

## Images of women and non-formal education: body representations in the illustrated press

*Imagens de mulheres e educação não-formal: representações de corpo na imprensa ilustrada*

*Imágenes de mujeres y educación no formal: representaciones corporales en la prensa ilustrada*

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### ABSTRACT

This investigation analyses photographic images in the press from the beginning of the 20th century and explores the contemporary non-formal education of women in Portugal and Brazil. The study reflects on the diffusion of representations through photographic language, and on its role in the non-formal education of women. The theory of social representations offers theoretical and methodological support to the study. The data obtained with the analysis of scenarios, facial expressions, accessories, ornaments and body postures were treated by content analysis. The results indicate that these elements spread both existing conventions and new ideas, expressed by the coexistence of different aesthetic and compositional elements in the same image. This study contributes to the debate about the role of body images in the diffusion of social representations and the re-signification of these representations, and the implication for contemporary non-formal education.

**Keywords:** Image. Body. Woman. Contemporary Education. Representations.

### RESUMO

*A investigação analisa imagens fotográficas na imprensa no início do século XX e explora a educação contemporânea não-formal de mulheres em Portugal e no Brasil. O estudo reflete sobre a difusão de representações através da linguagem fotográfica e sobre o seu papel na*

*educação não-formal de mulheres. A teoria das representações sociais oferece o suporte teórico-metodológico ao estudo. Os dados obtidos com a análise de cenários, expressões faciais, acessórios, ornamentos e posturas corporais foram tratados pela análise de conteúdo. Os resultados indicam que esses elementos difundem tanto as convenções existentes na época, quanto novas ideias, expressas pela coexistência de distintos elementos estéticos e composicionais na mesma imagem. O estudo contribui para o debate acerca do papel das imagens de corpo na difusão de representações sociais e na resignificação dessas representações, e da sua implicação na educação não-formal contemporânea*

**Palavras-chave:** Imagem. Corpo. Mulher. Educação Contemporânea. Representações

## RESUMEN

*La investigación analiza imágenes fotográficas en la prensa a principios del siglo XX y explora la educación no formal contemporánea para mujeres en Portugal y Brasil. El estudio refleja sobre la difusión de las representaciones a través del lenguaje fotográfico y sobre su papel en la educación no formal de las mujeres. La teoría de las representaciones sociales ofrece soporte teórico y metodológico al estudio. Los datos obtenidos con el análisis de escenarios, expresiones faciales, accesorios, adornos y posturas corporales fueron tratados mediante análisis de contenido. Los resultados indican que estos elementos difunden tanto las convenciones existentes en la época, como las nuevas ideas, expresadas por la coexistencia de diferentes elementos estéticos y compositivos en una misma imagen. El estudio contribuye al debate sobre el papel de las imágenes corporales en la difusión de las representaciones sociales y la resignificación de estas representaciones, y su implicación en la educación no formal contemporánea.*

**Palabras clave:** Imagen. Cuerpo. Mujer. Educación contemporánea. Representaciones.

## Introduction

This investigation examines photographs of women in the printed media in the first half of the 20th century in Portugal and Brazil. It will discuss how these images and representations enabled the dissemination of ideas about women's ways of life, norms and standards of behaviour, and new possibilities for their education and participation in the arts, sport and diverse areas of work. Among the Portuguese printed media at the beginning of the 20th century, the weekly supplement of the newspaper *O Século*, entitled *Ilustração Portuguesa*, draws attention for the richness of the images that illustrate the articles about women. Although published in Portugal, the supplement was also distributed in Brazil and constituted a relevant means of communication, information and training for that population. This study investigates contemporary education at the beginning of the 20th century by looking at photographs as a language that communicates knowledge about being a woman, and allows for critical reflections on the female identity.

In the case of Portugal, the study refers to a particularly relevant historical period, corresponding to the first years of implementation of the 1st Republic, declared on October 5, 1910. A date celebrated annually as one of the most important national holidays. The republican project naturally used the printed media as a vehicle for its ideals. At the same time, “Republican propaganda, to overcome the barriers of illiteracy, bet on the dissemination of small texts, the creation of specialized collections and iconography: the image was a way of reaching all citizens more directly” (PEIXINHO; SANTOS, 2011. p. 12). It is curious to note that the image of the 1st Republic present in the history books and in the most diverse promotional materials, such as postcards, pamphlets or posters, is represented sculpturally through the bust of a woman with bare breasts.

