



# **‘Roots migration’: The post-‘return’ experiences of second-generation Venezuelan-Portuguese migrants**

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## ***'ROOTS MIGRATION': THE POST-'RETURN' EXPERIENCES OF SECOND-GENERATION VENEZUELAN-PORTUGUESE MIGRANTS***

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**Abstract:** Luso-Venezuelan 'returnees' have been moving from Venezuela to Madeira since the 1990s. In recent years, they have arrived in masses, as a result of the ongoing crisis that hit the country after the severe global crash in oil prices. This study focuses on 'roots migration', specifically on the experiences of second-generation 'returnees' from Venezuela to Madeira, as an important part of the historic phenomenon of emigration from Portugal to Venezuela that started in the 1940s, with a clear majority departing from Madeira island. Drawing on fieldwork based on semi-directed interviews, the aim is to understand the circumstances in which the decision to relocate to Madeira takes place, and how the migration experience develops upon return. Taking into consideration and highlighting these individuals' upbringing as children of well-integrated immigrants, we look at the way these migrants negotiate their identities and belonging, and how their constructions of the self and home influence their expectations and lived experience in the ancestral homeland.

**Abstrato:** 'Retornados' Luso-Venezuelanos têm chegado à Madeira vindos da Venezuela, desde a década de 1990, e nos últimos anos, têm chegado em números significativos, como resultado da atual crise que o país tem atravessado desde a grave quebra global dos preços do petróleo. Este estudo centra-se na 'migração em busca de raízes', nomeadamente nas experiências dos filhos dos imigrantes Madeirenses na Venezuela, no âmbito do fenómeno histórico da emigração Portuguesa para a Venezuela que se iniciou nos anos 1940, e cuja maioria era oriunda da ilha da Madeira. A partir de um trabalho de campo centrado em entrevistas semi-diretivas, pretende-se compreender as circunstâncias em que surge a decisão de relocação para a Madeira, e como se desenvolve a experiência migratória após a chegada. Tendo em consideração que os indivíduos em questão são filhos de imigrantes bem integrados no país de acolhimento, analisamos a maneira como estes negociam a sua identidade e sentimentos de pertença, que por sua vez influenciam as expetativas criadas e posteriormente as experiências vivenciadas no país de origem dos pais.

**KEYWORDS:** luso-venezuelans, return migration, second-generation, transnationalism

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** luso-venezuelanos, retorno, segunda-geração, transnacionalismo

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## Introduction

Between the 1960's and the 1970's, a wave of transatlantic migration took place in the world, being vastly characterised by the outflow from European countries to the Americas. This was possible because Venezuela had rather positive migration policies towards Europeans, not only because of the need to export foreign labour, but as part of the process of race-building in the country, which favoured the incoming of white Europeans (Wright 1990). Europeans, in turn, were escaping economic crisis, dictatorship regimes and being deployed to colonial wars. They were attracted to Venezuela, which at the time was experiencing prosperity because of the oil boom, up until the 1980s. The Portuguese emigration to Venezuela had its peak in the 1960s, when around 75.000 Portuguese migrants arrived in the country, with a clear majority coming from Madeira island (Antunes 1970). The mass migration was made possible by the migration policies between the two nations, which easily enabled Portuguese nationals to settle in Venezuela. The economic prosperity that the country was going through, due to the development of its then strong and wealth generating oil sector, attracted migrants wishing to escape economic difficulties and seek better life conditions. The Portuguese population in Venezuela is the second largest in South America, while at the same time being among the largest immigrant groups in the country, along with the Italians and the Spanish, mostly settled in three big cities – the capital city of Caracas, Valencia and Maracaibo – where many started small businesses, bought properties and built homes (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010).

Venezuela's attractiveness as a destination country gradually decreased throughout the following decades as a result of political and economic instability. Meanwhile, conditions in Portugal were improving, influenced by the transition to a democracy in 1974 and further entering the European Union 1986. This conjuncture prompted a new counter wave of mass emigration from Venezuela to Portugal. Mainlanders were the first to return whereas Madeirans remained established in the country for longer, due to the delay in progress in the island and their still lucrative businesses in Venezuela. However, as economic and political instability deepened in the country since 2014, the wave of return migration to Madeira that started in the early 1990s became more significant, yearly reaching its highest volume in the past five years. This wave of mass emigration from Venezuela to Madeira is now composed

of first-generation returnees, their offspring - the second-generation and young members of the third-generation, as well as intergenerational Venezuelan partners and their ethnic mixed children.

During the years preceding Hugo Chávez' elections and throughout his governance, several events were pointing to a political and social turmoil in the country (Caracazo riots in 1989, coup attempts in 1992, oil strike in 2003, etc.), which prompted a first wave of emigration, especially by members of the high and middle class population, and those with European ancestry that could easily obtain citizenship from the country of their ancestors. Venezuela's economy improved significantly during the years in which Hugo Chávez was president, up until oil prices collapsed in 2014. Inflation, unemployment and extreme poverty had dropped, but the economic policies installed included setting strict price controls and privatising major farms, cutting private business, which resulted in an unfriendly environment for private investment, instead subsidizing food goods at the expense of the oil revenues (Mijares and Silva 2018). This marked the beginning of a second-wave of emigration from the Venezuela, which has been intensifying each year since.

Luso-Venezuelan returnees have been arriving from Venezuela to Madeira since the 1990s, and in recent years, they have arrived in masses, along with them, their children and grandchildren, born in Venezuela. I use Wessendorf's definition of 'roots migration' to describe the migration of people to a place that is the origin of their parents, first-generation immigrants, but where they have never lived (2007). The use of the term 'return', however, does not necessarily reflect the second-generation's own perception of their relocation as a return to an imaginative home, but rather reflect how they are portrayed in Portuguese popular media, by being referred to as Portuguese returnees from Venezuela.

Portuguese immigrants underwent an unproblematic process of integration into Venezuelan society, following a pattern of assimilation and effortlessly dissolving into the local population (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010). This does not necessarily mean that the Portuguese in Venezuela cut ties with their homeland and did not live translocal lives.

Research on second-generation transnationalism has shown that the extent to which these individuals lived transnational lives during their upbringing directly influences their constructions of the homeland and may determine their decisions regarding their place of

residence, as well as their experiences should they decide to relocate to the ancestral homeland (Potter 2005, Wessendorf 2007, King and Christou 2014).

In this research, I explore the extent to which transnational elements were maintained by the Portuguese immigrants in Venezuela – what kind of transnational practices, behaviours and orientations did their parents set out for them during their upbringing and how did these transnational enmeshments influenced their decision to relocate to the ancestral homeland. The way in which these individuals negotiate their identities throughout time and geographical positions is analysed, to come to an understanding of how these hybrid identities shaped the expectations and the lived experiences upon ‘return’. On a macro-level, relevant to the experience of migration is the response to the phenomenon by the receiving society. The way in which these migrants are constructed and received in their ancestral homeland determines the maintenance of ties back to the country of birth and how the process of integration into the local society develops.

Drawing from data gathered from semi-structured interviews with nine participants – children of Portuguese immigrants to Venezuela who relocated to Portugal as adults – the purpose of this study is to understand the circumstances in which the relocation of members of the second-generation of Portuguese immigrants from Venezuela takes place, and how the migratory experience develops once they leave their country of birth. To gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and expectations upon embarking on the journey to the homeland of their parents, it was important to gain knowledge of their lives as children of immigrants growing up in Venezuela, and the cross-border connections that they established prior to the decision to emigrate.

1. What kind of transnational practices, behaviours and orientations did their parents set out for them during their upbringing? How were they maintained, and what did it mean for them to be part of transnational networks linking both their country of birth and their parents’ origin?
2. What is the connection between these transnational enmeshments and their decision to relocate to the ancestral homeland? How did these influence, not only the decision, but the expectations and imaginaries they created about their destination?



3. How did they construct their identities as children of immigrants during their lives in Venezuela? How are they (re)negotiated throughout their lives in different positioning and circumstances?

The answers to these questions provide an insight of how these individuals conjugate their notions about their country of origin and their destination and on how they interpret the making of the migration plan. It is clear that the decision to relocate to Portugal has everything to do with their ancestry in this country, even if this is not the main pull factor for emigrating.

Regarding the decision to migrate and the relocation process itself, besides their motivations to leave their country of birth, it is relevant to dwell on the following questions:

4. How did the desire to emigrate develop? What influenced their decision to relocate and what kind of events and circumstances prompted the decision to make the move to their parental homeland?
5. What kind of resources did they mobilise to execute their movement? Did they make use of previously established networks to complete the relocation?
6. What kind of expectations did they have about the ancestral homeland? How does the lived experience of relocating to Portugal compare to those expectations prior to migration?
7. What are their views on their incorporation into the local society? How is this process developing? What problems do they face and how do they relate this new reality to that of life in their country of birth?
8. What kind of (reverse) transnational connections are maintained? What are the reasons for maintaining these links and what are their functions?

# 1. Methodology

Aware of the Portuguese-Venezuelan migratory relations, the first step into this research was to understand the context in which the emigration wave from Madeira to Venezuela took place during the 1950s through the 1980s. This was done through accessing local literature on Madeiran emigration to Venezuela. A Masters level dissertation, later published as a booklet, by a Luso-Venezuelan alumnus of the University of Madeira, Joselin Nascimento, provided an extensive description of this movement, based on literary works that romanticise the experience of emigration across the Atlantic, and on interviews with successful emigrants who returned or were passing by Madeira (do Nascimento 2009).

Further on, the interest moved from the trip itself and the process of emigrating from Madeira to Venezuela, to the establishment of these immigrants in the destination country. For this part, a wide range of academic and literary works, mostly published in Venezuela, are available, recounting and analysing the continuous presence of Portuguese individuals in Venezuela and their participation in the local society (Saignes 1993) (Abreu Xavier 2007) (Abreu Xavier 2009) (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010) (F. Ramos-Rodríguez 2012). Other works analyse this presence through transnational lenses, giving credit to the maintenance of social networks and transnational links as crucial to economic and social development and integration of this population in Venezuela (Dinneen 2015) (Dinneen 2011).

After understanding the characteristics of the emigration from Madeira to Venezuela and the patterns of integration and socialization in the country of the first-generation immigrants, I started the field-work. The first step into the field was to join several of the Facebook groups available for Luso-Venezuelans in Madeira, where I started making contacts with possible participants. Those who fell under the second-generation category, were then invited for an interview. At the same time, personal contacts were also able to refer other individuals who they knew belonged to the same cohort of Luso-Venezuelans. A total of nine participants were interviewed.

Throughout the entire duration of my study, I reviewed other case studies which focused on the topic of second-generation return to find commonalities and disparities between others and my case. They also served as a source of inspiration for possible variables and issues that could be studied within the research. Susanne's Wessendorf's work on Swiss-

Italian individuals' experiences relocating from Switzerland to Italy, highlights the importance of regular homeland visits (made possible by the relatively geographical closeness) as children in the construction of an Italian identity in second-generation individuals. It also revealed the importance that foreigners' legal status has in informing notions of belonging of immigrants and their children, in that the negative policies and attitudes towards immigrants in Switzerland, as well as their inability to obtain full citizenship, prompted the upbringing of a second-generation that is much more connected to the ancestral homeland, where their identities are validated (Wessendorf 2007). This is contrasting to the case of Portuguese immigrants in Venezuela, who, at a great geographical distance from their homeland, were encouraged to take up Venezuelan nationality, prompting a less unproblematic integration into the local society. Tracey Reynolds, in her work on British Caribbean individuals, too highlights the influence that transnational practices during childhood and the maintenance of transnational social networks has on the decision to relocate to the ancestral homeland (Reynolds 2008) (Reynolds 2011).

My research also confirms what literature on second-generation returns consistently shows, that regardless of the maintenance of close links to an ancestral homeland, it is often the case that second-generation individuals will, upon relocation, experience difficulties and disillusionments throughout the process of adapting to their new place of residence, which often highlights their outsider condition in their ancestral homeland (Christou 2006) (dos Santos 2014) (Tsuda 2003). (See also (Potter 2005), (Kaurinkoski 2008), (Vathi and King 2011), (Fehler 2011), (King and Christou 2011), (Binaisa 2011), (Vathi 2011), (Teerling 2011), (Čapo 2012), (Erciyes 2014), (Sardinha 2014), (Keles 2015), (Pelliccia 2017), (Kiliç 2017)).

Official statistics about the numbers of the Luso-Venezuelan population in Madeira is not obtainable, but other sources, including media and journalistic data were accessed, as to draw an overview of the phenomenon in study. Because Luso-Venezuelans can access Portuguese citizenship via *jus sanguinis*, the entries and exists from and to both countries cannot be traced accurately. However, the growing number in arrivals from Venezuela to Madeira in the past five years has resulted in increased attention about the numbers. These can be draw through registrations in aid institutions, such as the Employment Institute and the Luso-Venezuelan association, Venecom or through consulate data, but they are always inaccurate and encompass only a fraction, as further movement of these migrants within

national and Schengen borders is not controlled. Though this might represent a limitation for statistical data, my study is not dependent upon it as it is mainly qualitative, informed by ethnographic research. In-depth qualitative data from the interviewees' accounts reflect their own understanding and interpretations of their own realities and experiences.

Despite the many commonalities among the interviewees' narratives, this study can never be taken as representative of the experiences of the entire cohort of second-generation Luso-Venezuelans. It can only provide insights on certain issues faced by a small number of these individuals, and reveal differences and commonalities according to different variables. For instance, those who returned in the early 2000s had significantly different motivations and lived experiences than those who returned after the 2010s.

Together with observational methods, the aim of my study is to give centrality to the interviewees' own narratives, while also taking into consideration the wider context in which the phenomenon of second-generation 'return' has been taking place. The following sections in this chapter are the result of a collection of notes taken throughout the duration of the research, as well as epistemological notions from my own experience as a resident in the island and numerous informal interactions and discussions with second-generation returnees who did not purposely participate in my research, as well as from being present and observant of discussion in online platforms, such as the aforementioned Facebook groups created for Luso-Venezuelans to interact and share information with one another.

Throughout my study, I made efforts towards distancing my personal experiences and pre-conceived notions on the matter. Nevertheless, my positioning as an 'insider' showed valuable in certain steps of this research, particularly during the interviews. "One of the benefits of being positioned as 'insider' within a study is that it provides the researcher with additional insight and knowledge of the community being studied." (Reynolds 2008, 6).

During the interviews, I could communicate in the participants' preferred language and understand the use of colloquial or regional expressions, as well as the unspoken practices. Moreover, as a daughter of a father who belongs to the same cohort as the individuals being studied, I could relate to some of their stories and bring up issues that I was acquainted with as a result of my condition as a Luso-Venezuelan. This was also a factor that loosened the informants' barriers in terms of what they felt they could say. For instance, there were several cases in which the interviewees had somewhat negative views regarding

Portuguese cultural traits. Letting them know that I had come across similar views within my own family circle, and understood where they came from, allowed the participants to expand on them without the fear of misinterpretation or of taking offense from it. It was in these instances that I particularly stressed and made use of my insider status.

Notwithstanding, since an early stage in my study, I could detect the assumptions I had mistakenly constructed about the matter, particularly those regarding identity formation: I am part of a third generation of Luso-Venezuelans who grew up in Madeira, and during my upbringing, I saw both my parents express close ties to Venezuela and reject the local Portuguese culture in terms of traditions, language, music, etc. This made me construct the idea that the Venezuelan way of being was prioritized and that little from Portugal was being passed on from the first-generation migrants to the second. However, as I dwelled on the topic with my own family and friends, I understood that my father's lack of identification with the Portuguese side of his identity is linked to the fact that, despite his heritage, he was disconnected from his family from an early age. His parents had returned to the island in the early 1970s when he was still a child, and in Madeira, he has forced into hard agriculture labour even before his teenage years, which prompted him to 'escape' back to Venezuela when he was only twelve years old, accompanying an uncle who was to depart. He was forced to find his own way in the country, and even though his parents re-emigrated to Venezuela years later, his formative years were mostly spent around locals. Following the line of detachment from his roots, my father's relocation to Madeira in 1999, as a young adult, married to a Venezuelan woman, and with two children, had nothing to do with a desire to return to his roots, but rather was mostly driven by push economic factors. Throughout my research, it was made clear that this was not the reality for the participants, as most lived highly transnational lives growing up, with constant links to the homeland. Thus, the main commonality between myself and the participants in my study was our legal identification as Portuguese and Venezuelan.

My study is centred on the Autonomous Region of Madeira, where most Portuguese who emigrated to Venezuela departed from. The research participants were approached via internet, through Facebook groups dedicated to Luso-Venezuelans in Madeira and through snowballing. The criteria for participation was that their parents were first-generation immigrants from Madeira to Venezuela, and that they had made the decision to emigrate

(‘return’) to their homeland as adults. They are adults who reflect on their lives as children of immigrants, on their childhood, adolescence and on the choices they made during their lives, specially those relative to the process leading up to the relocation from their country of birth or to the origin country of their parents. Particular attention was given to the process of settlement upon relocation.

### 1.1. Research project and interviews

Three interviews took place in November 2019, three in March 2020 and other three in June and July 2020. Four participants were recruited via Facebook groups, as they responded to my post about this research. All these participants currently reside in Funchal and the interviews took place in a café. The other five participants were recruited through snowballing, three of the interviews took place in their homes or a friend’s home, and one was done over the phone. The interview done over the phone was significantly shorter than the previous one, and the interviewee (Hita) expressed an inability to communicate and engage further in the conversation due to the lack of intimacy that could otherwise be created should the interview happen in person.

Only three interviews were done in Spanish, four in fluent Portuguese and two predominately in Portuguese but with the use of some Spanish expressions. They lasted for an average of 45 minutes.

*Table 1: Interviews’ data*

<i>Name &amp; code</i>	<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Language</i>
<i>Maria F2019A</i>	Facebook	Café Continente, Ribeira Brava	16.11.2019	1:47:00	Spanish
<i>Belkis F1998</i>	Facebook	Café Jamaica, Funchal	22.11.2019	1:34:27	Spanish
<i>Emilia F2000</i>	Facebook	Café das Murças, Funchal	27.11.2019	0:52:28	Portuguese

<i>Hita F2019B</i>	Snowball	Phone call	21.03.2020	0:25:11	Spanish
<i>António M1995</i>	Snowball	Participant's home, Ponta do Pargo	29.03.2020	00:19:56	Portuguese
<i>Juan M1998</i>	Snowball	Participant's home, Ponta do Pargo	29.03.2020	00:58:17	Portuguese
<i>Lucia F2016</i>	Snowball	Friend's home, Ponta do Pargo	05.06.2020	00:31:22	Portuguese & Spanish
<i>Ana F2014</i>	Facebook	Confeitaria, Funchal	07.07.2020	00:39:42	Portuguese
<i>Alberto M2018</i>	Snowball	Sol Shopping, Ponta do Sol	08.07.2020	00:17:09	Portuguese & Spanish

Ethical procedures were put in practice: participants were informed about the use and nature of my research. They were asked permission to be recorded during the interview, and for their information to be analysed and used by me for academic research purposes. All of them signed a contentment document as a proof of their voluntary participation in my study. None of the interviewees requested for their relevant data, such as names, surnames and place of residence to be hidden. All the names, ages and places mentioned are true to the information they provided.

The interviews were unstructured and semi-structured, allowing the participants to speak spontaneously about their own story. Most of the them flowed in a chronological line: At first, they were asked about their family background and history of migration. They recounted their parents' narratives of hardship in Madeira and the process of leaving the island in search of better life and working conditions in Venezuela. Secondly, they were asked to reflect on their upbringing in Venezuela and recount their experiences of transnationalism: contacts with left-behind non-migrant kin in Madeira; visits to the region; their interaction with fellow Portuguese migrants, either within their locality of residence or through participation in Portuguese institutions; cultural expressions upheld by their parents; and their perception of how their upbringing differs from the local way. Lastly, they were asked about their motivations to emigrate and why they chose to relocate to Madeira. They spoke

about the decision-making process, the expectations they had prior to relocating and the actualization of the migration plan. Special attention was given to the process of settling in Madeira: their employment histories; social integration and interaction with the local society; aid received from family and institutions; plans and expectations for the future; and (reverse transnational) links back to Venezuela. Their socio-economic and demographic circumstances were also considered.

Prior to our meetings, I provided the interviewees with a list of topics and general questions that I would approach at the interview. This guide (attachment B) did not have the purpose of structuring the conversation, but rather to let the participant know beforehand what themes were put into question. Some returnees and in general, many Luso-Venezuelan individuals arriving in Madeira in the past years, are leaving Venezuela due to increasing political and economic tension. Though these factors are inherently important to some of the participants' relocation, I wanted to let the participants know that the interest of my research was anthropological and related to their lived experience as immigrants, and that they did not need to express nor would they be questioned about their political views.

Interviews were later transcribed in the original language. After transcriptions, the themes were organized into four main sections: family migration history; family life in Venezuela and references to Portugal; relocation from Venezuela to Madeira; and identity negotiation. Later on, under each thematic section, interviewees and the information they provided about them were put into categories, which were then analysed to find commonalities and relations between them.

Interestingly, all the participants came from migrant families that lived through similar experiences among them, which in its turn, are well represented in the literary works aforementioned. With their own distinctive details – different levels of economic prosperity, and different degree of transnational orientations – their family stories echoed those reported in literature, and their own experiences of migration added a whole new layer of information to the study of migration dynamics between Portugal and Venezuela. This segment of history, regarding the exodus from Venezuela to Portugal has so far remained unstudied, with only one published Masters' level thesis on the topic (Hernández Valencia 2018).



## 1.2. General characteristics of the sample

All but one of the participants in this research have two parents that come from Madeira and who emigrated to Venezuela during the 1950s or the 1960s. It was often the case for the interviewees, that their fathers were the ones who travelled to Venezuela and later returned to Madeira to marry their mothers and have them joining them in Venezuela, or in one case, married through proxy. It was also the case for nearly all of them that their fathers travelled together with other members of their family, such as a brother or an uncle. Only one participant had a parent who married a Venezuelan woman. They came from several regions of Madeira, Porto Moniz, Funchal, Câmara de Lobos and Calheta. Four of the informants come from parents who owned a business, usually a small grocery store, four others were dedicated to agriculture, and one was an electrician. It is interesting to note that the electrician, married to a Venezuelan woman, returned to Madeira after staying in Venezuela for only a few years. He left a daughter, Ana, whose background will be explored more deeply in the following chapter.

