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Between Europeanization and Domestic Influences: Portugal's Post-colonial Relations with Angola

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Abstract

This paper builds on the Europeanization literature to explore the impact of EU membership on Portuguese foreign policy towards Angola. The analysis is centred on trade issues, focusing on Portugal's accession negotiations and the reform of the Lomé Convention. Portugal is a small and open economy, with a colonial past in Angola. Trade is one of the most integrated policy areas of the EU, which has long and highly institutionalised relations with Africa. Preliminary results point to great evidence of Europeanization understood as national adaptation to the EU. However, the projection of Portuguese priorities onto the European level also received some support. History, cultural links and the presence of strong national interest groups appear to have limited the EU's impact on Portuguese preferences. Such findings give support to studies stressing the need to adequately account for domestic conditions, even in highly integrated EU policy areas and for smaller member states.

Keywords

Foreign Policy Analysis; Europeanization; European integration; Foreign policy; trade; interest groups

For many centuries Portugal's foreign priorities were oriented towards the Atlantic and its overseas territories. That general orientation was also the one adopted under the authoritarian *Estado Novo* (1933-1974), which deliberately distanced Portugal from European issues and emphasised its Atlantic and African "vocation". Following Portugal's transition to democracy and decolonisation in the mid-1970s, Europe became more important in Lisbon's external outlook. In particular, membership of the European Community (EC) came to be seen as the best way to anchor the newly born democratic regime and contribute to the country's modernisation. During an initial phase after its EC accession, in 1986, Portugal's general involvement in the Community was described as reserved and defensive. Yet, from the early 1990s Lisbon started to adopt a more active approach, including for foreign and security policy matters. Notwithstanding this broad trend of increased European engagement, traditional foreign policy priorities continued to occupy an important role for democratic and post-imperial Portugal. As a founding member of NATO, Portugal remained actively committed to the Alliance, as well as to a close relationship with the USA. Moreover, Lisbon kept its post-colonial relations high on its foreign affairs agenda. Relations with the former African colonies, in particular, continued to be valued for themselves, but also in view of the advantages they can bring to the other dimensions of Portugal's foreign policy. For instance, those countries have been among the main recipients of Portugal's bilateral aid and since very early Lisbon pushed for the creation of a community of Portuguese-speaking countries, which was finally established in 1996. Similarly to other former colonial powers, Portugal has also been a strong advocate of closer Europe-Africa relations, as illustrated by the bi-regional summits held during its EU Presidencies in 2000 and 2007.

This article explores the impact of EU membership on Portugal's foreign policy towards its former African colonies. More "Europeanist" views would predict the EU to play a crucial role for the foreign policy of a small state such as Portugal. Evidence has been gathered that decision-makers in small member states see the EU as the central forum for the delineation of their foreign policy interests (Tonra 2001: 263). Other studies indicate that the socialisation of foreign policy-makers stemming from European cooperation is more noticeable in smaller, rather than larger EU member states (Manners and Whitman 2000: 251). Thus, according to this broad perspective, the expectation is for Portuguese foreign policy to be mainly conducted through the EU foreign policy framework, and chiefly echoing common views and interests. More "state-centric" understandings would maintain that also small member states continue to have

substantial foreign relations “beyond” the EU. It has been argued that the EU has represented a means for both large and small member states to “rescue” their national foreign policies (Allen 1996). Henrik Larsen (2005) reminds us that the importance of the EU for the foreign policy of small members needs to be assessed across policy areas. Among other conditions, in policy domains where small member states have a specific expertise and credibility they can exert significant influence in the EU, rather than simply adapt to its joint initiatives (Wallace 2005). Therefore, following this second general perspective, even for smaller members significant parts of their foreign policy do not merely echo EU understandings and positions. In the far from abundant literature on Portuguese foreign policy, the prevalent opinion tends to emphasise its general “Europeanization” (Gaspar 2000; Magone 2004; Vasconcelos 2000). In a more specific way, José Magone (2000: 174-175) contends that even Portuguese “special relationships” are conducted in synergy with the EU. Writing in the mid-1990s and referring expressly to Portugal’s relations in southern Africa, Álvaro Vasconcelos (1996: 271) prefers to emphasise the primacy of national dimensions in this particular domain. Along those lines, Miguel Santos Neves (1996: 138) argues that the EU’s impact on Portuguese foreign policy towards sub-Saharan Africa was both limited and positive from Lisbon’s perspective.

Considering the limitations of the existing literature this study aims to provide an updated, more detailed, and nuanced account of the subject under analysis. In order to better capture the EU’s impact on the national level this article draws on the literature on “Europeanization”, which in recent times has been increasingly applied to the domain of foreign policy (Graziano and Vink 2008; Wong and Hill 2011). Reuben Wong (2008) suggests that three dimensions of Europeanization can be useful to examine possible changes taking place in the foreign policy of an EU member state: national adaptation (“downloading” process); national projection (“uploading”); and identity reconstruction (socialisation of interests and identities). Building on that conceptualisation, the key question that structures the analysis is: “to what extent has Portuguese foreign policy been Europeanized”? More specifically, it is asked whether Portugal has been adapting its policies, projecting its national priorities or changing its preferences and identity due to a potential influence of the EU. The analysis focuses on trade issues in relation to Angola. External trade plays an important role for a small country and open economy such as Portugal. Moreover, as the largest and richer African colony, Angola was once considered the “Crown Jewel” of the Portuguese Empire. With decolonisation in 1975 and the effect of the Angolan civil war the economic links between the two countries decreased sharply, but both Portuguese authorities and civil society continued interested in promoting closer bilateral relations (M. E. Ferreira 2005). Portugal’s high level of trade concentration in Europe and the return of peace in Angola in 2002 have increased the importance of this African market for its former metropolis (Seabra and Gorjão 2011). In turn, foreign trade has been one of the most effective foreign policy instruments of the EU, which is a major world trading power (Meunier and Nicolaidis 2011). Trade is also one of the more integrated EU policy areas where, differently from other domains, the Community can rely on strong competences and mechanisms (Woolcock 2010). Furthermore, the EU has long and highly institutionalised relations with Africa, which have traditionally privileged economic aspects rather than politics (Holland 2002).