Assuming that graphic images of the human figure can reveal details about who the subjects are, we understand that they also represent women in the context of a modernization project in Portugal at the time. This value resides in the fact that the graphic representations would not only be copies of reality but depictions of culturally discriminated aspects of culturally selected objects (JOLY, 2019). This value also resides in the way in which the visual representations of one subject express the intention of the author of the image in how it will be interpreted and understood by the audience (HOWARTH, 2006). It is in this sense that the way we perceive and produce images has a methodological value in research, since they are both supported by conventions. Thus, we interpret graphic representations and decipher the world in a cultural way (METZ, 1970), and understand images according to the knowledge that circulates in society.

Although we are confronted with images and imagery experiences, the social sciences rely little on analyses of perceptions and visual representations (EMMISON; SMITH, 2000, FYFE; LAW, 1988). However, some authors emphasize, in the context of the debate on research methodology in social representations, the importance of image analysis for understanding the full meaning of a message (BAUER; GASKELL, 2008, DE ROSA; FARR, 2001, DE ROSA, 2014; SILVA; COHEN; GAYMARD, 2020) and its role as a channel for expressing different aspects of social identities (JODELET, 2006). Therefore, we assume that photographs conveyed by the media to a wide range of audiences become a channel for the expression of representations, spreading knowledge and revealing new ways of seeing, interpreting, and making sense of the world.

When compared to paintings and drawings, photographs have a more immediate, natural and stable property of representing people and, since the 19th century, they have been expressing identities and social models (MICHAUD, 2009). For Emmison & Smith (2000) even when manipulated, consciously or not, they have the potential to be social constructions with ideological purposes, allowing the observation of aspects of social behaviour and social structures. For Sontag (1977), photographs are vehicles of what is conventionally considered beautiful and they expand and spread our notion of what is aesthetically pleasing. Possibly, for this reason, female images reproduced in magazines and in print media also facilitate product advertising. When associating a product with a body type, for example, the images of the product reinforce a sense of being feminine (HOWSON, 2004; GOFFMAN, 1979). What these studies indicate is that visual codes emit information about people's identity, such as gender, profession and their socioeconomic position, and that the visual elements that make up an image, as they are categorized and identified by others as indicative of group belongings (FRITH, 2012), are used to communicate knowledge, ideas, values, and conventional aesthetic attributes.

## Photography in the early 20th century

The illustrated press, one of the icons of the “second modernity of capital” (ALVES, 2007), stimulated the debate on social themes through words and images, conveyed the views of different individuals and social groups on facts and events, and functioned as an instrument of non-school training. The role of the image in the periodic press in Portugal, starting in 1834, was to reach and captivate a very diverse audience of subjects, due to the ease with which illustrations and photographs conveyed these events (TENGARRINHA, 2013). The image also communicated knowledge about health care, hygiene, and standards of behaviour and public presentation for women, for example.

A similar phenomenon had occurred in France. Through photographic images, the ways of being and behaving in some social contexts as well as habits, work and leisure activities, were transmitted quickly and simply. According to Freund (2010), photography was an instrument through which the new bourgeoisie and the new social strata, the result of the economic and social development that France was going through in the 1850s, represented themselves. With greater material security, these social strata aspired for power, visibility and to assert themselves “through external signs” (FREUND, 2010, p. 67). Painters surrendered to this need and used techniques that made the human figure

