

## Retratos sobre a migração na série televisiva brasileira “Portugal pelos Brasileiros”

### Portraits of migration in the Brazilian television series “Portugal pelos Brasileiros”

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**Resumo:** Neste artigo abordamos a relação entre o discurso midiático e as migrações a partir da perspectiva das representações sociais. Analisamos o caso do fluxo de imigração brasileira em Portugal que vem aumentando nos últimos anos, conforme retratado na primeira temporada da série televisiva brasileira “Portugal pelos Brasileiros”. Utilizamos a abordagem da Análise Crítica do Discurso para entender como a significação da experiência migratória está incorporada na série por meio das representações sociais. Como resultado, pudemos identificar que os novos imigrantes brasileiros em Portugal são retratados de maneira parcial e excludente, por meio de um discurso midiático ancorado em traços culturais e socioeconômicos específicos.

**Palavras-chave:** discurso midiático; migrações; representações sociais; análise crítica do discurso; Portugal pelos Brasileiros.

**Abstract:** In this paper, we focus on the relationship between media discourse and migration from the perspective of social representations. We analyze the case of the Brazilian flow in Portugal that has been increasing in recent years, as portrayed in the first season of the Brazilian television series “Portugal pelos Brasileiros”. We used the Critical Discourse Analysis approach to understand how the meaning of the migratory experience is incorporated into the series through

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*social representations. As a result, we were able to identify that the new Brazilian immigrants in Portugal are portrayed in a partial and exclusive way, through a media discourse anchored in specific cultural and socioeconomic traits.*

**Keywords:** *media discourse; migrations; social representations; critical discourse analysis; Portugal pelos Brasileiros.*

## Introduction

Migration has always been about navigating new risks, uncertainty, and the contested terrain of mobility (HEGDE, 2016, p. 1).

When we perform an Internet search on Brazilian migration to Portugal, it is possible to find a myriad of newlike articles about the increasing number of Brazilians<sup>3</sup> who decided to emigrate to that country in the last few years. In a moment in history in which Portugal “desperately needs” (*Público*, Aug. 16th, 2019) migrants, there are thousands of them that are “millionaires and unemployed” (*Uol*, July 14th, 2019) looking to settle in Portugal.

In a behavioral level, the symbolic exchanges are inherent to the processes of communication directly influence the decision-making processes of a personal and collective dimension. In the media dimension, Baudrillard (1991, p. 108) said it is possible to have cases of an exact syntony between information and meaning, being that information, in this case, can be either “destructive or neutralizing of meaning”. Such thing occurs because the world that media present to us is built, in turn, by diverse social representations that seek to give meaning to human existence. It is also frequent to find in the media obliterations and distortions of current social stratifications (PAZ; LEÃO, 2012). When entering the public dominion of media communications, these representations also become ideologic (MOSCOVICI, 2009). Thus, if it is true we live in a “furious idealism of meaning”, an “idealism of communication for meaning” (BAUDRILLARD, 1991, p. 108), it is essential to question what is the meaning that transpire in the social representation shown in media.

Precisely with this goal of answering questions such as this one that we conducted the study we present in this article. Adopting the point of view of Critical Discourse Analysis, we analyze five episodes of the first season of “Portugal pelos Brasileiros”, broadcast at Rede Globo de Televisão in early 2018. We guided ourselves through the intention of

understanding how the experience of these new Brazilian immigrants is signified in the media discourse through the social representations on the phenomenon, which would support us to glimpse in what way this portrait of the recent Brazilian immigration reverberates in the social sphere.

### **Social representations in the media context**

Once it's possible to escape the meanings the world receive through its representations, the focus of the analysis of the contemporary social issues must consider how they are being built and reflected in the current discourses. Adopting the discourse in a Foucauldian perspective, where the primary concern is to evidence the relationships there are between language and social structure (FOUCAULT, 2008), we reinforce the recognition that the analysis of these discourses should also contemplate the "interpretation and revelation of implicit meanings" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 127) and their "propositions" (FOUCAULT, 2008. P. 127). When we talk about the discourses present in contemporary societies, we cannot forget that they are related to an architecture of knowledge that is built in social meanders and has an operative nature, for directly influencing the communication of power and authority structures through the management of points of view.

