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UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF FOREIGNERS IN THE PORTUGUESE OVERSEAS EXPANSION THROUGH THE LENSES OF THE THEORIES OF COOPERATION AND SELF-ORGANISATION*

This essay aims to present an appraisal of some of the historiographical tendencies which have been applied recently to Portuguese overseas expansion, based on the study of cooperation and self-organisation in the building of the Portuguese colonial empire in the Early Modern Age (1400-1800). It aims to propose a theoretical approach in order to explain the presence and the active role of foreigners in the process of Portuguese overseas expansion. It deals with the operative concepts of informal networks and self-organisation, and proposes an agent-based analysis to produce new analytical outputs. This historiographical approach, based on the analysis of the performance of individuals, presents itself as potentially useful to understand both the role of foreigners in the Portuguese overseas expansion, and the presence of Portuguese within the scope of other colonial projects. It relies on recent theoretical and methodological trends of analysis designed to (re)orient empirical inquiries. Such research may be based on long-known or on more recently considered sources, primarily those produced by individuals rather than institutions, and those kept in local and private rather than central archives. The role of cooperation will contribute to an understanding of the building of colonial empires which went beyond the frontiers established and disputed by the European powers involved.

* This paper is a synthetical approach based on the author's previous studies, and contains the theoretical assumptions of a forthcoming book entitled *The power of the commoners: self-organised networks in the Portuguese overseas expansion (1500-1800)*.

1. *Seeing the Portuguese overseas expansion through new theoretical and methodological lenses*

The basic facts of the Portuguese projection overseas are well known. What is rather unknown are the factors which both explain its initiation and how a small, peripheral country could take leading positions in building and maintaining long-term colonial settlements. Classic interpretations of Portuguese overseas expansion do not really help to understand the launching and the sustainability of this overall process. The first global routes, involving all the oceans and continents, were opened up by the Portuguese and the Spanish. Within the European context, the Portuguese were the first to initiate this movement and to create regular maritime routes which made global exchanges at a worldwide level possible. What remains to be explained is why the Portuguese were in fact the first and how they managed to sustain such dynamics.

Portugal was a small, in many ways peripheral kingdom, located on the economic, political and cultural margins of Europe. Its population was very small (about one million inhabitants in the second half of the 15th century); it had a territory of less than 100.000 km² and few urban centres (with the notable exception of Lisbon with about 60.000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 16th century).

Portugal had the advantage of being the first European kingdom with stable frontiers, unchanged since the 13th century. Even so, the Portuguese crown, although one of the first in Europe able to reinforce its power (through the Christian Reconquest process against the Moors) lacked political strength, financial sustainability and real institutional, bureaucratic and administrative apparatus to effectively create and efficiently govern an overseas empire. In order to achieve this, the Portuguese crown depended not only on Portuguese subjects, but also on foreigners, whether European or autochthones agents spread all over the Portuguese colonial empire(s).

There are different theses about why the Portuguese were the first in the overall dynamics leading to a First Global Age, based on a process of maritime expansion. Some theories have been proposed since the 19th century. Among others, the indomitable spirit of the Portuguese was invoked; the Christian proselytism in times of the Muslim invasion of Europe; the strength of some exceptional Portuguese leaders, particularly Henry the Navigator (who never really navigated, except to cross the Mediterranean for the conquest of Ceuta and Tangier), or of some Portuguese kings. The critical and scientific knowledge and the free thinking of the Portuguese were also put for-

ward as an explanation, assuming that the Portuguese were, somehow, at the birth of a technical and scientific revolution, clearly anticipating that of the 17th century. Other analyses point to the crown acting as a merchant or as a capitalist agent². Most of these views are, by now, subject to intense criticism and considered definitively outdated. The fact that the Portuguese overseas expansion had been the Salazar regime's flag and main propagandistic topic has been a main obstacle in the process of establishing solid scientific knowledge. The publications accepted and promoted by the regime put a national perspective on empire building, under a nationalist flag.

Other analytical proposals had been, however, proposed, even during the Salazar regime. Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, operating on the fringes of the regime, but in the centre of European academic stages, proposed a rather geo-strategic explanation³, trying to understand Portuguese overseas expansion in worldwide geographic and economic contexts and interpreting Portuguese expansion as part of a European phenomenon. Those perspectives were combined with and influenced by a Braudelian analysis based on the idea of the existence of intense networks of trade and merchants connecting all over Europe.

After 1974, a different appreciation and comprehension of the process followed, which allowed independent academic proceedings in Portugal. The decolonisation process came to an end, making clear the ultimate consequences of the Portuguese colonisation and decolonisation processes: civil wars in Africa and the violent take-over of Timor by Indonesia. Equally intense ideological projections were applied to the historical analysis, now in an opposite direction. A new trend in Portuguese historiography tended to denounce the Early Modern Portuguese expansion and its implications as influenced by the latest marks of the African colonisation process. A dichotomous model of confrontation became dominant.

Simultaneously, international researchers paid more attention to the Portuguese role within the fabric of an Atlantic system, with emphasis on the Portuguese role in the African slave trade. Global history brought new perspectives which emphasized movement, transference patterns, and mobilisation of agents across the so-far compartmented worlds.

² M.N. DIAS, *O capitalismo monárquico português, 1415-1549: contribuição para o estudo das origens do capitalismo moderno*, Coimbra 1963.

³ See, among the extense work of the author, V.M. GODINHO, *Os descobrimentos e a economia mundial*, 4 vols., Lisbon 1987; ID., *Mito e mercadoria. Utopia e prática de navegar. Séculos XIII-XVIII*, Lisbon 1990.

At the same time, local and micro-analytical approaches of these historical phenomena⁴ brought the individual agents and the anonymous people to the fore, showing their centrality side by side with the leaders, the structures and the systems⁵.

More recent Portuguese research, both national and integrated in international research projects, insists on depicting a multinational, multicultural and borderless process of empire building⁶. Those approaches are, however, still a minority in the overall panorama: an analysis focused on «national» strategies, «national» means, «national» achievements and rivalries is likely to prevail, giving a monolithically oriented perspective of a phenomenon which is, by its nature, pluralist. The focus on the structures, mostly the formal and institutional ones, and the exclusion from the analysis of the informal ways of organisation, is responsible for a framework that does not acknowledge important sidetracks essential to the understanding of Portuguese overseas expansion. The presence of foreign agents is only one of them.

Furthermore, these classic perspectives, sound and valid as they may be, prove unable to explain both the contributions of the Portuguese as builders of a global world, and how Portugal was able to maintain a multiple territorial and maritime empire spread all over the

⁴ A. POLÓNIA, *Expansão e descobrimentos numa perspectiva local. O porto de Vila do Conde no século XVI*, II, Lisbon 2007.

⁵ A. POLÓNIA, *Indivíduos e redes auto-organizadas na construção do império ultramarino português*, in *Estudos em homenagem a Joaquim Romero de Magalhães*, edited by A. Garrido, L.F. Costa and L.M. Duarte, Coimbra 2012, pp. 349-372; EAD., *Ruling strategies and informal power of self-organising networks in the First Global Age. The Portuguese case*, paper presented at American Social Sciences History Conference 2010 (Chicago, 18-21 November 2010). Available at <http://dyncoopnet-pt.org/working-papers>.

⁶ See, from the author, A. POLÓNIA, *Portuguese seaports as gateways, 1500-1800*, in *Vanguards of globalization: port cities from the classical to the modern*, edited by R. Mukherjee, Delhi 2013, pp. 323-344; EAD., *Jumping frontiers, crossing barriers. Transfers between oceans. The Portuguese overseas expansion case study*, in *Oceans connect: reflections on water worlds across time and space*, edited by R. Mukherjee, Delhi 2012, pp. 121-142; EAD., *Global interactions: representations of the East and the Far East in Portugal (Sixteenth century)*, in *Networks in the first global age: 1400-1800*, edited by R. Mukherjee, Delhi 2011, pp. 263-301; A. POLÓNIA, A. BARROS, *Commercial flows and transference patterns between Iberian empires (16th-17th centuries)*, in *Self-organising networks and GIS tools. Cases of uses for the study of trading cooperation (1400-1800)*, edited by D.A. Garcia and A.C. Solana, Special Issue of «Journal of Knowledge, Management, Economics and Technology», 1 (2012), pp. 111-144; ID., *Articulações Portugal/Brasil. Redes informais na construção do sistema atlântico (séculos XVI-XVIII)*, in *Políticas e estratégias administrativas no mundo atlântico*, Recife 2012, pp. 19-48.

globe, clearly exceeding the potential power and means of the Portuguese crown.

