

## XXIII Conferência Internacional de Lisboa

### Sessão temática

### Prioridades para a Acção Externa de Portugal

### Relações Bilaterais

#### *Relations between Brazil and Portugal: From Caravelas to Telenovelas and Beyond*

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1. Relations between Brazil and Portugal have never been as close as the heady rhetoric about a shared history, language and culture would suggest, and whatever the significance attributed to Portugal by the status of Pedro Álvares Cabral in Ibirapuera Park in São Paulo. These links are certainly less intense than those between Britain and Australia and New Zealand, and the US. And whatever the grandiose ambitions of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) established in 1996, which also includes Angola, Guiné Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique, St. Thomas and Prince, and East Timor, (although Mozambique also chose to enter the Commonwealth), that entity is in no way comparable to the Commonwealth that unites Britain and its former colonies. Indeed, there is some irony in the fact that, in contrast to the Spanish colonial possessions in the Americas, Independence was declared not by local creoles chafing under the impositions of the metropolis, but by a Portuguese King, Dom Pedro I: the Portuguese crowned head preferred to defect from the metropolis and lead the rebellion against the homeland rather than return home (from whence he had departed to escape Napoleon's troops, a country 95 times smaller in terms of area, and with 18 times less population today).[1]
2. If one leaves aside the overblown expectations arising from much Luso-Brazilian rhetoric, what one finds is a healthy and vibrant relationship in almost all fields of human activity, from the economic and social, to the political and cultural. In 1991, a bilateral heads of state summit process was reinitiated in 1991, with modification of the 1953 Treaty of Friendship and Consultation with a new Framework Cooperation Agreement.[2] Portugal is the only European country with which Brazil has such regular bilateral head of state summits, and the process has played a key role in pushing forward an increasingly ambitious agenda. From 1995 onwards in particular, the bilateral agenda became increasingly dense and varied, going beyond caravelas and telenovelas, and addressing a wide ranging political dialogue, closer economic and investment ties, ranging from telecoms to supermarkets, and increasingly varied cultural agenda that transcends the classic 'stereotypes' and an attempt to maximise the asset of a common language by establishing the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), and last but not least, a focus on the common goals of regional integration as a means to overcome a historically fragile and dependent insertion in the global economy, and as a way to protect democratic institutions at home and in the neighbourhood.
3. Further, despite the great differences and physical distance between the two countries, there are many shared problems and challenges, not least of which is the consolidation of an efficient rule of law based democracy, in which the forces of law and order can be relied upon to operate with impartiality and celerity, and, further, the search for a development model that is sensitive to the need to compete in a global economy but is also capable to generating social cohesion and eliminating

extreme poverty. In other words, there is enormous scope for development and, what is more, an opportunity for a relationship between equals where the overcoming of such key political and social problems is.

### **The Distant and Recent Past: A Summary**

1. Between 1500 and 1822,[3] when Brazil gained its independence, relations between the two countries were, if not typical (the Calibanised Prospero) at least within the mould of those between colony. Ties remained strong after independence, in part because of the existence of a bi-national monarchy, with the father João Sixth in Portugal, and Pedro First, the son, in Rio. Between 1822 and 1889, ties between Portugal and the only monarchy among republics in South America cooled, but the ties were strong nonetheless. It is noteworthy that the same king Pedro (First) wrote the constitutional texts for Portugal (1826) and Brazil (1824), mirror images of one another, which survived until 1910 and 1889, respectively. It is equally noteworthy that while definitively the King of Brazil, Pedro (Second), opted for interment in Portugal.
2. Between 1889 and 1926 close ties took on a new political dimension, as Brazil inaugurated its Republic, influencing political events in Portugal, where the monarchy came to an end in 1910 after a republican revolt. The instability suffered by the republican regimes was similar. This was a period of high Portuguese migration to Brazil, and of close intellectual contact between republican circles. The proximity of political developments between the two countries continued into the second half of the twentieth century, albeit at different rhythms. In Brazil, a military coup put an end to the Republic and signalled the coming to power of Getúlio Vargas, who instituted the New State, modelled along the lines of the Salazar regime that had come to power in Portugal only a few years earlier, after a military coup in 1926.
3. After the Second War, the paths between the two countries diverged, in the wake of a period during which trade and social interchange diminished as a result of the great depression and the havoc wreaked by war in Europe. So while Brazil turned to democracy in 1945, the Salazar regime consolidated its hold in Portugal, and the former colony became a haven for many exiles of the Portuguese regime; however, Brazil's democratic experiment was cut short in the midst of intense political polarisation informed by the dichotomies of Cold War politics, by a military coup in 1964. Although both regimes were anti-communist and repressive, and although both became increasingly internationally isolated (for human rights violations in the case of Brazil, and for a stubborn commitment to colonialism in Africa in the case of Portugal), and although there was mutual sympathy between the regimes,[4] the nature of Salazarism and the new military authoritarianism in Brazil was quite different.
4. In 1974, initiating what Huntington has called the 'third wave' of democratisation, Portugal underwent a left-wing officer led Revolution, heralding an era of intense political change which transformed national foreign policy and the country's insertion into the international system. The colonies were surrendered, and although retaining its traditional 'Atlantic vocation' (as a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO), strong relations with Britain and the links with the US created by the Azores base, among other factors), Portugal began to turn to Europe, initiating negotiations to enter the European Economic Community (EEC), and acceding with

Spain, to the group in 1986. In Brazil, the regime began to liberalise in 1976, suffered a political defeat with the *diretas já* campaign in 1982, and transferred power to a civilian government in 1985. After the passage of a new constitution and the first free democratic elections in 1988, Brazil finally returned to democracy in 1989.

