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## YOUTH AND PORTUGUESE CINEMA: THE (DE) COLONISATION OF THE IMAGINARY?

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### Abstract

The narratives constructed and disseminated over various decades about the colonial past have profoundly influenced the relations established between the Portuguese population and ‘immigrants’. The stereotypes conveyed are deeply embedded in the social memory of the Portuguese, influencing intercultural relations. In order to analyse the perceptions of young people about intercultural relations, we conducted focus groups with secondary school students involving the viewing of the film *Li Ké Terra* (2010) and subsequent group discussion. In this article we present the results of the focus groups in articulation with the narrative of the film. The results demonstrate the persistence of certain negative stereotypes concerning the populations descendent from African immigrants, indicating that the memory of the colonial past significantly influences the imaginary and social identity of young people, also contributing to this youth perceiving young black people born in Portugal as immigrants. We argue that documentary and film literacy can play a central role in the reflexive and critical transformation of auto- and hetero-representations of young people, contributing to the decolonisation of the national imaginary.

### Keywords

Cinema; social memory; (de)colonisation; stereotypes; intercultural relations

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### INTRODUCTION

The national imaginary in Portugal has been constructed on narratives of a ‘glorious’ past, in which the discoveries, expansion and colonisation performed a pivotal role. As Eduardo Lourenço (1992) has observed, our historiography reveals the illusionary image that the Portuguese have of themselves. The narratives of this past have contributed to construct hegemonic social representations (Almeida, 2008; Santos, 2014), affecting intercultural relations at the present time.

The emphasis on hegemonic narratives of national history and the colonial past limits individuals’ access to alternative versions of history, thus hindering the development of a critical perspective. In the case of colonialism, the different versions of history conveyed influence the individuals’ interpretation of the past, their present positioning and strategies for the future, defining relations between and within nations in a dynamic process (Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010).

Reflecting critically on the images of the colonial past broadcast by the media, in particular by the Portuguese cinema, proves to be crucial in the deconstruction of hegemonic narratives about national history. Documentaries which portray the daily life of immigrants from the PALOP (Portuguese-Speaking African Countries) and their descendants (cf. *Li Ké Terra*, 2010, *Ilha da Cova da Moura*, 2010); autobiographical documentaries

about experiences of displacement and ambivalence of identity (cf. *Dundo, Memória Colonial*, 2009), by exploring other versions of the colonial past and intercultural relations, enable us to question and discuss whether these images promote the decolonisation of the imaginary or whether, in contrast, they add further fuel, helping to perpetuate stereotypes about the colonial past. Macedo, Cabecinhas and Abadia (2013) analysed the documentary *Dundo, Memória Colonial* (2009), by Diana Andringa, and conclude that this work shows the importance of examining the memories of people who lived in the colonial past. The memories of the filmmaker refer to people, places, times, emotions, smells and feelings that decisively mark the hybrid nature of her identity. In addition to considering that critical reflection around this film can contribute to the decolonisation of the imaginary, the authors believe that this type of autobiographical narrative may play an important role in the auto- and hetero-comprehension of the people who lived and live between cultures.

In this article, we question whether young people look critically at media contents on intercultural relations and the role of the Portuguese cinema in (de)constructing the imaginary about “us” and about the “other”.

In fact, the narratives which are constructed around the colonial past contribute to the development of the social identity of the groups involved in this conflict. These narratives influence the way that the groups currently interrelate and orientate their action in view of the challenges of present times (cf. Liu & Hilton, 2005). In the Portuguese case, the narratives that are constructed and disseminated concerning the colonial past influence the relations that are established between the Portuguese population and immigrants and their descendants. The stereotypes conveyed during the colonial period, and even after decolonisation, are deeply embedded in the social memory of the Portuguese, with profound impacts on intercultural relations (Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010).

