Film screening African Lisbon: talking about *Li ké terra* and *Horse Money* in classrooms

Ana Cristina Pereira, Isabel Macedo & Rosa Cabecinhas

Abstract

Today, through cinema, television, videogames, other audiovisuals and especially advertising, images have a role shaping beliefs, concepts and dreams. Most images have an inner action beyond our control, spreading social stereotypes that embody our visions of the world. Recent Portuguese film production highlight controversial visions of the complex post-colonial reality in contemporary society due to the clashes of memories about the colonial past that these films instigate. The documentary *Li ké terra* (2010) and the feature film *Horse Money* (2014) constitute places of memory and historical reconstruction: both films tell stories about Cape Verdean communities in Portugal, revealing present realities strongly influenced by a colonial History. Through focus group discussions about these films we examine how young students (re)construct their perceptions about the daily lives of African "immigrants" in Portugal and their representations of "race". These focus group discussions enabled us to scrutinize the way collective memories are (re)created in post-colonial contexts, and whether and how these memories enable the critical reflection about past conflicts and current intergroup relations. This qualitative analysis was carried out using the inductive-comparative method and the critical discourse analysis.

Keywords

Li ké terra; *Horse Money*; cinema; social stereotypes; racism

Lisboa africana no cinema: conversas em sala de aula sobre *Li ké terra* e *Cavalo Dinheiro*

Resumo

Hoje, através do cinema, televisão, videojogos, publicidade e outros meios audiovisuais, as imagens têm um papel importante na formação das nossas crenças, conceitos e sonhos. Possuindo um movimento intrínseco que frequentemente escapa ao nosso controlo, as imagens podem contribuir para difundir estereótipos sociais, que marcam as nossas visões do mundo. A recente produção cinematográfica portuguesa destaca visões polémicas da complexa realidade pós-colonial na sociedade contemporânea, devido aos choques de memórias sobre o passado colonial que instiga. O documentário *Li ké terra* (2010) e a ficção *Cavalo Dinheiro* (2014) constituem espaços/lugares de memória e de reconstrução histórica. Através de discussões de grupos focais examinamos como jovens estudantes constroem as suas perceções sobre o quotidiano dos "imigrantes" africanos em Portugal e as suas representações sobre "raça". A análise das discussões dos grupos focais permite a compreensão do modo como as memórias coletivas são (re)criadas em contextos pós-coloniais e uma reflexão crítica sobre conflitos (passados) e as relações intergrupais atuais. Esta análise qualitativa foi realizada com o recurso ao método indutivo-comparativo e também à análise crítica do discurso.

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Cinema, memory and identity(ies) reconfiguration

Cinema is an art form and a powerful medium of communication that is socially and culturally transversal, given its particular way of reproduction and distribution. Like other media, Film can contribute to reinforce hegemonic social representations, but it can also play an important role in the dissemination of controversial representations, thereby promoting social change. Political regimes have tried throughout history to use the medium of Film to serve their own purposes, and this happens both in authoritarian and democratic practices. The filmmakers choose (consciously or not) to collaborate with the political system in which they live, or they try to convey an alternative discourse. The public has the responsibility to interpret the films (producing meaning), which is a never-ending task, given the successive different interpretations that a single piece of work takes on.

The modern Portuguese colonization of Africa was always somewhat documented by cinema. In the first decades of the twentieth century short films were made with "natives" performing rituals, dressed in traditional clothing, showing how useful they were to the Portuguese in the colonies, and how they respected Portuguese culture, despite being exotic, eccentric and strange (Matos, 2016). But it was only after the 1930s, during *Estado Novo*, that Film was strategically used to enhance a sense of national identity (Piçarra, 2015) turning the colonial empire into a flag of national pride.

