

## **Social sciences and the study of racism in Portugal<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

The TOLERACE project proposes a contextual and historically-sensitive approach to racism, which requires interrogating how dominant knowledge production has reduced this phenomenon to “prejudice” towards the “unknown other” (often perceived as immigrant). Considering as problematic the individual-centred approaches to racism as prejudice that have been prevalent in the academia and in policy-making since the 1950s, it is argued in this paper that the *prejudice paradigm* depoliticises racism, that is, it “removes” racism from “comprehension of its *historical* emergence and from a recognition of the *powers* that produce and contour it” (Brown, 2006: 15, original emphasis). This depoliticisation shapes policy measures to tackle discrimination in European contexts of growing diversity. Likewise, in much research work the deployment of an “immigrant imaginary” (Sayyid, 2004; Hesse & Sayyid, 2006), which amplifies ontological difference between “host society” and “the immigrant”, helps to frame racial discrimination as a combination of social contrasts and cultural discontinuities (and, therefore, as a matter of integration), depoliticising historical processes and cultural formations.

It is to the analysis of these aspects in the Portuguese context that we now turn to, by considering the academic production within the social sciences. In Portugal, contemporary research on racism is relatively scarce and it was only from the late 1990s that could be considered a field of academic enquiry. Since early on, it was marked by studies within social psychology, sociology and migration studies, mostly deploying quantitative methodologies and, particularly, surveys on social attitudes. Within these studies, it is noticeable the framing

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of racism within the *prejudice paradigm*, as well as the embedding of an “immigrant imaginary” in academic thought, as analysed in detail below.

## **1. The centrality of the prejudice paradigm**

The social psychology of prejudice starts with this assumption of sameness and provides scientific legitimation of it. And it is clearly central to the administrative ideology of fairness (...) The emergence of the concept of prejudice as an object of scientific enquiry and as a political issue exemplifies the way in which knowledges on the one hand and the powers associated with them on the other, are mutually productive (Henriques: 1984: 64-5)

As a concept, racism is intimately linked to the context of political and academic concern with fascism and anti-Semitism, subsequently tied to the Holocaust as “the paradigmatic experience underwriting the abstraction” (Hesse, 2004: 15). It was in this particular context that took place the ascendancy of the idea of racial prejudice – the product of specific ideologies that shaped a cluster of beliefs (*id*: 11) –, which became prevalent in academic approaches and informed political debates (e.g., UNESCO’s declaration on race and racial prejudice in 1950 [Barker, 2002b: 476; Hesse, 2004]). In the 1950s, the advancement and proliferation of quantitative approaches to the study of racism, particularly within social psychology in the United States – in its search for scientific status (Henriques, 1984) -, has paved way to the primacy of the *prejudice paradigm* (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). This concern with the identification of the traits of the “authoritarian personality” (Henriques, 1984) was highly contested since the end of the 1960s, as made evident in the work by Carmichael and Hamilton on institutional racism, in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, published in 1967. And yet, the individual-centred approaches to racism as prejudice have been prevalent in the academia and in policy-making since then<sup>2</sup>.

As the prevalence of the prejudice paradigm in research on racism is paramount in the Portuguese academia, we will address in this section what we see as the major problems with this conceptualisation of racism, working on and enlarging the scope of the critical analysis proposed by Julian Henriques (1984). Analysing the politics of racism involved in the production of knowledge within social psychology, Henriques focused in particular in two key works - *The Authoritarian Personality* by Theodor Adorno and colleagues (1950) and *The*

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<sup>2</sup> According to our analysis, this is also the case with official European institutional conceptions: for instance, the first reports by the EU’s monitoring body, racism is described as “beliefs or attitudes” (DGV, 1993: 12), and racist individuals as “Those responsible for racism or xenophobic attitudes rely more on ideology, irrationality and fantasy than on reasoned argument.” (EUMC, 1998b: 19).

*Nature of Prejudice* by Gordon Allport (1954) –, as well as on their legacy on influential institutional reports on racism in the British context.

### **1.1 Methodological individualism**

Julian Henriques (1984: 60), pointed out to the prevalence of a dichotomy between individual and society on the framing of racism as racial prejudice. He thus proposed the idea of the “rotten apple” theory of racism, according to which racial prejudice is seen as occurring in the occasional behaviour of a few, isolated prejudiced individuals, who can refrain from contaminating other individuals once removed from the basket. In such conceptions, the individual is seen as an entity that may be (best) understood as separable from society.