Literature, cinema and school education perform a central role in the dissemination of certain narratives about the Portuguese colonial past. For example, as noted by Moutinho (2008), in most Portuguese fiction literature published after 1974, although Africa is not necessarily the principal scenario or focus, it lingers in the background or is incorporated into the personal history of a character. Apart from the concern with Europe in Portuguese official discourse, the recurrent presence of Africa is observed in Portuguese contemporary fiction, which indicates the influence that the colonial past appears to have in the (re)construction of national identity. Likewise in the educational context, research work on recent history manuals (Araújo & Maeso, 2013) indicates the persistence in Portuguese textbooks of discourses which naturalise processes such as colonialism and racism, helping perpetuate and reproduce unequal relations of power. In the opinion of Araújo and Maeso (2013), the subtle expression of racism in school textbooks is at the same time an illustration of the existence of racism and one of the forms through which it is reproduced and maintained in everyday life. The naturalisation of certain processes, which help to constitute the contemporary relations of power, has led to the formation of ideological interpretative frameworks. For the authors, a more critical pedagogy and teaching of history (as well as other course subjects) should go beyond the

inclusion of other perspectives and versions of history. They should foster the production of more critical and informed historical interpretations.

In this article, we intend to examine the role of the documentary as enabling or triggering alternative interpretations of the past and stimulating critical reflection, contributing to the (re)construction of social memory on intercultural relations in the past and contemporary period. Through the viewing and discussion of a documentary (*Li Ké Terra*, 2010) about young descendants of immigrants in Portugal, we sought to explore the way that secondary school students interpret the film and (re)formulate their perceptions on intercultural relations.

### **COLONIAL MEMORY AND NATIONAL IMAGINARY: TRACES OF PAST CONFLICTS IN PRESENT INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS**

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), individuals are motivated to acquire or maintain a positive social identity, which can happen by comparison with other social groups. In this positive differentiation process, the past is central. The past of a group can be used to justify actions and present practices, influencing intergroup relations. From this perspective, the reconstruction of the past proves to be crucial for the (re)construction of social identity, allowing “forgotten” events to find a place in the collective memory of mainstream society.

Volpato and Licata (2010) argue that colonialism has left clear marks on international relations, on social relations within nations, and on the ideologies and imaginary of a large part of the world’s population. For the authors, the comprehension of the dynamics and conflicts of our current world implies thinking about colonialism and its consequences. The colonial past has moulded representations, ways of thinking and the behaviour of those who lived through its experiences. The recognition of the colonial past as one of the sources of racism, xenophobia and intolerance in relation to Africans, has been considered by various authors (Sardar, 2008; Volpato & Licata, 2010). For Sardar (2008), racism constituted the “foundations of Fortress Europe”, being evident in the resurgence of the extreme right in various European countries and in the “discourse of refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers and the Muslim population of Europe” (Sardar, 2008[1952], p. xix).

In Portugal, there is a persistent discrimination of people of African origin, as well as racial stereotypes and paternalist prejudices (Cabecinhas, 2007; Vala & Pereira, 2012).

Various comparative studies on social memory in different Portuguese-speaking countries - Angola, Brazil, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Timor-Leste (Cabecinhas, 2006; Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010; Cabecinhas, Lima & Chaves, 2006; Cabecinhas & Nhaga, 2008; Mendes, Silva & Cabecinhas, 2010) confirm the need to deal with the memories of (de)colonisation. What is recalled and forgotten depends on the social frameworks of memory surrounding the individuals in which they were socialised since childhood. Although the memory of colonisation is very present in the narratives of both parties, in fact, the meanings which are attributed to it are different. For example, from the side of the former coloniser we observe a forgetfulness or non-recognition of the

more violent effects of the colonial expansion, albeit recognising a position of “guilt” in relation to some aspects of colonialism. On the part of the former colonised, it is the violent effects of colonial actions that are most vivid in the analysed memories, emphasising the most oppressive aspects of colonialism (slavery, massacres). These results indicate the need to consider that “a common past” neither has the same significance nor raises the same emotions in young people who, although they have not had any direct experience of the colonial period, lived and live in contexts marked by narratives which fuel the construction of a particular portrayal of the past.

The narrative of the Portuguese colonial experience, especially in Africa, “influenced social and racial relations in the former colonies, as well as the racial images, stereotypes and prejudices that, over that long period of time, the Portuguese progressively constructed about others and themselves” (Machado, 2001, p. 55). Although various discourses to this day present notions such as the Portuguese people’s capacity to adapt to other cultures, their miscegenation with other peoples, the fact that many “blacks” resident in the country were and are national citizens, or that the majority of African immigrants are derived from former colonies, as factors which would contribute to the specificity of racism in Portugal, there is no specificity of the racism in Portugal, its expressions being similar to those of other European countries (Marques, 2007; Vala, Brito & Lopes, 1999). Various authors consider that the idea that there is no racism in Portugal or that the Portuguese are not racist is linked to *luso-tropicalismo* (Alexandre, 1999; Vala, Brito & Lopes, 1999). This concept, coined by Gilberto Freyre (1953/1959) was never endorsed in the official discourse of the Estado Novo, but merely inspired a simplistic and thoroughly nationalist version which conveyed a few carefully manipulated ideas (Castelo, 1998), and continued to flourish with the same vitality after April 1974. Piçarra (2015, p. 115) further adds that these ideas endured in political and media discourse and, “consequently, in the national discourse of identity”.