In fact, European historiography usually associates empire building processes with state policies and institutions, the historical outcomes of early modern empires usually being focused on central power strategies and imperial rivalries, monopolies, warfare and political disputes between colonisers. This perspective leads to three main consequences: the lack of perception of how individuals and groups of individuals contributed to those historical dynamics, at times to an even greater extent than the central power itself; the exclusion of informal and non-institutionalised connections between colonisers and colonised; and finally a disregard for the active influence of external agents upon the «national» empires, whether European or the members of the African, Asian and American societies and civilizations of contact, completely ignoring local inputs to colonial dynamics⁷.

Admittedly, a sizeable number of studies have already gone beyond this perception regarding Asia, and particularly the Indian Ocean. Among them we should mention the works of Sanjay Subrahmanyam⁸, Michael Pearson⁹, or James Boyajian¹⁰. Even so, much has yet to be

⁷ Perspectives addressed for instance by Charles Boxer's copious bibliography on the Portuguese empire (C.R. BOXER, *The Portuguese seaborne empire. 1415-1825*, London 1969; ID., *Portuguese conquest and commerce in Southern Asia, 1500-1750*, London 1985; ID., *Portuguese merchants and missionaries in feudal Japan, 1543-1640*, London 1986; ID., *The church militant and Iberian expansion, 1440-1770*, Baltimore 1978; by Parry (J. PARRY, *Trade & dominium. The European overseas empire in the Eighteenth century*, London 1971), by John Elliot and others concerning the Spanish empire (J.H. ELLIOT, *España, Europa y el mundo de ultramar (1500-1800)*, Madrid 2009; ID., *Imperios del mundo atlántico. España y Gran Bretaña en América (1492-1830)*, Madrid 2006; H. KAMEN, *How Spain became a world power. 1492-1763*, London 2002), or in a vast body of works on the British Empire (L. JAMES, *The rise and fall of the British Empire*, London 1994; T.P. LLOYD, *The British Empire 1558-1995*, Oxford-New York 1996).

⁸ *Merchants, markets and the state in Early Modern India*, edited by S. Subrahmanyam, Delhi 1990; *Merchant networks in the early modern world*, edited by S. Subrahmanyam, Aldershot 1996; *Institutions and economic change in South Asia*, edited by S. Subrahmanyam, Delhi 1996; *Land, politics and trade in South Asia*, edit by S. Subrahmanyam, Delhi 2004; S. SUBRAHMANYAM, *Improvising empire: Portuguese trade and settlement in the Bay of Bengal, 1500-1700*, Delhi 1990; ID., *The Portuguese empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A political and economic history*, London-New York 1993.

⁹ M.N. PEARSON, *Merchants and rulers in Gujarat: the response to the Portuguese in the sixteenth century*, Berkeley 1976; ID., *Port cities and intruders: the Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the early modern era*, Baltimore 1998; ID., *The world of the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800: studies in economic, social, and cultural history*, Burlington 2005.

¹⁰ J.C. BOYAJIAN, *Portuguese trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640*, Baltimore 2008.

done. In this panorama one should point out the already classic contributions by Luís Fillipe Reis Thomaz, who always insisted on the operative results of informal networks' of agents performing in the East and the Far East¹¹ – a perspective which tended to be disregarded by Portuguese historiography until recently. Such perspectives are now the subject of more elaborate research, through the lens of a dynamic historiography, both European and non-European.

The idea itself of «informal empires» is being conceptualised, as a means of pointing out the informal ways by which the Europeans built overseas dominiums during the First Global Age. The reasoning to this is clear and can be checked in a panel proposal to the 2012 European Social Science History Conference (Glasgow, April 2012), according to which

there is a growing consensus that most of the European empires overseas were profitable and successful due to the intervention of individuals or groups of individuals engaged in the common good of the social and economic networks they served. More often than not, these self-organized, trans-imperial, cross-cultural networks imposed serious challenges to State, Church and Monopolistic institutions, since they were the source of most of the illegal and contraband transactions world-wide, but they were also the ones that within, or in collaboration with the institutions actually became agents of empire building¹².

¹¹ L.F.R. THOMAZ, *De Ceuta a Timor*, Lisboa 1994; ID., *Portuguese control over the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal: a comparative study*, in *Commerce and culture in the Bay of Bengal: 1500-1800*, edited by U. Prakash and D. Lombard, New Delhi 1999, pp. 115-165.

¹² C. ANTUNES, A. POLÓNIA, *Beyond empires: self organizing cross imperial economic networks vs institutional empires, 1500-1800*, session presented at the European Social Science History Conference, Glasgow, April 2012. This is also the rationale of another panel organized by the same researchers, *Fighting monopolies, building global empires: power building beyond the borders of empire, 15th through 18th centuries*, held at the international conference *Colonial (mis)understandings. Portugal and Europe in global perspective, 1450-1900* (Lisbon, 17-20 July 2013). In Leiden, a round table, *Building informal empires*, was held under the auspices of the workshop *The pursuit of empire: The Dutch and Portuguese colony of Brazil, 1621-1668. Workshop* (Leiden University, 10-11 November 2011). A research project of Cátia Antunes, *Fighting monopolies, defying empires 1500-1750: a comparative overview of free agents and informal empires in Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire*, awarded a ERC Starting Grant in 2013, is now developing along similar lines. Further information available at <http://www.hum.leiden.edu/history/staff/antunes.html>.

Approaches guided by this theoretical orientation tended to present the action of individuals as informal and performing on the margins of the systems. A recent work of António Manuel Hespanha about the limits of the juridical imperialism within the Portuguese colonial setup¹³ shows, on the other hand, that even the Portuguese law tended to incorporate legal guarantees for foreigners, and to adapt to them, showing how the monolithical «national» empire, studied and theoretically built by an abundant historiography, was actually far from being real.

In this historiographical turn, networks became a central concept, from a theoretical and methodological point of view, and network reconstitution methods a core procedure in the analysis of Early Modern history¹⁴. Portuguese historiography has not been unaware of this trend in what concerns the Portuguese overseas expansion¹⁵. More recently, researchers focus their attention on informal, trans-imperial and cross-border networks¹⁶, rather than on the institutional dynamics resulting from central power strategies, which are, by nature, national. This does not imply denying the existence of formal, institutionalised strategies, the existence of national boundaries or the performance of

¹³ A.M. HESPANHA, *Modalidades e limites do imperialismo jurídico da colonização portuguesa*, «Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno», 41 (2012), pp. 101-135.

¹⁴ See, on this topic, C. ANTUNES, *A história da análise de redes e a análise de redes em história*, «História. Revista da FLUP», s. IV, 2 (2012), pp. 11-22.

¹⁵ A. POLÓNIA, *Redes informais de comércio ultramarino*, in *Estudos em homenagem a Luís A. de Oliveira Ramos*, Porto 2004, III, pp. 881-891; A. POLÓNIA, M. NOGUEIRA, A. BARROS, «Now and Then, Here and There... on business»: mapping social/trade networks on first global age, in *Mapping different geographies*, edited by K. Kriz, W. Cartwright and L. Hurni, Heidelberg 2010, pp. 105-128; L.F. COSTA, *Império e grupos mercantis entre o Oriente e o Atlântico (século XVII)*, Lisbon 2002; Id., *Merchant groups in the Seventeenth-Century Brazilian sugar trade. Reappraising old topics with new research insights*, «E-journal of Portuguese History», 2 (2004), <http://www.brown.edu/e-jph/>; L.F. COSTA, M.M. ROCHA, T. ARAÚJO, *Social capital and economic performance: trust and distrust in eighteenth century gold shipments from Brazil*, «European Review of Economic History», 15 (2010), pp. 1-27; M.M. ROCHA, L.F. COSTA, *Merchant networks and Brazilian gold: reappraising colonial monopolies*, in *Redes y negocios globales en el mundo ibérico, siglos XVI-XVIII*, edited by N. Bottcher, B. Hauseberger and A. Ibarra, Madrid-Frankfurt 2011, pp. 143-169.

