs and its eventual withdrawal from the EFTA.

The revolutionary period starting with the 25 April 1974 military coup, which was marked by the succession of provisory governments and the tardy and traumatic decolonization process, saw the rising of polarized views on the country's future relationship with the ECs. Most of those associated to the emerging moderate political elites espoused the 'European option' that embodied the ambition of the country's accession to the ECs (see below). But others, largely pertaining to the military establishment (including the Armed Forces Movement), advocated an 'Africanist option', according to which recreated connections with new Portuguese speaking African countries should be prioritized in the strategic repositioning of the national foreign policy activity (Pinto and Teixeira, 2004). Eventually, the first democratic government led by the Mário Soares, then Secretary General of the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista* - PS), mobilized the process leading to Portugal's membership application on 28 March 1977. The latter came after securing, in the previous year, the country's entry into the Council of Europe that lent legitimacy to the nascent institutionalization of democracy whilst presenting itself as an antechamber of the future membership to the ECs

For the mainstream of the political spectrum (the only exception being the Communists that were against membership to the ECs), the 'European option' represented a historic political choice for liberal democracy, economic prosperity and societal modernization of the country. Against the backdrop of the formal negotiation process, ranging from October 1978 until the signing of the Accession Treaty in June 1985, the country witnessed the consolidation of its democratic regime and institutions, and the adoption of market economy with all this entails in terms of sociological consequences. It also developed a Euro-Atlantic external orientation anchored on the novel combination between continued commitment to NATO and membership in the EC. The latter became the overriding foreign policy goal for the restoration of the country's respectability, credibility, prestige and self-pride, for that matter, after decades of international (relative) isolationism and ostracism (Teixeira, 2014; Royo, 2004; Magone 2001; 2006; Pinto and Teixeira, 2002; Vasconcelos 1997).

The accession process completed with the formal accession on 1st January 1986, and the democratisation process, developing themselves in an interconnected way, paved the way to a paradigm shift in internal and external politics. Furthermore, such paradigm shift was the result of the country being the beneficiary of the economic and social solidarity underlying the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, as part of the ‘cohesion group’ of the poorer European states, which also included Greece, Ireland and Spain (Ferreira-Pereira and Groom, 2014; 2010; Magone, 2006; 2000; Royo 2004; Royo and Manuel 2003b). Eventually, within the EU’s fold, Portugal has overcome its political, economic and social structural backwardness while constantly avoiding slipping to the second line - or even the third line in a worst-case scenario -, which was considered the ‘wrong’ side of the European collective endeavour. Such outlier position became metaphorically equated with pertaining to the ‘tail’ (*cauda*) of Europe and the latent fear of seeing the country placed herein has moved successive governing elites, mainly originating from the mainstream Europhile parties - the PS and the Social Democratic Party (*Partido Social Democrata* - PSD) -, to struggle for Portugal’s recognition as a European model member state or a ‘good student’ from the very beginning of accession to the ECs (see below).

Participation in the Community-building process has been from the outset a paramount driver of systemic transformation of contemporary Portugal and a catalyst for continued endeavours to ensure its positioning at the ‘right’ side of the European project. Be that as it may, most observers acknowledge that much of the transformation of the country, albeit profound and embodying a ‘success story’, remains unfinished. Ultimately, initial progress and achievements in terms of real convergence with the European (economic and social) mainstream have not passed the test of time (Ferreira-Pereira, 2014; Magone 2006; Royo, 2013; Soares 2007).

In the context of the coronavirus crisis of 2020, the dramatic economic and social effects of the relentless pandemic threatened to reinstate a profound divergence of Portugal vis-à-vis the core of Europe that characterized the bailout period (2011-2014). During the latter the country was under the externally-mandated austerity by a troika composed of the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund; and had to face the burden of the ‘underdog’ stigma. Ironically enough, in view of the multifaceted severity imposed by the coronavirus pandemic crisis of 2020, the history seemed to repeat itself, not to say to be back for revenge. After more than three decades of multiple endeavors undertaken by national leaders to converge the country’s politics, diplomacy, economy and society with the European ‘core’ while

striving to overcome its chronic vulnerabilities and limitations (Ferreira-Pereira, 2014), Portugal found itself, yet again, in the crisis frontline, dependent upon the financial assistance under a customized Plan of Resilience and Recovery (PRR), which emerged as a new external rescue mechanism to avoid national collapse. Overall, political declarations on the arrival of new cheques from Brussels and observations made within various domestic quarters warning against the misuse of the EU funds and urging for a strategic great leap forward moving the country definitely away from the ‘tail’ of Europe sounded a *dejá vu* experience.

