

Azorean emigration in the context of social change: some notes from the press in São Miguel (1920-1950)

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Abstract

Changes in the volume of Azorean emigration between 1920 and 1950 transformed the demographic pattern of the archipelago, introducing significant socioeconomic adjustments into its new demographic configuration. However, it seems safe to argue that on the whole, unlike later periods, this was not a period of significant change in the contents of the newspaper articles that were written on the subject, even if some conflicting opinions were occasionally produced.

Keywords

Emigration, population, press, discourse, Azores.

Resumo

A alteração verificada na intensidade da emigração açoriana nos anos compreendidos entre 1920 e 1950 teve consequências na configuração demográfica do arquipélago, na sua economia e sociedade. Parece-nos razoável afirmar que este período, contrariamente a outros posteriores, não constituiu um tempo de grandes mudanças no que respeita ao conteúdo das peças jornalísticas que foram sendo elaboradas em torno desta problemática, ainda que, pontualmente, se fizessem notar algumas opiniões diferentes sobre o mesmo assunto.

Palavras-chave

Emigração, população, imprensa, discurso, Açores.

Introduction

This paper presents some perspectives on population and migrations in the Azores, between 1920 and 1950, based on the information found in some newspapers published in São Miguel. Being aware of the Azorean demographic dynamics in this period and the role played by emigration in this area (Rocha 1991), which justifies the interconnection between population and mobility, we seek to increase knowledge of such a relevant phenomenon pertaining to the history of the archipelago. Some studies (for example, Rocha 2001) have already sought to look at the question from other angles, namely the perception of emigration by political power and by the Azorean population, the backdrop against which this article is set. Being similarly aware of the

importance the host countries have in labor-based emigration, such as that of the Portuguese in general and Azorean emigration in particular, we could not avoid starting this study except by referring to the great changes of the time.

Effectively, the years under analysis were marked by a climate of increasing political, economic and social change, both nationally and internationally, which significantly affected the level of Azorean migratory flows.¹ Throughout the three decades following the end of World War I (1914-1918), which resulted in the creation of a new international equilibrium, namely the consolidation of the American domination of the international scenario, major events took place in several countries with serious external repercussions, such as the economic crisis of 1929 and World War II. These events not only had important economic and political effects, but they also affected the internal social relations in several European countries and in the USA. We can further add to this the new cultural influences, which in turn also led to new concepts about the individual and society as a whole.

In particular, the economic and financial crisis that paradigmatically broke out on *Black Friday* in October 1929 in the USA had extremely serious repercussions. Not only did unemployment have an immediate effect on the living conditions of the populations, but it also encouraged the long-term spread of political authoritarianism and, in that sense, also contributed to the emergence of dictatorial regimes and the outbreak of major conflicts. Such a situation compromised international mobility, particularly the flow of emigrants to North America, as in the case of Azores, mainly because the turn of the 19th to the 20th century had marked the end of the cycle of emigration to Brazil in all the islands (Rocha 2008).

While remaining shielded from some of these events, such as World War II, Portugal was also affected by the changes taking place in other countries and itself underwent an important political change with the end of the First Republic and the implantation of the *Estado Novo* through the military *coup d'état* in 1926. In this international context, which was particularly adverse to mobility, and with the emergence of different concepts regarding the role and functions of the State, the Portuguese political climate of that time brought about, or rather sought to bring about, alterations in the migratory flows inherited from the 19th century.

We assumed that any significant changes in the volume of emigration, affecting both the economy and society as well as the demographic structure of the archipelago,² would necessarily be reflected in the local newspapers. We therefore sought to discover how these changes were reported in the local press, and what were the prevailing opinions on this matter, seen within the context of the social evolution and the demographic trends of the time. With the help of statistical data on emigration, we analyzed news articles published in two weekly newspapers: *Açoriano Oriental*, during the 1920s and 1930s, and *A Ilha*, during the 1940s. In spite of the differences in editorial policies, emigration was a recurrent theme in the writings of politically and socially influential figures in Azorean society, as we already had occasion to remark in an earlier study (Rocha 2001). It is now our aim to examine how the question of emigration reached a wider audience, namely that composed of newspaper readers.

Sources and methodology

Analytically, we chose to use two types of sources. On the one hand, we studied the demographic statistics and the census, the quality of which had already been tested earlier (Rocha 1991). These sources referred to specific moments during that period, which we considered capable of providing concrete data about the Azorean population, emigration and its intensity. On the other hand, we also chose to consult two weekly newspapers of that time, printed in São Miguel (*Açoriano Oriental* and *A Ilha*), which constituted the empirical corpus of our analysis in our attempt to understand the main trends in the discourse about emigration in the press.

¹ The term *social change*, which is used in the title of this article, was chosen as a conceptual basis for synthesizing all the changes that occurred, both nationally and internationally, in the political, economic and social climate of that time.

² Amongst the trends in Azorean migration, we assumed that greater importance would be given to international political and social changes than to the rationale of the internal order, despite the consequences that emigration had within the regional context.

The first newspaper was chosen because of the high regard in which it was held amongst the Azorean press, a status that it had enjoyed ever since its foundation in 1835. Throughout the following decades, it continued to be a newspaper that defended the political and administrative autonomy of the Azorean archipelago, which meant that it gave important coverage to issues relating to the idiosyncrasies of the different islands, while also discussing these matters in a more general fashion. This fact led us to believe that there was a significant likelihood of our finding in this newspaper a considerable number of articles dealing exclusively with the subject of Azorean emigration.

However, because of the newspaper's reduced availability in the 1940s and the consequent difficulties that we encountered in consulting it for that decade, and with the aim of finding similar data for that period (10 years), we chose to complete our analysis through the consultation of another newspaper, in which the issue of emigration continued to be a matter of interest to journalists. We chose to study *A Ilha*, which, after a break of over seventy years, had begun to be republished in 1939 and was characterized, among others aspects, by the diversity and intellectual quality of many of its collaborators (Enes 2005). The greater subjectivity of the contents of this newspaper, resulting from its large number of opinion articles, was offset by its objective presentation of the facts. We considered this to be a quality that, from the outset, would enhance the significance of the discourse relating to the question of emigration. This was the main reason for our choosing the newspaper *A Ilha* for our analysis of the texts relating to the last decade of the established period—the 1940s—with the *Açoriano Oriental* remaining as our reference for the decades of the 1920s and 1930s.