It was a commonality between the informants that their parents left the island in search of better economic and employment opportunities. With not more than small pockets of land left in Madeira, all the participants' parents planned for a long-term or permanent settlement in Venezuela. Indeed, some of the participants' parents are still living in Venezuela, some returned later than their children, and others attempted an earlier return but re-emigrated to Venezuela after a short period. These parents, after some years of working in Venezuela, were able to purchase or build a house in the country, where the informants grew up. Except for two participants whose parents sold their house and the piece of land they explored for agriculture, all the participants still have a home to return to if they were to travel back to Venezuela.

Out of the nine participants, six were women and three were men. Except for one younger participant aged 32, all participants' age ranged from 45 to 58 years old. More important than their current age, is the age in which they relocated to Madeira: five emigrated in their twenties (between 23 and 29), two in their forties (44 and 47) and two in their fifties (53 and 57). Those who arrived in Madeira as young adults belong to an earlier wave of migration of the late 1990s and early 2000s (between 1995 and 2002), except for the younger participant, Ana, who relocated at the age of 25 in 2014. The majority of the interviewees

(four) were born and raised in Caracas, three in neighbouring Estado Miranda (Los Teques and Charallave) and one in Maracay. One interviewee was born in Porto Moniz, in Madeira, and was brought to live in Maracay by her parents at the age of 6<sup>1</sup>. Four are currently living in the capital city of Funchal and five in Calheta.

Regarding their employment situation, two participants were currently unemployed and searching for job opportunities, one was retired and providing unpaid labour as a caregiver to a grandchild; the two participants who had completed higher education degrees in Venezuela were employed in white-collar jobs, one as a company’s director and the other as a Social Security agent; four had manual jobs in the commerce sector, as a cook and a store repository, and in the service sector as a construction worker and a can tonier.

All those whose parents came from Calheta, relocated to the same area. Four of the five built on the lands that belonged to their grandparents or moved and enlarged the houses they had, while one currently lives on a rental in the same town. Two of the four who now live in Funchal had parents with origins somewhere else, and the other two, though their families were also from Funchal, do not live near their area nor in a land that belonged to them.

*Table 2: Interviewees' general information*

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Place &amp; year of birth</i>	<i>Year &amp; age of relocation</i>	<i>Residency</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>
<i>Maria</i>	F	Madeira, 1962	2019, 57	Funchal	retired
<i>Belkis</i>	F	Caracas, 1969	1998, 29	Funchal	unemployed
<i>Emilia</i>	F	Caracas, 1975	2002, 27	Funchal	company's director

<sup>1</sup> They are referred to in migration research as the 1.5 generation, though socially and anthropologically they are analyzed as part of the second-generation.

<i>Hita</i>	F	Maracay, 1972	2019, 47	Calheta	store repository
<i>António</i>	M	Los Teques, 1970	1995, 23	Calheta	cantonier
<i>Juan</i>	M	Los Teques, 1972	1998, 27	Calheta	construction worker
<i>Lucia</i>	F	Caracas, 1963	2016, 53	Calheta	unemployed
<i>Ana</i>	F	Caracas, 1988	2014, 25	Funchal	Social Security agent
<i>Alberto</i>	M	Charallave, 1974	2018, 44	Calheta	cook

## 2. Migration flows between Portugal and Venezuela

Migration flows in Venezuela have oscillated significantly throughout the last century: from a country that during most of the 1900's received massive waves of immigration to one that towards the end of the millennium transitioned into a sending one.

The first attempts at attracting immigration to Venezuela started in the 1830s but these were unsuccessful due to political instability and civil unrest in the country. It was only nearly one century later that Venezuela became an attractive destination for migrants from all around the world.

In 1937, under the government of Eleazar López Contrera (1936-1941), a regime of selective immigration was put in practice, with measures to attract immigrants. Foreign labour was needed to develop the country and to counter the national slow demographic growth. Thus, the Instituto Técnico de la Imigración y Colonización<sup>2</sup> was created in 1938 with the aim of recruiting immigrants and funding agricultural colonies. This mobilization however,

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<sup>2</sup> Technical Institute for Immigration and Colonization

did not meet its goals, as the Second World War (1939-1945) hampered potential migrants' departure (F. Ramos-Rodríguez 2012)

During the immediate years after the war, selective policies were still in place, which succeeded at attracting immigrants from Nordic, Mediterranean and Slavic European countries, as well as from the Atlantic archipelagos of Canarias and Madeira. These selective criteria for immigration was tied to and supportive of the predominance of a Eurocentric mind-set which associated white migration to economic and cultural development. Immigration from Europe had since long been encouraged by Venezuelan elites, as part of projects of improving the Venezuelan racial makeup by whitening the population and reducing the size of the 'pure black' minority (Wright 1990).

In the beginning of the XIX century Venezuela needed to export foreign labour for agriculture and economic expansion, thus immigration was heavily encouraged. Up until the 1920's, the main source of immigrant labour had been Colombia, however, between 1948 and 1959, pro-immigration laws, along with significant growth in the oil industry, succeeded at attracting large flows of immigrants from Europe, who at the time were living in the aftermath of the Second World War. This was the period of the governance by Perez Jiménez (1948-1958), whose interests were largely around recruiting agricultural and skilled workers to carry on the plans for urban expansion and development. With a seemingly regime of open immigration, as opposed to the selective one previously in place, the Venezuelan government accomplished receiving massive flows of immigration into the country. Though most of the recruitment was made through consulates in Spain, Italy and Portugal<sup>3</sup>, this was still the period in which Venezuela received most of its immigrants. In 1961, 7% of the population in Venezuela was foreign born (1.3% in 1941), and from 1960 to 1980, the Venezuelan population was growing at a rate of around 3% annually (Álvarez 2007).

Although not homogenous throughout time, migration between Portugal and Venezuela have resulted in the continuous presence of a large Portuguese diaspora in

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<sup>3</sup> Immigration from Colombia was discouraged but easy border crossings allowed large inflows of Colombian immigrants.

Venezuela as well as a strong Luso-Venezuelan presence in Portugal, especially in Madeira, where most of Portuguese emigrants in the 1950's departed from.

At the exception of the Italian immigrants, who were recruited through sponsored programs to work in agriculture in the interior regions of the country, immigrants from Europe tended to concentrate in the urbanized areas, specially the Spanish and the Portuguese. In 1971, 78% of Portuguese immigrants in the country was settled in the region of Caracas, mostly employed in commercial activities (Kritz 1975).

Portuguese immigrants were pushed out of Portugal due to a variety of reasons, such as the social and economic decay caused by the Second World War, political and economic instability and the establishment of a dictatorship than spanned between 1933-1974 which was characterized by colonial wars in Africa and Asia, and which caused the highest numbers of arrivals (Pires 2019). They were attracted to Venezuela due to the increasingly oil revenues which allowed the country the resources to develop and to promote demographic growth. Moreover, there was a snowball effect, in which migrants would depart to Venezuela attracted by the news of economic prosperity experienced by those who had departed before. Those already established in Venezuela helped fellow friends, acquaintances and family members to make the move.

## 2.1. Emigration from Madeira to Venezuela (1950-1980)

It was during the presidency of Eleazar López Contreras that Venezuela first received waves of migration from European countries. As a part of a plan to modernize and stimulate the national economy, mostly Spanish, Italians and Portuguese experienced migrants arrived to fill in jobs in agriculture and construction. The peak was, however, between 1947 and 1957, time in which nearly one million immigrants arrived in Venezuela, under Marcos Pérez Jiménez' regime (1952-1958). Pushed out of their countries by difficult living conditions in post-war Europe, 800.000 migrants were pulled to Venezuela's pro-immigration policies and oil-driven prosperity.

The first massive recruitment of immigrants from Madeira started in the 1930's to the oil refineries of Dutch company Shell in Curazao. Upon the end of work contracts there, in 1937, the Venezuelan institution, Instituto Técnico de Inmigración y Colonización, arranged

the arrival of many migrants who worked at Shell to come work at Venezuela's own oil extracting companies.

Meanwhile in Madeira, the population was incentivised to emigrate, due to the demographic excess in the island. Not only that, the local economy was very fragile, and most of the population, especially those in the rural areas, lived in poverty due to the lack of industries, the underdeveloped and unproductive agriculture, low wages, weak healthcare system and in general low economic and social development in a conservative country.

Large families saw emigration as the only solution to improving living and working conditions. Venezuela became an attractive destination in the first half of the 1940s, due to its then strong currency, the Bolívar, backed by effective oil production which started in the 1920s. When exchanged to Escudos, the Portuguese currency at the time, Bolívars would make up a fortune. Many immigrants would return to Madeira for visits, and bring large sums of money, and modern gadgets which they were keen to exhibit as a sign of their wealth and success accomplished in Venezuela. They would pay for religious masses, celebrations and festivals, and donate generous offerings to the church and local institutions. At the same time that their immigrant condition provided them with high status in their homeland, they enticed others, especially young men, to take the same path and sail far, to prosperous land. Even young men from wealthy families who owned lands in the northern region of the island, were leaving to Venezuela, as emigrating had become trendy and there was the desire to generate more wealth easily, which was possible in Venezuela (do Nascimento 2009). This is an example of what Douglas Massey identifies as a region with culture of migration, in which persistent outmigration is sustained throughout generations and becomes commonplace. At the same time, the values and cultural perceptions about migration change and increase the probability of future migration for others in the region, as migration becomes a rite of passage (Massey, et al. 1993).

To avoid the expenses of the bureaucracy needed to leave, many migrants chose to travel illegally, in so called "pirate ships" ('navios-piratas'). In 1947, emigration started to be more controlled and more bureaucracy was needed, but this was only to better regulate and organize it, not to prevent it. The Junta Nacional da Emigração, a Portuguese agency, started organizing in-group departures and mediating work contracts between employers in Venezuela and future workers in Madeira. In Madeira, the Direção Geral da Emigração

provided all the information regarding the procedure for departing to those who intended to emigrate, and upon arrival in Venezuela, immigrants were assisted by the Instituto da Emigração, who guided them through the process of settling in the country (do Nascimento 2009). In the 1950s, the Portuguese presence in Venezuela was already noticeable and successful merchants started funding Portuguese institutions, such as the Centro Português en Caracas.

During this first phase of immigration, between 1945 and 1960, 19.069 Madeirans departed legally to Venezuela<sup>4</sup>, an average of 1.271 people yearly. Throughout the 1950s, Venezuela received a total of 36.236 Portuguese immigrants<sup>5</sup>. The following period, between 1961-1974, corresponds to the years of the dictatorship of António Salazar, during which emigration from Madeira can be perceived as forced, as many, especially young men, left the island in fear of being deployed to the Colonial War in Africa, adding to still poor living and working conditions under the regime. Many others expressed desire to emigrate, as they saw their land could no longer provide for them. The population had raised in Madeira, the war had immobilised the tourist sector and hindered exports, the lack of industries and the nature of the local agriculture meant the island's inability to serve its dense populations.

On the other hand, Venezuela was still recruiting foreign labour to continue its modernization projects and Portugal provided the cheap workforce needed to build infrastructures. Madeiran immigrants initially worked within the agricultural and industrial field, saved up salaries and started investing in commerce.

Upon arrival, migrants would receive an 'immigrant visa', but they could have access to more rights if they chose to obtain citizenship: not only would they be exempt from military service, they could also receive accommodation, food and healthcare for the time it took them to handle the process of settling in their new place of residency. In the 1960s, with prospects of fixing more European immigrants and their families in the country, as opposed to receiving temporary workers, Venezuela encouraged its young immigrants to contract

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<sup>4</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), 1945-1960

<sup>5</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística & DGACCP, mentioned in Relatório da Emigração 2013, by Gabinete do Secretário de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas

Venezuelan citizenship. In exchange, they could receive administrative support when opening a business, as well as access to bank credits and subsidies. These benefits were interesting for many Madeiran immigrants, who found in Venezuela the opportunity to set up their own small companies and grow further. They would invest their savings, buying businesses in small instalments, mostly in the Caracas region. The first businesses owned by Portuguese immigrants were bakeries, small grocery stores and family restaurants and later luxury restaurants, clubs, bus companies and even a bank (do Nascimento 2009).

Venezuela was one of the countries that received most of Madeiran immigrants. Not only was it an attractive destination to those escaping extreme poverty, it was as well enticing for young men whose families owned lands and had comfortable incomes, as they wished to experience adventure and had the desire to increase their wealth quickly, which was possible in Venezuela. In her book, “Emigração Madeirense para a Venezuela (1940-1974)”, Joselin do Nascimento, a Venezuelan-born author whose family emigrated from Madeira, recounts the story of several Madeiran men who left the island with a spirit of adventure, such as António Joaquim, an owner of a bus company in Madeira at the time of emigrating, who despite having a significant wealth in Madeira, left to Venezuela, attracted to the ease with which he could do business in the country; Egídeo Teixeira, who had a fair income from raising cattle in Madeira but left to Venezuela and became a business man with a factory for plastics; Alfredo Caldeira, who owned several plots of land in the north region of the island and was a wood dealer, too emigrated to Venezuela and was later joined by his servant, a young boy from Ponta do Sol who managed to create more wealth than his former boss by investing in a bus company (do Nascimento 2009).

Between 1950 and 1969, 73.554 Portuguese immigrants arrived in Venezuela, of which 38.737 (53%) came from Madeira. Of all 83.573 who emigrated out of Madeira during these two decades, Venezuela was the preferred destination, attracting 46% of immigrants. Other popular destinations for them were Brazil and South Africa, which attracted 36% and 10% respectively<sup>6</sup> (Antunes 1970).

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<sup>6</sup> Boletins da Junta de Emigração (Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas) mentioned in *Vinte anos de emigração portuguesa: alguns dados e comentários*, by Marinho Antunes.



The period of mass Portuguese emigration to Venezuela ended in the 1980s, with the country facing economic difficulties. Moreover, not only had Portugal become a democratic country, new possible destinations emerged with the free access to other EU labour markets. A significant portion of Portuguese immigrants started to leave early in the decade, mostly those from the mainland. Madeirans, though no longer in the same numbers as in the previous decades, continued to be joined by relatives (Dinneen 2011).

### 2.1.1. First generation immigrants in Venezuela

In 1990, of all 1.880.727 Portuguese emigrants around the globe, 68.277 (3,6%) resided in Venezuela, accounting for 0,4% of the total population of the country and 6.7% of the foreign born. With only 7.259 new Portuguese emigrants arriving between 1980 and 1999, the flux was not sufficient to replace those who died or left the country, and at the turning of the millennium, the presence of this first-generation Portuguese-born population had decreased nearly 21%, to 54.176<sup>7</sup>. Between 2000 and 2010, the variation was not significant (54.176 and 53.028 respectively), though, according to statistic data, in 2011, the number dropped 13% (37.326<sup>8</sup>) (Pires, Pereira, et al. 2018).

Nearly half of 2011's Portuguese born residents arrived between the 1940 and 1970 decade. In the 1980s, there were 12.000 new arrivals and in the 1990s, the number decreased to 6.000, representing 34% and 18% respectively. After the 2000, only 500 new entries were registered (1.5%) and due to political, economic and social tensions in the country, the decrease continues, as Venezuela is no longer considered a destination country for Portuguese emigrants (Pires, Pereira, et al. 2018).

Though in the first years of massive immigration to Venezuela Portuguese inflows were not as massive in comparison to the Spanish and Italian, their increasing arrivals in the 1960s and 1970s has resulted in a strong consistent presence of a Luso-Venezuelan population in the country. The pioneer ones, the ones who arrived between 1945 and 1958

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Statistical Division

<sup>8</sup> Insituto Nacional de Estadística & Censos de Población y Vivienda, 2011

served as important base for further arrivals, making the period between 1962 and 1976, the most significant in terms of the number of incomers (F. J. Ramos-Rodríguez 2012).

As important as it is to understand the circumstances in which Portuguese immigrants left their homes, it is as important to learn about what happened to them once they arrived in Venezuela and how they adapted to their new place of residency.

With nearly half a million Portuguese, Venezuela accounts with the second-largest Portuguese presence in South America, after Brazil with nearly 700.000 people. According to Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo, the Portuguese population in Venezuela was, in 2011 estimated at 400.000, mostly settled in the metropolitan area of Caracas, Valencia and Maracay. In Caracas, more than anywhere else in Venezuela, most these Portuguese have origins in Madeira (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010), and in general, Madeirans make up nearly 75% of the Portuguese across Venezuela.

Most Madeirans who were recruited in the 1940s were initially dispersed in rural regions across the country employed in the agricultural field. Difficult conditions pushed them to soon move to the cities, and Caracas became the preferred destination. The rapid economic growth during the 1960s and 1970s allowed Portuguese to penetrate the Venezuelan labour market, for which they provided important labour in a variety of sectors. A lot of construction work was taking place as part of the plans for urban expansion, fuelled by oil revenues, and commerce was spiking up.

Most Portuguese men coming from rural areas in Madeira were aged between 17 and 35 years, had very little to no education and had experience solely in agricultural activities. Many would marry young Portuguese women through proxies, who would then become able to travel from Portugal to join them in Venezuela, some men would also return to Madeira to marry and then travel back to Venezuela with their now wives.

In her book, Joselin do Nascimento draws a prototype of the Portuguese migrant on his visits back to Madeira. Given the title of 'the uncle from Venezuela', his visit to Madeira was an important event, not only family members awaited with excitement, but also other members of the community, especially young women that wished to marry. Migrants would vigorously display the wealth they gathered in Venezuela, by bringing gifts and driving foreign expensive cars, never seen in the island (do Nascimento 2009).

Many families were established in Venezuela, with most Portuguese couples having between 2 and 5 children. Most of these children who were born and raised in the country, attended local public schools, spoke Spanish as their first language, reserving Portuguese to specific familiar context (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010).

Portuguese men from the mainland were the ones with the experience needed in the construction sector and so many took up professions as carpenters, plumbers and electricians, etc. Madeirans, however, with only agricultural experience, were at first mostly employed in farms in the outskirts of the city, only to later concentrate in urban centres to carry out merchant activities. Though throughout the 1960s, Portuguese from the mainland made up 3/4 of the Portuguese population in Venezuela, immigration from Madeira continued as the economic opportunities were still very limited in the island and so they were joined by their extended families. Their businesses generated consistent large scale profits, fuelled by the population growth and the expansion of urban centres, both fuelled by oil revenues which increased the population's spending power. On the other hand, Portuguese from the mainland had the tendency to return to Portugal or emigrate to other countries, as the opportunities for them diminished with the regression of public spending in urban infrastructures. In 1990, the Madeiran made up nearly 70% of the Portuguese community (Moreira Cunha 1998).

These men had mostly arrived in Venezuela by ship, through Puerto de La Guaira and established themselves in Caracas. At a first instance, many would find accommodation in pensions or even in their workplace, taking the time needed to gather enough capital to bring their families and establish a household. They worked long hours, often employed by fellow Portuguese who had arrived earlier and had managed to open businesses of several kinds, such as bars, restaurants, cafés, bakeries and small grocery stores (*abastos*).

Their priority was to pay back the debts they contracted to cover the costs of their arrival in Venezuela. Their departure from Madeira was often aided by relatives, friends of already established immigrants who could pay for the travel fares in exchange of work in their businesses once they arrived. They would then dedicate their funds to their families back home, either to help them through the difficulties in Madeira or to bring them to Venezuela. Some would then invest in the purchase of a plot of land, often through relatives, where they aimed at building a house for a possible return. This, along with other forms of transnational

practices, was mostly true for Portuguese coming from the mainland. Mark Dinneen points out:

“Such commitment was often evident in the behaviour of Portuguese in Venezuela – the mainlanders, more than the Madeirans – maintained plans of an eventual return to Portugal. They invested money there and made sure their children learned Portuguese, were exposed to Portuguese culture and, when the moment would come, they would find a Portuguese partner to marry” (Dinneen 2015, 60).

Urban centres were prosperous for merchant activities such as the ones developed by Madeirans, and allowed them to gather the economic and social resources they needed to expand and become more prominent in the business scenery of the four major Venezuelan cities, Caracas, Valencia, Maracay and Barquisimeto. They went from making up a significant part of the workforce in the 1950s to becoming the owners of commercial establishments in the 1960s and 1970s.

Portuguese popularity grew not only in urban centres but also in neighbourhoods and towns across the country. They diversified and amplified their economic activities, bought farms in the outskirts of cities and grew significantly in the banking sector, as Portuguese owned bakeries became part of everyday local living for popular communities and barrios. Their influence has even been felt in the local diet, in which there was a significant increase in the amount of wheat bread consumed, which due to its readiness for consumption slowly replaced the arepa (typical maize flat bread) as a side in main meals. (F. J. Ramos-Rodríguez 2012).

### 2.1.2. Integration into Venezuelan society

The case of the Portuguese in Venezuela is notably characterised by a process of assimilation that unveiled unproblematic, as immigrants gradually dissolved into the local population while maintaining certain structures of Portuguese tradition, thus forming hybrid identities through the process of negotiating their identities between the host society and the homeland (Dinneen 2011). With the implementation of positive naturalization laws and the promotion of the Venezuelan citizenship as a source of economic and social benefits during

the 1960s, many Portuguese immigrants took up Venezuelan nationality. During this time, foreigners were encouraged to stay permanently in Venezuela, as policies facilitated their nationalization, especially for those who had arrived with the intention of settling their families in the country (Gomes 2009).

Those arriving with a visa could expand their rights by becoming a Venezuelan citizen. They would be exempt from military service, receive assistance throughout their relocation process, and have access public health care. With these policies and aid, the country intended to counter the trend of young single adults who came to work temporarily in the country, gather money and return to their homeland. Instead, the permanent settlement of individuals and families was expected. Temporary individual migration also meant that large sums of money earned in Venezuela would not be invested back in the country, and instead be sent as remittances to the homeland.

Nevertheless, through their presence in the labour market, with their business, they not only acquired large amounts of economic capital, but it also allowed the integration in specific economic niches. Mark Dinneen argues that their entrepreneurship success has been supported by their sense of community which prompted them to create spaces for socialization, allowing the creation and maintenance of important networks based on values of mutual support. At the same time, their commercial activities promoted their social interaction with the local population, facilitating their integration and improving their social status (Dinneen 2015).

Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo's ethnographic work on the Portuguese community in Caracas point out to the inexistence of a specific Portuguese neighbourhood in the city and the dominance of the Spanish language among Portuguese migrants as indicators of Portuguese integration and assimilation in Venezuela. This facilitated the process of mixing and what they refer to as 'venezuelanization' of the community (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010). Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Portuguese held closely to their religious identity, which, among other ways, they expressed by organizing and engaging in festive celebrations in the name of catholic figures.

