

BEING PRESENT THROUGH ABSENCE: THE SEMIOTIC CONSTRUCTION OF RECENT BRAZILIAN MIGRATION TO PORTUGAL IN THE BRAZILIAN MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Over recent years, a rising number of Brazilians have migrated to Portugal. This phenomenon confirms certain trends that have already been identified in the literature while also revealing important changes in its configuration. These transformations are accompanied by a diversification of discourses about the phenomenon, that occurs across different media platforms. In the case of television, the discourses are transmitted in the form of audiovisual content which, more than just being an alternative language to writing, constitutes an important tool for articulating knowledge. In an attempt to understand the semiotic approach towards this fact in the Brazilian media, we decided to analyse all episodes from the first season of the television journalistic series, *Portugal pelos Brasileiros* (Portugal by Brazilians), broadcast in Brazil by Rede Globo de Televisão in early 2018. The principles of Social Semiotics developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen were used from an intersectional perspective as a starting point to unveil how the visual and sound resources used in this series, and the combination thereof, contribute to the construction of discourses about new Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal. In view of the identified arrangements, we conclude that we are facing a media discourse that privileges representation of recent Brazilian immigration in Portugal in a segmented manner, revealing the perspective of one specific group of immigrants, to the detriment of the plurality of voices and experiences that are inherent to the phenomenon as a whole. We view the ongoing intention to separate the representations of the new Brazilian immigrants in Portugal from other representations commonly related to Brazilian migrants from previous migratory waves, through the configuration of new semiotic repertoires to the effect, as a part of broader discursive strategies that might have direct consequences on the social life of the persons in question.

KEYWORDS

media discourse; Social Semiotic; intersectionality; migrations; Portugal pelos Brasileiros

ÊSTAR PRESENTE NA AUSÊNCIA: A CONSTRUÇÃO SEMIÓTICA DA IMIGRAÇÃO BRASILEIRA RECENTE EM PORTUGAL NOS MÉDIA BRASILEIROS

RESUMO

Nos últimos anos, o deslocamento de brasileiros para Portugal tem-se intensificado, o que tanto confirma algumas das tendências já apontadas na literatura quanto revela mudanças

importantes na configuração deste fenômeno. Paralelamente, é possível observar que estas transformações são acompanhadas de um movimento de diversificação discursiva sobre esse cenário e que acontece em diferentes plataformas mediáticas. No caso da televisão, esses discursos são transmitidos na forma de conteúdos audiovisuais que, mais do que apenas uma linguagem alternativa à escrita, são importantes ferramentas de articulação do conhecimento. Buscando-se entender a abordagem semiótica deste fenômeno nos média brasileiros, foi feita uma análise dos episódios da primeira temporada da série jornalística televisiva *Portugal pelos Brasileiros*, exibida no Brasil pela Rede Globo de Televisão no início do ano de 2018. Os princípios da Semiótica Social de Gunther Kress e Theo van Leeuwen foram utilizados em uma perspectiva interseccional como ponto de partida para se desvelar de que forma os recursos visuais e sonoros na série e a sua conjugação contribuem para a construção de discursos sobre os novos imigrantes brasileiros em Portugal. Face aos arranjos identificados, concluímos atestando a veiculação de um discurso nos média que privilegia a representação da imigração brasileira recente em Portugal de forma segmentada, dando a conhecer a perspectiva de um grupo específico de imigrantes em detrimento da pluralidade de vozes e experiências inerentes ao fenômeno em questão. Entendemos essa intenção de se separar, por meio do repertório semiótico, as representações dos novos imigrantes brasileiros em Portugal, como parte de estratégias discursivas que terão consequências diretas na vida social destes sujeitos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

discurso mediático; Semiótica Social; interseccionalidade; migrações; Portugal pelos Brasileiros

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the media assume a prominent place as a source of information and knowledge about the world (Talbot, 2007). Within the overall mix of media possibilities made possible by technological advances, television, due to its inherent characteristics and reach, is a communicational mechanism that has great social and cultural impact in contemporary western societies. When we understand it as a mediator of reality, it is no longer possible to describe its content as a mere mirror of everyday life. It is therefore necessary to approach television as one of many possible interpretations of the world, that resorts to culturally shared beliefs and values for specific purposes. Especially in view of the proliferation of media content that seeks to disclose the different nuances of the societies in which we live, it is therefore imperative to overcome the assumption of television as a means of information, and instead understand how the editing and format of television content influences its meaning (Araújo, Cogo & Pinto, 2015; Fiske & Hartley, 1978/2003).

