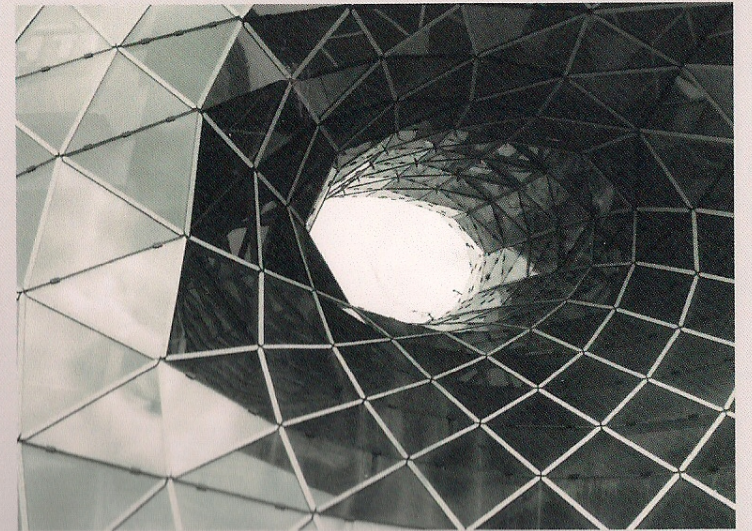


Intercultural Crossings

Conflict, Memory and Identity

Lénia Marques, Maria Sofia Pimentel Biscaia
and Glória Bastos (eds.)



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Women's Journeys to Portugal Identitary Reconstructions and Memories of the Country of Origin

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Introduction

We live in a world marked by rapid change at every level and by the co-existence of globalization and homogenization with fragmentation, which creates ambivalence between belonging and uprooting. Georges Balandier uses the expression "overmodernity" to define this period of change and ambivalence as a period of "change and uncertainty" (1997). The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2007)¹ talks about "liquid modernity" – light, liquid and dynamic, but inadequate for expressing the reality in which we live. For Bauman, what makes modernity liquid is compulsive and obsessive modernization, which is permanently accelerating and, like a liquid, no form of social life can hold back its influence for long (2007: 11). For the author, the third wave of modern migration, which is presently in full force and gathering momentum, leads to the "age of diasporas": a "world-wide archipelago of ethnic/religious/linguistic forgotten settlements – oblivious to the trails blazed and paved by the imperialist-colonial episode" (Bauman, 2007: 18).

At the same time that globalization represents a certain form of interconnection and interpenetration between regions and local communities marked by the hegemony of capital and of the market, it is also accompanied by a search for singularity and space to create difference and localism (Bhabha, 1995). Is it possible to articulate identity and globalization? Does globalization make identity impossible, or could it be the cradle of the assertion of identity, the context in which the fragmentation of its subjects sparks off new and successive attempts at recomposition?

¹ All quotes from documents in Portuguese translated into English are the author's own.

Living in an era of diasporas among diasporas, in which forms of life “float, meet, clash, crash, catch hold of each other, merge and hive off” new questions are asked about the connection between identity and citizenship, individual and place, neighborhood and belonging (Bauman, 2007: 19). This whole dynamic in the present world brings new challenges to the study of social phenomena and, in particular, to the study of migratory movements which has not consistently focused on the dimension of gender.

Over the last thirty years little concerted effort has been made to incorporate gender into theories of international migration. Theories of migration have focused on the causes of immigration and have not been able to find answers to a series of questions. Theories do not provide a real understanding of who emigrants are, of the conditions under which women emigrate or of the predominance of women in certain areas of work rather than in others. They do not explain the circumstances which encourage women to become transnational migrants, to fall into the channels of people-trafficking or to seek asylum. This difficulty of incorporating gender into the study of migration (on an international scale) punctuates studies in Portugal and is partly due to the fact that different disciplines tend to focus only on certain types of migration and to emphasize different explanations. The incorporation of gender as an explicit part of migration theory has recently been influenced by feminist theories from the United States which continue to challenge more orthodox perspectives.

