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Unseen Diasporas: Portuguese Labor Migrants in Colonial Plantations

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Re-centering Luso-diasporas, or, the Elephant in the Lusophone Studies Room

My central argument in this chapter is that there is a contradiction between Portuguese historiography and the history of the Portuguese. While the former is centered on themes of empire building, the latter is mostly concerned with moving away from empire and building lives somewhere else.

Mainstream historiography shapes representations of imperial Portugueseness for internal and external uses. Even the diasporic communities neglected by empire mirror themselves in monuments that celebrate empire—like caravels, maps of colonial conquest, poles with coats of arms, and others (Bastos, "Plantation Memories"; Fernandes, "Oh Famous Race!"). More recently, the geographies of empire have been replaced by those of post-empire, as in the imagined Lusophonic Commonwealth of the CPLP (*Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*). New flags are appended to the old picture, ex-colonies are replaced by new nations like Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé in Africa, plus Brazil in South America, the two Asian enclaves of Goa and Macao, and the eastern half of the South Sea island of Timor. Beneath a commonality that replicates the shape of empire, each flag stands for very different linguistic, political, cultural, and historical realities.

In the meantime, those maps, or imagined communities, leave aside the hundreds of thousands of people of Portuguese descent in North America, the Caribbean, non-CPLP Africa, Asia, South America and the Pacific. The invisibility of diasporic communities is situational and relative. Like the elephant in the Lusophone studies room, diasporic lives remain out of focus in the mainstream, empire-inclined narratives of Lusophony. That happens despite the fact those lives are the biggest share of the worldwide Lusophone experience, and despite the fact that there is no

shortage of literature on migrations produced by several generations of anthropologists, sociologists, historians, philosophers and literary critics, from Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, Miriam Halpern Pereira, Maria Ioannis Baganha and Caroline Brettel, to Onésimo Teotónio de Almeida (*Tales from the Tenth Island*; *O Peso do Hífen*), João Leal, Victor Pereira, Marcelo Borges and Gilberto Fernandes (*This Pilgrim Nation*), added by some high-quality collections with state-of-the art analyses (Higgs; Holton and Klimt; Teixeira and Da Rosa), among others. In this chapter I suggest that the time is right to bring diasporic experiences into the center stage and contribute towards the de-imperialization of the field.

This very volume *Migrant Frontiers* proves that the de-imperial turn is already happening. Other recent publications confirm the point. In 2012, *Imperial Migrations*, edited by Eric Mourier-Genoud and Michel Cahen, offers a selection of case-studies that challenge the boundaries between studies of empire and studies of migration. Malyn Newitt's monograph *Emigration and the Sea*, published in 2015, engages with an alternative history of the Portuguese by focusing on migration-related ocean crossings rather than on the traditional accounts of crusade, conquest, and oceanic expansion. Darlene Sadlier's *Portuguese Speaking Diaspora*, published in 2016, emphasizes diaspora and brings a de-colonial approach to empire. A few authors have also focused on the fluidity of Portugueseness at the margins of empire, as exemplified by Margaret Sarkissian's *D'Albuquerque's Children* and Antonio Hespanha's *Filhos da Terra*.

My contribution consists in analyzing certain routes of Portuguese islanders into other empires and nations, the communities they formed there, and the racialization they were subject to. I focus on their trajectories to sugar plantations in post-Abolition British Guiana (Guyana) and in Hawai'i. Before addressing these, however, a note on the intersections of empire and diaspora in late nineteenth-century southern Angola, where it all started for me.

Intersections of Empire and Migration: A Note from Southern Angola

It was while studying late nineteenth-century local processes in societies under Portuguese colonial rule that I was confronted with the tension between empire and migration which I explore in this chapter. Mainstream historical narratives depicted the Portuguese empire as one uninterrupted endeavor that started with the oceanic explorations of the 1400s and lasted until Angola, Mozambique and other former colonies became independent nations in 1975. The study of primary sources for the nineteenth century

showed me a different reality—one that is fragmentary, marked by discontinuities and filled with contradictory initiatives. It also showed me the magnitude of the migration by Portuguese subjects into competing empires and nations.

