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Portuguese Foreign Policy Pluralism 1974 to 1977: Contesting Elite Consensus

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Portuguese Foreign Policy Pluralism 1974 to 1977: Contesting Elite Consensus



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1. Introduction

In the immediate aftermath of the Carnation Revolution of April 25th, 1974, Portugal entered a period of political flux, instability, and competing ideological visions for the future of the country. In terms of foreign policy matters, the main questions had to do with alignment, would Portugal join the Western European democracies through political and economic integration in the EEC; pursue a non-aligned position through increased relations with the Global South and by balancing relations with the Western bloc and Eastern bloc by increasing relations with the USSR and its satellite states; or build a post-colonial Lusophone community or federation with the former colonies? These alternatives, European integration, Third-Worldism, and Lusofonia, were not only ideas, but clear projects developed in and through the Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (Foreign Ministry - MNE). Amid such diverse policy options did it decide to pursue integration into the European Economic Community (EEC). This thesis aims to engage these questions by focusing on the 1974 to 1977 period, when democratic transition was at its peak, not to trace a linear European integration project, but to explain the ideological conflict, institutional differences, and political struggle that ultimately led the Portuguese state into the arms of the EEC. The main aim of this thesis is to answer how valid is the claim that Portugal's successful integration into the EEC between 1974 and 1977 was the result of elite consensus, given the political fragmentation and competing foreign policy visions of the revolutionary period?

While Portuguese democratization and accession to the EEC have been very well studied, much of the academic literature, both historiographical and in terms of political science, has treated this pre-accession period as a process of elite consensus. According to those who defend this policy, centrist political forces, mainly from the Partido Socialista (PS) and the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD), deliberately chose the European option as the foreign policy vision, as it would align Portugal with the liberal democracies of the continent, stabilize the economy in the long run, as well as aid in establishing external legitimacy. This view of elite consensus presents the transition period of 1974 to 1977, as a pacted transition model of democratization, in which the role of the elites is seen as essential to democratization. However, this interpretation imposes coherence and intention on a process that was incredibly chaotic and contested at the time. It overlooks the existence of the other international projects, the ideological divisions between parties and in other state institutions, as well as the fragile nature of the Portuguese diplomatic engagement of the post-revolutionary period. In contrast, this thesis challenges this idea by explaining what is not accounted for in this idea of elite

consensus. It argues that the European option was not the only viable option, and also that it did not come about from an agreed strategy between elites. Between 1974 and 1977, Portugal's foreign policy was not shaped by elites, but by institutional cohesion, ideological conflict, and the pressures of the revolutionary process which was constantly threatened by uprisings by both the extreme left and right.

While most accounts begin with the formal Portuguese EEC application or at the 1986 formal accession and consolidation within Europe, this thesis argues that the decisive groundwork was made in fact between the Revolution in 1974 and the EEC's reception of Portugal's application in 1977. This three-year period was when the international orientation of the Portuguese state was most uncertain with the various competing visions being viable and politically embraced by several sectors of the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (Armed Forces Movement - MFA) and the different political parties. Even as integration into the EEC advanced, there was still contestation and it required continuous legitimation efforts. Additionally, the MNE had the difficult task of functioning even with the threat of counter revolution, successive collapses of provisional governments, and ideological division.

This thesis revisits the three policy visions that shaped the discussions during this period, which are: European Integration, based on EEC membership and alignment with Western European democracies; Third-Worldism, focused on developing relations with the Global South, and adopting a non-aligned position in the Cold War, implicating an exit from NATO; and Lusofonia, promoting post-imperial ties the former African colonies through a Federative state. This thesis will additionally focus on the role of the MNE as the institutional actor that presented and negotiated between the competing visions for Portugal's international alignment.

The hypothesis defended is that the dominant narrative of elite consensus fails to explain the complexity and uncertainty of Portugal's foreign policy trajectory during its democratic transition. Rather than a unified elite guiding the country toward Europe, the period from 1974 to 1977 was marked by deep ideological divisions, rival foreign policy projects, mainly Third-Worldism, Lusofonia, and European integration. The eventual success of the European option was not predetermined by elite agreement but emerged through political struggle, institutional resilience (particularly in the MNE), and international conditionality. The foreign policy direction was negotiated, not consensual. The three different ideas were developed through different provisional and constitutional governments, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), and the MNE. This thesis will present the MNE as a stabilizing actor, that played a crucial role

in shaping foreign policy choices. Institutional resilience allowed the MNE to function during a period of political turmoil, economic crisis, and ideological divisions. The thesis will show that the MNE functioned effectively during the “Verão Quente” of 1975, managed different political and ideological convictions and visions, and maintained and grew strategic relationships with European partners, while securing continuity, and preserving internal coherence. A focus will be placed on certain key diplomatic and political actors such as Mário Soares, Ernesto Melo Antunes, and José Medeiros Ferreira, to demonstrate the complex difficulty in defining an external policy during the transition period. These figures are not only representatives of particular policy visions but also institutional mediators, whose agency is clearly documented in archival material and supported by secondary interpretations. Archival documents provide insight into the way policies were implemented during this period

This thesis will use a comparative process tracing methodology to analyse the three foreign policy visions and each policy vision will be assessed through an analysis of the MNE’s structure, personnel decisions, and continuity amid regime change; the role of actors and how each made decisions that shaped these orientations; and the archival research using primary sources that demonstrate how each decision was made. The research will be done by showing the political and ideological support for each orientation across governments and parties from 1974 to 1977; tracing the MNE’s diplomatic activities with or against each vision; identifying turning points in foreign policy (e.g., changes to the Provisional Governments, elections); cross-referencing domestic developments with international engagements by Portuguese figures to explain the prioritization of the differing visions.

The thesis will have the following structure, a Literature Review which will examine previous academic work on elite consensus and its limitations, as well as other explanations for European integration: the differing foreign policy visions, the MNE, and the post-revolutionary political and diplomatic context. Next the focus will be on giving a background of the Estado Novo and the pre-1974 foreign policy, showing the role of imperialism and colonialism, NATO alignment, and EFTA participation, which shaped the institutional continuity of the MNE; chapter four will focus on the political context and transition, focusing on how the political landscape structured the foreign policy options; the next chapter will present the three foreign policy orientations, through what actors defended them and attempted to enact them as well as their institutional trajectory in the MNE; chapter six on the MNE, demonstrating through its institutional resilience, personnel and diplomatic continuity that elite consensus does not fully explain the process of European integration; lastly the conclusion will answer the research

question by reflecting on the findings and reflecting on the importance of these results to the study of democratic transitions and post-authoritarian foreign policy re-alignment.

This thesis aims to intersect in both historical and contemporary political debates. Historically, it challenges narratives that present Portugal's Europeanization as solely elite driven by focusing on internal foreign policy disputes, it demonstrates that European integration was the result of institutional discussion and political struggle, not simply an elite consensus. As will be shown through the MNE's continuous negotiations with the EEC, Council of Europe, and Western allies during the period of 1974 to 1977 the European option was a contested path, not a predetermined outcome, and any of the three political visions could have prevailed. Contemporarily, this research also addresses the political moment in which the legitimacy of European institutions is under strain in Portugal with a political party who questions and opposes democratic and European norms by framing the democratic transition and following period as elite dominated, taking a predominant role. Revisiting the MNE's role in constructing Portugal's European orientation serves not only as a scholarly contribution but also as a civic reminder that democracy was and remains a negotiated project, not a historical inevitability.

2. Literature Review

This chapter aims to critically examine the academic works on Portuguese integration into the EEC during the period of 1974 to 1977, the focus will fall particularly on the idea of elite consensus, central to answering the question of the validity of the claim that Portugal's integration in the EEC was the result of elite consensus given the political and diplomatic fragmentation of the period. This literature review has been structured into four different parts, the first will define the concept of elite consensus within democratization scholarship, as well as applying to the Portuguese case. Secondly it will evaluate the weaknesses of this framework, focusing on the political fragmentation, as well as the differing foreign policy visions of the period. Third, this chapter will view alternative explanations for Portugal's EEC integration, focusing on the role of the MNE, as well as international, mainly European, conditionality. Lastly, it will provide an overview historiography of Portuguese foreign policy during the period of 1974 to 1977.

