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**NEGOTIATING ESSENTIALISED CULTURAL AND
GENDERED DIFFERENCES IN A GLOBAL WORLD:
BRAZILIANS IN LONDON.***

*NEGOCIANDO DIFERENÇAS CULTURAIS E DE
GÊNERO ESSENCIALIZADAS EM UM MUNDO GLOBAL:
BRASILEIROS EM LONDRES.*

*LA NÉGOCIATION DES DIFFÉRENCES CULTURELLES ET DE
GENRE ESSENTIALISÉS DANS UN MONDE GLOBALISÉ:
LES BRÉSILIENS À LONDRES.*

*NEGOCIANDO DIFERENCIAS CULTURALES Y DE
GÊNERO ESENCIALIZADAS EN UN MUNDO GLOBAL:
BRASILEÑOS EN LONDRES.*

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ABSTRACT: In the last decades, transnational scholars have analysed the role of social ties in producing connections linking people in different places of the world within a context of intense mobility of people and goods in the so-called ‘mobile era’. In discussions of ethnicity, nationality and the formation of ‘ethnic community’ abroad, transnational studies, nevertheless, often far too easily celebrate the ‘ethnic commonality’ constituting ties of affinity based on shared cultural experience. Yet, there is a lack of understanding of the transnationalist migratory experience in relation to colonial legacies and to the multiple distinctions existing among and between migrants. In this article I contribute to the discussion on transnational experience by demonstrating how Brazilians in London are constantly re-signifying and negotiating essentialised and stigmatised representations of cultural differences, intersected with gender and ‘race’, when speaking about and interacting with each

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other as well to western European/British people. The findings are result of a mixed methods approach, which combines ethnography in places of leisure frequented by Brazilians in London, generated over 18 months (from July 2013 to January 2015), as well as 33 in-depth interviews with Brazilians in London.

Keywords: difference, transnational studies, culture and gender, Brazilian migration.

RESUMO: *Nas últimas décadas, estudiosos transnacionais analisam o papel dos laços sociais na produção de conexões ligando pessoas em diferentes lugares do mundo, dentro de um contexto de intensa mobilidade de pessoas e bens na chamada “era móvel”. Em discussões sobre etnia, nacionalidade e a formação de “comunidade étnica” no exterior, os estudos transnacionais, no entanto, celebram com demasiada facilidade a “semelhança étnica” que constitui laços de afinidade baseados na experiência cultural compartilhada. No entanto, há uma falta de compreensão da experiência migratória transnacionalista em relação aos legados coloniais e às múltiplas distinções existentes entre e entre os migrantes. Neste artigo, contribuo para a discussão sobre a experiência transnacional, demonstrando como os brasileiros em Londres estão constantemente ressignificando e negociando representações essencializadas e estigmatizadas de diferenças culturais, raciais e de gênero ao falar e interagir umas com as outras, bem como com europeus/britânicos. Os dados são resultado de uma abordagem metodológica mista, que combina etnografia em locais de lazer frequentados por brasileiros em Londres, ao longo de 18 meses (de julho de 2013 a janeiro de 2015), além de 33 entrevistas em profundidade com brasileiros em Londres.*

Palavras-chave: *diferença, estudos transnacionais, racialização, cultura e gênero, migração brasileira.*

RÉSUMÉ: *Au cours des dernières décennies, plusieurs spécialistes du transnationalisme ont analysé le rôle des liens sociaux dans la production de liens entre des personnes de différentes régions du monde, dans un contexte de forte mobilité des personnes et des biens à l’ère dite “mobile”. Dans les discussions sur l’ethnicité, la nationalité et la formation d’une “communauté ethnique” à l’étranger, les études sur le transnationalisme célèbrent cependant trop facilement la “similitude ethnique” qui constitue des liens d’affinité basés sur une expérience culturelle partagée. Cependant, il existe un manque de compréhension de l’expérience de la migration transnationale en ce qui concerne l’héritage colonial et les multiples distinctions entre et parmi les migrants. Dans cet article,*

je contribue à la discussion sur l'expérience transnationale en démontrant que les Brésiliens à Londres redéfinissent et négocient en permanence des représentations essentialisées et racialisées des différences culturelles, raciales et entre les hommes et les femmes en parlant et en dialoguant, ainsi qu'en Europe et en Angleterre. Les données sont le résultat d'une approche mixte combinant ethnographie sur des sites de loisirs fréquentés par des Brésiliens à Londres sur une période de 18 mois (juillet 2013 à janvier 2015), ainsi que 33 entretiens approfondis avec des Brésiliens à Londres.

Mots-clés: *différence, études transnationales, racialisation, culture et genre, migration brésilienne.*

RESUMEN: *En las últimas décadas, los académicos transnacionales han analizado el papel de los lazos sociales en la creación de conexiones que conectan personas en diferentes lugares del mundo en un contexto de movilidad intensa de personas y mercaderías en la llamada "era móvil". En las discusiones sobre etnicidad, nacionalidad y la formación de una "comunidad étnica" en el extranjero, los estudios transnacionales, sin embargo, a menudo celebran con demasiada facilidad los "elementos étnicos" que constituyen vínculos de afinidad basados en experiencias culturales compartidas. No obstante, hay una falta de comprensión de la experiencia migratoria transnacionalista en relación con los legados coloniales y las múltiples distinciones existentes entre los migrantes. En este artículo, contribuyo a la discusión sobre la experiencia transnacional demostrando cómo los brasileños en Londres están constantemente volviendo a significar y negociando las representaciones esencializadas y racializadas de las diferencias culturales, "raciales" y de género cuando hablan e interactúan entre sí y con europeos/ británicos. Los hallazgos son el resultado de un enfoque de métodos mixtos, que combina la etnografía en lugares de entretenimiento frecuentados por brasileños en Londres, generados durante 18 meses (desde julio de 2013 hasta enero de 2015), así como 33 entrevistas en profundidad con brasileños en Londres.*

Palabras clave: *diferencia, estudios transnacionales, racialización, cultura y género, migración brasileña.*

1 INTRODUCTION

In this article I analyse the role of 'culture', intersected with gender and 'race', in the production and negotiation of difference in a globalised world. I explore how Brazilians in London are constant-

ly re-signifying and negotiating essentialised and often stigmatised representations of cultural differences, intersected with gender and ‘race’, when speaking about and interacting with each other as well to western Europeans/British people. This is done within the political environment of the UK, in which the mediatic and political images of the ‘migrant’ has been constructed through racist and discriminatory narratives of migrants as uncivilised bodies that threaten the ‘British Culture’ (Tyler, 2013; Anderson, 2013).