The Carnation Revolution that occurred on the 25th April 1974 opened the doors to democracy and to the political negotiation that led to the independence of the Portuguese colonies in Africa. The years that followed were characterized by the affirmation of a creative freedom influenced, both, by the European *auteur* cinema, especially *Nouvelle Vague*, and a revolutionary political conscience. In the late 1970s, and especially during the 1980s, Portugal made a huge effort to become a "full status" European country and join the EEC (now EU). Regarding this matter Lemière (2006) refers that the Portuguese late decolonization was followed by a self-reflexivity period when the "nation" faced a new reality in which it had become "small and poor". Reinforcing this feeling, the European institutional exigence compelled the country to acknowledge its littleness[1].

It was only in the 1990s that people of Cape Verdean origin started to emerge in Portuguese films. This decade gave birth to a generation of filmmakers formed by the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema [Lisbon Theatre and Film School][2]. This new genera-

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[1] Portugal's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986 resulted from several years of difficult negotiations with the other European partners. The application was submitted on March 28, 1977, but several difficulties had to be overcome through a negotiation processes that dragged on for eight years and eight Portuguese governments. On the negotiating table, among other issues, were issues related to trade, agriculture, fisheries and emigration. The Treaty of Portugal's accession to the EEC was signed on June 12, 1985, and the country officially joined the community on January 1, 1986 (Pinto, 2011).

[2] In 1973 the School of Cinema was created, with Alberto Seixas Santos as its first director, supported by a group of members

tion of filmmakers[3], was heir to a tradition of purist, eclectic, and strongly ideological cinema – it had, as teachers, some of the directors of the Portuguese *Novo Cinema* – but came with its own agenda and the desire to seduce the public (Baptista, 2011). In the last decade of the twentieth century, some films were made with the purpose of producing an insight about urban and often marginal daily lives, challenging a concept of "nation" that excludes plural and peripheral realities.

In the twenty-first century a significant part of Portuguese film is committed to promoting some insight into the Portuguese society, and the recent Portuguese history, that might question the construction of Portuguese cultural identity. In this process, the postcolonial Diasporas are having a catalytic part, because, through them, cultural transit and translation (Hall, 2005) of cultures and identities for new migration locations is accelerated and stressed, thereby changing local cultures.

According to Bhabha (1994) these are distinctive identity types of late modernity, which have direct intervention in the spatio-temporal perception and in the current configuration of otherness, as representing the "in-between": the other is neither "a" nor "another", but something "beyond interval" (1994, p. 103). These hybrids are situated in a "transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (1994, p. 19).

Instead of the top-down "imagined communities" such as Anderson (1983) described, there are now parallel communities that coincide in time, and relate with each other and with the state, in a kind of rhizome of multiple identities. In the place of "national identity" a cumulative and performative, hybrid identity (Bhabha, 1994) now appears built from below and in the daily practice, notwithstanding all the contradictions and risks involved in the process.

There are, however, factors that play an important role in constructing liquid identities (Bauman, 2004) – the individuals degree of freedom in identity negotiations is constrained by social status, cultural meaning systems and political circumstances (Cabecinhas, 2007) and the global system in which we live is racially, socially and culturally hierarchized (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The sophisticated contemporary societies relegate to culture the differences traditionally attributed to "races" and individuals develop discursive strategies that allow them not to appear socially as racists (van Dijk, 1984) but that does not mean they question the concepts and prevailing social stereotypes inherited from the past. According to Wagner, Holtz and Kashima (2009) essentializing the "other" is fundamental to the (re)construction of group relations. This process plays a core role on racism, xenophobia and dehumanization, but also on self-construed social identity.

In the next point, after a brief overview of two films: *Li ké terra* (2010), by Filipa Reis, João Miller Guerra and Nuno Baptista, and *Horse Money* (2014), by Pedro Costa, we analyse the dialogue Portuguese students developed with these films, which were shown to

like Fernando Lopes, Paulo Rocha and António da Cunha Telles, the technician Costa e Silva and the critics Bénard da Costa and Eduardo Prado Coelho, among others.

[3] Margarida Vila Verde, Joaquim Sapinho, Fernando Vendrell, Pedro Costa, among others.

different audiences in different contexts. The film screenings were followed by debates aiming at understanding how identity and otherness is currently (re)built through these films.

