

*The colour that dares not speak its name: schooling and 'the myth of Portuguese anti-racism'*¹

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There is a well-constructed myth about Portugal being more tolerant and non-racist than other societies, due to the specificities of its colonial past. In this communication, I will explore the discourse that embodies this myth, trying to understand its implications for the schooling of ethnic minority students. It is my view that it provides powerful discourses in education, helping to remove issues of racism off the agenda. Based on an ethnographic study of one state and one private school in predominantly White areas, with children of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds and genders, I use the example of racist name-calling to argue that even the most obvious forms of racism are being silenced at the school level. I conclude that, to eliminate discrimination, schools must develop practices that go beyond the celebration of cultural diversity and engage with the racialisation of our societies.

1. Introduction

I would like to start with some background information on migration in Portugal, as some of you may not be familiar with the changes that have been taking place recently in the ethnic composition of our society.

Immigration is a recent phenomenon in Portugal if compared with many other countries with a colonial past. Traditionally, Portugal has been a country of emigration, mainly to North America and to richer countries in Europe, such as France. Immigration to Portugal, especially from former colonies in Africa, started to become visible since the 1960s, being intensified after the process of decolonisation in the 1970s. However, it was not until the 1990s that the inflow of foreign population outnumbered the outflow of Portuguese citizens (Fonseca *et al*, 2005). According to data from the last Census, the number of people with foreign nationality living in Portugal has almost doubled throughout the 1990s, representing in 2001 around 2.2 per cent of the total population (INE, 2002). These are conservative figures though: they do not include those who already acquired Portuguese nationality and illegal immigrants. It is thus estimated that immigrants make up around 5 per cent of the population living in

¹ I borrowed this quote from Cardoso (1998), even though I prefer the expression 'non-racism', as I understand anti-racism as an active stance, which does not seem to be Cardoso's intention.

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Portugal (SEF, 2006). The main factor that contributed to this recent growth in the number of immigrants in Portugal was the need of a workforce capable of responding to the construction needs of major public infrastructures (such as motorways, Expo 98 and Euro 2004), in a period of economic growth (Eurydice, 2004). A significant change in migrants' countries of origin has also taken place. Traditionally, immigrants came mainly from African Countries with Portuguese as Official Language and Brazil. Nowadays, there is a wider ethnic diversity, with a significant number of immigrants coming from Eastern Europe, mainly from Ukraine, Russia and Moldova (SEF, 2004).

In our education system, according to official data available, referring to the school year 1999-2000, 5.7 per cent of children in compulsory and secondary schooling were of ethnic minority origin³. 45 per cent of these came from countries with Portuguese as an official language (GIASE, 2001). Also, the greater proportion of immigrant children enrolled in Portuguese schools, compared to that of foreign nationals, should be read carefully: children born to illegal immigrants are granted with access to education⁴ and are thus represented in official statistics. Portugal is thus a society that is experiencing considerable change in terms of ethnic diversity, particularly over the last three decades, and this is reflected in its education system.

2. The study

The on-going study⁵ in which this communication draws aimed to explore issues around the integration of ethnic minority pupils in a context seen as culturally homogeneous. Whilst most studies in Portugal have been carried out in Lisbon or Porto, where ethnic minority communities tend to settle, I deliberately chose a context where cultural diversity is less visible, and a 'no problem here' approach pervades. Thus, the ethnographic study focused on two schools in a middle-sized Portuguese town, and looks at the schooling experiences of pupils of both genders and diverse ethnic and social origins.

Schools were chosen on their willingness to participate. One of them is private and the other is a state school. The private school advertises its commitment to multiculturalism and it is known for attracting socially favoured African families living overseas. The school provides accommodation for its students, mainly foreign ones.

³ Available official data do not reflect recent changes in immigration patterns.

⁴ Decree-Law n. 67/2004 of 25 March 2004.

⁵ This research project, entitled *Success, discipline, and school dropouts amongst ethnic minority pupils*, started as post-doctoral research and was initially funded by the Portuguese agency *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* (ref. SFRH/BPD/14672/2003).

The school teaches children from pre-school to the end of secondary schooling. Ethnic minority pupils make up around 10% of the school population and are mainly from African Countries with Portuguese as Official Language (PALOP). Although the school is privately funded, pupils who are in compulsory schooling are subsidised by the State, and so the social composition of the school is quite varied. In the two forms under study, ethnic minority students were socially more favoured than their peers.

