

Changing Lusospheres

**Europe, Brazil, Africa. On old and new connections
between centers and peripheries**

*Elisabeth Boesen, Karl Heinz Arenz,
Cristina Donza Cancela & Antonio Otaviano Vieira Junior*

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Edited by Elisabeth Boesen, Karl Heinz Arenz, Cristina Donza Cancela,
Antonio Otaviano Vieira Junior

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Modern, skilled, entrepreneurs: Is there a “new” discourse about Brazilian women in the Portuguese media?

Thais França & Beatriz Padilla

Introduction

In the last three decades (since the 1990s), Brazilian immigration to Portugal has been studied intensively from both the Brazilian and the Portuguese perspective (Finotelli et al. 2013; Malheiros 2007; Padilla et al. 2015). It was mainly the work of Brazilian anthropologists Feldman-Bianco (1997) and Machado (1999) that opened up this research field in the 1990s. The first decade of the 2000s witnessed a notable transformation of the composition of the flows of migrants and of the Brazilian community in the country. This shift coincided with a new reality: the growing number of women, aligning with what is commonly referred to in the literature as the feminization of migration (Padilla 2007a). Hence, during this time, special attention was paid to addressing the stereotypes, hypersexualization, and stigmatization dynamics surrounding these women, which was having a strong impact on their integration into local society (Gomes 2013; Pontes 2004). Thus, since then, the Portuguese media has played an important role in reproducing and highlighting discourses that portrayed them as exotic, sensual, submissive, inferior, and sexually available.

From 2010 to 2016, due to the impact of the international financial crisis (2008–2014), and the policies of the Troika, Portugal experienced a harsh economic shock that led to a sudden decrease in flows of immigration and

broke the steady growth observed in previous years (SEF 2011). It was only in 2016 that immigration to Portugal began to rise again (SEF 2017); this fostered a perception of the country as a desirable migration destination, boosting national pride and self-esteem. In this context, Brazilian immigration to Portugal began to show novel and distinct features: in stark contrast to the more homogeneous working-class profile observed in previous waves, there were now large numbers of international students, investors, and entrepreneurs. The Portuguese media gave visibility to the new arrivals, celebrating these new characteristics and presenting them as the consequence of Portugal's modernity, advancement, and cosmopolitanism (França & Padilla 2018).

This chapter investigates the discourse in the Portuguese media about the Brazilian migration to Portugal, adopting a gender perspective and critical discourse analysis (CDA) as methodological tools to answer the following questions: (1) What features has the Portuguese press portrayed about Brazilian women throughout time? (2) What social markers of difference (race, gender, class, nationality) are mobilized and depicted toward those images?

Gender, race, nationality, coloniality, and social class: Daily intersectional challenges for Brazilian migrants

Migration as a social phenomenon is an entirely gendered process, because women's immigration experience is shaped by gender relations, which force constant negotiations of their identity and behavior in both their home country and their destination country (Donato et al. 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007). Additionally, because of their location within the power relation matrixes—at the crossroads of distinct axes of differentiation, such as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, class, and religion—migrant women experience an intense convergence of stereotypes, racism, and further discrimination (Crenshaw 1991). Therefore, the concept of intersectionality is key for understanding the effects of gender in the migration process (Anthias 2012), as intersectional analysis makes

it possible to frame migrant women’s experience in a dynamic context within multiple systems of power, hierarchy, and identity.

Introducing an intersectionality standpoint to gender studies has been fundamental to determining certain types of oppression and discrimination that had not been identified before. Crenshaw introduced the concept by revealing how various forms of inequalities and disadvantages often intersect, creating barriers that cannot be fully understood through a single, isolated analytical approach (*ibid.*). Black women’s feminism has embraced intersectionality as a fundamental prism that allows them to fully understand their joint experiences of racial and gender discrimination and their distinct social realities (Collins & Bilge 2016). Hence, intersectionality has obligated researchers to analyze gender in interaction with other diverse markers of difference, such as race, origin, ethnicity, social class, age, sexuality, and religion.

Lugones (2008), focusing the concept of coloniality (Quijano 1992), reveals another complex aspect of women’s migration experience. For Quijano, coloniality is the continuation of the societal system of exploitation based on the control of territory, the labor force, the economy, knowledge, subjectivity, gender, and sexuality resulting from the European expansion through colonialism. Among other things, this system of control and domination has led to specific social and geo-cultural identities and classification categories that gravitate around race differences (*ibid.*). However, as Gutierrez-Rodriguez (2014, 49) underscores, “[t]his logic of subjugation inherent in the establishment of a racially coded social system still reverberates in the construction of the nation’s Other in Western Europe, although it does not always explicitly operate in racial terms. Though wrapped in a vocabulary of culture that refers to differences regarding religious beliefs, language, norms, and values, the construction of the ‘Other’ in Western Europe bears the traces of a pattern of thinking reminiscent of colonial times.”

In the case of migrant women, coloniality shapes their experience by exposing them to processes of subalternity, racialization, and othering, enforcing dynamics of internalization supported by the unequal power relations that were established during colonialism (Lugones 2008). Hence, migrant women from the former colonies tend to be seen as

national women's Other in the Global North and are thus categorized as colonial/racial subjects (Grosfoguel 2004).

