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Between margin and otherness: the representation of the Brazilian community in the Portuguese media

Entre margem e alteridade: a representação da comunidade brasileira nos meios de comunicação em Portugal

Entre margen y alteridad: la representación de la comunidad brasileña en los medios de comunicación portugueses

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Abstract

This investigation seeks to encompass around thirty years of migration experience of the Brazilian community from Brazil to Portugal, a flow that currently exceeds half a million residents, that is, about 5 per cent of the Portuguese population. This research aims to reflect on how the media initially created a bias against this migrant community, mainly through biased and sensationalist journalistic practices, which hindered the integration and acceptance of Brazilian immigration by Portuguese society. It is primarily through reversing this bias and the intervention of official entities, with new public policies, support from non-governmental organisations and associations, and media originating within the community itself, that the new Brazilian immigrants have gradually regained a previously blurred public image and gained citizenship status, as well as recognition from their Portuguese 'brothers'. The emergence of new critical situations, notably political polarisation and the growth of the far-right in Portugal, is contaminating the progress made so far and raising new concerns in this domain.

Keywords: Media, Immigration, Brazilian Community, Margin, Otherness.

Resumo

Trata-se de uma investigação que procura abarcar cerca de trinta anos de experiência migratória da comunidade brasileira do Brasil para Portugal, um fluxo que atualmente supera meio milhão de cidadãos residentes, isto é, cerca de 5 por cento da população portuguesa. Esta pesquisa procura refletir sobre como os media criaram um viés inicial sobre esta comunidade migrante, sobretudo por meio de práticas jornalísticas enviesadas e sensacionalistas, o que dificultou a integração e a aceitação da imigração brasileira pela sociedade portuguesa. É sobretudo por meio de uma inversão desse viés e da intervenção das entidades oficiais, com novas políticas públicas, com apoios de organizações não governamentais e de associações, e dos mídia originados na própria comunidade, que os novos imigrantes brasileiros, progressivamente, recuperaram uma imagem pública inicialmente desfocada e ganharam estatuto de cidadania e, bem assim, o reconhecimento por parte dos "irmãos" portugueses. A emergência de novas situações críticas, nomeadamente a polarização política e o crescimento da extrema-direita em Portugal, está a contaminar os progressos até então feitos e a lançar novos alertas neste domínio.

Palavras-chave: Mídia, Imigração, Comunidade Brasileira, Margem, Alteridade.

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Resumen
Este artículo examina casi tres décadas de migración brasileña hacia Portugal, un movimiento que hoy supera el medio millón de residentes, lo que representa aproximadamente el 5 % de la población portuguesa. El estudio analiza cómo las primeras coberturas mediáticas produjeron un relato sesgado y, con frecuencia, sensacionalista sobre esta comunidad migrante, configurando percepciones públicas que dificultaron su integración social. Con el tiempo, este encuadre inicial fue contrarrestado progresivamente mediante la actuación de instituciones estatales, la implementación de nuevas políticas públicas, el apoyo de organizaciones no gubernamentales y asociaciones comunitarias, así como el surgimiento de medios producidos por la propia comunidad brasileña. Estos procesos contribuyeron a reconstruir su imagen pública y a ampliar su reconocimiento dentro de la sociedad portuguesa. No obstante, el escenario reciente —marcado por la polarización política y el ascenso de la extrema derecha en Portugal— amenaza con erosionar los avances logrados y plantea nuevos desafíos para la representación mediática y la cohesión social.
Palabras clave: Medios de comunicación; Migración; Comunidad brasileña; Marginalidad; Alteridad.

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To provide a detailed overview of the background to this research on Portuguese media and the Brazilian community in Portugal—from the late 20th century to the present—we will, after this introduction and the theoretical framework, begin with a brief description and characterisation of the media market in Portugal. We will focus particularly on the most relevant aspects of this investigation: issues of discourse on integration and otherness in Portuguese media, especially through editorial strategies and discursive formulations regarding the integration of immigrants and their full participation in the host society.

We can say that the history of Portuguese social communication in recent decades is largely the history of discourse produced by major media outlets. This narrative primarily describes how the mass media continually confront concerns about a reality that has never peacefully coexisted with the communication system that interprets and narrates it. More than a history of reality and the society in which these media operate, it is a partial history that largely reflects the editorial lines and discursive stances of these media, rather than the event as a vital and shaping experience of civic virtue and true citizenship.

Instead of being mere fragments of contemporary Portuguese history, it is a history that cannot be reconciled with the multiple resistances of the irreconcilable. It is a narrative that, for much of this period, required compromise and submission to the games of political and economic interests. The true nature of the media—presumably intended to assume the role of a fourth estate, scrutinising public affairs without concessions and narrating the world of life rigorously and independently—has not been consistently or unequivocally realised by the Portuguese media.

Examples of this media model can be found in any major publication in the Portuguese press. Throughout Portuguese media history, we can see different commitments made by their leaders: sometimes supporting monarchist reactionism at the beginning of the 20th century, sometimes embracing republican modernity, and then being drawn to the integralist and fascist arrogance of the Estado Novo. Later, they praised freedom in April 1974, wavered for a while before Stalinism and new totalitarian shadows, and eventually, institutionally, returned to the petty politics of the time with fleeting words and circumstantial stories—lacking vision and purpose.

This is a sensitive issue amid the current Portuguese political crisis and rising political polarisation, as noted by various authors. Rather than fostering stronger democratic practices and citizenship, the media are experiencing a period of weakness in relation to the political and digital spheres, with critics raising concerns about the crisis of diversity and pluralism in Portuguese media: “The dangers of insufficient scrutiny of public affairs and of the depoliticization of audiences by way of a weakened and precarious media system are clear signs of concern in the current and future Portuguese media landscape” (Cádima, 2010: 17). The limitations of the media model, often confined to narratives of insignificant events, persist across the press, audiovisual media, and even their digital counterparts.

Reflection on the media event is fundamental to understanding how the media shape public perception of immigration. The event is not simply a fact of reality but a narrative construction by the media, which selects, frames, and dramatises certain elements rather than others. Recall Pierre Bourdieu (1996), who argued that the media manufacture the immediate by turning the contingent into the urgent, the episodic into the significant, and the banal into an event, through mechanisms of selection and mise-en-scène specific to journalism. Hence, the mediated event functions less as a reflection of reality and more as a symbolic operator that organises collective experience, helping to explain how episodes involving migrant communities, such as the case of the Mães de Bragança, which we will analyse, are amplified, dramatised, and transformed into a “moral panic” (Cohen, 2011).

