

The Portuguese Armed Forces after the Cold War: How post-Modern are They?

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War, associated with the dilution of East-West tensions and symbolically identified with the fall of the Berlin wall in September of 1989, brought with it profound transformations in the framework of strategic orientations, objectives and the organizational structure of the armed forces of Western democracies. These changes—the identification of which is not always clear¹-- have been charted along two main dimensions: on the one hand, the strategic, political definition of the use of force and the management of violence in a new international scenario; on the other hand, the changing relationship between the armed forces and the societies in which they function.

If, in international terms, studies and investigations regarding this topic do not abound, it is even more difficult to find Portuguese works in which, from a sociological point of view, authors seek to identify and evaluate the impact of such transformations upon the military institution.² In this paper, an evaluation is proposed, even though partial, of the positioning and evolutionary tendencies of the Portuguese Armed Forces in the framework of the new trends in military organization and civil-military relations in Western countries.

Taking as a point of departure one of the analytical frameworks most discussed in the recent sociology of the military institutions, proposed by Moskos, Williams and Segal (2000)—and (perhaps equivocally) designed as a model of the “postmodern” military—one can observe, synthetically and based upon the available empirical information, the way the Portuguese Armed Forces are positioned regarding some of the variables of this model: strategic orientation (definition of missions and perception of threats); organization (types of recruitment, structure of forces and socio-professional identities); public attitudes towards the military and, finally, patterns of gender integration.³

1. Change in Military Organizations: a new emerging paradigm?

One of the most important assumptions in civil-military relation's theory is that armed forces are Janus-faced organizations: on the one hand, they have to assure military effectiveness in order to respond to the changes of the strategic context; on the other, especially in democracies, they must be responsive to wider social values and thus to the society in which they are embedded and which pays for them (Dandeker, 1998; Ammendola, 1999). The dilemmas and tensions originating from this dual frame of reference have been particularly highlighted since the end of the Cold War, and even more after September 11th. A number of changes at the broader social-political level - in

¹ This is clear, above all, if such tendencies toward change are observed in connection with the occurrences of 11 September 2001 and their consequences in world politics.

² Actually, it was possible to identify some texts in which the recent evolutionary tendencies of the Portuguese Armed Forces are explored, among which Santos (2001) and Matos (2004) stand out, but none of them does so from a clearly sociological perspective.

³ In the work *Segurança e Defesa na Viragem do Milénio*, Loureiro dos Santos (2001) attempts an analysis using this same model, but based upon a politico-strategic reflection and a relative scarcity of empirical information.

terms of both the international strategic context and domestic social structures - have fundamentally and progressively challenged previous national definitions of strategic interests, conceptions of security and threat, and even existing perspectives regarding the nature of warfare.

At the *international strategic level*, the most obvious feature of these changes has been identified as the "shift from the 'certainties' of the bi-polar standoff between the two superpowers to a more uncertain, fragmented world of competing centers of economic, political and military power" (Dandeker, 1994: 639). Especially in the past two decades, security issues have been redefined. Traditional approaches based on the classical paradigm of realism, focusing on a strict political-military dimension and a stato-centric vision, have been challenged⁴. Non-military dimensions of security, considered as 'common-risks' which individual nation-states can neither escape from nor deal with alone, have thus come to the fore. The new concept of 'risk-society' posited a major emphasis on these new sources of danger that cut across political borders (Shaw, 1998, 1991). Although it should be recognized that this is not a new idea - since Western states have developed a perspective of common security in response to perceived common threats for at least half a century -, some new elements are now decisive. Among them is the emergence of a new and rather 'nebulous' category of political subject, 'the international community', whose individual members' rights and interests are increasingly acquiring stature in world politics. As argued by Shaw, "however inconsistently Western states and the UN respond to genocide, human rights abuse, anti-democratic regimes, global poverty and environmental degradation, it is an extremely significant transformation which has turned these issues into definers of world politics" (Shaw, 1998: 78). However, 'common risks' affect different groups very unequally and not all of them are military in nature, although some may become a potential source of military threat. As a result, it is difficult for any society to identify the conditions under which certain risks (defined as capabilities not matched to intent) may become identifiable threats (Dandeker, 1994).

Military institutions have attempted to adapt to these different challenges by seeking to achieve greater flexibility in its organizational structures and by responding to pressure from the wider society to conform to civilian values such as social equality.⁵

Prolonging a process that has been developing since the middle of the XXth century, military establishments have restructured their organizational format, accelerating the trend away from mass armed forces towards more technically-based volunteer forces. Traditional armies, based upon general conscription, have given place to more limited formations, professionalized and easily mobilized, following a tendency of reduction of the military contingents and potential. In the course of this process, and in

⁴ Barry Buzan's study, *People, States and Fear* (Buzan, 1991), was one of the first attempts to re-think the core concept of 'security', calling attention to its multidimensional nature. While maintaining that states are still the 'dominant units', he at the same time criticized the conceptions of security bound to the level of individual states and military issues and called for a broadening of the concept in order to include political, economic, societal and environmental dimensions.

⁵ This is evident in the debates about the inclusion of women or homosexuals in the Armed Forces.

large part as a consequence of technological development, there has been a substantial modification in the *ratio* between combat functions and support functions (the “tooth to tail ratio”), the second ones acquiring an enormous preponderance. Technological change has fragmented the military institution into multiple specialties and has increased the recourse to non-military specialists for the development and operation of extremely complex arms systems.

On the other hand, especially after the end of the Cold War, military missions have been reoriented, with priority shifting from national territorial defense to multinational interventions aimed at supporting peace and stability at a more global scale (Dandeker, 1998: 84). Although international law after World War II already contemplated this type of mission, the actual number of multinational 'peacekeeping operations' suffered a substantial increase since the dilution of East-West tensions and the renewal of the UN's role in world politics. Precisely because this entailed fundamental changes in the nature and scope of military missions and not a mere increase in its number, a distinction has been proposed between the first and second generations of peacekeeping. The second type of mission, which took on increased importance among the armed forces' 'operative possibilities', may thus be distinguished from the former at different levels. Some of its key features are: 1) Complexity and ‘fuzziness’: experience has shown that this type of mission is reasonably unpredictable in what concerns its territorial scope as well as its specific ‘engagement rules’; 2) The armed forces become multinationalized in various degrees and forms. In order to be effective, national leadership has to address interoperability problems, “including not only technology and equipment but also a range of cultural issues arising from cooperation between formations working under quite different national personnel policies” (Dandeker, 1998: 85); 3) They also become multifunctional: military dimensions increasingly interface with local and international political dimensions. The need to interact with a wide variety of political and social actors has challenged the traditional understanding (and practice) of military professionalism.

