2 Challenging Narratives on Diversity and Immigration in Portugal

The (De)Politicization of Colonialism and Racism

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[In the early 2000s] immigration issues were not a priority in the research agenda of academics and little of that knowledge was being applied to public policies. We were receiving a large flow of Ukrainians, Brazilians and others; we had had a radical change of conditions and of the social groups of immigration. It was necessary to study and understand this immigration, which no longer was just the traditional coming of Africans. It was also urgent to understand how we, Portuguese, were to rethink ourselves in the face of this reality. . . . I think the Observatory on Immigration would make a good service if it could further deepen the question of intercultural dialogue of which Portugal has been a pioneer, and could again be, in the sense of opening a new phase of that dialogue, because that is the future of humanity. (Roberto Carneiro, Director of the Observatory on Immigration)¹

In this chapter, I argue that there are a number of problematic aspects in contemporary narratives on immigration and diversity in Portugalmostly in politics, but which are also being circulated and legitimated by academic discourse. First, drawing on an assumed Portuguese specificity and especially on Gilberto Freyre's idea of Lusotropicalism, these narratives depoliticize colonialism in order to attest a national historical vocation for interculturality, thus evading racism. Second, they posit Portugal as a homogenous-turned-heterogeneous country due to globalization, subsuming (post)colonial dynamics into the push-and-pull logic of contemporary immigration flows, and obscuring colonial legacies in contemporary sociopolitical constructions of 'race'. Third, they contribute to the selfassuring idea of the country as modern and developed, by overemphasizing immigration and downplaying emigration in Portuguese society. Finally, they imply a causal relationship between recent demographic change and institutional response, implicitly seeing the visibilization of difference as a necessarily positive—and sufficient—achievement.

After presenting the main contours of these hegemonic narratives, I provide some critical reflections that are informed by my experience as a researcher who is engaged in understanding the production, maintenance

and challenges to racism in education. Education is a particularly interesting context for analysis as many institutional responses to cultural diversity and collective struggles for equality have been rehearsed therein.² I draw on three research projects in which I have been recently involved: a) a postdoctoral project (2003–2007)³ exploring the schooling of racially and ethnically marked⁴ students in a context seen as homogeneous; b) collaborative research (2008–2012)⁵ on Eurocentrism in Portuguese history textbooks—seeing these at the intersection of broader political, social and cultural debates; and c) a comparative project on the semantics of racism and anti-racism in civil society organisations, public institutions and policies in different European contexts (2010–2013)⁶, with an empirical focus on employment and education.

DEPLOYING MAINSTREAM NARRATIVES ON IMMIGRATION AND DIVERSITY

Mainstream accounts of diversity and immigration in Portugal advance narratives that are used to legitimate contemporary policy interventions. In this section, I discuss crucial features of these mainstream accounts, which have been advanced within the social sciences, political debates and the realm of policy making. In the subsequent sections I explore these features in more detail and consider their impact for the debate on (anti-)racism—with a focus on education.

From the 1990s, "Portugal ceased to be a traditional country of emigration and became a country of immigration and a host country for foreign citizens looking for better standards of living." These demographic changes in Portuguese society were accompanied by the creation of institutional bodies, such as the Secretariat for the Coordination of Multicultural Education Programs in 1991, the figure of the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities in 1996, the High Commissariat in 2002 and the Observatory on Immigration in 2003. In the last two decades, new institutional responses have been formulated to address education for a diverse society, most notably interculturality—seen as overcoming the shortcomings of multicultural education, common in Anglophone societies: "Whereas the multicultural approach fosters a preservation of identities and often places minority groups in a 'ghetto-situation', the intercultural approach emphasizes personal enrichment due to the exchange of experiences and knowledge with others."8 These national-led initiatives have been rehearsed mainly in the Lisbon metropolitan area (where the vast majority of the foreign population is located9), and especially with 'youth at risk'. Locally, schools have welcomed new students and started showing a concern to include all. Diversity is now celebrated in festivals and other special events, enabling ethnically marked students to enhance their self-esteem; teachers provide additional support to help them with

their language difficulties. Schooling in Portugal has changed and has new democratic concerns. Although still lagging behind many European policies and practices, the gap is narrowing. According to the experts, Portugal provides a "model of good practice," 10 being rated second in the 2007 and 2011 Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX),11 and the "most generous" country in an international study by the United Nations in 2009.12 The success of 'integration' policies in Portugal can be explained, according to official and academic authorities, by the history of soft colonialism and the miscegenation of multiple cultural traditions and cultures.13 Racism is thus a marginal phenomenon:14 "the Portuguese are in favor of equal civic rights and a multicultural society."15

Portugal is, nowadays, a diversified and a modern, multicultural country. Youngsters dance to the sound of kuduro and people learn capoeira; in the cinema. New Lisboners are exhibited. Supermarkets and restaurants sell ethnic food. African prints are fashionable. Diversity is now literally consumed.16 And yet, like commonly stated, "not too spicy" as "around here, people don't like odd stuff." Thus, in reality there is a domesticated fusion of ethnic sounds to make them more sophisticated, exotic flavors conveniently shelved in specific supermarket areas, and Portuguese Roma pupils occasionally contained in separate classrooms under the pretext of their special educational needs and cultural idiosyncrasies.¹⁷

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE AND ENLARGING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

The examples just described are aspects of common narratives that depict Portugal as a nation at ease with difference. These narratives, with their nuances and changing contours, have emerged from discourses that are not value-free. Yet the naturalization and depoliticization 18 of many of the assumptions on which it rests make it difficult to hold a meaningful debate on (anti-)racism in political and academic discussions. I thus argue that more critical and sophisticated analyses of ethno-racial equality need to broaden the debate and take into account its historical, political and contextual dimensions. In the remainder of this chapter I examine the intertwined aspects that are being naturalized or concealed by such narratives.

