



Draft version for this Conference use only. Do not quote without author's permission.

**Regime transition, democratization and citizenship:
The role of the people in local government and the Agrarian Reform, Portugal, 1974-1976.**

Maria Antónia Pires de Almeida
(CIES, ISCTE-IUL)
(mafpa@iscte.pt)

Abstract: The Portuguese 1974 revolution was initiated by the military, with huge popular support. The captains started the revolution, but then the generals took over, followed by politicians from the civil society. During the transition period, there was almost total elite replacement. Mostly it was a top to bottom revolution. But in local government, the people assumed control. Administrative commissions were put in place to manage the municipalities until the first elections took place in December 1976. At the same time, the Alentejo region was the stage of an Agrarian Reform, a political and social movement quite new and bold from a legal perspective. This research analyses a critical issue for its time, for it affected a strategic sector, it implied political decisions which concerned the use and possession of the land and the general functioning of the local political institutions and society. How did society react in face of such changes in politics, economy and social structure? What made people take to the streets and obtain control of local government and economic resources? Who were the local elites before the revolution and who took their place? And were these new elites validated in the elections? For this research there was a consistent study of local sources, as well as an important gathering of local memories through interviews. In order to compare local elites in Portugal during Salazar's dictatorship and then in the Democratic regime, a huge database was built with over 6.000 entries regarding mayors, councillors and civil governors. The above mentioned questions were answered by comparing biographies and by describing social groups, political paths and careers. In sum, the analysis of local elites provides the big picture of the carnation revolution and the real changes in the Portuguese transition to Democracy.



1. Introduction

Who exercises local power in Portugal? Who determines policy and heads the institutions? Which socio-professional groups controlled town councils during the New State, the 1974-76 transition and then following the first local elections on 12 December 1976? How has the group of council mayors evolved and what different criteria for recruitment and access to power were introduced with regime change? In short, what impact has the revolution had on local power?

To answer these questions, I undertook an intensive programme of research and data collection that resulted in the creation of a database with more than 6,000 entries for 3,102 mayors (and deputy mayors and chairmen and members of administrative committees between 1974 and 1976) and 402 civil governors (and their replacements) between 1936 and 2013 in the 18 districts of mainland Portugal and the four island districts that make up the current regional governments of Madeira and the Azores. This database, which is constructed on a prosopographic basis (Mendes, 1992: 359), holds a detailed list of names, including information on the individual's age, the dates on which they were appointed and exonerated, the duration of their mandates, their level of education, their profession and social and family background, as well as their prior and subsequent political careers (Almeida, 2013; 2014).

By analysing this information I seek to characterise this group during the three periods in question as a way of detecting continuities and change in the methods of and criteria for elite recruitment: regional (north/south, coastal/inland, urban/rural, etc.) differences and similarities; and any political and territorial mobility, following the comparative method proposed by Pasquino (2003: 18).

With this I seek to demonstrate the impact the transition to democracy had on the careers and lives of these local elites, who for most people are the most accessible representatives of the state. With the presentation of these results, I will show that the local government elites were replaced, even though in some cases there was continuity in the groups, recruitment criteria and in the elements that determined access to the highest local government positions.

Assuming that post-materialist values among the youngest generation in post-industrial societies has led to the gradual erosion of class-based politics (Inglehart and Norris, 2003: 91), I will show that these criteria can be applied – to a point – to local government in Portugal, where the traditional criteria of class and ideology seem to have been superseded by such factors as the candidate's personality and direct contact with the electorate.

This type of research is of an interdisciplinary nature, involving history and social science, as well as recourse to the tools and methodologies of other social sciences, such as sociology and anthropology, in the collection of oral sources for example.

With the aim of expanding the geographic range of the study of these local political elites to the entire country, and in an attempt to understand the impact of the transition to democracy on this group, what we seek here is a more rigorous and accurate awareness of this Portuguese elite group that both represented and mediated between local populations and central power: between the state and society (Ruivo, 1990: 77).

With the transition to democracy in Portugal, the 1974 electoral law established complete equality of the sexes for the first time, while other laws led the way to equality of civic, social and political rights. In 1974, the administrative committees that ran the town councils were the first political bodies to be headed by women, while on 16 May 1974 the first woman in government was appointed to the position of Secretary of State for Social Security in the first

Provisional Government. Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, who in 1979 became the only woman so far to serve as Prime Minister, was Minister of Social Affairs in the second and third provisional governments, from July 1974 to March 1975. From the first elections in 1976, a growing number of women were elected both to parliament and to the town councils, and then later to the European Parliament. A number have also been appointed to government office. However, while there is no formal discrimination between the sexes, it remains the case in Portugal, as in the most countries, that there continues to be an “under-representation of women in positions of political authority” (Viegas and Faria, 1999: 19).

At the same time, the Alentejo region was the stage of an Agrarian Reform, a political and social movement quite new and bold from a legal perspective. This research analyses a critical issue for its time, for it affected a strategic sector, it implied political decisions which concerned the use and possession of the land and the general functioning of the local political institutions and society.

2. Local Government Legal Framework

The organisation of local power in Portugal is a legacy of liberalism. The 1835 administrative reform created the position of the civil governor, who was responsible for organising the election of parliamentary deputies and for handing down laws, regulations and orders from superior bodies to their subordinate authorities. Following a number of reforms during the 19th century, the republic discovered that the district was well embedded into the organic structure of the state and that the civil governor was an important delegate of central power.

The coup d'état of 28 May 1926 led to the suspension of then existing administrative arrangements. In July 1926 the mainland and the islands administrative corps was abolished, leaving the civil governors responsible for sending the Interior Ministry the names of those citizens who should become members of any future town council administrative committee. From that moment on the civil governor assumed an important role as the representative of central power. The administrative committees operated between 1926 and December 1937, when they were dissolved and the effective council mayors appointed, assimilating the old elites into the New State's local cadres, just as the Republic had assimilated the local elites of the monarchy.

The New State administrative reform is largely contained within the administrative code prepared by Marcello Caetano, approved in 1936 and reviewed in 1940, in which the principle of local authority is enshrined. The civil governor was the government's representative and had an important role in local administration within his district, where he controlled the activities of the mayors who had been appointed by the Interior Ministry on his recommendation. The councils were almost entirely politically and financially dependent on the government.

According to the administrative code, town councils consisted of a mayor and a variable number of councillors. The mayors served a term of six years and could be appointed for more than one term. The 1940 administrative code extended the mandate to eight years, largely as a result of the difficulty finding people willing to fill the position, especially in the interior of the country. This difficulty was a consequence of the need to find qualified people to accept a somewhat demanding and, in most cases non-remunerated, position. Mayors were chosen from among local notables, representatives of the most prestigious groups, which translated into symbolic social capital such as academic qualifications or personal or family positions within the social milieu (Bourdieu, 1989: 136-137) and economic capital.

The position was incompatible with the exercise of any other government-paid public duties, which meant mayors had to both have their own means of subsistence and be able to continue their professional activities at the same time.

The civil governors' powers and range of actions were reduced by the democratic regime. Since 1974 there was a process of administrative decentralisation and strengthening of local power. This followed the general trend in Western countries during the 1960s and 1970s, in which "traditional" reforms were carried out to strengthen the political and administrative institutions of the social state (Wollman, 2004: 641). The political direction was towards decentralisation and the enlargement of the right and opportunities of citizens and their ability to influence and participate in the local decision-making process. The 1976 constitution laid out the general terms for the roles and responsibilities of the municipalities, parishes and future administrative regions.

Those in the most senior state positions – the president of the republic, the government, the National Assembly and the Council of State – were dismissed by Law No 1/74, while the civil governors were dismissed by Decree-Law No 170/74, both laws published on 25 April 1974. On 2 May the *Diário do Governo* started publishing ministerial orders (*portarias*) dismissing individual mayors who remained in office until the publication of the specific ministerial order giving the Minister for Internal Administration the competence to dismiss the administrative corps and replace it with administrative committees "made up of independents or people belonging to groups and political currents that accept the MFA Programme", and which remained in place until the first local elections on 12 December 1976 (Decree-Law No 236/74, 3 June 1974). Until these were appointed, the councils were to continue to be administered by the "most senior" councillors. Naturally, where the mayors and deputy mayors did not "identify" with the MFA Programme, or where they felt local political pressure, they presented their resignations before the government was able to automatically dismiss them on 18 June 1974, which was the date established in law for the end of their mandates. For the next two years the local authorities were managed by administrative committees, meaning almost all of the local elites had been replaced.

There have been regular local elections since 1976. Up until 1985 these elections were held every three years, since when they have been held every four. The legislators who wrote the first constitution for the new Portuguese democracy thought it necessary that the political parties – after an absence of half a century, dating from the military dictatorship throughout duration of the authoritarian regime – be presented to society as its political representatives. In order to create a network of local organisations, the parties needed to find supporters in the local communities. The closed list system and electing councillors in proportion to the electoral results was considered the best way to ensure every political party was represented, regardless of the size of the majority. The aim was to introduce the habits of political representation, which until then had not existed, into the lives of citizens. In short, the political parties were schools for local democracy.

It continued like this until the constitutional revision of 1997 allowed groups of citizens to stand as candidates in the local elections. Independent candidates, both for parliament and for the local authorities, had been permitted in the 1976 constitution, but only when they were included in party lists. Independent citizen groups had also been able to contest parish council elections since 1976. However, the 2001 elections were the first to accept of independent citizen candidates for town councils, where they could either stand at municipal elections in their own name or as part of a group with no connection to any registered political parties. These groups had some similarities with the local parties in the countries of northern Europe, particularly in Germany, where the federal regime is strongly committed to parties at the central and regional level, but where there is no similar commitment at the lower municipal

level. As a result, local political organisation there is much more free and uncommitted than it is at the intermediate and higher levels. This is the case in Germany as well as in Belgium and Scandinavia (Reiser, 2008). From the evidence available to us it appears this trend is not being followed in Portugal.

