Portuguese *Gauchos*: Associations, Social Integration and Collective Identity in Twenty-First Century Argentina, Uruguay and Southern Brazil[1]

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THIS ARTICLE STUDIES the connection between integration processes, immigrant associations and collective identities in migratory contexts. Through a selective analysis of several Portuguese migrant associations in the River Plate region (*i.e.*, Argentine litoral provinces, Uruguay and southern Brazil—states of Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina), we explore how different associational experiences and trajectories relate to strategies of social integration of groups and individuals. Despite the amount and richness of existing scholarly literature on ethnic associations and integration, not much has been written on the Portuguese present experience in these regions. This article aims to overcome such absence by analyzing how the formal sociability of Portuguese immigrants and their descendants relates to integration processes and collective identity. Using especially collected information on some of the existing associations and clubs in 2005-2006, we investigate the role of immigrant associations in both the construction and reinforcement of Portuguese national symbols and references, a trend that the literature identifies as ethnicizing, and the impact of associational practices on social and cultural assimilation within the host society. In particular, the article addresses the following questions:

what do present associative practices of the Portuguese and their descendants in the Plata region reveal about their social integration? What role do associations have in the construction of collective identities? To what extent do these associations and their leaders resort to ethnicizing or assimilationist type of narratives?

The article is organized as follows. First, we put forward the theoretical framework that guides our research on integration, associations and migrant identities. Second, we introduce the main features of Portuguese migration towards the region. The next three sections analyze empirical data regarding each national case. We close with a discussion of the main findings and a few concluding remarks.

Migrations, Associationism and Identity

1. Collective Identities and Integration Processes in Migratory Contexts

The concept of identity has been subject to a variety of (contested) uses in the social sciences. A frequent usage coexists with a generalized lack of precision and conceptualization.[3] Exploring the way in which immigrant associations' dynamics contribute to frame Portuguese and their descendants' present identities in the Plata region requires a previous clarification of our understanding of the concept.

A first aspect to highlight is the relational and contextual character of the concept of collective identity, which can be defined as a symbolic construction, socially produced and organized in reference to certain collective entities.[4] This construction is the result of two intertwined processes: identification—that is, the process through which social actors are included in wider groups—and differentiation—*i.e.*, the establishment of distances and frontiers in relation to others.[5] Therefore, the construction of social and cultural identities imply the existence of real or referential "others"; identities are always, albeit in different degrees, multiple. According to Kastersztein, strategies of identity are drawn in order to produce mutual recognition between the actor and the social system.[6] In this game of arti-

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[3] António Firmino da Costa, *Sociedade de bairro* (Oeiras: Celta, 2000).

[4] Edmond-Marc Lipianski, Isabelle Taboada-Leonetti and A. Vasquez, "Introduction à la problématique de l'identité," in Carmel Camilleri *et al.*, ed., *Stratégies identitaires* (Paris: PUF, 1999), 7-26; Costa, *Sociedade de bairro*.

[5] José Madureira Pinto, "Considerações sobre a produção social da identidade," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 32 (1991), 217-31.

[6] Joseph Kastersztein, "Les stratégies identitaires des acteurs sociaux: Approche dynamique des finalités," in Camilleri *et al.*, *Stratégies identitaires*, 27-41.

culation of belonging and specificity, recognition may result from both the underlying of similarity as much as from the expression of difference and singularity.[7]

A second aspect is that collective identity refers to different dimensions: the sharing of common characteristics by a group of individuals; their self-representation as a collective entity and their representation by others as a group.[8] Within each of these dimensions, but especially within the last two, power relations exist that define a variety of forms of identity building. To account for this diversity, Castells has developed a typology that distinguishes between legitimizing, resistance and project identities. *Legitimizing identities* are introduced by dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination over social actors; they generate civil societies and their institutions. *Resistance identities* are produced by those actors who are in a position of being excluded by the logic of domination; they lead to the formation of communities as a way of coping with conditions of oppression. Finally, *project identities* lay on proactive movements that aim to transform society as a whole, rather than merely establishing the conditions for their own survival in opposition to the dominant actors.[9] This conceptualization allows us to explore the relationship between identity building and immigrant associationism. One way of looking at it is to analyze the relation between collective identities and the processes of social integration. The literature on these issues has developed for over a generation around some contested concepts, loaded with normative assumptions: on the one hand, the concept of assimilation, initially used to identify rather linear and unproblematic incorporation of immigrants into the host societies; on the other hand, concepts such as "pluralism" or "ethnic retention", underlining the resistance of immigrants to assimilation and the preservation of significant ties to their ethnic heritage. Assimilationist perspectives have developed in a variety of versions based on different understandings of the original concept, from the so-called *straight-line* or *bumpy-line assimilation*[10] to the idea of *segmented assimilation*[11]

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[7] Kastersztein, "Les stratégies identitaires," 32.

[8] Costa, *Sociedade de bairro*, 500.

[9] Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity: The Information Age* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 10-12.

[10] Herbert Guns, "Second Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of Post-1965 American Immigrants," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15 (2) (1992): 173-92; Herbert Guns, "Comment: Ethnic Invention and Acculturation, a Bumpy-Line Approach," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (1) (1992): 42-52.

[11] Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimi-

and to more recent critical approaches.[12] Even more prone to multiple understandings, perspectives on ethnicity have moved from the idea of a primordial, rather immutable ethnicity[13] to a situational and instrumental conception of ethnic "interest groups"[14] to a relational perspective on "invented ethnicity"[15] and its critique.[16]

While traditional assimilationist positions have been dichotomously opposed to ethnic retentionist ones, recent perspectives suggest that such a polarization is unnecessary—let alone misleading—and reconciliation is possible. Following Pires, integration dynamics can be viewed as variable combinations of both processes of assimilation and ethnicization.[17] Taking into account various contributions aimed at redefining and reconceptualizing "assimilation",[18] the author defines it as "the process of inclusion of immigrants in the space which defines belonging in the host society, and thus opens the door for participation within the pre-existing interaction

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lation and Its Variants among Post-1965 Immigrant Youth," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530 (1993): 74-98; Min Zhou, "Growing up American: The Challenge Confronting Immigrant Children and Children of Immigrants," *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 63-95.

[12] Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *International Migration Review* 31 (1997): 826-74.

[13] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Harold R. Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

[14] Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moyhnihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970).

[15] Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: *Una lettura americana*," *Altreitalia* 3 (1990), 4-63; see also Werner Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[16] Arnd Schneider, *Futures Lost: Nostalgia and Identity among Italian Immigrants in Argentina* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000).

[17] Rui Pena Pires, *Migrações e integração* (Oeiras: Celta, 2003), 99-100.

[18] Alba and Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory"; Nathan Glazer, "Is Assimilation Dead?" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530 (1993): 122-36; Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *The American Historical Review* 100 (2) (1995): 437-71; Douglas S. Massey, "The New Immigration and Ethnicity in the United States," *Population and Development Review* 21 (3) (1995): 631-52; Ewa Morawska, "The Sociology and Historiography of Immigration," 187-238 in Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, ed., *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Ewa Morawska, "In Defense of the Assimilation Model," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13 (1994): 76-87; Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation"; Zhou, "Growing up American."

frames".[19] Some central features can be derived from this revised definition: first, assimilation does not suppose homogeneity or incompatibility with plural cultural identities, as most interpretations of the concept suggest. On the one hand, host societies are themselves heterogeneous; on the other, assimilation does not mean mere adaptation because the inclusion of new groups or individuals contribute to reorganize the common space of identity: therefore, assimilation is not opposed to hybridization;[20] finally, assimilation does not mean normative consensus, since it might coexist with normative conflicts that are possible to accommodate in the pre-existing order.