The problem, as Dandeker has put it, is that “changes stemming from the external strategic context and the domestic social structure are not occurring sequentially but simultaneously. Thus, while armed forces in most industrial countries have experienced sharp cuts and restructuring of their organizational format, military personnel are being asked to be prepared for a wider variety of missions encompassing peace support operations as well as traditional war-fighting” (Dandeker, 1998: 85).

One of the models initially proposed to explain the transformations underway during the Post-World War II and the Cold War periods was known as the Institution/Occupation thesis (Moskos: 1977, 1986; Moskos and Wood, 1988). In this model a set of polarized empirical indicators is identified in a continuum ranging from a military organization that is highly divergent from civilian society to one which is highly convergent with civilian structures. Two ideal-type models are conceptualized: an institutional or divergent model, legitimated in terms of norms and traditional values, where the members of the institution are seen as following a ‘vocation’, relying on symbolic rewards and sharing “a purpose transcending individual self-interest in favor of a presumed higher good” (Moskos, 1986: 378); and an occupational or convergent model,

close to the dominant market rationality of civilian society, where motivations to join or remain in the military are of an extrinsic material and instrumental nature. When this thesis was first presented, Moskos defended the idea that the dominant trend in the American Armed Forces was a shift from a ‘vocational’ to an ‘occupational’ logic, and a corresponding move from institutionalism toward occupationalism⁶.

More recently, changes in the military have been reinterpreted as the move from a ‘modern’ to a ‘postmodern’⁷ form of organization and thus a new model –even if more complementary than oppositional to the I/O thesis– has been proposed. Moskos, Williams and Segal (2000) posited the thesis that Western developed democracies are moving from a type of organization associated with nationalism, to an organizational form adapted to a new world system and to the erosion of traditional forms of national sovereignty. While the modern military was based on “a combination of conscripted lower ranks or militia and a professional officer corps, war-oriented in mission, masculine in make-up and ethos, and sharply differentiated from civilian society”, the new post-modern type “undergoes a loosening of ties with the nation state. The basic format shifts towards a volunteer force, more multipurpose in mission, increasingly multipurpose in makeup and ethos and with greater permeability with civilian society” (Moskos et al., 2000: 1).

At the global societal analytical dimension, five major organizational changes are highlighted: increasing structural and cultural interpenetrability between civilian and military spheres; diminution of differences within the armed services based on branch, rank and type of functions; change in military purpose from war-fighting to missions that cannot be labeled as military in a traditional sense; increased use of military forces in international operations legitimized by entities beyond the nation-state and finally, internationalization of the military themselves.

Battistelli has argued that all these changes can be placed along the classic “institutional/occupational” dichotomy proposed by Moskos to describe the transition from an early modern to a late modern military organization (Battistelli, 1997). The same seems to happen with correlated changes at the organizational analytical level, namely in terms of the dominant professional ideal (movement away from the warrior-hero type towards the emphasis on the soldier scholar and soldier-statesman ideals), the increasing

⁶ However, it is important to note that, for Moskos, this didn’t involve the identification of homogeneous and unambiguous situations on one pole or the other, nor the finding of intermediary situations on a *continuum*. The proposed hypothesis suggested, rather, the real existence of plural models in which the presence of contradictory characteristics is admitted. Therefore, there would be a “compartmentalizing” of the military: although some sectors would remain typically military and divergent from civil society—namely, the combat units—others, particularly in the more technical and administrative specialties, would come closer to the occupational model.

⁷ The way in which the term ‘postmodern’ is used in this proposal has very little to do with general academic conceptions of postmodernism. The authors recognize that there is probably only one area of overlap: the predictions of cultural relativism and a breakdown of traditional lines of demarcation between civil society and military. They note that “the framework for analysis (...) is not postmodern at all” and even that the editors and chapter authors of the book “are quite orthodox positivists”(!) (Moskos, Williams and Segal, 2000: 273). In this sense, there is a conceptual stretching which may cause more confusion than clarification of the described tendency. For a thorough criticism of the identified paradigmatic change cf. Booth et. al. 2001.

use of civilian personnel, fuller integration of women and acceptance of homosexuals and more tolerance of conscientious objection and alternative forms of military service.

One important question that can be placed regarding the analytic relevance of this new frame is, however, that of knowing whether we are in fact facing the emergence of a new paradigm, or, on the contrary, if the identified changes extend or even “radicalize” tendencies clearly emerging during the period of modernity. Booth, Kestnbaum and Segal have argued in this last direction, underlining that while some of the identified changes do not seem to have historic precedents, the majority represent global efforts at readapting existing force structures to new contingencies, something that the armed forces and other organizations have always done during the modern era: “(...) the thesis of the postmodern armed forces is not at all postmodern, but instead a distinctly modern effort at theoretical construction, undertaken to capture a host of structural adaptations to environmental change.” (Booth, Kestnbaum and Segal, 2001: 336-337).⁸

It is based upon this understanding that we seek to use some of the analytical dimensions of the model proposed by Moskos, Williams and Segal to observe the Portuguese Armed Force.

2. The Portuguese Armed Forces and the international scenario

2.1 Strategic orientations: perception of threat and mission definition

In spite of the relevance of the role performed by the military in the transition process towards democracy in Portugal, its progressive withdrawal from the political scene has been accompanied by a process of objective and subjective marginalization⁹ which has continued until the present time. The Portuguese Armed Forces arrived at the end of the Cold War period in a particularly difficult situation in terms of material obsolescence, relative absence of strategic orientation and shrinking budgets, while experiencing a climate of distrust between politicians and members of the military (Carrilho, 1994; Matos, 2004).

The lack of clear defense policies has been systematically pointed out and made clear by the actual absence of an up-dated strategic concept of national defense. Santos has put it bluntly: “no one knows which perception the Portuguese democratic political power has regarding potential threats. (...) This unusual situation, unique among Western countries, is due to the complete obsolescence of state structure for security and defense issues” (Santos, 2001: 184). As far as mission definition is concerned, similar criticisms

⁸ On the other hand, some authors have recognized that “the arguments invoked to justify the emergence of a new type of postmodern armed force were convincing at the time when they were proposed; however, following 11 September, 2001, some of them will have to be rethought, based upon the transformations registered in terms of public opinion, perception of threat, and a series of other key issues” (Callaghan and Kernic, 2003: 43).

