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Title of Panel

Regionalization in Portugal - The new Spheres of Political Power

Theme

Re-Centering Decentralization

Abstract

The definition of an political and administrative map of Portugal is a matter whose concerns lies in the first half of the nineteenth century (1835/36), when after a huge and complex debate, the country became divided on three types of administrative units – districts, municipalities and parishes. Nevertheless, even before that configuration of the earlier administrative map, Mouzinho da Silveira had created a division (1832) also in three levels, which divided the country in provinces, counties and municipalities, following the model developed by Napoleon. Considering both projects already mentioned and a few creations and extinctions of municipalities and parishes, the conclusion we reached is that two centuries after the first major effort to organize the Portuguese political and administrative map nothing significant advanced. It is important to understand whether the current structure and status quo existing between the different levels is still functional and that the creation of another administrative level - Regional - would bring efficiency and effectiveness to the political process. Another considering point we pretend to observe, is the emergence of news spheres of decentralized political power, as a result of the regionalization, which one's will raise in another political balances.

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