more pleasant and adapted to the taste of the clientele. The photographers of the time did something similar to “transporting the aesthetic habits that reign in the mass into the photographic art” (FREUND, 2010, p. 73). For the author, images of all stature, gestures, accessories that decorate the figure, and scenarios with furniture and decorative objects help to tell a story about the type depicted. This search for distinction began, as pointed out by Elias (1978<sup>a</sup> [1939]), in the 17th and 18th centuries with the emergence of courts in Europe, which institutionalized strategies to control gestures, facial expressions and clothing to differentiate people from each other and communicate positions, status and social value. Goffman's studies (1969) show how this search for distinction, which dates back to the 17th century, drives the management of presentation in contemporary societies, to make an impression and express identities. Bynum (1989, p. 171) also points to the fact that bodies behave in different ways at different historical moments, and for this reason, “they tell stories.” In this sense, the expression of social identity, ways of life and professional and leisure activities have benefited from the advent of photography, which allows you to fix body images in print and quickly distribute them to a varied audience. We hypothesize that the photographs on the covers of the supplement *Ilustração Portuguesa* convey representations of female identities in construction because the supplement cover topics including the diverse roles and lives of women in society (VAQUINHAS, 2011a).

## Theoretical background

This study finds its theoretical and methodological reference in the Theory of Social Representations, idealized by Moscovici (1978). Social representations are common sense knowledge, which are born from the daily contact between people from a given social group. For the author, this specific knowledge has the function of guiding the actions, behaviours and judgments that we make about social issues. It has the role of giving cohesion to a group, since all its members share the knowledge, values and practices that characterize the group, thus helping in the construction of its identity. Social representations facilitate communication between people since they are consensual knowledge, although each representation may also contain contradictory and specific elements of subgroups of people that make up the larger group. Social representations emerge from efforts to make something new familiar. In this exercise, we try to relate new ideas and images to what is already known, to the categories and references that we

recognize and that circulate in the social environment, finding similarities. This search for the known, and that which helps us to understand the new, is called 'anchoring' by Moscovici (2003). This process alleviates the strangeness and discomfort that a new idea, image, knowledge, or standards of conduct can cause (MOSCOVICI, 1978). When we look for references, we categorize the new, classifying and naming it. Without the anchoring process, the new, with its ambiguities, different configurations and meanings, would hinder human interaction. Objectification is another process that generates social representations. For Moscovici (2003), objectifying means "reproducing a concept in an image" (MOSCOVICI, 2003, p. 72), giving it a form. Thus, the new is materialized (objectified) in an image or word that designates it, allowing it to be communicated and discussed.

Moliner (1996) understands that some images, as well as words, objectify the different elements that make up the representations. For him, the image contains a set of characteristics and properties attributed to the object it represents. Thus, photographs may carry elements that reflect the attributions of others, anchored in cultural references and conventions, which give them the status of social representations and constitute a means of access to what make up these representations. In this way, the images of women give form to knowledge about this identity, objectifying it, and reflecting meanings attributed to them. Photographic images may also contain new elements that characterize social identities, which do not conform so much to social standards, since they are the product of a social representation that is always changing. The perspective of the theory of social representation allows one to analyse both the iconic elements that remain the same, as well as those that bring new configurations and inscribe novel characteristics on the depiction of women.

The representations can be expressed through the processes of propagation, advertising, and diffusion (MOSCOVICI; MARKOVÁ, 2001). For the authors, propagating means socializing a knowledge with a more prepared discourse, which can motivate uniformity, encourage convergence around a common idea, and stimulate the imitation of standards. Advertising is an intentional communication process that distinguishes and highlights disparate elements of a single category, simplifying them between the positive and negative poles. The diffusion, on the other hand, aims to make known new ideas and behaviours, without the intention of promoting a homogeneous behaviour (VALA; CASTRO, 2013). It is a sort of communication typical of newspapers and magazines, which

deal with different topics and reach large number of people belonging to diverse groups. The diffusion modality also aims to 'make a subject talked about' (VALA; CASTRO, 2013, p. 590). Therefore, this diffusion may have been the process used to communicate, to a large and varied audience, the diverse female identities of the time, the different roles that women occupied, and the possibilities for transforming those roles. Through the diffusion of images, knowledge on various themes, social roles, and the female universe became topics of conversation. We hypothesize that some social representations were also disseminated by these images to a larger and more varied audience, contributing to the non-formal education of these populations. Some depictions would have communicated knowledge of the types of women that exist with clearly defined roles in society, while others would have disseminated different and varied images of woman, possibly unveiling new feminine identities.

