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Submitted

December 9th, 2022

Approved

April 12th, 2023

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Communication & Society

ISSN 0214-0039

E ISSN 2386-7876

doi: 10.15581/003.36.3.71-86

www.communication-society.com

2023 – Vol. 36(3)

pp. 71-86

How to cite this article:

Pena-Rodríguez, A. & Sanz-

Hernando, C. (2023). "A daring

feat": pioneering women directors

of the Portuguese press in the

United States - historical and socio-

symbolic aspects, *Communication &*

Society, 36(3), 71-86.

“A daring feat”: pioneering women directors of the Portuguese press in the United States - historical and socio-symbolic aspects

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to give greater visibility to the female immigrant journalists who pioneered Portuguese newspapers within the United States. It also contributes to the restoration of their collective memories, lending special attention to some socially significant moments of symbolic value, so as to understand their remarkable roles within the Portuguese-American press. Their stories reveal the efforts of these women who strove to make a career in the world of journalism, and their determination and dignity, despite their socio-cultural origins from immigrant communities with rural roots, mostly in the Azores Islands. The male-dominated society of both the Portuguese diaspora and the USA meant that the inherent discrimination of cultural and social stereotyping relegated female roles to positions of inferiority and submission. Expected to forego higher education, they were often pushed into low-skilled jobs, even while caring for children and working as housewives. Through a qualitative methodology, based on the scarce few available archival resources, the lives of women who worked as editors of the Portuguese press in the United States are set in an historical perspective. Finally, the most representative aspects are presented of two of the most singular and paradigmatic pioneers of Portuguese journalism in the United States, Laurinda C.

Andrade and Mary Nunes Silveira, respectively, the editors of *A Tribuna Portuguesa* (New Jersey) and the *Jornal Português* (California), through a discussion of their biographies and their professional careers.

Keywords

Journalism, press history, Portuguese immigration, women, United States.

1. Introduction

There are increasing numbers of monographic studies on the visibility of women and their professional situations, both globally and in specialized areas, in the world of media communications and media representations of women (see Ross, 2020; Byerny, 2013). However, important gaps remain in the identification of referential cases, biographical studies, and the construction of historical critical perspectives that record the experiences of women working in the media, especially the pioneering women who, in different cross-cultural processes, overturned pre-established molds. In fact, the role of women is very often

overlooked in specialized publications on communication and migration, which is the field of this work (e.g., Smets *et al.*, 2019).

In the United States, there is a wealth of studies on the history of women journalists in the press as producers of information and creators of unique narrative styles. The careers of some pioneering professionals are acknowledged and analyzed in the works of Beasley and Gibbons (1977 and 2002), Chambers, Steinmer and Fleming (2004), and Chambers (2020), and Beasley (2020), among many others. Their books provide fundamental knowledge that restore the professional memory of women who have played significant roles within different areas of the communications media. However, attention is rarely paid to the female journalists who formed part of intercultural groups, immigrants, with no links to elites, low social classes, and with social stigmas. In this context, although it is not the purpose of this paper to reflect on one or another feminist theory, it is relevant to consider the concept of “intersectionality” (a word that Kimberle Crenshaw imbued with new meaning in 1989) that some authors developed to understand the intersections between the structural identities of race, class, gender, and sexuality (Cooper, 2015).

The life and professional careers of these less-than visible women and their contribution to the normalization of women who bring alternative discourses and audiences to their work within the media is also part of the same emancipatory process. They are not subject to the canons of conventional narrative that have dominated the thought processes of contemporary journalism, even if their voices carry echoes of peripheral settings within the public sphere and mainstream discourse (see Budarick & Han, 2017; Cargauh, 2017; Cormack & Hourigan, 2007). Achieving the “American dream”¹ through their work as journalists was for these women a challenge of epic dimensions in a transnational media context, with enormously complex dynamics, both in its diversity and its representations (Luther, Lepre & Clark, 2018).

In this particular aspect, those women stand out. For the first time in history and in a disruptive manner for the patriarchal mentality ingrained in certain social minorities, they assumed leadership roles that placed them in a position of authority in strongly masculinized workspaces. Environments where at different times and in various cultural frameworks sex discrimination, marginalization, and sexual harassment of women in the workplace have festered (Beasley, 2020; Sanz-Hernando & Lima, 2021).

As happened in many other fields in the United States, despite the distrust, suspicion and doubt that their condition as women might evoke, some held managerial positions within media newsrooms with minority or marginalized audiences. One of the least studied historical contexts of media studies is linked to the women who formed part of strongly stigmatized minorities confronting racial, cultural, linguistic, economic, and social prejudice and stereotyping. They had to overcome the barriers that women journalists faced and they had to contribute to the legitimization of women gaining qualifications for professional purposes. Little by little, their insertion in qualified work became more commonplace and positive social perceptions then ensued (Vandenbergh, d’Haenens & van Gorp, 2017).

One of the most unique and heroic cases concerns the first black women journalists who practiced in America, whose history dates back to the beginnings of the African-American press. The first newspaper, founded in 1827, was *Freedom’s Journal*, before the end of slavery in the United States. Under this sort of journalistic masthead of a title, black women behaved as authentic “heroines,” helping the black community to understand not only “who they were and what they aspired to be” (Millet, 2019), but, literally, working to change the course of history (Streitmatter, 1994).