⁹ This phenomenon of the relative marginalization of the Armed Forces has in fact been identified as one of the characteristics common to those countries which have intensified the change towards the referred postmodern paradigm in civil-military relations (Booth, Kestnbaum and Segal, 2001).

have been echoed, especially from within the military institution itself. According to some of these analysts, the nature of military missions that emerges from official documents seems to be broad enough as to cover any possible situation regarding the use of military force (Santos, 2001: 185). Santos notes that the result of this ‘strategic vacuum’ is that the organization, equipment and utilization of military forces are taken on a case-by-case *ad hoc* basis, with all the technical and economic problems this attitude involves. Others underline the inadequacy of existing legal frames and the perverse effects that a merely reactive (and often delayed) attitude on the part of political leaders has on the international perception of the Portuguese military (Pinto, 2002: 185).

Nevertheless, apart from these criticisms, it is possible to identify some general tendencies in the political definition of defense orientations. Contrary to the opinion of some significant sectors of the country’s political and military elite, which continued to adopt an isolationist attitude in the famous “collaborating neutrality” line that prevailed during the international conflicts of the twentieth century¹⁰, the participation of the Portuguese military in international missions has become an increasingly important area for military action. The need to build a system of forces capable to respond to national commitments in NATO and the European Union, as well as the participation in multinational peacekeeping missions, had already been identified as a goal to reach in the *Conceito Estratégico de Defesa Nacional* defined in 1994. Furthermore, in the *Livro Branco da Defesa Nacional* (White Book of National Defence) of 2001, the importance of the new missions is emphasized, even though on par with the traditional defense of the integrity of the national territory, and of participation in the collective defense within NATO.

The *Conceito Estratégico de Defesa Nacional*, revised in 2003, also promoted, and in a more clear form, the reevaluation of the Portuguese military participation in foreign missions, an aspect which has continued to be emphasized by political leaders. In declarations to a newspaper in 2005, the then Minister of Defense, Luís Amado, highlighted the fact that the priority missions of the Portuguese Armed Forces would be exactly those referring to the international commitments and the support of foreign policy within the framework of NATO and the European Union. According to his perspective, the ability to affirm the political personality and identity of Portugal as a sovereign State would occur through participation “in the new frontiers in which the security of the country regarding regional security is decided (...). For this, we need to move from a vision (...) which is still very static and territorial, to one (...) of rapid response and force projection, of interoperability and joint action.”¹¹

Although the Portuguese troops had already been modestly present in United Nations operations, especially in Angola and Mozambique,¹² it was the presence of a

¹⁰ The Portuguese position regarding a possible involvement in the Second Gulf War was identified as a good example of this attitude: while supporting a western coalition, Portugal was presented as a “non-belligerent” state.

¹¹ Interview in *Expresso*, June 4th 2005.

¹² Portuguese military observers have joined various UN missions, but in a limited manner: UNOGIL in Lebanon in 1958, in Namibia in 1989; ONOMUZ in Mozambique, UNAVEM II, UNAVEM III and MONUA in Angola.

Portuguese contingent in Bosnia in 1996 that signaled a real inflection of policy in this domain, in the sense that some analysts have defined as the “Europeanization” of the Portuguese defense policy (Vasconcelos, 1999). In this year, the so-called “new missions” represented nearly half of military operational expenses (46%) and approximately 12% of the defense budget. On the other hand, the Bosnian experience revealed a growth of support in public, military and political opinion regarding the participation of the Portuguese military in multinational operations and peacekeeping missions (Vasconcelos, 1999; Sousa, 1999; Carreiras, 1999), and initiated a systematic presence, even if not very expressive in numbers, of the Portuguese military in international missions. In 2002, for example, the Portuguese Armed Forces mobilized 1337 soldiers in peace related operations conducted under the auspices of NATO in Bosnia (SFOR-331), Kosovo (KFOR-15), Macedonia (FYROM-6), Afghanistan (ISAF-21), and of the UN in Timor (UNTAET/UNMISSET-964).¹³

However, old policy dilemmas – brought together in the “Angola or Bosnia” debate — became extremely visible during the Kosovo crisis, when the national capacity to maintain troops simultaneously in more than one operation was severely tested.¹⁴ The ambiguities and lack of strategic definition of Portuguese defense policy emerge thus as a major source of civil-military tension in a context where growing internationalization seems to be the unavoidable ‘destiny’ of the Portuguese military.

2.2. Organizational change and the dominant military professional

2.2.1. Force structure: from conscription to the all-volunteer force

Following a generalized tendency in most of the Western world, Portugal carried out, already in the beginning of the twenty first century, the transition between conscription and an exclusively voluntary force in peacetime. The constitutional reference to compulsory military service was eliminated during the constitutional revision of 1997 and, two year later, a new law of military service (Law 174-99) established that which could be considered the major challenge of the reorganization process: the institution of an exclusively voluntary force in peacetime, which would be complete in 2004 after a four year transition period.

This new model developed after a decade of slow— not always consensual, but doubtlessly clear— tendency towards professionalization of the armed forces. The approval in 1991 of Law no. 22/91 (a revision of the Law of Military Service of 1987) constituted an important step in this direction, through the creation of a mixed “semiprofessional” system, based upon temporary contract regimes. The approval of the regulatory framework of this new model in 1993, aimed essentially at a rationalization of means (reduction in the number of steps and departments of command) and optimization

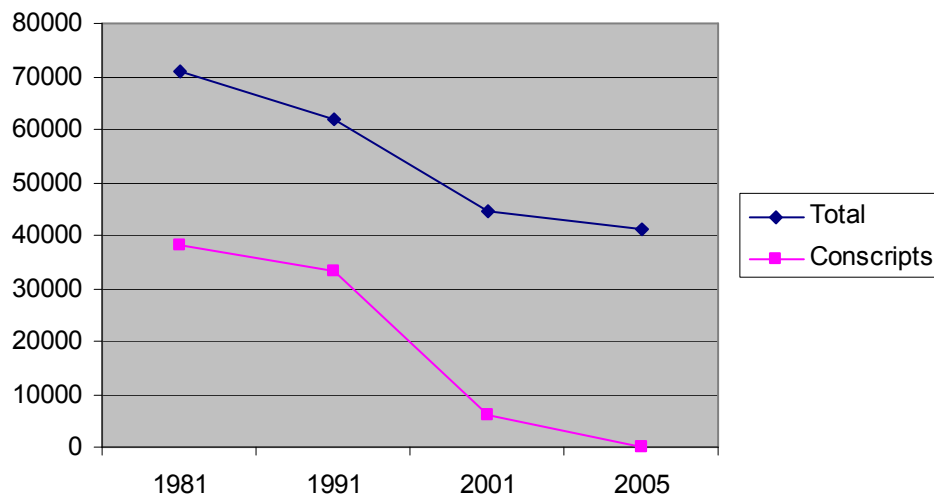
¹³ Information available in the *Anuário Estatístico da Defesa Nacional*, 2002 (MDN, 2002).