Cabecinhas (2007) demonstrates that although racism has undergone a metamorphosis in its forms of expression, it has not disappeared. What is observed is that people develop strategies to protect their public image of endorsing the values of equality, and adopt more subtle modes of racial discrimination. As argued by the author:

Present-day racism essentially involves refusing to recognize the singularity of the ‘Other’. In other words, racism is expressed by treating members of minorities as ‘representatives’ of a homogeneous category. This is reflected on a more automatic processing of information relative to those groups, i.e., more stereotype-based. Members of minorities become ‘invisible’ as persons, but extremely ‘visible’ as a group. (Cabecinhas, 2007, p. 280)

The author observes that the research participants pay less attention to people of minority groups, adopting a treatment more based on social stereotypes (Cabecinhas, 2007). Lages et al. (2006, p. 364) considers that manifestation of racism by the Portuguese population becomes even more significant when “observing the exaggerated cultural difference perceived, particularly with respect to East European and African

immigrants”. Immigrants of African origin and their descendants face a discriminatory racism that, in the Marques’ view (2007), is still strongly related to the colonial past of the country and to the racial ideologies and prejudices inherited from this same past.

Indeed, it is found that in Portugal, members of indigenous groups tend to regard the actual descendants of immigrants as different citizens, even when they are citizens formally endowed with Portuguese nationality. Even though these citizens are entitled to official political rights and have passed through a process of socialisation in Portuguese schools, they frequently end up excluded in social and economic terms (Malheiros et al., 2007).

### **THE MEDIA IN THE (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL MEMORY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Research on memory among victims of collective traumas, such as the holocaust, war or colonialism, offers evidence of complex narratives of mnemonic construction and reconstruction. Indeed, the traditional model of memory as a static and stable place of storage, where past perceptions and experiences are retained and from which they can be recovered, has proved to be increasingly more inadequate and obsolete. According to Brockmeier (2010, p. 27) “(...) human memory practices are embedded or embodied - in environments, umwelts, eco-niches, everyday life-meaning contexts, and historical life-worlds of action and interaction; they are activities within cultural (and that implies noetic) orders, which are themselves subject to historical change”. An important part of these cultural orders is the media, with which human recall has always been intimately linked.

The discussion around precisely how certain collective memories become hegemonic or, to the contrary, how memories hitherto marginalised gain prominence in the public sphere has been central in the study of memory. According to Erll and Rigney (2009, p. 2), the dynamics of cultural memory can only be fully understood if we take into account not only the social factors, but also the ‘frameworks’ of media recollection and specifically the media processes through which memories reach the public sphere and become collective. It is in the public sphere that some memories are transformed into media versions of the past, while at the same time others are ignored or censured. This means that the dynamics of social memory must be studied at the crossing point of both social and media processes.

Certain media productions strike a deep chord in the collective memory and, subsequently, through the inter-media reiteration of these narratives across different platforms in the public sphere (press, internet, commemorative rituals and films) the theme becomes embedded in a certain community. Effectively, the media are more than merely passive and transparent conveyors of information; rather it plays an active role in the formation of our understanding of the past, in the “mediation” between us (as readers, television viewers, listeners) and past experiences, and, therefore, in defining the agenda for future acts of remembrance within society (Erll & Rigney, 2009, p. 3). The inter-media reiteration of particular narratives about the past and present still influences the (re) construction of the social identity of the individuals exposed to it. Social identity is understood as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge

of his membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value or emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1983[1981], p. 290). More recent works consider that the use of the term “identity” should be replaced by “identities” in the plural, assuming that this latter idea reflects the concept that individuals and groups have access to a repertoire of socially available choices and that this involves an endless process of construction. On this issue, Hall (1993) notes that we should conceptualise identity as a persistently incomplete process, constituted within processes of representation. Cultural identity is not a fixed essence, but is profoundly marked by history and culture. The past has a central role in the process of the (re)construction of identity and always resorts to memory, fantasy, narratives and myths. In the author’s opinion, cultural identities are unstable points of identification constructed in the context of history and culture. They are not an essence, but rather a positioning (Hall, 1993). Other perspectives consider various identities coexist within the same individual, which change and evolve according to the situations, discussion partners and contexts, that can be created, imposed, ordered or repressed through institutions and social interactions (De Finna, 2003).

