

Media and discrimination: an exploratory study on the Portuguese case

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Summary

This communication presents the preliminary results from a running experimental project about expressions of ethnic and sex discrimination in the Portuguese Media, namely, on television and press. This study integrates a European net of research named *Observatory against ethnic and sexual discrimination*, involving three other countries such as Italy, Spain and Denmark. The preliminary results of this project point towards two different kinds of conclusions: the first one, refers to the interdependency between the thematic relief of discrimination appearing on the public scene

and the relationship established between the political, public and mediathic agenda; the second conclusion points towards the changing of the myth of *media* as “ a Mirror of Reality”.

Key words: *Media* Analysis, Discrimination, Immigration and Gender.

1 Presentation of the project: Scope and Purposes

The present communication intends to expose the first results of a project aiming to create a *Permanent Observatory against Ethnic and Sex Discrimination in the Portuguese Media*. This is a project supported by the European Union in which participate Denmark, Spain and Italy, along with Portugal.

The project, now in an experimental stage, has as main purpose the creation of a multinational data base, which will be available in the future on its own site of the internet, containing the output's summary description (newspaper or TV channel identifications, date of publication, kind of articles, number of columns or minutes, journalists or other producers and contents) of the daily and weekly newspapers, TV news both from Portugal and the participating countries, about ethnic and sex discrimination in the European Union or where European citizens might be involved in (Timor, for instance).

In Portugal, the project head-office is at the Centro de Estudos Sociais e Pastoraís of the Portuguese Catholic University. Besides the aim already mentioned, the project also pretends to achieve an exploratory approach to the way through which the *media* contribute to the construction of the discrimination's social problem when focussing the ethnic and sex origin.

2 Theoretical frameworks and hypothesis

A theoretical framework and hypothesis for this interdisciplinary kind of work, empirical and exploratory, about the subject of discrimination in *media*, demands that some general contexts about the ethnic and sex discrimination in the Portuguese society should be taken into account.

In the three last decades, Portugal suffered deep social transformations, namely at economical (development of the tertiary sector and consumption's growth), social-professionals (the emergence of urban middle-class carrying new values and new daily habits) and familial (changes in the values concerning the family and the new family structure) level.

With the adhesion to the European Union, in 1985, the entrance of women in the work market – started in the 60's with the overseas war and strengthened by the peak of emigration to Europe – gets a new impulse. In spite of the increase of women's schooling in the three last decades, and despite the assumption of new professional and social responsibilities, there still exist situations of real discrimination of women facing the power groups – namely in the access to some political, economical and managing functions – which turn women into a minority. (ALMEIDA et. al.,:1994; MACHADO E COSTA: 1998; FERREIRA:1999).

On the other hand, these new social and economical facts help the increase of immigration, traditionally coming from the Palop¹, in order to fulfil the needs arising from the development of the economic activities in civil architecture sector and non-qualified services (Vg. Home or industrial cleaning-services).

Thus, to these new facts correspond a major participation of these new social actors to whom are associated discrimination actions resulting from the readjustment of conflicts of the Portuguese society into a pluralist and multicultural one (MARQUES et al.: 1999).

¹ Translator Footnote (T.F.): Palop means the African countries having Portuguese as official language

Discrimination is, therefore, understood as a set of differentiated ways of treatment being present in the several society instances, considering that there are many sectors where this distinction is rather applied, such as at work, at school, at home and in the associative life. Discrimination is usually noticeable either as a set of emotions of negative reference or as “*negative behaviour before a group, based on a negative prejudice or attitude*” grounded “*in stereotypes or beliefs about the negative attributes which mark that group*” (VALA et ali: 1999: 108). The discriminatory actions and attitudes are usually linked to segregation, stigmatisation and social exclusion. Immigrants, women and, horizontally, the imigrant women, are those who suffer the most, with these practices and attitudes (FERNANDES: 1995).

