Ethnos

Strange Bedfellows: Brazilian Immigrants Negotiating Friendship in Lisbon

Angela Torresan [a]

[a] Manchester University, UK

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Strange Bedfellows: Brazilian Immigrants Negotiating Friendship in Lisbon

Angela Torresan
Manchester University, UK

ABSTRACT *In the late twentieth century, international migration became one of the strategies a number of Brazilians deployed to create and maintain a middle-class life-style. Many went to Portugal to seize the new opportunities offered by an expanding Portuguese economy and a skilled job market. As qualified Brazilians arrived with the required skills to fill these jobs and as they achieved a lifestyle that could be equated to a middle-class position in economic terms, they discovered more subjective barriers to their acceptance within general middle-class Portuguese society. In this article, I examine the role of friendship in people's efforts to integrate their middle-class migratory projects with their position in Brazil and Lisbon. I argue that making friends with the Portuguese was an important step for such a project while it required Brazilians to conform to Portuguese manners that contradicted the way they perceived themselves.*

KEYWORDS *Transmigration, friendship, Brazilian immigrants, middle class, Brazilian/Portuguese relationship*

Introduction

The term friendship has featured prominently in public debates and narratives surrounding the post-colonial relationship between Brazil and Portugal. In the official rhetoric of both countries, they are portrayed as linked by blood and affinity and as constituting a community of affection and tradition that has been forever heading towards a common destiny. Along with this rhetoric lay deeply ingrained stereotypes that, for centuries, have influenced the relationships between the two countries and informed the ways in which Brazilians and Portuguese perceive each other, both within national discourses and in face-to-face encounters. In this article, I

focus on how, during one of the recent post-colonial encounters between Portuguese and Brazilians – the migration of middle-class professional Brazilians to Lisbon – friendship and the expression of old prejudices went hand-in-hand.

I argue that Brazilians perceived friendship as an important pathway for their integration and acceptance within Portuguese society and will show the strategies they created in order to establish relationships with their hosts in spite of the mutual stereotypes that neither seemed too inclined to relinquish.

Historically, Brazil has been a major destination for Portuguese immigrants. During the period between independence in 1822 and the mid-twentieth century, it received more than 1.5 million Portuguese while experiencing little emigration by its own people. With the implementation of neo-liberal economic policies during the post-military era in the 1980s, this pattern began to change and a significant number of middle-class Brazilians set in motion the chains of migration that now amount to an estimated 1.5 million living abroad.[1] Portugal, on the other hand, has fostered the image of a seafaring nation built from the endeavour of explorers and emigrants. Although emigration has never completely ceased, after the Carnation Revolution in the mid-1970s, Portugal also began to receive immigrants. A major part of Portugal's population influx comes from African countries that were once Portuguese colonies. African immigrants are followed in number by those from other member countries of the European Union and Eastern Europe and then by Brazilians.[2] The Portuguese government responded swiftly to these changes. In a short period of time, it implemented a series of increasingly restrictive laws affecting the entry, length of stay, work, family reunion, and naturalisation of immigrants.

In spite of increasing immigration controls, most Brazilians who participated in the first waves of immigration to Portugal managed to obtain permission to work as they entered a job market that was ready to receive them. A majority found work in professional fields associated with their previous training, particularly as architects, engineers, advertising professionals, dentists, and medical doctors.[3] Others started businesses as consultants in the fashion, food and fitness industries. Sharing a common language was a crucial component in this process, but it was not the only factor.[4] Even before their arrival, a booming Portuguese economy had been welcoming the influx of Brazilian capital, commodities, ideas, information, marketing concepts, business strategies, and cultural symbols that were effectively disseminated by the highly popular Brazilian soap operas broadcast on Portuguese television. Brazilians arrived with valued personal and cultural assets during a specific period of

economic growth in Portugal and were met by a society that had been exposed to a great deal of information about contemporary Brazilian culture. Such a privileged position, and the mutual knowledge between Brazilians and Portuguese, made this a unique encounter within the wider phenomenon of Brazilian international migration. One outcome of it was that Brazilians constituted a rather visible immigrant population in Portugal and had been the most forthcoming portion of the Brazilian population abroad.[5]

In contrast, Brazilians who went to other countries in Western Europe (Torresan 1994, 2004), the USA (Margolis 1994, 1997; Ribeiro 1998; Martes 2000), and Japan (Kawamura 1999; Linger 2001; Roth 2002; Tsuda 2003) seemed to be forming what Margolis (1997) has described as invisible minorities. They usually had to take unskilled jobs before being given an opportunity to secure employment in their field of study, and, as was often the case, these opportunities never materialised. Their middle-class identity was sustained by a combination of factors independent of their unskilled employment, such as their previous social status back home, an increase in disposable income granted through their new jobs, and the cultural privilege gained by the fact that they were now living in the 'First World' (Margolis 1994; Martes 2000). Furthermore, the knowledge most of the people in these other countries had about Brazilians was often limited to a handful of clichés related to football, Carnival, a tropical exuberant sexuality, and urban violence (Martes 2000; Roth 2002; Torresan 2004). The view Brazilians held of their hosts was also usually stereotypical. In my previous research with Brazilians in London, I observed a common assumption that English people were stiff and hierarchical (Torresan 1994), and Martes (2000) relates how Brazilians found Americans indifferent and money-oriented. Shared stereotypes were commonly present in these situations of migration. What made the encounter between Brazilians and Portuguese so extraordinary, however, was the fact that mutual stereotypes were rooted in a long colonial and post-colonial history and that both immigrants and hosts found themselves in equivalent positions within the hierarchies of status.

