



## PORTUGUESE WOMEN IN FRENCH PUBLIC SPHERE: FROM INVISIBILITY TO EMANCIPATION

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the representation and role of Portuguese women in French public space. If the media discourses today are still being dominated by the national and masculine figures, it is nonetheless true that the immigration context is often a space of gender roles reorganization. Between a dual legal discrimination in media sphere (being an immigrant and being a woman) and a process of individual emancipation in the spheres of work and family, migrant women outline a process of identity reconfiguration. Our case study focuses on the diachronic analysis of the image of Portuguese women in France (since 1960) from a *corpus* consisting of thirty samples from emissions of the main TV channels as well as formulated in the framework of the so-called ethnic humour speeches. This case study is limited to the emigration of economic nature, distinct from most graduate migration.

**Keywords:** diaspora, Portuguese women, television, France.

### INTRODUCTION

For decades, within the fields of everyday life, migrant women were subject to gender subordination (Campani, 1995), double disfavour (Rocha-Trindade, 2008) or to a triple oppression of race, class and gender (Kosack, 1976).

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Nonetheless, today they represent approximately half the contingent of the 232 millions of migrants spread around the world (OCDE/ONU, 2013). The conscious of women's specificity in contemporary migration has been increasing, especially from the 1980s on, as a consequence of other gender studies (Brettell, 1982; Morokvasic, 1984; Castles & Miller 1998).

Today, in Portugal, the academic research on feminine migrant population doesn't go beyond two or three dozens of scientific essays (Marques & Góis, 2012: 18). Nonetheless, in 2010, 220 000 immigrant women were living in the national territory which actually correspond to 49% of the foreign population. On the other hand, although it is not feasible to report very precise data<sup>2</sup>; it is estimated that 2,3 to 4 million Portuguese live abroad, which reflect the importance of this phenomenon to a country with only 10 million inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> Only between 2007 and 2013, approximately 600 000 people emigrated from Portugal (Pires et al., 2014: 36). The main destination countries were France, Switzerland, United States, Canada, Brazil, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Venezuela, Belgium, South Africa and Australia (pp 46; 162). Women represent almost 50% of the total of that expatriated population (pp. 66; 163).

## 1. GENDER ROLES RENEGOTIATION

Despite their invisibility in the public space, women have always been central in the migratory movement, even when there were only a few that crossed the frontiers in search of better living conditions. Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the image of the Portuguese emigrant was clearly masculine, for cultural and political reasons.

As the republican Afonso Costa stated – at a time when Brazil was still a privileged destination – “*it is understandable that, when the emigrant's family remained in the country of origin, he tended to send his savings more frequently*” (Costa, 1911: 183). Afraid of a large-scale denationalising, the exit of women and children under fourteen years were therefore limited, thus strengthening the transnationality of heir and/or matrimonial bonds. As such, 74% of the 271 000 legal emigrants registered between 1898 and 1907 were male and one third of these were married (Baganha, 2001, p.92).

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<sup>2</sup> According to calculation methods, it is not very easy to evaluate first and/or second generation, taking also into consideration dual citizenship, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Pires et al. (2014) refer to only 2,3 million of Portuguese emigrants, based on estimates by international institutions. Challenged by some other researchers, it is assumed that this number doesn't take into account the binationals.

This profile remains in force throughout the *Estado Novo* (1933-1974), as one should bear in mind the input of foreign currency and also the reinforcement of national exports through the specific market of *saudade* (Paulo, 1998).

If the Portuguese presence in France dates further back, it was the arrival, in 1917, of 30 000 members of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps, to join the Allies, that marked the beginning of a remarkable wave of migration at the end of which the Portuguese became the first population group of foreign origins in France.

Between the 1876 census and 1914, the total of the Portuguese population in France never rose above a thousand individuals. Most of them were artists, intellectuals, diplomats, businessmen and a few groups of labourers. Between the two World Wars up until the end of the 1950s, the flow of immigrants – which covered a few political exiles – began to rise. Afterwards, the population of Portuguese immigrants in France increased from 50 000 in 1962 to 296 000 in 1968 and 759 000 in 1975. In 1970 alone, approximately 120 000 Portuguese people crossed the Pyrenees – 90% of them doing so illegally. Tired of the colonial conflicts (1961-1974), of the repressive *Estado Novo* regime, of the arduous living conditions, hundreds of thousands of individuals crossed the borders clandestinely. Within less than a decade, the immigrants from Portugal became the largest foreign-born group in France, representing 22% of all the foreigners living in the country in 1975. In the following years, homecomings, naturalization and death will gradually reduce this number. In 2005, INSEE counted 567 000 Portuguese, to which can be added the holders of dual citizenship, French with Portuguese origins and their descendants living in the French territory. The statistics rose again in recent years (593 000 in 2011) due to the economic crisis. Only in 2013, for instance, *l'Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques* (INSEE – The National Institute of Statistics and Economical Studies) reports the entry of 18 000 Portuguese, the largest foreign contingent (8% of total entries) settled in that territory (Brutel, 2014).<sup>4</sup>

