Portuguese-Canadian and Portuguese-French second-generation migrant women narrate 'return' to Portugal

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Abstract:

This paper is based on the narratives of ten second-generation Portuguese-Canadian and Portuguese-French women (five from each group) who have 'returned' to take up residency in Portugal. As a theoretical point of analysis, I look at issues of integration and belonging as idealised in the pre-return and carried out in the post return. Empirically, derived from ethnographic fieldwork carried out in mainland Portugal from June, 2008 to February, 2010, the paper takes these carefully selected female voices to show subtleties and ambiguities relevant to feelings of belonging and acceptance upon return to the ancestral homeland, one that may not be what was original preconceived.

Keywords: emigrant women, return, integration, narration, Portugal.

Resumo

Mulheres migrantes de segunda geração luso-canadianas e luso-francesas narram 'o regresso' a Portugal

Este artigo é baseado em narrativas recolhidas junto de dez mulheres de segunda geração luso-canadianas e luso-francesas (cinco de cada grupo) que 'regressaram' a Portugal para viver. Como ponto teórico de análise, observa-se questões ligadas à integração e pertença e como estes factores são idealizados no pré-retorno e realizados no pós-retorno. Empiricamente, através do trabalho etnográfico realizado em Portugal continental entre Junho de 2008 e Fevereiro de 2010, o artigo faz referência a vozes femininas cuidadosamente selecionadas para mostrar sutilezas e ambiguidades relevantes aos sentimentos de pertença e aceitação após o regresso ao país ancestral, aquele que pode não vir a ser o que era preconcebido originalmente.

Palavras-chave: mulheres migrantes, regresso, integração, narrativa, Portugal.

Résumé

Femmes migrantes de deuxième generation luso-canadiennes et franco-portugaises racontent 'le retour' au Portugal

Cet article s'appuie sur les récits recueillis auprès de dix femmes luso-canadiennes et luso-françaises (cinq de chaque groupe), de deuxième génération, qui ont pris la décision de venir (ou de revenir) s'installer au Portugal. Ce travail a eu pour but d'analyser les questions de l'intégration et de l'appartenance et plus spécifiquement la confrontation entre l'idéalisation de ces deux effets dans la phase de pré-retour et sa réalisation dans la phase post-retour. Le travail ethnographique réalisé au Portugal continental entre juin 2008 et février 2010 soutient les données empiriques de cet article, dont quelques voix féminines minutieusement sélectionnées a fin de dévoiler les subtilités et les ambigüités des sentiments d'appartenance et d'acceptation après le retour au pays des ancêtres, celui qui ne pouvait pas devenir tel qu'il avait été originalement envisagée.

Mots-clés: femmes migrantes, retour, intégration, narration, Portugal.

Introduction

Previous research on Portuguese return migration has, in large part, centred on the first generation – those who primarily departed during the height of Portuguese emigration in the 1960s and early 70s. When it comes to the offspring of these emigrants and their return[1] to their ancestral homeland, this population has been virtually ignored. This paper aims to contribute to the literature on second-generation return, already abundant in relation to certain migrants groups (see for example Christou, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c on Greek second-generation return from the United States; Lee-Cunin, 2005; Potter and Phillips, 2005; Reynalds, 2008 on Caribbean return from the United Kingdom; and Wessendorf, 2007, 2008 on Italian return from Switzerland), but scares in the case of return to Portugal.

Accordingly, the paper aims at understanding how push/pull factors, questions of identity and belonging and processes of integration and acceptance influence and shape return migration behaviour of the second-generation. This seeking to enlighten the understanding of return migration as a process that encompasses the combined notion of 'place' and 'acceptance' as the outcome of a search for 'belonging' within a gendered perspective. The object of the study is, thus, to present aspects of the stories of Portuguese second-generation women returnees and to investigate the migrant sense of 'self' in different settings and contexts. I, therefore, set out to analytically examine not only the 'whys' behind the return to the ancestral homeland, but also the experiences of settlement and the meanings attached to experiences. In conjunction, I intend to develop a clearer understanding of how the sense of place is articulated and lived out when confronted with problems of (re)adjustment in the various life spheres, ranging from social to cultural to landscape, just to name a few.