There were no incentives for middle-class Brazilians to take on menial jobs in Portugal. There was no increase in earning power, as the Portuguese escudo was not a strong currency, and no cultural capital to be gained, as Portugal has never featured in the Brazilian imagination as a developed 'First World' country. On the contrary, Brazilians shared a general sense of superiority vis-à-vis the Portuguese, who were often the butt of many a derogatory joke in Brazil and whose country was perceived as the 'backwater' of Europe. Brazil, on the other hand, played a central role in South American politics and had a more international

presence on the world stage. Not surprisingly, most middle-class Brazilians with whom I spoke in Lisbon took for granted the fact that by entering the professional job market and achieving a middle-class lifestyle, they would also obtain a middle-class status within Portuguese society. The situation was not as simple as they had anticipated. The fact that Brazil and Portugal shared a common history and language did not necessarily grant middle-class Brazilian immigrants the cultural competence (Stoler 2002) to be received on the same level as the local urban Portuguese middle class. At times, they not only lacked such cultural competence, but the one they seemed to embody was often perceived as inappropriate in being unduly Brazilian. The positive cultural qualities – innovation, creativity, sympathy, informality, spontaneity, ability to work under precarious conditions, and jack-of-all-trades disposition – that were assumed and ascribed to them, which would grant immigrants an advantage when it came to occupying certain positions in the job market, were also associated with negative qualities: irresponsibility, irreverence, intrusiveness, imprudence, untrustworthiness, and improvidence. This encounter brought about the crude realisation that, although connected through the idea of a common language, history, and ancestral friendship, each nation state and people had mostly served as a contrasting racial and cultural reference in the other's hegemonic national ideology.

Middle-class Brazilians were faced with a dilemma: they wanted to achieve a transnational class status that was fully accomplished and recognised both in Brazil and in Portugal, but they also resisted embodying certain social codes or acquiring the cultural competence which would put at risk their sense of being Brazilian. It is important to clarify that this did not translate into an essential Brazilian identity, but into a situation of being a middle-class Brazilian in Lisbon.[6] The common elements that rendered the boundaries between the categories in this encounter so frail meant that being less Brazilian would result in being more Portuguese (*aportuguesado*), and this was a problem for immigrants and hosts alike. There was a fear of cultural contamination on both sides of the line.

Therefore, this article is not so much about the varied meanings of friendship for immigrants and their hosts, but rather about how Brazilians perceived friendship as a safe gateway towards a fuller engagement with Portuguese society that would not impinge on their sense of who they were vis-à-vis the other. In fact, friendship proved to be an important kind of relationship on many different levels. Having a mixed social group that included both other immigrants and Portuguese people assured Brazilians that they were not

living within a Brazilian 'ghetto', a term many used to describe the kind of migration project they did not wish to reproduce because it had strong associations with poor, working-class immigrants. Friendship with Portuguese would, therefore, help middle-class immigrants to differentiate themselves from other Brazilians of less privileged backgrounds, emulating the hierarchies by which they had lived back in Brazil.[7] It was also a valued indication that, having been accepted by Portuguese people of equivalent social and economic status, their own status was based on their social and symbolic position achieved transnationally both in Brazil and in Portugal.

Before I present the more detailed ethnography, I offer a very short overview of the way in which friendship has been dealt with in anthropology. My argument is that the role friendship played in the migration project of middle-class Brazilians, and in their relationships with the host society, adds a different dimension to the anthropological discussion on this kind of connection between people. The possibility of establishing a friendship rested on the fact that there were different understandings of what it meant to relate and therefore distinct expectations of how relationships between Brazilians and Portuguese should be established and maintained. It also put conflicting cultural codes of conduct associated with national identities to the test. No matter how messily the relationships actually played out in the daily lives of Brazilian immigrants and their Portuguese hosts, contrasting models of social behaviour and cultural conventions seemed to be always present in the back of people's minds, and the situations, relationships, and people who deviated from them were often described as exceptions to the rules designated by these models. Brazilians, therefore, often explained the possibility of relating as a friend and of having Portuguese friends using an idiom of exception. In this way, while friendship was seen as a safe gateway to transcend the formal boundaries, a means to bridge the cultural differences between Brazilians and Portuguese, this idiom of exception assured their reinforcement. People were willing to transcend differences in their daily contact, but not to forget the prescribed codes by which they maintained who they were.