In 1997, article 239 of the constitution in relation to local authorities was amended without any major discussions, since it was believed to be the natural next step within a stable democracy. The same was not true of the proposal to allow independent candidates onto the parliamentary election lists: this proposal was rejected.

In practice, the presence of political parties at every level of Portuguese politics remains the norm. Despite the fact that in 2013 Portugal elected 13 independent mayors, representing 4.2% of all councils in the country, the parties continue to control the entire electoral process in Portugal.

The process for selecting local political elites has evolved during the 20th century: during the Monarchy and the First Republic councils and their mayors were elected; during the New State mayors were appointed; and from 1976 they were once again elected, this time through universal suffrage. During the transition periods, from 1926-1937 and 1974-1976, town councils were run by administrative committees appointed directly by the Interior or the Internal Administration ministries.

3. Mayors in the New State, 1936-1974

At least 58.5% of the mayors appointed at the end of 1937 were the same people who had led the administrative committees appointed during the transition period. A total of 1,829 mayors were appointed between December 1937 and 1974. The majority were appointed only once; however, 95 were appointed several times, either to the same or to different councils. There was also some geographic mobility among mayors, generally – but not always – within the same district, and associated with the individual's professional mobility. The average mandate lasted 5.3 years, with the longest term in office being 21.3 years.

The main professional group for mayors in the New State were “Specialists” and “Armed Forces Officers”, which accounted for 57% of the professional categories. They also tended to be university educated: during this period only 7.1% did not have university qualifications. The average age of mayors was 45.2 years.

Table 1: Mayors' Professions, 1937-1974

Mayors' Professions, 1937-1974	Number	%
Farmers	12	1.36
Bankers	1	0.11
Merchants	13	1.47
Entrepreneurs/Industrialists	28	3.16
Intellectuals and Scientists	307	34.69
Civil Servants	52	5.88
Nobility	11	1.24
Armed Forces Officers	195	22.03
Priests	45	5.08
Administrative and Similar Personnel, Services and Salesmen	1	0.11
Teachers	124	14.01
Landowners	61	6.89

Senior Managers and Directors in Public Administration and Business	24	2.71
Technicians and Intermediate-level Professionals	11	1.24
Total Professions	885	100.00

Table 2: Mayors' Qualifications, 1937-1974

Mayors' Qualifications, 1937-1974	Number	%
Primary school	2	0.14
Fifth year of secondary school (present ninth year)	3	0.22
Baccalaureate	26	1.87
Technical course	17	1.22
Doctorate	15	1.08
Secondary school	8	0.57
Higher studies	569	40.85
Undergraduate degree	676	48.53
Primary teacher	68	4.88
Post-graduation	8	0.57
No education	1	0.07
Total	1393	100.00

4. Popular Power and Local Power: The Town Council Administrative Committees during the Revolutionary Period, 1974-1976

In 1974 the people organised themselves and formed administrative committees that assumed control of the political transition at the local level, managing the councils until the first local elections were held on 12 December 1976. The transition period that followed 25 April 1974 led to the replacement of the local elites and the effective social recomposition of a large number of councils, although in some cases there was continuity both of the leadership group and recruitment criteria, albeit with considerable differences at the regional level: north/south, coastal/interior, among others. There was clearly a greater professional diversity within this group.

This period was marked by widespread instability at all levels. "The power fell on the street" and popular action sometimes took a violent turn (Cerezales, 2003). The municipal authorities did not escape this, and in some cases the situation proved dangerous for former representatives of local power. For the most part, however, the transition of power within councils was peaceful. The role of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA – Movimento das Forças Armadas) in these processes should be noted, primarily its Cultural Dynamisation Campaign and the clarification sessions that took place mainly in rural areas (Bermeo, 1986). These campaigns sought to help the people with their recent political apprenticeship, favouring direct contact between representatives of the MFA and the people, encouraging them and creating the conditions for political organisation at the village level. The campaigns were also a way to settle scores with the past and denounce the "fascist" and "dictatorial" legacy, and contributed to making some military units very influential at the local level and raised the spirits of the people (Almeida, 2007). This was all contained within the framework of revolutionary legality, with its origin in the legislation produced by the provisional government which was in turn based on the fear of economic sabotage (Decree-Law No 660/74 of 25

November 1974) that allowed the government to intervene in the management of companies and to follow a policy of nationalisation that gave rise to the workers' occupation movement and which culminated in the nationalisation of the banks, insurance companies, transport and other sectors crucial to the national economy, and in the agrarian reform movement (Almeida, 2006).

As noted above, on 2 May 1974 the ministerial orders dismissing the mayors was published. A total of 11 mayors were removed between 26 April and 27 May 1974. The first to go was the mayor of Barreiro. The council was dissolved immediately after by a ministerial order dated 15 May, with the administrative committee replacing it being formed by a chairman and 18 councillors: a number more than three times the average of 4.9 councillors in the administrative committees across the rest of the country. This absurd number is particularly evident when comparing the size and significance of the municipality of Barreiro with those of Lisbon and Porto for example, each of which had 12 councillors (although Lisbon had a further two vice-chairmen), or with Braga and Coimbra, which had six. The Barreiro case is an example of the political activism evident in some parts of the country, and revealed the enormous desire of ordinary citizens to participate in the local administration, with the response of the Interior Ministry ready to formalise the appointment of people who had been nominated by local committees.

By the end of May, a total of 81 mayors had been removed. From 3-15 June a further 101 mayors were dismissed, with 109 being removed automatically from their positions when the established legal deadline was reached. There was a third way, although one that was only used in the case of 10 mayors who had been reconfirmed in their positions prior to the date mentioned in the decree. Of these, only three were appointed chairmen of their respective administrative committees in 1974 and were then elected mayors in 1976, representing around 1% of all mayors. The limited use of this process allows us to establish that the discontinuity of local elites was the rule.

The ministerial orders appointing administrative committees referred to the profession of each chairman and councillor, enabling an analysis of these new bodies established during the revolutionary period and allowing us to reflect on the local interest in change or permanence.

The first appointment was immediately an exception: in Lisbon on 2 May 1974 an administrative order appointed a delegate of the National Salvation Junta (JSN – Junta da Salvação Nacional), João António Lopes da Conceição, a Lieutenant Colonel of Engineers, to assume the duties of the former mayor, who had not yet been officially dismissed. The administrative committee for Lisbon city council was not named until 28 August. The group of 12 councillors included senior technicians, specialists in several areas of interest to the local authority. It included Lobato Faria, an engineer who studied for his master's in public health in London, and the professor of art history José Augusto França, who was chairman of a new consultative committee charged with the preservation of Lisbon's artistic and urban heritage. While this administrative committee demonstrated a willingness to renovate, with clear goals in the areas of service dynamisation and restructuring, sanitation operations and the improvement of working conditions, the people who made up the committee had professional backgrounds that were very similar to those of the previous elites, especially the high-ranking military officers and engineers.

By 8 July 1976 administrative committees had been appointed, representing 58% of the 304 councils at that time. This number reveals both the willingness of citizens to get involved in politics, either by proposing themselves or by being invited. It also demonstrates the rapid and efficient response of the central authorities in replacing the local elites in compliance with JSN instructions. A total of 464 people were appointed to these positions. It was also from among these administrative committees that women emerged to take charge of the highest body of

local government: a total of nine women were appointed to head administrative committees, representing 1.9% of the total. Of the 277 vice-chairmen appointed to administrative committees, six, or 2.6%, were women. A total of 92 women served as councillors on the administrative committees, representing 3.6% of all councillors. As an aside, only two administrative committees were named in August 1974 (Portalegre and Lisbon), meaning that even at the height of the revolution, staff at the Interior Ministry continued to take their normal summer holidays.

Cascais was a special case: it had five different committees. However, the numbers above suggest there was a degree of stability during this period. In 117 councils (38.5%) the committees remained in operation without being replaced throughout the transitional period, while 169 (55.6%) councils only had one committee chairman.

The majority of the administrative committees had been chosen from groups that had locally formed part of the “clandestine and semi-legal opposition to the old regime – in particular to the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP – Movimento Democrático Português), a front organisation linked to the Communist Party (PCP – Partido Comunista Português)” that Sá Carneiro called an “assault on local authority”, which, with the assaults on the unions and the press by the PCP and MDP, characterised the revolutionary period (PREC – Período Revolucionário em Curso) (Carneiro, 1975). In fact, during this period the PCP’s penetration was visible in a “considerable number of intermediate associations that facilitate the mobilisation and control of social interests: workers’ commissions and factory committees, local unions and national workers’ confederations, specialist professional associations, intellectual study groups, residents’ committees, tenants’ associations, local government, student groups and faculty councils, soldiers’ organisations and non-communist organisations” (Schmitter, 1999).

It was in the districts in the north where the people tended to contest the choices of left-wing administrative committees, and which resulted in the fall of many of them. In the south the administrative committees lasted longer, particularly in those districts where previous support for parties of the left have been greatest.

These new revolutionary local elites were sociologically different from those they had replaced. For one, they had a greater variety of professional groups, and while mayors during the New State tended to be university graduates (93%), the administrative committees brought different groups to local power: only 229 of their chairmen had university degrees (49.4%), and only 5.2% had a technical qualification.

