

Mothers, whores and spells: Tradition and change in Portuguese sexuality

José Machado Pais

University of Lisbon, Portugal

Ethnography

12(4) 445–465

© The Author(s) 2011

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/1466138110393790

eth.sagepub.com



Abstract

This article presents a case study looking at the social upheavals generated by the presence of young Brazilian women in a town in northern Portugal (Bragança) with strong traditionalist traits. Due to their situation as prostitutes, seducers and immigrants, these women were regarded as disturbing the social order. A number of women of the town, calling themselves the Mothers of Bragança, organized themselves into a social movement to drive the Brazilian women out of the town, accusing them of bewitching their husbands with charms and magic. Focusing on issues of social change, the research takes up the challenge of interpreting the mothers' movement, the stereotypes associated with this movement and the Brazilian incomers, and also certain dilemmas of masculinity.

Keywords

sexuality, values, prostitution, social movements, spells, wonder, tradition, social change

From 1926 to 1974, Portugal lived under a conservative dictatorship which, in the name of morality, sought to deal with sexuality by means of containment. Tradition held out against modernity. Salazar, the charismatic head of government, was opposed to any foreign influences which might perturb the calm of this cultural backwater. Not even Coca-Cola managed to gain a foothold in the Portuguese market. Despite an endorsement from the poet Fernando Pessoa ('first it vexes you, then it gets to you'), Salazar wrote to the European head of the multinational: 'I have always been opposed to your moving in to the Portuguese market [...]. Portugal as a country is conservative, paternalistic and – Heavens be

Corresponding author:

José Machado Pais, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, University of Lisbon, Av. Prof. Aníbal de Bettencourt, 1600 Campo Grande, Lisbon, Portugal

Email: machado.pais@ics.ul.pt

praised – ‘backwards’, a term I regard as flattering, rather than pejorative’ (Mónica, 1996: 221). The idea of the family was one of the regime’s ideological banners. In the field of sexuality, great importance was attached to the role of women in sexual reproduction, a role they were expected to play as caring and submissive wives, and self-sacrificing, dutiful mothers. The gestures of everyday life were subject to constant moral scrutiny. For Salazar, a well-behaved woman should not smoke, ‘as this was a communist habit’. In 1936, the Ministry of Education prohibited ‘women teachers from using make-up’, as unbefitting of the ‘majesty of their ministry’ and these teachers were only permitted to marry if their fiancé displayed good moral conduct (Mónica, 1996: 219). A married woman had few rights. If she wished to travel abroad, she needed her husband’s permission, even if she were travelling to join him. Despite the traditional *machismo* prevailing in Portuguese culture, the newspapers supporting the regime published ‘bizarre discussions as to whether men who were chaste were more potent than those who were dissolute’ (Mónica, 1996: 219). Dances were discouraged because they could leave young women sterile and pervert their maternal instincts, as well as causing other side effects such as ‘sleeplessness’, ‘fainting’, ‘circulatory disorders’, ‘phenomena of self-intoxication’, ‘spasmodic neurosis’, ‘memory and language disorders’, etc. (Faria, 1938: 106). Amorous behaviour in public – such as kissing or suspicious hand holding – was kept in check by the police, in case it undermined ‘good customs’ (Baptista, 1990: 359).

With the carnation revolution in April 1974, social mores underwent a clear process of liberalization, creating an openness to new ideas and experimentation. With scenes regarded as audacious, broadcasts of the Brazilian soap opera *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela*, scripted by Jorge Amado, almost brought the country to a standstill, and even resulted in the suspension of parliamentary sessions. In a village tavern in northern Portugal, I remember an elderly man, smiling and spitting on to the floor, inveighing against the ‘mouth-to-mouth’ kissing in one of the scenes. A few days later, in the same café, the same man was happily bragging of having tried out this outlandish practice, despite having had to overcome the resistance of his no less elderly wife. A new erotic sensibility began to emerge.

However, some three decades later, when nightclubs and bars started to open in the quiet towns of northern Portugal, openly advertising sexual services, the local residents worked themselves into an uproar, and the new ‘discotheques’ were the main topic of conversation on street corners and in cafés, discussed in the newspapers and denounced from the pulpit. Tensions rose to fever pitch in the stand-off between fundamentalist and traditional attitudes, which were proving hard to sustain, and a sense of modernity in which every freedom could be attained. This was the context in which the movement known as the Mothers of Bragança took form in 2003. In effect, the 1974 revolution coincided with a burst of development in Bragança (a town in northern Portugal). In 1970, more than 70 percent of the working population in the municipality of Bragança was concentrated in the primary sector (agriculture), whilst 30 years later this figure had dropped to just 10 percent. The town grew to accommodate a population which in the decade of

1970–1981 grew by 55 percent. Urban expansion led to growth in service industries and the retail sector. Whilst in 1974 the town's hotels offered only 246 beds, this number grew over the next 30 years to 1234 (Fernandes, 2004). This sudden boom in development led to a clash between morals and economics, tradition and progress, conservatism and rejection of rules, moral crusades and carnal excess. Prostitution rings established themselves in the town, as it is clear that prostitution is not unconnected to urban and economic dynamics (Hubbard, 1999 NIR). Economic development had created greater spending power, and the economic capacity for 'sex for sale' (Weitzer, 2000).

Mothers of Bragança

A number of sociological concerns justify research into the Mothers of Bragança movement. First, it is useful to enquire into how the confrontation is taking shape between persisting features (the mores of morality, the valences of traditional values) and new socio-cultural currents, and the implications of this stand-off (Nisbet, 2007). What effects might the globalization of new forms of experiencing sexuality have had in this process? How are we to interpret the Mothers of Bragança movement and what might it reveal? Taking the movement as the medium for various social representations, I sought, in the first place, to discover what these mothers represented for the people who spoke of them. I then set out to discover the meanings of these representations and how they were manipulated and were modified in the course of the interpretative processes which people carried out with regard to the reality represented by these mothers. The same exercise was repeated in relation to the young Brazilian women. Of course, these are prostitutes and, in this sense, a prostitute is a prostitute, the meaning is inherent in the thing itself. But it is not so clear that the meaning of a thing can only emanate from the thing itself. Meaning is not a mechanical emanation from the intrinsic structure of the things that possess them, but rather the outcome of specific processes of social interaction. What interested me was to uncover the social mechanisms for the production and circulation of the stereotypes associated with the Brazilian women (looked on as 'whores' or 'witches') and the mothers (popularly labelled as *beatas*, a derogatory term for smugly respectable churchgoing women). The mothers–whores contrast will allow us to see how far the stigma attaching to the latter is manipulated to bolster the status of the former.

The accusation made by the mothers against the Brazilian prostitutes that they 'bewitch' their husbands (which the husbands actually corroborate) caused me some surprise and I accordingly chose not to dismiss it, but instead to use it to explore the 'mothers/whores' duality and the social basis of distinct patterns of masculinity (Crawford and Popp, 2003). The dignity conferred on the status of wife and mother demands a correlative respectability from her husband. But the desires of conquest associated with macho posturing make for an uneasy relationship between patterns of masculinity, which are in conflict with each other. We shall see how the *love spells* not only accentuate the 'mothers/whores' dichotomy, but

also serve to relieve men of the blame for their extra-marital adventures, due to the belief that they are simply attracted by 'malign forces'.