¹⁴ Eventually, this led later to the withdrawal of Portuguese soldiers stationed in the Kosovo region in order to ensure the Portuguese military presence in East Timor.

of relations between the two components of the system of forces: the territorial component (based upon compulsory military service) and the operational component (based upon compulsory recruitment), as well as a correct utilization of human resources (MDN, 1998). Two fundamental changes were introduced: a) a reduction in the time of compulsory service; b) the creation of new categories of “voluntary” and “contract” service.

Both measures must be analyzed in the context of a more ample process of transformation of the Portuguese Armed Forces in terms of the reduction of forces and the general re-dimensioning of the institution. Between 1989 and 2005, a reduction of 41.9% of the total military force effectively occurred, corresponding to a decrease from 72,926 to around 41,000 (Figure 1). This decrease occurred for two main reasons: the reduction in the number of conscript soldiers and an identical reduction of the personnel in the permanent structure (cf. Carrilho, 1994: 121/127).

Figure 1 – Total military personnel and conscripts in the Portuguese Armed Forces (1981-2005)



Source: Portuguese Ministry of Defense

The reduction of conscription time to 4 months was one of the first indications of a shift towards what was referred to, in the law as well as in other documents and promotional material, as “a new conception of military service”, based on the key-concepts of modernization and professionalization. However, the most important element of the model was the second measure: the introduction of special recruitment regimes of a

voluntary nature. Under the new framework, after three to four months of basic training (SEN), volunteer soldiers could serve for a period of up to 18 months –the *voluntariado* regime– and then apply for a fixed-term contract– the *contrato* regime. A set of economic incentives was established in order to make these new regimes attractive to young people. These included vocational orientation, access to education, professional training, social security, financial allowances, fringe benefits and support for re-integration into civilian life after the end of the contract.

In spite of initial ambitions, this model began to show various weaknesses soon after being implemented (MDN, 1998; UAL, 1998), eventually being considered excessively expensive, of dubious effectiveness, a generator of instability in the system and de-motivation among youths and, above all, reinforcing social inequality.¹⁵

It is no wonder, then, that in the context of the transition to an exclusively voluntary force, questions were raised regarding the ability to attract candidates or to retain them in the ranks. One of the greatest problems confronted by the previous system was exactly that of the ability to attract and retain volunteers, as well as of an ineffective application of the established incentives system (MDN, 1998).

Thus, apart from centralization on the organizational level, various other measures were proposed with the aim of facing the challenge of professionalisation, specifically regarding the attraction of a sufficient number of qualified personnel. Immediately, and probably as the most important axis of the model, a renovated policy of socio-economic incentives was announced, including access to academic qualifications and professional certifications, support in entering the job market, and additional measures of preferential treatment in public programs and institutions after the completion of the contractual term (Decree-Law no. 320-A/2000). Furthermore, the importance of the public relations dimension of the recruitment policy was emphasized, as was the possible increase of the proportion of civilian personnel and women in the ranks.

Some analysts, however, showed doubts as to the facility of implementation. Referring to the viability of that which was designated as the “professionalized” model, Mira Vaz shared this apprehension regarding the effectiveness of the incentive system: “Considering the difficulties that other countries with higher financial incentives continue to experience, the question will also not be easily resolved in Portugal” (Vaz, 2001: 70). A skeptical position was also assumed by Loureiro dos Santos, referring to the safeguarding clause by which the government could resort to conscription, in case the number of volunteers did not satisfy the needs of the system of forces: “We will see if there shall be enough courage to enact this clause, given that it is almost certain that this will be necessary” (Santos, 2001: 188).

¹⁵ Difficulties involving organization and the lack of infra-structures implied that only a limited percentage of suitable citizens would be effectively incorporated. Although this had been occurring throughout the 1980’s (and even before), the rate of incorporation continually diminished between 1992 and 1998, descending from 52% to 31%; since only some qualified citizens were effectively incorporated, the system would thus damage the principles of equal treatment.

In any case, although it is early to evaluate the results of the present all volunteer recruitment process, the data relative to the first incorporations have not justified the more pessimistic forecasts. Considering, however, that the ability to attract volunteers to the armed forces has historically depended upon factors such as the state of the economy, one must carefully evaluate the impact and evolution of this type of variable upon personnel policy design. Some of the stated tendencies, namely the attention to civilian personnel and the need to diversify the potential target-public for recruitment, are important elements of this new frame, which is common to the various countries which have begun similar processes of reform.

2.2.2 *Organizational identification: institutional, occupational and 'postmodern' trends*

Various indicators point to the existence of a plurality of orientations in the Portuguese Armed Forces, both regarding organizational structure and individual and collective identities.

If we concentrate on the first of these plans, and particularly on the constitution of an all-volunteer force, it is possible to discern a clear tendency in the occupational direction. In previous works, there has been an ample illustration of this movement, towards the intensification of “occupational” appeals for military recruitment (Carreiras, 1995, 1997). The transition, since 1991, to a semi-professional system was effectively accompanied by the production of brochures, fliers, posters, and above all, by a broad media campaign, projecting a new image of the armed forces. Military service began to be presented to young people as an attractive project, an opportunity for professional qualification and an instrument of personal promotion.¹⁶ The valuation of techno-professional aspects and a clear distancing relative to the traditional military ethos seems to have been evident in this new model. Although appeals of the institutional type were not lacking, the emphasis was decidedly attributed to occupational motivations. Nevertheless, this “occupational” orientation showed to be more intense in the discursive and symbolic dimension than in concrete reality, considering that many of the measures proposed had not been very successful, the same happening with the early plans to modernize and re-equip the forces.