In the case of Brazilian immigration to Portugal, over recent years, the media has played a fundamental role in showcasing a new migratory wave of Brazilians who have moved to Portugal. Following a growth pattern that had already been identified in previous years, in 2018, the number of Brazilian citizens residing in Portugal increased by 23,4% compared to 2017, without counting those who were not considered in this official survey because they acquired Portuguese nationality (SEF, 2019). The subject has been covered by many television channels, which has led to the production of content that seeks to show more about the lives of these new immigrants who have moved to Portugal. One such

production was the journalistic series *Portugal pelos Brasileiros* (Portugal by Brazilians), broadcast between January and February 2018 on Rede Globo de Televisão. Produced by the production company Plano Geral Filmes, the series presents an account of the migration experience and the lives of Brazilians immigrants who recently moved to Portugal.

In order to question how television content fosters media discourses about new Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal, we propose to analyse the five episodes of the first season of the series. The fact that the series presents the migratory experience from the perspective of its protagonists was decisive for choosing this object of study, since the biographical approach makes it possible to highlight the voices of these subjects and question social representations that are being built historically, as reflected in the media discourses. We also considered that the change of focus to approach the topic from the perspective of the country of origin, identifying the representations that are emerging and being disseminated in Brazil is not only interesting, but also fundamental. While the topic receives considerable attention in the Portuguese academic world, studying the presence of emigrants in the Brazilian media also involves investigating this phenomenon of being “present despite absence” (Sayad, 2011, p. 183) and how this *presence* delineates this phenomenon and its subjects, a discourse that may, or may not, prove to be homologous to the discourse of the destination country (Sayad, 2011). To conduct this analysis, we started from the principles of Social Semiotics as a way to explore the semiotic resources used in the series from a holistic perspective of the conjugation of the various elements that are present therein, and also those that are absent, while always observing a critical posture, inherited from the intersectional approach (e. g. Crenshaw, 1991; May, 2015). The attention devoted to the image did not sublimate an analysis of the sound. According to Oliveira (2016), the latter is as an important semiotic resource within audiovisual content. Therefore, researchers should thrive to reverse the tendency to neglect this semiotic resource – a situation that, as said by the author, has become common in the field of Communication Sciences. Going a little further, given the little that is still known about this new migratory wave, we compared our analysis with a broader reflection on the discourses that this content helps support, in order to promote the dialogue that is always necessary between culture, social life and its semiotic manifestations.

APPROACH TO SEMIOTIC ARTICULATION IN THE MEDIA

Over the last few years there has been change of discourse regarding the case that is covered by the *corpus* of our analysis. This corresponds precisely to the period in which it becomes more interesting to analyse these new discourses, that are socially constructed (Fairclough, 1995). In this paper, we will approach these transformations at the semiotic level, with the aim of understanding how these new discourses are visually articulated in the media. We consider that it is relevant not only to unveil the socially constituted discourses concerning a specific social issue, but also how they are semiotically articulated, given that this practice is both *reproductive*, since it is based on discourses

that are external to it, and *creative* from the moment that it becomes possible to articulate this discourse in different semiotic manners (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

The multimodal nature of television productions requires a methodology that contemplates its content in a comprehensive and articulated manner. In this context, instead of analysing semiotic elements in isolation, it is necessary to see the bigger picture and how the different elements are related to the objective of creating a broader meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). To achieve this, we used some of the dimensions identified by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 15) in their visual grammar that may be applied to moving images, especially those that we believe are being used to create “patterns of representation”. The aspects of multimodal content identified by van Leeuwen (2005) were also considered to identify how the semiotic elements of the television series come together to build social representations about recent Brazilian immigration in Portugal and its subjects. Understanding multimodality as a central aspect of the analysed material proved to be fundamental, since, unlike the still image, which is available to the viewer’s critical eye (Mota-Ribeiro & Pinto-Coelho, 2011), the moving image transports the viewer to its space-time, immersing her or him in that reality (Gervereau, 2007). In addition, when it has a multimodal character, the meaning of the image is achieved through the transversality of its semiotic modes, endowing it with a multidimensional character that should not be ignored (Machin, 2013).