This chapter aims at chronicling and discussing critically the milestones in more than thirty-five years of Portuguese membership to the EU. Such trajectory mirrors the growing pains and gains of an international transformative journey that became embedded in national identity. Taking stock of the existing Anglophone literature on Portugal in the EU, it begins with a tour d’horizon to highlight the major issues, insights and discussions. Such historic overview provides the necessary background for shedding a particular light upon the Portuguese Presidencies of the EU Council held before and after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (i.e. 1992, 2000, 2007 and 2021). Taken as a whole, they reveal an evolutionary process by which the country, whilst craving for belonging to the European ‘core’ and vanguard, became increasingly Europeanized and embraced a politically integrated Union. Portuguese authorities’ incremental support to task expansion within the realm of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), driven by a dynamic or adaptive approach to national interest, features as a paradigmatic example of this. Finally, the chapter offers a view of future avenues and challenges for the study and research on Portugal in the EU.

Portugal and the European Integration Project: A Tour d’Horizon

Although Portugal can be said to be an old member state of the EU, it has traditionally been a long neglected state in the EU studies literature. Hence, the dearth of Anglophone works devoted to the country’s engagement in the European integration project. That being said, since the beginning of the 1990s and particularly after the advent of the twenty-first century it is possible to identify a developing body of literature which came to embrace intellectual diversity and different research traditions while intersecting various strands of investigation. Reflective of the explanatory relevance of the eminently historico-political issues to understand the meaning and impact of the European integration for Portugal, scholarly studies highlight the multidimensional nature of

change undergone by the country's society, politics, economics and external relations as a result of its increasing enmeshment in the intricate and intrusive European project (Ferreira-Pereira, 2014).

After the first free elections in 1975, the first constitutional government (1976-1978), started to pursue the goal of EC membership that presented itself as “the great political innovation of the nascent Portuguese democracy” (Pinto and Teixeira, 2002:25). The ‘European option’ was firmly supported by the mainstream of the political spectrum composed by the PS, PSD and the Social Democratic Centre Party (*Centro Democrático e Social* - CDS¹). The only exception within the party system were the Communists that opposed unreservedly to the ECs accession. Since the late 1980s, they changed pragmatically their stance on the integration process. Participation in the European Parliament elections contributed to soften the original (‘hard’) Euroscepticism of the Portuguese Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Português* - PCP) that, nonetheless, continued to stand out as the most deep-rooted Eurosceptic party in the Portuguese politics (Lobo and Magalhães 2011; Lobo, 2003), especially considering that since 1986 its parliamentary representatives voted against the ratification of all European Treaties, ranging from the Single European Act to the Lisbon Treaty.

Although it was expected that membership to the EC would also impact on the country's economy development and modernization, for the then main Europhile parties the choice for Europe was eminently political – the choice for democracy and stability (Ferreira, 1993) and against Communism and the ensuing ‘albanization’ of Portugal (Matos, 1993:168). To be sure, the country's application to the ECs in 1977 and the membership prospect embodied in the accession process played a decisive role on the democracy transition and consolidation processes. One illustrative example of this was the abolition of the Council of the Revolution - a military institution that placed the fledgling democratic governments under its tutelage (Schukkinck and Niemann, 2010) -, as part of a constitutional revision undertaken in 1982, three years before the signing of the Accession Treaty.

Portugal entered the then EC three decades and a half after the creation the European Coal and Steel Community by the 1951 Treaty of Paris. Its size and geographically peripheral position, alongside a historical trajectory marked by dictatorship, feeble economic development and

¹ As of 1993, the designation of the conservative party changed to Social and Democratic Centre-Popular Party (*Centro Democrático e Social-Partido Popular* - CDS-PP)

(relatively) low profile in European cooperative structures (with such few exceptions as involvement in NATO, EFTA and the Organization for European Economic Cooperation), impelled national representatives to strive for credibility and respectability in the eyes of its European peers. It was of extreme importance to forge in Brussels the impression that the national leaders were taking the country's commitment to the European integration process very seriously, in order to receive the much needed political and economic solidarity for both democracy and internal development. A first indicative corollary of this was that the Portuguese authorities decided to postpone (from 1986 to 1992) the challenging task of undertaking for the first time ever the Presidency of the Council of the EC. Moreover, in the early years of EC membership, national representatives felt the necessity to find tangible mechanisms to ensure differentiation and distinctiveness vis-à-vis Spain insofar as it was critical that Portugal was perceived as able and capable of having a separated politico-diplomatic standing and holding on its own in an autonomous way. Hence, there were occasions when they choose not follow their Spanish counterparts in EC debates and decisions, despite the absence of any disagreement in principle, to dilute the syncretic view of the Iberian Peninsula, still prevailing within the Community's institutions and committees.²

The literature has substantiated the idea that the first ten to fifteen years or so of the Portugal's experience in the club of prosperous democracies saw a general transformational process that a small, peripheral, underdeveloped and isolationist Southern European state with an authoritarian past underwent as a result of the reorganization of its political system, economy, social life and foreign policy. All this with the aim of meeting a multitude of needs and expectations stemming from the increasingly restrictive integrative project eroding domestic policymaking autonomy. In fact, the country's fully fledged membership to the EU has left no stone unturned both in its internal and external spheres, with changes being made in legislation, institutions, agencies and policy processes to ensure Portugal's denser participation in the European project (Ferreira-Pereira, 2014a; 2014b). As acknowledged by various studies, during this sort of 'golden' period, the country experienced simultaneously democracy, political stability, economic development, social modernization and a pro-European consensus within the party arena. Overall, the membership-related benefits were perceived as being higher than the costs

² This view was traditionally epitomized in the description of Portugal as 'the nose of Spain'. Interviews with former diplomats and members of government in office between late 1980s and early 1990s, conducted in Lisbon, between 2005 and 2006.