Accordingly, the preferred focus of empirical research is the individual. This constitutes what is generally referred to as *methodological individualism*, a key characteristic of the prejudice paradigm that “seeks to disaggregate all larger institutional and historical entities into the practices and relations of the individuals or groups who compose or inhabit them” (Cohen, 1992: 77). This society-individual dichotomy is reinforced by the methods developed within social psychology, which make extensive use of surveys and favour a “clinical approach” to racial attitudes – the search for the prejudiced and tolerant individuals in societies.” (Bonilla-Silva, 2003: 64). This is a key characteristic of most studies on racism in Portugal (e.g. Vala, Brito & Lopes, 1999a, 1999b; Vala, Pereira & Ramos, 2007; Cabecinhas, 2007).

Another related aspect that is often implicit to methodological individualism is the presumption of the *unitary* racist subject: the idea that individuals are coherent and non-ambivalent and that their prejudices are expressed in their behaviours (Rattansi, 1992). Rather, complexity and ambivalence are inherent to racism, articulating differently in diverse contexts and times. Not only is problematic the linear relationship encapsulated in the common expression prejudice-attitudes-discrimination, as individuals are not so rigid or unitary: the so-called *racist subject* may also forge alliances with individuals that are the object of racial hatred on the basis of age, gender, sexuality, and so on (*id.*). It thus results that the identification of the racist or prejudiced subject is a *fallacy*. According to Philomena Essed (1991), “The term individual racism is a contradiction in itself because racism is by definition the expression or activation of group power” (p. 37). In this sense, the author proposes that a more productive approach is the identification of the processes through which racism reproduces and renews discriminatory ideologies and structures in routine ways.

### **1.2 Racial prejudice as bias and margin**

Within the prejudice paradigm, stereotypes are framed as *bias* from *accurate* representation, “transgressions of the rational limits of category use, that is, as irrational

categories” (Goldberg, 1990: 321). This results from the differentiation - produced by the prejudice paradigm - between “rational and objective information processing that produce a perfect representation” (in this case of the stranger, foreigner, immigrant) and those “erroneous generalisations” based on prejudice (Henriques, 1984: 71-76). Thus, it is possible to discern, on the one hand, a belief in rationality as an ideal for democratic societies and, on the other, a conception of the individual as the locus for the disintegration of rationality (Henriques, 1984: 66). This makes easy the related conceptualisation of racism as a problem of specific, *irrational* individuals.

These are very common assumptions across the academic literature produced in Portugal: without a conception of a system of racial domination, the prejudice paradigm has helped to frame racism as a “cognitive bias” (e.g. Cabecinhas, 2007: 269). The following example illustrates this:

...in circumstances of automatic processing of information, even subjects with low levels of prejudice can give prejudiced answers<sup>3</sup>. (Vala, Brito & Lopes, 1999b: 34)

That is, within the prejudice paradigm there is often the assumption that negative, preconceived ideas are *irrational responses* from the otherwise coherent subject (see Goldberg, 1990, for a thorough critique of conceptions of racism as irrationality). We see this assumption as problematic in two further ways. Firstly, by conceiving of prejudice as originating in *ignorance*, it implies that education (and information) can do much to eradicate racism (Henriques, 1984; Goldberg, 1990; Sarup, 1991).<sup>4</sup> In fact, most contemporary approaches reveal the belief in education and information as tools for eliminating the *evil* of racism, proposing liberal policy initiatives to deal with it, such as activities for awareness raising (Sarup, 1991), multi/intercultural or citizenship education (Gillborn, 1995) which tend to evade the power dynamics of racism and focus on the need to *know* the “other”. The following quote is illustrative of such requirement for information, in a way that allows for the reproduction of current configurations of racism:

This perception (of immigrants being seen as consumers of collective resources) is eased by the fact that, in the media, the information that immigrants do not compete with the citizens of the host country in the same areas of work, as well as information about their contribution to economic growth, is absent<sup>5</sup>. (Vala, Pereira & Ramos, 2006: 223)

Furthermore, we would argue that with misrepresentation and prejudice seen as “inaccurate”, such approaches tend to overlook that “‘ignorance’ is an effect of particular knowledge, not an

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<sup>3</sup> ...em condições de processamento automático de informação, mesmo sujeitos com níveis baixos de preconceito podem dar respostas preconceituosas.