Another example of how the Portuguese community integrated in Venezuela is documented by historian Ramos-Rodriguez in his study on Portuguese immigrants in the city of Barquisimeto:

*“[...] in the city of Barquisimeto, since the mid 1940s through the beginning of the 1980s, a Portuguese immigrant community has been settling, characterised by their liberality, inserting and integrating themselves in the city of the twilights, with the foundation of small businesses, bakeries, groceries stores, through which they interact with their barquisimetian costumers, economically lifting their families, allowing their children, the Luso-descendants to attend universities and inheriting the paternal businesses, along with the years passing, and the natural ageing of the immigrants, generations get mixed, children, grandchildren and saudades. If any trait has made noticeable the Portuguese presence in the city founded by Villegas, it has been their non-intervention in politics, their constant work in their establishments, their silence and reservedness, their devotion to the Virgin of Fátima and their taste for football.” (F. J. Ramos-Rodríguez 2012, 348-349)*

Many Portuguese immigrants found employment, important information and business support and advice during interaction with fellow immigrants in these social clubs. Small grocery stores (*abastos*) became minimarkets, and through the alliance between several Madeiran owners, new supermarkets and hypermarkets were appearing here and there, to the point that the food distribution sector in Caracas became dominated by the Portuguese, and currently most supermarket chains in the country are owned by these immigrants and their descendants, namely, Central Madeirense, Supermercados Unicasa and Automercados. Unlike other economic sectors which suffered oscillations, commerce was a continuous source of income. Owning a business was highly valued in Madeiran culture, and these immigrants found in Venezuela the opportunity structures to develop their entrepreneurial projects. As the economy grew, purchase power increased, and so did the demand for products and services, both by the locals and co-ethnics. It was in this context that Madeirans formed an ethnic entrepreneurship niche (Zhou 2004) in the food distribution industry.

Though there is a minority who were not able to find economic and financial stability in Venezuela, remaining invisible in the poor areas of cities such as Caracas, high level of economic success that many Portuguese immigrants accomplished in the country is a distinguishable case in the diaspora.

One of the factors that contributed to the process referred to as ‘venezuelanization’ is the language affinity. They argue that the ease with which Portuguese immigrants managed the Spanish language helped break down the resistance and psychological inhibitions that individuals could have had as a response to assimilation. Most Portuguese immigrants lost the habit of speaking Portuguese and Spanish became the language of spontaneous conversation, which significantly aided their integration in the host society (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010).

A second contributing factor is the inexistence of what is often called a ‘Portuguese community’ that is spatialized into a specifically Portuguese neighbourhood. “Absence of an ethnic enclave is the first indication of a process of social integration of the community. It is evident that the cultural and linguistic affinity of the receiving society has facilitated a process of mixing and “venezuelanization” of the community.” (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010, 458).

Though it is clear that Portuguese formed an economy enclave, they did not cluster in specific areas in the cities they settled in. Clusters and spatialized ethnic enclaves are common in many places where certain groups of immigrants are significantly present and they contribute towards preserving the immigrants’ original identity by promoting the prevalence of inward socialization. This is contrasting with other emigrant destinations where Portuguese immigrants have been more conservative in maintaining visible signs of their identity in their everyday life. Such was the case of the Portuguese immigrants in Toronto, who clustered in specific areas of the city where there was high demand for unskilled employment and affordable housing (Brettel 1981).

In contrast, exposure (and spatial proximity) of minority groups to the dominant society tends to result in social interaction, and such interaction gradually cause the erosion of minorities’ identity in favour of the codes of behaviour of the majority and dominant society (Peach 2005). Although one cannot claim that spatial proximity and mixing translates into social positive relations, it is often the case that physical distances are indicative of social distances. In contrast, the social process of assimilation results in dispersal and dissolution of spatial markers of identity (Peach 2005).

We can observe the phenomenon of integration through assimilation of the Portuguese immigrants into Venezuelan society by looking at the city of Caracas, the main

settlement area: that the Portuguese did not cluster nor created a network of ethnic institutions and schools comes to show that the first generation of Portuguese immigrants did not feel the need to create mechanisms to preserve their identity and values, as they were not threatened by the host society. Although the absence of spatial enclave alone does not undoubtedly signify that the Portuguese assimilated completely into Venezuelan society, it explains a significant part of the reasons why the Portuguese immigrants successfully became part of the local system. The prevalence of within-group interaction and residential isolation would have delayed socio-cultural assimilation and reinforced the original identity, language maintenance and in-marriage, which did not occur.

According to Dalila Romero, most Portuguese men in the 1980s married Venezuelan women, though most Portuguese women continued to marry Portuguese men. She refers to this discrepancy as an integration gap between men and women, as women were holding more closely to values of endogamy (Romero 1992), informed by the patriarchal organisation of families, in which women's sexuality and marriage is more controlled, and in which men are perceived as the main bearers of the culture, able to pass it on to their offspring in the case of outmarriage. It is, however, important to note that men were often the first to emigrate, and some would return, specially to Madeira, in search of a wife, for whom they would send an invitation letter (*carta de chamada*) to have them joining them in Venezuela (do Nascimento 2009), meaning that there were more single unmarried Portuguese men than women in Venezuela.

Portuguese immigrants did not completely erase their original identity. They maintained traits of it that they expressed in the private sphere, such as family organization and religious affiliation. Abreu Xavier speaks of a discrepancy between behaviour and values, in the sense that he considers that Portuguese immigrants adapted their conduct in everyday practical interactions with the local society, adjusting to it to be acceptable, when in reality, they still held to the values once installed in them during their youths living in rural regions of Portugal. Expressions of Portuguese identity, he argues, were thus reserved for private and community spaces (Abreu Xavier 2007).

Nevertheless, there has been evidence, that community spaces created by the Portuguese, these 'sites of belonging' – Portuguese associations, mostly in Caracas – mostly serve as institutions not aiming at protecting Portuguese norms and values, but to promote



socio-cultural integration and mixing. Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo carried out fieldwork in the most relevant associations self-identified as Portuguese, from which they concluded that they were the result of desires of social affirmation and a display of economic success as to vindicate the negative image sometimes associated with immigrants. They are oriented towards promoting socio-cultural integration, cultural exchange and celebrating Portuguese festivities rather than privileging inward socialization. The most famous one is the Centro Portugués in Caracas, built in 1958, it displays impressive facilities and is recognized as one of the most respected private clubs. Though denominated as Portuguese, the club is open to anyone and focuses on social life and sporting activities (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010).

Despite that, participation in these clubs reveals certain sense of transnational attachment, as rituals of celebration of Portuguese culture can be considered important devices for reproducing shared notions of attachment to Portugal (Leal 2014). In Barquisimeto, the Centro Portugués serves as a social space for cultural and religious events, where they celebrate Portuguese and Madeiran traditions and important national and regional dates, such as Day of Portugal (June 10<sup>th</sup>) and Day of the Autonomy of Madeira (July 1<sup>st</sup>). However, what has more deeply mobilized the community to gather is their spiritual attachment to Catholicism, which prompted them to organize funds to establish, in 1976, a church, where they started celebrating many dates dedicated to saints and virgins, strongly displaying their faith and catholic devotion (F. J. Ramos-Rodríguez 2012).

### 2.1.3. The Second-Generation: the Luso-Venezuelans

Although data regarding the number of Portuguese emigrants who entered Venezuela is helpful to draw a picture of the Portuguese presence in Venezuela, the calculation of the second and subsequent generations cannot be made accurate. Because the Venezuelan nationality law is based on the principle of *jus soli*, any child born in the country acquired citizenship at birth, regardless of their parents' nationality and status. Moreover, up until 1999, Venezuela did not allow for double or multiple citizenship, and therefore, those first-generation migrants who did not plan to move their families back to Portugal, did not privileged passing their Portuguese citizenship to their offspring. The estimation was at 400.000 in 2011, which included first generation migrants, and at least two proceeding generations. The first-generation migrants experienced a disturbance in their value systems,

shifting from a rural setting to an urban space, meaning that the second generation will have experienced the results of their economic and social betterment in a variety of ways. Moreover, by attending mainstream schools, the second generation lives in constant inevitable contact with the local population, which in turn results in the break of a rigid educational model. It is relevant to note that 'ethnic schools' have been an important tool for delaying and resisting socio-cultural assimilation in other countries where the Portuguese are significantly present (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010). Further in this work, I will expose how the second generation interprets their upbringing as children of immigrants born into a family structured by a fusion of rural/Madeiran and urban/Venezuelan values.

According to Mark Dineen, descendants of the Portuguese have been assimilating into Venezuelan society as they continuously lose direct connections with Portugal. Few of the interviewees in his research had travelled to Portugal and claimed that their connection to Portuguese culture was mostly established in familiar contexts during their upbringing. They express their affiliation only in a symbolic way, by supporting the Portuguese team in important sport events and very few by taking interest in folklore music and dance groups (Dinneen 2015). This goes in line with Montero's findings in her investigation work about the second generation of Portuguese in Caracas, in which she analysed their relation towards Venezuela and Portugal. She found that 38 out of 50 of her interviewees expressed preference and pride for their Venezuelan nationality, in detriment of their Portuguese ancestry, whose reference was only symbolic. Their views on each country accounted for tensions in the process of identity negotiation, as they found positive and negative traits in both cultures. It was always the case that they described the two peoples with binary oppositions: the Portuguese were hardworking, organized and ambitious but melancholic, reserved and rigid, whereas the Venezuelan were joyful, open minded and flexible, but lazy, disorganised and lacking drive (Montero 1992).

The Second-Generation has also had an import role in the Venezuelan economy. Many have taken up functions in family businesses, which they were able to expand and develop thanks to their wider knowledge in commercial practices and tendencies. They have been able to employ their skills in business management, to make use of marketing methods and technology in the benefit of their companies (Dinneen 2015). Their level of education is significantly higher than that of their parents, who worked hard to provide them the

opportunities in education that they did not have. Thus, they have evolved professionally and taken up careers in a variety of fields such as in architecture, law, medicine, etc. This professional progress has implied a loss of ties to Portugal, as they establish networks and connection elsewhere. Many have studied in the United States, Canada and Europe, wishes to live abroad and speaks English as a second language and have little knowledge of Portuguese. The once very successful Portuguese newspaper, *Correio de Portugal*, was sold in every corner in Caracas, but now, only a very limited number of copies are issued. For many Luso-Venezuelans, the extinction of the diaspora in Venezuela is inevitable, *“the only thing that will be left are the Portuguese surnames misspelled”* (Dinneen 2015, 66).

## 2.2. Migration from Venezuela to Portugal (1990-2020)

The Portuguese community in Venezuela was in 2011 estimated at 400.000 (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010), representing nearly 1,5% of the population<sup>9</sup>. Out of the nearly half million Portuguese in Venezuela, 75% have origins in Madeira. This is a considerable number, given that the resident population in Madeira was 245.011 in the same year<sup>10</sup>.

Data from the Portuguese Consulates and the DGACCP (Direção Geral dos Assuntos Consulares e das Comunidades Portuguesas) point to a total of 185,600 members registered at the Portuguese embassies and consulates in 2018, and an evident increase in registrations since 2013, likely due to the aggravation of the current crisis. In 2017, Venezuela was the sixth country in which most of the requests for Portuguese citizenship outside of Portugal were made (Oliveira y Gomes, 2017: 219). Between January 2017 and March 2018, the Portuguese government granted Portuguese nationality and citizenship to 5800 Luso-descendants from Venezuela<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística & Censos de Población y Vivienda (in Observatória da Emigração)

<sup>10</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), censos 2011

<sup>11</sup> Joana Henriques, “Nacionalidade portuguesa para 5800 lusodescendentes na Venezuela num ano.” *Público*, August 21, 2018, Sociedade (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2018/08/21/sociedade/noticia/num-ano-portugal-concedeu-nacionalidade-a-5800-lusodescendentes-na-venezuela-1841578>)

Though many Luso-descendants have privileged other transnational links, maintaining networks and even immigrating to other countries (among others, the United States, South Africa, Australia, Canada), a significant minority has taken up the decision to migrate to their ancestral homeland. Most mainland Portuguese immigrants of first generation emigrated back to Portugal in the 1980s, taking their children with them and thus concluding their original migration journey with a planned return. Madeirans on the other hand, remained longer in the country, raising up a second generation with less ties to Portugal, as they didn't plan to return and instead grounded their families in Venezuela, took up Venezuelan nationality and gradually adjusted to the local society.

Up until the 1980s, Venezuelans enjoyed a relatively stable government, which has since then been in gradual deterioration. Venezuela is nowadays characterized by one of the most unstable regimes in South America, with massive violent protests coming up in international media regularly. Massive exodus from Venezuela is a direct result of an ongoing economic crisis, characterized by significant cuts in salaries, uncontrolled inflation, food scarcity and widespread unsafety.

“The fall in oil prices, a policy of expropriation of companies and land and a variety of presidential decrees have generated a profound distrust and uncertainty in the Venezuelan business sector and have completely stopped the investment and national and foreign production, both industrial and agricultural. [...] In addition to shortages and inflation, a key problem is widespread insecurity, which has seen a significant increase in recent years. Venezuelan crime rates are very high and growing, although monitoring the trend is challenging due to unreliable government statistics. The country's homicide rate in 2016 was 91.7 per 100,000 residents and Caracas currently competes with San Pedro Sula in Honduras for first place in 8 on the list of the most violent cities in the world, while five other Venezuelan cities are among the top 50.” (Hernández Valencia 2018, 6-7).

“With the economy collapsing, a dire economic crisis has left millions of people unable to afford basic needs such as food, medicine and medical supplies. The poor state of the health-care system and increasing levels of malnutrition among children resulted in multiple deaths in 2018. The International Monetary Fund estimated that hyperinflation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would reach over 1 million per

cent in 2018, and would increase to 10 million per cent in 2019. In addition to the economic crisis, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is experiencing a deteriorating political situation, which involves targeting of political opponents and the arrest of thousands of protesters. The rise in violent crimes in the country also continues to force more people to seek protection in other countries.” ((IOM) 2019, 102).

Although exodus from Venezuela started in the 1980s, characterized by an outflow of people pertaining to Venezuela’s higher classes, who were suspicious of the governments’ redistribution policies, and those who, due to their European ancestry could more easily leave the country (Garbi 1991), it has been since 2014, that Venezuela’s exodus has become acute.

From 2015 to 2018, nearly 1.6 million Venezuelans had left the country (Santos 2017). In 2018, Venezuela was the largest source country of asylum seekers, with over 340.000 claims, among the 3 million who left that same year<sup>12</sup>. By mid-2019, nearly 4 million Venezuelans had left the country. All in all, the current political and economic crisis in Venezuela has produced one of the most acute humanitarian crisis in the world, with millions of people displaced.

Given the massive arrival of immigrants from Spain, Italy and Portugal to Venezuela in the previous century, it is no surprise that the crisis has prompted a counterflow of migration back to these countries, made possible by the acquisition of EU citizenship, inherited from their migrant ancestors.

Portugal, though it has been recognized as a country that produces large flows of emigrants, it has become since the late 1980s an attractive destination for immigrants too. From the return of Portuguese nationals from former colonies in Africa, to the arrival of migrants from Britain and other European countries, who find in Portugal the favourable conditions to spend their years of retirement (stable weather and low costs of living), the country has created throughout the years, positive responses to this ongoing tendency,

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<sup>12</sup> IOM & UNHCR, “Number of Refugees, Migrants from Venezuela Reaches 3 Million.” *IOM Press Releases*, November 9, 2018, Humanitarian Emergencies, Refugee and Asylum Issues (Available at [www.iom.int/news/number-refugees-migrants-venezuela-reaches-3-million](http://www.iom.int/news/number-refugees-migrants-venezuela-reaches-3-million))

through policies and measures to regulate migration and to promote their integration into the labour market.

Despite the impossibility to gather the real numbers of Venezuelan arrivals in Portugal, it was estimated that nearly 27.000 Luso-Venezuelans resided in Portugal in 2019<sup>13</sup>, though this number includes a variety of profiles, from second and third generation individuals - children and grandchildren of Portuguese migrants in Venezuela, to Venezuelan spouses and others who took up Portuguese citizenship or residency.

Those who travel from Venezuela to Portugal with Portuguese citizenship, automatically disappear from official data regarding immigration from Venezuela.

Official numbers from the Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteira (SEF) and from the National Statistics Institute (INE) do not point out the phenomenon of Luso-Venezuelan migration as a relevant one. Not only do the numbers mismatch the reality of the phenomenon, on a national scale, the Venezuelan presence is not as significant. However, the small dimensions and low demographic count of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, the main destination for individuals relocating from Venezuela to Portugal, results in an intense impact that is easily recognized on a regional level.

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<sup>13</sup> António Sarmento, "Venezuelanos em Portugal: Só há dois caminhos, o do sangue, que é o de Maduro, ou o diplomático." *Jornal Económico*, January 31, 2019, Sociedade (Available in <https://jornaleconomico.sapo.pt/noticias/venezuelanos-em-portugal-so-ha-dois-caminhos-o-do-sangue-que-e-o-de-maduro-ou-o-diplomatico-404950>)

### 3. Second-Generation migrants return to the ancestral homeland

#### 3.1. Theoretical framing

Second-generation return migration describes the movement of second-generation persons from the host country of their immigrant parents, to the place where the latter originate from but have never lived. It is their ancestral homeland, the place where their parents, the original immigrants, come from. The use of the term 'return' therefore refers to a movement to the origins, rather than an actual return to a previous place of residence.

Though in cases, the use of the term 'roots migration' has been applied to reflect individuals' own perception of their movement, as a return to a homeland where they belong to (Wessendorf 2007), it is important to emphasize that such decisions to move to the ancestral homeland imply complex processes of identity negotiation, different from that of their parents, and are set out in contexts in which transnational practices and networks are of significant importance for migrants, as they explore and take advantage of the possibilities. In these contexts, notions of home and belonging are scattered across places. It is not as simple as if returning to a known place, and neither should it be looked at as a relocation from one place to another, detaching it from their experiences of a transnational upbringing, or neglecting them as transnational beings.

Other terms have been used in academic works to refer to second-generation return, such as 'counter-diasporic migration' (King and Christou 2010) and 'ethnic migration' (Tsuda 2003). I do not discard these terms but I refrain from using them to refer to the object of my research due to the fluid and flexible notion of 'diaspora' and the container nature of ethnicity, and as not to assume second-generation individuals of Portuguese ancestry in Venezuela as part of a separate ethnic group or pertaining to a Portuguese diaspora, that maintains a collective memory (Safran 1991), nor categorise different generations under the same diaspora. Moreover, my research has confirmed that diasporas are constantly in transformation (van Hear 2014). When referring to these individuals and their counter-diasporic condition, the question of 'which diaspora' emerges, as they could as well qualify as members of a Venezuelan diaspora if taken from the Portuguese viewpoint. Nevertheless, by definition, this research has place within the wider phenomenon of counter-diasporic migration.

Interest in second-generation emerged in academia in the 1990s, with the need to include the children born in the United States or that were brought to the country as children as important actors in the experiences of immigration. The lack of consensus in terminology for the phenomenon of second-generation return reflects the novelty in academic interest on the matter, a shift from the focus on the first generation and on the discourse on assimilation and rupture between home and host societies as the ineluctable products of immigration and which proceeds with following generations. Essentialised notions of migration such as these must be put into question, as well as the notion of return to the homeland as the final, desired product of the migration experience for the first-generation.

I intend to contribute to the movement of scholars interested in second-generation individuals as important, potential or effective, actors in transnationalism. Some authors have made the link between migrant descendants, ancestral homecoming and transnational networks in Portuguese cases: João Sardinha on Canadian-Portuguese and French-Portuguese migrants (Sardinha 2014), Irene dos Santos on French-Portuguese individuals (dos Santos 2014), and José Mapril on Portuguese-Canadians in British Columbia (Mapril 2017). My research follows that of theirs and adds to the geographical scope of second-generation Portuguese studies.

The decline in numbers of the Portuguese population in Venezuela, (caused by mortality, returns, remigration and Venezuela's lost appeal as a destination), has reduced its importance in the mapping of Portuguese presence across the world, especially if compared to that of Brazil, the United States of America, France and Canada, which stayed more significant throughout the last decades. At the same time, Portugal was only the third main source of immigrants for Venezuela, after the Spanish and the Italian. However, because the majority of those Portuguese came from Madeira, and Venezuela was at the same time the preferred destination for Madeirans, the massive arrival of Luso-Venezuelans, (including second-generation returnees), makes the Luso-Venezuelans the protagonists and the most prominent in the migration scenario of the island, that has a population of only 267.785<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), censos 2011



My research on second-generation returnees exclusively focuses only on a small amount of Luso-Venezuelan narratives and types of experiences, and while there is a wide range of topics of anthropological interest to approach for research in the island, as means to cover more extensively the Venezuelan-Madeiran migratory relations, only one academic dissertation could be found in the matter: a work entitled “Madeiran emigration to Venezuela (1940-1974)” by Luso-Venezuelan author Joselin do Nascimento (do Nascimento 2009).

The current scarcity of regional focused ethnographic works is understandable, as Madeira has only in the recent decades become a destination for emigration (mostly from Venezuela), even though this scenario is only a product of decades long dynamics and massive exodus from the island in the previous century. Nevertheless, from the Venezuelan point of view, there is a wide range of ethnographic works on Portuguese immigration and presence in Venezuela available, and even though they do not focus precisely on the Madeiran presence as separated from the Portuguese, they do address and recognize their prominence and the differences in patterns between the two.

Important works for mapping and understanding the Portuguese presence in Venezuela are, among others, those by authors Miguel Acosta Saignes on the history of the Portuguese in Venezuela (Saignes 1993), and António Abreu Xavier on the stories and narratives of the Portuguese immigrants in the country (Abreu Xavier 2007), as well as on the community’s contemporary presence (Abreu Xavier 2009). Other authors have more widely included second and subsequent generations and linked it to transnationalism, such as Mark Dinneen on Luso-Venezuelans’ transnationalism (Dinneen 2011) (Dinneen 2015) and a work on Portuguese social institutions by Victor da Rosa, Ari Gandsman and Salvato Trigo (2010).