Theoretical framework, methodology, and research questions

This research employs a qualitative, longitudinal, and multidisciplinary approach. It integrates the theoretical framework with an analysis of the Portuguese media system and its historical and social context, and with a qualitative examination of media discourse on the Brazilian community in Portugal over nearly three decades. Special emphasis is placed on the period after 2003 and on the case of the “Mães de Bragança,” which will be analysed in greater detail.

We will specifically address the case of ‘Mothers of Bragança” as an analytical laboratory to examine stereotypes, gender, and immigration, seeking to understand how they intersect with media production and public perception, creating this moment of “moral panic,” that is, a social context in which a community reacts in an exaggerated, emotional, and disproportionate way to a phenomenon perceived as a threat to its

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values, social order, or morality. The reaction is then amplified by the media, political leaders, or interest groups, creating the impression of an urgent danger — even when that danger is limited, nonexistent, or poorly understood and/or analysed within its own socio-historical context and timeframe.

This research is therefore grounded in three main methodological pillars. Firstly, it outlines a brief theoretical framework for studies of media and immigration in a broader global context and conducts a critical review of the literature on the Portuguese case. In this global context, research on communication and immigration has consolidated a body of theory demonstrating that communication plays a central role in the public construction of the migrant "other." British cultural studies form the starting point, especially through Stuart Hall (1990), who shows that the media not only reflect reality but also produce meanings, framing minority groups as social, moral, or security problems. This perspective is further developed by critical discourse analysis, particularly through Van Dijk (1991), who demonstrates how media racism operates through subtle strategies of polarisation, reinforcing ethnic and national hierarchies.

An important theoretical axis concerns the concept of 'moral panic,' formulated by Stanley Cohen, which describes moments when the media amplify perceptions of threat, turning specific groups into scapegoats ('folk devils'). This approach has been applied to the study of immigration in Europe (Shenton, 2020), showing how localised episodes are turned into social crises, either through media dramatisation or through their consequences—in other words, through the projection, onto a particular social group, of a moral panic crystallised in popular fears, anxieties, and perceptions.

The European debate also incorporates the theory of securitisation, which explains how political and media discourses transform immigration into a security issue, thereby legitimising exceptional measures. Authors such as Gilroy (2004) and Ponzanesi (2020) introduce a postcolonial perspective, arguing that contemporary Europe continues to reproduce colonial imaginaries in the representation of migrants, especially racialised women. Postcolonial theory, as it relates to media and migration, also helps to frame the debate on representation, diaspora, and media power. Ponzanesi argues that postcolonialism is not just a theoretical field linked to the imperial past, but a structural condition of present-day Europe. Europe, in fact, continues to be shaped by racial hierarchies inherited from colonialism, global inequalities that underpin migratory flows, and cultural imaginaries that persist in public discourse, politics, and everyday life through so-called 'colonial continuities.' Postcolonialism is thus indispensable for understanding phenomena such as xenophobia, securitisation in relation to the 'other,' and racialised representations—in other words, how European media produce and reproduce 'regimes of visibility' that shape how migrants are seen and understood. Migrants tend to be framed as problems, threats, or victims, rarely as social agents. In the specific case of women migrants, they are often represented through sexualised or paternalistic stereotypes, and media discourses about racialised women reinforce symbolic boundaries in relation to the 'other,' as Ponzanesi argues.

There are interesting points of contact with the studies by Jessica Retis (2020) and Posch & Cabecinhas (2020), which examine the other side of the mirror. In the first case, the experience of Japanese descendants who emigrated to Brazil and then returned to Japan shows how these migrants live in a double diaspora: between Japan and Brazil, between Asia and Latin America, and within overlapping and contradictory ethnic and national identities. In the second case, there is a presence-absence bias, a media silence in the communication channels of the diaspora's country of origin. It is also important to understand how the media shape, reinforce, or challenge these hybrid identities, this postcolonial condition marked by fragmented affiliations and non-places across multiple locations. These communities, after all, live between integration, discrimination, and cultural reinvention, in a kind of 'mediated home' that transcends geographic borders.

In journalism, studies of news values show that the media privilege dramatic, deviant, and emotionally intense events, which often lead to immigration being framed as crime, conflict, or tragedy. Eberl et al. (2018) analysed how negativity is central to media coverage of immigration in Europe, linking this coverage to an increase in xenophobic attitudes in European public opinion. Chouliaraki & Zaborowski (2017) reinforce this idea by demonstrating that the European press continues to frame human mobility through logics of emergency, risk, and disorder, contributing to the symbolic construction of immigration as a social problem. The same is true of the approach by Mance & Splichal (2024), who consider immigrants to be traditionally underrepresented in the media and note that immigration coverage is often negative and focused on conflict. Thus, frequent exposure to media messages leads to negative attitudes towards these communities and activates stereotyped cognitions about immigrants.

This research synthesises the "state of the art" of studies by authors working within the theoretical framework of media and immigration studies in Portugal, namely: Cádima & Figueiredo (2003), Ferin (2005,

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2009), Correia (2008), Pais (2016), Minga (2016), Padilla & França (2019), Nogueira (2023), Blanco de Morais & Gil (2023), and Marchi (2023). Over the years, these works have stood out for analysing the media construction of the "immigrant" in contemporary Portugal, alongside the "figure" of the Brazilian woman, colonial imaginaries, sexualisation, and the evolution of journalistic narratives in this specific context.

Secondly, we integrate sociopolitical and historical contextualisation, including migration history and an analysis of public policies: the articulation between media discourses and social transformations, such as migration policies, bilateral treaties, the demographic evolution of the Brazilian community, the role of NGOs, the emergence of community media, and cultural changes in Portuguese society.

Finally, the axis of qualitative analysis of media content is addressed through the systematic examination of major news stories from the leading press—especially the daily Público—, reports, some television pieces, and editorial framings from the early 2000s to the present. This analysis enables the identification of patterns of representation, stereotypes, discursive changes, and moments of crisis, as in the specific case of the Mães de Bragança.

The qualitative content analysis and the historical and social context will also be complemented by other technical and scientific references, such as agency reports and barometers from governmental and non-governmental entities, bibliographic analyses of diasporas and migration, and relevant academic theses within the scope of this research. By weighing the entirety of the materials and combining the different analyses with the aforementioned methodology, we will then be able to better understand not only how the media represented the Brazilian community but also why these representations emerged, how they evolved, and what their main social, cultural, and political effects are in the contemporary Portuguese context.

