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The “Brasileiro”:
a 19th century
transnational
social category

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INTRODUCTION

This article is the result of the intersection between the two main historical fields I have been studying in recent years: 19th century Portuguese and Brazilian political culture. It synthesises, reviews and juxtaposes conclusions and data that I have gathered during my research on 19th century Luso-Brazilian relations, Portuguese emigration to Brazil, liberal elites and the political culture of the Portuguese constitutional monarchy. It compiles and digests information aiming to make a contribution to the understanding of a social stereotype that, for more than a century, has concerned Portuguese fictional and non-fictional literature: the “Brasileiro” (Silva 2013; Ramos, Carvalho and Silva 2018).

The Portuguese emigrants who returned from Brazil in the 19th century with enough wealth to ascend socially and often politically in their homeland were nicknamed by their contemporaries and have come down to us as “Brasileiros” (Brazilians). Throughout their lives these emigrants, who in their own country were called the “Brasileiros” and in Brazil were stigmatised as the “Português” (the Portuguese), have been subject to the pressure of overlapping exclusion and inclusion. This situation not only conditioned their integration both in the host country and homeland, but also had a great impact on their perception of their own national identity.

The purpose of this article is to reflect on the social construction of that category by analysing the Portuguese liberal culture’s criteria for social inclusion and exclusion in the 19th century. The operative use of the concept “transnational” allows the perspective to be widened beyond the social, economic, or even regional (centre *versus* interior) and even acknowledge the phenomenon within a historical reflection concerning issues of nationality. The article also raises several questions and shows the many uncertainties in our knowledge about the social context that produced the categorisation.

THE PORTUGUESE IN 19TH CENTURY BRAZIL, FROM COLONISER TO IMMIGRANT: THE “PORTUGUÊS”

After the independence of Brazil, in 1822, and long before seriously considering the economic exploration and exploitation of its African territories, Portugal realised the absolute and urgent need of restructuring its economy, or in the

words of a contemporary: of “finding in work the means to live that it had in the colonies” (Ramos 1990, 153-223). Nonetheless, the yearning for privileged economic relations with Brazil concerned Portuguese diplomacy right from the years immediately after its independence. Successive failed attempts to sign a commercial treaty marked the panorama of Portuguese-Brazilian relations throughout the 19th century. Agreements were on the verge of being signed in 1826, 1836, 1840, 1889, 1892 and 1908. But none was. Yet this obsession wasn’t merely imperial nostalgia. It was actually propelled by a very empirical phenomenon that rather spontaneously assured the continuity of a special link between Portugal and Brazil: emigration.

In fact, during the 19th century, the Portuguese in Brazil went from colonisers to immigrants. The relatively short period of time in which this transformation happened enabled the continuity of many things, among which the continuity of a refashioned resentment. The depreciative feelings behind the caricatured images of the “Português” (the Portuguese man) survived the century with just some adjustments. Recurrent waves of Lusophobia flared up in the first decades after independence and characterised the nation-building process of the Brazilian Empire, while most commonly limited to urban contexts and mostly motivated by economic rivalry concerning the continuity of the Portuguese slave trade monopoly (Lessa 2008, 237-256; Alencastro 1988, 30-57; Ribeiro, 2002). Being the most Portuguese of Brazilian cities, Rio de Janeiro was also the most propitious stage for the rising of these anti-Lusitanian feelings. In fact, from the 18th to the 20th century, the flow of Portuguese emigration was never interrupted in this city. Portuguese emigrants invested largely in urban real estate and small commercial properties, having the monopoly of retail trade and therefore controlling an important share of the job market (Ribeiro 1990). Later, this setting would be central to the mobilisation, reception, and integration of the men and women who embodied the mass migration phenomenon begun in the 1870s and reached its apogee at the turn of the century, when Rio de Janeiro became, after Lisbon, the city with the largest Portuguese population in the world (Oliveira 1919, 15).

In this new scenario, the traditional type of migrant from the colonial times – the single boy travelling alone at the age of 12 or 13 with minimal literacy, often with the voyage paid for by his family, with the purpose of raising some money and then to return – was no longer to be found. This was replaced by a distinct pattern of migration, characterised by the arrival of entire families,

very poor, illiterate, and with no prospect of returning. The stereotype, which flourished in the Brazilian society around that time, of the ignorant, greedy, and rude Portuguese is a combination of feelings towards those two types of migrants: resentment against the former, disdain towards the latter. In any case, the result was a sort of unintentional character assassination of a particular social and ethnic group due to fierce competition for jobs and increasing nationalism.