<sup>4</sup> While, for Adorno and colleagues, the causes of prejudice as irrationality are seen as lying within the social realm (and thus sees treatment as an insurmountable task that can only address the symptoms), Allport suggested that prejudice can be corrected by the provision of accurate (in)formation (Henriques, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Esta percepção (de os imigrantes serem vistos como consumidores dos recursos colectivos) é facilitada pelo facto de nos *media* estar ausente a informação de que os imigrantes não competem com os cidadãos dos países de acolhimento nas mesmas áreas de trabalho, bem como a informação sobre o seu contributo para o crescimento económico.

absence of knowledge” (Lesko & Bloom, 1998: 380), and thus marginalise considerations on ideology and structure.

A second aspect that is related to the framing of racism as bias stemming from irrationality or mis-education is the common-sense view (also prevalent in the academy) that associates prejudice to the problem of uneducated individuals<sup>6</sup>. As a result, the ignorant, racist subject becomes conceived as being “socially sick” and thus not morally accountable (Goldberg, 1990: 318). This is reflected in the deployment of disease metaphors to speak of racism (see also Hesse, 2004). The cancer metaphor is particularly recurring, suggesting that racism is abnormal, external, *i.e.* an intruder to the otherwise healthy body – the democratic society (see, for example, Neal, 2003; Malan, 2008).

Accordingly, when research frames such individuals collectively, it tends to do so by focusing on what is considered *deviant groups*, those constituting extremist organisations. This helps to frame racism as being on the margins of social and political cultures, as Paul Gilroy argued:

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 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 (Gilroy, 1992: 51).

Much work in Portugal frames the political in such narrow way, absolving (more *moderate*) political parties for their participation in the (re)production of racism:

Portugal is one of the countries of the European Union in which political parties or forces that host and promote racist or xenophobic ideologies have nearly no social or electoral expression.<sup>7</sup> (Machado, 2001: 53)

The myth of “non-racism” (...) had unpredicted effects, in that by trying to justify an undoubtedly situation racist – the colonial domination – ended up contributing to condition the social and cultural contemporary reality. Yet what is really interesting is that, through a sort of “perverted effect”, the New State inoculated in the Portuguese, through school and the State apparatus, a kind of vaccination that has prevented, so far, the most virulent forms of racism against populations of African origin, as well as the politicization of anti-immigration discourses.<sup>8</sup> (Marques, 2007: 33)

This is an approach that effectively narrows down the political to extreme right-wing political parties. This presumption of racism as *abnormal* allows for a conceptualisation of racism as marginal to democratic societies; society is exonerated, presumed the site of tolerance, democracy and human rights (Henriques, 1984; Goldberg, 2006, 2009), as it is further

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<sup>6</sup> An aspect that the works on racism within elites, such as those by Teun van Dijk (1993) and Philomena Essed (1999) clearly contradict.

<sup>7</sup> Portugal é um dos países da União Europeia onde não têm praticamente expressão social ou eleitoral partidos ou forças políticas que acolham e promovam ideologias racistas ou xenófobas.

<sup>88</sup> O mito do «não racismo» (...) teve efeitos não previstos, pois procurando justificar uma situação inequivocamente racista – a dominação colonial – acabou por contribuir para condicionar a realidade social e cultural contemporânea. Mas que é verdadeiramente interessante é que, através de uma espécie de «efeito perverso», o Estado Novo inoculou nos portugueses, através da escola e dos aparelhos estatais, uma espécie de vacina que tem impedido, até agora, as manifestações mais virulentas do racismo contra as populações de origem africana bem como a politização dos discursos anti-imigração.

developed in section 1.4. As a result from such narrow conception of racism, the myth of Portuguese non-racism and tolerance discussed in the previous sections goes unchallenged.

### **1.3 Social attitudes and the naturalisation of hostility**

Another key problematic aspect with the concept of prejudice – generally perceived as taking place between an “in-group” (or “endogroup”) towards an “out-group” (or “exogroup”) (e.g. Vala, Brito & Lopes, 1999; Cabecinhas, 2007), or majority/minority (racial) relations - is that it tends to assume the relative rigidity of such groups. The following quotes illustrate how this approach contributes, on the one hand, towards the essentialisation of the groups that are seen as the victims of racism, and, on the other, to reducing racism to *ethnocentrism* and *heterophobia*, which is then naturalised:

At the level of individual differences of psychological type, in our model we included the following variables: ethnocentrism, or orientation to the rejection of exogroups, a variable that follows from the studies of Adorno *et al.* (1950), according to which discrimination of an exogroup is, merely, a symptom of a more general orientation to the discrimination of any exogroup.<sup>9</sup> (Vala, Brito & Lopes, 1999: 182-3)

