# CHAPTER 8
# LUSOPHONY IN THE FIELD OF WORLD KNOWLEDGE. A DEFENCE OF DIVERSITY

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-I-

It is virtually impossible to discuss what the field of world knowledge has to offer to lusophony - the Portuguese-speaking world - without first analysing the crude reality of globalisation. The global interdependence and global unity of the world system are pre-requisites for acquiring any scientific knowledge about any territory, any population and any of the collective processes of our age.

However, this global unity is not flat. And a good example of how plastic the models and processes of integration in the globalised world system are is provided by that group of countries and peoples which are linked together in the world of lusophony. It is true that in structural terms they occupy either peripheral or semi-peripheral places in their respective regions of the world system (Santos 1993), developing the arguments of Wallerstein). Portugal and Brazil stand out from the remaining countries whose official language is Portuguese in that they are *intermediate* in terms of their level of economic development and degree of approximation to the core, and in that they are *intermediaries* in the type of role which they are tending to fulfil in the world system: that of a link between one part of the periphery and the relevant parts of the centre. But Portugal is also one of that group of states which is preparing for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), which is one step further in the construction of a European Union (EU) which is to be a very special kind of supranational entity. Portugal's membership of that group is still in some degree affected by its peripheral situation, but it does enable it to carry out a mediating role in bringing other states closer to Europe, starting with Brazil. Brazil itself is committed to Mercosul, the Latin American common market. There is also a very strong historical basis for the relations of Brazil, that giant in Latin America, with the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. This is tied in above all with the slave trade, which is one of the pivotal elements in Brazil's multicultural foundations. But those relations have in recent times had a much more directly instrumental part to play, namely in mediating between Angolan and north American interests. As far as Portugal's position is concerned, it is still true to say there is a decisive influence in the various forms of relationship between the Angolan state and the Western countries and multinationals which

have economic interests there. But the same cannot be said for its equivalent role in other African countries, which are now being attracted to other spheres of influence. The case of Guiné Bissau springs to mind: it is part of an African sub-region under strong francophone influence. But we should think particularly of Mozambique and its open future, now that the existence of a new centre of the world system in the southern African cone is no longer a mere academic hypothesis.

If we move on from the economic and political level to a demographic, historical and cultural plane, to consider the movement of peoples and communication, this more significant feature which is the interweaving of involvements becomes even more marked. I have already mentioned Brazil's African sources. Let us look now at Portuguese emigration, which has been described as a "structural constant (Godinho 1978), and recall how, from the 15th century onwards, it has made the Portuguese presence overflow the strict Portuguese *domain,* and has made the social and cultural influence of Portugal overflow the bounds of colonisation and Empire. Portugal, a country which over the many centuries of its history has both dominated, and been dominated by, other countries, is a clear example of how impossible it is to reduce the position of any one country in the world system to any one stage and any one type. It has links to the United States by way of emigration from the Azores; links to South Africa by way of emigration from Madeira; and in recent contemporary history, a very high level of dependence on Western Europe, with the movement of the Portuguese population to France and Germany, before formal membership of the EEC. There is the historical connection with Brazil, first through colonisation and later through emigration and also through what are in fact intricate political strategies. There is the connection with Africa, and the Portuguese presence in Asia by way of Macau and Timor, and further still significant emigration to the new continent of Australia. And so on. And Portugal's case is not unique. We could also mention Mozambique's contacts with the other side of the Indian ocean, and the fact that there is a part of Brazil which has got close to the United States. So this interweaving of influences should be retained as a one of the pillars which structure the relationships of the lusophone countries with the world system.

I think two consequences can be drawn from these facts to help us in the interpretation of our question- the role of lusophony in the field of world knowledge.

The first conclusion is that none of the countries which today has Portuguese as its official language can be "locked in" to the closed circle of lusophony. We should not turn lusophony into a regional reservation, where the participating peoples and countries would enter into a kind of communion based on some uncertain *essence* of civilisation or history, and block out any other instincts or strategies for integration in and relationships with the international environment. Portugal does not "owe" more to the Atlantic than to Europe, it does not "owe" more to Brazil than to Spain or any other of its fellow

member-states in the EU, Portugal does not betray Brazil and its former African colonies when it cultivates close economic, political or cultural relations with other nations or supranational groupings. And the same can be said for Brazil, Angola, Guiné-Bissau, Mozambique, Cape Verde and S. Tomé e Príncipe.