Let us now outline some of the research questions underpinning this study, particularly those concerning representation and stereotypes, as well as media discourse and public perception. We will address topics such as the construction, by Portuguese media, of representations of the Brazilian community in the first decades of the 21st century. We seek to understand how traditional stereotypes have shaped the media's portrayal of Brazilian women, particularly in the context of the Mães de Bragança case. What impact have journalistic practices had on public perceptions of Brazilian immigration in Portugal, and how have the media contributed to associating Brazilian immigration with prostitution and moral threat? We will also examine whether there has been discursive evolution in this regard—that is, to what extent has media discourse about the Brazilian community shifted from negative framing to greater recognition and inclusion, and what factors explain this change: public policies, NGO action, community media, social networks, or demographic transformations? Essentially, we want to know whether new practices within communities have contributed to this shift, such as the role of Brazilian community media in Portugal or the role of social networks in constructing new identity narratives.

With this study, we aim to contribute new methodological approaches and case analyses to this field of study on the relationship between media, society, and migrants—undoubtedly an interdisciplinary field with current and important challenges in advancing research into how the media construct the image of immigrants, thereby influencing policies, perceptions, and public attitudes.

Brief analysis of the Portuguese media system

The field of communication in Portugal currently faces significant challenges, some of which are directly linked to cases of "moral panic," the depoliticisation of younger segments of the population, and the polarisation of Portuguese society—all of which greatly hinder the consolidation of democratic experience and citizenship.

The sector is marked by a structural crisis combining economic fragility, job insecurity, and growing risks to media pluralism (Cádima et al., 2024). In recent years, several media groups have faced severe financial difficulties. This instability has directly affected journalists' working conditions, prompting the president of the Journalists' Union to describe the sector as in an "emergency" amid delayed salaries, growing job insecurity, and widespread difficulties, culminating in the general strike of Portuguese journalists in March 2024.

Criticism of the sector's state comes not only from professionals but also from the industry, which identifies structural problems affecting media activity. António Carrapatoso, founder of Observador, argues

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for a profound reform of the legislative and regulatory framework, calling for regulatory simplification, measures to tackle dominant market positions, and clarification of the role of the public service media (RTP).

Some of these weaknesses have historical roots: the television liberalisation of the 1980s, which introduced private operators to compete with RTP, led to television absorbing most advertising investment, thereby weakening the press and contributing to a precarious situation that persists to this day. Added to this are a fragmented regulatory environment, with four entities sharing responsibilities (ERC, ANACOM, AdC, and IGAC), a lack of transparency in appointments, and insufficient resources, especially for the Regulatory Authority for the Media (ERC).

Despite this critical context, Portugal continues to perform well in international assessments. The RSF Index 2025 ranks the country 8th out of 180 nations, highlighting strong press freedom, though with risks associated with extremist groups. Meanwhile, the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM, 2025) ranks Portugal 13th among European Union member states but notes a worsening trend across all evaluated areas. The greatest risks are concentrated in social inclusion and market plurality, reflecting the economic fragility of media outlets, insufficient representation of minorities, and the growing presence of “news deserts,” especially at the local and community level.

Journalists’ working conditions represent another critical point: although the overall risk in this area is classified as low, it has worsened compared with the previous year, linked to deteriorating wages and job instability. The working conditions indicator reaches a medium-high risk level in this monitor, with a direct impact on editorial independence. The president of the Journalists’ Professional License Commission describes journalism as “a strange place,” where it is increasingly difficult to remain in or even enter, reflecting the erosion of professional conditions. Regarding SLAPPs—legal actions intended to intimidate journalists—there is a notable lack of systematic monitoring in Portugal.

Although media outlets are classified as low risk by the MPM, the political independence of the media has shown signs of deterioration, with failures in safeguards against conflicts of interest, particularly in the radio sector and at the national news agency Lusa, which is now wholly owned by the Portuguese State.

The area of social inclusion—particularly relevant to the analysis of migrant communities—presents a medium-to-high risk, exacerbated by the fragility of local and community media and the under-representation of minorities. The ERC (2023) confirms that cultural diversity remains scarce in the programming of RTP, SIC, and TVI. Even so, migrants have gained greater media visibility in areas such as housing, work, and human rights, reflecting recent changes in public recognition of the Brazilian community in Portugal.

In recent years, defamation has been a significant concern. Portugal continues to punish defamation with imprisonment or fines under the Penal Code (Law 48/95, Article 180), which criminalises insults and the imputation of facts. Recent cases have often led to sanctions imposed by the European Court of Human Rights for violations of freedom of expression.

Online content moderation respects constitutional rights and EU regulations, yet transparency problems persist. Moderation reports are limited and unclear, particularly on “visibility moderation” (the new form of censorship) and content removals. Public authorities also lack transparency in their moderation requests, often providing outdated information on their websites. Furthermore, legislation on disinformation is scarce, despite the rise of false narratives. There is no comprehensive national strategy or regular mechanisms for monitoring disinformation.

The Portuguese whistleblowing law is limited, protecting only those who report violations within the scope of their professional duties, offering minimal guarantees and weak practical application. Awareness campaigns are lacking, and protections exclude victims of governance issues, domestic violence, or environmental crimes. Recent media cases, ranging from corruption to cybercrime, highlight the need to strengthen legal safeguards.

Regarding the physical safety of journalists, the context in Portugal has become more complex due to increased political polarisation. The Journalists’ Union created a channel to report pressure and threats, including those on social networks, via email, and in-person intimidation aimed at restricting press freedom. Portugal has robust protections for journalists but lacks specific measures to address illegal surveillance or intrusive technologies such as spyware. To prevent abusive surveillance, the Portuguese government approved the PNSJ—National Journalist Safety Plan—in 2025, which aims to protect media professionals against online threats and to provide training in digital security, data protection, cyber resilience, and risk management.

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Finally, the issue of corruption. In the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index (TIP, 2026), Portugal scored 56 points, falling to 46th place among 182 countries—its worst result ever—remaining below the European Union average and among the worst-performing countries in Western Europe. The decline reflects a negative trend that began in 2022 and stems mainly from less favourable assessments across several sources of the index, highlighting persistent weaknesses in public integrity, the effectiveness of prevention and oversight mechanisms, and the absence of a currently in force National Anti-Corruption Strategy. Despite some legislative progress, policy implementation and institutional follow-up remain to be consolidated in this area.