As was to be expected, there were certain limitations resulting from these choices. First, the fact that our analysis was restricted to the consultation of these two particular periodicals as our sources for unique qualitative data directly influenced the interpretations that are made throughout this paper as well as the conclusions we draw. On the other hand, despite the fact that this is not a subject of study here, the editorial policies pursued by each newspaper similarly constituted a serious obstacle to our making any firm generalizations based on the results obtained. However, in spite of these limitations, we believe that our results can contribute to the future development of a vast research project examining the social representations of the Azorean migratory phenomenon.

We therefore tried to discover the main issues linked to the question of migration that appeared in the pages of the above-mentioned newspapers between 1920 and 1950 using some fairly rudimentary techniques of content analysis. We began by selecting all the articles that referred either directly or indirectly to the subject of Azorean emigration regardless of their journalistic nature or whether their author's name was included or not. Next, we undertook an exploratory reading of these articles in order to draw up a classification for the various categories or subjects. Based on this typology, we then analyzed the frequency with which the different issues were treated.

Because of the analytical and methodological choices made, we could not include among the objectives of this study the identification of any relationship between the contents of the discourse produced and the political and ideological orientation of the newspapers or the writers of the articles, since this was an aspect that required a more detailed analysis of the contents and a more in-depth knowledge of both the newspapers and the journalists in question.

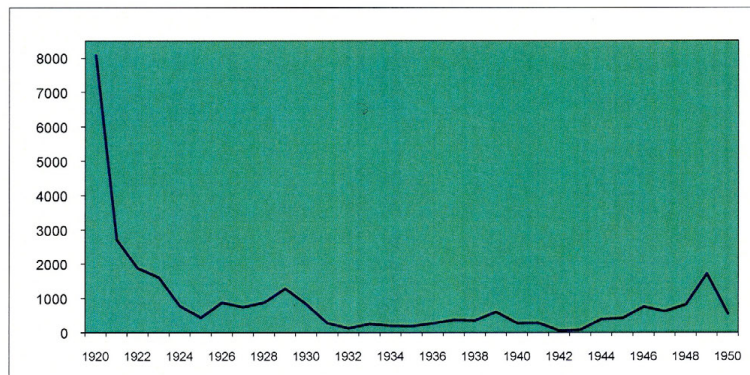
However, it is important to bear in mind that the object of our study has a unique particularity in terms of its historical context. According to the law regulating the Portuguese press during the period of the *Estado Novo* in Portugal, the Azorean newspapers of that time were also subject to censorship. We cannot therefore exclude the possibility of there being certain points of convergence between the journalistic discourse on emigration and the official position on this same issue, which, as will be seen later, followed a policy designed to discourage people from leaving the country. As Maria da Graça Rodrigues demonstrates, the encouragement of emigration was one of the topics on the long list of subjects to be censored, a list that was maintained by the SNI (Secretariado Nacional da Informação)³ until the time of the government of Marcelo Caetano (Rodrigues 1980: 75).

³ National Information Office.

The Azorean population and emigration (1920-1950)

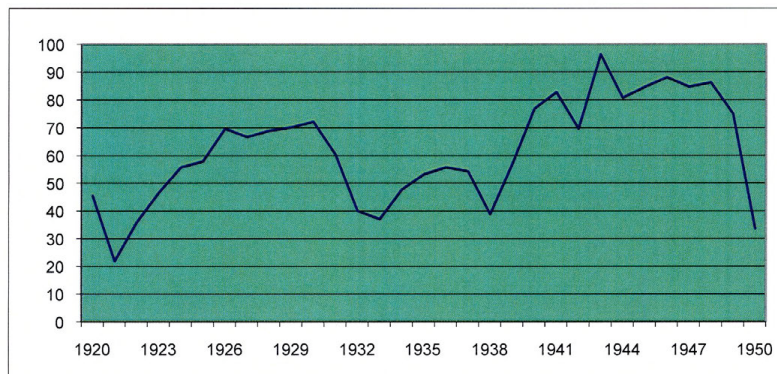
As can be seen in Chart 1, this period was characterized by a reduction in the flow of emigration, with an average total of less than 1,000 individuals each year. It can also be seen that the highest values were recorded in the first few years. 1920, in particular, with more than 8,000 emigrants, must be considered exceptional, even in comparison with previous years (Rocha 2008).

CHART 1
EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF AZOREAN EMIGRANTS
FROM 1920 TO 1950



Source: Demographic Statistics.

CHART 2
RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EMIGRANTS FROM S. MIGUEL ISLAND
IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT, FROM 1920 TO 1950

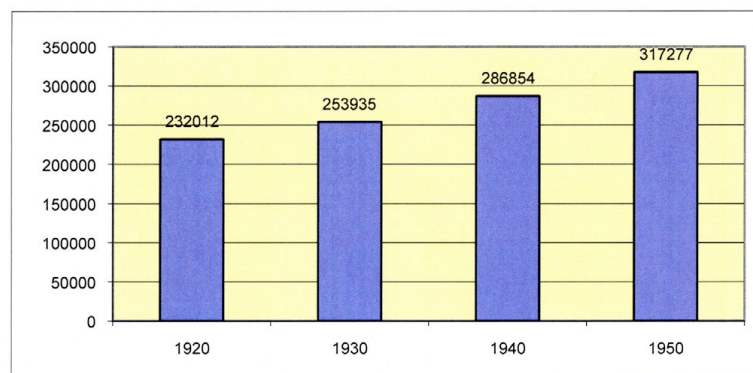


Source: Demographic Statistics.