From this we can straight away draw the second conclusion, that relations between the lusophone peoples and countries cannot be understood outside the patterns of multiple integration and sense of belonging in which they live and breathe. Lusophony makes sense both in real and imaginary terms, in this flexible, plastic context where the many and possibly contrasting positions in the world of these various countries are matched and intertwined: Portugal in Europe, Portugal as an arch between Europe and the Atlantic, Portugal as an arch between Europe and Africa, Portugal in the lusophone community, for example - like Brazil in South America and its links to the United States and Europe, and in its own links with former Portuguese Africa, like Mozambique with the Indian ocean and the southern African cone, and so on.

We may be able to outline a cultural and political project for lusophony on the basis of this complex set of attachments and relations. In other words, it may open up possibilities on several levels: in future diplomacy, in a dialogue between cultures, in spreading knowledge and in building partnerships. These partnerships would increase their relative strength of each of the partners and at the same time enable the group of partners as a whole to have its own voice on the international stage. In so doing the body of characteristics which bring the Portuguese-speaking countries together - their encounters in history, a common language, cultures which understand each other, a tradition of communication and exchange - could over the long term bring them together in creative joint action in the future.

-II-

The way in which social science institutions are organised, and the theoretical development of the social science disciplines, do not escape the impact of globalisation. In one sense they are in fact a particularly good illustration of the whole process of globalisation. The overwhelming presence of the English language as their *lingua franca,* the global influence of the theoretical models and systems which prevail in the Anglo-Saxon world (particularly in the United States) - and the fact that any authors, schools or publications which are outside it are relegated either partially or entirely to the status of a side-show, are all convincing proof of the impact of globalisation on scientific work and of the way in which movements which started in certain locales have expanded to achieve hegemony over others.

The evidence also shows the underlying conflicts involved in the movement towards expansion and globalisation. The ultimate triumph of Anglo-Saxon models, which today are so overwhelmingly prevalent, had its foundations and was later consolidated in the context of the confrontation between various methods and centres of influence, in particular in the competition with the francophone and, to a lesser extent the German-speaking world. Of course

when I am referring here to the French and German-speaking models on the one hand, and to the Anglo-Saxon model on the other, I do not mean just familiarity with and use of a particular language, but, much more all-embracingly, the whole influence of language, intellectual history, ways of thinking, ways in which teaching is organised, research, publishing and formal assessment and recognition. Now it is true that this confrontation is not over yet, not is the supremacy of English irreversible. In fact the issue is becoming more complex as new centres emerge. The most important of these will probably be that which is being built within the Iberian-American network and which is increasingly forcing the use of Spanish as the language of communication.

We should therefore not reduce the field of world knowledge to this relationship between various different forces which are competing for hegemony in a scientific environment which is ever more integrated. The future prospects of science cannot be restricted by the logic of competition for world supremacy, whether science be regarded as a body of acquired knowledge of its disciplines, as a strategy for generating and validating knowledge, as a system which creates technological information and output, or finally as a cultural and organisational community (Caraça 1997). Even though scientific knowledge is undoubtedly something which has its particular place in history and in the development of civilisation, and has a clear debt to the intellectual, technical and social development of modern European society, and even if its own expansion took place alongside that of modernity as a whole, it is based on a pre-disposition and a capacity for defining the nature of problems, a capacity for conjecture and testing of solutions, and for making ideas circulate amongst peers. These give scientific knowledge a dimension which we may describe as tending towards the universal. I do not want to force words too far beyond their meaning, but I believe it is possible to set against the actual systems of thought, communication and organisation which are current and which compete in the international scientific community the universal vocation of the ways of thinking and acting that those involved in scientific research consider to be the ideal norm, however far much of their actual practice is removed from it, and which Robert K. Merton tried to define several decades ago (Merton 1968).

For this very reason it seems to me very important that we recognise the potential of this process whereby the dynamics of international communication overflow the strict bounds of globalisation when seen as a dialectic between the globalisation of the local or the localisation of the global, and form movements which actually defy globalisation and promote a logic of cosmopolitan relations and a shared intellectual heritage (Santos, 1995). Following on in this line of thinking, and in the context of a discussion on the role of scientific communities which are tangential to the main axes of international scientific and technical influence, just like the one which we are trying to build around the concept of

lusophony, we should therefore take care not to overlook the cosmopolitan dimension of the sociological approach.