In the last decades, transnational scholars (Vertovec, 1999; Levitt 2001; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007) have analysed the role of social ties in producing transnational connections linking people in different places of the world within a context of intense mobility of people and goods in the so-called ‘mobile era’ (Urry, 2008). This analysis moved beyond understanding migration merely as the result of global economic disparities by considering, for instance, how the settlements of migrants in determined places of destination influence, facilitate or even predict the arrival of new migrants (Tilly, 1990; Massey, 1990, Levitt 2001). In discussions of ethnicity, nationality and the formation of ‘ethnic community’ abroad (Light and Gold, 2000), transnational studies, nevertheless, often far too easily celebrate the ‘ethnic commonality’ constituting ties of affinity. Ethnicity and/or nationality, in these studies, would result in a feeling of transnational camaraderie forged in previous shared cultural experiences, which has also been referred to as ‘bounded solidarity’ and ‘ethnic solidarity’ (Light and Gold, 2000; Portes, 1995). Thus, ‘a sense of belonging to a common “culture”’ (Djelic and Quack, 2010, p.xix), would result in the formation of transnational communities composed by ‘migrants who help each other emotionally, who undertake all kinds of leisure activities together, who share information on various aspects of life in the receiving society, and who help each other find jobs’ (Roggeveen and Van Meeteren, 2013, p.1079).

Transnational scholars have tended, then, to take ethnic/national commonality and solidarity among migrants of the same national group as a given and not as an object of research (Martes and Fazito, 2010). This is often the case in the majority of literature on Brazilians in the late 1990s and 2000s (Soares, 2002; Goza, 2003; Assis et al,

2010). Yet, some scholars have identified how Brazilian are often problematising their relationship with ‘the Brazilian culture’. Research on Brazilians in Boston (Martes, 2011) and in Los Angeles (Beserra, 2000), for instance, have shown that while they had a generally positive attitude towards ‘American culture’, the same did not extend with the same intensity to their ‘Brazilian culture’. Studies with Brazilians in the U.S have also importantly shown how ethnic/national identification has an instrumental nature among the group. Narratives of a valued ‘Brazilian identity’ emerge when they try to construct an identity in opposition to Hispanics through a discourse of not being ‘like Hispanics’, seen as the ‘inferior other’ and represented as poorer and less educated than Brazilians (Margolis, 2003; Martes, 2003). Conversely, no matter how undesirable the Hispanic category is often perceived to be, it does not mean that Brazilians will not adopt this identification in specific circumstances and in an instrumental way: when they can benefit from a quota system, for instance (see Oliveira, 2003). Thus, continuous processes of differentiation and cultural ‘dis-identification’ are central to the ways in which Brazilian migrants make and negotiate their lives abroad.

Nevertheless, the studies mentioned above often do not consider, for instance, how the ‘Brazilian culture’ that Brazilians avoid identifying with come to be loaded with stigmas that are bound up with the historical racist and discriminatory inscription of Brazilian bodies and culture as ‘inferior’ and uncivilised. Despite the important insights provided by transnationalism, what is notably absent in such discussions is the consideration of how the global (mobile) present still produces ‘racial’ and ethnic hierarchies, constructed in connection to the global legacies of the colonial past (Gilroy, 1993; Bhambra, 2013). Dialoguing with Grosfoguel et al (2014), I argue that there is a lack of understanding of the transnationalist migratory experience in relation to colonial legacies and to the multiple distinctions existing among and between migrants. Thus, joining a group of Brazilian migration scholars who have empirically examined migratory experiences in relation to colonial legacies (see Beserra, 2000; Gomes, 2013; Malheiros and Padilla, 2014; Togni, 2014), in this article I move the discussion on transnationalism forward by

questioning how do migrants negotiate and re-make historically entrenched national, 'racial' and ethnic hierarchies, in an increasingly connected but still divided world (Back and Sinha, 2018)? More specifically, how Brazilians negotiate stigmatised representations of 'the Brazilian culture', intersected with gender and 'race', as exotic and uncivilised in comparison to 'Western European culture'. It is important to note that while a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the workings of 'race' and gender is outside of the scope of this paper, this article will take into account how gender and 'race' often comes to matter when Brazilians speak of themselves and other groups, in London, in 'culturalist' terms.

Drawing on interviews and ethnographic notes, I organise the article in three sections. I first quickly theoretically frame the production and negotiation of difference and culture which shape this article. Following this, I analyse how Brazilians tend to inferiorize themselves in comparison to western Europeans/British through remaking, in their new context, essentialised accounts of culture, intersected with 'race' and gender, that have been historically re-signified since colonisation. Then, I analyse how Brazilians are constantly negotiating such essentialised representations of 'Brazilian culture', intersected with gender, by reframing both 'Britishness' and 'Brazilianess' in specific contexts through strategies of subversion and/or recognition (Sayad, 2004), such as those in which they have to deal with direct discrimination or in which 'being Brazilian' takes a positive value.

Dialoguing my empirical data with post- and de-colonial theories (Gilroy, 1993; Bhabra, 2013; Grosfoguel, 2011; Grosfoguel et al, 2014) as well as on theories of social representations as dynamic social categories that are continually produced and negotiated in the struggle over social classifications (Hall, 1997; Sayad, 2004), I argue that in order for us to understand the everyday experiences of transnational migrants it is necessary to understand how categories of difference in the present (in this particular case, cultural, gendered and 'racial' differences) continue to produce restructured hierarchical relationships constructed in the colonial and post-colonial era.

Empirically, this article is a result of a research project that adopted a mixed methods approach, which produced 180 pages of ethnographic notes, generated over 18 months (from July 2013 to January 2015), as well as 33 in-depth interviews with Brazilians in London. Brazilian migrants, in general, tend to be a diverse group, composed of people from different classes, regions, genders and motivated by different ambitions. Despite its diversity, the Brazilian population abroad is not composed of the country's poorest or most uneducated (Martes, 2011; Oliveira, 2014; Evans et al, 2011). Recent quantitative studies on Brazilians in London tend to portray similar findings (McIlwaine et al, 2011; Evans et al, 2011). Brazilians in London are a young population, highly educated in relation to Brazilians as a whole¹ and coming from diverse regions. Yet, the states from the South and Southeast regions contribute with the highest proportion of migrants, with the greatest numbers coming from São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro, followed by Goiás in the Central region of the country (Evans et al, 2011).

Since my research focused on interactions between different groups of Brazilians in London, it required a broad number of participants with different backgrounds and reasons for being in London to provide a better understanding of the everyday lives of Brazilians in London and thus enrich scholarly debates. Thus, I inductively selected three different groups of people to focus on: those who are in London performing 'unskilled jobs' in the service sector, such as cleaners and waiters; those who had previously performed 'unskilled jobs' but had experienced occupational mobility in London; and those who came to the UK already performing activities that are not seen as 'migrant jobs', such as postgraduate students and liberal professionals (university staff, business people, lawyers and doctors). I used employment as a means to divide these groups due to the fact that occupation is an important marker used by Brazilians to talk about the divisions existing within the population. I interviewed 11 people from each group. In total, I interviewed 17 men and 16 women, in which respondents were aged between 21 and 54

¹ Most Brazilians in London hold at least secondary school qualifications or university degrees (Evans et al, 2011).

(see Martins Jr and Knowles, 2017 for detailed methodological discussion of project).

