

What Portugal Thinks About Globalization

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What Portugal Thinks About Globalization

Due to the European debt crisis and Portugal's status as a debtor nation, Portugal has been covered in the media a lot in recent months. Beyond the immediate crisis, less is known about the impact of globalization on the country. For example, Portugal is a leader in alternative energies and is considered a model country for its decriminalization of drugs. Using clips from Portuguese newspapers, NGO publications, blogs, and video clips, this news analysis highlights Portuguese perspectives on a range of globalization issues and topics.

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The European Debt Crisis

In May 2011, Portugal received a \$78 billion euro bailout (approximately \$103 billion). In return, Portugal has followed a path of austerity prescribed by the EU and the IMF. Nonetheless, the ratio of debt to gross domestic product (GDP) is growing and is expected to reach 118 percent by next year.¹ When one includes private sector debt, the debt percent reaches 479 percent of GDP.² Portugal's debt problem arose from excess consumption in the private sector, financed by banks, especially subsidiaries of Spanish banks in Portugal.³

Portugal's economy is contracting and the public is starting to lose patience. Wage contraction is prompting many to leave the country. If economic growth does not return soon, Portugal will have to write-down its debt.⁴ Some Portuguese view the problem in light of a flawed monetary system of the EU, Prof. Robert Stinerock and Prof. Domingos Silva Ferreira write:

The EU was flawed in its conception. The idea that more than a dozen disparate nations could join permanently in a monetary union without tighter fiscal union was always unrealistic.

Back in 1992, I cautioned my Portuguese MBA students about the entry of Portugal into such an alliance, but my concerns were dismissed as those of an uninformed foreigner....

What the EU lacks is a provision for the transfer of funds from the rich-to-the-poor nations during periods of economic distress. And that is a major problem....

Assuming the Portuguese elect to remain in the euro, there are several inescapable realities they must face... Chief among these realities is that Portuguese businesses will find it difficult to sell their products at price-competitive levels in international markets. The reason is that they are stuck with an expensive currency that cannot float in a way appropriate to Portugal's situation. Accordingly, Portuguese businesses struggle to sell their products to foreigners, who shy away from products priced in expensive euros because they can find comparable products elsewhere priced more competitively. Compounding this is the problem of low domestic demand from the Portuguese population, brought upon in part by wave-after-wave of punitive austerity measures. Since 65% of national demand results from government spending, we

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have the double impact of (1) increased levels of taxation combined with (2) large reductions in public sector salaries and expenditures....

Stinerock, Robert and Ferreira, Domingos Silva. "[Portugal's future in the EU.](#)" *The Portugal News Online*. February 11, 2012.

Others view the debt crisis in light of a rigid labor markets, and unfriendly tax regimes and a poor regulatory environment. Luis Faria writes:

...After a lost decade of sluggish growth Portugal badly needs a fiscal consolidation strategy based on credible reforms that would boost productivity and promote robust growth. Since the late 90's Portugal has accumulated a blend of growth unfriendly policies: a procyclical fiscal policy and profligacy in public expenditures, one of the most regulated economies of the OECD, excessive taxation, a rigid labour market and an economic development based on low skilled work force. This set of policies has hampered the country's competitiveness and Portugal has successively missed the opportunity to overcome the causes of Portugal's anaemic growth instead of its symptoms...

The rigidity of labour market created a two-tier labour market with protected jobs for some and insecure jobs or unemployment for the rest, the latter mainly affecting the youngest and the least educated. Portugal has one of the most protective labour market regulations, but paradoxically is one of the EU countries where workers most feel insecure about losing their jobs. A more flexible labour market would mitigate this highly segmented market. Portugal has an unemployment rate of 11% and one of the highest long-term unemployment rates in the EU: 4.3% of total active population is unemployed for 12 or more months...