Table 3: Profession of Administrative Council Chairmen, 1974-1976

Professional of Administrative Council Chairmen	M	% M	W	% W	M+W	% M+W
Intellectuals and Scientists	147	32.3	2	22.2	149	32.1
Teachers	59	13.0	3	33.3	62	13.4
Merchants	51	11.2	0	0.0	51	11.0
Civil Servants	37	8.1	2	22.2	39	8.4
Administrative and Similar Personnel, Services and Salesmen	33	7.3	0	0.0	33	7.1
Technicians and Intermediate-level Professionals	30	6.6	0	0.0	30	6.5
Entrepreneurs/Industrialists	23	5.1	0	0.0	23	5.0
Landowners	21	4.6	0	0.0	21	4.5
Bankers	17	3.7	0	0.0	17	3.7
Armed Forces Officers	12	2.6	0	0.0	12	2.6

Farmers	9	2.0	0	0.0	9	1.9
Workers, Craftsmen and Machine Operators	4	0.9	0	0.0	4	0.9
Other Military	4	0.9	0	0.0	4	0.9
Priests	4	0.9	0	0.0	4	0.9
Rural Workers	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.4
Housewives	0	0.0	1	11.1	1	0.2
Unemployed	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2
Others	0	0.0	1	11.1	1	0.2
Not stated	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2
Total	455	100.0	9	100.0	464	100.0

Intellectuals and scientists continued in the majority. A total of 32.1% of chairmen came from this group, of which 43.5% were lawyers, notaries, registrars and trainees, 25.9% were medical doctors, 14.3% were engineers, 4.8% vets and 4.1% economists, with the remaining 8% made up of four architects, four pharmacists, one sculptor, one geologist, one journalist, a mathematician and a music maestro. The gender difference is also significant: the proportion of women teachers is substantially higher than that of men. In total, of the 62 chairmen who were teachers, primary school teachers accounted for 40.3%, while 33.9% were secondary school teachers.

The groups in which men made up the largest proportion were merchants, administrators and technicians, where there were no women. Civil servants, a category that came to have a substantial weight, accounted for 8.1% of all chairmen, but was 22.2% of all chairwomen. The one caveat of this exercise is the huge rapprochement between the values of each professional category and their respective variety. Integrated into PREC there was a clear and intentional enlargement of the sociological group of local elites. New and previously unthinkable categories appear, groups and social classes that claimed new spaces in which to get involved politically (Guerra, 1986: 58), such as a fruit seller, workers from several industries and rural workers, which serves to confirm the interventionism of the revolutionary phase, the popular mobilisation and the “awakening to political participation” (Fernandes, 1992: 30).

There is also evidence of some promiscuity between the professional categories: administrative committees could involve groups that used to be considered opposed and irreconcilable on the former socio-professional spectrum. For example, the chairman of the Almada administrative committee was an estimator, while the six councillors were an office employee, a cork worker, an electrician, an employee of the arsenal at Alfeite, a lawyer and a bank employee. In Famalicão the chairman was an engineer while the councillors included a medical doctor, a primary school teacher, a merchant, a lawyer, a mechanic and an industrialist. This phenomenon rendered obsolete the classical sociological theories about the “almost absolute separation of the political elite and the masses”. Undoubtedly what have become more applicable are the plural elite theories that “already present perspectives capable of being reconciled with democracy” (Freire, 2001: 10-11).

Among the chairmen of the administrative committees we found 14 retired and a further two officers on the armed forces reserves (3.5% of all male chairmen). There were no retired women.

It was also possible to determine the age of 91 administrative committee chairmen on the day of their appointment: they had an average age of 44, which was younger than the average age of New State mayors.

5. Agrarian Reform in the Alentejo region

The Alentejo region, in the South of Portugal, occupies forty one percent of the Portuguese territory. But it has the lowest demographic density and has always been so, due to its history, geography and water distribution. Many of this region's features remained throughout the centuries: a very concentrated agrarian structure, a homogeneous group of landowners and a high percentage of land workers on wage, mostly journeymen. This is the region where the Portuguese revolution is associated with the Agrarian Reform, which dominated the region's politics, its economy and its social life throughout a long period after April 25th 1974.

Collecting local memories was fundamental for understanding all those issues (Almeida, 2010). A series of interviews were made to the main participants in the Agrarian Reform process in a municipality of the Portalegre district, whose leader directly influenced the entire region. The selection process obeyed a simple rule: I aimed for a sample of the local diversity, as I tried to interview people from each social group. The analysis of the interviews reveals that each group member is reminded of the facts which are the most important to his/her group, and that are included in the public representation of the group's past (Tonkin, 1995).

Here are a few examples of some journeymen's childhood recollections:

"There was a traditional discontent from way back, for generations. People worked hard, made sacrifices. Look: I can tell you that when I was four or five years old, and my parents weren't so poor, and I was an only child, we had one sardine a meal. My father ate a piece of the head, my mother ate the tail and I had the middle portion. A sardine for the three of us. We had three meals a day, bread all the time."

"There was a lot of suffering in the Alentejo. We went bare feet to the fields when we were seven or eight years old. I suffered quite a lot. We didn't have what we can afford today, such as capes for the rain. I had my first shoes when I made my primary school exam, when I was about ten years old."

In rural workers memories, resistance against the regime and working for the Communist Party are important issues, which include strikes, nostalgia for the heroic times of clandestine work and meetings, prison and resistance as a prestige factor during the revolutionary period.

"There were a few communists in those days. They protected each other as they were outlawed. I joined the Communist Party when I was seventeen years old. My first assignment was to affix posters at the doctor's palace. He was a member of the state party. He was out there in the parliament. And he had huge dogs in his backyard. And they were nasty. We were supposed to affix posters with insults to the man, because he wouldn't find us work, and so on. Do you know how we deceived the dogs? There were two of us, one called them to the side while the other affixed the paper. When he left his house in the morning he found the paper. The other day there were guards everywhere asking about who had done it."

Regarding work for the clandestine Communist Party:

"Once I was carrying a handful of papers, hidden under my shirt, to distribute in a nearby village. A police patrol showed up on horseback. We heard the horses and hid in an abandoned house. That was how it was back then. I did a lot of work for the party."

"There was a military repression. A journeyman was digging the dirt and the boss arrived and everyone had to stand up and take off his hat. We could only go back to work after he told us so. Others weren't so bad. Others just got there and said good day..."

“My father wasn’t a member of the party, but he appreciated it. I can’t say I knew what communism was like. All I can say is that I lived poorly. For every 24 hours I worked about 17 or 18 hours. My pay was not fair and I was unhappy with it. Our only support was from those papers we read from the Communist Party. They opened our eyes to make demands. They were spread around there. And we talked about them throughout the night, people talked.”

Gender was also an important issue. Women described the joys of youth and they also felt the need to participate in the social struggle, but were stopped by men:

“My job was to do errands, clean the bathroom, dust... I kind of liked it, but I liked it better on the fields, to harvest, pick olives, weeding... We had a privilege inside the houses: we could eat. Our bellies were full. We didn’t starve. In the fields, during the harvest, women were paid less than men. And we had to work as hard as they did. If we didn’t, we were fired.”

“We dated during work. We talked on the way, the road was long, sometimes a hour and a half, there was no transportation like today. We could talk to boys, coming back from work, sometimes we sang... We made a party on the way home. We were young. We would sing and danced. We were tired but we were young. It wasn’t hard. And we had a lot of friends. Even with all those hard time, my younger days were great.”

“Back then people talked about the Communist Party. I became a member only after the revolution. Before that I was a sympathizer. There were reunions throughout the night, but women weren’t allowed. Only men. People always talked about the Agrarian Reform in this region. They said the lands were... Look, the lands were the way they are now, abandoned, full of weed. No one picks the olives. I don’t know how it was when the party was clandestine. Men went to reunions, but they didn’t want women to go there.”

In the 1970s, agriculture no longer played the most important role in the Portuguese economy. It supplied food and exportations, but regarding jobs it had been replaced by industry. Nevertheless, agriculture still occupied 24 percent of the active population. In rural areas it occupied over fifty percent of the population. In Avis farm servants and journeymen were still 92 percent of the population (graph 2).

With the revolution and local elites’ replacement, in the Alentejo region there was also a huge people’s movement, led by local communist representatives. All farm workers were out on the streets and landowners started to be afraid. There were road blocks and arms searches made by “people’s comities”, and any sign of luxury became a symbol of “fascism”.

Radical legislation established the concept of economic sabotage: when it was considered that an industry or a property weren’t producing as much as they could, they were classified as underused and were supposed to be a target of government intervention and nationalisation. This law was the perfect excuse for the first land occupations in the end of 1974. Farm workers adhered immediately. With their psychological and social background, when the revolution came and communist propaganda told them they could own their bosses’ land, they believed it (Carvalho, 1977, Garin, 1977, Maltez, 1989). When they heard the military, with long beards and red scarves and flags, telling them to move on and occupy the land, they marched on. The women came first, shouting and showing off like they had never done before.

The Agrarian Reform was a critical issue in the Portuguese revolution of 1974. It reflected the moment, the enthusiasm, the popular adhesion, as well as the ongoing political evolution, with all its forward and backward movements, mistakes and corrections, and divergent political behaviours of the successive governments. In 1975 the Alentejo region was the stage for a political and social movement quite new and bold from a legal perspective. It affected a strategic sector and it implied political decisions which concerned the use and possession of the land and the general functioning of the local political institutions and society.

6. The walls of the revolution

Posters and paintings on the walls revealed the spirit of the times, not only in Lisbon, but all over the country, and they were used as huge incentives to action. Inspired by the Soviet and Chinese revolution posters, they implied the association of all labourers, from industry, agriculture, fishing, teaching, the military, men, women and children.

Figure 1: Briz, 1999.