2 FRAMING DIFFERENCE AND CULTURE IN A ‘WORLD ON THE MOVE’

Drawing on my data, I argue that in order to understand the production and negotiation of difference in a ‘world on the move’, we need to frame ‘difference’ not always as a marker of hierarchy and oppression, but as something contextually contingent. In other words, we need to analyse the concept ‘difference’ through ‘the variety of ways in which specific discourses of difference are constituted, contested, reproduced or re-signified’ (Brah, 1996, p.225). In this article, I pay attention to the circumstances that enable ‘difference’ to be organised hierarchically, rather than laterally. By doing so, I look at the moments when ‘difference’ itself becomes the modality which domination articulates, resulting, thus, in the production and negotiation of hierarchies. Yet, borrowing from Brah (1996), in order to understand these processes, we need a conceptual framework that does not privilege either the macro - or the micro-level of analysis, or a specific axis of differentiation, such as class or ‘race’. Rather, we need to theoretically account for how articulating historically embedded discourses and practices inscribe social relations, subject positions and subjectivities through multiple axes of differentiation. In this article, we see such articulation happening through the markers of culture, ‘race’ and gender.

Moreover, I mark Brazilian (and Western European) ‘culture’ with speech marks when culture is taken as an essentialised feature that homogenously determines the behaviour of those who share it. Following Brah (1996), I take ‘national culture’ as a diverse and dynamic process which is in permanent construction. And, Brazil, for instance, is a big and diverse country, with stark regional differences. When doing my interviews, I found many ‘Brazils’ and many versions of ‘its culture’ constructed in different regional and classed accounts. However, when I analyse ‘the Brazilian culture’, in this article, I am analysing an essentialised representation, which also

has racialised and gendered features, often present in European and Brazilian imaginations. For instance, it is often assumed that Brazil has an exotic, mixed culture, which does not allow it to become a modern civilised country. I trace the historical construction of this representation in this article through my respondents' narratives.

I am not suggesting, however, that there is no such a thing as cultural differences between Brazilians and Europeans. 'Culture is essentially a process, but this does not mean that we cannot talk about cultural' specificities and artefacts - such as 'customs, traditions and values' (Brah 1996, p.231). Culture, as noted by Omar Lizardo (2010, p.19) dialoguing with Bourdieu (1996), is also a system of action and perception that is acquired in a tacit state through tacit mechanisms along the individual's trajectory. It composes all that marks, 'which is at once hidden and displayed, inscribed on the body, on gesture, postures, ways of carrying (porter) one's body and behaving with one's body' (Sayad, 2004, p.261). Yet, such cultural specificities do not necessarily constitute social divisions. Neither are cultural differences just the outcome of a simple process of differentiation. In fact, cultural difference can be the basis of discriminatory imperatives when such "difference" is constructed within the interstices of socio-political and economic relations', in which social groups (and their "cultures") 'with differential access to wealth, power and privilege are ranked in relation to one another' (Brah, 1996, p.19) – as it is the case with Brazilians and Western Europeans.

3 THE UNCIVILISED BRAZILIAN CULTURE AND THE (ENCHANTING) CIVILISED EUROPEAN/BRITISH

Drawing on my data, in this section I demonstrate how Brazilians in London tend to reproduce and re-signify, in new situations and contexts, stigmatised representations that inferiorize themselves in comparison to Europeans. In my interactions with Brazilians in London, I found that they often speak in 'culturalist' terms, in which 'culture', intersected with gender and 'race', is conceptualised as an independent factor that determines the fate of those who 'possess' it, representing themselves as being 'body' (emotional/traditional)

in comparison to the European ‘mind’ (reason/civilised). As demonstrated throughout this article, such comparisons intersect with ‘race’ as ‘Britishness’ is framed by Brazilians as (valued) ‘whiteness’. Moreover, Brazilians tend to take blue or green eyes, as well as blond hair, as very important features of beauty and cleanness, connected to traces of whiteness. Valuing traces of whiteness is commonplace where ‘hierarchies of colour operate’ in ‘highly multi-racial populations, such as Brazil’, through ‘colourism’ or ‘shadism’ (such as the range of skin tones) (Ali, 2005, p.158).²

In this way, the images of ‘Brazilians’ and ‘Western Europeans’ are constructed, in the narratives of my participants, on the basis of a set of homologous oppositions embedded in representations constituted as part of the ‘colonial matrix of power’ (Quijano, 2000). This matrix of power has been, since colonialism, racializing and stigmatising bodies and spaces through the hierarchical divide between rational/civilised Europeans (mind) and emotional/traditional non-Europeans (body) (Quijano, 2000). Post- and de-colonial studies assert that the ‘racial’ and ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide constructed during colonisation has been continuously re-signified since then, justifying global inequalities by racializing bodies and spaces as physically, intellectually and morally inferior, to non-civilised lifestyles (Grosfoguel, 2013; Said, 1979; Gilroy, 1993). This process has imputed allegedly fundamental characteristics to people, ‘writing those character qualities onto their bodies, into their genes and their essential nature’ (Spickard, 2013, p.14), based on their membership of ‘racial’ and ethnic groups.

Historically, justifications to stigmatise non-European bodies/spaces moved from explanations based on ‘religion’ (not having a soul) to ‘race’ (not having the ‘right biology’) and, contemporarily, to ‘ethnicity’ (not having the ‘right culture’) (Grosfoguel, 2013, p.83-84). The latter, ‘ethnicism’, imposes stereotypic notions of ‘common

² Such representations, both of Brazilians and Europeans, are also very much classed representations. As discussed elsewhere (Martins Jr, 2017), the Brazilian middle-class use the same divide between ‘body’ and ‘mind’ to distinguish themselves from ‘poor immigrant’. They are ‘mind’ (reason) and the ‘economic migrant’ is ‘body’ – even though in this article they homogenise all Brazilians as ‘body’. At the same time, the representation they have of European culture homogenises Europeans as ‘mind’, ignoring the presence of poor within Europe, who have also historically long been associated with the material and the embodied (see Bourdieu, 1984; Porter, 2003).

culture' defining the experience of stigmatised groups primarily in 'culturalist' terms (Brah, 1996). As Brah (1996) argues, this cultural discrimination 'combines the disavowal of biological superiority or inferiority with a focus on "a way of life", on cultural difference, as the "natural" basis for feelings of antagonism towards outsiders' (p.163), who are constructed through a variety of axes such as gender, religion, language, caste or class. Within this frame, my research participants used the follow words to describe the divide between Brazilians and Western Europeans: rude/polite, emotional/rational, uncivilised/civilised, tradition/modern, exotic/beautiful, macho (sexist)/prince, promiscuous/moral, corrupt/pure, uneducated/cultured, disorganized/organised, gossip (controlled)/individuality (freedom), inequality/equality. Such opposite representations generate a repulsion and aversion to 'the Brazilian culture' at the same time that results in an enchantment and desire for what they define as 'the British culture', as discussed below.