Looking at these issues from a different perspective, I also sought to interpret the way men flock to the *casas de alterne* (in effect brothels, more or less openly so), on the trail of a native explanation which I took as a '*sensitizing concept*' (Blumer, 1969: 148; Van den Hoonaard, 1997). The reason cited for frequenting prostitutes: 'to stop *Zeca* [John Thomas] getting rusty!' The discovery that the customers suffered from erectile problems led me to discuss a number of dilemmas of masculinity, especially loss of virility that alerted me to the need to look at the men not just as predatory villains but also as the victims of their own misconduct (Synnott, 2009). However, *the spectre of rust*, signalling fears relating to sexual failure, are no obstacle, as we shall see, to social bragging, mainly in the taverns – the prime locations for homosociality (Flood, 2008), which are most frequently the scene of sociabilistic ritualizations of the symbolic affirmation of virility.

As in a game of chess, there are various opening moves in a process of research. In more positivist approaches, the research is conducted in accordance with a pre-established sequence of stages. The starting point (as a rule, a 'theoretical framework' which only accommodates the phenomena in view) prefigures the point of arrival. The 'opening move' defines the whole sequence of the research process, stipulating a programmed linearity between an initial stage of the research (the setting of premises) and a final stage (the deducing of conclusions). In this research process, the logic of demonstration (*lógica demonstrativa*) was supplanted by a logic of showing (*lógica mostrativa*), allowing for unexpected ethnographical discoveries (Pais, 2005). In all my ethnographic wanderings, I took with me my field diary and pocket tape recorder. So in the chessboard of the research process, I went to work in the field as a pawn capable of surprise at the turns which my own ethnographical labours might take, driven by 'spontaneous curiosity' (Freire, 1997: 97–98) or, as Veblen would also say, 'idle curiosity' (Barañano, 1993). In my fieldwork, which I conducted mostly between 2003 and 2007, I used first-hand observation of brothels and taverns, and also used other available sources of information: documentary sources, specifically the press, which reported widely on the conflict;¹ information obtained through informal interviews of mothers, husbands, Brazilian prostitutes, shopkeepers, witches, priests, police officers and other authorities. The interviews, many of them with the status of informal conversations growing out of chance encounters, provided me with a naturalistic approach to the circulation of conflicting social representations concerning sexuality, in a context of tension between tradition and change.

Sexuality is associated with safeguarding or affirming identity-related values and these, in turn, reflect the social representations which set its orientation. This is why it is relevant to lay bare the symbolic devices of sexuality. To achieve this, we need to consider social representations as forms of social thought whose origin, properties and functions are, at the end of the day, the substratum of identities (Jodelet, 1989). The movement of thought is generally born from imagined representations. The researcher himself, submersed in a detailed analysis of a given sociological

issue, starts by producing abstract constructs and images. The creativity of his work emerges, probably, at the moment when, confronted with disparate observations, he seeks to discover possible links of meaning between them out of which his interpretations are eventually spun. I accordingly found myself interested in examining how social contexts, language and communication systems intervene in the construction of social representations concerning sexuality. The methodological route followed is not very different from that proclaimed by what is known as *symbolic interactionism*. This means that I approached different universes of social representation giving priority to the meanings that individuals attribute to them, as persons mutually bound to their acts.

Insofar as the research procedure I adopted was deliberately open to discoveries in the field, I never stopped questioning my findings. The research hypotheses, and my theoretical reflections, had to contend with the successive discoveries I made in the field. This is why a large part of the theoretical discussion of the findings is presented in the final part of the article, where I also give an overview of the methodological journey travelled during the research. The theoretical explanations required me first to describe, analyse and interpret the ethnographic findings.

Mothers and whores

The movement Mothers of Bragança started as a form of protest against the *casas de alterne* in the city. Because most of the women employed at these establishments were Brazilian, the Mothers of Bragança displayed special animosity against Brazilian women, many of them illegal immigrants. One of the first consequences of the Mothers of Bragança movement was that the conflict took on a media dimension, hitting the headlines in Portugal and around the world, thanks in particular to a report in *Time* in October 2003.² This then attracted visitors from Spain and other European countries, who started to come to Bragança to enjoy the delights of a traditional town which suddenly found itself firmly on the map for sexual tourism. A second consequence was the wave of protests which erupted in defence of the Brazilian women, criticizing the supposed inability of the 'virtuous mothers' to satisfy their husbands' sexual needs. We are faced here with a tension, to which we will return later, between 'virtuous mothers' and 'good lovers'.

The Mothers of Bragança movement started to take form when some of the town's women realized they were all suffering from the same conjugal problems: their husbands would be late home, offering implausible excuses. They would sniff their clothes and discover lingering traces of perfume, pointing to extra-marital adventures. At the same time, the local press carried reports of around a hundred 'Brazilian women' living in Bragança, willing to dispense sexual favours for cash. At corner bakeries and marketplaces, the women's movement spread and gained strength. Through conversation they shared their misgivings and grievances. The women spied on their husbands, surreptitiously checking their mobile phones for suspicious numbers, convinced they had succumbed to other charms. Men who could afford it 'set the girls up in apartments', and conducted their affairs

discreetly, during the day. But most waited for the 'cover of night'. The leaders of the movement then drew up a manifesto which was delivered to the civil governor, the mayor and the police chief of Bragança:

We want to avoid taking justice into our own hands, but if we are forced to do so, we will not hesitate, because we want, we need and we deserve to have peace in our homes, and in our hearts [...]. We have been invaded and overrun by dozens of prostitutes accommodated in night clubs, even during the day, in residential areas, in every street and at every corner of our town. How is it possible to permit more and more of these whorehouses to open, peddling drugs and prostitution? [...] And we, the daughters of the Land, huddle in sadness as we see our homes destroyed by the weight of suffering, because these women come to tempt our husbands with sweet talk, sugar cane and even drugs!

The manifesto, apparently with 'hundreds of signatures', was photocopied and circulated, generating widespread interest. The mayor of Bragança used the manifesto as a pretext for mooting the legalization of prostitution, and requested an increased police presence, for fear of sex hooligans. For his part, the bishop of Bragança called for 'redoubled efforts' to assure the 'dignity and sanctity of Christian marriage'. The police stepped up the number of raids on suspected brothels. The local authorities made a discovery which generated an unexpected consensus: the *casas de alterne* – so called because the women took turns (alternated) with the men – failed to provide a 'complaints book', as required by Portuguese law for all commercial establishments: some agreed because the services were clandestine, others because the *meninas* provided an 'impeccable service'. Some of the brothels had sophisticated security systems. When the owners detected police in the area, they concealed most of the *meninas*. The *meninas*, for their part, took issue with the deputy police chief, for being a woman. They preferred male police officers, because – thanks to their physical charms or 'sweet talk' – they could swap the status of persecuted women for that of seduced women.