¹ The “American Dream” is a concept that refers to a high degree of material prosperity that can be obtained through hard work in a system that provides equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of parentage and national origin, which implies success based on the hard work of the individual, and promotes the attainment of self-fulfillment through a life lived out in freedom. The term “American dream” was coined by James Truslow Adams in his book *The Epic of America* (1931), reedited by Routledge (2012).

In the historical evolution of minority communities living in the United States, there are extraordinary examples of respected women journalists who hail from diverse backgrounds. These women were confronted with the constraints of racism, poverty, lack of education, traditional family expectations, etc. They often originated from rural areas with atavistic moral values and social prejudices, but with the ambition to overcome their personal, cultural and gender barriers to work in the press at the service of their community.

Framed within the above reflections, the primary objective of this paper is to look at some biographical-professional features during the careers of pioneering immigrant newspaper editors who contributed to the history of Portuguese journalism in the United States. These stories are of women whose effort, self-improvement, and dignity when practicing their journalism overcame the limitations of an immigrant community, as well as the cultural stereotyping and the prevailing code of social values in the male-dominated society of the times. Both in many Lusophone and Anglo-Saxon communities where women were expected to forego higher education, and were pushed into low-skilled jobs while working as housewives and caring for children.

Some Portuguese immigrants managed to practice journalism and attained leadership roles at newspapers, despite the adverse circumstances of a world in which women experienced enormous difficulty in gaining influence. Access to positions of responsibility in certain areas of employment, especially intellectual ones, was constrained, due to traditional forms of social discrimination that limited their socio-educational and employment opportunities (Beasley, 2020).

From the 1920s onwards, the first women editors and editors-in-chief of some newspapers and radio stations were appointed, which served to visibilize the professional roles of immigrant women beyond routine unskilled jobs in factories and stores and the work of housekeeping. Framed within the history of the Portuguese press in the United States (see Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a), two women are particularly noteworthy whose great effort and eagerness to excel led them to work as professional journalists at the service of the Portuguese-American community: Laurinda C. Andrade and Mary Nunes Silveira, respectively, the editors of *A Tribuna Portuguesa* (New Jersey) and *Jornal Português* (California).

2. Methodology and research sources

An essentially descriptive-analytical methodology coupled with qualitative interpretation techniques are applied in this study. It is based on scattered bibliographic and documentary resources, mainly verbal and written references of a newsworthy, episodic, and anecdotal nature that provide insight into the professional activity of women selected from the few Portuguese-American newspaper archives. As Daniel (2019) underlined in his study on ethnic press archives held in the United States, the conservation of this type of historical newspaper, the limited access to this generally ephemeral type of publication, and its reduced distribution within its respective communities present several difficulties for researchers. Hence, the limitations of this work when offering a panoramic view of the female role in the history of the Portuguese-American press.

The first step was to compile an exhaustive catalogue of all newspapers that Portuguese immigrants to the US had established, based on existing records at the Library of Congress and the Widener Library at Harvard University. Indirectly, we also catalogued numerous headers identified through searches for related content in archived copies of those newspapers. Having drawn up a general overview, we began the search for the few copies of newspapers (the vast majority of which have disappeared) in different archives in Portugal and the United States, including the archive of the Portuguese embassy at Washington.

The study is focused on two representative cases, so as to throw light on the women who pioneered Portuguese journalism in North America: Laurinda C. Andrade, director of the weekly *A Tribuna* in Newark (New Jersey) in 1933, and Mary Nunes Silveira, who was the owner

and assumed various managerial functions, between 1932 and 1957, at the weekly newspaper *Jornal Português*, in Oakland (California). Both women represented, like few others, female success in the journalistic world of the Portuguese diaspora.

In no way is this study presenting a content or discourse-based analysis of the newspaper articles of the two above-mentioned journalists (among other reasons, because none of their works have been found in the few newspaper records that were analyzed). Instead, the idea is to approach their role as newspaper directors from a socio-symbolic perspective, paying special attention to representative and to significant biographical moments and circumstances which shed light on the singularity of their professional careers. There is, therefore, no analysis in this study of news items or other journalistic writings of the protagonists, all the more so as no articles signed with their names have been found in the copies of newspapers analyzed in the corresponding archives, even though it is known that Laurinda C. Andrade could be the unnamed author of various newspaper editorials.

The sample is based, essentially, on the indirect and incomplete references that appear in the press and other works, such as Laurinda C. Andrade’s own autobiography. The selection of the two individual cases was fundamentally due to their pioneering journalism, their rich and unique lives, and their professional experience, as well as their level of responsibility and their leadership in the editorial offices of newspapers serving the Portuguese immigrant community of the United States.

A general critical study of Portuguese-American journalistic production was developed. In addition, a theoretical foundation of the ethnic press in the United States, was established. Our aim was to approach this matter, based on data extracted from consultations in several archives and libraries in the United States and Portugal, where some (scarce few) copies of these newspapers are archived: the Ferreira Mendes Portuguese-American Archives, at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, the Freitas Library of the Portuguese Fraternal Society of America, the Library of Congress, the Widener Library, the National Archive Torre do Tombo, and the Diplomatic Historical Archive of Lisbon, where the archives of the Portuguese embassy and consulates in the United States are held. Searching these institutional archives yielded results with which to compile a catalog consisting of 167 Portuguese-American newspapers (most quite short-lived), in which the presence of 12 women in managerial positions was noted, 8 of whom worked in periods prior to the first half of the 20th century, as can be seen in the following table drawn from scattered newspaper sources.