It is in this constitutive web of human knowledge on the world that we find social representations. We can define them as collective cognitions and the current systems of thought in the sphere of groups of individuals that give meaning to daily life. They are socially built through specific cognitive processes, in which the goal is always "turning something unfamiliar into something familiar" (MOSCOVICI, 2009, p. 54). Everything that cannot be categorized within the pre-conceived ideas of the world becomes as enigmatic as threatening to the subject, creating a feeling of uncertainty that ends up provoking distancing (MOSCOVICI, 2009). Since social representation have a dynamic character, the study of those who still are not totally sedimented into social groups becomes particularly interesting (MOSCOVICI, 2009). Furthermore,

we consider imperative to also understand how these processes exercise influence in the mind and guide the action of individuals in the world. As we could observe through human history, this feeling of non-recognition of plurality inherent to the human being has been leading to situations of social discrimination and racism.

In this whirlwind of ideas that gives meaning to the world we live in, media takes on a key role. It is through them that is managed a true “disruption of reality” (BAUDRILLARD, 1991, p. 106), leaving the perception of the world confined to the social representation exposed there. Television takes on a particularly interesting role in this process. Even facing the proliferation of newslite and documental content nowadays, we cannot neglect the nature of television as a means of communication, not only information (GIACOMANTONIO, 1981). According to Crespi (1997, p. 200), it is a potent “agent of socialization” in society, in the sense that cultural productions shared there have a big social impact. Therefore, since it is not possible to focus the analysis of television productions only in its content, it is necessary to promote a change of perspective and seek to understand how this content is created and in what way these formats influence its meaning (FISKE; HARTLEY, 2003), being the own nature of television to offer productions in a context of “invisible censorship” (BOURDIEU, 1997, p. 6).

These meanings are fundamental parts of a symbolic puzzle that results in the construction of media discourses. In the case of social representations about migration, they promote transformations that will have a direct impact in the migrant’s life. Sayad (1998, p. 56) had already said that “there is no other discourse about the immigrant and immigration that is not an imposed discourse”, and this affirmation gains even more sense nowadays. It is not rare to observe the presence of discourses that advocate in favor of a status quo of the immigrant that positions its presence in the community of destination in a place between provisional and permanent (SAYAD, 1998), a type of social hiatus. From the moment it was agreed to approach the issue of migration as a “social problem” (SAYAD, 1998, p. 56), in the case of Brazilian immigrants in

Portugal, or in media contents or in everyday conversations within specific social groups, the power relations in a discursive order have been established throughout time in tangible and intangible levels, reaching the level of provoking, often, situations of true “symbolic incarceration” (MACHADO, 2003, p. 181) of these subjects.

When they are not approached in a critical form, media discourse on migration and its subjects end up socially solidifying itself. When fiction and non-fiction are mixed in the intent of representing reality (FREIRE; SOARES, 2013), this stiffness makes these discourses become, at times, real obstacles for the recognition and legitimation of cultural differences. These setbacks will have a direct influence in the process of integration of immigrants in the target community, which is involved in a costly process in the mental and emotional level.

### **Studying social representations through discourse**

In order to understand how the new migratory wave of Brazilians towards Portugal is represented in the Brazilian media, we analyzed the first season of the television journalistic series “Portugal pelos Brasileiros”.<sup>4</sup> This season has five episodes of, approximately, ten minutes each, where a Brazilian person that recently migrated to Portugal reports their experience in 1st person. The episode titles are: *Eduardo’s story*, *How to live and teach in Portugal*; *How to buy real estate in Portugal and getting a resident visa*; *How to validate a diploma in Portugal*; and *Becoming a businessperson in Portugal can be a way to get a visa*. The reports are complemented by a voiceover and the exhibition of information and tips for Brazilians who have the intention of emigrating to Portugal.

Coming to the conclusion that the social power relations are discursive (MACHIN; MAYR, 2012) and the discourses are a form of social and political action (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995; VAN DIJK, 2018), we

4 The series was created by the producing company Plano Geral Filmes and has the Direction of Rodrigo Ponichi. It was broadcasted as a special project within the TV show *Como Será?* In January 6th, 13th, 20th e 27th and February 3rd, 2018. The program is shown on Saturdays at Rede Globo de Televisão in the morning and has re-runs the next mornings in the channel Globo News and in the afternoon at Canal Futura..

analyze the social representation according to the Critical Discourse Analysis. This approach is guided in a way to clarify how the discourse positions subjects in society, who has the interest of that being made that way, and, when serving these interests, what other interests are being neglected (JANKS, 1997). Being one of the main differentials the concern in problematizing unequal power relations, in a clear position of solidarity to social groups socially and culturally dominated (VAN DIJK, 2018), the referred perspective revealed to be fitting for the study in question.