Rewriting the Nation: Colonial History, Power and Racism

In Portugal, political discourse on immigration and diversity is obscuring the centrality of colonialism in ideological constructions of 'race'. The official rhetoric centered on interculturality (re)produces a myth of tolerant conviviality, whereby the history of Portuguese colonialism becomes an available symbolic resource to demonstrate the tolerant character of the nation, while being disallowed to debate contemporary racism. While it is significant that colonialism—key to the proliferation of pseudoscientific racial ideologies—is publicly evoked to attest to the tolerant character of the Portuguese nation, is should be noted that many other societies have their own myths of tolerance (e.g., US 'color-blindness', British 'fairness', Brazilian 'racial democracy').

This myth of colonial conviviality became politically relevant in Portugal via the appropriation, throughout the 1950s, of Gilberto Freyre's work on Lusotropicalism, 20 which tried to demonstrate the exceptionality of Portuguese benevolent colonialism. Freyre believed that the Portuguese were open to biological miscegenation and cultural interpenetration with people from the tropics, which would lead to the creation of harmoniously integrated multiracial societies. 21 He explained this aptitude as resulting from the miscegenated nature of the Portuguese people, following the long history of contact with Muslims and Jews in the Iberian Peninsula, in precolonial times.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Freyre's ideas on miscegenation met strong resistance in Portugal. The idea of biological miscegenation was not appropriated officially. The mixing of different 'races' was linked to ideas of 'degeneration', thus jeopardizing an imperial project strongly anchored in 'race'.²² It was in the 1950s—in the context of struggles by national liberation movements and international pressure from the United Nations to decolonize—that Lusotropicalism became politically significant in Portugal. The dictator Salazar, partially appropriating Freyre's ideas (with his approval), advertised the idea that Portugal was a harmonious multicontinental and multiracial nation so as to render decolonization uncalled-for.²³

Although Freyre's ideas were seen as innovative, because they decoupled 'race' from culture and interrupted social Darwinist thought, ²⁴ other bodies of political discourse and practices of colonial domination were revealing of the prevailing racial asymmetries in power. ²⁵ Salazar's New State regime continued to affirm the supremacy of European civilization and the positioning of black Africans as inferior. ²⁶ By hierarchically categorizing the population of Portugal's then multicontinental territory by 'race,' it endlessly postponed the possibility of racially marked populations becoming truly assimilated. ²⁷ Lusotropicalism was therefore more an aspiration than an accurate depiction of Portuguese colonial race relations. ²⁸

Lusotropicalism was not a new idea, being anchored in nineteenth-century views on national identity that emphasized the softness of character and the adventurous spirit of the Portuguese.²⁹ The support that these ideas received from the elites of the right and left—and the capability of an authoritarian regime to diffuse them, namely through education—helps to explain how they endured after the restoration of democracy and the independencies in the mid-1970s. In contemporary discourse, two main ideas seem to persist: 1) a national identity strongly anchored in Portugal's imperial past and in the supposed exceptionality of its history of 'expansion'; and 2) the universalistic values of Portuguese society, seen as less racist than other European societies.

Significantly, it is within the rhetoric on interculturality that the discursive field of Lusotropicalism seems to be reactivated. Adriano Moreira, 30 who was a key actor both in Salazar's 'overseas'/colonial policies in the early 1960s and in the contemporary official endorsement of Lusotropicalism stated, "unexpectedly, the Gilbertian problematic that was defined around the intervention of the Europeans in the tropics seems now to be reedited due to the presence of the tropics in the European territory."31 This official narrative has been visible at least since the 1990s, as evident in the preface to the legislation that created the Secretariat for the Coordination of Multicultural Education Programs:

Portuguese culture, distinguished for its universalism and its awareness thereof and for its long links with other cultures which, over the centuries, have made it welcome diversity, comprehend differences and great particularity with open arms, is an open and varied culture enriched by the diffusion of a people which has sought overseas a further dimension to its identity. Today, Portugal is proud to be the chance product of a mysterious alchemy which found in the sea, that great unknown, its ideal medium and its path to adventure.32

Serving a political agenda that reinforces the idea of Portugal as a tolerant country, this narrative has a wide-reaching significance, including in school contexts:

... integration is easy ... We ... We have that advantage and I tell them [the students] that so that they can see . . . Which were the countries that integrated black people like Portugal did? . . . So, the Portuguese may have some flaws. Weren't there any racist Portuguese, aren't there? Fine. Weren't there any Portuguese who enslaved black people, who treated them badly? I have no doubt! I met some. But no one gets along with any other race like the Portuguese do (Teacher 1, School 1)

In official discourses on immigration and diversity, history has recently started being more systematically mobilized to promote a sanitized account of Portugal's colonial past that consecrates its pioneering role in the management of diversity. The contemporary renarration of colonialism and empire is not specific to the Portuguese case. For instance, Anne-Marie Fortier explores how, in the New Labor era of the mid-2000s, the refusal of the British government to address its legacy of imperialism was linked to the forging of a "multicultural nationalism, that is, the reworking of the nation as inherently multicultural." Accordingly, Fortier proposes that there was "a shift away from linear narratives of nations moving from monoculture and exclusivity to multiculture and inclusivity, in favor of a narrative that posits multiculture and diversity at the heart of the nationalistic project."33 Fortier's "multicultural nationalism" helps to elucidate how history is being deployed to legitimate certain national heritages and destinies across different contexts. In a similar fashion, in the last decade we have witnessed the consolidation of a historicized narrative that reconstructs the Portuguese nationalistic project through the idea that friendly interracial/intercultural coexistence took place both in the colonies and in the metropolis, and attests to a national vocation for interculturality. This is evident, for instance, in the rationale for a book series launched by the High Commissariat for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue entitled Intercultural Portugal: "History can have a crucial role in the projection envisaged for the future of a society marked by the richness of cultural diversity."34 The first volume, Interculturality in Portuguese Expansion: 15 to 18th Centuries, presents a historical narrative that shows the presumed success of Portuguese society in managing cultural contact with Others (highlighting as exemplary the civilizatory missions in Eastern Asia). The account is depoliticized in such a way that slavery-a paradigmatic illustration of the operation of power through the deployment of racial categories—is framed as "mother of many intercultural societies."35 Consider the following extract:

The social status and the economy of slaves were so similar to those of poor and free men from Lisbon that the interaction between these two groups was necessarily very close (Saunders, 1994: 198). Far from any color prejudice, workers in Ribeira, free whites and black slaves used to sit all together at the same table to eat. This fraternal conviviality, born of a labor held under conditions of equality, is documented since the sixteenth century, and lasted until the nineteenth century (Tinhorão, 1988: 118).³⁶

While attempting to find examples that demonstrate racial conviviality (proving interculturality), this account sanitizes and legitimates the colonial system of slavery based along racial lines (disproving racism). Accordingly, interculturality is historicized, but not racism. Rather than being seen as embedded in the colonial project, racism is reduced to "color prejudice." Therefore, we can argue that history has become an official resource, helping to consecrate the privilege of a *specific* national community (and its historical narratives),³⁷ while making illegitimate and competing political claims. This is particularly evident in the retractions made by those in positions of power while debating the legacies of slavery and racism, or in the refusal of the Portuguese state to recognize the Roma as a *national* minority (a population that has been residing in the territory for at least five centuries).

Evading 'Race' in Presentist Accounts on Immigration and Education

A second aspect of these hegemonic narratives that requires closer inspection and debate is one that posits Portugal as having been suddenly transformed from a homogenous into a heterogeneous nation, as a result of contemporary globalization. This narrative rests on the assumption of the presumed homogeneity38 of the national population.

Portugal has been constructed through political and academic discourse as one of Europe's first nation-states, with ancient and stable borders: the perfect textbook example of the nation as the natural coincidence of a territory, a community and a culture. 39 These statements have often sustained the idea of national homogeneity while evading how such homogeneity was achieved, managed and policed. Any process of imposing national homogeneity entails violence, however symbolic. Only through the invisibilization of violence can presumed homogeneity be reinforced. This is particularly evident in education, most notably in history curricula and textbooks.40 The naturalization of a foundational white, Christian, national 'we' goes hand in hand with the invisibilization of the violent governance of Others through death, expulsion, exploitation or exclusion (e.g., the Muslims, the Iews, the Roma or the black enslaved). This narrative, which excludes Others from the national project while implicitly naturalizing the privilege of a foundational 'we', fails to critically engage with securitization—initially focused on the national territory, but now transposed to national identity.41 This results in commonsense views of a stable white, Christian, national identity under the threat of external pressures—that is, immigration as a new global phenomenon that suddenly transformed homogeneous countries into heterogeneous ones, causing national (white) citizens to react-sometimes with hostility-to difference. This thinking pervades much research and many policy initiatives on immigration and racism in Europe. 42

Most contemporary accounts of immigration are heavily influenced by dehistoricized globalization theories. They tend to offer a presentist analysis, in which the past has the span of a few decades, making postcolonial dynamics irrelevant and sidelining considerations of 'race' and racism. In Portugal, for instance, most official accounts of immigration take the early 1990s as a key moment in contemporary immigration. These accounts decouple migration from the history of colonialism and subsume it into an economic logic of "push and pull factors."43

Much contemporary work that operates within this framework fails to consider that twentieth-century migrations into the metropolitan territory started to become noticeable in the late 1960s, when workers were recruited from the Cape Verdean archipelago to fill the demand for labor created by white Portuguese emigration and also by white Portugese recruitment to the ongoing wars against national liberation movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. The inward movement of people from several areas of Africa, which had been constructed as part of the Portuguese nation during the colonial era, was intensified with the end of formal colonial administration in the mid-1970s. While nationality law became significantly more restrictive from 1981, espousing a jus sanguinis rationale—that denied Portugese citizenship to many youth who were born in the national territory—immigration from the former African colonies continued to increase throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 1999, these African migrant flows still represented almost half of the total foreign population of Portugal⁴⁴—a figure that excludes people from postcolonial populations who obtained citizenship.

It is true that the dynamics of Portugese immigration changed in the 1990s. During this time the geographic origins of Portugese immigrants became more diversified. This increase in immigration remained generally steady until the mid-2000s. After this time, immigration from Portugal's former African colonies became statistically less significant, mainly due to an increase in immigrants from the former Soviet bloc. However, the current emigration of Eastern Europeans from Portugal and the slowing down of immigration into Portugal —effects of the so-called contemporary economic crisis—illustrate the persisting significance of the postcolonial contexts that are still shaping Portugese immigration, and the persisting significance of the historical processes and cultural formations that are associated with these postcolonial contexts.

In official narratives, although postcolonial (postindependence) migration might be acknowledged, it is not sufficiently discussed and debated. This lack of discussion is paving the way to the renarration of Portugal as a country where immigration is recent and divorced from its colonial past. The following example by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia is illustrative:

Several EU Member States have had migrants and minorities in the education system for a longer period of time. There are countries with a colonial past and also an early experience with foreign workers (e.g. France, UK, the Netherlands). Many of the minority members in these countries have attained citizenship. . . . The education system of several countries has to deal with the effects of more recent immigration (e.g. Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Ireland, and, to some extent, Denmark).⁴⁸

The downplaying of colonialism has also been reinforced by the fact that much of the recent, political and academic concern with diversity in Portugal happened at a time when newly arriving migrants were no longer equated with the colonized subject, but rather with the white 'Eastern European'—often used as 'model minority'—hindering a debate on racism. Indeed, as a report by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance⁴⁹ on Portugal indicated, a 'two-speed' integration process has been taking place. One side of this process involves those arriving more recently from Eastern Europe, who have been better received possibly because they have relatively higher academic and professional qualifications—and significantly, in my view, are white. The other side of this process involves black people coming from African countries, who face enduring difficulties 'integrating' into Portuguese society. Yet the prevalence of a discourse that

is evasive on matters of 'race'/power is downplaying the operation of 'race', under the pretext of job skills and qualifications:

Carlos Trindade [responsible for migration issues as an executive memher of the national trade union federation, the CGTPI however, puts such discrimination down to the issue of job qualifications held by immigrants. He said a recent influx of Ukrainian immigrants had been a success story because they usually hold good qualifications. He said black immigrants often came from countries with a poorer social infrastructure. Out on the street, three Cape Verdean men disagreed. Joseph Armando, Pedro Goncalves and Paolo Nazolini said that they all had professional backgrounds. but felt that colour was an issue when they went for jobs or housing. By day, they camped and cooked on a city square, parking cars for odd change. By night, they slept in shelters or hostels.50

Throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, black high-skilled workers in low-skilled jobs did not enjoy as much public sympathy as white Eastern European immigrants. Nowadays, the position of the white 'immigrant' is often used as a depository and model for official solutions (e.g., professional requalification), while the black colonized immigrant is assumed to have been assimilated—or else blamed for failure to integrate.