Table 1. Women with Major Roles in the Portuguese-American Press.

Name	Place of Origin	Publication and place of edition	Period	Role
Virginia C. Escobar	-	<i>Jornal das Damas</i> (New Bedford, Massachusetts)	1919	Founder and editor
M. G. Rose	-	<i>A Colônia Portuguesa</i> (Oakland, California)	1924-?	Director of the edition at Tulare and Kings
Mary (Maria) Aurora Silva	-	<i>O Progresso</i> (Sacramento, California)	1932-1940	Manager and editor
Celeste Alice dos Santos	Trás-os-Montes	<i>Rose and Albert Magazine</i> (Oakland, California)	1933-1934	Co-owner and co-editor with her husband, Arthur Vieira Ávila
		<i>O Clarim</i> (Alameda and Oakland, California)	1934-1935	
Laurinda C. Andrade	Terceira, Azores	<i>A Tribuna Portuguesa</i> (Newark, New Jersey)	1933	Director and editor. She left the newspaper to be the secretary of the new ambassador of Portugal.
Louisa S. Trigueiro and Ângela B. Trigueiro	(Cal.)	<i>A União Portuguesa</i> (San Francisco, California)	1940-1942	Director-owners, daughters of Manuel de Freitas Martins Trigueiro
Mary (Maria) B. Nunes Silveira	Cholame, (Cal.)	<i>O Jornal Português</i> (Oakland, California)	1944-1957	Director, owner and manager
Carolina Matos	-	<i>The Portuguese-American</i> (Providence and Bristol, Rhode Island)	1985-1995	Editor and owner with her husband José Baptista
Filomena Rocha Mendes	-	<i>A Tribuna Portuguesa</i> (San Jose and Modesto, California)	1993-1994	Director
Maria Carmen Odom	-	<i>Portuguese-American Chronicle</i> (Tracy, California)	1996-2006	Editor
		<i>Lusitânia News</i> (Tracy, California)	2006-?	
Lurdes C. da Silva	-	<i>O Jornal</i> (Fall River, Massachusetts)	2006-today	Editor

Source: Own elaboration based on data scattered from periodical sources.

Among them all, the focus of the paper is on the two women who best fit the profile of women directors or publishers of general information media. In addition to a varied list of specialized bibliographical references, the autobiography of Laurinda de Andrade, *The Open Door* (1968), is considered of great importance. Cited in Luso-American literature as a cultural reference by such authors as Fagundes (2010) and Meireles (1994), whose studies highlighted the identity and the emancipatory dimension of the story from a sociological or literary perspective, but overlooked the importance of her journalistic experience in her testimony.

The first woman editor-in-chief in Portuguese was Virginia C. Escobar, who founded a magazine in New Bedford, in 1919, and edited it for an exclusively female audience entitled *Jornal das Damas* [The Ladies' Magazine], which was advertised as a newspaper that “will contain beautiful short stories, novels, and splendid engravings on fine paper” (*Alvorada Diária*, 2 July 1919). Later, in 1924, M. G. Rose became the director of the Tulare and Kings County edition of the Oakland (California) weekly *A Colônia Portuguesa*. Both cases marked

the beginning of the incorporation of women in managerial positions in the field of journalistic production in the Portuguese-American community.

Some of them, such as Mary Nunes Silveira, Celeste Santos, and Carolina Matos founded newspapers with their husbands and held managerial positions in them. Others, such as Louise and Ângela S. Trigueiro, became owners and publishers after having inherited their father's newspaper company. Most of these pioneers lacked higher education and belonged to families of Azorean origin, consistent with the majority presence of Portuguese immigrants from the Azores archipelago in the United States (Holton & Klimt, 2009; Vicente, 1998).

As regards the presence of men on the newspaper boards of management, it was found that most of them could be grouped according to the following profiles: editors-typographers, formed of immigrant typographers who edited the newspapers with very limited contents; editor-entrepreneurs, who printed publications to promote their businesses in other sectors; political and intellectual editors, whose newspapers furthered a particular doctrine; editors-priests, who published newspapers with a religious and mainly Catholic editorial line, and the self-made director whose passionate journalistic vocation had guided an outstanding media career.

Among the most characteristic general features, many newspapers were small family-run businesses in which the publisher, owner, director, editor, editor-in-chief, administrator, and printer could be the same person or, in some cases, immigrant couples or families. At the outset, it was common among typographers to publish humble mastheads to get some extra income through advertisements. This was the case of João Maria Vicente, who, with the help of his son António, edited *O Jornal de Notícias* (1877-1884) in Erie (Pennsylvania), the first Portuguese-language newspaper in the United States on record. Little by little, news production in the Portuguese language expanded to other states, mainly in New England and California, where the projects were increasingly ambitious, professional, and long-lasting, as occurred, among others, with the weeklies *A União Portuguesa* (San Francisco, California, 1887-1942), *O Independente* (New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1897-1945), *Diário de Notícias* (New Bedford, Mass., 1927-1973), and the aforementioned *Jornal Português* (1932-1997).