Of course, this hostility was not exclusively directed at the Portuguese: as in any melting pot society, there was probably no foreigner safe from some prejudice. However, the Portuguese immigrant community had specific characteristics that distinguished it from other groups of migrants, starting with the fact that its members shared a historical, social, and cultural background with their hosts. A circumstance that, if on the one hand, entailed much awkwardness; on the other, enabled a kind of familiarity that was crucial for the colony's internal organisation and for migrant integration in Brazilian society.

Unfortunately, there are no reliable official statistics on 19th century Portuguese emigration.¹ Approximate numbers for the exodus of Portuguese emigrants are available for some periods, but it is not possible to evaluate the size of the Portuguese immigrant community in Brazil solely based on such data. Contemporary estimates of its size at the beginning of the 20th century varied between 700,000 and one million. But it is possible to draw some conclusions if we narrow our inquiry to the city of Rio de Janeiro: according to the 1906 Brazilian census, there were 132,529 Portuguese individuals living in Rio, amounting to about 70 percent of all foreigners and to one fifth of the city's total population.²

Although the statistics do not give us accurate figures of the size of the Portuguese community in Rio, they can inform us about its civic organisation. Data from 1913 about welfare institutions in Rio de Janeiro reveal the existence of 24 Portuguese associations with approximately 63,000 members, meaning that around 40 percent of these immigrants were

1 For the next two pages, I'll follow the introduction of my article (Silva 2017).

2 José Barbosa, *As Relações Luso-Brasileiras, A Imigração e a Desnacionalização do Brasil* (Lisbon: s.n., 1909), 45 and "Letter from King Carlos to the Duchess of Uzès," 12th December 1907 in Rodrigues Cavalheiro, *D. Carlos I e o Brasil* (Lisbon: Off print from the *Diário da Manhã*, 1957, 20).

integrated in networks of cultural or social assistance.³ These associations provided health support, financed immigrants who wished to return home, helped newcomers to settle, assisted in contacts with the homeland (regarding correspondence, remittances etc.), promoted patriotic cultural activities such as lectures, evening classes on Portuguese history, culture and language, as well as book lending and activities celebrating national holidays. So far, the study of these associations has been regarded with suspicion in Migration Studies, seen as the “foam of migration waves” and therefore unrepresentative of the whole Nuñez Seixas (2016, 141). However, my research has led me to believe that associative sources are of great significance not only because they allow us to keep track of the collective organisation, but also contribute to the sociological description of groups which, more or less voluntarily, held some kind of moral and informal leadership in the community (Peyrou 2015).

This institutions-oriented perspective allows us to identify and characterise an elite group that would include people possessing social capital and capable of political intervention such as entrepreneurs, wealthy shopkeepers, merchants, journalists, publishers, writers, titled individuals, diplomats and consular authorities. An elite that, regardless of its lack of an official accountability, played the role of informal representative of the migrant community. Keeping in mind that we are only dealing with a “social sample”, which is far from giving us the whole picture, these are the men that by their geographical mobility, emotional and political engagement and by their economic behaviour gave shape to a transnational social category from more than a century ago (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, 775).

Excluding diplomats and consular officials, most of these elite individuals shared a common experience in life (arriving in Brazil in the mid-19th century, aged from 13 to 20, coming from modest backgrounds to engage in commercial activities), as well as ethics founded on principles of meritocracy, philanthropy, and honesty. This set of values not only provided them with a distinct individuality but also offered them a specific sense of belonging, not just to a class or socio-professional category, but to a more subjective group of an “imagined community” simultaneously related to Brazilian and Portuguese nationalities but, at the same time, external to both.

3 *Assistência Pública e Privada no Rio de Janeiro, História e Estatística. Comemoração do Centenário da Independência* (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. “Anuário do Brasil”, 1922); and Fonseca (2009).

