



RECENSÃO

*Lisbon Rising: Urban Social Movements
in the Portuguese Revolution, 1974-5,*
de Pedro Ramos Pinto,
por Robert M. Fishman

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*Lisbon Rising: Urban Social Movements
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Pedro Ramos Pinto has written an important new book on mass-level urban movements in Portugal's decisive years of transformation, 1974 and '75, a major scholarly contribution that will be required reading not only for those interested in the Carnation Revolution and its aftermath but also for students and scholars concerned with the large

question of how popular mobilization, social revolution and democratization relate to one another. *Lisbon Rising* takes up several interrelated questions about the significance and the authenticity of genuine bottom-up participation in the large-scale socio-political transformation that began on April 25, 1974. Ramos Pinto has written a book that answers

those questions with skill and in a highly persuasive way. But the book in fact does much more than that. It makes several other large contributions.

Although its empirical focus centers on the urban social movement in Lisbon, it effectively serves as a general history of the period. Top-level leaders and large-scale processes are drawn into the narrative largely due to their explanatory relevance for the book's primary focus, but the result is a work that tells the larger story of the revolution and of the democratization experience from the standpoint of players who are not normally featured in narratives of democratization. But perhaps the most important and deepest significance of the book lies in the way that it shows how large and complex questions – such as the relationship between political parties and the social mobilization of the poor – can only be adequately addressed with an historical methodology. Not only historians but also many social scientists are fundamentally concerned with such issues. But a major lesson of this book – one that can, and should be, heeded by social scientists as well as historians – is that the answers to such questions are conditioned by historically complex processes and for that reason change over time. Indeed, Ramos Pinto shows us that genuinely compelling answers to such questions must be inherently historical ones that focus on understanding the dynamic process of interaction and of change that characterizes large-scale social processes such as Portugal's democratizing revolution. The relationship between mass-level

sentiment, the urban social movement, and political parties shifted several times during the two years under study. The book delineates and makes sense out of that process of dynamic change.

At its core, Ramos Pinto's book irrefutably shows that Portugal's democratization was inextricably interwoven with a genuine social revolution that unleashed a great deal of "bottom up" participation – including Lisbon's urban social movement. *Lisbon Rising* offers complex and compelling answers to interrelated questions that hold considerable importance not only for the Portuguese case but also for our broader cross-national understanding of democracy, popular participation, and revolution. Those compelling answers rest on an extraordinary scholarly effort to collect, weigh, and analyze all available evidence. Through meticulous research and an analytically sharp review of the wealth of evidence that he gathers, Ramos Pinto shows that political parties and government officials were frequently followers – not leaders – in the social turn taken by Portugal's revolution, and as a result its democratization pathway. Yet in some instances the reverse was also true. After the elections of April 1975 those political forces that were well to the left of the new parliamentary majority saw in the urban movement, and in other forms of popular pressure, the basis for building a power center outside of – and in opposition to – emergent electoral institutions; given that perspective, they then attempted to lead the movement in an increasingly radical direction. The book provides readers with a clear

understanding that the urban social movement and – in a broader sense – the “popular forces” that pushed the pathway of change in a solidly social direction should not be seen as unitary actors. In the new post-electoral context the urban movement became increasingly heterogeneous, and the same was true for the overall set of political parties. Ramos Pinto relies on the “relational” approach of Tilly, McAdam, Tarrow, and others to show that the perspectives of all the relevant actors developed and changed over time as a function of dynamic interactions with others. The view of the revolutionary process provided by Ramos Pinto is a highly textured and complex one but perhaps even more importantly it is one that highlights changes taking place over time as a result of the dynamic interactions between actors – and institutions – in the 1974-5 period.

Readers learn of several fundamental determinants which – in their interactions – shape the path of political action and social transformation. The political and social dynamic of the period was strongly influenced by what theorists of revolution call “multiple sovereignty”, which is to say the simultaneous existence of competing forms of power and legitimation. Ramos Pinto has uncovered a wealth of new primary source material which he analyzes in conjunction with an exhaustive reading of the relevant secondary literature both on this case and on the larger processes and issues posed by Portugal’s extraordinary socio-political road of transformation. The book is greatly enriched by its use of social

science insights and approaches, but it also offers powerful evidence of just how indispensable historical methodology is for addressing the concerns of political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists. The fine-grained research of Ramos Pinto clearly establishes the historical importance of the *Estado Novo*, and above all of the final years of the dictatorship, for forging the underlying social and political dispositions of urban residents that would give way to Lisbon’s broad-ranging urban movement once political conditions permitted.

A large question for Ramos Pinto and in a broader sense for the literature on the revolution concerns the issue of sustainability. Did the social character of the revolution live on after the curtailment of its most radical phase and the triumph of moderation in November 1975? If so, *how* did it live on and where can it be seen? *Lisbon Rising* makes an extremely important contribution to the overarching answer to this sweeping question. Ramos Pinto builds a very strong case for his argument that the lack of a popular social movement response to the triumph of moderates in November 1975 was largely a reflection of the genuine sentiments and preferences of movement participants. In his analysis the turn of one sector of the movement toward a radical systemic agenda forged in opposition to political moderates – a macro-political and ideologically framed agenda that reduced the salience of practical urban issues and demands – ended up weakening the movement and undercutting its mobilization potential. When

macro-level political strategies clashed with bottom-up social demands or concerns, the consequence was a decline in the capacity of the movement to shape large-scale political outcomes. Nevertheless, this conclusion should not be taken to mean that the revolution's social imprint on Portugal's nascent democracy had ended. Exactly how – and *how much* – that imprint lives on is clearly one of many issues on which scholars will continue to work and debate. *Lisbon Rising* is a major new contribution to that debate, one of the very best books to appear on Portugal's revolutionary road to democracy.

The significance of this book, and more broadly of the research on April 25 and its aftermath, extends well beyond the case-specific literature on Portugal. The importance of the events – and the broad ranging transformations – precipitated by the captains' coup of 1974 is not limited to Portugal and its former colonies. April 25 was not simply the beginning of the ultimately worldwide “Third Wave” of democratization. As the findings and

arguments of this book clearly establish, it was also an historically unusual socially transformative episode of that worldwide shift in forms of political rule, and is thus the episode that raises the broadest and deepest questions about the nature of democracy, political participation, and social transformation. The Portuguese revolution holds a significance quite out of proportion to the country's size and will continue to be studied and debated into the foreseeable future. The excellent scholarship of *Lisbon Rising* will surely serve not only to enlighten readers of the book but also to inspire future research and debate.

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