The war on the prostitutes declared by the Mothers of Bragança began to take on the form of a moral conflict between decency and indecency, fidelity and promiscuity, chastity and impurity, virtue and vice. As the movement spread, there were those who hoped – and also those who feared – that the 'brave mothers' would bring to the whole country the 'breeding' and 'fighting virtues' of the women of northern Portugal. Some people even recalled the episode of Maria da Fonte, the leader of a historic popular revolt (May 1846), widely supported by rural women who, from all over the north of Portugal, overthrew governments and drove the country into civil war (Bonifácio, 1993). One of the causes of the uprising was the prohibition of burials inside churches, for reasons of 'public health', but the common people regarded the law as 'anti-religious', believing it to bear the 'stamp of the devil and freemasonry'. With this new uprising of the 'mothers' against the Brazilian prostitutes, the same issues of 'public health' came into play. In the earlier revolt, the dead buried outside the church were left unprotected.

In the new movement, the husbands, buried in the *casas de alterne*, left the mothers unprotected and their children untended, whilst exposing themselves to the threat of sexually transmitted diseases. All this was the ‘work of the devil’. But this time the ‘devil’ came in women’s clothing – a seductress, from overseas, with ‘sweet talk and sugar cane’. The more conservative areas of the press published manifestos supporting the Mothers of Bragança: ‘You, the Mothers of Bragança, cry to the heavens, tell them of your suffering. You suffer at the hands of women of easy virtue who bring trouble to your lives [...] Whores! Heretics! Fire!’ This army of angry women called for a nationwide revolt, for women throughout Portugal to take a stand against the *brasileiras*, to take ‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth’, to beat the invaders at their own game: ‘Women of my country, let us finish off these *brasileiras* and other prostitutes, give yourselves body and soul to your husbands, make them moan with pleasure every day, go wild in the bedroom!!!’

The ‘mothers’ uprising generated heated debates on whether prostitution should be legalized. Some came out in favour: ‘Castrating the human will is no solution. . . legalize everything and allow everyone to work in decent conditions.’ The opponents of prostitution came up with radical proposals: ‘Give the women honest work and put their scummy pimps in jail.’ A well known nightclub owner astutely made use of his own respectability to present a petition to the Portuguese parliament, calling for prostitution to be legalized, signed by more than 5000 women belonging to the world’s oldest profession. When no response was forthcoming, the more impatient of these decided to appeal directly to the President of the Republic: ‘The President of the Republic [...] should render another service to the nation, in other words by legalizing all the illegal “pigsties”.’ Others, more romantically inclined but no less determined, used arguments which some might find convincing, depending on their point of view: ‘There was an old man who recently died when he was with a prostitute. At least he died happy.’ Other observers, armed with sociological sensibilities, began to spin theoretical narratives to explain marital misadventures. The husbands were apparently on the run from their wives because of dysfunctional marriages, for which incontrovertible evidence was produced: ‘these guys smell of tarts and wine’, an expression equivalent to ‘a knife blow in a broken marriage’. The smell of ‘tarts and wine’ appears here as the symptom of a problem whose solution only complicates the matter. ‘The men go of their own volition. And if they go, they are clearly looking for something that they no longer have at home.’ And their home life is also suffering from the lack of money, ‘misspent’ on ‘high living’. Denunciations followed of economic hardship, and ensuing family tragedies: ‘It’s terrible that some men let their families go without basic necessities, even without food!’ Competing explanations are offered for the runaway success of the *casas de alterne*: globalization, migration, organized crime rings, the crisis in values, declining moral standards, the media, consumerism, *machismo*, etc. A lawyer representing some of the night clubs referred to in the explosive report in *Time* announced that they would be suing the magazine for libel. The bishop of Bragança expressed indignation that such a prestigious publication should have given over eight pages to prostitution in ‘his town’, worst of all as the ‘top story’ on

the magazine cover. In a moment of irony, or perhaps mistaking the bishop's real meaning, one of night club owners was jubilant: 'The church has come out on our side!'

In response to the uproar, the police stepped up their raids on the *casas de alterne*. Some closed down, others survived by going more or less underground. There were car chases and arrests. A great many Brazilian prostitutes headed for Spain, settling in towns just over the border with Portugal. In February 2004, the Play Boy nightclub opened in Alcañices, with more than 50 *brasileiras* who had appeared in court in Bragança. Play Boy brought a flood of visitors to the tiny Alcañices. Initially, men who were used to using a prostitute around the corner were uneasy. I was told at the Bragança police station of a sharp increase in domestic violence reported by wives and children after the *casas de alterne* were closed down: 'it was a safety valve; the men could indulge their fantasies, have a drink, see something new'. Now, a senior police officer confided, 'they have no way of venting their bile'. Hence the likely increase in arguments, abuse and physical aggression. After an initial period of frustration, the men found the way back to their old habits. The short trip across the border instituted itself as a 'rite of passage' for the pleasures of sex. The *meninas* attracted their more devoted customers to Quintanilha, Alcañices and Zamora, towns at a distance of 50 to 80 km from Bragança. With heavy irony, one of them confessed that it was a weight off his shoulders: 'There's no fear of prying eyes, because we're all here for the same reason.'

Men made the 'trip to Spain' in their own car, alone or with friends, or in a rented minibus. It was soon being speculated that the mothers' next protest would be against the extra petrol used in these cross-border jaunts. One of the opponents of the Mothers of Bragança was quick to lay down the challenge: 'And now [...] they see their husbands spending even more money, as they have to go next door to Spain. Let them send another petition to the Spanish government, you never know, they [the Brazilian women] might be driven out from there too.' To the envy of their Portuguese rivals, Spanish 'nightclub' owners welcomed the *meninas* – *chicas buenas!* – with open arms. Most of the cars parked outside the clubs have Portuguese plates. Inside, Portuguese has relegated Spanish to second place. The *meninas* speak Portuguese, as do the customers, and even the waiters are Portuguese, to make the foreign visitors feel at home. A television report broadcast by SIC showed a number of shopkeepers in Bragança lamenting their bad 'luck', now that the *meninas* had fled to Spain. The daily newspaper *O Correio da Manhã* carried a similar story. A florist spoke of her fond memories: 'They were very polite and liked to give each other presents. It's so sad to see how bad business is for the shops now they've gone.' A taxi driver found himself unwillingly idle: 'I used to work day and night, and now there's not even any daytime work, the taxis are queuing up at the ranks. Customers wanted to go out for a drink [...] We would take them and then pick them up. It was great, but now there's nothing.' A hairdresser, recalling the rich pickings of the past, complained: 'When the *casas de alterne* were open, I had work non-stop for myself and two employees. Now I'm

here on my own, and the salon is almost always empty.’ Restaurants had previously done a lively trade in their private dining rooms, generally tucked away on the first floor with a separate entrance, where special customers had entertained special guests. The rooms are now gathering dust. Many tradesmen are close to despair, with the downturn in business. They remember the *meninas* nostalgically and rail against what for others was a return to ‘peace and quiet’: ‘Now the people go and spend their money in Spain!’ Disillusion has set in: ‘You don’t see a soul at night now. Bragança’s night life is over.’ The mothers once again get the blame: ‘Ah mothers, mothers... look what you’ve done to the economy round here’. Life has also not improved for the petrol station owners. Many Portuguese drivers take advantage of their ‘trip’ to Spain to fill up their cars with petrol bought on the other side of the border, where prices are lower. This money-saving wheeze has become an excuse for driving over the border, providing material for sarcastic humour:

Maria: Manel, where do you think you’re going at this time of night?