The media and the Brazilian diaspora in Portugal in recent decades

Initial stage marked by mistrust

The beginning of a significant Brazilian diaspora to Portugal can be said to date from the end of the 20th century, with growing migration flows from Brazil, mostly in search of work across diverse sectors—from services to commerce and industry—but also many young Brazilians seeking higher education at various levels in Portuguese universities. Brazilian migration then became structural rather than merely circumstantial; that is, unlike the first migration waves of the 1980s and early 1990s—which were smaller and marked by individual motivations—from the 2000s onward, Brazilian migration took on a permanent character, with support networks—family, religious, community—more institutionalisation, and a growing presence in various sectors of Portuguese society (Santos, 2010).

Let us begin, then, with the start of a migratory diaspora from Brazil at the end of the 20th century. This beginning was clearly marked by the initial detachment of Portuguese society from the first influx of Brazilian immigrants arriving in Portugal, still in the 1990s. This was at a time when, curiously, the media in the country mainly reported on immigration to Portugal from Eastern Europe and the PALOP (African Countries with Portuguese as the Official Language). Even then, it was evident that "sensationalist discourse, the language of the spectacle of reality, tragic current events and catastrophe, the fait-divers, curiosity and the monstrous, etc." were filling the media narrative, "leaving little space for rigour, contextualization and, ultimately, the human" (Cádima & Figueiredo, 2003: 5).

In this study, the Brazilian community did not feature prominently in coverage of immigration, immigrants, and ethnic minorities. In the analysis conducted at the time, most journalistic coverage focused on immigrants from Eastern Europe (30% of news), followed by those generically classified as 'immigrants' (28%). Roma immigrants and those from the PALOP ranked third and fourth (with 12.5% and 12.3%, respectively). In fifth place, far behind the others, were Brazilian immigrants (4.5%). During the period the analysis covered—January 2001 to March 2002—Eastern European communities were clearly more visible in the media agenda regarding immigration and ethnic minorities. This visibility arose from the new reality of immigration in Portugal at that time (Cádima & Figueiredo, 2003).

The initial impact of the emerging Brazilian community on Portuguese society, as reflected in the media, was very negative for Brazilians in general, who were then discovering Portugal as a destination for study and/or work. The media discourse and narrative were centred on a certain detachment and indifference, or neglect—a narrative that quickly evolved into a context of sensationalist journalistic practices, where misinformation, alarmism, and an environment of "moral panic" prevailed, as we will see next in the discussion of the Mães de Bragança case.

At that time, in these early years of the new century, the Brazilian community was, in a way, divided between "men" and "women": the former were "undocumented," involved in crime, "tricksters," or victims of organised networks. Women, in general, were portrayed in the media narrative as "prostitutes" or "sensual women," in a context of "nightlife and police raids," with colonial stereotypes updated through attributes ascribed to images of Brazilian women, sometimes in subtle ways (Ferin, 2009).

As Ferin (2009) notes, the scenario was largely constructed by some characteristically sensationalist media outlets, and it was obvious that the Portuguese were deeply suspicious of this newly arrived community in Portugal. It was clear that media coverage shaped perceptions of the "other," contributing to the erosion of multiethnic diversity and leading to intolerance, as Cádima & Figueiredo (2003) also pointed out. They further warned of the need for the media to change course by giving "a different kind of attention to political strategies more capable of including minorities in political life, influencing the formation of political action

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and offering a more complete and in-depth understanding of the various events involving these communities" (Cádima & Figueiredo, 2003: 6).

It is also important to consider what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic—in other words, how the Brazilian media reported on Brazilian migration to Portugal. According to Posch & Cabecinhas (2020), the Brazilian presence was constructed paradoxically: migrants are symbolically present, but their real experiences remain absent. Media coverage in Brazil thus tended to emphasise idealised narratives—quality of life, safety, opportunities—while silencing issues such as job insecurity, discrimination, bureaucracy, and structural inequalities. In this way, the Brazilian media produced a selective and aspirational image of Portugal that functioned as a "project for the future" while also creating bias regarding the challenges faced by migrants themselves. This semiotic construction, in the view of the aforementioned authors, contributed to reinforcing unrealistic expectations and fueling new migration flows based on an incomplete representation of reality.

The "Mães de Bragança" case

One of the causes of the adverse reaction among the Portuguese to Brazilian immigration to Portugal at the beginning of the new millennium was the Mães de Bragança case. This case emerged in 2003, when a group of women from the city of Bragança, in the country's northeast, mobilised against the sudden arrival of about a hundred Brazilian women who began working in the city's night bars. In a municipality with fewer than 28,000 inhabitants, the mass arrival of these women—many involved in prostitution or companionship services—generated strong social tension. The wives of men who frequented these places organised a movement to defend family stability and their children's well-being. Media coverage was intense and even extended beyond the local context.

On 1 May 2003, the newspaper Público, in its Local Porto supplement, published an article by Helena Fidalgo that largely gave voice to the complainants, the so-called "Mães de Bragança." The group of women had launched a petition urging the authorities to intervene to stop what they considered a "wave of madness" caused by the arrival of dozens of Brazilian women associated with prostitution. The signatories claimed that the presence of these women was destroying homes, leading to behaviours such as family abandonment, domestic violence, debts, and loss of property. In the article, they described the situation as an "invasion" that was degrading local values and turning Bragança into a centre of nightlife, alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. The article mainly highlighted the emotional and economic impacts experienced by some of the more than 100 signatories, who set out to "save" the city.

Time magazine even published an edition with a cover titled "Europe's New Red-Light District" that linked Bragança to prostitution, sparking widespread outrage in the city. Público addressed the topic, citing Júlio de Carvalho, a lawyer and former civil governor of Bragança: "There is nothing new about this; there has always been and always will be prostitution, but Bragança, in this regard, is still a clean city" (Fragoso, 2003). National and international coverage turned the case into a symbol of broader debates about immigration, public morality, gender, and economic inequality ("Prostituição brasileira em Bragança," 2003).

The case became emblematic of how Brazilian immigration was portrayed in Portugal in the early 2000s, with the media depicting it as an "invasion" linked to prostitution, thereby reinforcing negative and sexualised stereotypes about immigrant women. National and international coverage—including outlets such as Time, the Guardian, Público, Correio da Manhã, Folha de S. Paulo, and Veja—cast the case as a symbol of moral and social shock, presenting immigration as a threat to family and local order. This media framing contributed to securitarian responses, such as police operations and deportations, and consolidated public perceptions associating Brazilian immigration with risk, disorder, and moral degradation. The episode remains a milestone in the relationship between immigration, gender, and media representation in Portugal.