In education, these color-blind narratives have helped to naturalize racism. This is evident in the perceptions many educators have of the Portuguese fluency of students from African countries in which Portuguese is the official but not the national language. The (political) nonrecognition of the diversity of the Portuguese language has often resulted in labeling those forms of Portugese spoken in various African contexts as 'ignorant.' The expression 'to speak like an Angolan', in one teacher's words, and the older colonial expression 'to speak pretoguês' (preto + português, a derisory Portuguese of the black) are both grounded on the conflation of 'race' and language. Language skills are thus used as a proxy for cognitive ability in a way that masks the use of racial criteria. The same does not seem to apply to the children of British or French parents, whose foreign accents are not associated with cognitive-skill deficits. Thus racism is perpetuated by keeping hidden the criteria for academic success.

Other minoritized groups also face discrimination. For instance, Chinese and Eastern Europeans are often perceived as being too industrious. Yet, in relation to schooling, stereotypes of these groups seem to work in different ways than for black students. A common view among teachers is that Eastern European and Chinese students are very motivated, disciplined and hardworking children, who quickly learn the language and whose parents are very committed to education. This enables Eastern European and Chinese youth to be constructed as 'model students'. Black students, on the other hand, are more often perceived as lazy, talkative or undisciplined, and as culturally and linguistically deprived. The following examples are illustrative:

Now, regarding the other, if we can say this, nationalities, this year I am having a student and I really like her and I already realized she's committed, for example . . . one of Chinese origin. I have a Russian and I see that she, really, has a different academic background . . . she already reasonably speaks Portuguese and I am convinced she is going to be a good student. (Teacher 1, School 2) He can't, he can't express himself and then he makes mistakes, he speaks really . . . when he writes it's really like an Angolan and . . . he doesn't understand what he reads, he doesn't. And then he doesn't make an effort and he himself once told me, "I am dumb" [laughs], literally, those were his words, "I am dumb and, so, I can't." (Teacher 2, School 1)

The positioning of Eastern Europeans and Asians as 'model minorities' helps to prove the effectiveness of official integration policies and to shift blame for academic failure onto the culture and families of underachievers. Such discourses effectively exclude racism as an explanation for academic and social inequalities. We thus need further contextualized research that engages with the history of 'race' ideas and challenges the cliché binary poor, black student versus intelligent, motivated Eastern European that persists in many approaches to education.

The Thesis of Migration Transition: Recentering Portugal, Amplifying Difference

Closely related to the view of diversity as a recent phenomenon are the narratives that characterize Portugal as having changed from a traditional country of emigration into one of immigration in the early 1990s—this being the "thesis of migration transition." The thesis of migration transition has downplayed the structural role that emigration still plays in the country. Nowadays, Portugal is a 'receiving' and 'sending' society. According to official data, it is estimated that over five million Portuguese people live outside the country—the equivalent to half its territorial residents. This figure is on the increase, and new forms of emigration are often statistically invisible, relating to temporary work or intra—European Union countries and therefore not officially registered. Although structural factors—rather than mere individual dynamics—continue to play a key role in Portuguese emigration, it was only in the current context of the so-called economic crisis that it became publicly acceptable to utter this. A few decades ago,

In Portugal, in the context of EU integration, [in 1986] it made no sense to continue to admit emigration because this was always associated with, in our case [Portugal], the misery in standards of living, the economic aspects of the Monarchy and the beginning of the Republic, a severe economic situation in the country that naturally led the people out of the

country. And so emigration was an epithet to be associated with the New State [Estado Novo], to the past, and not to the democratic state.56

The wide circulation of the elimmigration transition thesis has resulted in a substantial increase in political and academic interest in Portugese diversity, now constituting a real immigration industry. Significantly, the way in which immigration began to be accentuated in the 1990s plays an ambiguous role in the representations of Portugal. As Vale de Almeida⁵⁷ suggests, an overemphasis on immigration in Portugal has helped to create an imaginary in which the country is positioned as "center." Although immigration might be still perceived as a threat, these narratives help us to imagine Portugal as a desirable destination for immigrants, valuing the national identity by locating it alongside other rich and modern European countries. This thesis is explicit in the following academic narrative that was produced inthe mid-1990s:

The existence of ethnic groups in Portugal presents, nowadays, a noticeable statistical dimension and an increased socio-cultural diversity, conferring on the country a truly multicultural profile, a characteristic that it shares with many European and world countries.⁵⁸

Moreover, the overemphasis on the role of immigration helps to reinforce a binary vision of development: the global South as poor, wrecked by disease and poverty, aspiring to emigrate to the rich, developed and modern North. This is best understood as the operation of an "immigrant imaginary." Salman Sayyid59 developed this idea, of the "immigrant imaginary" to analyze contemporary discourses on immigration and the postcolonial subjects of imperial colonialism in the British context. According to Sayvid, this imaginary works by consecrating and amplifying an ontological distinction between host society and immigrants. In the national context, the prevalence of this "immigrant imaginary" secures the self-assuring idea that 'tolerant' Portugal is a desirable destination for migrants due to its positioning in Europe—that is, in the modern and developed world disproving nineteenth-century views that Africa begins at the Pyrenees. Conversely, it naturalizes the idea that the African continent is premodern and underdeveloped, which informs much political, scholarly and commonsense thinking. In education, this imaginary circulates in the generalizations made by many teachers about the various African contexts from which recent migrant students come, and their assumptions about their inferior education systems and attitudes to schoolwork:

I don't see that [ethnic difference] is a problem. The only need that emerges is . . . in terms . . . say, intellectual terms . . . They actually need, for example, our Africans . . . They need much more support at that level, not due to an ethnic difference, because that's not it, but due

to a large difference in the work attitudes, and in the set of contents that they should have . . . now acquired, and they haven't. . . They are here, out of their countries, and take in customs and lifestyles that are not theirs, but with which they have to live and, to a certain extent, get used to so they can progress, isn't it? (Teacher 3, School 1)

Poor expectations of these students are compounded by teachers' assumptions about assimilation into Portuguese culture and education as a necessary road for academic success—with 'race' deferring the possibility of becoming truly assimilated. Hence the relation between racism and educational success is masked by assumptions of inferior early-academic experiences and qualifications, even when—as in this case—students were known to come from socioeconomically privileged backgrounds.

Associating Demographic Change with Positive, Political Visibility

A final aspect of these narratives that I wish to explore is the presumption of a causal relationship between increased demographic diversity, political visibility and institutional response. Drawing on Andrea Brighenti's work on the concept of *visibility*, I argue that such cause-and-effect relation needs to be made problematic.

Considering that the "invisible is what is here without being an object,"60 Brighenti invites us to explore the construction of diversity as a nonissue that is, something that is not accorded social and political relevance. In democratic Portugal, there is a time lapse of about two decades (roughly from the mid-1970s to the 1990s) in which diversity did not receive significant political attention. In religion, debates were polarized between secularists and Catholics without any concern with religious pluralism. Culture and language were not seen as deserving special attention or provisions: the formerly colonized were supposed to speak Portuguese and to have assimilated into Portugese language and culture. A "no problem here" approach61 pervaded, and it went undisputed both academically and politically by the left and right. Diversity issues were ignored in politics, including diversity in education, until the period in which changes to the demographic composition of the national population became increasingly more evident. It was only in the early 1990s, following Portuguese integration in the European Union, that such concerns were put on the political agenda. 62 although in a conservative fashion (not concerned with or requiring structural reform). Yet most official and academic accounts conceal this. Chronological narratives continue to depict policy making on these matters as an arena governed by good will rather than power relations: Portugal became an immigration country, and institutional bodies and policy interventions were formulated to respond to this new scenario. These narratives conflate a demographic question with a political one, failing to consider when and how the state started showing a public concern with (the not-so-new) diversity.

We must also consider the role of other actors in dealing with aspects of immigration and diversity that had not yet gained public visibility in democratic Portugal. The problematic association between demographic change and political response has rendered local initiatives and struggles invisible. Despite the absence of state initiatives or debates, the social problems faced by minoritized people—particularly in the housing and employment sectors and in access to the law—were being addressed by local associations at least since the 1970s.63 Meanwhile, cultural diversity has gained more political visibility, but politicians and other public officials have also reasserted the idea of a welcoming nation, making it difficult to speak of inequalities and racism. This challenge is being currently met by political activists and grassroots movements, but it is a particularly difficult task given the depoliticization of the wider debate over these issues. While European public policies have supported local projects aimed at socioeconomic integration, these policies have also neutralized the political agendas of grassroots associations and NGOs.64

Finally, as Brighenti suggests, visibility is not necessarily liberating. The process of making diversity more visible may simply function as "a strategic resource for regulation."65 This raises fundamental questions about what kinds of diversity-related political agendas have been incorporated as "legitimate concerns" and what has remained off the agenda. For example, the Secretariat for the Coordination of Multicultural Education Programs was Portugal's first institution to address cultural diversity. It was created in 1991 to "coordinate, foster and promote, within the education system, programs and events which aim for conviviality, tolerance, dialogue and solidarity between different peoples, ethnicities and cultures" (Statutory Regulation 63/91, of March 13). The emergence of the secretariat was related to the intensification of racism across Europe during that period. Yet racism was recognized only in its most violent forms, which were seen as marginal phenomena in Portuguese society and not a school matter. Official discourses and practices have been anchored in a conception of racism as prejudice, 66 rather than as a historical and political process, structurally embedded in modern societies. 67 Accordingly, it has been proposed that racism may be treated by emphasizing the value of different cultures and developing skills in intercultural communication.⁶⁸ By leaving concerns with structural amd political equality aside, it has merely made difference visible, rather than challenging inequities in power.

This silence on matters of power and inequality is particularly evident in the Portuguese education system. The main state structures have remained broadly unchanged, with the Ministry of Education continuing to rest its policies on assumptions of the presumed homogeneity of its school population. According to the annual European reports published over the last decade by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia and its successor the Fundamental Rights Agency, the overall situation of education policy and practice for diversity in Portugal is bleak. Initiatives

tend to be centered in the capital, Lisbon, and there is insufficient provision for Portuguese as an additional language, a total absence of state-endorsed bilingual education, few training opportunities for teachers, underachievement in some minority groups and persistent, explicit school segregation. All of these problems are aggravated by the ineffectiveness of the equality body that was established to monitor and tackle racism in Portugal. These problems also raise serious questions about the self-proclaimed 'success' of Portuguese 'integration policies'. Moreover, the depoliticization of debate is preventing a meaningful discussion of ethno-racial inequalities in education. Rather, diversity is being viewed through the lens of exoticizing narratives, epitomized by the multicultural festival. For example, when asked about the activities developed at his school, one teacher replied:

In our festivities when, for instance, our Africans . . . when we do something to do with music, or with dance . . . Indeed, it's wonderful to see them dance! And to see, to make . . . the Africans dance or the Europeans . . . They are perfectly different things! And to us, it brings us a huge joy . . . I remember, for instance, the dances, the songs in which they make instruments with a tin can if necessary . . . moments of theater in which . . . in which they put . . . hmmm . . . their way of speaking, their language or dialect. And so, it's moments like this of enormous enrichment and of cultural interchange that benefits all. (Teacher 4, School 1)

In education, engagement with diversity is still seen as taking place outside the classroom. Inside the class, Eurocentrism in the curricula and textbooks goes unchallenged⁷¹ and the perception that racially and ethnically marked students have cultural and linguistic deficits prevails.⁷² These contrary tendencies are revealing of Sayyid's "immigrant imaginary,"⁷³ in which immigrant experiences are read from either an exoticized or a banalized register—celebrating and exaggerating difference and overemphasizing sameness and denying racism. In sum, while making difference visible, current approaches are not moving beyond a 'benevolent' or 'celebratory' multiculturalism,⁷⁴ even when deploying the intercultural rhetoric. Diversity is conceptualized as an educational problem rather than a resource, and considerations of structural inequalities and enduring Eurocentric canons of knowledge are sidelined.