Manel: I’m going to Spain to buy petrol because it’s cheaper.

Historical feelings of resentment against Spain returned to haunt some of those on the Portuguese side of the border, who felt their national pride had been hurt, outraged at their own powerlessness when faced with the neighbouring, colonizing power: ‘The Spanish have taken advantage of the situation’; ‘The *Tugas* [Brazilian slang for Portuguese] are really stupid’; ‘The Spanish profit again from our stupidity’; ‘The Spanish have us for breakfast again’; ‘Is there not a Portuguese patriot who will open new *casas de alterne* (or re-open the old ones), to breathe life back into local businesses and stop our capital draining across the border?’. When the *casas de alterne* closed down, some of the *meninas* set themselves up in flats in Bragança and neighbouring areas, clubbing together in threes or fours to buy or rent the apartment. They started to shuttle back and forth across the border, keeping their customers happy on both sides. One of them confessed: ‘As a lot of my clients had my private mobile number, I can keep things going over here.’ So the police raids failed to wipe the *brasileiras* off the Portuguese map. Speaking of an ‘epidemic’ and a ‘plague’, their opponents kept up the barrage of complaints: ‘The plague is worse than the Portuguese imagine, the police are arresting Brazilian women every day, there are more and more of them.’ The owner of a café frequented by Brazilian prostitutes confided in me: ‘It’s all talk, talk, talk. But really they’re just gadding for it.’

Love spells

There are those who spoke of an ‘epidemic’ amongst Portuguese men, a madness driving them to the *casas de alterne* where the *brasileiras* personified the devil, dressed in the ‘tanned skin of the tropics’. The Mothers of Bragança pointed the finger, the *brasileiras* would seduce their husbands with drugs, spells, incantations, witchcraft, *macumbas* with rose petals and pansy roots. When I asked someone

involved in Bragança's nightclub industry³ he told me that the *brasileiras* actually used a special tea. I took a note of the name. As a tea drinker myself, I had never heard of this variety. I thought it was a tea imported from Brazil, one of the many exotic varieties that the Portuguese king, Dom João VI, had ordered to be cultivated at the botanical gardens in Rio de Janeiro in 1811.

Maritime explorers had brought to Europe a host of inebriating and intoxicating substances, curative herbs and demonic herbs. I also thought of the mixtures used by Celestina, the famous literary courtesan, created by Fernando de Rojas.⁴ I also knew that in the lands to which Pedro Álvares Cabral sailed in his caravels – just as in the country from which he set sail – common use was made of 'magic potions' and 'filters' to 'take a man captive'. These magic potions, called *veneficium*, could bewitch and also poison, their noxious effects outweighing the benefits. In the 16th century, the Court of the Inquisition, in Brazil, recorded potions made from the secretions of 'women's *vasum*': 'Contact with the *madre*, in other words, the woman's under-parts, conferred magic powers and could serve to wish well, or to enslave, and so the negress Josefa, in Minas Gerais, washed her private parts with water which she then mixed into the food for her husband and his gentlemen' (Priore, 2005: 53).

When I looked up the name of the tea – *chá de buceta* – in the dictionary, I found that in archaic Portuguese the word meant 'small case or a round, fancy bag'. But it clearly made no sense to speak of tea made from a 'case' or a 'small, fancy bag'. I later discovered that, in Brazil, *buceta* is a familiar swear word meaning vagina. The *buceta* is associated with tremendous magic powers, something indeed to be found in various parts of the world. In Catalonia I learned of the custom of fishermen's wives who would expose their genitals to the sea before their husbands embarked. They believed this would calm the sea – and the opposite would happen if they urinated in the waters. The exposing of female genitalia is a recourse which has been used throughout history to drive out demons, to expel evil spirits, and to prevent various types of misadventure. When danger or adversity loomed, popular wisdom in a number of cultures suggested that the best option for a woman was to lift her skirts (Blackledge, 2006). The same recourse is used in public quarrels in northern Portugal. In one of these quarrels, at a fair, I observed that the women lifted their skirts with one hand and then beat their buttocks hard with the other. There is no easy explanation for this deliberate exposure – or insinuation – of female genitalia, frequently referred to in folklore and literature. An attempt to humiliate the adversary? To seduce them? To confuse them? The power of the vagina was also witnessed by a fellow sociologist (Cabral, 2003) when, in north-eastern Portugal, he discovered traders and hunters who were frightened to cross paths with a young widow. A bad omen for business and sport. The traders complained that their profits would be lost – might they waste them on the sexual favours of prostitutes, due to the appetites whetted by the young widow? – and huntsmen complained that their rifles lost their aim, so they would rub them between their legs, against their genitals, to correct the aim.

The article in *Time* referred to other magical practices used, according to the Mothers of Bragança, by the *brasileiras*: 'They place flowers at crossroads to conquer men and write the names of their enemies on the soles of their shoes.' In response, some of the Portuguese wives tried to find an antidote, consulting witches and witch doctors to 'cleansing their menfolk'. The owner of one *casa de alterne* speculated: 'They must spend as much money on witch doctors as the men spend on tarts!' A *curandeira* (female witch doctor) I interviewed confessed to me that a number of Portuguese women had sought her out with desperate requests. 'Sometimes they turn up and say... "I want you to kill that whore that's stolen my husband!" And I tell her, "I won't kill anyone, love. You can take a gun and go up to her and shoot her! I can't put my hands to this evil, to this black magic"...' As well as resorting to witches and witch doctors, some of the cheated women – cheated on by their husbands, but also by the peddlers of magic remedies – make promises to their guardian (female) saints. Extra-marital affairs and whoring is nothing new. But order was previously restored by women affirming their power in public: women resolved this type of problem by 'thumping their rival and breaking a tile on their husband's head'. With a broken skull and the ensuing uproar, the husband would stay at home, leaving 'lively tales to tell the grandchildren'.