The main argument put forward is that Portuguese policy was significantly Europeanized, with national actions in the domain of trade towards Angola displaying high levels of adaptation to common EU decisions and mechanisms. Simultaneously, Portuguese authorities remained very active within the EU trying to project its national priorities onto the supranational level and preserve a minimum of visibility to its own positions vis-à-vis its ex-colony. This outcome indicates that even in highly integrated EU policy areas and in the case of smaller member states the EU framework can provide opportunities for the promotion of national perspectives towards matters considered of “special interest”. The article proceeds as follows. Firstly, a brief overview is provided on Portugal-Angola relations, focusing on trade aspects, which contextualises the

subsequent analysis. Secondly, the article considers the EU's impact on Portuguese policy by centring its attention on Portugal's accession process to the European Communities, dealing more specifically with the trade *acquis* of the Lomé Convention. Next, the analysis focuses on the intra-EU discussions for negotiating the 2000 Cotonou Agreement and the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which introduced important changes to the trade regime developed over 25 years under Lomé. Finally, the article closes with some conclusions.

BACKGROUND: PORTUGAL-ANGOLA RELATIONS

Portugal has a long and complex relationship with Angola, which has been driven by an intricate set of historical, cultural, economic and politico-diplomatic considerations. Those relations can be traced back to the 15th century when Portugal initiated its "Golden Age of Discovery", setting the basis for an Empire that over time included territories in virtually all continents (Newitt 2009). During a long period Portugal's presence in Africa was not very significant. Yet in the 19th century, with the loss of other territorial possessions and the European "scramble" for Africa, the continent grew more important for Portugal's imperial ambitions. The emphasis on the colonies was further reinforced in the 1930s under authoritarian rule. Angola was the largest and richest Portuguese African colony, including natural resources such as cotton, coffee, diamonds and oil. It was also the territory that received the greatest number of Portuguese settlers, attracted by the rapid economic growth experienced in Angola from the 1940s onwards and the "imperial mystique" promoted by the Salazar regime. In the 1950s Angola represented 14 and 5 per cent of Portugal's total exports and imports respectively, and around half of Portugal's overall trade with its colonies (see Table 1). However, by the 1960s changes in Portugal's economy and society were gradually moving the country's external orientation away from its colonies. Even though the colonies continued to be important suppliers of raw materials and critical markets for less competitive Portuguese goods, with the greater industrialisation and liberalisation of Portugal's economy, its trade relations became increasingly centred in Western Europe. Over this period, Europe (particularly France and West Germany) also became the main destination for the large flows of Portuguese emigrants. Growing international pressure for decolonisation and Portugal's protracted colonial wars (in Angola the conflict lasted from 1961 to 1974) put additional strains on Portuguese projects in Africa (Newitt 1981).

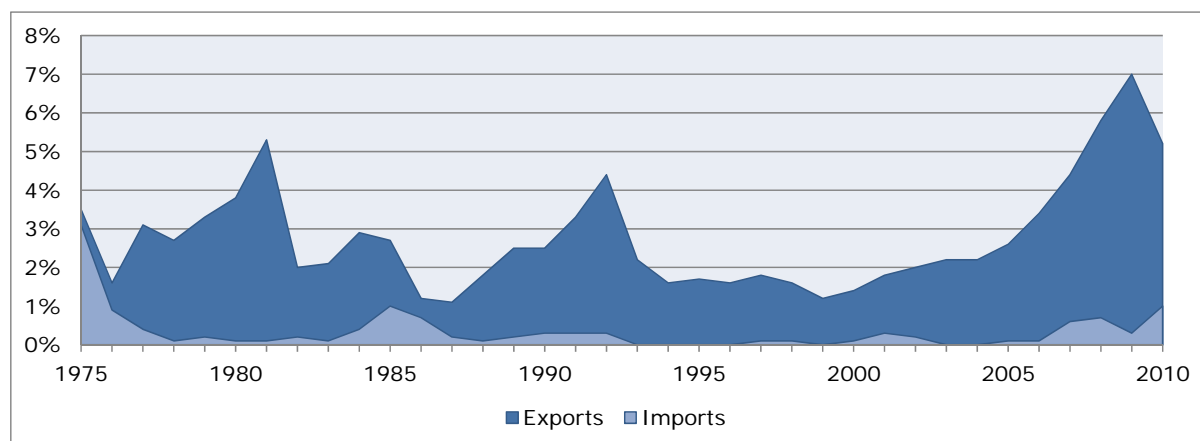
Table 1: Portugal's trade with Angola in comparative terms (% of total)

	Angola		Total colonies	
	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
1930s	5.4	5.1	12.1	10.2
1940s	8.4	5.7	20.0	13.1
1950s	14.5	5.5	25.7	14.0
1960s	13.1	7.7	24.4	14.2
1970-3	8.9	8.0	18.0	12.1

Source: adapted from M. E. Ferreira (2005: 346).

The April 1974 military coup that overthrew the Portuguese authoritarian regime led to a swift process of decolonisation of its territories in Africa. Even if Angola was the case where the reticence from some Portuguese sectors to a rapid decolonisation was more visible, in less than one year Portugal signed an independence agreement with the Angolan movements. Subsequently, the bilateral relationship was complicated by several factors, such as the instability of the democratisation process in Portugal, the outbreak of civil war in Angola, and the Cold War context (MacQueen 1997). Adding to that, the exodus of Portuguese settlers, the adoption of socialist policies and the nationalisation of Portuguese goods by the Marxist-inspired MPLA regime in Luanda, as well as strong post-colonial tensions and resentment greatly affected the economic significance of those relations (M. E. Ferreira 2005). By the late 1970s some signs of reconciliation started to take place facilitated by diplomatic initiatives promoted by Portugal. This evolution also benefited from concessions made by the Portuguese authorities concerning financial disputes with Angola that had remained unresolved since independence (Venâncio and Chan 1996: 42-43). Several agreements in the economic domain were signed leading to a temporary increase in Portuguese exports (see Figure 1). Moreover, it was during this period that a joint commission was established to work as the main institutional mechanism for the bilateral relationship. Notwithstanding those elements of progress numerous difficulties persisted, namely related to continuing instability and strong political divisions in Portugal. In fact, if a broad consensus existed among Portuguese decision-makers and large sectors of society about the importance of rebuilding and promoting strong post-colonial ties with Angola, the specifics of the relationship remained for a long time a more divisive question in Portuguese politics, closely linked to the dispute of power between the two rival Angolan movements, MPLA and UNITA (Vasconcelos 1996: 278).