Patterns of cultural and social reproduction in the Portuguese community in Brazil have reflected this feeling of an incomplete belonging in such subtle forms as: valuing meritocracy; encouraging an ethic of sacrifice and work; fostering a patriotic consciousness deeply bound to the homeland but simultaneously independent from national politics. In fact, it was the very historical nature of this consciousness that drove the Portuguese immigrants to regard themselves as an important part of the development of Brazilian nationality – as heirs and continuers of the Portuguese colonising mission.

Portuguese emigrants also expressed their sense of dual loyalty when choosing the destination of the proceeds of their work. For obvious reasons, the primary beneficiary was the Brazilian economy, but the “mirage of return” always played an important role in the strategy of asset management, and in this sense migrants promoted a significant movement of capital in opposite directions between the sending and receiving countries. In fact, at the turn of the century, Portugal’s finances were considerably dependent upon money transfers from immigrants in Brazil, and Portuguese governments did nothing to disparage that source of revenue, which played a crucial role in ensuring a surplus in its credit balance in London.⁴ Moreover, Portuguese migrants living in Brazil also continued to consume products from the homeland, and in the first decade of the 20th century, this consumption represented around 18 percent of all Portuguese exports (Lains 2003; Pereira, 1983; Alves, 1994). The wills left by these men illustrate this transnational mindset: a great part of them instructed that their money and property was divided between their heirs in both Brazil and Portugal. And in the very common cases in which there were no direct heirs, the fortune was normally assigned to charitable institutions, the building of schools and hospitals, and other similar kinds of initiatives on both sides of the Atlantic (Piloto 2014).

Remittances, nostalgic patterns of consumption and investments were only the economic facet of an existence that was already socially and emotionally spread between the “here” and the “there”. Unsurprisingly, this transnational life course also favoured the rise of transnational political practices, a phenomenon that would be of great consequence for Portuguese domestic politics at the end of the Monarchy and first years of the Republican regime (Silva 2017).

4 This scenario had some similarities with the contemporary British Empire (Magee and Thompson 2006).

THE PORTUGUESE EMIGRANT RETURNED FROM BRAZIL: THE “BRASILEIRO”

Long before reaching a national impact, which only happened at the beginning of the 20th century, the political engagement of these Portuguese emigrants in Brazil was already very valuable at local and regional levels. In 1881, an *Industrial National Survey* concluded that in the region of Oporto “the valuable capitals acquired in Brazil and the close relations that the constant emigration of this district maintains with the American empire are more or less present in all these industries, which animates agricultural activity and explains the high price of property.”⁵ Another survey specifically about emigration, published some years before, concluded that around 50% of the emigrants that came back from Brazil between 1863 and 1873 managed to save enough to be considered of little to averagely wealthy, although of these only one third showed a fortune above the 10 “contos”.⁶ As optimistic as this scenario may seem, we must not forget that we are dealing with data that, by default, excludes the cases of failure. According to the testimony of the Portuguese consul in Rio de Janeiro to the same *Emigration Survey* of 1873: “of 1000 emigrants, around 10 manage to be rich, around 100 to save enough to live on medium standards, the rest vegetate only if they do not die.”⁷ Understandably, only the two first groups had the means to return home. Hence, the label “Brasileiro” by default implied someone with some means.

Because they had always maintained a transnational allegiance, when settling back home these emigrants had a very positive impact on the development of their community of origin. Actually, they were engines of modernity in many different aspects, such as finance, industrialisation, architectural innovation, or philanthropy. In fact, the houses of the “Brasileiro” stood out from the rural scenery of the time, and are still, even today, a hallmark of the rural landscape in northern Portugal. They break with the regional pattern in terms

5 *Inquérito Industrial* de 1881 quoted in Maria Filomena Mónica (1987, 829).

6 For a correlative notion of these values, it is useful to know that an artisan would have around a 400 “reis” daily wage, and a peon 200 “reis”. So 1 “conto” of “reis” would represent around 6 to 12 years of work at home, assuming there was full-time employment, see Alves (1994, 261-270).