In the same period, the communication and information scene in Portugal changed radically, due to the *media* privatisation, started in the 80’s, and the opening, right in the beginning of the 90’s, of two private TV channels. The inherent strategies to the conception of public service – independently of its vices and dependencies – give place to the entrepreneurial strategies of concurrence and consumption (FERIN CUNHA: 2000).

It is in this tension scenery, between the concept of public service and the vision of competitive enterprises, that we may offer as paradigm of *media*’s analysis the notion of *agenda-setting*, either in its initial premise “*the subjects most emphasised by the media tend to be understood as socially dominant*” (McCOMBS e SHAW: 1972), or in the premises arising from the deepening of the inter-relation established between the public concerns – public agenda -, the political logics (political agenda) and the specific interests of the *media* (mediathic agenda) (DEARING e ROGERS:1996).

Considering this paradigm where the *media* appear both as a mirror of society or as a construction (re-construction) of reality (WOLTON: 1999), we bring forward the following hypothesis: the *media* tend to reinforce tendencies that are latent in society.

The discrimination actions and situations perceptible in the *media* correspond to the discrimination situations that occur in society.

Thus, in a first phase, the Portuguese society identifies kinds of ethnic and sex discrimination through the relevance given by the *media* to these questions. In a second phase their ways of treatment and its visibility arise linked by the inter-relations and complicities of the already mentioned agendas.

Then, it becomes pertinent to make the following consideration: is it likely to occur in society discrimination actions that are not mentioned in the *media*? In case of an affirmative answer, what might be its possible interpretation? Is it possible that all actions mentioned in the *media* are noticed by the society with equal value, dimension and amplitude? Which are the possible interpretations?

Once the perception of discrimination in the society finds itself basically linked to immigration, racism and inequalities between gender, the perception of discriminating actions on the *media* will tend to reflect, both the existing images or stereotypes of the immigrants in Portugal (for instance, the 1st and 2nd generation of people from Cabo-Verde), and the images and stereotypes of functions associated to gender (namely to women). On the other hand, in a moment in which arise new phenomena in society, the *media* would tend to build and re-build new images or stereotypes of the lived realities, either by immigrants (for instance, the new-coming immigration from East), or by women (for instance, the performance of women in charge of public functions) in Portugal.

Deepening this approach in the perspective of the formats and the contents transmitted by the *media*, it is useful to mention that the press - weekly or daily quality press or tabloid - presents a range of readers counted by thousands (MEDIA 2000: 2000), while on the TV channels audiences are evaluated by millions, being imputed to each individual about three hours per day watching TV (CONDE: 1998:82).

On the other hand, considering the influence's extension of *media* on society, we put forward a second work hypothesis with

the purpose of evaluating not *only* “*the quantity of attention addressed*” to *media*, but also “*the content and the meaning that people are exposed to*” in the *media* (WOLF: 1992:126).

While the first hypothesis led us to register, on the database, the thematic issues conferred to the several kinds of discrimination, the second hypothesis points out to the analysis of the *ways in which* the topic of discrimination is presented to the Portuguese society. That is, the quantitative and statistic analysis must be followed by a qualitative analysis aiming to answer to the following questions: what are the more visible ways of discrimination in the *media*? In what terms the discrimination is preferentially linked to immigration, to gypsies and to women? And if it is linked to immigration is it also associated to racism? Why the gypsies, in Portugal for 500 years, are considered immigrants or connected with immigrants? In which way and when, the minorities, whether ethnic or sexual, are talked about? When are they mentioned, and to which matters do they appear associated to: to poverty and social-economic conditions; to social integration and to education; or, on the contrary, they appear connected to crime, violence, racism and xenophobia? In which situations do women, being a majority, are visible as a minority? Which are the minorities more referred to and in which circumstances?

The answers to these questions will allow to ponder about the conclusive role that the *media* carry out in the construction of the Otherness, this is, in the definition of an Other, different from the dominant majority of the Portuguese society (RIVERS e SCHRAMM: 1967). That Other, independently of taking the shape of Immigrant, Gypsy or Woman, allows, on its turn, the definition of an Ourselves, through a permanent game of contrasts, contributing to “show” to the Portuguese society how “are” all those who are different.