Serendipity brought me there. I was studying the circulation of Goan physicians in Portuguese-administered Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g., Bastos, "Race, Medicine") and came across the writings of Germano Correia, a Goan physician who was also a physical anthropologist sympathetic to racialism. He was interested in racial purity and conducted anthropometric studies among Luso-descendant groups, including on his own homeplace in India and on a community he encountered in southern Angola in the 1920s. That community descended from settlers who had arrived from Madeira in the previous century. According to Correia, the descendants had improved their "race" and condition by not mixing with locals—an explicitly racialist and racist argument that I once presented as the reverse of Luso-tropicalism (Bastos, "Um Lusotropicalismo"). Intrigued by the existence of that community, I proceeded to research further (Bastos, "Migrants, Settlers and Colonists").

In the early 2000s, historians began documenting how Portuguese colonization of Africa had been discontinuous; it hardly corresponded to the 500 years of uninterrupted empire that was mythologized by the colonial regime and taken literally by anti-colonial politics. Cláudia Castelo demonstrated that only in the twentieth century, particularly after World War II, did Angola and Mozambique have a massive, government-sponsored settlement of Portuguese farming communities. Until then, what is now Angola was a vast territory populated by several different societies, numerous language families, distinct cultures, economic systems and ways of life. Few European settlers resided there. Nodes of overseas commerce existed on the coast, mostly connected to the traffic in enslaved people for plantations across the Atlantic. That commerce depended also on inland pathways and connections, as shown by Luiz Felipe de Alencastro and other historians. There were Europeans or Europeanized Africans, or Africanized Europeans, along those interior routes, some of whom identified as Portuguese. But those volatile actors did not turn the region into a settler colony.

At that time, the Portuguese administration had ambitions to control a vast extent of land stretching from the Atlantic (Angola) to the Indian Ocean (Mozambique). Those pretensions were quashed and Angola's borders were defined at the Berlin conference in 1884–85, when European nations fought with one another over entitlement to African lands, in what is known as the "Scramble for Africa," without the consultation of the African peoples affected by the process.

The settlement of Huíla started in those exact years. As if running against the clock of the European scramble for Africa, the Portuguese government brought in a few hundred Madeira islanders in 1884–85 under quite exceptional circumstances. The islanders were given contracts and sponsorship for their families to sail to the port of Moçâmedes (today's Namibe), along with guidance in crossing the mountains to the high plateau of Huíla, support with housing, clothing, agricultural tools, and so on. The episode is well documented in colonial laudatory literature and by a scholarly monograph (Medeiros). These sources show that this attempt at colonization succeeded where others had failed. Previous experiments had brought in Portuguese orphans, soldiers, German migrants and, in 1849, a group of Portuguese from Pernambuco discontented with the post-independence politics in Brazil. All of these groups dispersed or collapsed. In retrospect, in spite of the fragilities unveiled in primary sources, the 1884–85 sponsored settlement of Madeirans in Huíla was a successful maneuver that helped colonize disputed lands.

Yet there was another rationale for that project: it was also about bringing those who were prone to migrate elsewhere into territories under Portuguese control. Madeirans had been leaving their island for decades, as had many other Portuguese, both islanders and mainlanders. In Moçâmedes, the harbor where Madeirans disembarked on their way to the Huíla plateau in 1884, there was already a small community of fishermen from the Algarve, southern Portugal, who had sailed on their own initiative to the southern hemisphere. Of the routes that led Portuguese subjects away from their government's control, one in particular most concerned Portuguese politicians: the one that brought Madeirans to Demerara, or British Guiana, primarily for the purpose of working in the sugar cane fields. Governors of Madeira referred to it as "white slavery" while delegates in the Lisbon parliament claimed it was bleeding the nation, and enriching their rivals. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was suggested that the Madeirans of Guiana be re-routed into Portuguese colonies like Angola or Mozambique (Conselho Ultramarino). But Madeirans preferred to go to places of their own choosing: some chartered a boat to take them to the Australian gold rush, as documented by Malyn Newitt (106); some just stayed put and made their way to a better life in Guiana; and many engaged in commerce and encouraged more of their fellows to join them.

After 1878, a new destination pulled Madeirans and Azoreans across the oceans: the sugar plantations of Hawai'i. The Hawaiian Board of Immigration and the Sugar Planters' Association proposed attractive contracts that allowed entire families to sail and settle there. The archipelago was host to an early community of Portuguese whalers and sailors who had individually

crossed the Atlantic and the Pacific as crew members aboard a number of different ships. Their presence helped pave the way for the migration of Madeirans and Azoreans into Hawai'i. At some point, the Portuguese consul in Honolulu, Antonio Canavarro, subscribed to the idea that some of those who migrated to Hawai'i, could also be helpful in settling the Portuguese colonies, for instance, by going to Timor, an island near Australia that was partially under Portuguese administration but had practically no settlers (Consulado de Portugal em Honolulu). However, those patriotic biopolitics, foreseen by politicians and endorsed by consuls, were not reflected in practice: Madeirans and Azoreans kept going to the sugar plantations of the Guianas, the Caribbean and Hawai'i and the textile mills of New England, or kept trying to make their fortunes at sea, in the gold rush in California or in railroad constructions on new frontiers.