CONCLUSIONS

Portugal has joined the growing list of Western countries that include concerns about immigration and diversity in their political and research agendas. Even so, the Portugese state is still failing in its efforts to tackle racism at the institutional level. This situation has been naturalized by the

hegemony of the political, academic and commonsense assumptions that were analyzed in this chapter. In these political narratives-which have been endorsed by sectors of the Portugese academia-there is a tendency to historicize the tolerant nation and to attest a vocation for interculturality that circulates presentist accounts of immigration and evades the historical roots of contemporary, Portugese racism. In both cases, the debate over the legacies of colonial 'race' thinking is made irrelevant. Although historically informed perspectives are paramount for understanding how 'race' has been configured across time, it is crucial to note the emergence of a narrative that historicizes diversity as a deterrent for a discussion on racism. In turn, the constitution of the immigration industry of the last decade in Portugal is erasing 'race' and concealing (post)colonial dynamics within a logic of push-and-pull factors.

Academic work needs to challenge this overemphasis on national specificities regarding racism, which characterizes the Portugese discourse on immigration and diversity. Mainstream accounts tend to overestimate the specific national contours of the management of diversity and immigration, losing sight of a common, European (post)colonial legacy of 'race'. Contrary to treating the Portuguese case as exceptional or peculiar, I argue for the need to develop theoretical approaches that open up the possibility of in-depth international comparisons. A contextualized, comparative approach can also overcome the temporal linearity evident in the reductionist construction of certain contexts as not yet awakened to normative multiculturalism—implicit in many accounts of southern European societies. This comparative approach can also be used to overcome the assumption that multiculturalist policy formulations and interpretations are unavoidably progressive (evolving from assimilation to integration to multiculturalism/interculturality), or as bringing paradigmatic change.

Research must also disrupt discourses on diversity which presume that the achievement of visibility is necessarily positive, and it must engage the the cumulative effect of successive invizibilizations, which have made alternatives to the current, depoliticized public debate over immigration and diversity, hard to imagine. There are many struggles against colonialism, slavery and racism that have not just been marginalized, but made invisible. Likewise, the struggles by radical intellectuals, political activists and grassroots movements for an antiracist education have a long history of questioning Eurocentric canons of knowledge and the inequities (re)produced by school structures, arrangements and practices.75 A more productive research stream could be achieved by engaging these critiques and alternatives to the enduring shortcomings of hegemonic approaches.

Finally, research needs to overcome naive ideas about the relationship betweeen policy-making and knowledge, and particularly, the notion that official policies fail at tackling racism because of insufficient knowledge about better solutions or models. As Lesko and Bloom have argued, "ignorance is an effect of particular knowledge, not an absence of knowledge."76 In the Portuguese context, it is commonly suggested that there was a slow apropriation of debates on diversity and immigration—which became more visible in the early 1990s. Meanwhile, public bodies and academics have tacitly ignored institutional racism and antiracist struggles in a number of other contexts, in favour of a culturalist approach to difference that tends to evade questions of 'race'/power. This is a political choice, not an accident or forgetfulness.

NOTES

- 1. ACIDI, BI: Boletim Informativo 92 (Oct.-Dec. 2011): 8-9.
- Cameron McCarthy, "After the Canon Knowledge and Ideological Representation in the Multicultural Discourse on Curriculum Reform," in Race, Identity, and Representation in Education, ed. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow (New York: Routledge, 1993), 289-305.
- This was a qualitative study of compulsory education in a private and a state school in 'white areas' (using interviews, classroom observation and analysis of official documents). (Funding body: Foundation for Science and Technology, FCOMP-01-0124-FEDER-007554)
- Salman Sayyid, "Slippery People: The Immigrant Imaginary and the Grammar of Colours," in Institutional Racism in Higher Education, ed. Ian Law, Deborah Philips and Laura Turney (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 2004), 149–159.
- 5. The project "Race' and Africa in Portugal: A Study on History Textbooks" (accessed Nov. 13, 2012, www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/rap) is centered on three moments: the analysis of textbooks and education policy, interviews with a variety of institutional actors and participatory workshops. (Funding body: Foundation for Science and Technology, PTDC/CED/64626/2006)
- 6. The project TOLERACE was funded by the 7th Framework Programme of the European Community (Grant Agreement no. 244633). I draw particularly on the analysis of European reports on racism, especially on education. Project TOLERACE, "The Semantics of Tolerance and (Anti-)Racism in Europe: Public Bodies and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective," accessed April 12, , 2013, http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/tolerace
- 7. Speech by Nuno Severiano Teixeira (2001), who was then the minister of internal affairs, cited by Vanda Santos, O Discurso Oficial do Estado sobre a Emigração dos anos 60 a 80 e Imigração dos anos 90 à actualidade (Lisbon: OI/ACIME, 2004), 107.
- 8. EUMC, Migrants, Minorities and Education (Vienna: EUMC, 2004), 92, accessed Jan. 11, 2009, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/comparative_reports/pub_cr_education_04_en.htm.
- 9. SEF, Relatório de Actividades: Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo (Lisbon: SEF, 2007), accessed Mar. 21, 2009, http://www.sef.pt/portal/v10/PT/aspx/estatisticas/relatorios.aspx?id_linha=4265&menu_position=4141#0.
- 10. ACIDI, BI: Boletim Informativo 52 (Sept. 2007).
- 11. The MIPEX is a monitoring tool for measuring "the integration of migrants into society," resulting from the collaboration of the British Council and the Migration Policy Group, and receiving funding by the European Union. Accessed Nov. 13, 2012, http://www.mipex.eu/.
- 12. Clara Viana, "Imigração: Portugal é o mais 'generoso' em políticas de integração," *Público*, Oct. 5, 2009, accessed Oct. 5, 2009, http://ultimahora.publico.clix.pt/noticia.aspx?id=1403698.