Moreover, regulatory and administrative burden constitutes a huge hindrance to the entry of innovative newcomers in the market, foreign direct investment inflows and efficiency gains. It is also crucial to remove government special voting rights in private business activities and eliminate administered prices in services. A more competitive tax policy would also contribute to boost growth... However, a more competitive tax policy complemented by inevitable government expense cuts wouldn't put fiscal consolidation at risk, as common sense may suggest. Countries with low corporate-tax rate yield proportionally bigger revenues than most other countries. There are few alternatives left, if any, for Portugal to boost its competitiveness.

Portugal needs to create the environment to promote long-term growth and to decisively keep the murky perspectives off Portugal's outlook. Structural reforms and pro-growth policies would constitute a big leap forward in that direction. Hopefully, when the time comes Portugal will still have risk-takers who know what world they're living in.

Faria, Luis. "[Portugal's exit strategy.](#)" *Contraditorio*. April 11, 2011.

Energy and Technology



Portugal has become a world leader in renewable energies. From 2005 to 2010, the percent of Portugal's energy from renewable sources grew from 17 percent to 45 percent. Portugal has no fossil fuel source of its own and 50 percent of its debt used to be tied to energy. In 2000, the government bought the private transmission lines and adapted the grid, making it more flexible and connecting it to

remote areas that used small generators, such as solar power and other sources that are transmitted nationwide.⁵ A stable power based is used as back-up system. The extra cost for the renewables is passed on to the Portuguese consumers.⁶

In 2011, the IMF advised that Portugal decrease its support of the alternative energies to save the government money. BPI, a major Portuguese bank, made similar recommendations.⁷ In 2012, the Portuguese government froze new renewable energy licenses. Only hydro-electric power and co-generation facilities are exempt.⁸ Few opinion pieces have been written in the media in response to this decision. In fact it was not covered by the Western press, only in an English-language site for Portuguese news. The world is interested in Portugal when it adopts alternative energies, not when it decides to fall back on that policy.

The video below highlights one of Portugal's most innovative alternative energies sources: wave farms.

Environment and Media

Media bias in environmental coverage is further analyzed by researchers at EURONATURA, Centre for Environmental Law and Sustainable Development, Lisbon, Portugal.

Global climate change is one of the most pressing and challenging environmental problems of our time. It has been the focus of one of the most impressively coordinated international scientific efforts in recent memory.... The media has been responsible for both its dissemination and miscommunication, and has had a strong influence on public opinion and policy. This research examines media coverage on climate change in Portugal. Past studies (de Almeida et al. , 1998) have shown that the Portuguese public does not regard this environmental problem as one of the most serious. Could this be due to lack of media coverage? This is one of the questions this study tries to address.

Methodology

This study was based on the Portuguese national newspaper “Público ” , between April 1991-2000. We chose this newspaper because it is similar to other studied newspapers (such as The New York Times and Le Monde), has regular articles on environmental issues, and has the biggest and most balanced national coverage...

There are 431 articles that contains climate change in nine years. Each text was analysed individually and classified according to four categories, as follows. The first category defines the scope of the news, whether it reports an international or national event... The second category defines the relevance of the article with respect to the theme, i.e., if climate change is only briefly mentioned or if it is the core issue of the article. The third category describes the article content, i.e., if it is more science or policy oriented. The fourth category classifies the article according to the information it gives about the negative impacts of climate change..

Discussion

The...Portuguese media coverage on climate change follows a cycle. Downs (1972) explained the fluctuation of reporting of environmental issues with an “issue- attention cycle ” model, which is divided into five stages: pre-problem; alarmed discovery, euphoric enthusiasm; realising the cost; gradual decline of interest; and post-problem. Our records do not go as far back as to identify the “pre-problem” stage, but the “alarmed discovery” stage is very clear.... The Portuguese media cycle for climate change cannot be fully explained with Downs framework, but the “realising the cost stage” appears to have just begun, with headlines such as “ The future is not passing through Portugal”...

These preliminary results have shown that Portuguese media focus on climate change is mostly centred on international climate events, with few national scientific or relevant articles. Further research is needed to: compare these results with the US and French media to produce cross-national results; include other national newspapers and other media sources.