Likewise, social class, as a power system, impacts migrants' position within a given society (Fresnoza-Flot & Shinozaki 2017). In this study, following a Bourdieusian approach, social class is seen both as a material as well as a cultural and symbolic form of stratification (Anthias 2012). It is directly linked to the possession of economic and political power (Sklair 2000), limiting or increasing immigrants' access to opportunities, privileges, and rights.

The current literature on transnationalism emphasizes that social class should not be viewed as a static concept, because its meaning can evolve across various contexts and periods (Fresnoza-Flot & Shinozaki 2017). As Parreñas (2015) points out, migrants can occupy different and contradictory class positions in their home and destination countries; for instance, even if they hold a less qualified job than they had in their home country, they might still enjoy higher economic power than previously. For our study, however, social class refers exclusively to the position that the press assigns to a migrant in their host society upon arrival, which fails to acknowledge the less visible aspects of their personal experiences—for example, education level, previous working experience in Brazil, migration trajectory—which would be necessary for a more comprehensive understanding of their experience of social mobility. This perspective adds to the literature by unveiling the power of media discourses in building static images of Brazilian immigrants in Portugal that are based on fragmented elements of their migration path.

Brazilian migration to Portugal: Gender and the colonial discourse

Brazilian immigration to Portugal has been a consolidated feature of migration flows since the turn of the twenty-first century. Since the first immigrants arrived in the early 1980s, the numbers have grown steadily and overall three main different configurations have arisen (Padilla et al. 2015). In this sense, numbers, qualification levels, and feminization happened to be the key distinguishing features across the different waves

of migration. The patterns of Brazilian immigration to Portugal can be divided into three distinct waves. The first wave, extending from the early 1980s to the late 1990s, saw a relatively modest influx, predominantly consisting of Portuguese returnees from Brazil and their families. This group displayed a noteworthy prevalence of highly qualified individuals. In contrast, the second wave, from the late 1990s to 2015, witnessed a substantial increase in immigrant numbers. These newcomers were often perceived as predominantly lower-qualified workers, and this surge was accompanied by a noticeable trend of feminization (*ibid.*).

As a result of the Portuguese economic crisis (2008–2014), which was simultaneous with the Brazilian economic boom during BRICS (Brazil, Russia, China, and South Africa) block development (Caldas 2017), Brazilian immigration flows to Portugal declined slightly for the first time between 2012 and 2015 (Fernandes & Castro 2013; Nunan & Peixoto 2012). In 2016, however, the number of Brazilians arriving in Portugal began rising again (SEF 2017), with some previously unseen features: a consolidated flow of students and a growing number of investors and entrepreneurs. These characteristics allow us to define this new phase as the third wave of Brazilian immigration to Portugal (França & Padilla 2018).

In the early 2000s, the increasing feminization of the flow of Brazilians to Portugal was a novelty, but by 2005 the number of Brazilian women arriving in Portugal was higher than that of Brazilian men (SEF 2005). Since then, feminization has become a characteristic, reaching 64% by 2022. In addition to this feminization, Brazilian migration overall has continued to grow, with Brazilians currently representing over 30% of foreign residents in Portugal (SEF 2023).

Figure 1 summarizes two different lenses through which to view the periodization of Brazilian immigration to Portugal, accounting for the waves (based on certain features of the migration flows, such as social class, education, occupation, and insertion in the labor market) and for the feminization trend.

Coloniality has played a central role in shaping Brazilian women's experiences in Portugal and has been legitimized by Freyrean Lusotropicalist ideas (Castelo 2011; Gomes 2013). Freyre (1933) argued that Portugal's predisposition to diversity, multiculturalism, and racial fusion became

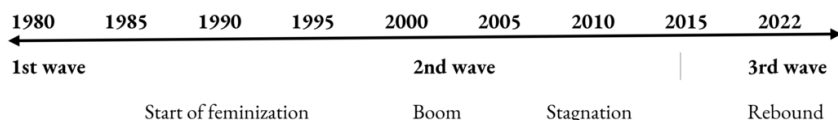


FIGURE 1: Start of feminization change to incipient feminization. Source: author's own elaboration.

evident in their common practice of mixing with the African and indigenous women in Portugal's colonies. Hence, within the Lusotropicalist discourse, these women play a pivotal role in embodying the realization of Portuguese "benevolent" colonialism (Gomes 2013). However, the Lusotropicalist discourse neglects to acknowledge the portrayal of these women as racialized and sexualized bodies, subjected to forcible exploitation by Portuguese men.

Moreover, colonality enforced a given gender hierarchy by portraying Brazilian women as a sexualized colonial body in comparison to Portuguese women in particular and European women in general (*ibid.*; Malheiros & Padilla 2017). This articulation of race, ethnicity, and sex is seen by Bhabha (1983) as crucial to the construction of the colonial subject discourse that, by the binding of a range of differences and discriminations, supports racial and cultural hierarchization in discursive and political practice. Consequently, in Portuguese society, Brazilian women are intensely exposed to the dynamics of racialization, class subordination, and sexualization that portray them as hypersexualized, exotic, available, and sexualized bodies (Gomes 2013; Padilla 2007a).

