From Luso-Brazilian Fraternity to Lusobrasileirismo.

The Portuguese immigrant community in Brazil and the fabrication of a Portuguese colonial discourse (c. 1889-1922)

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1. The Portuguese colónia in Brazil: a transnational community.

Since the first half of the nineteenth century that the Portuguese colony in Brazil seemed to have characteristics of size and quality that allowed it to be considered a dethatched part of Portugal on the other side of the Atlantic.

Unfortunately there is no reliable data on nineteenth century Portuguese migration: approximate numbers for the exits of Portuguese emigrants are available, but is impossible to speculate about the size of the Portuguese immigrant community in Brazil solely based on this kind of data. Contemporary estimates vary between 700 000 and 1 million¹.

According to the 1906 census of Brazil, 132 529 Portuguese were living in Rio de Janeiro, amounting to around 70% of foreigners and a fifth of the city’s total population. The 1913 data on welfare institutions in Rio de Janeiro revealed the existence of 24 Portuguese institutions with around 63 000 members, which means that around 40% of these immigrants were integrated in networks of cultural or social assistance organizations². It’s worth highlighting that these were private mutual organizations, made by and mainly for Portuguese people, with no interference from either the Portuguese or the Brazilian governments. These associations provided

¹ Cf. In his work about Luso-Brazilian relations, the journalist and politician José Barbosa says that in 1909 the Portuguese colony in Brazil had around 700 000 individuals, cf. Barbosa, José, As Relações Luso-Brasileiras, A Imigração e a Desnacionalização do Brasil (Lisboa: Edição do Autor, 1909), 45. In a letter to the duchess of Uzès, king D. Carlos mentioned 1 milion. The letter, dated from 12-12-1907, was published in the French newspaper Le Figaro few days after the regicide, apud Rodrigues Cavalheiro, D. Carlos I e o Brasil (Lisboa: Separata de Diário da Manhã, 1957), 20.

assistance in health; supported immigrants that wanted to return home; helped newcomers settle; assisted in contacts with homeland; promoted patriotic cultural activities, such as lectures, evening classes on Portuguese history, culture and language; book lending, celebration of national holidays\(^3\).

The image of the *brasileiro* is a hallmark of nineteenth century Portuguese novels, from Camilo Castelo Branco to Eça de Queirós: a character doomed to never have a complete sense of nationality: in Portugal he is hopelessly the *brasileiro*, in Brazil he will never cease to be the *portuguese*. The social morphology and ethnic consciousness of these migrants were, in a certain way, built upon this perception of an incomplete belonging, since their identity was constructed not only by a sum or an overlapping of national feelings, but also by a between-nationalities sense of self\(^4\).

By paying attention to the mode of integration of these migrants both in host and sending country, we can easily see how theirs transnational self-understanding affected their conditions of existence. They built a new life in Brazil but never stopped feeding their original life-tissue at home. And that is why, considering the impact on national economies of the remittances that immigrants sent home in small amounts, as «small players» these immigrants played a significant role on the global economy\(^5\). Portuguese governments in the nineteenth century never despised this source of revenue which played a crucial role in ensuring Portuguese credit in London. At the turn of the century, the Portuguese State indeed depended on money transfers from emigrants in Brazil to balance its finances.

But the Portuguese economy relied on immigrants beyond remittances. Portuguese emigrants living in Brazil continued to consume products from homeland, and in the first decade of the twentieth century that consumption represented around 18% of

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\(^3\) About the civic organization of the portuguese community in Brazil I’m following my research *Espelho Fraterno: o Brasil e o republicanismo português na transição para o século XX* (Lisboa: Divina Comédia, 2013) particularly chapter 4 «Os portugueses no Brasil», 275-312.

\(^4\) On this matter is interesting to follow Sallie Westwood on her concept of “correlative imaginary” as a framework to think about belonging perceptions of immigrants, Sallie Westwood and Annie Phizacklea, *Trans-Nationalism and the Politics of Belonging* (Routledge, 2000).

Portuguese exports. In addition, the Portuguese living in Brazil also invested at home considerable amounts of the money they gained abroad. Emigrants returning home with small and medium fortunes invested mostly in corporation shares, government bonds and bank deposits, but also in small business ventures and, more exceptionally, in industrial enterprises. Moreover, wealthy Portuguese returning emigrants often financed the building of hospitals, schools, churches and other kinds of welfare or cultural structures. If they certainly were contributing to the development of their country of birth, they also were establishing parallel structures of local power, through which they could pursue social promotion or even political aspirations.

