

## PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY IN PORTUGAL

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*The rise of anthropology in Portugal is examined within the framework of several cycles of development. The chapter discusses how the consolidation of anthropology at university level was the main focus until the 90's. Applied anthropology, as distinctive from academic anthropology received very little attention. Consequently, there was an absence of an institutionalization of applied anthropology in the country. Nowadays, however, two main trends converge that supports the growth of applied anthropology and is providing work for anthropologists outside academia. First, anthropology departments in Portugal have stabilized their staff quotas resulting in very few positions open for anthropologists at the university level. Second, global changes are impacting the social framework of the country and, consequently, opening up new horizons of research and practice for social scientists. Several examples of these opportunities are discussed which is creating an optimism about the various niches for new and relevant anthropological practices.* Key Words: Portugal, colonialism, community, applied/practice, research

From a simplified and panoramic viewpoint, the history of the construction and consolidation of anthropological discourse in Portugal can be traced through three main cycles of development, each of them directly or indirectly associated to practical concerns. I agree with van Willigen when he states, "Awareness of history does much to reduce the antipathy that exists between theoretical and applied anthropologists. Historical awareness teaches a number of important points, perhaps most important among them, that the theoretical realm is historically based on application" (1993:17).

### THE RISE OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN PORTUGAL

#### The Proto-Anthropology Stage

The first stage runs from mid-19th century to the Second World War, and was dominated by the emergence of a proto-anthropology and influenced by Romantic currents of that time (Branco 1986; Leal 1998). During this period, thematic interests led by eminent

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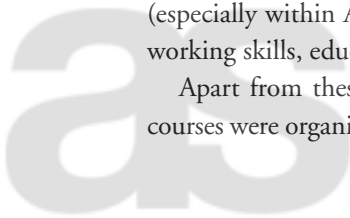
scholars centered on collecting inventories of oral traditions (Coelho 1985), material culture (Rocha Peixoto 1990<sup>1</sup>), and local or regional customs (Vasconcelos 1933), mostly collected in rural settings. At the same time, anthropologists also worked in overseas colonies whose studies were promoted by the dictatorial regime since the 1930s. The scientific aim of this research was to produce ethnological maps for the political objective of ensuring the control over local groups. Several expeditions to overseas territories were organized, giving priority to the collection of anthropometric data, whose immediate utility was used for better management of indigenous forced labor. The research expeditions that took place overseas, beyond their scientific interest, were promoted and sponsored by governmental institutions interested in the knowledge produced in order to design policies that would ensure the preservation of the colonies.

Transcripts of reports from that time (Moutinho 1982) seem grotesque to us nowadays, and, as has been mentioned, this kind of anthropology represented the most conservative tendencies of regime colonial ideologies (Cabral 1991:31).

Interest in studies of indigenous populations of the colonies emerged by the end of the 19th century when the international political situation (especially following the Conference of Berlin and the British Ultimatum of 1891) shook the basis of the Portuguese Empire. The maintenance of the colonies (either in political or economic terms) deserved great investment that constituted a heavy responsibility for the government and for the Portuguese people in general. Portugal entered an era of a profound socioeconomic crisis that left the country in a difficult situation and motivated a search for a national identity. This search involved national perception of the Portuguese colonies, whose existence was perceived to be threatened. Intellectual elites, disappointed with Portuguese imperial destiny, turned to history and popular culture in order to find the lost national splendor. This led to profuse ideological production around national identity—a search for the roots, conditions, and circumstances of existence of the Portuguese nation (Pereira 1998:v, my translation).

This “lost national splendour” was associated with rural life and popular culture. Overseas it was associated with a sort of civilization mission that contributed to generate a hegemonic relationship between colonizers and autochthonous groups. These policies were supported by “scientific” data from physical anthropology, the main thrust of the first colonial anthropology. Actually, since the end of the 19th century, anthropology was considered the “total science of Man,” whose physical features were seen like important issues that would clarify human nature. The studies of skulls assumed that craniological characteristics were correlated with psychological capabilities. As a consequence, these types of studies were given priority and support from the government. Portuguese colonial regime took advantage of the anthropological interest in physiological features. Anthropobiological studies led to evaluation of the capabilities and skills of indigenous populations (Schouten 2001:164). Mendes Correia (1934) coordinated some initial expeditions to African colonies and East-Timor. The materials collected during fieldwork (especially within African groups) led to publications about controversial issues such as working skills, educability, impulsivity, and global intelligence.

Apart from these research projects, throughout this cycle very few anthropological courses were organized at university level, and the first ones that appeared (Anthropology,



Human Paleontology, and Archaeology; and Anthropometry) were clearly situated in the domain of physical anthropology, as part of undergraduate degree programs in biology or medicine. Beyond these subsidiary courses delivered at main Portuguese universities, in 1906, the Escola Superior Colonial (Higher Colonial School), in association with the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa (The Lisbon Geographical Society), developed diplomas in anthropology that integrated subjects like Colonial Ethnology and Indigenous Policy in the curriculum.

Thus, on the one hand, the development of folk-ethnological studies in the Iberian geographical context, during the 20th century, focused on recreating “traditional” or “popular” ways of life within the domestic scenario (Gómez 1997:303, my translation), while, on the other hand, emphasis was placed, especially since the 1930s, on studies produced as a consequence of scientific missions undertaken in the overseas territories. These two convergent orientations have contributed very incisively to the development of anthropological studies in Portugal.