The settlement of Huíla should be read in that context as a modest attempt to provide an alternative destination for those who were willing to move. It was as much an episode of empire-building as it was a component of a wide net of migrating patterns. There were families who combined several of those diasporic routes: I found at least one family recruited to Huíla who had previously lived in Hawai'i, and someone who went to Hawai'i having previously lived in Demerara. Studying those connected movements is one of the goals of the *The Colour of Labour* project, in which I address the displacement and settlement of people across the geopolitics of nations and empires, the communities formed in the process, and the racialized lives experienced in the plantations and industries and on the shores of their arrival and settlement.

From Madeira to Guiana

The massive migration from Madeira to British Guiana remains largely unacknowledged in Portuguese Studies and among Portuguese historians, with the exception of those based in Madeira (e.g., Spranger, "Guiana Inglesa"). In Madeira, the word *Demerara* stands for more than a variety of sugar and refers to one of the destinations in the island's migratory history. Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice are the names of the three provinces of Guiana/Guyana (Guiana for the colonial period, Guyana since independence in 1966, Republic of Guyana since 1970).

Guyanese historian Mary Noel Menezes, herself of Portuguese descent, has extensively researched Madeiran migration to British Guiana. She has calculated that 30,645 Portuguese men and women arrived during the period of state-sponsored migration, between 1841 and 1882 (*Scenes* 5). She has also pinpointed 3 May 1835 as the date of the first arrivals, a date now

celebrated as "Portuguese Arrival Day." On that day, forty Madeiran men and women disembarked the *Louisa Baillie* in Georgetown and went to the plantations of La Penitence, Liliendaal, and Thomas (*Scenes* 5).

Abolition had outlawed the slave trade in the British Empire in 1807, but it was not until 1833–34 that slavery itself was outlawed in the colonies. Emancipation put an end to plantations' reliance on enslaved labor as of 1834. The travails of sugar cane cutting and processing would thereafter be performed by emancipated Africans in the system of apprenticeship (where they basically continued the same tasks under a new legal framework), by those captured/liberated by abolitionist British vessels from slave ships crossing the Atlantic, by free West Africans (Kroo), Madeiran islanders, and South Asians. The latter group would eventually come in the hundreds of thousands to British and Dutch Guiana and nearby Trinidad as part of a massive sugar-related diaspora that also took them to Mauritius and to Fiji under the indenture system (Bahadur; Carter; Hassankhan et al.; Kale; Kumar; Lal; Northrup).

Madeirans were an easy target for a variety of reasons. Madeira was a regular stop on the way between Britain and the Caribbean islands. Plus, there were British-owned businesses on Madeira, mostly related to wine production and trade, which involved large numbers of laborers. There were also informal connections that indirectly facilitated recruiters' access to Madeiran working hands.[1] Those were the hands of people willing to embark for distant shores, even if they did not fully know what awaited them there. Some would leave the island out of distress, after experiencing famine or other extreme difficulties. Many embarked leaving no official record of their journey. It is difficult to estimate the number of people who actually went to Guiana, but it was certainly more than those registered and counted by Menezes. Sometimes recruiters returned successful Madeiran migrants to the island so they could persuade their countrymen to look for *Eldorado* in Demerara (Spranger, "Guiana").

Once in Guiana, the challenges were multiple. Fever and brutal working conditions took many lives. Of those who survived, and those who kept arriving, some improved their economic condition by engaging in commerce, disputing with emancipated Africans the niches of street vending. Tension between the two groups mounted and exploded in the anti-Portuguese riots of 1856 (Chan; Doyle; Menezes, *Scenes*; Mello). Madeirans also established dry goods stores and rum shops, at least after 1843 (Laurence; Menezes, *Scenes* 31; Moore; Wagner). Still, by the middle

1 For a character sketch of the persuasive recruiter, see Corvo; Mendonça; and Spranger, "Guiana."

of the nineteenth century, many were working in extreme conditions in the plantations. According to Henry Horatio Haynes, consul of Portugal in British Guiana in the 1850s, they were the pillars of the colony's sugar industry. In 1851, 14,000 of British Guiana's 18,000 Portuguese residents worked in the sugar plantations (Consulado Guiana Ingleza). Around that time, in Madeira, Governor José Silvestre Ribeiro wrote anxiously to Lisbon reporting the quasi-slave conditions endured by the Madeirans in Demerara; he estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 had already left the island for that destination (Arquivo Regional da Madeira).