Li ké terra and Horse Money: an overview

Li ké terra (Filipa Reis, João Miller Guerra & Nuno Baptista, 2010) is a documentary film about a descendant generation of Cape Verdean immigrants in Lisbon, who have to deal with a bureaucratic system that does not recognize them as Portuguese, despite having been born in Portugal; a school that wants them to memorise things instead of understanding them; and the impossibility of getting a job without having Portuguese 'papers', and school certificate. In the words of Miguel Moreira, one of the two main characters in the film: "This is what is called a vicious circle, right?"

In Cape Verdean language *Li ké terra* means approximately *this is my land*, and in this film it refers to the neighbourhood where these young men live. This title tries to describe the feeling of these people towards their own neighbourhood, but in *Li ké terra* the problem is that, legally speaking, they are not from there. Miguel and Rúben have goals: to get the legalization papers, finish school and get a job. Obtaining documentation of citizenship is their lives main objective.

Miguel and Rúben built a representation of Africa as a kind of "lost paradise", a place of emotional identification and therefore a place where the identity of this two young men is (re)created. The family's story plays a central role in the way Miguel (re)constructs his identity: "the young man identifies himself culturally as Cape Verdean. To Miguel Moreira the education, music, food and even the way in which he expresses his emotions are Cape Verdean" (Macedo, 2016, p. 279) and he draws on narratives and myths about the Cape Verdean culture, building an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983; Hall, 1993) to which he feels he belongs.

Miguel Moreira, known as Tibars, lives with his grandmother, since his mother died and his father was arrested and repatriated. Despite not having Portuguese citizenship documents, he attends school. Rúben Furtado, known as Dibela, has several brothers and sisters. He does not attend school anymore and he is trying to get the required documentation to obtain Portuguese nationality.

Horse Money (Pedro Costa, 2014) can be described as a lyrical statement that confronts us with a dream, or a nightmare, as it explores the memory and the madness[4] of the Cape Verdean Ventura, who moved to Portugal in the early 1970s, where he lived during the Carnation Revolution, and worked all his life. *Horse Money* tells us about a generation of Cape Verdean people who left their homelands in the pursuit of a better life, and who lost their youth, their health and often their lives whilst doing so. As days go by, dreams get mixed with memories, and memories of home lose their transparency, although there is a common destiny that unites all characters in the film.

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[4] Words like "dream", "nightmare", "madness" are often used to talk about *Horse Money*; see Rommey (2015); Oliveira (2014), among many others.

The fate of *the other half* [5] is shared by Vitalina: she got married in Cape Verde, and after the marriage, her husband returned to Portugal to work. One day Vitalina's sister gave her the news of her husband's death, and she rushed to the embassy to get papers to go to his funeral in Lisbon. The process and the journey were not easy, nor fast enough; when she arrived in Portugal, her husband had already been buried. Vitalina shares her painful memories, both with her friend Ventura and the public, as she reads the official documents, always with a heart-breaking whispering voice.

Ventura, who is ill, recovers from his illness immediately after talking with Vitalina for the first time. Progressively he becomes her husband, as they progressively become the other, in a process of self-identity exchange, which is achieved through a non-realistic and sometimes non-coincidental switch between images and text, and between voices and images: Vitalina and Ventura assume each other's story as if they had both lived the two stories. As a matter of fact, and in a way, they did. Once again the idea of a common fate emerges.

This displacement of time and place culminates in the lift scene, where Ventura talks with "ghosts that haunt him": those who are alive, those who are dead, and those who are merely symbols. At the end of this cathartic lift trip (which can be, of course, a metaphor for his mind) Ventura, who is prostrate at a lift's corner, turns his face up to the camera, and says: "this is the story of the young life".

Pedro Costa worked with the Cape Verdean community of Fontainhas (now Casal da Boba) since the middle 1990s and constructed a cinematographic work based, from the aesthetic point of view, in the *auteur* cinema tradition. The singularity of Pedro Costa's work, as a whole, results from this double movement (fleeing and looking for cinema): Costa moves away from the present modes of cinematographic production, pushing himself into the life of the community, while at the same time, he constructs his films starting from the cinematographic references of which he is heir.