The colonial imaginary also shapes migrants' experiences of the labor market in Portugal. Because of the gender and racial segregation dynamics in the labor market, Brazilian women can easily find jobs in low-qualified activities in the care sector as cleaners and domestic workers (Anthias & Metha 2003; França 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007). However, it is in the service sector—sales, tourism, customer services, dancing, and waiting tables at restaurants and bars—that the majority of these migrants are concentrated, constituting what Machado (2009) and Fernandes (2008) call the "happiness" and "entertainment" markets, respectively.

Further, Brazilian women are notably present in the beauty and aesthetics sector—composed of “body services,” such as manicuring, waxing, hairdressing, or selling clothing and beauty commodities, such as bikinis, beachwear, and hair products—both as entrepreneurs and as regular employees. In this case, they take advantage of the general naturalized/essentialized and socially constructed attributes assigned to Brazilian women—friendly, sensual, and beautiful—and use them as an aesthetic—corporal capital to support, promote, and legitimize their business (Malheiros & Padilla 2017).

The presence of Brazilian women in these two segments—services and beauty—is directly linked to the racist colonial discourse toward these women that portrays them as happy, joyful, seductive, exotic, and sexy (*ibid.*; Padilla 2007a). However, in practice, there is ambivalence in the way they instrumentalize this situation, because even if Brazilian women suffer sexualization and erotization that condition their experience, “these imaginaries sometimes could also facilitate worthy resources in marriage and labour markets” (Padilla 2016, 280), becoming strategies for survival or empowerment, and no less contradictory for that.

The Portuguese media has been one of the main actors that has contributed to the reinforcement and diffusion of the colonial discourse and the image of Brazilian women as a colonial body (Gomes 2013). We will turn to this discussion next.

The Portuguese media and Brazilian women

A report published by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) stresses the relevance of media discourse in shaping society’s opinions and attitudes toward migration and cultural and ethnic diversity (Ter Wal 2002). Given that the media is people’s main source of social and political knowledge, it is considered to be the most influential form of public discourse in modern society. Media discourse plays a central role in the creation and reproduction of public opinion, and in shaping knowledge and beliefs about a social phenomenon (Torkington & Ribeiro 2019). However, space in the media is not equally distrib-

uted (Dijk 2000b). Because migrants do not occupy many influential positions—such as, politicians, corporation managers, professors, or journalists—and have reduced access to media sources—such as press conferences, documentation, and interviews—their perspectives and opinions tend to be mostly ignored (*ibid.*). Hence, the media is inclined to polarize the discourse on migration, treating immigrants as a problem or a menace, reinforcing a differentiation between the nationals (us) and the migrants (the Other) (*ibid.*).

In Portugal, migration is a topic that has already been consolidated in the national media agenda (Ferin et al. 2008) and covers different matters in the field—migration laws, inclusion, integration, crime, and nationality-acquisition policy. A negative approach toward the phenomenon, however, has prevailed (Oliveira 2001). In particular, during the 2000s, the media discourse associated migration with criminality, illegal affairs, documentation irregularities, human trafficking, and unemployment (Ferin et al. 2008). Specifically, the focus on immigrant women has been through the lenses of sexual activity and prostitution (Pontes 2004; Santos 2007).

In general, the image of Brazilian immigrants in the Portuguese media is associated with the previously identified stereotypes: on the one hand, happiness, joyfulness, and amusement; on the other hand, laziness, dishonesty, unreliableness, and trickery (Fernandes 2008; Machado 2009; Padilla & Gomes 2016). In the case of Brazilian women, the dominant media discourse tends to present them as exotic sexual objects, connecting them to the sex industry (Santos 2007). In addition, news on Brazilian urban violence, criminality, poverty, social inequality, and corruption is highly prevalent in the Portuguese media (Lisboa 2017; Vitorio 2007), and it is used by many to blame Brazilians for bringing violent crime to Portugal.

It is also important to consider that since the late 1970s, Brazilian soap operas have been very popular among the Portuguese audience; according to Cunha (2003), these programs have influenced the dominant discourse about Brazil and Brazilians in the Portuguese media. Padilla (2007b) argues that soap operas and tourist marketing have both projected the image of an exacerbated sensuality of Brazilian women. Even if gendered and sexist tourist advertising is now forbidden, the consequences still prevail. All these images have contributed to reinforcing

the colonial myths about the tropics—exoticism, exuberance, and native women’s sensuality—and, simultaneously, the narratives about Portugal’s imperial past, where Brazil was its biggest conquest (Lisboa 2017).

In this context, the image of Brazilian women in the Portuguese media is loaded with the stigma of a racialized and sexualized colonial body—erotic, seductive, and sexually available (Padilla & Gomes 2016). Building on Stolke’s (2006) analysis of the reproduction of Iberian morality from the colonial period up to the present time, Gomes (2013) reveals how colonial imaginary and stereotypes about European women as mothers/wives/Marys (alluding to the Virgin Mary) and Brazilian women as sinners/prostitutes/Eves are operationalized by the media discourse in Portugal.