One decade later, at the moment of transition towards the all volunteer force, the same type of appeals accompanied the recruitment efforts. However, concerns prevailed over the “institutional” aspects, which is clearly illustrated in the *Livro Branco da Defesa Nacional* of 2001: “(...) the existence of a reference to values based upon patriotism and ethics, the formation of a spirit of mission and the availability of a variety of diverse and effective incentives are conditions to take into account in the new model of professionalized military service. Their absence would reduce such service to a mere

¹⁶ “The developed legal model is intended to make the young person view military enlistment as a demanding professional activity of high public interest, counterbalancing the inconveniences of its eventually short duration with adequate stimuli to re-implant the citizen into active non-military life, enriched by the instruments useful for integral human success” (Portaria 227-B/92, Dr. II series, no. 169, 24/7/92).

technical offering, (...) and, quite probably, would turn its base of recruitment into a universe of outcasts. To create the conditions that prevent this type of perverse and undesirable development, must be an obligation and a commitment on the part of the political power.”¹⁷

Furthermore, and still at the level of organizational analysis, various indicators point to the relative predominance of conservative forces of an “institutional” nature.

One of these indicators refers to the question of military unionism and professional representation. In spite of a growing opening up towards various forms of professional association, the constitution of military unions was still prohibited in 2005, and the *Lei da Defesa Nacional e das Forças Armadas* (LDNFA) imposed several restrictions on its soldiers in terms of civic and political rights. After more than a decade during which various professional interests’ associations were created,¹⁸ some alterations were introduced in the law, with the goal of eliminating previous restrictions, namely those relative to freedom of expression and of association. In 2001, the Portuguese parliament approved an alteration of article no. 31 of the LDNFA, according to which military personnel would begin to be covered by the general domain of the freedoms of expression, assembly, demonstration, association and collective petitioning, making an exception, though, of rigorous non-partisanship, of their not being able to freely express themselves regarding the handling of the national defense policy, of endangering the cohesion and discipline of the armed forces or even of “using their weapon, their post or their function for any political or unionist intervention.” Although some authors do not hesitate to identify in these transformations the emergence of military unionism in Portugal (Matos, 2004: 237-242), these developments were considered relatively limited by the media as well as by various military sectors (Santos, 2001: 195), given that the new rights thus consecrated referred exclusively to the professional/deontological dimension, excluding, in practice, any type of unionism or political involvement.

The way in which the Western countries have come to deal with the question of representation of soldiers’ interests has been extremely diversified, a common model or uniform practice not existing in the current democracies (Carrilho, 1994: 158; Bartle and Heinecken, 2006). However, the prudent form with which the new scheme of representation of the socio-professional interests of soldiers in Portugal was institutionalized appears to be evident, if we compare it with that of countries such as Holland. There, in the end of the 1990’s, some large unions represented the interests of approximately 80% of the personnel in the defense sector. Its action frequently being combined with that of civilian unions, these organizations acquired a growing influence and an effective negotiating ability in terms of salaries and careers (Van der Meulen, 2000).

¹⁷ http://www.mdn.gov.pt/Publicacoes/livro_branco/livro_branco.htm#11

¹⁸ In the end of the 1980’s, various associations began to be constituted: Associação dos Militares na Reserva e na Reforma (Association of Reserve and Retired Soldiers-ASMIRR), 1987; Associação Nacional de Sargentos (National Association of Sergeants-ANS), 1989; Associação dos Oficiais das Forças Armadas (Association of Armed Forces Officers- AOFA), 1992; Associação Nacional dos Contratados do Exército (National Association of Contracted Army Members- ANCE), 1996.

Attitudes regarding cultural diversity, and specifically those regarding sexual orientation, are the aspects of the model herein referred in which the conservative institutional forces seem to be more expressive. While the reactions to the entrance of women in military service do not suggest strong resistance, the theme of homosexuality remains taboo in the armed forces, which essentially reflects the general social situation. This question, which in some countries has inspired heated debates, while in other has been somewhat resolved (or, at least, “pacified”), does not exist in Portugal: the presence of homosexuals in the armed forces is not even designated as a politically relevant question. The invisibility of the problem results from the fact that it has not become a theme of discussion. Although the legal restrictions regarding the presence of homosexuals in the military service have ceased to exist, the current practice is that of discretely excluding those members who explicitly indicate a homosexual orientation. As Santos notes, “If there should be any knowledge that a certain soldier is homosexual, he risks being isolated and marginalized, in a corps whose gregarious nature is very important (...) [this] can lead to an attitude of voluntary leave, which in fact functions, in the end, as a punishment” (Santos, 2001: 194). The same author calls further attention to the fact that there is a generalized use of derogatory and offensive terms to label those who are suspected of being, or assumed to be, homosexuals.

Turning now to a micro-sociological perspective, from the point of view of professional identities, there is ambivalence in the orientations of Portuguese soldiers. Data obtained through surveys conducted throughout the 1990’s confirm the growth of occupational orientations among some categories of military personnel, but also the fact that institutional orientations have maintained relative predominance. A representative survey to officers of the three branches of the armed forces conducted in 1990 (Carrilho, 1990), showed that the occupational motivations for joining the military profession were dominant in the Air Force, while in the Navy and the Army the officers proved to be closer to institutional values. In any case, Carrilho noted that, at this moment, a plural identity model could be considered dominant (Carrilho, 1994: 152). At the end of the decade, another survey to soldiers who participated in the IFOR and SFOR missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina also showed a diversity of orientations (Carreiras, 1999). The results pointed to a considerable weight of institutional factors as reasons for adherence to a military career, that is, factors associated to the traditional military culture and values (with an emphasis upon aspects such as national service or the *esprit de corps*), as well as to expressive and self-centered factors, such as a “search for adventure” or “personal test”, which authors such as Battistelli associate with the so-called paradigm of the postmodern military (Battistelli, 1997); whereas these last factors were those mostly underlined by enlisted members, the officers and NCOs were the groups in which the greater percentage highlighted the institutional factor “desire to serve the country”.