3. Theoretical framework of the research

3.1. *The activities of the allophone immigrant press in the United States*

Generally, immigrant journalism in the American scientific literature is associated with the concepts of “ethnic press,” “ethnic media,” and “ethnic journalism” (see, among others, Jamil & Gladkova, 2021; Ogunyemi, 2015; and Viswanath & Arora, 2000). It is a type of delocalized and transnational social communication, often allophone or foreign-language in nature, which has been of remarkable relevance throughout U.S. history (Budarick & Han, 2017; Rhodes, 2010). However, studies on issues related to women and minorities in ethnic media have primarily been focused on aspects that address media representation and discourse (see, among others, Vandenberghe, d’Haenens & van Gorp, 2017; Yu, 2015).

Rather than a marginal activity with a low impact within American society, there are numerous examples of foreign language media that illustrate the extent to which the diverse approaches and methods of this type of press became important sociopolitical forces throughout different historical periods within different communities (García Galindo & López Romero, 2018; Rhodes, 2010; Karim, 2006). Among the generalist studies and books on the matter, Sally M. Miller (1987) edited a compilation of 27 ethnic press histories that is certainly of interest. It offers a panorama of each minority press serving its own minority community, including Arab, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, German, Japanese, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, and Russian newspapers, the penultimate analyzed by Leo Pap.

Newspapers were for many immigrants a vital link with their community, their country of origin, and the United States. One of the first functions of the so-called “ethnic press” in the American scientific literature was to educate immigrants in their various roles as American citizens, providing them with information on their countries of origin and promoting political causes. Its functions adapted to the needs of the populations as their relationship with English, for example, changed. As new generations of immigrant families were born in North America, their offspring were schooled in English, and the increase in readership in the local language led many ethnic newspapers to offer bilingual content (Almeida, 2010).

The ethnic press always tried to find a complementary market niche, publishing news that might otherwise be unavailable in the local American press, particularly news related to the country of origin of immigrant communities, news on immigration and naturalization policies, and public events within the colony, etc. (Rhodes 2010, pp. 54-56). Historically, in addition to offering interesting data and information for life as an immigrant, they stimulated both cultural and spiritual processes of identification needed to integrate in these new and unfamiliar socio-cultural environments (Viswanath & Arora 2000, p. 47). In this way, the allophone press helped to develop and to consolidate a kind of “imagined community,” with its own socio-economic structure and national sentiment, as theorized by Anderson (2006).

In the past, most newspapers were founded with resources, sometimes related to banking entities or shipping agents, as was the case of the Portuguese businessman based in New Bedford, Guilherme Machado Luiz, the founder of two newspapers: *Alvorada* (1919-1926) and *Diario de Noticias* (1927-1973). Other publishers relied on the support of associative, fraternal, political, and religious entities to promote their publishing projects successfully. The Portuguese-American community also had its priest-publishers, among whom Father Joseph Cacella, the founder and publisher of *O Portugal* (1929-1934) and *A Luta* (1936-1970?) in New York City, stood out (Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a, pp. 131-142).

The business of allophone journalism depended heavily on the composition of the local community. Finding readers was easy in urban areas when immigrants were concentrated in small towns. But if the immigrant communities were dispersed or not very numerous, promotion and distribution soon became too expensive, and advertisements, which financed each edition were scarcer (Rhodes, 2010, p. 67). Moreover, the emergence of the radio significantly reduced newspaper advertising, complicating the economic survival of many newspapers (Pena-Rodríguez, 2020b, pp. 158-160). For these reasons, many newspapers were short-lived or had irregular periodicity. Moreover, illiteracy was common among the first waves of immigrants throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which further complicated the attraction and retention of new readers, so that each new edition might be sustainable (Zubricky, 1958, p. 79).

The essential causes driving the launch of newspapers and journalism within immigrant communities living in the United States were essentially threefold: the need to read news and information on their country of origin, to feel links with their roots, and to nourish the emotional bond with their land; the desire to affirm their cultural identity and language in a new environment, where they were unfamiliar with local customs and language; and their function as a public service to report on the life of the colony, and to help to integrate immigrants in the new world (Park, 1922, p. 87). The consequences of its existence were also various. This type of press stimulated a real sense of community among the members of each immigrant nucleus, contributed to their economic and cultural dynamization, increased their political influence and participation, fostered the development of community projects, and was an important agent in their education, orientation, and social integration (Rhodes, 2010, pp. 37-42).

In terms of content, there are specific studies on the newspapers launched by and for immigrant communities within the United States that reveal several common themes.

According to the findings of the work of J. Zubrzycki (1958), there are five themes that tend to be repeated: information on the host country, international news, news on their own community, news on their country of origin, and the editorials that expressed the opinion of the newspaper and its editors on a particular topic. However, although there are logical similarities, there are notable differences between all of them, based on a series of key elements.

