

## Portugal and Latin American Studies (1980-2000)

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The studies on Latin America developed in Portugal in the last 20 years have basically focused on the traditional geographical area of Brazil as a consequence of the strong historical ties between the two countries which have strong cultural and economic relations and share Portuguese as their official language. As a result, the number of studies produced on the other Latin American countries is much less in spite of the fact that Portugal has important emigrant communities in countries such as Argentina and Venezuela, or that many of the situations experienced in other Latin American countries constitute important case studies in several domains. Although history is my disciplinary background, I believe that the area of humanities studies has been quantitatively more significant in Latin America research produced in Portugal last twenty years.

### **The Institutional Promotion of Research and the Case of Brazil**

The Portuguese-speaking world constituted by Portugal, Brazil and the Portuguese-speaking African countries and benefiting from closer political proximity over the last two decades (1980-2000) has established a platform for the exchange of knowledge and for the development, although limited, of a number of joint projects in different fields of the human and social sciences. However, far from answering the expectations of a gradual strengthening and diversification of the relations between these countries, the cultural and scientific exchange has almost exclusively occurred between Portugal and Brazil, allowing for experiences that enhance mutual knowledge through the development of projects involving researchers of both countries. As a result, books have been published, scientific meetings and congresses organised, and a number of cooperation protocols between research institutes have been signed.

The events commemorating the *500 Years of the History of the Portuguese Discoveries* are a decisive reference for the whole process, since they were responsible for the availability of funding and the institution of official bilateral committees that included in their activities support for research projects and dissemination of results in the fields of the human and social sciences. Although there had already been some discussions on common areas of research since the democratisation of both countries (some sporadic congresses, for example, on the Inquisition and the Jewish Diaspora), the action of the *National Commission for the Commemorations of the Portuguese Discoveries* were crucial in bringing Portugal and Brazil closer together, both by promoting numerous meetings (economics, sociology, law, geography, history, politics and international relations during 1999-2000) and by the publication of books and organisation of important exhibitions which captured the interest of the general public and made possible the publication of

extremely well-documented catalogues (such were the cases of the exhibits *A Construção do Brasil*, *D. João VI e o seu tempo*, *Memória da Amazônia*, *O 'Brasileiro' de Torna-Viagem*, *Os Índios, nós*, among others). Consequently, Portuguese researchers took this opportunity to again focus on the study of common issues. Similarly, Brazilian researchers embraced the opportunity to study Portuguese issues related with Brazil, although the themes that were studied focused on the common history, particularly the period between 1500 and 1822.

Naturally, the end of the commemorations raised the question on how the same level of co-operation was to be maintained between the two research communities. Without this official support and visibility, continuity would depend on the researchers and institutions (particularly academic research centres), which had, in any case, already developed studies on Brazil or, more generally, the historical relations between Portugal and Brazil. In fact, when considering structural dissemination through education, the history of Brazil is offered as a subject of many undergraduate and master's degrees in History and Cultural Studies. Furthermore, it is worth noting that between 1980-2000, new master's programs directly related to Brazil or more generally to Latin America were created (for example, in *History and Culture of Brazil* at the University of Lisbon, in *Iberian-American History* at Portucalense University, in *Historical Relations among Portugal, Brazil, Africa and the Far East* and *Brazilian Studies* at the University of Porto, and in *Expansion and Emigration* at the University of Minho) offering correlated themes and approaches, and assuring a continuous flow of studies and dissertations. Nevertheless, the fact that these dissertations are seldom published drastically reduces their dissemination outside the academic sphere. Therefore, it is vital that effective ways are found to ensure their dissemination; otherwise the effort invested in the production of knowledge will be completely wasted.

There are a number of research centres and institutes affiliated with Portuguese universities today that do promote the study of Brazilian society and culture, encourage exchange activities, arrange meetings among researchers, produce articles and papers for specialised publications, and publish studies on Brazilian social and human sciences (see for example the academic journals *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, *Revista Portuguesa de História*, *Penélope*, *Ler História*, and *População e Sociedade*).