When presenting to the society definitions of ethnic and sexual minorities, when exposing simplified images of the Other, with the help of stereotype, the *media* may contribute to reinforce the perception of minorities as “*political-ideological fields, as alien*

realities, composing an foreign body” as well as constitute instruments of “*valuation of the several cultural narratives*” (CARNEIRO: 1999:7). Summarising, when making a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the discrimination actions presented in the *media*, this project pretends, still in an exploratory way, to evaluate the role of *media* in the construction of the Portuguese social reality.

3 The current situation of immigration in the Portuguese society

Traditionally being a country of emigration, Portugal has become, along with other south Europe countries, a country of immigration, mainly from the decade of 80. This transformation occurred in the Portuguese reality must be understood in the light of its insertion in the world migratory context, defined by three main factors (BAGANHA e GOIS: 1999:254).

First, the aggravation of the “*geo-economical inequalities*”, namely in countries of the southern hemisphere and of Eastern Europe, caused by wars, ethnic and religious conflicts and by economic instability, have been contributing to change significantly the outlines of the world migratory flow. Secondly, the growing complexity of the globalisation procedures has also contributed to a re-definition of those same migratory flows, once they imply a “*deep re-construction of industry, a re-localisation of the work force sources, a re-direction of capital flows and new patterns of international competitiveness*” (BAGANHA e GÓIS: 1999:255). Finally, the new state/ position of Portugal as immigration country must be seen in the context of the construction of the European Union (Ibiden), a course through which the internal frontiers have been abolished, while their members adopted no common immigration policy. The complex conjugation of all these factors brought as a result that the new immigration tendencies to the South of Europe assume specific and unique shapes, resulting

in particular from the past history and from the “*geo-economical and political interests*” of each country (Ibiden).

In the Portuguese case, the outlines of the migratory tendencies, which have been intensified in the last decades, are connected with two processes, independent though related: on one hand, the end of the Portuguese colonial empire and the resultant decolonisation process and demobilisation of the resident human effective; on the other hand, the already mentioned process of adhesion to the Common European Zone and the construction of the European Union.

As a result of these two important political and social proceedings, Portugal was obliged to reconsider its place within the European and Worldwide “new order” which gave rise to a redefinition of its national identity. Previously based on the idea of “colonial empire” (Portugal turned out towards the world, expanding its national identity through out all the Empire population), that became officially set up on the European historical roots (Portugal turned to Europe, trying to base its identity as member of the “large European Family”). As it could be expected, this transition would have important implications in the notions of “foreigner” and “immigrant” (opposing to “national”)² (BAGANHA e GÓIS: 1999).

Initially, the entrance of foreigners in Portugal was caused by its colonial condition, previously described. The first wave of immigration with a significant importance seems to have taken place in the 60’s, with the so-called “substitution-immigration”, i.e., a workers contingent, mainly from Cabo-Verde, whom arrived in Portugal with the purpose of filling the gap of work-force in the public works and civil architecture sector, caused, at that time, by

²As Baganha e Góis (1999) demonstrate, the year 1981 marks up this transition. The publication of the new Lei da Nacionalidade - Citizenship Law – (Lei nº 37/81, de 3 de Outubro), which changes the prerequisite to the acquisition of Portuguese citizenship from *jus solis* to *jus sanguinis*, symbolises the referred transition from a “colonial” national identity to a “European” identity.

the emigration to Northern Europe (MACHADO: 1991) and to America of many Portuguese.

The second phase of the settling down of the ethnic minorities in Portugal coincides with a period started in 1974, by the 25th April' Revolution, in which occurred the independence process. In this stage, flowed to Portugal about 800 000 returning emigrants or "repatriates", a contingent presenting a social-professional disposition totally different from the prior one (medium and high scholar and professional qualifications, integrating the new middle class sectors(MACHADO:1991;SAINT-MAURICE:1997).