On the one hand, lexical options are a determining factor, which establish fundamental categories for any characterization of the ethnic press. The choice of one word or another conditions the interpretation of the text, evoking different lines of thought. On the other hand, the cultural structure of the emigrant community influences the narration of facts, the choice of what to report and how to report it. The idiosyncrasy of each society, based on cultural traditions and the ideological structure of its imaginary, conditions the informative discourse. The construction of the journalistic narrative is also influenced by the type of publication, the audience, and the intentionality of the editor in relation to the event that is reported. The *weltanschauung* of each newspaper, within its respective immigrant community, is unique. Its own version of reality, its reality in the North American universe, offers a singular perspective with which social dynamics outside the dominant local culture may be understood. It also reflects the level of influence of a community in political and socio-economic contexts (Rhodes, 2010, p. 49).

3.2. Brief contextualization on the Portuguese-American Journalism

Since the founding of *O Jornal de Noticias* of Erie in 1877, Portuguese immigrants to North America have turned journalism into a professional opportunity to achieve their own particular “American dream.” Identifying and knowing the professional careers and the biographies of the newspaper editors and directors behind a newspaper is relevant, not only to construct a history of Portuguese journalism (among both men and women), but also to picture the specific circumstances within the context of migratory flows that prompted the immigrants to promote their own style of journalism, generally in unconventional formats and styles (Pena-Rodríguez & Hohlfeldt, 2021).

Regardless of gender, the newspapers that Portuguese immigrants founded in the United States are the most faithful radiography of the diaspora and its idiosyncrasy. The study of this type of journalism reveals an honest self-affirmation in which the political, social, linguistic, cultural, and economic realities of the Portuguese in North American territory may be observed: their views on themselves and their role as immigrants and citizens of the United States; their opinion of Portugal and its successive governments; the way they lived out their cultural traditions; their relations with other immigrant communities and the dominant local culture; their defense of their rights and their way of life; their representations of a cultural identity and its promotion and their feelings of patriotism; the creation of their own imaginary; in short, their own construction of the American dream. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the Portuguese-American press is reflected in the following aspects: 1) It was mainly the work of immigrants from the Azores archipelago. 2) Its contents, therefore, showed a special interest in information related to Azorean affairs. 3) The migratory concentration of Portuguese communities in Massachusetts, California, and Hawaii (between 1890 and 1927) meant that the Portuguese-American press had a greater presence in those areas (Knowlton, 1960; Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a).

A quantitative observation in comparison with other immigrant minorities is also necessary, in order to perceive its true historical dimension. The non-English language press was at its height during the period of mass emigration from Europe to the US, between 1890 and 1930, when more than 22 million people sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, most of whom disembarked at the ports of New York and San Francisco (Park, 1922). In 1910, according to the *N.W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (1909), there were more than

1,300 non-English language newspapers in as many as 30 different languages, of which 12 were in Portuguese. In total, adding up all the allophone newspapers, of which 150 were daily, their estimated circulation might have been around 2.6 million copies. There were at least 167 newspapers serving the Portuguese community, most of which were short-lived (43 lasted less than a year, although 5 lasted for over half a century), and were published in different states and cities. In all, 135 were published between 1900 and 1930 (Pena-Rodríguez 2020a, pp. 263-269).

The study of the journalism of Portuguese immigrants to the United States has attracted little interest. Among the first researchers from an interdisciplinary viewpoint, Leo Pap (1987) provided a brief overview of the historical evolution of the Portuguese press that was part of a compendium of papers on the political function of this type of press in California between 1888 and 1928, edited by Miller, and Geoffrey L. Gomes (1995). There have been other more recent approaches, but none have addressed the role of Portuguese women (Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a; La Pastina, Pavão & Sousa, 2017).

4. Pioneering women directors of Portuguese-American newspaper in the United States

Two of the most significant and symbolic examples of pioneering women editors and directors in the history of the Portuguese-American press and journalism were Laurinda C. Andrade (1899-1980) and Mary Nunes da Silveira (1886-1960), as explained in the Introduction on the methodology behind this study.

4.1. Laurinda C. Andrade, the courage of solitude

The journalist Laurinda C. Andrade arrived alone in the United States, after her parents had booked her trans-Atlantic passage on a ship, so that she could seek a better future than the one that was awaiting her on Terceira Island (Azores). She had left at the age of 17. Her autobiography, *The Open Door* (1968), sheds light on her personal life and professional career. It is an intimate account of the enormous difficulties she experienced as an immigrant in North America. Her personal testimony recounts a daring story of her perseverance, determination, and commitment to the Portuguese culture and community in the United States and how she overcame difficulties (Meireles, 1994)². Her emancipatory history earned her the reputation of being the “first Portuguese feminist in America” (Fagundes, 2010, p. 17).

From 1917 to early 1924, Laurinda C. Andrade worked in the textile industry in New Bedford, occupying different positions in the Old City Mill, Acushnet Mill, Sharp Mill and Booth Mill. Rather than resign herself to survival as an immigrant mill worker with no other aspirations, she decided to invest all the savings accumulated during several years of work in studying for higher education, so as to improve her working conditions, and to climb the social ladder. After an arduous journey, full of difficulties in which her loneliness and her stigmas, both as an immigrant and as a woman, forged her resilient and courageous character, she managed to get a degree in Liberal Arts from Brown University. She would eventually achieve her American dream by becoming the founder of the first Portuguese language high-school department in the United States, at New Bedford High School (Massachusetts).