Figure 1: Portugal's trade with Angola, 1975-2010 (% of total)



Source: Banco de Portugal. Author's calculations.

From the second half of the 1980s, the circumstances became more favourable for a more significant improvement in Portugal-Angola relations. In particular, Portugal's newly acquired European Community membership and the election of successive centre-right governments (1985-1995) brought greater clarification, stability and continuity to Portuguese initiatives and policies. At the same time, with the extreme difficulties in Angola resulting from civil war and the gradual Soviet disengagement from Africa, Portugal started to be seen by the Marxist MPLA regime as a useful means of strengthening relations with the West. Later, the fall of the Berlin Wall opened the door for an important Portuguese involvement in the Angolan peace process that contributed to upgrade the bilateral relationship. In effect, backed by Washington and Moscow

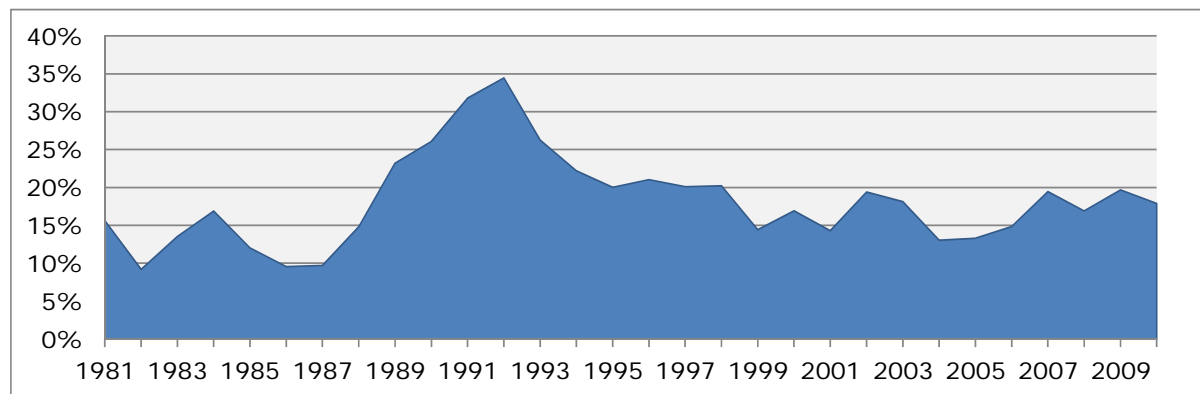
Lisbon's diplomatic efforts allowed it to play a central mediation role in the negotiations that led to the Angolan peace agreement (Bicesse Accords), signed in Portugal in 1991 (Venâncio and McMillan 1993). Over this period, Portugal's aid efforts towards Angola were also stepped up, both on a bilateral and multilateral level. Within the European Community, in particular, Lisbon pressed for greater support for the stabilisation and reconstruction of its ex-colony (Neves 1996: 157-158). Furthermore, new instruments were adopted to promote bilateral economic relations, including credit facilities for Portuguese companies and a scheme allowing Angola to pay its debt to Portugal through the supply of oil (M. E. Ferreira 2005: 356-357). Owing to these measures and the prospect of greater stability in Angola economic exchanges were boosted, especially Portuguese exports which increased from around one per cent of the country's total exports in 1987 to more than four per cent in 1992 (see Figure 1). This growing trend was disrupted by the restart of the Angolan conflict in late 1992.

With the failure of the Bicesse Accords Portugal stepped back from its mediator role, but continued to be involved in the Angolan peace process as an observer and contributing to the United Nations peacekeeping operations. By this stage, though, Lisbon's support became less significant for the Luanda regime, which in the new post-Cold War era had considerably reinforced its international links, while its internal rival, UNITA, was facing UN sanctions (Oliveira 2005: 60). Notwithstanding the enduring conflict, Portugal kept pursuing closer economic ties with Angola, which wealthy resources were also increasingly attracting other international actors. Results during this phase were, however, less sizeable than the ones Portugal expected. For instance, plans put forward in 1996 for a "debt-for-equity swap" and a bilateral agreement on mutual investment protection were subsequently abandoned or postponed. Moreover, attempts by Portuguese interests to upgrade their participation in the Angolan oil sector in the late 1990s were not welcomed by Luanda, in spite of all diplomatic efforts made by Lisbon at the highest level (M. E. Ferreira and Gonçalves 2009: 128). The military defeat of UNITA and ensuing end of the Angolan conflict in 2002 reinforced the already strong internal consensus in Portugal concerning its politico-diplomatic relationship with Angola. Additionally, Portugal's need to diversify its export markets beyond the EU area and the slowdown of its economy since the end of the 1990s, turned even more appealing the possibility to participate in the post-war reconstruction of the rapidly-growing oil-fuelled Angolan economy.

In this new context, Portugal has visibly sought to advance the bilateral relationship promoting new initiatives in different domains and increasing its political contacts with Angola (Seabra and Gorjão 2011). For its part, Luanda has arguably been less hurried to intensify the bilateral exchanges, but it has welcomed all diplomatic and economic support Portugal can provide for its development and growing international ambitions. To illustrate, between 2002 and 2010 Portuguese prime ministers visited Angola four times, while the Angolan president, in power for more than three decades, only made its second official visit to Portugal in 2009 (the first happened in the mid-1980s). During the last few years, Portugal has also been pressing more openly for the formalisation of a "strategic partnership" between the two countries, a mechanism Luanda has already established with Brazil, USA and China. At the multilateral level, there has been increased cooperation between Portugal and Angola within the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries (CPLP), greatly linked to the growing interest Luanda has shown towards that platform. Moreover, Lisbon has continued to play a role of "interlocutor" for Angola within the EU, for instance actively supporting an enhanced political dialogue between the Union and its ex-colony ("EU-Angola Joint Way Forward" process). Bilateral economic relations have also intensified since the return of peace in Angola. This was evident in the significant increase of Portuguese exports, supported by a series of credit lines (see Figure 1). Between 2002 and 2008 Angola moved from the ninth to the fourth position as the main destination for Portuguese exports (after Spain, Germany and France), becoming Portugal's main market outside the EU. Apart from that, despite a slight decline since the 1990s, Portugal has remained a top supplier of

Angola ahead of other important players such as the USA, China, Brazil, and South Africa (see Figure 2) (Banco de Portugal 2011: 31).