Therefore, the major causes for the interest in studying social issues of Latin American countries and their implications do not reside in the ephemeral and conjunctural activities of the Commemorations of the 500 years of the History of the Portuguese Discoveries, but in the major transformations that occurred in the world from the 1980s onwards. One of the major transformations during that period was the reordering of ideologies and its repercussions on the research field. The collapse of Positivism and Marxism as systems of knowledge impelled the need to elaborate new theoretical frameworks and epistemological stances, which have yet to be fully apprehended in all their dimensions within the scientific community. These issues were object of discussion at the First Congress on Luso-Afro-Brazilian Social Sciences, held from 2-5 July 1990 in Coimbra. This congress brought together researchers in the social sciences from the Portuguese-speaking countries and took place at a very important moment. The events of the 1970s had signalled the end of the 'Portuguese Empire': the democratisation process that took

place in Portugal after the Revolution of 25 April 1974, and the consequent independence processes of the former Portuguese African colonies (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and S. Thomas and Prince), followed by the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil.

The themes discussed at the First Congress revealed the issues that marked the social sciences research agenda in the Portuguese-speaking countries: democracy and social injustices; new social subjects; cultural transitions, knowledge and identities; social research practices; citizenship, State and public policies; culture, ways of life and socialisation practices; women, family and social transformation; rural and urban life, production, work and employment (*Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 1991-1992, numbers 32, 33 and 34). It is worth noting that this congress is held biennially and one of its aims is the creation of an *Association for the Social and Human Sciences in the Portuguese Language*.

Carlos G. Mota mentions these issues in a paper presented at the First Congress in which he contends that 'it is urgent to reanalyse the historical processes of a remarkably heterogeneous group of peoples', particularly now that the myth of 'lusotropicalism' based on the alleged concept that the Portuguese tended to miscegenation, a theory founded by Gilberto Freyre and used as an ideological lever by those who supported imperialism, has died out with the decolonisation process. If we take into consideration the changes resulting from the recent events which have reshaped the role of world powers, it becomes clear that one of the challenges faced by researchers is to define a new identity within the new group of Portuguese-speaking countries, a group of countries that must find the root of a common history based on their diversity, in light of new explanatory paradigms.

### **Some Dominant Trends of Recent Research**

In more specific terms we will attempt to define some approaches for a well planned and focused understanding of the South American reality (a reality which, in the Portuguese case, is almost equivalent to the Brazilian, as mentioned above). Historiography represents the most significant production of studies, particularly the study of the period of colonial administration (1500-1822). The different aspects of the Portuguese colonisation of Brazil (administration, missionary work, economic organisation, slave trade, relations with Africa, cartography, scientific survey, etc.) have been responsible for many works published both in Portugal and Brazil from 1980 to 2000. Since it is impossible to mention all the researchers involved in these studies, we would like to draw attention to a few authors. Jorge Couto published a work on 'the construction of Brazil' in which he analyses the contribution of the Amerindians, Portuguese and Africans in the pioneering days of settlement in Brazil. There are numerous studies by Luís Ferrand de Almeida, and also Ângela Domingues, who has dedicated her research to the eighteenth century policies regarding the natives of the Amazon. The historical vicissitudes of the construction of Brazil constitute the object of many other studies, as evident from the number of articles published in several specialised magazines. *Oceanos* is published by the National Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries. It includes different approaches to the theme of the discovery of Brazil, its territorial organisation, its daily life, the construction of urban spaces, the manu-

facture of jewellery, the fortresses and Portuguese immigration. Other related studies, although more associated with maritime navigation, can be found in *Mare Liberum*, published by the same Commission.