It is known that Guineans of Muslim ethnics live, spatially, more concentrated than average, have strong intra-ethnic and weak inter-ethnic sociabilities and are the most contrasting with the involving society in linguistic and religious terms (Machado, 1999). If we add the fact that they are the most visible in their difference, due to the use of garments that distinguishes them from all others, it is not wrong to think that they may, due to this accumulation of differences, be more often the target of demonstrations that they take as racist, and that it is precisely that which their perceptions reflect.<sup>10</sup> (Machado, 2001: 69)

As such, *race* becomes “the force of prejudice exercised against newcomers (...) an irrational excess” (Goldberg, 2009: 162). The emphasis is shifted onto *their* culture, *their* difference (within the common-sense idea that “they have culture, we have civilisation”) – along with the essentialisation and pathologisation of those cultures and lifestyles, seen as clearly identifiable and discrete categories<sup>11</sup>. This paves way to an understanding of racism as the fear of the unknown or hostility towards those perceived as threatening “our way of life”, that is, a *natural* response to the “other”, playing on what Teun van Dijk designated as the

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<sup>9</sup> A nível das diferenças individuais de tipo psicológico, são incluídas, no nosso modelo as seguintes variáveis: o etnocentrismo, ou orientação para a rejeição de exogrupos, variável que decorre dos estudos de Adorno *et al.* (1950), de acordo com os quais a discriminação de um exogrupo é, apenas, um sintoma de uma orientação mais geral para a discriminação de qualquer exogrupo.

<sup>10</sup> Sabe-se que os guineenses de etnias muçulmanas vivem espacialmente mais concentrados do que a média, têm sociabilidades intra-étnicas fortes e interétnicas fracas e são os mais contrastantes com a sociedade envolvente em termos linguísticos e religiosos (Machado, 1999). Se somarmos a isso o facto de serem também os mais visíveis na sua diferença, devido ao uso de indumentária própria que os distingue de todos os outros, não será errado pensar que possam, por esse acumulado de diferenças, ser mais vezes alvo de manifestações que tomem como racistas, e que seja justamente isso que as suas percepções reflectem.

<sup>11</sup> This was perhaps intensified in political and academic debates in the 1950s, following the issuing of several declarations by UNESCO from the 1950s, proposing to “drop the term ‘race’ altogether and speak of ethnic groups” (UNESCO, 1950: 6). Yet culture did not replace ‘race’; rather it has operated in a pseudo-biological fashion and been further essentialized (Barker, 1981/2002b). Racism no longer required the existence of ‘races’ to operate (Balibar, 1991); racial thought was so deeply inscribed in western societies that its foundational category could now be discarded. The shift of emphasis onto culture led authors such as Barker (1981/2002a) to argue that, in post-war Britain, a new racism was emerging in political discourses and sociobiological theories, effectively framing other cultures and lifestyles as pathological.

“ubiquity argument (...), which says that prejudice and discrimination are universal, human properties” (1993: 169; see also Goldberg, 1990: 320-322).

The main consequence of this approach is the providing of explanations concerning “racist attitudes” that naturalise the “divide” between homogeneous ethnically non-marked nationals and immigrants/minorities, also framed as “social and cultural contrast” (Machado, 2001: 71; see also Marques, 2007: 50). Such naturalisation of hostility (Barker, 1981, 2002a) or cultural *distance* (Balibar, 2008: 37) effectively transforms the problem of *discrimination* into a problem of *integration*, and its victims into “potential objects of tolerance” (Brown, 2001: 3). Combined with a view of prejudice as inaccurate knowledge about the “other”, it ends up shifting “the object of study from the prejudiced person onto the stimulus object” (Sarup, 1991: 56), thus “blaming the victims” of racism – constituted as the *unknown* -, rather than focusing on the prejudiced - the *unknowing* subject (*id.*). As a result, the problem shifts from *discrimination* to *difference* itself. As David Gillborn argued regarding the official endorsement of *Education for Citizenship* in the early 1990s-Britain:

justice and fair-play are the norm, while “racial prejudice” and “discrimination” reflect “the tensions and conflicts that occur between groups which perceive each other to be socially, racially, ethnically or culturally different” (NCC, 1990b: 6). Therefore, “prejudice” and “discrimination” are defined in terms of a reaction to *difference* while racism, as a persistent feature that reflects and recreated the unequal distribution of *power* in society, is conspicuously absent (Gillborn, 1995: 135-6, original emphasis)

This is based on the idea that it is racial and cultural diversity *per se*, rather than its management, that creates tensions and conflicts:

The ethnic or “racial” conflictuality that is observable in the suburbs of the main cities has its sources in the problematic of social mobility, in the fear of exclusion and in the uneasiness regarding the social equivalency to the social status of the “immigrant”. Racism expresses itself, thus, through the transferral of the existing difficulties of the autochthons to the close presence of populations with origins by immigration.<sup>12</sup> (Marques, 2007: 41)

In tandem with this approach, most empirical studies on racism in Portugal have been carried out in Lisbon metropolitan area – where “immigrants” and “ethnic minorities” tend to be located, along an explicit call for racism to be studied in the real space of its “empirical concentration” (Machado, 1999; Ferreira, 2003). This reading of racism as resulting from the direct contact with an-“other” stems from a view that is the “exoticism” of the immigrant and the “modernity” of host society that generates racism (Sayyid, 2004; Hesse & Sayyid, 2006). This materialises in empirical studies that reproduce the idea of hostility or fear as natural(ised) responses to *contact*, taking place in “disadvantaged neighbourhoods” with the *presence* of “immigrants” or “minorities” (e.g. Vala, Brito & Lopes, 1999a: 28).

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<sup>12</sup> A conflitualidade étnica ou «racial» observável nos subúrbios das principais cidades tem as suas fontes na problemática da mobilidade social, no temor da exclusão e na inquietude face à equiparação ao estatuto social de «imigrante». O racismo manifesta-se, então, através da transferência das dificuldades concretas dos autóctones para a presença próxima de populações com origem na imigração.

## 1.4 Prejudice as remnant of old ideologies

Since the ending of the US civil rights movement, the Cold War and the apartheid regime in South Africa, political discussion of the meaning of racism seems to be over in the West. Its sociality is overwhelmingly conceived as a problem that has been largely overcome. What remains is seen as residuum, consigned to pathology, a profound moral deviation from the western liberal and democratic ethos and ethnos. (Hesse, 2004: 10)

Work on racial prejudice also reflects a “historicist” notion of race (Lentin, 2008a): as race was scientifically discredited and considered a “morally irrelevant category” (Goldberg, 1990: 339), racial classifications and racism were considered false views that were historically overcome, or remain merely residual (Hesse, 2004). This perspective is quite evident in the work of Adorno and colleagues:

How could it be...that in a culture of law, order and reason there should have survived the irrational remnants of ancient racial and religious hatreds? How to explain the willingness of great masses of people to tolerate the mass extermination of their fellow citizens? What tissues in the life of our modern society remain cancerous, and despite our assumed enlightenment show the incongruous atavism of ancient peoples? And what within the individual organisms responds to certain stimuli in our culture with attitudes and acts of destructive aggression? (Adorno *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality*, 1950, p. V *apud* Henriques, 1984: 67).

The triumph of the historicist notion of race and racism - as old and radical ideologies, progressively erased - is intimately linked to the forging and universalisation of the concept of racism as inevitably tied to the Holocaust, excluding colonialism from its conception. As Barnor Hesse argued (2004: 14):

Once the concept of racism became universalised (internationalised), beyond the particular paradigmatic experience (nationalism, Nazism, the Holocaust) in which it was initialised, it could be and was subject to conceptual claims for inclusion by “other” particularised experiences (e.g., US racial segregation, European colonialism). A conceptual logic emerged where what became foregrounded (exclusion, discrimination, ghettoisation, exterminations) supplied the conceptual resources to translate “other” experiences into the vaunted paradigmatic template. However, what was simultaneously foreclosed by this conceptual process were aspects of the “other’s” racialised experiences that appeared inassimilable or incomprehensible and threatening to the privileging of the paradigmatic experience (e.g., colonial inclusions, orientalism, exoticism).

Studies in race critical theories have stressed the need to think of racism as an embedded aspect of Western modernity and its state structures (Goldberg, 2006; Hesse, 2004; Lentin, 2008b). Challenging the traditional way in which the problem of racism has been addressed in Europe (as an ideology that has been overcome), these studies provide a historically informed understanding of the persistence and durability of racism in Western states by revealing the colonial inheritance of racialised governance and by interrogating postcolonial conditions (Hesse, 2004; Hesse and Sayyid, 2006, 2008; Sayyid 2004; Law and Sayyid, 2007).