As can be seen in Chart 2, emigration originating from the island of São Miguel was of crucial importance, taking place at a rate that was disproportionately higher than the share of this island's population in the archipelago's total number of inhabitants (at the time, less than 50% of the whole Azorean population). If, in the first two years, the numbers involved were not comparatively important, since this island provided less than half of the total number of Azorean emigrants, the same cannot be said of the following years, especially the 1940s, when emigration from São Miguel amounted to 80% and even 90% of the total Azorean outflow. This situation was crucial in determining our choice to use newspapers published in São Miguel for the purposes of this essay. At that time, this island was, as in other periods, one of the most densely populated and the one that displayed the fastest rate of demographic growth – a key factor behind the population increase occurring in times of dwindling outflows (Rocha 1991).

As emigration decreased and became practically limited to the island of São Miguel, in sharp contrast to the general pattern since the second half of the 19th century (Rocha 2008), changes began to be noted in the volume and structure of the demographic pattern of the archipelago, and new variables emerged that were related to the natural movement of the population (Rocha 1991). In fact, the dramatic fall in emigration led to a major rise in population numbers,⁴ as shown in Chart 3, together with an increase in the number of young people in terms of the composition of age groups, and a renewed balance in terms of gender distribution. These are aspects that we have already had the opportunity to highlight in other studies, especially when we analyzed the dynamics of the population in several Azorean islands between 1900 and 1981 (Rocha 1991), and more recently, in a synopsis of the demographic growth of the Azores between 1895 and 1976 (Rocha 2008).

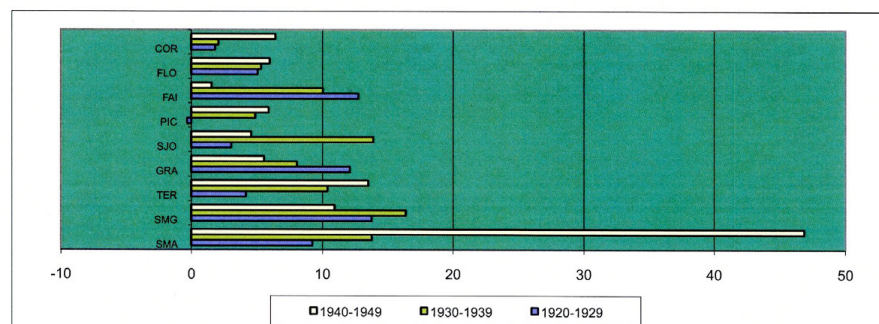
CHART 3
EVOLUTION OF POPULATION IN THE AZORES FROM 1920 TO 1950



Source: Census, 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950.

Over the course of thirty years, the Azorean population increased by more than 85,000 individuals: 21,923 between 1920 and 1930; 32,919 between 1930 and 1940, and 30,423 between 1940 and 1950. However, the population growth rates differed from island to island, being higher in São Miguel, as can be seen in Chart 4. Such differences in terms of demographic volumes and growth rates can be understood in the light of geographic variations, with their being a tendency for greater demographic concentration in the larger islands. Santa Maria was an exception to this rule from 1940 to 1950, when the male half of the population was attracted by the employment opportunities created with the building of the international airport (Rocha 1991).

CHART 4
POPULATION VARIATION IN THE AZORES (%)
FROM 1920 TO 1950, BY DECADES

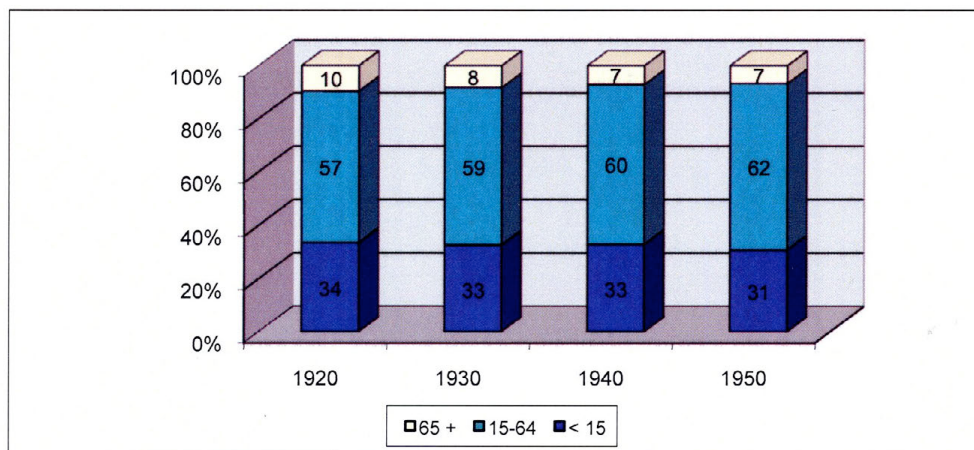


Source: Census, 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950.

⁴ Present Population. We use *present population* instead of *resident population*, since the former was classified according to age groups in the Census that we consulted.

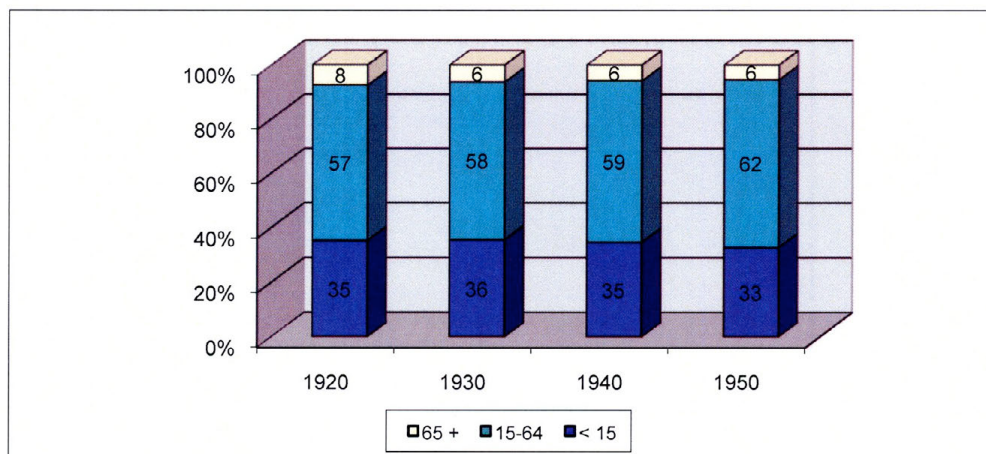
There were distinct changes to be noted in the age structure,⁵ mainly resulting in an increase in the adult population (Charts 5 and 6) as mentioned earlier. Effectively, the increase in the relative share of the adult population is quite clear, as is the consequent relative fall in the shares of the young and elderly age groups. The indirect influence of these changes on the birth rate, resulting from an absolute as well as a relative increase in the population of fertile age, was just as important in all of the Azorean islands as it was in São Miguel.