Friendship

Although most anthropological studies on friendship entail the observation of self-representation contiguous with meanings of social relatedness and normative behaviour, there is a significant theoretical and methodological distinction in the way they deal with the theme.[8] On the one hand, some authors take friendship as a specific kind of relationship contingent on a Western notion of

the self-conscious individual. On the other hand, there are those who see friend-
ship as a notion or a 'social and human process' (Aguilar 1999), constituted
within historical and cultural contexts and therefore much more contextual
and varied than the private, personal relationship rendered in the Western
model.

For writers such as Pitt-Rivers (1973), Paine (1999), Allan (1989), Carrier
(1999), and Du Boulay (1974), friendship is a product of the transformations
brought about by capitalism and its effects on the social codes and moral con-
straints that separate individuals from society and instil in them the modern dis-
tinctions between private and public domains. Being a personal and voluntary
relationship comprising emotions that belong in a private place – the individual
domain – friendship could only be performed in private by people who ident-
ified with each other. According to this model, friendship implies a relationship
between social equals who can maintain a balanced reciprocity without the
interference of material interests.

In the second view, this Westernised ideal type would be seen as a specific
manifestation that does not hold true even in the very Western societies to
which it has been associated. Here, friendship and the emotions it evokes are
part of a multiplicity of interconnected relationships that cross the social and
individual spheres. Most of the articles published in a collection of anthropolo-
gical texts on friendship (Bell & Coleman 1999) were by authors who subscribed
to this second perspective. For instance, Smart (1999:120) drew on his ethnogra-
phy on Chinese *guanxi* (which he defines as 'relationships of social connections
built primarily upon shared identities such as native place, kinship and attending
the same school') to argue against the separation between non-hierarchical,
voluntary, interest-free sentiments and the instrumentality of social and econ-
omic domains, each artificially associated with Western notions of the private
and the public. Smart argues that, in Chinese societies, friendship and *guanxi*
should be understood in terms of both meaningful interaction and relatedness.

In her work with middle-class people in London and Rio de Janeiro,
Rezende (1993, 1995, 1999, 2000) also explores friendship in terms of relatedness.
She shows how in Brazil friendship was not confined to a private sphere; rather,
it cut across all aspects of personal and social life. Her interlocutors used the
term friendship to express feelings of affinity, affection, and trust towards
people in similar or distinct social, economic, and racial locations (such as the
relationship between a mistress and a servant), combining ideas of individuality
and choice with the need for relating to others in any given context. To under-
stand such a seeming contradiction between the private nature of friendship and

its public use in Brazil, Rezende asks us to look at it as an idiom of affinity rather than one of equality; I would add that it should also be looked at as an idiom of 'relationality'.[9] In this way, '[i]t may be possible then to find references to, and experiences of, friendship in various social domains, thus breaking away from its close association in the modern "West" to the private sphere' (1999:93), while also being able to perceive how people use and experience friendship as a crucial means of defining and creating social distinctions. In the Brazilian case she observed, the presence of instrumentality in personal relationships did not necessarily disavow their affective aspect, nor did the expression of affection towards strangers in places conceived as public erase social hierarchies. It would, however, tease out boundaries between defined categories of gender, class, and race, as friendship could be established across these definitions according to different contexts. In these terms, friendship is one kind of relationship with which people can bridge social, cultural, and economic differences while still maintaining the conventional hierarchies.

It is with this category of friendship as an idiom of relationality in mind that I will explore in the next sections how Brazilians and Portuguese tried to negotiate their desire to make friends across the very boundaries they constantly struggled to define. One of the many challenges they faced was the fact that people conceived different ways of relating associated to personal circumstances and dominant narratives of national belonging, which is the theme I explore in the next section.

Contrasting Models of Relationships

When I asked questions about friendship, people usually presented me with a few recurrent narratives that seemed to mix some of the characteristics typical of the theoretical approaches on friendship I presented above. At times, both Brazilian immigrants and the Portuguese located friendship in the realm of relationalities, which included relations that expanded from the private and crossed distinctions of class, blurring prescribed boundaries between public and private. At other points, friendship was defined as a relationship close to the Western ideal, forged among equals and belonging to the private sphere of the individual. These narratives, although apparently confusing and presented in varied forms, had two main threads that organised the disparate perspectives above according to the placement of affinity and affection. Such organisation created what I call here contrasting models of relationships, which, in turn, informed people's expectations of friendship. For most Brazilians, affection could and should be manifested spontaneously as it was felt, no matter where or towards whom it

was directed, and it could easily cross boundaries of social classifications. For their hosts, on the other hand, feelings of affection should be exclusive to very close relationships and situations connected with people's private lives. The relation was inverted in regard to feelings of distress and animosity, which, for the former, should be restrained and not revealed outside the private domain and, for the latter, could be manifested in public and shared with others outside their own tight-knit circles.