In this text, I have sought to present some results found in a research project called “Immigrant Women in Portugal. Memories, difficulties of integration and life projects” financed by the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, in which I sought to analyze three fundamental dimensions of the life of immigrant women in Portugal. The first of these dimensions was the memories of the country of origin, the second dealt with the difficulties of integration in Portugal and the third, with the women’s life projects. Each dimension includes different variables. Following the theme of this book, results found for the variables of memory and identity will be analyzed.

1. Theoretical Contextualization: Migration and Identity

Immigration and the consequent encounter of people from different cultures that the phenomenon engenders has implications both for the social identity of those who migrate and the culture of what is called the “host” society. Nevertheless, studies on migration have not paid great attention to the psychological dimension, personal experience and difficulties of members of the migrant communities.

Identity has been conceptualized differently by different social sciences. In Psychology, drawing on from Henri Tajfel’s theory of social identity (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy and Flament, 1971; Tajfel, 1981) and John C. Turner’s theory of self-categorisation (1982), the discussion of identity has focused on the opposition/complementarity between personal and social identities (Ellemers *et al.*, 2002). Other authors have emphasized the fact that the importance of group membership is not an aspect which can be analyzed in a social vacuum, but is dependent on the context of comparison (Codol, 1982) and the relative positions of groups in a certain social structure (Deschamps, 1982). A more recent line of research on identity and social representations has emphasized the role of social memory in the construction of social identity (Jovchelovitch, 1995; Laszlo and Farkas, 1997).

In sociology, identity has been conceptualized in different ways. Social constructivism has stimulated socio-historical work on commemoration, narrative and symbolization. Connerton (1999) emphasized the processes and mechanisms by which societies remember their past, an area of research for which there is a growing interest, while authors like Grossberg (1996) posit that it is impossible to have an *authentic* identity based on experiences which are universally shared or from the same origin. Postmodernist approaches consider that variations within identity categories are as important as the variations between them.

More recent research on identity has focused on the fluid, multidimensional and dynamic aspects of identity. Different authors have presented important ideas for rethinking identity. Weeks (1990: 88) points out the potentially contradictory nature of identity experienced by each individual and the factors which condition the identities on which individuals focus their attention. Gramsci emphasizes the idea that individuals are active agents of the process of constructing identity and presents an important concept: the “starting point of critical elaboration”, the point at which the person becomes aware of who they really are, where identity marks the connection of their past to the social, economic and cultural relationships in which they are immersed.

Another fundamental concept is Stuart Hall’s strategic and positional concept of identity which makes it possible to relate identity to the discourse which argues that “identities are points of temporary attachments to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us” (1996: 6). Bauman (1996) relates the concept of identity to postmodern conditions. Despite the fact that the conceptualization emphasizes the fluid, dynamic and multidimensional aspect of identity, empirical studies of identity have not managed to capture it in general

and the influence of the social and historical context has been neglected (Frable, 1997: 139).

Research has lent more importance to the analysis of isolated dimensions of identity and not to the analysis of the overlapping of different identities with one another (Howard, 2000: 374). Studies have been made of ethnic, sexual, gender, class and age identities, but rarely of the overlapping membership of these groups. Questions of identity are of particular importance for minority groups such as (im)migrants. Authors such as Anzaldúa (1987) talk about the construction of a unified identity, and there is a vast range of literature on the problems of identity experienced by different minority groups.

Psychological and psycho-sociological research has neither always studied the ideological dimension which underlies identities nor analyzed the ideologies which support collective identification and which result from this same identification. Deschamps (1982) emphasized the need to include an ideological analysis as well as social and psychological ones. Authors such as Hall (1996), Bauman (1996) or Grossberg (1996) seek ways of articulating a notion of democratic citizenship which are effective in a post-modern world, focusing on political issues based on the existence of people in specific communities and contexts, transforming identities into a question of exercising citizenship.

Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay's perspective (1996) is particularly important for my study. These authors use deconstructive criticism but, as they themselves point out, this criticism does not displace traditional concepts of identity (classic literature on identity considers identities to have an intrinsic and essential content defined by a common origin, by a common structure of experience or by both). Identity is no longer seen as a nucleus and is now considered to be a strategic and positional concept (Hall, 1996: 6). It follows then that the concept of fragmentation which emphasizes the multiplicity of identities and positions is in the heart of every identity. Moreover it recognizes the role played by hybridity which evokes images of liminality and the crossing of frontiers. Finally, the diaspora principle emphasizes transnationality, movement and political strategies to define location as a distinct community in historical contexts of dislocation (Clifford, 1994: 308).

2. The Empirical Study

2.1. Objectives

In this text, I am presenting an empirical study with a psychological analytical perspective (as well as the more customary sociological and economic perspectives). Women were the subject of this study and were not merely one analytical dimension, which would usually be the case.

The objectives of the study were to analyze the three most numerous communities of immigrant women in Portugal and to find common dimensions and differences between the three, seeking to answer a series of questions, including whether there is a stronger connection to the past related to greater integration problems and with plans to return to the country of origin.

2.2. The Brazilian, Cape Verdean and Ukrainian Communities in Portugal

Data from the Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (the Portuguese Foreign Office) for 2008 indicate the presence of 440,277 foreigners in the national territory, 230,555 men and 209,722 women. The data shows that the Brazilian community is the most numerous in Portugal, with the number of Brazilian women (57,494) higher than the number of Brazilian men (49,467). Calculating the proportion of men to women in each community, we find that in two communities, the Brazilian and Cape Verdean communities, the proportion of men is lower than women: 0.86 in the Brazilian community and 0.92 in the Cape Verdean community. The highest proportion of men is found in the Ukrainian community (1.34), and this is common for most immigrant communities in Portugal.

2.2.1. The Brazilian Community

Padilla (2005) argues that among the motivations which lead Brazilians to seek out Portugal are the image of the "old mother country", the historical-colonial connection, the flow of return from Portuguese emigration to Brazil (of themselves and of their descendents), the common language, a natural curiosity in relation to Portugal and Europe and a certain familiarity with Portuguese culture. Among the determining factors are also the fact that no entry visa is required, that there are social support networks for immigrants – friends, acquaintances or family members – which make it easier when they first arrive, the great difference between the wages earned in the two countries, as well as the optimistic images transmitted by the media in Brazil, showing economic opportunities and jobs in Portugal (Padilla, 2005: 1-2).

As I have pointed out, Brazilians are not a new immigrant group in Portugal, but over the last decade, and particularly the last five years, the profile of the typical immigrant has changed. The first wave of immigrants essentially consisted of qualified people, who were predominantly dentists, computer experts and people working in advertising and, as a result of pressure from these professional groups, Portuguese society made adjustments and changes at various levels, such as the reform of the profession of dentistry or the modernization of advertising and IT (Peixoto, 1999). But, also according to Padilla (2005: 2), the new wave of immigrants has fewer qualifications and a more limited socio-economic integration, working in the building industry, restaurants, cleaning and commerce.

2.2.2. The Cape Verdean Community

The main Cape Verdean contingent arrived in Portugal in the mid-1960s, a period when there was a lack of manpower due to the Colonial War and emigration. These people found work in the building industry, the public sector, mines and the manufacturing industries. In geographical terms, they were concentrated in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, and it is estimated that 100,000 Cape Verdeans left their country between 1963 and 1973 to find a better life in other countries. In fact, the concept that emigration is a road to prosperity is well-rooted in Cape Verdean society. In the 1980s, the Cape Verdean community was consolidated in Portugal, and the flow of immigrants continued until the nineties, with many settling in Portugal (permanent migration) through migratory networks, which in their turn facilitated the arrival of others. As families were reunited and marriages took place, a new generation of Cape Verdeans was born in Portugal or came here very early and was socialized in this country.