3.1 'Culturalising' reasons to live abroad

When analysing their lives in London, Brazilians frequently make comparisons between Brazilian and Western European/British culture as one of the reasons for leaving Brazil as well as for not wanting to go back. The representation of European/British culture tends to acquire a positive value and to be counterposed against Brazilian culture through a set of homologous oppositions that were present in Brazilian minds' even before they migrated. There seems to be a tacit enchantment with Western European culture, which is taken as 'the culture', the universal reference to be followed. Thus, it is common to hear people citing Brazil's allegedly inferior/immoral culture and lack of 'civilization' to explain why they wanted to come to London or why, once arrived, they do not want to go back. When I spoke to Rachel, a 42-year-old Brazilian woman, she explained why it would be hard for her to go back after living in London for 12 years using such hierarchical 'cultural' differences.

It's hard to live in Brazil. There's too much gossip, people wanting to know everything about your personal life, trying to control everything, who you are going out with, how you dress, when they themselves don't know how to dress properly or how to behave themselves: they talk too loud, spit on the floor.

They jump into the conversation, right Mum?! [Sara, Rachel's 8-year-old daughter who was coming along with us on her scooter and listening to the conversation.]

Exactly, Sara, they jump into the conversation - see why mum tells you to not jump into conversation? Because it's not polite. Also [turning back to me], they don't respect queues, push you and don't even say sorry. Everyone takes advantage of each other, uneducated people, without culture and morals! Everything stresses me out there. It always did. That's why I left there. Here they're civilised. They're polite. You don't see people jumping the queue, throwing rubbish on the floor, gossiping about each other's lives. They respect your space, your opinion, how you dress. They're civilised. Did you see those (English) ladies sat next to us in the pub? Could you hear what they were talking about? No! Because they have culture, manners, education - something that we don't have.

My conversation with Rachel is typical of many others I had in which Brazilian migrants stigmatise themselves as having a culture and morality inferior to those of Western Europeans. By making the division between the 'civilised', 'polite' and educated people 'here' and 'the uneducated people, without culture and morals' 'there', Rachel's comments highlight how the way in which Brazilians classify themselves is often 'dependant upon the classifying systems of others' (Skeggs, 1997, p.74). In other words, Rachel's account is embedded on historical representations which have morally, epistemically, and aesthetically established the ontological inferiority of non-Europeans, in comparison to Europeans, since colonialism. Since the arrival of Portuguese colonisers, Brazil and the bodies of Brazilians, for instance, have been continuously constructed in racialized, stigmatised and sexualised terms. As Beserra (2007; 2000) shows, the initial exotic image of Brazil was shaped by the European belief that there was

no sin below the equatorial tropic: the practically unknown territory was imagined as a paradise on earth, without laws, suffering, work or punishment. However, such images and fantasies projected by Europeans onto the 'rest of the world' have always been constructed around the idea that primitivism has already been overcome in the 'civilised countries'. As Said (1978) illustrates, 'primitive', 'savage', 'immoral', are terms that always place 'the exotic' in a position which requires intervention, help or domination from the civilised. This representation, which became widespread in Europe in the 17th century, has been continuously reproduced and re-signified through the centuries, also being reinforced by Brazilians themselves, even with the discrediting of the racial sciences in the 20th century³.

In the 1930s, the decade considered to be central to Brazilian modernisation and industrialization, the state, intellectuals and artists tried to create a new idea of the nation for Brazil. Brazilian people would live in, and be the product of, a racial democracy, a hybrid society (Freyre, 1969). Yet, the notion of hybrid 'race' and culture was also the basis from which Brazil and Brazilians continued to be racialized and stigmatised as non-modern (Guimarães, 2002; Souza, 2012). The old myth of the tropical paradise from the 17th century shaped and inspired the creation of new myths, in which Brazil, now a cultural hybrid country and a racial democracy, became a place of happiness, cordiality and sensuality (Beserra, 2007). As Beserra (2007) comments, this image is strongly represented in what later became the symbols of 'Brazilian national identity' - football, carnival and samba. However, such symbols are not only connected to primitivism, but work to commodify the supposedly primitive body, place and 'culture', in the form of music, dance, sex and food.

Thus, Rachel's comparison is produced in dialogue with the Eurocentric (colonial) representations and imaginings of Europeans and

³ Scholars have shown that at the same time that modern science and knowledge were revolutionary, in the 17th Century, they were also reactionary, being used as instruments to control those populations seen as 'uncivilised' (Hardt and Negri, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2007; Gilroy, 2000). In this context, the racial sciences developed pseudo-scientific explanations demonstrating how non-Europeans did not have 'the [correct] human biology', justifying racist domination in the European colonies (Grosfoguel, 2013, p. 83-84; also see Gilroy, 2000). As Puwar (2004) discusses, in this modern scientific process of racialisation, non-European bodies were represented as savage and uncivilized and non-European spaces as wildernesses, both in need of taming, while white bodies were associated with spirit and mind.

their 'others' (Said, 1978)⁴, constructed through the Cartesian dichotomy of 'mind' versus 'body'⁵ (Puwar, 2004; Mills, 1997). That these binary representations were already part of Rachel's imaginaries before migration is made clear when she says, 'This is why I left there (Brazil)'.

I am not suggesting that there are no cultural differences between Brazilians and Europeans. Rather, I am highlighting how Rachel's comments reflect the hierarchical meaning historically attributed, by Europeans, to those 'differences'. Within these cases, 'cultural difference' is essentialised, ranking social groups - with differential access to wealth, power and privilege - in relation to one another. As Brah (1996) argues, 'the esteemed values and modes of behaviour in society are most likely to be those that are associated with the dominant groups in society' (p.19). This dominant group, in Bourdieu's terms (2004), would be the group that is also 'culturally dominant' (whose culture is 'hegemonic' in the field) and that claims 'to define culture to its own standard or contest' (p.5).

As a consequence, as in the case of Rachel, all markers that could be taken as part of a 'Brazilian culture' - ways of behaving, walking, speaking - are qualified as uncivilised/inferior. Thus, the body here becomes 'the geometric locus' (Sayad, 2004, p.260) of a stigma against a 'culture', being the main marker in the articulation of morality and power. Engaging with Sayad (2004) and Bourdieu (1990), the body is both a physical individuality and a social product; it carries all the inscribed markers of a 'culture' (which is also shaped by gender and class): gesture, postures, accent, language, styles, tastes...and other actions that 'go without saying' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.71). In this sense, the discomfort Rachel feels with Brazil-

⁴ Said (1978) highlights how the Orient has been constructed in the West as its great complementary opposite since antiquity.

⁵ Descartes' (1999 [1637]) most famous phrase, 'I think, therefore I am' ('*Cogito ergo sum*') is based on the claim that 'the mind is of a different substance from the body, which allows for the mind to be undetermined, unconditioned by the body' (Grosfoguel, 2013, p.75). This claim was the essence of the enlightenment idea of the formation of the modern universal humanity, in which the rational (European) man was seen as able to control the body (nature): an ability that non-Europeans bodies were marked as not possessing. Yet, the Cartesians' 'rational Universal Man' was figured not only in racialised but also gendered and classed terms, which in turn were used to justify 'racial', gender, and class inequities (McClintock, 1995). The image of the 'universal man' was a white Western upper-class man (the civilised mind). Those bodies and spaces which did not fit into this particular 'intersected category' (white, Western, upper-class man) were not included in the 'liberal/modern social pact', justifying their social inequality and domination by pointing to their alleged moral and intellectual inferiority (Mills, 1997; McClintock, 1995).

ians' perceived lack of manners, excessively loud speech, and improper dress has its equivalent in the discomfort that she experiences in, with and through, her 'national culture' – which has been historically stigmatised as de-valued and uncivilised.