Based on this conceptual framework, we drew up a grid of visual and sound analysis of the television series, identifying the aspects that seemed to be the most important for study of the case in question. In the representational dimension, we chose to observe the constitution of the present conceptual standards and the way that migrants are represented in the series, according to certain parameters, measured by inference. In addition to common indicators identified in research on this topic, such as race and gender, we added the parameter of social status, which we consider to be essential for this case because it explains that the subject’s social position is derived from circumstances that lie beyond her or his economic condition. We also added the indicator of age group, since statistical data on immigrants in Portugal reveal important changes in the age profile of this population segment. In the interactive dimension, in addition to filmic aspects related to camera position and movement, we included the visual and sound modality. In terms of composition, we chose to analyse the framing, through which the relationship between immigrants seen in the television series and the other persons depicted, may or may not be related. Finally, we added the sequential and simultaneous perspective of the dialogue, which made it possible to achieve a more comprehensive view of the time dimension, given that this aspect of the moving image is so vital for the construction of its meaning.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| REPRESENTATIONAL MEANINGS | Structures of representation | Conceptual patterns |
| | Representation of human participants | Race Gender Age group Social status |
| INTERACTIVE MEANINGS | The image act and the gaze Size of frame Perspective/viewing angle | |
| | Modality | Illumination Brightness Colour saturation Colour differentiation Colour modulation Sound |
| COMPOSITIONAL MEANINGS | Framing | |
| DIALOGUE | Sequentiality Simultaneity | |

Table 1: Analysis grid, adapted from Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and van Leeuwen (2005)

ANALYSIS

The first season of the series *Portugal pelos Brasileiros* reveals the migration path of some Brazilians who have emigrated to Portugal in recent years. Each episode focuses on the individual experience of each immigrant, addressing certain aspects of migration, in the first person, such as why the interviewee chose to emigrate and their daily routine in terms of work, leisure options, family life and the perceived differences between everyday life in Portugal and Brazil. The use of biographical reporting has been widely exploited by the media, increasingly focusing on “slices of life” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 50) as a way of making known and representing the inherent diversity of human life. In the television series, these lines are interchangeably complemented by a male voice-over narration which, in function of that which is said by each interviewee, shares information and tips for Brazilian viewers who may be planning to emigrate to Portugal.

In what we considered to be a pre-analysis stage, we prepared the storyboards of each episode, so that the visual narrative could be seen from a more distant point of view, through analysis of the individual shots. Analysis of the storyboards corresponds to the first of the six levels of analysis of film and television content (Iedema, 2004). Although the moving image has led us to a methodological approach that differs from analysis of still images, visualisation of the individual shots allowed us to elucidate possible stylistic and visual trends. This exercise was an important guide for preparing the analysis grid and for effective discussion of the specific aspects of the images in question.

Understanding the content on the basis of its structural logic, analysis of the dialogue does not refer solely to verbal interaction, but also to the relationship between semiotic resources used in the series, in terms of their sequentiality and simultaneity. These two perspectives are based on issues of temporality and, through their analysis, it is possible to understand how the series’ dialectical cohesion is created, which fosters interaction between the different semiotic modes present, in order to contribute to creation

of the meaning of the image (van Leeuwen, 2005). Analysis of the television series from a sequential perspective reveals that the sequence of images does not follow a storytelling logic, but instead illustrates what is being verbalised by the interviewee, in the voice-over. Therefore, what we see are previously selected and edited shots from the immigrant's life in Portugal, instead of a sequential narrative about her or his migratory experience. More than history, the content reveals small portions of her or his successful migratory experience¹ and life as an immigrant in Portugal in terms of work, family environment and leisure options. These choices, which have been made by the production team rather than by the interviewee, are combined with ideological and social motivations that go beyond this specific media content, and rely on the authority of the protagonists' spoken testimonies (Ribeiro, 2017) in order to endow the seal of authenticity (Fairclough, 1995). Nevertheless, there are fast transitions between the different scenes, a technique that is commonly used to endow a sense of action and excitement to the subject being shown (Fairclough, 1995).