Initially the Cape Verdean women who came, followed their husbands/partners through family reunification processes. But a large number of Cape Verdean women arrived alone, many as one-parent families, and had to support their children on their own. In some of these cases, the children initially stayed with other members of the family, and it was only later and generally through family reunification processes that they joined their mothers (Sertório and Pereira, 2004). One of the factors that gave most incentive to this immigration of lone women was the fact that it was easier to get a work visa, particularly if they had a contract for domestic services. The special agreement between Portugal and Cape Verde facilitated this situation (Sertório and Pereira, 2004).

2.2.3. The Ukrainian Community

The first contingent of Ukrainian citizens arrived in Portugal in the 1990s. The collapse of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the USSR (1992) changed the economic and political systems of these countries. One hundred and twenty million people from the former Soviet countries lived in poverty. The Ukrainians experienced the profound economic and political changes of their countries, with closures and crises in industry, companies and public institutions which led to a high percentage of unemployed people and low salaries. In addition, the cultural and economic hegemony of western countries, the facilitated movement of people between the Schengen countries and the opening of frontiers in the former Soviet countries, created more pressure to migrate among these people. Labor trafficking networks facilitated the movement of people and the establishment of contacts in the host countries. After independence, the nature, intensity, composition and direction of migratory movement from Ukraine changed dramatically (Malynovska, 2004: 11). Up to the year 2000, the number of Ukrainian immigrants in Portugal with residence visas was residual. Moreover, there was no historical relationship between the countries or a cultural proximity which would justify the creation of privileges for Ukrainians, unlike what happened with the Brazilians or the Cape Verdeans.

The mass entry of Ukrainians would have been impossible to predict. At the time, Portugal had not adopted any pro-active policy for recruiting workers from Eastern Europe, and had no privileged economic, historical or cultural connections with the region (Baganha, Marques and Góis, 2004: 5). The number of Eastern Europeans who settled in Portugal during the 1990s was very small: 373 people in 1999 (Portal SEF, 1999), and there was no group of any nationality which could form a base for constructing a strong migratory network. According to some studies – Baganha, Marques and Góis (2004); Pires (2002) and Gonçalves and Figueiredo (2005) – most Ukrainian immigrants legalized their situation in 2001 and, in 2002, became one of the three most important groups in Portugal.

Under the terms of Article 55 of Law 4/2001 of 10th of January, the number of residence permits issued to illegal immigrants in 2001 was 16,901 (Baganha, Marques and Góis, 2004: 25-26), 36% of which were to Ukrainian immigrants.²

² Permits for over a year which are renewable for a maximum of five years, as long as immigrants prove they have a work contract, no criminal record, paid up what they owe to the social security system and entered Portugal before 30th of November 2001.

In fact, in 2002, the Ukrainians became the group with the most residents: 62,041 (Baganha, Marques and Góis: 2004). This is a flow of immigration which took place without any of the habitual co-existing factors of this type of situation: post-colonial relationships, direct recruitment, migration supported by the State, bilateral agreements, strong historical, cultural and economic relationships and migratory networks. So what happened? Among other factors habitually cited when attempting to find an explanation, I included the lack of control for the issue of short-term visas within the European Union, easy and speedy movement within the Schengen area, the people-trafficking organized in Eastern Europe under the guise of "travel agencies", the existence of organized infrastructures for transport and easy access to documents.

But other factors should be taken into account (Baganha, Marques and Góis, 2004: 30), after the collapse of the Soviet Union, its constituent countries moved into a period of transition to a market economy and democratic system. Restrictions on people leaving progressively disappeared. The great difference in wages and standard of living between the Eastern countries and the countries of the European Union also stimulated departures. Some regions of the country had a strong migratory culture (Western Ukraine). But why was this flow of migration destined for Portugal? The marketing used by agencies in Eastern Europe has to be taken into consideration, particularly in Ukraine, which offered very attractive packages that included travel documents and job opportunities made accessible to a large segment of the population. Moreover, wages in Portugal were several times higher than in Ukraine. Another important factor which should be taken in consideration was the process to legalize the situation of immigrants between January and November 2001, which represented a real alternative to a possible illegal residence in other countries of the European Union (Baganha, Marques and Góis, 2004: 31).