Ethnicization, in turn, can be defined as:

> the set of collective identity building processes that take place as a confronta-tion of the immigrants with the reactions produced in the host society. This identity is based on a sense of belonging to a collectivity with a common ascendancy and usually takes priority over other self and hetero social categorizations, thus providing a sense of solidarity which overcomes, in critical situations, other social divisions.[21]

The type of identity building associated with ethnicization depends more on the reactions of the host societies than on the memories that the immigrants bring with them.[22] Hence, there is always, even if in varying degrees, a process of hybridization between different identities. Following a similar perspective, Machado proposes an understanding of ethnicity as a concept that refers to processes more than to particular groups, and to the relevance that belonging to a certain minority, ethnic or culturally differentiated, might acquire in social, cultural and political terms.[23] He defines the space of ethnicity as built around contrasts and continuities of minorities with regard to the wider society or other minorities, highlighting two main analytical dimensions: social (class, demographic composition and place of residence) and cultural (sociability, religion and language). For each minority, different combinations can be identified. When there is con-vergence of all contrasts, ethnicity has a maximum salience and is poten-

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[19] Pires, *Migrações e integração*, 96.

[20] Alba and Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory."

[21] Pires, *Migrações e integração*, 100.

[22] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

[23] Fernando Luís Machado, *Contrastes e continuidades: Migração, etnicidade e integração dos guineenses em Portugal* (Oeiras: Celta, 2002).

tially disruptive. Contrariwise, when continuity features converge, the idea of ethnicity itself lacks social, cultural and political meaning, pointing to a situation of full integration. Therefore, it is in terms of the level of contrasts and continuities that the problem of the social integration of migrant minorities should be analyzed.[24]

Ethnicization and assimilation are not mutually exclusive categories. They should be understood as polar ideal-types in a continuum that may have different empirical expressions in the social times and spaces of integration. Building on a critical revision of Portes's proposals, Pires identifies three sets of factors that explain different integration modalities: characteristics of migration flows, state policies, and social reactions towards immigrants.[25]

As far as the characteristics of the flows are concerned, a decisive aspect regards the existence and impact of migration networks. The author suggests that the more the flow is anchored on informal networks, which tend to be reproduced as integration spaces, the greater the tendency to ethnicization. The persistence of informal networks will be higher whenever the flow is continuous and the less the skills and resources of the immigrants.

In turn, state policies condition the modes of integration in three ways. First, in terms of the specific migration policies designed to regulate flows: "The wider the gap between restrictive policies and the real development of the flows, the greater the possibility that it becomes dependent on informal networks, giving rise to a communitarian type of dynamic."[26] Given his marginal status, the immigrant will thus need the continued support of these nets. The other two ways concern the nationality issue: the definition of the condition of "foreign" and the access to citizenship. In this case, the more restrictive the opportunities of acquisition of social, economic and political rights, "the more the immigrant tends to be defined and define himself as a 'stranger', and therefore, the greater likelihood of developing a reactive ethnicity".[27]

Finally, the third factor, social reactions to immigration—especially in the cases of social stigmatization, marginalization and discrimination—have

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[24] Machado, *Contrastes e continuidades*, 3-4.

[25] Alejandro Portes, *Migrações internacionais: Origens, tipos e modos de incorporação* (Oeiras: Celta, 1999); Pires, *Migrações e integração*.

[26] Pires, *Migrações e integração*, 105.

[27] Pires, *Migrações e integração*, 106.

a decisive impact on the mode of integration. The stronger they are, the greater the propensity to the reinforcement of ethnicization.

2. Immigrant Associations and the Politics of Identity

A common perspective with regard to immigrant associations considers them as spaces of strong identity building of an ethnicizing type, generators of self-confidence and belonging within a community. The need for identification is stronger among immigrants due to the fragmentation of their life experience: identities that were previously stable within the routine and familiarity of normative codes become unstable, oscillating between two worlds.[28] Thus, immigrant associations act as reference groups and anchors of identity. But associations can also be viewed as places of constitution of ethnicity as a political phenomenon.[29] In this light, immigrant associationism may become an expression of ethnic institutionalization, performing a role of political representation or interest intermediation. These understandings are not incompatible; they rather call attention to the existence of different types of associations, more or less politicized, more exclusivist or more open, more dependent or more autonomous with regard to the state. Beyond internal functions related to members' sociability, social support and the reproduction of cultural forms, many associations also assume external functions of representation and interface towards the larger society and the receiving state.[30] The place of associations in the process of social integration of individuals and groups and the construction of identity will thus vary according to the background conditions as much as to their ability to mobilize members for collective action, or its constitution and recognition by the state as a legitimate social actor. Referring to this last aspect, Soysal argues that "the rules of membership that define the forms of participation in particular polities also configure collective patterns of migrant organization".[31] The author underlines that, while most studies of immigrants' collective organization have focused of ethnic community formation and identity, very few have examined how

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[28] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann [1966], *A construção social da realidade: Tratado de sociologia do conhecimento* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2002).

[29] José Manuel Viegas, "Associativismo e dinâmica cultural," *Sociologia, problemas e práticas* 1 (1986), 103-21; Luis Capucha, "Associativismo e modos de vida num bairro de habitação social," *Sociologia, problemas e práticas* 8 (1990), 29-41.

[30] Machado, *Contrastes e continuidades*, 397.

[31] Yasemin Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 85.

the host society's institutions shape the organizational incorporation of migrants. Her analysis suggests that the organizing principles and incorporation styles of the host polity are crucial variables in accounting for the emerging organizational patterns of migrants. The collective organization of immigrants is thus a process framed by the interaction of factors pertaining to their ethnic identity and the characteristics of the host societies. The result of such interaction is usually something new. Approaching the topic from a global and historical perspective and using examples from a variety of immigration contexts, Moya has shown how quasi-universal processes and local and temporal specificities combine to shape associational practices in a way that transcends the ethno-national traditions and characteristics of particular immigrant groups and host societies.[32] In the same vein, Schrover and Vermeulen have argued that the characteristics of the immigrant community and the political opportunity structure are important in explaining immigrants' organizational activity, but that the nature of the relationships is bell-shaped rather than linear. According to these authors, "too much and too little competition (from governments and others) leads to reduced organizational activity. Too small and too large communities experience problems in maintaining organizations".[33]

At the bottom line, all these perspectives underline the fact that, "immigrant associations are not ... an homogenous reality, neither in terms of the type and degree of activism, nor with regard to the social contexts where they emerge, not even in their goals and space of action".[34] In his book *Historia de la inmigración en Argentina*, Fernando Devoto offers a rich portrait of such diversity with regard to immigrant associations in Argentina during the first decades of the twentieth century. The author highlights the variable dimension, objectives and activities of the existing associations, showing how their evolution depended on factors such as the social origin of its leadership and the "bridges" they helped build with other spheres and contexts of social interaction. He shows, for instance, that within an open society as Argentina, associations were, simultaneously, places for ethnic reinforcement and instruments for "civilization".[35]

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[32] José Moya, "Immigrants and Associations: A Global and Historical Perspective," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (5) (2005): 833-64.