Two contrasting kinds of emotions that could be made manifest publicly seemed very salient in these models: expressive affection, on the one hand, and melancholy, on the other. Spontaneous demonstrations of affection in what would be considered a formal or public situation were a given in the Brazilian ideal. As one immigrant I knew stated, 'it breaks with formality and just makes things easier'; but the same public display would be considered extremely inappropriate according to the Portuguese model. This was embodied frequently in perceived Brazilian manners: cheerfulness; the blasé address of unfamiliar people as *meu amigo* (my friend); the widespread use of informal forms of greeting such as *oi*, *tudo bem* (hi, how are you?) rather than, for instance, *muito prazer* (nice to meet you), accompanied by a kiss on both cheeks rather than a handshake; the common identification of people by their first name; the custom of touching and being receptive to touch; what could be described as an 'easy smile', speaking and laughing loudly in public places; etc. Rather than being a sign of insolent disrespect towards others and towards social conventions, this was a positive indication that Brazilians regarded everyone else as equals in spite of social hierarchies. This would indicate a willingness to relate, a sign that there was interest in the relationship, however superficial this could turn out to be. As a Brazilian woman told me once, 'the possibility [of a relationship] is always there'. To the Portuguese, this was a little more troublesome. Affection, when shown indiscriminately, could be read as superficial. A Portuguese man I met, and who had had a few Brazilian friends over the years, told me that it would be foolish to trust the feelings Brazilians showed as 'they open their arms to all but hug no one'.

Rezende (2002) questions in her work why Brazilians used the term friend in a wide variety of contexts that traversed social divisions and included a flexible separation of public and private spaces. She defined it as a morally charged practice of displaying good intentions towards one's fellow humans, which did not guarantee, she remarked, the same social and economic rights to all. Therefore, first and/or sporadic contacts with people were usually very important in order to mark that willingness and to present the acknowledgement of common

ground. This would usually be translated into a perception of Brazilians, both by themselves and by others, as a spontaneous, high-spirited, and generous people, generally indiscriminate with their affections. Yet this openness to relate would also intensify the very social divisions it was intended to cross, for in a hierarchical relationship it was up to the person in a higher position to express a willingness to grant her/his time and affection, while those in a subordinate position would normally be the obliged recipients of such gestures. Therefore, a Brazilian middle-class person could be simultaneously good and affectionate towards others outside their social stratum while maintaining social and economic distinctions. Friendship and power did not cancel each other out; on the contrary, both consisted of collective values of equality and hierarchy to be shared and performed publicly.

For the Portuguese, what needed to be acknowledged was not a readiness to relate indiscriminately, but a common humanity and shared understanding that life was a hard struggle for everyone. Likewise, this did not suggest that people had equal rights within society, but that they were all vulnerable to instances of personal hardship. In this case, one should show solemn respect and empathy towards other people's struggles and achievements. Open demonstrations of self-satisfaction could mean that one was acting irresponsibly and egotistically in not being considerate of this common predicament. Respect was then expressed through a feeling of melancholy in reverence to life's general ordeals. Informal ways of approach or address could also show disrespect towards the other's position in the world and disregard for their difficulties and feelings. Distinctions were to be respected and acknowledged by the practice of formality, presupposing a sense of grace, self-control, and, ultimately, civility, which was often contrasted with the Brazilian spontaneity and exuberance that was caricatured as not being as civil. People's narratives on friendship were constructed through a contextual combination of their particular experiences and a set of stereotypical ideas and models of social behaviour that I have just described. These prescribed patterns seemed to help those with whom I talked make sense of their relationships across cultural boundaries, while their daily experiences and encounters were in fact much messier and influenced by the specific circumstances of their migration projects.

Misplaced Emotions

One of my closest informants, a Brazilian woman who worked in Lisbon as a therapist, once told me that, 'against all odds', she had many Portuguese friends. Silvia embodied what some would perceive as a typical Brazilian attitude; her

extrovert manner was extremely personable, making the first contact with her very agreeable. It was impossible not to be enticed by her warmth. She explained that it was precisely because of this that she made so many Portuguese friends. However, she added that it also took them a while to trust her and realise that this was not just a facade: 'They are very distrustful and don't open up very easily'. She saw her situation as an exception and explained, in her own words, that:

> It's really hard for Brazilians to make friends with Portuguese people. We're almost psychologically incompatible. First, there's a difference in disposition. The Portuguese people have a much more rigid disposition. Europeans are more rigid because they have their basic necessities accounted for. They have a problem of self-esteem, which worsens things and makes them more introspective. Therefore, they have great difficulty with expressing their feelings; there's difficulty in physical contact outside of a romantic relationship. Even in a close friendship, they will hardly show physical affection. There's a different logic at work, they are more rational, and this makes it more difficult to allow certain things to happen. They have to accept that pain comes with pleasure, but at least you're feeling something. To take risk in favour of pleasure is very difficult for them. And this clashes with everything Brazilians believe in. Brazilians who are here, even if they have migrated to make money, take things more lightly on an emotional level. They want to relate and they complain about this all the time. The Portuguese people only complain about work and money. They don't talk about their feelings – it's amazing.