When it comes to the power of the *brasileiras*, there are some who connect the effects of the spell to the powers of the magician: 'There's no better spell than a top-quality service.' Indeed, several of the people I interviewed assured me that the Brazilian women are 'much more tender and loving' and 'put up with things that Portuguese women would not accept'; in short, 'they're sex kittens'.⁵ In some sectors of the press, the *brasileiras* are portrayed as '*mouras encantadas*' (referring to the Portuguese tradition of 'enchanted Moorish women'), although the less quixotic contest this imaginative reading, arguing that the Portuguese men who fall for them are tricked, that they are no '*mouras encantadas*', but merely 'Brazilian women with an Indian complexion... until the first day when they adorn their forehead with decorations to match their intelligence' (i.e. *cornos*, the Portuguese symbol for the cuckold). Some husbands acknowledge that they have been bewitched: 'they're sent by the devil'; 'they tried to set me against my family'; 'they stole my money, those whores'. The unfortunate victims of this trickery are said to have fallen into temptation, attracted by malign forces, and the town 'needs to be cleansed of these devils with legs, nice legs and all'. A police officer used a telling metaphor to illustrate the wiles of these trans-Atlantic sirens: 'they eat the bait, and shit on the hook'. The seductive attributes flaunted by the *brasileiras* also serve to excuse the 'poor men' who are led by these 'sinful' and 'wanton' Brazilian women. The 'poor men', for their part, blame their wives for not having the seductive appeal of the *brasileiras* and for not knowing how to do the 'things' the others know. In short, the 'poor men', for one reason or another, appear almost always as victims. The blame is always laid at the feet of the women, irrespective of the damage actually done: either for possessing excessively wanton charms, or else for lacking them.

The spectre of rust

Nonetheless, the 'poor men' like to brag of their virility. In a shop right in the centre of Bragança, I was surprised to see a window displaying a huge range of t-shirts with sexual slogans, all loudly proclaiming the wearer's sexual appetite: 'Wanted. A woman to adopt the animal in me'; 'If I'm drunk and you're good looking, take advantage of me'; 'I'm going to say the rosary [in Portuguese: *terço*, or 1/3] to find a way [*meio*, or ½] to take you to a bedroom [*quarto*, or ¼]'. Other slogans suggest unusual erotic and sexual capacities: 'My brain is my 2nd organ'; 'If your boyfriend is no good at it, I'll take over'; 'Sex instructor. 1st lesson free'; 'My eyes are a sexual organ. They're on you now.' Other messages point to the therapeutic benefits of sexual activity: 'Sex is good for your bones'; 'Oral sex won't rot your teeth.' Finally, they express thoughts, fixations and conjugations of sexual orientation: 'I only stop thinking of you when I stop breathing'; 'I'm not what you think, but I've got what you want.'

We are dealing here with sexuality which is sometimes repressed, sometimes insinuated, perhaps repressed through insinuation, or vice versa. The affirmation of sexuality through its negation, and the reverse, are part of a game that feeds on social habits which have become ingrained over time. In any case, sexuality pulsates in everyday life both openly and implicitly. In more rural milieux, for example, certain types of cherry are given sexually related names. The earliest cherries, in early May, are called a '*meia foda*' ('half fuck'). Other sought-after varieties include the '*lisboeta*' ('Lisbon girl') and the '*francesa*' ('French girl'), the latter used for jam making, because it's the 'sweetest'. At the Bragança market I saw an impressive collection of bottles of red wine suggestively called 'Strength in the Stick'. The same name is used for a brand of cherry liqueur. These liqueurs are traditionally '*com elas*' or '*sem elas*', in other words, with (or without) them (feminine), that is, literally, with or without actual cherries, or by suggestion, with or without the girls. This particular brand features both: cherries in the bottle and a label depicting bikini-clad beauties being ogled by a country bumpkin leaning on a stick.

In the town cafés frequented by men, conversation sometimes turns to women, less to sexuality. The topic seems off-bounds, and probably for this reason referred to only in jest. Politics, football and television are the conversational staples. The few times I heard any comments on sex, the men lowered their voices and spoke evasively, their meaning understood, but unspoken. This linguistic reticence when talking about sex or women is due to reasons relating to the moral clothing in which sexuality is dressed. But the men are still given to boasting. Indeed, it's the older men who make the most of their conquests. The younger men measure their words. The owner of a *café de subir* (a 'café for going upstairs', i.e. to private rooms, for sex) confided to me: 'Look! [lowering his voice]... Those old men over there... Most of them don't do anything! Then they talk, "twice, three times", that's what they say [...] They boast to each other. Half a dozen at a time! They goad each other on.' Others, however, confide to the owner their failed attempts, in the hope of getting their money back: 'They tell me: "I couldn't

get it up. Just a waste of time” – No good, they still paid! Some don’t even try! They just use their hand. . . that thing! I know because they tell me! I don’t go there to look! Some of them just talk. And they pay! Just to talk. Rent a room, you have to pay! They say they can’t manage to talk to their wives. There are two of them up there [gesturing with his head and lowering his voice]. . . they say it’s impossible to talk to their wives. All they do is argue!

Sexual failures are no obstacle to braggadocio. Some boast of the number of women chasing after them. All this showing off about sexual conquests is a feature of exhibitionist *machismo*, and is necessarily related to repeated visits to *casas de alterne*, visits which they make, not by chance, in groups. For many of the Portuguese men who frequent brothels, their visits there are not just a ritual of virility, but also of sociability, as men who go ‘for the tarts’ also go ‘for a drink’, not least because the working girls receive a commission on the drinks their customers consume. As the wine flows and the girls arrive, the men comment on the ‘new talent’: new imported ‘fruit’, their physical attributes or how involved they show themselves in sex – ‘moans with pleasure, see?’ – someone brags, leaving in the air the idea that the moan is an inevitable consequence of his mastery in making them moan. What some of them don’t realize is that the moans of pleasure are faked, just as the orgasms are faked. For the women, the aim is to consummate the sexual act as quickly as possible, using deliberate strategies to hurry things along. As soon as they reach the bedroom, the prostitute undresses and encourages the excited client to do the same, lending a hand, helping to undo his trousers and shirt buttons. The motto is: ‘Money in the hand, trousers on the floor; money gone, trousers back up’ (Azevedo, 2007: 66).

Although I didn’t conduct a survey of men entering and leaving the *casas de alterne*, the information collected suggests they are frequented by a wide range of clients: builders and bricklayers, university students, teachers, lawyers, judges, police officers, bar tenders, shopkeepers, owners of small industrial concerns, and even a priest. Of course, I can only bear witness to the occupation of the customers I actually interviewed: two shopkeepers, a taxi driver, three pensioners, a young bricklayer and a waiter. Several prostitutes told me they had VIP clients, who had priority over the others, although they were open to everyone, ‘rich and poor’. The owner of a downmarket café, also frequented by prostitutes, confirmed what I had observed with my own eyes: ‘The men looking for the women. . . are those who work all week long. . . office workers, labourers, brickies. . . looking for a quickie, the men from the construction sites.’ In the mid-afternoon, when I conducted the interview, most of the customers were older. He explained that many were retired: ‘These ones, the older ones. . . these pensioners, they get their pension. . . and blow it all in a few days!’ – adding in jest, ‘For an old donkey, new money!’ (Portuguese proverb).