## Methodological procedures

The study is based on an instrument developed by Silva & Barreira (2017) for the analysis of images of women in the printed media and expands this instrument to analyse the images on the covers of the Portuguese Illustration journal between the years 1911 to 1915. The objective is to identify the imagery, aesthetic, and compositional elements of the photographs, and reflect on their symbolic and cultural values. The procedure also aims to identify body elements such as postures, ornaments, and facial expressions that convey the new ways of being women, as well as the trends in their training. The analysis of the photographs is supported by the studies of Bardin (1977), Bauer & Gaskell (2008) and Silva, Cohen & Gaymard (2020), and in the works of Barthes (1977) for whom arrangements in focus, framing and light can offer a symbolic value that can be interpreted at the connotative level.

After an initial analysis of the covers, we selected the ones containing centrally framed photographs of adult women, with captions naming the figures. For this analysis, we also considered a small number of paintings, drawings and retouched portraits. In the first stage of analysis, details of the body posture, facial expression, accessories, and context or setting were catalogued. The analysis was based on the studies of body representation, expression of moods, presentation in social contexts, and social identities (SILVA, 2011, 2015; MORAES; SILVA, 2016; SANTOS; SILVA, 2017; SILVA; BARREIRA, 2017; SILVA; COHEN; GAYMARD, 2020). It is a descriptive and denotative analysis, which

dissects the image into smaller units, to observe and list the most prominent body parts and spatial elements, creating an inventory. In this stage, we also classified these units into the categories space, facial expression, ornament, and body, and compared them to the subjects' social group. This crossing of categories allowed a more articulate analysis of the images, seeking to understand the possible messages conveyed. The data obtained was tabulated, and the tables show the frequency distribution of both the categories, and the relationship between them. The captions that described the person portrayed facilitated the identification of her social status, the activity she performed, and her classification in the category Social group. This category contains three subcategories: artists, aristocracy/bourgeoisie and common. In the subcategory artist, we grouped images of Portuguese and foreign theatre actresses, dancers and singers. The subcategory aristocracy/bourgeoisie gathers photographs of countesses, queens and empresses, Portuguese and foreign, as well as members of the emerging bourgeoisie. In the common subcategory, we find rural and city women, workers and housewives performing day-to-day tasks, such as fishing and washing.

The category space contains the spatial and decorative elements of the environment in which the figure is inserted, and has three subcategories: internal space, external space, and neutral space. The context of where people are introduced elements that function as symbols, whose referents are arbitrary (EMMISON; SMITH, 2000). The spatial context of a figure regulates social interactions and power relations between people (FOUCAULT, 2004), expresses formality, informality, and tradition (STIMSON, 1986), and influences our perception of who the people are that frequent it (KNAPP; HALL, 1999; EMMISON; SMITH, 2000). The internal space subcategory groups photographs of women portrayed indoors such as a living rooms, libraries or offices. The external space subcategory organizes photographs taken in open places such as gardens, streets, squares and riverbanks. The neutral space subcategory groups images with blurred backgrounds and decorated line drawings, where it is not possible to identify the exact spatial context where the person is.

The facial expression category comprises two subcategories that reflect different emotional states: smile and serious. In the smile subcategory, it is classified faces with a light and happy expression. In the serious subcategory, it is classified faces with more closed expressions, possibly representing the feeling of sobriety or sadness. Since the studies of Darwin (1877) on emotion expression, several others have analyzed the face as



a regulator of human interactions, its role in conveying personality and emotional states, and how it complements other forms of communication (GOFFMANN, 2011; FERNANDÉZ-DOLS; CARRERA, 2001; KNAPP; HALL, 1999). The smile is associated with the feeling of happiness and harmony (ROTENBERG et al., 2003) and with sensations of warmth between people (MATSUMOTO; HWANG, 2013). The facial expression in the photograph may indicate a greater or lesser predisposition to social interactions, and in this sense, it functions as a symbol of proximity.