2. The political engagement of the Portuguese community in Brazil: the struggle between monarchist and republicans.

Remittances, nostalgic patterns of consumption, and money investments in the homeland profiled a relatively solid “avenue of capital” between Portugal and Brazil, but also favored the rise of a transnational pattern of political practices. A variety of structures and actors were implicated in these practices: migrants; governments and other state-instances; non-state institutions (e.g. press; political parties; social and cultural organizations), informal human networks. Portuguese political agents soon began to be interested in channeling these migrants’ transnational political practices into their own domestic political agendas. After the establishment of the Brazilian Republic (15 November, 1889), a real struggle started to take shape between Portuguese monarchists and republicans in order to capture the political affection of the immigrant community in Brazil.

Few days after the Brazilian Republic was established, the Portuguese republican journalist Sebastião de Magalhães Lima spoke to a French newspaper to say that the Portuguese colony in Brazil was «exclusively republican». We may never know if Magalhães Lima truly believed his own words, but Portuguese immigrants in Brazil for a long time never gave him any evidence to support his assertion. In fact, if there were

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8 Vertovec, «Conceiving and Researching…», 452.
any signs of these immigrants’ political engagement, they were precisely in the opposite direction: Portuguese immigrants in Brazil were traditionally seen as having rather more conservative political sympathies.\(^{10}\)

The honorable men of the Portuguese community, who controlled the press and the major social networks of the colony, nurtured a certain dynastic cult, but simultaneously a certain indifference towards the monarchist political parties. Therefore, for a long time, rather than a concern, the Portuguese colony in Brazil was essentially a frustration for Portuguese republicans: a kind of paradise behind closed doors. If on the one hand the Portuguese Republican Party could moan the poor enthusiasm with which its propaganda was received amongst Portuguese emigrants, on the other it couldn’t complain of any sort of anti-Republican activism. But when in 1907 João Franco’s government took power, this apparently dispassionate scenario suddenly changed. Between 1907 and 1908 several franquist newspapers started to germinate amongst the Portuguese communities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, all the major social and cultural institutions of the colony started to mobilize themselves and to work on the welcoming program for the official visit to Brazil that king D. Carlos was planning for June 1908. Media and social networks of the colony worked together with diplomatic Portuguese structures in Brazil to develop a transnational dynamic of support to João Franco’s political project.

João Franco took the political potential of the Portuguese living overseas very seriously. He counted on their enthusiasm, their money and their capacity for social and political mobilization. Above all, he was absolutely convinced of their power as a patriotic symbol, such that he put great faith in all proposals made by the chief of the Portuguese Legation in Brazil to please the colony. During his tenure, Franco reinforced links with Brazil: his cabinet agreed to support two large exhibitions in Rio de Janeiro (the Permanent Exhibition of Portuguese Products, in 1907, and the two Portuguese pavilions on the Great Brazilian Exhibition of Praia Vermelha, in 1908); approved a budget for the king’s visit to Brazil and undertook serious efforts to build a

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\(^{10}\) On this matter see my previous research on the 1893-1894 episode that led to the cut of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Brazil: Isabel Corrêa da Silva, «Um diplomata entre dois regimes. O conde de Paço d’Arcos (1891-1893)», Culturas Cruzadas em Português, Redes de Poder e Relações Culturais. Portugal-Brasil séc. XIX e XX, Cristina Montalvão Sarmento e Lúcia Paschoal Guimarães, coords. (Coimbra: Almedina, 2010): 111-145.
profitable agenda for the visit: a treaty of Commerce and Navigation, a Luso-Brazilian joint-venture for a shipping line and a branch office of the Bank of Portugal in Rio de Janeiro were some of the items to be discussed\textsuperscript{11}.

Whereas the Portuguese community in Brazil continued to sustain Franco’s political project, at home Portuguese republicans started to invigorate their propaganda. As a reaction to initiatives put forth by the talassas\textsuperscript{12} (epithet used to name the monarchist from the Portuguese colony in Brazil), Republicans in the colony increased their own activity by organizing political meetings and multiplying their participation in the press.

After February the 1\textsuperscript{st} 1908 the situation changed dramatically. The news of king Carlos’ and prince Luís Filipe’s murder was received with astonishment. In Rio de Janeiro the press showed its sorrow much more emotionally than in Lisbon. If in Lisbon Franco's supporters disappeared miraculously on February the 1\textsuperscript{st}, in Rio de Janeiro franquism outlived Franco. And from that moment on, and for about half a decade, this franquist loyalty sustained what became a real battle between monarchists and republicans to conquer the political affection of the Portuguese colony in Brazil. In January 1909 the Lisbon Geographical Society launched a competition with a monetary prize of 200 thousand reis to reward the best memoir about «the most effective way to promote moral unity between the Portuguese colony in Brazil and the motherland». A few months later, the republican scholar Consiglieri Pedroso came up with the proposal to organize, within the Geographical Society, a special committee aimed at studying issues concerning Luso-Brazilian relations\textsuperscript{13}.