5. By this time, Portugal had undergone very significant social and political change, and the distance between the two countries seemed to be great. Portuguese investment in the country was practically non-existent and migration flows had stemmed significantly, as Portuguese migrants had opted increasingly for other Western European countries from the 1960s onwards. However, there was some Brazilian investment in Portugal,[5] and the beginnings of what has become Brazil's popular cultural 'imperialism-in-reverse,' with the arrival of the first soap operas in Portugal.
6. The most recent phase in Portuguese relations with Brazil, from the early 1990s to the present, has been characterised by X factors: (1) The insertion of both countries into regional integration schemes – the EU and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) – and the establishment of closer bilateral ties as members of these groups, as well as a concomitant attachment of strategic significance to regional integration as a promoter of a fairer, more balanced and more multilateral international system (and for Brazil, a way to further ties with the EC and counterbalance the power of the US through trade diversification and closer political ties with Europe). The most obvious result of this was the 1995 signature of an economic and political association agreement between the EU and the MERCOSUR, the first ever between two regional blocs; (2) Reinsertion as democracies into the international system, with a concomitant attachment to a new normative framework of respect for basic civil and political rights (human rights) and democracy, and for international multilateral institutions, particularly the UN; (3) The liberalisation and privatisation of the economies of both countries, within the approximate logic of the Washington Consensus, and rapid (albeit delayed until after the debt crisis, and thereafter unstable, in the case of Brazil) economic growth, and dramatically increased private investment as a result of that, particularly of Portuguese investment in Brazil; (4) a shift in migration flows, with many Portuguese moving to Brazil, particularly the northeast, but above all, with a massive flow of Brazilians to Portugal from the early 1980s onwards, newly attractive as a growingly prosperous member of the EC. This flow initially consisted of professionals and later of lower middle class and poorer people escaping from the impact of economic crisis in the 1980s and early 1990s, and signalled the historical transformation of Portugal from a migrant sender to a receiving country; (5) and an increasingly complex and rich cultural and academic relationship, with enormous potential for growth, which is contributing gradually to breaking down long-held cultural stereotypes on both sides of the Atlantic.
7. The second part of this paper focuses on these five aspects of relations. The third section then goes on to examine some areas of 'neglect' that could intensify and qualitatively alter political relations between the two countries, namely: stronger direct political ties, through political party links; stronger multilateral coordination that takes advantage of the very similar normative wavelengths of the two countries where key international issues are concerned; a focus on social issues through a selective thematic approach to the questions of social exclusion – particularly the social integration of migrants (or how to address multiculturalism), HIV/AIDS, and the links

between poverty and environmental degradation; a focus on human rights – particularly rights of women, children and the prison population – and a concomitantly a policy to establish closer civil society contacts, with deliberate coordination of NGO work, and to promote greater exchange between police and judicial authorities; and last but not least, the a new direction in academic study and policy research, with the development in Portugal of the study of Brazilian political, social and economic reality as an issue of interest in and of itself (rather than studies about Portugal that focus on Brazil), and as a means to extend Portugal's vision beyond Brazil to the rest of Latin America, and essential aspect of developing relations with and taking economic advantage of the association with the MERCOSUR, whose other members are all Spanish-speaking, and may come to include a country with a vast Portuguese community – Venezuela – which is currently presenting political challenges in the region that Brazil is committed to attempting to resolve.

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[1] The nature of the unique relationship between Brazil (much larger, much higher economic output) and Portugal (the only country that shifted its metropolis to a colony) is analyzed by Boaventura Sousa Santos, who calls Portugal colonizer and itself colonized (“The Portuguese Prospero is not just a Calibanized Prospero; he is a very Caliban from the viewpoint of European super-Prosperos.”) See: Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Inter-Identity,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 39 (2) winter 2002: 9-43.

[2] In September 2002, the *Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Consultation* entered into force lays out the guidelines and areas of cooperation in bilateral relations, and established a Permanent Bilateral Commission headed by appointees of the ministries of foreign affairs, to follow through with its application.

[3] This period should be subdivided: 1500-1807 (minimal territorial consolidation, an only recently finished process); 1640-1668 (war with Spain over the colonies and Brazil as an imperial priority); 18th century (consolidation of Portuguese dependence on Brazil, and melding of the fates of both to the point of moving the court (King João Sixth, and 15,000 people) to Rio in 1807); early 19th century (establishment of key institutions – military schools, national bank, national library and press, medical schools, typical of a colonial administration, culminating in the 1815 declaration and international recognition of Brazil as a United Kingdom of Portugal and the Algarves, and intensified rebel movements, culminating in the 1822 ‘Grito de Ipiranga’ issued by Pedro First himself).

[4] One of the interesting cultural manifestations of authoritarian like-mindedness is the Luso-Tropicalism as originally espoused by Gilberto Freyre, which Portugal adopted as a quasi-official ideology/myth about its special relations with its African colonies, based on the supposedly unique capacity of the Portuguese to adapt to the tropics and cross the cultural divide through social promiscuity and miscegenation (in contrast with the Anglo-Saxon model of separation and discrimination as exemplified by Apartheid). See: Claudia Castelo, *Claudia, O modo português de estar no mundo: O luso tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa, 1933-1961*. (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1999).

[5] Trade with EC states from the 1970s was low it increased gradually until by 1995 German investment in Brazil was second only to that of the US, with Britain France and Italy and Portugal relatively distant seconds.