The issue of mediation is thus fundamental to the way that social memory and social identity are conceived and (re)constructed. In fact, as remarked by Sturken (2008, p. 75), “we all have ‘personal’ memories that come to us not from our individual experience but from our mediated experience of photographs, documentaries and popular culture”. For Anderson (1991[1983]) both nationality (or national condition) and nationalism are specific cultural products. In the author’s opinion, a community is above all imagined because its individuals, even never knowing one another, share common signs and symbols, which imply that they recognise themselves as belonging to the same imaginary space.

Based on this idea of social memory and social identity as dynamic processes, whose (re)construction is influenced by the media, we seek to examine the way that the cinema, in particular, enables reflection on the Portuguese colonial past and present day cultural relations. It is important to bear in mind that the national imaginary and the memories of the Portuguese were based on the narrative of a ‘glorious’ past, in which the ‘discoveries’, the empire and colonisation played a pivotal role. The fact that these narratives became hegemonic and part of the representations of the Portuguese (Almeida, 2008; Lourenço 1992; Santos, 2014) could help to understand the results of this study, in particular concerning the discussion about how the descendants of Cape Verdean immigrants are perceived by young Portuguese in the present time.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The use of various methods proved productive as this enabled the study object to be observed from different angles. Following this line of thought, the researcher should develop an awareness of the plethora of perspectives that permeate any social environment (Howarth, 2014). Bearing in mind this idea of mixed methods, we present our reflections on the outcomes of the focus group discussions with secondary school students, with an analysis of the narrative of the film used to stimulate the discussion.



We developed focus groups with young people attending secondary school in the north of Portugal, and showed a previously selected documentary followed by group discussion. This method proved to be appropriate due to its potential for deconstruction and analysis of auto- and hetero- representations. We chose secondary education as we considered that this involves an age cohort in which individual identities are at a critical stage of construction (Fivush, 2008), and where reflection of the role of the media in the portrayal of certain realities is essential.

The film under discussion is entitled *Li Ké Terra* (2010), which means “This is my land”. Winner of the Portuguese DocLisboa competition in 2010, it recounts the story of two young people living in Casal da Boba, in Amadora, Miguel Moreira and Ruben Furtado, and was produced by Filipa Reis, João Miller Guerra and Nuno Baptista.

The selection of the film was made according to the following criteria: its duration, as the available time was limited; the illustration of a situation with which the students could identify (the film participants are of the same age cohort as the students and questions are posed in the film related to school and family issues); and, finally, a film which could raise a discussion around intercultural relations. We also assumed that a film that could be provocative and cause some level of emotional involvement would constitute an important stimulus for the discussion.

We created 17 focus groups, involving 129 students, aged between 15 and 18 years old. The dynamics occurred in two secondary schools, in the Philosophy and History courses, between 31 January and 4 April 2013.

The students saw the film, followed by a discussion on it in small groups. This discussion was directed around a series of topics that we wished to see addressed. In this article, we shall focus on the young peoples’ representations concerning immigrant populations and their descendants, and the role attributed by them to the media, namely the cinema, in the process of constructing their opinions about others and their views of the world.

#### **THE FILM *LI KÉ TERRA*: NATIONALITY, IDENTITY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

The discussion about the difficulties experienced by the main characters in obtaining Portuguese nationality, despite having been born in Portugal and lived there up to the present, is central in the film. This constitutes the overriding concern of Ruben Furtado, one of the main personalities in the film, who refers to the daily impossibilities imposed on those who do not have the citizenship documents.