CHART 5
AGE STRUCTURE IN THE AZORES FROM 1920 TO 1950 (%)



Source Census, 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950.

CHART 6
AGE STRUCTURE IN S. MIGUEL FROM 1920 TO 1950 (%)



Source: Census, 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950.

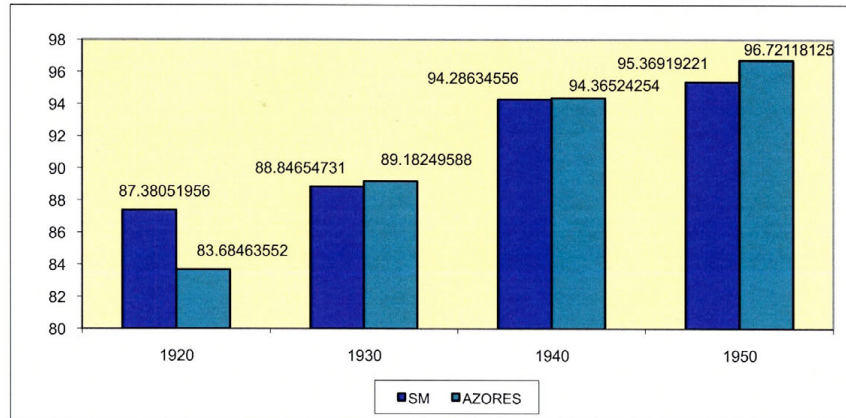
Besides affecting the age groups, the decrease in Azorean emigration brought further changes, namely in terms of gender balance, after years of striking disparities, particularly in the late

⁵ Young age group under 15; Working age group (15-64); Elderly people (65 and over).

19th century (Rocha 1990), when it became clear that Azorean emigration was predominantly attractive to the male element.⁶

Contrasting with the masculinity ratio of 85% in 1920, the following years were characterized by a similarity in the shares of the male and female population (Chart 7). In this particular case, São Miguel deviated from the general trend of the archipelago, even when the other islands had experienced sharper gender cleavages in the past (Rocha 1991). The movement towards a greater gender balance was, therefore, less evident in São Miguel than in the rest of the islands.

CHART 7
MASCULINITY RATIO IN ACTIVE POPULATION, IN THE AZORES AND S. MIGUEL, FROM 1920 TO 1950



Source: Census, 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950

The declining emigration numbers led to a fear in certain circles that already existing social problems, such as unemployment and poverty, might be aggravated (Rocha 2001). The Azorean economy was mostly rooted in a stagnant primary sector (Enes 1994). In addition to a lack of vitality in agricultural production, the political regime dealt strongly with any form of dissent and social unrest. Despite the poor living conditions (Brito 1955), the government propaganda spread notions of national greatness and unity, slowly bringing into existence the so-called New State, ideologically strong, censorial and highly critical of the ways of life to be found in foreign countries, particularly the USA, which had the highest concentration of Azorean emigrants, after Brazil had reigned supreme as the most popular destination for emigrants in the second half of the 19th century (Rocha 2009).

Frequency and main contents of newspaper articles about emigration

A systematic analysis of the characteristics of the discourse produced in the press about Azorean emigration over the course of this thirty-year period must necessarily take us far beyond the world of journalism. This is especially true in the case of Azorean writing, since, in the period of our study, there appeared to be a clear overlap in the opinions and representations published about migratory flows originating within the archipelago. In other words, several genres of discourse were juxtaposed as a result of the multiple social roles that some of the authors often played: politicians, journalists, literary figures, among others. As has been stated earlier (Cordeiro 2003), beginning in the late 19th century and continuing through the first decades of the 20th century, most of the writing on the theme of emigration was produced by highly regarded figures in Azorean cultural

⁶ São Miguel was not the island that was most affected by this gender imbalance. Emigration to North America, characterized by the largely illegal outflow (Chapin 1981; Silva 2002) of the young male population in the second half of the 19th century, affected, first and foremost, the islands of Faial, Pico and São Jorge, where age and gender imbalances were more evident, particularly at the end of the 19th century and in the first two decades of the 20th century (Rocha 1991; 2008).

and political life.⁷ The articles they published in the local press were usually speeches that had been presented earlier in a political context or else took the form of cultural essays and/or academic studies.

Because it crosses over discursive boundaries, the theme of emigration shows the importance of political, economic, social and cultural questions as a source of public interest (Santos 2004: 10). Even when relatively informal, no discourse on the subject of migration and its agents can ignore the living conditions of the population, the prevailing ideology and currents of thought, or the decisions taken with regard to migratory policy, either in the country of origin or in the destination society. Even when there is a fall in the volume of migratory flows – as is the case with the period under scrutiny here – all information and opinions are structured and expressed in accordance with the complexities of the societal framework of their time.

The present analysis is based on this premise and seeks to clarify the contents of the messages that were produced and conveyed within a particular social and political environment. In keeping with the methodology and aims established for this article, a reading of Table 1 shows that the evolution in the number of articles written on the subject of Azorean emigration and published between 1920 and 1950 does not always reveal the real dynamics of the emigration flows during those thirty years. The number of articles published in the 1940s contrasts sharply with the phase of “low emigration” to be noted in this thirty-year period. The explanation for this fact is probably to be found in the methodological options that we took, namely in terms of the newspapers that were chosen, given their editorial differences.⁸

Table 2 shows how the contents of the press articles can be grouped together around specific themes, thus indicating some of the prevailing concerns and purposes of that time. At the same time, the relatively restricted scope of these themes may express the generally shared ideas as to which emigration-related matters were considered relevant and worthy of public debate, from a journalistic point of view. Even so, as will be shown later on, such consensus did not exclude the airing of conflicting ideas, notwithstanding the central priorities of a social and political context that was averse to any form of social upheaval; nor could it conceal the different thematic trends that were developed, with there being a sharp contrast between the first and the last years of the period under analysis.