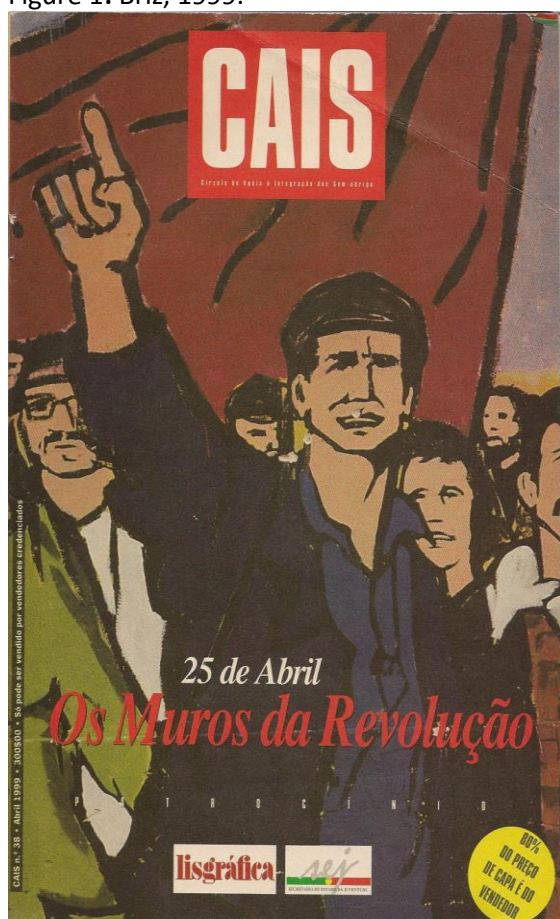


Figure 2: Briz, 1999.



Figure 3: Briz, 1999.

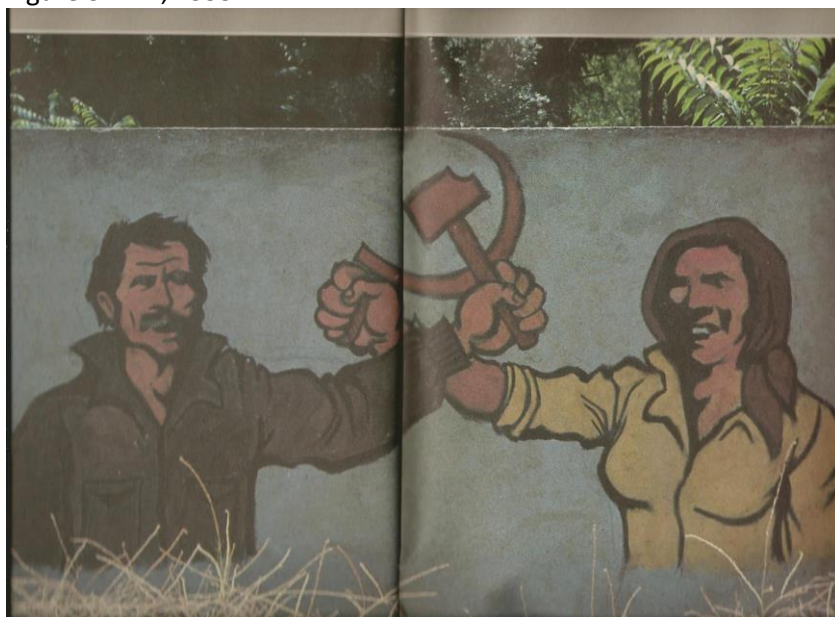


Figure 4: Briz, 1999.



Figure 5: Briz, 1999.



Figure 6: Briz, 1999.



Figure 7: Briz, 1999.



Figure 8: Exhibition at Tate Modern, London, 2014, picture by the author. The walls of the Portuguese revolution were inspired by Soviet and Chinese revolution posters.

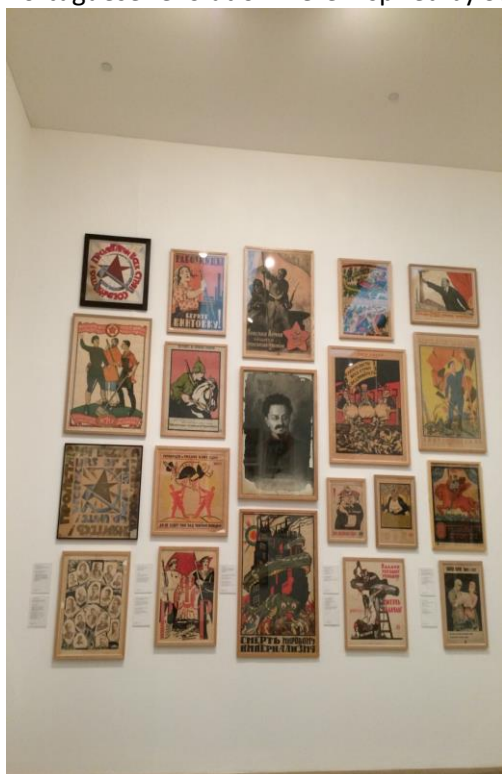


Figure 9: Salgado, 1999. Labourers occupy the house of João Nuncio, horse riding bullfighter and landowner in Alcácer do Sal, Alentejo. Photos by Sebastião Salgado.

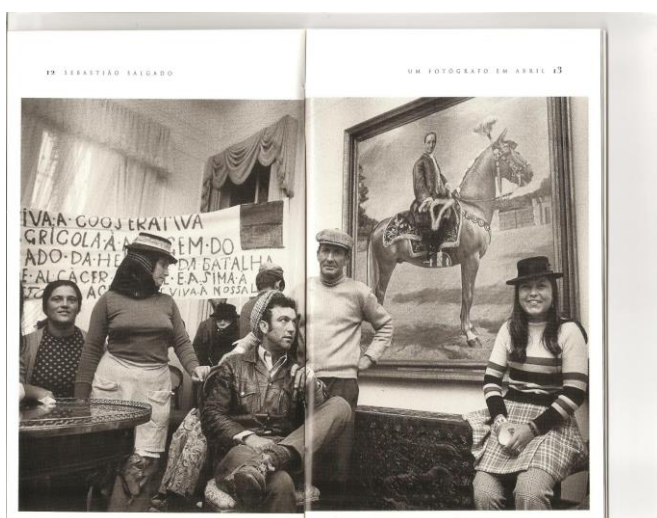


Figure 10: Salgado, 1999.

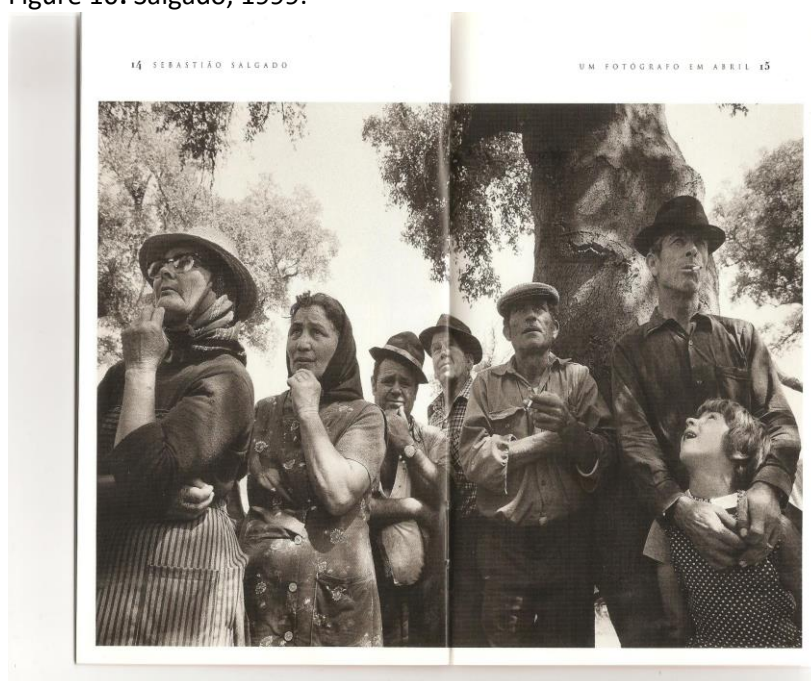
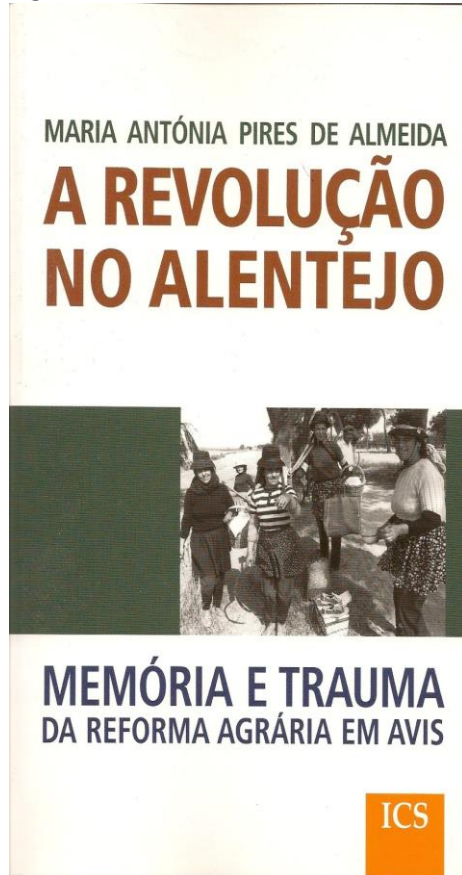


Figure 11: A labourers meeting at the Fundação Abreu Callado, civil parish of Benavila, Avis, Portalegre district, 1975. Local source.



Figure 12: Almeida, 2006.



7. The laws of the revolution

There was an alteration on the concept of Property, which was so clearly imbedded into legislation since the Liberal Revolution of the early nineteenth century. For the first time new laws defined principles of economic sabotage and ownership limits and originated unprecedented land occupation.

Legal Framework:

Decree n. 203/74, May 15th 1974: Defined the program of the Provisional Government and obedience to the Program of the Movement of the Armed Forces. General lines: freedom for unions, strengthening of local government, public investment, cooperatives, agriculture enhancement, reform of the agrarian structures, minimum wage. It established Portugal's adhesion to the Universal Convention of Human Rights, which states that every individual has a right to property and that no one can be deprived of it.

Decree n. 660/74, November 25th 1974: Established the concepts of economic sabotage, government intervention in firm's management and a nationalization policy. In agriculture it was applied when farmers or landowners were supposedly under using their lands.