Elite Consensus

The idea of elite consensus features heavily in the literature of democratization, suggesting that broad agreement between the political elites is crucial for successful transitions from authoritarian to democratic rule. Applied to Portugal and its democratization process, this framework defends that the shift to democracy, followed by European integration were both processes led by political elites, forming a united front of key political actors, pushing for democracy and Europe. Lisi defends this by explaining how PS and PPD united on the topic as the two main supporters of European integration, "both the PS and PSD converged in the support to the EC and strongly defended the goal of European integration (...) the party elite linked European integration with the democratisation process" (Lisi 2019, 154). This framework makes it seem that EEC accession was a consensual elite-led process where Europe consolidated democracy, "integration was viewed by the political and economic elites as the best way to consolidate" (Royo 2004, 101). This perspective presented by Royo argues that elites saw Europe as the only way to institutionalize democratic norms and large economic reforms, and as such they worked to achieve this.

Additionally, scholars have used the idea that the European option became the political priority from 1976 onwards of the Portuguese governments and parties with the exception of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) (Barreto 1994, 1058) to prove that it was an elite led process. Unlike in the accession process of 1973 where Denmark, Norway, and Ireland held

referendums, Portugal's process included no popular referendum on EEC accession. This fact is cited by many as key evidence of the elite-driven process, "adhesion was clearly a path traced, negotiated and agreed by the top political elite" (Ruivo, Moreira, Costa Pinto and Tavares de Almeida 2017, 185). This approach places the EEC as the main safeguard for democratization and modernization, this view is defended by several scholars like Royo, Costa Pinto and others.

Despite these ideas being present in scholarship, it is clear that the period of 1974 to 1977 was also marked by large political fragmentation and ideological divisions, that had an important impact on the foreign policy of the state. As will be later proved the process was not a simple, smooth elite process towards Europe, to say so would be to oversimplify a complex and difficult revolutionary process. Bastos da Silva informs us that the period was full of "oscillations, hesitations, and indecisions" (Bastos da Silva 2024, 35) on foreign policy matters, with the revolutionary regime advocating for peace and friendship with everyone, and an opening of relations with the world to oppose the restrictive policies of the previous regimes policy. This lack of political definition for one single foreign policy led to several competing visions appearing, these included Third-Worldism, Lusofonia, and Atlanticism (closely aligned with the US, the UK, NATO, and the EEC).

The Third-Worldist view defended that Portugal take a neutral, non-aligned stance, attempting to establish closer ties with developing nations, as well as with members of the Non-aligned movement. Additionally, those defending this stance were also in favour of tightening relations with the Eastern bloc. In terms of scholarship, most of the literature including Rezola, Medeiros Ferreira, Pedro Ponte e Sousa, and Severiano Teixeira defend that it was an unfeasible plan that could not be put into practice. However, it seems they are forgetting that during a large period of 1975 the Communist led provisional governments were attempting the installation of an East European style state and were only stopped on the 25th of November. For Severiano Teixeira (2010) a Third-Worldist policy was never a possible outcome for Portuguese foreign policy. This thesis will attempt to prove that in fact this was a policy that was pursued during the period of 1974 to 1977, and had the political winds favoured the PCP and left-wing members of the MFA this could have been the adopted policy, which demonstrates that in fact elite consensus was not the reason for EEC integration.

The other option, Lusofonia, had been in existence for a long time, as a sort of myth of the connection of Portugal and its colonies, be them in Africa or Brasil. This idea based on the idea

of Lusotropicalism and popularized by President António de Spínola in his 1974 book *Portugal e o Futuro* defended the establishment of a Federation or Community with the former colonies. This “post-colonial myth legitimizing decolonization as a mutual and fraternal liberation from the same oppressive regime without a loss of strong ‘natural’ cultural bonds” (Reis and Oliveira 2018, 633) was viewed by those on the right of the political spectrum and with some connection to the colonial regime as the best proposal, although less likely to be implemented due to the decolonization push of the MFA, it still was viewed as an alternative by President Spínola until his failed coup in late 1974. This vision although not fully implemented at the time, led in 1996 to a modern representation which is now a pillar of Portugal’s current world power, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Nations (CPLP). This new implementation of Lusofonia has led to some scholars defending that the CPLP could be presented as the “alternative to the European option” (de Sousa e Gaspar 2017, 234), proving that the vision held by Spínola and others in the 1970’s had potential.

An additional factor for this thesis opposition to the idea of EEC integration being an elite led process, was that several of the political actors particularly inside the PS party were divided, as Castaño explains there were “profound divergences on the subject in PS” (Castaño 2018, 13), and Mário Soares refused to endorse European integration in 1974. In fact, during a congress in 1974 PS was divided, and held a position that could be described as favouring a non-aligned foreign policy and a Third-Worldist viewpoint. Additionally, as referred above the Hot Summer of 1975, which included a swing to the left and the fall of several provisional governments, tensions within the left-wing and the moderates of the MFA, created the perfect storm and led to a period of lack of interest in the EEC. This period of political contestation in 1975 helped establish the Third-Worldist policy option and was so disorganised that as Rezola (2016) explains led to the creation of “parallel diplomacies” (Rezola 2016, 30), that indicate a lack of unified elite course. Another factor which should shape the way we see the idea of elite consensus in terms of Portuguese EEC integration is the idea of a top-down democratization process. While clear that some elites played a crucial role, like Soares, Sá Carneiro, and others, the transition period is characterized as a “democratising social revolution” (Fishman, 232), which included purges in almost every political and social institution. This suggests that the revolutionary period and subsequent integration were more contested and socially driven than a purely elite-based one.

The triumph of European integration was not due to the elite consensus, but to the outcome of the political will of the people who in a large majority elected a moderate representation to the

Constitutional parliament and then to the first Constitutional government, negotiation, institutional agency, and international imposition by allies.

The MNE

It is interesting to note that little attention has been paid to the MNE as an institution. The common narrative, based on statements by actors like Mário Soares and José Calvet de Magalhães, demonstrates that the MNE was largely spared from post-revolutionary purges and remained a site of professional continuity, Soares claimed in a 2008 interview that the MNE was one of the few ministries that did not undergo significant restructuring or political retaliation. It is explained that figures like Sá Machado and Victor Cunha Rego ensured that professionalism and experience were retained, even during revolutionary moments (Calvet de Magalhães 2004, 250–251). These accounts suggest institutional resilience in the face of a sweeping revolutionary movement.

The limited research that does exist on the MNE focuses largely on foreign policy actions, rather than internal dynamics. For example, Mateus (1999) and Paiva and Monteiro (2013) mention the importance of the MNE in securing European financial aid and preparing Portugal's application to the EEC but offer little explanation of how the ministry functioned during crises like the 'Verão Quente' when it was negotiating with the EEC and European partners on aid and loans, or how it handled conflicting demands on policy directions from the different provisional governments. By focusing on foreign policy rather than internal process, these works miss the significance of how the MNE negotiated conditionality and alignment under domestic political volatility and constant change. This thesis offers an analysis of the MNE's role as both a site of conflict and a stabilizing force. Showing that the MNE functioned not merely as a neutral channel of foreign policy, but as a continuous space for different visions to be negotiated and prioritized.