3.2 'Culturalising' social inequality

Culture is also used as an important marker when Brazilians in London compare social inequalities between Brazil and Western Europe. The inferior/uncivilised culture, imagined to determine the construction of Brazilian bodies and behaviour, is also conceptualised to be present in Brazilian social and political institutions, generating 'Brazilian corruption' and social inequality. This can be seen in a conversation I had with Fabricio, in which he explained why he already knew Brazil was going to lose to Germany in the 2014 World Cup Final.

Of course we would [lose to Germany]. They prepared themselves, developed their team, years of training, and Brazil doesn't have this culture of preparation, training. This is our general culture, there is a lack of reason there.

AMJ: What do you mean?

It means we have the wrong culture. The problem started when the Portuguese took their first steps into Brazil. They imposed their system of life. Two hundred years ago, Brazil was as rich as the U.S, same level of wealth. But why have [North] Americans developed and we haven't? Because they have a different cultural system, Anglo-Saxon capitalism, and we have the Portuguese. We inherited it from them. It's all about *jeitinho* ['little way']: who knows whom, skipping steps, no one wants to do things in the right way. For example, there is no point giving a house to people from the favelas because they will have a big party and celebrate that they have a house and after that they will sell it, burn all the money on shit things and then go back to living in the favelas. This is why [Brazil] is full of homelessness, poverty, violence, because they are not able to distinguish between right and wrong. We will never be a modern country. We blame the politicians but the problem is the culture,

which is corrupt by nature; of course our politicians will be corrupt.

AMJ: Don't you think there is corruption here as well?

There is, but here it's one person here and there. It's not part of their culture. Things work here.

My conversation with Fabricio brings important analytical points to light, as it is embedded in - and helps to illustrate how - 'culturalistic' approaches have been used to racialise Brazil, its people and its institutions. Firstly, when blaming the vestiges of Portuguese (traditional) culture for not allowing Brazil to become a modern/rational nation, and in this way differentiating it from Anglo-Saxon cultures, Fabricio is positioning 'culture' as an independent determinant variable at the root of Brazilian social inequalities. In so doing, Fabricio is reproducing a racist/culturalist account close to practical policies and theoretical reflections which have been implemented, reproduced and re-signified in Brazil since the first republic (1889-1929).

During the first republic, when Iberian countries had already lost their central place in the colonial world system to 'the modern' Great Britain, Brazilians sought to 'civilise' themselves through 'racial' policies that encouraged European migration (preferably non-Iberian) (Seyferth, 1990; Schwarcz, 1993). As part of the same 'civilizing' effort, they distanced themselves from traditional Portuguese culture, as the Portuguese had become stereotyped and ridiculed as dim-witted and traditional, in order to imitate French and British costumes and habits (Guimarães, 2002) mentioned by Fabricio. However, in Fabricio's eyes, the 'inherited' Portuguese cultural system is still imprinted on Brazilian bodies, which not only explains why Brazil lost the football match, but also why Brazil is corrupt, socially unequal, and underdeveloped.

According to Fabricio and many other Brazilians I talked to, these national shortcomings can be traced to the lack of reason in Brazilian culture: 'They are not able to distinguish between right from wrong'; Brazilians do not have 'a culture of preparation and training'. Instead, Brazilians have the nepotistic culture of *jeitinho*.

ho, in which they ‘skip steps’, activating their ‘personal’ network of social relations to achieve things through favours and corruption (DaMatta, 1981), instead of following the rational/legal (bureaucratic) way of ‘doing things right’ – what Fabricio calls ‘the cultural system’ of Anglo-Saxon capitalism’.

As a consequence, such a ‘corrupt’ way of behaving is then embedded in Brazilian political institutions. On the other hand, in Britain, corruption is limited to isolated, individual cases, since ‘it’s not part of their [Anglo-Saxon] culture’. In such discourse, Fabricio is also reproducing the same racist prejudice found both in the common sense as well as in contemporary theoretical reflections which take corruption as a feature of ‘pre-modern’, ‘not developed’ societies (Bernstein, 1971; DaMatta, 1981; Luhmann, 1995), due to their ‘hybrid’, not-fully ‘modern’ cultures.

As demonstrated by Grosfoguel (2002), the 20th century discrimination based on culture, instead of biology, has also been legitimized by ‘academic approaches that portray high poverty rates among people of colour in terms of their traditional, inadequate, under-developed, and inferior cultural values’ (p.213). In this context, the so-called Brazilian exotic hybridity has also been used to explain the perceived vestiges of traditional forms of organising society and politics in Brazil, such as the notion of personalism (Holanda, 1995) and its institutional dimension, patrimonialism (Faoro, 1998). In this discourse, having a hybrid culture means that the ‘traditional’ Portuguese cultural heritage is still in Brazilian bodies and political institutions, thus resulting in the determinism of personal relations in the ways Brazilians structure their social (personalism) and political (patrimonialism) lives. As Jessé Souza (2004) argues, these ‘remnants’ of ‘pre-modern’ features have been used and re-signified by politicians and by intellectuals to explain permanent inequality and exclusion in ‘the peripheral world’⁶, as ‘pre-modern’ ‘countries, society and their individuals are taken as dirty, corrupt and potentially unreliable’ (p.44). This analytical strategy maintains the presumption of ‘essentialist culturalism’, in which culture is perceived as homogeneous, totalizing, and undifferentiated.

⁶ The classic theory of modernisation from the 1950s and 1960s (Bernstein, 1971) is the main base for this discussion.

As Souza (2004) argues, much theoretical work on Latin America, were/are still explicitly or implicitly marked by this pre-sumption (see Luhmann, 1995; DaMatta, 1981). By conjoining modern terminologies with traditional culturalistic explanations, the scholar Niklas Luhmann (1995), for instance, supposes the existence in supposedly un-developed societies of networks of relations that oblige everyone to take part in them, with those who are excluded transformed into ‘un-persons’. DaMatta (1981), one of the most influential anthropologists in Brazil, follows a similar logic constructing the opposition person/non-person, in which the person – due to their personal relations – can do whatever they want, even being above the law, while the non-person, the individual, does not have privileges in society and is excluded due to their lack of personal relations (Souza, 2012). These networks of personal relations are seen to be central to the famous ‘*jeitinho Brasileiro*’, or the ‘Brazilian little way’ of dealing with issues related to, for example, the law and bureaucracy, which is dependent upon ‘who knows who’.