Dessai, Suraje and Branco, Kevin and de França Doria, Miguel. [“Climate Change and Media in Portugal: Preliminary Results.”](#)

Culture

One of the key issues in Portugal’s culture war is the issue of rights for gay couples and individuals. In 2010, same sex marriages became legal in Portugal. The next battle for gay rights has centered on the issue of adoption. The Portuguese

Parliament is currently debated a bill that will allow gay couples to adopt children. The Catholic Church is trying to block this right.⁹ The following videos highlight two different Portuguese perspectives on the issue.

Please click on the links to watch the videos, embedding was disabled:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPmyJDVlbdM>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_hYTGK6Ct0

Health

More than ten years ago, Portugal decriminalized drug possession, categorizing it as a social and health problem, rather than a criminal one. Once a magnet for heroin users where half of all HIV infections were drug addicts, the number of addicts has now stabilized. The number of those in treatment has risen by about one-third since 1998.

Portugal changed their whole approach to illicit drugs, focusing on prevention, harm reduction, treatment and reintegration. Those arrested for possession are sent to “dissuasion boards” to learn about the harms of drug use. Fines or community service are given to second times offenders, as well as the revocation of certain employment licenses.¹⁰ The video below analyzes the impacts of the decriminalization of drugs in Portugal and provides perspectives of the pros and cons of Portugal’s drug policy.

International Law and Organizations

At the EUPRERA PROCEEDINGS 2005, Mafalda Eiró-Gomes, Lisbon’s Superior School of Mass Communication and Media Arts, IPL. Philosophy of Language Institute, UNL discusses the role of NGOs in Portuguese society.

Introduction

In this paper will try to question the role of corporate communications management both in the improvement and expression of the organizational / corporate identity of the NGOs for the development operating in Portugal...

Non Governmental Organizations for the development

When we speak about NGOs we usually think about those organizations outside the realm of the governments and that don’t belong to what we usually consider as the business sector. It’s precisely because they neither belong to the public sector or to the private sector that they are usually known as the “third system”.

In Portugal and from a legal point of view it’s not easy to define, in a quite accurate and precise way, what we consider as those institutions that belong to the so-called “third system”. However our Constitution recognise the existence along with the private and the public systems of another one denominated as a co-operative and social system....

Legally these types of organizations can be co-operative societies, mutuality associations, charities, associations and foundations. A special case is that of all the associations, charities or foundations of social action that in a certain sense are assuming functions that initially were supposed to be fulfilled by the state and in consequence are financed by the Portuguese state. They operate in special in areas like the education of children with special needs or the support of older people. This type of organizations, the great majority of all the organizations of the third system existing in Portugal, is designated as Private Institutions of Social Solidarity.

The Non Governmental Organizations for the development only have a special

legal status in Portugal since 1998. The law number 66/98 of 14th October defines that the NGOs can be associations or foundations that have as main areas of intervention the cooperation and education for development as well as the humanitarian help in emergency situations. To be recognized as an NGO an association or foundation must go through a special process of appreciation by the Portuguese Ministry of Foreigner Affairs. The NGOs are in a minority situation among all the institutions of the non-for-profit sector in Portugal and are in general associations and not foundations...

Specifically in Portugal NGOs for the development have great financial problems, as they don't seem to be able to cause enough financial support from the civil society and stay in certain dependence from the casuistic support of national and international funds belonging to the public sector.

In what concerns the NGOs' staff and even though there aren't accurate data in Portugal it is believed that the labour turnover in the Portuguese NGOs, often seen as an indicator of a lack of commitment to the organization, is extremely high. The point is that the situation in Portugal is not different from the situation in other European countries: the jobs aren't secure, there aren't career development opportunities and the last but not the least the salaries are lower than in the private and public sectors....

Eiró-Gomes, Mafalda. [“NGOs for development in Portugal: some remarks concerning organizational/corporate identity.”](#) EUPRERA PROCEEDINGS - 2005.

