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## Introduction to the Special Issue: Examining Relationships in the Portuguese Speaking World

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## **Introduction to the Special Issue: Examining Complex Relationships in the Portuguese Speaking World**

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Marking the 32nd anniversary of Kennesaw State University's (KSU) award-winning Annual Country Study Program, the Year of the Portuguese Speaking World (YPSW), has been a truly unique and rewarding undertaking. We owe such an indelible experience to the tremendous diversity represented in the constellation of countries within this community, as well as to the myriad of views and perspectives to which our guest speakers espoused, and which they also shared, throughout the project. The Portuguese-speaking world includes the following countries and various cultural enclaves spread throughout four continents: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, East Timor, Equatorial Guinea, Goa, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Mozambique, Portugal, and São Tomé and Príncipe, among others. Our program of study has focused especially on the relationships which have developed among these countries over the past 500 years, as well as with other Portuguese-speaking communities in their role in the wider world.

One of many overarching goals of the program has been to understand the complex histories and dynamics of this relatively undiscovered world at KSU. Such a project is borne from the growth and collapse of the Portuguese Empire and the ever-changing post/neo-colonial conditions that continues to shape the national and cultural identities, worldviews, and relationships of these countries and their people. Portugal, the first modern nation-state in Europe, took advantage of advanced seafaring techniques learned from its earlier Arab conquerors to become a nation of global traders and explorers. They first established colonies in the Atlantic Islands of Madeira, the Azores, and Cape Verde archipelago, then developed a network of factories/fortifications along the Atlantic coast of Africa (for example, to trade for gold at the Elmina castle in Ghana) and then along the Indian Ocean. The 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas fixed a boundary among the competing Portuguese and Spanish empires, incorporating Brazil and much of Africa into Portugal's domain. Three years later, Vasco da Gama led the first

European seaborne expedition to make landfall in Asia, at Calicut in India, returning with precious cargoes of spices. Notably, upon arrival, da Gama encountered Christian communities already present in India (Fernández-Armesto, 2006, p. 178). The first essay in this volume describes the iconography of royal portraiture that transposes Christian motifs onto local scenes; while the second article further articulates the motivations and myths surrounding de Gama's voyages of discovery. It emphasizes, in particular, the messianic zeal in carrying out a so-called civilizing mission. After the establishment of trading ports in India, Portuguese expansion developed in entrepôts in places such as Macau, China, and Nagasaki, Japan. This allowed Portugal, essentially, to monopolize the sea routes from Europe to Asia for 100 years. Indeed, the Portuguese were instrumental to the development of highly decentralized, social networks of global trade, beyond that which already existed in the Indian Ocean and other long-distance routes, which have endured and continue to shape such relationships today. David Hancock, in *Oceans of Wine* (2009), traced these extensive networks related to the Madeira wine trade especially in North America. In the United States, today, large communities of Portuguese speakers live in the Boston area. For example, New Bedford's Feast of the Blessed Sacrament attracts over 100,000 people and claims to be the largest Portuguese feast in the world. The final article in this special issue reviews Macau's trade relationships with the Portuguese-speaking world revealing serious weaknesses but also opportunities for growth.

Understanding differences in concepts of hybridity, creolization, and gender and race relations in the Portuguese -speaking world have been critical recurring themes in this year's study. Race, especially, was used to identify, mark, and separate groups of people, to place them within a hierarchy ranging from civilization to barbarity, and to explain and justify the rule and domination of Europeans over others (Williamson, 2016). One of the distinguishing characteristics of Portuguese colonialism was its reliance on marriage and miscegenation to expand its influence and deny claims of racism. Owen and Klubocka (2014) write, "Linking expansionist impulse to sexual desire," we have come to know this as "Lusotropicalism," a term that encompasses many other aspects of colonial cultural re-shaping (p. 1). This includes the rampant justification of cultural, linguistic, and social submission of colonial peoples via the above-mentioned discourse. Encouraged by government and church in part due to Portugal's small population and increasing European competition for global conquests, such unions—ranging from genuine voluntary companionship to coercive rape and abuse and resulting in both wanted and unwanted children—had significant consequences for both colonizer and colonized (Reid, 2014, p. 31).

Noting that "identities are always relational but seldom reciprocal," for de Sousa Santos (2002, p. 20) post-colonial hybridity and alterity rest along a continuum between Prospero and Caliban, between colonizer and colonized. The theory of the "calibanized Prospero" face-to-face with the "prosperized Caliban," although rife with Lusotropicalist possibilities, attempts to build an image of Portuguese colonialism as one in which the former would become unthinkable without the latter, and where reciprocity and mutual respect is the best possible outcome. Historically, it means "those who would render the Portuguese as a

proper and prosperous Prospero ascribed to them a Lusitanian, Roman and Germanic ancestry. . . [and] those that viewed the Portuguese as a reluctant, inconsequent, and cannibalized Prospero ascribed to them Jewish, Moorish, and African ancestry” (de Sousa Santos, 2002, p. 28). In more recent critical work the issue of an unstable, centralized cultural framework coming face-to-face with the cultural diversity that the Lusophone World’s various countries and territories encompasses has also taken center stage (Matta Matta, 2001, pp. 31-32). Within most of the articles present in this volume these and related notions of class, ethnicity, race, and sociopolitical (in)stabilities make themselves apparent.