Silvia's description was a diagnosis of neurotic blockage caused by the fear that she, like many others, believed ran through the entire Portuguese culture. The outcome of this was an ingrained incompatibility between the two people. And, yet, Silvia spoke of her Portuguese friends with gratification. She was grateful for both their ability to embrace her and her own capacity, through them, to integrate herself into Portuguese society. Silvia saw herself, and not her Portuguese friends, as the exception from other immigrants because of her understanding that she couldn't behave with them as she would with her friends in Brazil. While they accepted her extrovert Brazilian side, she had to adjust herself to their social codes and control her spontaneity. This was at once both a rewarding and a strenuous experience, as Silvia was never sure whether she was performing a role while with her Portuguese friends, or was in fact irrevocably assimilating a certain degree of this Portuguese reserve and, as she feared, the suppression of emotions that accompanied it.

Matters could become even more complicated in the work environment. Brazilians often mentioned the rudeness and coldness of their first contact with Portuguese people and the formality of relationships established at work. For some, this constituted an obstacle to the establishment of friendships with their colleagues, which emphasised the perception that Portuguese people directed their affection exclusively to family members and small intimate groups of long-term friends. This also made the work environment a more formal place, a situation to which Brazilians did not easily adapt, as most were unaccustomed to living with a very sharp distinction between private/home and public/work domains.

On the other hand, Portuguese people would generally concede that their first contact with Brazilians had been easy and even 'quite pleasant'. However, maintaining a friendship with Brazilians was a different matter altogether. Brazilian manners were considered by some not as simply uncouth, but as outright rude – a lack of cultural competence, as I mentioned before. While many Portuguese interpreted the open demonstration of affection as an excess of unwanted and unreciprocated intimacy, especially in the work-place, if expressed physically, it could be mistaken for romantic or sexual advances. Openness could mislead, and ease of contact could evolve into a lack of commitment. Some of the blunders most frequently pointed out were that Brazilians confused the limits between self and other, between public and private, and, in extreme cases, used this sense of informality for their own personal gain and made promises they could not or did not want to keep. They were not punctual and did not take their social commitments seriously; they invaded others' personal space, took things without asking, or assumed that they had the right to demand things from others.

Bruno, a Portuguese man working in an advertising agency that employed a number of Brazilians, became sceptical of them after a disappointing experience he had with a colleague called Ricardo. Although Bruno did not tend to make friends at work, he accepted one of Ricardo's invitations to go out after work for a pint of beer. With time, this became a pleasant routine and, soon, Bruno noticed that Ricardo was sharing some very personal information with him about his life, his aspirations, his marriage, etc. Ricardo was 'opening up' and, in spite of Bruno's initial scepticism towards this, the relationship quickly attained a level of confidentiality. Bruno felt closer to Ricardo; they began to exchange dinner invitations to each other's homes, their wives met, and the contact developed into a friendship. Bruno told me he enjoyed the friendship with someone different – a foreigner, a Brazilian. One day, however, he

arrived at the office to learn that the project he had been working on had been rejected. His friend Ricardo had teamed up with another art director and presented an alternative idea. Bruno felt stabbed in the back. He realised that Ricardo had never been a true friend, because real friends do not betray like this. Ricardo had hoped the episode would not interfere with their friendship because, as he saw it, 'It was only work'.

It seemed to Bruno that there was an inadequate mixture of the values necessary for a true friendship. Trust and commitment were inconsistent with the competitive environment of an advertising agency. By contrast, according to his former Brazilian friend, the domains could be mixed together through the forging of friendship at work inasmuch as the values attributed to each domain were to be kept separate. The interesting aspect of this story is that the Brazilian friend could have been anyone else; there was nothing particularly 'Brazilian' about his behaviour towards Bruno. However, the fact that it was a Brazilian immigrant in this particular case reinforced the idea that Brazilians and Portuguese placed certain values in different ways or misplaced them, according to the respective point of view.

In Bruno's view, Ricardo was not an exception; rather, Bruno believed that Brazilian culture reinforced this kind of behaviour and he felt justified in turning this experience into scepticism towards Brazilian immigrants in general. He hesitated about telling me this story and agreed only after I insisted and assured him I was not going to take anything he told me on a personal level. Bruno reasoned that I was most likely a different kind of Brazilian because I was not an immigrant, as my purpose in Lisbon was to do research and return to England where I lived. To Bruno, therefore, it was my situation that exempted me from fitting neatly into the typical model and not necessarily my personality or national identity. The model was applied to 'real' immigrants, meaning those who were competing for a slice of the job market and trying to create a home for themselves in Portugal. A passerby, in contrast to a resident stranger, would not desire to get involved and hence would not be asked to redefine their behaviour and moral codes to fit the daily rhythms of Portuguese relationships.

