

ASSOCIATION FOR CONTEMPORARY IBERIAN STUDIES (ACIS)
Kings College London / University of Westminster
Annual Conference, 4th – 6th September 2012, Kings College London, UK
Panel Proposal

Portuguese Crisis:

Security Realities and New Power Challenges

Chair: Cristina Montalvão Sarmiento, PhD Professor, Director of the Political Observatory

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Participants:

Marta Ceia (Master Researcher): *Portugal at the crossroads: current economic and security issues*

Eduardo Correia (PhD Researcher) and Raquel Duque (PhD Researcher): *Repression versus Prevention: Different Paradigms in Security Policy - The case of Portugal*

Rui Alexandre (PhD Researcher): *New Regionalism: Portugal's Current Debate*

Teresa Furtado (Master Researcher): *Biopolitics: the ambiguity of citizenship and human rights – an Iberian approach*

Abstract

The current economic and financial crisis that Portugal is facing is causing swift developments in areas indirectly linked to the budgetary crisis and the national debt. The social instability compels to new thinking about the State of Exception in progress and eventual security measures that are expected.

The shift of security paradigms, divided between the change of the prevention and repression models, combined with the reorganization of local government authority underway, has foster new analytical frameworks of the Portuguese political reality that fits in a wider and more important debate about social control, in which biopolitics emerges as a new configuration where citizenship and human rights are challenged.

In this panel we analyze the structural realities of the Portuguese policy on security and power in light of the social and economic instability caused by conditions of exception of the State's financial rupture.

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Portugal at the crossroads: current economic and security issues

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Abstract

In the present juncture of economic crisis and the possible faltering of the European Social Model, there is an ongoing debate about the options for the future of the European Union. These include the hypothetical scenarios of a remapping of the Euro zone (with the possible exit of Greece or other defaulting peripheral economies like Portugal's) or even the unravelling of the EU as we know it. Faced with this uncertainty, many countries will likely be forced to devise contingency plans in order to be prepared to face these dire outcomes, and even to possibly reshape their foreign policy plans.

On the one hand, the crisis has affected the national budget dedicated to Portugal's participation in International Organizations, such as NATO or the UN. Portugal's membership within these organizations implies a number of duties which need funding to be carried out. If Portugal has no means to continue to fund both the annual contributions and the missions in which its armed forces are involved, then its place in these organizations has to be reassessed.

On the other hand, if the political situation deteriorates and there is a perspective of serious social turmoil, a reshaping of security measures is also a scenario that cannot be discarded.

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Repression versus Prevention: Different Paradigms in Security Policy

The case of Portugal

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Abstract

Traditional models of security policies implemented by several Western States in the post-World War II have proven inadequate after a few decades in addressing the increased sense of insecurity and social problems which have contributed to organizational and budgetary changes within security forces.

Following this trend, Portugal has witnessed the emergence of public policies favoring the reference of prevention in detriment of the reference of repression. The latter implies the possibility to control deviant behaviors through repression and sanction, while the former is based on preventive actions integrating a global policy to preserve social cohesion and to promote the involvement between the police and the population.

It is essential to analyze the changes produced since the implementation of the reference of prevention in Portugal and to assess its results, especially in a period of economic constraint, in order to understand whether its goals based on reshaping the relationship between the police and the communities have demonstrated to be successful.

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New Regionalism: Portugal's current debate

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Abstract

The definition of a political and administrative map of Portugal is a matter whose concerns lies in the first half of the nineteenth century, when after a complex debate, the country became divided on three types of administrative units. Before that configuration of the earlier administrative map a division was created also in three levels, which divided the country in provinces, counties and municipalities.

Considering both projects and a few creations and extinctions the conclusion we reached is that two centuries after the first political map nothing significant changed. However, due to the currently economic constraints, is important to understand whether the *status quo* existing between the different levels is still functional and that the creation of another level - regional - would bring efficiency and effectiveness to the political process.

Another point we pretend to observe, is the emergence of news spheres of decentralized political power, as a result of the regionalization, having in mind all the budgetary cuts imposed by the *Troika* guidelines (IMF, ECB and EU).

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Biopolitics: the ambiguity of citizenship and human rights – an Iberian approach

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Abstract

The emergence and subsequent development of *biopolitics* theory is today surrounded by a growing debate. The vulnerability of the concept of human rights finds its greatest expression in the work of the Italian thinker Giorgio Agamben. It is based on the notion of *homo sacer*, the fragility of life and the permanent possibility of bare life, that give us the mechanism that control and define the life itself.

The ambiguity and vagueness of the notion of citizenship depends, ultimately, on the constant possibility of expropriation of the legal convertors that endows man the rights and freedom in which the concept of citizenship stays anchored. In the European scenario the implementation of these kinds of mechanisms, mainly biometric tools, are been adopted in a systematic manner. This represents the reality impregnated in Iberian countries that are facing the controversial problems caused by high flows of immigration, notorious economic obstacles added to the need of maintaining standards of freedom.