\textsuperscript{12} The expression talassa (from the Greek: sea) was first used in a famous support message that 30 thousand Portuguese immigrants in Brazil sent to the new Portuguese prime-minister João Franco in 1907 (cf. «A mensagem da colónia portuguesa no Rio de Janeiro», Diário Ilustrado, 24-11-1907, p.1). The whole style of the message, including the use of Greek metaphors, was considered bad taste, and the leaders of the colony were derided for that. After 1910, opponents to the republican regime were generally nicknamed talassas and the term would from then on be used as a synonym of conservative or reactionary.

\textsuperscript{13} Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa. N.º 4. (Lisboa: Typographia Universal, Abril de 1909), 132
On October 5, 1910 the First Republic was proclaimed in Portugal. A few days after, cruiser Adamastor sailed to Rio de Janeiro to officially represent the new Portuguese regime in celebrations of the Brazilian Republic’s 21st anniversary. The boat crew was received with great enthusiasm in Republican Portuguese Club (Grémio Republicano Portugues), but with booing and potatoes in some streets of the Brazilian capital. From Rio de Janeiro to Santos, and São Paulo, coldness and indifference were hallmarks of most receptions to the delegates of the new Portuguese regime. Portuguese immigrant in Brazil would soon be a source of great trouble for the new Portuguese regime. Between 1910 and the beginning of World War I, talassas from Brazil became active agents of the monarchist counterrevolution in Portugal. Men, money, munitions, exile support, propaganda, lobbying and conspiracy shaped a transatlantic counter-revolutionary network which contributed significantly to the political instability of the earlier years of the Portuguese First Republic, between 1911 e 1914.

After the War, things started to change. A polarized international context favored the proliferation of ethnic, racial and nationalist discourses. In this framework, the ultrapatriotism of talassas promoted their reconciliation with the new Portuguese political regime. Calling the Portuguese community in Brazil to cooperate in the effort of building a «Greater Portugal», the Portuguese Republic found its way to these emigrants’ hearths with the help of a certain idea of portugueseness. The successful image of modern Brazil - and of the Portuguese immigrants who contributed with their work for that success - was integrated in the record of Portuguese glories and used to support the claim of the civilizing mission of Portugal within the new world order.

Arguments on the need for solidarity among Latin people were contextualized with accuracy by post-War political environment. Arguments suggesting that, as guardians of the occidental democratic and civilizing legacy, Latin countries should organize themselves in more thick networks of cultural interests and political ambitions. Arguments pointing out economic and strategic benefits of a hypothetical triangle of alliances connecting Brazil, Portugal, and the Atlantic and African Portuguese territories.

14 On this subject see my work Espelho Fraterno..., particularly chapter 6 «Uma dinâmica contra-revolucionária à escala Atlântica». 
In the second decade of the twentieth century, the integration of *lusobrasileirismo* on Portuguese imperial consciousness gained concreteness in form of alliance’s projects, treaties and bilateral agreements or even confederation proposals. Between 1915 and 1920, for instance, the review *Atlântida* brought together people from many different political origins on both sides of the Atlantic. Under a dual direction (João de Barros in Lisbon and João do Rio in Rio de Janeiro), during its five years of existence, *Atlântida* worked as a network platform for many political expressions of *lusobrasileirismo*. Projects of cultural agreements; proposals for a Luso-Brazilian Confederation; essays on national Portuguese consciousness and its civilizing mission shaped those expressions.\(^\text{15}\)

Portuguese political forces recognized the high political potential of the Portuguese colony in Brazil and endeavored to get hold of it. They were interested both in political and financial support. They hoped to count on immigrants resources to finance propaganda, to lobby in Brazilian government and to influence public opinion. But over all they wanted to retain the loyalty of the overseas community as a part of their national regeneration project. The same way that Italian and Irish emigrants were part of Italy’s nation-building project and Irish nationalistic ideology of a «larger Ireland»\(^\text{16}\), in a symbolic way, Portuguese immigrants in Brazil also sustained the idea of a «diffuse lusitanity» which started to germinate within Portuguese political imaginary at the turn of the century.

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3. The *lusobrasileirismo* as a political device.