### **Media discourses on Brazilian immigrants in Portugal in a historic perspective**

One of the vital dimensions for the study of Brazilian immigration in Portugal is understanding the current discourse on the phenomenon was built through time. According to Fairclough (1995), this appreciation allows us to have a panoramic view of the universe of possibilities in which discourses are inscribed. Our analysis was focused on the linearity of discourse about the Brazilian immigrant in Portugal and their eventual points of rupture, following a historic-diachronic perspective (CARVALHO, 2015). This temporal appreciation allowed us to weave connections between the current media discourse and those of other historic moments.

The different economic realities between the two countries can be pointed out as the main reason that, from around the 1980's, the first migratory wave of Brazilians to Portugal had occurred. In a first moment, this movement had the profile of countercurrent, because the Portuguese emigrants that had established themselves in Brazil were now returning to their country with their family. When people already declared that period as a "lost decade" (FAUSTO, 1995, p. 546) in Brazil, the economic growth in Portugal and the perspectives of modernization in the country due to its entry to the European Economic community made that migratory project begin to be considered in other parts of the

Brazilian population. Therefore, beyond Brazilian political exiled, we also perceive the dislocation of highly qualified people to Portugal.

In that country, the arrival of the first group of immigrants was reported in a preconceived and pessimistic way, in consequence of the stereotype of the “cheeky and smartass Brazilian” (IORIO; SOUZA, 2018, p. 319) that prevailed at the time, an inheritance of the social representation about the men present in Brazilian telenovelas that were shown in Portugal since then (MACHADO, 2003). Meanwhile, in Brazil, the subjects were focused in re-signifying Portugal as a modern country with promising economic perspectives. It was only in a second moment, when the first migratory flow became more consistent, that the Brazilian immigrants in Portugal began to be represented in the news. Here, we found the first attempts of characterizing the phenomenon through the description of who were these Brazilians that “took a chance” at improving their quality of life in faraway lands. The first news report about the migratory flow was made in 1988, highlighting the profile of the emigrant, whose characteristic that stands out is the profession, showing, thus, the level of qualification of these people (PINHO, 2007). They are doctors, dentists and engineers, but also businesspeople, the latter referenced as a testimony of economic viability of the migratory project (PINHO, 2007). They also mentioned football players, advertisement people, architects, artists and engineers, characterizing the immigration of the professional type (PINHO, 2007) and of the male gender.

The first migratory flow was extended until early 1990’s. With the entrance of Portugal in the Schengen Area,<sup>5</sup> the improvement of public infrastructure and the transition of that country for an economy based in the service sector, the emigration to Portugal begins to be considered by many Brazilians as an opportunity of better work opportunities. Then, the second migratory flow begins, distinguished from the first one due

5 The Schengen Area comprises the geographic territory of 26 countries that agreed to the Schengen Agreement. Created in 1985, this agreement establishes the end of border control between the signing countries, in a way of allowing free circulation of people within the European Union and simultaneously a reinforcement of control and vigilance of exterior borders (CARVALHAIS, 2008).

to its density and migrant profile. The Brazilians that began to arrive in Portugal had a lower school level and were more oriented to less qualified positions in the work market (PADILLA et al., 2015). Another unique aspect of this second flow is the fact that it is marked by the feminization of the migratory movement, which followed the trend of other migratory flows in the global sense (PADILLA et al., 2015).