Finally, the third phase of the settling down of the ethnic minorities in Portugal took place from the 80's onwards and was constituted, mainly, by unqualified working force (the men employed in the civil architecture and public works and the women in the domestic and cleaning services). They show a low scholar level and integrate the more unqualified sectors of the work market. Above all, the clandestineness shapes many of these immigration experiences, throwing these immigrants into situations of great vulnerability and weakness, generally associated to illegal work (MACHADO: 1991).

Thus, it is pointed out the existence of a deep social cleavage between these two last groups, i.e., between the luso-Africans (Portuguese with African ascendance and/or Africans with Portuguese ascendance), who arrived in Portugal by 1974 and the African immigrants themselves arrived in Portugal as from 1980, a cleavage that assumes a major importance, when the time comes to examine if it exists or not a tendency to be repeated with the younger generations (the named "second" and "third" generations) (MARQUES et al: 1999; BAGANHA e GÓIS: 1999).

Nowadays, the foreign population living in Portugal presents a social-demographic bipolar profile which distinguishes, on one hand, the people with origins in Europe and Brazil (with a higher social-economic level) and, on the other hand, those from the

Palop³ (the majority) as well as from other countries, such as those from Eastern Europe (carrying a very ill-favoured social-professional structure). Besides, the immigrant population who resides clandestinely in the country is considered as highly significant.

Table I: Foreigners with legal residence in Portugal considered by country of origin. (Situation in 1977)

Country of origin	Number of effective
Africa	81 717
North America	10 573
South America	22 254
Asia	7 192
Europe	49 797
Others	175 263

Source: SEF, statistic report, 1997. In.: Baganha e Góis, 1999:256

If some confusion between “immigrant” and “foreigner” has been present in the scientific literature about this subject⁴, this confusion is produced (and re-produced) in the *media*, which tends to present – mainly in Television, according to its nature – the social facts deprived of their complexity and context.

In addition, the forms of discrimination don’t fall upon the totality of foreigners but, mostly, upon those who are considered immigrants, even if they have Portuguese nationality, as it happens with the “second generation” of Africans in Portugal and the Gypsies. Thus, one may say that the perception of the immigrant is linked to a “low social condition” and to a negative differentiation in which are included, preferably, the “black people” in opposition to the white, also reaching the gypsies (all with Portuguese

³ T.F: Palop means the African countries having Portuguese as official language.

⁴As it is demonstrated by Baganha e Góis, 1999.

nationality) and the “second generation” of Africans (almost with Portuguese nationality)(VALA et ali: 1999).

On the contrary, the “foreigners” tend to be understood as a group linked to a “*high social status*”, with origin in European countries, North America and Australia. In this context, it has not yet been identified or explained the perception existing in the Portuguese society about the minority groups tending to grow, such as the Brazilians, the Hindus and the Chinese.

Considering that these social perceptions cross the Portuguese society and, therefore, the *media*, it turns out to be extremely important to evaluate the way they appear in press and television and how do they behave taking into account the work hypothesis previously mentioned.

4 Methodology and *Corpus* of Analysis

The empirical gathering of data started on the 25th January of 2000, focussing on two specific means of communication.

Regarding the press, 6 newspapers, 4 of which are daily (Público, *Diário de Notícias*, *A Capital*, *24 Horas*) and 2 are weekly (*Expresso* e *O Independente*), constitute the corpus of analysis. The criteria presiding the choice of these daily and weekly newspapers was trying to express the offer of the Portuguese press not only in terms of quality (the case of the two firstly mentioned dailies and the weeklies) but also in terms of popular press (MESQUITA: 1994).

Regarding television, the *corpus* of analysis is formed by three telecast-news from two different TV channels: *Telejornal* from Canal1 (RTP, state channel), *Jornal da Noite* from SIC (private channel) and *TV2 Jornal* (RTP, state channel).