It's everything, for me, the documents mean everything! Now, at this moment it's everything. It's everything I need to be able to work, to be able to take a course, continue at school. Various things. What I mean is that a person, really, without documentation is nothing! Like having one foot in the grave, like being down on the floor, lying down. One zero to the left! It's tough! Let me tell you, anyone who doesn't have documents is fucked! Can't do anything! Can't go to college, can't work, can't get

a job... Stuff like that. If I had documents, I probably wouldn't be like this.  
(Ruben Furtado, *Li Ké Terra*, 2010)

The life story of two participants is narrated over the course of the film, in particular the story of Miguel Moreira and the events that led up to him not having obtained Portuguese documentation at the right time. The grandmother stresses the difficulties experienced, the numerous applications for documents, documents which were very often impossible to obtain. In another scene in the film, young people's financial problems are also highlighted, and the expense involved in the getting all the paperwork together to obtain nationality.

Mother got into a life of drugs, Miguel was not registered. For Miguel to be registered it was me who went along to talk to a social worker, Dr. Susana. She managed to help me to get Miguel registered. So Miguel ended up being registered, Miguel was about 2 years old. Since I wasn't the kid's guardian, I thought that at the time Miguel would get his documents as he'd always lived with me. He lived at home with me, and I thought, well, it should be easy to get documents for him. When I went to the embassy to see if I could get the documents for him, they said no, they said I needed to be his guardian, that I had never applied for guardianship. That I didn't know how! I am his grandmother, he was practically born there at home, he lived at my home, he never lived with his mother. I thought that at the time of getting his documents that it wouldn't be necessary. That it would be easier that way. So, every day that I went, they told me to get some document together and go to the embassy. I went there and they told me to get something else, it had to be something else! (...) He went to see the mother's document and then told me that I needed to go and get the mother's criminal record in Cape Verde. In Cape Verde and in São Tomé, where she was born. But, if she never lived in Cape Verde, doesn't know Cape Verde, how am I going to get hold of her criminal record in Cape Verde?. (Miguel's Moreira grandmother, *Li Ké Terra*, 2010)

Miguel's Moreira grandmother, having lived longer in Portugal than in Cape Verde, identifies herself and her family, to a large extent, as being Portuguese. For this reason, she is thoroughly perplexed with the complexity inherent to the process of obtaining nationality for her grandchild, Miguel Moreira.

I see my children and my grandchildren as Portuguese! Because they were born here, I see them as Portuguese! I practically feel Portuguese myself, because they live more in Portugal than in my homeland. I left there when I was 24 years old, never went back, now I am 60, it's already a lifetime!.  
(Miguel's Moreira grandmother, *Li Ké Terra*, 2010)

Miguel's Moreira process of identity construction, as illustrated in the following extract, is deeply marked by the history and culture of his family. The student thus takes



up a positioning and culturally identifies himself as Cape Verdean. For him, the education, music, food and even the way in which he expresses his emotions is Cape Verdean. Miguel's cultural identity is thus profoundly marked by the history and culture of the context in which he has grown up. The past of his family and his origins play a central role in the process of the student identity (re)construction, while not having lived in Cape Verde, draws on the social memory, narratives and myths about the country's culture, in the construction of an "imagined community" to which he feels he belongs (Anderson, 1991[1983]; Hall, 1993).

Me, when I listen to music, hey man, which comes from there, or which is really traditional, like *morna*, hey dude, I identify with it right away! I don't need to listen to the whole soundtrack to say "yeah, I like it"! I really identify with it immediately. Like yeah, it's in my blood. Like a *funaná* or *ferro-gaita* [music and instruments]. Just hearing that *gaita* [accordion] play or the *ferro* [metal instrument], the rest of the melody stays with me, know what I mean? Really from back home, it's impossible for me to feel Portuguese with these things. When I eat that great *cachupa* [traditional stew] I also get that same taste. I don't get the taste of the food, but it reminds me that I have been to Cape Verde, like, that I have touched that ground and wow it's great. This is why I feel 100% Cape Verdean. (Miguel Moreira, *Li Ké Terra*, 2010)

I'm going to buy a country and have my own nationality. I'm going to be Tiberian. That's it, I'm going to be Tiberian. I'm going to buy a country, it's going to be called Tiber, and I'm going to be Tiberian. Until then, before getting all that, I'm going to be Portuguese on my Identity Card. But I'll always consider myself Cape Verdean. My education has all come from there, the theories of life were from there. The first time I kissed it was in Cape Verdean. Everything, it was all in Cape Verdean! It was never in Portuguese. This is what is called a vicious circle, right?. (Miguel Moreira, *Li Ké Terra*, 2010)