My research follows the discourse on transnational connectivity and answers questions of why some people and places are more transnational than others and which factors contribute to the maintenance and disappearance of cross-border social practices (Rogers 2005). These are important points to reflect on, as to understand the nature of second-generation return in terms of where these actors place their identity and their views of home and belonging. Migrants’ descendants construct their identities within transnational social fields and express them through a variety of practices and performances, including relocation to the ancestral homeland, which in turn requires them to remould and renegotiate their identities, resulting in multiple constructions of the self and fragmented

notions of belonging (Christou 2006). How does 'return' impact their social networks and their transnational positioning?

Motivations for these mobilities play a significant role on the tactics and resources to be deployed by second-generation individuals and strongly influence their experience of ancestral return. It is relevant to take into consideration the contexts in which the 'return' takes place for Luso-Venezuelans, as many were pushed by structural, sociological and economic factors, and so return is not entirely an expression of ontological anxieties.

While the phenomenon of return migration has been demonstrated, specially through economic lenses, it is not easy to map it with precision based on available statistics, as numbers give only a reference to net migration but not the numbers and directions of the movements. It is even more difficult to statistically trace second-generation migration, as their movement between their country of birth and country of their parents' settlement can be done unaccounted. Economic factors and a theoretical migration model based on push-pull factors in both locations can serve as mechanisms to interpret an important part of the counter-flows, but these leave out a group of migrants whose main purpose is tied to an ontological search of the self. It is therefore important to study the phenomenon from the individuals' point of view.

### 3.2. Literature review

Reviewing the literature of the first authors on return migration, it is astonishing the lack of mention of the children of immigrants, the second-generation. They often answered questions on the types of return migration, on their motives to return, the problems of adjusting faced upon return and the returnees' influence on their origin community, but fail to address the circumstances of those who accompany them or are left behind in the receiving country. It is as if the migration was experienced individually.

Return migration has been studied since the start of its very own existence. It is recognized as one of Ravenstein's laws of migration, as he states that "each main current of migration produces a compensating counter-current" (Ravenstein 1885). This theorization was made regarding internal migration and with the views that migration decisions are purely shaped by economic factors. In regards to international migration, it is important to keep in

mind other factors that may contribute to return, such as: the distance between the sending and the hosting (shorter distance migration produces more return migration); the duration of the stay (longer stays reduce the chance of return, as integration proceeds, the chances of return diminish); and the economic circumstances of the origin and the destination, as directly impacting the volume of return migration (Bovenkerk 1974).

Accordingly, those who succeed economically and as a result proceed to integrate are unlikely to return. Nevertheless, there are cases in which return migration happens for non-economic reasons, but rather due to strong family ties and homesickness (Appleyard 2007). There are also those who live highly transnational lives and who maintain expressions of their diasporic identities on a daily basis, who regardless of their economic circumstances, keep dreams of returning as a constant in their migration experience, even if plans for an actual return are never executed. These unrealised desires for return (within the first generation) is referred to in literature as 'myths of return' (Carling 2015).

It can also happen that this desire to return is passed on to the following generation, through their parents' constructions of the homeland as the idyllic home (Wessendorf 2007).

Though return migration has since long been recognised and studied, it wasn't until the 1980s that research interest in it flourished, with the end of temporary migration programs in Western Europe. Since then, a wide range of qualitative works on return migration has become available, mostly stemming from empirical data, as large-scale quantitative data remains scarce. This scarcity is tied to the difficulties in tracing and conceptualizing who returnees are. Entries and exits to and from most countries are regulated through specific visas and permits that state the purpose and duration of foreigners stays, but when it comes to national and dual-citizenship nationals, their movement, direction and intentions are not easily accessible through systematic quantitative measures. Nevertheless, large-scale migration has deepened relations between sending and receiving countries, through bilateral agreements and changes in national the immigration policies. (Kritz 1987). This has been the case for Luso-Venezuelan relations, as national and especially regional (in Madeira) policies are being formulated to respond to the large number of Portuguese nationals coming from Venezuela, for example, regarding issues of degree recognitions.

Return migration in classical literature is often tied to premises of success and failure: if intended to stay temporarily, return was a signifier of success and completion of the migration process, whereas if intended permanently, returning home meant the migration plan had failed (Bovenkerk 1974).

The neoclassical approach explains return migration as the result of a failed migration experience, meaning that financial goals were not met. The migrant expected higher earnings in the destination country but could not achieve them and is then left with no choice but to return to the home country (Todaro 1969). Under this light, decisions to emigrate are based on individual motivations and migration is assumed as a unidirectional movement in which the migrant intends to settle in the host country permanently, integrate and possibly assimilate into the local society.

On another stance, in the new economics of labour migration (NELM), return to the origin country is interpreted as an integral part of the migration plan, the final step, which happens when the migrant has accomplished their economic goals, and with wealth accumulated, is ready to return to the homeland. In this view, migration is a bidirectional movement, the migrant intends to leave his home country for a limited period of time and because they are attached to their home country, they are bound to return once they have the means to make a living there. In this approach, remittances are viewed as part of the strategy towards the expected return (Cassarino 2009).

Literature on Portuguese immigration to Venezuela has shown that emigration from Madeira to Venezuela during the 1950's and 1960's consisted in permanent settling. It was often the case that migrants left for Venezuela with intentions of generating wealth quickly to later return to the homeland, but as they experienced the fast economic ascendance in the host country, and aware of the economic stagnation in the island, changed their views on the duration of their stay. Instead they chose to reunite with their families by bringing their relatives into the country and invest their earning into finding stability in the country and advancing professionally (do Nascimento 2009, Dinneen 2011). At the same time, the local government was promoting permanent and family settlement in the country by giving access to Venezuelan citizenship. This shift in the migration plan directly impacts on the behaviours of migrants in the host society, namely regarding their level of socialization with locals. In its turn, these behaviours will have an impact on the migrants and their offspring' orientations.

Though the neoclassical and NELM approaches attempt to answer the question of who and when returns to the homeland, they are focused solely on the value of monetary earnings and leave out of the circumstances and the environment changes or prospects of change in both the sending and receiving countries. Regarding second-generation migrants, neoclassical economics theories would explain return to the ancestral home as a result of a family failed migration experience in the host country or as the start of a migration movement driven by economic factors. The reality of several of my interlocutors is not far from this, yet this approach does not take into consideration where these people 'return' or 'migrate to', and the pull factors of the destination country, that is at the same time the ancestral country, go beyond wage differences.

Research on return migration by anthropologists and sociologists has significantly contributed to refining classical notions of migration as an exclusively economic and individual process. The Structural Approach to return migration departs from this notion of migration being tied solely to the individual's experience, and instead considers social and institutional factors, specially in the country of origin (Cassarino 2009). In this light, return decisions are influenced by the opportunities that migrants expect to find in their homeland, in relation to the resources, mostly economic ones, that they are able to relocate to pursue their goals upon return. Successful return is therefore tied to migrants' capacity to emerge as actors of change in their home country, and to pursue their goals – a positive relation between expectations and realities.

This approach has resulted in pessimist views of the returnee, as often being incapable of using their resources, (economic funds and professional skills acquired abroad) upon return because they were not able to access realistic information and gain awareness of the social, economic and political context in their origin countries. (Gmelch 1980). Returnees are likely to fail their goals and even re-emigrate after return if they are not able to readapt to the changing realities of their home country (Dumon 1986). The time variable is very important in context of return migration, as the time in the host country must be optimized so that the migrant is able to acquire enough skills to invest in the home country (Dustmann 2001). It can happen that the period of stay abroad is too short for the migrant to acquire sufficient skills and resources to invest and modernise in the home country upon return; or that this period

is very long that the migrant becomes too alienated from the origin society and are not able to exert any influence (R. King 1986).

In sum, the structuralist approach and its pessimistic tendency, views the returnee as the one who failed to pursue his interests and impacts negatively in the home country upon return because he was absent for too long. Because of this he lost his networks of social relationships and at the same time, the long absence made him outsider to the traditions in his own origin society (Cassarino 2009).

Despite the focus on the locality of origin and assumption of the migrant's disconnection from their home country during the migration experience and later from the host country upon return, the structural approach to return migration has brought to light the importance of contextual factors (social and economic) and their influence on the decision to return.

Contrasting to these ideas of disconnection between the migrant's origin and host countries, theories of transnationalism and social networks have emerged since the late 1980s to interpret the ongoing movement of people across-borders and to understand the links between migrants' origin and host countries, implemented by regular and sustained social contacts over time (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999). These across-border links influence migrants' sense of self, who end up forming transnational identities that are negotiated through time, space and context. The same is true for the second-generation, who will acquire different notions of identity, from their place of birth and formation and from their ancestral homeland, passed by their immigrant parents during their upbringing and through their participation in transnational activities.

On the optic of transnationalism, return migration appears not as the end step to the migration experience, but as an integral part of a migration cycle that is characterised by transnational mobility. As it is interpreted under the structuralist approach, return from a transnationalist perspective involves a process of adaptation in the home country, however, because of the transnational links considered, migrants are perceived to be successful at reintegrating, due to their prior preparation to return through regular visits and investments (i.e. remittances) to the home land. Once in the home country, though adaptation is expected, it does not mean the abandonment of the identities acquired abroad, but rather negotiation of such when faced with difficulties to reintegrate at social and professional levels. Their

belonging and preparedness to return may result in success when it comes to calculating the benefits of return, but once confronted with the local realities in the origin, their identities need to be renegotiated. “Migrants may be attached to their countries of birth, while being at the same time emotionally connected to their places of origin, and vice-versa” (Cassarino 2009, 262).

A study done by June De Bree on Dutch Moroccan return migrants shows how transnationalism plays a vital role in reconstructing post-return sense of belonging. She explains how return migration is not a simple matter of “going home”, but rather a complex process in which feelings of belonging to a “place” or to a “community” need to be (re)negotiated and constructed upon return, and therefore it shouldn’t be taken for granted that return migrants will fit smoothly into their communities of origin (De Bree, Davids and De Haas 2010).

Transnationalism encompasses the flow of information, people, goods and capital across nation-state borders and the establishment and maintenance of durable economic, political, and cultural ties. These borders and boundaries become fluid and permeable, instead of forcing the break of ties between countries of origin and countries of destination. Immigrants maintain and cultivate links to the homeland, either tangible or intangible, that are passed on across generations (Portes 2003). It is therefore common for members of second-generation immigrant groups to have nostalgic relations with their parents’ place of origin, especially if they have grown up in a strong transnational social field, from where it is normal that a strong sense of belonging arises. It plays an important role in the integration process of the children of immigrants in a destination country, as translocal activities and transnational everyday lives that their immigrant parents set out for them during their childhood and teenage years, shape their views of their ancestral homeland and to a certain degree determine the ease with which the second-generation will settle there should they relocate (Wessendorf 2007).

Most of the research on second-generation ancestral return follows transnational theories, as globalization and the highly interconnectedness of the world in current times leaves no space for unidirectional notions of migration as a rupture with the homeland. The transnational approach has questioned the uncomplicated thesis of generational cultural assimilation, which predicts the loss of ancestral culture against the host society’s, lived and

inhabited. Cheaper transport costs have intensified cross-border mobility and technological advancement in communication have helped developed and sustain flows of information, contributing to the maintenance of transnational links. Moreover, multicultural and pluralist approaches to migrant settlement, developed in several countries, such as Canada and Australia since the 1980s have favoured and promoted the maintenance of these same links.

Literature on second-generation is abundant within the social sciences, the main interest being on issues related to their integration and sense of belonging in their parents' host country, where they were born or were brought to as children. Focus is on how their condition as bicultural individuals and their cultural identity as members of an ethnic minority (LaFramboise, Coleman and Gerton 1993).

The recent works on second generation ancestral return has brought to light these individuals' connections and relationship to their parents' country of origin and how they change throughout time, context and their location.

I use Wessendorf's definition of 'roots migration' to describe the migration to a place where descendants of the original migrant generation come from, but where they have never lived (Wessendorf 2007). Her use of the term 'return' and 'roots' carries additional emotional meaning, as it reflects her informants' own perception of their relocation to the country of their parents' origin, as a return to an imaginative home. Though this is not entirely true for most of the second-generation Luso-Venezuelan returnees to Madeira, 'roots migration' and 'return' are used in this context to emphasize these migrants' inherent connections to the island through ascendancy, even if this reality was not significantly influential in their identity construction prior to emigrating.

Several authors on second-generation migration to the ancestral homeland use the term 'return' when referring to this movement even though these individuals are not returning to a place they have been. This hermeneutical approach is used to demonstrate their participants' own reflection of their migration project. It is the case of Greek-Americans, who relocate to Greece because during their upbringing in the United States of America their families, communities and national discourses transformed them into Greeks and therefore moving to Greece meant for them finding their true home where they could express their 'true Greek self'. Return in this case was interpreted as closure of the migration cycle that their parents started. Many first-generation members too had returned, but even in cases in



which second-generation relocated independently, leaving their families back in their country of birth, it still meant for them a type of closure and a way to deepen their parents' connection to their origins, as they became a new important tangible link to their homeland. (King and Christou 2014).

Factors, such as race, class and culture, influence the maintenance of transnational practices by the first-generation immigrants. These practices, on their turn, are important to have in consideration when analysing second-generation return behaviour, expectations and experiences, as they influence the relations they create with their ancestral homeland. Their parents, the original immigrants, are often the ones who take the lead in establishing connections between their homeland and their host society and so they are often the most important link between second generation members and their homeland.

Sala and Baldassar have demonstrated the role that family has in the decision of return. Regarding second-generation individuals born to Italian parents in Australia, they have demonstrated the role of family as both a push and a pull factor for ancestral return: it was often the case that young Italian-Australians moved away from family strict structures in Australia with the desire to access independence. At the same time, moving away was only acceptable and approved by the nuclear family left behind because they were 'returning' to their origin, back to (extended) family that could support and ease their process of settling, while at the same time providing a secure and familiar environment, one that most her interviewees knew and had positive reflections of as a result of several trips to Italy during their upbringing (Sala and Baldassar 2017).

Transnational behaviour and sense of belonging do not flow consistently throughout second-generation individuals' life course. Rather, they vary in relation to work, school and family demands (Levitt 2002). These practices do not necessarily require physical mobility. Migrants can establish transnational belonging<sup>15</sup> without travelling to a place to which they feel they belong (Vertovec 1999). For example, long established migrant groups in the United States, such as the Italian and the Greek, have developed their communities that are strongly

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<sup>15</sup> Feelings of being at home across national borders and the attachment to one or more places.

oriented towards the homeland, creating “little Italies” or “little Greeces”. Within these communities, members cultivate and express their identities on a daily basis, reproducing their homeland far away from it. Though this perpetuates the idealization of the ancestral homeland as their true home, the fact that this homeland can be experienced in the country of settlement leaves no need for an actual relocation for them to fully express their ethnic self. It may happen that second-generation returnees live highly transnational lives in the country of settlement, where they have experienced traditional notions of their ancestral identities so strongly, that once they relocate to the homeland, they become aware, sometimes disappointed with the discrepancy between what it meant to express a culture within the migrant community in the country of settlement and the lived experience in the homeland. It is not uncommon to find references about the irony of feeling they belonged to a certain ethnic group in the country of settlement, only to feel more foreign than ever once they relocate to the country they originate from (R. King, A. Christou, et al. 2008) (Potter 2005) (Tsuda 2000).

The extent to which the first-generation will keep transnational connections also depends on the perception of their migration experience itself: those who emigrate with the idea of returning, are prone to keeping strong ties to the homeland, including through their children, so that the return happens more easily; in the other end, those migrants who intended their migration to be permanent tend to dissolve more into the host society, making it less likely that the second-generation will complete a return. Erdal and Oeppen make an intersection between the concepts of return, transnationalism and integration, referring to it as the “balancing act”, in which more integration in the host country translates into less transnational links with the country of origin and less integrated migrants are more likely to maintain transnational lives and to be more prone to actualise the return to the country of origin (Erdal and Oeppen 2013).

Transnational practices includes, among others, behaviours that connect two different localities, such as frequent travels between the sending and the receiving country, sending and/or receiving remittances to and from overseas, maintaining contact with kin and friendships through calls or visits, establishing or frequenting diasporic institutions and associations, or simply passing and maintaining visible or abstract traditions that come from the homeland, such as language, foods, rituals, religion, norms, etc. (Glick-Schiller, Basch and

Blanc-Szanton 1992). These transnational practices that migrants engage in (*'ways of being'*) directly influence their sense of self that results from these transnational connections (*'ways of belonging'*), as they continuously search for a place within transnational social space where they negotiate their identity (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004).

The case of second-generation Swiss-Italians' relocation from Switzerland to Italy is largely driven by their feelings of belonging and self-identifications with the country of origin of their parents, as result of individuals being raised on highly transnational environments, including frequent travels to Italy for family reunions and in general family constructions of Italy as their home (Wessendorf 2007). Wessendorf explores the influence of transnational practices set by the first generation on the identity formation of the subsequent generation and their decision to reside in Italy. She argues that the second generation lived in highly translocal social fields, frequently travelling between Switzerland and Italy. In these visits to the homeland, specially as young kids, children of immigrants developed notions of belonging to Italy, as they perceived these visits as good memories, as times of freedom and fun, and of strong familial connections. Swiss-Italian second-generation ancestral migration is therefore interpreted as a response to intense translocal upbringing and life-course. Moreover, when in Switzerland, their parents kept alive dreams of returning to Italy, of building a house there and relocating the family, therefore maintaining these strong connections. Building a property in the homeland too enhances the possibility of return and constitutes a symbolic site for family reunion, physically connection subsequent generations to their origins. At the same time, the dreams of return were passed on to the second generation, who construct the homeland as the idyllic place.

An important aspect that Wessendorf points out as heavily influencing the upbringing of the second-generation Swiss-Italian, their expectations of return and how the return experience develops, is the fact that during the main period of Italian migration to Switzerland, Italian migrants were confronted with restricted immigration policies in terms of residency permits and laws of family reunion – becoming a Swiss citizen was a long and expensive process to which Italians were discouraged to take. These constraints to settlement and full integration into Switzerland's society resulted in the dream of returning being kept alive during the entire migration experience of the first-generation, therefore prompting the strong translocal connection that would also influence their children's, second-generation

individuals, own constructions of belonging (Wessendorf 2007). In its turn, the notion of belonging and homeland can have powerful influence on the choices that members of the second-generation will make regarding their place of residency (King and Christou 2014) (Basch, Schiller and Blanc 1993)

The circumstances of Portuguese immigrants in Venezuela were quite different: during the years of mass emigration to Venezuela, the country was characterised for implementing pro-immigration policies, as a result of its low population density and economic considerations. This meant that Portuguese immigrations underwent a much less problematic process of full integration into Venezuelan society, followed by a pattern of assimilation that effortlessly made them dissolve into the local population (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010). This does not necessarily mean that the Portuguese in Venezuela cut ties with their homeland and did not live transnational lives, but second-generation individuals' motivations for ancestral return and their experiences of the migration greatly differ from those who kept close links with the homeland for their entire lives.

Religion, ethnic schools and holding of traditional events play a major role in emphasizing migrants' roots in the countries of destiny. The Greek diaspora in the United States and in Germany emphasised their greekness by living in what Christou and King call a "Greek bubble", in which they lived a very typical Greek lifestyle, held traditional events and where the interaction with other migrant groups and with the autochthonous was limited (Christou and King 2014). Regular visits to the homeland, to Greece, or Italy – in the case of Swiss-Italians – and sending the children to spend summer there, was also one of the main transnational elements kept by the migrants. This reflected the first generation's long-anticipation for return and had important influence on a later decision of the following generation, as adults, to return to the so imagined idyllic place (Wessendorf 2007, King and Christou 2014).

Hand in hand with the transnational approach to return migration, social network theory identifies migrants as maintaining strong linkages with their origin country, the difference being that these links are not based on common attributes, but rather on an experience of migration that can potentially contribute to migrants' initiatives once returned. In Cassarino's words, "While transnational linkages emerge spontaneously at a cross-border level, on the commonality of such attributes as ethnicity and kinship, social network theory

contends that the emergence of cross-border networks between receiving and sending countries is responsive to contextual and institutional factors. Cross-border social and economic networks are conducive to complementary exchange relations among actors which may go beyond this commonality of attributes. In fact, these exchange relations are viewed as being based on the commonality of interests, and not attributes.” (Cassarino 2009, 268).

Return migrants participate in diverse social structures that increase the availability of resources and information that can be mobilized to secure their return. These social structures result in social capital (Coleman 1998), which, combined with resources, including pre-existing social and financial resources provided by the family, may influence the decision to return and their behaviour upon return. In the case of second-generation, the participation in cross-border networks highly depends on their parents’ own linkages to the homeland.

Migrants’ membership in these social networks is not granted by commonality of origin and identity, as it would be in the diaspora. Instead, social networks depend on longstanding interpersonal relationships prior and during the migrant’s stay abroad, through cross-border linkages and exchanges. They are selected and organised and require voluntary action by the actors. At the same time, the maintenance of these cross-border networks is influenced by economic, social and political context in both the origin and host country (Cassarino 2009). Specific contexts can prompt migrants to start or to deepen their participation in these transnational networks, according to their plans for return, interests, goals and expected benefits.

In her study of second-generation return from the United Kingdom to the Caribbean region by young adults, Tracey Reynolds’ analysis indicated that “for the second-generation who have taken the decision to return to the Caribbean, this migration is facilitated through the social relationships and resources which are generated and sustained through their family networks. It is these family networks which make the difference between the dream or intention to return and the actual reality of doing so.” (Reynolds 2008, 16). In this case, second-generation UK born Caribbean individuals were incentivised by family members to make the move to the ancestral homeland. During their upbringing in the UK, the family kept alive narratives of return and depicted the region as their idyllic home. Disillusioned with life in the UK, and with no prospects of achieving economic independence and social upward mobility, as a result of diverse factors including perceived experiences of racial disadvantage,

these individuals were pushed to construct their ethnic identity and belonging oriented towards their ancestral homeland. Many of her interviewees' parents had too returned, some prior to their children, prompting the latter to make frequent visits to the region and further encouraging their own 'return'. Not only did these family structures incentivised return on an emotional level, they also represented important social capital of which second-generation individuals were able to benefit from. "These young migrants utilised their parents and native kin to develop their social networks. Also, and more importantly, to assist them with practical details upon return such as the building and purchasing of homes, finding work and employment opportunities, and information concerning duty and tax concessions." (Reynolds 2008, 19). While these strong family networks allowed them to access an insider status that other migrants of non-Caribbean ancestry would not, their foreignness, expressed mostly through their British accent, also represented an important social capital resource in terms of economic opportunities, as it was associated to professionalism and highly valued by employers.