Human Rights

*Similar to many countries throughout Europe, Portugal struggles with outbreaks of racism, particularly against the Roma community. In 2010, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) filed a complaint against Portugal for its housing relating injustices. These injustices include lack of access to social housing, poor quality housing, lack of access to basic utilities, segregation of the Romani communities and other violations. Furthermore, the Roma people do not have many legal remedies to address these injustices.*¹¹

Anthropologist José Pereira Bastos, professor at the New University of Lisbon speaks out against expulsions of the Roma throughout Europe. On behalf of the Gypsy Lore Society, Bastos says

[We have] strong concern over the policy of expulsions, which could lead to serious consequences for community relations between Europe's majorities and the vulnerable Roma minority...

Anthropologist Daniela Rodrigues, member of the non-governmental organization SOS Racism states that there is discrimination against Roma living Portugal

especially by the police, who when they are checking merchant credentials at the street fairs, target the Roma merchants...But unlike France and Italy, in Portugal the operations to control undocumented foreigners is not focused on them..

On the other hand, Rodrigues further notes though that Portugal has

adopted a system of socially mixed neighborhoods, constructed with the perspective that the Roma coexist with Africans, Brazilians and Portuguese, whether white or mixed race, and there is little discrimination there.

*Rodrigues' view of the mixed housed contradicts the ERRC complaint that was filed the same year. While Portugal's treatment of Roma was not nearly as bad as Italy and France, ERRC backed its statements of injustice using extensive research into the inequalities in Portuguese society that stem from housing injustices, such as lack of educational and economic opportunity.*¹²

de Queiroz, Mario. "Italy and France enact deportation policies against the Romani that echo centuries of persecution." Street News Service. October 7, 2010. <http://streetroots.wordpress.com/2010/10/07/no-country-for-roma/>

Migration

*Because of the economic crisis, emigration from Portugal is on the rise. In 2011, about 120,000 Portuguese migrated to Mozambique in search of employment. More than 25 percent of Portugal's youth (16-25) are unemployed and are looking for jobs outside the country. Portuguese Parliamentarians are worried about the long-term impact of the loss of Portugal's talented youth.*¹³ *Meanwhile, the Portugal's Prime Minister has publicly recommended that unemployed teachers emigrate to Brazil or Angola to find employment. While applauded by some, the Prime Minister's remarks drew a lot of criticism.*¹⁴ *This Euronews report provides perspectives on the emigration trend of the Portuguese.*

Education

Portugal's is the least educated country in Europe. Only 28 percent of 25-64 year olds have completed high school, compared to 85 percent in Germany, 91 percent in the Czech Republic and 89 percent in the U.S. Historically, Portugal's' governments have not emphasized education, particularly during the 1926-1974 dictatorship. Only recently Portugal phased in 12 years of required schooling; many still leave school after 9th grade. The curriculum is undemanding and rigid. A push for teacher evaluations led to widespread strikes and demonstrations. School budgets have been decreased under the austerity measures. Quasi private schools run by the Catholic Church try to pick up the slack, but also face decreased budgets.¹⁵



Portuguese newspapers cover stories of how the economy is impacting educational institutions. The following piece was translated from Portuguese to English using Google translation.

About 2400 experts from the New Opportunities Centres (CNO) have lost or may be on the verge of losing their jobs, warns the president of the National Association of Professional Education and Training of Adults (ANPEFA).... "The Government is to eliminate the network of New Opportunities Centres without any further public review he promised," complains Sérgio Rodrigues.... In late January, the National Agency for Qualification justified the decision not to fund about 30% of the CNO "oversizing the network" and "lack of financial resources." The heads of these centers were notified by mail of the decision, but, according to Sergio Rodrigues, only late last week began receiving letters with the justification for refusal... The ministry said the ongoing reappraisal, whose results will be known until September, focuses only on the axis of adult New Opportunities program. The main part of this sector are the so-called Recognition, Validation and Certification, which are developed in the CNO and are sought primarily for the purpose of school certification. These centers, aimed at people over 18 years, is also done diagnosis and referral of candidates for other training options. Without specifying further alternatives, the ministry ensures that "the adult population will continue to have access to vocational education and certification school." "The future of the program will also pass by the vocational education of young people, creating a unique network of guidance and redirection of youth and adults," he adds.