[33] Marlou Schrover and Florian Vermeulen, "Immigrant Organizations," *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 31 (5) (2005): 823-32.

[34] Machado, *Contrastes e continuidades*, 407.

[35] Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003), 310-18 and 379-89.

A huge variety of studies on immigrant associations has been conducted throughout South America, and specifically in the countries we look at: Argentina, Brasil and Uruguay.[36] However, not a great deal is known about the Portuguese associations and the way how they framed collective identities and integration processes.[37] In this article we do not attempt an histo-

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[36] Among others, see Samuel Baily and Eduardo José Míguez, eds., *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2003), especially Maria Bjerg "The Danes in the Argentine Pampa: The Role of Ethnic Leaders in the Creation of an Ethnic Community, 1848-1930," 147-66; and Samuel Baily, "Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914: A Comparative Analysis of Adjustment," 69-80. Other studies include José Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); Ronald C. Newton, *German Buenos Aires*, 1900-1933: *Social Change and Cultural Crisis* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1977); Ignacio Klich, "The Chimera of Palestinian Resettlement in Argentina in the Early Aftermath of the First Arab-Israeli War and Other Similarly Fantastic Notions," *The Americas* 53 (1) (1996): 15-43; Ignacio Klich, *Arab and Jewish Immigrants in Latin America: Images and Realities* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Núñez Seixas, *O inmigrante imaxinario: Estereotipos, representacións e identidades dos Galegos na Arxentina, 1880-1940* (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 2002), and "Gaitas y tangos: Las fiestas de los inmigrantes gallegos en Buenos Aires, 1890-1930," *Ayer* 43 (2001): 191-224; Maria del Pilar Cagiao Vila, "Aporte cultural de la inmigración gallega en Montevideo, 1879-1930," *Arbor: Ciencia, pensamiento y cultura* 536-7 (1990): 75-98; Carlos Zubillaga, "Una perspectiva histórica de la inmigración española en Uruguay," *Pasado, presente y futuro de la emigración española a Iberoamérica* (Seminarios de Colombres, 1993): 125-50; Fernando Devoto and Gianfausto Rosoli, ed., *La inmigración italiana en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos), 95-104; Fernando Devoto "¿Inventando a los italianos? Imágenes de los primeros inmigrantes en Buenos Aires, 1810-1880," *Anuario IEHS* 7 (1) (1992): 21-35; Adhemar Silva Junior, "As sociedades de socorros mútuos: Estratégias privadas e públicas (estudo centrado no Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil), 1854-1940" (Porto Alegre, PUCRGS, 2004); Bela Feldman-Bianco, "Múltiple Layers of Time and Space: The Construction of Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism among Portuguese Immigrants," in N. Schiller, L. Basch. and C. Blanc-Szanton, eds., *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration, Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 645 (1992): 145-74.

[37] Important clues can be found in the works of Marcelo Borges, such as "Los portugueses en Buenos Aires a mediados del siglo XIX: Una aproximación socio-demográfica," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 12 (1989): 353-82; "Características residenciales de los inmigrantes portugueses en Buenos Aires en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 18 (1991): 223-47; "Portuguese in Two Worlds: A Historical Study of Migration from Algarve to Argentina" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1997), and "Migration Systems in Southern Portugal: Regional and Transatlantic Circuits of Labor Migration in the Algarve (Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries)," *International Review of Social History* 45 (2000): 171-208. *Cf.* also Emir Reitano, "Los comerciantes portugueses del Buenos Aires tardocolonial: Inversiones, familia, relaciones," paper presented at Jornadas sobre los Comerciantes como Empresarios, siglos XVII al XX (Buenos Aires: Universidad Argentina de la Empresa, 2000); and Ada Svetlitza de Nemirovsky, "Celebraciones en los clubes portugueses de Argentina: La construcción de la doble identidad," *Documentos de Trabajo*—Universidad de Belgrano 154 (2000): 3-7.

rical reconstruction of Portuguese associational practices and institutions in the Plata region, nor do we focus on their changing structure, representativeness, roles and activities. Rather, we look at a selection of the existing associations and clubs in the beginning of the twenty-first century to address the relation between social integration and collective identities. Before going farther, however, it is convenient to summarize the development of the migration flows and the characteristics of the Portuguese immigration in the Southern Cone.

Migratory Waves and Social Integration in the Southern Cone

The presence of Portuguese immigrants in the Plata region at the beginning of the twenty-first century reflects both the characteristics of the social-historical processes that have framed migration flows from Portugal and the processes of integration of these immigrants in the host societies. Notwithstanding many commonalties, differences across the studied countries emerge as concerns the dimension, organization and rhythms of the flows, the effects of migration policies, and the social-demographic characteristics of the immigrants and their families.

Data collected in 2005 pointed to the existence of some 12,000 Portuguese in Argentina, 1,100 in Uruguay and 700,000 in Brazil, of which 210,000 were born in Portugal.[38] However, in the southern states of Brazil, the Portuguese were a minority: only 9,000 (4%) lived in Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. The intensification of the Portuguese emigration to the three countries took place in the first decades of the twentieth century, following important transformations in the social and economic structures both at home and in the host societies.[39] Remarkably, the flows to Brazil were much more significant in quantitative terms than those to Argentina (Table 1) and especially to Uruguay, where they were almost residual.

A key element behind the development of these flows was the nature of the migratory policies adopted on both shores of the Atlantic. In Portugal, a formally restrictive legal framework was trumped by a high degree of tolerance in practice, which favored the continuity of flows until the

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[38] Data obtained at the Portuguese consulates in Argentina and Uruguay on the basis of inscriptions, which of course undervalue the quantitative dimension of the Portuguese presence and do not include non-Portuguese second generation. For Brazil, data refer to the national population census.

[39] Miriam Halpern Pereira, *A politica portuguesa de emigração, 1850-1930* (Lisbon: Instituto Camões, 2002).

Table 1. Portuguese Emigration to Brazil and Argentina

Years	Argentina	Brazil
1900s	7.633	229.348
1910s	17.570	293.793
1920s	23.406	233.655
1930s	10.310	85.690
1940s	4.230	60.700
1950s	12.033	237.327

Sources: for Argentina, Borges, "Portuguese in Two Worlds"; for Brazil, García, *Portugal Migrante.*

mid-twentieth century.[40] The magnitude of the flows, however, was rather due to the incentives present in the countries of destination. In Latin America, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay held particularly permissive and liberal policies until the 1930s, and in Brazil they even had an assistentialist character.[41] Therefore, the impact of the migratory policies should be analyzed in articulation with the attraction-repulsion factors working at the socio-economic level. If, in the Brazilian case, a program of subsidized immigration explains a good deal of the increased rates of arrival, in Argentina such an increase was rather due to its higher salaries than to any direct migratory policies.[42]

Although both the immigrants and their descendants have progressively assimilated into the host societies, much like all other immigrant groups, a still visible feature of the Portuguese presence in the Plata region is the persistence of a lively associative dynamic, which is especially visible in Argentina and Uruguay. In 2006, the archives of the *Direcção Geral dos Assuntos Consulares e Comunidades Portuguesas* (DGACCP) registered fifty-two associations of Portuguese or Luso-descendants: sixteen in Buenos Aires city

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[40] Pereira, *A politica portuguesa de emigração*; Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, "As politicas portuguesas para a emigração," *Janus* (2001): 140-1.