The state school has no explicit mention to multiculturalism in its documents. It teaches children from Years 5 to 9 (10 to 15 year olds), and it is socially heterogeneous. Whilst in the private school the pupils of ethnic minority origin were generally more favoured socially, in the state school the reverse is true. Three out of the five ethnic minority origin children in the forms studied were orphans (of father or mother or both) and were put in the care of an institution. Ethnic minority pupils make up around 4% of the school population. Pupils of ethnic minorities in the two forms studied are of African descent, except one who is of mixed heritage (Portuguese and African) and another of Chinese descent.

In both schools, 13 students had an ethnic minority background, and had been living in Portugal for three to ten years. The fact that most ethnic minority students in the study are Black may be seen as helping to reinforce views of a White-Black dualism, rather than contributing to explore the complexities of contemporary racisms (Mac an Ghail, 1999). However, in my view, colour and 'race', rather than ethnicity, have largely been neglected in Portugal, both politically and academically. It is thus my aim to explore the continuing importance of differences seen as 'racial' at a times where education policies and practices tend to focus on cultural difference.

The methods of research used are semi-structured interviews, direct observation of lessons, and the collection of school documents. Participants in the study are around 50 pupils in Year 6 (aged 11) and 25 in Year 9 (aged 14), 21 of their teachers, the schools' headteachers and two school psychologists. In this communication, I will focus on pupils in Year 6 only. In each registration form, classroom observation focused in two subjects, as I wished to observe children in different classroom contexts. Civic Education lessons were observed in all forms. This was because this subject is considered to have a low academic status, a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and is not assessed by written exams. A second subject for each form was observed, and this was chosen from those considered as having high academic status, depending on the teacher's willingness to participate in the study. In both schools, such 'hard' subjects

were Portuguese, Maths or History. A total of around 80 lessons were observed. Finally, the school documents collected include: school regulations and mission statement, pupils' school records, discipline reports and tables of achievement. Data is being analysed using a loose version of *Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and particularly the method of 'open coding' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

3. The myth of Portuguese 'Anti-Racism'

There is a well-constructed myth about Portugal being more tolerant and non-racist than other societies, due to the specificities of its colonial past. It is often mentioned that relationships between Portuguese settlers and the 'natives' were friendly and that this testified to the 'natural aptitude' that the Portuguese have to deal with different cultures.

This idea was worked by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s to explain the success of the Brazilian multiracial society, and came later to be known as *lusotropicalism* (Castelo, 1998). According to Freyre, there was a supposed aptitude of the Portuguese people to biological miscegenation and cultural interpenetration with the people from the tropics that would lead to the creation of harmoniously integrated multiracial societies (Alexandre, 1999; Valentim, 2005). Freyre explained this aptitude through the miscegenated nature of the Portuguese themselves who had emerged out of a long contact with the Moors and the Jews (Castelo, 1998). This could be seen in the existence of 'intimate' contacts that the Portuguese established with the 'natives', being in friendly social contacts or in the possibility to have sexual intercourse with African women. Significantly, he saw Portuguese social relations overseas as being characterised by integration rather than domination or assimilation (Castelo, 1998). For the Brazilian sociologist, this contributed for the specificity of the Portuguese colonial relationships.

Lusotropicalism became particularly important when it was embraced in mainland Portugal by Salazar's regime in the 1950s⁶, to Freyre's approval. Significantly, this happened after several European empires were forced to review their policies of colonisation after the declaration of the Indian Union, and international attacks to the Portuguese dictatorship and colonialism were mounting (Alexandre, 1999). In 1951, a couple of months after Portugal revised its constitution to remove traces of its colonial

⁶ It should be noted that in the 1930s and 1940s, the Portuguese regime rejected Freyre's ideas on biological miscegenation (see Castelo, 1998).

regime (expressions such as 'colonies' were then replaced by 'overseas provinces'), Freyre visited the country (Alexandre, 1999; Castelo, 1998). His ideas were partially appropriated to construct the idea that Portugal was a multi-continental nation. Using the argument that the relationships between the Portuguese settlers and the 'natives' were harmonious and peaceful, and that coloners and 'natives' belonged to the same nation⁷ served to make decolonisation spurious (Alexandre, 1999; Castelo, 1998; Valentim, 2005). Significantly, it also helped to reinforce the construction of a national identity strongly based on our colonial history, said to be characterised by openness and tolerance to other ethnic groups and cultures (Cardoso, 1998).