Correia (2014) revisited the topic a decade later, concluding that this type of news coverage had evolved. In similar cases, he found a "softening of xenophobic expressions" and "humanitarian angles and affirmation of human rights," which were absent in the Bragança case. The contribution of NGOs, with alternative framings of the problem of prostitution and "some critical sensitivity," led to "restraint in this particular component in more recent reports of similar situations" (Correia, 2014: p. 192). Minga (2018) also analysed how the Portuguese press constructed and reproduced stereotypes about Brazilian women to understand broader patterns of media representation. The author concluded that Portuguese journalism tended to sexualise, moralise, and homogenise the image of Brazilian women, associating them with prostitution,

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threats to the family, and social disorder. For Minga, by privileging moralising and sensationalist discourses, Portuguese journalism contributed to the construction of a feminine and foreign “other,” reinforcing symbolic boundaries between “Portuguese” and “Brazilian” women and influencing public perceptions of immigration and gender.

Regarding the case, Ferin (2005) argued that decades of Brazilian soap operas created, in Portugal, a collective imagination that sexualised and exoticised Brazilian women, thereby influencing both the social gaze and journalistic coverage of female immigration. This imagination—reinforced by colonial stereotypes of the “tropical woman,” young, sensual, and available—was, in some ways, reproduced in TV news through fragmented images of bodies, catchy headlines, and the absence of the voices of the prostituted women themselves. In the case of the Mães de Bragança, this gaze found fertile ground in a conservative regional context marked by inequality, male emigration, and repression of female sexuality, where Brazilian women were seen as a moral threat and where sensationalist coverage reinforced both old colonial images and new stereotypes.

It is also worth noting the book by sociologist José Machado Pais (2016), Enredos Sexuais, Tradição e Mudança. As Mães, Os Zecas e as Sedutoras e Além-Mar, an ethnographic and anthropological work that, in some respects, corroborates the analysis of the aforementioned researchers. The book reflects on the historical discontinuities between Portugal and Brazil and on how cultural representations shape contemporary social conflicts. The narrative follows the author through night bars and local rituals, revealing how popular beliefs—such as spells, “binding teas,” or macumbas—coexist with more mundane explanations offered by men. Again, the stereotypes of the “seductive Brazilian woman” and the “foolish Portuguese man” have deep historical roots, linked to colonial imagery and dilemmas of masculinity. At the same time, it highlights the clash between tradition and modernity in a region marked by strong religiosity, male emigration, and rigid gender roles, concluding that prostitution says a lot about society. Público revisited the topic at the time of the book’s publication, writing: “Since the landing of the caravels in Brazil, Brazilian women have inhabited the fantasies of the Portuguese. First, they were seductive indigenous women. Then, also mulatto women. This imaginary persists ‘as a colonial legacy.’” With the Mães de Bragança movement, the stereotype of the Brazilian woman as accessible, erotic, and sensual gained strength. “‘They became a composite dramatic figure, a source of desire and curse, pleasure and pain’” (Pereira, 2016).

The phenomenon would also be evaluated from other perspectives, including its impact on the local economy. As Nogueira (2023) notes in his master’s thesis, the study analyses the economic effects of the Mães de Bragança case, showing that the repression of prostitution and the closure of bars associated with the phenomenon unexpectedly had positive economic impacts in the region. The author analysed indicators such as GDP per capita, the number of businesses, and local consumption, and concluded that intense national and international media coverage attracted tourists and stimulated economic activity, especially in the tourism sector.

As we have seen, in the concrete case of the Mães de Bragança, the set of journalistic works published on the subject by the newspaper Público never went beyond a mere circumstantial account of the event; that is, it did not develop to a level of sociological depth or provide social, historical, and political framing, nor did it avoid the stereotype of young Brazilian women, subjected, through human and drug trafficking networks (Franco, 2008), to the world’s oldest profession in the ultra-conservative and remote lands of Bragança. This, however, would later be done. Take, for example, the text by Coelho (2025), “From Gabriela to the Mães de Bragança case, who are ‘the Brazilian women’?” about the play “We Came to Steal Your Husbands,” by Maria Giulia Pinheiro, presented in Lisbon. As Alexandra Prado Coelho recalled, in the Brazilian soap opera Gabriela, inspired by Jorge Amado and broadcast on Portuguese public television (RTP) in 1977, the ladies of the city of São Jorge dos Ilhéus, wives of the colonels, also petitioned against the participation of the Bataclan prostitutes in the girls’ procession led by Maria Machadão. The play, this time, clearly questioned the stereotypes, taking up the theme with an approach that considered the “capital/racism/machismo triad” in its different forms between Brazil and Portugal, “even though the oppressions are the same,” as the author of the play pointed out.

Contradictory dynamics: otherness and margin

The phase of progressive integration of the Brazilian community in Portugal took place throughout the first decade of the 21st century, but there were still clear resistances to its full inclusion, both in the country’s interior regions—where part of this migration began to settle—and in the major urban centres.

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A first point to note is the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Consultation between Brazil and Portugal, which has been in force since 2000 and has granted Brazilians special rights in Portuguese territory, including the right to apply for residency with fewer requirements.

From then on, things would change. We entered a phase clearly distinct from the previous one, marked by the progressive recognition of the Brazilian community in Portugal. We would say that this was, above all, the result of a shift—especially in the media's discourse, which abandoned its more sensationalist tone. The media's perception and discourse were reversed and ceased to be merely a succession of stories about extreme situations such as crime or prostitution within the Brazilian community, thereby correcting that bias. Above all, this phase is characterised by a dynamic of transition and discursive realignment regarding events associated with immigrants.

There is then a rapid transition preceding the phase of consolidation of the Brazilian community in Portugal, marked by the emergence of a media discourse that recognises the community's importance in Portuguese society (Blanco de Morais & Gil, 2023). This movement is characterised by several noteworthy aspects: i) the emergence of new immigrant investors in the Portuguese economy; ii) the appearance of new media outlets targeting the community; iii) the importance of social networks for connection; iv) the ease of sharing the same language; and v) perspectives from the Brazilian community and its own media.

Let us now look more closely at how this reversal takes place and how Portuguese society evolved over two decades, from a very negative perception to a progressive, albeit not absolute, consolidation and integration of the Brazilian community. Of course, the dynamics of welcome and recognition, although now more frequent in media discourse, did not immediately produce full effects in the social field. This is, so to speak, the phase we find ourselves in, alongside the emergence of new issues that have arisen recently—issues of political polarisation, to which we will pay attention at the end of this analysis.

In the current phase, the representation of the Brazilian community in the Portuguese media coexists with a new context of more complex and intense migration flows, marked by the growth of new communities, mainly from Asian countries (Nepal, India, Pakistan).