(Teixeira, 2014; Soares 2007; Pinto and Teixeira, 2004; Magone 2004; Royo and Manuel, 2003a; Vasconcelos and Seabra 2000; Matos, 1993). Such auspicious multifaceted context, inextricably associated with engagement in key European common decisions, policies and strategies, led Portuguese authorities to give further signs of their Europeanist stance whilst supporting the deepening of European integration - even in fields in relation to which they had more explicit reservations due to its impact in national sovereignty, namely security and defence (Ferreira-Pereira, 2016).

Indeed, for the national policy-makers, Portugal's 'Europeanness' became intimately equated to its modern democratic identity and post-imperial national vital interests. Therefore, since 1986, for the parties that have alternated in governmental power (i.e. PS and PSD), it never made sense to frame the political debate on European integration along the lines 'EU versus national identity' and 'participating in EU versus safeguarding national interests'. The major reason for this was because the European identity became embedded in the fabric of national democratic identity and participation in the EU's 'core' came to be conceived as an integral part of national interest(s). This is paradigmatic of the identity reconstruction, to which all political elites (with the exception of the PCP in the 1970s and 1980s and the CDS under Manuel Monteiro in early 1990s) contributed, as a corollary of the regime transformation. The latter allowed Portugal to mitigate the core-periphery gap while avoiding a frail position at the margins of the European integration process (Schukink and Niemann, 2010) That being said, it should be underlined that the Portuguese governments remained wary of initiatives potentially conducive to the creation of a *directoire* of the big powers and unswervingly supportive of the balance of power within the Union's institutional architecture and across its geography, especially between the Southern and Central/Eastern flanks (Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira, 2013; Vasconcelos, 2000).

Portugal's road to EU membership was somewhat winding and long. Internal and external factors accounted for seven years of intense and complex negotiations not only with Brussels institutions, but also in the European capitals. In the domestic arena, there was the legacy of the post-1975 revolutionary adjustments resulting in, for example, the nationalization of economic sectors), political instability and military control over political authorities. At the external level, besides French opposition to the Iberian enlargement, the Community's unnegotiable understanding that Portuguese and Spanish accession processes albeit separated, should not be

separable, obliged Portugal to wait for the conclusion of even more intricate membership negotiations with Spain (Pinto and Teixeira, 2004; Royo and Manuel, 2003b).

Over the last thirty-five years, the EU has undergone successive enlarging and deepening phases, which required continuous adaptations at various levels. Regarding enlargement, when Portugal joined in 1986, the then EC was a community of ten member states. Since then, the EU has more than doubled in membership in the sequence of the 1995 enlargement (Austria, Finland and Sweden) and expansion to the Central and Eastern Europe, in 2004 and 2007. When Croatia joined in 2013, Portugal was an established and relatively older member state. Besides shifting geopolitically the EU's centre of gravity eastwards, enlargement has considerably altered the scale and composition of EU multilevel system of policymaking. Portuguese representatives started to operate in a larger array of small states, having to strive, not to say compete, for time, attention and for its voice to be heard in the EU's meetings (October 2012: 14 and 19). At the same time, EU's expansion to Central and Eastern Europe has increased competition in the distribution of European funds. It has further deepened internal divisions within the Union's fold to the extent that besides the traditional North/ South division, a West/East split begun to develop itself. Against this backdrop, national authorities and representatives have been advised to cultivate smart power (i.e. intelligent exertion of influence) in order to make the country's voice heard, advance its goals and ultimately punch above its weight in Brussels political community. According to Rose and Trechsel this "involves identifying issues of national concern early in the policymaking process; endorsing consensus positions early in the process of policy deliberation; and building alliances with countries with likeminded policy positions" (October 2012: 2).

When it comes to the deepening dynamic, it is worth noting that after the end of the Cold War, the EU has embarked upon the enhancement of its security objectives and chores, which resulted in a more structured actorness in the international arena. Each advancement in the EU's evolutionary path engendered choices and constraints which faced successive Portuguese governments for whom the consolidation of the country's EU full-fledge member state status became a dominant priority in the name of national interest. In this regards, three illustrative examples stand out. The first is the demonstration of considerable political support for the European integration process throughout the constitutional process (Farrell, 2010) conducive to the signing up of the Lisbon Treaty (December 2007), under the Portuguese EU Council Presidency. The second is the growing, albeit half-hearted, politico-diplomatic and military

engagement in the CSDP purview (Robinson, 2015b; Ferreira-Pereira, 2007; 2014c). And the third is the Lisbon's trouble-free political approval of the Eastern enlargement process despite all this entailed not only in terms of political and institutional competition mentioned above, but also in terms of decrease of financial support for Portugal and increase of direct competition in trade and investment from new member states (Schukkink and Niemann, 2010).