In terms of gender continuity within such a theoretical system this means that “. . . Portuguese post-colonialism calls for a strong articulation with the question of sexual discrimination and feminism . . .” (de Sousa Santos, 2002, p. 17). The article “The Integrity of Women in Re-making a Nation: The Case of Guinea-Bissau” specifically looks at gender relations and the roles of women as agents of change, moving beyond the dichotomies rampant in earlier critical frameworks. Perhaps in contrast to the views of de Sousa Santos, yet well within the ideal of “lusofonia,” the article on “The Universality of Traditional Folktales” considers similarities in values across cultures that in some ways may transcend issues of power. Also in this volume, the short story, “A Lagoa do Cacimbo,” further contributes to the literary perspective on issues of tradition and modernity in contrast both with one another and with the theories which attempt to bind them.

The advent of Early Modern slavery and the Atlantic slave trade also corresponded with the Portuguese colonial legacy and, ironically, a system we may now characterize as an early variant of globalization. One of the most devastating impacts of the contact between Europeans and Native Americans was that of diseases such as smallpox which caused widespread epidemics and loss of life. In the Brazilian colonies, because of these decimating illnesses, and the desire to exploit labor for economic gain, the loss of native populations lead the Portuguese to begin importing enslaved Africans from the regions around the Angolan colony to work on sugarcane plantations. Slavery was the key institution to the development of the sugar industry as well as other commodities (gold, tobacco, coffee, cotton, indigo, rubber, brasilwood, etc.). Because of these lucrative industries, Brazil became the jewel in the crown of the Portuguese empire. The trade saw more enslaved Africans forced to Brazil (4 million) and over a longer period of time than any other country. As a result, the impact of African cultures on Brazil is ever-present. Beyond influences on the Portuguese language itself, it is most obviously evidenced through traditions that involve a level of religious syncretism and cultural expression in resistance to slavery’s oppression such as Capoeira, Candomblé, and certain Carnival performances. Yet, it also permeates numerous aspects of daily life especially in the northern states of Bahia and Pernambuco. Due to the shorter distance between Africa and Brazil, it was also the only territory in the Americas that regularly exported goods directly back to Africa. Direct trade between Brazil and Southern Africa remains a vital economic and social driver of change in the Portuguese-speaking world. These ongoing “South-South” relationships have begun to take on new meaning to embrace alternative views of social justice and the solidarity economy.

Among the most interesting episodes in all of world history is the unprecedented move in 1808 of the Portuguese Royal Court and Capital from Lisbon to Brazil with the help of the British Navy in order to escape Napoleon's forces. Moving the Royal capital from Lisbon to Salvador was done to protect the most lucrative trade holdings of the empire. A similar move occurred later when the Sultan of Oman moved his capital from Muscat to the spice island of Zanzibar. The Napoleonic Wars were accompanied by rising European nationalism with British sea power confining French imperialism to mainland Europe. The Portuguese monarchy escorted to Brazil subsequently opened the entire Portuguese Empire to British trade, indicating the importance of collaborative alliances to compete globally, although some observers have cast Portugal in the relationship of being an informal colony of Great Britain (de Sousa Santos, 2002, p. 11). After King João VI returned to Portugal in 1821, his son Pedro remained in Brazil claiming Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1822. Unfortunately, most of the countries in the Portuguese-speaking world only gained their independence from Portugal 150 years later in 1974-75 following the overthrow of authoritarian rule in Portugal (15 years after most African countries gained independence from British and French colonial powers). This makes this Year of the Portuguese Speaking World also the year of the 40th anniversary of these countries' independence. For Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, independence was only achieved after years of guerilla warfare and armed struggle. The decolonization of these Portuguese territories also went hand-in-hand with nationalist movements committed to socialism; yet, many of the colonial period legacies, such as centralizing linguistic practices, were still part of the "national project" of many countries, including Angola (Arenas, 2011, p. 160). African decolonization in the Portuguese-speaking world occurred against the background of supposedly having learned lessons from the previous British and French colonies, involved extensive military conflict and traumatic violence, was seen as "the last great hope of Third World socialism," and occurred simultaneously with the Carnation Revolution's overthrow of the Salazar-Caetano regime inextricably linking change in Portugal with change in Africa (Chabal, 2002, pp. 18-19). In the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution, over a million Portuguese citizens fled the African territories. Portuguese emigration and the sending of remittances back to Portugal have been important aspects of economic development for Portugal before, during, and after the colonial period.