To understand the dynamics of the MNE is critical to engage with the idea of elite consensus in the Portuguese case. Much of what the literature suggest regarding elite consensus is a straightforward agreement between the political and the institutional. However, those assumptions minimize the actual importance of the MNE, who due to its professional continuity and pivotal role in foreign policy creation played a bigger role than what most scholars who defend elite consensus admit. The MNE, as stated by Soares and Calvet de Magalhães state was a key site for the articulation of the various foreign policy options. Thus, studying the MNE allows for a better understanding of how foreign policy was created, and

how institutional actors adapted to different directives coming from the Provisional Governments, and helped shape the European option.

International Conditionality

Crucial as well to the study of the period and of the process of European integration is the aid and support offered by many European states and parties, as well as the US. This support as suggested above was not unconditional, “it was clear that the United States, individual European states, and the European Communities would not grant loans unless a liberal democratic political system was established” (Bruneau 1977, 301). This view of conditionality is again seen through various scholars including Royo (2004), Simões do Paço (2015), Bastos da Silva (2024), and Castaño (2018). Although it does help contest the idea that the process was elite led, as it suggests a heavy outside influence, in fact it aids the idea of a top-down process, as one of the main beneficiaries of this financial backing was the PS party through its close ties to the European socialist parties who helped fund the party.

Additionally, Atlanticism quite closely tied with the EEC and its members of NATO, as well as the name suggests through the Atlantic Ocean ties to the UK, the US, and NATO. At the time of the revolution and due to the Estado Novo regime having close ties to the US and the UK, and being an important NATO member, due to the bases in the Azores of critical importance to the US, the Secretary of State Kissinger was worried about a communist takeover of Portugal, and of the risk of NATO secrets being passed to the Eastern Bloc, as such the US adopted a policy of aiding certain moderate political parties. Additionally, through NATO, Portugal had built some ties with French and West German actors, as well as with the UK, all of these would be critical in providing aid to Portugal during the period of 1974 to 1977 critical in establishing its relationship with the EEC. Soares according to Juliet Sablosky wanted to “honour the international commitments of the country, especially NATO” (dos Santos Vicente 2011, 253). This here helps to show how international conditionality helped to force through the EEC policy, as both EEC states and NATO states worked to stop Portugal from becoming a communist state which would have led to a different policy route being fully taken.

Portuguese Foreign Policy Historiography

The foreign policy reorientation that followed the fall of the Estado Novo has been well documented in Portuguese historiography. Central to this tradition is the work of Nuno Severiano Teixeira, whose analyses across multiple publications (1995, 1998, 2004, 2010, 2017) provide a detailed demonstration of the shift from colonial isolationist policy to a

European one. Teixeira identifies that Portugal's decision to join the EEC after 1974 was a political decision, and an economic one. His work demonstrates how Europe emerged as the core basis for Portuguese democratization. This thesis aligns with Teixeira's view that joining the EEC was the key to securing democratic consolidation but diverges in how it was completed. Teixeira offers a top-down narrative, focusing on high-level political decisions and geopolitical realignments which depicts the European options as a consequence of elite preference, this thesis emphasizes how institutional legacies and intra-ministerial choices shaped the policy direction. Additionally, de Sousa (2000) observes that by 1975–76, Portuguese political elites and a growing segment of the public began to identify with Europe politically, marking a profound transformation in the population. He reinforces that European integration was created as both a policy and identity project, an insight that this thesis analyses at the institutional level by showing how the MNE's diplomatic initiatives helped implant this option within the foreign policy. De Sousa captures the ideological transformation of Europe into an identity but does not trace how that transformation was managed in diplomatic channels, through internal contestation and governmental instability.

This thesis aims to look at the period of 1974 to 1977, not as others have approached it. Europe was not the pre-determined course, it was not a process solely orchestrated by a cohesive political group, instead it was a consequence of a revolutionary ideological plural period, filled with institutional resistance and external limitation. By focusing on the foreign policy options of this period with an eye on the MNE as a site and instrument of mediation, this study wants to provide a challenge to the idea of elite consensus. The European path was not self-evident nor universally supported, it appeared through the converging of several conditions. This thesis offers a more complex and dynamic account of Portugal's EEC integration. This perspective understands that it is necessary to approach the disruption of revolution and as well as the structures of diplomacy that been built up over 50 years of authoritarianism. The following chapters will develop this argument through a critical encounter with literature, a detailed analysis of the MNE, and a close study of the MNE's diplomatic actions during the transition period.

3. Portuguese Foreign Policy during the Estado Novo and its Legacy

Portuguese foreign policy under the Estado Novo (1933-1974) cannot be analysed separately from the regime's authoritarianism, colonial imperialism, and geopolitical isolation. The Portuguese government led by first António de Oliveira Salazar and then by Marcello Caetano, focused on the idea of Portugal not as a European nation-state, but as a pluricontinental entity, whose territory is almost as large as Europe itself, defending the idea Portugal is inseparable from its colonies, mainly the African Colonies of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique. This vision of nation led to a creation of a foreign policy defined by the defence of empire, strategic alliances (with anti-communist states, like the United States – Atlanticism), as well as a difficult relation with other European states. We can define Portuguese European policy before the revolution as deeply ambivalent; it wanted the European economic benefits without the political and legal frameworks that constructed modern post-war Europe.

Estado Novo and the African Colonies

Crucial to the regime's foreign policy was the narrative of Portugal's civilizational role as the bearer of Christian values across its African colonies. This role helped to legitimize the narrative of the regime, supporting Portugal's claims that its colonies were not only imperial possessions, but important parts of the pluricontinental nation. This led to institutional resistance against the international norms of decolonization and self-determination, this was clear in Portugal's confrontation with UNESCO, which led to Portugal's withdrawal from the organization (Valente dos Santos 2021, 100). Portugal's pre-revolution views on sovereignty, signified that any international pressure on Portugal's colonial territories were seen as attacks on the territorial unity of the nation. The pre-revolution ideas on sovereignty and empire isolated Portugal from the Western European democracies (UK, the Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, France, Belgium, etc.) who were shaping European strategy and condemning Portugal's colonial regime.

Estado Novo and NATO

Regarding, Portugal's Atlanticism, Portugal joined NATO in 1949, however its alignment with the Organization was not driven by the affinity with the new post-war liberal democracies, but more by strategic calculations. The NATO alliance helped provide military and economic assistance to Portugal, with the USA providing over thirty million dollars' worth of military aid (Bruneau 1982, 896), added to other loans and economic investments in construction projects in Portuguese Colonial Africa, as well as helping secure support for the colonial

position (Bruneau 1977, 313). However, friction became clear between Portugal and other NATO members during the Portuguese Colonial War, with Portugal being condemned several times internationally (Cardina 2024, 5), in both the UN General Assembly (UNGA 1973) and the UN Security Council (UNSC 1972). The regime attempted to project the image of independence, defined as non-aligned Atlanticism, with the foreign policy being reactive to the rest of the world, the regime lacked a unified diplomatic strategy beyond a defence of the empire, Portugal had to be standing alone against decolonisation, according to Salazar's policy of "proudly standing alone" (Teixeira 1998, 83). This marginalized Portugal's integration into the European community.

Estado Novo and Europe

Albeit, isolated from the European community, the regime needed realistic economic engagement with Europe to help solve its economic problems. A large majority of the budget went to defence and the Colonial War, in 1974 the budget for defence was around forty-five percent of the total budget (Telo and Gómez 2000, 138). In the meantime, Portugal was a founding member of EFTA in 1960, which gave Portugal easier access to the European markets without having to follow the political and legal principles of the EEC. Portugal had adopted, similarly to the UK in the early 1960's, a scepticism to the political integration required by the EEC and the Rome Treaty (Teixeira 2017, 19). It is important to note that Portuguese participation in EFTA led to an increase in its economic power and trade capacity in the 1960s (Paiva and Monteiro 2013, 17).