After graduating, Andrade was hired as director of *A Tribuna*, in Newark (New Jersey), between April and December 1933. *A Tribuna* was an illustrated weekly newspaper of general information with a tabloid format that was distributed among the immigrant communities of the East Coast of the United States, with a special presence in the states of New England, New York, and New Jersey.

² Also, see the website *Lighting the way: Historic Women in the SouthCoast*.
<https://historicwomensouthcoast.org/laurinda-c-andrade/>.

The newspaper had been founded by an Italian typographer, Joseph Merola, in Newark on July 2, 1931. It was launched with old linotypes purchased from António Fortes, a former owner of *O Independente* in New Bedford. Merola also hired the former linotypist of *O Independente*, Delfina Sousa, and Gil Stone as an editor and a director, respectively. When Merola moved to Paterson, NJ, he sold the newspaper to a company owned by Luis Gomes, Gil Stone, José Alves Rodrigues, and António Pires, though it only lasted another month (Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a, p. 237). During those years of the Great Depression, according to Vasco S. Jardim “neither Bianchi’s (the ambassador in Washington) money, nor Verdades’ (consul Portugal of New York), or even that of a Ford would have been enough” to keep it afloat (*Luso-Americano*, 1 November 1989). One of the goals of *A Tribuna* was to raise awareness about the culture, commerce, and industry of Portugal in the United States, which, according to an editorial of March 15, 1934, could be done through greater investment in advertising by the Portuguese authorities (*A Tribuna*, 15 March 1934, p. 6).

According to Laurinda C. Andrade’s biographical account, when she met the owner of the newspaper, the Italian-born typographer Joseph Merola, with whom she had a job interview after a series of personal setbacks in New York, the owner of the weekly newspaper offered her the position with the following words: “I want to give you a break; I know that college degrees don’t come easy, I earned one. The hours will be long and the pay small to start, but \$10 a week is better than nothing” (Andrade, 1968, p. 162). According to Andrade, Merola used the occasion to dismiss the previous director, Gil Stone, who had repeatedly asked him for a pay raise (Andrade 1968, pp. 162–163).

During her eight months as head of *A Tribuna*, Andrade had to overcome the adversity of managing an all-male editorial staff and a lack of resources for publishing the newspaper on a regular basis. She used the psychological and emotional techniques that she considered most appropriate to adapt to the patriarchal environment without producing a collective “trauma,” in an effort to gain the respect and to win over the trust of her male colleagues. Her very enlightening story was undoubtedly quite common among other women in the same situation. If we are to understand it, we must understand how the work environment conditioned her attitude as a director, in which she showed high levels of receptivity and a submissive attitude, so as to create a pleasant climate in such a masculinized atmosphere, and to avoid dissonances that might lead them to question her leadership, because of her condition as a woman:

[...] Invading the field of journalism was a daring feat, unlikely to be accepted without trauma by the so-called superior sex. A woman editor had to be an oddity. (...) My first efforts were all directed at establishing a friendly relationship with my co-workers, by asking questions, soliciting advice and showing sincere appreciation. In the pressroom was my landlady, on whose support I could depend [...] (Andrade, 1968, pp. 164–165).

During her time as the director, Laurinda C. Andrade applied large doses of humility and received the help of all those around her with a certain paternalism, which she knew how to manage with intelligence: “[...] I have been accepted, on my own terms, in a community dominated by masculine minds rooted in the civilizations of the Iberian Peninsula [...]” (Andrade, 1968, p. 168). Thus, little by little, she discovered new aspects and techniques to develop her professional functions beyond the conditioning factors related to gender. She found out, for example, that the most difficult and most important thing was to draft a good editorial, one of the contents most read by her readers, mostly men: “[...] The importance attached to the editorial opened my eyes. That was the feature destined to make or break the image of the new director. I proceeded to sound out my advisors, asking for suggestions as to fitting topics with which to introduce myself in that open market to my scattered readers [...]” (Andrade, 1968, p. 165).

Joseph Merola preferred not to publish Laurinda’s name in the first issue that she was to edit, due to the suspicions that a female presence in the newspaper’s management might arouse among readers. However, the new director gained the respect of all, as the public response was favorable and circulation figures improved. Even her colleagues at *El Heraldo Español*, who were based near *A Tribuna Portuguesa*, hired her to do editorials leaving aside their masculine pride: “[...] I saw the day when my Spanish colleague sacrificed his proud ‘hombria’ to translate one of my editorials which was to appear in his ‘El Heraldo’ [...]” (Andrade, 1968, p. 168).

Her interdisciplinary training meant that she was early to adapt to journalistic routines, applying a self-taught apprenticeship that was inspired in the narrative style of *The New York Times*, a sort of role model for her (Andrade, 1968, p. 167). Despite her low pay, her journalistic success was not to go unnoticed. The College Club of New Bedford, the institution to which Laurinda C. Andrade still owed \$550 from a loan for her studies, sent her a letter demanding immediate payment of the debt. The director of *A Tribuna* responded by explaining that her low salary was still not enough to pay off the loan that had contributed to her graduation (Andrade, 1968, p. 163).