13. ACIME, Imigração: Os mitos e os factos (Lisbon: ACIME, 2005), 21.

14. ME, normative dispatch 63/91, Dário da República, Nº 60-Série I-B, Mar.

13, 1991.

15. Lucinda Fonseca, Jorge M. Malheiros and Sandra Silva, "Portugal," in Current Immigration Debates in Europe: A Publication of the European Migration Dialogue, ed. Jan Niessen, Yongmi Schibel and Cressida Thompson (Brussels: MPG, 2005), 5.

16. Sayyid, "Slippery People."

17. Marta Araújo and Silvia Rodríguez Maeso, "The 'Prudent' Integration of Roma/Gypsy Pupils: Segregation and White Flight in Portuguese Compulsory Schooling" (TOLERACE working paper, Coimbra, 2012), accessed Apr. 5, 2012, http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/tolerace/pages/en/publications/ working-papers/february-2012.php.

18. Wendy Brown, Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

19. Miguel Vale de Almeida, Um Mar da Cor da Terra: 'Raça', Cultura e Política da Identidade (Oeiras: Celta, 2000).

20. Gilberto Freyre, Em torno de um novo conceito de tropicalismo (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora, 1952). See also Gilberto Freyre, Casa Grande e Senzala (1933; Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, 2003).

21. This could be seen in the existence of friendly social contacts or in the possibility of having sexual intercourse with 'native' women. See Cláudia Castelo, O modo português de estar no mundo': O luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961) (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998), and Valentim Alexandre, "O Império e a Ideia de Raça" in Novos Racismos, ed. Jorge Vala (Oeiras: Celta, 1999), 133-144.

22. Castelo, O modo português.

23. Ibid., and Alexandre, O Império e a Ideia de Raça.

24. Almeida, Um Mar da Cor da Terra, and Margarida C. Ribeiro, Uma História de Regressos: Império, Guerra Colonial e Pós-Colonialismo (Porto: Afrontamento, 2004).

25. Also, contestation of the rhetoric during that period should not be overlooked. See, Charles Boxer, Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963); James Duffy, Portuguese Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

26. Almeida, Um Mar da Cor da Terra; Carlos Cardoso, "The Colonialist View of the African-Origin 'Other' in Portuguese Society and Its Education System," Race, Ethnicity and Education 1, no. 2 (1998): 191-206; and Ribeiro,

Uma História de Regressos.

27. Lorenzo Macagno, "Um antropólogo norte-americano no «mundo que o português criou»: Relações raciais no Brasil e Moçambique segundo Marvin Harris," Lusotopie (1999), 143-161, and Maria Paula Meneses, "Os espaços criados pelas palavras: Racismos, etnicidades e o encontro colonial," in Um olhar além das fronteiras—educação e relações raciais, ed. Nilma L. Gomes (Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Autêntica Editora, 2007), 55-76.

28. Castelo, O modo português.

- 29. João Leal, Etnografias Portuguesas (1870-1970): Cultura Popular e Identidade Nacional (Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 2000).
- 30. Adriano Moreira was overseas minister (1961-1963) in Salazar's regime. However, in some segments of Portuguese society, his political responsibilities have been broadly sanitized, and he is often invited to participate in academic debates on issues of interculturality.

31. Joaquim Pires Valentim, "Luso-tropicalismo e Lusofonia: Uma perspectiva

psicossocial," Via Latina 6, no. 2 (2005): 68.

- 32. ME, normative dispatch 6391, translated in Cardoso, "Colonialist View," 198.
- 33. Anne-Marie Fortier, Multicultural Horizons: Diversity and the Limits of the Civil Nation (London: Routledge, 2008), 22.
- 34. ACIDI, Apresentação de Estudo OI: A Interculturalidade na Expansão Portuguesa (2007), accessed May 9, 2007, http://www.oi.acidi.gov.pt/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1377.
- 35. João Paulo Oliveira Costa and Teresa Lacerda, A Interculturalidade na Expansão Portuguesa (Séculos XV-XVIII) (Lisbon: ACIME, 2007), 23, 86-87.
- 36. Ibid., 104.
- 37. This has been most visible in the depoliticization of colonialism and slavery in the contest titled "7 Wonders of Portuguese Origin in the World." This program was broadcast by the public television channel RTP1 (June 10, 2009) to mark the Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Comunities. Salazar's regime used this date to celebrate the Day of Race. The contest listed 27 buildings (22 of which classified as World Heritage by UNESCO) related to the history of 'Portuguese Expansion', and received support from the Portuguese Institute for Architectural Heritage (IPPAR), the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture. A public petition by international academics was launched to denounce the rewriting of the Portuguese colonial past. RTPI, "7 Wonders of Portuguese Origin in the World," accessed Nov. 13, 2012, http://www.petitiononline.com/port2009/petition.html.
- 38. David Theo Goldberg, The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
- 39. Shiv Visvanathan, "Nation," Theory, Culture & Society 23, no. 2-3 (2006): 533-538.
- 40. Marta Araújo and Silvia Rodriguez Maeso, "History Textbooks, Racism and the Critique of Eurocentrism: Beyond Rectification or Compensation," Ethnic and Racial Studies 35, no. 7 (2012): 1266-1285.
- AbdoolKarim Vakil, "Heróis do Lar, Nação Ambi-Valente: Portugalidade e Identidade Nacional nos tempos dos pós," in 30 Anos de Democracia em Portugal, ed. Manuel Loff (Porto: FLUP, 2006), 73-101.
- 42. Silvia Rodríguez Maeso and Marta Araújo "Understanding the logics of racism in contemporary Europe—Booklet presenting key findings and recommendations" (Coimbra: Centre for Social Studies, 2013), accessed Apr. 12, 2013, http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/tolerace/pages/pt/dissemination-materials-activities/documents.php, and Araújo and Maeso, "'Prudent' Integration."
- 43. Barnor Hesse and Salman Sayyid, "Narrating the Postcolonial Political and the Immigrant Imaginary," in A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain, ed. Nasreen Ali, Virinder S. Karla and S. Sayyid (London: Hurst, 2006), 13-31.
- 44. Maria Ioannis Baganha and José C. Marques, *Imigração e Política: O caso português* (Lisbon: Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento, 2001).
- 45. SEF, Relatório de Actividades: Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo (Lisbon: SEF, 2007), accessed Mar. 21, 2009, http://www.sef.pt/portal/v10/PT/aspx/estatisticas/relatorios.aspx?id_linha=4265&menu_position=4141#0.
- 46. Natália Faria, "Regresso de imigrantes está a deixar o país mais pobre e envelhecido," *Público*, May 25, 2009, accessed May 25, 2009, http://ultimahora.publico.clix.pt/noticia.aspx?id=1382690&idCanal=62.
- 47. Hesse and Sayyid, "Narrating the Postcolonial Political," 21.
- 48. EUMC, Migrants, Minorities and Education, 10.