Even though lusotropicalism was more an agenda or an aspiration, it is important to note that it obscured and denied the realities and practices of Portuguese colonisation. Several historians have argued that it denied the occurrence of economic exploitation, the fact that there had never been cultural reciprocity, or that sexual intercourse with 'native' women resulted from the fact that there were few White women amongst the settlers (*see* Castelo, 1998). Also, racism and a view of the African 'other' as inferior and uncivilised pervaded (Cardoso, 1998), even though Freyre saw it as an exception to 'the Portuguese way of being in the world' (Castelo, 1998). The Portuguese were, no more, no less, like any other colonial empire.

Even though these discourses have changed, particularly since the end of dictatorship in 1974 and the ensuing process of decolonisation, lusotropicalism has survived to present days. The myth that the Portuguese are not racist by nature and are actually more tolerant than other peoples is occasionally present in official discourses (Santos, 2005). Significantly, it is explicit in the document that created our first public institution to deal with multiculturalism in education, the Co-ordinating Secretariat for Multicultural Education Programmes:

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 product of a mysterious alchemy which found in the sea, that great

⁷ Even though it was not until 1961 that Portuguese citizenship was granted to all people living in Portuguese colonies (Alexandre, 1999).

unknown, its ideal medium and its path to adventure (ME, 1991, cited and translated by Cardoso, 1998, p. 198).

The media has also preserved the myth: 'Portugal is the most tolerant country in Europe' (JN, 17 Nov. 2005) still make newspapers' headlines.

All these discourses have been helping to promote the idea that the Portuguese are less racist than other peoples. This is particularly significant as a large number of teachers in Portugal were socialised into this idea (Cortese & Stoer, 1996).

Our particular aptitude to relate to other people was expressed by one of the teachers interviewed. When talking about the usefulness of intercultural education, a teacher told me that he felt no need for it, because:

...integration is easy... We... And we have that advantage and I tell them that, so that they can see... Which were the countries that integrated Black people like Portugal did? The countries that helped them in war did not have social relationships with Black people, coloured people, it was only English, Swedish, whatever! (...) Weren't there any racist Portuguese? Fine! Weren't there any Portuguese who enslaved Black people and treated them badly? I am sure there are! I met some. Hmm... But there is no one who lived with any other race like the Portuguese. (Physical Education Teacher)

Moreover, in my interviews, teachers who were born in former colonies assumed that such experience was sufficient to deal with cultural diversity:

I am particularly sensitive to this issue because I came from Angola, so I have a large emotional attachment to... Well, I always had Black peers and always got on well with them, that is, it doesn't mean that people who... If I was another person who doesn't... But, I mean, it's an issue that I am concerned with. So, I pay attention. (Headteacher, state school).

What teachers did not acknowledge was the situation of White domination into which they grew up, ending up minimising any problems in the integration of Black pupils.

In spite of these discourses and their prominence in Portuguese society, the 2002 *European Social Survey* suggests that around 70 per cent of the Portuguese population thinks that immigration contributes to increasing criminality and insecurity (Vala, 2003). These images circulate in, and are fed by, the Portuguese media, which have

traditionally portrayed ethnic minority communities as 'problematic', and associated with higher levels of crime and marginal behaviour⁸ (Cunha *et al*, 2004; SOS Racismo, 2005). According to a recent report from the Portuguese Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination (CICDR, 2005), in the media the Roma are often associated to violence and drugs, the Brazilians to prostitution, Eastern Europeans to alcohol consumption, violence and mafias, and African people to laziness, violence and trafficking of drugs. I think these stereotypes question the myth that the Portuguese is 'naturally' not racist.

Not all ethnic minority communities face the same barriers to integration. The *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance* (ECRI, 2002) warned about the 'two-speed' integration process taking place in Portugal: of those coming from African countries and that still face problems of integration in our society, and of those recently coming from Eastern European countries, who have been better received possibly because they generally have higher academic and professional qualifications, and are White. This suggests that colour or 'race' plays an important role in discrimination, and points to the need of investigating both old and new processes of discrimination in Portuguese society.

4. Education and multiculturalism: removing racism off the agenda?

Given the prominence of the discourses influenced by lusotropicalism, it is not surprising that education policies to deal with ethnic and cultural diversity have been prioritising 'benevolent multiculturalism' (Troyna, 1993).