7 *Documentos Apresentados às Cortes na Sessão Legislativa de 1874 pelo Ministro e Secretário de Estado dos Negócios Estrangeiros – Emigração Portuguesa* (1874), documento n.º 222: “Resposta do sr. António de Almeida Campos, cônsul geral de Portugal no Rio de Janeiro ao sr. Andrade Corvo” Anexo F, quoted in Pereira, *Política Portuguesa...*, 275-282.

of style; building materials; volumetric and are recognisable at a glance. Not surprisingly, most probably because of their deviation from the national standard, they were considered bad taste by the Portuguese social elites of the time (Monteiro 2000, 2007).

Philanthropy was probably where the “Brasileiros” made a major difference, as far as local development was concerned. Charity was a common practice among liberal elites, but these emigrants had a particular predisposition that was obviously related with their lifetime experience within the immigrant community in Brazil. They were probably the more important philanthropists of their time regarding education. Building a school in their hometown became almost a rule. Not to mention some extraordinary cases like that of the Count of Ferreira, whose will stipulated the building of 120 schools throughout the country (Araújo 2013).

It is also important to notice that both sides of the story stressed the transnational nature of the “Brasileiro”. It was predominantly evoked symbolically, but was often also used in operative ways concerning many different aspects of daily life, such as escaping from military service or other civil obligations. The commercial almanacs of Oporto, where the name of the “Brasileiros” businessmen appeared followed by the abbreviation *Braz.*, are a vivid example of this voluntary distinction, since we know these almanacs only published the information provided by each individual (Alves 1994). By choosing to deliberately appear identified as “Brasileiros”, these men were using the exclusion device for their own benefit: they weren’t foreigners, because these almanacs had specific lists for foreigners, but they didn’t want to be seen as any other Portuguese businessman. They performed their own transnational identity.

Throughout the 19th century, the Portuguese crown was well aware of the significant contribution of these wealthy “Brasileiros” to the development of their homeland, as well as their dedication to the network of solidarity within the migrant community in Brazil. As a sign of recognition, kings granted titles either of nobility, chivalry, or honorific orders to practically all those Portuguese emigrants who managed to reach a place of some significance in the heart of the colony, or who returned home wealthy enough to generously serve their birth community.

Historiography has not yet sufficiently noticed the attention that governments of the Portuguese constitutional monarchy devoted to the many dimensions of the transnational dynamic developed by the “Brasileiros”. That is why it may be surprising to realise that from 1850 onwards, and until the end of the monarchy (1910), there were about 160 titles of nobility granted

to emigrants either living in Brazil or who had already returned from Brazil. The majority of these new title-holders were of very modest origins, mainly from the north or central interior of Portugal (Minho, Trás-os-Montes and Beiras), with a lifetime of hard work engaged in commercial activities. Just considering the amount of new titles after 1850 (a total of approximately 950), the amount granted to Portuguese emigrants in Brazil (156) or to Brazilian nationals (47) corresponds to about 21% of the total.⁸ There are at least three comments we can make on these numbers regarding the relationship between political power and the “Brasileiros”.

First, the consistent commitment of the state to granting official recognition to a certain group of people who only had in common the commendable characteristic that they had put their wealth at the service of their fellow countrymen. We should note that, for the most part, these men were merchants and financiers with little or no connection to national politics, and therefore the title of nobility could hardly work as a recompense for political favours. However, neither did it work as recognition for civil entrepreneurship; as it was, for instance, in the case of the Order of Industrial Merit, created by King Carlos in 1893 for that specific purpose. Certainly, the titled “Brasileiros” fit into a paradigm of merit reward, but they also apply to a new way of understanding the service to the monarchy, considering it beyond the traditional frame of the Crown and State administration. These “Brasileiros” were rewarded because they had served the Portuguese monarchy, perceiving it as the Portuguese nation, a rather modern and yet imprecise concept that comprised all Portuguese men and women, including those that lived outside the national territory.

Second, we should note that the numbers above corroborate what we have already written about the strong desire of Portuguese governments to maintain good relations with Brazil. In fact, with 34%, Brazil ranks first on the list of all Portuguese titles granted to foreigners throughout the whole 19th century. It is followed by Britain (24%), France (14%), Spain (9%), and Germany (5%). It is easy to find coincidences between this ranking and the table of national exports. It is also easy to understand how one way to curry favour with the Brazilian government was by the influence of the Portuguese colony elite, who were a significant lobby in some Brazilian state affairs, for instance by controlling an important part of the Rio de Janeiro press.