There is at the same time an additional factor resulting from the fact that Portuguese and Brazilian historians, anthropologists, economists and sociologists find themselves outside, or at the periphery of those two great competing centres - the Anglo-Saxon and the French. This has encouraged an attitude of openness and critical assimilation of contributions from both these centres. In what is only seemingly a paradox, this gives them an advantage over those of their colleagues who wished, or have been obliged, to shut themselves in to one or other of those centres. Let it be understood of course that I am speaking here of openness to a multiplicity of different models, of using many and varied authors, theories, schools, methodologies and sources of information, and not exclusively of the language in which these things are written. I say this in order to stress the point that the integration of the lusophone community in the field of world knowledge does not have to come about only, or even mainly, by the adoption of a humble and submissive attitude of peripheral dependency or by accepting the presumption that we are somehow structurally diminished.

Having said this, it is surely important not to lose sight of the analogous risks which we face in the struggles for hegemony within our own lusophone network, and of the indifference, unawareness and mutual hostility which may well exist, and partially at least does exist, above all between the stronger intellectual and scientific centres, Brazil and Portugal. For this very reason, any affirmation of lusophony as such in the field of world knowledge should, with intention, be based on a defence of diversity in language, issues and types of interpretation. The cause of diversity is in itself a good cause; but it is also an indispensable pre-requisite if the manifold nature of social science research is to be enriched. Without it, there will be no universalism and no cosmopolitanism. It is, moreover, the only possible durable basis on which we can assert our regional identity.

In the first part of this essay I sought to argue that while a common official language no doubt forms a connecting link between Portuguese-speaking peoples and countries, it is by no means the only link on which their historical ties and their current (outline) plans for a community are based. These draw on a multiplicity of factors, on different periods in time and on different forms of correlation. Nor should those historical ties and that projected community spill over into a sick obsession with exclusivity, where any exposure on the part of any one of the partner countries to other regional groupings or other forms of cooperation is regarded with suspicion. By analogy, and if we look at lusophony from the point of view of the spread of the social sciences throughout the world, its scope is not restricted to the language itself, nor by its true significance or by the degree to which it is accepted in international councils.

Let us nevertheless use language as the platform on which to build the other dimensions needed for lusophony to establish its place in the world. The

Portuguese language itself is pluralistic. It has its own internal variants and is in contact with other languages. So it is a language which is increasingly varied and cross-bred. This does not mean that it loses its essential unity. It is used as a communication code by thousands of specialists in the area of scientific investigation of social life and its structure. Many of these specialists study matters which are not necessarily related to events and situations in lusophone countries. This does not mean that the Portuguese language is any less relevant. Many others, the vast majority in fact, make a deliberate choice to study those let us say "home-grown" social events and situations, which in turn are also defined by the basic factor of language and the speech of millions of people. Simplifying and distinguishing things, if it is correct to say that social relations are at the same time relations of communication and relations of power, then the language in which we think, express ourselves and communicate, and the language in which we create and recreate meaning for ourselves is absolutely and essentially necessary to anyone who would wish to understand and spread understanding of social action.

So let us go a bit further. At the outset we have to take seriously the basic warning which linguists and psychologists have given us in relation to the combination of language and thought: one is not extraneous to the other. The terms which people use to express themselves, and the language which they use, are frameworks in which thought and communication evolve. It can be said that up to a certain point - beyond which we would fall back again into parochialism and lack of communication - that for a social scientist to write in Portuguese on the, let us say, "non-lusophone" world implies establishing a specific "approach to the issues" of that world: in other words a specific way of thinking and of giving concrete form to that way of thinking.

Going on from this, since language affects the construction of knowledge, then the terminology of the language which is used brings with it, or generates, its own effects. These include the imposition of specific subject matter (the relevant scope and the relevant issues), the way in which strategies for dealing with issues are developed (analytical and interpretative models, methods of assessment and validation), and the way results are expressed, made known and stored. And if this holds true when we compare what I will call logical languages (for example, the inductive and the abductive) and different methodological languages (for example, the formalised and the intensive, the mathematical and the qualitative), I believe it also holds true for different languages in themselves. I believe that the process of grasping a problem or a solution in a language which in some way encompasses and empowers that learning process acquires characteristics which are due to the language which is used, namely the baggage of history and customs which the use of that language implies. I am not suggesting that it changes it completely. What I want to emphasise is that there is a margin of difference and that it is unquestionably present. In the same way that theories of social science which circulate in the international arena may need a specific contribution which is

provided by a Spanish point of view, or an Arab, or a Chinese, or French point of view, and so on, so they can only benefit from a lusophone contribution as well, and will in fact lose out if they are restricted to the Anglo-American perspective.