Multiculturalism was ignored in education policy even after the changing composition of Portuguese society was evident (Cardoso, 1998). It was only in 1991 that the creation of a state body to deal with multiculturalism in education took place. The Co-ordinating Secretariat for Multicultural Education Programmes⁹ (referred to above), aimed to:

...coordinate, foster and promote, within the education system, programmes and events which aim for conviviality, tolerance, dialogue and solidarity between different peoples, ethnicities and cultures.¹⁰

⁸ Even though it has been shown that in Portugal, when age, sex, and social origin are controlled for, ethnicity does not have an explanatory power for crime (Seabra & Santos, 2005).

⁹ Renamed as Intercultural Secretariat (Entreculturas) in 2001, being dependent from the Ministry of Presidency and not only from the Ministry of Education (Statutory Regulation 5/2001, 1 February).

¹⁰ Statutory Regulation 63/91, of 13 March.

A Project of Intercultural Education (PREDI) was then developed from 1993 to 1997¹¹, aiming to respond to the difficulties felt in the social and educational integration of ethnic minority students into Portuguese society. The project included around 50 basic and secondary schools, with teachers who volunteered being trained to develop school projects (SCOPREM, 1997).

However, few projects were developed in intercultural education. Those in place were concentrated in Metropolitan Lisbon, directed to the children of ethnic minorities, and intervention was marginalised to non-curricular areas and compensatory education (DEB, 2003). This means that Intercultural Education in Portugal has been characterised by 'benevolent multiculturalism' (Troyna, 1993), being primarily concerned with recognising cultural diversity and not questioning the ethnocentrism of curricula nor actively challenging racism in schools and society. An external evaluation of the project referred the need for further teacher training, to move beyond the integration of multicultural elements in a curriculum which is essentially ethnocentric, and also the need to involve school's management to help processes of change to take place (SCOPREM, 1998). Intentions to generalise the project to other schools never materialised.

Even though in the meantime, schools have gained some autonomy in curriculum development, most schools and teachers never used this to integrate other perspectives that challenge ethnocentrism. In Portugal, most projects and events of Multicultural education were limited to outside the classroom activities. This kind of practices was evident in the private school I studied. The following extract suggests that such approach tends to be based on a fossilised concept of culture and helps in reproducing stereotypes:

Our Africans... when we do something related to music, or to dance... It's actually wonderful to see them dance! And see, for instance, to put... put the Africans dancing and to put Europeans dancing... Its perfectly different things! (...) because they have such rhythm in their body, they have a way of feeling and vibrate with music (...) much more than we do! (Religious Education teacher)

In 2002, ACIME (High Commissariat for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities), a government body to target specifically ethnic minority communities, was created¹².

¹¹ Regulation n. 170/ME/93.

¹² Decree-Law 251/2002, 22 November.

This followed the appointment of an Ombudsman (High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities) to deal with such issues in 1996¹³. The creation of ACIME has been vital in dealing with issues of multiculturalism and has brought issues of racism to the agenda, mainly through the work carried out by the Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination¹⁴ it embodies. Few complaints have been received in education, and they relate to explicit forms of discrimination as in cases of disproportionate allocation of pupils of ethnic minority origin to school forms (CICDR, 2005). However, it has been suggested that this might be the 'tip of the iceberg' (EUMC, 2004).

As a matter of fact, anti-racism has never found its way in Portuguese education system, except for some isolated events organised by the Portuguese SOS Racism. However, there has been no consistent effort to eliminate racism at school level. The fact that schools do not record racist incidents or have anti-discrimination codes of practice is in my view illustrative of how racism has been marginalised in education.

5. Focusing on Racism

Significantly, the emergence of the Secretariat of Multicultural Education was related to the growing manifestations of racism across Europe during that period (Cardoso, 1998). However, the conception of racism is one that locates it at the periphery of society:

Even in our society, displays of intolerance are emerging, as are cases of physical and psychological violence directed at ethnic minorities, the result of the proliferation of simplistic doctrines and extremist groups which must be strenuously combated (ME, 1991, cited and translated by Cardoso, 1998, pp. 198-9).

As Cardoso (1998) noted, focusing on racism as physical violence helps to promote the idea that racism is a marginal problem, an idea which helps to preserve the myth that the Portuguese society is not racist. Rather, as Gilroy (1992) defended, racism should be understood *in the mainstream*:

The price of over-identifying the struggle against racism with the activities of these extremist groups and grouplets is that however much of a problem they

¹³ Decree-Law 3-A/96, 26 January.