The dialectical cohesion is achieved through the use of four distinct semiotic tracks: the visual image, written language, the immigrants' spoken testimonies and the soundtrack. The spoken element is the dominant track, and governs all the other semiotic resources. It is also important to highlight the role played by the soundtrack chosen for the episodes. This attention to the sound aspect is crucial because, despite the fact that the academic world often pays little attention to this semiotic resource (Oliveira, 2016), the modality of sound also steers the viewer's interpretation of the content in question. In this context, sounds require a sensitive appraisal (Oliveira, 2016) and, in the case of the series, the musical track follows the orientation of the sensorial coding, which means that it aims to achieve the emotional impact that the perceived musical parameters will provoke in the viewer (van Leeuwen, 1999). Fado music, sung in a Portuguese accent, is present in the series, with songs in more serious and slow tones used at the beginning of the videos. In episode one, for example, we hear the Portuguese singer Ana Moura singing her *Desfado*, in which she says "destiny wants me not to believe in destiny/and my (fate) is not having any *fado* (fate) at all". In episode four, we hear Gisela João, also from Portugal, singing the verses of *Meu amigo está longe* (My friend is far away), specifically "my friend is far away/and the distance is so great". This atmosphere gradually progresses with other songs, sung in a more agitated and high-pitched voice, as we move towards the end of each episode. Thus, as the interviewee continues to talk, the soundtrack becomes more cheerful and agitated, especially when immigrants speak optimistically.

Still from a distant perspective, we also analyse the modality of the image. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), this aspect of the image refers to the semiotic visual indicators that can be applied in order to suggest how the image may be interpreted. Here we consider not only the type of lighting and the brightness of the image, but also

¹ We emphasize this detail with a critical stance, considering that there are still very few news items in the Brazilian media that address the difficulties experienced by Brazilian immigrants in Portugal in their migratory process (Marmo, 2019; Ribeiro, 2018).

the manipulation of colour, such as saturation, differentiation and modulation. One of the aspects that differentiates colour from the other semiotic modes of the image is its ability to appeal to emotions and feelings, promoting a direct connection between the visualised image and the viewer's affective field², often working outside the logical and rational field (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The combination of these nuances, on scales that are dependent on cultural conventions, means that the content may be perceived as more or less real, or more or less abstract, for example. Since time is a dimension that cannot be ignored in moving images, time-related parameters must be appreciated with an even more critical eye, in order not to overlook modality changes that may occur while the moving image content develops. Such modality changes, however, do not seem to be present in this series. Throughout the different episodes, we noticed very little manipulation in terms of lighting and colour, reinforcing the idea that the content aims to present itself as an exact reproduction of reality – a naturalistic encoding of the image that, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), is dominant in contemporary Western societies. Even so, some aspects of this naturalistic aspect can be analysed critically. In this television series, lighting does contribute to the creation of a springtime atmosphere, although there is no mention of a specific date or season. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), the seasons convey a cultural meaning and are organised discursively.

In terms of analysis of the image, the first focus concerned the representative structures (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In this series, there are almost no scenes that reveal interaction between the immigrants interviewed and other individuals besides family members, spouses, service providers and close friends. It is clear that most of the image content found therein is of a conceptual representative nature, implying that its objective is to characterise Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal, rather than to show how interaction with other individuals occurs³.

In view of the common denominator of the represented participants – they are all immigrants of Brazilian nationality who are resident in Portugal – we sought to explore other aspects that rise from a perceptual difference, so that other information about these people could be inferred. Analyses made in studies on previous migratory waves were made in function of the social categories of gender, race and economic class, for example in Assis, Silva and Frederico (2016). However, we do not consider that it is possible to talk about these aspects in isolation, since they are intertwined in complex and meaningful manners. In order to highlight the existing relationships between the different practices of social positioning through the identities defined in these previous analyses, we adopted the perspective of intersectionality in our analysis. This approach is not defined by a set of specific rules and methods of analysis, but by the approach to the object of study that

² Heller (2012) demonstrates the relationship between feelings and colours. According to this author, different colours or chromatic arrangements lead, according to the context in which they appear, to different sensory and psychological effects. The emotional effects that follow these chromatic arrangements vary, depending on the cultural context.