One episode involving Portuguese and Brazilian women in the north of the country clearly illustrates this point. In 2003, *Time-Europe* magazine published an article giving visibility to a movement organized by Portuguese women in Bragança, a small town in the north of Portugal, to rally against Brazilian women who were working in town as sex workers. The *Mães de Bragança* (“Mothers of Bragança”)—what these women called themselves even if their discourse was that of abandoned wives—argued that the Brazilian women who worked in the town’s brothels had “bewitched/seduced” their husbands (Pais 2010). Although they insisted on the women’s removal from the town, they did not request any punitive measures against either the brothel owners or the business establishments involved (Padilla 2007b). The local press coverage of the occurrence was strongly shaped by coloniality, sexualization, and racialization practices (Padilla & Gomes 2012). This article in the national and European media reproduced the image of Portuguese women as decent, pure, impeccable, and incorruptible, while portraying Brazilian women as indecent, promiscuous, and immoral (Gomes 2013). Minga (2018) notes that in alignment with the approach of *Times-Europe* magazine, the Portuguese press portrayed the episode in articles akin to tabloid discourse, replete with gender and racial stereotypes; thus, reinforcing the link of Brazilian women to prostitution, irregular migration, and illegal activities.

Eight years later, in 2011, during the economic crisis, another episode involving Brazilian women’s representation in the Portuguese media

gained visibility. A Portuguese animation TV show presented one female character, Gina, among its five protagonists. Gina is portrayed as a Brazilian easy-going and loose female, who always wears sensual clothes, while all her lines, spoken with a heavy Brazilian accent, are strongly sexualized, for instance: “If it was me to decide the country’s future, sex would rule it all.” The hyper-sexualization of Gina reflected in her image and discourse was classified by Padilla and Gomes (2016) as an act of media symbolic violence that reinforced the colonial imaginary about Brazilian women as colonized bodies devoted to sex.

Many other examples of colonial discourse manipulating, stereotyping, and stigmatizing Brazilian women in the Portuguese media can be found during the 2000s. However, in recent years, accompanying the third wave of Brazilian migration, the press discourse in Portugal has shown some changes. The following sections are dedicated to this analysis.

Methodology

This study adopts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Dijk 2000a) approach to investigate the discursive patterns of representation of Brazilian immigrant women in Portuguese newspapers. In CDA, discourse is a way of representing and signifying the world by (re)contextualizing social practices (Dijk 2009). Discourse is therefore an action that shapes, and is formed by, social interactions and dynamics in a reciprocal process. This process, however, is not neutral in terms of political and ideological content, as it operates within power matrixes and may reproduce social inequalities and dominance relations.

Dijk (*ibid.*) highlights the strong relationship between media discourse and social power. According to the author, newspapers today still maintain an influence on public opinion by guiding who the actors to be represented in the public arena are, what is said about them and how it is said (the amount and quality of the information given, and the selection of arguments and rhetorical practices), and the opportunity to make their voices heard. Hence, CDA allows us to investigate the links between discourse, power, and ideology and analyze how discourse reinforces the construction and legitimization of certain “social problems,” namely dis-

crimination, racism, sexism, and power inequalities (Dijk 2000b). Therefore, by using CDA methods we intended to uncover existing practices related to Brazilian women in the Portuguese press discourse.

The primary data used in this study comprised 108 articles published in *Público*, one of the main national newspapers in circulation, online and in print, from 2000 to April 2019. *Público*, published daily, is considered to be a quality publication because of its high level of prestige, its objectivity, its verification of facts using reliable sources, and its focus on hard news, which includes topics such as global and local politics and economic issues (Berrocal Gonzalo, Redondo García & Torres Chico 2015), in contrast with other publications that could be considered tabloid. Regarding its political standpoint, *Público* is considered to be mostly center-left (Torkington & Ribeiro 2019). Following the periodization presented in Figure 1, the chosen time interval comprises four different moments in Brazilian immigration through the lens of its feminization trend, which can be divided as follows: the beginning of visibility (2000–2005), boom (2005–2011), stagnation (2011–2015) and rebound (2016–present days).

To get a more precise picture of discursive press representation of Brazilian women in Portugal, we searched for any article discussing Brazilian immigrant women in Portugal or discussing immigration in general and Brazilian women in particular. To avoid sampling bias, the articles were selected regardless of their political, social, or cultural perspective. The collected material was analyzed on two levels: textual and contextual (Dijk 2000a). All articles containing references to the mentioned topics were scrutinized chronologically, screened for relevance, retrieved in full and individually analyzed for structure, themes, and rhetorical strategies. The collected material was also considered together to categorize some of the recurrent themes and discourses and the ideological differences within the material.