Figure 2: Portugal's share of Angola's imports, 1981-2010 (% of total)



Source: IMF - Direction of Trade Statistics. Author's calculations.

Summing up, over the last three decades or so Portugal's relationship with Angola has improved gradually, highly constrained as it was by past legacies and the Angolan civil war. After Angola put an end to its long-lasting internal conflict, more decisive steps were taken to upgrade the bilateral relationship. Yet Portugal has always kept a close interest in its former colony, both at the elite and societal level. Specifically in economic matters, even if in recent decades Portugal's exchanges with Angola have only represented a small part of its overall trade, those exchanges become more significant when bearing in mind that they take place outside the competitive EU context. In fact, for many Portuguese companies Angola has remained an important market, where they have kept significant shares of specific sectors, very often taking advantage of historical, cultural or personal links. As asserted by some, those companies, together with other Portuguese interest groups, have represented a very influential and efficient lobby in shaping Portugal's policy towards Angola (Oliveira 2005: 62). Moreover, the broader role Angola (and the other Lusophone countries) allegedly plays for Portugal's foreign policy is often assumed as a justification for Portuguese authorities to support the reinforcement of bilateral economic ties. Portugal's post-colonial relations would represent a means to ascertain the country's diplomatic specificity and a "trump card" to reinforce its influence at the international level, particularly within the EU (Venâncio and Chan 1996: 6-9). Apart from that, recurrent flows of migration in both directions have helped to nurture cultural and personal ties between populations with a common language and a not so distant shared history. In fact, the idea of Angola as an "El Dorado" that could help surmounting Portugal's intrinsic limitations as a small power remained resonant over the years, especially among sectors of Portuguese society who had a direct experience of the Empire. Furthermore, Angola continued to occupy an important place in Portuguese national imaginary, especially in view of its association with Portugal's "glorious past" during the Age of Exploration (Cravinho 2005).

PORTUGAL'S EC ACCESSION PROCESS: THE IMPACT OF THE LOMÉ ACQUIS

When Portugal made its decision to join the European Community in the second half of the 1970s, its relationship with Luanda was far from unproblematic. As seen above, after decolonisation in 1975 Lisbon was interested in rebuilding on a new basis its historical ties with Angola, but those intentions were hindered by various factors, including the

eruption of the Angolan civil war, strong post-colonial frictions, and the divergent orientation the two countries came to follow in the Cold War divide. From the late 1970s, Lisbon authorities sought more actively to put forward new bilateral initiatives towards Angola, aiming in particular to promote Portuguese economic interests in that country. However, Portugal's political instability and serious economic difficulties until the mid-1980s meant that those initiatives were often far from consensual and significant. Mirroring those circumstances, the bilateral cooperation over this period had a low level of institutionalisation and effective implementation. On the European side, the Lomé Convention was the main mechanism through which the EC structured at the time its relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group, which Angola joined in 1985. Rooted in the colonial legacies of some EU member states and established under a favourable context for the large ACP group, Lomé was at the top of the "pyramid of privilege" of the Community. Proclaimed as a "partnership of equals", the Lomé model followed a group-to-group approach and included an institutionalised dialogue, substantial aid assistance, as well as special trade preferences. More specifically, the EC granted preferential access to its market without requesting reciprocal liberalisation. Simultaneously, as a "mixed" agreement the Lomé Convention allowed a great say to EU member states, in contrast with simple trade agreements where supranational features are more present. Considering this general background, what was the impact of Portugal's accession to the European Communities on its relations with Angola?

National adaption to a useful *acquis*

Portugal's adoption of the Lomé Convention *acquis* was on the whole unproblematic. The lengthy accession negotiations (1978-1985) were mainly due to the simultaneous accession of Spain, whose negotiation process was far more complex than the Portuguese one. Moreover, the dossier of "external affairs" was not among the most difficult to close (Dinan 2004: 184). As put by a former Portuguese politician, Portugal had virtually no foreign policy at the time.¹ Apart from that, Portuguese interests groups had a limited involvement in the negotiation process, which was largely dominated by the political elite. In fact, Portugal's turbulent transition to democracy, including widespread nationalisations and the adoption of other socialist-inspired policies, meant that while civil society groups were weak the state came to occupy a strong presence in the Portuguese economy (Pinto and Teixeira 2004: 124). For Portuguese decision-makers the Lomé *acquis* was important primarily in view of the overall goal of EC membership. This was particularly the case during an initial phase, when domestic resistance and doubts over accession were more significant. In effect, following the overthrow of the long-lived right-wing authoritarian regime, Portugal went to a phase of great instability and uncertainties marked by a strong influence of the military and leftist movements. During those revolutionary years (1974-1975), despite all volatility pro-Soviet and chiefly "Third Worldist" perspectives, favouring privileged relations with the ex-colonies, were largely dominant (Teixeira 2003: 114). Against this context, for the pluralist and pro-Western political forces EC membership came to represent a means to secure the stabilisation of Portugal's nascent democracy and the redefinition of its international orientation (Pinto and Teixeira 2004: 123). Thus, in order to more effectively pursue that goal the instrumentality of Europe and the Lomé Convention for Portugal's traditional ties in Africa were highlighted in the domestic debate.