We can now say that we are witnessing a better-integrated Brazilian community—the largest migrant community in Portugal, with about 500,000 citizens (35% of the national total). This progressive integration has, to some extent, been aided by the correction of the initial bias observed in the Portuguese media system, which is recognised at the European level (MPM, 2025) and globally (RSF, 2024) as generally pluralistic and upholding constitutional rights, freedoms, and guarantees.

Thus, as already mentioned, Brazilian immigrants have seen a progressive recognition of their community within Portuguese society over the last few decades, from multiple perspectives and at different levels. Notably, the media narrative has shifted, with representations of immigrants no longer dominated by the negative image seen in the early years, especially in more sensationalist outlets such as Correio da Manhã, as analysed by Ferin (2009).

As a result of the emerging media discourse, this progressive change has occurred not only in journalists' work but also in the practices of citizens, authorities, and institutions, who have played their part in consolidating a new narrative that now more fairly and accurately reflects the reality of Brazilian migrants in Portugal. There has also been recognition from the Brazilian community itself, through its associations, NGOs, and other organisations, of Portugal's openness and receptiveness to the Brazilian diaspora.

At the same time, we identify a more pronounced recognition of the dimensions of "diversity" and "inclusion" in the media discourse (MPM, 2025). In fact, at the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, the growing recognition and receptivity towards Brazilian immigrants in Portugal have become increasingly evident. Giovanna Tavares (2024) addressed the issue in unequivocal terms, especially regarding what is perhaps the most marginalised community within the Brazilian diaspora itself: the LGBTQIAP+ community.

> "Portugal has established itself as one of the most progressive countries in Europe for the rights of the LGBTQIAP+ community. This progress attracts people from all over the world, especially from Brazil, who see Portugal as an opportunity to live safely, with dignity and guaranteed rights. For many Brazilian LGBTQIAP+ individuals, the desire to legalise their status in Portugal goes beyond a simple migration issue; it is often a matter of survival in the face of violence and structural discrimination in Brazil." (Tavares, 2024).

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Furthermore, for Brazilian LGBTQIAP+ individuals who "arrive in the country in situations of great vulnerability, especially those who have faced persecution in their homeland due to sexual orientation or gender identity" (Tavares, 2024), Portugal, as a signatory to the Geneva Convention, offers asylum or subsidiary protection to victims of persecution in their countries of origin, in full respect for victims' human rights.

Moreover, for these immigrants in particular, there are additional options for regularization:

> "Brazilians can apply for work or study visas, and Portuguese law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in the labour market or in educational institutions. LGBTQIAP+ couples can also apply for a residence permit for family reunification, as Portugal has recognised stable unions and same-sex marriages since 2010." (Tavares, 2024).

But, as Giovanna Tavares also points out, not everything always goes smoothly. Although the legislation is advanced in this area, even allowing gender changes with greater dignity and security, without the need for a medical diagnosis, there are still several aspects that need improvement, for example, through specific programmes for LGBTQIAP+ refugees, the training of health and social care professionals, and the promotion of campaigns against prejudice in the workplace. Tavares points out, for example, prejudice against trans people, who report greater difficulties in achieving full inclusion and in obtaining work, housing, etc. In any case, for Giovanna Tavares, Portugal consolidates its image as a welcoming country in this area, ensuring that LGBTQIAP+ immigrants can legalise their status and, under the law, have equal conditions and opportunities (Tavares, 2024).

Furthermore, in the ranking of European countries on LGBTI rights, Portugal ranks 11th in Europe, with an average score of 67% (out of 100%), compared with the European Union average of 51%. The worst scores are in the areas of hate crime and hate speech, whereas Portugal performs better in public space, family, and gender recognition (Rainbow Map, 2025). Clearly, there is still work to be done, especially in this area, as shown by other studies on this community in Portugal (Tibiriçá, 2025).

Across various sectors in Portugal, the Brazilian community is well represented, including dental clinics, construction companies, wine production, university teaching and research, services, restaurants, and more. In most cases, this reflects the welcome and recognition these professionals receive from Portuguese society.

It is worth highlighting a few testimonies selected from the consulted media corpus. One of the best examples of the positive reception that Portuguese society currently offers Brazilians is the case of the Brazilian dentist Alexandre Carvalho, who brought his family to Portugal in search of greater tranquillity and safety. He says: "We already feel like we belong to Portugal, to here." (Carvalho, 2025).

In Braga, Alexandre Carvalho says he found everything he was looking for: "We had a very good life in Brazil, I have nothing to complain about. I say we reached the maximum we could grow there. We had our house, a clinic, a car, everything. But the kids grew up, they were reaching adolescence, and the issue of quality of life affected us a lot," he explains. By quality of life, one must understand above all safety. He notes that insecurity had begun to weigh heavily, and, thinking about the future and his children's independence, he had to make a decision. He tells journalist Patrícia Carvalho (2025): "They started wanting to go out, and we couldn't give them that freedom. The tendency of every teenager from the countryside is to move to the capital and go to university. That moment was coming, and with the violence, we decided to rethink our plans." They came in search of their El Dorado in Portugal, specifically in Braga, the city where his sister lived with her son and mother. It was "love at first sight."

> "Once the bureaucratic matters were resolved, the climate was suitable, and housing and a clinic were secured, they stayed. The hardest part was saying goodbye to Brazil, to friends, and to the sea. Today, at the Origem clinic in Braga, 16 people are employed, including Brazilian and Portuguese dentists and a Peruvian professional. In the first year, they had '1,200 new patients' 80% of whom were Brazilian. His wife, Sílvia, also works there in administration, and the couple says the project's concept is one of 'inclusion'" (Carvalho, 2025).

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Journalist Patrícia Carvalho (2025) also reports:

> “Between the coffee, the dendê oil, and the acarajé dough they always bring back from holidays in Brazil, where they go at least once a year, and the peace and welcome they say they have found here, Alexandre has no intention of leaving the country. He describes a sense of belonging that manifests in different ways. ‘We go to Brazil, spend twenty days there. But when we return, we’re on the TAP flight and the pilot says: “Attention passengers, prepare for landing at Lisbon airport; the sky over the Portuguese capital is clear, 15 degrees.” When I hear that, it feels like I’m arriving home. We already feel like we belong to Portugal, to here. Building, creating jobs and wealth, and contributing. And there’s another joke I make that is actually true. When we play that clip of Mariza singing “Ó gente da minha terra” and we shed tears, that’s it, you know? It’s done.’”