Viana, Clara. "[Closure of the New Opportunities Centres threat employment of more than two thousand technical.](#)" *Publico*. February 22, 2012.

Women

Trafficking of women, men, and children is a problem in Portugal. It is a destination, transit and source country, specifically for prostitution and forced labor. Most trafficking victims originate from Brazil, Eastern Europe, and Africa. In 2009, the government prosecuted a landmark trafficking case the resulted in jail time for eight convicted sex traffickers. Also the government has increased anti-trafficking training for law enforcement and labor inspectors and has provided

shelter and assistance to an increased number of victims, though most refuse protection. In general there is a lack of data on prison sentences for offenders.¹⁶

Dr. Ana Sofia Antunes das Neves at the Instituto Superior da Maia in Portugal published a paper "Women Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Portugal: Life narratives" in the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*:

Smuggling and trafficking of migrants is a relatively new phenomenon in Portugal (Peixoto, 2005)...

In 2004, João Peixoto and colleagues promoted a research project named Migrant Trafficking in Portugal: Sociological, Judicial and Political Perspectives. Trafficking of immigrants from Eastern Europe and Brazil, including that of women for sexual exploitation, was the main focus of the study. This revealed that the great majority of the trafficked women came from Brazil and that the trafficking in women networks include Portuguese owners of bars and night clubs, elements in Brazil, very often women and other elements in Portugal, generally connected with the sex business or owners of apartments...

Between 2005 and 2007, Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, conducted the first Portuguese study on trafficking in women and sexual exploitation, titled Trafficking in Women in Portugal for Sexual Exploitation, by Boaventura de Sousa Santos and his team. Commissioned by Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, this research concluded that the phenomenon is still shrouded in opacity, and the true extent and dynamics behind it was still unknown. Findings previously identified were reinforced by Santos's research, especially the results related with the origin of victims and trafficking dynamics. Since 2007 a few studies were conducted to intensify the knowledge about phenomena...

Four Brazilian women accepted to be interviewed individually to this study... Their ages ranged from 21, 33, 36 and 47. Coming from rural environments, socially and economically underprivileged, these women had very diversified educational levels...

None of these women was, in Brazil, involved in the sex business. They made the decision to emigrate for economic reasons and 2 of them wish to return to Brazil when they gather the necessary conditions for that...

They all gave their consent to come to Portugal and none was informed that they would come to work in the sex industry. The ones that were forced to prostitute themselves (3 out of the 4) expressed they did it against their will, having been target of coercion. All of these women are against prostitution...

These 3 women travelled to Portugal after having been allured by people in Brazil that bought them the tickets and loaned them money, which resulted in a considerable debt. This man was known in the region for recruiting young women to travel to Portugal, with the promise of work and dignification of their living conditions...

The stigma associated with the Brazilian women and the feeling of discrimination is very prominent in the speeches of these 4 women, especially on the part of the Portuguese women. "It's very hard here, you are coming to a country that is not your own. All the Brazilian women here are taken for whores, but that's not the case. We are treated like garbage, like we're nobody, home wreckers". E3

"Not the men, but the women feel more jealous (...). Portuguese women, if they see a man and a woman talking they are already thinking that...I think that the Brazilian are more sociable...".E4

"For them we are whores (...) some think it's just work. (...) Others look at us with distrust, those women discriminate us all time". E2

According to them the clients are, many times, the ones who protect and rescue them from these environments, functioning as protectors or friends. "They feel pity for us". E1. "Some spend the whole night just talking with us because in some situations we create bonds ". E2 "We are like a night psychologist". E3. All women imagine spending their middle-age years with their family in peace and with a sense of achievement.

das Neves, Ana Sofia Antunes. "[Women Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Portugal: Life narratives](#)." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol 1. No. 17. November 2011.

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