[41] Blanca Sánchez-Alonso, "Políticas de imigração na América Latina," in António Barreto, ed., *Globalização e migrações* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2005), 101-21.

[42] Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina*, 250.

and Buenos Aires province, two in Uruguay and thirty-six in the three southern states of Brazil. Since 1988, the Portuguese communities of Argentina, Uruguay and Rio Grande do Sul annually organize the *Encontros das Comunidades Portuguesas e Luso-Descendentes do Cone-Sul*, aimed at "debating common problems and strengthening the relations and exchange among the associative movements in the three countries".[43]

We now turn to some aspects of the associational life of the Portuguese immigrants and their descendants with a view to highlighting its main features and dynamics. The empirical analysis does not follow a uniform pattern: in some cases, we lay emphasis on the connection between current and historical dynamics; in others, we privilege the institutional structure and relationships; sometimes we give the floor to the interviewees, displaying their experiences and views on the role of the associations and the social integration of the Portuguese.

Argentina: Associations and Integration in Greater Buenos Aires

The history of migration to Argentina is usually divided into three phases: early, mass and contemporary.[44] The Portuguese, in variable proportions, were present in all three, but their magnitude was much higher during the first decades of the twentieth century and after the Second World War— *i.e.*, the last half of the second period and the first half of the third one (Table 1). According to Devoto, the migratory wave from Europe towards Argentina in the second postwar period limited itself to "an intense but short episode between 1947 and 1951".[45] However, although the flow of Portuguese migrants was certainly more intense between those years, it did not stop afterwards. The number of passports issued to Argentina kept significant, albeit reduced, until the mid-1960 (Figure 1).[46]

By mid-twentieth century, most of the Portuguese living in Argentina had come from the regions of Algarve and Guarda, origin of roughly 60% of the arrivals. Castelo Branco, Viseu, Braga and Leiria contributed with 5% each of the migrant population.[47] The Portuguese settled mainly in Buenos

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[43] Direcção Geral dos Assuntos Consulares e Comunidades Portuguesas (accessed in September 2005 at http://secomunidades.pt).
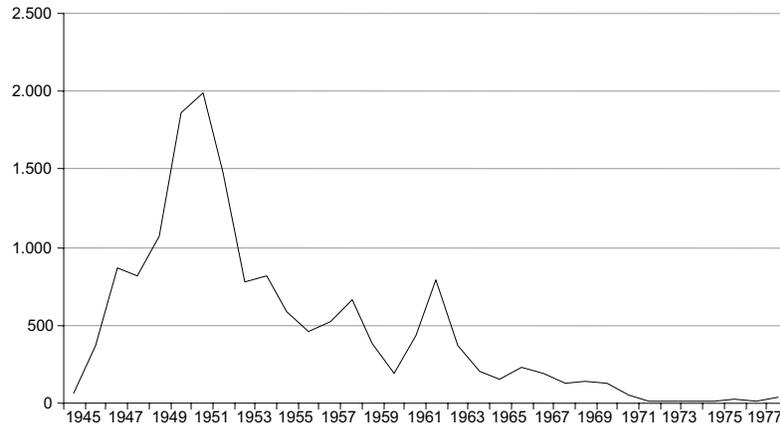
[44] Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina*, 15-6.

[45] Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina*, 408.

[46] José Luís Garcia, ed, *Portugal migrante: emigrantes e imigrados: dois estudos introdutórios* (Oeiras: Celta, 2000), 135-6, anexo.

[47] Borges, "Portuguese in Two Worlds," 258-9.

Figure 1. Passports to Argentina. Postwar Period.

Source: Garcia, *Portugal migrante.*

Aires city and province and in Comodoro Rivadavia, a Patagonic city where the discovery of oil generated considerable job opportunities.[48]

The Portuguese presence in Argentina is relatively small and enjoys low visibility. A conventional assumption is that most migrants chose Brazil as final destination out of linguistic affinity. However, in the early twentieth century a close relation between Southern Portugal (Algarve) and Argentina had been established, paving the way for a "migration system". As a consequence, Argentina became the main destination for the migrants from the district of Faro.[49] This relation between regions of origin and destination is still evident in the associations of Greater Buenos Aires, the urban and suburban area that surrounds Buenos Aires city. Somewhat paradoxically, the establishment of some of these associations took place from the late 1970 onwards, more than one decade after Argentina ceased to be the main port for the southern Portuguese.[50]

Two of the largest Portuguese associations in Greater Buenos Aires are the *Club Portugués de Esteban Echeverría* and the *Casa de Portugal Nuestra Señora de Fátima* (Villa Elisa, La Plata). The former is located in a closed

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[48] Susana Torres, "Two Oil Company Towns in Patagonia: European Immigrants, Class, and Ethnicity, 1907-1933" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1995).

[49] Borges, "Portuguese in Two Worlds"; Borges, "Migration Systems in Southern Portugal," 176-8.

[50] If, in 1953-9, 21.4% of emigrants from Faro went to Argentina, in 1960-9 just 2.8% did so. Calculated from Garcia, *Portugal Migrante*, 142-3.

neighborhood, 30 kilometers south of Buenos Aires city. It was founded in 1978 and most of its founders were northern Portuguese (*minhotos*). Many of those who serve at the direction bodies are owners of small firms, mainly related to the construction business. From the trajectory of the interviewees and their families, it becomes clear the reason why the post-war migratory wave extended for more than a few years. These immigrants were part of a migration chain, the first phase of which brought the bread-winners whereas the second one aimed at family reunification. This process usually took up to 15 years, as the first comers arrived in the immediate post-war period (1946-51) while their families kept arriving until the mid-1960s.

In turn, the *Casa de Portugal Nuestra Señora de Fátima* was established in 1981 by Portuguese residents of Villa Elisa, some 35 kilometers southeast of Buenos Aires city. Many of its founders, most of them natives of Algarve, worked on flower farming and related horticulture activities. They are still in charge of the association, which is acknowledged as one of the most active in Argentina together with Comodoro Rivadavia's. The family trajectories of the interviewees show striking similarities with the above-mentioned case. Drawing on these data, it is possible to advance a three-fold periodization of post-war Portuguese emigration to Argentina: working males (during the half dozen years following the end of the war), family reunification and draft evasion (roughly the subsequent decade, from 1953 through 1963), and the very limited last drops (from 1964 onwards). The determinants of this chronology are mainly two: the existence of pre-war networks and the ensuing process of family reunification. This explains why the post-war wave to Argentina was prolonged until the mid-60s.

The Portuguese that arrived to Buenos Aires in this period joined networks previously established by their relatives or associates. As a result, most of them did not work in activities they were skilled at, but rather in those developed by the elder Portuguese migrants: brick ovens and flower fields. In the more successful cases, progress was achieved within the same activity. For instance, those initially working on brick production went over to the commercial sector, selling material for construction; and those that grew flowers went on to selling flowers:

> When I arrived, as all the other emigrants, I worked with those who called us. Because, logically, when we are just arrived it is much more difficult to work with people we don't know, so we began to work in the same area as those who received us. It was what I did. In Portugal I worked as a carpenter,

so when I arrived here I began to work as a flower producer along with my brothers. I worked during ten years growing flowers, and afterwards I went into gross selling in the Central Market. As a producer, I sell my own flowers but I'm also an intermediary for other flower producers (Analido M. A., Villa Elisa).