Filipa Reis has a degree in management and a post-graduation in film and television. She founded, with João Miller Guerra, a company that develops cinematographic and television projects. The directors inserted themselves in social neighbourhoods in the suburbs of Lisbon, in order to show that reality from the inside out. They develop the work with people of these neighbourhoods, making them tell their stories, deepening the question of perspective. *Li ké terra* is what is conventionally called a fiction of the real: a reality staged by its own protagonists.

From the aesthetic viewpoint *Li ké terra* and *Horse Money* reveal considerable differences, although the themes and the methodology of work intercept. The interest in analyzing these two films together lies precisely in the attempt to understand how the relationship with the public, particularly with regard to the reading of racial representations, results from so different proposals from the artistic and political point of view. It is about perceiving how the public, with its cultural and generational references, dialogues

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[5] *How the other half lives: studies among the tenements of New York* (1890) is a book by the photographer and journalist Jacob Riis about the daily life of immigrants in NY City in the beginning of the twentieth century. Some of Rii's photographs are used by Pedro Costa in *Horse Money*.

with such different films. To what extent do these references overlap with these films proposals and to what extent the cinema has the capacity to lead the public to change their perceptions?

Places of *poiesis* – the focus group discussions

There is a kind of continuity between the films *Li ké terra* and *Horse Money*. Both films are based on this particular reality of people "with Cape Verdean origin" who live at Casal da Boba, Lisbon. While in *Li ké terra* we see the hopes and dreams of two boys, in *Horse Money* we are confronted with the despair of those who could be their parents, or grandparents. In both films characters are imprisoned in a world made of structures they cannot control, they cannot improve, even though they understand them.

The two films were shown to previously selected audiences, and afterwards discussions were held. *Li ké terra* was seen and discussed by young people attending secondary schools in the north of Portugal: 17 focus group with 129 high school students (84 females, and 45 male), aged between 16 and 18 years. The focus groups were developed in the disciplines of Philosophy and History, from January until April, 2013. *Horse Money* was shown in universities in the north and centre of Portugal: 4 focus groups with 73 graduation students (40 females and 33 male), aged between 17 and 21 years. The focus groups were developed in Sociology and Theatre courses, from October 2014 to February 2015.

Both secondary and higher education levels were chosen as we considered that they involve an age cohort in which individual identities are (for different reasons and in different modes) at a critical stage of construction (Fivush, 2008) where is crucial the reflection on media's role in the representation of certain realities.

In the documentary *Li ké terra* (2010), the discussion about the difficulties of obtaining Portuguese legal nationality for afro-descendant people is central, because, as Filipa Reis[6] says, one of the main objectives of the film was to portray that reality. However, during the process of producing the film the directors "realized that there is a large group of Cape Verdean descendants in these communities who were born here and do not feel Portuguese", for Filipa Reis (2013) "it is a question of identity". In the light of this finding, she redefines intentions:

> I would like to "share people" ... maybe I would like to deconstruct stereotypes, in the sense that I'm immensely interested in the complexity of people. People are very complex, they are not only what we sometimes see and immediately project on them, and therefore I'm more interested in working the human complexity then in working the social classes.

To Pedro Costa (2008) it is important "not to forget that we live in a planet that has this name, that has a particular form of organization, that this is where Arabs, Blacks,

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[6] The interview with Filipa Reis took place on 23 April of 2013, in Lisbon.

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and others live"[7]. The author reveals his opinion of what cinema is about:

> I always thought that cinema spoke about 90% of the humanity, and that was stupid. I still think it is, because I think that what happens in Fontain-has is what happens in India, in Latin America, in Asia, in Africa (...). I've always believed that cinema was made out of this 90% and it is; I cannot be that wrong.[8]

We versus them and how the past weights on the present

During the discussions we registered the effort to deepen the issues raised by *Horse Money*, for example as if the lift where Ventura confronts his memories and his fears is not only the world (mind) of Ventura, but also a valid metaphor for all humans.