The 1920s thus focused on emigration as representing a problem in itself and/or as the cause of further difficulties and predicaments.⁹ The idea of *excessive emigration* was immediately presented as a demographic threat to Azorean society. The risk of upsetting the already frail balance in the population (a difficult goal to achieve and maintain, even under normal conditions, especially in the smallest islands) went hand in hand with the decrease in agricultural production and the increase in wages in the primary sector.¹⁰ A shortage of goods and rising prices were some of the arguments presented in a number of articles that were overtly opposed to emigration and to uncontrolled emigration in particular. It is our belief that this kind of assessment was actually more closely related to the high emigration rates in the past, since it hardly mirrored the reality of the historical period in which the articles were written.

At the same time, other shortages and problems were pointed out as being closely connected with the migratory process. The inhuman traveling conditions and the precarious situation awaiting immigrants in terms of employment and residence in the destination country

⁷ For example, Mont'Alverne de Sequeira, Luís da Silva Ribeiro, Carreiro da Costa or Armando Cortes-Rodrigues.

⁸ In spite of this, we have already had the chance to demonstrate on another occasion (Rocha and Ferreira 2008) that, in the periods after the one analyzed here, a much larger number of news items and opinions tended to be published about the subject at times when there was a significant rise in the number of emigrants, with the reverse situation also being true.

⁹ Following this same line of thought, Miriam H. Pereira defines the 1920s as a decade similar to the 1850s and 1860s, due to the unrest that emigration caused among the ruling classes (Pereira 1993: 14).

¹⁰ This view linking together demography and economics was not exclusive of the 1920s. Cordeiro (2003) claims that such a “reading” of Azorean emigration was already to be found in the mid-19th century, and that it continued into the first half of the 20th century, meeting with changes in its acceptance and visibility “depending on economic and social circumstances, ideologies, interests, aims and the public it was addressed to” (translated from Cordeiro 2003: 124-125).

were also the subject of harsh criticism.¹¹ As one of the main destinations for Azorean emigrants, the United States was the target of vehement accusations in this respect, in contrast with what was said about Brazil. The 1929 crash was held responsible for the plight of unemployment, which spread rapidly among the Azorean immigrants living in North America, bringing with it famine and disease,¹² and causing some of them to rush back to their country of origin, an aspect that justifies the observation that we made earlier about the appearance of an older adult population, or even an elderly population, in some of the islands during those years (Rocha 1991).

Furthermore, the mere mention of the United States seems to have aroused explicit nationalistic feelings in the press of the time, even if the 1920s in the Azores were generally associated with the activities of a remarkable cultural movement in favor of the formation of a regional identity¹³ (Cordeiro 1995; Enes 1995). The Azorean emigrant in America was seen as being particularly exposed to the dangers of *de-naturalization*, given the vulnerability of immigrants to the processes of assimilation and acculturation.

*In contact with a new civilization that doesn't even deny him political rights, adapted to the life of another race, one that is young and strong and that isolates him and separates him from his homeland, the settler in North America rapidly forgets his nationality. His absorption is complete.*¹⁴

Another fear was added to the above, namely that a mass emigration of whole families might take place, something that did indeed become a distinctive feature of Azorean emigration in the 20th century. This was, however, a concern that was essentially limited to official bodies and which was applicable to the nation as a whole, as Miriam H. Pereira reminds us when analyzing Portuguese emigration policies between 1850 and 1930. The author argues that the government feared the emigration of entire families, as this might reduce – if not completely do away with – the remittances of funds to Portugal. Such a possibility never did in fact materialize because the emigration from the mainland was predominantly of an individual nature (Pereira 1993: 14-15), contrary to what was happening in the Azores.

Nevertheless, the official State discourse on this subject, consulted for the purposes of this study, is not particularly elucidative. Rather, it seems to have been aimed at discouraging individual plans for emigration, which may be interpreted as a way of impeding any possible future plans for family reunification abroad. We believe that one of the main strategies developed at the time consisted of minimizing the quantitative importance of migratory flows. The restrictions on the entry of newcomers imposed by the United States during the 1920s proved to be of assistance to the Portuguese government's purposes (Baganha 1994). An article in *Açoriano Oriental*, dated January 1927, reproduced a press release from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which had previously been published in *O Século*. The text reports on the low number of Portuguese citizens seeking to settle in North America and informs the population of the remote possibilities of candidates on waiting lists ever achieving their emigration wishes or succeeding in becoming clandestine emigrants:

The last published bulletins on emigration account for [...] something like 18 in one thousand in certain northern districts, whereas in the south the percentage is insignificant. [...] North America establishes yearly quotas for all countries; our country has a limit of 503, women and children

¹¹ cf. *Contra a emigração* [Against emigration]. *Açoriano Oriental*, 24/07/1920; *O problema da emigração* [The emigration problem]. *Açoriano Oriental*, 15/01/1927.

¹² cf. *Os portugueses em má situação na América* [The difficult living conditions of the Portuguese in America]. *Açoriano Oriental*, 18/02/1933.

¹³ As a rider to what has already been said, it should also be added that the authors mentioned saw no contradictions or conflicts between regionalist and nationalist ideas, as they were both linked together in the debates and speeches dating from the 1920s. We can even read that “(...) regionalism did not oppose nationalism. In other words, the former did not jeopardize the nationalist feelings of the Azoreans: on the contrary, it strengthened them” (translated from Cordeiro 1995: 283) and “‘Azoreanity’ was not seen at that time as the basis of an Azorean ‘nationalism’ that might foster the independence of the archipelago. [It was rather seen as] a complement to and a part of the Portuguese nation” (translated from Enes 1995: 299).