Although the regime clearly benefitted from EFTA integration it had absolutely no interest in further political European integration, this can be seen in the 1972 Trade Agreement (CEC 1972) signed with the EEC (Bruneau, 1982), which focused on the trade of industrial products and certain agricultural goods, enabling economic cooperation with the EEC without the obligation to adhere to certain democratic norms nor committing to supranational governance organizations which would impose sovereignty restrictions over Portuguese African colonies. Even though the regime did not want any political impositions from the European community it became clear by the early 1970's that Portugal's economic future was with Europe, forty-eight percent of the exports of the regime went to the EEC with only fifteen percent going to the African colonies, as well as forty-five percent of imports coming from the EEC and only ten percent came from the African colonies (Maxwell 1999, 43). The war had conditioned economic growth, industrial and agricultural production in Portuguese Africa.

The Estado Novo's foreign policy of isolationism and focus on the colonies and the war left Portugal constrained in its actions after the revolution. The economic agreements with the EEC and participation in EFTA were helpful for the governments post-revolution Europeanization as clear links now existed between the EEC and Portugal, however, the impact of having nearly fifty percent of the budget allocated to defence over a period of ten years severely restricted the economic possibilities of the new executives, destabilizing the future reforms and projects that would be needed to guarantee European adhesion. Another factor which destabilized the incoming governments were the loss of the colonial markets which led to the reduction in exports, and the oil crises of 1973 – deepened by Portugal's decision to allow American air force planes to refuel at the Lajes Air Base during the Yom Kippur War in support of Israel in return for an end to the American embargo on selling certain weapons to Portugal (Maxwell 1999, 72-73) – caused major trade losses and a reduction in the GDP of almost five percent by 1977 (Mateus 1999, 2).

Transition to Democracy

The transition period to democracy was not only focused on the economic future of Portugal, but also on the decolonization of the African colonies, as well as the need to democratize a country that had lived for forty-eight years in an authoritarian restrictive state. Additionally, the new governments needed to reorient the country's international position. This last point was a crucial discussion point held by many. Many in the MFA and the provisional governments wanted Portugal to pursue alignment with Western Europe and maintain participation in NATO, while the Communist Party and a leftist extreme faction of the MFA wanted alignment with the USSR, this led to a particularly turbulent 'Verão Quente' of 1975 (the hot summer of 1975). However, the moderates succeeded as we will see in future chapters. Kissinger's "Kerensky" Mário Soares managed with the help of the MNE to steady the ship towards Western European alignment.

It is fair to say that the economic relations created by the Estado Novo in the 1960s and the 1970s aided in the process of European integration, however their lack of democratic tools, their institutional underdevelopment, and their diplomatic isolation due to their defence of the colonies made Portuguese European relations trickier to govern for the provisional governments. The next chapter will give the political context of the transition period between 1974 and 1976, as well as the first few months of the first constitutional government leading up to the official start of ascension talks to the EEC in 1977.

4. Political Context 1974-1977

The Carnation Revolution began Portugal's transformation into a European democracy, with profound domestic and foreign policy changes. In terms of foreign policy, it is important to note that the collapse of the system led to a collapse of the long-standing foreign policy tradition which had rarely changed over the previous 40 years, which led to intense contestation. To understand these foreign policy changes we need to understand the political context during the period of 1974 to 1977, focusing on the different domestic forces in play, the establishment of the constitution, and the first democratic elections which help us to understand the context of the application for accession to the EEC in 1977. This chapter looks at the MFA program, the six Provisional Governments, and the I Constitutional Government.

A. MFA

The MFA led the Carnation Revolution, when they seized power, they aimed to implement 'os três Ds' (the three Ds), 'democratização, descolonização, e desenvolvimento' (democratization, decolonization, and development), ideas present in the MFA program (Neves 1975, 41-46). These objectives changed the national agenda and forced a change in Portugal's external relations. The MFA's intentions were clear, change should not only be internal but also external. Portugal's isolationist policy was prejudicial as they had little international support. An example of this is that in 1974 Guinea-Bissau's African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) had been recognised by eighty-two countries, which was more than Portugal had diplomatic relations with (Almeida Cravo 2024, 168). However, over the next few weeks, the new regime had been recognized by several states, as they had committed in the MFA program (Teixeira 1995, 815) to honouring existing international agreements. In the first few months there was a clear interest in increasing and diversifying diplomatic relations, ending the isolation of the Estado Novo, with new relations created with the Eastern European bloc, many Third World countries (Teixeira 2010, 53). The MFA clearly favoured between 1974 and 1975 the Third-Worldist policy, as they were the main organ of power between 1974 and 1976, it is very hard to see how EEC integration was the elite consensus option.

Between 1974 and 1976 there were six provisional governments who fell amid revindications, nationalisations, several attempts from right-wing groups to bring back an authoritarian regime, and from left-wing groups that wanted to install a soviet style regime in Portugal. This did not help to contain the increasing social violence (Carvalho and Ramos Pinto 2019, 200) and

political polarization. Like much of society during this period the MFA was also deeply divided on the course of action to take. The group did not behave as a unified actor, including regarding external matters. The more left-wing section of the MFA sided with the PCP and defended a more Third-Worldist approach, while the more moderates leaned toward Atlanticism and the European option. Interestingly, Melo Antunes, a moderate and a key leader of the MFA, as Foreign Minister pursued and defended a more Third-Worldist foreign policy. These divisions within the MFA led to the definition of a foreign policy idea in the MFA's Program for the period of 1974 to 1976, that was incredibly broad. In section B point 7 the program defines the following foreign policy, "The Provisional Government will guide itself in matters of foreign policy by the principles of independence and equality between states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the defence of peace, increasing and diversifying international relations based on friendship and cooperation" (Neves 1975, 42). This allowed for a range of options, the unclear definition allowing for contestation and participation from many political actors and parties. This shows once again the MFA's division, and lack of complete support for EEC integration during 1974 and 1975.

B. Provisional Governments

The period from the sixteenth of May 1974 when the I Provisional Government took power to the twenty-third of July 1976 when power was handed over to the first Constitutional Government was marked by extreme volatility, as six different provisional governments succeed each other, an average of one every four months. These governments were a balancing act between the MFA and the main political parties, PS, PPD, and PCP. Each government was coalition based, with the exception of the V Provisional Government led solely by the PCP, however these coalitions were shifting alliances that contained numerous ideological divides, particularly in regard to foreign policy, a clear example is the first three governments, dominated by the PCP, but with PS founder Mário Soares, a moderate, as Foreign Minister.

During this period, the MFA had a central role in the decision-making process, and its internal divisions were mirrored in the fragmentation of the political system. The left-wing segments of the MFA aligned with the PCP, promoting a foreign policy based on Third-Worldism and anti-imperialism, especially during the governments led by Vasco Gonçalves (II, III, IV, and V). During this time PS and PPD, both also committed to decolonization aimed to bring Portugal closer to the Western world and to promoting closer relations with NATO, and EEC partners. During this period of transition there was little political possibility of EEC accession,

due to the social unrest and tension (Castaño 2018, 13), however both PS and PPD tried to position themselves as the pro-European party. PS aligned with European social democrats according to Granadino, which they believed would deter a communist takeover.

As we can see these six successive governments were inconsistent and contradictory in terms of foreign policy. This was not helped by successive coups and counter coups especially between the twelfth of March 1975 and the twenty-fifth of November 1975, this period known as the 'Verão Quente' created even more tensions and prevented the creation of any coherent policy, including regarding foreign matters. Diplomats faced uncertainty, not only regarding the type of regime being implemented, as well as regarding the ideological focus of external relations. The MFA's control over the MNE did not translate into clarity, instead it turned the MNE into a place where different mandates were interpreted, negotiated, and ignored depending on the Minister or government of the day.