¹⁶ A. POLÓNIA, *Cooperation of agent based self-organizing networks as the focus of an alternate historiography*, in TECT-INCORE final School, «Cooperators since life began» (Budapest, 11-15 September 2010), <http://dyncoopnet-pt.org/working-papers>; *Informal self-organised networks in the first global age. The Jesuits in Japan*, The Bulletin of the Institute for World Affairs and Cultures, Kyoto Sangyo University, 28 (2013), pp. 133-158.

enforcement mechanisms led by formal powers and their representatives. It means that their existence and performances do not explain all the existing dynamics and were not sufficient to meet all the new emerging challenges which transcended their capacity of intervention.

The rationale of this turn is clear. Taking the 16th century as the «time of the world economies»¹⁷ or of «world systems»¹⁸, or even as the «First Global Age», it is seen as a period of growing connectivity between several world spaces. This implies cooperative patterns that ignore nationalities and boundaries and go beyond frontiers. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand how people, products and ideas moved in space, apparently ignoring or bypassing geographical, religious and political boundaries. As these circuits depended on human agents, the analysis of the performance of complex networks, frequently multinational, is a core procedure in this path.

This trend falls in line with the developing tendency of historiographical revision, in which Francesca Trivellato's *The Familiarity of Strangers*¹⁹, Studnicki's work on *Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora*²⁰ or Lamikiz's research on Spanish merchants and overseas networks²¹ set the tone.

The same applies to an international and interdisciplinary research project, DynCoopNet – Dynamic Complexity of Cooperation-Based Self-Organizing Commercial Networks in the First Global Age, supported by the European Science Foundation's TECT (The Evolution of Cooperation and Trading) programme²². As for the theoretical background, DynCoopNet applies the evolutionary models and theories of cooperation to historical studies. From a methodological point of view, it is based on the operative principles of network analysis and

¹⁷ F. BRAUDEL, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XV^e-XVIII^e siècle*, III, Paris 1979; ID., *Le modèle italien*, Paris 1989; ID., *La dynamique du capitalisme*, Paris 1985.

¹⁸ I. WALLERSTEIN, *The modern world-system*, 2 voll., New York-London 1984-1990.

¹⁹ F. TRIVELLATO, *The familiarity of strangers. The sephardic diaspora, Livorno, and cross-cultural trade in the early modern period*, New Haven-London 2009.

²⁰ D. STUDNICKI-GIZBERT, *A nation upon the Ocean sea: Portugal's atlantic diaspora and the crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640*, Oxford 2007.

²¹ X. LAMIKIZ, *Trade and trust in the eighteenth century atlantic world. Spanish merchants and their overseas networks*, Woodbridge 2010.

²² Program EUROCORES (European Collaborative Research) – European Science Foundation (Ref. 06-TECT-FP-004).

agent-based modelling. A Portuguese research team largely contributed to its success²³.

The project sustained that, in the period between the 15th and 18th centuries, the world economy was increasingly characterised by widespread collaboration that went beyond the boundaries of countries and continents. It further argues that it was made possible by new means of global communication and the building not only of formal but also informal networks, frequently multinational. The project sustains that cooperation tied together several self-organizing networks, and that the history of any place cannot be understood without examining how it was connected to other locations and to the system as a whole²⁴. These connections, at a global level, were mainly sustained by the activities of informal and self-organised networks, rather than by the official operations of formal agents of empire building, whether monopolistic trade companies or state institutions and representatives.

According to DynCoopNet, the international and inter-cultural scope of those cooperation-based self-organising networks favoured the flexibility, the creativity and the innovation necessary to respond to the needs of increasing flows of commodities, information, and capital²⁵. The strategy and work plan of this research programme, aiming to establish the agency of self-organising commercial networks from 1400 to 1800, presents itself as a major tool to re-evaluate worldwide dynamics from a new perspective, centred on individuals.

Going further, we would argue that to fully understand the mechanisms of cooperation, it is important to acknowledge that it does not take place only among individuals or informal networks. Individual actors and informal networks do not always act against formal powers, against the crown or the state. Cooperation among individuals and between these and the state is often a decisive means of empire building. And it applies both to national subjects and to those considered, by the law, as foreigners.

The construction of global interactions, based on self-organising networks becomes, thus, essential to the understanding of some dynamics that transcended political, religious and economic frontiers, which are, in fact, those which sustain globalisation processes. Furthermore, cooperative behaviour among individuals and the state did

²³ For further information see <http://dyncoopnet-pt.org>.

²⁴ Extracted from *DynCoopNet Project Proposal* submitted to EUROCORES – TECT programme.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

not exclude reciprocal patterns of cheating and desertion. Understanding the mechanisms of cooperation implies realising that cooperation patterns include different degrees of involvement which range from positive to negative inputs, from active cooperation to simple collaboration, from dialogue to deception, desertion and active competition, the latter often regarded as the opposite of cooperation.

Indeed, deceit and defection of state and central power, for instance, emerge simultaneously, as ways of cooperation between individuals and as means of establishing cross-border cooperation. See, for instance, the contraband on the ships (which promoted international markets); smuggling (which in fact presaged future legal circuits); or espionage (which is, over time, a mechanism of international relations and diplomacy).

Understanding these dynamics implies grasping the essence of theories of cooperation. According to those, this phenomenon is described as «a behavior which provides a benefit to another individual and which is selected for because of its beneficial effect on the recipient»²⁶. Economists' definitions of cooperation focus on two fundamental characteristics. One defines cooperation as a collective action of individuals who aim to share a certain task, lucrative for all participants²⁷. The other regards cooperation as a social process where individuals, groups and institutions act in a concerted way to reach common goals. Economic approaches, in this sense, focus not only on economic characteristics of cooperative relations (cost vs. benefit), but also on the social attributes of partners and their relations²⁸. This behaviour is driven by goals, expectations and motivations which imply a collective or dyadic interaction between individuals²⁹. Individual motives and beliefs are the basis of cooperation, even if the game established has inevitable social implications.

Besides the theories of cooperation, self-organisation theories also become a useful tool to create a more accurate understanding of the dynamics under scrutiny, in the analytical inquiry we are pursuing in

²⁶ S.A. WEST, A.S. GRIFFI, A. GARDNER, *Social semantics: altruism, cooperation, mutualism, strong reciprocity and group selection*, «Journal of Evolutionary Biology», 20 (2007), 2, p. 416.

²⁷ P. JESUS, L. TIRIBA, *Cooperação*, in *Dicionário internacional da outra economia*, edited by A.D.L. Cattani, L.I. Gaiger and P. Hespanha, Coimbra 2009, p. 80.

²⁸ A.S.V. RIBEIRO, *Mechanisms and criteria of cooperation in trading networks of the first global age. The case study of Simon Ruiz network, 1557-1606*, Porto 2011 (PhD thesis), pp. 10-14.

²⁹ R. AXELROD, *The evolution of cooperation*, New York 1984, p. 6.

our current research. Self-organization is seen as a process where some form, order or coordination arises out of the interactions between the components of an initially disordered system. This process is assumed to be spontaneous: it is not directed or controlled by any agent or subsystem inside or outside the system. Self-organization occurs and it can be observed in a variety of physical, chemical, biological, social and cognitive systems. One of the most detached authors who connect the principles of self-organisation with world systems functioning is the political scientist George Modelski. The author stresses the connection of the dynamics of self-organisation with the concept and the dynamism of world system evolution³⁰.

The worldwide economic framework produced in the First Global Age is, in fact, full of examples of cooperation and self-organisation: national, international and intercontinental trade networks existed and are well known; inter-confessional trade between Catholics, Protestants and Jews is well documented; worldwide transference of goods and capital is based on cooperation patterns, as is the overall communication system: an active transference of news and informations is a major pillar of cooperation in those days. In all of them, the commoners, mainly pilots, seafarers, captains, shipmasters and merchants are key elements of the system. Among those, nationality is not really an obstacle to cooperation.

Even at the level of central and formal circuits, the inclusion of foreigners is a rule rather than an exception. Frequently, a king or a state depends, for the sustainability of his policies and its own sovereignty, on resources and agents which are not provided by their national subjects. The dependency of the Portuguese and Spanish crowns on German and Italian bankers³¹ or the role performed by the Bank of Amsterdam from the 17th, and mostly the 18th century onwards³²

³⁰ *Globalization as evolutionary process: modeling global change*, edited by G. Modelski, T. Deveza and W.R. Thompson, Abingdon-New York 2008; G. MODELSKI, *Self-organization in the world system*, in *Encyclopedia of life support systems (EOLSS)*, Developed under the Auspices of the UNESCO, Oxford [<http://www.eolss.net>]. See also E. JANTSCHS, *The self-organizing universe: scientific and human implications of the emerging paradigm of evolution*, New York 1980.