### **Establishment of Cultural and Community Studies**

By the end of the 1940s, with the pioneering studies of Jorge Dias (1907–73), Portugal entered a new stage in the history of the discipline (Dias 1948a, 1948b) that extended until the revolution in 1974. A brief summary of his career illustrates the influence he has had in the modernization of anthropology in Portugal.

Jorge Dias obtained his undergraduate degree at the University of Oporto, where he studied German philology. His interest in archaeology and ethnography led him to pursue a graduate program in *Volkskunde* in Germany, where he defended a PhD thesis about a Portuguese village named Vilarinho da Furna (northwest Portugal). Returning to Portugal at the end of the 1940s, he began working at the Centro de Estudos de Etnologia Peninsular in Oporto, where he was responsible for the ethnographic studies section. With a small working team (which included, besides his wife, Margot Dias, Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira, Fernando Galhano, and Benjamim Pereira), several research projects were developed, sponsored by Instituto de Alta Cultura (Estate Culture Foundation).

As other authors have pointed out (Branco 1986; Cabral 1991; Pereira 1998), Jorge Dias’ first anthropological works denote the influence of the German ethnologist Richard Thurnwald (1869–1954) and are especially concerned with wide-ranging surveys and aim at mapping different features of material cultural of the peasant world. The study “Os Arados Portugueses e as suas prováveis origens” (Portuguese Ploughs and Their Possible Origins), published in 1948, illustrates his approach to community studies. Afterwards, similar studies were conducted that focused on other domains of material culture (such as popular architecture, traditional technologies, and music instruments).

The topics approached by this small group clearly began to separate the domain of anthropobiology (which had dominated the activities of anthropologists) from this emergent new field of anthropology, which was basically “cultural.” However, the

process took time and the truth is that the first projects carried out continued to be dominated by the older methods and presentation of anthropology used in the country. In fact, the techniques and style of the publications with a cultural perspective were quite similar to the contents of the works of the anthropobiologists (with all his measurements, typologies, and morphological systemizations) and these first cultural anthropology collections. For example, the graphic style of the artist Fernando Galhano, who collaborated with Jorge Dias' group, was very similar to illustrations in the Biological Manuals. His ethnographic drawings of the "objects of culture" exhibited, in fact, the same detail that his contemporaries dedicated to the graphic description of plants and animals (see Museu de Etnologia 1985). As a consequence, most of the work of his pioneering teams became visible in a particular place—the museum—where the collected ethnographic materials were archived, catalogued, and described in a similar manner to the specimens collected for natural history museums.<sup>2,3</sup>

Jorge Dias' first visit to the United States, in the 1950s, when he fell under the influence of North American culturalism through the disciples of Franz Boas, marks a turning point in his career. This influence would be seen in his monograph *Rio de Onor—uma comunidade agro-pastoril* (Rio de Onor—an agro-pastoralist community) (Dias 1953). While the emphasis given to material cultural and traditional technologies related with agricultural activities is still evident, this publication inaugurates community studies in Portugal based on intensive fieldwork and participant observation.

Jorge Dias' career as an anthropologist balanced research at CEEP<sup>4</sup> with teaching. He delivered courses on Ethnology at Coimbra and Lisbon Universities and collaborated with the Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina<sup>5</sup> (Higher Institute of Social Sciences and Overseas Policy), where he was responsible for the teaching of subjects such as Cultural Anthropology, Regional Ethnology, and Indigenous Institutions. At that time, it was in this school that the colonial officers received a complementary formation, which aimed to introduce them to different dimensions of overseas territories and indigenous populations.

Afterwards, Jorge Dias was invited by the Portuguese Overseas Ministry to participate in the scientific campaigns that were being carried out at the African colonies, and from 1957 to 1961 he was charged to be the coordinator of the *Missões de Estudo das Minorias Étnicas do Ultramar Português* (Expeditions for the Study of Ethnic Minorities from Portuguese Overseas). The main objective of these expeditions, promoted and sponsored by the colonial government, was the study of the cultural and social dimensions of the dominated groups for the purpose of ensuring control of eventual rebellion nucleus or movements of independency. A generalized sense of discomfort and tension characterized the relationship between colonial administrators and some autochthonous groups. The work of Jorge Dias represented the political recognition of the importance of the cultural and social dimensions of the discipline, which signaled a break from the domain of anthropobiology. "Sociocultural" studies were emancipated from physical anthropology, which as previously discussed, dominated colonial studies. His reports to the colonial board, particularly carried out in Mozambique, illustrated the discriminatory attitudes of intolerable racism in the colonies. They called for a better understanding of

colonized peoples and addressed the scientific importance of the collection of ethnographic materials. Besides the reports produced for the government, which are the object of an interesting analysis by Rui Pereira (1998:V-LII), the four volumes on the Macondes from Moçambique, first published between 1964 and 1970, constitute the most representative of all ethnographic monographs produced by the Portuguese school (Pereira 1998:V). Addressing the reports produced by Jorge Dias during such expeditions, Rui Pereira underlines precisely this dimension:

The reading and analysis of the 'Reports' would demonstrate that the scientist never omitted political considerations, being critical as regards colonial administration, sometimes gently, other times incisively, but also believing in the political mission and role of Portuguese participation in colonial Africa [...], never avoiding the clarification, however, that 'the most important report will be the monographic study of the Macondes.' [Pereira 1998:XXXIII]

In reality, the observation of situations related to the exploitation of the colonial labor force led Jorge Dias to address explicit criticism regarding the controversial relationships between colonial officers and indigenous populations. By assuming a role that nowadays we would consider as an advocacy-anthropology strategy, the criticism of this pioneer social anthropologist was sometimes reinforced by particular proposals of concrete measures aiming to ameliorate the social and economic conditions of the people under study. Citations of his reports are illustrative of his approach:

I have visited entire villages in Macomia region where it was hard to find people. Upon my arrival I would only meet blind or defective persons, because the others had run away when they knew a white man was coming. They are terrified by the procedures of colonial officers when they invade their villages to recruit labor, acting through ignorance or cruelty. I have collected several data about these problems. [Dias 1957, cited in Pereira 1998:XLV]

While promising, this line of anthropological practice would have little continuity in the years that followed in Portugal. With the colonial war, which continued throughout the 1960s, anthropological work would be temporarily abandoned, considering the risks inherent to conducting research under the circumstances of armed conflict.