This phase of institutional and political division deeply challenges the idea of elite consensus. The idea that a unified political elite steered Portugal toward the EEC is contradictory to the deep ideological splits and constant instability of the provisional governments. Foreign policy in this case was not the product of one shared vision, but of institutional improvisation, as it was the MNE who negotiated with the EEC during periods of political instability in 1975, going against what most in the PCP led governments wanted, exemplified by the fact that the MNE on the seventh of October 1975, managed to negotiate with the EEC through its various embassies (AHPR 1976c and AHD 1975b) for aid in the form of credit in worth around five thousand three hundred million escudos (Commission of the European Communities 1979).

C. Constitutionalism

During the 'Verão Quente' an election was held on the twenty-fifth of April 1975 to elect the two hundred and fifty delegates of the Constitutional Assembly that would draft the new Portuguese Constitution. The results gave the win to PS followed by the PPD and by PCP. The drafting of the Constitution started on the second of June 1975 and institutionalized the commitment to democracy. The Constitution created a semi-presidential system, with a separate judiciary, it also maintained the Council of the Revolution as a supervisory organ, and in its preamble stated that the role given by the people to the delegates and to the Constitution was that of creating a future "socialist society" (Assembleia Constituinte 1976). The outcome of the election favoured a European leaning centrist movement, proving that moderate Europeanist had the electoral strength, the Constitution still reflected revolutionary language

and ideals. The Constitution still maintained the Council of the Revolution formed mainly of MFA members, which counselled the President, as well as having the power to decide on military matters and approve treaties and international agreements as per the 148th article of the Portuguese Constitution of 1976. Even with a centrist majority, the Constitution reflected compromise rather than elite consensus.

Following the ratification of the Constitution, a minority PS government was installed in July 1976. This government established a new strategy for the country both internal and external. The focus on Europe became at the forefront of the government's foreign policy plan, assuming that Portugal is both European and Atlantic (Teixeira 2010, 54), giving importance to joining the EEC and remaining in NATO. This political leaning and approximation with Europe started with Mário Soares during his tenure as Foreign Minister in the I Provisional Government, and although interrupted when he became Prime Minister in 1976 it returned, as he leveraged his international contacts, chiefly with the other European parties and socialist leaders and governments mainly in the UK and West Germany to secure economic and political support. He presented Portuguese integration into the EEC as not only an economic need, but also as the political consolidation of democracy, preventing the rise of communist state, or the return to an authoritarian right-wing regime. This resonated well with the Portuguese people who had just been freed from a repressive state, as well as with governments across Europe who had seen this Western state almost fall into communist hands. Mário Soares, with a strong backing from other prominent European socialist party leaders and based on the work done by the MNE during the period of 1974 to 1976 when the foreign policy focus was on the Third-World, prepared Portugal for EEC accession talks from 1977 and for membership in 1986. He viewed this as the most important way to secure Portuguese democracy overall.

In summary, the political situation of this period became the backdrop for the development of Portuguese Foreign Policy, between 1974 and 1976 in a constant fight between Third-Worldist and European paths, but with the stabilization brought about by democracy the clear focus fell on Europeanisation. The European option became viewed by politicians and many in civil society as the option, but also in the political forums which set the stage for Portugal's eventual membership in the EEC and the subsequent development, however large sections of society aligned with PCP and other leftist parties still held a large minority.

5. Foreign Policy Visions – Europeanism, Third-Worldism, and Lusofonia

This chapter will look at the complex and difficult period between the revolution and the formal application of membership to the EEC in March 1977. The accession talks only started in 1977, however the period of 1974 to 1977 was crucial in shaping Portugal's new foreign policy, as well as preparing the stage for eight years of negotiation for EEC membership, it was this period that confirmed Europe as the political option (Teixeira 2004, 10) to follow out of the three policies pursued. This was a period of foreign policy pluralism, various sectors of governance disagreed on which one to follow so it is very hard to state that there was an elite consensus and much less that Europe was the policy pursued. Additionally, during this period there were multiple actors who tried to influence policy decisions (Ferreira 1980, 10), and who enacted policy in order to implement their visions. This led to Portugal's international role during these years being complex and uncertain.

Within this uncertainty the three main policy visions that were followed had distinct ideological and political roots and goals. Europeanism, and in particular EEC integration was a key objective for the moderates including PS, PPD, and the Christian Democratic Party (CDS). For them Europe was the solution to the issues that Portugal faced especially in democratization and economic development. The Third-World view was predominant among the members of the MFA in particular those who had served in Africa during the Colonial War, as well as with PCP and the political left, they defended non-alignment, and the development of relations with newly independent nations and the Eastern bloc. Lastly Lusofonia, although less predominant than the other two policies, aimed to use the historical and cultural connections between Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking countries to create a federalised union for post-colonial cooperation, this project was later developed in the 1990's. In all this the MNE played an important role, in implementing and coordinating these different options, working not only to align Portugal with Europe, but also to create strong connections with the Lusophone world, and to develop relations with the nations of the Third World. The analysis in this chapter, will focus on showing what was done to advance each of these visions, contributing to showing how elite consensus is a weak idea when looking at the project of European integration, as this was an incredibly plural period for foreign policy.

Europeanism

Europeanism in the post/revolutionary period emerged as the social-democratic and moderate project, backed by PS and PPD, as well as many European socialist allies. It was developed

through the MNE as one of the policies pursued, competing directly with Third-Worldism. This led to a showdown and separation between the parties and the MFA who in their majority backed separate visions, meaning the progress towards Europe was negotiated and contested rather than agreed by the revolutionary and post-revolutionary elites.

When Soares took over as Foreign Minister in May 1974, a rapid diplomatic engagement began, on his first day he began a large trip to several European cities (Calvet de Magalhães 2004, 250) attempting to establish and strengthen relations with several EEC countries. These initial urgent steps reflected his personal and most of PS's orientation in foreign policy matters, even while many others in the Provisional Governments preferred to steer policy in other directions. Mário Soares was a strong supporter of EEC membership, however there were some concerns regarding the feasibility of immediate European integration from some in PS. This led to Soares stating in a press conference that the economic and financial situation of the country meant that membership was not viable immediately as it could have negative effects on the economy (Soares 1974, 44). Advised by members of the MNE, Foreign Minister Ernesto Melo Antunes would state in 1975 that Portugal was excluded from accession until the economic situation had improved (AHCE 1975a). This led to the European Commission suggesting financial aid to Portugal, as it would help with the economic situation, as well as aiding in the move to democracy (AHCE 1975b).

In 1974, with Soares saying that integration was still not possible, PPD tried to position itself as the most pro-European party with Francisco Sá Carneiro, leader of the party declaring in October 1974 that the party was in favour of joining Europe and the Common Market (Castaño 2018, 12). However, PS had the strongest ties to Europe, due to its close ties with the European socialist parties. During the campaign for the first constitutional, PS held a conference called 'A Europa Connosco' ('Europe with us') in March 1976 where Mário Soares along with many European socialist leaders including Willy Brandt and Olof Palme defended the creation of a democratic regime in Portugal, as well European integration. Soares is quoted as saying that the Portuguese people wanted to "participate actively in the construction of Europe" ("Exposição 'a Europa Connosco' Partido Socialista"). Willy Brandt declared that Europe is and will always be with Portugal. For PS, EEC membership was a definitive break with authoritarianism and the final transition into a democratic state.

This desire by PS and PPD to join the EEC shows a willingness by a majority of the population – these two parties combined had over 50% of the vote in both the elections for constitutional

assembly and the first elections – to join the EEC. As Fernando de Sousa says, Portugal was beginning to want to be part of Europe politically as well as geographically (de Sousa 2000, 192). It is important to note that at the same time leftist parties led by PCP had a large minority of the vote and the left-wing section of the MFA led by Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho was still heavily active between 1976 and 1977 in defending the Third-Worldist view and still had a role to play in the Council of the Revolution. Additionally, it is important to note that parliamentary majorities do not erase policy divides, nor do they guarantee changes in policy or laws.