While attempting to provide elucidation about the impact of Portugal's participation in the EU upon national institutions, political actors and policy processes, including diplomatic relations, various works have drawn on the explanative potential of the key theoretical concept of Europeanization. Indeed, this concept has proved to be attractive as demonstrated in the number of empirical studies conducted as part of the Europeanization research agenda. The focus is particularly on what the literature designates as 'downloading' comprising mainly the adaptation of national legislation, public policies and institutions to provisions enshrined in the EU treaties, that is to say the *acquis communautaire* (Royo, 2004; Magone, 2006; Teixeira and Pinto, 2012). At the same time, the literature on Europeanization has also turned its attention to the 'uploading' involving the export of national preferences, views and policy actions from Lisbon to Brussels. Scholarly works are clear that, while drawing on longstanding historic, cultural and linguistic affinities in five continents, the governing elites have successfully undertaken it during the country's Presidencies of the Council of the EU, notably in the realms of CFSP and CSDP (Robinson 2015a; Ferreira-Pereira, 2008; Magone, 2001; 2015) (see below). This has enabled them to further reinforce Portuguese commitment and contribution(s) to the political integration process; and ultimately to reconstruct the country's post-colonial role reflecting its new and modern place in the world politics (Magone, 2004; Ferreira-Pereira 2007; 2008; 2014b). Although national foreign policy makers have managed to ensure the projection of national ideas and interests onto the EU decision shaping and making processes, policy flows have been mainly from Brussels to Lisbon. Eventually, upon the multidimensional impact of 2008 Eurozone crisis and the Brexit process, the academic attention and enquiry has turned to the so-called de-Europeanization dynamic to scrutinize revealing signs of reversal (following a re-nationalization logic) in traditional trends of integration/deeper cooperation, notably in the foreign and security policy spheres (Raimundo et al, 2021).

Portugal's European strategy implemented since the accession to the EC has been capitalized upon by the governing elites to further deepen and improve the country's adherence to

democratic principles and market economy system. This was particularly successful during the first ten to fifteen years of membership which were marked by a pro-European consensus not only across the political party spectrum, but also amidst public opinion, as mirrored in voter concentration in the two Europhile parties - PS and PSD (Lobo and Magalhães, 2011). Portuguese citizens were mostly motivated by the perceived individual and collective benefits of EU membership, namely the economic growth, job opportunities and the improvement of the standard(s) of living. Such positive sociological context prevailing in the mid-1990s, enabled António Guterres-led government to undertake the needed endeavours for the country to meet the convergence criteria for the Euro and join the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) at the outset, in January 1999, as a founding member. (Teixeira, 2014; Moreira et al, 2014; Royo and Manuel 2003b; Royo, 2004; Soares, 2007). Despite the popular more enthusiastic support started to curb with the prospect of the Eastern enlargement (and subsequent reduction of EU structural and cohesion funds) and even more so during the international bailout period upon the impact of the draconian cuts that affected all public policies and economic assistance measures, it exhibited an intriguing degree of resilience. This is because as of July 2016 trust in the EU has steadily grown amongst the Portuguese citizens reaching 58% in 2019, according to the data provided by the Eurobarometer Standard surveys³.

At this point, it is worth underlining that since the very early days of the country's full-fledged membership, national political and diplomatic authorities have showed a sustained concern with Portugal being perceived as a 'good student' by both the European peers and Brussels-based institutions. This expression was recurrently used by the former President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors. At the time, Aníbal Cavaco Silva was the Portuguese Prime Minister and the image of the country as 'good student' became part of his political legacy (1986-1995). Acting as a 'good student' would enable Portugal to overcome its peripheral condition(s) and assert itself as a responsible and credible partner. So, it was deemed important that the country get actively involved in all policy areas considered to be pertinent for the advancement of the integration process. As the former Prime Minister, António Guterres, stressed: Portugal "must be

³ Cf. Directorate-General for Communication. (July 2016) *Standard Eurobarometer 85*; (December 2016) *Standard Eurobarometer 86*; (August 2017) *Standard Eurobarometer 87*; European Commission; Directorate-General for Communication. (December 2017) *Standard Eurobarometer 88*; (June 2018) *Standard Eurobarometer 89*; (December 2018) *Standard Eurobarometer 90*; (August 2019) *Standard Eurobarometer 91*; European Commission; Directorate-General for Communication. (December 2019) *Standard Eurobarometer 92*.

part of *all dimensions of the European integration process* even when those dimensions do not embrace all continent or all member states of the EU” (Guterres, 1999:73 – Author’s translation and emphasis).