### **The Institutionalization of Academic Anthropology**

The revolution of 1974 (and the decolonization process that took place) gave rise to the third stage of anthropological development in Portugal (see Areia 1986). The transition from the authoritarian regime to democracy in the country brought about important social, political, economic, and cultural changes in universities and scientific research. Universities underwent strong restructuring, either with respect to the staff or in terms of the contents of courses. After decades of contention in several scientific domains, the years following the revolution were a period of academic expansion, particularly in the social sciences, which previously had little representation at higher education levels under dictatorial regime. New democratic regimes brought about an overall restructuring of the university. The structures that supported colonial administration quickly

became obsolete. The staff of these institutions was integrated into the new university departments.

Throughout this stage the first undergraduate degree courses were established (all in Lisbon), new university departments were founded, and a professional association of anthropologists was established—the APA (*Associação Portuguesa de Antropologia*)—directed successively by a series of academics. A great part of the synergies of this stage focused on creating the basic conditions in order to ensure the institutionalized reproduction of anthropological knowledge. This involved the formation of human resources, the necessity to provide libraries with accessible references, and the cataloguing of materials accumulated in the main anthropological museums, as well as the conduct of fieldwork research according to modern standards. All these efforts took time to accomplish, finally reaching levels of success in the last decade.

As stated above, if we exclude physical anthropology, anthropology teaching was rather inexpressive during the period preceding the revolution in 1974. Previously, academic teaching of anthropological subjects was isolated and sporadic, and the discipline became autonomous within universities after the revolution. Branco (1986:94) underlines this trend: “A support structure was created that would consolidate and produce autonomy in a scientific domain—specialized university teaching.”

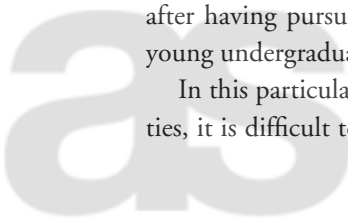
The next section will discuss, in some detail, the establishment of applied anthropology in Portugal.

### **The Establishment of Academic and Applied Anthropology<sup>6</sup>**

The brief history of the discipline, culminating in the consolidation of anthropology at university level (Cordeiro and Afonso 2003), explains the state of infancy that characterizes the institutionalization of applied anthropology in Portugal. This does not mean, however, that no applied studies have been pursued. Indeed, throughout the 20th century, and more recently, applied studies have been present, most of which were conducted by academics. While, in the past, these kinds of studies were mostly directly commissioned by governmental institutions to researchers, nowadays they are developed through agreements established between university departments (or research centers) and external public and private institutions.

Between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, three new undergraduate degree courses appeared in Lisbon: the first at Universidade Nova (1978), the second at the Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, previously ISCSPU, and the third at ISCTE (Instituto Superior the Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa) (1982). The staff of these recently founded departments derived from the reorganization of tiny dispersed groups more or less involved in the teaching of subjects related with anthropology<sup>7</sup> and also from the incorporation of young graduates that had returned to Portugal after having pursued their studies abroad.<sup>8</sup> Later, this initial staff would be joined by young undergraduates who finished their first degrees in the new departments.

In this particular context of turbulence and overall restructuring within the universities, it is difficult to separate academic and applied anthropology. The starting point of



this period of institutionalization lies, precisely, in their convergence. Actually, research projects carried out by young anthropologists were associated with their academic career, and the main purpose of anthropological work was to ensure the reproduction of specialized anthropological knowledge in a scenario of great competition between different branches of the social sciences. The structure of the first undergraduate degree programs reflects this central concern, and the shape of the courses, apart from slight differences between institutions, was centered on anthropological theory and ethnographic reading, aiming to provide a solid grounding in the discipline.

But as anthropology departments have stabilized their staff quotas, the profile of the courses has been questioned and re-evaluated. This has resulted in the inclusion of new subjects and syllabus updating, which aims to reduce the hiatus between anthropological theory and its practice. Thus, disciplines on methods and techniques are being reinforced<sup>9</sup> where students are encouraged to think critically about the application of ethnographic concepts and methods to a particular applied research context, which usually implies long-term fieldwork.

Another example is found in efforts to integrate interdisciplinary subjects<sup>10</sup> in order to give the student a certain familiarity with other disciplinary perspectives, which eventually could facilitate entry into the labor market by opening access to jobs not exclusively in the domain of anthropology. Generally speaking, however, the profile of main course programs has remained predominantly associated with theoretical anthropology and the number of graduates is increasing exponentially.