The structure of the Portuguese-Brazilian Empire and its economic, social and cultural characteristics and the study of the colonial independence movements have been the focus of some of the most important historiographic issues. Consequently, among the more general works that have been published in Portugal, we would like to mention the eighth volume of the *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa* dedicated to the Luso-Brazilian Empire (1750-1822). The work includes studies by Brazilian authors and was co-ordinated by Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, a Portuguese author who has dedicated most of her research to the study of Brazilian culture and society. Her efforts to diffuse the history of Brazil in Portugal (*Guia de História do Brasil Colonial*, 1992) is also noteworthy. On a political and economic plane, studies on the decisive role played by the Portuguese monopolistic companies in Brazil during the eighteenth century have also been published, among which the studies of António Carreira are noteworthy. The work of Valentim Alexandre (1992) is obligatory in order to understand the diverse manifestations of the Portuguese-Brazilian colonial system from its golden age to its disintegration, caused by the Liberal revolutions and external affairs, and its repercussions on Portuguese society as well. On the same theme, also important is the work of Jorge Pedreira on the colonial market and its effect on the mother country's economic structures. A synthesis of these issues can be found in a recent collective work, *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, which includes the participation, among others, of the above-mentioned authors and was co-ordinated by Francisco Bethencourt and Kirti Chaudhuri. In the recently published *História de Portugal* edited by José Mattoso, it is possible to find syntheses of different aspects of the history of Latin America, particularly of Brazil, and their repercussions on Portuguese history.

The interest Portuguese researchers have in issues related to Brazil is basically centred on the exchange relations between the two countries: the cultural, economic and even political exchanges during the colonial era or in the post-independence period, where it is possible to clearly identify many mutual influences in terms of the political parliamentary and authoritarian solutions experienced by both countries. Particularly important, however, was the demographic exchange between them, which is characteristic of poor economies and societies that find in migration the most efficient (and sometimes the only) process to support the economic exchange deficit. A few research centres have given some attention to the study of the demographic flows between both countries, and have established protocols and exchanges of researchers: the NEPS (Group for the Study of the Population and Society – Núcleo de Estudos da População e Sociedade) of the University of Minho and the CEPESE (Centre for the Study of Population, Economy and Society – Centro de Estudos da População e Sociedade) of the University of Porto. Both have published several texts related to the study of Brazilian society and particularly the issue of emigration.

The Portuguese emigration movement to Brazil manifests structural aspects and can be traced back to the early days of colonisation. Emigration resulted from two processes: either groups of settlers from northern Portugal and the Atlantic islands of the Azores and Madeira migrated to different regions in Brazil with government

support, or did so spontaneously, generally under the pressure of family and neighbours. After the independence of Brazil, the increasing flow of Portuguese leaving for the former colony assumed a more dramatic aspect in that it no longer reflected the settling of people in different parts of an empire, but the exportation of human labour to a foreign country that was encouraging the emigration of Europeans in order to replace the slave work in the sugar cane and coffee plantations, and in the construction of roads, railways and sea ports. Emigration and its effects marked the nineteenth century political relations between Portugal and Brazil. These relations were based on the paradox that, on the one hand, a small country (the former coloniser) needed the money that was sent back by the emigrants to stabilise its balance of payments, but on the other, it was unable to defend its policy of emigration before public opinion, since the country itself was facing a demographic revolution and economic underdevelopment, given the incipient industrialisation and subsequent lack of employment. There were parliamentary inquiries, reports, statistical data and legislation limiting emigration, but these measures ultimately proved ineffectual in the face of increasing emigration to new destinies in the Americas (namely the United States, Argentina, Venezuela and the Antilles), and, more recently, to other European countries. Thus, Portuguese emigration to Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as one of the more significant social movements of the period, became an object of intense study in search of the applicable classic general laws. In recent years, new general explanations have been produced as to its structural origins (Vitorino Magalhães Godinho), the characteristics of its fluxes and destinies (Joel Serrão) and the framework of political and economic conjunctures (Miriam Halpern Pereira). Other recent works have examined the relationships between place of origin and place of destiny, focusing on a microanalysis of the emigration phenomenon. This research has attempted to contextualise the social background of the emigrant's place of origin in its diverse regional aspects, studying in detail the family background and the individual himself, multiplying the observation scales according to the emigrant's trajectory and based on the elaboration of biographies, associating quantitative and qualitative elements and conferring a renewed importance to the return movements. In this area, the works of Beatriz Rocha Trindade, Sacuntala de Miranda, Maria Ioannis Baganha, Joaquim Costa Leite and Jorge Fernandes Alves, as well as several master's and doctoral dissertations in this particular field are worth mentioning, as well as the catalogue of the exhibition 'O Brasileiro de Torna-Viagem', organised by the National Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries under the supervision of Eugénio dos Santos. This collection of texts seeks to illustrate typical situations experienced by emigrants in their journeys to Brazil and back to their hometowns, and constitutes a good introduction to this topic. Several studies on the lives of emigrants in Brazil have also been published, and again we would like to mention the studies of Beatriz Nizza da Silva on philanthropy and clubs within the Portuguese emigrant community in Brazil. From a different perspective, the dissertation of Heloísa Paulo, on the forms of organisation within the Portuguese community in Brazil (1930-1960), its activities and its political role, either in support or against Salazar's authoritarian regime, is noteworthy. At present, the migratory movement has been reversed with a significant number of Brazilians now looking for work in Portugal. The first studies