This social capital-based theory encompasses the three-way relationships between the second-generation returnees, the first-generation migrants and the non-migrant kin (the 'left behind') and other connections (relatives, friends, neighbours), bonded by ties of trust and reciprocity settle over the share of the same language, values, common ethnicity and faith/religion. These ties between like-minded people form the bonding social capital, which influences family regrouping in the country of origin by bringing together compatriots with common identity. Despite the positive aspects of the bonding social capital, the inward-looking aspect of it may be an enclave in the integration as it excludes those who are not members of the group and limits the bridging social capital – the outward-looking connections – making it more difficult to form looser bridging ties between communities that could ease the settlement (Reynolds 2011) (Edwards, Franklin and Holland 2003).

On a later work by Reynolds on second-generation returnees to the Caribbean and their links back to their country of birth, however, though recognizing the nostalgia instilled in them by their parents, the author's analysis points out that the main drive for these individuals', "decision to return to these territories has more to do with practical concerns, such as intimate unions formed with local residents and improved employment prospects in particular Caribbean territories, as opposed to a cultural and spiritual attachment to their

parents' homeland" (Reynolds 2011, 536), contrary to what is widely recognised in literature, that second-generation return to the ancestral homeland happens on the basis of strong kinship relationships and cultural and ethnic attachment to the origin country. In this study, she utilises social network and social capital theories to examine the three-way relationships between second-generation returnees, first-generation migrants and left-behind kin in Britain. She found that a wide variety of connections and networks are strategically maintained with family, friends and others, and are embedded with social resources. There are several reasons to maintain these networks, for instance, in cases in which returnees don't plan for a permanent settlement, so they do not entirely let go of their lives and maintain ties as a way to insure an eventual return (Byron 2000).

Return migration, including that of the second-generation to the ancestral homeland, produces new waves of transnational orientation and behaviour. This phenomenon is referred to in literature as reverse transnationalism (King and Christou 2014). "Transnationalism becomes a two-way street; they experience 'transnational lives' as children and young members of the second-generation, and then, after relocating to the parental homeland, they may experience a kind of 'reverse' or 'post-return' transnationalism back to their birth country where many of their friends and relatives still live." (King and Christou 2014, 86). Reverse transnationalism behaviours may include, similarly to the transnational practices performed by the first-generation in the host country, the maintenance of constant contact with kin back in the country of birth, travels back and forth between the two localities and in general the maintenance of strong cross-border links.

"Once the second generation 'returns' to the homeland, the roles are reversed. In many respects, second-generation returnees are first-generation immigrants in their homelands. Once (re)settled they may cut ties to their country of upbringing, especially if their relocation becomes part of a family return. More likely, they will retain or develop new transnational links back to their country of birth, which could therefore come to be regarded as a different kind of homeland." (King and Christou 2011, 456). Reverse transnationalism refers to the maintenance of transnational links back to the country of birth, regardless of the motives that resulted in the decision to make the movement. One of the reasons to maintain reverse transnational links is related to the fact that second generation returnees may regard their relocation as temporary.

Authors have demonstrated the tendency for second-generation individuals to become aware of their actual 'foreignness' in their country of ancestral origin upon 'return', as a result of high expectations for a smooth and inevitable process of integration into the local society and full acceptance by locals, when the realities they experience differ greatly: not only is the local population likely to consider them foreigners or not entirely 'one of them', forcing an outsider status upon them, which can sometimes lead to xenophobic experiences, but it may also be the case that the lifestyle in the new country of settlement does not meet the expectations they created before relocating. The reality of living in the new country will greatly differ from their experiences of vacations times, in which they were not faced with the issues of everyday life. Maintaining links back to the country where they grew up becomes a way of coping with the disillusionment, loneliness and exclusion that second-generation returnees experience, while at the same time securing a potential re-return (Christou 2006, Reynolds 2011, King and Christou 2014).

Reynold's work emphasizes the relationships with left-behind kin in Britain, explaining that these links function as social resources and support for the second generation upon return, when they find themselves with a status of 'outsiders' in their parents' country of origin and having difficulties establishing ties and networks within the local communities. "The backward links are important to the second-generation returnees because they provide these individuals with important social capital resources such as care, security and a sense of belonging and wellbeing, which help them to cope with their 'outsider status' in the migrant country" (Reynolds 2011, 548). Many of Reynold's informants deliberately did not cut all ties with their old lives in England because they knew that when their children got older, they would go back and hoped that they wouldn't have to start from scratch. Thus, their left-behind kin in England provided an important social insurance against the possibility of return. Specially in the cases in which the relocation was regarded as a sacrifice, these links worked positively towards facilitating their settlement when it comes to feelings of isolation whilst adjusting. In the case of Greek second generation, for example, some of Christou's interviewees claimed to miss their country of birth and expressed the desire to re-return as they had a never-ending identity crisis – the "dilemma of being in one country and thinking of the other" (Christou 2006).



## 4. Luso-Venezuelan return migration to Madeira

The phenomenon of return migration, both by first and second-generation Luso-Venezuelans, to Madeira has been ongoing since the late 1990s. At an earlier stage, there were many cases of multilocal residents, who had their businesses in Venezuela and could afford to spend long months in Madeira, where they would invest in secondary homes. Throughout the 1990s, the Luso-Venezuelan presence was mostly felt in the economy, as returnees would bring and invest their savings in commercial businesses and in real estate in the island. For example, Tito Pinto, a former successful merchant in Venezuela, who developed his businesses in the country but also invested in a mansion in Madeira, very popular among locals for its size and luxurious details; Manuel Luís Mendes, a returnee from Venezuela, who, together with his returnees brothers, Júlio and João, opened a shopping centre, Centro Comercial da Sé, in the capital city of Funchal, a hotel in their hometown of Porto Moniz, a club, and a bakery; and João Lima, who also built a home for his siblings in his hometown of Porto Moniz with money earned in Venezuela and an apartment for himself for his long visits to the island (do Nascimento 2009).

Remittances from Venezuela also played an important role in the development in the island. For many families, this was the main source of income and meant a significant improvement in the quality of life. There were also many cases of Madeirans pursuing higher education, made possible by the large amount of remittances sent to them by their emigrant relatives. In the year 2001 alone, nearly 96 million of euros were sent from Venezuela to Portugal, according to official data<sup>16</sup>, most of which to Madeira. Unfortunately, due to the current economic circumstances in Venezuela, these remittances are no longer significant, officially mounting a total of 4.490 million euros in 2019<sup>17</sup>, according to data from the Observatório da Emigração. The same source also provides the value of remittances sent in the opposite direction, from Portugal to Venezuela – of 1.110 million in the same year – but the reality is different, as it is widely known that a significant part of remittances, if not the

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<sup>16</sup> Observatório da Emigração: Data from Banco de Portugal, BP stat. Balance of payments statistics, Emigrant/immigrant remittances

<sup>17</sup> *Idem*.

majority, are sent through unofficial means. The inflation in Venezuela is so severe that black market exchange rates prevail<sup>18</sup> over official ones.

Although Luso-Venezuelan presence had already caused significant impact in the island, with the return of migrants in the 1990s, the current reality is quite different, as Luso-Venezuelans arrive in masses. Their distinctiveness and their presence is not questioned in everyday situations and it has been somehow normalized.

As the economic crisis and political repression gradually increased in Venezuela, especially aggravating after 2014, the topic of Venezuelan and Luso-Venezuelan arrivals in the island has become paramount in many sectors of social life in Madeira. Their presence since then has been accentuated, so much, that policies and programs specifically oriented to them have been created. Spanish is heard everywhere, Venezuelan gastronomy has been popularized and is widely commercialized in the island. In current days, Luso-Venezuelans, of first, second, and third generations, together with their non-Luso spouses and relatives, are spread throughout the island among the local non-migrant population. Coming across conversations in Spanish or hearing the Venezuelan accent in Portuguese speech has become the normality of daily life in Madeira.

#### 4.1. Luso-Venezuelan migration through media

As it has been expressed throughout this work, numbers regarding the return, and in general, arrivals and relocations from Venezuela to Madeira are not possible to point out and categorise. The difficulty to count and categorise these Luso-Venezuelan individuals is well evident in media publications, as they are often mistakenly referred to as returnees from Venezuela, and at the same time counted as foreign population.

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<sup>18</sup> Paulo Barradas, “Mercado negro da Venezuela trai Maduro.” *Expresso*, February 26, 2019, *Economia à 3ª* (Available at [https://expresso.pt/blogues/bloguet\\_economia/blogue\\_economia\\_a\\_3a/2019-02-26-Mercado-negro-da-Venezuela-trai-Maduro](https://expresso.pt/blogues/bloguet_economia/blogue_economia_a_3a/2019-02-26-Mercado-negro-da-Venezuela-trai-Maduro))

The *Jornal da Madeira*, for example, published an article entitled “In 2019, returnees from Venezuela represented 24,1% of the foreign population residing in Madeira”<sup>19</sup>, in which it points out the mass return of emigrants from Venezuela as the main booster of the increase in foreign population registered in Madeira between 2018 and 2019. Despite the title’s ambiguity, the article provides useful information on the number of Venezuelan nationals living in Madeira with residence permits - 2.069<sup>20</sup>, but contrary to the article’s claim, this number does not necessarily refers to Portuguese descendants or returnees, but rather to their partners, extended family members and other Venezuelan nationals, a most Portuguese descendants arriving in Madeira have Portuguese nationality, or acquire it soon after arrival, thus not being counted as foreign population in official statistics.

Other sources point to some 8.000 Luso-Venezuelans migrants having settled in Madeira since 2015, but these numbers are still an estimation, based on these individuals’ voluntary association in local institutions<sup>21</sup>, such as Employment Centres, Social Security agencies<sup>22</sup>, and Luso-Venezuelan organizations. The most recent numbers point to a total of 9.000 Luso-Venezuelan in Madeira, as of August 2020<sup>23</sup>.

Many Luso-Venezuelans also arrive in the island and stay for a certain period of time, as many still own businesses in Venezuela. Others re-emigrate to Spain and other EU countries<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, numbers will always inaccurate, as there are no tools tracing the directions and duration of each movement.

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<sup>19</sup> Redação, “Em 2019, Regressados da Venezuela representavam 24,1% da população estrangeira residente na RAM.” *Jornal da Madeira*, June 30, 2020 (Available at [https://www.jm-madeira.pt/regiao/ver/97329/Em\\_2019\\_regressados\\_da\\_Venezuela\\_representavam\\_241\\_da\\_populacao\\_estrangeira\\_residente\\_na\\_RAM](https://www.jm-madeira.pt/regiao/ver/97329/Em_2019_regressados_da_Venezuela_representavam_241_da_populacao_estrangeira_residente_na_RAM))

<sup>20</sup> Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF), 2019

<sup>21</sup> Reporting, “Nos últimos 4 anos, Madeira recebeu 8 mil descendentes Luso-Venezuelanos.” *TVI24*, September 19, 2019, Vídeos (Available at <https://tvi24.iol.pt/videos/sociedade/nos-ultimos-4-anos-madeira-recebeu-8-mil-descendentes-luso-venezuelanos/5d83cf2d0cf2bd64e1c55d0b#/welcome>)

<sup>22</sup> Social Security agencies in the island opened in 2015, a department dedicated to support migrants, after the increase of arrivals from Venezuela

<sup>23</sup> Jorge Sousa, “Cerca de 9.000 luso-venezuelanos terão regressado à Madeira.” *Diário de Notícias*, August 26, 2020, Madeira (Available at <https://www.dnoticias.pt/2020/8/26/71743-cerca-de-9000-luso-venezuelanos-terao-regressado-a-madeira>)

<sup>24</sup> Joana Henriques, “Nacionalidade portuguesa para 5800 lusodescendentes na Venezuela num ano.” *Público*, August 21, 2018, Sociedade (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2018/08/21/sociedade/noticia/num-ano-portugal-concedeu-nacionalidade-a-5800-lusodescendentes-na-venezuela-1841578>)

Although these media publications produce ambiguous information regarding the numbers of Luso-Venezuelans, they have constructed a popular depiction of migrants coming from Venezuela as returnees, regardless of their legal status and type of connection to Portugal. This is an interesting shift in journalistic practice, from the years of prosperity in Venezuela, in which migrant returns and visits to the homeland were an important event in the island. The prototype of the migrant was one of economic success abroad. They were impatiently awaited by friends, family and neighbours, for whom they would bring expensive and unseen gadgets as gifts. They displayed their wealth by purchasing imported cars, building luxurious homes, and paying for local celebrations. During these times, their condition as emigrants, especially those from Venezuela, was emphasized in a positive way. “The uncle from Venezuela”<sup>25</sup> had a special connotation, and media exacerbated their condition as emigrant, ‘the other’, ‘from Venezuela’, different from the local, non-migrant individual (do Nascimento 2009). The discourse towards them has now changed, to the construction of these migrants as ‘returnees. By referring to them as returnees, their Portugueseness is recognized, and their belonging to the local society is emphasized. They have not been identified in popular media as “immigrants” or solely “Venezuelans”, but rather “Portuguese emigrants from Venezuela”, “returnees from Venezuela”, “Luso-descendants”, “Luso-descendant returnees” and “Luso-Venezuelans”.

In other instances, they have also been referred to as refugees, but the term is applied regarding their conditions and motivations to migrate and not regarding their legal status in Portugal:

“Although the official discourse always emphasizes that it is Madeiran people who are dealing with, the desperation with which they arrive at the archipelago, the uncertainty as to what they left behind and doubts about the future, make these emigrants just that: refugees.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Revista “O tio emigrante – O tio da Venezuela”, p. 8, in *DN*, 04-09-2005.

<sup>26</sup> Márcio Berenguer, “Fuga de Portugueses da Venezuela faz subir apoios sociais prestados pela Madeira.” *Público*, May 31, 2017, Venezuela (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2017/05/31/sociedade/noticia/fuga-de-portugueses-da-venezuela-faz-subir-apoios-sociais-prestados-pela-madeira-1774017>)

Regardless of how they are referred to, the Luso-Venezuelan presence has not gone unnoticed in Madeira island. In contrary, their presence as resulted in significant changes in the cultural and social scheme of the island, from gastronomy to linguistics, their influence is widely recognized.

Regarding regional politics, influential Luso-Venezuelans, such as Ana Cristina Monteiro, president of the Luso-Venezuelan association Venecom, and Carlos Fernandes, member of the Legislative Assembly of Madeira, have pushed for the participation of migrants in regional elections, advertising the inclusion of Luso-Venezuelan issues in their parties' political agendas. The large presence in Madeira of Luso-Venezuelans means that their participation weights in significantly in the political scheme in the island, and that the anti-Maduro sentiment may benefit right-wing parties, and make the difference in the direction of politics in the region<sup>27</sup>.

## 4.2. Regional response

Besides the organization and association of many migrants to put forward their interests and assist each other in the process of integration in Madeira, governmental agencies have too taken important actions towards easing both the relocation to and insertion processes of Luso-Venezuelan individuals in Madeira. Not only have the main embassies in Venezuela, located in Caracas and Valencia, been reinforced with more staff to handle bureaucracy, the Portuguese government has created since 2017, several sets of policies that aim at removing bureaucratic obstacles and speed up the process of granting Portuguese nationality and citizenship to Luso-descendants in Venezuela. Since 2016, despite the high inflation rates in Venezuelan currency, the government decided not to continue increasing embassy prices, as to facilitate the process of acquiring the needed documentation to emigrate. This meant the loss of nearly 8 million Euros in recipes in two years <sup>28</sup>. Despite

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<sup>27</sup> Reporting, "Nos últimos 4 anos, Madeira recebeu 8 mil descendentes Luso-Venezuelanos." *TVI24*, September 19, 2019, Vídeos (Available at <https://tvi24.iol.pt/videos/sociedade/nos-ultimos-4-anos-madeira-recebeu-8-mil-descendentes-luso-venezuelanos/5d83cf2d0cf2bd64e1c55d0b#/welcome>)

<sup>28</sup> Joana Henriques, "Nacionalidade portuguesa para 5800 lusodescendentes na Venezuela num ano." *Público*, August 21, 2018, Sociedade (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2018/08/21/sociedade/noticia/num-ano-portugal-concedeu-nacionalidade-a-5800-lusodescendentes-na-venezuela-1841578>)

these losses, further action was taken, and in October 2018, ministries of Foreign Affairs and Internal Administration made the decision to cease charges for consulate administrative actions. Requests for citizenship cards, passports, birth and marriage certificates, became free for all Portuguese and Luso-descendants in Venezuela<sup>29</sup>. Further on, in 2019, Portuguese nationality started being granted to individuals who had at least one Portuguese parent or grandparent, regardless of their marital status<sup>30</sup>.

Governmental funds from Portugal have also been mobilised in the country to increase medical aid. In October 2018, the government launched a medical project in Venezuela (Projeto Rede Portuguesa de Assistência Médica e Social na Venezuela) with the goals of providing medical assistance to Portuguese individuals and their descendants. The project also included the installation of many medical units in five Venezuelan cities – Caracas, Valencia, Barquisimeto, Barcelona and Puerto Odaz - with the joint efforts of the Luso-Venezuelan medical association (Asomeluve - Associação de Médicos de Origem Luso-Venezuelana), the Portuguese Embassy in Caracas, the General Consulates of Caracas and Valencia, and eight other honorary consulates throughout the country. It is widely known that one of the main current issues associated with the Venezuelan crisis is the scarcity of medicine and medical equipment. In 2018 alone, 400 kilograms of medicine were sent to and distributed in Venezuela by the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>31</sup>. In Madeira, many associations take in donations in the form of medicines and foods that are then sent to Venezuela.

“Between 2016 and 2018, the Portuguese State spent 14.7 million euros in support of the Portuguese and Luso-descendent community, on measures such as not increasing or not charging fees [for administrative actions], social support for needy elderly people in Venezuela, investment in housing in Madeira, and in a secure diplomatic

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<sup>29</sup> São José Almeida, “Consulados na Venezuela deixam de cobrar emolumentos.” *Público*, October 7, 2018, Política (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2018/10/07/politica/noticia/consulados-na-venezuela-deixam-de-cobrar-emolumentos-1846491>)

<sup>30</sup> São José Almeida, “Governo facilita acesso a nacionalidade a luso-descendentes na Venezuela.” *Público*, January 27, 2019, Emigrantes (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2019/01/27/politica/noticia/governo-facilita-nacionalidade-lusodescendentes-venezuela-1859557>)

<sup>31</sup> São José Almeida, “Governo lança novo programa de apoio aos portugueses e lusodescendentes na Venezuela.” *Público*, October 4, 2018, Diplomacia (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2018/10/04/politica/noticia/governo-lanca-novo-programa-de-apoio-aos-portugueses-e-lusodescendentes-na-venezuela-1846125>)

network, human resources and computer equipment. To this amount, 900 thousand euros are added in support of housing measures in Madeira for Portuguese and Luso-descendant returnees. These funds do not include money spent by the State in areas such as support for employment, health, education, vocational training and social security for Portuguese and Portuguese descendants who have returned.”<sup>32</sup>

On the other side of the Atlantic, upon ‘return’, Luso-Venezuelans find available a diverse network of support towards immigration: in mid 2017, the regional government inaugurated an office dedicated specifically to this segment of the populations - the “Gabinete de Apoio ao Emigrante da Venezuela”. The goal was:

“implementing a transversal strategy among all the public regional administrative services, as a mean of creating a main channel of communication between all these services and all the Madeiran emigrants and their families, who have returned from that country [Venezuela]”<sup>33</sup>.

This office has also been given the task of preparing reports and statistics about the current scenario in the region, regarding to Luso-Venezuelan migration, as a way to “identify these emigrants’ purposes (definite or temporary return), their area of residence in the island, the composition of their household in cases in which whole family structures [migrate], their main needs, particularly in terms of health and finances, the challenges for a younger generation, particularly regarding education, language and expectations regarding employment.”<sup>34</sup>

In the education department, the support given to the Luso-Venezuelan youth has been somewhat informal but responsive to families’ particular circumstances. Young pupils are allowed to start attending school even if they arrive after the start of the academic year,

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<sup>32</sup> São José Almeida, “Governo facilita acesso a nacionalidade a luso-descendentes na Venezuela.” *Público*, January 27, 2019, Emigrantes (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2019/01/27/politica/noticia/governo-facilita-nacionalidade-lusodescendentes-venezuela-1859557>)

<sup>33</sup> Agência Lusa, “Governo Regional da Madeira cria gabinete de Apoio ao Emigrante da Venezuela.” *Expresso*, June 1, 2017, Sociedade (Available at <https://expresso.pt/sociedade/2017-06-01-Governo-Regional-da-Madeira-cria-gabinete-de-Apoio-ao-Emigrante-da-Venezuela>)

<sup>34</sup> *Económico da Madeira*, “Madeira: gabinete de apoio ao emigrante da Venezuela reúne hoje.” *Jornal Económico*, June 9, 2017, Madeira (Available at <https://jornaleconomico.sapo.pt/noticias/madeira-gabinete-de-apoio-ao-emigrante-da-venezuela-reune-hoje-170000>)

and in many occasions, even before their legal situation in the country has been regularized. There have been serious efforts towards integrating students in the education system. Moreover, teachers have received training and received instructions for dealing with the massive arrival of Luso-Venezuelan students, including the tools to assess these students in terms of their language abilities and learning level, so they can be allocated in the respective classes and be redirected to extra courses, particularly Portuguese language courses, which have been prepared in response to their massive arrival.<sup>3536</sup> Between 2018 and 2019 alone, Madeiran schools received 1.400 new pupils coming from Venezuela. Despite the costs involved in the process of integrating these students, this inflow of Luso-Venezuelans has meant the revival of many schools in the region and for several towns, especially in the north coast of the island, it has halted the plans for closure of primary schools, due to demographic decay that caused the decline of nearly 1.000 students each year since<sup>37</sup>. Between 2012 and 2018, Madeiran schools had lost nearly 7.000 pupils, resulting from the severe decline in birth rates – 2.047 in 2012, against 1.500 in 2018<sup>38</sup>.