As was the case in other studies (Macedo, Cabecinhas & Abadia, 2013) on the experiences of those living "in-between cultures", we found that audio-visual narratives such as those in the film *Li ké Terra* (2010) enable an understanding of the complexity of identity among young people like Miguel Moreira, who live in countries where different cultures coexist, in which they are called upon daily to develop strategies of negotiation and identity (re)construction. As illustrated by the extracts presented above, Miguel Moreira mobilises traditional Cape Verdean cultural references to substantiate his social identity, drawing on a national imaginary which is not Portuguese, but Cape Verdean. The student adds that he is going to buy his own country, indicating that while he neither feels nor is perceived as Portuguese and, simultaneously, identifies himself as Cape Verdean, he is aware that he has never been to Cape Verde. Miguel Moreira appears to consider himself stateless, or someone who is constantly missing his own country. This feeling of "not

belonging anywhere” is also mentioned by individuals who have lived through migration experiences (Macedo, Cabecinhas & Abadia, 2013; Macedo & Cabecinhas, 2014).

The reflections of Ruben Furtado, which are presented below, where he evinces his expectations in relation to the future, are mentioned in the focus groups. We found that his testimony enables the students to reflect on the constraints under which young people who are descendants of immigrants currently live.

Sometimes I go for a walk, wander around, see something I would like to buy, something like that...

Then, I start thinking. You don't work, how are you going to get the money to buy the stuff you want?

What's the easiest path? If you don't have documents, you can't get work!?

What's the easiest path? It's stealing, or doing something bad! But nope, in my head that's all under control. That's not what I want for myself, so I would rather not be able to buy that stuff which I probably feel like buying, I could steal and buy it, right? But, I would rather stay cool, not buy the stuff and stay just as I am, without money. Sometimes I might want to have money, but I stay cool, I'm not going to do anything to get money, I just stay where I am.

If I get a mark on my criminal record, then I will never ever get the documentation! It will never happen!. (Ruben Furtado, *Li Ké Terra*, 2010)

It's not the life for me. It's not the life I want for myself! I might have children later on, what kind of example would they have? What would be their background? Like, they are at school, the other kids are saying “my dad does this or that, he's an architect, he's whatever, and so forth”, gets to my kid's turn “my dad's a thief, and so on” Fuck, what then? I'm very young, really wet behind the ears. There's a heck of a lot of guys about my age who die just like that! They kill us or some kind of shit happens. I think about that a lot, a really young guy getting himself mixed up in shit, some really bad stuff could happen. He ends up, 19 years old going to prison for 4, 5, 6 years! 10, 15, fuck it! You got to think about the future a little. (Ruben Furtado, *Li Ké Terra*, 2010)

Exploration and reflection around testimonies such as those of Ruben Furtado can help in the deconstruction of negative stereotypes about this population, which young people are confronted with on a daily basis and which are conveyed, for example, through the media (Ferin et. al., 2004; Malheiros et al., 2007).

#### **THE FOCUS GROUPS: IDENTIFICATION WITH THE FILM AND SOCIAL STEREOTYPES**

Part of the participants in the focus groups recognised the difficulties facing young descendants of immigrants in Portugal. In the case of Miguel Moreira and Ruben Furtado,

the problems that they progressively faced with in attempting to obtain Portuguese nationality, despite having been born in Portugal, are mentioned as issues that, up to the time of the discussion, were unknown to the majority of the participants in this study. The recognition of persistent discrimination among this population and, moreover, the complexities of identity experienced by the characters of the film, enabled the students to reflect and share different perspectives about the subject.

Clara - I think there's a lot of discrimination, in these matters. It could be a little bit because their parents are of another nationality, I think that displaces them a bit from society. They feel that.

Ana - I think they feel like that... a bit displaced! In spite of wanting to be Portuguese, they feel they are not from here, they are from someplace else.

Mariana - There's always something that connects them to Cape Verde and this is felt in their lives.

Ana - And people make a point of always reminding them of this...

It was found that there was a stronger identification with the reality portrayed and greater reflection among the participants whose experiences of intercultural contact are more present. Those who have friends of other nationalities, whose family members have immigrated and mention knowing the difficulties that they experienced in that migratory process, and those who, like Miguel Moreira and Ruben Furtado, are descendants of Cape Verdean immigrants, such as Joana, reveal a more critical attitude. Joana's testimony leads to discussion of the importance of relations established at school, in the process of constructing children's and young people's social identity.