By 1990, the inception of anthropology as an autonomous discipline ceased to constitute a problem, with three programs functioning full-time in three universities in the capital city of Lisbon. Anthropological disciplines have also been integrated as compulsory or optional courses in undergraduate degree programs in other domains of the social sciences (e.g., sociology, communication studies, psychology, law, and international studies). This expansionist trend was maintained over the last decade, when two other undergraduate degree programs opened in public universities situated in cities in other parts of the country—at the Universidade de Coimbra (1992) and recently in Miranda do Douro, in an extended branch of the Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (1998).<sup>11</sup>

We find in these new curricula the same concern with classic anthropological subjects but also strategies that make them different from earlier courses in other university departments. For example, the undergraduate course at Coimbra University, framed within a longer tradition of biological anthropology practiced at the Museu e Laboratório Antropológico (see Areia 1986), provides a hybrid structure, associating the sociocultural dimension to biological anthropology and enabling the student to organize and select her/his own curriculum and orientation. In the case of the most recent undergraduate degree program opened at the UTAD (which serves especially the northern hinterland), the title of the degree (*Antropologia Aplicada ao Desenvolvimento*) clearly shows its emphasis and orientation to applied anthropology. As the document presenting the course states,

Students enrolled in 'Applied Anthropology' will be familiarized with anthropological methods and techniques of research, and trained to use them in the design, elaboration and

evaluation of concrete projects, either related with development anthropology or with other domains of application. [UTAD 2003:3]

The proliferation of courses in higher education is accompanied by the inception of research centers at the universities and by the diffusion of knowledge through scientific circuits, which arose through the publication of new anthropological journals.<sup>12</sup>

This could be regarded as reflecting a positive step towards the consolidation of a disciplinary domain. However, we find that in the 21st century, the public image of the anthropologist remains rather encapsulated within the university space. Yet these niches where anthropology teaching is reproduced and anthropological research carried out are limited and incapable of absorbing the growing number of graduates that year after year finish their studies. Thus, having solved the problem of institutionalization, we now face the challenges of establishing careers in applied anthropology.

In fact, since positions within university departments and museums are now few and far between, and the teaching of anthropology at secondary school (as an optional subject) has been cancelled, there are not many opportunities for young graduates to enter the job market. Indeed, anthropology competes rather at a disadvantage with other social sciences, inasmuch as it still lacks a strong professional profile and continues to be linked, in the public mind, with a certain exotic dilettantism as well as with the practices derived from anthropometric research of the first generation of anthropologists. The present situation of a hostile job market faced by successive cohorts of undergraduates suggests, then, that some caution is necessary in celebrating the expansionist process. As has happened in other national contexts, the debate around anthropological practice has begun to enter scientific agendas and questions the uses of anthropological knowledge.

The need to restructure academic curricula as well as to open new horizons for research and the application of anthropological knowledge in the contemporary world stand out, in my mind, as the main challenge faced by university departments today. Furthermore, questioning of the current teaching model is felt to be urgently needed as attempts are made to match anthropology teaching to the possible roles young graduates could fulfill in society at large. An example of this commitment is drawn from recent experiments carried out in two representative departments—at ISCTE and UNL.

The Department of Anthropology at ISCTE launched, in 1998, an in-service vocational training, which involved the establishment of agreements between the institute and different types of external institutions (museums, NGOs, private companies, municipal councils), where graduates, sponsored by PRODEP,<sup>13</sup> could be engaged, during one year, in specific projects. For the majority of students who decided to undertake such training, this constituted a first contact with the labor market that was supervised under the joint coordination of the institutions in question and teachers of the department.<sup>14</sup>

Inspired by this pioneer experiment, the latest restructuring that occurred in the department of anthropology at UNL<sup>15</sup> has also introduced a similar opportunity of in-service vocational training, but as an optional semester integrated into the undergraduate degree program. This optional semester (which is carried out in an external



institution under the joint supervision of a member of that institution and a teacher from the university), constitutes an alternative to a minor in a different disciplinary area or to an ethnographic research project and essay based on individual fieldwork. The possibility of completing the necessary credits to obtain a degree in anthropology in a particular work setting is concerned with increasing the employability of future graduates by attempting to bridge the gap between the university and the outside world of potential applied work.

Previously, students had to carry out and write up a compulsory final research project to get their degree in anthropology (as fundamental research was the condition *sine qua non* for the degree). The introduction of this 'Applied Anthropology' optional area in the curriculum in the UNL course renders undergraduate formation much more flexible. It opens up new horizons of applicability of anthropological knowledge not strictly linked to university teaching or to basic research.

The ISCTE experiment of in-service vocational training, albeit recent, is regarded in a very positive manner by students and teachers in Portugal. In addition to making the testing of new methodologies possible for research and intervention in the field of anthropology, vocational training provides greater involvement between teachers and students as well as between the educational institution and civil society (Cordeiro and Afonso 2003:178). Beyond this, the particular success of some of the students that have pursued vocational training is contributing to the construction of a public image of the anthropologist by making more visible his specialized knowledge and the advantages of ethnographic method in the approach of sociocultural issues of the contemporary world.

While the present situation can lead to the conclusion that conditions for the institutionalization of applied anthropology in Portugal have not so far been created, there are signs that things are moving in that direction. In particular, there have been recent attempts (timid and not always consensual) within different anthropology departments to revise the curricula of undergraduate degree programs, aiming to promote a more adequate articulation between anthropology teaching and its potential social uses.

## **EMERGING AREAS OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICE**

Although we cannot speak of applied anthropology in Portugal as an autonomous disciplinary sub-domain with its own organizational structure separate from fundamental anthropology, a confluence of interests between basic research and anthropological practice, clearly motivated by practical problems of overall society, has been evident since the pre-disciplinary stage of anthropology. As stated above, this orientation was particularly remarkable within colonial contexts, with the carrying out of expeditions commissioned by institutions related with colonial government.