The MNE managed in this period various achievements, which included the meetings of the Joint Committee Portugal/EEC, created in the 1972 Agreement. The first of these meetings post revolution was held in November 1974 (AHD 1975a, 3), where the need to develop further the free trade agreement, as well creating more social protections for the large number of Portuguese emigrants (Castro 2002, 129) abroad was the main topic. The resulting Protocol prepared and signed in 1976 included the abolition of import taxes on certain industrial products, as well as financial aid in the form of loans, in order to help the Portuguese financial situation which was seen as the way to strengthen Portuguese democratic capabilities and strengthen EEC ties. In June 1975, the MNE had held a meeting with several ambassadors and consuls to discuss the negotiations that had been ongoing since November 1974, as well as future cooperation and the process of approximation with the EEC which had demonstrated “political worries” (AHD 1975a) due to the *Verão Quente* nationalizations of the PCP led Provisional Governments. This led to a growing wariness from Western European states (Rezola 2016, 30) which placed the negotiations with the EEC in a difficult position. However, on the seventh of October 1975, the MNE and the EEC negotiated more financial aid. During this period, the MNE office for Europe also worked to prepare for membership in the Council of Europe and for the signing of the European Convention on Human Rights, both confirmed on the twenty-second of September of 1976. These achievements especially pertaining to financial aid and backing did strengthen the Europeanist position, however they did not fully re-orientate the policy direction.

By 1976, with PS in power Europe was not only an economic option, now it was a political option. Mário Soares and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Medeiros Ferreira went on a European Tour, additionally during this period the MNE as directed by Medeiros Ferreira intensified talks with the European Parliament, the European Economic Council and Commission, among others. Politically the government tried to harmonize Portuguese legislation with EEC norms,

as well as declaring favourability to accepting the competence of the European Commission of Human Rights and accepting the mandatory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights (Paiva and Monteiro 2013, 57). Accepting this was conducive to the building of Portuguese democracy, as Portugal had never had a modern legal system and as such it could profit and speed up the democratic process by adapting to the European system.

On the twenty-eight of March 1977 the request for application of EEC membership (AHCUE 1977) was submitted. This application was the result of the persistence of the European option not only in the MNE, but also in the public campaigns for the elections and in the media.

Third-Worldism

Associated with the decolonisation of the period was the Third-Worldist view defended by Foreign Minister Melo Antunes (1975–1976 during the IV and VI Provisional Governments and a minister without portfolio in charge of decolonisation during II and III Provisional Governments), as well as by PCP and left-wing MFA members. Based in non-alignment and diversification of relations, it aimed to place Portugal as the connector between Europe and the developing world. The first step was to strengthen and make new connections, making a request to become observer of OAS (AHPR 1975f); and improving relations with the Arab World including Egypt (AHPR 1976b), Kuwait (AHPR 1975c), and Iraq (AHPR 1975d). Additionally, Portugal started building relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization PLO (AHPR 1975a); China; and newly independent African states (APCM 1975), ex. Ivory Coast and Gabon (AHPR 1975b). Replacing the isolationist imperialist policy of the *Estado Novo* with a network based on post-colonial solidarity. This policy was viewed internally as unrealistic and geopolitically isolating by the future Foreign Minister Medeiros Ferreira who defended that this was prejudicial as Portugal would be alone with the Third World and our former colonies, who did not want intense relations (Medeiros Ferreira, interview by Rezola, cited in Rezola 2016, 35) with their former colonisers.

Melo Antunes was key in moving Portuguese foreign policy beyond the bipolar world of the Cold War, emphasising autonomy, non-alignment, and solidarity with liberation movements of the Global South; however, he never advocated abandoning the Western bloc (Reis and Oliveira 2018, 637). Melo Antunes' influence was especially important in the initial stages of decolonisation negotiations, where he emphasised the need for dialogue with African liberation movements and disengaging from Cold War alignments (Melo Antunes interview 1994). He moved to initiate diplomatic missions with Yugoslavia (AHPR 1975e and AHPR 1975h) as

well as with other members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Melo Antunes participated in the fourth meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of NAM (AHPR 1975g). Notably, Portugal and the OAU had an extremely poor relation during the Estado Novo (Falcão Machado 2014, 47), as such under the Third-Worldist policy Portugal established communications with the President of the OAU, Idi Amin (APHR 1976e. President Costa Gomes and Melo Antunes visited the USSR (AHPR 1975) and Poland in 1975. In 1976 Melo Antunes visited Czechoslovakia (AHPR 1976a), additionally signing agreements in Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, USSR, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany (Brandão 2002, 377–383) regarding scientific and technical issues, abolition of the need for visas, and for cultural cooperation. This helped broaden Portugal's international presence and showed how this foreign policy option managed to escape the Cold War bipolarity.

However, this Third-Worldist orientation faced growing resistance within the MFA itself. The revolutionary military was far from ideologically unified, a moderate faction, aligned with the PS, pushed for a Western-oriented democracy with a strong European identity. Tensions peaked during the 'Verão Quente' of 1975, when the radicals backed the IV and V Provisional Governments of Vasco Gonçalves, prompting criticism from moderates who feared that Portugal was heading towards a Soviet-style model (Neves 1975, 100). In August 1975, nine moderate MFA officers, published the Documento dos Nove, which explicitly rejected censorship, the Soviet model, and excessive alignment with the Third World, while calling for reinforced ties with both the EEC and EFTA (Neves 1975, 101). The document gained support from around eighty percent of MFA officials (Redação DN 2005), the PS, and future President Ramalho Eanes, effectively signalling a shift away from an exclusively Third-Worldist foreign policy towards a more balanced, Europe-facing orientation. Although Melo Antunes supported this Document he maintained that Portugal should attempt to bridge the gap between Europe and the developing world, his main opposition was against the Communist style leadership that the PCP had attempted to implement, he always emphasized the need for dialogue with Africa and disengaging from Cold War alignments.

Third-Worldism survived throughout the first Constitutional Government; however, it was increasingly overshadowed by Europeanist orientation. The prioritisation of EEC accession coupled with economic crisis and limited reciprocity from new Third World partners, meant that this vision of a neutral, non-aligned Portugal serving as a bridge between Europe and the developing world gradually lost centrality in policymaking through 1976 and 1977.

Lusofonia

This section examines Lusofonia a distinct, right-leaning and neo-colonial foreign policy vision, separate from Third-Worldism, and explains how it emerged, the ideological roots, and why it failed to be implemented fully in between 1974 and 1977. The existence of this policy alongside Europeanism and Third-Worldism further demonstrates the absence of elite consensus in the foreign policy of the transition. Lusofonia which defended the cooperation between Portugal and its former colonies. Its survival as a vision past 1977, show how foreign policy was shaped by rival projects instead of a united national strategy. Its origins predate the Revolution, which highlights how closely aligned and continuous it is from the Estado Novo to the transition period. The policy developed by General António de Spínola in February 1974, defended the creation of a federal union of nations which included Portugal and its African colonies (de Spínola 1974). Supported by right-wing parties and former supporters of the Estado Novo, as well as many white settlers in Africa, who were forced in their majority to leave due to the end of the war and independence. Although a minority the defenders of this vision were still large enough to create problems to the MFA showing again a lack of elite agreement in terms of external orientation. Even though it was a niche of foreign policy and became comparably to the other visions a very small part of the MNE's workload during 1974 to 1977, due in part to Spínola's exile in 1974 after a failed right-wing coup.

Ideologically, Lusofonia was based on Spínola's vision of a pluricontinental Portuguese federation, which would transform the colonies into members of federation which with their own organs of power but ultimately subordinated to Lisbon (de Spínola 1974, 150-151). This model was based on a gradual autonomy process, the regionalization of government structures, as well as African political representation and participation. He presented this as an alternative to the rapid process of decolonization which he believed would be "a threat to the survival of Portugal as free nation" (de Spínola 1974, 47). The main criticism of this vision are its clear neo-colonial overtones, tying former colonies to its coloniser in a different political system in which the metropolis would still hold much of the power. The vision's cultural, linguistic, and historic appeal was destroyed by the neo-colonial idea of Portuguese supremacy over the federation. This attempt at proposing decolonisation as mutual liberation while preserving the ties of language and culture, completely ignored the nearly ten years of struggle for independence.