Oliveira Baptista's law, Decree n. 406-A/75, July 29th 1975: According to the 1975 agrarian law's goals, defined the introduction, there was a clear intention to "liquidate fascism and its bases", to "destroy the economic and social base of those classes" which exploit "the mass of agricultural workers" and stole from small farmers. The Agrarian Reform is defined as "a political process which is fundamental to liquidate large landowners, who dominate the

fields". This law created "a general base for attacking large properties and the capitalist exploitation of land."

These laws were associated with others regarding the nationalization of strategic sectors such as industry, transportation, banks and communications.

Lopes Cardoso law, Decree n. 236-A/76, April 5th 1976: defined the Agrarian Reform Intervention Zone (ZIRA) and prohibited land expropriations under 30 hectares and from land belonging to autonomous producers.

8. Land occupations

There's been a discussion regarding the thesis of popular and spontaneous initiative, which has been abandoned by scholars, versus the thesis of a top down agrarian reform, initiated by the early revolutionary governments with explicit legislation, followed by strong popular adhesion. In the whole process considerable importance is attributed to strong charismatic leaders and the early presence of the Communist Party and its decade long structures.

9. Timeline of the social movement

As soon as the revolution took place, the first May Day was celebrated all over the country with huge joyful manifestations and rallies. In the Alentejo region, the first agricultural workers meetings took place in Beja, in early May 1974. Immediately the first Agricultural Labourers Unions were created in each district. Their goals were pay rises, employment to the unemployed, reduction of the work hours. José Soeiro, the leader of the Beja Union, was interviewed for this project in 1998: "It wasn't hard to move forward, because the structure was already in place with work done for decades by the Communist Party. We'd go to the villages, to meet with the labourers, and a committee was put in place immediately. This was rapidly spread in the three Alentejo districts."

There were rallies and gatherings throughout the entire Alentejo region. And women were on the frontline of meetings and organization, which was quite a novelty, after decades of being denied political participation by the Communist Party. Here is a woman's testimony (local Communist Party leader): "With the revolution I had a great time. I was everywhere. I was a member of everything. I went spontaneously. But it was the party who organized everything, let there be no doubt about it. Then we proposed the administrative committee for the municipality and we took off. I also went on campaign for the elections. It had to be done. I made speeches at the rallies, I distributed papers, I was a voice for the party. The 25th April was the best thing that ever happened in my life. I've paid my membership fees to the party all these years and I'll continue to do so until the day I die. The worst part of all this are the ones who aren't real communists. Those are the ones who got good houses, good cars. And how did they get them? The revolution did everything for them. They had nothing before 1974. And they got what wasn't theirs. Some of them kept things that didn't belong to them. I sure got nothing..."

Slogans were cried out: *Give the land to labourers! No more private property! The people is in command! Down with the reaction!* There were insults to the *fascists*, the *capitalists*, *latifundia owners* and *agrarians*. People in rallies were called *workers* and *comrades*, which implies a previously inexistent class solidarity, particularly in different levels of rural workers, such as labourers, shepherds, herdsman, sharecroppers, servants and others, who traditionally obeyed a rigid hierarchy.

And the MFA, the Movement of the Armed Forces, intervened with physical presence on the fields, on the lands and on local meetings. It promoted *The Campaigns for Cultural Enhancement* and published the journal: *Movement 25th April. Bulletin of the Armed Forces*,

since October 1974 e distributed for free to the military, with a language of encouragement towards an Agrarian Reform. The MFA was particularly active in enforcing the laws for expropriations.

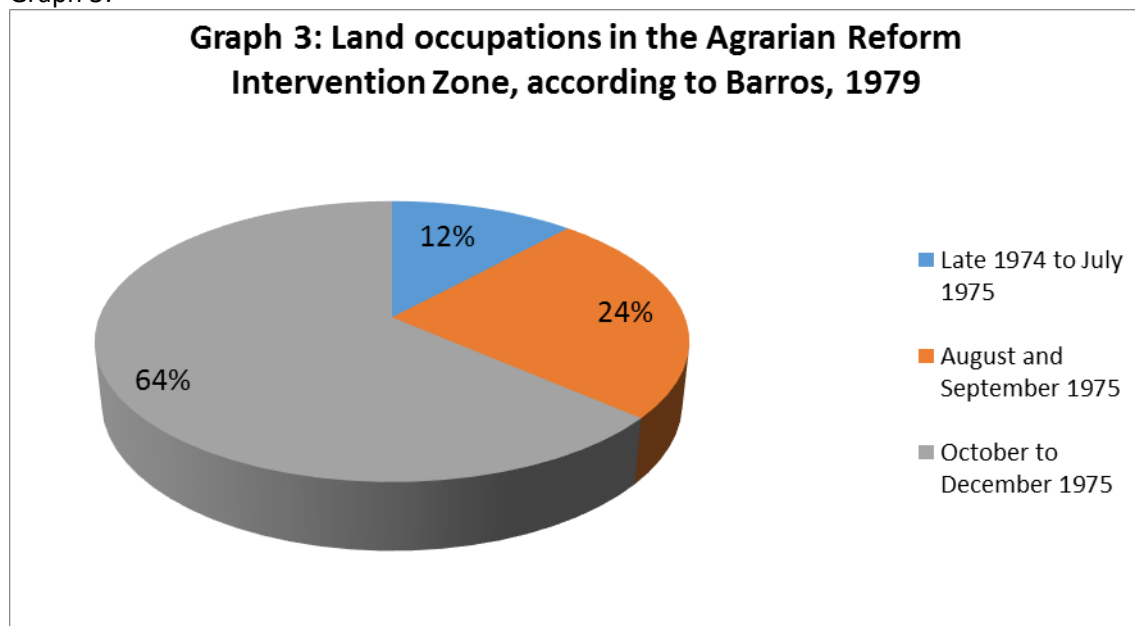
On October 1974, Esteves Belo, the Secretary of Agriculture on the Third Provisional Government of Vasco Gonçalves, sent a team of agronomists to the farms to check the lands and how they were being used. They were supposed to write reports on the possibility of intensifying production. Those reports went missing. But Cultural Intensification Committees were created, there were compulsive placements of workers in farms and allegations of underuse of the lands and threats of unemployment, enhanced by propaganda.

The first land occupation occurred in the Outeiro estate, at the Santa Vitória civil parish, municipality of Beja: 774ha, owned by José Gomes Palma, occupied on December 10th 1974 allegedly for “economic sabotage”, applying Decree n. 660/74 and supported by the MFA, Movement of the Armed Forces (the military on the ground).

Then there was the Torre Bela case study: this estate was owned by the Duke of Lafões and it was occupied on April 23rd 1975 by labourers from the estate and others from elsewhere, supported by the MFA. There is a documentary which is an important ethnographic document. On this documentary we can observe an ongoing land occupation and the issues that were discussed among the workers, such as tools ownership. There are several testimonies by the estate labourers.

Most estates were occupied and legally expropriated from October to December 1975, as shown on graph 3.

Graph 3:



In order to manage expropriated land, about 500 UCP – Colective Production Units, known as cooperatives, were implemented. They covered over one million hectares, one fifth of the country's farming land (Baptista, 1993: 72). These UCPs enforced Decree n. 406-A/75: statutes and production organization should be created by local initiative and the will of local assemblies.

10. Mayors during the Democratic Regime, 1976-2013

The continuity between the transition from the military dictatorship of 1926-1933 and the stability of the New State regime was not repeated with the emergence of the democratic regime: rather, after 1976 there was an almost complete break with the administrative committees. In 304 councils and of the 464 administrative committee chairmen, only 16.6% (in 25.3% of the councils) were elected after 1976. To determine if the elite from the transitional periods remained in office when the transition came to an end and the new regimes stabilised, we sought to ascertain whether these local elites were transitory or whether they were the same ones who had always held power and continued to do so. During the transition to democracy there was clearly less continuity than there had been during the transition to the New State. In 1937 this was explained by the fact that those who appointed the administrative committees were the same people who later appointed the mayors – the Interior Ministry – which also used the same criteria. With the transition to democracy there was greater discontinuity caused by the start of an electoral process that changed definitively the rules of the game. The popular plebiscite of 1976 did not validate the choices made during the revolutionary period.

From 1976 to 2013, a total of 1,273 people have been elected to serve as mayor, and have held office for an average of 8.4 years, or for 2.3 mandates.

Table 4: Length of Mayoral Mandate, 1976-2013

Length of Mayoral Mandate (years), 1976-2013	Number	%
0-1 year	28	2.08
1-2 years	37	2.74
2-4 years	499	37.02
4-8 years	302	22.40
More than 8 years	482	35.76
Total mandates	1348	100.00
Mayors with 37 years in office (Braga and Vila Nova de Poiares)	2	0.15
Total	1273	
Longest term of office	37	
Average term of office	8.4	

Table 5: Number of Mayoral Mandates, 1976-2013

Number of Mandates, 1976-2013	Number	%
Incomplete	60	4.48
1	494	36.92
From more than 1 to 3	510	38.12
From more than 3 to 5	211	15.77
More than 5	63	4.71
Total	1338	100.00
Greatest number of mandates (2 cases)	10	
Average number of mandates	2.3	

After more than half a century of appointing locally-nominated people, in the first local elections “the parties became the almost exclusive channel for political mediation, and were consequently largely responsible for the mobilisation and participation of new social groups” (Mendes, 1993: 178). Longevity of office was thought of as a problem that was resolved with the introduction of a law in 2005 limiting each candidate to three mandates. The successive renewal of mandates ended with the 2013 elections, in which 63.3% of all mayors were replaced.