8 An estimate based on the data compiled by Vasconcelos (2003).

Third, acknowledging the fact that the Portuguese state treasury used titles and other honours as a source of revenue, we see how this was another way for the “Brasileiros” to contribute to state finances. Since every title or honour granted by the crown was subject to taxation. Committed, in theory, to abolishing privilege and favouring merit, the liberal state taxed the use of aristocratic titles and other forms of traditional privilege heavily. This may seem a contradiction when we know that, in the 19th century, the number of titles of nobility and of many other honorific orders increased as never before (Monteiro and Silva 2018). However, the old aristocracy was largely bankrupt to the point that it often had to appeal to the king’s favour for lower entitlement taxes on their titles. Nevertheless, a second rank of nobility (gentry) and an ascendant bourgeoisie were growing wealthier and more politically weighty and, therefore, avidly in search of signs of distinction. The liberal monarchy was, in fact, opening access to noble ranks which, besides being a democratic endeavour, also represented a significant income to the state treasury.

The Portuguese liberal state had many reasons to please the “Brasileiros” and to nourish their transnational nature: economic domestic benefits and political influence in the host country were probably the most obvious but not the only ones. In the effort of nationalising the monarchies, common to many western nation-states during the 19th century, emigrant communities started playing a rather important role in the building of a certain idea of national identity that included different perceptions of many antagonistic concepts, such as race, ethnicity, language, culture, and tradition. Keeping the national allegiance of the “Brasileiros” close to the crown was, therefore, a significant matter. This was also because, around the beginning of the 20th century, republicans started seriously directing their propaganda towards the Portuguese emigrants in Brazil.

However, the official *fons honorum* did not have a social correspondence. After all, even honoured by the Portuguese crown, these wealthy Portuguese returning from Brazil never ceased to be the “Brasileiros”. Contrary to what would be expected, it seems that the signs of status given by the State did not really serve as a vehicle for social rising and integration in the Portuguese social elite.⁹ Only very exceptionally, did any of these “Brasileiros” obtain

9 I refer to the return-phenomenon of the second half of the 19th century. This was completely different from the migration circumstances in the early decades of the century, when “Brasileiros” were men who had left for Brazil during the Luso-Brazilian Empire, and their integration in the new liberal elite was, therefore, completely natural.

higher political or administration positions at a national level after returning to their mother country. Though some of them became local political leaders or even mayors of small towns, very few got to sit in the lower or higher house of Parliament, or serve in other prestigious public offices.

The most common fixation of these ex-emigrants was in their birth village or, at most, in the nearest city, where they could have made some commercial or industrial investment. Besides local confinement, another potential constraint for the social reproduction of these “Brasileiros” was the difficulty of physiological reproduction, since these men emigrated during their youth and often married already at an advanced age, which naturally reduced the odds of a large offspring. They often married heirs of landowners of local nobility, thereby saving many traditional noble families and their estates from ruin. But examples such as those of the Viscount of Morais or of the Counts of Alto Mearim, whose direct descendants (children or grandchildren) married into families of the high nobility, are exceptions. Similarly, cases of second holders of the “Brasileiros” titles of nobility are also exceptions.¹⁰ Thus, although a sociological prosopography of these “Brasileiros” is yet to be done, the existing monographic literature points out their very weak capacity of being assimilated by the upper stratum of society where, by the ennoblement, they theoretically belonged.

However, we should not look at this picture and simply see a clash between two opposite worlds: one of privilege, and one of merit; nor necessarily, between an old and a new society. By the second half of 19th century, the high ranks of Portuguese society were already very heterogeneous, and social status or even nobility could be acquired by a multiplicity of ways: academic curriculum, finance, marriage, politics, commerce and industry, etc. Nobility titles in use represented mainly civil aristocracy. In any case, titles of nobility were less than 5% of the total number of distinctions granted by the crown.¹¹

Most likely because of all the conceptualisation problems that come with the historical effort (Elite or elites? Political elites? Social elites? Cultural elites?

10 One characteristic that differentiates the 19th century nobility from that of the *ancien régime* was the fact that it was mostly non-hereditary. This, however, did not stop many sons requesting the renewal of their parents’ title after their death. This rarely happened with the “Brasileiros”.