When in 1976 the charismatic Prime Minister Mário Soares presented the objective of joining the EC as the main foreign policy priority of its minority government, much emphasis was put on the idea that such decision would not be detrimental to the relationship with the former colonies: 'Portugal is a European country and can only benefit from European integration, including for improving relations with its ex-colonies' (Portugal 1976a: 406). At the time, some former Portuguese colonies had started to move closer to Brussels and become part of the Lomé Convention. Such was the case with the smaller countries, but the picture was less clear for Angola (and Mozambique)

due to its links with the Soviet bloc. In any case, this development was not overlooked by the pro-European Soares government, which used it as an additional argument for justifying Portugal's EC accession:

'in the domain of economic and commercial exchanges any claim to privileged relations established exclusively on a bilateral basis seems difficult to be achieved, given that we are witnessing a move from those new African countries to become members of the Lomé Convention. This Convention does not allow special concessions to countries that are not full members of the European Community. Here lies one of the reasons for Portugal to integrate the Common Market, since until that happens Portugal will assume the role of a third country, being forced to witness the creation of privileged arrangements between the new Portuguese-speaking African countries and the European Economic Community.' (Portugal 1976b: 130).²

After the decision to join the European Community was made effective in 1977, the pre-existing internal misgivings gradually weakened and became secondary (J. M. Ferreira 1999: 42-44). The "European option" made initially by the centre-left Soares government was backed by all main political parties (except the Communists) and became part of a consensual general Western orientation. In view of the concentration of efforts in the EC accession priority, Portugal's post-colonial relations necessarily started to receive less political attention. Yet, the importance of those relations for the country's external outlook did not disappear.

As mentioned above, in the late 1970s Portugal began to adopt a more active stance towards its former African colonies, especially in relation to Angola. This bilateral activism was meant to be complementary to Portugal's EC accession goal. But in view of the country's political instability at the time, that general principle also incorporated some nuances with important internal corollaries (see Gaspar 1988). Ultimately, Portugal's bilateral initiatives (even if not always consequential) signalled an intention to preserve a voice in relation to its former African colony. To illustrate, as a result of a summit that represented a breakthrough in the bilateral *rapprochement*, Portugal and Angola signed a general cooperation agreement in 1978. Other initiatives followed, particularly in the economic domain. Thus, in 1979 the two countries signed several agreements in different economic areas, including a trade agreement comprising a "most favoured nation" clause. That same year a US\$40 million credit line was open to support Portuguese exports, which was subsequently reinforced. By 1984 those credit facilities had reached a ceiling of US\$130 million, at a moment when economic competition from other Western countries (such as France and Spain) was becoming more pressing (Rolo 1986: 167). The European Community added a further impulse to Portugal's initiatives towards Angola. Since the beginning of Portugal's EC accession process, Brussels had pointed out to the potential utility of Lisbon's historical links in Africa, and other continents, for the international role of the Community (European Commission 1978: 7). Moreover, as the EC was interested in strengthening its relations with the Frontline States (which included Angola), Lisbon increasingly linked strong ties with its ex-colonies in Africa to a reinforcement of its own position next to the Community (Venâncio and Chan 1996: 45).

Portugal's intention to play a specific role in the relationship between Europe and Africa became perceptible since the early stages of its EC accession process. Yet considering the intrinsic uncertainties of those negotiations and Portugal's enduring political instability, it was only in the final phase of the accession process that Lisbon's claim started to gain more grounds and clarity. As explained by the Portuguese Foreign Minister of the "Central Bloc" government (a coalition of the two largest parties), in early 1985, the role Portugal envisaged for itself in the context of Euro-Africa relations was that of a "privileged interlocutor" (Gama 1985: 312). Through accession Portugal would join the group of member states with historical links to Africa, such as France and the United Kingdom. But as a small and, therefore, more "equal" country Portugal could

bring in a distinctive contribution, not least for relations with Lusophone Africa.³ Portugal's future participation in Community mechanisms was depicted as "adding value" to its national policy, but potential advantages for the EC and Africa were also officially underlined:

'Portugal's integration in the European communities will provide Europe with the Portuguese sensitivity to African problems and will give Portugal the support of community mechanisms to expand its African vocation. As a result, it will also provide Portuguese-speaking African countries with an ally and a friend within the community structures, balancing the game of influences which has been conducted there by other linguistic areas' (Gama 1985: 251).

This emphasis on reciprocal benefits indicates that Portuguese authorities were aware of the conditions involved in the bridging role Lisbon wanted to play in Euro-Africa relations, not least the need to strike a balance between its national goals and common Community objectives. By becoming a member of the European Community in 1986 Portugal had to adapt its trade relations with Angola to the *acquis communautaire*. Community instruments and procedures started to be applied to those relations as EC membership required the adoption of the *acquis* in full. Due to the Common Commercial Policy (CCP), Portugal adopted all Community external trade arrangements. Moreover, all Portuguese previous external links contrary to the CCP were abolished and future ones subjected to its rules, including the exclusive right for the Commission to offer and negotiate new trade agreements. Since Angola had joined the Lomé Convention in 1985 (Lomé III), this agreement became the framework for Portugal's trade relations with its ex-colony. Also, the "most favoured nation" clause inserted in the 1979 trade agreement between Portugal and Angola lost its potential benefits in relation to other European member states.⁴ Nevertheless, Portugal's trade agreement with its ex-colony continued to be potentially advantageous vis-à-vis other countries outside the EC, as its content was not incompatible with the *acquis communautaire* (Álvares 1986: 201-3). In fact, owing to Lomé's non-reciprocal trade regime the main implications of Portugal's accession to the Convention concerned its imports from ACP countries. Yet, as seen above Portugal's trade with Angola was at the time very low, especially regarding imports.⁵ Moreover, Portugal was allowed to only gradually open its market to ACP products over a seven-year transition period. Thus, in practical terms Community obligations had limited implications for Portugal's bilateral trade relationship with Angola. As bluntly put by a senior Portuguese diplomat referring to Community trade dispositions: 'Community rules are not as rigid as they seem; even the rules we need to abide by do not impede bilateral relations.'⁶ In contrast, the participation in common mechanisms and resourceful programmes opened the possibility for Portugal to reinforce its enduring national preferences vis-à-vis Angola.