It is mainly in the 1970s that the emigration to France truly begins to become feminine, as a consequence of the fall and collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship (April, 25, 1974) and the progressive closing of the welcoming countries' borders. In times of economic crisis, the safest way to immigrate to Europe will be, henceforth, through family regrouping. In the 1962 and 1968 census, women represented around one third (30% and 34%, respectively) of the

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the freedom of movement within the Schengen area, the seasonal migration and to the dual citizenship phenomenon, it is therefore complex to risk any precise numbers. Sociologist Jorge Portugal Branco calculated that near 1,2 million “Portuguese” were living in France in 2012, 490 000 of which had only the Portuguese citizenship (mono-citizenship), 320 000 had dual citizenship (French and Portuguese) and 389 000 were French citizens with Portuguese origins.

Portuguese living in France.<sup>5</sup> In 1975 this number increased to 46%, a percentage that has been kept without relevant variations until our days (Brutel, 2014).

For a very long time, women have been confined to the role of wives and/or mothers, and consequently their central position in the migratory dynamic has been concealed. However, MGIS research (Tribalat, 1996)<sup>6</sup> allows us to draw a more accurate image of the feminine contingent of Portuguese origin: average age of 24,4 years on arrival, from a rural background (77,9%), with limited education (7% illiterate and 59% with education up until 10-12 years old), in a stable relationship (69,1%) and with a job (63,4%) – especially in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing industry and housekeeping – at the moment of departure. Furthermore, 40% entered the French labour market in the very first year of their stay (Condon, 2000). This number however does not take into account undeclared work, a practice that was then recurrent in housekeeping (Leandro, 1995b, 112-113). The statistics analysed by Condon (2000: 306-307) should, therefore, be understood in the light of that circumstance: “in the course of this period, the percentage of women between the Portuguese active migrants has increased from 10% in 1962 to 29% in 1975, thus their participation rate has improved from 20% to 30%. The feminine participation rate observed in the 1982 census (38%) and 1990 (50%) concerns a population that, in most cases, is already settled for years”.

The first step for the inclusion of foreign women into the French labour market – that Taboada-Leonetti and Lévi (1978) define as the “operational” stage – is not much characterized by a desire of change or self promotion, but instead it focuses on the accumulation of capital within the framework of the so much desired return to their homeland. To many women, only the extension of their stay in France will provide real strategies of family and individual promotion (Condon, 2000: 327).

Though coming from a patriarchal society, one can not deny that the Portuguese woman – namely in her role as a mother – had already in her country of origin a certain power within everyday family decisions, a power that was somehow boosted by the departure of their parents and spouses. In January 1977, it is estimated that 32 200 families and 80 500 Portuguese children are separated from their husband/father, the so-called “isolated workers” settled in France

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<sup>5</sup> As in other migrations (Gaspard, 1998: 84), although in a smaller number compared to men, some women have also emigrated illegally to France on the 1960's, thus official numbers do not represent the wideness of the phenomenon.

<sup>6</sup> The research *Mobilité géographique et insertion sociale (MGIS)* was carried out in 1992 by the *Institut national d'études démographiques (INED)* with the collaboration of the INSEE, and with a group of 8 889 immigrants of both sexes and different backgrounds who were living in France. Regarding the ones coming from Portugal, people with ages between 20 and 59, who emigrated with 16 or more years and were still living in France in 1992, were surveyed.

(Charbit, 1977).<sup>7</sup> Karin Wall's study (1985) on social and economic function of the "woman who stays" illustrates how the separation from the domestic core involves the taking of new responsibilities of economic, labour and family character, in a sociocultural environment still clearly traditional. And when they leave for a foreign country, "wives and mothers [still] had a certain degree of power in negotiating day-to-day decisions, particularly in relation to their entry into the labour market" (Condon, 2000: 330). It is precisely the process of professionalization that allows them to set the basis of a progressive emancipation.

Contrary to men, most of them employed in companies with a great ethnical trait, Portuguese women are integrated in social and employment contexts that stimulate a greater linguistic and cultural immersion in the host country. "Besides working in private households, it is especially them, the women, who handle administrative procedures, such as contacts with school, health care and other social affairs", underlines Leandro (1995a: 311). This multiplicity of new roles does not just provide sporadic acculturation (language, cooking, clothing, education, health, recreation, citizenship, etc.), but makes it economically and socially more autonomous. This acculturation is converted in real "social mediators between the immigrant families and the host society" (Rocha-Trindade, 2008: 28), a process that creates more self-esteem.