¹⁴ Created by Law 134/99, 28 August.

may be in a particular area (and I am not denying the need to combat their organising) they are exceptional. They exist on the fringes of political cultures (...). A more productive starting point is provided by focusing on racism in the mainstream and seeing 'race' and racism not as fringe questions but as a volatile presence at the very centre of British politics (p. 51).

There are certainly differences in how issues of racial equality emerged and were fought for in Portugal and the UK. Nonetheless, this concept of *racism in the mainstream* is of particular importance in a country which has been in state of denial in relation to 'race' issues, focusing rather on cultural differences.

In Portugal, we have not had a broad definition of racism that allows us to engage with racism in the mainstream. Legal definitions of racism and racial discrimination that go beyond a focus on the individual and on the intentionality of action are relatively recent. It was only in 2004¹⁵, following a European Council Directive¹⁶, that legislation that defines racial discrimination, both direct and indirect, and harassment was passed. The definition of racial harassment focuses now on the effects of behaviour rather than only on motivation. Before the late 1990s, racial discrimination was prohibited both in the Portuguese Constitution and in criminal law. However, it was only after 1999 that specific legislation to eliminate racism and racial discrimination was passed¹⁷. What I wish to emphasise here is that an official concern with racial discrimination and harassment is relatively recent. Even though racial discrimination was forbidden, the concept on which it was based did not include its most subtle forms, such as harassment or institutional racism, that is, *racism in the mainstream*.

Actually, studying issues of racism and racial discrimination in Portugal is particularly difficult. There is a total absence of official statistical data to assist researchers. There are no official data on the number of ethnic minority people living in Portugal (current data are calculated through the number of immigrants), and ethnic monitoring has never been implemented. It is often resisted by academics, who tend to focus on the potential that the categorisation of groups has in reinforcing stereotypes, neglecting its importance in diagnosing and fighting inequalities (see Araújo & Pereira, *forthcoming*). There are also no reliable statistical data on racist offences.

¹⁵ Law 18/2004, 11 May.

¹⁶ 2000/43/EC, 29 June.

¹⁷ Namely through Law 134/99, 28 August and Decree-Law 111/2000, 4 July.

This is due, in my view, to a misguided interpretation of the Portuguese Constitution, which includes the principle of non-discrimination, and the 1998 Data Protection Act¹⁸, according to which data about people's ethnic origins cannot be asked. The 1998 Act, which transposed to Portugal a European Directive¹⁹, states that:

...it is forbidden to treat personal data referring to philosophical or political convictions, membership of a political party or trade union, religious faith, private life and racial or ethnic origin... (No. 1 of Article 7)

Even though no. 2 of the same article allows for the treatment of such data where there is informed consent and non-discrimination is assured, official institutions have consistently neglected this opportunity to verify whether equality of opportunities is functioning. An exception has been precisely in education, when the official body from the Ministry of Education responsible for statistics in education (DAPP), surveyed pupils nationally in order to obtain updated figures on ethnic diversity in schools. Nonetheless, this was received with caution at both sides of the political spectrum. A local branch of the Portuguese Communist Party reacted immediately, considering inadequate the collection of data in the light of the principle of non-discrimination (Article 13) of our Constitution (Público on-line, 30 March 2004). This was in spite of the collection of such data having taken place before the 1998 Data Protection Act.

Given the Portuguese history of Salazar's dictatorship, in which political persecution was frequent, it is reasonable that our society is concerned with the collection of sensitive data. However, what I wish to point out is why the 'race' issue is seen as so problematic even when anonymity is granted²⁰. Interestingly, Portuguese schools have also collected data about the social origin of pupils, and this has never been seen as problematic. Also, in the UK, the 1998 Data Protection Act makes several exemptions to its application (in education and research) as long as it does not violate the principle of non-discrimination.

I think that this illustrates the *absent presence* (Apple, 1999) of 'race' issues in a society like the Portuguese, one that sees itself as equalitarian and non-racist. Not-knowing the extent of racial discrimination and racism seems coherent with the 'no problem here' view. Significantly, several international bodies have noted this absence

¹⁸ Law 67/98, 26 October.

¹⁹ Directive 95/46/EC, 24 October.

²⁰ My own project ensured informed consent and was authorised by the National Commission for Data Protection, even though with great delay.

of 'race' figures, such as the United Nations (in a response to the annual report by CICDR (2005)) and the European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC, 2004).