Although in the 1970s Argentina was no longer promising for potential Portuguese migrants, it was still attractive for those who were already living there. Some of the interviewees had gone back to visit Portugal during the 1970s and 1980s. In that moment they decided to stay in Argentina, where they had a good economic position instead of having to start all over again. In that period of currency undervaluation, the immigrants had the opportunity of going back to their original villages on holidays and show themselves as successful people:

Q: When you visited Portugal [in 1981], did you think of staying there?

A: No, no, because I was young and I didn't think of Portugal. I was thinking of coming back to Argentina to make money, in 1981 ... At that time we were living much better here [than in Portugal], it was the period called *plata dulce* [sweet money]. So, here we earned a lot of money, we would buy dollars and then, when travelling to Portugal, we could do lots of things. Portugal was a cheap country by then, very cheap (José Maria C. T., Esteban Echeverría).

Macroeconomic indicators show the paradoxical element of this situation. When looking at GDP per capita trends, it turns up that the lines crossed in 1980, the last year Argentina had a higher figure than Portugal.[51] It is precisely in this period that the Portuguese associations of Greater Buenos Aires were established. Why were most associations established around 1980, more than a decade and a half after the migration flows had virtually ended? This can be explained by looking at the integration processes that took place within the host societies. As inferred from the interviews, these processes also had three phases. The first one, that could be labeled the hard work phase, runs from 1950 to 1978: it is a period of upward mobility, when immigrants cease to be just producers to become producers and merchants within the same type of activity. The second phase, consolidation (when the decision to stay is made), runs from

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[51] Per capita GDP, 1990 million dollars; *cf.* Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (OECD, 2001), 278-88.

the end of the 1970s to 2001: the associations are created by those who are better off. The third phase, of reverted relation, is set off by the 2001 economic collapse, when it becomes perceptible that Portugal's quality of life has overtaken Argentina's. Second thoughts about returning to the home country consequently grow among the least successful members of the community. These cases are rare though.

Associations were established during the second phase. When association leaders were asked about the reasons for creating the clubs, the most common answer was that it was a period of currency undervaluation and they had a good economic position. But economic reasons were not the only ones. The clubs developed important "internal" functions, providing not only members but also the local community with a space for socialization, open-air activities and sports. This, in turn, bestowed members with an effective tool for social integration: if until the 1970s these people had dedicated their life to hard working, after 1978 the clubs allowed them to definitely assert themselves in the host society. They opened the door for continuing to be Portuguese abroad. Such an identity differs from being Portuguese in Portugal, therefore legitimizing different ways of being Portuguese. The identity of those who emigrated is reinforced by the sacrifice of migrating and the pride of honorably representing Portugal abroad. A constant of this view is the self-reference as working people.

> A: I always say that we carry the best part of the Portuguese community all over the world. We carry the Portuguese culture to our host countries. ... We work a lot trying our Portugal to be well [regarded]. ...
>
> Q: What is the image of the Portuguese people here in Argentina?
>
> A: It is very good. The Portuguese image is excellent, because we are a community that hasn't caused trouble. The Portuguese, we are working people. I mean the people who came in that time; today's migration is different, the Portuguese are also different. We have to admit that the current Portuguese, those who are living now in Portugal, don't have the same ideas as we, those who migrated some time ago, do. Because they live in another time ... they are different. During the Salazar period, the only thing we could do was to work honestly. That thing of being subsidized to get good cars, good houses, and good cell phones without working did not exist! (Analido M. A , Villa Elisa).

Although the clubs were founded by immigrants who used local networks in the early phases of the migration flow, they reinforce an identity

that overcomes the local identity (*e.g.*, born in Boliqueime). The notion of "being Portuguese abroad" is the one that is constructed and reinforced in the daily life of these clubs. Such notion of integration appears in the speech of all the interviewees, a self-identification that confers them the role of ambassadors of Portugal in the new society.

Southern Brazil: Power Assymetries and the Azorean Identity

Between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the Brazilian government developed two consecutive policies to attract European immigration: the first one was state-driven and aimed at populating distant and vacant territories; the subsequent one was rather market-driven, though public funds were made available to support travelling expenses, accommodation and working credits, and sought to develop a workforce in the wake of the abolition of slavery.[52] In the southern region, the former prevailed.

Even though Brazil has historically been a key destination of Portuguese emigration, the same is not true for its southernmost states. When massive immigration arrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, other European groups got to settle there. This fact is crucial for understanding not only the history of the Portuguese associations in Southern Brazil but also their current condition.

From an early stage, Portuguese emigrants organized themselves through a variety of forms, from immigrant associations to charities. Many of them were so important and counted on such affluent members that were able to establish and manage hospitals. This occurred in several Brazilian regions, namely Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Recife and Salvador da Bahia. Yet, the situation was different in the south, where other European communities settled with the assistance of local policies. The Germans arrived as early as 1820; the Italians, Poles, and Ukrainians followed. Thus, as in the rest of the Plata region, the Portuguese formed a smaller community. According to the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE), 1912 registered the highest number of Portuguese arriving in the state of Rio Grande do Sul: 373. Between 1941 and 1946, of the 9,073 that arrived in Brazil, only nineteen established in Rio Grande do Sul.[53] Today their

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[52] Neide Fiori, "Imigração portuguesa e nacionalismo cultural brasileiro: o 'regime de cotas' de imigrantes," paper presented at II Congresso Internacional sobre A imigração em Portugal e na União Européia, Angra do Heroísmo (Azores), 23-4 November 2006.

[53] Dante de Laytano, "Os Portugueses," *Enciclopédia Rio-Grandense V, 5, Imigração* (Canoas, RGS: Ed. Regional Lda.), 126.

magnitude remain inexpressive, as according to the 2000 census only 8% of the Portuguese residing in Brazil live in its southern region.

It is in this context that the cases presented next—*Casa de Portugal* and *Instituto Cultural Português*—are set to show how ethnicity was built in relation to other groups. It confirms, as Kasterzestein suggests, that the main purpose of identity strategies is the recognition of the actors by the system, recognition achieved by singularity and difference.[54]

In Rio Grande do Sul, the Portuguese claim their identity in relation to and amongst other national communities. Threatened, on the one hand, by the negative image associated with the colonizer (in spite of Gilberto Freyre's efforts to revalue the Portuguese component of the Brazilian national character)[55] and, on the other, by the stronger presence of other ethnic communities (whose references were diffused by national celebrations and cultural festivals), they reacted with the purpose of achieving recognition among the others, building on a host society that was acknowledged as multicultural.[56]

To this end, identity resources were activated in order to structure collective practices and narratives. The Portuguese associations tried to achieve visibility and protagonism through the (positive) distinction of the Azorean element in the history of the state and in the gaucho identity.[57] This process was strengthened by policies developed by the Azorean government towards its diaspora, an example of what Castells calls "legitimized identities".[58] The Azoreans were depicted as settlers that came to stay, thus distinguishing from the Portuguese who were looked upon as conquerors and colonizers. This vindication, called the "Azorean movement", was fundamental in the construction of a Portuguese identity in opposition to, and

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[54] Kasterzestein, "Les stratégies identitaires des acteurs sociaux."

[55] Fiori, "Imigração portuguesa e nacionalismo cultural brasileiro," 11-3; Thomas Skidmore, "Criadores de mitos: Os arquitetos da identidade nacional brasileira," in Thomas Skidmore, *O Brasil visto de fora* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1994), 71-98.