In many cases long mandates were complemented with careers at other levels, in national or even European politics, which resulted in the professionalisation of positions, something that had not existed during the previous regime. With the introduction of pay, particularly in hierarchically inferior councils – the more rural – because of the possibility of occupying the position on a professional basis, there was a significant growth in the professionalisation and exclusive dedication to the role, which contributed to two changes taking place within local administration: the enlargement of the social groups with access to local power, and increased specialisation in the position and of the administrative abilities of local politicians.

Between 1976 and 2013, elected mayors had a number of professions, with “Specialists” dominating, although with a smaller proportion than was the case in the previous regime.

Table 6: Mayors’ Professions, 1976-2013

Mayors’ Professions, 1976-2013	Number	%
Farmers	19	1.57
Bankers	87	7.19
Merchants	33	2.73
Entrepreneurs/Industrialists	81	6.69
Intellectuals and Scientists	311	25.70
Civil Servants	150	12.40
Armed Forces Officers	14	1.16
Workers, Craftsmen and Machine Operators	24	1.98
Other Military	2	0.17
Priests	5	0.41
Administrative and Similar Personnel, Services and Salesmen	74	6.12
Teachers	248	20.50
Landowners	13	1.07
Senior Managers and Directors in Public Administration and Business	47	3.88
Technicians and Intermediate-level Professionals	98	8.10
Rural Workers	4	0.33
Total Professions	1210	100.00

There was an increase in the proportion of teachers and civil servants and of intermediate-level technicians and bankers. Elite recruitment criteria was almost exclusively determined by political affiliation, although personal support and social services offered to the community had acquired a new importance.

During the democratic period, the number of mayors who had not attended university increased by 27%, compared to 7.1% in the previous regime.

Table 7: Mayors' Qualifications, 1976-2013

Mayors' Qualifications, 1976-2013	Number	%
Ninth year of schooling	17	1.94
Baccalaureate	10	1.14
Preparatory cycle	7	0.80
Technical course	109	12.43
Doctorate	3	0.34
Primary school	17	1.94
Secondary school	39	4.45
Higher studies	69	7.87
Undergraduate degree	499	56.90
Primary teacher	48	5.47
Master's	23	2.62
Post-graduation	36	4.10
Total	877	100.00

The average age of mayors was 43.3, much lower than that of mayors appointed between 1937 and 1974, which was 45.2.

Among the mayors and councillors there were many retired people who had exercised a great many professions. While in the district capitals or other major towns any political career could lead to promotion to other political office, such as civil governor, deputy or even a position in central government, in the smaller councils it was not uncommon for people who exercised their profession there or in another council area to retire to their home town and enter the local administration. However, the opposite is true of ministers and deputies who stood for mayor.

In short, the social and demographic profile of Portuguese local politician fits in with the international trend of the "three Ms": male, middle-aged and middle-class, and is not so much different from the profile of deputies. Compared with ministers, the specialisation rates among mayors was very much lower (Pinto and Almeida, 2002).

11. Women's Participation in Local Politics

While three councils had women councillors, not one woman served as mayor during the New State.

The administrative committees appointed in 1974 included the first nine council leaders. Between 1976 and 2005 a total of 37 women were elected mayor, representing 2.8% of the total number of mayors elected in this period.

Table 8: Council Mayors by Gender, 1976-2005

Elections:	Women elected:	%	Men elected:	%	Total elected:
1976	5	1.6	299	98.4	304

1979	4	1.3	301	98.7	305
1982	6	2	299	98	305
1985	4	1.3	301	98.7	305
1989	7	2.3	298	97.7	305
1993	5	1.6	300	98.4	305
1997	12	3.9	293	96.1	305
2001	16	5.2	292	94.8	308
2005	19	6.2	289	93.8	308
Totals	78		2672		
Mean	8.7	2.8	296.9	97.2	100

Within this small universe, the characterisation of women mayors is necessarily limited and almost personal. In any event, it is true this group of women were better educated than their male peers, which is consistent with the wider demographic reality in Portugal. The women who headed administrative committees had university qualifications in 55.5% of cases, compared to 49.2% for men. Between 1976 and 2005, 58% of women mayors had university qualifications, while the figure for men was only 43%. In terms of professions, 55.5% of administrative committee chairwomen were teachers, scientists and intellectuals: three secondary school teachers and two who had law degrees (one a public registrar, the other a notary), while only 45.3% of men were in this group. During the democratic period, the percentage of women in this group increased to 59%, while the proportion of men fell to 44%. Geographic distribution of women mayors: coastal districts accounted for 71%, with the greatest number in the districts of Lisbon, Setúbal and Aveiro, which coincides with the female activity rate by region.

The average age of this group on the day they took office was 44.3, older than the average for all mayors, which was 43.4. The average duration of their mandates was 7.3 years (slightly less than the 8.4 year average) and they were mostly incomers to the council area: 50% were from other districts, 22.7% were from other council areas within the district while 27.3% represented their own local council (against the average of 64.4%). A total of 90% also lived in their own council area, with a further 7% living in the same district. With respect to political parties, 38.7% of women mayors represented the Social Democratic Party (PSD – Partido Social Democrata), 29% the Socialist Party (PS – Partido Socialista) and 29% the PCP and its coalition partners. While the PSD had most of the elected women mayors, the parties on the left of the political spectrum combined accounted for 58% of all women mayors.

12. The end of the Agrarian Reform

Several reasons may be appointed for the end of the Agrarian Reform, all of them valid and cumulative. For starters, Collective Production Units (UCP) were not economically viable, due to excess workforce. In the words of José Luís, the leader of the UCP May 1st (Labour's day), Avis: "People lived happily around here. And they had jobs. We employed 320 people! Plus their families, we supported 600 or 700 people. We paid seven of eight million escudos every month. We had two accountants in a huge office..." Then there was emergency credit for agriculture, which was used to pay wages, with over 30 percent interests. Finally, government policy: there was a political intention to end the Agrarian Reform and give lands back to owners.

And production and productivity levels did not go up during those euphoric years, as claimed by the Portuguese Communist Party reports. On the contrary: corn production did not reach

the high levels of the sixties, even though corn fields were enlarged. Cattle was reduced, olive oil and wine production fell practically to zero, and cork, the region's biggest wealth, was stolen by corrupt industrialists. Salaries remained the same as before: the only advantages to the workers were job stabilisation and the end of unemployment. But all those sharecroppers who'd improved their lifestyles earlier, now had to enter cooperatives in order to survive, and this was a step back for them. They didn't like being paid the same as all the others. And they were the first to leave when conditions were created for them to rent land again (Almeida, 2007a).

The process of reversing the Agrarian Reform: on the first legislative elections on April 25th 1976, the Socialist Party won with 35 percent. The Communist Party got only 14 percent and did not accomplish its goals, even though it won in the South of Portugal. Definitely, the popular plebiscite of 1976 did not validate the choices made during the revolutionary period. Mário Soares' First Constitutional Government inaugurated on July 23rd 1976 and Portugal initiated its democratic consolidation.

António Barreto was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Fishing November 5th 1976. According to his own words, "I wrote a little note that I've kept. 1st: to write a new Agrarian Reform Law. 2nd: I wanted Carlos Portas and António Campos as Secretaries of State. I asked for the Communist Civil Governors to be dismissed and for the military commands who were favourable to the Communist Party to be replaced. Mostly, I asked for the end of the Agrarian Reform Regional Centres and for the end of the Emergency credit for agriculture. That credit line had to be stopped. And it should become an exclusive to the Ministry of Agriculture, and turned into an investment line. And the UCPs were supposed to be forced to pay their debts. Soares looked at the paper and he said: 'I agree'. And he signed his name on it. I started in office the day after." António Barreto's interview, 1998.

"The truth is that what was at stake was the foundation of the democratic regime. For a whole year the military and their civilian allies wrote the laws, applied them with none other than revolutionary legitimacy. This accumulation was one of the sources for despotism. (...) They were a minority and they had no external support. The revolution failed at the elections, as it does most of the time." (Barreto, 1987: 334-335).

The European option: on March 28th 1977 Mário Soares presented Portugal's formal application to the EEC – European Economic Community.

Portugal's frail economy and a loan from the International Monetary Fund forced the government to promote harsh measures. The huge weight of the structures created from the nationalization and expropriation process became incapable of coexisting with the necessary economic convergence with the rest of Europe. And the money spent supporting them was a massive expense to the state, together with a huge state sector, which was inefficient from an economic point of view and absorbed 20 percent of the Gross National Product.

The laws that brought an end to the Agrarian Reform were the following: Decree n. 56/77, February 18th 1977: New rules for the Emergency credit for agriculture. Decree n. 58/77, February 21st 1977: Compulsory payments to the Emergency credit for agriculture. Decree n. 221/77, May 28th 1977: Reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture on a regional basis. Creation of a Department of Rural Extension with the goal of encouraging farmers to improve their work with technical knowledge and management skills and to overcome their credit, distribution and price related problems. Law n. 76/77, September 29th 1977: Rural tenancy. For the first time contracts had to be signed regarding lands over 2 hectares.

Particularly Barreto's law, Law n. 77/77, September 29th 1977: General Basis of the Agrarian Reform. Introduced the concept of Autonomous Farmer, increased the reserved area to 70.000

points, and separated active and absent landowners. Absent owners would receive only 35.000 points. This law allowed the increase of reserved areas for previous landowners and tenants up to 20 percent in case it was considered technically favourable. And up to 80 percent for societies. Or up to 10 percent for each member of the family household who relied on the expropriated land's income for survival.

Regardless of these laws, it was only with Sá Carneiro and the Social Democrat Governments that land devolutions kicked off. Social Democrat Governments replaced Socialist Governments in 1978. This was the year more landowners requested their reserved lands and more farms were removed from UCPs and given back to previous owners. With the so called Sá Carneiro tenancy laws (Ministerial orders n. 246/79, May 29th 1979 and n. 797/81, September 12th 1981, lands were removed from UCPs and distributed to farmers who could prove that agriculture was their main source of income. Tenant contracts were signed for private use of the land. This was an incentive to land division in the UCPs and it introduced a different proposal for Agrarian Reform. From a project which was structured around collectivization and large production units, towards old proposals of land parting and distribution. This process produced longer lasting results. It was a more attractive proposal for small sharecroppers and tenant farmers.