on this new phenomenon, either to obtain a more in-depth understanding or to learn how a country traditionally associated with emigration becomes a place of destiny, have been published recently.

Furthermore, these movements have brought other types of exchanges that have influenced different aspects of social life. One important area is art. The studies of Brazilian art (architecture and forms of urban art), its influence on Portuguese art, and the influence of baroque and particularly gilded engravings cannot be contemplated without considering the richness of Minas Gerais gold. Brazilian art also reflects this exchange, namely the well-documented export of neo-medieval architecture to Brazil, as well as other types of influences, such as tile art and some architectural tendencies that, in the nineteenth century, became the stereotype of the 'Brazilian house'. These themes have been an object of study by many Portuguese art historians: for example, José Manuel Fernandes, Natália Ferreira Alves, Regina Anacleto, Paula Peixoto, Miguel Monteiro, among others (see the magazines *Oceanos*, numbers 36-7, 43; and *Camões*, no. 11).

The Luso-Brazilian schools of thought have also been studied (by António Almodovar and José Luís Cardoso). In particular, research has centred on the academics and intellectuals who, in 1808, accompanied the transfer of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro, where they published their economic, social and political views. Education and learning conditions, diffusion of culture and science, the beginning of the press and the structure of public opinion in nineteenth century Brazil have been objects of study by authors such as Jorge Borges de Macedo and Beatriz Nizza da Silva.

The area of the political relations between Portugal and Brazil that, in the past and the present, gave rise to numerous articles of opinion and intention has come to attract historians and researchers in international relations. They seek to produce innovative texts, incorporating new concepts of political science. The period of the independence of Brazil is naturally the most studied (Maria Cândida Proença, Fernanda Paula Maia), but there are also publications on joint perspectives and bibliographic analyses (Amado Luíz Cervo and J. Calvet de Magalhães) and more general interpretations (António José Telo). The field of international relations has favoured new proximity between both countries, due in part to the new position of Portugal within the European Community, representing as such a possible base for Brazilian entry in Europe. Another factor is growing Portuguese investment in Brazil, a country that seeks its integration into a vaster market through the Mercosul. These new facts are responsible for an increased demand for information about Brazil by researchers who had previously not felt the need to consider such issues as, for example, economists and sociologists with entrepreneurial interests.

An issue always present is the nature of the discourse applied to the relations between the Portuguese and the Brazilians from the viewpoint of the colonised people, and includes the role of colonisation, the problem of identities, the levels of exchange and reciprocity. At a moment when the Portuguese discoveries are being commemorated, there is a strong urge for greater cultural proximity. An analysis of the traditional historical, ethnographic and anthropological discourses is a recurrent theme, in which the meaning of commemoration and association is debated. On this topic, see *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, number 38, dedicated to the theme of *Discovering/Concealing*. Particularly interesting is an article by Boaven-

tura Sousa Santos on the issues of 'modernity, identity and a border culture', in which the author emphasises the multicultural facet of Portuguese culture. A different approach is expressed in a paper by Cláudia Castelo, in which she analyses how the Portuguese viewed the polemical theory by the Brazilian, Gilberto Freyre, known as lusotropicalism, and how this theory was used in the Portuguese colonial ideology between 1933 and 1961. This theory attributed the Portuguese with a unique capacity to adapt to the tropics, culminating in miscegenation and in the crossing of cultures.