Following these changes are the transformation in the discourses of the Brazilian media. Maybe for the first time, it is signaled the existence of “illegal” Brazilian immigrants in Portugal, condition that is only mitigated when it appears associated to more qualified professionals (PINHO, 2007). It is also observed the fact that, as in the first flow, we perceive substantial differences in the way of presenting the phenomenon. From Brazil’s side, the press would neglect the essential changes that differentiated the profile of the first and the wave migrant, especially regarding the recognition and representation of women, of people with less favorable economic conditions and the “multiracial” character of the second wave (ASSIS, 2017). In Portugal, these changes, even though they are recognized and legitimized, end up appearing in pessimistic discourses, for instance, the association of Brazilian men to criminal activities and Brazilian women in the sex market (ASSIS, 2017). These stereotypes, along with European migratory policies becoming more strict and difficulties found by immigrants in foreign soil, were some of the factors that contributed to, at the end of the second migratory flow, the increase of number of Brazilians emigrating Portugal and returning to Brazil, situations also documented in Brazilian press (PINHO, 2007).

After a period marked by the return of Brazilians to Brazil or by the re-migration to other European countries, which is extended until the end of the first decade of the 21st century until the following decade, the statistic records have come to show a new period of growth of the migratory flow from Brazil to Portugal. In 2018, it was possible to see an increase in 23.4% in the number of Brazilian citizens residing in Portugal in

comparison to the previous year, 105,423 citizens representing 21.9% of the foreigners living in the country<sup>6</sup> (RIBEIRO et al., 2019).

These data show that, even before there were a certain indecision in distinguishing a new migratory flow face to the one observed in the first decade of this century (FRANÇA; PADILLA, 2018), it is already possible to see studies that attest its existence (FRANÇA; PADILLA, 2018). Following the trend of diversification already observed in the second flow, we are facing a multifaceted third migratory flow. How it is being represented by the media discourse is the question we have and we seek to respond with this article.

### **“Portugal pelos Brasileiros” and the new Brazilian immigrant in Portugal**

The analysis of the material we proposed to study was guided in the sense of evidencing in what way the social representations of Brazilian immigrants in Portugal are being built or articulated in the show. In order to do that, we recurred to statistic data and other studies, in a way of understanding the relation of what we see in the show with a wider scenario. We also did not neglect the work of production and editing the content. Even though the show portrays the experience of migration through the direct speech of immigrants, Fairclough (1995) points out that the choice of which excerpt of scene to put in the final cut of the material that will be broadcast in the television schedule is everything but arbitrary. According to the author, it is in the center of these choices a complete relation of social and ideological motivation more or less conscient that will have direct impact in the meaning and discourse articulated with that content. When we think in this manner, we understand that the option for recurring to personal portraits of immigrants demonstrated the intention of representing a certain authenticity which would have been supposedly lost when checking that the statistical data

6 It is admitted that the total number of residents of Brazilian descente in Portugal is bigger. This number, even though it is official, do not consider undocumented Brazilians and those who are not considered because they have acquired the Portuguese citizenship.

did not match the social representation about Brazilian immigrants in Portugal (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995).

We will speak about the social representation from their presences and absences, in other words, how they are being built in the episodes through which they are shown or mentioned, but also for what they do not show or tell. We are concerned in comprising our analysis into two different perspectives, without disregarding them being connected in very complex ways. In our notes, we mention representative implications of discourse, in the sense we perceive in what way the broadcasted representations are related with the wider context we mentioned above. On the other hand, we did not obliterate the discursive implications that these changes carry within that talk directly with the social context in which these immigrants are inserted. It is this interweaving that allowed the problematization of social and cultural issues that come from the aspects observed, evidencing what is the impact of these changes in the subjectivity of contemporary societies and their implications in the life of these subjects.

Before we begin with the analysis of social representations associated to immigrants, we questioned what would be the Portugal that is being represented. According to King and Wood (2002), the discourses and images that are built about the country of destination are an important support for the decision of emigrating. In this sense, we see in the show a discourse that interpolates the immigrant's speech with images and voiceovers that makes us know different aspects of the Portuguese culture, such as food, architecture and music. Here, we see an example of the ideologic character of the national identity, through which it is evident the prioritization of the political and economic view about the society (MARTINS, 2001). Since this is not the focus of our analysis, we considered important to point out here that it is imperative to question, in a second moment, not only the means, but also the ends in which the national identity associations of Portugal present in the show intend to accomplish.