2.3. Public attitudes towards the military

The aforementioned transformations concerning the armed forces, namely the end of the draft, force reduction, and involvement in peacekeeping missions, have usually been backed by considerable majorities of public opinion. According to recent national

surveys, public opinion has slowly but clearly shifted to support a totally voluntary system of military service. In 1996 about two thirds of the population supported an all-volunteer force, versus 31.5% who still preferred conscription (Carrilho, 1998). The same proportions held in 1999 (Matos and Bacalhau, 2001: 93).

Likewise, participation in peacekeeping missions has been generally welcomed. In Portugal, as seen above, political and military leaders have been rather conservative regarding the international involvement of the military. However, from the moment Portuguese troops were deployed to the IFOR mission in Bosnia, positions started to change, moving towards a clearer will to participate in post-Cold-War military missions. Not only were the armed forces willing to intervene internationally, but already in 1993, public opinion was also favorable to an European operation in the Balkans. In 1996 more than 2/3 of the Portuguese public supported the country's participation in the IFOR mission.

The presence of Portuguese soldiers in Bosnia became one of the major media events in the country and contributed to an increasing visibility of the Balkan conflict. In fact, after the deployment the media started to give much more attention to the situation in Bosnia. Between January and August of 1996, 25 newspaper, radio and television channels kept 150 permanent reporters in Bosnia. During the first months, soldiers had many reasons to complain and their complaints were immediately reported by the journalists. The absence of previous experience in this type of mission and, above all, the bad weather conditions (previous participation had always taken place in Africa) resulted in various difficulties of installation and inadequate equipment. More than other national contingents, Portuguese troops had to adapt to the new European scenario. The novelty of the whole experience resulted in an unprecedented attention and support given to the armed forces and the military's new missions.

2.4 Patterns of gender integration

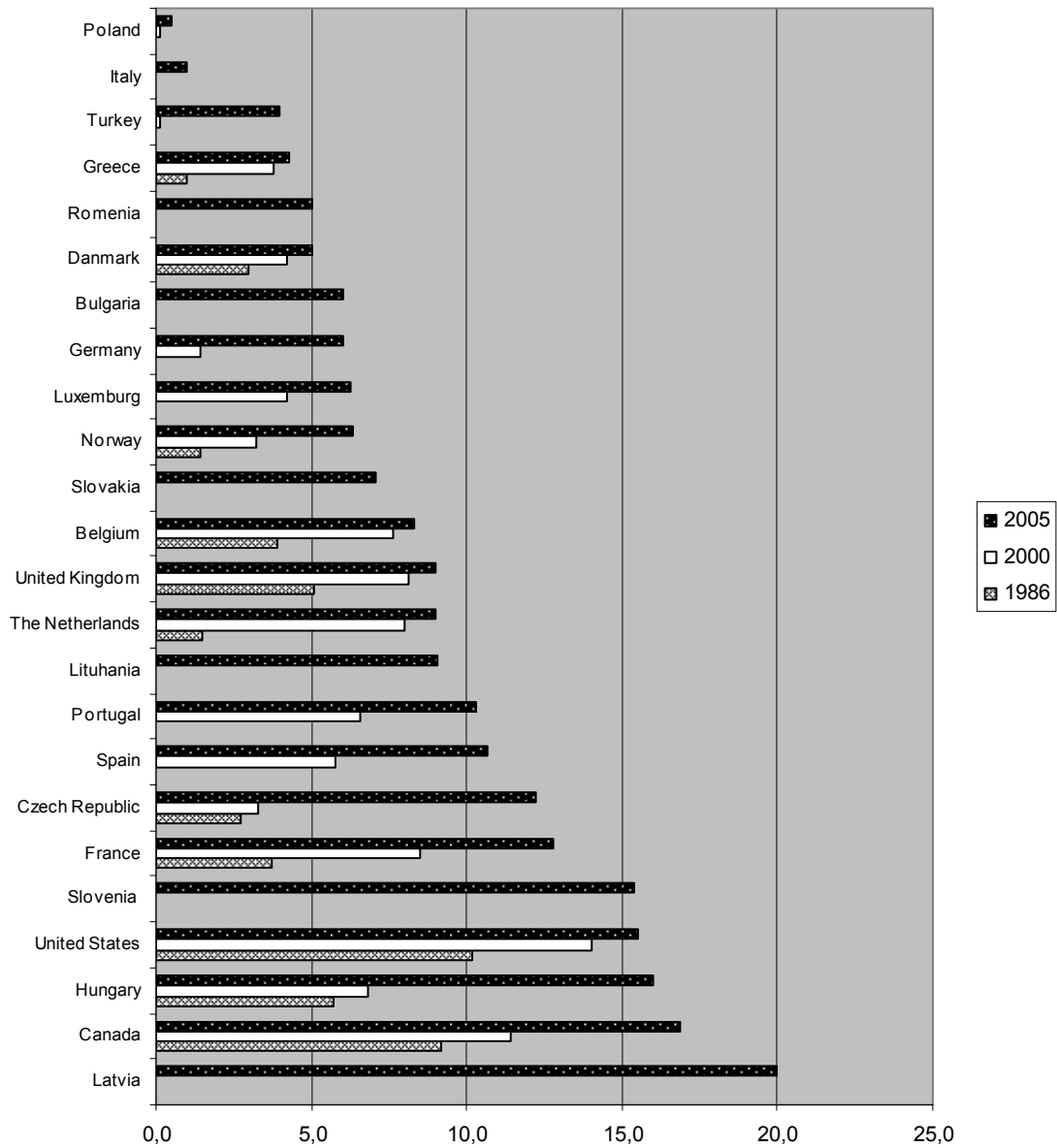
Regarding the role of women, the model under analysis suggests that the present situation in terms of female military integration reveals the tendency towards the new emerging paradigm. Whereas in the "pre-modern" era, women were generally excluded from military service, the period of advanced modernity is characterized by partial integration, namely the abolition of exclusively female corps, but also by the persistence of reduced levels of representation and resistances to the incorporation of women in combat functions. On the contrary, the "post-modern" military would coincide with strong pressures in the direction of a total opening of the military specialties and units to women.