Literature is probably the channel that has done more to promote not only Brazil but also Latin America in Portugal. Major Brazilian and Spanish-speaking authors have been translated and published in Portugal, and the work of many of them has been the object of in-depth studies. Naturally, 'Brazilian Studies' have always been the most frequently found in Portuguese universities, since there is a common linguistic identity. Particularly relevant are the initiatives of Arnaldo Saraiva in this field, who, along with solid work on the influences of Portuguese and Brazilian Modernism, has promoted Brazilian literature and organised meetings with writers from that country. Furthermore, this researcher and lecturer is also involved in organizing a Master's Course in Brazilian Studies and in overseeing the production of several dissertations. The press, cinema, music and TV soap operas are other highly appreciated forms of expression of Brazilian culture in Portugal, and they have been the subjects of various studies in several areas, from mass media to art critique.

## **Conclusions**

Research in the field of Spanish-speaking Latin American Studies is scarce in Portugal, mainly due to a strong distrust of the Spanish-speaking culture, which is a result of the long historical antagonism between Portugal and Spain, and which has only been overcome since the two countries became full members of the European Community. A good example of this is the fact that only recently has the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language been accepted in secondary schools next to the traditional languages of English, French and German. In a handful of universities, degrees in Spanish studies have now been created in the area of languages and cultures. The study of Spanish culture and history, and consequently, the study of the history of the Spanish-speaking countries, has always been included in the subject of world history or associated with the history of Portugal (particularly those events common to the histories of both countries). Nevertheless, human and social science studies dedicated to the Spanish-speaking American countries are insignificant, despite the above-mentioned emigration to those countries. At first, Portuguese emigrants passed through Brazil before moving on to other countries, but later, in the twentieth century, they went directly to the Spanish-speaking countries and established large communities in Argentina and Venezuela.

Given the linguistic, cultural and human affinities that are a result of several centuries of common history, today Portugal, Brazil and several African countries are linked together in a (as yet, rather fragile) cultural lusophone network. Although it is generally accepted that researchers from both countries are still not taking full advantage of the existing facilities and economic conditions, it is also

true that in the past 20 years there has been considerable evolution, and we are now beginning to see the results of that partnership. Never have we seen so many books about Brazil being published in Portugal, or so many Portuguese researchers visiting Brazil or vice versa. Never have so many colloquia been organised and never have Portuguese universities been so deeply involved in the study and teaching of subjects related to Brazil. Is it enough? Obviously not, but all things considered, major steps have been taken towards greater proximity, despite possible reservations.

Nevertheless, reservations arise regarding the continuity of projects and the evaluation of the results produced by heavy institutional investment (previously, many researchers had never even had the opportunity to carry out any work on Brazil). It is possible that the inevitable consequences of public exposure of appearances and ephemeral events associated with the commemorations may have been counterproductive in the sense that these were detrimental to quality. A greater investment in time, work, patience and discretion (features not usually suitable for commemorative acts) would have thus ensured better results from the institutional investments made.

Other reservations lie in the types of studies made in Portugal about Brazil, which are almost exclusively directed toward the search for links with Portuguese history and as a complement to national issues. Therefore, with few exceptions, the works on Latin American countries seek to find out more about Portuguese reality than to study the specific realities of those countries.

Consequently, and in order to encourage the development of studies dedicated to Latin America, it is necessary to determine the objects to be studied. This should be done without having to abandon the present line of research, but instead by broadening it to include studies in comparative history and new approaches to specific issues particular to the different countries. Latin America will continue to be a complex laboratory for experimentation within the social sciences, and research will decisively contribute towards the understanding of the problems and challenges of our present world. In short, we should start by:

- deepening the studies centred on the problems arising from relations between Portugal and Brazil, and more generally, with Latin America;
- encouraging studies about Brazilian society itself, its diversity and its geo-strategic regional role;
- broadening the scientific and cultural interest of the Portuguese in the other Latin American countries so as to understand the complex regional puzzle they represent; and
- implementing the protocols established throughout the years between several Portuguese and Brazilian institutions, transforming them, whenever possible, into dynamic bases for the production of scientific material.

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