Focusing on two over-arching themes – integration, belonging and gender – the article focuses on two key questions:

– Why the desire to return to Portugal and how was the 'homecoming' imagined in the pre-return preparation stage?
– How has integration and settlement been approached in the return setting?

In order to accomplish the aims set out, the article relies on the narratives of ten second-generation returned women (five from Canada, five from France) to give meaning and exemplify specific theoretical stances up for debate. Although the ten participants have unique return experiences, certain opinions and integrating experiences do share a common ground.

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[1]   Although I apply the word 'return' to the Portuguese second generations' settling in Portugal, I am aware that the use of this term is not the most accurate being that those born in the emigration country of their parents most likely have never experienced a previous migration.

The participants in this study are:

From Canada,

    Sonia (born in 1984, returned in 1999),

    Cassandra (born in 1983, returned in 2002),

    Marcia (born in 1979, returned in 2005),

    Dina (born in 1982, returned in 2001) and

    Natalia (born in 1986, returned in 2007).

From France,

    Isabel (born in 1974, returned in 1997),

    Elena (born in 1976, returned in 2001),

    Jacqueline (born in 1969, returned in 1987),

    Joana (born in 1962, returned in 1987) and

    Cecilia (born in 1975, returned in 1997)[2].

The interviews with these participants were carried out throughout mainland Portugal from June, 2008 to February 2010[3].

To complete a dream: discussing return conceptions of the desired return

Composing a personal return migration projects requires delineating an array of variables, processes and stages, all of which go into constructing the return itself. Within this logic, seldom are production meanings and the organisation of activities so clear-cut, for often obstacles, challenges and the unexpected will require the re-working of 'personal plans of action'.

That said, the returnee women interviewed in this study were asked to discuss why they had wanted to return to Portugal and how they had imagined their 'homecoming' in the pre-return stages. From the narratives provided, one important variable in answering this question was that of return type: was the return of an individual nature or positioned within a familial setting (with parents or with husband and children)? Defining such a return characterisation particularly provides differing conceptions of return. Of the ten women observed, six came by themselves, two came with their parents and siblings, and two returned accompanied by their husbands and children.

The desire to return be it individually or within a familial setting, often starts taking shape well in advance of it ever taking place. Its construction takes place, above all, in the home, while in the emigration country. As Chamberlain (1995) points out, the extent to which the offspring will feel attached to their ancestral homeland and ethnic roots will often depend on the scale of ethnic practice and affiliation implanted by the parents at home. If it's the desire of the

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[2]   In order to guarantee anonymity, I revert to using pseudonyms.

[3]   This work is currently ongoing.

parents to maintain a strong attachment to Portugal, perhaps even with the aim of returning home, it will be their intent to equally install this same philosophy in their children. Such an undertaking will frequently be carried out through the use of lived symbols, family-tales and the manufacturing of a sense of nostalgia and reminiscences of the homeland (sense of *saudade*)[4]. Correlating with the instalment of a strong ethnic attachment at home, outside the home this sentiment will be fortified through conviviality with fellow emigrant nationals carried out through collective associations and/or personal relations. Most significantly, however, if strong ties are desired with the goal of returning, frequent visits to the ancestral homeland is of utter importance, for such visits are key to constructing networks and shaping their essence (Duval, 2004; Christou, 2004; 2006c)[5].

All women pointed out the importance of being surrounded by 'Portugueseness' while growing up, as well as the importance of having maintained physical contact with Portugal and, above all, their family in Portugal, highlighting the importance of such contacts in their decision to return. Contacts with Portugal and Portuguese culture – be it during short visits or while still in Canada or France – helped the respondents to create idealised versions of return, in some cases, individually moulded, in others, family-oriented.