To be sure, there has been a real tendency towards the intensification of female recruitment in the armed forces of the Western countries over the past three decades. Although the rhythm and characteristics of the process have varied significantly, in the beginning of the 21st century, all the member countries of NATO had recruited women, increased their representation in the ranks and eliminated many of the previously existing

conditions (Carreiras, 2002a, 2002b). However, it is important to note that, at present, in spite of this tendency to eliminate discrimination and equalize status between service members, occupational restrictions still exist and women are largely excluded from many combat related areas and functions. They have limited representation in higher hierarchical posts and power positions within the military system. They are not always readily accepted, but often have to face hostile reactions. Empirical data show that even when formal/legal integration has been accomplished, effective social integration has not necessarily followed (Winslow and Dunn, 2002). Moreover, while recognizing that those states that have made more formal commitments are more likely to carry out integration, Moskos, Williams and Segal emphasize the fact that “de jure policies do not automatically translate into de facto opportunities, and domestic interest groups know they must use both legal and political instruments to ensure that they do”(Moskos, Williams and Segal, 1999:270).

Let us observe, in a comparative perspective, some of the indicators of this situation, by first analysing global representation levels (figure 2).

Figure 2 – Percentage of women in the armed forces of NATO (1986-2005)



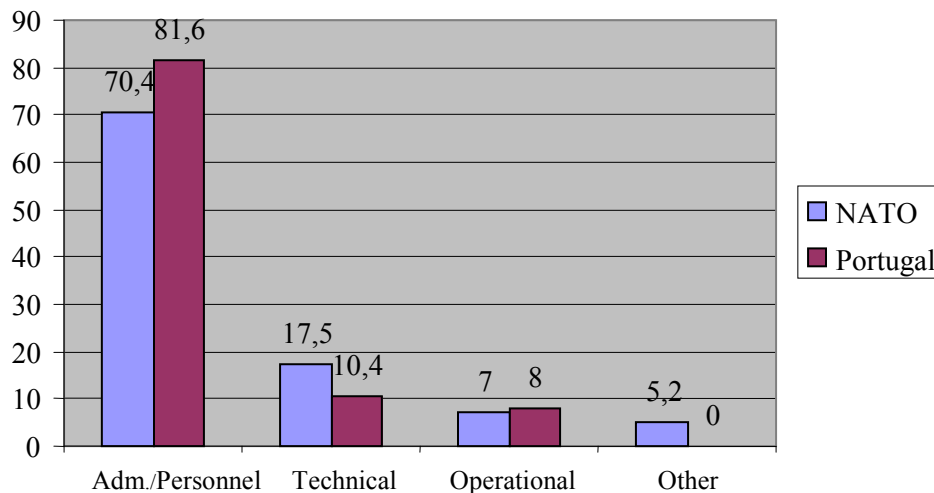
Sources: Stanley and Segal (1988: 563); Carreiras (2006); Annual reports of the Committee of Women in the NATO Forces.

In the year 2000, approximately 289,000 women performed their functions in the armed forces of NATO. Representation levels varied then between less than 1% in the cases of Poland or Turkey and 14% in the United States. In 2005 percentages ranged from 0.47% in Poland and 20% in Latvia.

In spite of having begun female recruitment later, Southern European countries such as Portugal and Spain have made notable progress in terms of the numeric representation of women in the armed forces. The data relative to Portugal show the amplitude of values attained if compared to those of other countries and, above all, if we consider the relatively late moment in which the process began in this country. Numbers increased regularly during the last decade of the 20th century, a fact that, associated with the reduction of military personnel, originated an accentuated growth of female representation: if in 1994 the 1,300 Portuguese women soldiers still represented a residual percentage, in the year 2002 there were approximately 3,100 female soldiers, constituting 8.5% of a global force of 36,000 troops. This growth in absolute numbers was clear until 1998; after that, numbers seemed to stabilize around 3,000. From 2001 absolute numbers started to raise again and in 2006 there were 4399 women in the Portuguese armed forces, representing 12% of the total personnel pool.

The occupational distribution of female soldiers reveals, in its turn, a recognized and therefore unsurprising pattern. Data available for 13 nations (Carreiras, 2006) show that in 2000, more than two thirds (70.4%) of female soldiers were concentrated in health and support functions (personnel, administration, logistics), 17.5% in technical areas (engineering and communications) and only 7% occupied positions in more operational specialties or in the combat arms (artillery, infantry, cavalry). In Portugal, these values were 81.6%, 10.4% and 8% respectively (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Occupational distribution of female soldiers in NATO and Portugal (2000) (%)



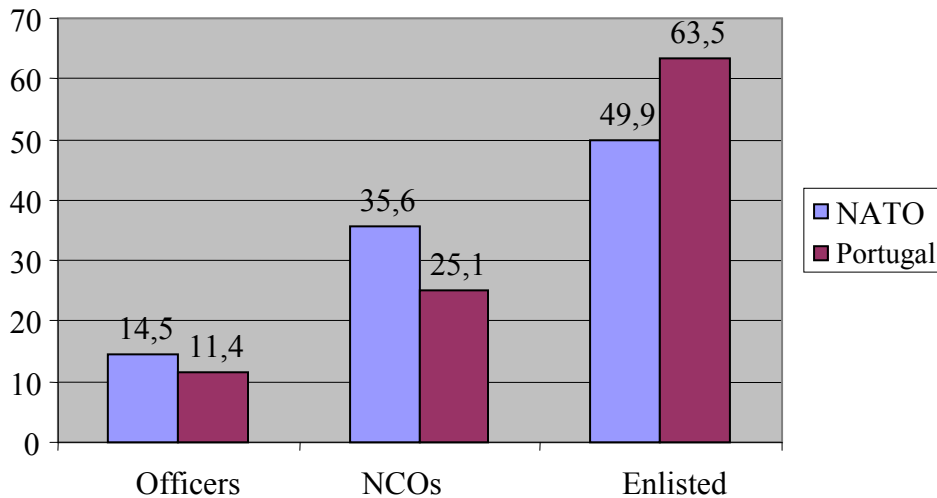
Source: Carreiras, 2006

Even when the relative weight of each of these occupational areas within the organizational structure is taken into consideration, women are clearly over-represented in traditionally female specialties. In effect, support functions in the areas of personnel, finance, administration and health services employed approximately 46.1% of the NATO's military personnel, with a percentage of more than 70% in the case of women. The opposite occurred in the technical areas, and in particular in the operational areas, where this asymmetry was also extremely visible: 22.2% of military personnel were concentrated in this last type of function, versus only 7% of women.

In Portugal, we also have data that allows for the evaluation of the relative weight of women within each occupational area. In the same year, they continued to be over-represented in the areas of support and health, constituting 19.8% and 12.2% respectively of the total personnel pool in each of those areas. One should note, however, the fact of their representing 5.5% of soldiers placed in "technical" specialties (engineering and communications), a percentage which, while below the general average of female representation in the armed forces, was still much higher than that registered in operational areas (combat arms) (1.9%).