In what concerns the two first ones, the criteria used to choose them was the fact of both were broadcasted in prime-time, addressing therefore the largest band of public of each channel. The *TV2 Jornal* is a telecast-news broadcasted later in the evening (by 10.p.m), in a channel presumably directed to a more selected pu-

blic (with a higher scholar level and jobs socially more valued) and, therefore, presents more reflective characteristics (longer pieces with a higher and profound level, a greater number of specialists and commentators). With its choice it was pretended to make a counterpoint to the information addressed to the “large middle public” from the other two remaining channels (MEDIA 2000:2000).

Whether in the case of the press or Television, the monitoring of the referred means of communication was started, i.e., making the raise and registry in a database of all the journalistic pieces regarding ethnic and sexual discrimination, following certain criteria. Thus, the information considered relevant in each piece (meant to fulfil the several “fields” of the data-base⁵) was the following: mean of communication of origin (newspaper or TV channel name); date; place where occurred the event described in the piece; title; author; size (counted in pages in the newspapers; counted in seconds in the television); prominence (if it was, or not, a lead story); number of pages occupied (on the written press); which type of discrimination is referring to (sexual, ethnic or both); kind of news (piece or commentary); text’s main topic⁶; key-words; commentaries⁷.

Other criteria presided, yet, to the selection of the monitored pieces, which integrated the database. On one hand, a criteria that is connected with the spatial and geographic delimitation of the discriminatory act to be registered. Under this criteria, were

⁵In this first phase of constitution of the Observatory, the database was conceived and designed by the project’s present co-ordinating team, Italy.

⁶This field intends to forward to the news’ dominant subjects. It contains 8 major subject groups: A) General Information and Statistics; B) Work, Job, Profession; C) Social and Cultural Items; D) Seminars, Cultural Debates, Conferences, Studies; E) Public Services (institutions related with the ethnic or sexual discrimination and respective activity); G) Political Debates, Initiatives, Sit-ins, manifestations, protests, etc; H) Judiciary and Police Acts; J) Other Subjects

⁷This field intends to open a space that might include all information clarifying the nature of the news and /or the motive why it was considered relevant.

selected all news referring to discriminatory acts that took place not only in the European Union but also outside when countries or citizens from the European Union were involved⁸.

On the other hand, and maybe the most important, a criteria relating to the definition of the discriminatory act itself or with what “discrimination” means. Along with the monitoring process and the contact with the empirical materials, it became visible the difficulty in defining the thematic of “discrimination”, by opposition to other thematic such as “racism” and “human rights”. Concerning the current project, it was considered that was more important to identify than to distinguish these thematic.

Thus, and considering “discrimination” as it was previously defined, they were considered relevant all the journalistic pieces which made reference to **discriminatory acts** based on ethnic and gender (v.g. violence acts against black people, in Germany); and also all pieces which made reference (directly or not) to **ethnic minorities and women** (hence, when the sexual and/or ethnic condition has constituted a publishing criteria)(HALL et ali: 1973). In short, regarding each piece the following questions were made: “What does this piece exposes?” “For what reason is this piece in this place” and “In which social, political and mediathic context does it appear?”

Concerning the sexual discrimination, it must be said that the present study doesn’t seek the sexual minorities in general (thus being excluded news about homosexual movements, v.g.). Rather, its aim is to collect published news about Women, seen as minority, not in a numeric sense (which, in fact, doesn’t happen), but in a political approach (as a group with rights although only formally instituted, effectively diminished in the Portuguese society relatively to the dominant male majority – majority precisely due to their power to still impose their dominance).

⁸For instance, racial acts of violence in the USA, or ethnic violence in South Africa, **were not selected** while the ethnic conflict in Kosovo was considered relevant, due to the fact of European military forces being implicated (KFOR).