Over time, this has been mainly done through efforts towards securing a place in the vanguard group of more ambitious ‘willing and able’ countries leading the major integration initiatives; and also at centre of a collective decision-making process that would inescapably affect the country. Thus, since 1986 Portugal became involved in all pioneering ventures of the European economic and political project, notably the completion of the Single Market, the foundation and functioning of the EMU, the establishment of the Schengen Agreement, the historic enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe, and the development of the CSDP with the aim of endowing the EU with autonomous military capacity to respond effectively to international crisis. The same can be said regarding labours made by the governmental authorities to put a definitive end to the Union’s existential crisis that had been haunting the EU since the collapse of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005; and to position the future of the EU back on track on the basis of a comprehensive political compromise befitting an enlarged Union of 27 member states. This was made through fostering the indispensable politico-diplomatic brokerage, bridge-building and consensus for the signing up of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 while the country was for the third time at the helm of the EU (Ferreira-Pereira, 2008).

Incidentally, before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the Presidency of the EU Council presented itself as a unique window of opportunity for Portuguese authorities to show the country’s commitment to the deepening of the integrative venture. Like a badge of honour, it helped to enhance Portugal’s standing within the Brussels political community and internationally. This occurred when, in each Presidency period of six months, the diligent management of leadership tasks and coordination responsibilities as well as policy entrepreneurship, particularly in the CFSP purview, enabled national authorities to make the country’s voice heard within the EU and in the world. Moreover, as demonstrated in the following section, the fulfilment of such high-level chores signaled visibly that the Portuguese leadership have internalized a more eminently political outlook of the European project in the sequence of a dynamic view of national interest.

The Presidencies of the Council of the European Union: The Emergence of a Creative and Self-Assured Member State

In 1986, amidst national political elites, prevailed a view of EC as an eminently economic collective undertaking. For this reason, particular attention was paid to the material dividends that Portugal could derive from membership as a ‘convergence country’ in order to ensure its own process of economic and social development (Soares, 2007). In fact, although at the time membership to the EC was also perceived as entailing engagement in a political project, the Community’s political dimension was viewed with great caution (Vasconcelos, 2000). This was due to the country’s strong Atlanticist vocation mainly determined by three factors: the Cold War setting, the longstanding diplomatic alignment with the UK - one of the ardent advocates of Atlanticism within the EC -, and the dependency of national defence upon NATO (Ferreira-Pereira, 2007). Yet, under the impact of post-Cold War groundbreaking events, but especially as a result of the lessons learned during the first Presidency of the EU Council in 1992 (related, for example, with the Yugoslav crisis and East Timor) and growing socialization into the EU *engrenage*, national leaders became more pro-European, convinced of the import of CFSP and embraced the European political integration (Magone, 2001; Soares, 2007; Ferreira-Pereira, 2007; 2014c; Vasconcelos, 2000).

Equally important, Portugal joined the EC with a global outlook as a legacy of its historic experience as a global power crystallized during the Golden Age of Discoveries, which made an indelible imprint on the country’s foreign policy identity. For political authorities in Lisbon participation in the EC, in providing access to collective human and material resources, would allow the country to amplify its voice and status on the international scene. In this way, the ancrage to the EC was judged to have the potential to instill renewed dynamism to the longstanding relations with Brazil and the former African colonies (Vines, 2012; Vasconcelos 1997). Given the country’s internationalist pedigree, which had enabled it to foster a large community of Portuguese speaking countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, national foreign policy makers became gradually confident about their capacity to build bridges of dialogue between Europe and the world. Along these lines, prior but especially after accession, the potential for a political symbiotic relationship was identified: Portugal could use the Community’ institutions and policy instruments as vehicles for promoting national interests, namely international relevance, on the one hand; and the EC could capitalize on the global credentials of Portugal to achieve increased clout as an

international actor, on the other. Not surprisingly, the reinforcement of the Community's ties with the world featured clearly among the priorities in 1992. And such priority would continue to inspire mottos and aims of all subsequent Presidencies of the EU Council.

Illustrative of this was the attention paid during the first European Presidency to the Union's relations with Latin America, notably the Mercosur countries (Vasconcelos, 2000; Magone, 2001), as indicated by the organization of the first EC-Mercosur Summit (May 1992). Latin America corresponded to a geographical area to which Portugal was linked through longstanding historic and cultural ties. Thus, from the point of view of national authorities it was crucial to seize the opportunity provided by the first tenure of Presidency to carve out the EC's relationship with that region through the institutionalization of a formal routine of consultation and cooperation based on new agreements. In such a multilateral dynamics, relations with Brazil stood out as particularly important. Hence the labours of the Portuguese Presidency conducive to the signing up of a third generation agreement with this country that can be considered the predecessor of the formal EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership established two-and-a-half decades later under the auspices of the Portuguese Presidency of 2007.