The ornament category includes objects for personal use such as clothing and accessories that adorn the body and hair. According to Emmison & Smith (2000), Goffman (1969) and Knapp & Hall (1999), one can modify the appearance of the body and its movements and postures to express social meanings and categorizations. Clothing and accessories can aesthetically transform the body image, and in this sense, they function as symbols (HALL, 2011) and express concepts such as formality, group membership and social status (SIMMEL, 1957). The category has three subcategories: accessories, hairstyle and adornments. In the accessories subcategory, the figures appeared with hats of varying sizes and models. In the hairstyle subcategory, the figures appear with their hair loose or tied, without hats, ribbons and scarves. In the adornment subcategory, the women appear with veils, scarves, ribbons or flowers in their hair.

The body frame category groups details of the framing of the figure that emphasize and draw attention to parts of the body. These frameworks can convey a state of mind (MILLUM, 1975; GRAHAM, 1977). The images with the focus on the face and trunk broaden the view of the hairstyle and facilitate the visualization of accessories such as jewellery and hats, transmitting information about identity and social status. Full-length shots, on the other hand, may include other elements in the photograph, such as furniture and decorative pieces, in addition to showing in more detail the environment in which the figure is located. Thus, the category Body frame has two subcategories: trunk, and full-length figure. In the trunk subcategory there are partial images of women, with a focus on the face and trunk. In the full-length figure subcategory, women were standing or sitting down.

In the second phase of analysis, we tried to observe the coexistence of different compositional elements in the same image. Photographs that contain arrangements of elements from different categories may have a less conventional character. These photographs may reveal the intention to capture changes in representations of women, or

to represent minority groups within a larger group. They communicate life experiences, professional activities, and more active public participation, possibly from people that had a systematic education. These images could have objectified different types of women, working in distinct social sectors, such as in the arts, sports, health and other liberal professions, disseminating the desired types at the time.

## Images and classifications

The following examples of photographs on the covers of the journal illustrate how the classification process occurred. The figure on the cover number 319, in 1912, was classified as belonging to the social group artists with the title 'The dancer Nalierkoska'. It was classified in neutral space subcategory because the context was unclear, and in the serious subcategory, as it is not smiling. Regarding the body, it was classified in the trunk subcategory, because one cannot see the entire body. The figure on cover 414 (1914) was classified in the social group aristocracy/bourgeoisie, based on its title 'Mrs Dona Luiza de Castro Ferreira, distinguished music lover'. It was classified in the neutral space subcategory, as it has a blurred background, and in the serious subcategory, as it has a serene physiognomy. We classified the body in the trunk subcategory, as we cannot see it entirely, and in the hairstyle subcategory, due to the way the hair was done. Based on the caption 'Vindimadoras', and the scenery of a grape plantation, cover number 291 (1911) was classified in common and external space subcategories. Since the figure was fully portrayed, smiling and with a scarf on her head, the photograph was classified in the subcategories full length figure, smile, and adornment object.

## Results

### First phase of analysis: converging elements

From the 260 covers of the journal, between the years 1911 and 1915, we selected 206. They contained images of women or images where they appear centrally framed. Table 1 shows the distribution of these 206 covers in the Social group category.

historical period	artists	aristocracy/bourgeoisie	common
de 1911 a 1915	54 (26,21%)	117 (56,79%)	35 (16,99%)

**Table 1** – Distribution of photographs in the social group category (n = 206)

**Source:** research data

It is possible to observe a high number of images classified in the subcategory aristocracy and bourgeoisie, and a reasonable number of images of women artists and commoners on the covers of the journal, which may be indicating the desire for representation in the public life of a diverse group of women. Possibly, in this historical period, more active groups of women in public life, such as those who formed the growing bourgeoisie and artists, were pushing for changes in terms of their roles in society. The spread of these images satisfied the need of representation of a group which, as Vaquinhas (2011b) affirms, saw in photography a mechanism of memory production that allowed the affirmation of individual and collective identities.

Table 2 shows the crossing of data from the category Space/scenario with the category Social group and the Chi-square calculation. This calculation indicates that the values are significantly different from each other.