The community is highly educated, with a minimum of ten to twelve years of education, frequently holding a technical or professional certificate corresponding to twelve years of study or higher education in a civil or military university. In Portugal, they work in sectors of activity and in professional activities which are partly or totally ill-suited to their professional experience or qualifications. They are dependent on work contracts, which means they are frequently exploited in the workplace, increasing their potential for suffering social exclusion. However, their high qualifications make it easy for them to learn Portuguese.

Though these immigrants started out with short-term migratory projects, the arrival of other members of the family, the continual need

for manpower and their low expectations for the improvement of the political and economic situation in their country of origin meant that they lived in Portugal for longer than they had originally intended.

2.3. Methodology

We held semi-directive interviews with twenty-four women from the three communities, who were witness to different waves of immigration and forms of integration in the Portuguese economy and society: eight Brazilian women, eight Cape Verdean women and eight Ukrainian women.

2.3.1. Criteria for Selecting the Women

This study sought to understand the three most numerous communities of immigrant women in Portugal by collecting the life stories (at least the parts relevant to their migratory projects) of women from each of the communities. My definition of immigrant women refers to women who were born in other countries and who emigrated to Portugal, and not a second generation of women who were born in Portugal and are children of immigrant parents.

All of these women were born in Brazil, Cape Verde, Ukraine or Russia (the two women who were born in Russia have Ukrainian nationality) and emigrated to Portugal at a certain moment in their lives. They all do unskilled work in cleaning and catering (one woman being unemployed at the time of the interview and preferring to present herself as a student). This study does not intend to analyze women who represent the three communities, but only to analyze stories which help to understand some of the difficulties experienced by these same communities. All of the women live in the Greater Lisbon area. I made sure that for each nationality interviews were held with women in situations which varied in terms of the following variables: age, marital status, number of children, religion, education (though all of them did unskilled work, there were women among them who had been through higher education systems), had emigrated on their own initiative or emigrated with their husband or partner (as a result of a decision taken by the couple) or who emigrated to join their husband or partner and lastly the length of time they had been living in Portugal.

2.3.2. Semi-Directive Interviews

I chose to use the methodology of the semi-directive interview to achieve my objective of collecting specific aspects of the stories of the women which related to their migratory project. I do not consider that I collected life stories as such, but actually certain dimensions of these life stories as defined by the interview blocks.

2.3.3. Interview Blocks

The interview script consisted of twelve blocks of questions, with a planned duration of 88 minutes. This text only discusses the results of Blocks 11 – Past/ Future Projects; and 12 – Personal/ Social Identity.

2.3.4. Procedure

An interview script was initially written and subsequently tested with a woman from each country of origin, to test how long the questions would take and how easily they would be understood, after which some changes were made according to the feedback received.

The women were contacted and the interviews scheduled, the general aim of the study was explained and they were made aware of the importance of answering truthfully. It was pointed out that they could choose not to answer any questions they were not comfortable with. The interviews were recorded in their entirety and then transcribed, with the women's permission. The interviews were held throughout 2008: the first on 7th of April and the last on 14th of December.

The women who wanted to remain anonymous were able to do so, but in fact only one Cape Verdean woman asked for anonymity. For the remaining women, I chose to include their first names and to omit their surnames.

The content of the transcriptions was analyzed from interview to interview, for each nationality group and for the whole group of twenty-four interviews. I sought to listen carefully and analyze what I was being told, but also included the force of the silences, what was unsaid and could not be said, as I sought to take the whole relational dimension into account.

3. Results

So Why Did They Come After All?

Curiously enough, in the age of the diaspora (Bauman: 2007) and in the globalized and de-territorialized world, "the crossing" (by plane or by car, alone or in the company of others) was not just another trajectory in the middle of a web of other trajectories.

Rosi Braidotti's metaphor (1994) of women moving between different worlds, languages, jobs and places with no connection with a fixed location has proved to be attractive for the feminist discourse because it transmits the representation of women "on the move", with strategies for avoiding racism and sexism, but it is only a metaphor. Celebrating mobility is only possible in certain conditions or for certain women,

qualified women whose academic training and professional skills afford them a certain level of independence.