These cases are merely examples; many more could be cited of equally successful Brazilian migrants fully integrated into Portuguese society today. We cannot speak for the entire community, but compared with thirty years ago, the evolution is extremely significant and helps explain the community’s explosive growth over three decades. According to the Brazilian government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024), the number of Brazilians living in Portugal reached 513,000 by the end of 2023, compared with just 20,851 in 1999. The major boom occurred after 2019, when 151,304 residents were already registered (ACM, 2021).

In the restaurant sector, another example of full integration is Diego Grunewald and his Costelaria Don Gaúcho in Vila Nova de Cerveira, northern Portugal. It went viral on social media thanks to an “incredible barbecue show,” attracting visitors from Portugal and Spain. The specialty is gaúcho-style smoked barbecue, prepared on an artisanal grill designed by Grunewald, a 38-year-old Brazilian from Rio Grande do Sul. He moved to Portugal in his early thirties, after his mother’s death, seeking the quality of life he had always pursued in Brazil. Upon arrival, he began working in a butcher’s shop. “The company gave me the opportunity to visit different brasseries and venues in Europe, where I realised there was room to introduce a very Brazilian concept dedicated to gaúcho barbecue” (Simões, 2025). With his father-in-law’s help, he built an artisanal smoker and began selling cuts from his garage. Soon, the garage became a pilgrimage site: “Every day, pilgrims, tourists and many locals arrived looking for our roasted ribs.” Ten years after arriving in Portugal, he now owns one of the most sought-after restaurants in the north.

In the wine sector, passion has indeed crossed the Atlantic (Vasconcelos, 2024), fuelling wine production in Portugal. Today, numerous Brazilian immigrants and investors (Nunes, 2024) produce high-quality wines for discerning consumers. The list is long, and this is clearly a well-integrated community that has given a strong boost to Portuguese wine production. In the Douro region, examples include Rubens Menin (Menin Douro Estates), Bianca Rocha (Quinta do Vianna), Camilo Mello Azevedo Lima (Quinta da Covela), Fernanda Zuccaro (Quinta Alta), and Rodrigo Soares (Quinta da Castanheira). In the Dão region: Marcelo Villela (Textura Wines), Juliana Kelman (Quinta Kelman), and Otacílio Soares (Quinta Domínio do Açor), among others.

Portugal is also increasingly sought after by so-called “luxury migrants” from Brazil, who come to invest. One example is Rubens Menin, one of Brazil’s major industrialists, who owns one of the largest wine estates in the Douro. Another is the luxury neighbourhood of Prata Riverside Village in Lisbon, where apartments average one million euros and around 10% of owners are Brazilians living in or investing in Portugal (Rattner, 2025). In the arts, literature and music, there is constant synergy between Brazilian culture and Portuguese audiences, with Rock in Rio Lisboa—led by Roberta Medina since 2004—being one of the most notable examples.

Finally, we must consider recent problems linked to political polarisation in Portugal and the rise of the far right, particularly between 2014 and 2024. Despite many successful integration cases, clouds are gathering on the horizon. As the far right grows, the “immigrant” has once again become, in certain contexts—though fortunately limited—the “other.”

The rise of the far right has reshaped public discourse on immigration, reactivating symbolic boundaries that had seemed to fade. In this context, the “Brazilian immigrant,” long perceived as culturally close and economically contributive, is again constructed as the “other” in some spaces. This re-emergence of denied alterity is especially evident in reactionary discursive spaces marked by securitarian rhetoric and the

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political instrumentalisation of immigration. Even in a generally successful integration landscape, belonging and recognition remain vulnerable to polarisation and exclusion.

Although these new dynamics of "othering" are directed more towards Indian and Muslim communities, cultural and linguistic proximity alone does not eliminate stigmatisation. Lusophony, often celebrated, also contains ambivalences: it can obscure inequalities and discrimination. Thus, the social construction of "Brazilianness" in Portugal both brings people together and sets them apart, integrating and hierarchising. The Brazilian community is diverse, complex and stratified, marked by heterogeneity, integration tensions, structural inequalities and persistent gender stereotypes.

For decades, Portugal was an exception in Europe for the electoral presence of the radical right. The explanation for its recent growth—especially after 2015—is complex. Marchi (2023) argues that this "exceptionality" faded as new generations, without memory of the dictatorship, entered politics and the party system fragmented.

Hernandez-Morales (2026) offers a more conjunctural reading, arguing that the erosion of António Costa's government created space for Chega, which won 60 seats in the 2025 elections. According to this view, the rise of the radical right is linked to Costa's political legacy: the centralisation of power, corruption scandals, and failures to address structural problems, including the housing crisis and the rapid increase in immigration—from 5% to 15% of the population in less than ten years—which strained public services. The radical right capitalised on these issues, positioning itself as an anti-system alternative.

Marchi (2023), however, offers a deeper structural explanation. He argues that the rise of the radical right stems from profound sociopolitical and cultural transformations already underway. He identifies declining trust in institutions as a central driver: the radical right grows when voters feel unrepresented by traditional parties. Economic frustration and perceptions of social decline fuel radicalisation, prompting simplistic, moralistic solutions. The discourse is typical of contemporary radical right movements: emotional, polarising, anti-elite, and fiercely critical of "wokeness" and political correctness.

Thus, the Portuguese case stems from a combination of internal factors—conservative backlash against rapid cultural change, institutional distrust, corruption, and the instrumentalisation of immigration and insecurity—and external factors, including economic crises, international influences, conspiracy theories, and the impact of digital platforms.

Concluding synthesis

As we have seen, media discourse and literature on Brazilian migration in Portugal indicate that this community, despite its size and diversity, continues to face processes of inequality, segmentation, and racialisation. Today, Brazilians are by far the largest group of foreigners in the country, accounting for a third of immigrant residents, estimated at around 1.5 million people of multiple nationalities. It is, naturally, a community characterised by profound internal heterogeneity. Within the same migratory flow, over the years, we find students, highly qualified professionals, investors, and precarious workers, whether in the service sector, tourism, or social care, especially in health. This diversity reflects migratory cycles sensitive to the economic and political contexts of both Portugal and Brazil. The linguistic and cultural proximity, often described as facilitating integration, has not, however, eliminated structural obstacles. Many Brazilians continue to face job insecurity, bureaucracy, discrimination, and media stigmatisation, especially women and racialised individuals (Padilla & França, 2019).