Many Brazilians believed that the recipe for success in making Portuguese friends rested on their effort to become an exception to that model. Fatima, a Brazilian architect who had become exasperated by the social and political situation in Brazil before 1989, saw many advantages in adopting the ways of her host society. She discovered what she described as the benefit of a Portuguese formality of address and treatment, which at first had a negative impact on her. Although formality was contrary to the kind of openness so dear to

the model Brazilians drew upon, to Fatima it left no doubts about people's position in a relationship because it made explicit hierarchical boundaries. She also believed that Brazilians in general could gain from acquiring some of this formality in their relationships, while she questioned some of the fundamental elements that Brazilians in Lisbon used to differentiate themselves from the Portuguese. Fatima no longer saw the Brazilian model of openness as a virtue, but as the deployment of a false sense of equality drawn on to smooth out impersonal and hierarchical relationships. As the years went by and Fatima met people in Portugal with whom she began to understand the differences beyond the stereotypical Portuguese melancholy, seriousness, and reserve, she could no longer use those terms to define Portuguese culture in general. At times, she generalised 'the Brazilians' (including herself) and seemed to incorporate the very stereotypes used by some people in Portugal to mark the difference between her situation and that of 'other' Brazilians. The difference for Fatima was supported by her experiences in Portugal – by the years she had invested in trying to understand Portuguese people through her own trial and error.[10]

In the same way in which the Brazilian model of openness provides a means both to transcend and to reinforce social distinctions, friendship between Brazilians and Portuguese created a bridge that crossed over cultural patterns which were then subsequently strengthened by the idea that friendship was only possible because someone in the relationship was an exception to the rule. People's practice of engaging in meaningful relationships with each other was quite intricate and circumstantial, and more often than not these practices challenged the prescribed cultural codes. On the ground, the models could only operate as general guidelines for situations that will never provide a perfect fit. Yet, it was the unpredictable peculiarities of these daily situations that, while challenging the blueprint of general ideologies, also provoked people to reorganise the world according to those scripts.

Migration and Friendship

Cultural models of relationships were not the only principle informing the friendship between Brazilians and Portuguese. The very experience of migration led to changes in the meanings of friendship for immigrants and also guided people's predisposition to engage in close relationships across cultural boundaries. Such changes were experienced in specific ways according to how people negotiated differences in gender, age, and time of migration. A couple I knew well, who were the co-founders of the Casa do Brasil de Lisboa

(a voluntary-based immigrant organisation and a place where I spent many of my fieldwork days), once got into a slight argument when I asked them to tell me about their Portuguese friends. Carlos Henrique considered most of the Portuguese people he knew to be acquaintances and not friends. Being older, married, and a male Brazilian immigrant in what he considered a closed Portuguese society were all practical reasons he gave to explain why he believed that it was more difficult to make friends in Lisbon than in Brazil. Heliana, on the other hand, counted a number of these acquaintances as friends. She criticised her husband's restricted view of friendship and remarked that relationships also had to vary with the context and with one's life moment. Heliana believed that the differences of perspective between her and her husband were partly due to the fact that she was a woman and therefore more open to establishing relationships based purely on affection. Furthermore, as a foreigner, she had also learnt to be more flexible in her view of what constituted friendship, of what she could expect from friends, and how she would behave as a friend. I should add here, as contextual information, that both Heliana and Carlos Henrique had engaged in political protest during Brazil's military regime in the 1960s and had had to flee the country then in what they called a 4-year voluntary exile in Argentina. Many years later, they left for Portugal seeking better-paying jobs and a more stable life for their two children outside the growing urban violence of São Paulo.

> *Heliana*: We have a very strong notion of friendship and forged very strong ties with some people because of the kind of life we lived. Political exile brings people together. But this is a very particular circumstance and today I'm more open. I now understand that it can't always be like that. Each moment is its own unique moment. To this day, we have some friends from high school. We experienced many things together, we engaged in political struggles together, some of us lived in exile together, we grew up together. This creates great acceptance and complicity. They aren't here but we're still friends. But we have to learn to make friendships that don't have this kind of strength. There are different levels of friendship. We can and should make other kinds of friends. People we enjoy, who are present here. The Casa do Brasil serves this purpose as well. We've made many friends at the Casa. At work as well, there are people I like a lot; I don't see them, but I like them...
> *Carlos Henrique*: They aren't friends.
> *Heliana*: Yes they are; I think Maria Rosa is my friend. I think so...
> *Carlos Henrique*: No she isn't.
> *Heliana*: Not for you who has a closed view of friendship...
> *Carlos Henrique*: I think that a friend who you don't see isn't a friend.

Heliana: We have so many friends in Brazil and in other parts of the world that we don't see! So, they aren't our friends anymore because we don't see them? You and I have different views of friendship.

Carlos Henrique: Friendship has to be cultivated, it's a process.

Heliana: Fine, but I think Maria Rosa is my friend, I like her, that's enough for me. There are many people like this. They aren't my closest friends, but I don't have those kinds of demands any longer. I think one can make friends in different ways. In my definition of friendship, there are people who I like and with whom I have a relationship that has its own force. There are people who you feel could be your friends because you like them; if you aren't friends with them it isn't because of you or them, it's because. . .

Carlos Henrique: It can only be because of me or of them; it can't be because of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. . .