Category	internal	external	neutral	Significance (p<.001) degree of freedom = 4
artists	12 (22,2%)	5 (9,25%)	37 (68,51%)	
arist./burg.	41 (35,04%)	30 (25,64%)	46 (39,31%)	Chi-square 49.702
common	5 (14,28%)	25 (71,42%)	5 (14,28%)	

**Table 2** – Crossing of the categories social group and space/scenario (n = 206)  
 frequency and Chi-square

**Fonte:** research data

The artists, when portrayed, appeared more often in neutral spaces. Ordinary women, on the other hand, were more frequently represented in the external space subcategory, where they appeared performing a job or activity. The images of women from the aristocracy/bourgeoisie group were evenly classified in the subcategories, with a slightly higher occurrence in the neutral space. We think that the physical demarcation and the use of space serve to communicate identities, and can give us clues about the management of the functions and activities of women in the early 20th century. The demarcation of spaces helps to define the people who inhabit them (KNAPP; HALL, 1999), and how they relate to other people (FOUCAULT, 2004), as they express elements such as formality or informality (STIMSON, 1986). In the case of women in the aristocracy/bourgeoisie category, the internal space with furniture, chairs, sofas, carpets, curtains and decorative pieces helped to distinguish them from other women, associating

them with tradition, formality and a higher social status. However, they were also common in the subcategory neutral space, where the background was out of focus. This composition offers another quality to photography as the public does not look away from the figure, and the facial expression, hairstyle and ornament help to describe the person photographed. When crossing the result of the facial expression category with the social group category (see table 3), we noticed some patterns in the images.

Category	smile	serious	Significance (p < .10)
facial expression			degree of freedom = 2
artists	24 (44,44%)	30 (55,55%)	
arist./burg.	33 (28,20%)	84 (71,79%)	Chi-square 5.445
common	15 (42,85%)	20 (57,14%)	

**Table 3** – Crossing of the categories social group and facial expression (n = 206) – frequency and Chi-square

**Source:** research data

The Chi-square result indicates that the values differ significantly. A higher number of faces were classed in the category serious than in the smiling. We found more women in the aristocracy/bourgeois subcategory classified in the serious subcategory. When crossing the categories, we see that facial expression works as a symbol of distinction and helps to build the image of the person portrayed. The serious and sober facial expression can indicate distance and formality and be a strategy to communicate monitoring and control of emotions. The distinction between people could be expressed by the serious facial expression, which would explain its high occurrence in a group with a higher social status. As the smile is more associated with the feelings of happiness and harmony (ROTENBERG et al., 2003), closeness and cordiality (MATSUMOTO; HWANG, 2013), this would possibly explain its high frequency of occurrence among women classified in the category artists or common.

When we cross the ornament category with the social group (see table 4) we see that there are significant differences. A significant number of images of ordinary and common women were wearing scarves or ribbons in their hair (adornment subcategory). Another group portrayed using this type of ornament was that of artists. Almost half of the images of women from the aristocracy/bourgeoisie appeared with elaborate hairstyles, and a considerable number of them were wearing hats.

Category	accessories	hairstyle	adornment	Significance (p < .001) degree of freedom = 4
artist	9 (16,66%)	20 (37,03%)	25 (46,29%)	
arist./burg.	35 (29,99%)	53 (45,29%)	29 (24,78%)	Chi-square 33.136
common	3 (8,57%)	5 (14,28%)	27 (77,14%)	

**Table 4** – Crossing of the categories social group and ornament (n = 206) – frequency and Chi-square

**Source:** research data

These results show that the scarf was more often associated with ordinary women, while the hat (accessory) and hair without ornaments were more present in the aristocracy/ bourgeoisie group. The hat can be associated with formal events, while the scarf with religious rituals and work.

Table 5 presents the results of the categories Social group and Body. The Chi-square calculation indicates that the differences are significant. The data show that there were more images of common women in the full-length figure subcategory, and a considerable number of artists were classified in the trunk subcategory.

Category	trunk	full-leng figure	Significance (p < .001) degree of freedom = 2
artist	34 (62,96%)	20 (37,03%)	
arist./burg.	43 (36,75%)	74 (63,24%)	Chi-square 19.94
common	6 (17,14%)	29 (82,85%)	

**Table 5** – Crossing of the categories social group and body (n = 206) – frequency and Chi-square

**Source:** research data

The full-length portraits allow us to obtain more information about the person portrayed, as they present more details of their full outfits, and the context of her location, disseminating information about activities and group membership. Working women, farmers, fisherwomen, and housewives were photographed mostly in full body and outdoors. It is possible to see that, in many cases, they are barefoot and with clothes adapted to manual work. Full-length images of women from a higher social group show their dresses, decorative objects and furniture that serve as symbols of their social status. Images of artists often appear in the trunk subcategory. They focus on the face, hairstyle, accessories and ornaments, and are less grand and imposing than full-length portraits.