> Agnes – We are all prisoners... we are prisoners of ourselves, inside ourselves there are our fears, our happiness and sadness and sometimes they stay with us forever... only each of us knows. I made this reading mainly because of that character Ventura. In the end I didn't understand very well if he was talking with the soldier or if he was imagining that conversation... For me he was creating that discussion in his mind... because we all have ghosts, everybody has their own ghosts. So the ghosts in his mind make that situation real for him, even if for me, watching the film, it was only pure illusion. I found it a little bit difficult. Just as life is. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

> Manuel – There is here quite a strong universal sense. This happens by chance in Portugal, and among Cape Verdean immigrants but this could be in many other places... many other communities: revolutions, badly solved, colonialism, and all the consequences that come from there... (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

The problems raised by *Li ké terra* were often seen as a consequence of history. And in this case students have the tendency to naturalise racism nowadays, or to consider it as something unavoidable.

> Lídia – Because the black race has always been associated with the people who work at the lowest level, they are the poorest, the ones who have to do what we say.
> Clara – It has to do with the history of the world.
> Lídia – It is everything. We are the result of something.
> (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

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[7] Interview given to André Dias (2008) "Aquela é a minha terra", *Visão*, nº 416.

[8] Interview given to Martin Paradelo; Xiana Arias (n.d.) "Eu acho que há cineastas que não têm a coragem de não fazer filmes [I believe that there are directors who don't have the courage not to make films]".

We also observed a certain tendency to approach both films by identification with the main characters, which was surprising given the apparent distance between the participants and the represented reality. It is important to note that participants were almost all White[9], and living in a region of the country distant from Lisbon and its suburbs, also it is important to say that black communities in the north of Portugal are small, rare, and not particularly present in the media. This identification with the main characters of the films endorses however different feelings or beliefs.

Seeing *Horse Money,* participants tend to leave behind all the possible differences between them (and their families) and the characters:

> Sandra – This is exactly the same story that happened to my grandfather. He went to France in the pursuit of a better life and there they used to live in places where only the Portuguese were living, and with no conditions. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

> Rita – My uncle was in the colonial war, and now he had a stroke and the only thing he talks about is bombs, and the noise, and killing people... it is very interesting to see this other side where reality appears like an overlap of layers, which don't arrive to us complete. There is something that arrives to us, and something else that is a construction of identity based on several happenings. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

Seeing *Li ké terra,* identification often appears as a way to justify racism as something that happens everywhere, or to say that immigrants in Portugal have to find their own way, just as the Portuguese did abroad.

> João – But even us abroad, as immigrants, we are also treated like that.
> Carla – Maybe not!
> João – My uncles and my grandparents were treated the same way! Not now, not anymore, but in the beginning, when they went abroad they were all rejected.
> Luísa – There is a lot of xenophobia, both here and there!
> (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

Stereotypes, essentialization of the "other" and ingroup distinctiveness

Participants in the focus group recognized the persistence of racism in Portuguese society. The younger participants in this study were not aware of the difficulties young people of African origin faced to obtain Portuguese citizenship documents, but they acknowledged it as a problem and as an injustice. Perhaps, due to the different ages, and

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9 In Portugal there is no official racial or ethnic categorization, therefore is impossible to know the percentage of non-White population, but estimative indicate that the majority of Afro-descendants live in the region of Lisbon. Concerning this issue, see Roldão (2015) and Arenas (2015).

different levels of education, participants, in focus groups about *Horse Money* were much harder on the issue of racism.

> Clara – I think there's a lot of discrimination in these matters. It can somehow be because their parents are of another nationality; I think that it moves them a little bit of reality. 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 some place elsewhere.

> Mariana – There's always something that ties them to Cape Verde and this is felt throughout their lives.