There were huge social conflicts during land devolutions, from 1978 to 1980. According to a local witness and UCP manager, "They started taking the reserved areas from our cooperative. That was the worst part of it all. The guards came in. I was there all the time when parts of the land were taken. We were there to say we didn't want to give them away. Some of the lands were ready to harvest. Others were being watered. They said there was a law that forced us to return the land. The old landowners showed up with the guards and they brought riffles. There were gunshots. And some slapping. By the guards. We were over 300 people and there was conflict. We resisted. But then we left. We started noticing that it wasn't worth it. The cooperative had too many expenses. Too much staff. And there wasn't enough income to pay salaries. And that was it. They were all shut down. It was the government's fault. Because it never gave us any support. The government never supported the cooperatives and they went down. Our UCP had a debt of 7 million escudos. With interests, later on would have had to pay over 70 million. There were interests over interests. We went bankrupt. If the government had given us some support, things would have been different."

Nevertheless, the process wasn't over. With Cavaco Silva's government, there was a hot summer in the Alentejo in 1987, with new land devolutions and conflicts. And a new Agrarian Reform Law by Álvaro Barreto, Minister of Agriculture: Law n. 109/88, September 26th 1988. Its goals were "to correct the excess of the revolutionary period. (...) to create a climate of social stability and peace; to provide for the survival of the private sector; to reconsider the Agrarian Reform in order to fit the principles of the European Economic Community..."

With Portugal's European Integration in 1986, several changes were inserted in the legislation in order to adapt Portuguese agriculture to European standards. A new vocabulary was produced and new concepts invaded the fields, originating a totally different approach to a profession that had remained the same for centuries. As early as 1977, the Barreto law introduced new concepts such as landscape, environment, agricultural multi-functionalism, bio-diversity, and an attempt to close the gap between Portuguese agriculture and its European counterparts. In order to move towards Europe, Portuguese farmers were urged to behave differently; to straighten bonds with the local community; to improve their workers social and economical conditions; to protect natural resources; to increase soil fertility; to intensify, modernise and diversify their agricultural activities; to promote agricultural associations; and, most important, to foment forestry areas and to combine the production of raw materials with hunting, fishing and pasture in an integrated economy scheme. This wasn't

any different from what was being made for centuries in the Alentejo region and throughout the whole country until the late nineteenth century. But for the first time it was put to law, regardless of the need to increase wheat production. Finally cereals were cleared away from the first place position they had occupied for centuries in the minds of urban intellectuals and other products and activities in the rural areas were considered more important.

Portugal's adhesion to the European Community in 1986 made European agricultural policies available to our country. In the scope of the European Fund for Agricultural Orientation, a special program for the development of Portuguese agriculture was created: PEDAP (EEC Rule number 3828/85, December 20th, 1985), with a ten year deadline and a large amount of money to spend in order to correct Portuguese agriculture's deficiencies and to improve its production and marketing. Alentejo region received 25 percent of the money, which was used mainly on roads construction, fences, and taking electrical power to agricultural establishments. Large estates benefited, small farms could not compete. With the farmers' new job as subsidy's managers, older and less educated people simply abandoned their lands and retired. Their children had other professions, which were more rewarding. And even landowners with larger properties had to adapt and improve their management skills (or hire someone to do the job) in order to survive.

Conclusions

These are some of the characteristics of the local elites and their evolution as a result of the events of the revolutionary transition that took place in Portugal between 1974 and 1976. Almost the entire New State elite was replaced by new people, bringing with them a diversification of professions and the introduction of new skills. However, the domination of intellectuals and scientists with high education levels continued to predominate.

According to F. Ruivo, democracy was a motor of change. The occupations of elected local officials reveals the predominance of middle-class professionals, who "tend to be people with a different way of relating to both politics and with the community" (Ruivo, 1990: 76). Was this a consequence of the transition to democracy? Or has the local political elite undergone a slow evolution during the last four decades as a result of several other factors, such as European integration, new methods of local government finance or even the demographic, economic and social changes that have redrawn the map? The social recomposition of councils was a fact, particularly when the people took the power into their own hands, introducing significant changes to the social groups that had traditionally exercised local power.

With the 1976 elections, voters chose not to validate revolutionary actions and elites. What followed was a stabilisation that matches Schmitter's description of the Portuguese transition to democracy: "from the fiery rapture of a revolutionary transition to the satisfactory (although prosaic) routine of a consolidated democracy" (1999: 19).

There was direct association between Vasco Gonçalves' Governments and land occupation and then Social Democrat Governments and land devolutions. The Agrarian Reform was a top to bottom process. It was politically motivated and directed. Laws and policies were enforced both for its beginning and its end. In both cases, there was strong popular adhesion. These were strong historical motives and rural southern population's tradition of resistance and support for the Communist Party, which influenced the whole process. In the end there was the failure of the economic model based on a large workforce with low levels of productivity.

"There was an early intention to absorb unemployment with the creation of jobs in agriculture. With the new reality of the European Economic Community and the evolution of Portugal's social and economic structures towards a market economy, it became obvious that these large

production units were oversized. They were overstaffed and they were not economically viable without the constant and expensive support of the State.” António Barreto’s interview, 1998.

Clearly the early revolutionary governments had the goal of changing power relations on all economic sectors (they also nationalised industry, banks and so forth) and giving away the land to those who worked it. The presence of ministers and secretaries of state in manifestations and rallies promoted by workers unions controlled by the communist party were a formal way to legitimate the advance of the workers towards the lands and the beginning of the agrarian reform. The physical presence of military forces on farms that were going to be occupied completed the apparatus that brought about enthusiastic crowds previously motivated by decades of clandestine work done by members of the communist party. Rural workers responded to powerful and effective propaganda and were completely deceived as to the real goals and possibilities of the movement they were getting themselves into. By then, there were no longer the apparent reasons for such actions, but the ghosts of hunger and unemployment that were real twenty years earlier, were again brought about. To create such a climate of fear and motivation, there was a strong contribution of the military press and the military “Cultural dynamics campaigns”. Therefore, the army had a fundamental role in the process, both in its institutional support to the occupiers and preventing any kind of resistance occupied landowners could possibly think of.

Agrarian reform in the Alentejo region may be described in three words: leadership, precocity and totality, both in local politics and land occupations. The role of communist party local leaders was fundamental to the attraction and mobilisation process of the people who actively participated in the replacement of the local mayor and all the presidents of economic and corporative institutions.

The Agrarian Reform movement was directed by central governments both in its origin and its end. In the late seventies, right wing governments were interested in creating more favourable conditions to Portuguese integration into the EEC. For such purpose, physical and economic support was removed from the cooperatives. Consequences were an utter failure of the whole process and a general feeling of frustration to all social groups that were involved. Especially for rural workers, who could not keep the necessary group cohesion to move forward with its cooperative project. For landowners, those were lost years, and what they took back were abandoned lands, sick cattle, worn down machines and absolutely no money to start again. They had to borrow, with heavy interests, and decades went by until they could recover their traditional lifestyles, when they did at all.

As for local political elites, the revolution totally replaced them. Landowners don’t even run for local elections. And economic power is no longer a way of conquering local political leadership. New professions emerged in the group that controls political jobs. Economic elites based on landownership are completely and deliberately absent from local politics. The change resulted from the fact that elections are now held and also because political jobs are no longer interesting to these groups, whose professional activities either in agriculture or others are increasingly more time consuming and provide them with incomes that are by far more appealing than a mayor’s salary.

Nowadays there is little left from the Agrarian Reform. It remains in the memories of the older generations who experienced it. But among youngsters there is no interest in the theme, just as there is no interest in agriculture as a professional activity. Nature became a hiking ground or an all terrain vehicles track. The present and the future are elsewhere.

References:

- Almeida, M. A. (1997). *Família e poder no Alentejo: elites de Avis (1886-1941)*. Lisboa: Colibri.
- Almeida, M. A. (2003). As elites municipais e a revolução: Portalegre 1941-1997. In A. C. Pinto & A. Freire (eds). *Elites, sociedade e mudança política* (9-42). Oeiras: Celta.
- Almeida, M. A. (2006). *A revolução no Alentejo: memória e trauma da reforma agrária em Avis*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Almeida, M. A. (2007a). Memory and trauma of the Portuguese Agrarian Reform: a case study. *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 6 (2), 63-76.
- Almeida, M. A. (2007b). O mundo rural e os novos desafios. In T. Dentinho & O. Rodrigues (eds.). *Periferias e Espaços Rurais. Comunicações apresentadas ao II Congresso de Estudos Rurais* (295-317). Estoril: Príncípa Editora.
- Almeida, M. A. (2008a). Fontes e metodologia para o estudo das elites locais em Portugal no século XX. *Análise Social*, vol. XLIII (188), 627-645.
- Almeida, M. A. (2008b). Party politics in Portugal: municipalities and central government. *European Societies*, vol. 10, n. 3, 357-378.
- Almeida, M. A. (2008c). Independents and Citizen's Groups in Portuguese Municipalities. In Marion Reiser, Everhard Holtmann (eds.). *Farewell to the Party Model? Independent Local Lists in East and West European Countries*, Wiesbaden, VS, 233-251.
- Almeida, M. A. (2009). Women in Portuguese politics, *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, vol. 8, n. 2, 177-189.
- Almeida, M. A. (2010a). *Memórias Alentejanas do Século XX*. Cascais: Príncípa.
- Almeida, M. A. (2010b). Partidos e Independentes nos vários níveis de governo: Portugal no contexto Europeu. In André Freire, Isabel Estrada Carvalhais, José Leite Viegas, José Palmeira (eds). *Cidadãos, Parlamentos e Representação Política. Perspectivas Transdisciplinares, Perspectivas – Portuguese Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, n. 5, Lisboa e Braga, 123-145.
- Almeida, M. A. (2013a). Landlords, Tenants and Agrarian Reform: Local Elites and Regime Transitions in Avis, Portugal, 1778-2011. *Rural History*, n. 24 (2), Cambridge University Press, October, 127-142.
- Almeida, M. A. (2013b). *O Poder Local do Estado Novo à Democracia: Presidentes de Câmara e Governadores Cívicos, 1936-2012*. Lisboa: e.book. http://www.leyaonline.com/catalogo/detalhes_produto.php?id=57147.
- Almeida, M. A. (2014a). *Dicionário biográfico do poder local em Portugal, 1936-2013*. Lisboa: e.book. <http://m.leyaonline.com/produto.php?id=62433>.
- Almeida, M. A. (2014b). A memória oral na construção de imagens da revolução no Alentejo. In Rita Luís, Luciana Soutelo, Carla Luciana Silva (coords.). *A revolução de 1974-75: repercussão na imprensa internacional e memória(s)*. Lisboa: Instituto de História Contemporânea, FCSH, 128-142.
- Almeida, M. A. (2015a). Mulheres na política portuguesa. In Eduarda Ferreira, Isabel Ventura, Luísa Rego, Manuela Tavares, Maria Antónia Pires de Almeida (orgs.). *Percursos Feministas: Desafiar os tempos*. Lisboa: Universidade Feminista / UMAR, 164-174.