The change of perspective in Portugal's image of their economic traits for their cultural traits are mirrored both in the change of the profile of the migrant and in the terms in which this migration happens. In the series, we see family as an important component of media discourse on migrants. In a large part of time, interviews are conducted within the residence of immigrants or show them interacting with family members. We see here a mirror of the trend associated to the third migratory wave of: family inclusion in the decision-making process about migration and their effective realization. The statistical data do not allow us to say otherwise: in 2018, 28% of residence authorization conceived to foreigners were for situations of family regrouping (RIBEIRO et al., 2019). In the next year, the Service of Foreigners and Borders was obligated to refuse new requests due to the absence of available dates to help immigrants (LOPES, 2019). In addition to family, in the show, we also see the hobbies and moments of leisure to be values, either through images if immigrants developing their aptitudes in ateliers or in strolls with the family, or through the verbal discourse of these immigrants. This aspect consolidates the change of economic and labor profile of migration of other periods to political and moral profile, something already mapped in previous studies (FRANÇA; PADILLA, 2018). It is important to mark, however, that, even if these discourses are a reflection of what statistical data show us, they are also, in a certain way, implicit markets of what is considered important or not to be shown about these migrant's lives, influencing a whole representative and symbolic universe in full construction.

When we went further on understanding how the recent Brazilian migration to Portugal was represented in the show, another aspect that stood out was the discourse that this is a geographically marked phenomenon. The Brazilians that appeared in the episodes of the first season of this show migrated to different places in the Lisbon area. Some of them live in more central regions of Lisbon, as Príncipe Real and Alvalade, and others live in nearby cities, associated to a higher social state, such as Cascais and Sintra. The show's voiceover show us a bit more

information about these locations, with data about the number of inhabitants and their distance in relation to Lisbon. Even if, in 2018, the district of Lisbon would concentrate 68.9% of the foreign resident population in the country (RIBEIRO et al., 2019), it is important to observe that other regions of the country equally presented a significant growth in the number of residing foreigners, rates that can be compared to the districts that, taking Lisbon as an example, shelters a great number of immigrants. We especially highlight the growth of the Northern region as a destination, being the district of Braga, Porto and Viana do Castelo the ones who presented a greater increase in number of foreign residents when compared to the previous year – 24.4%, 18.7% and 17.4%, respectively. These taxes were matched or superior to the districts where there are a greater concentration of foreign residents nowadays, Lisbon, Faro and Setúbal – 17% 12.3% and 12%, respectively (RIBEIRO et al., 2019).

In relation to the sociocultural dimension, we observe that the division of gender, race and social status, commonly used to characterize Brazilian immigrants in Portugal, are still present in the show. The verbal discourse of immigrants and also their lifestyle show their higher social status in Brazilian societies. That also explains why there wasn't any black or indigenous people in the show, since it isn't possible talking about race in Brazil without talking about social status. According to a 2019 report from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the condition of economic and social vulnerability is strongly present in the portion of the black population,<sup>7</sup> making these people be in “severe disadvantage” (IBGE, 2019 p. 12) in relation to the rest of the population.

We also highlight some important transformations about the presence of women in representation of the phenomenon. Out of the five episodes of the first season of the show, two had a woman as a lead character. Also in another episode, that talks about a couple's experience, even though the lead character is the man, and not the woman, we

7 The aspects of color and race find themselves mixed in a sole category in the analyses of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), which presents to their respondents the option of self-declaring White, Black, Mixed, Asian or Indigenous (IBGE, 2019).

perceive that the intention of migration was hers, and her partner decided to follow her. We note, here, an important discursive change in the media discourse about the Brazilian immigration in Portugal. In Pessar (1999), we see how migrations and the image of the migrant can end up being confined to representative categories of the male gender. The author explains that, in the United States, until not long ago, migrations had an exclusively male connotation, which made migrant women and their stories be invisibilized. This situation makes the expectations in relation to migrant men or women to be completely different. While the man was expected to have integration to the work market, the movement of migrant women was associated to following the working husband and taking with her the couple's children.