The *meninas* prefer the older men, or *coroas* (‘crowns’) as they call them, for two reasons. First, because the *coroas* have more cash, as one *madam* confirmed to me: ‘The good clients are not the students. The good clients are the *coroas*, as they say. Those are our good clients.’ And second because they are ‘kinder’. A young woman

from Espírito Santo (a coastal region of Brazil) filled out this idea: '[The young ones] drink, they're more aggressive... not the old ones!' One customer, with a toothless smile and shiny pate, explained his interest in the *meninas*: 'to stop Zeca [John Thomas] getting rusty!' The confession may be read as a dread of losing their virility. The problem is that – because of their age, psychological discomfort or whatever – some of the *Zecas* get to the moment of truth with clear signs of rust damage. Some of them are barely up before 'they shoot off' or, in the poetic, driving-instructor metaphor used by a prostitute, 'neutral, into first gear and the engine stalls'. In other cases, as a Brazilian woman told me, 'there's no way of getting them up'. When the flag won't hoist itself naturally, some of the prostitutes are experts in easing it up, but success is not guaranteed. The effort involved in putting a condom onto a drooping member must try even the most patient amongst them. And, 'as time is money', some of them treat their failing clients with vibrators and *consolos* ('consolations' – dildos).⁶ There are also clients who act out fantasies they would never dare try with their wives or outside the world of prostitution. Their friends would not question the virility of these 'disconsolate' men, because they would always consider that a man who goes up (the expression used to mean 'going up' to the prostitute's room) does so to stay on top.

In a society shaped by macho values, men are required to have a sexuality which is available permanently, indiscriminately and compulsively. It is even argued that these characteristics respond to biological drives. However, macho values are woven so tightly into the social fabric that they actually outlive the rusting away of biological impulses, even if they have to resort to artificial 'consolation'. The greater the threat from erectile dysfunction, the greater the individual's urge to defend his macho reputation in his own eyes and those of others – his companions on his trips to the *casas de alterne*. Some men who are sexually moribund will do anything to reclaim their masculinity. When they manage this, they endorse the power of certain products designed to 'raise the dead', such as Viagra and the famous infusion of '*pau de Cabinda*', from the bark of a tree of the same name, to be found in the forest of Cabinda, in Angola.

Many clients are reluctant to use condoms, as some of the prostitutes confessed to me. The older clients are the least willing to use them, alleging they're not used to it. A prostitute suggested to me that one reason they reject condoms might have to do with an idea 'they put in their head that the condom gets in the way', making an erection more difficult, or worse, deflating it. Some won't even go there with a blow job (oral sex). It has been suggested that male rejection of condoms is a manifestation of masculinity, highlighted by risk-taking (Ribeiro et al., 2005). This is not always the case. For many older men, rejection of condoms has nothing to do with the taking of risks, and everything to do with avoiding the risk of a painful confrontation with the rusty condition of their *Zeca*.

Sometimes, risk taking, frequently associated with 'eroticization' (Ribeiro et al., 2007: 385), heightens feelings of masculinity. Other times, however, what they risk is losing this feeling when a shaky erection droops at the prospect of enclosure in the *camisinha* ('little shirt', Brazilian slang for condom). If I may credit the

privileged and professional source of the information to which I had access, it sometimes requires considerable expertise to revive the drooping member. My source confided that one of the techniques is for the woman to conceal the condom in the roof of her mouth.

Even when experiencing erectile difficulties, the male tends to locate the blame elsewhere, generally accusing the *camisinha* of 'putting him off/getting in the way'. Attribution theory (Weiner 1974; 1987) helps us to understand these defence mechanisms which lead successes to be attributed to personal qualities whilst failures are imputed to external circumstances. Attribution theory lays down that when an individual centres the causes of the success or failure of an event in himself (internal attribution), he normally experiences feelings of pride or shame. In macho sexuality, pride or shame are associated with the (in)capacity to achieve an erection. If an erection is difficult to come by, one way of getting around the shame is to find justifications external to the failure (external attributions). It would appear that condoms are recurrently used as an excuse in this situation, insofar as, allegedly, they 'get in the way'. 'Risk taking', as proof of masculinity, presupposes an audience that legitimates, through recognition, a valued predicate: the capacity to take a risk. However, in bed, the audience is reduced to a woman and the only trial is confined to revealing whether or not the flag can be raised.

In any case, whilst rejection of condoms may be associated with an affirmation of masculinity through the dread of failure (when 'they get it into their heads' that the *camisinha* 'gets in the way'), in other cases the assertion of masculinity is effectively projected onto risk taking: because the man who sees himself (because he is seen) as 'strong' should not be 'scared' of tackling the bull bare-handed. It can also be the case that a man centres on the condom a dispute which allows him to subject the woman to his power. In other words, what might be at stake is his belief that he exercises some form of power over the prostitute, forcing her to submit to realizing his fantasies. She wants to use a condom? And if he doesn't want to? Who's in charge? Once, in Bragança, I saw a car parked with a miniature t-shirt hanging from the rear-view window with the slogan 'In the car and in bed I'm the boss'. At stake here is a macho ideology which in order to survive requires the submission of the woman, both in the car and in bed, because 'it's an unhappy house where the distaff rules the sword' (Portuguese proverb). To drive around with an unembarrassed proclamation of this form of domination is one way of lending it visibility.

The correlation between the assertion of virility and the rejection of condoms may therefore be determined by different factors. As we have suggested, amongst the elderly, the fear of a failed erection feeds the conviction that condoms 'get in the way'. Oddly, a number of surveys of sexuality failed to envisage this hypothesis. A survey was recently conducted in Portugal into 'the sexual behaviour of the Portuguese population', which purely and simply neglected to consider anyone aged over 65. In other words, due to prejudice or some other concealed reason, it might have been assumed that from that age onwards sexuality has faded away. Surprisingly, the reason for conducting the survey was that Portugal is one of the EU countries with the most worrying situations as regards infection with

HIV/AIDS. For this reason, the survey set out to study relations between sexual behaviour and risky behaviour associated with the transmission of HIV in the population resident in Portugal, on the basis of what is claimed to be a 'representative sample'. Although the data from this survey has yet to be published, it was recently presented at a seminar at my university.⁷ What they found was that the younger people surveyed had less risky sexual behaviour and that the highest risk was concentrated in the highest age range, 55 to 65 years. The population presumably most at risk was simply ignored.

Sexuality and change

If method refers to what is beyond (*meta*) the road (*hodos*) travelled, this is now the right time for reflection on the road travelled in order to reply to our initial questions. The method I used was to discover concealed realities, assuming that there are connections between the reality which shows itself to observation and that which evades it. Hence the interest in analysing the social values and representations in which everyday practices are clothed. In classical sociology, ideologies were always considered as 'deviations' or 'distortions'. However, world views do not always leave the world in darkness. They also contain elements of truth. Salvador Giner (Giner, 2007) drew attention to this fact when he warned of the need for us to deal with ideologies in the same way as anthropologists have dealt with myth: searching for the deep and hidden truths which exist in them, using convincing and objective criteria. The metaphors, narrations, symbols and images in which myths are dressed are clothing which needs interpretation in order to reach the truths at their core.