³¹ R. CARANDE, *Carlos V y sus banqueros*, III, Barcelona 1987³; A. VIGO GUTIERREZ, *Cambistas, mercaderes e banqueros en el siglo de oro español*, Madrid 1997.

³² I. WALLERSTEIN, *O sistema mundial moderno*, II, *O mercantilismo e a consolidação da economia-mundo europeia, 1600-1750*, Porto 1994, pp. 239-283; J. HUERA DE SOTO, *Money, bank credit and economic cycles*, Alabama 2012³, pp. 98-106.

as European states' creditor is paramount in these global markets of capital and trade.

The nationality or the religious status (as e.g. the «New Christians») might be a legal obstacle to accede to business ruled by an apparent monopolistic state policy. In the Portuguese case, this went for the spice trade in the East, and in the Spanish case, it applied to silver trade with the Spanish Indias. Even then, legal and illegal mechanisms existed which allowed the profusely documented insertion of foreigners in the overseas trade. Marriage and business partnerships with national agents, naturalisation processes³³ on the one hand; smuggling and illegal emigration on the other³⁴, opened an overall range of possibilities for the active participation of foreigners in the scope of apparently strictly exclusive and monopolistic colonial trade and settlements.

This seems to be particularly true, in the Portuguese case, for the integration of bankers, merchants and seafarers from the Italian «nation»³⁵, as has been proven by a growing bulk of historiography, with Benedetta Crivelli, Nunziatella Alessandrini or Antonella Viola setting the tone³⁶. The same can be said about their operations and those of the Flemish in Spain³⁷.

³³ On this see N. ALESSANDRINI, *Os italianos na Lisboa de 1500 a 1680. Das hegemonias florentinas às Genovesas*, II, Lisbon 2009 (PhD thesis); and the vast work of A. Crespo Solana, in particular A. CRESPO SOLANA, *Mercaderes Atlánticos. Redes del comercio flamenco y holandés entre Europa y el Caribe*, Córdoba 2009; ID., *Redes de dependencia interimperial? Aproximaciones teóricas a la funcionalidad de los agentes de comercio en la expansión de las sociedades mercantiles*, in *Irlanda y el Atlántico ibeérico: movilidad, participación e intercambio cultural, 1580-1823*, edited by I. Pérez Tostado and E. García Hernán, Valencia 2010, pp. 35-51; ID., *Networks and "national" communities in the first global hispanic Atlantic*, in *Oceans connect*, pp. 78-91.

³⁴ J. OWENS, *"By my absolute royal authority": Justice and the Castilian Commonwealth at the beginning of the first global age*, Rochester 2005.

³⁵ As for the concept of "nation" see *Definitions of community in early modern Europe*, edited by J. Halvorson and K. E. Spierling, Ashgate 2008, pp. 1-23; CRESPO SOLANA, *Mercaderes Atlánticos*.

³⁶ See, among others, *Di buon affetto e commercio. Relações luso-italianas na Idade Moderna*, Lisbon 2012.

³⁷ F. RUIZ MARTIN, *Las finanzas españolas durante el reinado de Felipe II (alternativas de participación que se ofrecieron para Francia)*, «Cuadernos de Historia. Anexos de la Revista Hispania», 2 (1968), pp. 109-173; ID., *Los hombres de negocio genoveses de España durante el siglo XVI*, in *Fremde Kaufleute auf der Iberischen Halbinsel*, edited by H. Kellenbenz, Cologne 1970. About the Flemish Nation see A. CRESPO SOLANA, *Entre Cádiz y los Países Bajos. Una comunidad mercantil en la ciudad de la Ilustración*, Cádiz 2001.

To empirically discuss the evidence underlying these assumptions, we will focus on the Portuguese case, aiming to look at some global processes of cooperation, centred on the activities of Portuguese and non-Portuguese individuals, including those belonging to autochthon societies. We argue that these networks are responsible for the consolidation of the Portuguese navigation and trade and for the reinforcement of Portuguese settlements overseas. Eventually, we argue that the inclusion of non-national agents was essential, not only for the building of a global commercial emporium, but also for the launching and sustainability of long-term political empires.

2. *Foreigners³⁸ in Portuguese Overseas Expansion*

Maritime dynamics appear as one of the main agents for exchange on a global scale, since they historically fostered connections between the local, the regional and the global levels. These dynamics provided the means of technological and knowledge transfers, global trade, human migrations, and cultural flows³⁹. What we contend here is that such transfers were not only a result, but themselves a precondition of the expansionist phenomena and, ultimately, of the colonial dynamics, as far as the Portuguese expansion is concerned. We would argue further that this applies to the overall European expansion, even if we will only centre our discussion on the Portuguese case.

This section will review some of the arguments presented above by selecting specific domains in which the building of the worldwide Portuguese presence is associated with the presence of foreigners, their performance in multinational networks and even their strategic use by the formal powers, including the Portuguese crown and its representatives.

³⁸ «Estrangeiro. Homem de outra terra, que aquella em que se acha. Aquelle, que nasceo em outro Reino, tem outra pátria, que a das pessoas, com que vive». «Foreigner. Man from another land, than that in which he is. Man born in another Kingdom, and has another country than the people who lives with», R. BLUTEAU, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino, aulico, anatomico, architectonico, bellico, botanico, brasilico, comico, critico, chimico, dogmatico, dialectico, dendrologico, ecclesiastico, etymologico, economico, florifero, forense, fructifero... autorizado com exemplos dos melhores escritores portuguezes, e latinos...*, III, Coimbra 1728, p. 332, 1st column.

³⁹ See, on this subject, POLÓNIA, *Jumping frontiers, crossing barriers*.

The primary thrust of this essay is that the Portuguese were the first Europeans, even if not the only ones, to globally connect oceans and continents in the early Modern Age. However, this was not done by them alone. In the first place, their experience was a synthesis of contributions from ancient and modern times derived from Islamic, Chinese and European backgrounds. Even if the Portuguese were able to question numerous beliefs of that tradition, and enrich it with new topographical, cartographic, navigational, commercial, political, religious and ethnographic information, the fact remains that they were inheritors of various foreign cultural and civilizational influences, which they used in a syncretistic and transformative way, based on their empirical experience.

The Portuguese 'revolution' in nautical science was in actual fact an evolution, and appears as a very successful process of an on-going empirical appropriation and adaptation to new needs and technical demands. During this process, the astrolabe, the compass, and basic mathematical as well as astronomic knowledge that navigators used as their main tools were the result of a chain of transfers, which resulted in the Portuguese undertaking technical adjustments and improvements so as to launch their own explorations⁴⁰. The presence of Moors and inheritors of the Jewish cultural background in Portugal and the Iberian Peninsula is thus crucial to understand the technical and scientific tools of the Portuguese overseas expansion. This is common knowledge, long-term established by Luís de Albuquerque, among other Portuguese researchers⁴¹.

Similar conclusions can be drawn for the use of navigational techniques and instruments. Portuguese ships are rightly considered to have been revolutionary, and a chief tool for geographical discoveries and the dominion of the seas. The ultimate example of this is the Portuguese *caravela*, pointed out as the technological basis of the Portuguese dominion of the seas in the 15th century, because of its adaptability to the difficult and demanding Atlantic navigation. The Por-

⁴⁰ A. POLÓNIA, *Arte, técnica e ciência náutica no Portugal moderno. Contributos da "sabedoria dos descobrimentos" para a ciência europeia*, «Revista da Faculdade de Letras – História», s. III, 6 (2005), pp. 9-12; D.C. DOMINGUES, *Science and technology in Portuguese navigation: the idea of experience in the sixteenth century*, in *Portuguese oceanic expansion, 1400–1800*, edited by F. Bethencourt and D.R. Curto, Cambridge 2007.

⁴¹ L. ALBUQUERQUE, *Introdução à história dos descobrimentos portugueses*, Lisbon 1989; ID., *A náutica e a ciência em Portugal: notas sobre as navegações*, Lisbon 1989.

tuguese caravel is supposed to have had, as its predecessor, the Arabian *caravo*, a traditional and even archaic small trade ship used in Mediterranean navigation, which was transformed and adapted by the Portuguese. Even if this is contentious, the hypothesis provides food for thought⁴². What is less contentious is that the caravel, a Portuguese technical novelty, is, after all, a syncretic model, putting together, in a new functional combination, techniques developed and dedicated in the naval architecture of the Mediterranean, such as a robust hull and the triangular sails, with other technical contributions, such as the axial rudder, adapted to the hard conditions of the North Sea⁴³.