The development of this idea of a «difuse lusitanity» occurred in parallel with the process by which the Luso-Brazilian fraternity turned into the concept of «lusobrasileirismo». The visit to Brazil of the Portuguese President, António José de Almeida, in September 1922 can be seen as a point of arrival of this conceptual journey. In his speech on the *Real Gabinete Português de Leitura*, in Rio de Janeiro, the President spoke of the Atlantic Ocean as «the great Lusitanian Sea, enclosed between the shores of Africa and Brazil, having Lisbon as safe haven». And spoke also of his faith in a future in which the two countries would be «not just friends, but everyday cooperators in the same civilization project and self-glorification purposes»\(^{17}\).

A decade before, while preparing the official state visit to Brazil that King D. Carlos was planning for June 1908, similar things were said. Similar, but not quite the same things\(^{18}\). Something had changed in the way Portuguese politicians look to Brazil. In effect, change started long before. It was, in fact, a gradual process that begun around the last decades of the nineteenth century when Liberal State started to be more seriously questioned.

Answers to this impasse came from many places. From outside of Portuguese borders came maybe some of the most instigators impulses to patriotism. In the 60s the *Questão Ibérica* brought to debate renewed doubts about the viability of Portugal as an independent nation. The Scramble for Africa, a decade after, reintroduced the colonial issue at the center of the political agenda and put it under tighter attention from the public opinion. Portuguese governments increased their investment on exploration campaigns of the African interior and reinforced the idea that the overseas territories could be the guarantee of Portuguese viability in the new-imperialist context. The British Ultimatum on 11 January 1890 showed ruthlessly how chimerical this idea was.

Regardless of its chimerical nature, imperial consciousness started, around this time, to impregnate Portuguese national feeling. And the political meaning of D. Carlos’

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\(^{18}\) See on this regard the introduction essay of the book that was prepared for the moment, *Livro de Ouro, Comemorativo da Visita de Sua Magestade El-Rei D. Carlos I aos Estados Unidos do Brazil e da Abertura dos Portos ao Comercio Mundial – Homenagem ao Brazil e Portugal* (Lisboa: Escola Typographica das Officinas de S. José, 1908).
programmed-trip to Brazil lies here. Because Brazil was no longer a colony, it may seem inappropriate to consider this trip an evidence of Portuguese imperial consciousness. But it is not so. The reintroduction of Brazil in the political Portuguese thought should be seen by the light of an emerging nationalism in the wake of which the civic patriotism gradually shifted into cultural patriotism.

Cultural patriotism allowed to significantly extent the boundaries of the symbolic space where national regeneration could be achieved. It allowed Portugal to no longer think of itself as an underdeveloped country, decadent and dependent, fighting against its smallness within a political arena dominated by ambitious and modern powers. But as a “Greater Portugal”. Greater both in space and in time. Greater because owner of a vast colonial empire. Greater being the «brave and immortal nation» (as we could read in the Portuguesa march that became national hymn after 1910) that gave birth to other nations of the world like Brazil. Cultural patriotism made even possible to say that in those days the Portuguese national soul remained in Brazil. This assertion had two complementary meanings and purposes: it intended to distinguish the Portuguese colónia as an example of patriotism, but at the same time it also meant to use Brazil as a symbolic pledge to a higher and ever lasting perception of Portugal.

In the first decade of the Portuguese Republic a certain Luso-Brazilian euphoria had its repercussion in the efforts to strengthen official relations: on the propaganda efforts to convert the talassas, or in editorial projects like the one of the Atlântida. But in the early '20s, more pragmatic voices started to rise, accusing of sterile idealism those utopian voices that cried for approaches, alliances and confederations. The sort of subservient and fanciful rhetoric that was often used to talk about Luso-Brazilian friendship started to be considered unsuitable for the renewed Portuguese national discourse. Portugal’s position in the international new-imperialistic context claimed a posture of greater dignity and it was essential to treat the colonial question more objective and consistently. For this purpose, Brazil could be of a precious symbolic value. It was, therefore, in this path that, in 1922, the Portuguese government decided to sponsor initiatives of great impact and symbolism such as the realization of the aerial crossing of the South Atlantic Ocean, by Gago Coutinho e Sacadura Cabral, and the official visit to Brazil of the President António José de Almeida.
In 1923 the publication of História da Colonização Portuguesa do Brasil, coordinated by Carlos Malheiro Dias, was part of this symbolic strategy to relate with Brazil, granting it a new theoretical scientific legitimacy. Although it has not been an official initiative, the book eventually synthesizes Portuguese colonial thought after being inseminated by a few decades of modern nationalism. In terms of colonial policy, this was the reasonable path: a small and poor country like Portugal was doomed to disgrace if tried to compete with other new-imperialistic nations in the same terms that they competed with each other.