The labor landscape in colonial Guiana changed with the arrival of large numbers of indentured South Asians, which began in the 1830s and grew massively in the 1860s (Bahadur). The South Asians became the major labor force in the local plantations. Madeirans kept arriving but sought other occupations. Many of the newly arrived went directly into urban jobs or commerce in the city or the interior. The Portuguese had become a successful business community.

The Portuguese in Guiana formed a special category, a racialized segment of a society in which the dynamics of producing difference shaped six clearly distinct groups: Whites, Blacks, Amerindians, Indians, Portuguese, and mixed (the sixth category was eventually replaced by that of "Chinese," who also became a prominent group in labor and in businesses). The Portuguese were not "White" like the minority of plantation owning families of British and Dutch descent; not "Black" like the descendants of Africans displaced by enslavement; nor "Indian" like the descendants of displaced South Asian indentured laborers that came later; and definitely not the original "Amerindians." Nor were they the same as other groups who settled there for work and business, such as the Chinese. Other groups who came later, like Syrians and Brazilians, never made it into that system of classification, which was produced in colonial times, when race was a matter of hierarchizing labor, generated by a production system and legitimized by a system of knowledge. Anthropologists Brackette Williams and Marcelo Mello analyze the production of difference, expressed in terms of race and culture, as a structural, often antagonistic feature of Guyanese society.

Neighboring Suriname and other Caribbean islands such as Trinidad and Tobago, Curaçao, Saint Vincent, Antigua, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, etc., were also destinations for Portuguese diasporas at different moments and under different political circumstances. This goes as far back as the resettlement of the Portuguese Sephardic Jews from Recife to Curaçao and Suriname in the seventeenth century (Arbell; Davis; Ezratty), or, later, the exile of Madeiran Christian dissidents in Trinidad (F. Fernandes; Ferreira); and above all, there were plantation-related migrations to the different

islands, parallel to the major traffic to Guiana (Brizan 183; Ferreira; Roberts and Byrne 127), continued by recruitment to other occupations, including to Curaçao's oil platforms during World War II—a link that later helped create a major flow between Madeira and Venezuela. Each local social dynamic generated a specific Portuguese niche, itself mobile and mutable, and we should not look for any essentialized Portuguese culture, nature, type, temperament, or character under that broad diaspora.

Destination Hawai'i

Portuguese authorities had mixed feelings regarding the migration of Portuguese islanders to the kingdom of Hawai'i in the late nineteenth century. On the one hand, Hawai'i, at the time also referred to by Europeans as "The Sandwich Islands" after James Cook's name for the archipelago, was seen as yet another place that took the Portuguese away from their own land; it was therefore an obstacle to the purpose of building a colonial empire with Portuguese settlers. On the other hand, migration to Hawai'i was conducted in good faith and had been discussed as part of broader cooperation between the kingdoms of Hawai'i and Portugal. King David Kalākaua, who ruled from 1874, was an active promoter of sponsored migration and sought treaties and agreements with a variety of nations, including Portugal. As part of his diplomatic efforts, he visited Portugal in 1881 and was hosted by King Luis in Lisbon and Sintra (Dias).

Unlike British Guiana, Hawai'i was not part of a Europe-based colonial empire and did not enter the sugar economy on the basis of trafficked enslaved labor. It was an Indigenous kingdom that retained its own political sovereignty while opening its doors to European and North American traders and, after engaging with the sugar economy, to migrants and settlers from Asia, the Pacific, South America, and Europe. Some of those who originally went to Hawai'i as Christian missionaries (locally referred to as *haole*, "white foreigners") formed the core families that would later run the sugar economy and, ultimately, the politics of the territory. This accumulation of power did not happen through a sudden takeover of Indigenous land. It was, rather, a slow process that involved alliances with the Hawaiian aristocracy (*ali'i*) and the establishment of an oligarchy that ultimately profited from the land division known as the great *mahele*, which started in 1839 and was completed in 1848 (Beechert). Originally meant to safeguard the interests of Hawaiians, the great *mahele* eventually provided the basis for the private appropriation of land by foreigners through an amendment in 1850. An 1875 reciprocity treaty with the United States then guaranteed market prices that enabled the prosperous development of the sugar plantation economy.