Marcia, Natalia, Dina and Cecilia are examples of solo returnee women who envisioned their move as a way of achieving professional objectives they felt would be easier to accomplish in Portugal. Marcia described her aspirations of becoming a *Fado* singer in Portugal and recording an album, while Natalia returned wanting to pursue her dream of becoming a sports journalist and coving Portuguese soccer. The return aims outlined by Marcia and Natalie are based on dream-chasing objective thought of as only being possible to attain if residency is taken up in Portugal. This may include entering a profession or partaking in a cultural element typical to Portugal as is the case with seeking a *Fado* career or becoming a soccer journalist (given that soccer is not a sport of great popularity in Canada). Similarly, Dina and Cecilia both described their objectives of teaching English and French, respectively, with the goal of someday having their own schools, something that Dina has since accomplished, having opened up a languages school in her parents' hometown. Professional return motives often comes with a belief that the ancestral homeland's labour market is more penetrable and holds more opportunities, especially in areas where the returnee will have an

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[4]   Portuguese migrants' nostalgia is best expressed by the term *saudade*. Often referred to as being untranslatable, it implies as sense of longing for something or someone that one was fond of and which is lost or distant. For an analysis of the sense of *saudade* felt and expressed by Portuguese migrants, see Brettell (1998, 2000).

[5]   Although home country visits will provide direct contacts with the territory, culture, language and people, these visits are often limited in time and space, often not permitting an in-depth experiences, this beyond the fact that holiday visits are usually just that: holidays – composed of 'carnivalised' experiences of where the ancestral homeland is often associated with the romanticised images of Portugal (Afonso, 1997; Strijdhorst dos Santos, 2005).

upper hand in comparison to the local population (e.g. foreign language teaching) (Sardinha, 2011). Equally, returnees may also be motivated by the possibility of contributing to community development, aiming to provide new amenities to the community (Lee-Cunin, 2005; Rodman and Conway, 2005; Conway and Potter, 2006). In case of Dina, return was conceive as a 'win/win scenario' where by opening a language school, she'd be bringing a resource beneficial to the community, while, at the same time, this resource would provide her with a livelihood.

Also returning by themselves, Joana and Cassandra reflected on family and relationship forces coming from both the countries they departed from and Portugal. In relation to Joana, who moved to Portugal in 1987 when she was 25-years-of-age, she described her wanting to return as being driven by the desire to change her life, to live out other experiences and to be autonomous – away from the overprotective family cocoon she was raised in:

> It was important for me to be independent. My parents lived a typical emigrant lifestyle. They worked hard ... and, you know how it is ... my father set the rules. So you don't go out at night because it's not safe and you can't be setting a bad image by running around all the time. This situation drove me to wanting to get out, and by moving to Portugal, this was something my parents didn't think negatively about.

Evident in Joana's narrative is the divergent lifestyles of 'old world' parents and their 'new world' descendants (Tyyskä, 2005). For the first-generation of Portuguese emigrants, emigrating implied saving (with a return desire frequently kept in mind) and consuming only the bare necessities. This implies not partaking in events common the local population, but instead carrying on a daily routine of going back and forth between work and home and little else (Oliveira and Teixeira, 2004). Important to remember, however, is that within the migrant family, members live different external and internal worlds of experience based on generational as well as gender differences. For the second-generation, these individuals must negotiate cultural differences and try to accommodate distinct cultural behaviours against a backdrop of such differences. Raised among different mentalities and possessing a yearning for self-discovery, escapism from the control of a submissive patriarchal household and gender/generational role divisions and power inequalities becomes common. Joana's narrative provides such an example, and, for her, the ancestral homeland return strategy was a way of dodging parental rules and mentalities.

Cassandra, on the other hand, described having three family and relational push/pull factors that lead to her moving to Portugal: first, the fact that her brother had returned a few years before her (having since moved back to Canada); second, her parents were preparing to return in a few years time; third, she had found a partner in Portugal. Cassandra's return sees a *pragmatic* motive, owed to her brother's return and her parents soon to be accomplished return, thus the homecoming decision is seen as facilitating and assisting with the family

return project. As well, having found a partner in Portugal, she sees a pull factor that parallels the desires of many returnee women – of wanting to find a Portuguese partner, often with the intent of satisfying the intermarriage desires of parents and to not disrupt familial relations and desires (Noivo, 1997).