¹⁴ *A emigração* [Emigration] *Açoriano Oriental*, 06/11/1920.

*included. We can safely say that there is practically no emigration to North America, since 70% of this amount is reserved for women and children, and only the remaining 30% for men. And yet, however, there are many applications. Approximately 12,000. Some of the candidates will give up, or have already given up, this purpose, finding a different course for their lives; others go abroad illegally, being arrested on arrival and then shipped back to their country of origin.*¹⁵

In direct contrast to what has been seen in relation to the USA, newspaper articles from the period that centered on the question of Brazil as a migratory destination underlined the need for Portuguese foreign policy to give additional importance and value to that country. This is a topic we shall return to later on when analyzing the 1940s, but its relevance was already hinted at as early as 1920 due to a number of interrelated factors.

The first and foremost of these is the setting in which Portuguese and Brazilian bilateral relations took place. The first years of the 20th century were crucial to the fundamental shaping of such relations. The first steps in bringing the two countries closer together involved the acknowledgement of a common purpose: each country was determined to carry out its own *project of national regeneration* (Santos 2006)¹⁶ and was therefore willing to assist the other by strengthening their transatlantic bonds.

Two other, albeit contradictory, factors explain the central focus given to migrations to Brazil in the newspaper articles we examined. On the one hand, there was the relative increase of interest in this country as an emigration destination (probably as a result of the restrictions imposed by the United States in 1921, 1924 and 1927). On the other hand, there was the steady determination of the Brazilian authorities to extend their legislation restricting immigration. The end of World War I triggered this restrictive policy as a response to major national events, such as the successive economic depressions following the 1930 Revolution (Westphalen and Balhana 1993: 22-23).

Both factors help to explain the reasons why the articles consulted were concerned with describing the difficulties that Portugal would face if it neglected its economic relations with Brazil.¹⁷ Thus, emigration to Brazil was advertised as a solution to the problem of insufficient numbers of workers on the other side of the Atlantic, with financial benefits for Portugal arising from the transfer of funds and the strengthening of commercial transactions.¹⁸

The invectives delivered against emigration, a central theme in the newspaper articles we first analyzed, were thus replaced by a laudatory discourse in favor of outflows towards destinations that were historically linked to Portugal, such as Brazil and the African colonies. The new theme was gradually presented as the main solution to the “emigration problem,” providing the basis for a wider public debate in the 1940s.

In actual fact, despite its being sustained by the colonial policy of that time, the plan to redirect Portuguese emigration flows to the colonial sphere was not an original idea of the *Estado Novo*. The beginning of the political discourse defending the departure en masse of Portuguese (and even other Europeans) to the African colonies dates back to the 19th century and was included in the program of the liberal movement of the time (Pinto 2006: 59-60). By then there were a number of ideological aspects that were involved in this suggestion – one was the idea of the *civilizing mission* that could be played by the Portuguese; another was the defense of the principle of the *historical rights* that Portugal enjoyed over its African territory – but the fact remains that in 1822 the proclamation of Brazilian independence ended up contributing to the idea and yet at the same time, because of this, one of the main reasons for the Portuguese presence in Africa – the transatlantic

¹⁵ *O problema da emigração* [The problem of emigration]. *Açoriano Oriental*, 15/01/1927.

¹⁶ After conducting an in-depth study of the relationship between Portugal and Brazil, during the period from 1930 to 1945, Paula Marques Santos states as follows: “(...) fresh and more vigorous attempts were made to bring the two countries closer together, as they embarked upon similar political and ideological processes, through the centralized and dictatorial governments of Oliveira Salazar and Getúlio Vargas, whose central goal, in each case, was to establish a new *project of national regeneration* and to form a new conception of the country, in the light of the existing international order and its main actors” (Santos, 2006: 2).

¹⁷ cf. *A influência portuguesa no Brasil está ameaçada* [The Portuguese influence in Brazil is at risk]. *Açoriano Oriental*, 23/09/1923.

¹⁸ cf. *idem, ibidem*.

slave market – was done away with (MacQueen 1998: 30-21). Consequently, the inevitable and progressively increasing demographic vacuum in the colonies had to be compensated for.

The idea of presenting the African colonies as a territory that was attractive to the Portuguese people started to gain in intensity at the end of the 19th century, after the Berlin Conference in 1885,¹⁹ and it became part of the program of colonial propaganda in the first two decades of the 20th century, already under the regime of the Portuguese Republic. With the fall of this regime in 1926, important changes were brought to colonial policy with the coming to power of Salazar – consolidated in the 1930 Colonial Act and its transposition to the Portuguese Constitution in 1933. Yet, nonetheless, the idea did not perish, being presented in the light of arguments that were apparently less ideological than those that were used in the past. As Norrie MacQueen states, the Colonial Act was passed at the time of the economic conjuncture that had spread across the world after the 1929 depression. Consequently, the Portuguese colonies in Africa were presented as a viable alternative to the harsh living conditions that were being experienced all across Europe (MacQueen 1998: 29). However, the plan to increase the migratory flows to Africa and establish large populations there did not meet with the hoped for success, although some legislative changes were made in an attempt to encourage this process.²⁰

We believe that the fact that this theme continued to be discussed in the newspapers of São Miguel is symptomatic of the New State's supportive attitude towards the idea. Although the channeling of the Portuguese population towards colonies such as Angola and Mozambique was part of a vast scheme intended to solve the problem of "excessive emigration," it was also intended to contribute to the project of expanding the empire.

This is the main reason why the theme remained a vital one in the newspapers for over thirty years, even during a period of decline in migratory movements. This solution was meant both for Portuguese citizens who had returned to their country of origin after unsuccessful emigration experiences and for aspiring emigrants:

We also have a surplus population, who are anxious to emigrate, we have many thousands of families, country people, fighting against extreme poverty because even bread is in short supply. Why shouldn't we use them for the purpose of occupying land that others covet?
[...]
*Let the Portuguese people occupy the land, before others come and take it over. Portuguese people! It is your duty to populate Angola and Mozambique. And this is more urgent than you might think. Let it be done now: For the Good of the Nation.*²¹

Between 1920 and 1930, analysis of the newspapers shows a decrease in the number of articles focusing specifically on emigration (Table 2). New demographic topics began to be covered randomly by the press, such as general quantitative data on the population or migratory flows. This trend changed in the 1940s. Not only was there a rise in the number of articles showing a renewed concern with the theme, but the discussion of the old questions was also returned to once again.