A notable consequence of this colonial legacy and the circumstances of its final moments has been that the so-called periphery (i.e., Portugal's former colonies in Africa and Asia) was now influencing the center (i.e., Portugal). As sites of value, today, Portuguese Africa is being examined as emergent leaders in cultural, social, aesthetic, and economic initiatives that impact the greater Portuguese-speaking world (Lundy, 2016). Interestingly, many Portuguese are now moving to Angola, Brazil, and Mozambique in search of work; more so, such a movement "back" to the former colonies has been by invitation and with the support of the Portuguese government (Pinto, 2011, p3). At the same time, Portugal has become an important link for the Portuguese-speaking world within the European Union as well as a highly regarded global center of diverse artistic,

musical, and literary culture (“Portugal,” para. 1). In this sense, while Portugal has represented this world’s rich and complex past, and Brazil symbolizes the challenges and opportunities of the present, Lusophone Africa is viewed as a vital place for the Portuguese-speaking world’s future potential. Moreover, today, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP, or “Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa”) is working to support each other’s progress in mutually beneficial ways. The article “The Portuguesinhos: Return and Reintegration of Angolan Police Officers who Trained Abroad” focuses on assessing the impact of a specific collaborative training project between two countries in the Portuguese-speaking world whose relationship has spanned colony, political revolution, social evolution, and a nascent and somewhat fractured collaborative “reencontro,” or finding of each other again.

The specific and varied circumstances of the colonial pasts, independence movements, and post-colonial developments represent another important theme in our year-long program of study of the Portuguese-speaking world. In Angola and Mozambique, especially, independence did not result in an immediate end to the manipulation of structures of power and privilege or the establishment of stable democracies. For example, Angola’s most important export crop, coffee, and the political fights for its control “affected the wars of liberation in the 1970’s, the wars of intervention in the 1980’s, and even the civil wars in the 1990’s” (Birmingham, 2002, p. 140). As emphasized by KSU visiting Fulbright scholar Raul Fernandes (2016) during his talk in the YPSW series, the struggle for independence represented not only a rejection of colonial order but was also a time-consuming process of cultural emancipation and political consciousness aimed at building alternative forms of livelihood and prosperity. In discussing the development of a large dam in Mozambique, Allen and Barbara Isaacman (2013) have observed that,

despite their very different economic agendas and ideological orientations, the Portuguese colonial regime, the postindependence socialist state, and its free-market successor all heralded the development promise of Cahora Bassa. Whether Portuguese or Africans held the reins of state power, the dam symbolized the ability of science and technology to master nature and ensure human progress . . . [yet], Cahora Bassa has caused very real ecological, economic, and social trauma for Zambezi valley residents. (p. 4)

Unfortunately, fifty years after its completion, the Cahora Bassa Dam today continues to impoverish the more than half a million residents of the lower Zambezi river valley and to devastate the region’s local ecosystems and wildlife. The challenges of balancing economic development with environmental sustainability are among the most critical issues for the Portuguese-speaking world.

Brazil, a unique example of a long-term post-colonial nation in the Portuguese-speaking world, holds an important place within it as well as globally. Born out of Portugal’s economic colonial empire and now almost 190 years post-independence, it is a vital trading partner of the United States and therefore of particular interest to many of our faculty, staff, students, and local community.

Georgia's governor recently led a trade delegation to Brazil. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Brazil was the sixth largest destination for global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows in 2013. The country typically receives close to half of South America's total incoming foreign investment. U.S. trade with Brazil exceeds \$100 billion annually. However, not all of the news from Brazil is so positive. The nation also boasts the second most expansive market for cocaine and the second largest small arms industry in the world, a murder rate higher than that of Mexico, and the fourth largest incarceration rate in the world (Reid, 2014, pp. 189-191). To be fair, it should be noted that the United States has the dubious distinction of surpassing Brazil in most of these categories. Nonetheless, and despite the recent downturn and corruption scandals, overall long-term economic prospects in Brazil remain relatively good due to growing domestic demand, global demand for commodity exports, a growing middle class, increased investments in infrastructure and development of offshore oil reserves, and prudent macroeconomic policies.

In the face of the dramatic economic and political swings that define Brazil's contemporary evolution, a strong desire to learn about what makes Brazil so unique in the Americas has brought many Portuguese language students into the classroom. The article in this volume on "Critical Pedagogy and Language Acquisition" examines how studying Brazil's current economic and political crises presents an engaging and meaningful method for enhancing language learning through problem-solving practices.

It has been the goal of the YPSW to foster a critical understanding of this diverse region. In this vein, the intellectual community at KSU has looked to contribute to the development of more nuanced approaches in solving the complex global issues and challenges that our students face. This will strengthen them as critical and thoughtful members of society, as global citizens, as they attempt to interact constructively, responsibly and appropriately, across cultures. The YPSW Program has aimed to provide participants with a wide range of perspectives on different aspects of the artistic, economic, social, scientific, literary, musical, and cultural life of the Lusophone, or Portuguese-speaking, world. This has been possible via a weekly series of lectures and round tables, our many cultural events, the student symposium and conference, the two-week seminar abroad, and this special issue of the *Journal of Global Initiatives*. The project has also offered opportunities to engage with people from various countries, regions, and cultures in meaningful dialogue. In sum, we hope that readers will find this volume informative and thought-provoking as a means for better understanding and engaging the Portuguese-speaking world in all of the vast diversity it represents.

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