The potential opportunities for Portugal to project its national priorities started to materialise very soon. One of the consequences of Portugal's EC accession was the application of the Lomé Convention's sugar protocol, which imposed restrictions on Portuguese imports of cane sugar from ACP countries.⁷ Although Portugal's former African colonies (especially Mozambique, but Angola too) were some of its traditional suppliers, they were not in the list of countries which continued to supply Portuguese refineries under the ACP-EC sugar protocol. In fact, long wars and decolonisation had severely damaged the production capacity of those territories.⁸ Concurrently, the ACP countries were interested in supplying the raw sugar deficit of Portuguese refineries. Indeed, during the negotiations of Portugal's accession to the Lomé Convention the ACP group was against the introduction of a transitional arrangement and pushed for additional concessions for agricultural products, including for sugar.⁹ After protracted negotiations that request was rejected in 1987, but the ACP continued to raise the issue in subsequent discussions (Xinhua, 15 May 1987). This situation gave Portugal the opportunity to make more visible the specificities of its position within the EC. In an interview published in early 1988 the Portuguese Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs,

Durão Barroso, said that '(w)ithin the European Community Portugal maintains a position of openness for sugar imports from ACP countries. (...) Angola and Mozambique are major potential producers of sugar and this is one additional reason to support a more generous position from the Community.' Further asked whether Portugal would revise previous arrangements in order to facilitate ACP exports, the response was that '(n)o decision has been made in that regard yet. Moreover, this is a complex question and we do not want to make decisions that are not acceptable at Community level' (Barroso 1990: 94). More broadly, Portuguese officials confirmed that during the negotiations of accession to Lomé, Portugal adopted a more flexible approach in relation to exchanges with its ex-colonies, which in any case were small.¹⁰ This more "generous" stance vis-à-vis its former colonies and the ACP in general indicate that Portugal tried to assume a distinctive position among its EC partners. Portugal's efforts of differentiation would be a way to preserve some visibility and autonomy for its own position, rather than accept its full "Europeanization".

THE IMPACT OF THE COTONOU AGREEMENT AND THE EPAs

When the reform of the Lomé Convention started in the mid-1990s, Lisbon's relationship with Angola had relatively improved. By then Portugal could benefit from favourable domestic political conditions to pursue its largely consensual foreign policy goals. The same was applicable in the economic domain where despite greater liberalisation the Portuguese state continued to have an important presence, often favouring more protectionist views. Additionally, EC membership had contributed to bolster the country's international status. In a more specific way, Lisbon's role in the Angolan peace efforts in the early 1990s had helped to reinforce the bilateral relationship. Subsequent progress was constrained by the enduring Angolan conflict, but Portugal continued to push for closer bilateral ties, namely in economic areas. Meanwhile, at the European level Lisbon became a strong supporter of the EU-ACP partnership, with a particular focus on Africa and aid approaches. As mentioned before, the 2000 Cotonou Agreement introduced major changes to the EU-ACP relationship. Ideas of solidarity continued to permeate those relations, but globalist and liberal views gained more attention. In particular, Cotonou introduced a principle of trade liberalisation, where the uniform preferential regime of Lomé was to be gradually replaced by reciprocal arrangements. Greater "differentiation" between ACP countries and "regionalisation" of trade relations represented additional departures from the Lomé regime. Further, though a mix of trade and aid measures was maintained, the development focus of previous arrangements gave more room to market-oriented approaches. This was reflected in a larger role for the European Commission's Directorate-General (DG) for Trade in EU-ACP relations. Against this broad setting, what was the impact of the Cotonou trade innovations on Portugal's relations with Angola?

Between national adaption and policy projection

The reform of the Lomé Convention that led to the signature of the Cotonou Agreement was seen by Portuguese authorities as an important process. More than trade aspects per se, Portugal's concerns related to the potential political and aid implications of the reform. In the face of growing dissatisfaction towards the Lomé Convention since the early 1990s, Lisbon was interested in preserving a special relationship between the EU and the ACP, particularly with African countries. It was in that sense that in March 1996 Portugal had put forward the initiative of organising for the first time a EU-Africa summit (Gama 2001: 269-270). The debate on the future of Lomé was launched by the Green Paper released by the European Commission in November 1996. The document suggested four options to reform EU-ACP arrangements. A first option was to maintain the *status quo*, that is, a non-reciprocal trade regime underpinned by an overall

agreement with all the ACP countries. All other options recommended a liberalisation of the trade relationship in conformity with WTO rules. Thus, the second possibility was to integrate Lomé into the EU's Generalised System of Preferences, which would diminish preferential margins and reduce the partnership to its aid and political dimensions. A third alternative ("uniform reciprocity") consisted in a general EU-ACP Free Trade Agreement, extending reciprocity to all ACP countries after a transitional period. Finally, a fourth option ("differentiate reciprocity") involved a series of trade agreements between the EU and separate regional groupings of ACP countries (Holland 2002: 173-176). Subsequent discussions revealed three main cleavages among EU member states: "traditionalists" (who wanted to preserve the "spirit of Lomé") versus "revisionists" (who pressed for an all-encompassing revision); "social development-oriented aid supporters" versus "growth-oriented free market proponents"; and "trade sceptics" versus "free trade enthusiasts" (Elgström 2000: 187). In general terms, a "traditionalist", "pro-development aid" and "trade sceptic" perspective appears to have inspired Portuguese representatives during the negotiations.

From the beginning Portugal declared itself in favour of the reform, but in order to "revitalise" EU-ACP ties. Accordingly, in its opinion the positive aspects of Lomé ("contractual nature, predictability, dialogue and partnership") should be preserved. Another distinctive element of Portugal's stance was the support for a positive discrimination in favour of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (Portugal 1997b: 101-102). These same elements as well as a critical view over following a primarily free trade approach in the forthcoming reform were buttressed by the Portuguese Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs, José Lamego, at the national parliament in January 1997:

'We do not want this framework of cooperation (Lomé model), which has existed for over 30 years, to be dismantled under the guise of a future reform. More differentiation needs to be introduced. However, we do not believe that the current cooperation framework, based on a partnership model, can be dismantled and replaced by a system of relations only in terms of a Generalised System of Preferences or of pure unfettered free trade. The economic vulnerability of our partners would not stand it.' (Portugal 1997c: 1264).

Among the preliminary written responses that the Commission's Green Paper received from the member states, Portugal's one was described as using some of the strongest language (Posthumus 1998: 11). The document, circulated in May 1997, clearly stated that Portugal would consider reviewing its involvement in EU-ACP cooperation if the reform did not minimally meet the objective of strengthening this relationship at all levels, favouring the ACP countries' development (Portugal 1997a: 6). Portugal's paper depicted the geographical coverage and trade arrangements of the partnership as interrelated matters (Portugal 1997a: 14). Whilst pointing to the fact that the decision was ultimately to be made by the ACP group itself, Portugal explicitly favoured maintaining the geographical set-up as it was (Portugal 1997a: 10). Regarding trade aspects, although no clear and definitive choice among the different options of reform was made, a preference for an "enhanced *status quo*" formula was indicated (Portugal 1997a: 12). As noted by some, in its initial response Portugal (together with France) was more optimistic than other member states about the possibility of obtaining WTO waivers to preserve the non-reciprocal regime of Lomé (Posthumus 1998: 5).