One of these articles, reviving the debate on the relations between Portugal and Brazil, restored the official discourse of the Portuguese and Brazilian governments about the mutual interest of promoting the joint project of internal restructuring and international empowerment that was referred to earlier. Influential regional and national figures, as well as highly regarded Brazilian publicists, came out and vindicated the political ideals nurtured by their respective governments.

¹⁹ Isabel Castro Henriques justifies the colonialist strategy of the main imperialist nations during the period immediately after the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) as follows: "The creation of African colonies by the powerful European countries, from the late 19th century onwards, called for the implementation of structures and the deployment of men – soldiers, missionaries, technicians, colonial administration agents, businessmen, settlers – essential for ensuring territorial control and the development of the European projects for exploiting the local resources and the African populations" (Henriques 2004: 433).

²⁰ For example, in 1907, departure for those territories no longer required the obtaining of a passport (Pereira, 1993: 14).

²¹ *O povoamento das Colónias portuguesas* [The settlement of the Portuguese Colonies]. *Açoriano Oriental*, 05/08/1933.

Dutra Faria and Azevedo Amaral were two men of letters and political thinkers who stood out as distinguished examples offering their support to the activities of their respective governments in this area.

The convergence in the Azorean press of the ideas and opinions from the two continents highlights the popularity of the concept of “*lusso-brasilidade*” (a combination of the Portuguese and Brazilian characters, traditions and goals). A cultural and propagandistic movement was therefore founded upon the pillars of a common language, a common history and now a common political purpose (Santos 2006: 9).²² No wonder that the regional press mirrored this movement and sought to draw the two countries closer together; claims were made about the relevance of teaching each country’s history on both sides of the Atlantic, and stress was laid on the importance of the Portuguese emigrants’ role in the development of Brazil. In its turn, Brazil prized highly an immigrant community that adjusted easily to the local rules and standards and that succeeded in all activities based on the values of *work*, *honesty* and *public spirit*.²³ The Brazilian acknowledgement of the Azorean emigrants’ good attributes helped to shape the articles written on the theme:

*Parents and grandparents of Brazilians, the Portuguese living in Brazil, have been granted unrequested privileges under Brazilian law, simply by virtue of their being of Portuguese origin. The whole of Brazil grants them moral citizenship as a result of their keen historical awareness, as well as their affectionate feelings derived from reciprocal habits of good companionship.*²⁴

These writings are much more than mere newspaper articles. Besides sharing a common interest in the emigration theme, they succeed in cementing mutual affinities, such as language, history, culture and religion. Although emphasis is laid upon emigration, wider cultural purposes are thus attained, as is shown by the words with which the well-known politician Manuel de Abranches Martins tried to convey Marcello Caetano’s thought:

*The Portuguese in Brazil, and the Brazilians in Portugal, must be considered almost of the same nationality [...] Friendly relations between Portugal and Brazil have matured lately, by virtue of a broad and clear international policy. [This] friendship [...] will have its appropriate judicial counterpart.*²⁵

The *demographic problem* was another subject of renewed interest for journalists in the 1940s. It gained newfound autonomy from the theme of emigration, and was now approached from the viewpoint of a surplus population.²⁶ Carreiro da Costa was the author of an article in which the decline in the flows of emigration, stemmed by the restrictive measures taken by the United States of America, was held responsible for the growth in the population. Furthermore, the author argued that the difficulties experienced by the various economic sectors in the Azores combined with the international climate of war to exacerbate the precarious living conditions of the lower strata of Azorean society at the beginning of the 1940s.²⁷

²² During the 1930s and the 1940s, cultural and intellectual exchanges were a distinct reality. As mentioned earlier (Santos, 2006), “(...) besides the several visits and the special missions being sent between the two countries, there was also a continuous exchange of specialists in different areas, who worked as consultants and participated in universities, enterprises, etc.” (Santos 2006: 9/note 18).

²³ cf. *Os portugueses do Brasil* [The Portuguese of Brazil]. *A Ilha*, 06/04/1940; *Somos Cem Milhões* [We number one hundred million]. *A Ilha*, 29/03/1941.

²⁴ *Os portugueses do Brasil* [The Portuguese of Brazil]. *A Ilha*, 06/04/1940. Another right granted to the Portuguese to the exclusion of other immigrants was the right of association, on Brazilian territory, in social clubs of a regional and local nature, (cf. *Portugal no estrangeiro* [Portugal abroad]. *A Ilha*, 25/05/1940).

²⁵ *Portugueses e Brasileiros* [Portuguese and Brazilians]. *A Ilha*, 13/02/1943.

²⁶ In spite of the controversy surrounding this issue, this expression is normally used only under very special circumstances: when there is an excess of people in a certain territory, which in most cases cannot be dissociated from the economic, social and political contexts of the respective societies. This can be linked with the demographic reality when we talk about a general decrease in the population between 1900 and 1920, followed by an increase from the mid-1920s until the end of the period under analysis, especially in the 1940s, when the trend ran counter to emigration.

²⁷ cf. *A crise Açoriana* [The Azorean crisis]. *A Ilha*, 11/01/1941.