A central element in this history is that the Hawaiian population declined dramatically after 1778, the year when Captain Cook's fleet arrived in the islands. From an estimated number of at least 300,000 (Takaki 22), with more recent estimations exceeding 700,000 and possibly much more (Swanson), the Indigenous Hawaiians had been reduced to 130,000 by 1834, mostly due to the effects of newly introduced diseases. In 1853, the population had gone down to 71,000 (Takaki 22). In 1872, only 57,000 remained.

The Hawaiian leaders' interest in repopulating the islands merged with plantation owners' interest in securing a labor force. The politics of sponsored labor immigration helped reverse the demographic decline, albeit at the cost of Hawaiian sovereignty and the establishment of a settler society. In 1900, the population of residents in Hawai'i had reached 154,000. Of that total, 12 per cent (18,272 persons) were Portuguese, 17 per cent were Chinese, 40 per cent were Japanese, 19 per cent were Hawaiian or and part-Hawaiian, whether European-Hawaiian (5 per cent) or Asian-Hawaiian (2 per cent), and 6 per cent were non-Portuguese Europeans and North Americans (see Forstall 3). It is interesting to note the disparate male/female ratios among migrants at that time: 1.2/1 among the Portuguese, 7/1 among the Chinese, and 4.5/1 among the Japanese (see Forstall).

How Portuguese islanders from so far away became such an important demographic and cultural group in Hawai'i is a complex story, which I will summarize here, having gone through it in more detail elsewhere (Bastos "Portuguese in the Cane"; "Lusotropicalism Debunked"; "Açúcar, Ananases"). The Atlantic archipelagoes of Madeira, Azores and Cape Verde were indeed far from Hawai'i, yet there were connections between them before organized labor recruitment began. These were sailing connections, though not of the "discoveries" kind so praised by the Portuguese nationalist ideologies of the twentieth century. Portuguese sailors travelled to Hawai'i as crew members of whalers and other foreign vessels, having been recruited, forcefully or willingly, as the ships passed their home islands. They spent years on board, crossing the North and South Atlantic, and the Pacific too. Sometimes they jumped ship and settled on the coasts of South America or the islands of Polynesia. They made it to Lāhainā, a famous whaling harbor in the Hawaiian island of Maui. In the 1870s, there were an estimated 400 Portuguese on the archipelago (Felix and Senecal). Back home in Madeira and the Azores there was diffuse knowledge about a distant *Terra Nova*—not northern Newfoundland but the archipelago of Hawai'i in the Pacific (Jardin; Caldeira; Takaki).

One of the members of the early Portuguese community in Hawai'i, a businessman of Azorean descent named Jason Perry (or Jacintho Pereira) claimed that he had promoted the migration of his fellow countrymen by suggesting to King Kalākaua that they would make great plantation workers.

Perry was the first consul of Portugal in Hawai'i, from 1876 to 1881, until the diplomat António de Souza Canavarro was appointed and arrived from Lisbon in 1882. Canavarro remained in office until 1914 and kept close ties with the Portuguese community, living through different political regimes: Hawaiian Kingdom, Planters' Republic, and Annexation to the United States.[2]

Someone else is credited with the plan of bringing Portuguese islanders as sponsored migrants to Hawai'i: Wilhelm Hillebrandt, a German doctor and natural scientist who lived in Hawai'i for years. Hillebrandt had spent time in Madeira and corresponded with the Hawaiian government, arguing the case for sponsoring Madeiran migrants. It is generally accepted that Hillebrandt was the author of the anonymous pamphlet *Breve Notícia Àcerca das Ilhas Sandwich—e das vantagens que ellas offerecem à emigração que as procure*, which circulated in Madeira in 1878. The pamphlet outlined the advantages of sailing to Hawai'i under the contracts offered by the Hawaiian Board of Immigration, and mentioned that there was already an established community in place and that the climates were very similar so there would be no need to acclimatize (Caldeira 71–79; Miller).