On the contrary, the prejudice paradigm is a depoliticising perspective that does not consider the analysis of power relations that reproduce excluding ideas of *citizenship* and its articulation with *nationality*, and the corresponding current constructions of difference as



(political) *otherness*. Accordingly, much academic work in this paradigm continues to split racism from routine ways of racialised governance, which in turn determines what is identified as racist, making racism dependent on motivation and intent (examples of this can be found in Machado, 2001: 60-1). This effectively constructs racism as an *externality*, “an aberrant ideological affront to the enduring ideals of Enlightenment and the values of the Judeo-Christian tradition” (Hesse, 2004: 22), rather than regarding it as a political practice inherent to the constitution of the Nation-State, democracy and citizenship in European history. The following examples are illustrative of the prevalence of this idea of racism as external to Europe:

In modern societies, racism constitutes indeed a betrayal to the proclaimed values, a significant distancing to the norm of equality.

In a young democracy that is based upon the principle of universal citizenship, built upon the ashes of a regime of fascist inspiration, racist manifestations effectively constitute a serious distancing to the values of civic, political and juridical equality.<sup>13</sup> (Marques, 2007: 15, our emphasis)

The combat against racism is carried out in several ways, from the exemplary punishment of violent crimes of racist nature to *the assertion of the civilizational values of equality and respect for the dignity of human beings*.<sup>14</sup> (Lígia Amâncio, Preface to Cabecinhas, 2007: 9-10, our emphasis)

Also pervasive is the historicist conceptualisation of racism that works with “ideal types”<sup>15</sup> (flagrant and subtle racism, modern, aversive racism, but always eschewing institutional and everyday racism<sup>16</sup>), based on its conception as a “distorted belief”, fuelled by structural elements such as economic crises or the absence of institutional/legal initiatives for the promotion of integration. Consequently, its expression is mostly confined to well-bounded expressions of racially/ethnically motivated crimes perpetrated by extremist individuals/groups whose ideology may, however, receive some support from the “majority of the population”. The challenge for European democracies is, accordingly, the *integration* of a growing population with “identifiable racial and ethnic difference” that is making Europe “multicultural and multiracial in an unprecedented way” (DGV, 1993:6).

## **2. Racism and immigration**

Another cluster of presumptions across academic work is that which focuses on immigration, and that sees racism as a problem of immigrants, *newcomers* – thus evading the racial – while not quite addressing it.

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<sup>13</sup> Nas sociedades modernas, o racismo constitui, de facto, uma *traição aos valores proclamados*, um afastamento significativo à norma da igualdade.

Numa jovem democracia que se baseia no princípio da cidadania universal, construída sobre as cinzas de um regime de inspiração fascista, as manifestações racistas constituem efectivamente afastamentos graves aos valores da igualdade cívica, política e jurídica.

<sup>14</sup> O combate ao racismo faz-se de diversas formas, desde a punição exemplar dos crimes violentos de natureza racista, à afirmação dos valores civilizacionais de igualdade e respeito pela dignidade dos seres humanos.

<sup>15</sup> See Goldberg (2006, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, Vala, Brito & Lopes (1999b), Machado (2001), Marques (2007) and Cabecinhas (2007).

## 2.1 The “immigrant imaginary”

Politically and academically, there is an overemphasis on immigration in Portugal, which has helped to create an imaginary in which the country is positioned as “centre” (Vale de Almeida, 2006a: 363-4). Neglecting the role that structural, economic emigration plays in the country and emphasising that the country is increasingly the destiny of immigrants – though this might be still perceived as a threat - helps to imagine it as desirable, valuing the national identity by locating it alongside other rich and modern European countries:

The existence of ethnic groups in Portugal presents, nowadays, a noticeable statistic 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. (Rocha-Trindade, 1995: 204).

This facilitates the construction of 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 -, as well as fuels analyses based on an economic and nationalised logic of “push and pull factors” (Hesse & Sayyid, 2006).

In the year of 2000 and subsequently, a deep change, both quantitative and qualitative, in the landscape of immigration in Portugal has been verified. (...) These new immigration trends, with no linguistic or cultural affinities to the Portuguese, may perhaps be attributed to a greater knowledge and attraction of those populations for the economically and socially privileged space of the European Union, following the preparation of the process of adhesion of numerous countries of that area to the European community space.<sup>17</sup> (Rocha-Trindade, 2003:76)

What is at stake is the operation of a “immigrant imaginary” (Sayyid, 2004; Hesse & Sayyid, 2006), which constructs and amplifies an ontological distinction between host society and immigrants and reads immigrant experiences from either an exoticised or a banalised register – both celebrating and exaggerating difference *and* overemphasising sameness and denying racism –, with whiteness as the norm. Sayyid (2004) argues that this imaginary assumes that difference will be consumed (both metaphorically and literally) over time, an assumption that is quite common in the academia:

Social contrasts, on the one hand, and cultural continuities, on the other, are, in sum, two basic elements for the equation of racism in Portugal in the medium run. The permanence of the former at current levels means a high probability of *foci* of future tension, in which new “second generations” to be formed in the meanwhile will not cease to play the leading role. The increase in the latter, facilitated by the enlargement of the time of residency, will help to minimise the racialised interpretation that can be made socially about those tensions.<sup>18</sup> (Machado, 2001: 75)

Yet, the author also argues, its unit of analysis – generations - prevents the process of immigration from ending and (indefinitely) postpones assimilation (Sayyid, 2004: 150-153).