Therefore, by understanding Brazilian corruption as well as social inequalities as linked to its culture Fabricio is reproducing and re-signifying racialised Eurocentric representations that justify Brazil’s ‘peripheral position’ in the world system. At the same time, this linkage obscures the continuous (re)production of (‘racial’, class, gender) inequalities and hierarchies within that system and the symbolic and material consequences of colonialism for those taken as (non-European) ‘body’ (Mills, 1997; Grosfroguel, 2007). As Souza (2012) argues, naturalising social inequality and the production of poverty as a mass phenomenon in peripheral countries as a ‘premodern’ and ‘personalist’ inheritance does not allow us to comprehend how such phenomena actually result from large-scale modernization processes, which have gradually been implanted in these societies as a result of worldwide capitalist expansion.

3.3 Gendering the body versus mind divide

Gender, intersected with culture and ‘race’, is another important marker used by Brazilians in London to compare themselves to

Western Europeans and the British. It is very common to hear Brazilians in London, both women and men, reproducing and re-signifying gendered, racial and sexualised stigma against Brazilian women in a new context, at the same time as they value British women (and ‘their whiteness’), as we can see with Adriano:

Brazilian women, only for sex. They are all prostitutes here. Look at the way they behave in the clubs, the way they dress. They relate to you only if they can get something from you, like a [European] passport, and you will be *cornio* [cheated on]. British women are top for me, in the world. Since I was a child, I used to watch TV and see them, all pretty, coloured eyes with their sexy and charming accent. Comparing British and Brazilians would be a massacre, in culture, studying, behaviour. English women, if you see them on the tube, you notice how into study they are, the amount that they know about the current economic and political situation of the country. They are politicized; they are cultured, civilised. They have a mind which I consider superior than other races.

AMJ: Have you been out with a British girl?

Not yet, because I don’t know any British women closely. I met one in a pub where I used to work, but it was hard to have something with her because I couldn’t understand her accent. But, my aim is to get my documents, go to university, marry a British woman and have a family.

As we can see, Adriano’s representation of Brazilian women – ‘prostitutes’ that cheat on you, reproduces historical “assumptions of ‘racial’ (hyper) sexuality and sexual desire that also lie at the heart of processes of stereotyping and the construction and representation of [gendered] ‘racial difference’” (Alexander and Knowles, 2005, p. 12). The historical Eurocentric enterprise to continuously divide the world’s population between civilised, valued cultures (‘minds’) and uncivilised cultures (‘bodies’) is also constructed through gender and sexual assumptions (see Connel, 1998; Collins, 2004; Nagel, 2001; Stolke, 2006). As Joane Nagel (2001) argues, ‘sexual depictions and denigrations of racial, ethnic, and national “others” and the

regulation of in-group sexual behaviour are important mechanisms' by which racialized boundaries have been 'constructed, maintained, and defended' since colonisation (123). Verena Stolke (2006), for instance, shows how since the Iberian colonisation there has been a production of essentialised representations of women in which European white women are represented as good wives and mothers, while indigenous, black or mixed women from former colonies are seen as sinful prostitutes with a hyper sexuality.

The production of racist and stigmatised boundaries through the intertwining of 'race', nationality, ethnicity and sexual assumptions has been particularly apparent in the case of Brazilian women. Feminist Brazilian scholars have shown how the exotic, erotic and sensualised image of Brazilian women has been disseminated and commodified by the Brazilian tourism industry (Gomes, 2013), the international pornography industry (Beserra, 2007), the international sex tourism industry (Piscitelli, 2008) and other markets of cultural, 'racial' and sexual exoticism, as it was the case, for instance, of the brand Adidas selling t-shirts Adidas t-shirts promoting sexualised images of Brazilian women during the 2014 World Cup in Brazil (Boadle, 2014).⁷ This stigmatised image is present in many narratives of Brazilians when commenting on Brazilian women's behaviours and bodies in London, as illustrated by Adriano's criticism above. As Sayad (2004) highlights, the most violent and direct criticism made of emigration is against the female population and their bodies. The body of the female migrant is 'an object of an intense and dramatic cathexis' and surveillance, which focuses on the way 'they dress, ways of holding themselves, speaking and behaving in public' (p.117). This surveillance is carried out by the society of origin, the host society and by the migrants themselves. This is reflected in Adriano's exhortation to 'look at the way they behave [and] dress', as well as in his assertion that he would be with a Brazilian woman 'only for sex' because '[t]hey are all prostitutes here'. His aim is to marry an (imagined) cultured, respectable beautiful (white) British woman with a 'sexy, charming

⁷ During the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, Adidas had to apologise and stop selling two t-shirts for the event, as they had sexualised images of Brazilian women. In one t-shirt the logo had a woman in a bikini on the front with the words 'Lookin' to score' and the other one a heart shaped like a thong (Boadle, 2014).

accent' and 'coloured eyes'. Here, racist and stigmatised notions of culture/morality, sexuality and (whiteness) beauty intersect in his justifications for disdaining Brazilian women and desiring British women. Respectable female bodies, as noted by feminist scholars, are historically represented as white, heterosexual, and middle-class, (see Skeggs, 1997; Davis, 1995).

3.4 The (hypersexual) macho and the (civilised) prince

The connection between beauty, whiteness and culture (morality) is also common among Brazilian women making a comparison between Brazilian and British men. Post-colonial scholars have shown how historical constructions of non-white masculinity have been inseparable from notions of hypersexuality (see Collins, 2004; Young, 2005). Dialoguing with these representations, many Brazilian women also claim that they would not get into a relationship with a Brazilian man in London. As Amanda told me, 'Brazilian men are *machista* (sexist) and you can't trust them'. According to her, due to their high sexual drive, 'Brazilians will cheat on you'. On the other hand, she describes meeting a British man:

It's like a dream, like meeting a prince: blond, tall, blue eyes, not sexist. They pay the bill at the restaurant. They grab the menu and ask if you want to drink a sauvignon or a pinot noir? Fish or meat?

With both Adriano and Amanda, we can see how Brazilians reproduce racist accounts of 'looks' intersected with morality to explain why they do not want to relate intimately with Brazilians and why they desire a British partner. Here, looks are important because historical representations of the body are crucial to the constitution of prejudice; as Brah writes, 'racialized powers operated in and through bodies' (Brah, 1996, p.3). Patricia Collins (2004) argues that such historical racist and stigmatised representations, which have been reproduced in the media, films and popular culture, allow the continuous idea of non-whites as 'hypersexual' bodies (p.207), 'sexually promiscuous and engaging in sexual practices that resemble

those of animals' (p.351). Such representations are reflected in Adriano and Amanda's respective arguments that Brazilian 'women are prostitutes' and Brazilian 'men are machista' and cannot be trusted. These representations furthermore result in racist desires, like Adriano saying he grew up admiring the English women he watched on TV, or Amanda describing meeting a blond, tall, white British man as 'like a dream' and 'like meeting a prince'. This desire, in turn, is based on representations that allow contradictory accounts – such as Adriano's knowing description of cultured British women that he has never had the chance to actually meet or Amanda's assertion that 'the prince' is not sexist because he pays the restaurant bill.