The use of gunpowder as a tool for weaponry spread in a similar way. An invention of ancient China, gunpowder had already been used against the Mongol attempt to invade and breach the northern Chinese city fortifications. However, the use of gunpowder on a larger scale in naval artillery on board European ships, as well as its employment in heavy artillery in conventional territorial wars, was a European achievement. Flows between the East and Europe, provided by Muslims and Italian merchants even previous to the regular contacts guaranteed by the opening of the Cape route by the Portuguese, were responsible for these transfers.

If the importance of foreigner's knowledge and technologic transfers is, at this point, unquestionable, the same can be argued for human transfers. Portuguese expansion in the Early Modern Age favoured, but simultaneously depended on, active exchanges between European nautical officers and men, as well as between European and autochthonous crews, particularly pilots and seafarers. The Portuguese crossed unknown waters with the assistance of local pilots. When exploring the Indian Ocean, they largely used the services of Arabs from the Indian Ocean region. Arab, Gujarati, Javanese and Malay pilots were also present on Portuguese voyages from Malabar to Ceylon, Melaka, the Sunda Islands, Java, the Maluku islands, Sumatra and Siam. As Russell-Wood notes, Chinese pilots were frequently taken on board for the Melaka-Macau-Japan run⁴⁴. Similarly, when the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean, they were conducted from So-

⁴² See *Diccionario marítimo español*, edited by M.F. De Navarrete, Madrid 1831, pp. XXXVIII, XLVI.

⁴³ F.C. DOMINGUES, *Os navios do Mar Oceano. Teoria e empiria na arquitectura naval portuguesa dos séculos XVI e XVII*, Lisbon 2004; ID., *Arqueologia naval portuguesa (séculos XV e XVI). História, conceito, bibliografia*, Lisbon 2003.

⁴⁴ A.J.R. RUSSELL-WOOD, *The Portuguese Empire, 1414-1808*, Baltimore 1998, p. 15.

fala to Calicut by a Muslim pilot, supposed to be Ahmad Ibn Majid⁴⁵.

In carrying out explorations around the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic, Genoese seamen fulfilled key roles from the beginnings of the Portuguese expansion. The Genoese involvement, and commitment, resulted from a long line of cooperation which included the earlier presence of Genoese seafarers commanded by Manuel Pessanha, nominated admiral of the Portuguese navy during the reign of Dinis I (1279-1325). Those Genoese and other Mediterranean seafarers acting in Portugal are taken to bring in important contributions to the Portuguese navigations.

Similarly, Florentines, Genoese, and Venetians were main contributors in the launching of the Portuguese overseas expansion. The activities of the Venetian Alvise da Cadamosto and of the Genoese Antoniotto Usodimare and Antonio da Noli during the Portuguese exploration of the West Coast of Africa are well known. The examples of their activities set the context in which Christopher Columbus later achieved a leading role. Columbus can be seen as a major example of the transfer of knowledge and cross-cultural dynamics, since he brought to Portugal the Genoese expertise in trade and navigation, and to Spain the additional knowledge he accumulated during his stay among the Portuguese, in Porto Santo on the Atlantic⁴⁶. Similarly, his adventures in the service of the Spanish Catholic kings only anticipated the career of Amerigo Vespucci under the rule of the same monarchy, and that of the Portuguese Ferdinand Magellan, whose work at the service of Castile resulted in the first circumnavigation of the world.

As for military accomplishments, cooperation between agents deriving from very different and frequently conflictive political backgrounds is equally documented both between the East and the West, and among European counterparts, as proven by the significant number of foreign mercenaries hired by the Portuguese for the conquest of North Africa. The fighters in the field, hardly considered to be regular armies or troops, included not only Portuguese, Spanish,

⁴⁵ A. VELHO, *Roteiro da primeira viagem de Vasco da Gama à Índia*, Leitura crítica, notas e estudo introdutório por José Marques, Porto 1999.

⁴⁶ J. MATOSO, *Antecedentes medievais da expansão portuguesa*, in *História da expansão portuguesa*, edited by F. Bethencourt and K. Chaudhuri, Lisbon 1998, I, p. 16; M.F. ALEGRIA, J.C. GARCIA, F. RELANO, *Cartografia e viagens*, ivi, pp. 40-55; J.R. MAGALHÃES, *O reconhecimento do Brasil*, ivi, p. 195.

German, French and Italian troops, but also Central European soldiers⁴⁷.

In the East, large-scale recruitment of locals for Portuguese military operations was still rather unusual, although the Portuguese did use second-line armies constituted by local men. During the capture of Goa, Hindu captains and mercenaries were said to have assisted Afonso de Albuquerque⁴⁸. The recruitment of Portuguese armies operating in the East is still, though, a field to be explored.

In a reciprocal dynamic, biographies and chronicles point to active mobility in the opposite direction⁴⁹. When in the East, Portuguese soldiers were not paid for their services and had to find additional occupation in order to guarantee their subsistence. Some of them never returned to Portugal and disappeared into a world of adventures that promised them more than the Portuguese Crown was able to offer. Many used their training and expertise at the service of local rulers and performed leading roles in local and inter-regional wars⁵⁰.

Plus, as it is nowadays well known, none of the Portuguese, Dutch or British maritime empires would have been possible without multinational armies, multinational crews, international labour markets and spontaneous or forced migration between continents and empires.

In fact, during the second half of the 16th century, the Portuguese suffered a structural lack of crewmen. Enforced recruitment was often the solution to guarantee scheduled departures to India. The same happened with military garrisons. The return voyages, due both to high rates of death on the outbound voyages to the East and the desertion rates, seem to be even more dramatic, and not just for the Portuguese. European shipping always needed the input of Eastern crews – a fact that has been proven recently by a multiplicity of studies on maritime labour markets⁵¹, characterized by recruitment on a large geographical scale. International recruitment was a possibility,

⁴⁷ J. COSME, *A guarnição de Safim em 1511*, Lisbon 2004.

⁴⁸ V.L.G. RODRIGUES, *Da Goa de Albuquerque à Goa seiscentista: aspectos da organização militar da capital do 'Estado da Índia'*, Lisbon 2001; J.P.O. COSTA, V.L.G. RODRIGUES, *Conquista de Goa: 1510-1512*, Lisbon 2008.

⁴⁹ F.M. PINTO, *Peregrinação*, II, Lisbon 1997; F.L. CASTANHEDA, *História do descobrimento e conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, Coimbra 1552-1561.

⁵⁰ P. PHISPUMVIDHI, *La Société d'Ayutthaya aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles: aspects culturels, économiques et politiques*, Porto 2008 (PhD thesis), pp. 398-401.

⁵¹ J.L.V. LOTTUM, H.V. VOSS, *Sailors, national and international labour markets and national identity, 1600-1850*, in *Shipping and economic growth, 1350-1850*, edited by R. Unger, Leiden 2011, pp. 309-352.

and frequently it was a necessity. Mobile maritime labour markets were essential to the existence of flows between oceans, as much as mercantile or maritime dynamics.

The role performed by autochthon agents in the overseas European expansion is better understood if one thinks of the levels of European dependency at the point of local cooperation. The Portuguese in the East, for instance, were provided by local agents with skills, information and intelligence, which contributed substantially to their presence in the Indian Ocean. Hindu merchants from the Coromandel, who subsequently assumed important roles in developing Portuguese trade in the Malay Peninsula, assisted the Portuguese in the capture of Melaka in 1511. Portuguese recognition of the existence of key points and key ports in the Eastern trade depended on information transfer. Only such a process explains how the Portuguese themselves became significant brokers in the maritime trade routes connecting the East and the Far East.

Even for evangelization, historiographical perspectives tend to acknowledge the role both of foreigners and autochthon agents as elements of Christianisation and acculturation. In the first place, congregations were multinational, and Catholic missionaries came from a wide range of European political and cultural spaces: Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italians participated jointly in common missions. The studies on the Jesuit missions in the East and Far-East give evidence to that⁵².

It is consensual that the evangelization process was one of the main mechanisms and the most formal strategy of imposing acculturation according to European patterns, as it is a fact that evangelization worked as an active tool of colonial domination⁵³. However, acculturation resulted also from an adaptive process which had an impact upon Europeans: missionaries had to cooperate with locals, and to be flexible towards the linguistic, cultural and religious universe of the local populations, to effect conversion. If these examples can be seen as strategic tools of conversion, eventually they resulted in the acculturation of Europeans to local cultures as well. The criticism directed against the Jesuits in Japan by European ecclesiastic supervisors is an

⁵² J.P.O. COSTA, *O Japão e o Cristianismo no Século XVI. Ensaio de história luso-nipónica*, Lisbon 1989.