The transition to a society with different sociocultural standards and practises inevitably raises some questions, causes some discomfort, suggests new expectations, stimulates negotiations and promotes changes... In France, women find a new legal and social status, which leads to a process of renegotiation of roles within the couple. In lands of emigration, they reveal themselves, almost invariably, "more receptive to adopt values that are more consistent with family modernity than men" (Leandro, 2002: 62); but without sacrificing the values that were brought from the motherland such as "education for respect within the family and the society and also for the ethics of effort and work" (61). As any emancipatory process, this one does not happen in the same way, nor at the same rhythm, for all individuals, according to age, cultural capital, individual and collective paths, social learnings, etc.<sup>8</sup> The nature of migratory projects – more orientated to a medium-term return or to a long-lasting residence – has also some influence in the negotiation process of conjugal and filial relationships, as well as in personal achievement on the social sphere (Leandro, 2002).

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<sup>7</sup> On the dramas of family separation, see the first part (autobiographical) of the novel by Isabel Mateus (2011), *A Terra do Chiculate*, Gráfica de Coimbra.

<sup>8</sup> In what concerns the first generation, gender roles renegotiation can, for example, open a space for episodes of domestic violence, whereas in the period of adolescence and youth, second generation women sometimes complain about a different treatment when compared to their brothers (greater parental control).

Changes tend to be more profound in the context of definite residence, but also “regarding families who, in whole or in part, return to Portugal after ten years abroad, the traces of emigration tend to remain” (Rocha-Trindade, 2008: 28), especially in what concerns consumer habits and sociocultural practises. When one considers the “return” – the appropriate word would be migration – of women belonging to the second generation (i.e., those who were born abroad), changes are far more deeper; which does not mean that intra-family negotiation is not complex, engendering motivations that sometimes are diametrically opposed. Sardinha’s fieldwork (2011: 40) reveals that beyond the belief that a return to their homeland would fulfil them cultural and professionally, some interviewed stated that the return “would provide them with an exit from traditional, authoritarian, conservative ways of being Portuguese (primarily imposed by their parents) (...) yet others pictured their return around family and family desires of returning, be that return of an independent nature, keeping in mind their parents’ return, or returning with their own established family (spouse and children)”.

Let us go back to emancipation and visibility of the Portuguese woman in France. In fact, it is mainly from the 1970s that she gains access to sociocultural mechanisms that will allow her to mitigate gender inequalities, though it is not that the image that is conveyed within the public and media space.

## **2. UNTIL THE MIDS-70S: GENDER INVISIBILITY IN THE FRENCH MEDIASCAPE**

In France, the media attention generated by ethnic minorities – in the last decades the terms “immigration”, “visible minorities” and “diversity populations” were continuously used (Nayrac, 2011) – constituted a real social question around the politics of integration of foreign populations (Boucher, 2000; Malonga, 2000, Antunes da Cunha, 2010). One should bear in mind that the Portuguese community always cultivated a certain discretion, even because a substantial part of its members has arrived in an illegal situation (Cordeiro, 1999; Volovitch-Tavares, 2008). Such collective invisibility was supported, in Portugal, by a dictatorship that condemned all and each piece of information regarding a tacitly tolerated exodus (Pereira, 2012), however publicly veiled, in such a way that the image of the regime is not damaged (Ribeiro, 2009). On the other hand, the French public opinion has focussed its attention on the migratory fluxes that were considered more problematic, in line with the conflicting post-colonial relations (Cordeiro, 1990). Today, on both sides of the Pyrenees, the Portuguese of France are seen as a discrete, hard-working and integrated population.<sup>9</sup> But

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<sup>9</sup> In Portugal, the residents’ remarks on their compatriots living abroad also have a more critical tone, especially within the academically qualified classes. They interpret certain behaviors as exhibitionism,

what gaze(s) has the host society cultivated in the course of this last half century about the women of Portuguese origin? What (in) visibility and representations are conveyed in the media, especially on television? We will seek to find an answer to these questions through an exploratory research, mainly based on the analysis of three dozens of television excerpts (news, magazines and fiction) of the two main French channels on air (1966-2006).<sup>10</sup>

Since the mid-1960s, the settling of hundred of thousands of Portuguese has been giving origin to a set of articles published in the French press. The reports on the troubles faced during the clandestine journey – the so-called *salto*<sup>11</sup> (“the jump”) – and the precariousness of the living conditions in the slums reveal an image of a hardworking community, however closed on itself (Volovitch Tavares, 1995). Having a close look on those articles, one’s observes that most of the times, women are set aside as second plan, merely seen as wives and spouses. Consider, for instance, the testimonies of two Portuguese emigrants on the edition of 3rd of June 1964 of *La Vie Ouvrière*, the weekly newspaper of the CGT syndicate, in a dossier entitled “Slums in France: the immigrants”:

*“I have eight children. I had to wait eight months to get the child benefit. Now, they want to cut the benefit to my eldest. He is only fifteen years old and he does not work” (p. 8)*

*“My husband fractured the spinal column in an accident at work. He received medical treatment, but he became incapacitated, he can no longer work. We didn’t get anything. We wrote to the Social Security; we did all the administrative procedures; we went through control visits. We are still waiting for an answer”. (p. 8)*

On the other side of the political spectrum, the daily *Le Figaro* (13/14 January 1968) describes the concern of Manuel Joaquim, 31 years old, married and father of three children, in the day in which he sees himself obliged to leave the slum and settle in a social housing quarter. The reduced access of the Portuguese immigrants to the public space at those days is a privilege, almost exclusively, of men regardless of their marital status:

*“Are they going to destroy my stall? When we arrived, a man anxiously asked us this question. He is Manuel Joaquim, 31 years old, married, and father of*

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worship of money and obsessive reference to foreign things (vocabulary, architecture, taste, culture, ideas, etc.). Such attitude is a strategic differentiation from these popular classes, who have some economic capital, but less cultural capital (Gonçalves, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> They were designated then as *La Une* and *La Deux*. In 1975, *La Une* was renamed TF1 (privatised in 1987) and *La Deux* was renamed *Antenne 2* (*France 2* since 1992), today being the main channel of public service. Our survey was conducted at *Institut national de l’audiovisuel* (INA), in Paris.

<sup>11</sup> Consider, for example, the movie *O salto* (1967) by the French director Christophe de Chalonge, in which is portrayed the clandestine journey and the settling of a young Portuguese emigrant in Paris.

*three children. (...) What is going to happen to these men who are being thrown out of their stalls? (...) Last September 5, at the time of the destruction, only 93 out of the 270 single registered citizens had accepted the resettlement offers. On the scheduled day, only 50 were there. (...) Before being integrated into the social housing quarter, many of these countryside families should learn how to live in it”.*

The case of Laurette da Fonseca, spokesperson of the slum residents of Massy, suburbs of Paris, constitutes a remarkable exception of that feminine invisibility since most of the times, women are not given voice in the media<sup>12</sup>.

Having come to France with her children within family reunification, Laurette begins by helping her husband Carlos (teacher) in literacy classes and in the follow-up of compatriots in their *démarches* with public administration or their employers. In 1971, she led a manifestation that occupied the city hall for some hours, demanding a less authoritarian resettlement for the residents of the slums. She is threatened with a deportation order. Laurette’s case gives origin to a local and national solidarity movement.<sup>13</sup>

Simultaneously with press articles, two public service television channels (ORTF) broadcast a set of television reports on the social situation of the Portuguese population. A research by Mills-Affif (2004) reveals that the Portuguese are then almost exclusively represented as “people in pain, who drag with you an endless number of misfortunes. Sub-proletarians, living away from the civilization, in the filthiness of the slums, they are illegal workers, unemployed, weighed down by the burden of misery, exploitation and racism” (p. 122). However – points out the author – the first channel highlights especially the social problems (accommodation and employment), while the second adopts, until 1974, a more political approach, illustrated with testimonies of political exiles and people who rejected military service. We have then two distinct perspectives. On one hand, a more compassionate view towards a population that is willing to face all types of difficulties to improve their living conditions. On the other hand, a militant involvement is suggested, the escape to the colonial war and to the presumptuousness of “salazarism”. On one hand, there are the economic migrants; on the other, the political exiles. In both cases, there is a predominantly masculine image.

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<sup>12</sup> See *Laurette et les autres* (1973), a movie by the French director Dominique Dante.

<sup>13</sup> The deportation order will only be revoked in September 1981. Laurette Fonseca passed away in 2001. In 2014, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution, the town of Massy paid tribute to this Portuguese activist with a set of cultural activities and the attribution of her name to a Street, at the Georges Brassens Park.