Following the consultation phase, in October 1997 the European Commission issued its policy guidelines for reforming Lomé, indicating a clear preference for the negotiation of economic agreements with regional ACP subgroups (European Commission 1997: 4). This was in line with Portugal's own position at this stage, as revealed by the following excerpt from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 1997 report:

'the EU should move from the current unilateral concessions granted to the ACP to a regime of reciprocity (except for LDCs). Yet, this should be done in a measured and gradual manner in order to avoid disruptions. Focusing first on

deepening regional integration processes that are under way in the ACP countries before moving to the requirement of reciprocity vis-à-vis the EU corresponds to the gradualism that we advocate.' (Portugal 1998: 128).

The Commission guidelines were subsequently expanded and formed an important basis for the negotiating mandate adopted by the Council in mid-1998 (Holland 2002: 178). In fact, the European Commission played an important role in the process, particularly DG Development as the directorate traditionally in charge of EU policies towards the ACP (Forwood 2001: 433-434). At the time, DG Development was led by Commissioner Deus Pinheiro, a former Portuguese Foreign Minister. The outcome of the internal EU negotiations was a compromise between different perspectives, but one that according to the assessment made by a high-level Portuguese politician was not so negative for Portugal.¹¹ On the one hand, a principle of trade liberalisation was introduced, replacing the non-reciprocal regime of Lomé. As put by a senior Portuguese official 'no member state was willing to pay the price for keeping an exception to WTO rules; nor were we!'¹² In any case, Portugal's stance on trade matters was closer to France, Belgium and Italy than, for instance, to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the Nordics (Forwood 2001: 428-429; Posthumus 1998: 4-5).¹³ On the other hand, the trade liberalisation agreed by the Council did not include LDCs and was to be conducted gradually, through the negotiation of the so-called EPAs with different regional ACP sub-groups. Following the same Portuguese official, 'member states with closer ties with Africa ended up preferring the EPAs. So did Portugal, as that option preserves the EU relationship with the continent.'¹⁴

Even if an EU-ACP link was retained, the potential impact of trade changes on the overall partnership raised more concerns in Portuguese quarters. Some apprehension was already visible during the intra-EU negotiations described above, namely in the emphasis that Portugal put on the interdependence between the different dimensions of the reform. But it continued to be voiced even after the EPAs principle was adopted: 'the new economic and trade partnership framework cannot diminish or weaken the special relationship the EU has with the region (ACP)' (Portugal 1999: 134). More specifically, while backing the negotiation of EPAs Portugal was less comfortable with the new emphasis put on trade liberalisation in comparison to development approaches based on aid measures. Thus, in 1999 when the United Kingdom and the Netherlands broke away from the EU position, doubting about the EPAs feasibility, Portugal (and other seven member states) reaffirmed their adherence to the negotiating mandate (Forwood 2001: 435). Accordingly, in June 2000, when the negotiations of Cotonou were already concluded, Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Luís Amado, publicly raised questions about the availability of adequate instruments to support the setting up of EPAs and the possible effect of "disintegration" that greater liberalisation could produce in some regions, especially in Africa (Portugal 2000: 89-91). These concerns were not dissipated with the beginning of the EPAs negotiations. The EU mandate for those negotiations was based on a recommendation drafted by DG Trade, putting greater accent on trade objectives than on development aims (Elgström 2009: 458); the recommendation called for more autonomy for the Commission, as well as greater openness of both EU and ACP markets. Portugal appears to have pushed for a less flexible mandate for DG Trade and joined a more protectionist camp opposing full access to the EU market due to defensive interests in agricultural sectors (Sicurelli 2010: 97-98).¹⁵ In the end, the mandate adopted by the Council in June 2002 watered down the full opening of European markets, while confirming a trade-centred approach for the EPA negotiations.

The negotiations of EPAs between the EU and the different ACP sub-groups revealed many difficulties. At least initially, EU countries in general showed little interest in the process. To illustrate, only three European ministers (including from Portugal) attended the first EU-ACP council meeting that took place after the adoption of the EU negotiating mandate (IPS 1 July 2002). Against this setting, DG Trade was left with great room for

manoeuvre and started to conduct the negotiations as if they were a pure trade negotiation (Elgström 2009: 459-460). Lisbon was critical of this primarily free trade approach. According to Portuguese officials, since the beginning Portugal stood for the creation of EPAs as tools for development. The way DG Trade handled the negotiations would have contributed to delay the process and, consequently, complicated Portugal's plans.¹⁶ The negotiation between the EU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) - which comprises Angola - was no exception to the slow progress of the EPAs. Indeed, after a late start in mid-2004 the EU-SADC EPA discussions were complicated by the inclusion of South Africa (Sicurelli 2010: 102). During an initial phase the country (the dominant economic player in the region) participated only as an observer.¹⁷ In 2006 the SADC presented a proposal to include South Africa as a full party, but excluding Mozambique, Angola, and Tanzania (the so-called MAT).¹⁸ Portugal (and other EU members) was against the exclusion of the MAT from the EPA process (Portugal 2008a: 114). Moreover, it pressed for the acceptance of South Africa to be subjected to specific conditions, allegedly for 'safeguarding the interests of the MAT countries' (Portugal 2008b: 110). Eventually, the deadline of end of 2007 for concluding the negotiations was not met. Instead of a full regional EPA, interim deals were initialled by some SADC countries. Angola was not one of them, but expressed the intention of joining later. Meanwhile, the country continued to benefit from a preferential access to the EU market through the EBA scheme, while gaining time to prepare the liberalisation of its economy.¹⁹ In sum, while the trade changes introduced by Cotonou have not produced a significant impact on Portugal's relations with Angola so far, Lisbon was able to an extent to protect its own market and project an image of a pro-Africa partner.