As for the youth that pursued higher education in Venezuelan institutions, measures have been implemented towards facilitating the process of academic recognition, streamlining the transition to employment in Portugal. Although there has been an agreement between Portugal and Venezuela since 2007 regarding the reciprocity in academic recognition, through the Decreto-Lei n.º 283/83<sup>39</sup>, further measures were deemed necessary to respond to the difficulties of Luso-Venezuelans in accessing this recognition. Since 2017, the Regional Government in Madeira had been vindicating further simplification of the administrative process for recognizing Venezuelan academic degrees, and so in 2020, through Portaria n.º 43/2020<sup>40</sup>, it established that academic diplomas can be handed in Spanish,

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<sup>35</sup> Reporting, “Escolas da Madeira com 30 alunos provenientes da Venezuela.” *Jornal Nacional*, May 31, 2017, Educação (Available at <https://www.jn.pt/local/noticias/funchal/funchal/escolas-da-madeira-com-30-alunos-provenientes-da-venezuela-8521383.html>)

<sup>36</sup> V. Nóbrega, “Escolas madeirenses com cerca de 200 alunos vindos da Venezuela.” *RTP Madeira*, July 21, 2017, Sociedade (Available at [https://www.rtp.pt/madeira/sociedade/escolas-madeirenses-com-cerca-de-200-alunos-vindos-da-venezuela\\_10994](https://www.rtp.pt/madeira/sociedade/escolas-madeirenses-com-cerca-de-200-alunos-vindos-da-venezuela_10994))

<sup>37</sup> Reporting, “Escolas da Madeira receberam 1.400 alunos vindos da Venezuela.” *SIC Notícias*, March 13, 2019, País (Available at <https://sicnoticias.pt/pais/2019-03-13-Escolas-da-Madeira-receberam-1.400-alunos-vindos-da-Venezuela>)

<sup>38</sup> João Porfírio, “Há menos 7 mil estudantes nas escolas da Madeira.” *Sapo*, September 12, 2018, Sociedade (Available at <https://sol.sapo.pt/artigo/625717/ha-menos-7-mil-estudantes-nas-escolas-da-madeira>)

<sup>39</sup> Diário da República: Regulamento n.583/2018

<sup>40</sup> Diário da República: Portaria n.43/2020



French and English. Article 13.º-A exempts graduates from presenting all the documentation related to their higher education process. Only refugees, due to humanitarian reasons, were exempt from such action, but “by virtue of specific circumstances that affect the regular functioning of the institutions of that State”, Venezuela was added as a country in which gathering documentation certifying qualifications can be a very slow, sometimes impossible, process.

The mass arrival of Luso-Venezuelans in the past couple of years has also resulted in a significant increase in expenses with public healthcare. In Madeira alone, 2.363 nationals coming from Venezuela were registered in the public healthcare system - Serviço de Saúde da Região Autónoma da Madeira (Sesaram) – in 2017, which accounted for 1.2 million euros in expenses related to medical services. In mid 2018, the number had increased to 4.151 registrations and expenses to 2.06 million<sup>41</sup>. As for 2019, regional authorities estimated the need of 4.6 million from the state budget to cover expenses related to the integration of Luso-Venezuelan residents in Madeira<sup>42</sup>, from which 2.5 million of the state budget were assured by national authorities to cover costs with health and social security services.

The most recent support measures for Luso-Venezuelans has been the organization, together with state owned airline, TAP Air Portugal and Portuguese airline Hi Fly, of several repatriation flights for Portuguese nationals from Venezuela in 2020, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which led the total closure of commercial activity in the Venezuelan airspace since March 2020<sup>43</sup>.

#### 4.3. *Venecom*, Virgin of Coromoto, Arepas and Baseball

*Venecom (Associação da Comunidade de Imigrantes Venezuelanos na Madeira)* is the main association for Luso-Venezuelans and Venezuelan immigrants in Madeira. Online based,

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<sup>41</sup> Márcio Berenguer, “Madeira quer ajuda de 4,6 milhões para integrar emigrantes da Venezuela.” *Público*, September 19, 2018, Madeira (Available at <https://www.publico.pt/2018/09/19/sociedade/noticia/madeira-quer-ajuda-de-46-milhoes-para-integrar-emigrantes-da-venezuela-1844455>)

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>43</sup> Marco Sousa, “Mais de 120 Madeirenses serão repatriados da Venezuela esta sexta-feira.” *Jornal da Madeira*, July 29, 2020, Diáspora (Available at [https://www.jm-madeira.pt/comunidades/ver/99921/Mais\\_de\\_120\\_madeirenses\\_serao\\_repatriados\\_da\\_Venezuela\\_esta\\_sexta-feira](https://www.jm-madeira.pt/comunidades/ver/99921/Mais_de_120_madeirenses_serao_repatriados_da_Venezuela_esta_sexta-feira))

and created in 2017, this non-profit organization has the set goals of promoting and assisting in the integration of these migrants in the region. It works together with local institutions and entities, to promote Luso-Venezuelans' full insertion and participation in the local society, to defend their rights and interests and to promote the bridging between both Venezuelan and Portuguese cultures. Their online activity is mainly done through Facebook, where they constantly share and produce news about the Luso-Venezuelan community, as well as information about new policies, measures and opportunities (jobs, contests, etc.) that could benefit them. They also engage with members and sympathisers, and are open to answer their questions and help requests.

The association develops a diverse range of activities and serves as the bridge between this segment of the population and the official institutions and actors of change. Although this type of work is extremely important and relevant for both the native community and the Luso-Venezuelan community, their most evident activities are the many socio-cultural events that they co-organize and sponsor. Some of these, as fund-raisers to send help back to Venezuela.

Their most popular events are the "Festa Luso-Venezuela" that take place in several occasions, such as summer and Christmas, and gather many participants. They celebrate Venezuelan gastronomy, music and dance.

Other local institutions, churches and town halls have also taken the steps towards spreading Venezuelan culture and traditions and fostering conviviality between Luso-Venezuelans and other segments of the local population. Celebrations in the name of Our Lady of Coromoto (Virgen de Coromoto, declared in 1942 the Patroness of Venezuela), for example, have become part of the local agenda.

While it is true that the Portuguese influenced the increase in consumption of wheat in Venezuela – bread became a popular alternative to the traditional arepa, made from maize flour, as it was readily available for consumption and sold in every Portuguese bakery and *abastos* all over cities (Dinneen 2011) – it is also true that the local gastronomy in Madeira has since long been influenced by Venezuelan traditions. Maize flour is now widely consumed in the region, and is even used to make one of Madeira's most traditional foods, milho Frito. Ever since I can remember, Venezuelan empanadas, also made from maize flour, have been sold in many average, local owned, restaurants and cafés. The availability of this dish is a given

all throughout the island and it has since long been such a popular breakfast option, that many are not even aware of its origins. Besides the gastronomical fusion that has happened in the island, with the gradual infusion of Venezuelan traditional ingredients and dishes into the local eating habits, the demand for authentic Venezuelan food has also prompted the opening of several restaurants exclusively dedicated to exploring Venezuelan cuisine.

Luso-Venezuelans and Venezuelan immigrants have also prompted the introduction of baseball practice in Madeira. In 2004, a baseball association (*Associação Cultural e Recreativa de Basebol e Softbol da Madeira*) was created, given the high demand for this sport among the community. “Baseball in Madeira began to be practiced in the late ‘80s by the children of Portuguese emigrants who returned to this land after having spent much of their life in Venezuela. These children of emigrants brought with them the love for this sport, which is the king sport in the land of “El Libertador” Simon Bolívar [Venezuela], but for various reasons this practice was falling into oblivion until the turn to the new century, when a new wave of Portuguese descendants began to organize some gatherings to play baseball” (*Associação Desportiva do Campanário* 2013, 1). The practice of baseball went dormant again during the economic crisis of 2010-2014, but once again, the mass arrival of Luso-Venezuelans has prompted its revival. With incentives from Venecom, and local town hall authorities, many baseball events have been taken place since 2019<sup>44</sup>, including free drills and sessions to inform about the rules and to promote the practice of this sport, as a way of integrating migrants and promoting their interaction with locals<sup>45</sup>.

## 5. The experiences of return migrants

The experience of the ancestral homeland is not only shaped by the lived reality in which migrants find themselves, but also by the constructions and imaginations they had prior to the movement. When confronted with the realities of the ancestral homeland, second-

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<sup>44</sup> Luís Rocha, “VENECOM movimenta treinos de Basebol na Madeira.” *Funchal Notícias*, March 27, 2019 (Available at <https://funchalnoticias.net/2019/03/27/venecom-movimenta-treinos-de-basebol-na-madeira>)

<sup>45</sup> Luís Rocha, “Junta de Freguesia de São Martinho realiza formação sobre as regras do basebol.” *Funchal Notícias*, August 10, 2020 (Available at <https://funchalnoticias.net/2020/08/10/junta-de-freguesia-de-sao-martinho-realiza-formacao-sobre-as-regras-do-basebol>)

generation migrants often find themselves within a complex process of identity negotiation. Their settlement in their parents' homeland is influenced by structural and social factors, some of which they were not familiar with in their country of birth (Wessendorf 2007, Reynolds 2011).

In this chapter, we will analyse the results gathered from the informants to this study, on an attempt to answer a set of questions specified in the following section. Even though the size of the sample cannot provide narratives that are representative of the whole phenomenon of Luso-Venezuelan return migration to Madeira, many common themes came up during the interviews, which can hint to certain specificities of the phenomenon. It is also true that different periods of arrival (late 1990s versus recent years) produced mainly two distinctive experiences of migration, and the post-return realities, issues regarding integration and socialization have a clear gender-based differentiation.

### 5.3. Growing up in Venezuela: the Portuguese permeable bubbles

The mass emigration from Madeira island to Venezuela was based on economic push-pull factors: difficult economic conditions and financial instability in the island versus a nation that was growing economically and in fast development, sustained by increasing oil revenues during the second half of the twentieth century.

Whilst it is recognized in the literature on first generation immigrants from Madeira to Venezuela, and true for all my informants' parents, that upon arrival in Venezuela, immigrants went through hardships and difficult working conditions, having to work long hours and often not being able to afford proper living conditions, it is also true that they found in the country the opportunity to grow economically as urban centres expanded, popular spending power increased and opportunities for employment were created (Dinneen 2011) (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010).

#### 5.3.1. Family migration histories

Not surprisingly, all but one of my informants were raised by parents who worked in their own business, either in the field of agriculture, in which they would purchase a plot of

land to explore to their advantage, or, in the case of four participants, their parents had saved enough money to invest in an *abasto* – a small grocery store and bakery, a popular business among Madeiran immigrants, who placed high value in entrepreneurship. It was often the case that their fathers were the ones who first emigrate to Venezuela, they would save up money to invest in a business and develop their families, either have their wives and children join them in the country, or return to Madeira to find a wife and bring her to Venezuela.

Maria (58, 1.5 generation) travelled from Madeira to Venezuela in 1968, when she was only six years old. Her father had been working there, in the city of Maracay for two years, where he gathered enough money to open a convenience store, resulting from a joint project with his brother. When Maria and her mother joined her father, he was already settled in Venezuela, and soon after they arrived they moved into the house that her father was building:

“I recall I arrived at my dad’s *abasto*, which was divided by some shelves where there were the supplies, and we lived behind those shelves for several months while my dad built the house, further down [the street]. I recall I was at the *abasto* with them, despatching, and very near the *abasto* there was the school [...] My father went there first, I was like 4 years old, and he worked, he worked with my uncle, who helped him, because he had gone there earlier and they put up that *abasto*, because before there were no supermarkets, they were big *abasto*, so he already had his own business, he had his own car, house... In general, we arrived well, we arrived stable.”

**(Maria – F2019A, Ribeira Brava, November 2019)**

When they left Madeira, in the 1950s, living conditions in the island were quite difficult, which prompted many of her family members to emigrate. It was easy for them to leave a place of difficulties and adapt to Venezuela as their new home, as they soon started living in prosperity. Her family worked there for most of their lives, built their own home and developed the family business. It was very common to emigrate to Venezuela with relatives, generally siblings, uncles or cousins, or, in other instances, they were influenced to travel to Venezuela by kin or acquaintances, whose economic achievements enticed them to try their

luck in the country. It was the case for all my informants that their parents received help upon arrival, from friends and relatives, or after meeting with fellow Madeiran immigrants.

A similar case was that of Emilia (45), who was born in Caracas in 1975. Her father immigrated from Madeira to Venezuela in 1966 when he was 23 years old. He was aided by friends who were established there and helped him find a job. He managed to save up some money while still sending remittances to his parents and three sisters who stayed in Madeira. Her father had met a woman in Madeira, with whom he would exchange letters and spend time with during his visits back home. In 1971, her father married her mother through proxy and arranged for her arrival in Venezuela with a 'carta de chamada' (an invitation letter stating economic capacity to support someone's settlement in the country). According to Emilia, though her mother did not know much about the country, she was enchanted from the very first day about her new place of residence.

Three of my informants had parents who worked in agriculture. Just like the others, they managed to save up a sum of money to purchase a piece of land, where they raised cattle or pigs and produced foods. Juan (48) and António (50) are to second-generation individuals whose parents emigrated from Ponta do Pargo to Venezuela in the 1970s. They owned a small farm run by the family, where the brothers too worked prior to relocating to Madeira.

There were two cases in which my informants' fathers had first travelled to other countries in the region, such as Curacao and Aruba, but were not able to gain economic independence, and so they moved to Venezuela.

### 5.3.2. Family life in Venezuela and references to the homeland

Even though the interviewees' parents were assisted by fellow Madeiran immigrants once they arrived in Venezuela, and that they lived in neighbourhoods where other Portuguese families were also established, not all of them were too interested in maintaining or developing a Madeiran community. Emilia's parents are an example of migrants who embraced the local culture upon settling in their new country. They were from a small town near Funchal, called Câmara de Lobos. Besides their economic reasoning, they were happy to leave their hometown because they did not identify with the local social norms, which they deemed retrograde and restrictive in terms of women's freedoms. According to Emilia, her

mother and in general the women from her town, were often deprived from studying or being outdoors alone, for the simple fact that they were women, as such behaviour would be condemned and generate gossiping within the neighbourhood. Once in Venezuela, though Emilia's father had been helped by a friend from Madeira at a first, he and his wife did not wish to continue interacting with fellow Portuguese, as they didn't want to recreate the patterns of socialization in which they previously lived in Madeira:

“They said they didn't want to have contact with the Portuguese, because they thought they preferred to deal with the Venezuelan, because they were more genuine people [...] Often when people emigrate, they maintain their ideas, their ways of thinking, they don't think that they are in a different country, that they are in a different culture, and my parents loved the Venezuelan culture, in that they were open and joyful, always in good mood and getting along. So, my dad would say 'the least contact that we have with the Portuguese, the better, I don't care' [...] [My mother said] 'if I left [Madeira] because I did not like it there, why would I continue mixing with the people who maintain the same mentality and the same principles, the same culture, the same things? Let's move forward'. Why would they go after the same thing outside if they did not relate to it [when they lived in Madeira]? [...] They found something better, so why would they go back to that same... that same retrograde ideas?”

**(Emilia – F2000, Funchal, December 2019)**

Although this is an extreme position to take regarding the migration plan, given the economic and social inhibitions they experienced prior to emigrating, it is only reasonable that they suffered a positive cultural shock, and that they made the choice to embrace all the aspects of the society in which they accomplished the lifestyle they desired. This was not the case for most of my informants, who characterized their upbringing as 'very strict', which they equate to 'the traditional Madeiran way', as opposed to the 'looseness' associated with Venezuelan ways.

Belkis, Maria and Hita are three examples of individuals whose migrant parents interacted with other Portuguese migrants daily all throughout their lives in Venezuela, while

at the same time establishing contact with locals in the context of their families' businesses – in the *abastos*.

Growing up, Belkis (51) was very much in touch with the Portuguese. Because her family owned a grocery store and a big house nearby, they were able to help other Madeiran immigrants who had left the island, “boys who escaped from here [Madeira], from the military service”, she added. Her family would help these young men by providing work and renting out rooms in the family home. This resulted in Belkis always being around other people from Madeira. She describes the ambience at her family house as very festive, full of people who she considers siblings. The women in the family were responsible for housekeeping chores while the male guests would be working at the family store or in nearby food houses.

She describes her upbringing as being ‘very Portuguese’, in that she received a strict education from her parents, characterized by strong family orientations, a patriarchal organization and by not being allowed out too often or to interact on a personal level with the local population, whom the family considered to not hold common values, such as chastity and modesty. Her parents were also very serious about maintaining the values of endogamy, as they made it clear that their daughters could only marry Portuguese men:

“It [our education] was very Portuguese, it was so, because it was strict, and you knew that Portuguese... you have to marry with a Portuguese, you could not marry a Venezuelan person, it had to be Portuguese.”

Nevertheless, despite maintaining what they considered traditionally Madeiran ways, she mentions that her parents easily adhered to Venezuelan expressive traditions, for example regarding food and festivities:

“Around this time in Christmas, we always had that thing that everything was Venezuelan style, you know? The food was not Portuguese at all, everything was in Venezuelan style, the *hallacas*, the *pernil*, the chicken salad, the *pán de jamón*, it was a mix. [But] the way my mother raised us was strict, like then Madeiran way, because she also had that thing that she could not go out, my father didn't let her, you know?



So [we had] that part, but when it comes to food and culture, that was Venezuelan, you know?”

**(Belkis – F1998, Funchal, December 2019)**

Maria’s narrative was similar to Belki’s, in that her family managed to expand their business and constantly helped many Madeirans from Seixal to emigrate to Venezuela, providing housing and small jobs for when they arrived:

“In Maracay there are many Portuguese. We would provide them with accommodation [to some]. I remember my dad and my mom, they’d give them accommodation at home, for example, to the son of the neighbour [in Madeira], they’d pay for the ticket, they’d give them roof, they’d give them food, they’d wash their clothes, while they were establishing themselves also, it was something like a group where everyone helped everyone, they’d give each other a hand.”

**(Belkis – F1998, Funchal, December 2019)**

Maria too considers having received a traditionally Portuguese education from her parents, which she describes as being reserved and family oriented.

“[...] we also didn’t mix with the Venezuelan, because my mom [Maria] brought with her a very closed mind-set, not very trustful, [she would say] “be careful with the men”, which means everything [we did] was inside the home. [...] I have an uncle, my mom’s younger brother, who was at a Portuguese folklore group, and I liked it very much, but they wouldn’t let me join, because I was a female. The female always had to be at home, very restrained of everything... but I always like it [the folklore culture].”

**(Maria – F2019A, Ribeira Brava, November 2019)**

Hita (48) makes similar remarks regarding her upbringing:

“[My upbringing] was strict. Nothing to do with the looseness that there was [in Venezuela], and so now I come here [to Madeira] and the looseness here... it’s a shock! [...] There, in Venezuela, [Portuguese] parents don’t let one go out, one doesn’t link much with Venezuelans, only in the context of the business, but to hang out with them, they [parents] would not allow it. Everything was based on here [Madeira], they raised me the way [they knew from] here, the Portuguese way.”

**(Hita – F2019B, phonecall, March 2020)**

These three narratives account for the experiences of three women as the daughters of immigrants from Madeira in Venezuela. Their parents were *abasto* owners and their economic success enabled them to assist fellow Madeiran immigrants, with whom they interacted daily. Being involved in the family business, these women interacted with the local population mostly in the context of vendor-customer, as their families made efforts to limit their interactions and privileged socialization with fellow Madeirans.

On the other end, there is the case of Juan and António, whose family was dedicated to agriculture on the outskirts of Los Teques. They grew up in largely Portuguese context: uncles, cousins, friends of his uncles, had all emigrated from Madeira to Venezuela, and worked together in the same land. António says that where they lived, most people were Portuguese, and that they were only a few Venezuelan temporary workers in the field. Although they do not mention any attempts from their parents to enforce Madeiran ways of being, their isolation in relation to Venezuelans meant that their upbringing was mostly informed by family settings.

One of my interviewees, Ana (32), had a distinctively interesting upbringing as a Luso-descendants, as she grew up with barely any references to Portugal and Portuguese culture. Her father emigrated to Venezuela after working in Curacao and Aruba. In Venezuela, he married a Venezuelan woman, with whom he had his daughter Ana. Unfortunately, his journey in Venezuela wasn’t successful and he ended up returning to Madeira some years later. It was only in her teenage years that Ana got acquainted with her paternal side of the family and became interested in her Portuguese roots. She says that as a child, she was referred to as ‘the Portuguese girl’ based on her light complexion and overall appearance, even though she was not brought up identifying as Portuguese.

### 5.3.3. Transnational practices: language, Portuguese clubs and homeland visits

The term transnationalism in anthropology identifies the practice by immigrants of maintaining cross-border links and ties with their country of origin. Advances in communication and transport have significantly impacted the ways in which mobile individuals experience their migration experience. It is “a process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multistranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders.” More than ever before, migrants engage in more frequent travel to and from their country of origin and the country of settlement, transferring cultures and ways of living across borders (Quirke, Potter and Conway 2009).

Homeland visits are one of most tangible transnational behaviour. They have a special significance as a corporeal act of engaging with the homeland. Typically, of a touristic and leisure nature, such visits can produce various effects on the reinforcement of one’s ethnic identity, especially if these visits happen during individuals’ childhood, as they are put in touch with their homeland culture (Vathi and King 2011).

Many factors influence the maintenance of transnational practices and in particular the practice of homeland return visits. Variables such as the distance between the origin and the host country, costs of travel and financial availability, as well as left-behind kin, all influence this practice. Homeland return visits may as well serve as a precursor to a definitive return, both for the original migrants and for their offspring (Wessendorf 2007, Reynolds 2011).

Frequent trips back to Madeira were a reality only for a few of my informants. Only three of them had parents who travelled to Madeira yearly, and would bring the children in a few of the trips. For three of the informants, the first time they travelled to Madeira was when they decided to emigrate, and one had travelled there before already as an adult. In one case, a single trip to Madeira at the age of fourteen was what determined him to emigrate later in his life, and in another case, one participant lived in Madeira for a whole year in early teen years, as her parents planned on returning permanently, but decided that they could no

longer adapt to the lifestyle in Madeira and so re-emigrated. It was a commonality among most of those who travelled to Madeira before their relocation, either as children or as adults, that there were always certain bureaucratic issues to be taken care of in Madeira, related to assets, home or land ownership, or a sick or deceased relative.

All in all, trips to Madeira were not relevant for all but one participant, António. His first visit to Madeira happened in 1984, when he was fourteen years old. During this visit, António did not want to return to his country of birth, but returning to Madeira was not part of the family's plan at that point. His following visit was in 1992, when he had set intentions for a permanent stay, but did not have the documents necessary to do so. Therefore, he had to go back to Venezuela, he arranged the necessary documents, acquired Portuguese citizenship and returned to Madeira again two years later.