Regarding hierarchical representation, around half of all female soldiers in NATO were concentrated in the category of enlisted soldiers (49.9%), 36% were NCOs and 15% officers. Contrary to that which occurred regarding occupational representation, female distribution among the various hierarchical categories was much more balanced when compared with that of the organizational structure: although in absolute terms, women were found to be over-represented in the category of enlisted personnel, they were only slightly under-represented in the categories of officers and NCOs (Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Rank Distribution of Female Military Personnel in NATO and in Portugal (%) (2000)



Source: Carreiras, 2006

However, the relative percentages within each hierarchical category point to another situation. Due to their reduced absolute number, women were a minority in the various categories: on average, in the NATO countries, women constituted 6.9% of the officers, 7.0% of the NCOs and 8.1% of the enlisted soldiers. It is important to note that, contrary to the common idea that female representation is comparatively more limited in the category of officers than among enlisted soldiers, the data show that there is not a great asymmetry between these situations. In Portugal, this distribution was, nevertheless, more asymmetrical, and thus the same values revealed an over-representation in the category of enlisted soldiers (13.4%) and an under-representation among officers and NCOs (4.7% and 4.3% respectively).

On the other hand, besides being concentrated at the base of the hierarchy, from the point of view of the contractual situation, the presence of women was still relatively insignificant in the permanent structure, where they only constituted 0.8% of the troops, and much higher than the average (17%) among non-permanent personnel, that is, among those military professionals fulfilling the *Serviço Efectivo Normal* (SEN), in the *Regime de Voluntariado* (RV) and in the *Regime de Contrato* (RC). The fact of their already representing 11.3% of the cadets in training in the military academies suggested, however, that the weight of the female component in the officer's category could come to grow in the following years, as long as there were not a strong tendency to drop out or quit before completion of the course. In this sense, the situation of the Air Force Academy stood out, since 20.6% of the cadets were women.

To summarize, if we compare Portugal with those countries that have a longer experience of female participation, in spite of the highlighted differences, we find similar patterns in terms of: a) the tendency towards the formal elimination of restrictions of female access to military functions; b) levels of representations that are generally limited, although, in this case, resulting from a rapid growth; c) under-representation of women on higher hierarchical levels and in specialties related to the core functions of the armed forces; and d) a clear over-representation in traditionally “female” areas.

Conclusion

This paper has explored a series of indicators relevant to situate the Portuguese Armed Forces within the changes which have generally been affecting military forces. This analysis shows the simultaneous existence of elements of modernization and of resistance to change, resulting in a situation which is paradoxical and generator of tensions.

As far as strategic international orientations - such as the perception of threat or the definition of missions - are concerned, the referred ‘postmodern’ model predicts, on the one hand, a growing loss of the relevance of threats such as invasion or nuclear war initiated by enemy States, corresponding, in terms of priority missions, to the defense of State territorial integrity; on the other hand, it identifies a growing risk of conflicts on a sub-national level (such as public disorder and terrorism) and frequently non-military in the traditional sense, corresponding, in its turn, to the dominance of a new type of mission, designated by acronyms such as OOTW (Operations Other Than War). It has been shown, in the case of Portugal, how both variables reveal some ambivalence, oscillating between the demands of the new international geo-strategic scenario and the prevalence of the previous paradigm centered upon the defense of the territorial integrity of the State. The fact of the new missions having come to acquire more and more salience, however, stands out, in terms of strategic-political discourse, as well as on that of the concrete utilization of military forces, which clearly situates the Portuguese Armed Forces in the dominant tendency of the new model.

The indicator that unequivocally reinforces this orientation is, nevertheless, the transition towards a system of exclusively voluntary military service, concluded in 2004. While this has happened relatively late if we compare the case of Portugal to that of the majority of countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, it is the result of a process of restructuring of the Portuguese military organization— of an attempt at its adaptation to the new strategic scheme— that has been occurring for more than a decade. These adjustments have produced new tensions in their turn. While the transition occurred—size reduction, progressive increase of the voluntary component of contingents, participation in new missions based upon the projection of forces—the Portuguese Armed Forces have seen their budgets reduced, as has happened in most of the Western countries over the past decades.

Likewise, the opening up of military service and careers to women is one of the most relevant aspects of the described change. In a very short time, female representation and gender integration in the Portuguese Armed Forces have reached relatively high levels if compared to those of other NATO members, many of which with a much more precocious female military presence. Nevertheless, in spite of the progress done, more than 15 years after the beginning of female recruitment, the tendencies that stood out in the beginning of the integration process remain unchanged— for example, those concerning under-representation in some specialties and hierarchical categories.

Other indicators exist, however, which reveal much less distance from the paradigm of military modernity. This is the case of organizational identification and *ethos*, as well as professional identities. Although the model of Moskos, Williams and Segal does not offer descriptions or concrete predictions relative to these variables, the changes identified can be viewed in light of the classic “institutional/occupational” dichotomy previously proposed by Moskos to describe the transition between pre-modern armed forces and those of advanced modernity. If the occupational tendency seems to have become dominant in terms of organizational structure, namely regarding aspects such as the reduction of personnel or professionalization, in other domains, such as the resistance to military unionism, the lack of acceptance of homosexuality (and the tendency to not address the issue) as well as the relative prevalence of institutional orientations among the military professionals—officers and NCOs— a “paleo-modern” model (Battistelli, 1997) of the military organization is still visible.

Finally, regarding the way in which Portuguese public opinion reacted to the organizational transformations under way and the new missions of the armed forces, we observe that, similar to that which has occurred in other countries, the prevision of a relative growth of indifference does not adequately characterize the attitudes of the Portuguese towards their military institution. On the contrary, the traditional ambivalence of public opinion in this domain seems to have given way to an effective, even though possibly temporary, support. We see, specifically, how the Portuguese participation in international missions under NATO and the UN was the object of public approval, contributing to a greater recognition of the role of the military and of the armed forces in Portuguese society.

Approaching the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the Portuguese Armed Forces are, therefore, facing the need of managing tensions resulting from the coexistence of different types of organizational and professional orientations, as well as of responding to the challenges of reforms underway and of those that will inevitably have to be promoted in order to adjust to the progressively globalized conditions in which they must operate.

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