4 NEGOTIATING 'BRITISHNESS' AND NAVIGATING 'BRAZILIANESS'

In this section I argue that Brazilians are constantly negotiating and reframing both 'Britishness' and 'Brazilianess' in specific contexts, through strategies of recognition and subversion of essentialised representations of Brazilian culture. As Sayad (2004) notes, the former 'involves the recognition of the criteria of judgment that base "identity" on a legitimate foundation', while the latter attack 'symbolic power relations, to invert the scale of values that authorises stigmatisation, rather to erase the stigmatised features' (p.256-7). Brazilians use such strategies of subversion when they face situations in which they try to undermine the stigma against Brazilians or when 'being Brazilian' acquires a positive symbolic meaning. Yet, in the process they tend to re-invert the scale of values that facilitated stigmatisation by giving a negative value to 'Britishness' and a positive value to 'Brazilianess'. Drawing on Brah (1996), racism and prejudices do not impose 'simple bipolarities of negative and positive, superiority and inferiority', rather it 'simultaneously inhabits spaces of deep ambivalences, admiration, envy and desire' (p.15). Thus, Brazilians are constantly navigating such spaces of ambivalences which they narrate through often contradictory accounts. This is only possible, I argue, because 'race' and 'ethnicity' are social 'categories of power' which

are made and remade by people at the everyday level, ‘performed in mundane encounters between individuals as well as at the interface between people and structure’ (Alexander and Knowles, 2005, p.2). In other words, they are part of a ‘system of social meanings and cultural classifications, which is created and sustained through relationships of power and hierarchy, but which changes over time and which can be contested and subverted’ (idem, p.11).

4.1 Negotiating the enchantment

As previously discussed, Brazilians seem to be enchanted by an image of British culture as civilised and rational, in contrast to its counterpart image of Brazilian culture as uncivilised. Yet such images are also open for negotiation. Time is an important factor for Brazilians in negotiating and reframing both ‘Britishness’ and ‘Brazilianess’. As time passes, they find out that the UK is not as perfect as they had imagined. Moreover, the representation of Brazilians and British tend to be negotiated, especially when Brazilians narrate daily encounters with British people in which they try to overturn the stigma attached to ‘Brazilian culture’. These attempts at subversion are marked by a series of contradictions and manipulations, which do not necessarily exclude their previous accounts of distancing from ‘Brazilianess’. Rather, they co-exist, each positioning appearing several times in the same interview, as was the case with Jacob, a 49-year-old, highly-skilled informational technology worker.

In the beginning of our interview, Jacob had told me that by living abroad he realised that he ‘never had the uncivilised Brazilian culture’, claiming that he ‘was born in the wrong country’. He asserted that he felt ‘more at home’ when living in Italy for a few months – the country where his grandparents were born. Nevertheless, by the end of our interview, his perception shifted as he started telling me about instances of discrimination from British people at work. Even though Jacob thought he was born in the wrong country, he could not get rid of his ‘Brazilian origin’ or its stigmatised consequences.

Before living and working here I used to have a different view of them. I thought they were more British than they really are [laughs]. For example, at work, I thought we wouldn't suffer from the lack of organisation and efficiency that we have in Brazil, but it's the same here. We think they're more formal, pretty, seem to be more organised, but they aren't. All this formality is fake and they're very bad at work. They're very weak, inefficient, rigid, don't think outside the box. We work better than them. This thing that they don't gossip as well, it's not true. They gossip a lot, but they do it with style, having tea [laughs]. And, they don't accept receiving orders from a non-British person and I have many examples that I can give here from my experiences working with them. They still have this imperialistic position with non-British. I'm a project manager and in many cases, they didn't accept receiving orders from a Brazilian, or working with other people in our team, like Indians.

Discrimination in the workplace was a very common theme in the accounts of Brazilians working in high-skilled jobs. When describing discriminatory situations, they always relativized their initial representation of British people, resulting in critiques of 'Britishness' and valuing 'Brazilianess'. Like Jacob, many claimed that as time passed in London, they started losing the initial enchanted idea of 'British people' as rational, organised, formal, self-interested beings: they 'do gossip', their 'formality is fake', and they are not organised or efficient. Here, we can see, firstly, how 'culture' is a process, a terrain on which social meanings are produced, appropriated, disrupted and contested (Brah, 1996; Collins, 2004). Secondly, we see how 'cultural specificities are similarly constructed as flexible modalities within a multiplicity of sites, structures and relations of power', in which the meaning given to systems of signification 'can change over time in and through structural' – economic, political and social – shifts (Brah, 1996, p.129), as well as in situational context.

Nevertheless, when criticising British workers in attempting to subvert the stigma attached to 'Brazilian culture/people' and to value themselves, many of my respondents tend to, once again, essentialise the relational categories of difference – in this case 'Brazilian' and 'British culture' - in a binary disposition of 'body/mind', but

with the scale of value inverted. Body is taken as positive and mind as negative. British workers, associated with mind, are described by Brazilians as ‘weak’, ‘rigid’, ‘square’ and ‘stuck inside a box’, which would reflect, as Leonardo said, their ‘too trained formal/rational culture’. On the other hand, Brazilians (body) are presented as being positive because of their ‘flexible, not too rational culture’ creating, as Leonardo told me ‘hard working, flexible, creative workers who always find a way to solve a problem’ – the Brazilian little way (*jeitinho Brasileiro*) of dealing with things.

Thus, when Brazilians attempt to break with hierarchies, the same ‘*jeitinho Brasileiro*’ which is usually cited as the characteristics that do not allow Brazil to become a modern developed country, receive a positive value in differentiating Brazilian workers from British. As Bourdieu (1991) highlights, symbolic properties, even the most negative, can be used strategically according to the material and symbolic interests of their bearer. Thus, highlighting the positive aspects of ‘*jeitinho*’ is not only a way for Brazilians to assert their value as workers, but also a means to attack the symbolic power relations that justify the discrimination against them.

4.2 Negotiating the prince and the macho

Brazilians also tend to re-negotiate Brazilianess and Britishness when talking about their intimate relationship with the British at home. In these cases, the same notions of Brazilian culture as ‘body’ in contrast to the British ‘mind’ that resulted in opposed notions of masculinities – ‘the sexist’ Brazilian in contrast to the British ‘prince’ discussed earlier – are re-signified in order to explain the problems in their relationships. This was apparent, for example, when Amanda explained why she broke up with her British husband.

I work looking after two British kids and I see their education. It’s so repressed: you need to speak quietly, say sorry for everything, you can’t touch people. So it’s not real politeness, it’s obligation, training. They are full of barriers, individualistic. They are sad people. There is no emotion. Then, when they meet Brazilians, they go

crazy because we are the opposite of what they are. We have emotion, fire, we're sexy. This is why I broke up with my ex-husband. I am not going to deny it, they are like a prince for us, but, the prince is cold [laugh]. Besides the fact that they drink too much to be able to release themselves, sexually they're too restricted, lazy. Brazilians grab you, they have fire.

When I first met Amanda, she told me that she avoids relationships with Brazilians, while meeting a European man is like meeting a prince. Nevertheless, when explaining later why she broke up with her British husband, Amanda started using an essentialised dichotomy of 'Brazilian and Britishness', re-inverting the hierarchy of value. Here, the representation of British society and its people as 'mind' is re-signified as 'individualistic', 'full of barriers', 'cold', lacking emotion and 'sad', as well as 'sexually strict and lazy'. Within this logic, the representations of 'Brazilianess' as 'body' resulting in a hypersexual masculinity, which she previously presented as a problem, asserting that Brazilian men were sexist and untrustworthy, is also re-signified as something positive: 'Brazilians grab you, they have fire'.