Joana - I am living proof of this experience, with my parents being immigrants. I was born here, and when I was small it was very clear in the way that I was treated, and at first it's very bad and we want to be like them. I remember my mother telling me that when I was little I wanted to be white, because they would often tease me for having a different colour and they would tell me to go home and things like that, but now I couldn't care less, because they don't often talk to me like that, but even if they did it doesn't bother me so much anymore...

Although this is not perceptible in the extract, in Joana's testimony and in her voice there are traces of hurt which is simultaneously a venting of emotion. This catches the other participants in the focus groups rather by surprise, creating a silence and, in some cases, we found some introspection and reflection about what they had just heard. Then, a girl speaks, seeking to justify the attitudes of the majority population in relation to this segment, but this testimony is looked upon with recrimination by her colleagues who view the girl with reproach, distaste. We found that, in view of the looks of reproach by the members

of her group, Marta progressively changes her discourse. This case offers evidence of the importance of confronting different perspectives in a critical manner and the way that perceptions can be reorganised or reformulated during the process of group discussion.

Marta - I think that sometimes there are certain people who come to Portugal because they think they will get more benefits here and sometimes they only come here as a result of this, because if we take a good look there are many people who are hanging around, I wouldn't say that there aren't people who don't come here seeking work and a better life, but there are others who just come to take advantage. A small minority, because I no longer believe that a person wants to be permanently dependent on another or something like that... But I think that now this is changing and no longer happens as much...

Negative portrayals of the film's participants are also very present in the discussion. The idea of "happy-go-lucky" constitutes a negative stereotype attributed to blacks in various studies about social stereotypes (Katz & Braly, 1933; Gilbert, 1951; Karlins et al., 1969). These studies indicated that the following negative stereotypes were attributed to black: the black as lazy, aggressive, religious, musical and superstitious. Madon et al. (2001) demonstrates the prevailing attribution of these negative stereotypes to blacks: the image of the black as musical, noisy and uncouth persists in the mentality of some young people. In the extract presented below, we find that the stereotype of the black as unconcerned with life (happy-go-lucky) is present in the mind of some participants.

Carlos – They were unconcerned about life (...) one of them had done nothing for three years.

Jorge – I think that the first one, who wasn't doing anything, was still concerned about trying to find out how to get legalised in the country.

Pedro – Oh, but that one has more time...

Jorge – But while one was actually working on trying to get hold of the papers, the other didn't do anything.

These stereotypes are recurrent in the participant's narratives. This idea of "happy-go-lucky" associates young people with responsibility for their situation of social exclusion. As observed in the extract presented below, apart from the stereotype linked to lack of concern, attributed stereotypes are also associated to supposed lack of schooling and criminality.

João - In being immigrants, employees prefer to contract people of real Portuguese nationality and they were born in Portugal, they just don't have full nationality.

Ana - They are going to have greater difficulties in getting employment, because in addition to being of other nationalities, they don't have much schooling, compared to people who have received their education at school and are actually Portuguese.

Patrícia - Sometimes they are pushed aside a bit. They are perceived as second-class people, as if there is a core of people who are so-called normal and others who are abnormal! I think it's kind of dissent...

Jorge - As they are black in terms of colour, people frequently say that they are vandals, that they steal and treat them badly. Sometimes, it's not like that.

Although it was stressed that the two film participants were born in Portugal and that, due to a series of problematic issues, they had not yet obtained their nationality documents, the narrative of the focus group members shows the persistent idea that Miguel and Ruben are "immigrants" and the colour of their skin assumes a central importance in this classification. In fact, the auto- and hetero- representations of the young people participating in this study are based on the idea that a descendant of black immigrants, even when born in Portugal, continues to be an immigrant due to skin colour.

Expressions of racism can also be observed with respect to immigrants of African and East European origin. These expressions sometimes stress the cultural differences (Cabecinhas, 2012; Lages et al., 2006) and on other occasions are substantiated by negative social stereotypes about this population.

Carlos - However, now in the case of Portugal, why discrimination exists, for example racism, I am anything but racist! But, let's see, 75% of the robberies in downtown Lisbon are done by whom? They are done by East European immigrants...

Jorge - But that's a consequence of their entry into Portuguese society.

Carlos - But, one thing doesn't justify the other.

Jorge - Why not? Look, you need to survive, you don't have a job...

Paulo - So you're saying that it's legitimate to steal, in these cases?