When it comes to returning within a family setting, although the final decision to return is always in the hands of the parents, this does not imply that the children do not influence and shape when and even if the return is to take place (Dustmann, 2003; Djajić, 2008). Driven by the fact that, with the prolongation of time spent in the emigration country the offspring will start to design a life project that does not include the return to the ancestral homeland, parents might map out a return strategy before greater independence starts to be established by the offspring. Under this scenario, for the second generation, the process of return might be seen as forced if the desire to return is not a shared desire. Such was the case with Jacqueline whose ancestral homecoming was determined by her parent's divorce, having then returned to Portugal as a teenager, a time she recalls as «*hard, painful and lonely*».

On the flip side, however, Sonia, who returned in her mid-teens with her parents, recalls her pre-return dream of wanting to search out and live out what it is 'to be Portuguese' and, in her own words, «*to live among real Portuguese people*». Possessing the goal of searching out her true cultural-self, Sonia falls into what Wessendorf (2007) refers to as second-generation 'roots-migrants'. Everyday translocal experiences during childhood and adolescence, along with the nostalgia for the homeland fostered at home and among fellow emigrants, are crucial for the second-generation's perceptions of the ethnic homeland. For many descendants, this nostalgia forms part of their ethnic identity while in the diasporic setting with some taking these ongoing translocal connections a step further by returning to their ancestral roots in the homeland (Wessendorf, 2007). For Sonia, the 'dream of return' was not enough to 'quench her thirst' for a real Portuguese identity. It had to be realised. As Wessendorf (2007) advances, the children of emigrants who desire to return to their roots do not want to make the same painful experience as their parents – to live in one place but dream of the other[6].

In contrast to those who return with their parents, Isabel and Elena are examples of second-generation returned women who returned with their husbands and children. What constitutes these returns as different is the fact that return is not one person's decision but one made mainly by two people. Often done in a calculated manner, the move to Portugal is something to be carried out once certain securities are guaranteed, primarily of an economic nature, and when the return will not be a step backwards for the family. That said, both interviewees outlined three important factors in their decision to move to Portugal:

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[6]   For first-generation Portuguese emigrants in the diaspora, the desired homecoming, more often than not, becomes a 'myth' that perpetuates over time (Brettell, 1979; Rocha-Trindade, 1983; Monteiro, 1993).

first, professional opportunities; second, greater proximity to family; and thirdly, a calmer, more laidback lifestyle in comparison to the life lead in the previously lived country. Within their return venture, the two women define themselves as central figures in a project they constructed together with their husbands. On this issue, Elena contrasted her mother's position in her parents' emigration to France to her experience as the female head of a second-generation Portuguese descendant family that has returned to Portugal:

> My mother basically followed my father to France, she didn't have a say in the matter, but that was normal back then. My husband and I, we had talked many times about moving to Portugal but it wasn't a matter of life or death for us. (...) At the time, we just did it for a change of pace in our lives. We were young and I had my father here who helped us out and that was important. The decision was ours together though. Completely different from the generation that departed from Portugal to go to France of which my parents were a part of.

Embodying dominant family and gender ideologies, therefore, women like Isabel and Elena not only feel compelled to consolidate their roles, but to justify them in terms of having a 'family project' (Noivo, 1997), one they are very much a part of.

Return, however, is not a simple process where cultural worlds are nicely enmeshed and go unquestioned. Quite the contrary in fact, as the return and what follows, frequently brings further questioning of identity and belonging, as well as questions of fit into a society that, in large part, is only known through holiday visits and through third part transmissions. The next section looks at issues of integration and reception on the part of the Portuguese society.

Upon return: the 'welcoming experience' and the search for the self

For those who dream of returning to an often idealised version of Portugal, accomplishing the 'homecoming' may be seen as a superlative happening. An often possible reality is that once return is accomplished, pre-return idealisations may be contested by the realities of everyday life and cultural misrepresentations, dissimilar from what was preconceived before the return was carried out (Christou, 2004).

Upon return, the clash of realities, perceptions and geographies, markers of what Markowitz and Stefansson (2004) argue are 'unsettled paths of return', are useful in trying to work out the complexities of social identity constructions and sense of belonging, while keeping in mind the sending/receiving, host/home plurality that serve to influence the multi-layered characteristics and variables that go into negotiating, translating, inventing, imaging and, ultimately, (re)constructing identification as well as facilitating integration into the 'new' receiving

society. Second generation homecomings, therefore, must think beyond the myth-laden mission of return and build bases of security and socio-cultural shock preparation (King and Christou, 2008). If no social interactions and/or insertion-related undertakings are prepared (before or upon arrival), the realisation of the 'dreamed homecoming' may be thwarted, leading instead to feelings of disenchantment, rupture and regret (Pérez, 2005; Christou, 2006a).