Since the Berlin Conference (1884-85) that Portugal sought to find a strategy to overcome an apparently insuperable cleavage between its ambitions and its resources. The invocation of historic rights, the inconsistent occupation of African hinterland, the efforts to reorganize colonial administration, and the fragile alliances had had erratic and weak results. Following the War, Portugal kept its colonial territories and joined the League of Nations, but nothing could be taken for granted.

Portuguese political elite could diverge about the best conduct to relate with the new European colonial powers, or about the best way to shield Portuguese overseas possessions, but they were agreed in the belief in the Portuguese exceptional social and mesological capabilities.

Discourse on Portuguese exceptional colonizing capabilities sounded much more realistic than the lyric evocations of the Portuguese discoveries golden age. More than a discourse, these Portuguese colonization skills could be seen as a path – from colonization to migration. A path that could be identified and studied, as the authors of História da Colonização Portuguesa do Brasil had done. It allowed changing the paradigm. Portugal could finally abandon the “archaeological arguments” that, for the last decades, had supported its claims in the new-imperialist world, and allow History to speak for itself: showing the success of Brazil as the most irrefutable proof of the exceptional Portuguese capabilities for colonization.

It’s easy to understand how Portuguese immigrants in Brazil were interested in the consolidation of this ideology and aware of the concrete benefits they could obtain from thinking of themselves to be the modern settlers, continuing the mission of their
colonizers ancestors. In a migration country like turn-of-the-century Brazil, competition between migrant communities couldn’t be underestimated. But the Portuguese community always felt it had a differentiated status from others. And tradition made the difference: men of the Portuguese colony never accepted to be seen as a mere group of immigrants, they thought of themselves as agents of an ever-renewed privileged relationship that Portugal and Brazil were supposed to have in view of the colonial past. They have gone to Brazil for the same exact reasons than any other immigrants, they have arrived as hungry and they have worked as hard, but they claimed to be different because they carried with them, in their Portuguese nationality, the cultural and historical core of Brazilian identity. Tradition was the key to their status in Brazilian society. It was not by coincidence that the 20.000 copies of História da Colonização Portuguesa do Brasil were published with the financial support of Câmara Portuguesa de Comércio e Indústria with the purpose of being distributed among the cultural circuits of Portugal and Brazil.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Portuguese nationalism was made from a merging recipe between republican messianism an imperial consciousness. But despite serving a discourse of modernity, Brazil’s presence in this process can’t hide a strong attachment to tradition.

In 1934, the famous map showing the Portuguese that Portugal was not a small country for obvious reasons didn't include Brazil. But, verily, he was there. And for a long time, continued to be. In the 60s, when Portuguese empire began to give more serious signs of weakness, an important panacea arrived from Brazil: the “Luso-Tropicalismo” ideology developed by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre contributed importantly to sustain the Portuguese position on international debate on the rights and political position of African natives19. The integration of “Luso-Tropicalismo” in the Portuguese colonial discourse helped Estado Novo working out a strategy to resist international pressure for decolonization. Following the revolution of 25 April 1974, once outstripped the mourning period during when references to colonial heritage were to be avoided, Brazil returned and was integrated in the new historiographical agendas that claimed for

19 On this matter, the key work of Freire is Casa Grande e Senzala. Formação da Família Brasileira sob o Regime da Economia Patriarcal (Rio de Janeiro: Record 1994 [1933]) and O Mundo que o Português Criou: Aspectos das Relações Sociais e de Cultura do Brasil com Portugal e as Colónias Portuguesas (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympo, 1940).
Portugal an outstanding position as pioneer of globalization and multiculturalism\textsuperscript{20}. At the turn of this century, Brazil continued to be the key element of a project as ambitious as ambiguous as the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, founded in 1997.

More than a century after the founding trauma of Portuguese imperial consciousness (British Ultimatum of 11 January 1890), it's easy to agree with Eduardo Lourenço when he says that «’Lusophonia’ is the Rose-Coloured-Map of our days»\textsuperscript{21}.

Throughout the twentieth century, in its imperialist, colonialist, multiculturalist or lusophonist nature, has been difficult for Portugal keeping the Luso-Brazilian idea out of the debate about its own national identity.


\textsuperscript{21} Eduardo Lourenço, A Nau de Ícaro. Seguida de Imagens e Miragens da Lusofonia (Lisboa: Gradiva, 1999), 177.