### 3. PORTUGUESE WOMEN AS SEEN ON MEDIA

In the television musical program *Enclave portugaise* (02/12/1966, *La Deux*), the *fado* singer Germano Rocha sings *fado* at a pastry inside the shopping centre of Marly-le-Roi and, later on, he goes to the Champigny slum, in the Paris area.<sup>14</sup> After being invited by the director Frédéric Czarnes, this exiled engineer, with his shoulder strap guitar on, meets some dozens of compatriots, half of them suspicious, half of them curious. Surrounded by men and children – women stay away from the cameras –, in a more refined French, the artist talks about his own personal journey, interprets and translates the first verses of an irreverent title by Zeca Afonso (*The vampires*). Out of distrust and/or mere ignorance, those who were present refrain from making any disparaging remark on Salazar's dictatorship. In fact, during the twelve minutes of the program, they barely open their mouths. It is true that these recently arrived immigrants are still far from mastering the French language, but this unfolding constitutes, without a doubt, one of the distinctive traits of the television discourse up until 1974.

On June 22 1968, the first channel broadcasts *L'histoire de Joaquim*, a 52 minutes documentary by Maurice Failevic that presents to the general public the adversities faced by a Portuguese immigrant when arriving to Paris. Holding his suitcase, lost in the middle of the crowd, on the first scenes Joaquim is seen totally helpless at the train station. "I left my country, Portugal, for political reasons. I had just turned 21 years old. I crossed the border illegally. After paying the train ticket to Bordeaux, I arrived to Paris without any money. I didn't know anyone. I didn't even know a word in French", says the protagonist who reads in an off-screen voice the story that he himself embodies in the film. The only Portuguese woman, an employee of a local institution who seeks to give some information to the ones who have just arrived, comes into the picture right on the first minutes. If she was given the chance to speak, even if for a brief moment, it is because she does not correspond to the typical profile of the Portuguese immigrant.

*"I am Portuguese. I came to Paris to study and I found this job. It's been almost two years that I've been working to Comité Lyautey. I have plenty of work, but not many resources. There are people who arrive at night, without any money or destination. I don't know where to send them. At that time everything is closed already. I let them stay [all night long] in the waiting room".*

*(L'histoire de Joaquim, 22/06/1968, La Une)*

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<sup>14</sup> Iconic place of the community's history, the name of the slum (*bidonville*) Champigny, that harbours around 10 000 people in 1965, was famous even in the most remote Portuguese little villages (Volovitch-Tavares, 1995). In its place today we can find Plateau's Park where a monument to the Portuguese immigration was inaugurated (22 June 2008).

Before disappearing, she still writes down one or two useful addresses in a piece of paper, gives a couple of practical instructions... From that moment on we see a man (Joaquim) facing a number of obstacles (language, accommodation, work) that a set of male social actors (public employee, boss, priest) tries to ease. In the end, young Joaquim – as well as his two compatriots who walk around the library and the Parisian cafés with him – talks about the exile and the political situation of his own country.

After all, when it's about looking closer to the daily routine of dozens of thousands of clandestine who arrive with the purpose of making their lives better, it is almost always the journalist, the director or a third person (employer, worker, neighbour or even an actor) the one who speaks.

On TV, whereas intellectuals and political exiles are given the mission of being the spokesperson of the community and/or resistance, the economic migrants prefer or are pushed to the absolute silence (Antunes da Cunha, 2013). Women invariably remain on the sidelines, tied up between gender invisibility and/or domestic or background roles.

If migrant women are on the margins of society, we cannot fail to notice some specific broadcasts, real sociocultural beads set to a foreign audience. For example, between 1966 and 1992, the editorial staff of the daily radio programme to “the Portuguese workers” produce around seven thousand programmes, to which were addressed dozens of thousands of letters (Antunes da Cunha, 2001).<sup>15</sup> It is true that, between 1976 and 1987, the Sunday television show *Mosaïque* (FR3, 10h-12h) reaches a certain reputation – for some years also amongst the French population (Humblot, 1989) –, but these broadcasts had almost always a very marginal status (schedule, use of foreign language, production) within the French public space.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. AFTER THE MIDS-70S: BETWEEN STEREOTYPES AND EMANCIPATION

Let us consider this news report from the 1 p.m. News Bulletin (14/03/1973, *La Une*), regarding the passing of three Portuguese children in a fire on an old building in the centre of Dijon. Home alone – despite the

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<sup>15</sup> The programme is broadcasted in Portuguese language, at network B (national medium wave) of *France Culture*, in marginal schedules.

<sup>16</sup> More than 400 televised broadcasts of *Mosaïque* increased awareness of the music, cultural and practical information, as well as journalists reporting on the countries of origin and daily life (including migrant women) of the most relevant foreign communities. The other television experiences had a far less notoriety: *À écrans ouverts* (1975-1977), *Immigrés parmi nous* (1976), *Ensemble aujourd'hui* (1987-89), *Rencontres* (1989-91), *Premier Service* (1993-95) and *Saga-Cités* (1995-2002).

intermittent monitoring of family members who lived in the same building– the phratry is victim of imprudence and precariousness. They say the mother was nearby, at the house of a sick elderly whom she took care of: « *There are a number of concerns in terms of security and prudence. (...) It would also be desirable if parents did not leave their children by themselves. However it is their problem. Maybe they cannot do it* », states an employer, neighbour of the Portuguese immigrant.