This is what happened when we sought to decipher the stereotypes projected on the *brasileiras* and even on the mothers, often referred to as *papa-hóstias* (literally 'host eaters', a scornful reference to enthusiastic communicants). The hypothesis which explains the mothers' movement as a movement of prim churchgoing ladies appears to me to underestimate the complexity of the phenomenon. The religious explanation is as consensual as it is simplistic. It is possibly consensual because it is simplistic. At best, it is a paraphrase whose tautological power is confirmed by some of the analytical evidence, although refuted by other parts of this evidence. Whilst some of the mothers were practising Catholics, others were not. Moreover, the reason invoked by some of them for their revolt was economic, and not always religious: their husbands were 'throwing away' on 'tarts' the money they 'needed at home'. As for the *brasileiras*, the challenge was to decipher the procedures which reify the stereotypes, the necessary methodological imperative for denaturing the differences.

What reasons might have explained the movement of the Mothers of Bragança? The question has continued to preoccupy the opinion-makers of Bragança and of the country as a whole. A columnist in *A Voz do Nordeste* suggested: 'Until recently a petition of the kind produced by the women known as the "Mothers of Bragança" would have been unthinkable. If any of them had dared to produce a

similar document the least they could have expected would have been a thrashing from their husband. But today, a much higher value is attached to the role of women in society, and this role is more autonomous of their husbands.' Indeed, the traditional rules of morality restricted the management of sexuality to the perpetuation of family and property. Vices and deviations were discouraged by a morality dressed in the fear of God. The search for pleasure was circumscribed by moral prescriptions. This social order has been laid low by new socio-cultural currents in which the search for earthly pleasures has superimposed itself on the demands of moral duty and private vices have dealt successive blows to public virtues.

Moving on, how should we interpret the runaway success of the *casas de alterne*, principally amongst married men? This is a question with more than one answer. But we may assume that conjugal difficulties of various kinds have helped pave the way. Indeed, it would be wrong to consider them in isolation from the surrounding social circumstances. For example, in rural milieux, questions of property have a strong bearing on those of matrimony. The undoing of a marriage would send shockwaves through a system of property ownership which would topple family alliances. This is because, previously, marriages were often decided on with a view to conserving and accumulating property. For the same reason, ties of property were a deterrent to divorce. Marital breakdowns were simply something that had to be lived with. This whole status quo was based on the submission of women, with their supposed capacity for self-sacrifice. Men, in contrast, could relieve the tensions at the taverns or whorehouses: hence the symbolic burden of the 'smell of tarts and wine'. The enjoyment of sexuality was something that occurred frequently outside the conjugal relationship, as women were regarded as not entitled to this enjoyment, on pain of being accused of wantonness. In this model, it is not clear that erotic love was absent, but it was not accepted as a value on which matrimonial life was founded. Or rather, the women could be loved but not so much as a woman as a mother, housekeeper, rearer of children, etc. In other words, she was valued for everyday sacrifices frequently offered up in silence. This is why, in a situation of conjugal betrayal, with threats to dissolve the marital bond, the woman lays claim to her status as mother. It is no coincidence that the movement of 'mothers' decided not to call itself a movement of 'wives' or 'women'. In laying claim to the status of mothers, the women were not exactly denying other forms of status. They were above all placing themselves on a higher moral plane than their rivals: the 'pure' women (mothers), versus the 'tarts' (whores).

Certain conjugal conflicts are therefore the result of the asynchronous experience of social change by the genders. Moreover, the new roles required of women by society do not always coincide with the affective models they have in fact internalized. In the domain of subjectivity, tradition resists social change. Men have also started to entertain increasingly contradictory expectations in relation to women: whilst, at home, they idealize them as continuing to reproduce the role of their own mothers, in bed they long for them to rid themselves of preconceived ideas and to be ready for wild and varied sex, like the uninhibited women they see on the cinema

and television screens, where the Brazilian soaps are always top in the ratings. In any case, we found that some of the Mothers of Bragança were beginning to consider divorce, as a better option than a dragged-out broken marriage. In other words, a climate has emerged calling for a new ordering of relations between the genders as a result of new representations of the family and conjugality. Guided by traditional macho values, some men have been unable to adapt to the change in the female condition. But we should note an important fact, referred to above. The sudden popularity of the *casas de alterne* was not the inevitable effect of a revolution in customs. In a world where moral standards associated sexuality with reproduction, the ruling *spermocracy* had always partied in the brothels (Raymond, 1994). Prostitution has always existed, but underground.⁸ Marital infidelities were concealed from the other spouse. They then started to be more obvious, associated with nocturnal revelry. When husbands started to come home 'late and at an evil hour', clearly the worse for wear, it was impossible for their wives not to suspect anything. So what happened was that these episodes of infidelity became more visible. At the same time, these visits became more recurrent as a result of a general sense of euphoria which became the fashion, explaining the trips to Spain in rented minibuses, with all the trappings of excursions or social outing. So we might say that there was *social pressure* – fed by the sociabilities of the café and the tavern – inciting the men to visit the *casas de alterne*. The visibility of these establishments – which advertised themselves with fluorescent signs, meaning they could hardly go unnoticed – had the end result of unmasking the social lie of marriages which were happy only in appearance.

The excitement generated around the *casas de alterne* was also fostered by the new-found prosperity of small shopkeepers and other businessmen who started to squander their gains on these expeditions, their appetites stirred by the frequent arrival of new girls, or 'fresh fruit' in the slang used in the milieu. Both hypotheses are supported by an astute observation expressed in a discussion of the *mouras encantadas* (enchanted moors): 'they eat the bait and shit on the hook'. The male euphoria aroused by the *casas de alterne* was also nourished by a kind of *sexual mobilization* not unconnected to the growing influence of the mass media. In the 1970s, Portuguese cinemas started to show pornographic films and, on television, Brazilian soaps – with scenes which were daring for the mentality of the time – took the place of parish sermons as the source of everyday moralities. The appearance of television foreshadowed a change in family and sexual relations. Prohibition and proscriptions were swept aside by a profusion of images, including shameless exhibition of the naked body.

The *sexual mobilization* model can interact with a host of other variables. It might be supposed that a social group which has submitted to relative sexual containment, for moralistic or repressive reasons, will tend to reject this same order as soon as it shows signs of weakness. This is a hypothesis which fits in with what are called 'conditioned' theories of social change, frequently formulated in probabilistic terms: a given event brings with it the probability of the occurrence of another event. The idea has been developed in the field of political sociology.