[56] According to "Identidade Gaúcha," research project carried out by the *Fundação de Apoio à Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul e a Fundação Irmão José Sótão da Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul* (2000), Italians are considered the most important community in the formation of the gaucho's identity, followed by the Germans. The Portuguese are barely mentioned.

[57] In 1752, sixty Azorean couples were sent by the Portuguese crown to the southern region of Brazil in order to populate and occupy the territory. Porto Alegre was originally called "Porto dos Casaes." See Laytano, "Os portugueses," 45-6.

[58] Castells, *The Power of Identity, passim.*

through cultural wars with, other European ethnic communities.[59] The Portuguese associations analyzed next gained recognition through this recreation of contrasts or singularities, playing ethnicity as an integration resource. In other words, "being different" was a way of belonging in a social context in which cultural diversity was no liability.

The *Instituto Cultural Português* (ICP) was founded in 1979, when the extinction of the *Gabinete Português de Leitura de Porto Alegre* led António Neiva Soares, a Camões Institute's reader, to look for alternative means to promote Portuguese culture and underscore the Azorean influence in the gaucho identity. Remarkably, at the entrance of the ICP there is an Azorean flag and the picture of the Azorean governor. The Institute offers courses and seminars, including Portuguese art and culture classes; it has issued several publications such as the *Caravels Magazine* and the *Azorean Journal*, and organized the commemoration for the 50 years of Fernando Pessoa's death. It also broadcasts a radio program, "Portuguese presence", and is recognized for its cultural and exchange activities rather than for its membership, which is rather exiguous.

In 2002, the ICP achieved higher visibility when Santa Inèze Domingues Rocha, Soares's Brazilian wife, co-organized with the state government the official celebrations for the 250 years of the Azorean settling (1752-2002). Three years later, she edited the book *Açorianos no Rio Grande do Sul*, highlighting the fact that the Azoreans arrived 72 years before the Germans and 123 years before the Italians, and underlining the vast Azorean influence on the gaucho costumes and traditions.[60] António Filipe Sampaio Neiva Soares, member of the ICP, contends that:

> Who keeps the cultural spark alive is the Portuguese Cultural Institute; the *Casa de Portugal* does very little (in that realm). There are no other associa-

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[59] João Leal, "Açorianos, alemães, gaúchos: Guerras culturais e políticas de identidade em Santa Catarina (Brazil)," paper presented at ICS Luncheon Seminar, Lisbon, 2 Feb. 2007; see also http://www.azores.gov.pt/Portal/pt/entidades/pgra-drcomunidades/texto Imagem/Cursos.htm).

[60] Santa Inèze Domingues da Rocha, "Os 250 anos do povoamento açoriano no Rio Grande do Sul," in Santa Inèze da Rocha, ed., *Açorianos no Rio Grande do Sul* (Porto Alegre: Caravela, 2005), 15-23. Although the Azorean influence had been underscored by historians and writers such as Laytano, Borges Fortes, Cezimbra Jacques, Apolinário Porto Alegre, Walter Spalding and Cecília Meireles, it was only after 1988 that it started to gain notoriety and legitimizing attributes. Still in 2000, the Azorean couples occupied one of the last positions on the ranking of the personages acknowledged in the history of the state (See Identidade Gaúcha, Projeto de Pesquisa, Assembleia Legislativa do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul, 2000).

tions that keep culture alive. The *Casa de Portugal*, once in a while, organizes some events but not with that objective.

The current presence of the Azorean narrative in the cultural life of Rio Grande do Sul can be explained by many factors. First of all, there is the need by the associations to legitimate their symbolic status in competition with other, stronger references. Second, there is the interest of a number of scholars, especially historians, to gain recognition within a niche of studies that looks promising. Last but not least, the Regional Government of Azores has played a very active role, which best example is the program-contest "Discovering the Roots", annually disputed by thousands of candidates. Through this program, a group of people selected by the Azorean government travel to the islands to receive intensive training that includes workshops, visits and courses that foster an Azorean feeling of belonging. Just as the Brazilians from Rio Grande do Sul consider themselves different from other Brazilians, so the Portuguese from Rio Grande do Sul regard themselves as different from the Portuguese in other Brazilian states. Italians, Germans, and more recently Azoreans take pride for the *gaúcha* alleged singularity.

Today, the children and grandchildren of the immigrants rarely visit the *Casa*, preferring to socialize in clubs that offer better conditions for social mingling even when they belong to other collectivities. Thus, youngsters currently have a more utilitarian relation with the associations than their parents, for whom participation is rather associated with ethnic belonging. However, as many families are built on mixed marriages (several Portuguese married *gaúchas*), there are usually varied ethnic roots within the household.

Unlike the culturally laden ICP, the *Casa de Portugal* in Porto Alegre is a more typical immigrant association, founded by initiative of the consul António Rodrigues in 1934. It currently has about 1,000 members, but only about 400 pay their dues. Its membership is aged, mostly around the 65-70 years old. The association is located downtown and has a large building that is underutilized. It has office space and a library, a large room usually rented for celebrations and a restaurant. It also features a sportive and recreational premise out of the city, where members may enjoy a swimming pool, sport courts, and a picnic area. The *Casa de Portugal*, according to testimonies from some of the interviewees, was more central to the life of the Portuguese immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s than today, and it enjoyed higher social recognition. It assisted immigrants upon arrival in

many different ways, thus nurturing ethnic solidarity as an institution and through its individual members, who provided jobs, housing, financial resources, contacts and references when needed.

Contrasting with the ICP, whose leaders never referred any lack of support from the Azorean government, the *Casa de Portugal* main complaint is the neglect they suffer from the Portuguese government. In the words of the President, voiced in February 2005, "there is a complete oblivion by the Portuguese government with regard to the Portuguese of Rio Grande do Sul".[61] The Portuguese government is further charged for giving a poor response in terms of assistance, especially in comparison with that received by other groups such as the Spaniards, German and Italians. The members of the *Casa* also feel derided when compared to the Portuguese of other states, namely São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, who are allegedly taken into consideration because they are more numerous, enjoy solid social networks and used to send a superior amount of remittances.

Uruguay: From Historical Heritage to the Contemporary Reconstruction of the Portuguese Identity

In Uruguay, most of the Portuguese and their descendants settled in the area of Montevideo—just like most Uruguayans. However, there is another important group in Salto, a city 600 kilometers north by the Uruguay River. Although there are about 1,100 Portuguese registered with the Consulate, information provided by representatives of the Portuguese associations point to a community that, including nationals and Luso-descendants, numbers between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

While in Montevideo it is still possible to find immigrants that came after World War II, in Salto those who claim the Portuguese heritage are descendants of immigrants that arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century or even before. This is a group almost exclusively composed of descendants who can no longer obtain the Portuguese nationality. Thus, unlike Montevideo, it is not surprising to find very few Portuguese-speaking persons in Salto.

The oldest migration wave included Portuguese of Azorean origin that arrived in Uruguay from southern Brazil at the end of the nineteenth century. In contrast, the subsequent waves mobilized poor rural workers from northern Portugal, especially the regions of Minho, Douro Litoral and

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[61] The authors' interview with the president of the *Casa de Portugal*, José Carlos Miranda, in February 2005.