Equally important, however, is the role of the host society and the degree of the warmth of the welcome, as discriminatory, behavioural and institutional obstacles that may be major draw backs to any returnee's insertion. From the narratives collected, proof of these confrontations is common, not only at the institutional level but at a personal level as well. For the second generation returnees, feelings of disillusionment are frequently drawn out of the problems encountered with the 'inner workings' of Portuguese society and the State, ranging from bureaucracies, to corruption, to the lethargy of Portuguese public services, to the lack of sense of service and friendliness in the shops and businesses.

As well, at a more personal, micro-level, daily interactions with Portuguese society may equally bring about disenchantment brought by clash of values and social differences. As a number of authors (Potter *et al.* 2005; Conway and Potter, 2006) have argued, the differentiation and non-acceptance of return migrants often leads to a process of 'othering'; that is the marked marginalisation of the returnees as outsiders who are perceived as being different in comparison to the indigenous population. This very process of 'othering', however, may also be a two-way street, for in protecting non-Portuguese values and norms, returnees will distance themselves from what they feel and perceive as incorrect, thus leading to the local community members equally perceiving them as outsiders for possessing different values and perspectives; ones they attach to her foreignness.

Furthermore, for second generation returnees, spaces of confrontation and conflict may emerge when confronted with anti-emigrant sentiments. Unsurprisingly, a lot of the labelling and stereotyping equally emerges from such sentiments. Gonçalves (1996) analysis how Portuguese emigrants are often negatively stereotyped upon returning to the homeland due to what the Portuguese population perceive as the exhibitionist and pretentious nature of the returnee wanting to show-off, wanting to call attention to themselves and to the material goods they bring with them, as well as frequently possessing an image and a fascination for elements of Portuguese culture considered cliché by Portuguese residents. Such characteristics of the emigrant persona also tend to transcend generations. The interviewees recounted stories of 'growing up Portuguese' in a way they thought typical of girls their own age in Portugal, only to find out upon return that 'the Portuguese ways' they were brought up with in the diaspora is seen as old-fashion and belonging to older generations in accordance to their peers in Portugal. Resultingly, the women described being the object of ridicule due to their 'outsider' positions – emigrant descendant out of touch with 'the true Portugal'.

This arriving to Portugal with the wrong judgment of realities equally goes beyond cultural symbols and false perceptions of what is adorned and what is not. As was brought to light earlier in this paper, some returnees make the move to the ancestral homeland possessing the belief that their educational and knowledge capital will permit labour-market advancement in Portugal. Upon arrival, many quickly find out that this is seldom the case. To exemplify this, I revert to the words of Marcia and her hard fought professional struggles in the labour market niches she's involved in:

> I've sent out so many c.v.'s (curriculum vitae) to the point that I've lost count. I can speak Portuguese, French and English and I'm a translator; that's what I got my degree in back in Montreal. I thought that would be enough to get me a good job, but it hasn't been the case. My daytime job, I'm ready to quit because it's so unmotivating. (...) With my other carrier – *Fado* – I used to sing in this *Fado* House in Bairro Alto (neighbourhood) in Lisbon. At first I was singing every night there for the tourists. Then they decided they were going to get another female voice, so they got this young girl, 20-years-old, and she would wear these provocative blouses during her performances and flirt with the clients. All of the sudden they were cutting back my nights. (…) After a while I just quit singing there because I felt I was being disrespected. But you know the saying here: 'subir na horizontal' (moving up horizontally)?[7] I think a lot of women are given that option around here, and if you look around, you do question: 'how did she get the job?', 'how did she move up so fast?', this when they're not even qualified to do what they're doing. But you know how Portugal has always functioned ... on the 'cunha' bases, right? Now I get here, I move to Lisbon, I don't know anyone ... how am I going to get to where I want to get to accomplish my dreams?