There is a small, albeit consistent, body of academic literature approaching the Portuguese Presidencies of the Council of European Union that started to develop since the first decade of 2000s (Cunha and Magone, 2015; Magone, 2015; Robinson, 2015a; Ferreira-Pereira, 2008; Edwards and Wiessala, 2001). This specific literature touches upon the way in which successive governments endeavoured to project national foreign policy interests and preferences onto the EU agenda ('uploading'). Particular emphasis was given to entrepreneurial initiatives and strategies designed to reap "the fruits of Portugal's post-colonial links and affinities in playing the 'Lusophone world card' based on areas of natural expertise and influence comprising more than 250 million people" (Ferreira-Pereira and Groom, 2014: 221). Examples of this include the organization of two EU-African Summits, in 2000 and 2007 that corroborated the country's distinctive role as the promoter of Euro-African relations. There is also the establishment of an EU-Brazil strategic partnership and a special partnership with Cape-Verde during the 2007 Presidency; and preparations for a civilian mission in Guinea-Bissau to be launched during 2008. Various contributions acknowledges that the country was able to punch above its weight while managing to 'upload' national strategic interests to the realm of CFSP by drawing effectively its European peers' attention and resources to such areas and regional actors. Consequently, it

gathered further credibility and status in the eyes of its European peers (Magone, 2015; Robinson 2015a; Ferreira-Pereira, 2008).

As some studies demonstrate, the quest for credibility also moved national authorities to contribute in a tangible way to the expansion of CSDP that embodies the security and defence dimension of the European project which corresponds to the inner core area of the political integration process (Robinson 2015a; Ferreira-Pereira 2014c). Indeed, several scholarly analyses recognize that during the 2000 Presidency, political and diplomatic authorities showed ability to sustain the momentum inaugurated by the historic Saint Malo meeting between Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac in December 1998, as a result of which the European debate on security and defence gained unprecedented impetus leading up to the creation of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in the European Council of Cologne in June 1999; and subsequent innovative developments approved in Helsinki, in December 1999. More concretely, their endeavours helped the EU to move forward on the road to the consolidation of the ESDP, notably by means of overseeing the institutionalization of its operative politico-military apparatus (Ferreira-Pereira 2007; 2014c; Edwards and Wiessala, 2001). In 2007, tangible contribution to the advancement of the Union's security and defence pillar was made through securing the political consensus around and agreement of the Lisbon Treaty, whose provisions reinforced the now designated CSDP. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, all this was accomplished with the Portuguese authorities making sure that ESDP structures, functions and tools were setting up in full respect to NATO's prime role in the realm of European collective defence (Robinson 2015b; Ferreira-Pereira, 2007; 2014c).

Over the decades, the predominant preoccupation in sustaining the image as the 'good student' in the EC/EU classroom has conditioned, to some extent, policy entrepreneurship and diplomatic creativity. Sometimes, however, some political decisions adopted by Portuguese leadership enabled the country to transcend the 'good student' posture and to assert itself as a creative and more self-assured player in pursuit of greater international protagonism. Hence its engagement in constructive bridge-building and mobilization of intra-European consensus around new visions about the role that the EU should play in the world (Ferreira-Pereira, 2008). The most paradigmatic example of this proactive posture is the approval of the 2000 Lisbon Strategy with the ambition of transforming the EU into the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world within a decade (Soares, 2007; Magone, 2015); and the signing up of the Lisbon Treaty in

December 2007 which enabled to leave a Portuguese permanent imprint on the European integration process. The significance attributed to the promotion of multilateralism, multipolarity and interregionalism through extending and strengthening the EU' relations with Brazil, India, Mercosur, African Union is also seen as a case in point (Robinson, 2015a; Ferreira-Pereira, 2008).

The euphoria with the triumphs conquered during the 2007 EU Council Presidency and the subsequent entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty proved to be short-lived. The eye of the international economic and financial storm, which started with the collapse of the Lehman Brothers in 2008, hit Portugal very fiercely, exposing deficiencies of the country's economy, fiscal policy and structural reforms (Gorjão, 2012; Royo, 2013; 2015). Its variegated repercussions were still echoing when in 2020 the devastating coronavirus pandemic engulfed Europe and the world in unparalleled trying times.

A part from the challenges springing from the Covid19 crisis that turned feral in the country at the beginning of 2021, the continued complexity surrounding the Brexit process and the post-Trump scenario of uncertainty in transatlantic relations, the fourth Presidency of the EU (January-June 2021) was expected to face national authorities with new issues engendered by the post-Lisbon Treaty changes in the institutional set up. These alterations have converted the Presidency of the EU Council into a presidential exercise of 'second order' and eminently administrative given the sizeable reduction of the rotating presidency's powers in the domain of external representation. To this less prestigious mission contributed the creation of the permanent post of the President of the European Council, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the two-headed post of High Representative of the Foreign and Security Policy (also Vice-President of the European Commission).