The television movie *L'engrenage* (12/04/1974, *La Deux*) raises the question of racism, poverty and the difficulties of communication for Portuguese people, focussing on the meeting between an elementary French teacher and an exhausted immigrant. The script of *Ici peut-être* (26/09/1974, *La Une*) highlights the destiny of the clandestine through the story of another Joaquim, who came from Portugal to France looking for his youngest brother who was missing.

From the mid-1970s on, both the home and host countries are unquestionably marked by a significant set of socio-political changes that are not the scope of this work. In what concerns Portugal, let us just remember the establishment of the democracy (1974), the end of the colonial war and the admission to the European Economic Community (1986). During the same period, in France, one could witness a rise in unemployment, the end of state monopoly within the audio-visual sector and consecutive changes in the migratory policies as the Left wing arrived to the power (1981). It is not by chance that is precisely during this period that some women begin to emerge in the public and media space.

For two decades, the popular singer Linda de Suza, with over 20 million disks sold (1978/1998),<sup>17</sup> embodies the Portuguese emigrant woman in France. Her difficult life story gives even origin to an autobiography (1984), a musical (1986) and a television fiction of six episodes (Antenne 2, 1988), all of them entitled *La valise en carton* (The Cardboard Suitcase). Since then, this expression began to be associated, in the collective imaginary, to the migratory exodus and to the perseverance of hundred of thousands of Portuguese who crossed the Pyrenees in search of better living conditions. With far less media impact, during the 80s, a group of second generation women will also try to find an affirmation space, distancing themselves, however, from the popular culture of the elderly.

Following the movement *thos* (Pingault, 2004),<sup>18</sup> the association *Centopeia*, founded by Maria do Céu Cunha, and the theatre group *Cá e Lá*, created by

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<sup>17</sup> Linda de Suza sings (in both languages) especially Portuguese popular themes about her life story and emigration. In January 1983, she has two concerts booked at the mythical Olympia, in Paris. She ends up by having a full room for fifteen days in a row.

<sup>18</sup> This auto-denomination resumes a disparaging designation (*porthos* ou *thos*), turning the stigma into a flag. Some of these young people participated in *La Marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme*,

Graça dos Santos and Glória Silva, tried to “compensate the double depreciation that the social origin of the parents represents as well as the Portuguese origin, particularly difficult to manage, especially in adolescence” (Pingault, 2004: 81). *Centopeia* shoots the movie “Portugaises d’origine” (1983) and *Cá e Lá* produces several theatre plays, in which, among other themes, the relationship father-daughter and/or man-woman are addressed. Despite some appearances in a wider public space, the visibility of this young movement is essentially limited to the associative and militant sectors.

Nevertheless, since the middle of the previous decade, the first generation of Portuguese migrants had been cultivating a little more protagonism in the media, being mainly portrayed in a socio-professional context (market, street, company, work, school, association) or in the intimacy of the home. The French media focuses then on the one that is considered “the greater foreign community” living in the country. The journalistic speech emphasises the dimension of this migratory flow, as well as the ties that join their members to the country of origin. Apart from some difficulties not yet completely solved (accommodation, work, language, racism), new issues come to light: possible return to the country *versus* integration in the French community, pride in the origins *versus* criticism to Portugal or children’s education.

The family around the table, the civil construction worker, the cleaning lady, the factory worker, children in school or the faithful in religious celebrations constitute some of the main audio-visual metaphors that draw the image of the Portuguese in France. Almost always associated to the universe of family (modest), to work (manual) and to culture (of origin), they have not reached yet the status of full right citizens. On the other hand, the youngsters are encouraged to demonstrate that they truly feel members of the French society (Antunes da Cunha, 2013).

In the collective imaginary, the image of a simple and hardworking couple (him as a civil construction worker and her in a domestic role) is insinuated – as Joe Dassin and Michel Sardou sing<sup>19</sup>–, whose children face the challenges that come with their double culture. With time, women become slightly more visible on the screen, though called to give their opinion especially on more domestic issues: children education, religious practice, with some inroads into the workplace universe. All in all, they are almost always reduced to the role of working mothers. When the husband is present or when public order issues are being taken care of, the woman of Portuguese origin is still quite transparent...

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an anti-racist walk that takes youngsters from the provinces to Paris, between October and December 1983. The Portuguese remain, however, in the shadows of the Maghreb community (*beurs*).