11 Of the approximately 7000 distinctions granted in the period between 1900 and 1910, only 233 were titles of nobility. The counting of distinctions and of individuals is an estimate made from the survey by Jorge Forjaz (2012).

Local elites?), there is still no strong scholarly work about Portuguese 19th century elites¹². Although it would be in many respects very useful. Starting with the possibility of situating the Portuguese case within the old, and yet not closed, international debate about the social consequences of the liberal revolutions from the first half of the century and the persistence of the *ancien régime* in societies with negligible or late-industrialisation in 19th century Europe (Mayer 1981). The vision of an unaccomplished bourgeois society in liberal Portugal was dominant in 1970s and 80s Portuguese historiography, at a time when studies about the bourgeoisie, nobility, and elites started to proliferate all around Europe (Serrão 1970, 1984; Godinho 1971).

Recent scholarship tends to clearly disagree with the view that features from a pre-modern world persisted in 19th century Portuguese society (Monteiro 1993, 2007). In fact, considering property as the main indicator and comparing with other nations, the *ancien régime* suffered a brusque fall in the Portuguese case, with a fast decline of the established wealthy aristocracy and the traditional noble lineages. Historiography has already argued how the liberal revolution of 1820 had a rather extraordinary impact on Portuguese society, irretrievably demolishing its traditional foundations. Moreover, and once again in comparison for instance with Spain, it has also proved that the liberal legislation of the first constitutional governments had catastrophic consequences for the patrimony of the old traditional Houses, including the royal House of Braganza (Fontana 1975; Ruiz Torres 1993). The thesis of the absolute decline of *ancien régime* has furthermore been supported by evidence about the weak presence of old aristocracy in the high political ranks of the liberal monarchy, such as government and parliament (Almeida 1995).

All this is true but may be insufficient to shape a solid image of a modern society, completely imbued in a bourgeois and meritocratic mindset with no remains from the former political culture and values. Although very important, the economic and political spheres are not the only indicators to consider when trying to gauge the “modernity” of a society. It is essential to consider also social and cultural dimensions. Saying this is suggesting that some other questions could be added to the inquiry, such as: did the old aristocracy still have any social influence? How did it relate to the new bourgeois elite that rose during the 19th century? And did this new liberal elite have an ethos of its own, completely distinct from the elites of the *ancien régime*?

12 An exception to the already mentioned work by Vasconcelos (2003).

The enchantment of the bourgeoisie with the *ethos* of nobility is a common characteristic of many European national cultures in the 19th century and widely acknowledged by literature. To go beyond this assertion, we should try to discover if the reproduction of this traditional *ethos* meant the rejection of the liberal mindset that led to enrichment and social ascension (Fonseca 1993, 465). This seems to be a key question because it invites us to better define what we are dealing with when talking about “liberal mindset” outside of an ideological framework. Does it concern strategies of property and wealth management? Is it about levels of independence or connections with political power? Is it just about social behaviour: matrimonial strategies, for instance? Is it to do with stylistic and aesthetic choices? Does it involve types of cultural and educational investment? Finally, how, and to what extent, did this liberal mindset actually contribute to social climbing? The better we answer this questionnaire, the closer we are to picturing liberal Portuguese elites and understanding how autonomous they were from the *ethos* and mentality of the old ruling classes.

Biographical research on some important and very wealthy figures of the 19th century Portuguese society, such as José Maria Eugénio de Almeida, Manuel José Gomes da Costa São Romão and José Maria dos Santos contradict the image of an economically conservative bourgeoisie unconcerned with national progress (Martins 1992, 116-117; Reis 1987, 865-904). However, only more monographic works of this kind might prove or deny whether these cases stand for the common pattern or the exception.¹³

A study that analyses Portuguese 19th century etiquette guide books and many social drama texts from the same period advocates that throughout the century there was, in fact, an effort to codify the manners and draw a specific bourgeois *ethos*, characterised by a trilogy of work ethic, merit and discretion. Nevertheless, that study also argues that from a certain moment (later in the century), ostentation and idleness became distinctive of this same bourgeoisie, in a progressive appropriation of the symbolic capital of the nobility. In those social dramas, tension between good and evil is normally displayed by a conflict between two leading characters: frequently, the rude magnate (often the “Brasileiro”) plays the role of the villain, while the old aristocrats are often pictured as heroic characters, combining a certain nostalgic ideal of tradition

13 The study by Maria Antonieta Cruz (1999, 289-340) about the 19th century elites in Porto mitigates this perspective.

with their independence from political power due to inherited wealth (Santos 1983, 54).