The Hawaiian Board of Immigration and the Planters Society sponsored the travel of Azoreans and Madeirans, who arrived on contracts of three or five years, after which they could stay on the plantation or move onto other activities. They rapidly became a flourishing community, reported with pride as "Our colony in Hawai'i" in the bulletin of the Lisbon Geographic Society. The official migration to Hawai'i that in 1878 and lasted until 1913 brought over 20,000 Portuguese, who predominantly joined the sugar plantation workforce.

The memory of Portuguese migration to Hawai'i and Guiana, was kept alive in Madeira and the Azores, but suppressed from the mainstream narrative of Portuguese history. The pride in "Our colony in Hawai'i" gave way to oblivion. At the dawn of the twentieth century, there were more Portuguese settlers in Hawaii than in Angola or Mozambique, but that was not the version of national history that the Portuguese government wanted to promote. The Portuguese who had sailed to Hawai'i had not gone as conquerors in caravels, but as laborers in steerage of British and German vessels. Their story remained untold in the narrative of a nation with imperial aspirations. In recent years, the Portuguese-Hawaiian connection was brought to public awareness via the

2 Canavarro lived on O'ahu, like most Portuguese in Hawai'i, and visited the other islands to investigate potentially abusive situations involving Portuguese workers, supported the workers in fighting unfavorable court decisions and intervened on other issues concerning his nationals. He also represented Portugal at courtly events and attended King Kalākaua's festivities at the palace (Hawai'i State Archives). (See also Interior Department, Immigration – Portuguese, 1865–99; and Foreign Officials in Hawaii – Portugal, 1893–1900.)

popular resurgence of interest in one of Hawai'i's most celebrated traditions, the *'ukulele*, which was originally crafted by Madeiran migrants after their own *braguinha* (Sousa; Tranquada and King). Still, there is much more to be known about the Portuguese in Hawai'i, and much that can be learned from it for the broader discussion on empire and diaspora.

The first Portuguese contract workers arrived on 30 September 1878, when 80 men, 40 women and 60 children from Madeira disembarked in Honolulu after 116 days aboard the German barque *Priscilla*. This was the first of a series of arrivals that totaled between 12,000 and 20,000 men, women and children from Madeira and the Azores. That movement was interrupted in 1887 over claims of its excessive cost. The last arrival of that series, on 13 April 1888, is also the most documented, thanks to the journal of two young Madeiran men (D'Oliveira and Ornellas). They depict the long and adventurous journey aboard the *Thomas Bell*, which took 156 days from Funchal to Honolulu and carried 117 men, 62 women and 163 children to Hawai'i.

At that point, Asian migrant workers—especially those from Japan—were favored by the Hawaiian Board of Immigration. Everything made the Portuguese island workers more costly than their Asian counterparts: the Portuguese travelled in families, while Asians traveled mostly as single men; the Portuguese came from further away, so travel expenses were greater; and they were paid higher wages than Asian workers.

In the 1890s, the political landscape of Hawai'i changed radically. King Kalākaua died in 1891 and his sister, Queen Lili'uokalani, was forced out of power in 1893 by a political coalition that instituted a republic; the process ultimately led to the 1898 annexation by the United States (Coffman). Portuguese migration resumed timidly with an arrival in 1895, and another two in 1900 and 1901, to regain a major pace between 1906 and 1913—now under very different conditions than in the first wave. It is estimated that about 13,000 Madeirans, Azoreans and mainlanders came to the archipelago in that second wave (Caldeira; Spranger, "Havai").

Hawai'i's board of immigration and planters' intermittent preference for Portuguese islanders over others deserves further analysis. The Portuguese were presented as worth being paid well for their laboriousness, their commitment to family life, and their willingness to stay and settle. Implicit racialist assumptions were at work, and explicit comparisons to the Chinese workers were made: the Chinese were said to move out of the plantations very quickly, get urban jobs, and not settle the islands the ways the board wanted them to, that is, in agriculture. Implicit fears of being engulfed by Japan also arrived with the massive influx of Japanese workers, and there were endless debates comparing the advantages and disadvantages of sponsoring the Portuguese or the Japanese. On many occasions, the Portuguese were not

hired to replace the Asian laborers, but above all to diversify—and potentially divide—the workforce. As historian of plantations Ronald Takaki argues, it was in the interests of the planters to keep the workforce segregated, with different housing headquarters and different pay scales, exacerbating racialized differences (Takaki). A study of payroll records from the nineteenth-century plantations provides evidence that the workers were separated by nationality and indeed had different pay scales (Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association).