⁵³ See, on these topics, L. BOURDON, *La Compagnie de Jésus et le Japon. 1547-1570*, Paris 1993, and COSTA, *O Japão e o Cristianismo no século XVI*; ID., *A descoberta da civilização japonesa pelos Portugueses*, Lisbon 1995.

eloquent testimony of the institutional disapproval of the way the priests in the field adapted to the material culture, houses, food, schedule and clothes of the local population, becoming, in their looks and habits, more similar to, than different from, the local people⁵⁴. Here, these Europeans, acting as foreigners, were in fact converted to the local cultural patterns. They were also used strategically, as instruments of the local *daimyos*, or lords. At the same time they depended on the recruitment of local priests or at least of *dógicos* or *dojucus*, who acted, not as priests, but as assistants even in the domain of catechisation, in order to accomplish their mission. Their number, in both cases, increased over time, and the dependency of the European Jesuits on these elements became crucial to the mission's sustainability⁵⁵.

According to these findings, it seems that the maintenance of the Portuguese colonial power during the 16th and 17th centuries depended on cross-cultural self-organised networks, as much as on state policies. If this premise is accepted for naval logistics and colonial settlements, we believe it can be taken even further, particularly when centred on economic performances related to overseas trade, despite the fact that Portuguese and European historiography describes Portuguese commercial expansion as based on monopolistic strategies led by the crown.

It is, in fact, true that the Portuguese crown imposed some monopolies, as it is also true that monopolistic systems led to the primacy of state national policies to the detriment of individual initiatives. But in the Portuguese case in the 15th and 16th centuries, this monopolistic model can only be identified for the Mina gold trade and the spice trade on the Cape Route. And even there, monopolistic policies never really succeeded in totally excluding individual initiatives, and frequently coexisted with them. In fact, trade circuits and trade strategies are the most obvious object of discussion when we talk about the importance and the role of foreigners in the Portuguese overseas expansion.

In a panoramic overview of this question, one cannot avoid the

⁵⁴ L. SOUSA, *O Japão e os Portugueses (1580-1614): religião, política e comércio*, Porto 2007 (PhD thesis); A. CURVELO, "Porque e sen todo tan diferentes y contrario". *O método da acomodação na missão do Japão*, in *Encompassing the world. Portugal e o mundo nos séculos XVI e XVII*, Lisbon 2009, pp. 337-342.

⁵⁵ J.P.O. COSTA, *Os Jesuítas no Japão (1549-1598). Uma análise estatística*, in *O Japão e o Cristianismo no século XVI*, pp. 17-47.

obvious assumptions, according to which the financial sustainability of the Portuguese colonial dominium depended frequently on agents which were not Portuguese: German, Florentine, Genoese or Venetian merchants and bankers sustained in Portugal, as they did in Castile, an overseas empire, both in its commercial, military or logistic apparatus⁵⁶.

Furthermore, departing from the classic Braudelian overviews⁵⁷ or introducing new methodological approaches on the study of European trade networks⁵⁸, researchers have proved, also for the Portuguese case, that the essence of trade, mostly in the First Global Age, implies that it does not have any frontiers.

An active bibliography points to the existence of trans-national networks of trade and finance, performing in Europe, profiting from or being targeted by the evolving political and economic contexts. At the same time, economic agents on the margins of the different colonial systems used to connect within very active networks of trade. One could just mention the active articulations between the illegal networks of Portuguese Jews or New Christians and their Italian, Spanish or Flemish counterparts, or between them and active groups of Armenians operating as central commercial agents of an Ottoman empire in which they were not but marginal groups from which the system depended⁵⁹.

⁵⁶ On this subject see, in this themed section, the papers of Benedetta Crivelli, Nunziatella Alessandrini, Antonella Viola and Jürgen Pohle. See also RUIZ MARTIN, *Las finanzas españolas*; ID., *Los hombres de negocio genoveses*.

⁵⁷ BRAUDEL, *Civilisation matérielle*; ID., *Le modèle italien*; J. GENTIL DA SILVA, *Stratégie des Affaires à Lisbonne entre 1595 et 1607. Lettres marchandes des Rodrigues d'Évora et Veiga*, Paris 1956; ID., *Marchandises et Finances, Lettres de Lisbonne 1563-1578*, II, Paris 1958, and III, Paris 1961.

⁵⁸ For an overall perspective of the history of networks analysis see ANTUNES, *A história da análise de redes*. New methodological contributions in the analysis of social and spatial networks in the PhD theses of A.S.V. RIBEIRO, *Mechanisms and criteria of cooperation*, Porto 2011, and S. PINTO, *A companhia de Simón Ruiz. Análise espacial de uma rede de negócios no século XVI*, Porto 2013.

⁵⁹ S. ASLANIAN, *Social capital, "trust" and the role of networks in Julfan trade: informal and semi-formal institutions at work*, «Journal of Global History», 1 (2006), pp. 383-402; ID., *Trade diaspora versus colonial state: Armenian merchants, the English East India Company, and the High Court of Admiralty in London, 1748-1752*, «Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies», 13 (2004), pp. 37-100; B. BHATTACHARYA, *Making money at the blessed place of Manila: Armenians in the Madras-Manila trade in the eighteenth century*, «Journal of Global History», 3 (2008), pp. 1-20; S. CHAUDHURY, *Trading networks in a traditional diaspora: Armenians in India circa 1600-1800*, in *Diaspora entrepreneurial networks: four centuries of history*,

The existence of networks of trans-national partnerships also applies to the *asientos de esclavos*, contracts established between the Spanish crown and providers of slave labour to the Spanish Indies. Those *asientos* allowed for sub-contractors who would buy licenses for particular slave shipping heading for specific destinations. The *asientos*, incorporating partnerships of traders and other financial agents from diverse «nationalities», give additional testimony to another domain in which multi-national networks of economic agents performed as key-elements of the system. Or should we say of the systems? In fact, slave trade always involved agents, policies and gains encompassing different colonial projects, whether Portuguese, Spanish, French, British or Dutch. In the Spanish case, where a «national» policy did not permit the involvement in slave trade, articulations, first with the Portuguese settlements and then with the British, are well-known. It did not exclude, however, Castilian or other Spanish subjects from the highly lucrative business.

These dynamics of national subjects associating with several foreigners were in no way hierarchical or unidirectional: foreign providers of slaves were essential to the system, as much as agents working on its fringes. They served as providers both of capital, vessels or nautical knowledge and delivered the necessary logistics to a very complex and demanding circuit of trade. In terms of the internal organisation of business networks, there are in fact examples that document the importance of second or third level European agents in the overall functioning of the system, and not only in the slave trade⁶⁰.

Apart from capital, labour force, technical knowledge, and products, these trans-national networks were as well providers of a most important commodity: information. Information transfer took place at all levels of daily life, both in Europe and in overseas territories.

edited by I.B. McCabe, G. Harlaftis and I.P. Minoglou, Oxford-New York 2005; M.N. SETH, *The Armenians in India*, New Delhi 1983; X. LAMIKIZ, A.B. ZAPATERO, *Presencia de una diáspora global: comerciantes armenios y comercio intercultural en Manila, c. 1660-1800*, «Revista de Indias», 74 (2014), pp. 693-722.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, the importance of the Lisbon New-Christian merchants in Simón Ruiz network, stressed both by RIBEIRO, *Mechanisms and criteria of cooperation in trading networks*, and PINTO, *A Companhia de Simón Ruiz*, or the importance of the Luso-Iberian partnerships in slave trade in which the Portuguese agents were as important as the most diligent bankers and capital providers, due to their connections to a territory providing the desired labour force. See on this review, the article of Ana Sofia Ribeiro. See also POLÓNIA, BARROS, *Commercial flows and transference*.

Even if official registers insist on the role of diplomats, ambassadors, missionaries and church dignitaries as information providers to the Portuguese Crown, individuals like soldiers, sailors, merchants, adventurers, farmers, naturalists, men of science, or physicians were also agents of information transfer, mostly through their contact with non-European agents. This dynamic was supported by an active person-to-person contact. The importance of the translators, the 'línguas', both local and Portuguese, testifies to the role of communication and cooperation as the basis of the spread of the European dominium over other worlds.