³ This absence points in the opposite direction of the expectation that there would be some interaction between these immigrants and those of previous migratory waves. This probability is considered based on studies that attest to contact networks that exist between future emigrants and those who have already emigrated to the country of destination, constituting an important aspect in the decision to emigrate (Fonseca, Esteves & Iorio, 2015).

values analytical and interpretive orientation to question dominant ideas about individuals and social groups (May, 2015), in order to unveil the webs of subjectivity that underpin unequal power relations. In the context of migration, the intersectional approach has been adopted to highlight important differences at the intragroup level, especially in relation to issues such as differences in privileges between individuals in the same social group, given that this approach has managed to expand beyond the gender perspective without losing its political tone directed towards social change (Bastia, 2014).

In this context, it is possible to see how the various social categories are intertwined in the representation of contemporary Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal. The racial profile present in the television series is perhaps the social category that is most evident and is projected with greatest force. We observed that all Brazilian immigrants seen in the television series are white, despite the fact that racial diversity is one of the most prominent characteristics of Brazilian society. According to the Brazilian Institute of Statistics and Geography – IBGE (2016), the racial composition⁴ of Brazilian society has changed significantly since 2004. The year of 2006 was a turning point when the number of people who declared themselves to be brown or black surpassed the white population (IBGE, 2018). In 2018, the size of the brown population in Brazil was 46,5%, followed by 43,1% whites and 9,3% blacks (IBGE, 2019). It is interesting to see how the segmented visual representation in the television series of Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal may directly impact not only their social life, but also that of other Brazilian immigrants who already reside in Portugal. As Machado (2004) revealed, the social dynamics within the Brazilian community in Portugal operate according to what the author calls the “centrality game”: Brazilian immigrants whose physical characteristics and behaviour mirror the stereotypes about Brazilians crystallized in Portuguese society hold positions of prominence in hierarchical social structures, even within the Brazilian community itself. In Portuguese society, these social representations support what the author calls “identity-for-the-market” (Machado, 2004, p. 4) because they lack a historical basis and are reduced to the demands of the Portuguese market in relation to Brazilian immigrants. Due to this fact, Machado (2004, p. 11) claims that, in Portuguese society, there is a process of “reversing the Brazilian racial hierarchy” that has ruled Brazilian society since the end of the 19th century: blacks and browns are gaining social visibility, precisely because they are assimilated to the social categories in force and because it is possible to trace expectations about them (Moscovici, 1988). What the visual images in the television series show us, however, makes us question this alleged “reversal”, but instead giving rise to new representational structures in addition to conventional stereotypes in Portuguese society. It is also worth noting the peculiarity of the fact that this process is operating in the Brazilian media scene – the series in question is broadcast in Brazil and not in Portugal – which gives room to reflect about the new configurations that racism is assuming in Brazilian society (Lima, 2019).

⁴ It is important to mention that the question asked in the surveys undertaken by IBGE mentions “color or race” and has white, black, yellow, brown or indigenous as answer options. Therefore, it is not possible to distinguish how many of the respondents answered to this question thinking in terms of skin color and not race, or vice versa.

On the other hand, we know that it is not possible to talk about skin colour in Brazil without entering the terrain of the social disparities that are interlinked with this debate. So, we also decided to analyse the perceived social status of the immigrants represented in the series. The choice of this parameter proved to be relevant, since it makes it possible to analyse representativeness and power relations that go beyond counting of the number of appearances in the content itself (Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2018). The social status of the Brazilian immigrants who appear in the television series was inferred according to several perceived markers, which could be compared, in order to enable cross-sectional readings. In this regard, although there may be differences between the immigrants represented in the series, we observe that these individuals have a medium to high social status. One only has to consider the economic class of these subjects – who, even after residing in Portugal for a few months, acquired their own property and other commodities, such as vehicles – to realise that their social status is significantly different from that of Brazilian immigrants of the second migratory wave, for which migration to Portugal involved a large initial investment – which in some cases required personal savings over several years or family assistance to cover expenses related to airline tickets and bureaucratic issues (Padilla, Marques, Góis & Peixoto, 2015). Other indicators reinforce this identification of social status, for example, in relation to profession, residence in geographical areas that have a high social status and lifestyle – in particular leisure activities. On the other hand, it is interesting to note, however, that indicators that could imply a lower perceived social status of the participants in the television series are compensated through visual strategies and explicit mention of other indicators that suggest a higher social status.