A point generally disproved by the interviewees is the fact that knowing other languages and being educated in Canada or France, under different and often better-perceived educational and organisational systems, does not put returnees in a more privileged position. It is felt that those born and raised in Portugal are at an advantage for they have accumulated social/human capital through the years, and know the systems of the country, and therefore, have an inside track (Christou, 2006b). The '*cunha*' concept[8] is, in fact, something of great concern to the respondents, as, similar to Marcia, many point out that 'what is most important is who you know', emphasising, as well, the existing difficulties in penetrating already established social networks.

In Marcia's narrative, reference is also made to the gender positioning of women in Portugal, needing to subject themselves to having to be flirtatious,

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7   'Moving up on the horizontal' is a saying that implies having sexual relations with someone (in a horizontal position) with the sole purpose of moving up the corporate ladder.

8   '*Cunha*' is the Portuguese word for having the right human capital or social connections with people in authority to obtain favours or benefits for third parties.

having to indulge in sexual activities in order to 'climb up the corporate ladder', and how many women, who do understand the power of such submission, will wield that power in the name of advancement. For nearly all the women in this study, in one form or another, education, work and careers figured prominently in their discourses. At the same time, their career ambitions and drive to succeed draws parallels with their discourse of being self-sufficient, autonomous and being independent decision-makers. Being confronted with women who submit to the male-driven pressures in order to achieve upward professional mobility creates a gendered struggle, one Marcia has encountered through her work experience.

In the case of these women, beyond being individual 'ethnic actors' (Yuval-Davis, 1997), in one way or another, they also possess defining roles as professionals, as mothers, as wives and as daughters. Keeping this in mind, through the mediation of roles and performance, post-return identification processes can equally be discerned. From the narratives collected, one can also observe that the act of return is often also an act of a self identity search, be it through an attempted self-search within the ethnic culture, through the keeping alive of family traditions, or through the possibility of professional fulfilment. For these women, even those who return individually, seldom are their returns devoid of external influences, be them familial or societal. The narrations collected provide a variety of examples, often framed within dialogues of a time/space schisms – the past in the emigration country; the present and future in the ancestral homeland – in their attempts to construct new spaces of heterogeneous (gendered) identities. Here we are reminded of Joana and her ancestral homeland return strategy, aimed mainly at dodging parental rules and mentalities. Her very act of returning, in this case, was also her pawn in the intergenerational power negotiations between her and her parents, as mobility became the outlet to attain the 'freedom' to define the self. As she describes:

> It's not that I came back here thinking I'm going to be rebellious and do a whole bunch of crazy things that I wouldn't be able to do in France because my parents wouldn't let me. I came hoping to conquer something on my own, and if things were to go wrong, then so be it, but at least I wouldn't have someone pointing fingers, telling me 'I told you so'. (…) Portugal provided me with the opportunity to 'open my eyes'. I ended up finding myself here, but that didn't take much to accomplish – being on my own was enough – and what I found out is that I'm not too far attached from my parent's emigrant ways. Having a calm life, being at home, saving your money, it had its impact on me … I admit it. It might not be the Portuguese way but it's the Portuguese emigrant way, and that's the way I was raised.

Beyond the search for self-identification, Joana's return is not only a journey for 'emancipation' and 'empowerment', but also one of ethno-cultural reassurance; with the aim of placing herself within a state of 'Portugueseness' that sees a

dual influence: on one hand, the traditional and conservative version of her parents, on the other, a more liberating version presented in the Portugal she arrived to by herself. She, therefore, sees Portugal as the space to construct an identity that can accommodate what she was before returning and what the family environment in the emigration country instilled upon her, and what she's suppose to be in the post-return, accommodating the best from both 'worlds' within the parameters of what she coins 'the Portuguese emigrant way'.