How could these flows happen without an active cooperation between individual agents from rival states and imperia? This is particularly conspicuous in the case of the interpenetration between the two Iberian empires.

3. *Portuguese in the Spanish Indies*

An active permeability and informal cooperation, besides and beyond formal rivalry between Portugal and Spain and between Portuguese and Spanish settlements overseas, is proven in many ways, one of which is naval logistics, i.e. ships, nautical personnel and knowledge. Case studies centred on Portuguese seaports prove the existence of an intense flow of smuggled ships. Crown deliberations bluntly forbade selling ships built in Portuguese shipyards to other European states, particularly Spain⁶¹. The rivalries between both crowns and, above all, the need to employ all the ships they could get are enough reasons to explain this official policy. Several lawsuits and local testimonies prove, however, the existence of an active smuggling to Spain and other countries of ships built in Portugal. Export of ships can be proven both for Northern Portugal and the Algarve⁶². Such profitable commerce greatly reinforced local shipbuilding activity, and improved the return on individual strategic investments. This informal cooperation, beneficial to both parties, proves the importance of the Portuguese, foreigners as they were, for maintaining the Spanish maritime

⁶¹ Not to mention technical secrets the crown meant to be unveiled.

⁶² POLÓNIA, *Expansão e descobrimentos*, I, pp. 340-342; A. BARROS, *Porto: a construção de um espaço marítimo nos alvares da época moderna*, I, Porto 2004 (PhD thesis), pp. 338, 680, and J.R. MAGALHÃES, *Para o estudo do Algarve económico durante o século XVI*, Lisbon 1970, p. 191.

empire. These dynamics constitute a major example of self-organised networks, acting in the field, frequently disrespecting territorial frontiers, political boundaries and central power rivalries.

The same could be argued with regard to seafarers. A significant number of Portuguese pilots can be found enlisted and working on the Spanish Indies maritime run. The statistical analysis of pilots' examinations to Carrera de Indias by the Casa de la Contratación de Sevilla reveals this tendency unequivocally for the period between 1574 and 1650, e.g., before and after the Iberian Union⁶³. According to the registers, among the foreigners examined as pilots were 8 Italians, 1 Flemish and 41 Portuguese out of a total of 851 pilots. That corresponds, in the Portuguese case, to 5 percent of the total.

If those are anonymous agents with a statistical expression, other paradigmatic examples can also be put forward. Apart from Magellan, a Portuguese nobleman who almost performed the first round trip around the world at the service of the Spanish crown⁶⁴, one has to point at other outstanding examples. It is particularly noticeable in the case of Portuguese pilots in the service of the Castilian Crown, among whom we find Estevão Gomes (Magellan's pilot); João Dias de Sólis (the discoverer of River Plate); along with other Portuguese seafarers and pilots who played central roles in the Spanish maritime and colonial dominium⁶⁵. The same can be said, in the opposite direction, of important cartographers, cosmographers or architects, at the service of the Spanish crown, like Filipe Tércio, who also served the Portuguese expansion.

Another domain in which the Portuguese were essential to the Spanish empire is slave trade⁶⁶. At least until the 18th century, the Portuguese were the main agents and Portugal's African possessions the main supplier markets of enslaved labour force to the Spanish Indies⁶⁷. At first, the Spanish crown intended to adopt a rigid monop-

⁶³ POLÓNIA, *Expansão e descobrimentos*, II, pp. 237-269.

⁶⁴ The voyage was interrupted by his death in the Philippines. Its aim was the establishment of a connection between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, which was achieved, and not the fulfillment of a round trip around the world, which only resulted from the need to return to Europe along a safe route: the Portuguese *Carreira da Índia*, past the Cape of Good Hope.

⁶⁵ R.A. LAGUARDA TRÍAS, *Pilotos portugueses en el Río de la Plata durante el siglo XVI*, Lisbon 1988, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁶ See, on this subject, POLÓNIA, BARROS, *Commercial flows and transference*.

⁶⁷ Besides the works of M.M. TORRÃO, *Tráfico de escravos entre a Costa da Guiné e a América Espanhola. Articulação dos impérios ultramarinos ibéricos num espaço*

oly over the navigation and trade circuits to America, by allowing departures from Seville exclusively⁶⁸. That was to include the slave trade as well. However, such intentions hardly succeeded in general, and certainly not as far as the slave trade was concerned. As García-Baquero stresses, the monopolistic structure of the colonial economy was one thing; fitting the slave trade into that strict structural organisation was quite another⁶⁹. This inadequacy was responsible for notorious evolutions on the regime of that specific traffic.

Significant changes were introduced by the Union of the Portuguese and the Spanish Crowns (1580-1640). In 1586, Philip II of Spain (Philip I of Portugal) decided to reform the licence system⁷⁰. His decision derived from the increasing need of manpower to feed the sugar plantations in the Antilles, namely in Cuba, as well as the huge requirements from the growing exploitation of silver and gold mines in the Caribbean, New Spain, Central America and most of all Potosí⁷¹. Consequently, between 1586 and 1640, the Habsburg Kings negotiated contracts for the regular supply of African slaves to the Spanish American colonies – the «asientos de negros»⁷². In these *asientos*, as previously in the *licenças de escravos*, the number of multinational partnerships of merchants applying for licenses or contracts with the Spanish crown is outstanding, as stated above.

In the context of the Iberian Union, from 1586, it was no longer illegal to send Portuguese ships, with Portuguese crews, from the West

atlântico (1466-1595), Lisbon 1999 (PhD thesis), and M.G. VENTURA, *Negreiros portugueses na rota das Índias de Castela (1541-1556)*, Lisbon 1999, more recent contributions for the period 1580-1674 were presented by F.R. DA SILVA, *The Dutch and the Portuguese in West Africa: empire building and Atlantic system (1580-1674)*, Leiden 2009 (PhD thesis). See also this author's article in this issue.

⁶⁸ G. BAQUERO GONZÁLEZ, *La carrera de Indias: suma de la contratación y océano de negocios*, Sevilla 1992.

⁶⁹ Ivi, p. 234.

⁷⁰ Concerning the evolution of the supply system of slaves to the Spanish Americas see, for instance, L.B. ROUT, *The African experience in Spanish America*, Cambridge 1976, pp. 37-61; H. VILA VILAR, *Los asientos portugueses y el contrabando de negros*, «Anuario de Estudios Americanos», 30 (1973), pp. 557-599.

⁷¹ F. BROWSER, *Los Africanos en la sociedad de la América española colonial in América latina colonial*, Barcelona 2003, pp. 79-98; P. BAKEWELL, *Minería y sociedad en el México Colonial Zacatecas (1546-1700)*, México 1986; ID., *Estado y minería en la Hispanoamérica colonial*, in *Industria y estado en la vida de México*, edited by P. Arias, Zamora 1990, pp. 43-55; ID., *La minería en la Hispanoamérica colonial*, II, *América Latina na época colonial*, Barcelona 1990, pp. 79-98.

⁷² Cfr. ROUT, *The African experience*, pp. 37-61; VILA VILAR, *Los asientos portugueses*, pp. 557-599.

Coast of Africa to the Spanish Americas⁷³, even if crew personnel were not legally allowed to disembark⁷⁴. The most striking proof that these restrictions were often disregarded are the significant rates of illegal Portuguese emigration to the Spanish Indies. Portuguese seafarers and Portuguese pilots are among those identified as illegal immigrants or who just die, wealthy, in the Castilian Indies, as can be proven by the multiplied «Autos de bens de defuntos», the legal proceedings of the deceased, preserved in the Archivo General de Indias, in Seville⁷⁵.

One could also remember all kinds of legal, but mostly illegal emigration flows which crossed boundaries of both colonial empires on a daily basis, despite explicit interdiction⁷⁶: the number of Portuguese emigrants and the huge community of Portuguese new-Christians in the Spanish Indies persecuted by the Lima Inquisition⁷⁷, give abundant testimony of those flows.

The Portuguese Restoration War (1640-1668) introduced a new context and a new framework with consequences for this flow. The commercial routes between Portugal and the Spanish West Indies were suspended. Moreover, the embargoes imposed by the Portuguese and the Spanish kings on each other's vessels during the conflict, and the Dutch takeover of Angola and São Tomé in 1641, should have rendered it impossible to carry on with these commercial and navigation routes. Nevertheless a question arises: should we take that for granted? We are not able to give a definitive answer, since the research data available relates mostly to the pre-1640 period. However, based on other examples of similar situations in the Portuguese colonial dynamics, including the studies on smuggling strategies, we would argue that the trade networks somehow managed to keep going. Seafarers, shipmasters and pilots, as well as merchants⁷⁸, were key ele-

⁷³ SILVA, *Dutch and the Portuguese in West Africa*, p. 215.

