

Review of *Contemporary Portugal: Politics, Society and Culture*
(Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2003).
Edited by António Costa Pinto

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Contemporary Portugal is an ambitious and important volume that offers a multifaceted and complex picture of contemporary Portugal. Edited by António Costa Pinto, this tome brings together an impressive group of scholars from a variety of disciplines, including the social sciences, the arts, and cultural studies.

It consists of 11 chapters. Three chapters deal with economic matters, three examine questions related to the colonial empire, three look at various aspects of contemporary Portuguese culture, and two analyze political themes.

António Costa Pinto's introduction in Chapter 1 is a clear, concise and intelligent analysis of the twists and turns of twentieth-century Portuguese history. Chapter 2, co-authored by Nuno Monteiro and Costa Pinto, carefully examines the changing images of Portuguese national identity, from the so-called "Imperial myth" to a contemporary national identity wrapped up in the idea of a greater Europe. Chapter 3, by Valetim Alexandre, offers an historical analysis of Portuguese colonialism. Nuno Severiano Teixeira examines Portuguese foreign policy from 1890 to 2000 in Chapter 4. Considered together, chapters 3 and 4 offer splendid and detailed analyses of twentieth century Portuguese colonial history. The next three chapters have economic themes. Chapter 5, by Pedro Lains, contributes an excellent study of the Portuguese economy in the twentieth century. Chapter 6, by Maria Ioannis B. Baganha, examines Portuguese emigration patterns in the post-1945 period. Chapter 7, by Antonio Barreto, looks at social change in Portugal between 1960 and 2000. These three chapters do a masterful job of examining and explaining the Portuguese economy, and are suitable for both experts and undergraduate audiences. Political scientists will find chapters 8 and 9 the most interesting. Chapter 8 features Pedro Magalhães writing on elections, parties and policy-making. Marina Costa Lobo examines Portuguese voting in EU elections in Chapter 9. These are clear, succinct and noteworthy contributions to our understanding of contemporary Portuguese politics. The last two chapters examine the contemporary arts scene in Portugal. João Camilo dos Santos examines Portuguese literature in Chapter 10, and João Pinharanda reviews developments in Portuguese art in chapter 11; both are fine contributions.

Much of the book previously appeared in 1998 as *Modern Portugal*, and was published by the Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship in Palo Alto, California. That work was also edited by Costa Pinto, and seven of its fourteen chapters reappear in this new volume with only slight editing, with four new contributors revisiting topics previously covered. Costa Pinto accounts for the overlap in his preface to *Contemporary Portugal*, observing that this new work seeks to incorporate some of the suggestions offered by reviewers. His hope is that this new work “will provide a good basis for further study by a wider English-language readership in the various fields and disciplines of the social sciences and humanities.”

In fact, this new work is an updated and improved version of the previous work. A more appropriate title for this current volume may have been something like *Modern Portugal, Revisited*, to more clearly connect this research project with the earlier book.

Contemporary Portugal ultimately presents us with more questions than answers, a real virtue of this effort. Among these are the following. First, the impact on traditional patterns of life brought about by economic modernization throughout the country, thanks in part to EU funds, could use some analysis. Second, Portugal’s new and evolving international identity forged in a particular way during the struggle over East Timor—which enabled Portugal to recast its old Imperial identity in the mold of Portugal as a universal defender of political, social and religious liberties—needs study. Third, the global presence of RTP-International has opened up new horizons for Portuguese culture, from Brazil to India and beyond. What opportunities and pitfalls does RTP-International hold for Portuguese culture? Fourth, the role of religion in contemporary Portugal could use a detailed treatment. Of note, the 1998 national referendum over abortion was extraordinarily significant for many reasons; certainly the presence of a pro-life Socialist Prime Minister at that time suggested that the traditional left/secular and right/religious cleavages may have given way to some new ideological and epistemological formations, worthy of study. Fifth, Fátima remains a political, cultural, spiritual and religious reality for many Portuguese, and could use a detailed treatment. Sixth, the role of Catholicism in contemporary Portugal, and whether the Church will remain a significant player over the course of the twenty-first century, is an important area requiring serious scholarship. Seventh, the role of sport, especially soccer, in contemporary Portugal, also merits analysis. The national disappointment, even shame, felt by large sectors of the population due to the poor performance of the national team in the World Cup of 2002, followed by Portugal’s disappointing loss to Greece in the 2004 European championship, raises some interesting questions related to sport, society, and national solidarity. Finally, a chapter on music would nicely round out the volume. Fado remains an important part of Portuguese culture, and an analysis of its social role would be most welcome. These are but some of the potential topics still requiring attention for a more complete understanding of contemporary Portuguese politics, society, and culture, and could perhaps be incorporated into a third book.

Contemporary Portugal examines a series of important topics. Its scope is expansive, it is well organized, and each chapter is a well-written, careful and thoughtful offering. It is a fine piece of scholarship and is highly recommended.

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