What is known as the Tocquevillian law of ‘political mobilization’ is well known, suggesting that a people which has been subjugated by oppressive laws will tend to reject them violently as soon as this order is overthrown (Tocqueville, 1952 NIR, *apud* Boudon, 1990). The grounds for the hypothesis are that containment causes a build-up of tension which is released explosively when given the chance (the ‘pressure cooker’ effect, when the lid blows off). It is curious that some of the owners of the *casas de alterne* blamed the presence of a number of young Portuguese women in their establishments on the backwards conservatism of their parents: ‘It’s primarily the parents’ fault. They won’t accept new ideas, they won’t keep up with the times, they’re very repressive. . . and the girls. . . get out at the first opportunity! As clear as water! I blame the parents!’

The concepts of *tension* and *frustration* can also be called on to explain individual predisposition for mobilization. The actual Mothers of Bragança movement could be understood in the light of this theoretical framework. We could use for this what is already a classical concept, that of *relative frustration*. The concept was pioneered by Ted Gurr (1970) to designate a state of tension resulting from satisfaction expected and withheld. Frustration appears as a negative balance between the recognition and prestige which an individual enjoys at a given moment and that which he thinks he should have. This is what may have happened with the Mothers of Bragança, driven by a frustration transformed into a *social fact*. This is *relative frustration* because it derives from a comparison. It is born from expectations associated with a socially differentiated distribution of symbolic powers. The Mothers of Bragança compared themselves to the Brazilian prostitutes and saw them as an outrage to their status as mothers. This is how the identity of motherhood appears here as a motive for collective action: a feeling of frustration emerged from observation of the gap between socially constructed expectations – associated with the status of mother – and the subjective perception of their real situation: devalued, betrayed, exchanged for others, abandoned. The intensity of frustration, when socially shared, is fuel for social change and for social movements.

Notes

1. The following newspapers and magazines were consulted, from the period from 2003 to 2007: *Visão*, *A Bola*, *Expresso*, *Jornal Nova Guarda*, *Correio da Manhã*, *Semanário Transmontano*, *Diário de Notícias*, *A Voz do Nordeste*, *Jornal Nordeste*, *Jornal de Notícias e Público*. The quotations between inverted commas in the text are taken from these newspapers or from the interviews conducted.
2. Indeed, one of the first reports appeared in *Time*, in October 2003. See the article ‘When the *meninas* came to the town’, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,517712-5,00.html>.
3. The owner of one of Bragança’s best known *casas de alterne*. I interviewed him at his home, as he is under house arrest. He is since rumoured to have fled to Brazil – so they told me when I tried to find him for a second interview.
4. The first edition is thought to date from 1499, under the title *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*.

5. The construction of the *brasileiras* as witches is not independent of a process of ethnicization of sexual skills (Nagel, 2003).
6. Rubber penis attached to a belt.
7. The survey data were presented at a seminar held at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, on 6 May 2008.
8. Prostitution was prohibited in Portugal in 1963, and classified as a crime punishable by a prison term. Twenty years later, in 1983, the law was repealed and prostitution as such was decriminalized. Procurement and pimping remained crimes.

References

- Azevedo E (2007) *Luísa. Uma Brasileira na Noite de Lisboa*. Lisbon: Editora Livros do Brasil.
- Baptista LV (1990) Os discursos moralizadores sobre a família. In: Reis A (coordinator). *Portugal Contemporâneo, Volume IV*. Lisbon: Publicações Alfa.
- Barañano M (1993) Thorstein Veblen: un alegato en favor de la ciencia. *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 61: 201–212.
- Blackledge C (2006) *A História da V. Abrindo a Caixa de Pandora*. Lisbon: Lua de Papel.
- Blumer H (1969) What is wrong with social theory?. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Methods*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 140–152.
- Bonifácio M de F (1993) *História da Guerra Civil da Patuleia, 1846–1847*. Lisbon: Editorial Estampa.
- Boudon R (1990) *O Lugar da Desordem*. Lisbon: Gradiva.
- Cabral J de PO (2003) *Homem na Família: Cinco Ensaios de Antropologia*. Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Crawford M and Popp D (2003) Sexual double standards: A review and methodological critique of two decades of research. *Journal of Sex Research* 40(1): 13–26.
- Faria AG Molho de (1938) *Os Bailes e a Acção Católica*. Braga.
- Fernandes A (2004) *Contrastes e Transformações na Cidade de Bragança: 1974–2004*. Bragança: Câmara Municipal de Bragança, Coord.
- Flood M (2008) Men, sex and homosociality: How bonds between men shape their sexual relations with women. *Men and Masculinities* 10(3): 339–359.
- Freire P (1997) *Pedagogia da Autonomia. Saberes necessários à Prática Educativa*. São Paulo: Editora Paz e Terra.
- Giner S (2007) Descrédito de la verdad y banalización de la ideología. Notas de sociología cognitiva. In: Rodriguez Morató A (ed.) *La Sociedad de la Cultura*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Gurr T (1970) *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jodelet D (ed.) (1989) *Les Représentations Sociales*. Paris: PUF.
- Mónica MF (1996) A evolução dos costumes em Portugal, 1960–1995. In: Barreto A (ed.) *A Situação Social em Portugal, 1960–1995*. Lisbon: Edição do Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa, Org.
- Nagel J (2003) *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality. Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nisbet R (2007) *Cambio Social*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Pais JM (2005) *Vida Cotidiana: Enigmas e Revelações*. São Paulo: Cortez.
- Priore MD (2005) *História do Amor no Brasil*. São Paulo: Editora Contexto.
- Raymond J (1994) *Women as Wombs. Reproductive Technologies and the Battle over Women's Freedom*. New York: Harper Collins.

- Ribeiro M, Silva MC, Ribeiro FB and Sacramento O (2005) *Prostituição Abrigada em Clubes (Zonas Fronteiriças do Minho e Trás-os-Montes). Práticas, Riscos e Saúde, Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, Coleção Estudos de Género, 3, Lisbon.*
- Ribeiro M, Silva MC, Schouten J, Ribeiro FB and Sacramento O (2007) *Vidas na Raia. Prostituição Feminina em Regiões de Fronteira.* Porto: Edições Afrontamento.
- Synnott A (2009) *Re-thinking Men: Heroes, Villains and Victims.* Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Van den Hoonaard W (1997) *Working with Sensitizing Concepts. Analytical Field Research.* London: SAGE.
- Weiner B (1974) *Achievement Motivation and Attribution Theory.* Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.
- Weiner B (1986) *An Attributional Theory of Motivation and Emotion.* New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Weitzer R (ed.) (2000) *Sex for Sale. Prostitution, Pornography, and the Sex Industry.* New York: Routledge.

José Machado Pais is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Social Sciences (University of Lisbon) and Professor at Lisbon University Institute. He has been Visiting Professor in several universities of South America and Europe. He was Coordinator of the Portuguese Youth Watch-Scheme (1987–2009) and Director of the Observatory of Cultural Activities (2007–9). He was also Editor of *Análise Social* and Director of *Imprensa de Ciências Sociais*. Leader of several projects, specially in the field of culture, everyday life, youth, religion, sexuality, social structures, social theories and methodologies. He has published more than 20 books in Portugal, Brazil and Spain. Gulbenkian Prize of Science (2003). He is presently Deputy Director of the Institute of Social Sciences.