This policy would similarly to the Third-Worldist policy place Portugal as the bridge between Europe and Africa. However, it faced criticism from the liberation movements which had engaged in war against the Portuguese state since the early 1960's. It was clear that these African states would not agree to any influence by Portugal even in a federalist system. The liberation movements associated this proposal with neo-colonialism, as did Melo Antunes who stated that this would be “prolonging the colonial exploration through neo-colonial forms” (Rezola 2012, 131). Additionally, in Mozambique due to its location on the Eastern side of Africa and as such farther from Portugal was less culturally integrated than the other colonies, and Portuguese settlements being in their majority located on the coast of the Indian Ocean did not extend into the interior of Mozambique which affected not only the cultural but also linguistic expansion throughout the whole territory.

Although outlasting Third-Worldism, it never displaced the Europeanist orientation. This policy was also less prominent as it was made ineffective almost immediately, due to the rapid decolonization proposed by the MFA which ruined the gradual federalist plan that Spínola proposed. The passing of Lei 7/74 which recognised the right of the colonial peoples to self-determination (República Portuguesa – Conselho de Estado 1974) by the MFA and the I Provisional Government led to some supporters of this vision to support Spínola's suggestion for a referendum on the matter, this was denied by the MFA and the Provisional Governments. Spínola tried also to foment support among the white minority settlers in Angola and Mozambique. Here again, we see that the clash between ideologies and foreign policy visions was based on disagreement and not on consensus.

This policy vision, struggled to gain wide traction in the post-revolutionary period. The realities of decolonisation and the political preferences of the newly independent African states meant that intense relations with the former colonial power were not always welcomed. As Medeiros Ferreira argued, such a Third-Worldist orientation risked isolating Portugal internationally, leaving it aligned only with the Third World and the former colonies, many of which did not desire close political ties. However, this policy unlike Third-Worldism has survived until today, remaining a key issue and led to the establishment of the Secretariat of State of Cooperation inside the MNE (Paiva and Monteiro 2013, 45) during the I Constitutional Government in 1976, focusing on the relations with the Portuguese-speaking world. This institutional foothold would later play a part in the 1996 creation of the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese Language Countries – CPLP) it serves as the basis for the CPLP

founded in 1996. This demonstrates that the multiple foreign policy visions co-existed, contradicting the notion of an elite consensus around Europeanism.

The years 1974 to 1977 were not a direct move to EEC membership marked by political unity, but by competition between divergent foreign policy visions. The revolution destroyed the Estado Novo's imperial-isolationist orientation, but no one alternative vision received at the time elite agreement. Instead, Europeanism, Third-Worldism, and Lusofonia were implemented with varying degrees of success, as each had its ideological support, institutional backers, and external alliances.

Europeanism ultimately emerged as the dominant orientation, but this was not the result of complete national agreement. It advanced through the persistence of key actors in the PS and the MNE, the strategic use of European aid and democratic conditionality, and the gradual political marginalisation of other policy options. Third-Worldism, despite its early prominence, faltered under internal MFA divisions due to political issues, economic crisis, and limited reciprocity from some African partners. Lusofonia, based in a pre-revolutionary neo-colonial framework, was quickly side-lined by rapid decolonisation and African resistance, though it retained a small but durable institutional presence. The coexistence of these orientations during the transitional period exposes the fragility of the idea of elite consensus. Rather than a straight line towards Europe, foreign policy in these years was shaped by contestation, negotiation, and the survival of multiple visions in tandem. EEC integration was not predestined, it was the contested outcome of a plural and diverse foreign policy.

6. MNE: Continuity and Contestation

This chapter analyses how the MNE adapted to the revolutionary moment through various provisional governments addressing the issue of the validity of the claims of elite consensus by examining the MNE's behaviour amid political fragmentation and competing foreign policy visions. It does so with the aim of testing the claim that Portugal's EEC integration resulted from elite consensus, by showing how the MNE functioned in the midst of political fragmentation and competing policy visions. By focusing on institutional resilience, ideological divisions, and foreign policy contestation, the chapter challenges the hypothesis of a unified elite guiding a smooth European trajectory. It explores how institutional continuity worked, how different actors cooperated within the institution, and how the reshaping of foreign policy functioned. It will also look at the decolonization process, interactions with international organizations, and preparation for EEC accession. This will show how the different projects coexisted and clashed within a single institutional framework. To understand this better we will look at the contributions of several actors.

The task of democratization and repositioning needed credible and functioning institutions, most notably the MNE stood out for its continuity. This choice to maintain the staff illustrates the MNE's role as a political safe zone where ideological opponents could work without the need for dismantling the institution. Continuity is significant because it shows that the MNE could survive deep political disturbance, and act as neutral space for competition between policy visions instead of being turned into a vehicle for elite action. This continuity matters because in a period where the revolutionary process destroyed elites, the ability of a crucial institution to operate unchanged, undermines the idea of a fully consensual elite process. Many other ministries were purged and faced restructuring and political contestation, the MNE retained much of its personnel, aided by the fact that it had a renewal in the late sixties and early seventies which left it with a young staff.

Purges and Continuity

The MNE did not face the purges and the dismantling that other Estado Novo structures did. Mário Soares claimed in a 2008 interview for a MNE publication that it was one of the few ministries that did not have any purges (Requixa and Cornélio da Silva 2008, 40). In the case of the MNE there is no evidence of systemic purges, in fact most staff and diplomats maintained their roles, and some were even promoted, which suggests a deliberate decision by the MFA and the Provisional Governments to preserve institutional continuity. This shows that the

previous renewal in the MNE helped it remain operational, which allowed both pro-European and Third-Worldist actors to advance their visions from within for maintaining their position, staff had to pledge faithfulness to the new government. It is important to note that some ambassadors and high-ranking officials were fired, as they were intrinsically linked to the old regime. Some argue that because a small number of ambassadors were dismissed this is evidence that there were purges in the MNE (Mateus 2024, 2), but most ambassadors were simply appointed to other posts. In the MNE the main action of the new regime was restructuring the functioning of the diplomatic corps, mainly in the embassies and consulates (AHPR 1975i). It is said that Soares with the aid of Cunha Rego and Sá Machado stopped the “assault that certain forces” (Calvet de Magalhães 2004, 250-251) wanted to enforce on the MNE.

The lack of purge supports the hypothesis that EEC integration was a result of a political struggle, rather than a seamless elite pact, making integration into the EEC a contested, negotiated result instead of a result of elite consensus. The MNE’s role was not to impose a Europeanist consensus but to coordinate presence of the different orientations until one became dominant. We have seen proof of this in the previous chapter where we can see that during the peak of the *Verão Quente*, both Europeanist and Third-Worldist policies were being taken simultaneously, exemplified by the opening of relations with Soviet bloc states and EEC negotiations, processes led by the MNE. It became clear that Portugal’s immediate foreign challenges demanded a functioning diplomatic corps, and it was clear that the MNE had sufficient professionalism and institutional autonomy to serve the new state, as many diplomats already had NATO, OECD, and UN experience which would ultimately help the process.

Stabilizing actors

Helping Mário Soares in his role in 1974 as Foreign Minister was Manuel de Sá Machado, a senior diplomat who played a crucial role in preserving institutional coherence within the MNE. Being a crucial part of the diplomatic corps of the *Estado Novo*, de Sá Machado managed to transition seamlessly to the new regime, his presence symbolised the decision to preserve the diplomatic corps. His work on framing Portugal’s revolutionary transformation and making it compatible with European engagement helped reassure foreign counterparts of the moderation of the MNE.