Despite the transformed institutional landscape, the general concern with making a 'good' Presidency on the part of António Costa-led government remained strong. This is so because eventual dividends stemming from the country's image of proficiency, efficiency and elevated commitment to the European integration in Covid19 highly testing times were deemed be long lasting, both in the history of the national diplomacy and the annals of the European project. The fact that the fourth EU Presidency coincided with a celebratory context for being held in the year that marked the 35th anniversary of Portugal's EU membership amplified such reputational concern.

Against this background, Portuguese authorities placed emphasis upon the “aim at strengthening Europe’s resilience and people’s confidence in the European social model by promoting a Union based on the common values of solidarity, convergence and cohesion.” For that reason, the Presidency’s agenda focused on five major priorities, namely Resilient Europe, Social Europe, Green Europe, Digital Europe and Global Europe, which underpinned the presidential motto ‘Time to deliver: For a fair green and digital recovery’⁴. The serious socio-economic consequences of Covid-19 pandemic for the Union and its member states only added strength to the imperative of placing the “European social model at the heart of the EU’s agenda”, while advancing the digital and green transition (already in progress) under the catalytic impetus of the pandemic. In this regard, the governmental authorities felt particularly successful with the results achieved at the Porto Social Summit held in May (enshrined in the so-called ‘Porto Commitment’), paving the path to a tangible implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. This high level meeting came just before another highlight of the Portuguese Presidency which was the EU-India Leaders Meeting with a goal of stepping up the European strategic relationship existing with this pivotal player in economic and trade spheres; but also to enhance the EU’s role in Indo-Pacific region in times of rising geostrategic competition. Here, yet again, Portugal was able to capitalize on both its historically close relations with India and achievements attained in previous EU Presidencies while projecting national preferences regarding an area of national strategic interest.

The 2021 EU Portuguese Presidency was also marked by the circumstance that Portugal was the first member state to submit formally its recovery and resilience plan to the European Commission allowing the country to become one of the beneficiaries of a 750 billion fund to help Europe repair the economic and social losses caused by the coronavirus crisis⁵. Such swift move, materialized on the 22 April 2021 - three days prior to the national holiday celebrating the Carnation Revolution (25 April 1974) -, was symptomatic of the national authorities’ continued endeavours to feature Portugal as a model state. But it was surely, yet again, a stark indication of a survival strategy to ensure access to external grants and loans as the basis to envisage a viable

⁴ See “Time to deliver: a fair, green and digital recovery” <https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/programme/programme-for-the-portuguese-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union/>

⁵ The Portuguese plan totals €13.9 billion of grants and €2.7 billion of loans; and must involve expenditure in investments and reforms supporting climate/green goals and digital transition objectives. See <https://www.euronews.com/2021/04/22/portugal-becomes-first-eu-country-to-submit-its-pandemic-recovery-plan>

future for the country that remained structurally anchored in a protracted economic dependency upon the European funds.

From the Bailout Trauma to Dismal Brexit and the Global Coronavirus Pandemic: The Gaps in the Literature

In 2011, the Portuguese government requested financial assistance from the EU and the International Monetary Fund, a development which led to an emergency bailout to deal with a soaring sovereign debt. The financial aid programme brought about a traumatic political, economic and social experience whose consequences and lessons learned remain open to theoretical, empirical and methodological approaches to be explored in depth. Few studies to date have focused on its effects upon Portuguese foreign policy, notably upon the Europeanization and de-Europeanization dynamics (Raimundo et al, 2021). Under the conditions imposed by the successive austerity programmes and economic hardship, the ‘good student’ image alluded in previous sections suffered a considerable blow, as evinced by comparisons to Greece that were vehemently rejected by the Portuguese policy-makers (Magone, 2014). At the same time, the condition of Portugal as a debtor country worsened substantially, further increasing national policy maker’s alignment with, not to say subservience vis-à-vis, Germany preferences and goals (Raimundo et al, 2021: 539) whilst further exposing it to vocal criticism on the part of the so-called frugal states (particularly, Finland and the Netherlands). So, a stimulating avenue for further research bridging theoretical and empirical analysis, might result from the identification of coping strategies and approaches adopted by Portuguese political leadership during and after the sovereign debt crisis to restore the country’s model member state status, inextricably connected to its pursuit of credibility and respectability as a responsible European partner.

The beginning of the economy and financial turmoil in Portugal coincided with the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty which was accompanied by further differentiation in the intensity of participation by member states in different policy areas, Eurosceptic contestation and political, economic and social domestic conditions favourable to the spill back of Europeanization dynamic. Yet, the study of the significance and implications of the Lisbon Treaty for the Portuguese membership to the EU call for more academic interest since it has not achieved a great deal.

Equally important, with the beginning of the ordeal in coping with the economic and financial crisis, Portugal had to tackle simultaneously several adversities in order to continue to get international assistance. Some of these difficulties moved national authorities to adopt gradually a more open stance towards Chinese initiatives and proposals, a tendency that continued to take roots after the launching of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013. This has not been without politico-diplomatic consequence for the country's relations with its European peers and Brussels-based institutions. Yet, references to this topic in the literature are still thin on the ground (Raimundo et al 2021; Ferreira-Pereira and Duarte, 2021), calling for more systematic scholarly enquiry.