⁷⁴ F. SERRANO MANGAS, *La encrucijada portuguesa. Esplendor y quiebra de la unión ibérica en las Indias de Castilla (1600-1668)*, Badajoz 1994, p. 18.

⁷⁵ See, among others, M.G. VENTURA, *Portugueses nas Índias de Castela. Percursos e percepções*, in *Viagens e viajantes no Atlântico Quinhentista*, Lisboa 1996, and POLÓNIA, *Expansão e Descobrimientos*, II, pp. 244-266.

⁷⁶ POLÓNIA, BARROS, *Commercial flows and transference*.

⁷⁷ G. REPARAZ, *Os portugueses no vice-reinado do Perú (Séculos XVI e XVII)*, Lisbon 1976.

⁷⁸ A. POLÓNIA, *Portuguese seafarers. Informal agents of empire building*, in *Law, labour and empire. Comparative perspective on seafarers, c. 1500-1800*, New York 2015, pp. 205-227.

ments in those informal and illegal networks of trade, the only ones able to maintain the colonial system in times of war and open rivalry between empires. They remained functioning as stable networks while the gains remained bigger than the losses, despite the official policies which imposed a breakdown on the official connections between empires.

4. *Intermingled «empires»: who is foreigner where?*

The same can be documented for the Iberian presence in the Far-East, especially in the Philippines and Macau, overseas territories where it becomes difficult to disentangle the reciprocal permeability between the agents of both Iberian empires. After the 1570s, with the regular arrival of the Manila galleons from America, and the reinforcement of the Spanish colonial presence in the Philippines, the boundaries between the action of Portuguese and Spanish colonisers and traders was more and more difficult to ascertain: who was foreigner in which territories and maritime areas of influence? According to a patent letter of 1582, promulgated at the beginning of the Iberian Union, no Spanish authorities could interfere with, or establish themselves in, Portuguese settlements⁷⁹. Still, the reality turned out to be quite different. In the first place, an active movement of ships was established connecting Manila and Macau. From Macau, the Spanish persistently tried to reach China, Malacca and Japan. Even if the municipal power of Macau, the Loyal Senate, officially reacted against their presence, there are accounts according to which they refused to punish Spanish captains, shipmasters or traders who had disobeyed the law. Moreover, a Castilian man, Domingos Segurado, had obtained from a Portuguese, João da Gama, the captaincy of the carrack in charge of the Macau-Japan route, thus acquiring jurisdiction over the subjects of Macau⁸⁰.

Repeated Castilian expeditions were organised from Manila to China and Japan, much as Portuguese expeditions were organised

⁷⁹ BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL DE PORTUGAL, Rs 68 P, *Patente das Mercês, Graças e Privilégios que El Rey D. Philipe Nosso Senhor faz Mercê a estes Reinos*, 1582.

⁸⁰ SOUSA, *O Japão e os Portugueses (1580-1641)*, II, pp. 346-347. In fact, after an informal presence of Portuguese settlers in Macau, the State of India tried to establish control over the territory. From then on, the only official jurisdiction was performed by the captain of the carrack responsible for the connection between Goa, Macau and Japan.

heading for Manila. One of them was even put together by the captain of Cochin himself. Indeed, this was not a marginal activity led only by outsiders of the system. It involved central personalities of the official scheme. The issue of loyalty to the Portuguese crown or the Portuguese interests is in this and in many other contexts a topic under current revision. Last but not least, it was not only lay agents who performed active roles in the constitution and maintenance of these trans-imperial and cross-border trade networks. The Castilians even used religious agents, able to penetrate Portuguese settlements in Malacca, China and even in Japan⁸¹. China is a case in point: from 1575 onwards, Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits mediated systematic efforts by the Castilians to penetrate this territory, and to initiate trade relations. The immediate reactions from the Portuguese traders, Portuguese representatives and Portuguese clergy to these attempts were not always successful⁸².

From Macau to China and Japan, several trips were illegally organised jointly by Portuguese and Spanish subjects and funded with mixed capital. On their way to China, these ships were trailed by British vessels, in order to determine the maritime run to follow. Portuguese pilots were part of Japanese crews, attracted by the high wages paid, manoeuvring ships against the Japanese leaders' policy of closing the Japanese ports and maritime trade. Multi-nationality is a permanent feature in the Asian crews and armadas, whether they were Japanese, Chinese or European.

In the end, even the Dutch depended on the mediation of the Portuguese language, the Portuguese «linguas» and the autochtone Portuguese speakers to settle influence and dominium in the East and Far-East. Portuguese was for a long time a lingua franca in the Eastern Dutch dominions: who was, after all, foreigner where?

5. *Concluding remarks*

Drawing both on the initial theoretical framework about the mechanisms of cooperation and self-organisation, and on the empirical ev-

⁸¹ Philip II ended the Jesuit monopoly of evangelisation in Japan, authorising the activity of other religious orders there, through the Castilian "Padroado". In 1600, Pope Clement VII, through the brief *Onerosa pastoralis*, authorised the entry of other religious orders into China and Japan through the Portuguese "Padroado".

⁸² SOUSA, *O Japão e os Portugueses (1580-1641)*, II, p. 344.

idence provided by this panoramic overview of the performance of foreigners within different European empires, consolidated by a long term research, we can conclude. European empires were sustained by states, by central policies, by wars and rivalries, but in equal measure by cooperative patterns and agent-based networks which have yet to be studied in depth. To this end, we have to move the focus away from the formal structures, the systems, or the states, and concentrate our attention on individuals and their connections and interactions. Putting aside the limitative analysis of «national» empires and going beyond frontiers is another necessary precondition for this achievement. In this world without frontiers, the status of foreigner has a legal meaning but not a concrete application. In practical terms, the «foreigners» had a significant leeway of action. They were essential in order to ensure active flows of capital, information, knowledge, contacts, only possible within the scope of a complex network of contacts, in which they were essential.

Who in fact (and not in face of the law) is a foreigner in this system, in this economic and cultural setup is beside the point. The legal status only matters when those foreigners, upon whom the system frequently depended, became dominant to such an extent, or costly in such a degree, that both political systems or individual agents used their legal status to exclude them as competitors and/or creditors. The assimilation of the condition of «foreigner» to the condition of heretic (the believer in another faith and the follower of another religious law) became crucial in the development of the events. The persecution of Jews, New-Christians, and of the protestant confessions by Catholic agents provides abundant proof of what we mean. Nevertheless, when it was opportunistically beneficial to the political and economic system, tolerance was at a premium, and acceptance of the other was a determinant factor for the success of cooperation. The status itself of «foreigner» could be highly beneficial to the «nationals» in more than a few circumstances. Portuguese had lived within this standard since the Middle Ages. Moorish, Jewish, Italian, German, Spanish, French, British agents played key roles in several moments of Portuguese history: the Christian Reconquista of a territory which later on would be «national» is an obvious example. The other is, indubitably, the Portuguese overseas expansion, with historical dynamics which can only be understood in a world of cooperation within which non-Portuguese subjects play determinant roles.

Besides, as stated by Bluteau, «O estrangeiro há de ser como a

prumage⁸³, que depois de criar raizes, & de dar bons frutos, tem sua estimação, & he tida por planta da terra, em que foi disposta. Os Rios, que fertilizão as nossas terras, vem de muito longe dellas. Fora cousa galante, que não quisessem os Portuguezes aproveitarse das agoas do tejo, porque he Rio, que em terras de Castella tem seu nascimento»⁸⁴.

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⁸³ Savage tree, with spines, before it is submitted to grafting, which makes it suitable for fruit production. Mostly applied to apple trees. Cf. BLUTEAU, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino*, VI, p. 812.

⁸⁴ «The foreigner is to be like the *prumage*, which, after it takes root and bears good fruits, is esteemed, and is considered as a plant of the motherland, in which it grew. The rivers which fertilize our land, come from very far away. It would be a strange thing if the Portuguese would not enjoy the waters of the Tagus, because this river has its birth in Castile». BLUTEAU, *Vocabulario portuguez e latino*, III, p. 332, 2nd Column.