Heliana: Come on Carlos Henrique, João for example is adorable. . .

Carlos Henrique: He's adorable, but he's not my friend [laughter].

Heliana: But this doesn't mean that he couldn't be.

Carlos Henrique: But we are not friends and why is that so? I don't know! Most probably because of me, because my idea of friendship is closed like you say. It may have to do with my age, with the fact that I'm a married middle-aged man, in this society that is so closed. I don't know. . . I've lost track, weren't we talking about the Casa do Brasil?

What Heliana seemed to be saying was that in order to make new friends in her present situation of migration, she had to set certain values aside and go with her feelings in order to create some kind of connection with people she considered to be different from her. To her, this was a process of openness, both in terms of sincerity of feelings and in terms of being more available to different possibilities of relationships. For Heliana, to like someone was good enough for a start and it was then up to her to make the most of her immediate circumstances. Ironically, it was her experience as an immigrant that brought Heliana's view of friendship closer to the Brazilian model of relationship I described above.

To Heliana, as to other Brazilians, being able to make friends in Lisbon was a matter not only of overcoming cultural differences, but also of rethinking personal boundaries in a process of self-transformation important to some Brazilians if they wished to make friends with different people. However, this was also easier for her than for her husband, she later told me, because 'as a woman I don't have as much to lose in terms of keeping up the facade of a strong, rational male'. As a foreign woman, she could not only choose the

person with whom she wanted to become friends, but she could also choose to embrace new meanings of friendship and new ways of implementing them that were more adapted to her current situation. What Heliana's narrative also emphasised is that many of the qualities Brazilians played out as cultural tools were made manifest precisely because people had moved to a country where they needed to build up a network of relations from scratch, or with minimal contacts. The urgency to make friends and to establish contacts was certainly not the same in Brazil, where such networks were already in place. While they criticised the Portuguese because of their propensity to limit their relationships to a restricted social circle of family members and intimate friends, many Brazilians failed to realise that their own self-perceived ability to make friends even during adulthood could have been the result of their migratory circumstances and not, perhaps, as some would like to believe, the natural consequence of a distinctive cultural attribute.

This process was very different for Brazilians who had gone to Portugal at an earlier age, more often because they had had no choice but to move with their parents. Tati, for instance, had to follow her mother's decision to live in Portugal when she was 15 years old in the late 1980s. She attended high school in Lisbon and was already at university when I first met her in 1996. The majority of her friends were Portuguese, as was her boyfriend. Heliana and Carlos Henrique's son, Tiago, was even younger – 10 years old – when he went to live in Lisbon with his parents and older sister. Both Tiago and Tati could switch back and forth between Portuguese and Brazilian accents, which in their terms meant that they could also switch their ways of feeling and thinking. Tiago, who had turned 18 when I interviewed him, told me he was gradually losing his grip on what he called a Brazilian way of thinking and increasingly felt more comfortable with Portuguese people than with Brazilians. He explained this by saying that he was officially Brazilian, his family was Brazilian, but in practical terms and in his daily life, he felt Portuguese, although he knew he would never fully 'be' Portuguese. In Tiago's opinion, he had the best of both worlds. Being Brazilian, he stood out among his friends because he had something different and special about him, and yet he could relate to them because they shared the experience of growing up in Lisbon. Tiago could behave like a young Portuguese of his generation. For people like Tiago and Tati, making friends with Portuguese people their age was not a matter of concern, but a natural result of their early socialisation in Portugal. They represented 'exceptions', as Brazilians who had acquired the cultural competence on how to 'be Portuguese' and could switch from one model to the other as they switched accents.

Conclusion

As I mentioned earlier, most middle-class Brazilian immigrants who had secured a qualified job and achieved a material situation on par with the expectations relative to their class position wanted their status to be acknowledged and enacted transnationally, within a social circuit that included Brazil and Portugal. For that to become reality, Brazilian immigrants felt that they had to achieve a certain degree of integration and acceptance within Portuguese society in a way that would allow them to circulate beyond the boundaries of a defined Brazilian immigrant community. One of the strategies they deployed to ensure this acceptance was to build a social circle that included not only other transnational middle-class Brazilians but also Portuguese friends of similar status. However, given the dominant framework of mutual stereotypes and the contrasting models of relationships that invested the categories of Portuguese and Brazilians with a series of prescribed cultural qualities, which in turn informed the ways people perceived themselves and each other, making friends with their hosts was not a straightforward endeavour. As I have previously shown with a few ethnographic examples, even though people constantly related to one another across the boundaries of national categories, the pressure of the social models was such that most felt impelled to explain their successful relationships with an idiom of exception. Brazilians would either consider themselves atypical, which was the case with Fatima and Tiago, or think that their situation was exceptional, as Heliana had explained, but more often the exception lay with the Portuguese friend.