As a game changer, the Brexit process conducive to the withdrawal of the UK from the EU, in January 2021, has opened up a totally novel avenue for research. For this reason, more studies are needed to advance understanding on how Portugal will accommodate the resulting manifold changes not only in its relations with the remaining member states, notably key players like Germany and France; but also in its diplomatic activity towards the UK and US (Raimundo and Ferreira-Pereira, 2021). Moreover, future analyses on to what extent the unfolding of the Brexit will influence the country's self-perception of its role in the EU and the world will be valuable contributions to the field of research.

Due to its global and earth-shattering effects, the Covid-19 pandemic emerged as a highly disruptive occurrence facing the EU with a multitude of crisis, risks and challenges. Considering that since 1986 Portuguese authorities have sought in the EU a stable shelter to ensure political and social stability and economic growth, the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 prompted a new constellation of problems for a small country that had not fully recovered from the traumatic post-2008 crisis experience. The ways in which Portugal tangibly contributes to the European collective responses to the coronavirus pandemic and how effectively it responds at the national level to the multifaceted challenges and opportunities will have a bearing on its place in the European integration process and its continued commitment to the EU over the next decades. Some of these contributions and responses gained expression during the fourth Presidency of the EU Council that deserves close examination since it was the first undertaken after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, in a post-Brexit and post-Trump landscape; and also under the impact of pandemic conditions. Others contributions and responses will result from the future implementation of the PRR that will open new and interesting topics for research. Certainly, taken as a whole, this might

well generate another distinctive research agenda that would benefit from a comparative investigation across a decade of crises to appraise the depth and cumulative consequences of the successive different crises (i.e. the sovereign debt crisis, the Brexit and Coronavirus pandemic) in the continuous transformative journey of Portugal as a full-fledged EU member.

Conclusion

By tracing the integrative experience of Portugal, this chapter has cast light on the general transformational process that this country has undergone during more than three decades in order to meet a plethora of challenges stemming from the increasingly complex and intrusive European integration project. Overall, membership to the EU of this small and peripheral Southern European state with an authoritarian and colonial past has hitherto influenced every facet of its political, economic and social changes following the transition to liberal democracy, market economy system and a Euro-Atlantic foreign policy orientation. Undoubtedly, at the critical post-coronavirus pandemic juncture, the former will continue to further mould current policy responses to national, European and global challenges, foreign policy behaviour patterns and future aspirations, whilst Lisbon's authorities strive to emulate the most economically and socially resilient EU member states.

Historically, successive Portuguese governments have engaged in denser collective cooperation to attempt to shape integration and the operation of the EU in the world, notably by promoting the expansion of its foreign policy reach and level of ambition. Consequently, Lusophone Africa and Latin America, with an emphasis being placed upon Brazil, saw their prominence renewed. This occurred especially, albeit not exclusively, against the backdrop of the EU Council Presidencies in 1992, 2000 and 2007, which witnessed the country transcending the position of 'good student' to assert itself as a more creative and self-assured player within the EU, but also in the world. Underlying such evolution was a positive change of heart towards embracing the European project as a whole, that is to say, an 'ever closer' economic and political Union. Along these lines, the cumulative experience of being at the helm of the EU has contributed to crystalize structurally Portugal's committed Europeanism, which was corroborated during its fourth Presidency of the EU Council, in 2021.

As this chapter has testified, there is a wide variety of topics that have received insufficient or no academic attention at all. This can easily engender new areas for further research combining

diverse theoretical perspectives, empirical analysis and methodological approaches. Novel and interesting directions for investigation springs naturally from the dearth of research scrutinizing the opportunities, challenges and dilemmas facing national authorities as they strive to uphold the country's committed membership to an EU unprecedentedly distressed by successive crisis rounds. The impact of 2008 economic crisis in the Portuguese participation in and position within the EU is a case in point. This is something that needs to be overcome particularly in view of developing political and diplomatic difficulties posed to the national European strategy as a result of Portugal's open posture vis-à-vis Chinese activities, inside and outside the realm of the BRI. Numerous challenges fostered by the impact of both the effective materialization of the Brexit and the dynamic pandemic developments within the EU – a vital 'shelter' on which the country has been relying to secure its own economic growth and social stability -, can easily provide veritable sources for the fertility of this area of research.

What of the future? New articles and books are expected to be published about the evolutionary paths, transformative trends and future advances of Portugal's involvement in the European project. This would be very welcome especially if they succeed in generating original theoretical perspectives and insights into still unexplored themes and debates, thereby advancing understanding of singularities underpinning the Portuguese experience of integration. Hopefully, in a decade or two, it will be a pleasure to report on the vitality and strength regarding the state of health of research dedicated to Portugal in the EU as a field of growing academic interest.

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