Over almost three decades, Brazilian identity has been shaped by stereotypes of gender, sexuality, and race, which have influenced opportunities and experiences. Stigmatisation has operated subtly through institutional practices, media discourse, and social interactions that reproduce exclusion and inequality. Labour segmentation is one of the most visible effects of this process: many Brazilians are channelled into precarious work niches characterised by low pay and limited social mobility. França (2019) argued that linguistic affinity, far from guaranteeing full integration, can reinforce expectations of "automatic integration," making it harder to recognise discrimination and contributing to the "invisibility" of inequalities (França, 2019), which mainly affect women, Black people, and precarious workers. This dimension of multiple invisibilities also helps us understand how "Brazilianness" has been socially constructed in Portugal.

These dynamics were also identified by Machado (2009) in one of the earliest systematic studies of Brazilian immigration in Portugal, showing that the persistence of stereotypical social representations—especially those concerning Brazilian women—shaped how the community was perceived and treated in Portuguese society. Far from being mere individual prejudices, these representations had concrete effects on

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social integration, employment access, and public recognition. Thus, there was a persistent tension between indifference and proximity, and between marginality and otherness, which is important for understanding the community's consolidation in Portugal. This implies recognising both its successful integration across various sectors and the persistent inequalities that particularly affect the most vulnerable members.

As we have seen, the context of reception and recognition is not immune to the risks of the current (dis)information landscape, dominated by networks and large digital platforms. Nor is it immune to occasional cases of xenophobia or hate speech, which also occur in Portuguese society towards different migrant communities. On the other hand, new media possibilities (Observador/LUSA, 2024), highly interactive social networks, and the production of digital subjectivities cannot, in the post-colonial context, mask the return of old stereotypes. Thus, "even in the appropriation of 'webdiasporas,' Brazilians' perceptions of migration in Portugal are constructed from a colonial structure of oppression in which the migrants themselves express themselves uncritically, from a position of subjugation" (Ribeiro, 2022).

In any case, today we can say that, except for a few well-identified situations—which have mobilised the governments of Portugal and Brazil for their resolution (various cases, such as those relating to passports, visas, residence certificates, academic qualification equivalence, etc.)—there has been a very favourable evolution in the receptivity of Portuguese public institutions towards Brazilian immigrants and the community in Portugal over these three decades. Examples include the CNAIM (National Centres for Migrant Integration Support), the CLAIM (Local Centres for Migrant Integration Support), and the Migrant Support Hotline. Social sector and non-governmental institutions can also be mentioned, such as Casa do Brasil, Associação Mundo Feliz, Associação Brasileira de Portugal (ABP), Associação UAI, etc. No less important is the emergence of media outlets specifically targeting Brazilians living in Portugal, including Tropical FM radio and, more recently, DN Brasil and Público Brasil, launched in June and September 2024, respectively.

A study by the Public Law Research Center of the University of Lisbon Law School, published at the end of 2023, found that the Brazilian community was considered the best integrated in Portugal. The study, entitled "Public opinion on immigration in Portugal," aimed to provide information for the government to prepare new proposals for immigration law changes. It was based on 1,000 interviews, of which 72.2% of respondents indicated that the Brazilian community was well integrated, above other European citizens (41.2%), those from the African Portuguese-speaking countries (32.4%), or the Chinese community (23.1%). The Indian and Pakistani communities (6.5%) and migrant communities from North Africa and the Middle East (3.1%) had less positive perceptions.

Similarly, the Immigration Barometer from the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation (FFMS, 2024) asks: "What do residents in Portugal think and feel about immigration and immigrants?" The answers are clear on perceptions of immigrant integration. Assessing immigrants' impact—on the labour market, contributions to Social Security, and perceived effects on employment, wages, or crime—the study finds that 68% agree immigrants are vital to the national economy. Although 68% say Portugal's current immigration policy is too permissive regarding entry, Portuguese society is in favour of granting immigrants rights. For example, most believe immigrants should be able to vote like Portuguese citizens, be facilitated in naturalisation, and bring their families to Portugal. According to this barometer, the Brazilian community is by far the largest contributor to Portuguese Social Security. In 2023, €1.033 billion (38.6% of all foreign workers' contributions) came from Brazilians, with the second nationality—Indian—contributing only €168.4 million.

In the final synthesis, it is clear that traditional stereotypes about the "other" shaped the discourse and media image of Brazilian women, especially in the context of the "Mães de Bragança" case, but also regarding the Brazilian LGBT community, as we have seen in more detailed analyses. These are clear examples of how, during a period of intensified migration flows from Brazil to Portugal, the Portuguese media contributed significantly to the social construction of representations and perceptions of the Brazilian community. This amplified bias at the national level, thus distorting the concrete reality of the whole based on a prejudiced view of one of its parts.

To the extent that media discourse about the Brazilian community has evolved from an initial negative framing to a broader context of reception and recognition, there has been a clear discursive shift, moving beyond the indifference and even the so-called "moral panic" focus of the early years in Portuguese media. The factors explaining this change are diverse: not only the growing perception that Portuguese people assimilated through increasing direct contact with migrants and their idiosyncrasies and culture, as well as their willingness to contribute to the country's economy and progress, but also political and legal

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measures regarding immigrants in general, the work of NGOs and civic associations, etc. As we have seen, new public policies have also been implemented in this regard. All these factors have also impacted the media, as has the emergence of some community media and, importantly, the contribution of digital platform networks—forming a strong web of connections within the Brazilian community—all of which contribute to the construction of new identity narratives. This includes, on the part of Portuguese media, the creation of specific outlets for the Brazilian community, such as DN Brasil and Público Brasil.

Thus, if the poor practices of mainstream media and biased or even sensationalist journalism initially contributed to associating Brazilian immigration with prostitution, crime, and moral threat—with clear effects on the public image and perception of the Brazilian community in Portugal at the beginning of the 21st century—we can conclude that, through multiple actions involving civic associations, public policies, community and national media, and even media projects aimed exclusively at the Brazilian community in Portugal, it was generally possible to reverse the initially recorded critical trend. We can say that, despite threats from political polarisation, there is now a fuller integration of the significant Brazilian community living in Portugal, which already represents 5% of the Portuguese population.

Nothing now resembles those difficult years, still very recent, when Brazilian immigrants in Portugal were mistreated and, in a sense, persecuted by the Portuguese media as if they were carriers of some kind of "white plague," contaminating everything they touched. Today, Portugal's major cities reflect this multiculturalism, with the massive presence of Brazilian immigrants in tourism, construction, advertising, schools and universities, and the arts, radically reshaping the initial media image and making an invaluable contribution to a new way of being—and even speaking—for the Portuguese, who are increasingly brothers to their brothers, who are, more and more, also Brazilians.

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