Analysis

From 2000 to 2019, 108 news articles regarding Brazilian migration, either specifically or indirectly, were found in *Público*. The examination of the articles was conducted through content analysis to identify empir-

ical observations associated with validity claims, outlining the predominant arguments and assessing their frequency. This analytical approach encompassed a two-stage coding procedure. Initially, attention was focused on discerning speech dimensions indicative of each validity claim. Subsequently, a refined coding phase was implemented to augment the precision of the initial coding outcomes (Cukier et al. 2009). The quotes presented here were chosen as deemed the most representative of some of the ideas identified during the coding process. They were translated from Portuguese into English by the authors. Because of the large volume and overlap of information, the full news analyses will not be presented here.

In the researched time frame, *Público's* content discourse concerning Brazilian women associated them with the sex trade, prostitution, human trafficking, illegal activities, illiteracy, and poverty.

Prison sentences for brothel managers; Brazilian women who enticed other women to work in Portugal will be expelled from the country—May 28, 2002

A Brazilian citizen, named Roberta Silva, who was accused of enticing alleged prostitutes in Brazil to work at the Sassarico bar in Cerdal, Valença (. . .) the judges sentenced her to two and a half years, suspended for three years, but with an order to expel her from the country for ten years.

RNP [National Republican Party] member accused of supporting illegal immigration—October 31, 2008

According to the accusation, the prostitution business set up by the nationalist militant party had the support of two Brazilian women, who were in an illegal situation and who were helped by him [the RNP's party member accused of supporting illegal immigration] to enter Portugal, and also with the participation of his wife, whom the MP accuses of being in charge of interviewing the candidates who would provide sexual services.

Captured nightlife businessman who was the origin of "Mothers of Bragança" restlessness—November 20, 2013

A lawsuit was filed by the Mothers of Bragança, who complained that the influx of Brazilian prostitutes into the city was breaking up many homes.

GNR [National Guard Police] member accused of warning brothels of inspections—November 10, 2017

In addition to the militaries, the Public Ministry accused another four people of pimping, irregular migration support, improper receipt of benefits, and active and passive corruption. “The facts refer to the exploitation of prostitution by four of the defendants, with a majority appeal to Brazilian women in an irregular situation in the national territory.”

Manifesto condemns prejudice against Brazilian women—September 20, 2011

To express the repudiation of the “prejudice against Brazilian women in Portugal” and “demand that steps be taken by the competent authorities” a manifesto is being published by the organization World March of Women Portugal.

Foreigners detained at Lisbon airport are “most exposed” to harassment—October 3, 2018

When Antónia [fictitious name], born in Brazil, arrived at the Lisbon airport from Fortaleza, her entrance was denied by the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF). When looking at her visa, the SEF employee had some suspicions and told her: “She is coming as a tourist but only has 30% of the accommodation paid.”

The first four articles address various events in different years (2002, 2008, 2013, and 2017) linking Brazilian women to prostitution. As the literature has shown, the immigration of Brazilian women to Portugal represents different waves and characteristics (Padilla 2007b; Padilla & França 2015); *Público*’s coverage, however, almost exclusively alludes to cases involving the sex industry and illegal activities. The majority of the articles analyzed (73 out of 108) refer to episodes of prostitution, trafficking, and irregular migration. Moreover, there seems to be an intentional

decision by *Público* to constantly and unnecessarily mention the nationality of these women, as in many of the articles, the nationalities of other people involved in the events are not mentioned. Furthermore, in Portugal, prostitution encompasses a range of nationalities, including the Portuguese (Couto et al. 2012); hence, the frequent reference to Brazilians contributes to consolidating the false idea that Brazilian women are the only sex workers in Portuguese society.

Despite the particularities presented by Brazilian women migrating to Portugal, the constant reference to prostitution and irregularity suggests the strong influence of the colonial imaginary in shaping Portuguese press discourse. Further, these women's voices are never heard in the articles referred to, as their testimonies are not cited and were probably never consulted. Dijk (2000a) argues that immigrants' views tend to be ignored or unpublished because they are considered to be less reliable and less trustworthy.

The article regarding the manifesto against the prejudice against Brazilian women in Portugal is emblematic in this sense. As mentioned previously, the manifesto was organized mainly by Brazilian women who were immigrants in Portugal; however, in the text it is wrongly credited to the World March of Women. Neither the women who led the manifesto nor any Brazilian feminists who were in Portugal at the time were contacted. This serious fault can be seen as a negligent approach to issues involving Brazilian women's self-organization, assuming that Brazilian women are not capable of organizing themselves in such an engaged way. Hence, although visibility is given to the issue, not all perspectives are taken into account in the coverage. This diminishes the real protagonism of Brazilian women, which resembles Mohanty's (1984) denouncement of how a discursive colonization practice still operates nowadays, building the image of women from the ex-colonies as victims and submissive subjects who need to be represented by Western women. No Brazilian women involved in the manifesto or who experienced prejudice in Portugal were interviewed, even if they were the agents and the subjects of the manifesto. Thus, the newspaper opted for an approach that excludes immigrants' voices while reinforcing the image of them as speechless actors (Dijk 2000a) and that minimizes the gravity of discrimination practices in Portugal by not offering concrete examples of their daily experiences in society.