6. Racisms in children's lives

In spite of this *state of denial*, racism is an important feature of Black children's lives. I do not mean that it is the most important factor in their experiences of schooling, but it does shape their experiences. As Connolly and Keenan (2002) suggested in relation to Northern Ireland, we need to understand the salience of 'race' even in the 'white hinterlands', where 'no problem here' approaches tend to predominate.

The salience of 'race' did emerge in my study. For instance, anticipation for being picked up for being Black in a context where Whiteness is the norm emerged in interviews and influenced school choice:

I came to (this school), 'cause my older cousin is also here, she said she liked it, and also 'cause she thought that I would have more problems in other schools... Because here... Well, there are more people from the same race and so they don't make so much fun. (Estela, Black Portuguese, Year 6)

For Estela, being amongst a larger minority seemed to provide her with a sense of security that she thought would not find in other schools.

It should be noted that I did not ask any particular questions to pupils about racism or 'racial' discrimination. Even so, issues of 'race' emerged in interviews, and racist name-calling seemed to be a common experience amongst ethnic minority pupils, particularly those in Year 6, in which I will now focus. None of the boys in that Year Group referred to racist name-calling. However, the gender differences found should be read carefully: my own ethnicity and gender might have influenced pupils' responses, or boys might be more reluctant in admitting to racial harassment.

I will then use the example of racist name-calling to illustrate how, in spite of being an overt form of racial harassment, schools deracialised it and downplayed its importance, helping to preserve the myth of Portuguese anti-racism.

It can be argued that other children suffer with other forms of name-calling: because they are fat, they wear spectacles or anything else. However, none of the pupils interviewed recalled such incidents, which suggests that racist name-calling is

lived with particular intensity. Racist name-calling humiliates and offends people, not just for who they are, but on grounds of 'race' or ethnicity:

We believe the essential difference between racial name-calling and other forms of name-calling is that whereas the latter may be related only to the individual characteristics of a child, the former is a reference not only to the child but also by extension to their family and indeed more broadly their ethnic community as a whole. (Swann Report, 1985, p. 35)

In Portugal, and to my knowledge, there are no studies on racist name-calling. My own study was not specifically on that. Nonetheless, as an exploratory study, it identified it as important aspect of children's lives. Research in the UK has suggested that racist name-calling is the most common form of racism amongst children (Gillborn, 1990; Kelly, 1990; Connolly & Keenan, 2002; Troyna & Hatcher, 1992). An important study in racist name-calling was carried out by Elinor Kelly (1991), following the MacDonald Inquiry into the murder of a Bangladeshi 13 year-old boy in the playground of Burnage High School. The study shows clearly that 11 year olds know the differences between descriptive names and offensive ones (for instance, Black/nigger; Pakistani/paki).

Before we move on, it should be noted that there are differences in the vocabulary used to describe (or offend) Black people in Portugal in relation to those used in the UK. The expression *coloured people* is considered patronising, even though it is still used. A form that is generally considered politically correct in Portugal is *Negro*, which corresponds more closely to Black in the UK than to Negro. The word Black, which we translate as *Preto*, was often (though not always) used in colonial times in a rather depreciative fashion, and its negative meaning subsists. For instance, in children's name-calling *Preto* denotes an intention to offend and could thus be better translated by Nigger. However, currently there is a process of re-signification of the word *Preto*, particularly by youth cultures and in the cultural and music scene, in similar terms to those that led the word Black to be appropriated in the UK by Black Civil Rights Movements in the 1960s and 1970s (and for that matter, so is the word Nigger/Nigga being re-signified by rappers). Thus, the word *Preto* can be used both descriptively and offensively. In this communication, I have tried to translate these words according to the intent in their use.

So, in spite of choosing a school with more Black pupils than average, Estela, acknowledged that verbal abuse also existed at the school she attended:

Marta: ... in this school you feel that that problem doesn't exist?

Estela: Only... sometimes, primary school kids start picking on me...

Marta: Do primary school kids say anything?

Estela: Oh! They say sometimes, but it's few times maybe.

Marta: But what kind of things do they tell you?

Estela: Hmm... They call me nigger and that's all.

(Estela, Black Portuguese, Year 6)

In another example, a girl told me how calling names based on colour served to segregate her:

Augusta: Even today, downstairs (where primary school kids are), I was with a friend of mine, only that she was White and we were playing and she called a girl... We were playing downstairs in the swings, a girl comes and she pushes me, tells me to get out of that place and asks me why I am so different, that people who are different are not supposed to be with people who are not like them and she started calling me names. That I was a nigg...