But apart from a few exceptions,<sup>16</sup> it is also clear that the interest for applied anthropology, which timidly emerged within the colonial context, found little echo amongst

future anthropologists. We can see in this abandonment the effects of political turbulence that accompanied the decolonization process, turning the former colonies into hostile and even dangerous anthropological terrains. But it can also be regarded as a general post-revolution intellectual tendency, which, in several scientific domains, involved the uncritical rejection of old paradigms.

In a certain way, we may say that “the baby was thrown out with the bath water.” Applied anthropology came to be associated with its worst connotations, reflecting connivance with the procolonial dictatorial political regime, as synonymous with indirect rule, or second line anthropology—non-scientific and purely ideological.

The negative image associated with the concept of *applied anthropology* would take time to dissolve, and it is only recently that the debate around anthropological practice was relaunched in the national scientific arena. This situation is not alien to the progress of the institutionalization of the discipline by itself but it also reflects the strong appeal made to the social sciences to test their potential applicability (or social utility) in a context of political, economical, social, and cultural transformations.

Since the revolution of the 1970s and the entrance of Portugal in the European Community (in 1986), important changes have occurred in the country that affect several domains of society (education, legislation, health care, family relations, environment, demographic patterns, public works, motorization of society). Before the revolution, Portugal was a poor and peripheral country, with deficient communications, that lacked basic infrastructures in several places from north to south hinterland, and had high levels of illiteracy and restricted access to university, an increasing number of emigrants (both for political and economic reasons), and notorious social and economic differences.

Nowadays, the majority of these figures have changed, and the resulting modernization of the country generated social problems that deserve the special concern of the social scientists. Their particular way of observing and analyzing these problems are being recognized as important in contributing to attempts of solving the problems brought about by recent global changes. As a consequence, anthropologists, along with other social scientists, are being commissioned by non-academic public or private enterprises to participate in applied projects. Unfortunately, the outcomes of these kinds of studies are generally materialized through massive reports, access to which is not always possible. Due to this circumstance and in the absence of a complete characterization of the current state of practicing anthropology in Portugal, my contribution offers only a partial view and risks leaving in the shadow important works.

The brief review that follows is intentionally restricted to applied projects, recently developed, that have been the object of publication in scientific journals. The projects mentioned cover a diverse range of substantive foci of applied work, such as anthropology of work, environment, social impact analysis, and migration. A synopsis of four projects illustrates the focal problems privileged and also the institutional frames within which they were carried out. To a certain extent, these examples can be seen as illustrative of potential niches of applied work that are emerging in Portugal due, to some extent, to changes caused by development and globalization processes.

## **Anthropology of Work**

Based on long-term research carried out in a refining plant, Paulo Granjo produced a pioneering study in the domain of practicing anthropology, particularly in the area of work relations and danger. The project was funded by JNICT (Junta Nacional de Investigação Científica e Tecnológica)<sup>17</sup> and was conducted from 1994 to 1997. The author addresses the question of risk, arguing that the dominant ideology of management, the concern in maximizing the production, and the processes of hierarchy and dependence work together, maximizing the dangers already existing in industrial settings (Granjo 1998:89). By discussing the relationship between theoretical and applied research, the results of this innovative ethnographic study underline the importance of human relations factors in the work place, the understanding of which could contribute to minimize danger, namely through informal learning and reproduction of professional skills and knowledge. The author also stresses the relevance of interdisciplinary teamwork to carry out this kind of research, within which knowledge exchange could contribute to objectively dealing with organizational problems that arise in such settings.

## **Environmental Studies**

The project “Social Management of the Natural Resources in South-eastern Algarve” took place in a “natural park” in the coastal area of Algarve (the southernmost region of Portugal). It was a result of an official agreement between the Instituto de Conservação da Natureza (Institute for Nature Protection) and a research center (CEAS—Social Anthropology Research Center, which is linked to ISCTE). The park’s board commissioned anthropological research among fishing communities in order to collect and to systematize data about the “maritime” and “coastal” human settlements inside the park’s territory. This territory covers over 18,400 hectares, corresponding to 60 kilometers of Algarve’s eastern coast, and includes the surrounding marshes and dune areas of three important cities (Faro, Olhão, and Tavira). The rapid urbanization of the region and the chaotic development of mass tourist industry inside and around the park led to inflammable situations of conflict that were fueled by lobbies that operated at national, regional, and local levels (Ramos et al. 2003:158).

In order to do anthropology in this controversial context, a small research team, consisting of four anthropologists, began working in the area in March 1999 and conducted a two-year project in anthropological research within the park’s limits. The initial draft proposal presented to the park aimed to address the following topics: (1) social and economic profile of the fishing and shellfish-gathering settlements; (2) study of the traditional techniques for fishing and shellfish production and gathering; (3) description of the means and equipment used in the pursuit of these activities; (4) inquiry into indigenous knowledge of the sea and the lagoon; and (5) study of local oral traditions.

The final text introduced some changes. As the research was carried out, it became obvious that park administration should be considered one of the groups under study through deconstructing how they perceived anthropologists’ research goals. This new orientation conveyed a different meaning from the agenda initially suggested and had a

strong impact on the diffusion (or lack of diffusion) of the research outcomes. But in the opinion of the anthropologists, this was the price to pay for what they considered to be a scientific anthropological approach.