The final article suggests a shift in the Portuguese immigration policy paradigm. In line with the European Union’s recommendations, Portugal has been enforcing a tougher approach to human trafficking and irregular migration (Clemente 2017). Notably, two distinct measures have been implemented to address these challenges. First, a zero-tolerance policy has been instituted to prevent individuals potentially implicated in human trafficking violations from returning to their home country (*ibid.*). A second, simultaneous measure focuses on facilitating the return of third-country nationals whose stay is irregular (*ibid.*; Baldaccini 2009). Hence, the article offers a positive assessment of Portuguese strategies to combat human trafficking.

The issue of mixed marriage between Brazilian women and Portuguese men has also been a frequent topic in *Público*. On the one hand, mixed marriages have been analyzed from a positive point of view, as a sign of immigrants’ integration and as a contributor to the country’s demographic growth as a result of the slightly higher childbirth rate among immigrant women (Rosa, Seabra & Santos 2005). On the other hand, as the discussion on the European agenda about marriages of convenience became more intense (Maskens 2015), the phenomenon gained more visibility in Portugal and was raised by authorities, scholars, and newspapers (Togni & Raposo 2009).

Marriage between Portuguese and foreigners doubled in the last five years—October 26, 2003

... but the Brazilians already made history in the national registers. “Sometimes, we notice something weird, a very young and pretty Brazilian girl, with bad-looking Portuguese men, says Joaquim Martins, from the Register Workers trade union. We already hear about Brazilian women who pay five thousand contos (25,000 euro) to marry someone,” he states.

The majority of the Brazilian citizens who marry in Portugal choose a Portuguese partner—August 18, 2008

Some numbers, in 2005, 78.3% of the women and 59% of the men born in Brazil who got married chose a Portuguese partner.

| *Mixed marriages more than quadrupled—November 2, 2008*

| Maria boarded in Minas Gerais and landed in Portugal three years ago. Shortly afterwards she met a Portuguese man who she liked: “It was right after my arrival. It was too much suffering. I needed to work, I couldn’t pay the rent.”

Despite also presenting some discussion on mixed marriages as a sign of immigrant integration and as a contributor to minimizing the demographic crisis, *Público’s* discourse on the matter focuses mainly on two specific angles. The first two articles focus on marriages of convenience as a strategy for obtaining Portuguese nationality, and the third portrays the image of the poor immigrant who marries a Portuguese man for a better quality of life.

The arguments in these articles depart from the colonial discourse, as they employ the stereotypes of Brazilian women as poor, involved in illegal activities, and having special attributes (beauty, magic, witchery) to seduce Portuguese men. Moreover, these news articles present a biased coverage of the phenomenon and a moral judgment of Brazilian women’s intimacy choices, whereas, in general, they make no comments on Portuguese men’s choice to marry Brazilian women. If focusing on the time frame, these articles embrace two different moments in Brazilian migration to Portugal: the beginning of visibility (2000–2005) and boom (2005–2011), promoting and feeding the “moral panic” existing in Portuguese society about Brazilian women bewitching Portuguese men and persuading them to marry them (Alvim & Togni 2010; Pais 2010).

A shift in the content of the press articles can be identified during the Portuguese economic crisis (2008–2014), when Brazilian immigration to Portugal declined for the first time (2011–2015) and Brazil became a global emerging power, integrated into the BRICS block. At this time, emigration became the focus of attention in Portugal (Padilla & Ortiz 2017), and many skilled Portuguese workers and businessmen moved to or invested in Brazil (Cervo 2010). Thus, following the Portuguese colonial imaginary that tends to present Brazil’s successes and accomplishments as outcomes of the Portuguese intervention during the colonization period (Almeida 2008), positive discourses regarding Brazil became more common.

They choose Portugal and not even the economic crises push them away—March 17, 2013

Flavia is part of the group of thousands of Brazilians who continue their studies in Portugal. But her path is unique. This student in the Master’s in Education of the New University of Lisbon shares with a Swedish businessman based in Portugal, Jonas Lundberg, a fast-paced romance, marked by improbable decisions and uniting three continents. [. . .] Flavia, a 31-year-old woman from Rio de Janeiro, graduated in Portuguese Language and Literature and founded a theatre company. “I had to think a lot because this decision implied leaving my job, but I’m very happy, I came because my love was here.”

Brazilians in Portugal: four voices of the same trip—April 8, 2014

Thaís Helena dos Santos arrived in September 2013, to pursue a PhD degree in Information and Communication in Digital Platforms at the University of Porto. [. . .] In the case of Auxiliadora Siza, the issue was the impossibility of survival in Portugal. “It was a trap, I was misled,” she recalls “[. . .] I was working as a caretaker, my wage was 500 euros and my rent 400 euros [. . .].” After nine months she decided to go back to Brazil, “I was completely broke,” she said.

For the first time, *Público*’s discourse approaches different examples of Brazilian women’s experience in Portugal, rather than taking a single perspective that links them to sexual and irregular activities. On the one hand, this approach responds to Portugal’s interests in improving its international image as a developed country suitable for skilled migrants and investors. On the other hand, it continues to reproduce the images of Brazilian women as poor, illiterate, and performing low-skilled jobs, hence being responsible for the failure of their migratory project.