Marta: What names did she call you?

Augusta: Your teeth are too yellow, your nose is too big, she says that Black people smile like monkeys, but well...

(Augusta, Black Guinean girl, Year 6)

When pupils told me that the most common form of racial harassment they suffered was name-calling, this was generally accompanied by expressions such as 'they only call me...', or 'that's all'. Although always referring that they did not like being called names, it seemed that they got used to racial abuse and thus downplayed its importance.

In yet another case, children appropriated names from TV characters to offend their peers, which illustrates how children appropriate and rework information they receive at home, on TV and through their peers.

Marta: Do you remember any examples of things that happen often?

Francisca: Verbal language.

Marta: Calling names?

Francisca: Yes. Some really want to offend us willingly. And also... Hmm (...)

Marta: What do they call you?

Francisca: 'Estrombetas' (Untranslatable)

Marta: What is that?

Francisca: It's one of the jokes of Fernando Rocha (a Portuguese stand-up comedian who often makes sexist and racist jokes). Hmm... It's one of the characters... The 'estrombeta' is (a building worker) from 'The Building of Vasco', you don't watch that either? (...) It's from some jokes they had there.

Marta: Yeah...

Francisca: They are always making fun of us because of that. (...)

Marta: And why do they call you that?

Francisca: I don't know!

Marta: What's the relation? As I never watched (the show), I don't know...

Francisca: The only thing is race.

(Francisca, Black Guinean, Year 6)

This last example is particularly interesting. One of the measures introduced by ACIME to combat racism was a TV programme (entitled 'Nós', meaning 'Us'), about ethnic minority communities in Portugal. This shows in RTP2 (the Portuguese equivalent to BBC2) every Sunday morning. However, in a much more popular TV Channel (TVI) they show the programme referred to by the girls every weekday in prime-time. This show tends to provide stereotypical images of the Black 'other'. Thus, there is a need of concerted action in tackling racism. There is a very limited possibility of success in challenging stereotypes if they are being allowed to circulate so widely. Moreover, this example also points out to the need for qualitative studies in racist name-calling, which take into account the particular contexts in which they emerge, and the processes and practices with which they are associated (see Troyna & Hatcher, 1992).

I also observed lessons in which pupils proffered racially abusive words. The following examples are illustrative:

Pupils are correcting homework. This entailed creating a healthy diet for one day, to be served in a restaurant they were also to name. A pupil says, 'The Chinkland'! The teacher doesn't comment on the name of the restaurant,

correcting only the foods that she did not consider healthy. (Fieldnotes from a lesson of Civic Education, state School)

A pupil says he doesn't understand a thing, whilst his peers are copying the exercise from the board. Another pupil says, 'Miss, me have done! Ukranians be really fast!' (The pupil is White Portuguese, and says it with what he perceives to be an Eastern European accent) The teacher tells him to sit properly in his chair. (Fieldnotes from a lesson of Portuguese, state school)

Rather than not knowing about the occurrence of racist name-calling, it seems to me that teachers did not feel the need, or felt they did not know how to challenge the racist remarks of students. In her study, Kelly (1990) stressed the role that schools and teachers can play in deconstructing those categories, not deracialising social relations but helping pupils to understand how they emerged in a racialised society. However, with a 'no problem here' approach, the importance of racist name-calling tended to be downplayed:

... I think that the situation of racism is not very acute, there may be a case or other that may be seen as racism... Because children, obviously, are in permanent confrontation on a daily basis, right?, and sometimes they may feel that it (the incident with Augusta in the swings) was a form of racism, but that could have happened between children of the same race (...) What usually happens is that coloured children try to gather themselves. But there isn't any case of mess... of them with those of... the White race. At least that I am aware of, no... (Psychologist of private school)

In another quote, the headteacher of the state school put it this way:

Last year there was a case of a girl that came here crying but I solved the situation. She came, it was her and a blond one. The blond one had hit her and called her Black (Preta) and I said, 'She called you Black (Preta)?' 'But I don't want to be Black (Preta)!' And she cried... (...) That matter, I solved straight away because it was just between the two of them, every now and then they fought in the playground because one called Black (Preta) to the other, and she hit her because she thought the girl was calling her names (...) I deflated immediately the situation and said, 'Black (Preta)? Listen here, you are black (Preta). You are dark; you are Black (Negra). I am White. There are Yellows, etc. What's the

problem? Have you seen that...? Then I tried, 'Have you seen that there are people who are so beautiful, and you are beautiful, have you seen that there are people who are so beautiful which are, well, Black (Negras)?' I turned it around, talked about Naomi Campbell, then told her about Kofi Annan, a person who has really been doing so much for under-developed (sic) countries. (...) Then, the other one was also there, the blond one, so I told her, 'Now go and call her White. 'Cause it's like this, you can't interpret them calling you Black (Preta) as an insult, because the colour of your skin is dark (Negra) and you have to recognise that with pride'. (Headteacher, state school)