Moreover, Amanda also reinforces the stereotype of Brazilian women - as emotional, fiery, and sexy, with the power to make British people 'go crazy' -, to value herself. Thus, she uses the same stigmatised representation that many Brazilian women – including herself – point to as facilitating the (negative) characterisation of Brazilian women as 'promiscuous'. In fact, in the great majority of my interviews, Brazilian women mentioned that the sexualised stereotype of Brazilian women abroad was a problem, while later portraying themselves as sexier and more erotically appealing than British women. This is similar to research on Brazilian women in Portugal (Malheiros and Padilla, 2014; Gomes, 2013) and in the U.S (Beserra, 2000), which also shows that Brazilian women have, at some point, been confronted with negative images of exoticness which frame them as sexy, vulgar, exotic and, as Gomes states, an 'always available body' (2013, p.871). These studies also highlight how at the same time that these women try to be critical of these

representations, they also often attempt to twist these negative exotic images into a positive resource, through promoting an idea of a 'Brazilian natural beauty and sex appeal', in the sex (Piscitelli, 2008) and beauty (Malheiros and Padilla, 2014) industries, as well as in 'the marriage market' (Beserra, 2000).

4.3 Shifting affiliations

The sexualised/exotic stereotype of Brazilians is also negotiated when attempting empowerment in interactions with non-Brazilians. During my fieldwork in bars, clubs and house parties, I noted that Brazilians were constantly navigating through shifts of affiliation with or distancing from 'Brazilianess', depending on the meaning it acquired during social interaction with Brazilians and non-Brazilians. Yet, many moments of recognition also resulted in situations in which Brazilians reinforced the sexualised/exotic stereotype that they previously criticised. Demonstrating or teaching British acquaintances how to dance sexually, or saying that Brazilians, unlike the British, 'are good in bed' because 'they know how to move their bodies, for instance, are typical examples. In these cases, Brazilian women were reinforcing stereotypes in situations in which they recognised that they could use the erotic/exotic representations of their body for potential empowerment (Lorde, 1984) - in other words, in situations in which such representations could work as a symbolic capital providing them with gains, whether material or symbolic. Nevertheless, it was not only Brazilian women whom I observed doing this, but also Brazilian men, as was the case with Manoel.

Manoel always complained about Brazilians' places of leisure, even before going to these places, as there he would find everything he is trying to distance himself from: the 'uncivilised Brazilian culture'. I was with him the first time he went to Guanabara, a Brazilian club in central London, because his friend was going to sing there. Once there, Manoel only spoke English with the staff, even with the waiters who were Brazilians. In addition to this, he kept complaining about how the people were uneducated, pushing each other all the time, and about the music. Yet, when his friend

started singing Brazilian music, Manoel realised everyone, especially non-Brazilian women, were trying to sing and dance to the music. He then started dancing and singing along, close to the non-Brazilian women. At this point, singing and dancing properly became a form of symbolic capital. Manoel accessed his 'exotic Brazilianess' displaying his 'Brazilian corporeality', gaining the attention of the non-Brazilian girls around him. After dancing with them, he turned to me and commented, 'Here (Guanabara) is the only place in London that, sometimes, being Brazilian can be good'.

Thus, the same features of 'Brazilian corporeality' (speaking loudly, dancing sexually, pushing people and so on) which are identified as 'negative makers' by those who are critical of Brazilian places of leisure, are re-signified when 'Brazilianess' is taken as something positive. The very same people start manipulating the same characteristics they criticize, either as a way of distinguishing themselves, or as a defensive mechanism in response to situations of prejudice against themselves – as in Jacob's example described above. Nevertheless, 'exoticising' 'Brazilianess' can indeed empower the subject in interactions inside the field, working as a symbolic capital (Sayad, 2004) by inverting the scale of value of the stigma – positively essentialising (and homogenising) Brazilians as 'body', as warm, passionate, and sexy, and negatively essentialising British as 'mind', as cold, rigid, and weak. Yet, by doing this, Brazilians can end up reifying the same discourse that justifies inequalities in Brazil, and its 'peripheral' position in the world system, as well as sexualised accounts which stigmatise Brazilians, especially Brazilian women. Thus, their individual agency results in a perverse confluence with the narratives and discourses that subordinate Brazilians under the term exotic - perverse because by obtaining individual gains through mobilising 'exoticness' as a symbolic capital, they are legitimating the same features which have been historically used to stigmatise Brazilians and justify inequalities in the world system.

5 CONCLUSION

Responding to calls among scholars to investigate transnational migration processes beyond of the assumed production of ‘ethnic commonalities’ (see Bhambra, 2013; Kosnick, 2009; Grosfoguel et al, 2014), I worked with a range of theoretical traditions, including feminism and post- and decolonial studies, to examine Brazilian migratory experiences in relation to colonial legacies and the multiple distinctions that exist among and between migrants. I analysed how Brazilians, instead of affiliating themselves with specific categories in ways that result in a perceived ‘cultural commonality’, they constantly reinvent and contradictorily negotiate cultural as well as ‘racial’ and gendered representations when speaking of or interacting with Brazilians as well to western Europeans/British people. Brazilians tend, firstly, to stigmatise Brazil and its people through reproducing and re-signifying narratives of ‘culture’ and ‘race’, which have been historically reproduced since colonisation. ‘Brazilianess’ was narrated as an inferior culture, which results in the constitution of uncivilized, uneducated immoral bodies. On the other hand, Western Europeans are polite, educated, beautiful, civilized bodies, living in a country with rational, modern institutions. Such binary representations are also shaped by gender assumptions, which produce sexualised representations of Brazilian women and men. Nevertheless, in specific contexts, Brazilians also reframe representations of both ‘Britishness’ and ‘Brazilianess’, navigating through often contradictory shifts of affiliation and narratives of subversion, in which ‘Brazilianess’ takes a positive value in its distinction from ‘Britishness’.

Drawing on the lives of Brazilians in London is possible to see how the experience of migration is full of contradictions, constraints and anxieties that people must constantly manage, in dialogue with historically entrenched social markers and representations of valued and non-valued ways of being in the world. This was the case here with the ways in which Brazilians engaged with essentialised representations of ‘the Brazilian culture’ as well as when dealing with direct racism and/or prejudice in London. As Bhambra (2013) notes,

‘any theory that seeks to address the question of “how we live in the world” cannot treat as irrelevant the historical configuration of that world’ (p.307). It is only by taking into account the constitution of the colonial global, and its ‘others’, that we can understand how the global (mobile) present, and its ‘others’, came to be constituted as such. Such an analysis is largely absent from transnational studies. Examining colonial legacies, thus, allowed me to develop a multi-dimensional analysis of the ways in which migrants create attachments and disassociations through essentialised and stigmatised cultural, ‘racial’ and gendered differences.

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