Permanent return to Madeira was not a plan for the majority of my interviewees. Only Juan and Antonio's parents had intentions to return to their homeland prior to emigrating. They would send remittances back to the island to assist in the building of a house and to help the elder members of the family. Maria explains:

“What happens is that when you leave a bad situation, for example, if your country is going through a difficult situation and you arrive in a country where you have purchasing power, which means you start doing your life from new and so then when you start doing life, you cannot stop to return to what is your homeland, that stays behind [...]. When they [parents] left, they were illiterate, at that time, some more than other, had that opportunity to work, save up [...] and when they realised, they had [managed to buy] a property [in Venezuela], so ‘if I have nothing there [in Madeira], what would I return for?’

**(Maria – F2019A, Ribeira Brava, November 2019)**

Regarding the language of everyday conversation, many of my informants' parents continued speaking Portuguese within the household and familiar contexts. For the ones whose families owned an *abasto*, Spanish quickly became the main language. Maria, for example, because her parents were in the front of the convenience store and constantly interacting with the local public, Spanish became the language of everyday conversation,

whereas Portuguese was only spoken when they did not wish to be understood by bystanders. Maria too worked at the convenience store during her teenage years, for which she claims there was little room for the use of Portuguese:

“Well, the culture, let’s say in terms of food, in education, was very Portuguese, the language not so much because we always had stores, so we were always behind the counter until I got married, so there was almost no opportunity to speak Portuguese. I’d hear my parents speak Portuguese, but when you arrive at such a young age, and you enter school, I think that you forget your original language. Well, it’s not that you forget, it’s just that you no longer pronounce it correctly. Now that we came [to Madeira], we can speak it, but we don’t speak it nicely.”

**(Maria – F2019A, Ribeira Brava, November 2019)**

For those who worked in the family farms, Portuguese remained as the main language of communication, but the second-generation individuals became fluent in Spanish as they attended school.

Juan and Antonio are two examples of second-generation individuals whose families recreated a Portuguese environment, as they mostly worked in the family farm. They did not participate in Portuguese clubs or specific places for Portuguese socialization, but this context allowed to recreate a Portuguese bubble, as social life was mostly confined to the family home or of other relatives.

As the work on Portuguese Cultural Associations, by Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo had confirmed, these institutions mostly served as platforms for cultural exchange, rather than perpetuators of Portuguese traditions (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010).

Maria, for example, was in constant contact with other Madeiran immigrants in Maracay, but her family was not involved in the Portuguese institutions, which she criticizes for their values of vanity, serving as a platform for successful immigrants to display their economic wealth and not necessarily as one to bring the community together for mutual support:

“We didn’t have an excessive contact with Portuguese people, because we didn’t attend clubs and none of those things. In that kind of places, La Casa Portuguesa, everything that was Portuguese, was more of a show-off, such as ‘I accomplished’, ‘I own more’, ‘I have a daughter, I’m of good families, who do I marry her to?’ [...] It was not [a place] where you would gather to have a good time, [or] ‘if I get to know that you need something, I help you’, no, nothing like that. I was only a social club, of pure society. Moreover, [all] my dad did was work, work, work, and my mom would take care of us at home, so we were very busy to be up on vanities.”

**(Maria – F2019A, Ribeira Brava, November 2019)**

Only two informants were involved in these Portuguese social clubs, as part of folklore music and dance groups. Hita’s family joined the Casa Portuguesa in Caracas, where she and one of her brothers participated in a folklore group where she was a dancer and he played the Brinquinho, a traditional Madeiran instrument. The family actively engaged and participated in events within the Portuguese community and were frequent visitors to the Casa Portuguesa. Hita says that she interacted with [Venezuelan] colleagues at school and in the family shops where they were clients, but most of their socialization was with fellow Portuguese people that they would meet in communal places:

“I had my friends from school and all that, but at home, we were all Portuguese, the traditional way. We were always taught like this. I had nephews and nieces that had their own Portuguese group... things that used to do here they took it there, like playing the accordion... We always kept that, the traditions. And we had friendships, with other Portuguese, from when we’d go to the Casa Portuguesa, and with the Venezuelan... well, in the business, the ones you interact with daily, the normal...”

**(Hita – F2019B, phonecall, March 2020)**

Two other participants mentioned that even though they were only active in the clubs, they engaged in celebrations in honour of Nossa Senhora de Fátima – for whom this was the main context in which they expressed their Portugueseness.

#### 5.4. Leaving home to find home: two periods of exodus

My informants mentioned a variety of reasons for emigrating from Venezuela to Madeira. The clear majority mentioned push factors to leaving their country of birth, rather than pull factors attracting them to Madeira. There is a significant variation in the nature of the reasons for emigration between the individuals who relocated to Madeira in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While the earlier migrants were mostly young adults reacting to personal motivations, such as the desire to live elsewhere or their inability to achieve economic independence, those who emigrated during the 2010s, at a later age, expressed signs of a forced migration, mainly motivated by external factors, such as social insecurity and inability to access daily essential goods, as food and medicine shortages become more prominent in the country.

Family issues have been important in these individuals' process of decision making. As the first-generation gets older, those who had previously returned to Madeira are now in need of assistance.

*Table 3 - Main reasons that prompted emigration*

<i>Main motivation to emigrate</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<i>not achieving economic independence</i>	F1998 , M1998
<i>economic crisis: food and medicine scarcity</i>	F2019A, F2019B, F2014
<i>mistrust in government</i>	F2000, F2014, F2019B
<i>insecurity</i>	M1995, F2000, F2014, F2019A, F2019B
<i>kin in Madeira needed assistance</i>	F2016, M2018, F2019A
<i>family members pushed emigration</i>	M1998, F2000, F2014, F2019B
<i>desire to live elsewhere</i>	M1995, F2000

##### 4.4.1. Young migrants search for new lives (1990-2010)

The participants (4) who had moved to Madeira in the late 1990s and early 2000s provided a more extensive account on their experiences living in Madeira, distanced from the ongoing economic and socio-political crisis that has shaken the country. Their reasoning for leaving Venezuela are mostly tied to personal preferences. Two of them mentioned economic

reasons – not being able to achieve economic independence, as their businesses failed - and the other two mentioned that they always wanted to live abroad.

They have been making a living in Madeira since their 20s, raising their families, built their home in the island, and found a certain stability.

Emilia took her bachelor's degree in Public Finances from Universidad Santa Maria in Caracas. In 2000, when she was 24 years old, she went to England to pursue further studies in economics and learn English. On a short holiday trip from London to Madeira, she met her current husband, who was at the time living in the United Kingdom. Her father had been insisting that she returns to Venezuela, but she refused, as she wanted to go on studying and working in England, together with her partner. After two more years of staying there, Emilia felt she was had completed her goal of learning English and was ready to move forward, and so they decided to move to Madeira together. Her father disliked the idea of Emilia being abroad, far away from her family, and even though he wished her to return to Venezuela, he was more at ease with her move to a place he knew, where she would be able to contact relatives in the case of an emergency or assistance. Though Emilia had never considered moving to Madeira, she had it clear that she did not want to return to Venezuela after her studies abroad. Along with her longing for living abroad, she understood that living conditions in Venezuela were getting worse, so she aspired to leave to somewhere she felt safe and secure:

“I always said I want to emigrate, I want to see what is out there. I had seen that... we had been through several crises [...] I had studied Public Finances and Economics, so [I] could understand a bit that things were going downhill [in Venezuela's economy]. And then I start thinking about our own safety, there was a lot of criminality, friends or acquaintances being killed by shot. I would say I don't want to grow older like this, I don't want to expand my family in this environment. Even though this is home, it is not safe. It's not an environment in which I can buy a car and go out at night, have a drink and feel safe. It's not a place in which I felt safe. I said 'look, I'm going to try life outside, let's go see what's happening in the world, if I see that things are not better out there than here, look, I'll come back home'. The door was always open. I went to London, and even though it's a bigger city, I could feel safer than in Caracas, so that ends ups... the feeling of safety for me is more important. [...] Then we would come



on holidays, here to Madeira and to continue to feel that safety... For me that was the most important.”

**(Emilia – F2000, Funchal, December 2019)**

Juan was 26 years old when he left Venezuela, in 1998. His father had sold the plot of land where they worked, and because of the economic struggles they started to feel at the time, his father decided it was the right time to complete the migration plan and leave, and Juan joined him. He says that prior to that decision, he had not considered leaving his country of birth, but when his father made the move, he decided to join him, as other family members too had emigrated. His brother Ant3nio, on the other end, had been fond of living in Madeira since his first visit when he was only a teenager. He was attracted to the island’s peaceful environment, contrasting to the feeling of insecurity he lived through in Venezuela. In 1992, he intended to go to Madeira and settle permanently but did not have the proper documents to make it happen. He returned to Venezuela and after acquiring Portuguese citizenship through the Portuguese Embassy in Caracas, he left for Madeira for good, in 1995, when he was 23 years old.

“Because we were in much danger. Much more dangerous than here in the mountain [in Madeira]. The house was in the mountain. When we would hear a motorcycle, we already knew they came to rob. [...] We saw many things on the television. Killing of this one, killing of that one, for nothing, for a pair of shoes... I would go from my house to Los Teques, all scared of the robbers, so I said, “being here, no”. It’s my land of birth, but too bad.”

**(Juan – M1998, Ponta do Pargo, March 2020)**

My informant Belkis too emigrated to Madeira in 1998. Together with her husband, they first went to Madeira on vacation for three months, to her husband hometown of Calheta, in the southwestern part of the island. During these vacations Belkis got pregnant with her second child and soon returned home to Venezuela. She gave birth to her son in Venezuela and soon after they decided it was best to emigrate Madeira. In Venezuela, they were not achieving economic stability, they lived in rented apartments and their cheese

distribution company was not as lucrative. Their initial plan was to come to Madeira for only five years, to gather enough money to return to Venezuela and build their own house there. However, their evaluation of the Venezuelan economic and politic scene, prompted them to stay in the island, as they did not consider it the proper environment to raise their family:

“We were coming for five years, because it was to earn money, because there we had a cheese distribution [company] and we lived in rentals, we didn’t have [our] own house [...] so no, he [her husband] though that coming here [we] would make some money, we could go back there and buy our own house.” [L.59]. “We were already seeing that the situation there was changing, we saw Chávez started changing things regarding education, setting up [a scene where there were] weapons and the military and such, and that... and so that is not what I want for my children. If I’m already here, then let me just stay.”

**(Belkis – F1998, Funchal, December 2019)**

#### 5.4.2. Escaping socio-economic decay (2010-2020)

All the participants (5) who emigrated later in the 2010s, in one way or the other were reacting to the economic downfall in Venezuela that has been escalating since the second half of the decade. They either escaped the current economic and socio-political crisis by making it their own decision to emigrate, or had parents or other relatives who pushed them to make the move. Prior to the crisis, they had not considered leaving Venezuela. They built their lives in their country of birth, where they lived most of their lives, but were pushed to start anew somewhere else.

Despite the economic and social situation in Venezuela, Maria and her husband did not willingly return to Portugal. They considered returning once her husband needed critical medical assistance that he could not receive in Venezuela, but it was their daughter and son who ultimately pushed them to leave when they made the decision for themselves to move their families to Madeira. Their daughter had for long been considering emigration and finally made the decision after her partner went all around Maracay in search of medicine for their infant child, which he was not able to find. This was for them the last straw. Though Maria and her husband did not wish return, they calculated that it would be best to. Her husband

owned a truck which suffered damaged, enabling him to continue working (transporting merchandise). The cost to fix the truck was higher than the cost of the flight fares to travel to Madeira, and because he is an old man, he could no longer fix it himself. Moreover, his employees were stealing from his transportation business, and his work was no longer profitable. They were pulled to Madeira because their son, daughter and grandchildren were already there and a big part of their lives was taking care of the young grandchildren.

Hita and her family left Venezuela also left due to the complicated political and economic state of the country. Pushed by insecurity and economic difficulties, she classifies her emigration as forced by the current government. Her father, a first-generation immigrant, had already returned in 2017, and he was the one who mobilised resources for his daughter and her family (husband and two children) to migrate.

Like Hita, Lucia points out as reasons to leave the country, the unsafety and economic difficulties, though she was mostly driven by the need to assist her mother who had relocated to Madeira years earlier and was of old age. She considers she was obliged to come. She had travelled to Madeira for long stays in several occasions, but as her mother gets older, more permanent assistance is needed. She was also not satisfied with her multilocal lifestyle, as she felt she was not settled in neither of the places, having to abandon work several times.

“I had come here several times. When my father got sick, when my mother got sick. And she was always like ‘oh, I’m going to die’... and I would go back [to Venezuela] again. Now I say, I’m sorry, I’m sick of this life of going back and forth, it had been four times already, I cannot take it any longer, because I don’t do living there nor here. If I was working there, I would have to abandon it and come here again.”

**(Lucia – F2016, Ponta do Pargo, March 2020)**

Alberto too came to Madeira to assist his father. He had intended to stay for a couple of months, but as his father’s health condition worsened, he decided it was best to settle and stay long-term. He points out that he had no intentions to emigrate before and neither did his father plan to return, though he did so in 2012, also driven by crisis.

A different case is that of Ana. She left Caracas in 2014 and it was her baby daughter who was the main push to emigrate, as she felt the environment in Venezuela was unbearable

in terms of safety. Because she was not acquainted with her Madeiran roots during her upbringing, she had never intended to move there. She and her husband intended to emigrate to Spain, but her husband having origins in the island too, meant that they could count with a network of relatives there to help with the relocation. They travelled to Madeira with the intention to stay for a short period of time, in which Ana could acquire Portuguese nationality and all the documents regarding her studies, and then emigrate to Spain, which they found more suitable for language reasons. As time passed, they have made the decision to settle permanently in Madeira.

### 5.5. Adapting to the new realities of rural Madeira

Moving from urban areas in Venezuela to Madeira implies a process of adaptation at several levels. Even though second-generation individuals have origins in the island, and some have experienced translocal lifestyles to a certain extent, moving to Madeira meant for most of them, emigrating to a foreign land, where they saw the need to adapt to a whole different social and cultural setting, from what they experienced when living in Venezuela, even if their parents passed on many aspects of Madeiran culture.

Family connections are particularly important when analysing ancestral return. The capacity to mobilise a network of economic and social resources in Madeira, was the main pull factor to relocating there. It was the case for all my informants, that they had relatives in the island that could assist them through the process of settling. For many, it was their relatives who provided or helped find accommodation. Others moved into the houses that belong(ed) to their parents or grandparents, or built their own houses in family-owned land.

In terms of language, only three participants mentioned having had difficulties related to their inability to communicate in Portuguese. They had been in contact with the Portuguese language – it was the case for the majority that their parents spoke Portuguese within the household, even if they would respond in Spanish – but upon arrival in Madeira, they had to readjust and improve their language skills. Nevertheless, there is a certain ease with which Spanish speakers can manage the Portuguese language. At the time of the interview, all the participants were fluent in Portuguese, some more than others.

The experiences of living in Madeira are very diverse among all my participants, but significant differences were found between the lived experience of men and women in terms of socialization. It was clear that female informants had more difficulties adapting to the lifestyle in Madeiran, in interacting with the locals and forming meaningful relationships, than their male counterparts.

The main issue to integration in Madeira, for the men interviewed, was related to the increase in workload that they had to take. António (M1998) and Juan (M1995) mentioned that once they arrived in Madeira, they found work in construction, which provided a good salary but required long hours of hard labour, in contrast to what they were used to in Venezuela, as workers in the family farm. Nevertheless, after more than 20 years in Madeira, they do not recall having had major issues integrating the local communities. They moved to their parents' hometown of Ponta do Pargo and built their houses there, with the help of relatives. Having both grown up in a Portuguese bubble in Venezuela, in a familiar context, they did not encounter other social challenges when interacting with the local community in Madeira and expressing their identities.

António describes his lifestyle as wonderful and joyful, he relates very well with locals and enjoys living in a rural area surrounded by many members of his family. He was very attached to Madeira since his first visit as a teenager, and the familiar context in which he grew up accounted for the recreation of a Madeiran way of living, as well as the maintenance of traditional practices, including keeping Portuguese as the main language of communication, meaning he was never much in touch with Venezuelan culture. When I arrived at his house for the interview, António was listening to traditional old music from Madeira. In his living room, he displayed several patriotic and catholic decorative items, one single artefact from Venezuela, which he pulled out to show me. He was proud to have experienced a different reality and to be cultured, thanks to his migration background, but was otherwise not distinguished from any other local.

For Juan, the main negative side of living in Madeira, is the lack of social dynamic and lack of entertainment options, as a result of the low demographic density. He is married to a Venezuelan woman, his connection to Venezuela is lived within the household and mostly through her. They communicate in Spanish with each other and experience the Venezuelan lifestyle through music and food. During their first years in Madeira, they considered

relocating back to Venezuela, due to the hard-working conditions and slow paced lifestyle, but as time passed, they adapted to it. Being able to settle his family in Madeira contributed to his detachment from his country of birth, as he mentions that after having built a home in Madeira, he no longer considered returning to Venezuela. In this case, home ownership directly affected his feelings of belonging and constructions of home.

Alberto, having been living in Madeira for a shorter period, points out a certain level of restriction to personal choices as the main issues of his migration experience:

“As a Venezuelan, we are very different. We like to party, to play around. If I felt like being out all night drinking coffee and chatting [with friends] at my doorstep, I could do it, here I cannot. Here, if you’re having barbecue, they will say right away ‘I will call the police’. It is difficult, because we are not used to this.”

**(Alberto – M2018, Ponta do Sol, July 2020)**

He relocated to Madeira at a time in which many more Luso-Venezuelans and Venezuelans did too, which has accounted for certain discriminatory behaviours against them, especially when it comes to employment, as employers may offer lower wages because they perceive their urgent need to find jobs. It took Alberto 6 months to find job in Madeira and he currently works as a cook at a restaurant by the beach. Overall, he is satisfied with his new life in Madeira, and even though he feels free to express himself among fellow Luso-Venezuelans, he holds tightly to his Portuguese identity when confronted with discrimination:

“If I am Venezuelan, I am a ‘*mira*’. If I am Portuguese, I’m a returnee. Do you understand? Sometimes I would have to question my nationality. It is just as if I went to Venezuela and returned here... but people say, ‘oh you come speaking ‘Venezuelan’, you are a ‘*mira*’ – ‘no, I’m Portuguese’ – ‘oh so you are a returnee’... So, the community discriminates.”

**(Alberto – M2018, Ponta do Sol, July 2020)**

### 5.5.1. Unemployment, isolation and sacrifice

Finding employment opportunities was a major issue for several of my informants, particularly for those who relocated in the recent years. In terms of work, there were many comparative mentions between the conditions experienced in Venezuela and the ones lived in the island. They mention increased workload, inability to generate quick informal income and long period until being employed.

Lucia never had a job in Madeira. She points out her inability to run small businesses without having to go through bureaucracy, being left dependant on others and on what she can produce in the land.

“In Venezuela, in your own home you can make cakes, cookies, and go out to sell. You put out a little table outside and you’re set. I think the only ones who go hungry are the ones who don’t have any means to do anything at all, but other than that, there you can defend yourself, if not in one way, you try in a different way. If you have a car, you can profit from it, you can use it for taxi service...Here everything is controlled, by the law. Here we can tell who’s poor and who can’t make a living, dies of hunger, but there [in Venezuela] you can do something by yourself [...]. But well, there are many good things here too, the government helps, other people help.”

**(Lucia – F2016, Ponta do Pargo, March 2020)**

Given that these individuals are Portuguese nationals, there were no significant issues related to the legal process of their migration. The majority had acquired Portuguese nationality prior to emigrating, which meant that they were able to access national services right upon arrival. This was essentially important for many of my participants and their offspring, as there were no legal constraints to their integration. They may be illegible for social aid and assistance from the regional employment centres.

Hita, for example, benefited from economic aid by Social Security services during the time that she was not employed. She passed on Portuguese nationality to her two children, who were able to enrol in the education system immediately after arriving. It took her four months to find a job, but has now found stability, as she and her husband are both employed and their children are attending school. Despite that, there were certain expressions of

resentment in her narrative, as leaving Venezuela was a very difficult and emotional decision to take. The following quotes are representative of her feelings regarding their relocation to Madeira:

“They [the children] love it here, because in Venezuela I had to take them to and pick them up from school, but here they can go and come by themselves, there’s more safety and freedom [...]. I feel good, the colleagues, they welcomed me very well, they are all nice. I don’t miss much from there [Venezuela] when it comes to that. People from here are very good persons, well, some are mean, but at the end, you get along, and you get attached. It has been very surprising, because I thought it was going to be worse. – In what sense? – The treatment, the rejection... but no, they’re very friendly here, the people [...] What I was told the most when I arrived here, was that one could find job soon after arriving. And that’s a lie. Also, the change, from working from 8h to 17<sup>th</sup> there, and not here. it was different because it was our own business, so we would work from 8h to 17h, go for lunch and be back at 20h. That change hit me hard, but one adapts, with resignation. What else can we do? It is like that. We carry on.”

**(Hita – F2019B, phonecall, March 2020)**

Although Hita identifies very well with being Portuguese and Madeiran, as a result of a lifetime expressing and being surrounded by Portuguese culture, she is attached to her place in Venezuela, as the country where she achieved everything she owns. The desire to return is experienced in a mythical way, as they reminisce their old life and wish to go back, but continuously settle in Madeira, due to a disbelief that a return will be feasible in the foreseen future:

“There is always that hope of going back, but things are getting worse and worse, but here we are, in the name of God.” [...] if the situation would change in Venezuela, I would return, because we have everything there. We kept the house, the car, everything there. Everything from a life is there. If things change, we won’t be staying here [...]. My siblings stayed in our house [in Venezuela], and it won’t be sold, because maybe one wants to go there, and so one has their own house to go to.”

**(Hita – F2019B, phonecall, March 2020)**



Lucia shared similar views. Not having clear ideas of where she can pursue a happy living, she feels conflicted because of the current uncertainty in the country, not allowing her to make a decision to return, but also not making her discard the idea completely.