<sup>19</sup> In 1970, Joe Dassin interprets *Le Portugais*, a song about an emigrant “with his jackhammer”. In 1981, Michel Sardou sings *L’autre femme*, a theme that makes a reference to a Portuguese babysitter.

*“Reporter: The happiness of José and Helena of being able to vote for the first time [for the Portuguese parliamentary elections] is immense. But as well as most of their compatriots in France, who cannot yet vote, there is a big disappointment and enough resentment against the politics of Lisbon who excluded them from the political life of their own country.*

*José [sitting next to him, his wife remains silent]: Yes, I am thrilled to be able to vote for the first time. I am 54 years old and I have never voted. It will be my first time.”*

(News, 22 /04/1976, Antenne 2)

*“« [Off-voice]: Here is Trindade family, both doorkeepers, three children. They earn 5000 francs a month, but they spare money to build their house [in Portugal].*

*Father [sitting at the table with the family; the mother serves the soup]: We deprive ourselves of everything. We do not go to the cinema. We do not go to the theatre. Anything... Anything... We deprive ourselves of everything. Of vacation, even vacation. We work for eleven months here waiting for the vacation again to go there and breath a bit better.”*

(News, 22/04/1983, Antenne 2)

Whether it is on the news, or in fictional narratives, the history of Portuguese emigration is made almost exclusively in the masculine. We cannot forget that the access to the media was then strongly partitioned, thus most of the women were confined to themes that were considered more appropriate to their gender (Rouquette, 2001; Vovou, 2005).

Nevertheless, these immigrant women will progressively become more protagonists, either of their own story, either of collective narrative, accessing new territories of the public debate. In 1979, in the occasion of the visit of President Ramalho Eanes, the News of the second French channel invites a young couple (him a barman and she a cleaning lady). The image is quite meaningful. A little more distanced from yesterday's stereotypes on clandestineness, the live presence of this Portuguese middle-class couple in television studios symbolizes the access of an entire “community” to the heart of the public space and at a time with great audience. Above all, it is sought to illustrate the success – one of the new clichés to talk about Portuguese emigration – of this integration. The last question of the presenter is, therefore, quite suggestive: “what do you miss the most in France? (...) Well, do you really miss anything?”

*“Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. France is at Portugal’s time. Since Monday at 12.00 o’clock, President Eanes is a guest of our country. This morning, he went to the factory Renault de Flins and tonight, in La Villette, he will meet a certain number of his compatriots. As we know, there are lots of Portuguese living in our country. This is why today we invited to our studio to participate in the News, Laurent and Anabela Dionísio. They are here by my side. They live in France. One of them for six and a half year and Anabela for two and a half years. They are married. For some minutes, we will talk about their life and their life in our country.”*

(News, 10/10/79, Antenne 2)

## 5. TO CONCLUDE

Initially seen as someone who needs to be helped and integrated in the society, the Portuguese woman ends up by affirming herself, each passing day, as a real social actor. She is yet still associated to a domestic universe, but she begins to be questioned on issues related to identity and belonging, difficulties of adapting and integration. Are they closing themselves too much in their origin community? Are they staying definitely or are they thinking about returning? What is a migrant woman? Are her children raised in a Portuguese or French way? In *Des femmes d’ailleurs: celles du Portugal (Fenêtre sur*, 23/11/1979, Antenne 2), the camera follows the daily life of a group of cleaning ladies: their work at the French’s house, their family and social lives. In a report entitled *Dans la Beauce, Marie-Josée (Les Gens d’Ici*, 27/11/1981, Antenne 2), a Portuguese living in the city of Le Mans approaches, with some detail, several aspects of her life, the first years in Portugal, problems of adapting, questions on tradition and religious practices, etc. Immigration is finally beginning to be also spoken in the feminine.

*“Woman: Even at work, they tell us: ‘If you are not happy, go back to your country.’*

*Journalist: Do lots of French say that? Woman: Sure they do! (...) Here in France, accommodation conditions are terrible. It is extremely necessary to solve this situation for the sake of all immigrants.”*

(News, 09/10/1979, TF1)

*“Journalist: Do you like your new house?*

*Woman: Yes, Madam. The other one was too old. It was tiny, it had rats e it let the water in. (...) Journalist [to a Portuguese woman]: Wouldn’t you like to have more contacts with French families?”*

(*C’est la vie*, 12 /05/1981, Antenne 2)

*“I am a happy woman. I believe it is the right word. I am very happy. Here, I have lots of friends. For me, friendship is essential. To them I am Maria-José, or just Mari-Jo. They do not make any difference between their French friends and me. This is being a true friend.”*

(*Les Gens d’Ici*, 27/11/1981, Antenne 2)