49. ECRI, Second Report on Portugal (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002), accessed Nov. 13, 2012, http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/Ecri/1-ECRI/2-Country-by country_approach/Portugal/Portugal_CBC_2en.asp# TopOfPage.

50. Charies Dunn-Chan, "Portugal Sees Integration Progress," BBC News, Nov. 14, 2005, accessed Mar. 21, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/

4436276.stm.

51. Discourses on 'model immigrants' can be found more widely in political discourses. Eastern Europeans are often constructed as 'good immigrants', integrating easily across the country. On the contrary, black Africans are often seen as self-excluding, creating ghettos in metropolitan areas with high unemployment rates, and thus causing 'discomfort' (e.g., António Vitorino's interventions in the RTP1 TV show Prós e Contras, Episode 17: "A Imigração: Os novos colonizadores," May 8, 2006).

52. José Carlos Marques, Os Portugueses na Suíça: Migrantes Europeus (Lis-

bon: ICS, 2008).

53. Miguel Vale de Almeida, "Comentário," in "Portugal não é um País Pequeno": Contar o 'Império' na Pós-colonialidade, ed. Manuela R. Sanches (Lisbon: Cotovia, 2006), 361–397.

54. MNE, Comunidades Portuguesas e Comunidades Luso-descendentes (2007), accessed Apr. 27, 2008, http://www.mne.gov.pt/mne/pt/infocidadao/

comunidades/.

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56. Observatório da Emigração, "A emigração evoluiu em modalidades distintas, mas no decurso da nossa história fomos tendo sempre saídas," Oct. 11, 2011, accessed Nov. 13, 2012, http://www.observatorioemigracao.secomunidades.pt/np4/2659.html.

57. Almeida, Comentário, 363-364.

- 58. Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, Sociologia das Migrações (Lisbon: Universidade Aberta, 1995), 204.
- 59. Sayyid, "Slippery People"; also in Hesse and Sayyid, "Narrating the Postcolonial Political."
- 60. Andrea Brighenti, "Visibility: A Category for the Social Sciences," Current Sociology 55, no. 3 (2007): 328, original emphasis.
- 61. Chris Gaine, No Problem Here: A Practical Approach to Education and 'Race' in White Schools (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

62. Cardoso, "Colonialist View."

63. Rosana Albuquerque, "Dinâmicas Associativas e Comunidades Imigrantes," in A Imigração em Portugal: Os movimentos humanos e culturais em Portugal, ed. SOS Racismo (Lisbon: SOS Racismo, 2002), 366-381.

64. Ibid.

65. Brighenti, "Visibility," 339.

66. Julian Henriques, "Social Psychology and the Politics of Racism," in Changing the Subject, Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity, ed. Julian Henriques, Wendy Hollway, Cathy Urwin, Couze Venn and Valerie Walkerdine (London: Routledge, 1984), 60-90.

67. David Theo Goldberg, The Racial State (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

68. Entreculturas, O que quero dizer quando penso em Educação Intercultural?, 2009, accessed Mar. 12, 2009, http://www.entreculturas.pt/DiariodeBordo. aspx?to=214.

69. See also Araújo and Maeso, "'Prudent' Integration."

70. EUMC, Migrants, Minorities and Education; EUMC, Annual Report 2006 (Vienna: EUMC, 2006), accessed Jan. 11, 2009, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/annual_report/ar2006_part2_en.htm;

FRA, Annual Report 2007 (Vienna: FRA, 2007), accessed Feb. 12, 2009, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/annual_report/ar2007_part2_en.htm; and FRA, Annual Report 2008 (Vienna: FRA, 2008),, accessed Feb. 12, 2009, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/annual_report/ar2008_part2_en.htm.

71. Araújo and Maeso, "History Textbooks."

72. Marta Araújo, "O silêncio do racismo em Portugal: O caso do abuso verbal racista na escola," in Gomes, *Um olhar além das fronteiras*, 77–94. For a discussion of the construction of minoritized populations as cultural and linguistic deficits in the academia see Philomena Essed, "Ethnicity and Diversity in the Dutch Academia," *Social Identities* 5, no. 2 (1999): 211–225.

73. Sayyid, "Slippery People";

- 74. See Barry Troyna, Racism and Education (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), and Boaventura de Sousa Santos and João Arriscado Nunes, "Para ampliar o cânone do reconhecimento, da diferença e da igualdade," in Reconhecer para libertar: Os caminhos do cosmopolitismo multicultural, ed. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2004), 20-51.
- 75. See, for instance, Carter G. Woodson, The Mis-Education of the Negro (Washington: The Associated Publishers, 1933).
- 76. Nancy Lesko and Leslie Bloom, "Close encounters: truth, experience and interpretation in multicultural teacher education", *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4 (1998): 375-395 at 380.