In terms of visual aspects, even though the immigrants in the series may have different social status, the composition of the images nonetheless establishes a relationship between the various immigrants shown in the series, either because they form part of the broader context of the television series or through the use of film techniques such as including them all in the same shot, or absence of visual indicators that distinguish between them. As a result, they are perceived as individuals who are connected to each other and pertain to the same social group (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). It is not possible to conclude, however, whether only an unrepresentative portion of all Brazilian immigrants is being represented in the series, or whether the Brazilian community in Portugal is, in fact, segmented in the way that the series presents to us. One of the biggest obstacles to answering this doubt is the lack of statistical data for various parameters related to migrant communities living in Portugal, including “ethnic-racial issues”⁵. This is a component that is also absent in national census research in Portugal, which has stirred up debate about all the associated issues related to social and cultural origin. Although this subject has gained recognition and importance at a governmental level through the

⁵ There is no room here to discuss the complexity of several issues that we consider to be pertinent in relation to the term “ethnic-racial”, since is not the focus of this article. In this context, we limit ourselves to using the same designation present in the debate on the subject at the governmental level, in particular Ministerial Order no. 7.363/2018 that created the working group *Census 2021 – ethnic-racial issues*.

creation in 2018 of the working group, 2021 *Census - ethnic-racial issues*, effective changes may still take time to emerge, since studying this issue in the Portuguese context is also traversing various trajectories that are not easy to navigate, such as historical awareness and social memory. With regard to immigrants, this absence reinforces difficulties related to legitimising and promoting their cultural origins and practices, and also obstacles imposed by the lack of data on the development of public policies that respond to situations of discrimination and racism suffered by these individuals.

In terms of gender, we note that six of the immigrants shown in the television series are men, whereas seven are women. Faced with a phenomenon that has been represented as being primarily male (Assis, Silva & Frederico, 2016), observing the presence of women as protagonists in the television series enables us to understand the discursive dimensions with which female Brazilian immigrants have been represented in the media. During the first migratory wave, little or nothing was said about female Brazilian immigrants, who appeared in a supporting role in the labour migration of their spouses (Pinho, 2007). Their presence in the media only occurred on a more regular basis in the second migratory wave, which marked the beginning of feminisation of Brazilian immigration in Portugal (França & Padilla, 2018), and established a break with the dominant male profile that persisted until the year 2000, the beginning of the third millennium (Assis, Silva & Frederico, 2016). Even so, the portrayal of female Brazilian immigrants has been often associated with the stereotype of hypersexualized women linked to the “sex market” (Assis, 2017, p. 226; Oliveira, Cabecinhas & Ferin-Cunha, 2011), a legacy much influenced by interpretations made by Portuguese people of Brazilian cultural products shown on Portuguese television stations in previous decades (Iorio & Souza, 2018). In the television series in question, we see female Brazilian immigrants who not only assume a prominent position in characterisation of the phenomenon of Brazilian immigration, but who are given a voice to narrate their migratory journey in the first person. Even though they are inserted in a family context, they are also shown in other social dynamics in the public sphere, such as professional and social activities. In addition, the work positions in which they are inserted involve higher qualifications, which calls attention to possible changes in the labour insertion strategies adopted by Brazilian immigrants in Portugal.

In order to extend our analysis of this dimension, remaining within the framework of representative structures, we also analysed age groups, perceived as another fundamental characteristic. The most representative age group of the second migratory wave was 20 to 30 years old, with an equal proportion of men and women (Padilla et al., 2015), which was consistent with their work character. In the series, we infer that the immigrants are from older age groups, in an interval between 35 and 55 years old. No major discrepancies are observed between the number of men and women. This change is in line with statistical data on the most representative age group in relation to the total number of immigrants who arrived in Portugal in 2018. According to the Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), the most representative age groups were 30-39 years old, for women, and 25-34 years old for men (SEF, 2019). In the case of Brazilian immigrants,

when we compare these statistics with the profile of the immigrants represented in the television series in question, it is understood that the issue goes beyond a simple statistical change. The change in the more representative age group may indicate that there are already other reasons that led these new Brazilian immigrants to move to Portugal, that are not just the economic and family issues (Padilla et al., 2015) which motivated immigrants from the previous migratory wave. When verifying the justifications given for issuing residence permits throughout 2018, we note that, in addition to professional activity, there was a higher number of applications granted for study and investment purposes (SEF, 2019), which are key indicators in order to understand the current situation of Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal.