Even assenting that a particular reverence to tradition and a certain propensity for nostalgia are characteristic of 19th century Portuguese society, the scenario we've described cannot be disconnected from the trend for historicism at the time and the phenomenon of the "invention of tradition" that was common to many European societies during the same period. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine someone in Portugal reproducing what in Germany Alfred Krupp declared about preferring to be the first of the industrialists than the last of the knights (Gay 2005). The 7000 decorations granted by the crown between 1900 and 1910 reinforce this idea.

If social status was no longer dependent on noble birth, the same way it was no longer restricted to fortune, it was undoubtedly conditioned by some kind of social performance. That is to say, by complying with a particular code of manners and civility – a system of practices –, and by the display of certain signs of dignity. From this perspective, it is easier to understand the difficulties and constraints involving the social assimilation of the "Brasileiros" upon return. Even exhibiting titles of nobility, after a lifetime abroad, they were not only perceived as social meteors but also as foreigners. Literature of the time mirrors well the contradictory feelings that the "Brasileiros" motivated. Eça de Queirós, the most famous and sharpest writer in the second half of the 19th century, frequently denounced the snobbish and cynical attitude of the Portuguese elites towards the "Brasileiros": "You – that in conversations, among friends, in the café, are inexhaustible in mocking the "Brasileiro" – in the newspapers, in public speeches or in the sermon you are inexhaustible in glorifying the "Brasileiro". In your chats, he is the monkey; in the press, he is our brother from overseas."¹⁴

If on the one hand, the "Brasileiros" were vivid examples of entrepreneurship and ascent by merit; on the other, their manners from the new world were unsuitable for the social norms of Portuguese elites. Hence, they were pushed into a category of their own, which stigmatised them not only in terms of social *status* but also in terms of their national identity.

14 Eça de Queirós, February 1872 in *Uma Campanha Alegre de "As Farpas"* [1890] (Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, 2001, 312).

THE RISE OF A NATIONALISTIC POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE LUSO-BRAZILIAN RHETORIC

The scenario described above started to show signs of change in the twilight of the 19th century when, pressed by the international context of the new-imperialism, Portuguese political forces realised the political potential of the Portuguese overseas community to face the new international challenges. In fact, since the Berlin Conference (1884-85) Portugal had sought to find a strategy to overcome the gap between its imperial ambitions and its resources. The invocation of historic rights, the inconsistent occupation of the African hinterland, the efforts to reorganise colonial administration, and the fragile alliances had showed erratic and weak results. In contrast, imperial discourse seemed to be a successful expedient. The rhetoric about the Luso-Brazilian fraternity became an important feature of this emergent imperial discourse.

In 1908, the Portuguese king, Carlos 1st, was planning a state visit to Brazil, programmed for June of the same year. It did not take place due to his assassination in that February. It would have been the first time a European head of State had made such a visit. More than honouring a former colonial territory, King Carlos would have been honouring the Portuguese men and women living there. Clearly, the implicit purpose of the royal visit was to put Brazil on the symbolic map of Portuguese imperial discourse (Silva 2009). The conviction of a “Greater Portugal” was being set up; paving the way to thinking of Portugal’s “greatness” both in terms of space and time. In space, because of its vast colonial empire; in time, because it “generated” other major nations, like Brazil. Within this rhetoric, Portuguese emigrants living in Brazil were considered part of the Portuguese “brave and immortal nation”, as can be seen from the lyrics of the martial hymn, *A Portuguesa*, written in 1890 and made the national anthem in 1910.