By referring to the case of two Brazilian women taking postgraduate courses, *Público* portrays an image of these women not previously illustrated—educated and skilled. Nothing is mentioned regarding their appearance or seductive behavior. As will be discussed later, more specifically in the context of the third wave, the discourse shifted and started to

“celebrate” the increase in the number of Brazilian international students through positive coverage.

A preliminary analysis of these two articles could suggest a paradigm shift in the use of the colonial discourse, but a deeper examination reveals a more complex situation that involves a mix of elements, some linked to the classic stereotypes about Brazilian women. In the first article, although Flávia’s qualifications and career are mentioned, the reference to her marital relationship with a “Swedish businessman” resembles the “romantic tale” of the poor immigrant who marries a rich European man and gives up everything for a love story (Brennan 2004; Groes-Green 2014). Moreover, it indirectly sheds some light on the link between Brazilian women and marriages of convenience. The second article, after positively presenting Thaís Helena dos Santos as a PhD student, introduces the example of Auxiliadora Siza, returning to the image of Brazilian women as deprived and unskilled workers. Hence, the change presented in *Público*’s discourse regarding Brazilian women in Portugal is a rather minor one, as it continues to reproduce traces of the colonial discourse through different angles: (i) by a negative representation of Brazilian women, and (ii) by stressing Portugal’s greatness and level of development.

In the years after the official end of the economic crisis, migration began to rise again (2016–2019) and a shift from emphasizing the low-qualified worker associated with illegal activities and the sex industry toward new images of immigrants as valuable investor, skilled worker and international student. This change is evident in the increasing number of articles about middle-class Brazilian skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and students, which offered a positive and enthusiastic discourse toward this “new flow.” At the same time, Portugal’s image as a prosperous and advanced country was repeatedly underlined, whereas the Brazilian political, social, and economic crises were stressed over and over. Here, the metropole-colony relation is re-elaborated, with Portugal being represented as a civilized, modern society and Brazil being pictured as an inferior, underdeveloped country. Moreover, by denouncing the political situation in Brazil since the coup d’état that led to the dismissal of former President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 and the ascension of the extreme right and conservatism there (Löwy 2016), Portugal’s media has reinforced its superior image as a society that praises democratic values. Portugal por-

trays itself as a developed “European” nation, valued by and suitable for these women who want to improve their qualifications, invest, or join the skilled labor market, elevating Portugal’s national pride and self-esteem after the difficult times during the period of economic crisis. On the other hand, Brazil is described as an economically and politically unstable country, experiencing high levels of violence, which is enhancing the willingness of these educated women to escape.

In this context, however, Brazilian women are portrayed in an “unusual” way.

Brazilians are the majority of foreign students of the University of Algarve—October 1, 2016

Two years ago, she [Ana Luiza Velo, a Brazilian student from Rio de Janeiro] applied for a Marine Biology degree at a university in Rio de Janeiro and the University of the Algarve. “I was accepted in both places,” she says. When she compared the costs in the two countries, she concluded that “the cost would be the same, but the safety and quality of life here are incomparable.” The possibility of developing a professional career in the European area is another incentive: “I am in Europe, and I love this course,” she emphasizes.

Brazilian Elite brings new business to Portugal—August 20, 2017

The 50-year-old Carioca is installing the family business in Lisbon and launching the furniture brand created by her father. “The idea is to make Portugal the base for the European market,” explains Andreia, who in recent months has come to Lisbon several times in search of a space to install her showroom. [. . .] Andreia—with a degree in History and who also studied French Literature at the Sorbonne and Art at the Inch Bald School of Arts in London—says that her lawyer is analyzing the best way to change country, admitting to using the Gold Visa mechanism as an option.

Hopeless Brazilian found a house in Portugal—August 20, 2018

It was this same feeling [of hopelessness surrounding Brazil] that influenced Juliana Montenegro. After the excitement reported by

her boyfriend Júlio Morais, she also packed and moved from the northeast of Brazil to Lisbon about a month ago. “Like 99% of Brazilians, not to say all of them, we were dissatisfied with our country. It’s an old thing, but after Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment, it all got worse. And as incredible as it seems, it keeps getting worse.”

Following on from the tendency identified in the previous analyses, *Público*’s discourse regarding these Brazilian women is now rather cheerful. Moreover, the women are identified by their qualifications and are explicitly quoted, expressing their opinions and views about their professional and personal experiences. Thus, Brazilian women are portrayed as empowered, skilled, and active in opposition to the image of the humble, illiterate, and passive immigrant shared by the articles analyzed previously. Furthermore, *Público*’s discourse indicates that these women belong to the middle/upper class by highlighting their qualifications, skills, and educational background.

The increase in well-off Brazilian women migrating to Portugal is presented by the press as a positive phenomenon that shows the new Portugal as cosmopolitan and open to diversity, with advanced migration policies, and, hence, an outstanding migration destination. Additionally, it obliges these women by welcoming them and recognizing their valuable contribution to the country’s economic development. During the last two decades, Portugal has developed policies to attract international students, skilled workers, investors, and lifestyle migrants as a strategy for strengthening its image as a modern country and to boost its economy (França et al. 2021).