### **Second phase of analysis: contrasting elements**

The second round of analysis sought to observe the coexistence of different compositional elements in the same image, as they can offer new qualities to the represented figure. For this analysis, we selected 22 covers of the supplement: 2 in 1911, 3 in 1912, 5 in 1913, 5 in 1914 and 7 in 1915. These covers had elements that translated conventions and new ideas about the role of women in society. They can also be interpreted as representative of the future and desirable feminine traits to be propagated in society, indicating types of women to be admired and imitated. Photographs of women in different body postures, playing sports or partaking in artistic activities, were also included in this category. Combining new compositional elements with the more traditional ones to compose a new image can indicate a complex negotiation of values and traditions, and an attempt to give another meaning to female identity and women's role in society.

The photograph of an actress working as a nurse during the war is an example of images with contrasting compositional elements. Another cover shows a character from a higher social group wearing a hat and holding a racket. These images connote strength and physical skills, which differs from other skills more typically related to women. In another cover, a photograph of a lawyer was classified in the subcategory internal space, with facial expression serious and sober, and with hair 'without ornaments. The black colour of her clothing contrasts with the lighter shades of dresses of most other women on covers of the periodical. Her posture and facial expression are also in contrast. The photograph has spatial elements more traditionally associated with male portraits, such as a desk, a chair and pillars at the background, which are imposing and communicate formality and power. The desk on which the woman holds an open book also expresses a working environment, which contrasts with the private space more conventionally associated with women

### **Conclusion**

The identification of conventional and non-conventional elements in the depiction of the body has allowed us to understand how traditional and new knowledge about being a woman were negotiated in the early 20th century, and the role of the media in the

dissemination of this knowledge. The printed press presented the characters in different contexts and activities, transforming them in topics of conversation. The images are powerful communication tools since they synthesize a set of information and knowledge about different social themes, which are quickly interpreted by many people (MOLINER, 1996). In this sense, they can both disseminate knowledge and behaviour considered to be typical of the time, reflecting traditions and customs, as well as propagate new possibilities of behaviour, knowledge and values. The covers could have conveyed the future and desirable types of women and expressed the possibility of overcoming and replacing conventions. The visibility given to the different social segments on the covers of the journal may reflect the recognition of the social championing of diverse female groups. It may also represent a new social structure, the product of profound social, political and cultural transformations of the time, by valuing each of these groups on their uniqueness.

Women were actively engaged in the realization of republican values, having pioneered for the affirmation of their own civil, political and social rights. However, the desire to be recognized as citizens amongst citizens ended up being frustrated on many levels, such as with the right to vote, enshrined in the first Constitution of the Republic (1911). In this context, the symbolism of the suffragist Carolina Beatriz Ângelo, who, taking advantage of the ambiguity of the electoral law, stands out, claiming her “condition of widow and head of a family”, thus becoming the first woman to exercise the right to vote throughout Central and Southern Europe. Citing the historian Manuel Loff (2010, p.13), the “Republic raised expectations for Portuguese women but fulfilled only part of its reformist promises”. The images of women published in the periodic press of the time portray, precisely and in a paradigmatic way, the hesitations and contradictions of the republican project, reflecting, above all, the values and customs of the middle and more educated classes in the cities. In this sense, these images played a significant role in society and contributed to changes in the mentality of a predominantly rural and illiterate country.

As Moscovici (2003) shows us, minorities can popularize a knowledge, or a representation, spreading a new idea in a social environment. Media agents and photographers may have had this function of popularizing knowledge or new ideas or making a particular social group, or people with different social performances, more visible. They also spread new concepts of womanhood, through the coexistence of different visual and aesthetic elements in the same figure. This study contributes to the

debate about the role of the media in disseminating representations and their impact on people's non-formal education, creating new expectations, giving visibility to the different and varied ways of being in public and private spheres.

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