- Almeida, M. A. (2015b). Longevidade nas autarquias e responsabilização dos autarcas: questões pendentes no poder local em Portugal. *Revista Mátia XXI*, Centro de Investigação Professor Doutor Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão, Santarém, n. 4, maio, 119-138.
- Balabanian, O. & Bouet, G. (1987). *Os cravos murcharam: os resultados da reforma agrária portuguesa (1975-85)*. Lisboa: author's edition.
- Balabanian, O. (1984 [1979]). *Problemas agrícolas e reformas agrárias no Alto Alentejo e na Estremadura espanhola*. PhD dissertation, Clermont-Ferrand University.
- Baptista, F. O. (1978). *Portugal 1975: os campos*. Porto: Afrontamento.
- Baptista, F. O. (1979). Lei 77/77: a contra-reforma agrária. *Economia e Socialismo*, n. 43, 3-13.
- Baptista, F. O. (1982). O Alentejo – entre o latifúndio e a Reforma Agrária. *Arquivo de Beja*, vol. 1, II série, 233-273.
- Baptista, F. O. (1986). Trabalhadores Agrícolas e Agricultores Familiares. Dez anos de factos, debates e projectos. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, n. 18/19/20, 411-450.
- Baptista, F. O. (1993). *Agricultura, Espaço e Sociedade Rural*. Coimbra: Fora do Texto.
- Barreto, A. (1987). *Anatomia de uma Revolução. A reforma agrária em Portugal 1974-1976*. In A. Barreto (dir.). *A Reforma Agrária*. Vol. 7, Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América.
- Barreto, A. (ed.) (1987). *A Reforma Agrária*. 7 Vols. Mem Martins: Publicações Europa-América.
- Barros, A. (1979). *A Reforma Agrária em Portugal. Das ocupações de terras à formação das novas unidades de produção*. Oeiras: Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência, Centro de Estudos de Economia Agrária.
- Barros, A. (1986). *Do Latifundismo à Reforma Agrária: o caso de uma freguesia do Baixo Alentejo*. PhD dissertation, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, ISCTE.
- Barros, A. (ed.) (1980). *A Agricultura Latifundiária na Península Ibérica*. Oeiras: Centro de Estudos de Economia Agrária, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- Bermeo, N. G. (1986). *The Revolution within the Revolution. Workers' Control in Rural Portugal*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). *O Poder Simbólico*. Lisboa: Difel.
- Briz, T. (1999). "25 de Abril. Os Muros da Revolução", *Caís*, n. 38, abril.
- Cabral, M. V. (ed.) (1974). *Materiais para a História da Questão Agrária em Portugal, sécs. XIX e XX*. Porto: Editorial Inova.
- Carneiro, F. S. (1975). *Por uma social-democracia portuguesa*. Lisboa: Dom Quixote.
- Carvalho, V. (1977). *O Fracasso de um processo. A Reforma Agrária no Alentejo*. Lisboa: author's edition.
- Cerezaes, D. (2003). *O Poder Caiu na Rua. Crises de Estado e Acções Colectivas na Revolução Portuguesa 1974-1975*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Cooperativa Agrícola Popular da Torre Bela (1976). *Torre Bela, duma tapada real a uma cooperativa agrícola e popular, ou o fim do feudalismo em Portugal: a comemorar o 23*

de Abril 75 tornado possível pelo 25 de Abril 74. Torre Bela.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCpKB8uogXI>.

Cutileiro, J. (1971). *A portuguese rural society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Estrela, A. V. (1978). A reforma agrária portuguesa e os movimentos camponeses. Uma revisão crítica. *Análise Social*, vol. XIV (54), 219-263.
<http://analisesocial.ics.ul.pt/documentos/1223988882X4iOS7hv6Eo23ZS2.pdf>.

Fernandes, A. (1992). Poder Local e Democracia. *Sociologia. Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto*, 1ª série, vol. 2, 29-59.

Freire, A. (2014). *Austeridade, democracia e autoritarismo*. Lisboa: Nova Vega.

Freire, A. (ed.) (2001). *Recrutamento Parlamentar: os Deputados Portugueses da Constituinte à VIII Legislatura*. Lisboa: STAPE, MAI.

Garin, J. (1977). *Reforma Agrária: Seara de Ódio*. Lisboa: Edições do Templo.

Guerra, I. (1986). Poder local: reprodução ou inovação? *Sociologia – Problemas e Práticas*, n. 1, 55-65.

Holt, H. (2000). *The life stories of undistinguished Americans as told by themselves* (1906), expanded edition with a new introduction by Werner Sollors. New York & London: Routledge.

Inglehart, R. & P. Norris (2003). *Rising Tide. Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lowenthal, D. (1985). *The past is a foreign country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Magalhães, P. (2005). Disaffected democrats: Political attitudes and political action in Portugal. *West European Politics*, v. 28, n. 5, 973-991.

Maltez, J. A. (1989). *A estratégia do PCP na Reforma Agrária (1974-1976): Relatório Síntese*. Lisboa: Associação para a Cooperação e Desenvolvimento Social.

Martin, Jean-Clément (2000). Histoire, mémoire et oubli: pour un autre régime de historicité, *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 47-4, Octobre-Décembre, 783-804.

Martins, C. A. & Monteiro, N. G. (eds.) (2002). *A Agricultura: Dicionário das Ocupações*. Madureira, N. L. (coord.). *História do Trabalho e das Ocupações*, vol. III. Oeiras: Celta Editora.
<http://repositorio-iul.iscte.pt/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=20&value=Almeida%2C+Maria+Ant%C3%B3nia+Pires+de>.

Mendes, J. (1992). “O contributo da biografia para o estudo das elites locais: alguns exemplos”. *Análise Social*, vol. XXVII (116-117), 357-365.

Mendes, M. (1993). As Elites Políticas num Concelho da Área Metropolitana do Porto, *Sociologia – Problemas e Práticas*, n. 14, 177-198.

Oliveira, C. (ed) (1996). *História dos Municípios e do Poder Local (dos finais da Idade Média à União Europeia)*. Lisboa: Temas e Debates, Círculo de Leitores.

Pasquino, G. (2003). The study of political science: methods and goals, *Cultura. Revista de História e Teoria das Ideias*, vol. XVI-XVII, IIª série, CHC/UNL, 13-31.

- Pinto, A. & P. Almeida (2002). Portuguese Ministers, 1851-1999: Social Background and Paths to Power. *South European Society and Politics*, 2, 5-40.
- Reiser, M. & E. Holtmann (eds) (2008). *Farewell to the Party Model? Independent Local Lists in East and West European Countries*. Wiesbaden: VS.
- Roux, B. (dir.) (1982). Réforme et contre-réforme agraire au Portugal. *Revue Tiers Monde*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, t. XXIII, n. 89, Janvier-Mars.
- Ruivo, F. (1990). Local e Política em Portugal: o Poder Local na Mediação entre o Centro e a Periferia. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 30, 75-95.
- Salgado, S. (1999). *Um Fotógrafo em Abril*. Lisboa: Caminho.
- Santos, R. (1993a). Senhores da terra, senhores da vila: elites e poderes locais em Mértola no século XVIII. *Análise Social*, vol. XXVIII (121), 345-369. <http://analisesocial.ics.ul.pt/documentos/1223290740B3aBB8jk7Nu42SY1.pdf>.
- Santos, R. (1993b). A nuvem por Juno? O tema da fisiocracia na historiografia do pensamento económico português. *Análise Social*, vol. XXVIII (121), 423-443.
- Santos, R. (1995). *Celeiro de Portugal Algum Dia. Crescimento e Crises Agrárias na Região de Évora. 1595 – 1850*. PhD dissertation, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa.
- Schmitter, P. (1999). *Portugal: do autoritarismo à democracia*. Lisboa: ICS.
- Tonkin, E. (1995). *Narrating Our Past. The Social Construction of Oral History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Viegas, J. & S. Faria (1999). Participação Política Feminina. Percursos, Constrangimentos e Incentivos. *Sociologia – Problemas e Práticas*, 30, 55-87.
- Viegas, J. & S. Faria (1999). *As mulheres na política*. Lisboa: INCM.
- Wollmann, H. (2004). Local Government Reforms in Great Britain, Sweden, Germany and France: Between Multi-Function and Single-Purpose Organisations. *Local Government Studies*, 30 (4), 639-665.