During the turbulent times of 1975, when between the two failed coups on the eleventh of March 1975 and the twenty-fifth of November 1975, there were many fears of civil war

erupting, there was widespread violence, forced nationalization of industry, agriculture, and businesses. Manuel de Sá Machado was key to stabilizing the MNE managing to bridge the gap between left and right inside the MNE, according to many diplomats “it was Sá Machado who saved the MNE” (Reis 2020). Additionally, Calvet de Magalhães claims that Manuel de Sá Machado was crucial for the “functioning continuity of the ministry” (Calvet de Magalhães 2004, 250). This mediating role inside the MNE’s shows the MNE as a site of political struggle, and not as unified body following a single policy.

Another key figure inside the MNE was José Medeiros Ferreira, who assumed the role of Foreign Minister in July 1976, having already served in the VI Provisional Government as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His engagement in European affairs and consistent advocacy for integration positioned him as an important presence in the MNE. He defended that maintaining a Third-Worldist approach was following in the footsteps of the previous regime, maintaining Portugal as an isolated state once again. His academic background in history and his Europeanist orientation allowed him to build a strategic link between Portugal’s revolutionary project and the European democratic tradition. This shows that the I Constitutional Government was the moment that the Europeanist project was fully institutionalized in the MNE, despite the presence of the alternative visions. He defended that by following EEC institution guidelines Portuguese democracy would be stabilised, he aimed to signal to the EEC that Portugal was in fact prepared to join the community. Medeiros Ferreira had held the position that European integration in the EEC was necessary as early as 1973 (Rezola 2016, 43). He laid the groundwork for the ascension talks with the EEC (CDE-UCP, n.d.). Additionally, he was crucial in maintaining moderation in the MNE, and aligning the Ministry with the moderate faction in Portuguese politics associated with the PS and PPD. His work demonstrated the pressure that was put by certain actors in this case from PS for integration, pressure that led to the triumph of the European option.

Despite the ideological divisions in the country, the MNE’s ability to work effectively through various crises illustrates the strength of its professionals, its institutional resilience, and the strength of its leadership. Moreover, the MNE was conditioned partly by the consensus of the centrist and centre-right political parties on Portugal’s future was in Europe. However, this consensus was the outcome of political struggle and external conditionality and ignored a large minority who was opposed to EEC integration, showing again that there was no elite agreement. Thus, the MNE’s contribution to Portugal’s eventual EEC integration lay not in enforcing elite unity but in absorbing, mediating, and reconciling competing political pressures

while sustaining the institutional capacity needed to meet European conditionality. The MNE's managing of certain processes including decolonization, Cold War realities, and increased international exposure, laid the groundwork for European integration, making the MNE the cornerstone of the transition from authoritarianism to democracy and from isolationism to a valuable international member.

7. Conclusion

This thesis has shown that Portugal's transition process between 1974 and 1977 did not lead directly to EEC integration, showing that the route to the EEC was not inevitable, nor solely a result of elite consensus, but a negotiated result of a revolutionary period shaped by volatility, ideological pluralism, and competing visions for foreign policy. The post-revolutionary years were defined by Europeanism, Third-Worldism, and Lusofonia, each with its own political support and agenda. Instead of a unified political class guiding the state toward Europe straightforwardly, the records show us a divided political sphere in which the MNE, was both a mediator of conflict and a stabilising institution, preserving professional continuity and maintaining external credibility despite the instability of successive provisional governments, proven by continued negotiations with EEC during the period 1974 to 1976.

The comparison of these orientations proves that the European option was not unchallenged. Europeanism was politically defined as the way to democracy, economic modernisation, and alignment with the Western European liberal democracies. Its supporters focused on getting support from abroad mainly other European parties exemplified by the March 1976 "A Europa Connosco" conference where European integration was presented as a political necessity. However, this vision faced persistent challenges from Third-Worldism, promoted by the PCP, the left wing of the MFA, and figures such as Melo Antunes, who wanted to position Portugal as a non-aligned bridge between Europe and the developing world, deepening the ties with the Eastern bloc and newly independent African states. Lusofonia, associated with António de Spínola and certain conservative military circles, aimed to preserve a post-imperial identity through a neo-colonial federation with the former colonies, reflecting a lasting idea of empire.

These were not abstract preferences but concrete policy paths that were followed. The October 1975 negotiation in which the MNE secured an EEC credit loan shows how Europeanists used the economic crisis to strengthen the case for integration, even under a PCP-led government that was hostile to the EEC. At the same time, the MNE was establishing relations through diplomatic initiatives with several Third-World states and organizations, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the establishment of relations with China, the PLO, and multiple African and Middle Eastern states. Lusofonia persisted as a diplomatic vision through efforts to maintain cultural and political ties with Portuguese-speaking countries, even as the independence negotiations were being completed. The development of Secretariat for coordination with Portuguese speaking states, although a limited victory, is nonetheless a

victory of the period for the Lusofonia policy. The coexistence of these projects, each pursued in parallel by the same state institution, the MNE, contradicts the idea of a cohesive elite consensus.

The MNE was not merely an administrative channel for implementing externally set directives. It was an autonomous institutional actor whose ability to interpret, balance, and advance competing policy options was critical to redefining Portugal's international credibility during this period of internal instability. During the "Verão Quente" of 1975, when the country came close to a communist takeover and Third-Worldist policy was close to being turned into the only policy, and the EEC was wary of deepening ties, the MNE still managed to maintain negotiations, secured financial aid, and kept the dialogue of accession open. In the aftermath of the 1976 Constitution and the formation of the first constitutional government, the MNE, under Medeiros Ferreira intensified engagement with EEC institutions, harmonised domestic legislation with European norms, and prepared the ground for the formal application. However, during this period the policy of Lusofonia was further developed, alongside a continued effort to maintain relations with developing states.

The MNE's internal resilience, professional continuity, and capacity for political mediation were key in managing the contested policy options. This study challenges the teleological narrative in European integration scholarship that shows accession as consensual process. It additionally contributes to the literature on democratic transitions by showing that regime change is possible within an ideologically contested state, as long as key state institutions remain functional. Between 1974 and 1977, the contest between Europeanism, Third-Worldism, and Lusofonia was not resolved through consensus but through a gradual process of negotiation in which the MNE served as the space for actioning different visions, and where political power and international conditionality were key to shaping the end result. The eventual prioritisation of the European option is seen not as the lack of alternatives, but through diplomacy, external conditionality, and domestic political adaptation as the path most agreeable to a majority.

In directly answering the research question, this thesis finds that the European option was not the result of a unified elite agreement but from a negotiated process shaped by institutional resilience, political struggle, and international influence. The results show that in the Portuguese case, successful foreign policy re-alignment during democratisation was possible without elite unanimity. It also shows that the MNE, was key to this process, as it was able to

mediate between competing orientations and to adapt external policy to the shifting internal balance of power. This finding challenges the prevailing elite consensus idea in Portugal's democratic transition, suggesting that policy pluralism, far from being destabilising, can coexist when worked through robust state institutions.

For the broader study of post-authoritarian foreign policy re-alignment, these findings highlight that alignment choices are not simply directed by regime change but come from the interaction of domestic political contestation, institutional ability, and the positioning of the international system. In Portugal's case, the EEC and its member states actively conditioned economic and political support on democratic consolidation, creating incentives that made European integration the most advantageous and politically viable choice. The European path ultimately prevailed not because it was preordained by the political elite, but because it offered the best way to balance Portugal's urgent needs for economic recovery, international legitimacy, and internal political democratisation in the post-revolutionary period. The Portuguese experience between 1974 and 1977 therefore stands as a reminder that foreign policy in new democracies is not the product of consensus, it is the result of contestation, debate, institutional mediation, and external conditionality, negotiated between differing visions of a nation's place in the world.

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