The coverage of the third wave shows how a perceived change in social class has impacted *Público*’s discourse, as becomes evident in its presentation of the image of Brazilian women in Portugal. Overall, the overlapping periodization of waves and feminization trends in Brazilian migration is rendered productive, as it makes it possible to identify the paradigm shifts. While the second wave overlaps with the beginning (2000–2005) and boom (2005–2011) of the visibility of feminization, the stagnation (2011–2015), which coincided with the economic crisis, an increasing emigration of Portuguese abroad and a decline of immigration to the country, introduced a period of silent reflection, with mixed feelings around outbound and inbound migration. This phase involved a certain nostalgia

for immigration as a period in which Portugal was desirable; thus, immigrants coming to Portugal in this period were seen as more valuable than before, especially if they were qualified.

As soon as the crisis was over, and coinciding with a deacceleration of the Brazilian economy followed by political turmoil (impeachment, advance of the right, and elections), the third wave of Brazilian migration began with a fast rebound that translated into the largest ever percentage of Brazilians among foreign residents in the country, reaching 30%, along with a new shift in the media discourse. This new paradigm may still include some elements that are associated with coloniality, however, other elements are a novelty. For example, elements of the old paradigm involve mentions of the Brazilian nationality in relation to sex work or illegal activities, whereas elements of the new paradigm include mentions of students and middle-class women’s previous experiences abroad, their qualification levels, and their positive opinions about Portugal, etc. Moreover, the new paradigm goes further, as Brazilian women who arrive in the country as professionals or to perform skilled jobs are not referred to as immigrants, but rather as businesswomen or international students. Hence, media discourse has evolved from the old paradigm, which associated Brazilian women with poor, problematic individuals and threats to the social order, to the new one, which portrays these women as members of the transnational cultural and capitalist class who are contributing to society’s progress (Florida 2002).

Yet, simultaneously, the colonial imaginary has not been fully overcome, as the stereotypes that present Brazilian women as irregular, poor, and low-skilled immigrants has continued to be present in *Público’s* articles.

The case of the finance inspector who did not pay the immigrants who took care of his mother—13.02.2017

They are all immigrant women, most of them Brazilians, many without regular residence authorization. All were said to have been providing care or cleaning services, on average for two weeks, some more and some less, until they received a message that they had been dismissed.

The lives of immigrants waiting to regularize their documents—07.03.2017

Mary Lane Tavares, 53, a Brazilian, living in Portugal consecutively since 2005, has been trying to regularize her situation for years. She has already had several jobs [. . .]. It was difficult to get a contract. For three years she worked as a domestic worker.

Joziana and Wolner dream of returning to Brazil to “start again from scratch”—03.02.2019

Joziana does not sleep because of her anxiety [about returning to Brazil]. She is afraid of the bills and of the debts. “Our life is suspended, the mortgage on the house is delayed. None of the family has a way to support us: it’s five plane tickets.”

The three articles suggest a shift in the way *Público* represents Brazilian immigration to Portugal, providing different examples of Brazilian experiences and trajectories in the country. It gives visibility to the experiences of Brazilian students and middle-class women, but it also covers situations involving underprivileged Brazilian women. Presenting different examples of Brazilian immigration to Portugal offers a more accurate picture of the phenomenon in the country. Despite that, the influence of the colonial discourse in portraying these women as poor immigrants cannot be minimized. The case of the couple who want to go back to Brazil, while presenting Joziana as a Brazilian woman married to a Brazilian man and worried about her family’s well-being, stresses the impoverished situation that they are living in, their debts, and their dependence on policies to assist them to return to Brazil. No discussion, however, is provided on the efficiency of the Portuguese integration policies.

Conclusion

In our analysis covering the period from 2000 to 2019, we observed different trends in the representation of Brazilian women as migrants in *Público* discourse. The conventional image, deeply rooted in the colonial imagination, has been dominant, and even if other images have emerged,

it still persists. The colonial imaginary that portrays Brazilian women as stigmatized, second-class citizens associated with sexual and irregular activities has not disappeared. However, within this image, our analysis shows a notable shift toward a more positive perspective, emphasizing both the women's professional qualifications and their capacity for entrepreneurship, which portrays them as sophisticated modern citizens. This change in discourse seems to be linked to recent shifts in the Portuguese context and migration policy after emerging from the international financial crisis. Moreover, the women's elevated social class has positioned them favorably in the social hierarchy, mitigating the impact of the influences of the colonial imaginary on their experience in Portugal.

In today's context, it is crucial for Portugal to actively shape its image as a thriving, cosmopolitan, and appealing destination for skilled migrants, reinforcing its reputation as an open and culturally diverse country. The influx of skilled female Brazilian business investors aligns perfectly with these objectives. Furthermore, the substantial economic and cultural capital possessed by these women contributes significantly to fostering a more positive discourse surrounding their presence. Lastly, at both the European Union and the national level, the increasing regulation of press content and initiatives to prioritize coverage of discrimination and diversity have also played a role in driving this positive change. However, it remains to be seen whether at any point in history, the colonial imaginary will ever be forgotten.

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