It is consequently plain to see that within the space of a decade a shift in attitude had occurred with regard to the pressing demographic issues and the effects of emigration on society. Carreiro da Costa recalls the past outflows of Azoreans heading for Brazil and the United States, in order to stress the economic benefits that had been gained: a strengthening of commercial ties and the receipt of foreign capital.²⁸

Since this is a personal interpretation of the facts, it is somewhat risky to consider this to reflect a general trend in the Azorean press.²⁹ In support of this cautious position, we should mention an anonymous article, published in the second half of the 1940s, which expressed unequivocal backing of the regime's positioning in this matter.³⁰

The text presents a favorable appreciation of the surplus active population, viewing it as an outcome of a well-designed social and economic policy. According to what has been said, the New State had succeeded in establishing and implementing objective measures leading to agricultural and industrial progress, resulting in an overall decrease in the tendency to emigrate.³¹ In the same spirit, an argument was again evoked that was popular in the 1920s – the advantages of settling in African colonies for all those who felt the urge to live far from the metropolis.³²

Existing alongside these main themes were other articles that focused upon the *image* of the Azorean emigrant. They played an important role in the portrayal of regionalism and in the formation of a specific identity, a project which was still very much alive in journalist circles in the 1940s, even if it remained under the sway of an all-pervasive national feeling (Enes 1995). The role and the profile of the Azorean emigrant in the destination society seem to be part of a certain Azorean *and* national *essence*:

*[Azoreans in California] have performed social action that is worthy of praise, and have managed to extend our islands, and even Portugal, abroad, by giving continuity to habits, customs and traditions.*³³

As mentioned previously (Rocha and Ferreira 2008), and strange though it may seem, articles dealing with this theme tended to be written in periods of low migratory flows and were accompanied by a relative effort to form an identity, as in the second half of the 1970s and most of the 1980s. The same may be said of the texts that focused on the cultural scope of the migratory process. The representations of the emigrant, being central to these documents, include a description of the relationship with the homeland, seeking to highlight the preservation of a collective memory and a sense of belonging, without which no regional identity is ever completely formed.

Conclusions

The analysis of the press discourse about Azorean emigration, for the thirty years considered in this study, is far from concluded. We recognize the benefits of further and more in-

²⁸ cf. *idem, ibidem*.

²⁹ It is, however, interesting to note that, by the end of the 1940s, emigration was beginning to be mentioned as a *solution* to the demographic problem (cf. *O Problema Demográfico Micaelense* [The demographic problem in São Miguel]. *A Ilha*, 12/02/1949). This view continued to be held throughout the 1950s (Rocha and Ferreira, 2008). Carreiro da Costa has the particular merit of having anticipated this question and introduced it into the public arena.

³⁰ cf. *Medida justa e oportuna* [A fair and opportune measure]. *A Ilha*, 19/04/1947.

³¹ cf. *idem, ibidem*.

³² Further reading on the channeling of migratory flows towards Africa must include: *Portugal de Aquém e de Além-Mar* [Portugal on this side of the ocean and overseas]. *A Ilha*, 10/11/1945; *A emigração portuguesa* [Portuguese emigration]. *A Ilha*, 09/08/1947.

³³ *Portugal na Califórnia* [Portugal in California]. *A Ilha*, 21/11/1940.

depth research in this area, both in terms of the interpretation of data and of the methodology adopted. We also recognize that other contents and discursive forms, as well as continuities and novelties, may be found and highlighted.

In any case, it seems reasonable to argue that the period 1920-1950 did not witness any major changes as far as the contents of articles on Azorean emigration were concerned, despite some diverging opinions. Subjects such as migratory flows and their relationship with demography and culture, emigration as the cause of all manner of problems, the attempt to encourage people to emigrate to the African Colonies, or the Portugal-Brazil relationship, using the history of Portuguese emigration as the backdrop to their discussion, were all to be found with some regularity in the pages of the newspapers analyzed during those thirty years.

Another point of view that must be emphasized is the widespread tendency to discourage discourse about emigration during this period, with only one solitary text appearing in the 1940s explicitly referring to its advantages. This is not such a strange fact if we consider that, with the press being subject to censorship, a certain kind of convergence was inevitably to be noted between the discourse to be found in the press and the prevailing political attitude towards emigration at that time. During the *Estado Novo*, the Portuguese government's position towards emigration was basically characterized by the restrictive procedures that were adopted, with strict control being exercised over departures aboard and punitive measures being taken against those who emigrated irregularly (Peixoto 1999: 156; Santos 2004: 30-35). In a certain way, it is understandable that the incentive to emigrate was not included among the fundamental principles of Salazar's policies, despite the Portuguese government of that time encouraging the sending of remittances to the nation.

Sources

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Census of Portuguese Population, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950
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Table I

Evolution of published texts on emigration in the newspapers
Açoriano Oriental and *A Ilha* (1920-1950)

News- paper	Year	No. of articles	Total
Açoriano Oriental	1920	6	13
	1921	0	
	1922	1	
	1923	2	
	1924	1	
	1925	0	
	1926	0	
	1927	1	
	1928	0	
	1929	2	
	1930	0	5
	1931	0	
	1932	0	
	1933	2	
	1934	0	
	1935	1	
	1936	0	
	1937	0	
	1938	0	
	1939	2	
A Ilha	1940	8	23
	1941	3	
	1942	0	
	1943	1	
	1944	1	
	1945	3	
	1946	0	
	1947	4	
	1948	1	
	1949	2	
	1950	3	

Source: Açoriano Oriental (Ponta Delgada, 1920-1939) and A Ilha (Ponta Delgada, 1940-1950)

Table II

Main themes of the texts on Azorean emigration, from 1920 to 1950

	1920 - 1929	1930 - 1939	1940 - 1950	Total
Culture	2	-	4	6
Demography and migratory flows	-	1	2	3
Problems (emigration as a solution)	-	-	1	1
Problems (emigration as the cause)	4	1	-	5
Emigration to the "colonies"	2	1	3	6
Emigration and relations between Portugal and Brazil	2	-	5	7
The "image" of the emigrant	-	-	4	4
New destinations (Curaçao and São. Domingos)	-	-	3	3
Foreign/immigration Policy	1	-	-	1
International and diplomatic relations	-	-	1	1
Support for the emigrant	-	1	-	1
Participation/Integration	1	-	-	1
Other	1	1	-	2

Source: *Açoriano Oriental* (Ponta Delgada, 1920-1939) e *A Ilha* (Ponta Delgada, 1940-1950)