Now within the return scenario that places a woman as the female head of a returned family, as Christou (2006c: 183) highlights, in her role as wife and mother, 'the sense of collective security underlines the gendered return to a motherland where the 'mothering' of the land complements the mothers' journeying'. That said, in defining their agency in this setting, women are placed in a situation where they are to define cultural positions and interpretations in the home. Case in point is that of Isabel who finds herself in a position to engineer familial processes of identity formation, guided by her own shifting positions of belonging. She explains:

> It may sound different, but in a lot of aspects in my life, we're in France. As a family, we even do our shopping in the French supermarket chains. We go to Carrefour, Leclerc and Intermarché because they have French products there that we use. In my kitchen at home I probably have just as many French products as my mom has in her kitchen back in France, but she probably has just as many Portuguese products as I do as well. But this is what I mean by different. Just as my mother is a different person in France, I am a different person here. Just as my mother kept Portugal present in our house when I was growing up, I keep France alive in my own house for my children because I want them to have that in common with us. (…) Sometimes I ask myself to what extent we're not complicating things in our family. My seven-year-old daughter, who likes football, asked me when Portugal played France: Mom, what am I going to do? Who am I suppose to be cheering on? This question, it's like asking who am I? I tell her to cheer for both; that way she'll always win. But you know as parents, we are responsible for this. We have the power to influence. So these questions she asks, I'm responsible for them as well.

Accordingly, in negotiating roles and constructing performativity, often within the frameworks of being hyphenated emigrant descendants residing in a 'new' terrain of belonging, converging multiple sites of gendered interpretations and hoping to find stability at the junctions of these interpretations (Christou, 2004: 180-183), women like Isabel convince themselves that their placing and performance in Portugal is right for them and their families. Insertion, in the long run, is then worked out under dual senses of belonging.

Conclusion

This article has centred on the 'return' migration of ten second-generation women and how these participants define and describe aspects of their (pre- and post-return) relocation and of their gendered identity construction, incorporating within them transnational representations. The ethnic community and the symbolic ethnicisation of the return are refined by the conscious decision of a 'motherland' return, in search of an identity and sense of belonging that manifests itself within the socio-/ethno-cultural playing fields negotiated in. The multiple constructions that emerge are key to the way these women perceive themselves, and how this may determine the way socio-/ethno-cultural production is expressed within local and global contexts (Christou, 2004). Such orientations are particularly important in determining just how the homeland return is visualised, processed and understood.

Resultingly, the participants elaborated on their 'personal plans of action' in the pre-return, pointing out why the desire to return to Portugal and how the 'homecoming' was imagined in the pre-return. The women imagined better opportunities for them professionally in Portugal, perceived that Portugal would provide them with an exit from traditional, authoritarian, conservative ways of 'being Portuguese' (primarily imposed upon them by their parents), and some also possessed the belief that a homeland return would fulfil them culturally, permitting great proximity to roots. And yet others constructed their return around family and family desires of returning, be that return of an independent nature, keeping in mind their parents return, or returning with their own established family (spouse and children).

The reality, as many of the narratives highlighted, is that the often 'pretty picture of return' envisioned in the pre-return is seldom as 'pretty' upon returning. Feelings of disenchantment and rupture with Portuguese society are brought by a lack of warmth in welcoming 'home' these descendants. Descriptions of behavioural and institutional obstacles, of bureaucracies, of lethargy of Portuguese public services, of the lack of sense of service and friendliness in the shops and businesses, lack of honesty and of corruption, as well as clash of values between the returnees and the host society, were expressed in the narratives given. As a result, the women spoke of 'othering' and being 'othered', of feeling the brunt of anti-emigrant sentiments, of being stigmatised and labelled, as well as encountering difficulties in penetrating already established social networks.

Through personal and intimate relationships, the returnees confront performances of 'Portugueseness' that challenge previously fixed notions they might have held in connection to gender identities and behaviours in the pre-return. These distinctions are realised through everyday experiential confrontations. Ensuing from such encounters with Portugal society, as the narratives of the female returnees exemplified, any attempt at actively articulating a greater sense of belonging to Portugal often falls short of its goal given that 'the Portugal' these

women identify with is often not 'the Portugal' found upon return. This, in turn, leads these women to reform their views on Portuguese social norms, values, relations and socialisation patterns, serving to alter attitudes and construct broader outlooks, this in comparison to those held in the pre-return. Thus, resulting from their brushes with Portuguese society, differentiation and rupture puts these women's search for home and sense of belonging into check. The end result is that seldom does the dreamed return become a reality.

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