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<sup>17</sup> No ano 2000 e seguintes verifica-se uma profunda alteração, tanto quantitativa como qualitativa, no panorama da imigração em Portugal. (...) Estas novas correntes imigratórias, sem qualquer afinidade linguística ou cultural com os Portugueses, podem talvez atribuir-se a um maior conhecimento e atracção daquelas populações pelo espaço económica e socialmente privilegiado da União Europeia, decorrente da preparação do processo de adesão de numerosos países daquela zona ao espaço comunitário.

<sup>18</sup> Contrastes sociais, por um lado, e continuidades culturais, por outro, são, em suma, dois elementos básicos para a equação do racismo em Portugal a médio prazo. A permanência dos primeiros aos níveis actuais significa probabilidade elevada de focos de tensão futura, em que não deixarão de ser protagonistas novas “segundas gerações” a formarem-se entretanto. O aumento das segundas, proporcionado pelo prolongamento do tempo de residência, ajudará a minimizar a interpretação racializada que socialmente se possa fazer dessas tensões.

While in politics and in academic research on racial prejudice and social attitudes, racism and migrations tend to be seen as two intertwined phenomena that frame the *immigrant* as the recipient of racism (whilst shifting the emphasis onto their cultures and lifestyles, as argued above), the analysis of work within Migration Studies in Portugal shows that a concern with the theoretical engagement with the complex configurations of racism remains conspicuously absent. For instance, Baganha & Marques (2001) argued that:

It may be said that, in Portugal, not only does it not exist an assumed racism, as the cases of militant racism are extremely rare.<sup>48</sup>

[Text to footnote<sup>48</sup>] Both public opinion and official authorities have always firmly condemned the incidents of racist nature that occurred in the last decade.<sup>19</sup> (Baganha & Marques, 2001: 70)

The focus is rather on *integration*, which dissolves racism within its promise of *assimilation*:

The individuals that are naturals from Eastern Europe frequently have (or claim to have) qualifications of higher level (...) although, for many of the immigrants of these origins, the jobs to which they can accede are roughly below the qualifications that they really hold, it is expected that when holding an adequate masterisation of our language and giving proof of performance skills in works of a more highly qualified or specialised nature, they will progressively have access to those.<sup>20</sup> (Rocha-Trindade, 2003: 177).

As a result, integration is an idea that finds wide circulation academically and little need for enquiry or critique:

A report for the European Observatory of Racism and Xenophobic Phenomena, presented in March 2005 said that the majority of the Portuguese feel there is an excessive number of foreigners in the country (...) *This position is sometimes interpreted in the press as "resistance to immigrants" or even xenophobia. But this is not necessarily the case. It is important to note that the Portuguese are in favour of equal civic rights and a multicultural society.* Further, this general feeling about the "excessive" number of foreigners should also be understood in the context of the present economic environment, marked by labour market contraction and an increase in unemployment. Finally, there has been a lack of information about the economic and social benefits of immigration. (Fonseca, Malheiros & Silva, 2005: 4-5, our emphasis).

## **2.2 Reading (post)colonial migration as cultural continuities**

Another aspect in academic narratives on racism in Portugal is the depoliticised approach to the relation between immigration and colonialism. Most contemporary immigration to Portugal has resulted from the historical process of colonialism. In 1999, immigration from the former African colonies represented almost half of the total foreign population (Baganha & Marques, 2001). With the increase in immigration having generally been steady, that resulting from the former colonies' post-independence processes became statistically less significant, mainly due to a raise in immigrants from the former Soviet bloc, largely Ukrainians. Yet the current migratory outward movement of many Eastern Europeans and the slowing down of

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<sup>19</sup> Poderá dizer-se que em Portugal não só não existe um racismo assumido como são extremamente raros os casos de racismo militante.<sup>48</sup> (Texto da nota de rodapé<sup>48</sup>: Tanto a opinião pública como as autoridades oficiais condenaram sempre com firmeza os incidentes de natureza racista ocorridos na última década.)