*“Woman [on the street]: A country that had such government [dictatorship], for more than forty years, cannot change from night to day. You have got to be patient.”*

(News, 22/04/1983, Antenne 2)

*“Woman [at the market] At the Villiers market, we can find all these Portuguese products. We can find everything. It is almost as if we were in Portugal. You speak more Portuguese than French around here.*

*The same woman [in the church: I believe that integration is a step-by-step process. (...) I would like to feel good in all aspects (...). Sometimes it is difficult to accept some things in the daily routine with the church [French].”*

(*Le Jour du Seigneur*, 01/05/1988, Antenne 2)

From the end of the 1980s, the presence and participation of the community – and of both genders – is progressively diluted. The citizens of Portuguese origin return to a near invisibility within the public space either because they are not solicited, or because their origins are not mentioned. We recognize them sometimes because of their names. On the news, for example, the number of news reports on Portuguese emigration gives room to other extra-European populations who are more visible and, above all, considered more problematic. Going from the status of “(im) migrant” to “community citizen” seems to indicate a certain change in the public opinion’s perspective either on the host or the home countries. Here and there, the Portuguese are mentioned due to a network of forged documents (News, 28/04/1989, *Antenne 2*), illegal work (News, 04/08/1987, *Antenne 2*) and precarious forms of accommodation (20h00, 12/12/2003, *TF1*), disturbs with the employers, accidents at work, bureaucratic matters (News, 05/01/1989, *FR3*) or when belonging to quite specific professional categories (News, 18/05/2005, *TF1*). As time goes by, it is nevertheless more and more rare to be associated to “emigration problems”<sup>20</sup>. The question of identity, may it be through the feeling of belonging or of returning to the country, it is still one of the greatest *leitmotiv* of media discourse. It happens, recurrently, for example when France and Portugal are involved in

<sup>20</sup> Last decade, the *Misericórdia de Paris* has been calling attention for the increase of poverty cases, exploitation and marginality of Portuguese who escaped the economical crisis on their country of origin. However, these situations have had visibility mainly on the Portuguese media.

sports confrontations, real metaphors around which, for the umpteenth time, the question of fidelity to our origins and/or republican integration is raised.

*“Journalist: Is your country Portugal? (...)”*

*Little girl: I don’t know exactly what the word “immigrant” means. [She thinks, scrunches her eyebrows and looks to the journalist]: What about you? Do you know what that means?”*

*(Le jour du Seigneur, 1/05/1988, Antenne 2)*

*“Woman [at a Portuguese bar]: Here, it’s almost as if we were in our house [Portugal].”*

*(News, 15 /09/1992, TF1)*

*“Woman [retired]: I do not wish to return definitely to Portugal. My house is here. My grandchildren are here. My daughter is here .I like to go and come back. I have always been like this. I like this life. ”*

*(Les Maternelles, 20 /05/2004, France 5)*

*“Woman [before a France-Portugal match]: France had its moment of glory with Brazil. Now it’s our turn. You are going to loose”.*

*(News, 05/07/ 2006, France 3)*

Today, in France, the image of the Portuguese immigrant woman – such as the one of the man – is indelibly marked by physical (brunette, small in stature, excess hair) and social (accent, manual work, traditionalism) stereotypes even though associated to a positive image of seriousness, competency and integration of success. The stereotype of the doorkeeper or the cleaning lady becomes therefore part of the French anecdotes. The ethnic humour created within the community recovers that same image<sup>21</sup>, making its members “evaluate their own and other’ relative ‘modernity’ and nonmodernity’, in a relation to a stylization of a first generation Portuguese migrant figure” (Koven & Simões Marques, 2015: 214). Although one must not ignore the endemic invisibility of the Portuguese migrant woman in the public space<sup>22</sup>, the last decades show us a continuous process of sociocultural empowerment. In certain contexts, she managed to find the path of her own emancipation by herself, in spite of a double discrimination in a public sphere controlled by national and masculine

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the character of *Idalina*, in the sketch *Les Gardiens*, by the duo of entertainers *Ro et Cut*.

<sup>22</sup> In 2013, the success of the movie *La Cage Dorée* (around 1 230 000 tickets sold in France) brought with it a more tender perspective on the Portuguese immigrant woman in the public sphere.



figures, who are recognized within the universes of politics, sports and culture, but also in several associative and professional contexts.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Let us just mention the cases of Alda Pereira Lemaître (former president of Noisy-le-Sec City Hall), the congresswoman Christine Pires-Beaune, the councilwoman Nathalie de Oliveira, the writer Alice Machado (Simões-Marques, 2015), the actress Bárbara Cabrita, the singers Lio and Bévinda, the artist Lídia Martinez and the footballer Marianne Amaro, amongst others.

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