Laurinda C. Andrade left the newspaper in December 1933 to become secretary to the new Portuguese ambassador in Washington, João António de Bianchi, all thanks to the recommendation of the Portuguese consul general in New York, Verdades de Faria. She had befriended the consul general at a New York Portuguese Club event in tribute to Alexander Lawton Mckall, the author of the *Portugal for Two* (1931), at which her speech had made a very good impression on the audience.

After her activities at the service of Portuguese diplomacy, in January 1942, she joined the New Bedford High School as a Portuguese teacher (Andrade, 1968, pp. 207-214). With the help of the editor of the *Diário de Notícias*, João Rodrigues Rocha, she founded the Portuguese Educational Society of New Bedford in September 1944 (Rodrigues Rocha, 1941). This institution contributed to educational and cultural exchange between Portugal, Brazil and the United States, launched the first Portuguese department in a High School, and granted scholarships to students from the Portuguese-American community (Andrade, 1968, pp. 215-224; *Diário de Notícias*, 23 February 1942).

Among many other initiatives, in 1950, the Portuguese Education Society with the collaboration of the Portuguese Ambassador to the United States (then Pedro Teotónio Pereira), managed to organize the first Luso-Brazilian Colloquium at the Library of Congress, in Washington, attended by students from the Portuguese colony in New Bedford. After 25 years of teaching at New Bedford High School, Laurinda retired in 1966. Her life-changing journey represented a milestone for women in the Portuguese community in the United States, for whom she was an inspiring example for the advancement of social equality and to break through female glass ceilings both in intellectual spheres and in the world of the news media.

4.2. Mary Nunes Silveira and the leadership of immigrant women among immigrants

Another singularly representative case of pioneering women in Portuguese journalism in the United States is that of Mary Nunes Silveira. However, quite unlike Laurinda C. Andrade, her biography and professional career were to weave different strands of her life together. Mary N. Silveira was born in Cholame (Monterey County, California) on July 4, 1886, she was fluent in Portuguese thanks to her parents (Fernandes, 1938) who had emigrated from the island of Flores (Azores)³.

³ For additional biographical details read: “O inesperado falecimento de Dna. Maria Nunes Silveira”. *Jornal Português*, ano 28, 2ª serie, nº 142, 13 de mayo de 1960, p. 1.

Her journalistic activity is closely linked to her husband, Pedro Laureano Claudino da Silveira, with whom she formed a professional partnership for most of her career. In 1917, they founded the *Jornal de Notícias* of San Francisco (California), where she oversaw administrative functions until its later merger with *A Colónia Portuguesa* (Oakland, 1924-1932) and *O Imparcial* (Sacramento, 1913-1932), to launch a new journalistic project for the Portuguese-Californian community. All three newspapers were aware when they merged that competition was detracting from their strength and capability to survive, due in part to the dwindling flow of new immigrants. They agreed to found a newspaper that was more solid in business terms and of higher journalistic quality, joining forces to take advantage of their synergies.

As in New England in the late 1930s, the journalistic phenomenon of the Portuguese diaspora in California underwent a process of change and transformation as a result of the economic and demographic crisis within the Portuguese community. In that context, some news companies had to reformulate their business strategy to face the new challenges. The case of the *Jornal Português* was, in that sense, paradigmatic.

Born on July 24, 1932, Mary Nunes Silveira took charge of the administration of the *Jornal Português* and the editorial staff, while managing the production of many other publications at the modern printing facilities she owned in Oakland (Corrêa, 1944).

At the outset, normalizing reader subscriptions caused no few problems for the new company, but Mary Nunes Silveira soon managed to offer, with great patience and dedication, an “almost perfect service” (Corrêa, 1944). *Jornal Português* was a newspaper that assumed the status of spokesperson for the Portuguese colony in California, especially after the disappearance of *A União Portuguesa* in 1942. It was a weekly with a conservative editorial line that offered extensive journalistic coverage of the Azores, Madeira and other parts of Portugal, as well as the Portuguese-Californian colony itself, with numerous specialized sections, some of which were pioneering.

In the 1930s, for example, Mary N. Silveira created and edited a supplement entitled *Revista Feminina* [Women’s Magazine], which published poems, literary stories, short stories and gave advice on health and beauty for a female audience. Novelistic bulletins were commonplace, and there was also a section for commentary and free articles, in which contributors who wanted to express their opinion on the concerns of immigrants were given a voice. Generally, the editorials of *Jornal Português* dealt with contemporary issues relating to Portuguese and American politics and the social and labor problems of immigrants, but its opinion sections included all kinds of matters that could be of public interest.

After the death of her husband Pedro L. C. da Silveira, Mary Nunes Silveira became the director and sole owner of the *Jornal Português* in 1944. On August 2, 1957, she decided to sell the newspaper to Alberto dos Santos Lemos (1921-2011), an immigrant who had graduated in Journalism from California State University at Hayward in 1976 (Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a, p. 327).