Sociologist Moon-Kie Jung argues that conceptualizing in racially disparate ways the Portuguese, Japanese, Filipino, and other migrants was a way of keeping *haole* power and influence (Jung 61). As in Guiana, albeit in different ways, "race" was produced by the plantation economy. The Portuguese, although of European extraction, were not white like the *haole* planters; they were labelled as a separate category, for they had arrived to work as labor (Geschwender et al.). This is what Jung describes as the "analytical ambiguity" regarding the Portuguese (69). Racialization meant living with stigma and ethnic stereotypes while enduring the hierarchies of labor. For the Portuguese, the names that went with the stereotype were "portugee," "pocho," "poregee," etc. The stigma of being "poregee" is depicted in Elvira Osorio Roll's novel *Hawaiian Kohala Breezes* (Bastos, "Lusotropicalism Debunked," "Portuguese in The Cane"; Freitas; Silva).

Settled in Hawai'i[3]

For most of the Portuguese who went to Hawai'i, their new life started at the plantation, but it did not end there—or, at least, not at the bottom of the plantation hierarchy where they began. They moved up into other positions: the prevailing racialized hierarchies brought the Portuguese into positions of operational management like *lunas* (middlemen), while keeping them away from full leadership and supervision. Moon-Kie Jung notes that there is a tradition of associating the Portuguese with the role of *luna*, but the evidence is that although there were many Portuguese *lunas*, they were not the majority, nor did the majority of Portuguese workers get to be *lunas* (Jung). *Paniolo* (cattle-handler, rancher, cowboy) is another role much associated with the Portuguese, especially in Maui. Many Portuguese did work as ranchers, but the term is not Portuguese. It probably evolved from the pidginized term *espanholes*, as there were a number of early ranchers from Mexico in Hawai'i. Landlord is also a role often associated with the post-plantation Portuguese. Many of them planned to own a piece of land or urban property after their

3 This section is partially adapted from the section "Life beyond Plantation" of Bastos ("Portuguese in the Cane," 86–89).

time at the plantation. In the second wave of migration, housing and land were a part of the contract deal and many workers made that a starting point for accumulating more property. Masonry is yet another craft and skill that is immediately associated with the Portuguese, even today: oral tradition has it that the main public buildings in Honolulu were built by the Portuguese, who knew from back home how to handle lava stone. Carpentry, cabinet making, guitar making—the ukulele being its most famous outcome—printing and a variety of other arts and crafts were also activities carried out by many of the Portuguese after they finished their plantation contracts. Indeed, many had arrived in Hawai'i with those skills and tried to shorten their time at the plantation in order to return to their crafts. At some points, the Consul acknowledged that it would be useful to have the migrant ships disembark their passengers directly on the rural islands rather than on Honolulu, because once there, some migrants absconded from their path to the plantations and went directly to exercising their urban-oriented skills.[4]

The Portuguese founded important cultural associations, charities, and mutualities from 1877, before the first wave of contract laborers had even arrived. The name of one of them, *Lusitana*, remains the name of a street in Honolulu's Punchbowl neighbourhood. They built churches and kept alive the devotion to the Holy Ghost popular among the Azorean diaspora (Leal). The Holy Ghost Fraternity of Punchbowl has existed since 1891 and remains a magnet for the Portuguese community on O'ahu. They also founded cultural clubs, promoting dance, music and reading. There was an impressive number of newspapers in the Portuguese language: the *Luso Hawaiiano* (founded in 1885) and *A Aurora Hawaiiana* (founded 1889), which merged to become *A União Lusitana Hawaiiana* (1892–96); *A Sentinela* (1892–96), *O Luso* (1896–1924), the short-lived *O Directo* (1896–98), *As Boas Novas* (1896–98), *A Liberdade* (1900–10), and *O Popular* (1911–13)—all on O'ahu (see Caldeira, *Da Madeira* 237). In Hilo, Hawai'i, there was *A Voz Pública* (1899–1904), *A Setta* (1903–21), and *O Facho* (1906–27).