5 Some preliminary results

Ethnic Vs Gender: the Portuguese media give more visibility to women's than to ethnic's discrimination

After a first analysis of the data collected up to the present moment, and in what refers to the press, it is noticed that reference newspapers published a greater number of pieces about this subject than the so-called popular press. Considering the referred two kinds of discrimination, the daily newspaper *Público* distinguished itself from the other dailies (v. Table II). In what concerns the *outputs* of the two monitored weeklies, the *Expresso's* publications about this matter were significant when compared with its homologous *O Independente*.

Table II: Number of journalistic pieces, according to the type of discrimination and means of communication (since the 25th January)

	Press						
	DN*	Público	24 Horas	Capital	O Independente	Expresso	Total
Gender	42	74	38	33	12	12	211
Ethnic	389	452	350	192	31	123	1537
Gender and Ethnic	10	15	9	8	1	4	47
<i>Total</i>	441	541	397	233	44	139	1795

**Diário de Notícias*

	Television*			
	SIC	RTP1	TV2	Total
Gender	25	26	7	58
Ethnic	230	230	113	573
Gender and Ethnic	18	24	9	51
<i>Total</i>	273	280	129	682

*Respectively: *Jornal da Noite (SIC)* and *Telejornal (RTP1)*, both broadcasted at 8:00 pm.: and *TV2 Jornal* on the air at 10:00pm.

As far as the Television channels are concerned, *SIC* and *Channel 1* of *RTP* stayed together in the cover they did about discrimination thematic, with a slight distinction of the second one, due to the pieces that focus, jointly, the two kinds of discrimination (v. Table II). Regarding the channel 2 of *RTP* and the *TV2 Journal*, although there are a less number of pieces, they are generally longer, which points to a deeper care of the subject with the participation of commentators and guest specialists.

Considering the context previously exposed of hard concurrence between *media*, mean's, public's and news' nature, as interpretation factors for these results, we could bring forward the following explanations: the greater attention paid by the daily *Público* and the weekly *Expresso* to this thematic, would fit in their reference editorial direction and in the definition of their public target, mainly urban and from middle-class; The explanation for the relevance addressed to this thematic by the generalist TV channels would lay on the concurrence factor and on the nature of the raw material itself – considering its characteristics of apparent rupture of the consensus and social cohesion – that these pieces are made of.

Nevertheless, the main contrasting element in table II it's the abyssal difference between the number of published matters about the ethnic discrimination (1537 records in Press and 572 in Television, amounting to 2110 records) and those about discrimination based on gender (211 records in press and 58 in television, total-

ling only 269 records). This difference shows the bigger visibility conferred by the studied means of communication to the questions involving the ethnic minorities in detriment of the questions referring to the women discrimination.

To the best of our knowledge, the elements to which these two subjects seem to be associated to, might constitute a clue to the explanation of this difference, once they contribute to impute to each one of the thematic considered above, some characteristics which make them more or less noticeable. News worthiness (TUCHMAN: 1978) is, in fact, a journalistic criterion that attributes a value to a fact and potentially turning it into news.

In this sense, we should interrogate ourselves about what is the news-values ascribed to the facts dealing with the thematic of discrimination and, therefore, which are the criteria and in what contexts they became noticeable? In short and in other words: *for what purpose does the media talk about ethnic and gender discrimination?*

Ethnic minorities: crime and punishment. Women discrimination: a social-cultural problem.

Table III: Number of journalistic pieces, according to the Text Argument and the type of discrimination.

News Argument*	Gender	Ethnic	Gender and Ethnic	Total**
General, statistic information	86	402	26	514
Work, job, profession	73	253	29	355
Social-cultural items	74	294	37	405
Seminars, debates, studies	18	44	10	72
Public Services	35	58	8	101
Political debates, initiatives, <i>sit-ins</i> , protests, manifestations	57	474	34	565
Police and judicial acts	30	651	25	706

*Cf. Note IV

**This total might not correspond to the total number of pieces on the database, once each of the news may be classified simultaneously according to several of these "Arguments".