Like Laurinda C. Andrade, Mary Nunes Silveira had to earn respect among the almost all-male editors and contributors of the newspaper, while managing a branch of the American Trust Company bank in San Francisco. During her time as director, *Jornal Português* favored the publication of some contents specifically aimed at women or written by female collaborators, such as information on fashion, social life in the community and poems that, among other aspects, highlighted the role of immigrant mothers. She was also a member of several women’s societies in California and promoted intense philanthropic activities. In fact, she organized several charitable campaigns to assist the neediest immigrants and for other social causes in the Azores, Brazil, and Portugal through the *Jornal Português* (*Jornal Português*, special issue, 1938).

In keeping with her Catholic faith and commitment to Portuguese culture, Mary N. Silveira also raised funds for the creation of a monument dedicated to Christ the King in California and the acquisition by the Portuguese government of the historic Condes de Almada Palace, in Lisbon, today known as the Palace of Independence (see *Jornal Português*,

September 21, 1936). All these initiatives made her one of the most popular people in the Portuguese-Californian community. In fact, in 1955, on her retirement, she received a public tribute in which consular authorities and several Portuguese organizations participated (*Jornal Português*, May 27, 1955). Mary Nunes Silveira passed away on May 9, 1960. Her death moved many of the readers of *Jornal Português* to send numerous letters of condolence and poems dedicated to the former director, whom they remembered as one of the greatest leaders in the history of the Portuguese-American community (*Jornal Português*, May 13, 1960).

The new owner of the newspaper was Alberto dos Santos Lemos, who began by taking on the role of “Manager Editor.” Lemos tried to modernize the newspaper, both typographically and in terms of its content, to expand its circulation and readership. Some new sections were included, such as the one devoted to sports; the number of articles in English was increased, the number of opinion articles was reduced, and there was more information from the Portuguese government *Agência Nacional de Informação* (ANI) (National Information Agency), as well as reports, especially on the activities of fraternal organizations. The literary bulletins section, however, remained unchanged throughout its existence (Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a, p. 273).

Lemos was to manage further consolidation of the project initiated by Pedro L. C. Silveira and his wife Mary Nunes, and thus turn the newspaper into an icon of Portuguese culture for Portuguese immigrants on the West Coast of the United States. Throughout its history, the *Jornal Português* developed an informative and Public Relations policy in defense of the interests of the Portuguese, seeking to communicate the strength and dynamism of their community in California to American politicians and local authorities (Pena-Rodríguez, 2020a, p. 274).

5. Conclusion

The activity of the Portuguese press and journalism in North America has historically had a symbolic function as a fundamental cultural instrument in the diaspora. It has likewise been a platform for the dissemination of educational values and public information among immigrants, favoring their social cohesion, political consensus, and associative projects within the same sociocultural imaginary.

The dissemination and duration of some Luso-American diaspora newspapers and the dialogue they maintained with their readers showed that they must have made significant contributions to the development of a sense of identity among the minority groups that they themselves represented in the United States. They also made their ethnic group visible, which likewise projected their cultural traditions within the framework of a conservative mentality, in which women assumed a secondary professional role, dedicated mainly to domestic chores and low-skilled jobs.

In this context of male domination, social stereotypes marginalized women's roles and degraded them to low and unskilled positions, thereby favoring female stigmatization. Women were considered incapable of leading any business or intellectual project and a certain role was imposed on them that prevented them from pursuing higher education. In general, and very particularly immigrant women, with a deeply patriarchal cultural tradition, were literally prepared to watch life pass by from the kitchen window.

However, at a time when it was socially frowned upon for a woman to hold positions of authority or professional responsibility in strongly masculinized environments, as was the case in the world of journalism, some immigrants of Portuguese origin took on the challenge of breaking the mental molds and prejudices associated with their supposed inferiority for the development of certain professional activities.

In the fieldwork for this research, it was possible to record up to 12 cases of Portuguese women who had worked in journalism in the United States in managerial positions, most of them between 1970 and the New Millennium. Women faced enormous difficulties at that time

when gaining influence and responsibility in certain areas of intellectual activity, due to traditional forms of social discrimination that limited both their educational options and their employment opportunities. Despite such challenging circumstances, some Portuguese women, either in association with their husbands or on their own initiative, dedicated themselves to journalism. Beginning in the 1920s, several of them managed to occupy positions of authority in various newspapers, which served to make the professional activity of women visible beyond routine, unskilled jobs, and domestic chores. In this context, the examples of Laurinda C. de Andrade, who had a short but intense experience leading *A Tribuna* in Newark, and Mary Nunes Silveira at *O Jornal Português*, who dedicated her life to journalism in California, are biographies of professional integration, testimony to the success of pioneering female journalists within the Portuguese-American diaspora. Their careers and their female leadership were of great significance for the Portuguese community in the United States, inspiring other immigrant women who have seen examples of courage in them, to continue breaking through glass ceilings in their professional development.

Despite the adversities, they managed to prove their worth, gaining respect within the journalistic milieu and projecting the idea among new generations of Portuguese immigrants that women could indeed work and manage newspapers and publishing houses. Their lives, marked by determination in their professional self-realization over and above labels, clichés, and the discrimination of rampant male chauvinism, are a shining example of triumph over adversity and a source of inspiration to the Portuguese diaspora working towards full gender equality in the journalistic profession.

This research is part of the project “Towards a history of journalism in Portugal (2018–2022)”, (PTDC/COM-JOR/21844/2017), funded by the Portuguese Science & Technology Foundation.

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