Having completed our analysis of the representational factors, we proceeded with analysis of the images in their interactional dimension. In this context, we focused our attention on the camera perspectives used in the filming process, since they denote the level of interaction between the represented participants and the viewer. For Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), different angles enable different ways of relating – with respect to the contact between the person portrayed and the viewer, the social distance between them and the attitude of one in relation to the other, in terms of power relationships. In moving images, camera movements also influence these aspects, since such dynamics occur directly in front of the viewer. These forms, in turn, both reflect and influence that which is conventionalised in everyday social practices, whereby this relationship between perspective and subjective positioning towards a given subject or a represented object may be seen as natural for those who become acquainted with it.

The first aspect analysed was that of contact – which refers to a kind of imaginary social relationship between the represented participant and the viewer. In its absence, the represented participant becomes the object of contemplation for the observer. This relationship is achieved by the focus of the represented person's gaze. When the person looks directly at the camera, this establishes a connection between the person and the viewer, whoever they may be me, establishing what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 118) called a “demand” image. We then analysed the intended social distance, which concerns the degree of involvement between the represented person and the spectator who observes him or her and can be measured by the camera's proximity to the person who is being represented. The shorter the distance between the interactive participant and the subject through camera distance, object or setting, the greater the degree of involvement with these elements (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Equally important, the interactive dimension also indicates the power relationships established between the interviewees and the viewer in function of the angles of camera position. In the vertical axis, a low-angle shot denotes that the person represented has greater power over the interactive participant, while a high-angle shot of the represented participant denotes greater power of the interactive participant over the person represented. When the represented participant is portrayed at the same vertical angle of the viewer, both participants stand at the same hierarchical level of power relations, with no discrepancies between the power exercised by one over the other (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). On the horizontal axis, the

frontal angle reveals the participant represented from a central perspective and brings the viewer closer to it, by indicating that it is something that is “part of our world” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 136), while oblique views allow them to be seen from a horizontally displaced point of view, in relation to the frontality of that which is being represented (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), which indicates distance and detachment between the context of that which is being represented and that of the viewer. In the case of moving images, this relationship can be established both in a specific scene and in a sequence of scenes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The choice between one or other perspective directly influences the degree of subjective involvement between the represented participant and the producer-viewer, and also reveals the extent to which this relationship is based on fostering empathy between these two subjects.

In the television series in question, most of the time, the immigrants direct their gaze towards a possible interviewer located in the same space, but to one side of the camera. However, in specific moments, it is possible to perceive that they look directly at the camera, creating this invented space that connects represented to interactive participants. In relation to the distance between the camera and the interviewee, we conclude that there is no defined standard for use of medium close ups when filming immigrants. When this does occur, the intimacy generated by medium close ups, something that has already been mapped in studies on films and television (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), does not occur solely when the immigrants are talking about their lives, but also in different shots taken of their daily lives, which leads us to conclude that an approach to the aspects of everyday life is desired, in addition to that which is actually being reported. This proximity can also be understood as an elaboration strategy which aims, through repetition and/or reaffirmation, to deepen the viewer’s knowledge about that which is being shown (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). Through the use of close-ups, known as “talking head” shots, social distances are reduced, transmitting an idea of equality between the participant represented in the shot and the spectator (Fairclough, 1995). It is thereby also suggested that the viewer has an in-depth knowledge of that which is being shown to her or him, by allowing a more impersonal dimension to enter subjective spaces, in more private areas (Fairclough, 1995). It can therefore be said that use of medium close-ups and close-up shots is a technique that aims to bring the spectator and the Brazilian immigrants closer together, seeking to foster a feeling of empathy with these persons.

With regard to the camera angles used, we observe that, except in the scenes in which they are filmed at different moments in their daily lives, the immigrants make their statements in a position facing the camera, at the eye-level of the viewer’s gaze. In the specific case we analysed, we highlighted two consequences of positioning the immigrant in this manner, which are explained by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). First, this choice endows the represented participants with symbolic autonomy that makes it possible for them to be transported to other locations and contexts without losing their perceived identity characteristics. This fact requires the establishment of a set of information associated with the person so that he or she can be recognised in different