The journey to Portugal was, in most cases, "the journey", the turning point. The vast majority of women had never been out of their country, their region, and in the case of the Cape Verdeans, their original islands. The dates of their arrivals are generally remembered precisely, even when they were far back in time: the day, month and year were announced with the same solemnity with which they announced other great dates, because of their symbolic and instrumental value (given that the longer a person lives in a place, the easier it is to gain a residence permit and then certain rights).

Strangeness and Transformation

Arrival in Portugal and contact with a different country and culture cause a feeling of strangeness. Habits and customs, and differences in climate and language are all strange. Little by little this strangeness is overcome, but other questions or problems of identity arise.

Women no longer see themselves as the same as the women in their country of origin. They realize this when they communicate with their compatriots by telephone or the internet, or in a more marked way, when they travel to their countries on holidays. On this first "crossing" back, they find women who seem unchanged and realize that, as the ones who left, they are no longer the way they were, and have been transformed in ways and to degrees which were imperceptible to them at the beginning.

They are almost all transformed, become different: more open/more closed, sadder/more joyful, more courageous, and few of them express a feeling of continuity, of being exactly the same as they were before. Finding that they are different to their compatriots is a painful experience. One question begins to assume great importance: who are they really? They now know that they are not the same as the women who left their country of origin, but they also know that they are not the same as Portuguese women. They discover that they are strange in their own country and are foreigners in Portugal.

Thus internal identity conflicts arise which are more serious than the external conflicts which sometimes punctuate their relationships with nationals of the country, and gradually the women get into complex identity processes which may involve different identity strategies (in the sense of Camilleri, 1990): asserting themselves, differentiating themselves, hiding themselves, negotiating meanings, becoming antagonistic, showing complicity or opposition, and playing games.

Memories

The identity of these women is made up of "subterranean memories" (a term used by the sociologist and Austrian researcher Michel Pollak) because these women experience exclusion and marginalization to a greater or lesser extent. Situations of prejudice, discrimination, sexual harassment, exploitation in the workplace (long hours, harsh working conditions) and mafia networks are revealed by almost all of the women, and even those who say they have not felt prejudice from others eventually reveal situations which actually disclose discrimination, if not at work then in everyday life. Identity is therefore also the identity of the inferior group (in the sense of Tajfel), or of the dominated group (in the sense of Deschamps).

Identity and memory are processes which are intrinsically linked. Some of these women take refuge in the past and emphasize the importance of their roots. They mystify it, imbuing it with sad longing and nostalgia. These are the memories of their grandparents, mothers, colleagues and friends from the street, of their school years and of the geography of places: "I like the island as a space, it has something really good... I had never left the island, it's really big". Their memories are of events in their personal lives such as marriage, personal accidents like hurting their head, the death of their parents or events which marked life in their country: the election of Lula da Silva, the impeachment of Collor de Mello, the dismantling of the former Soviet Union area, the day that Cape Verde gained independence. These memories of episodes are imbued with feelings of joy and pain and it is precisely these previously experienced emotions that makes them more memorable. Meanwhile, other women do the opposite. They distance themselves from the past, separate themselves from it and want to become citizens of the world: "I'm not attached to the past because holding the past is for museums, and because everything I have done is done. I don't have any regrets and I try to live for today". For many, the past is already a distant place which could just dissipate completely – a tremulous and temporary scenario which others help to compose: "I have very few memories... I only remember one rock and one beach! I don't remember any of the rest. I was there too, but I hear people and family talking about it... they came later and talk about that".