<sup>20</sup> Os indivíduos naturais da Europa de Leste têm frequentemente (ou proclamam ter) qualificações de nível superior (...) embora para muitos dos imigrantes destas proveniências, os empregos a que inicialmente podem aceder estarão sensivelmente abaixo das qualificações que realmente possuem, é de prever que quando possuidores de um adequado domínio da nossa língua e tenham feito prova de capacidades de desempenho em trabalhos de natureza mais qualificada ou especializada, a eles venham progressivamente a ter acesso.

immigration into Portugal is once again rendering post-colonial migration very significant, pointing to the relevance of (continuing) historical processes and cultural formations (Hesse & Sayyid, 2006: 21). However, the legacy of race colonial constructions is practically absent from migration studies within the Portuguese academia. Rather, the focus is the taken for granted *cultural continuities*, an assumption also often shared within socio-psychological approaches. This approach does not so much decouples migration from the history of colonial relations (Hesse & Sayyid, 2006), as it depoliticises the colonial to reduce it to the idea of a common cultural *heritage*:

In the Portuguese case (...) The anti-Gypsy racism is stronger than the anti-African, which is, in its turn, stronger than the anti-Indian racism, relatively uncommon. Now, the Gypsy minority is precisely that which more social and cultural contrasts accumulates, the various African populations have stark social contrasts, but significant continuities in terms of sociability, language or religion, while the Indian minorities combine cultural contrasts with social continuities.<sup>21</sup> (Machado, 2001: 71-2)

Contrary to what happens in the countries with older immigration, immigrants are not, thus far, targets of a racism of differentialist character; this may be due to various types of factors: firstly, it is necessary to underline the existence of significant cultural continuities between the immigrants of African origin and the Portuguese with which they are in closer contact. That is, contrary to the example of countries in Northern Europe, no truly significant cultural contrasts – at the level of language, religion, and even family structures – are registered between the majority of the populations originating in immigration and the autochthonous population.<sup>22</sup> (Marques, 2007: 50-1)

Nowadays, this imaginary is being embodied in the idea of idea of a *Lusophone world community*, with shared “cultural continuities”, presuming a common language (and religion) but omitting its *imposition*. As Vale de Almeida argues:

Lusophony, as a global geostrategic concept, would serve to define “culture”. Culture would be something given to others by Portugal. Nationality, however, would be only for us who belong in the genealogy. In this sense miscegenation and *mestiçagem* are discursively constructed as the passing of Portuguese blood for the others, and rarely the other way around. And when the others are among “us” the definition of their cultural authenticity places them outside nationality/citizenship, although they are allowed to enjoy multiculturalism. (Vale de Almeida, 2006b: 22)

The disjuncture of the cultural and the biological effectively removes racism off the agenda while downplaying routine forms of racialised governmentality. It is made possible through the emphasis on broad colonial ideologies, such as Lusotropicalism, and specifically the way in which they were appropriated in Portugal (that is, preserving the idea of racial homogeneity in the metropole).

Consequently, the downplaying of the legacy of colonial racialized governance in academic narratives helps to reproduce a Eurocentric conception of racism, as Barnor Hesse has argued:

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<sup>21</sup> No caso português (...) O racismo anticiganos é mais forte do que o antiafricanos, que é, por sua vez, mais forte do que o racismo anti-indianos, relativamente pouco comum. Ora, a minoria cigana é justamente aquela que mais contrastes sociais e culturais acumula, as várias populações africanas têm contrastes sociais acentuados, mas continuidades significativas em termos de sociabilidade, língua ou religião, ao passo que as minorias indianas combinam contrastes culturais com continuidades sociais.

<sup>22</sup> Inversamente ao que se passa nos países de imigração mais antiga, os imigrantes não são, por enquanto, alvos de um racismo de carácter diferencialista; o que se pode ficar a dever a várias ordens de factores: em primeiro lugar é preciso sublinhar a existência de continuidades culturais significativas entre os imigrantes de origem africana e os portugueses com os quais eles estão em contacto mais directo. Isto é, contrariamente ao exemplo dos países da Europa do Norte, não se registam contrastes culturais verdadeiramente significativos – ao nível da língua, da religião e mesmo das estruturas familiares – entre a maior parte das populações com origem na imigração e a população autóctone.

The *universalisation* of a Eurocentric concept of racism is itself racist, because it does not question the *conventionalization* of the North American/West European colonial hegemony of international relations. It is racist to the extent that its deployment as a concept obscures the colonial excess of the European and American racism which continues to dehumanise “non-Europeans” and “non-whites”. (Hesse, 2004: 20)

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