### **Social Impact Analysis**

The construction of the mega-dam Alqueva, in river Guadiana—which would originate an enormous reservoir in the driest zone of the country (south hinterland)—had great impact in the region at environmental, economic, political, and social levels. The construction work, started in the early 1990s, was financed with European funds for its implementation. The submersion of the village of Luz—situated in one of the zones of the reservoir, with an urban area of circa 16 hectares—and the inevitable move of its 363 inhabitants (in 2001) represented a serious social problem that deserved urgent intervention.

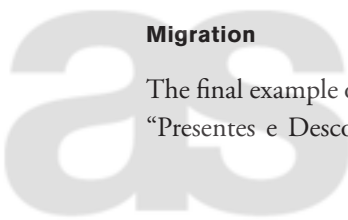
Framed by Plano de Minimização de Impactes do Alqueva (Program for Minimizing Impacts from Alqueva), which was coordinated by EDIA,<sup>18</sup> different interdisciplinary work teams were constituted to carry out a series of studies funded by the enterprise. They focused on the planning of the new village, including the houses, public services and equipment, and space for monuments, with a special concern for the process of reinstallation, which would take place in 2002.

A small group of anthropologists (including a visual anthropologist) participated in different stages of the project, namely during the move to the New Luz village. They carried out cultural research for the purpose of easing the resettlement of the villagers. The most delicate phase took place when the graves were transferred to the new cemetery. The anthropologists stated that “Within a community whose inhabitants were already seriously affected by the submersion of their village, the transference of the cemetery represented a violent invasion of privacy and touched the sacred relation of the people with Death, which was felt as totally disrupting social and familial harmony” (Saraiva 2003:110, my translation). An interesting dimension of the project was related to the conception of a local museum (see Saraiva et al. 2003) situated in the monumental area of the new village, which was dedicated to the memory of the submerged village. The museum was conceived as a radical testimony to the village submerged by the waters from Alqueva reservoir.

In this respect, the Sala da Memória (Memory Room) constitutes a privileged and innovative space in the construction of a memorial archive and is supported by audio-visual records collected throughout the project and complemented with materials offered by the village inhabitants themselves. This archive is more than a collective and cumulative family album. Rather, “it is a dynamic space of interaction and reinvention, participating and influencing present and future reality” (Mourão and Costa 2003:103, my translation).

### **Migration**

The final example of applied anthropological research involves a research project entitled “Presentes e Desconhecidos: uma análise antropológica sobre mobilidade e mediação



com populações migrantes no Concelho de Loures<sup>19</sup> (Baptista and Cordeiro 2002). Its purpose was to analyze immigrant settings in a municipality situated on the periphery of Lisbon—where the immigrant population had remarkably increased in the previous decade—and propose to identify type-situations associated with migratory and installation processes.

The study was commissioned in 2000 by the Department of Social Affairs of the Loures Municipality, who sponsored it, making an official agreement with CEAS<sup>20</sup> (a research center at ISCTE). The two-year research project was carried out by a small work team of sociologists and anthropologists and, in methodological terms, was based on the intertwining of two main sources: daily press and ethnographic fieldwork. The researchers state that their purpose was to attempt to illustrate how immigration is frequently associated with diversified forms of obscurity and marginality of migrants. Aided by an array of media materials, they describe the dynamics that are involved with immigrants' settlement in a particular territory (Baptista and Cordeiro 2002:40, my translation). In order to carry out their mandate, they organized the project around four main lines of inquiry linked to key issues in the approach of the problem: (1) territory and mobility (where are the immigrants?); (2) immigrant and foreigner (how do immigrants identify themselves?); (3) citizen and undocumented non-citizen (is there an immigrant social condition?); and (4) institutional and informal (how are immigrants assisted?).

Although the authors considered the research as an exploratory study (where the period of one year dedicated to fieldwork was felt to be rather short), the outcomes of the research gave a voice to the immigrants' experience. The results of this project consist mainly in the production of knowledge supported by ethnographic method, particularly in ascertaining the migrants' perspective. This knowledge can be used (in a greater or lesser way) in designing particular policies that aim to find proper solutions to migrant problems—anthropologists rarely are involved in designing such policies—or in direct action. Again, in Portugal, anthropologists have little power in bringing about changes via policy formulation. The role of anthropologists that participated in the applied projects outlined above was essentially one of consultant or, in some cases, that of specialized analyst. In the final analysis, it is not the anthropologist but the entity that funds such projects that has been responsible for the conception of the policy programs and for the concrete actions that will be implemented.

Although, as I have suggested, applied anthropology in Portugal is still in its infancy, it is important to mention that a progressive openness toward a diversified range of topics, clearly motivated by practical problems of contemporary societies and often brought about by development and globalization, is emerging among academic anthropologists. These problems are often still framed in theoretical terms, which indicates a transitional phase toward the acceptance of expanding the work of anthropologists toward integrating theoretical and applied anthropology. Indeed, paradigmatic examples of this kind of approach address several content areas with great potential in terms of anthropological practice, such as Education Anthropology (Iturra 1990, 1994), Medical Anthropology (C. Bastos 1999), Ethnic Minorities (Bastos and Bastos 1999), Work and Unemployment (Casal 2000), Post-Colonial Identities and History in Africa (Dias 2002), Social

Movements (Godinho 2001), Urban Anthropology (Cordeiro et al. 2003), Car Culture (Ramos et al. 2003), and Anthropology of Tourism (Silva 2004).