In spite of the importance of the Portuguese language in the plantations and urban settings, efforts to promote its teaching did not meet with success. Attempts were made to support the creation of a Portuguese school with plans and subscriptions, and one project actually took off for a while (Riley). By and large, however, the education of choice—even for Portuguese children—was in English; and through English, the Portuguese of Hawai'i were mainstreamed. Becoming mainstream was neither an easy nor quick process for them. Until 1930, they were classified in a separate census category, outside the "White" category covering most other Europeans and North Americans, as well as their descendants. Things were to change in the following decades, a time

4 Hawai'i State Archives, Foreign Officials – Portuguese.

in which Hawai'i was deeply and directly affected by World War II, followed by a time in which the territory became the 50th state of the United States. Americanization was the definitive element of mainstreaming; the Portuguese became Americans according to larger geopolitical classifications: Americans of Portuguese descent on a second level of identification, and Portuguese-Americans in the light of more recent trends towards honoring heritage. Or, as many have told me, just "Portuguese" or "Portuguese, not Portugee!" Portuguese names are widespread and Portuguese as a label is commonly identified by many in Hawai'i—although not always in relation to the history of migration and plantation labor.

Many people of Portuguese descent search for their genealogy, seek records, and try to find out on which boat their ancestors came to Hawai'i, from which district and village and to which island they traveled. Genealogy is often complemented by genetic ancestry tests that in theory show the exact proportion of Portuguese, Hawaiian, Scottish and other ancestries they are. As anthropologist Kauanui Kehaulani argues, the legal/colonial imposition of "blood" arguments for claims of indigeneity have shaped and influenced perceptions and practices of belonging—and eligibility for certain qualifying programs. Many of those perceptions and practices, I argue, have been extended to other groups, including the Portuguese. For instance, proof of at least 1/8 Hawaiian blood is required for admission to the Kamehameha schools, which aim to provide an excellent education to people of Indigenous Hawaiian ancestry; an equivalent proportion is required to qualify for a high-school scholarship under the Dolores Furtado Fund, designed to support the education of students of Portuguese descent at the prestigious Punahou school. More than once, the Portuguese genealogical society has been asked to assess the ancestry of candidates.

Nowadays, the Portuguese *Festa* (a yearly festival in Honolulu), the cultural associations of the different islands, the Holy Ghost fraternities (also on different islands), the Portuguese Genealogical and Historical Society of O'ahu, the Heritage Society on Maui, provide some of the spaces where people of Portuguese descent can celebrate their heritage. No longer needed as a primary support, as in the early days of migration, these societies keep alive a flame of tradition while also providing space for enjoyment, through music, dance, food, and festivities. Some participants in the *Festa* get to learn the phonetics of old Portuguese songs and sing them more "authentically"; they dance to the music, wear traditional festive clothes from Madeira and the Azores, cook, eat, sell, and buy *Vinha d'alhos/Vinhdalhos* (garlic-seasoned pork), *Pão* (bread), sweetbread, and malasadas; and they get to know their ancestry and strengthen their community ties. On Maui, a Portuguese Heritage Center was built with the support of community activists and local fundraising. On the

Big Island, the first stone of a Portuguese cultural building was laid in 2018 as part of a cycle of festivities that celebrated 130 years since the arrival of the *Priscilla* and included the first screening of a documentary called *The Portuguese in Hawaii* by filmmaker Nelson Ponta-Garça. On Oʻahu, a movement towards the building of a community center has also been getting support and funds.

Final Remarks

The saga of the Portuguese islanders who joined the plantations of British Guiana and Hawaiʻi is not inscribed in the mythography of the Portuguese nation nor included in mainstream Portuguese historiographies. And yet, at the turn of the twentieth century, there were more Portuguese-born people living in Guiana and Hawaiʻi than in the Portuguese colonies in Africa. Portuguese men and women hoping to escape destitution and oppression had good reason to follow those well-known migration routes rather than embrace an abstract national empire. They made their lives elsewhere, carved out a social existence, and lived through the stereotypes and categories produced in each social context. They also created mutualist associations, churches, recreational forums, businesses, newspapers and neighborhoods. They may have lost their original language, but they continue to promote their cultural heritage not only through religion, food, music, and dance, but also through civic participation in local politics.

Rather than searching for traces of an essentialized "Portugueseness," the study of those diasporic experiences should allow us to understand the multiple ways in which collective identifications are generated locally in the complex dynamics of producing difference, whether expressed in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, heritage, or ancestry (see Bastos, "Lusotropicalism Debunked"). Those identifications are also ways of coping and coming to terms with a history of inequalities that involved major displacements and re-settlements, social mobilities, achievements, and the re-invention of communities, all largely ignored by mainstream, empire-centered Portuguese historiography. By understanding, mapping and conceptualizing those processes, Lusophone studies will expand the scope of the field and provide the framework for a de-imperial turn.[5]

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