The same way that Italian and Irish emigrants were part of Italy’s nation-building project and Irish nationalistic ideology of a “larger Ireland” (Jacobson 1995; Foner 1997), symbolically, Portuguese emigrants in Brazil also sustained the idea of a “diffuse Lusitany” that, along with an emergent imperial consciousness, started to germinate within the Portuguese imagination at the turn of the century. Republicans internalised this idea and chose the “Brasileiros” as one of the main targets for their propaganda. Therefore, after the republican revolution of 1910, Portuguese governments sponsored many official initiatives that gave concrete shape to this Luso-Brazilian facet

of cultural nationalism. This was the period of the Luso-Brazilian journals such as *Orpheu* (1915), *Águia* (1920-21), *Atlântida* (1915-1920); of ambitious editorial projects, such as the *History of Portuguese Colonization in Brazil* (1921-1923), of the Portuguese aerial crossing of the south Atlantic (1922). It was also the time of President António José de Almeida's official visit to Brazil (1922), who referred to the Atlantic Ocean as "the great Lusitanian Sea, enclosed between the shores of Africa and Brazil, having Lisbon as safe haven. (Derouet 1923).

It is easy to understand how Portuguese emigrants in Brazil were interested in encouraging this ideology. Not by coincidence, the *History of Portuguese Colonization of Brazil* was published thanks to the financial support of the "Brasileiros", with the purpose of being distributed in instalments in Portugal and Brazil (Dias 1921). It is also easily comprehensible how this new nationalistic trend helped to rehabilitate the image of the "Brasileiros", who started to be acknowledged as mediators for the Luso-Brazilian fraternity that became a key feature of the imperial and colonial Portuguese discourse during the first Republic and, later on, during the authoritarian regime of the *Estado Novo*.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this overview and questioning on 19th century Portuguese elites was mainly to reveal the idiosyncrasies and complexity of the world that was intercepted by the "Brasileiro". By identifying the conditions of inclusion that the "Brasileiros" lacked, we hope to have contributed to a deeper understanding of Portuguese 19th century society, which produced that classification, and to a more accurate knowledge of the criteria that worked as gatekeepers to the higher ranks of that society.

Viewed as social category, the "Brasileiros" are indeed a very fertile case to think about dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in 19th century Portugal. Not only because it obliges us to go beyond the economic or even political notion of inclusion, but also because it calls for a sharper lens when looking for the grounds of social exclusion. These men had the means and the official recognition sustaining their stance as members of an elite, but apparently they did not have the capabilities nor the experience required to be assimilated and recognised by the elites. Moreover, the "Brasileiros" seem to confirm the

link that literature identifies between “the birth of the modern world” and the gradual uniformisation of the system of practices in which elites were fostered. More than genealogy or wealth, the modern status regimes were grounded on manners, and required the performance of a certain code (of dressing, of behaving etc.) (Bayly 2007). Therefore, if on the one hand, the modern world effectively leads to a democratisation of elites with more widespread and inclusive criteria of integration; on the other, its trend towards a standardisation created new exclusion criteria, by drastically reducing the acceptance of diversity.

The “Brasileiros” also allow us to look at inclusion in terms of national and cultural identity, since they thought of themselves and acted as transnational players. In fact, 19th century novelists and journalists already acknowledged what anthropologists and sociologists identify today as a “correlative imaginary” or a dual ethnic sensibility of transnational migrants (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000), picturing the “Brasileiro” as a character doomed never to have a complete sense of his own nationality: in Brazil he will never cease to be the Portuguese, in Portugal he is hopelessly the “Brasileiro.”

Yet, in the transition to the 20th century, in the historical context of the emergence of new imperialism that characterised the period, the “Brasileiros”, particularly those who were still living in Brazil, were redeemed, to some extent, by an emergent political culture that saw them as important assets to deal with international pressure regarding its colonial Empire. Symbolically featuring the inheritors of former colonisers and playing agents of propaganda for Portuguese imperial ambitions, Portuguese emigrants in Brazil played a key role in the strategy of showing the successes of the ex-colony to prove Portugal’s capacity to undertake a “civilising mission.”

The time when a new type of nationalism impregnated with imperial aspiration and nostalgia arose was simultaneously that when 19th century civic liberal culture fell. This new trend towards a nationalist political culture rehabilitated the “Brasileiros”, to some degree, by making political profit from their transnational curriculum. Their transnational feature was finally seen as the interest of a new ideological discourse exulting the Luso-Brazilian fraternity and foreseeing a common civilising destiny for Portugal and Brazil. Yet, if on the one hand, this context promoted the political criteria of inclusion for the “Brasileiros”; on the other, it was never able to overcome the social criteria of exclusion.

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