## **PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY IN A MULTIETHNIC NEIGHBORHOOD: A CASE STUDY**

My recent participation in a project in the area of local development is the starting point for a brief retrospective concerning some key issues that arose during this research. The project, “Antropologia e Desenvolvimento local: um estudo piloto no bairro da Bela Vista” (Anthropology and Local Development: A Pilot Study in Bela Vista), took place in the satellite-city of Setúbal (50 km from Lisbon), for one year (which included six months of initial fieldwork), starting in November 1999. As occurs with similar applied anthropology projects, an official agreement was established between the municipality and CEEP<sup>21</sup>—a research center at UNL. The project was part of a larger program of urban rehabilitation of the city of Setúbal—ORUS<sup>22</sup>—whose objectives consisted in its physical and environmental valorization, as well as in the improvement of socioeconomic conditions of the inhabitants that lived within the intervention area.

The Bela Vista estate neighborhood located in the proposed area of intervention was considered a problematic social setting. It was characterized by conflicts and aggressive behavior between intra- and interdomestic groups, fragile economic conditions, dependency, racism, and the absence of social amenities, which had contributed to the proliferation of a very negative image. The majority of the buildings were constructed in the early 1970s and the decades that followed, totaling about 1,200 apartments.

At the very beginning, the Bela Vista estate neighborhood was planned to host internal migrants that were coming to the city to work in local industries, but following the 1974 revolution and industrial crisis in the region, the newcomers would come mostly from the former Portuguese colonies as refugees from the political and military violence that followed decolonization, especially in Angola and Mozambique.

The aim of the study (as initially stated) was to promote case studies in the area that contributed to a better understanding of the inhabitants’ ways of living and expectations in order to be able to design specific policies that might contribute to fulfilling the population’s needs. Thus, an anthropological approach was particularly appropriate and allowed close interaction with the inhabitants, which would facilitate entry into the neighborhood and the identification of the most pressing problems of its inhabitants. The first step was then to organize a small work team, constituted by four anthropologists and coordinated by myself and Adolfo Casal (both academics in the anthropology department of UNL).

The development of the project included three main stages, whose results would be written up in progress reports:

- I. Data gathering (6 months): detailed social map of the neighborhood and surveying of its main problems; analysis of the use and appropriation of space

- (to include gender, age, and ethnic differences); processes of change within the neighborhood (based on different histories of installation).
2. Intervention proposals (3 months): surveying of inhabitants' potential and expectations as regards sustained development in different domains of everyday life; needs assessment and identification of concrete measures that would match population goals.
  3. Discussion of the proposals (3 months): analysis and discussion of action measures with local agents, considering their priority, adequacy and eventual implementation.

To the preliminary draft proposal of the project, Setúbal Municipality added a fourth stage that previewed the foundation of a local observatory that would be responsible for the evaluation of the intervention measures. The observatory would be constituted by a mixed team, integrating scientific consultants and local agents.

The particular circumstance surrounding this project—namely, the perspective of being engaged in applied anthropology, producing anthropological knowledge that could contribute to ameliorate the lives of our research subjects—was felt, without doubt, to be a stimulating challenge that we were proud to accept. However, as research evolved, we began to requestion methods and strategies that we have tried to consolidate, by attempts and failures, throughout the project. One of the most problematic issues addressed the old question, Who is the research for?

The design phase of the project focused on the inhabitants of Bela Vista neighborhood as the main object of research. As we entered the field and became familiar with the area's main problems, however, we felt that it was fundamental to redirect our attention to include the relationships established among the inhabitants of the neighborhoods and the different institutions, governmental or non-governmental, that had a strong presence in the barrio. The inclusion of these dimensions, albeit important, would bring, we felt, ethical dilemmas. It became difficult to maintain a neutral position as regards the role of the institutions within the neighborhood and especially the questionable role of the municipality, which delegates to the NGOs (and on other formal organizations) the role of managing the social problems of Bela Vista. Within this controversial scenario, how should we manage the information? What would be published and not published in the reports? To whom should our research be addressed? To the inhabitants? To the institutions (NGOs and other)? To the municipality? None of these questions was entirely answered during the project and we decided to produce an ethnographic description of Bela Vista, as dense as possible, approaching different groups and their relations (which included not only the inhabitants but the institutions with whom they interact as well).

The reports contained citations transcribed from the interviews that addressed several dimensions of social life in the barrio including frequently used critical statements about the failure of the municipality to fulfill the inhabitants' expectations. Several topics approached important issues that could indeed have led to interesting lines of reflection in order to implement specific policy programs. However, it became clear in the course of this applied project that our client (the municipality?) was more interested in the possession of the information than in its discussion and analysis vis a vis solving social

problems in the area. The project ended with the writing of the reports, and the phase of the project concerned with intervention measures was not carried out.

This leads to another key issue. The working team role, having been excluded from eventual participation in direct action, as was stated in the objectives of the project, was restricted to that of “information producer.” This information, which was supposed to contribute to identifying specific measures for improving the social and economic conditions of the Bela Vista inhabitants, ended up as the exclusive property of our main client (the Setúbal Municipality, who funded the study). The only echo we have had from the research, despite all our commitment and expectancies, has appeared from time to time in the media, following turbulent events at Bela Vista. Transcripts of our reports have been arbitrarily cited by Setúbal Municipality in order to justify government disregard of social problems occurring in Bela Vista estate neighborhood.