contexts. The second consequence, on the other hand, is related to the viewer's point of view, since the frontal view suggests that the meaning attributed to the immigrant is shared between the producer of the displayed content and the viewer of the television series (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Although this latter point may raise the idea that there is no interpretive freedom for the spectators regarding the way in which immigrants are conjectured, reception and media studies within the framework of Cultural Studies have been adding new appraisals of this subject. One example is the contribution made by Hall (1973/2001) who talks about the three positions from which it is possible to decode media content, moving from the one that agrees with the dominant discourses to a point where there is greater freedom of interpretation, in which the message is assimilated according to individual codes, that are used as an alternative to hegemonic discourses. Based on this line of thought, although the content codification establishes certain parameters according to which the interpretation will be based (Hall, 1973/2001), the viewer is also an active participant in the construction of the meaning of the message and, consequently, of the knowledge that the media message aims to build.

CONCLUSIONS

The growth in the number of Brazilians who have decided to emigrate to Portugal over recent years has meant that this phenomenon has assumed a prominent place in Brazilian and Portuguese media. Through various platforms, content has been produced in order to disclose the characteristics of this new migratory moment and the people involved. Recognising the importance of audiovisual productions at a time of evolution from the written word to the screen (Martins, 2017), we decided to analyse the five episodes of the first season of the television news series *Portugal pelos Brasileiros*, broadcast in Brazil in early 2018 by Rede Globo de Television, which presents the account of Brazilians who have migrated to Portugal over recent years. In order to understand how the semiotic articulation used in the series characterised the phenomenon of recent Brazilian immigration in Portugal, we conducted an intersectional analysis, anchored on principles of Social Semiotics, based on the multimodal perspective and moving images.

In our analysis of the structural dimension of the television series, we observed that the scenes interact with each other, not so much to create a narrative about the migratory experience, but rather to reveal certain parts of it, highlighting the work of the media in framing and selecting what is effectively shown about the lives of these immigrants in Portugal. In the representative sphere, we observe that the content is marked by scenes that are, for the most part, conceptual, indicating that the series values the characterisation of the new Brazilian immigrants in Portugal, rather than exploring their social dynamics in the country. Nevertheless, the characterisation of these immigrants is carried out using a well-defined cultural, social and economic profile that reveals itself to be closely related to the vicissitudes of Brazilian society. As a result, the migratory trajectories chronicled in the series appear to be similar, homogenising the representation of the phenomenon

and neglecting the obstacles that appear in the path of many other Brazilian immigrants who have decided to emigrate to Portugal, ranging from difficulties in finding long term accommodation to difficulties experienced in the legalisation process.

In view of the presences and absences in the semiotic arrangements of the analysed series, we conclude that we are facing an articulation of a discourse through the media that privileges the representation of Brazilian immigration in Portugal in a segmented manner, focusing on the perspective of a specific group of immigrants, to the detriment of the plurality of voices and differentiated experiences. The representation of the migratory experience of Brazilians who recently migrated to Portugal, shown in the series, advocates the homogenisation of the phenomenon, which is supported by an idea of elitisation of it. In the content analysed, as we have seen, the visual and sound arrangements are the semiotic resources through which these designs are constructed. This tactic highlights the media representation of the “ideal” immigrant (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 18) that operates in Portuguese media, where news about new Brazilian immigrants in the printed media has been reporting the phenomenon in a more “positive” manner (França & Padilla, 2018, p. 1). Consequently, another facet of the phenomenon is being made known, in addition to existing socially stereotypes, and largely derived from the distinct characteristics of previous waves of immigration. Bourdieu (1997, p. 4) states that individuals who agree to appear on television do so to “show themselves and be seen”, especially when their version of the story does not fit the dominant narratives in force, in the social contexts where they live.

We conclude by indicating that, because they deal with subjectivities that cut cross different social structures, the visual arrangements that we identified in the series are directly related to the media discourses that are being construed about Brazilian immigrants living in Portugal, directly affecting the lives of these people. Both discursive strategies that they support – whether the representation of experience within an elitist context or the way that it veers away from common sense, may strengthen certain social processes about which the series in question gives us clues. As an example, we cite the absence of interaction between new immigrants and those from previous migratory waves, which may mean that social segmentations are occurring at the intra-category level in the Brazilian community.

Continuing to observe the relations between the semiotic articulations of the discourse about Brazilian immigrants in Portugal in the media and their interference in the social life of these individuals is, therefore, an important and necessary line of future study.

Translation: Formigueiro, Conteúdos Digitais, Lda.

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