For others still, the past is made irrelevant and is the place where they were born but nothing more than that – a place: "Cape Verde is where I was born. That's about all". For others their original identity (that the memory helps to construct) is consolidated in daily practices, in cooking the cuisine of the country of origin. In the case of Brazilians the references are rice and beans, *angú* (corn puré) and chicken. Cape Verdean women cook *cachupa* (stew made with corn, beans, and fish or

meat), *caldo de peixe* (fish soup), *feijão congo* (Cajan peas) and *xerém* (a spicy soup made with tuna and coconut milk, and thickened with cornmeal). For the latter, dance also plays an important part (*funaná*, *kizomba* and *coladeira*), as well as music of the country of origin and language (Creole): "I feel more at ease, because speaking Portuguese alone I seem to be Portuguese"; "this music is from Fogo Island... this music is called Alice. But when I put this music on, I immediately feel full if I'm hungry... I identify with the music, I like Mornas [a style of Cape Verdean music]".

The Portuguese as Interlocutors

Whether they are seen in a more positive or more negative light as a result of ongoing experiences, the Portuguese are the unavoidable interlocutors of the transformation dynamic among immigrant women and it is from the dynamic of the relationship with them that their identities are reconstructed. Many women do not know how they are seen by the Portuguese, but all know they see the Portuguese, as fairly distant, supportive, sad, dirty, good, (very or little) similar or different. And it is in a continuous dialogue and negotiation with these Portuguese people who almost all of the women consider sad and closed that these women see themselves and are transformed in a dynamic of mirror images.

Portuguese or Brazilian/Cape Verdean/Ukrainian Women

Three Brazilian women feel Brazilian and five a mixture of Brazilian and Portuguese. Maria da Glória says: "I'm Portuguese-Brazilian. I'm Portuguese in my heart and by choice. That's really what I feel! I feel I'm Brazilian but I also feel part of this country, this land".

Three of the Cape Verdean women feel Cape Verdean and five a mixture (one Cape Verdean and a little Portuguese, one more Portuguese than Cape Verdean). Alcinda comments: "I feel Cape Verdean and Portuguese. My heart is Cape Verdean, but my body is Portuguese". Let us consider Jacqueline and Sónia's cases, who have Portuguese nationality and who came to Portugal when they were very young (Sónia when she was three and Jacqueline when she was ten). Sónia feels Cape Verdean and a little Portuguese and Jacqueline a bit of both.

Four Ukrainian women feel Ukrainian (though two say they feel like foreigners in Ukraine) and one feels more Ukrainian and just a little Portuguese. Vera feels Russian (she was born in Moscow, though she had Ukrainian nationality) and Lúcia and Tetyana feel Russian and a bit Portuguese (Tetyana was born in Orel in Russia and Lúcia was born in Ukraine, but had a Russian father and a Ukrainian mother). It is

interesting to note that for each group of women, it is possible to identify women whose identity remains unchangeable – that of the country of origin – and others whose identity shows how they belong simultaneously to two different worlds (Horta, 2008: 251): the world in which they were born and the world in which they live.

Concluding Remarks

As one of the objectives of this work was to compare the situation of the three communities, I could not conclude without mentioning the comparative analysis of the results found in the three communities. The comparison of the answers from the women in the three communities to the questions in the script showed more continuity than discontinuity and this text makes little mention of discontinuity for precisely that reason. The three nationalities show basic differences in their characterization: different religions, and different levels of education, levels tending to be higher among the Ukrainians, intermediate for the Brazilians and lower for the Cape Verdeans.

The difficulties recounted by the women are inextricably linked to the community to which they belong. Thus, the Ukrainian women have greater difficulties with the language, are more dissatisfied with their migratory project, have less intention to continue in Portugal and more of them have plans to return to Ukraine. A lack of support networks is one factor which makes it more difficult for these women to integrate, despite the fact that some expressed very little desire to do so. The Brazilian women face the problem of sexual harassment and prejudice in Portuguese society. The Cape Verdean women are the ones who work longer hours in general terms, though they have support networks which have been constructed due to the community's long-standing presence in Portugal. They also face the problem of racism which, though often called subtle, leaves similar marks and stigmatizes people. Despite its difficulties, it is the people from this community who have the most frequent plans to live in the country permanently and who apply most often for Portuguese citizenship.

In the three communities as a whole, there is a general tendency for greater connection with the past and to the country of origin, a fact which is related to the difficulties of integrating into Portuguese society and to plans to return to the country of origin.

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