“Here it’s ok, it’s not bad, but there [in Venezuela] we have a home, there is everything I worked for in my life. Here, well, it is what my parents have, it’s not the same thing. One always wishes to return because there’s family, [...] but one also makes new friendships [and it becomes] painful to leave again... it’s hard to explain... If Venezuela would ‘be fixed’, well, maybe, maybe... [...] but one is already thinking that if I’m going to settle, I’m going to settle in one place only [...]. One adapts to the land where one is, but always longs/wishes for their [home] land.”

**(Lucia – F2016, Ponta do Pargo, March 2020)**

For Maria, it was important that her husband could enter the health system immediately, as he was in need of urgent medical care. Despite that, she expressed being extremely disappointed with the reality of living in Madeira. Unfortunately, she and her husband are not eligible for retirement pensions in Portugal, and due to their old age and health conditions, they are not employed, though they provide valuable caregiving to their grandson, which allows their daughter to work. Heavily influenced by the working conditions they found in Madeira, they consider their circumstances a ‘delay in life’. They are disappointed with the inefficiency of the social systems in Madeira. Not knowing whether they will be able to return to Venezuela nor having fully accepted their settlement in Madeira, Maria and her husband have a difficult time adjusting to their current situation:

“You don’t know if you’re able to return. You don’t get any pension, you don’t know if you’ll have money. Even though we’re depending on family, we don’t feel the independence that we used to have before. You work a whole life and suddenly you have to leave and come here, and here you’re the foreigner.”

“In Venezuela, maybe there is no cotton, maybe there is no alcohol at the health centre, but the person, the nurse, the doctor [says attentively] ‘yes, what do you have? How can I help you? Look, do this’... there was human quality, you know? The person

has humanity. Here you go to a pharmacy and you can get all the medicine, all, but if it takes one year to get to see the specialist that you need, what is [the medicine availability] worth for?”

**(Maria – F2019A, Ribeira Brava, November 2019)**

Nevertheless, Maria recognizes the value of peace and stability that they found in Madeira and recognize that it is the proper environment for raising her grandchild, as there are better opportunities for education and mobility in European territory.

This narrative of sacrifice for the family was common among the majority of the female interviewees. Belkis, who had made the decision to migrate to Madeira when she found out that she was pregnant with her second child, put it bluntly:

“It is a question of you getting used to the lifestyle. You end up getting used to it because you have no other choice than to sacrifice yourself, because we sacrifice ourselves for the kids.”

**(Belkis – F1998, Funchal, December 2019)**

She refers to Madeira as a paradise, mostly due to the sunny weather which allows her to often go to the beach, and she praises the safety she feels there, but she is disappointed with her current professional circumstances and criticizes the system for having failed to help those in need throughout the years while making it easier for Venezuelan newcomers:

“I spent 11 years at the hair salon and I was paying Social Security every month, because I had to pay it. And I closed the salon because they [landlords] raised the rent... [it was] very difficult [to keep it open] and I am not one to be ‘with my head down’ having debts [...] and so I closed the salon, and do you believe [that] I have no right to anything from the government? As for the Venezuelans who come now, they [Social Security officers] send them to job interviews. These are things that upset me, that now everything is easy. Should they have come here 22 years, 40 years ago, they would have seen how things were.”

**(Belkis – F1998, Funchal, December 2019)**

Despite these feelings of dissatisfaction regarding her current economic circumstances, Belkis has found ways to cope with being away from her country of birth, where she had a very active lifestyle. During the years of raising her children, she mostly stayed at home, but in current times, she has taken the opportunities to hang out and attend festive events. She criticizes local culture for being too judgemental of women having fun and attending parties, but she considers that the presence of so many Luso-Venezuelans has helped weaken these social views, and she finds that it has become more acceptable. Attending these events and socializing with Venezuelans has helped Belkis better integrate and has contributed to her well-being:

“Now when I go to a party and I goes to the front and sing... they no longer see it as bad, that’s how Venezuelan parties are. We go to a street festival and one goes around as in group, we go to the front and we start singing songs. [...]. Now I am living again. That [side of me] was shut down, you know? It shuts down because there in Venezuela I used to be very joyful, I was a party person [...] you arrive here and you must adapt to the local ways... There weren’t so many parties, there weren’t so many Venezuelans. I didn’t have or knew anyone. Because my children were so young, my husband was working, I’d only go out on Sundays with him, you know? [I] was always at home, listening to my music at home, I’d sing at home... but I was feeling very down, I got very depressed because of not having anyone, you know? I got very depressed.”

**(Belkis – F1998, Funchal, December 2019)**

Emilia expressed a similar narrative. She felt tension between trying to fit in a lifestyle that she does not consider compatible with her ways of being while remaining true to herself. She described Madeiran culture, and in general the Portuguese, as very nostalgic and melancholic people, contrasting with the joyful, open minded and accessible Venezuelans:

“[...] When I arrived, a got a bit lost, because, ok, how do I adapt to this culture? Something along the lines of my dad, [that] if you arrive in a country, you must adapt to the culture of that country, but I’d refuse, I will not die of sadness. This is not what I like, and I remember from my first job, my boss, he’d tell me ‘if you don’t feel like

that, then you don't have to be. Be as you feel better. If listening to *gaitas*<sup>46</sup> and eating *pán de jamón*<sup>47</sup>, making *hallacas*, makes you happy, even if it's in Portugal, China or Japan, let that be so. Whatever makes you happy' [...] I feel people [having] a negative energy, it is a very closed culture, it is 'don't tell anyone, don't say anything to anyone'. And [in Venezuela], we would take the bus, from Plaza Venezuela to Chacaito, and the lady that sits next to us... when we get to Chacaito, we already know that the woman has three children, one is married, one is in love... we didn't know each other from anywhere, yet she'd tell you her life story. So, one comes from that to 'I don't even tell you how I am doing'. [...] And then [they say here that] Venezuelans only hang out with Venezuelans. No wonder, who else will we hang out with? This culture... they welcomed me, but wow, it is too heavy... It's a culture, a way of being that is depressive, heavy and negative."

**(Emilia – F2000, Funchal, December 2019)**

### 5.5.2. Reverse transnationalism

Having relocated from Venezuela to Madeira, second-generation individuals produce a counter-current of transnational practices oriented to Venezuela. It was made clear that the majority of the informants to this study maintained relationships and ties to their country of birth. The most tangible and common transnational practices among the participants are the following:

- Four participants did not sell their houses and other important assets such as an automobile, in the hopes that they may eventually return to Venezuela.
- Four participants had close relatives, including their parents (3), with whom they maintained contact daily.
- Four participants send remittances to friends and relatives in Venezuela

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<sup>46</sup> Venezuelan traditional Christmas carols.

<sup>47</sup> Venezuelan traditional Christmas dish.

- Seven participants maintain constant touch with friends and relatives through phone calls and messaging.

Other forms of transnational practices include the maintenance of Venezuelan traditions, such as foods and celebrations (7), regularly communicating in Spanish (7), and socializing with Venezuelans and other Luso-Venezuelans on daily basis (3).

These transnational practices have been significantly important for many of my informants in easing the process of integration into Madeiran society. Others – the most recent newcomers - by maintaining their homes in Venezuela, at the care of relatives, they secure the possibility of a return to their country of birth.

The most expressive account that depicts the importance of transnationality to the process of integration, is that of Emilia, whose international-oriented career has helped her cope with feelings of nostalgia:

“When I need to fill myself with energy, I call my friend who is in Canada, or I call my sister who is in Venezuela, I call my colleagues who are in Angola, and they pull the plug-in, because here is where I lose my energy. Except at home with my husband. Thanks to God, he is Madeiran but... he is not from here. He was in England for many years, he is more English than Portuguese.” “Sometimes they [Madeirans] criticize Venezuelans who come, and who don’t try to... don’t even make the effort to speak Portuguese, because they think that the ones from here should speak Spanish... No, you’re in their place. Yes, I brought Venezuela in my heart, I do my own party inside my house, but outside the house I respect the locals. I’m not going to arrive in the office [and be like] ‘look, today we are listening to *gaitas*’ [...] No, I put my own earplugs and I listen to it by myself. We do a little Christmas party when we put up the Christmas tree here in the office, we put on Christmas songs from here. Yes, because we must respect this home. We end up adapting.”

**(Emilia – F2000, Funchal, December 2019)**

Even though she considers that her place in Madeira is only a safe base, ‘a roof above her head’ that provides her with security and stability, she does not want to withdraw completely from the local cultural and social aspects. She considers herself to absorb the

characteristics she finds positive about the people who come into her life and to leave out the traits that she does not consider compatible with her spiritual self:

“Nowadays, I tell I’m not from anywhere, because here I am Venezuelan, because in Venezuela I was *Portu*, [...] in Angola [I am] Madeiran. We’re not from anywhere. Yes, we are a little bit of the mixture of everything. And when I lived in England, they’d ask ‘where are you from’ and I would stop for two minutes like this, hold my breath, ‘what do I say?’, and so I would say ‘well, I’m Venezuelan’, that’s it. Because that is what I feel [...] I have my Portuguese passport, which was what my parents gave me, which was brought to me through cultural heritage. I cannot deny that, right? It is part of my other half. I have a friend, a work colleague from France [...] she likes my Latin spirit, and so she calls me the Latina [...] and says, ‘you don’t seem Portuguese’. [I say] ‘it doesn’t matter, I am Portuguese’. What am I? I am me. I am the mix of many things, of three years in England of meeting Angolan people whom I love, [I am] my French friends who taught me to be... to continue being joyful [...] I am the friends I left behind, the children of Italians, the children of Spanish [...] I am a mix of the people I have met throughout my life. In each place, I took the best of it. We have to learn to take the best of things [...]. We have to know what good we take from people, what we best learn from them, and that’s a little bit of what I do. My life lesson has been ‘I came to Madeira, and I am taking the best that they [the Madeiran] can give me.’”

**(Emilia – F2000, Funchal, December 2019)**

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the circumstances in which members of second-generation of Portuguese immigrants to Venezuela emigrate to their ancestral homeland – Madeira, from where the majority of the Portuguese immigrants to that country departed from during the second half of the nineteenth century.

As previous research on first and second-generation individuals of Portuguese origins in Venezuela had shown, there was certain detachment from this group of people from their origins. Means of communication were not as readily available as they currently are, and the large distance between the two places, of origin and settlement, meant that travelling between the two was an investment, not accessible for many. Moreover, the poor living conditions in the country, and in particular in Madeira island, prompted emigration that was intended to be permanent. The long years of Venezuelan prosperity contrasted with the socio-economic stagnation that was lived in the island between 1940 and late 1980s, and positive immigration policies in Venezuela fostered entire immigrant families to settle in the country and take up Venezuelan citizenship. Moreover, the ease with which the Portuguese managed the Spanish language, and certain cultural and religious affinity, helped the process of integration into the local society and assimilation (Da Rosa, Gandsman and Trigo 2010). To no surprise, first-generation Portuguese immigrants, in general, did not raise their children in highly transnational lives, mostly being distinguished from the local way by receiving a stricter education through their upbringing, which included being part of a patriarchal family structure, in which the female members were expected to be at home and be family oriented. Many of the older generation also favoured interaction with fellow Portuguese, rather than with the local Venezuelans, as they perceived the latter to hold looser values. Nevertheless, contact with the locals was inevitable and part of daily life, especially in the work settings. The Portuguese did not inhabit specifically Portuguese neighbourhoods, and children attended local schools. Travels between Venezuela and Madeira were expensive and did not happen often during the second-generation's upbringing. Some immigrants would return for some months to take care of bureaucracy or upon a family important event, such as the death of a relative.

As the first signs of socio-economic decay were felt in Venezuela in the late 1980s, a first wave of return, both by first and second generation individuals, to Madeira started to take place. With nuances throughout the first decade of the current century, the global crash in oil prices in 2014 meant the downfall of Venezuelan economy, which had been made heavily reliant in oil prices since the beginning of Hugo Chávez's governance. This corresponds to the starts of massive arrivals of Luso-Venezuelans to Madeira.

Second-generation individuals who relocated to Madeira in the late 1990s and early 2000s did so as young adults, in their 20s. Given the improvement in economic and socio-political conditions in Madeira, they chose to relocate there for diverse reasons, mostly tied to personal motives, such as attaining financial independence or building their families, as they perceived the environment in Venezuela to be unsafe. Several of my participants that returned in this period, mentioned that they intended to stay for a short period of time, or that during the first one-two years they considered returning to Venezuela, as they felt that they could not adapt to the lifestyle in the island. Within this cohort of returnees, the men mentioned having to work longer hours than they did in back in Venezuela and lack of entertainment options. As for the women, they pointed out feeling lonely and unable to relate and communicate with locals.

The most recent second-generation newcomers to Madeira belong to an older age group, in their late 40s and 50s. They consider their migration to be forced by the current conditions in Venezuelan – unstable government, economic difficulties, food and medicine scarcity, hostile and unsafe environment with growing crime rates. With no previous desire or plans to emigrate from Venezuela, these individuals were settled in Venezuela, where most of them owned a house or small businesses. They left once they perceived the conditions to no longer be bearable, or were heavily influenced by the emigration of close relatives, either their parents or their children, who in turn were too reacting to the difficult conditions in the country. Many of these returnees see their futures as uncertain. They experience desires for an eventual return - reason for which they did not sell their houses in Venezuela, and keep close ties with family and kin left-behind. This desire to return, is however, experienced in a mythical way, as they do not consider it to be possible in the near future, as a result of deep distrust in government and perceived decay in the values of Venezuelan masses. These individuals express feeling satisfied with their relocation to Madeira, despite their



disappointment towards employment prospects and public services in the island. They are appreciative of the safe and stable environment.

The female narrative of sacrifice was prominent among my participants. Whilst men seem to go through an easier process of integration, women expressed feeling more affected by cultural differences, having more difficulty adapting to the new lifestyle and participating in social settings:

“I was looking for peace and quiet, and of course, you trade some problems for others. Here, I found myself in situations that I had never experienced in my life, of necessity. I was not rich in Venezuela, but I had comfortable life, I didn’t lack anything, but not here. And solitude, is not only physical, but also, not having anyone to count on, and that affected me very much.” **(Ana – F2014, Funchal, July 2020)**

Women often referred to their stay in Madeira as sacrifice for the well-being of their children. The most mentioned issue they face in Madeira is the negative and nostalgic way of being, the lack of warmth and spontaneity of the locals, compared to the joyful, festive and outgoing traits of the Venezuelan population. Nevertheless, the massive arrival of fellow Luso-Venezuelan is perceived positively, as it has resulted in more festive events and opened space for in-group socialization. This is not an uncommon reaction to female migrants and returnees. “Female friendships stress the significance of emotional and intimacy bonds, and the value in “being there” for each other. Male friendships, in contrast, are more social, recreation and instrumental, lacking the focus on intimacy” (Reynolds 2011, 545).

The environment in Madeira has also been rather positive towards the massive arrival of Luso-Venezuelans. The majority of my participants strongly identified as being Venezuelans, despite their connections to Madeira. However, the public and popular discourse refers to these individuals as Portuguese returnees from Venezuela, regardless of their migration background. Whether this discourse is the reflection of the confusion and difficulties in classifying this population (they are migrants, but they are also Portuguese citizens), or as part of projects for nation building and assimilation, it has justified the development of regional measures and policies to better accommodate and assist this population, especially in regards to their integration into the labour market, and for the younger (third and subsequent generations), their integration in the education systems.

Migration from Venezuela to Madeira is visible throughout the entire island at different levels, from new Venezuelan restaurants popping up in each town, Venezuelan ingredients and food products being sold by national supermarket chains and typical dishes gradually being integrated into the local diet, to Spanish language being heard daily and an entire column being dedicated to news about Venezuela in the regional daily-published newspaper, *Diário de Notícias*. Lastly, there's is widespread recognition that "every local has a relative from Venezuela".

Inevitable, the mass arrival has caused some tension among locals, with reports of xenophobic behaviours against Luso-Venezuelans<sup>48</sup>. Others, including some of my participants, reported feeling discriminated, especially in the work environment, as employers attempt to capitalize on newcomers' urgent need to find employment. They are often required to work extra hours and feel that they are underpaid. Despite culturally identifying as Venezuelans, those participants who mentioned having had experienced xenophobia and micro-aggressions, emphasize their Portuguese nationality and citizenship as a defence mechanism when confronted with such behaviours.

As expected from any migration wave in the midst of a globalization era, where it has never been easier to establish and sustain cross-border contacts, second-generation returnees to Madeira are maintaining constant contacts with friends and relatives back in Venezuela. Some dream about returning and maintain important assets in Venezuela to secure that possibility, others have close relatives left-behind with whom they exchange contact daily, and friends to whom they send remittances, medicine and other goods that have gone scarce in the country. For my female informants, these transnational bonds have been a crucial social resource for battling against feelings of loneliness and of maladaptation to the local ways of being.

The contexts and settings of Venezuelan migration to Portugal are astonishingly different from those of Portuguese migration to Venezuela in the 1940-1980s. There is a wide range of available literature on Portuguese emigration to Venezuela, from the perspective of

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<sup>48</sup> Reporting, "Venecom denuncia casos de xenofobia na Madeira.", *RTP Madeira*, December 16, 2018, Sociedade (Available at [https://www.rtp.pt/madeira/sociedade/venecom-denuncia-casos-de-xenofobia-na-madeira\\_24360](https://www.rtp.pt/madeira/sociedade/venecom-denuncia-casos-de-xenofobia-na-madeira_24360))

both nation, but scarcity of the movement in the opposite direction, justified by the relative novelty of the phenomenon. Return and second-generation return from Venezuela to Portugal have added a whole new layer of complexity to the matter of migration dynamics between the two countries, and has undoubtedly opened space for further and deeper anthropological research. With this study, I have attempted to analyse the influence and connection between the first-generation immigrants from Madeira to Venezuela and their ways of settling, with the experiences of the second-generation upon return to their ancestral homeland. Migration from Venezuela to Portugal cannot be looked at as a phenomenon isolated from the wider and long-established migration history between the two countries. It is clear that the decision to relocate to Portugal has everything to do with having Portuguese ancestry, even if this is not the main pull factor to emigrate there. Social network theories are relevant to this matter, as it is the existence of such networks that will determine the decision to emigrate, will dictate the destination, and influence the experience upon arrival (Blumenstock, Chi and Tan 2019) (Takyiakwaa 2019).

The nature and size of this study does not allow for generalizations about this population and their experience in the island, but statistical representation is not the goal in of the present study. That common themes came up during interviews shows that there exist certain patterns in behaviour that cannot be overlooked.

Literature on second-generation return cases also proved important to inform this study, often in a contrasting basis. For example, Swiss-Italian second-generation lived highly transnational lives, as a result of disconnection from the host country, as Swiss laws make it difficult for immigrants and subsequent generations to access citizenship, and the short distance between the two countries, which allowed for frequent and easier travels (Wessendorf 2007). Contrastingly, Venezuelan pro-immigration laws towards Portuguese immigrants, and the long distance between the two nations that hindered the maintenance of links, resulted in a generation of well integrated immigrants whose following generations gradually dissolved into the local society, decreasing the need or motivation to maintain transnational links back to the ancestral lands. Not surprisingly, second-generation return to the each's ancestral origin, will have contrasting foundations, will have happened in different circumstances, and have significantly different developments.

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## Attachment A: Consent

### Ficha de consentimento para participação no estudo-investigação

Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Mestrado em Migrações, Interetnicidades e Transnacionalismo

Dissertação: 'Migração às Raízes': As Experiências Pós-'Retorno' da Segunda Geração de Migrantes Luso-Venezuelanos

A presente dissertação está a ser desenvolvida no âmbito do curso de Mestrado em Migrações, Interetnicidades e Transnacionalismo, pela estudante Ramnyra Gabriela da Silva Isturiz da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Através de entrevistas semiestruturadas, procura-se entender as dinâmicas culturais, o processo de integração e a formação de identidades individuais e sociais resultantes de um processo migratório complexo por parte dos filhos dos emigrantes Madeirenses que no século XX se estabeleceram na Venezuela e que nas últimas décadas decidiram emigrar à terra ancestral.

A participação no estudo implica responder a perguntas numa entrevista. As entrevistas serão gravadas, apenas com o fim de facilitar a transcrição da informação por parte da estudante.

As informações recolhidas não serão utilizadas para outro propósito que não a elaboração da presente dissertação e será tratada de forma confidencial.

Qualquer esclarecimento sobre o estudo pode ser prestado através de contacto por e-mail: **ramnyra@gmail.com**

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Eu, \_\_\_\_\_, recebi informação sobre a índole e propósito do estudo conduzido, e autorizo à Ramnyra Gabriela da Silva Isturiz, o registro dos meus dados; a realização e gravação de uma entrevista; a análise, tratamento e publicação dos resultados obtidos.

Participo no estudo de forma voluntária e informada.

\_\_\_\_\_ em \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment B: Interview guidelines

### Guião de Entrevista

#### Referências a Portugal na infância e em contexto familiar:

- Os pais faziam planos ou tinham o desejo de regressar a Portugal? Perante que condições?
- Que idioma predominava em casa, português ou espanhol?
- Faziam visitas a Portugal? Em que ocasiões?
- Frequentavam sítios Portugueses? (Centro Português, Associação Desportiva Luso-Venezuelana, etc.).
- Participavam em eventos junto da comunidade Portuguesa?
- Mantinham contacto com família em Portugal?
- Envio de remessas para Portugal: com que finalidade? (construção de casa, ajuda a familiares, etc.).

#### Durante os planos para emigrar a Portugal:

- Contou com ajuda de familiares que já estavam em Portugal?
- Porquê escolheu a Madeira? (familiares já aqui, facilidade de entrada no país, desejo de voltar às raízes, outras?).
- Quando começou a considerar emigrar? Perante que condições?
- Quando obteve a cidadania portuguesa?
- Descreva o processo de emigração pelo que passou.

#### Após chegada à Madeira:

- Obteve ajuda? De quem e em que aspetos?
- Sente-se integrada no estilo de vida local?
- Como se relaciona com madeirense não-migrantes? Que valores encontra em comum? O que há em comum e em contraste com os estilos de vida e de ser dos madeirenses e luso-venezuelanos?
- Mantem contactos com família e amigos na Venezuela?
- Envio de remessas para a Venezuela: com que frequência e finalidade?
- A realidade de emigrar correspondeu ao que imaginava quando planeava a emigração?
- Tenciona voltar a emigrar? Para onde e em que contexto?

Este guião serve apenas para orientar a entrevista. Os entrevistados são bem-vindos a falar sobre outros mais tópicos que considerem interessantes para o tema geral.