As it is shown on Table III, the ethnic minorities appear more frequently associated to elements considered as having “*impact over the nation and national life*” once they generate thematic that break through frontiers of a “*specific conception of society as consensus*” (HALL et alii: 1973) questioning the “*stability*” or future evolution “*of a given situation*” (WOLF: 1992:181): “General information”, 402 records; “political debates, initiatives, *sit-ins*, manifestations, protests”, 474 records. On the other hand, thematization, as Luhmann defined (LUHMANN: 1995), tends to appear associated to crises or crises’ symptoms, as well as to pain or pain succedaneum in civilisation (“police and judicial acts”, 651 records) (SAPERAS: 1992:96).

In our opinion, the significant number of journalistic pieces dedicated to the ethnic minorities and discrimination, must be explained considering the *agenda setting* effect. In this case are the inter-relations established between the public, the political and mediathic agendas, whether based on the public agenda – for instance, about the assaults committed by youngsters in Lisbon’s metropolitan area in July and August – starting on the feelings of “*insecurity crises, generalised panic, or external menace*”, or based on the political agenda – giving visibility both to the measures announced by politicians and to the critics of opposition parties, in a context of the New Law’s definition about the permanence of foreigners in national territory.

On the other hand, and considering the concurrence factor, the *media* – and mostly the television channels – tend to explore these agendas in a way to “*easily*” pick up emotional audiences (HALL et al: 1973), causing public opinion movements which, by their turn, tend to generate new flows and re-flows on the three mentioned agendas.

Concerning the discrimination based on gender, the visibility of discriminatory acts towards women appears, generally, in the sequence of a political and/or public agenda: celebrations, commemorative occasions (international women’s day), political initiatives (inauguration of a Refuge House for women being victim of violence, vg) or other social organisations (Conferência da Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima de Violência Familiar⁹, vg)¹⁰. As it can be seen in Table III, the conflict’s element is withdrawn to a back stage (only 30 records as “Police and Judicial Acts”), putting in relief the “General and Statistic Information”(86 records), the “Social-Cultural Items” (74 records), “Work, Job, and Profession” (73 records). Thus, the women dis-

⁹ T.F: Meeting of a social organisation dedicated to support the victims of home violence.

¹⁰Nevertheless, it must be noticed that although there are only 30 news registered as “Judiciary and Police Acts”, home violence often appears registered as “Political Debates and Initiatives” (as happens in the referred case)

crimination appears, in the analysed *media*, and by opposition to the ethnic discrimination, as a problem of social-cultural nature.

Ethnic Minorities, violence and crime: To punish or to understand?

Being the ethnic minorities the theme numerically more represented in the studied *media*, which are, however, the minorities most referred? And how? What matters are they associated to?

Focussing exclusively in the ethnic discrimination, we verify that the subject that is most frequently associated is “violence” (665 records), followed by “crime” (347 records), “racism” (307 records), “immigration” (256 records) and “clandestine immigration” (252 records). Aside from the referred subjects, and as it has been already mentioned, pointing out the case of the Austrian politician Jorg Haider (196 records) to whom are associated the themes of “extreme right” (129 records) and of “xenophobia” (158 records).

On the other hand, we verify that, within the ethnic minorities, the most referred are the **Africans** (in a total of 402 records, where 258 doesn't make specific reference to nation's origin; 100 records about Angolans; 36 records about Cabo Verde natives; 4 records about Mozambicans; and 4 records about Guinea natives). The second most referred ethnic group is the Gypsies (182 records).

Concerning the Africans minorities, they appear above all associated to violence and crime, but also to racism. These data support the results from qualitative studies already done about how the ethnic minorities (namely the Africans) are referred to in the Portuguese press (FERIN CUNHA: 1995). On the other hand, the Africans emerge related with immigration affairs and with immigration policies, being mainly associated to clandestine immigration. Then again, the reference to the (presumed) integration in the reception society it's a neglected matter, as well as

education, health, housing problems or the objective social conditions in which they live (see the existing total of records)

Table IV: More frequently key-words associated to Ethnic Minorities

Key words	Africans	Gypsies
Violence	129	66
Crime	89	52
Drugs	7	12
Racism	47	31
Xenophobia	16	15
Immigration	36	–
Clandestine	45	–
Immigration Policies	7	–
Integration	9	1
Education	13	4
Health Care	7	–
Housing	3	3
Social Conditions	9	2

In the same way, the gypsy ethnic group equally appears associated to violence, crime, racism and xenophobia¹¹. Likely, the relationships of this ethnic group with matters such as the social conditions, education or health care don't exhibit a significant expression on the records above (See Table IV).