It is curious how the headteacher conflates Black as a descriptive term (Negra, dark) and Black as an offensive one (Preta). By doing so, she denies the importance of racist name-calling. This is particularly important as it does not help pupils to report racist verbal abuse.

Another teacher told me once how surprised and offended she had been because a Black student called her White. This made her aware of her own colour and 'race', with her firmly classifying the incident as reverse racism. I do not mean that all White people would have been offended by being called their colour, but that we are not used of thinking about ourselves as White (McLaren & Torres, 1999). Significantly, though, calling others racial names is seen as unimportant.

What I wish to argue is that we need a definition of racist incident that stresses the effect it has on those who suffer it, and promotes the reporting of incidents, such as that recommended by the MacPherson Report (1999) into the murder of Stephen Lawrence: 'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person' (Chapter 47, para. 12). This is because, though the examples suggest that racist verbal abuse is quite common and that pupils are aware of the intent to offend, none of the pupils interviewed ever complained to an adult at school or elsewhere (even though the psychologist and the headteacher of the state school referred to a couple of examples). The following quotes are illustrative:

Marta: And did you ever tried to complain to any teachers or talk to someone about it?

Augusta: No, I got used to those things, 'cause of other children who don't know that yet and I think they're too small and they don't understand quite well what that is, and maybe someday they'll regret it.

Marta: Did you ever complain?

Francisca: I never complained. (...) Some (kids) change. Last year, many were doing that, but not this year. This year they started doing it to other... This is a fashion, when a new one comes...

Bela: There are some kids that still do that...

Francisca: Yeah... We got used to it...

These pupils seemed to accept with resignation the verbal harassment they were subjected to. However, this seemed to be lived uneasily. When one of the Black girls interviewed told me that sometimes she was picked on by her peers, she pinched her hand saying, 'It's because of this'. The general silencing of 'race' issues point out the need to further explore how Black becomes a colour whose name she did not dare to speak. In another case, a psychologist in the state school told me how a pupil came to reject his own colour:

Because, at a certain time, when he mentioned his parents, he said himself, 'Oh, I don't like my father at all!' 'And why you don't you like your father?' 'Because he is Black'. And I asked him, 'And what are you?' 'I'm not!' When actually he was... (Psychologist, state school)

This quote points to the effect of racial harassment in children's perceptions of who they are. The way in which these pupils seem to be ashamed of being Black is particularly striking. In my view, this can be related to a colour-blind approach that tends to portray our society as very tolerant and is prominent in White areas. Such 'no problem here' approach might be making Black pupils such as these two feeling that there might be something wrong about them. Significantly, it also helps to preserve the myth that the Portuguese are not racist.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, I alluded in this communication to the emergence and persistence of discourses of lusotropicalism in Portuguese society. These have been helping to create the myth that the Portuguese are not racist, particularly by promoting a colour-blind approach.

I used as an example an overt form of racism, racist name-calling between young children, to argue that such powerful discourses that make 'race' issues invisible and

contribute to the silencing of racism in school. Generally, the reluctance of staff to admit to a problem or their predisposition to deracialise name-calling did not help pupils to come forward and report racist incidents. Moreover, the fact that the schools had no codes of practice regarding racial harassment or any form of recording complaints seemed to contribute to children's own reluctance in reporting such incidents and to the myth that there is 'no problem here'.

As most other countries in Europe, Portugal is seeing a significant increase in ethnic diversity. Legislation to eliminate racial discrimination and harassment is being implemented so that minority rights are protected across the European Union. This, however, can only have a limited success if we do not admit to the racialisation of our societies, and do not put in practice concrete measures to tackle racism. Connolly and Keenan (2002) have pointed out that schools need to 'create a 'counter-environment' within which racist harassment is deemed inappropriate and is thus more difficult for pupils to instigate' it (p. 350). In order to do so, a critical anti-racist stance, which takes into account the complexities in which contemporary racisms occur, and its articulation with other forms of discrimination, is needed.

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