But this is not all, nor yet is it the most important aspect. The most important point is that contemporary practitioners of the social sciences, namely of those which are open to the multiplicity of the areas of knowledge and in particular challenge the traditional opposition between humanistic and scientific culture so that they can become the "domain for their potential reconciliation" (Wallerstein et al. 1996, p.99), and which develop complex epistemologies shaped by different intellectual affiliations, know that there is no action without meaning and therefore that there is no analytical knowledge without hermeneutics. They know that understanding is not in opposition to explanation, but that it nourishes and enriches explanation. These practitioners of the open social sciences (Wallerstein et al., 1996) know better than anyone that you cannot understand and interpret social change and social events by isolating them form the context of meaning, that is, the culture which surrounds them. So how could that "local knowledge" (Geertz 1983) set itself up so high as to disregard language, culture and history, how could it claim to do without those very anchors of its interpretation of the universe of meaning which it is investigating. In short, how could it understand the lusophones - the speakers of Portuguese - without itself practising lusophony - the Portuguese language?

-III-

What conclusions can we draw from the preceding remarks? For myself I would draw the following:

The fundamental basis for the assertion of lusophony in the field of world knowledge lies in the value of diversity. The significance of diversity has become all the more decisive for the social sciences today to the extent that its practitioners have discovered that the multi-faceted approach to the study of social change is both inescapable and highly productive, as are an intellectual openness to different sources and different forms of knowledge, and communication between various theoretical models and different organisational systems.

The diversity of terminology, in which I include the diversity of the languages in which thoughts are expressed and articulated, is an essential part of that wider diversity I have just referred to. An international scientific community which spoke the same language in the same way, which obeyed the same canons and used the same criteria for evaluating results and for the recognition of authors and their works, a scientific community following a single pattern of rules governing thinking, channels of communication and the ways in which works achieve greatness and are widely circulated - such a community would be an almost insurmountable obstacle to the development of a type of knowledge which, while still being scientific, is nonetheless many-sided. Or

rather, because it is scientific, and in order to be scientific, it has to be many-sided.

To assert the need for diversity is to establish one of the conditions under which multiple facts, points of view and discoveries can be brought together, to be discussed and compared. We cannot of course deduce from this an aggressive defence of lusophony against the current centres of diffusion and hegemony. If it is worth while fighting for lusophony as a "member" of the whole body which goes to make up the field of world knowledge, it is worth it precisely because we want to prevent this field from being reduced to nothing more than a battleground between centres of influence. It is worth it because we want to bring a transverse and cosmopolitan dimension (in the sense in which the word cosmopolitan is used here) to the globalisation of the social science community, and to help it to look inwards on itself and become an open ground on which differences thrive and multiple exchanges take place.

To achieve this, it is absolutely essential that we refuse to conceive of lusophony as a kind of closed network, in which a group of countries and peoples united by the same official language would undertake to ignore the outside world and where even the differences between them would have to be eliminated. On the contrary, lusophony has a history, and will have a future as a design for connecting and linking its partners. But it will also be a design for openness and cross-fertilisation. It is precisely in its internal diversity, in its plasticity, that it will bring added value to the globalised world.

Secondly, if lusophony represents something specific, or a "soft core" of specific characteristics, and therefore makes its own particular contribution, we should not define that particular nature of its contribution in the essentialist way, as a *quid* which nobody can ever quite locate with precision nor describe analytically, but which so often is advanced as being something like the line of a mystic and unbreakable union between those countries which have a debt to the language of Camões, to the sense of adventure, to the love of the sea, or even to a love of Pélé's football (there are various ways in which this is dressed up). No. We are dealing here with facts from our own world which should be properly safeguarded and not lost in the catch-all explanations which are in vogue from time to time. We need to explain those facts with a thorough understanding of language and culture. But just because we are doing so does not mean that we should cease dealing with the kind of processes of change, the problems and the concepts which social science is able to address effectively.

Finally if we consider that lusophony constitutes a way of looking at the world, a no doubt coherent perspective or window on a social and scientific world, but in itself also made up of multiple perspectives, outlooks and windows, this means that it is only worth our while moving on from lusophony to point ourselves towards others. No-one can retain and take advantage of that outlook if he does not also know and become familiar with the outlook of others and if he hides from the channels and mechanisms, or rather, the theoretical and institutional frameworks where international cooperation takes

place. For this reason it would be unsustainably parochial to argue that the defence of lusophony would involve dropping English and other languages of international communication or the reviews, the schools, the conferences, the authors, the trends, and so on, which are influential at world level. It does indeed mean doing all those things, but at the same time keeping up a constant dialogue with the problems, the history, the culture, the language, the future plans even, of those countries which are linked together by lusophony, - not as a closed system, but as an open network. This is a network which should be open to diversity - both its own internal diversity and the diversity which makes up the world.

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