The analysis of the show allow us to say that the contemporary media discourse about the phenomenon we approach have been seeking not only including Brazilian women in the scenario of Brazilian migration to Portugal, but also qualifying who are they and the terms in which this dislocation happens. This type of discourse is different from the first migratory flow, in which the male gender was predominant, and also the second flow, in which we see a feminization of the movement followed by the hypersexualization of Brazilian women. That change in perspective has consequences not only in the perception about the movement, but also in the social counterparts of these symbolics constructions. That is because, beyond the aspects that were already mapped as important for the maintenance of good mental health of immigrants, such as maintenance of familiar relationships with the original country, the long-term perspective in the decision of living in the destination country and the conservation of a high level of physical health (TEIXEIRA; DIAS, 2019), studies such as Oliveira et al. (2019) showed that also an insertion in more qualified positions in the work market will have a positive impact in the mental health of immigrants.

They are, precisely, these new media discourses about Brazilians in Portugal that support a perceptive change between the immigrants of the third flow and the previous flows. This scenario indicates that we

are facing the creation of a new social category that distinguishes these new immigrants of others. That is a significant change because, as already reinforced by Tajfel (1969), stereotypes have a fundamental role in the configuration of the relationship between members of different social categories. If, on one hand, characteristics perceived as common between members of a social category are reinforced, on the other, the ones perceived as different between social categories are equally reinforced, in a process the author called *perceptive accentuation*. As a consequence, we see a new social identity of the Brazilian immigrant in Portugal gaining strength, at the same time that their own existence deducts possible intracategory conflicts that cannot be obliterated. In the series, this change is shown in the absence of interaction between the new Brazilian immigrants with those of other migratory flows. Most of the time, the Brazilian people interviewed in the show interact with spouses, family members or workmates. This absence of presence – which, in many cases, says much more than the presence – represents a marked segregation between social categories which, in our point of view, deserve all the attention in future studies.

## Conclusions

Brazilian migration to Portugal nowadays indicate we are facing a new migratory flow that have been intensifying over the last few years, constituting itself as a third migratory flow. The media discourse being a powerful tool of representation in the world we live in, we intended to understand how the social representation present in the television show “Portugal pelos Brasileiros” mean and shape the perception of the phenomenon.

When we revisit the discourses that were woven about Brazilian immigrants and previous migratory flows, we perceived they fluctuate according to a series of variables. The social representation of immigrants of the first migratory flow are linked to a media movement of praising Portugal as a country with economic potential, with migration being portrayed as a movement of highly qualified people with a certain cultural bond with the country of destination. In the second flow, we see that the low degree

of qualification and density of flow stand out, along with the derogatory view of the feminization of the movement. It is common to both flows the social representation sustained by a well-defined division of gender, race and social class, which helped crystallize the structuring dimensions of the stereotypes of Brazilians in the Portuguese imaginary.

In our analysis of the TV show in question, we identified different aspects that directly relate to a current movement of re-signification of these social representations of Brazilian media, as well as the social implications of this process. To the Portugal that now appears to be characterized by its cultural component much more than its economic situation, we see reinforced the idea of a migratory flow restricted to the Lisbon region and surrounding cities with a recognized high social status, contrary to statistical data that show a much more pulverized movement in which the Northern region is prominent. About the characterization of the immigrant, we see the replication of conventionalized social categories, such as gender, race and social status which, however, are being re-worked discursively. The new Brazilian immigrants are portrayed as white and belonging to more elevated social classes, which denounces the still persistent position of inequality of black people in the Brazilian cultural matrix. Women are represented in a position of bigger representation, which could be an indication to understand the re-positioning of Brazilian migrant women in the Portuguese social structure. In this process, the autonomy of Brazilian women as migrant and their insertion in positions qualified in the work market are some of the observable differences in the discursive level. On the other hand, the lack of mention of social relationships between immigrants of this new flow and previous migratory flows revealed to be a discursive strategy for the creation, through social representation, of a new category of Brazilian immigrants in Portugal. This scenario allows both distinguishing them from the stereotypes associated to Brazilian immigrants of previous flows, which would have a direct impact in the negotiation of its social identity and integration in the Portuguese society, as promoting the migratory project of Brazilian people with a similar profile that are still in Brazil.

These observations allow us to conclude that, in the TV show in question, the new Brazilian immigrants in Portugal are being portrayed in a partial and excluding manner, disregarding the plurality compatible to the nature of this phenomenon. The media discourse used for the effect is found based in specific cultural and social-economic traits, reinforcing a social representation of the phenomenon compatible to this profile, protecting these subjects from those who migrated in previous migratory flows, at the same time it positions them in a re-signified way in the Portuguese social structure.

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