The ending point of this project is therefore rather paradoxical. Launched with the aim and impetus of doing applied anthropology, the main outcomes of this experiment will be reflected in the domain of fundamental research. As was concluded by Jorge Dias about his fieldwork among the Maconde from Mozambique (see above), in our opinion, the results of this research were mainly the ethnography that was written. Indeed, beyond the production of an ethnography of an urban multiethnic neighborhood, the project opened new horizons of future theoretical research. At this moment, some members of the work team are engaged in projects that address studies of gypsy groups, a topic motivated by the expressive numbers of gypsy families amongst Bela Vista inhabitants.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I have suggested that throughout the sequential cycles that characterize the history of anthropology in Portugal, the applied domain was given little attention in national scientific agendas. Recently, however, an increasing involvement in applied anthropology has flourished. This recent trend is reflected in a national concern about the purpose of higher education degree programs and the increasing governmental support of collaborative research projects. Both these developments are fueled by the need for social scientists to solve practical social problems in the nation. Thus, recent trends in anthropology in Portugal are framed by continuous movement between academia and society at large. This is particularly the case where accelerated changes, influenced by globalization processes, linked to the growing mobility of populations and goods in a worldwide system.

At the national level, both internal and external factors catalyzed these overall changes. During the 1970s the fall of the dictatorial political regime and the decolonization process that followed constituted influential endogenous factors. In the 1980s Portuguese integration in the European Union also introduced profound changes in the country, either in terms of legislation or with regard to the implementation of modernization policies in several areas of society (environment, health care, housing, and public



works). During the last decade, the effects of these changes were clearly visible in the social composition of the country. Portugal, in common with other south European nations, quickly attracted the influx and establishment of large numbers of immigrants, which has had important social, cultural, political, and economic repercussions for the nation. These global changes are opening up new horizons of research for social scientists, which leads them to project new focal issues, addressing problems of the contemporary world, and to strengthen interdisciplinary dialogue.

## NOTES

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1. Ethnographic essays written by Rocha Peixoto (1866–1909), posthumously collected in a single volume.

2. Several museums (local and regional) that were created during the expansionist period will be, side by side with the universities, the most important job market niches for the future generation of anthropologists.

3. In 1962 Jorge Dias was charged Director of the Museu de Etnologia in Lisbon—a museum that derives from an old educational museum at Instituto Superior de Estudos Ultramarinos (Overseas Studies Institute). There he would have had to organize all the materials that were collected especially during overseas expeditions.

4. Centro de Estudos de Etnologia Peninsular (Peninsular Ethnology Research Center).

5. ISCSPU was responsible for the formation of colonial administrative officers and from 1969 onwards, organized a two-year degree course entitled Curso Complementar de Ciências Antropológicas e Etnológicas (Complementary Degree Course of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences).

6. The term *anthropological practice* is used in the text synonymously with *applied anthropology*, according to the definition proposed by J. van Willigen: “applied anthropology is a complex of related, research-based, instrumental methods that produce change or stability in specific cultural systems through provision of data, initiation of direct action, and/or the formation of policy. This process can take many forms, varying in terms of problem, role of the anthropologist, motivating values, and extent of action involvement” (van Willigen 1993:8).

7. At Universidade Nova, for example, were integrated academics coming from the old ISCSPU (Social and Political Sciences Overseas Institute) and also some geographers coming from Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa (Faculty of Arts).

8. The department of anthropology, at ISCTE, could be seen as the most expressive in this kind of recruitment.

9. In the undergraduate degree program at UNL, a research seminar was introduced in which the students have to carry out a final research project based on fieldwork experience (called monografia—monograph).

10. E.g., ISCSP, where first semesters include a range of subjects introducing several domains of the social sciences (such as Law, Economics, Demography, Sociology, Social and Economic History).

11. In the 1990s, there appeared also a new undergraduate degree program in the private university Fernando Pessoa, in Oporto (1990), but at this moment the course has just closed.

12. Three examples illustrate this trend: *Etnologia* (edited by Departamento de Antropologia da UNL); *Etnográfica* (edited by CEAS—Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Social at ISCTE); and *Arquivos da Memória* (edited by CEEP—Centro de Estudos de Etnologia Portuguesa at Universidade Nova de Lisboa).

13. Programa de Desenvolvimento Educativo para Portugal (Program for the Development of Education in Portugal)—European Union funds.

14. As regards some of the external institutions (namely, Museu Nacional de Etnologia, which has privileged contacts with the national network of museums), this first experience could lead either to future contracts—commissioned from any museum from the network and mediated by the National Museum—or motivate the graduates to pursue their studies by enrolling in a masters/PhD program.

15. This recent restructuring took place in the 2003–2004 academic year, following the overall restructuring of the social sciences faculty at UNL, which has adapted the curricula of the degree courses to a student-oriented model, influenced by Anglo-Saxon major/minor structure.

16. The PhD research carried out by Adolfo Casal on social change and development, based on fieldwork conducted in postcolonial Mozambique from 1977 to 1983, constitutes an exception within this hiatus of applied studies. The author's analysis focuses on rural development strategies led by political authorities, which were implemented through concentration of the scattered population into local centers and the setting up of cooperatives (Casal 1996).
17. Nowadays named FCT—Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (National Foundation for Science and Technology)—which is the main national scientific foundation.
18. Empresa de Desenvolvimento e Infra-estruturas do Alqueva (Enterprise for the Development and Alqueva Infra-structures).
19. Present and unknown: an anthropological analysis about mobility and mediation with migrant populations in Loures municipality.
20. Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Social (Social Anthropology Studies Center).
21. Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Portuguesa (Research Center of Portuguese Anthropology), with which I collaborated while the project was carried out.
22. ORUS—Operação de Reabilitação Urbana de Setúbal (Program for the Urban Rehabilitation of Setúbal).

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