From what has been said, it seems possible to conclude, considering the initially presented hypothesis that *media*, rather than reinforce latent situations in society, they contribute to the social construction of ethnic discrimination through the thematic issues imputed to the ethnic minorities within the crime and violence

¹¹The association of the Gypsy Ethnic Group to drugs and drugs-traffic shows only 12 records.

context. As long as they give visibility to this thematic, the *media* tend to erase the political and social context of these phenomena, making from the exploration of several kinds of violence (physical and symbolic) the synthesis image of a group in a social “illegitimate” situation.

On the other hand, and considering the second hypothesis, of a more qualitative nature – which aims to evaluate, not only the “*amount of attention paid* “ by the *media* to certain thematic, but also “*the contents and the meaning of what people expose themselves to*” (WOLF: 1992:126) – it seems possible to us to conclude that the stereotyped images and the kind of innermost journalism would tend to pronounce, among audiences, the difficulties inherent to the discernment between factual and structural knowledge, thus influencing the perception of **Whom** the society discriminates (the different, the African, the Gypsy, and Others) and **Why** (because is violent and criminal).

6 Conclusions

Once this is not a study about the way the *media* is received - this is, how the public receives the messages, whether they are written or visual – and their cognitive effects - in a short, medium or long term – it became necessary to underline, nevertheless, that they exist and influence each individual and society, in a cumulative way and in relation with a previous information (WOLTON: 1999).

On the other hand, knowing that in the fast world of communication and information, data transform themselves daily, and, thus, the possible interpretations about those phenomena follow the same quickly changing process, it's useful to make some remarks in a conclusive way.

The first remark refers to the nature of the analysed *media*, press and television, which although presenting a common logic in the system, they work in a proper and autonomous logic due to their distinct nature. In moments of great thematization referring

to several ethnic minorities and to women, the press, and mainly the reference one, namely the newspapers *Público e Diário de Notícias* and the weekly *Expresso*, tend to a thematic deepen through reports, opinion articles, commentaries and interviews. In identical circumstances, the major audience TV channels tend to work on these matters, exposing rather the facts than their causes and consequences, independently from presenting, sometimes, specialists and commentators (which happens more frequently in the channel 2 of RTP). It is still convenient to mention that the specific characteristics of the press and television tend to approach through the aid of photography and of imagery (the case of daily and weekly newspapers) and of key images (social and individual stereotypes in the Television's case).

A second remark is linked to the idea of *media* as a *reality mirror*. In fact, when confronting studies about the women's situation in the Portuguese Society with studies about the Portuguese's attitudes regarding the ethnic minorities (FERREIRA: 1998), we notice that the *media* seem to be far as much as from the lived realities as from the attitudes shared by a great part of society. While in Press and Television, the cases of women discrimination - the so-called "*paradoxes of women condition in Portugal*" - are forgotten or then exhibited in a positive discrimination sense - valuing "*the small group of women who have been leading the changes*", the so-called "*women's alibi group*" - the ethnic groups tend to turn visible due to negative discrimination, exposing preferably attitudes of the kind "*gypsies only cause troubles*" "*Negroes only provoke conflicts*", attitudes which contradict studies already done.

The third and last conclusion points to the need of deepening the treatment of this thematic and its social implications. In a first moment, trying to understand the global context of *media*, through the case studies in the press and television, separately and afterwards jointly, and in a second moment, crossing these results with the perception which the audiences in general and the discriminated minorities in particular have about them.

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