CONCLUSION

Portugal's membership of the European Union led to an important Europeanization of its trade policy towards Angola. This impact was mainly translated in a national adaptation to the EU's influence, but also as the projection of national priorities onto the European level. Lisbon's legal obligation of adopting the *acquis communautaire* in full during the EC accession process was a powerful mechanism to produce national adaptation. More broadly, the importance accession came to represent for Portugal's main political forces, as a tool for democratic stabilisation and foreign policy reorientation, together with the new opportunities Community membership promised to create for Portugal's meagre and problematic relations with Angola, helped overcome domestic reservations over closer relations with Europe in Africa. Even if the instrumentality of EC membership was given great emphasis during this phase, more ideational factors favouring national adaptation might not have been completely absent. This is an aspect that deserves further investigation, as decision-makers with stronger European convictions may have had to conceal their beliefs in order to facilitate the process of accession. Yet, a possible identification with European ideas was not necessarily incompatible with own representations in relation to the ex-colonies. These continued very present among vast sectors of the Portuguese elite and society in general. The difference, however, was that with Portugal's EC membership the national and European side became more intertwined. In effect, through accession Lisbon transferred to the Community most of its powers in external trade matters, and EC instruments became a central framework for Portugal's commercial relations with Angola. In practical terms, the constraints on Portugal's bilateral relations with Angola resulting from accession were more limited, namely due to the low level of trade between the two countries.

The reform of the Lomé trade regime provided another good case for assessing the potential EU's impact on Portugal-Angola relations. The greater role commercial aspects came to occupy in EU-ACP discussions seems to have gone beyond Portugal's preferences, due to its traditional "trade sceptical" stance. Lisbon had to compromise its position in order to achieve the common goal of revising the partnership with the ACP. However, Portugal did not have major commercial interests at stake, being more

interested in the aid and political implications of the reform. Even if further research is needed on this point, Lisbon appears to have been able to protect its (limited) defensive interests, while showing more flexibility with regard to greater openness of ACP markets in general. In any case, the compromise outcome of the reform, including a “gradual”, “regional” and “differentiated” trade liberalisation, did not move too far away from Portugal’s interests. Notwithstanding the complications of the EU-SADC EPA negotiations, Angola remained linked to the process and as a LDC continued to benefit from a non-reciprocal regime. Thus, in practice the reform did not have major implications for Portugal-Angola trade relations so far. Simultaneously, the evidence above indicates that Portugal was able to project some of its preferences. This was the case in relation to the acceptance of the EPAs option, despite all the difficulties that followed. In that process Portugal appears to have benefited, among other factors, from the unanimity requirement for revising Lomé (as a “mixed” agreement), the similar position of other member states (such as France), and the support of DG Development. Apart from that, by putting forward proposals favouring the ACP (particularly LDCs, such as Angola) Portugal was able to draw attention to the specificities of its national position within the EU, therefore, favouring its interests in Africa.

Those findings provide a more detailed and nuanced picture than the one found in the existing literature on Portuguese foreign policy, described above. The evidence of national adaptation comes close to more “Europeanist” perspectives describing the EU as the central forum for the delineation of the foreign policy of smaller member states. Yet, evidence also revealed that such adaptation was not disconnected from an instrumental use of common mechanisms to pursue national objectives, along the lines of more “state-centric” understandings. This mixed outcome indicates that Portugal subscribed and showed commitment to common objectives, but also sought actively to shape EU policies according to its national views, especially in relation to its ex-colonies. Ultimately, this level of national agency can be related to the presence of important economic interests from Portuguese companies with influence over the official policy. That influence is likely to have been favoured by the strong historical and cultural links existing between Portugal and Angola. A complementary explanation is the more general role Angola (together with the other former African colonies) plays in Portuguese foreign policy, as a factor of international differentiation and influence. In effect, apart from the importance of those relations on a bilateral level, Portugal’s post-colonial relations are often presented as a key trait of the country’s diplomatic identity and a factor of leverage at the international level. The end of the Cold War, globalisation, increased European integration, successive EU enlargements, as well as the recent economic crisis in Portugal, seem all to have reinforced such relevance. The broader implication of those findings is the need to adequately account for national conditions, even in highly integrated EU policy areas and for smaller member states.

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¹ Author's interview (Lisbon, October 2010).

² All quotations in this article originating from non-English sources are the author's own translation.

³ Author's interview with Portuguese diplomat (Lisbon, October 2010).

⁴ Under Lomé dispositions Angola assumed an obligation of non-discrimination among EC members (see article 136 of Lomé III).

⁵ Between 1978 and 1986 less than 0.4 per cent of Portugal's total imports came from Angola (Banco de Portugal, 2000).

⁶ Author's interview (Lisbon, November 2010).

⁷ With EC accession the annual amount of raw cane sugar Portugal was allowed to import from the ACP at a reduced levy was limited to a maximum of 75,000 tons, whereas in the past it used to import an amount of 300,000 tons. See article 303 of Portugal's Act of Accession to the EC (European Communities, 1985).

⁸ Author's telephone interview with a senior official from the Portuguese Foreign Ministry (July 2011).

⁹ As Lomé III was signed before Portugal's EC accession, the participation of this country (together with Spain) in the Convention had to be negotiated separately with the ACP.

¹⁰ Author's interviews, Portuguese Foreign Ministry (Lisbon, November 2010).

¹¹ Author's interview (Lisbon, November 2010).

¹² Author's interview, Portuguese aid agency (Lisbon, November 2010).

¹³ Author's interviews, Portuguese Foreign Ministry (Lisbon, November 2010).

¹⁴ Author's interview, Portuguese aid agency (Lisbon, November 2010).

¹⁵ Author's telephone interview with official from the Portuguese Foreign Ministry (July 2011).

¹⁶ Author's interviews, Portuguese aid agency (Lisbon, November 2010) and Permanent Representation to the EU (Brussels, February 2011).

¹⁷ The SADC countries that in 2004 started negotiating an EPA with the EU as full members were: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique (also a former Portuguese colony), Namibia, Swaziland and Tanzania.

¹⁸ As LDCs those three countries benefited from the Everything-But-Arms (EBA) scheme, which the SADC proposal wanted to "contractualise" on a non-reciprocal basis in the EPA.

¹⁹ Author's interviews with EU officials, DG Trade and DG Development (Brussels, January 2011).

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