Brazilians usually defined their Portuguese friends as people who had lived outside Portugal or had a strong interest in Brazilian culture. In both cases, this exceptionality was often attributed to the friend's previous experience in foreign countries and in dealing with foreigners. Carlos Henrique, for instance, told me that the friends he had were not typical Portuguese. One of them, a woman, had not only lived in Mozambique for many years but was married to a Brazilian man, which made her a more 'open-minded' person, in his view. Brazilian immigrants usually remarked that these open-minded friends embraced the presence of Brazilians in Portugal and viewed them as a positive influence, a breath of fresh air in the 'supposedly' conservative Portuguese culture. Meanwhile, some Portuguese people would describe their Brazilian friends as exceptions to the rule because they had either lived in Portugal for a lengthy period of time or arrived when they were young, like Tiago or Fatima; others still had married a Portuguese spouse or had come from a migrant Portuguese family in Brazil.

In conclusion, I return to the idea of friendship as an idiom or relationality (or in Rezende's (2002) term, relatedness). To become an exception, to be in an exceptional situation, or to have exceptional Portuguese friends seemed like an inescapable part of being a transnational middle-class Brazilian immigrant in Lisbon, but what this narrative of exception revealed, and what really seemed to matter to both immigrants and their hosts, was the fact that Portuguese and Brazilians were indeed establishing relationships, albeit conflicting ones that were many times at odds with their own cultural framework and expectations. In the end, this ambiguous mixture that involved both a rhetoric of friendship and the deployment of old stereotypes had been renewed and was still working within the parameters of this recent encounter between Brazilians and Portuguese. This renewal of historical links offered Brazilians the opportunity to become a very visible migrant population that could claim not only their right to reside legally in Portugal but also their position as privileged middle-class transmigrants.

Notes

1. Ministério da Relações Exteriores, 2010, http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/assistencia-consular.
2. When I was conducting research in Lisbon, the Brazilian Consulate and the Portuguese Service of Borders and Foreigners (SEF) estimated the presence of around 70,500 Brazilians in Lisbon and Porto, half of whom were legal residents. In 2008, this estimate had risen to 160,000 against 66,354 documented immigrants: MRE (2008) and SEF (2008).
3. The first waves of immigrants to Portugal came from urban middle-class families and held either university degrees or some other kind of professional certificate.
4. Language is indeed a crucial issue in the course of adaptation to the new country in general. Many Brazilians in London and New York associated unskilled jobs with poor knowledge of English (Margolis 1994; Torresan 1994). But language proficiency is also akin to the symbolic capital attached to certain dialects and accents. While a Brazilian accent in Portugal may be positively valued in the job market, Cape Verdean or Angolan accents, for example, were often associated with unskilled labour.
5. Brazilians have publicly campaigned for their right to be in Portugal, and the increased migration control imposed on them has provoked many instances of diplomatic friction between the two countries. By the end of the 1990s, however, with the closing of Portugal's job market to professional non-EU foreign workers and the sharpening of immigration controls, the profile of the incoming Brazilian population began changing from a majority of professional middle-class workers towards a new, less-qualified, working-class movement.
6. I have explored the concept of middle class in detail elsewhere (2004), and here suffice it to say that my definition is inspired by Ortner's idea of class acting as a mirror (1991, 2005) and McCallum's portrayal of it as a positioning metaphor

(1996). With such concepts, these authors are emphasising the fact that on top of and beyond the material elements attached to the idea of class, people understand their class position in contrast to the situation of others who are themselves located both within and outside the respective class. Thus, class can be treated as a flexible and contextual category of social and economic position and status. It is in this sense that I observed Brazilians dealing with the idea of class. Due to its contrastive and contextual nature, it was important for them that their position would be made manifest and attested in Lisbon and with Portuguese people.

7. Middle-class Brazilians in London also tried to distinguish themselves from those who did not share the same class background and level of education (Torresan 1994, 2004). According to different ethnographies, internal hierarchies seemed to be commonly practised by Brazilian immigrants in other countries (Margolis 1994, 1997; Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003).

8. I do not intend either to investigate the meanings, practices, and organisational role of friendship in Portuguese and Brazilian societies or to review the sociological and anthropological literature that indirectly refers to the theme of friendship in Brazil and Europe. To my knowledge, there is no research that focuses specifically on friendship in either rural or urban parts of Portugal. The theme is tangentially brought up in studies concerned with rural systems of kinship and social organisation (see, for example, Cutileiro 1977). In Brazil, apart from Claudia Rezende's work (1993, 1995, 1999, 2002), friendship has been mainly approached indirectly in studies on youth identity (Heilborn 1984; Coelho 1990; Fiúza 1990).

9. I use the term relationality here in parallel with the tradition in the social sciences, which emphasises multiple connections and relationships that people establish across time, space, and social categories, challenging, in this way, the limitations of bounded units of analysis and Cartesian dualism (one strong example in anthropology being the works of anthropologists from the Manchester School). I am thankful to Nina Glick-Schiller for having brought the concept of relationality to my attention.

10. Many Brazilian immigrants also used these stereotypes to mark a distance between themselves and other Brazilians, in terms of both the length of their stay and their ability to relate, which would ultimately distinguish their social position in Lisbon.

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