Jorge - No, but you get to an extreme and you don't have anything to eat, you don't have anything!

Paulo - Well, in a certain way Carlos is right, we also have to be rational. It's like this, it's no-one's fault that Portuguese society doesn't integrate them and then we get robbed.

Tânia - Some people are...

Filipe - Really racist, like they despise people who...

Tânia - Some have been brought up like that, it's not their fault, it's not that "it's not their fault", they just don't know any better. But there are others who should be a tiny little more understanding and they are making an effort now, I think that like this they will have a better future than those who go around stealing.

These representations and social stereotypes have consequences for young people's career paths and future like the participants in the film under discussion. The view of a lesser legitimacy in terms of rights by this population, even when involving citizens formally endowed with Portuguese nationality, could lead to social and economic exclusion (Malheiros et al., 2007).

The persistence of stereotypes, the association of minority groups to problems of urban criminality and violence, the generalisation of prejudices, the systematic discrimination in various areas of social life (Marques, 2007) are phenomena embedded in the functioning of society itself and recognised by the focus group members. For them, the media plays a crucial role in their learning process, influencing their representations about the world surrounding them.

Carla – We see a black person in the street and almost automatically we are discriminating, even if only mentally. If we see a French or an English person we have an idea of England and France as good countries. We discriminate more or less depending on what the television, the social networks and our group teach us”.

Sara - I agree with Carla. There is still a pecking order of countries, there are those countries that we consider superior to us and those that we consider inferior to us, taking into account the country's economy and culture. This still happens.

Various researchers have analysed the role of the media in the dissemination of representations about immigrants and ethnic minorities (Cádima & Figueiredo, 2003; Costa, 2010; Ferin et al., 2004; Malheiros et al., 2007; Marques, 2007). Indeed, the media perform a fundamental role in the process of (re)constructing the social memory of conflicts and in the attribution of stigmas to places and the populations living in them. Television and the media in general participate in the “co-construction of conflicts and violent events, amplifying them and providing visibility to the perpetrators” (Malheiros et al. 2007, p. 21).

The results of the focus groups indicate the role of the media, and cinema in particular, in constructing the participants' images about immigrants and ethnic minorities. It is



important to explore these results in greater depth, and seek to link them with the results of other studies about the role of the media in the (re)construction of social representations about immigrants. For example, by mobilising the study by Matos (2006) which, in addition to cinema, examines the role of school textbooks and exhibitions in the construction of a positive image of the Portuguese, an image which excludes Portuguese blacks from the national imaginary, contributing to their discrimination and social exclusion.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

Methodological integration enables a better understanding of a certain social reality, allowing examination from different angles. In the case of the study presented herein, we sought to link the analysis of the narrative of a Portuguese film – *Li Ké Terra* (2010) – with the perceptions of young students about intercultural relations.

In the focus groups, we were able to observe the existence of tensions and conflicts, caused not only by the endorsement but also the contestation of hegemonic representations. This co-construction and reflexive reconstruction of images and portrayals of intercultural relations is revealed to be relevant in the process of developing critical citizens who are attentive to the plurality of narratives about the past and present.

Similarly to the outcome of other studies (Cabecinhas, 2007), we found that the members of minorities are viewed by the participants in this study as ‘representative’ of a homogenous category and not on their singularity. Furthermore, the young children of immigrants, born in Portugal, are still perceived as immigrants, ‘they are not really Portuguese’, due to the colour of their skin. Negative stereotypes associated to immigrants and their descendants persist in the minds of young people, as well as expressions of racism. These stereotypes are closely related to the ideologies and racial prejudices conveyed during the colonial period, which have become part of representations of the Portuguese (Almeida, 2008; Lourenço, 1992; Santos, 2014), profoundly influencing intercultural relations in the present day.

Having observed that focus groups also constituted a space of co-construction and reconstruction of images and perceptions about ‘immigrants’, it is important to consider the role of media products, especially documentary cinema, in the learning and development process of young people and in the reflexive and critical transformation of their auto- and hetero- representations.

During the process of viewing and analysing films in a school context, the role of the teacher is crucial. Directing and stimulating the students towards their critical comprehension and interpretation of film contents – film literacy – is shown to be essential for the construction of reflexive citizens attentive to the plurality of narratives about the past and present social reality, and contributing to decolonising the imaginary of mainstream society. ✍

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