Trás-os-Montes, recruited through local networks. Apart from a few cases of successful businesspeople, the Montevideo community is mostly composed of small farmers that own some land in the surroundings of the city and sell their products in the area markets. Likewise, in Salto the majority are farmers or small entrepreneurs in fruit (citrus) and vegetable production.

Both cities have a Portuguese association (the only two Portuguese associations in Uruguay), the *Casa de Portugal de Montevideo* and the *Casa de Portugal de Salto*.[62] The former is more active and institutionalized and has a clear lead of the associative dynamics in the country. In both cases, the difficulty to attract younger generations is the outmost concern of their leadership.

In Montevideo, Portuguese associations have an old and continuous history.[63] Two first mutual benefit societies were created at the end of the nineteenth century: the *Real Sociedade Portuguesa de Beneficência* (1888) and the *Sociedade Portugueza de Beneficencia e Socorros Mutuos Dona Maria Pia* (1880). In 1912, after the proclamation of the republic in Portugal, these institutions merged with the name of *Sociedade de Beneficência União Portugueza*, later changed to *Sociedade de Beneficência e Socorros Mútuos União Portuguesa de Montevideu*, in 1938. According to associative sources, while this structure always represented the official interests of the Portuguese state, another association developed during the 1930s—renamed from *Centro Democrático Português Cinco de Outubro* to *Centro Social Portugués* in 1954—which mainly included opponents to the authoritarian Estado Novo.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the difficult economic situation of the mutual aid society led to the end of its medical services. For this reason, but also because most associates were already members of both associations, the idea of a fusion began to take root; after years of complex negotiations over patrimonial and juridical issues, a *Movimiento Pro Casa de Portugal* was

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[62] During the field work of the present research (2005), another association was being formed in S. Carlos, a city located in the southeastern part of the country which was founded by Azoreans in the eighteenth century.

[63] The information regarding this association was obtained from the following sources: private documents (such as the *Memoria Anual* from 1998 to 2003); informal contacts and direct observation (meeting with association leaders in the Portuguese consulate in Montevideo in January 2005; meeting with members in the Association premises in November 2004; informal correspondence with association secretary Eduardo Vargues; and survey data (answers to the survey to the Portuguese Associations in the Southern Cone especially conducted for this research, and three semi-directive interviews with members of the association).

formed in 1980, leading to the creation of the present *Casa de Portugal de Montevideo* in 1983.

The *Casa*'s activities have a dominantly cultural, recreational and social character. In 2006 there were 500 members, mostly women (56%) and with a high percentage of over 65-year-olds (44%). These people were mainly Portuguese immigrants and their descendants, but there are also people of other origins: around one fourth have the Portuguese nationality, forty per cent are Uruguayan of Portuguese ancestry, and the rest hold other nationalities (mostly Uruguayan of diverse ancestries). Among the variety of activities of the *Casa de Portugal* there is the commemoration of the civic days of Portugal and Uruguay, the organization of Portuguese language courses, feasts, cultural events and conferences, as well as a weekly radio program *Voz Lusitana*. Although broadcasted in Spanish, it disseminates news from the community and information and music from Portugal. The frequent visits of renowned Portuguese artists and intellectuals as well as public authorities are accompanied with special pride, revealing close relations with Portugal. The *Casa de Portugal* also has an active folkloric group (*rancho*) of some fifty people, formed by Portuguese and by youngsters of no Portuguese descent, what illustrates the syncretism of the association. The *rancho* is seen by the members and leaders of the *Casa de Portugal* as one of its most important activities, because it helps foster Portuguese identity while at the same time creating a healthy, nice and friendly environment, especially for the youth. According to different testimonies, the fact that their youth participate in "healthy" activities, away from drugs and alcohol, is a motive of pride, more significant than other kind of successes to a community whose self image is based on the traits of hard work and honesty.[64] In addition to this, the folklore group is presented as an incarnation of the true national history of Uruguay: a frontier line where part of the historical rivalry between the Portuguese and the Spanish empires took place. Thus, besides performing typical dances of the newer immigrant communities that built Uruguay in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the group evokes the earlier Portuguese presence in the region.

Financially, the *Casa* depends on occasional support from institutions such as the Gulbenkian Foundation and the *Secretaria de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas*. However, private donors constitute its main financial source. The *Casa* has leaned in many aspects (namely for the purpose of

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[64] Informal meeting with around 20 associates in November 2004 at the premises of the association in Montevideo.

building acquisition and enlargement) on the contributions of affluent citizens whose presence is highlighted in order to establish a contrast with (and even cover up for) some stereotypical characteristics of the early Portuguese immigrants in Uruguay, portrayed as illiterate, rude and unsophisticated. Since 1988, the participation of the association in the annual *Encontros das Comunidades Portuguesas e Luso-Descendentes do Cone-Sul* has been presented as a salient activity, usually involving a delegation of around 80 people. From observation in the field, informal conversations and formal interviews, it was possible to corroborate the hypothesis of a mixed identity, produced and sustained in the absence of particular tensions either between national symbolic references or with regard to other ethnic groups.

In Salto, the *Casa de Portugal* is the putative heir of an ancient mutual aid society, the *Sociedade Portugueza de Beneficiencia*, which was created in 1882.[65] This structure, initially formed to provide members with social support such as medical care and funeral service, entered a lethargic period after 1956. More than underlining continuity, the reference to this first association aims at setting the historical foundation of a Portuguese identity as much as the Luso-Brazilian origins of Salto,[66] the role of a Portuguese diplomat at the beginning of the twentieth century,[67] or the list of Portuguese names among Salto families.[68] The memory and history of this association is presently used to legitimize a much more informal and less institutionalized group. In fact, the present association was born in the course of the first years of the twenty-first century, out of the convergence of external support from the *Casa de Portugal de Montevideo* and the voluntarism of a few Portuguese descendents in Salto. This is a group of around

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[65] Data regarding the association was obtained through documentary sources, informal contacts (extensive correspondence with Carlos Texeira; two meetings and group interviews with associates in Salto in January 2005 and January 2006; direct observation (visits to the Portuguese Mausoleum, Portuguese School, and other locations in the city); and survey data (answers to the survey to Portuguese Associations in the Southern Cone; eight semi-directive interviews with members of the Portuguese community).

[66] Aníbal Barrios Pintos, *El origen luso-brasileño de la ciudad de Salto* (Montevideo: n.e., 1968).

[67] Interview with Carlos Texeira.

[68] Among the various family names, there are the following: Pereira (Perera), Ferreira, Teixeira (Texeira, Tejera, Tejeira, Techera, Techeira), Pinto (Pintos), Motta, Araújo, Da Costa (Costa, Acosta), Da Cunha (Acuña, Da Cunda), Magalhães (Magallanes), Oliveira (Olivera), Almeida, Alves (Alvez), Pires (Piriz), Amorim (Amorín), Gonçalves (Goncalvez), Amaro, Moreira, Coelho (Cuello), Farinha, Barros, Carbalho (Carballo), Da Cruz, Da Silva, Silveira, Ferreira, Da Rosa, De Lima, De Souza (Sosa), Dos Santos, Dutra, Brum, Salgado, Trindade, etc.

250 people, most of whom over sixty years old, whose leading group gather informally in the absence of a standing meeting place. Most members are farmers living in the surroundings of the city, although there are also a few entrepreneurs and professionals, and the majority descend from Portuguese who came from a few villages in the area of Porto (Penafiel, Vale de Sousa, and Entre-os-Rios).

As in Montevideo, the proclaimed goals of the association are the reunion of the Portuguese and their descendants through recreational and cultural activities. One of the central purposes of its existence is the building up and management of the Portuguese mausoleum in the local cemetery, which is not only a motive of collective pride but also the main reason to seek membership with the association. The instrumental nature of this motivation is criticized, albeit in a complacent manner, by the current leadership, who oppose such attitude to their deep feelings regarding their Portuguese roots. Disaffection is not surprising if one takes into account that, with rare exceptions, none of these people speak Portuguese and only a few keep contact with Portugal. For many of the interviewees, Portugal became progressively a distant reality, although symbolically strong, due to the weakening of ties and communication with the family remaining in the country. Another explanation for the relative difficulty in associative mobilization is provided by Carlos Texeira, one of the leaders in the re-foundation of the *Casa de Portugal*, a descendant of Portuguese, and an amateur historian: "Here, immigrant associations were never strong because Uruguay is a very open country. So ... between the Uruguayan and the foreigner there is no difference".[69]

However, when Portuguese associative dynamics are compared with those of other national origins, differences are sometimes underlined as relating to the varying social and economic status of migrants:

R: These human groups gathered around two very important things in life: health and death. That explains the mausoleum and the mutual aid societies. So, there is an Italian association which still has a big mausoleum, its activities and premises. The French society had it but does not any longer; they became too integrated ...[70]

P: ¿More than the Portuguese?

R: The Portuguese integrated fine, but maybe not so much as the French because the French did not go to the *chacra* [farm] ... . What I mean is ...

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[69] Carlos Teixeira, Salto.
[70] Juan Manuel A., Salto.

maybe the resources the French had allowed them other type of things ... . People who came with their possessions and wealth. ... Not as the Portuguese. These people came very humble ... . (Juan Manuel A., Salto).

More than the very existence of the association, it is striking the degree to which many of these people feel Portuguese even without speaking the language or having ever been to Portugal. This happens both in Montevideo and in Salto, where it is more salient due to the remote Portuguese origins of the community. Also amazing is the level of material and emotional involvement of the community in certain of the association's initiatives. The baptizing of a rural school in a formerly "Portuguese" area in the surroundings of Salto as *Escola de Portugal*, which took place in 2005, may be considered paradigmatic. The authorization for the renaming of the school came after a long process of bureaucratic proceedings, involving not only the leadership of the association and a number of its members but also liaison people in Montevideo and even the school teacher. Her report on the preparation of the whole process,[71] which included surveys to the parents of the students, data collection on the Portuguese presence in the area, collection of old documents, photos and family stories through interviews, is illustrative of a collective process of identity building at work. The ceremony of inauguration of the school was another touching moment, since the feast was prepared several months in advance in a very detailed manner, from the choice of food to the typical Portuguese dances (performed by the *rancho* of Montevideo), the theater performance of the school children, the decoration, the speeches of the oldest Portuguese, and the presence of the authorities. However, the whole process entailed paradoxical consequences, such as the fact that, according to the Uruguayan law, the renaming of the school requires that in official ceremonies both the national anthems of Uruguay and Portugal be sung. This forced the association to search for the music and words of the Portuguese anthem, with no guarantee that someone would be able to sing it. Likewise, a collection of books offered by the Portuguese authorities and institutions remains at the school with an uncertain future, regarded mostly as museum pieces with no practical utility.

The case of Salto shows how associative dynamics may foster the mobilization of an ethnic collective identity, but it also highlights the paradoxes involved in such reconstruction.

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[71] Group interview and informal meeting at the *Escola de Portugal* in January 2005.

Discussion and Conclusions

The cases analyzed above lead us back to the role that immigrant associations may play regarding the tensions between ethnicization and assimilation as modalities of integration. The available information is consistent with the idea that, at present, the mobilization of cultural frames and identity markers from the home country through associational practices does not necessarily promote ethnicization processes, as it is not aimed at establishing particularities, emphasizing contrasts or establishing distances. In the cases we study, the activation of identities from the country of origin has not had ethnicizing goals—or effects. On the contrary, it seems to work as an effective resource for integration in the host society through the promotion of open social networks rather than isolation or closure within the original community. A reason for this pattern can be found in the interaction between the three dimensions described above: characteristics of the flows, immigration policies, and social reactions in the host country.

From an historical perspective, one would have expected to find a tendency towards ethnicization due to the salience of the in formal anchorage of migratory networks. However, these networks, which were crucial while the migration flows were active, lost relevance thereafter. This was due to a number of factors: 1) the interruption of the flows, 2) the reconceptualization of the individual migration/life projects from temporary to definitive and, above all, 3) the generalized upward mobility of a large majority of the immigrants. These factors converged to dilute potential ethnicizing tendencies. The cases of Greater Buenos Aires, and even more those of Uruguay, show how the dilution of initial networks was related to growing integration into the local and national societies, favored by conditions related to the other two dimensions: immigration policies and social reactions.

As already noted, immigration policies have been liberal and non-restrictive in the cases of Argentina and Uruguay; but also in Brazil, where restrictions and a more selective immigration policy were in place, the Portuguese usually escaped such limitations and received a more favorable treatment. These conditions have probably inhibited "communitarian" integration strategies, which is visible in the nature of the associations. None of those encompassed by this study was constructed as, or reoriented towards, an interest intermediation organization, nor did they aim at representing the immigrants within the new societies. Henceforth, they have

largely avoided the politicization of their activities. This is also true in southern Brazil, even if an intense identity politics can be found at work there. In general, though, the associations mostly perform "internal" functions of an expressive rather than political nature.

Regarding social reactions, the dominant pattern has been the absence of negative, stereotypical and stigmatizing processes vis-à-vis the Portuguese. This said, the case of southern Brazil presents some peculiarities. In Rio Grande do Sul, the Portuguese nurture their identity in relation to, and amongst other, national communities. Threatened, on the one hand, by a negative image associated to the colonizer and, on the other, by a strong presence of other communities, they try to enhance their visibility by mobilizing the (positive) distinction of the Azorean element in the history of the state and in the gaucho's identity. This process has been fostered and legitimized through policies developed by the Azorean government.

In any case, despite the existence of hierarchies and asymmetric categorizations of national ethnic groups, our interviews show that the Portuguese do not feel discriminated;[72] quite to the contrary, and especially in Argentina and Uruguay, they stress the openness of the host societies. Besides, their self-image as honest and working people—a powerful symbolic construction in the three countries—fits the image that the host societies have of the Portuguese. This coincidence between self-identity and attributed identity gives stability to the collective referentials of the Portuguese in the region. In this context, the mechanism of social reaction loses explanatory power. It would probably acquire more relevance in host societies with clearer non-migrant interaction frames, where the presence of migrant minorities might be perceived as threatening and subject to hostile reactions. In the Plata region, the social contexts where the Portuguese integrated were rather open and constituted by a diversity of groups of various national and ethnic origins. Even when power hierarchies were powerful between those groups, as in the case of southern Brazil, they do not seem to have produced discrimination that could foster defensive, ethnicizing reactions among the Portuguese. On the contrary, their associations have developed a distinctive kind of ritual ethnicization that allows them to come closer to normative and culturally dominant integration patterns. In other words, the strategy of being different to be equal or being special to belong has predominated in societies where cultural

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[72] The list of interviewees included people with and without membership in associations.

diversity is not only a valued feature but also a central characteristic of the social structure.