> Ana – And people make a point of always reminding them of it... (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

> Amilcar – This is what happens now in many situations: they (immigrants) are exploited, and they don't receive... they don't have documents, they have nothing, they can't appeal to anyone because they are illegal... exploited... they are exploited. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

> Patricia – White people are oppressors, and in the film they are portrayed as oppressors. We exploited the other races that we considered inferior to ours, in this case the Black people... considering them less intelligent, and because they didn't understand our world we took advantage of them. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

Converging with studies (Burke, 2004; Karlins et al., 1969; Madon et al., 2001) that demonstrate the prevalence of attribution of negative stereotypes to Black people, during the discussions about *Li ké terra*, images of Black people as musical, noisy, uncouth and unconcerned with life – "happy-go-lucky" – are recurrent in the speech 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, the one who wasn't doing anything, he was still worried and trying to find out how to be legal in this country.

> Pedro – Oh, but that one had more time...

> Jorge – But while one was actually working on trying to get hold of the

papers, the other didn't do anything. (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

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.

Jorge – As they are Black in terms of [skin] colour people frequently say that they are vandals, that they steal and so they treat them badly. Sometimes, it's not like that. (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

Other stereotypes about Black people, in general, and of Cape Verde in particular, namely considering them "aggressive", are called up in the discussion about *Horse Money*. Participants seem to be aware of the prevailing social stereotypes, showing sometimes disagreement, and others searching for justifications. Words like "anger" are associated with Black people.

Fausto – But... there is always that part. For example, those problems that occurred a couple of years ago in places like Damaia, and Amadora[10] and other places... Those groups are mostly Black... We associate Black people immediately with confusion, and rebellion. In Lisbon it is worse because there are neighbourhoods typically inhabited by Black people... I think it is also the way that they express their anger and it is a problem of integration. I believe it is so. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

Paradoxically, also in the discussions about *Horse Money*, some students find Cape Verdean people closer to Portuguese than other Africans. This notion has its roots not only in the way colonial power was carried out in that archipelago (Henriques, 2016; Torgal & Paulo, 2008), but also in the different phases of immigration, and different social origins of immigrants from Cape Verde that arrived to Portugal – these immigrants were, at first, people belonging to a middle class of intermediate employees of the colonial government[11]. The idea prevails even if the community portrayed in the film do not match the stereotype "they are almost like us": the processes of differentiation between "us" and "them" makes participants compare workers who live in Amadora with Cape Verdean students that they know as their colleagues, as an indivisible world of Cape Verdeans.

Ricardo – I do not know if, by any chance, he (the director) got from Cape Verde only that which is most similar to our society: the concept of family, religion. Their culture is very similar to ours. I don't know if it was on purpose... A Black culture, a Black society so much alike ours and yet we reject them.

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[10] Notice that Damaia belongs to Amadora, but the student is talking about a reality he knows only through media.

[11] About the Cape Verdean immigration in Portugal, see Luís Batalha (2004).

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Anabela – Yes, maybe to show that the only difference between us and them is the colour of the skin, nothing else...

Belmiro – Because it is like this: large communities of Cape Verdeans are here in Braga, and Guimarães and at the University of Minho and I mean, they are... I mean... only the skin tone is different, really. Because, I mean, the habits, the costumes, there are small differences but everything looks the same to us...

Moderator – Many of them were born here...

Belmiro – Yes... but in comparison to the Angolan or Mozambican communities, it is much different.

Moderator – Do you find it that different?

Diana – They are a little bit more different from us... and I believe that, as my colleague said, they were seeking as a Black race, the Cape Verdeans, to be more like us, to show that the colour is only our problem. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

The skin colour shows up as the main divide between "us" and "them" also during the discussions about *Li ké terra*. The fact that the two characters of this film were born in Portugal was highly underlined, but the narrative of the focus group persistently falls into the idea that they are immigrants, due to their skin colour. Expressions of racism towards immigrants (not only of African origin) can be observed. These expressions sometimes stress the cultural differences and on other occasions are substantiated by negative social stereotypes.

Carlos – However, now in the case of Portugal, why does discrimination exist, for example racism, I am not a 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 integration into the Portuguese society.

Carlos – However, one thing doesn't justify the other.

(...)

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 little bit 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. (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

Participants tend to assume that the exploitation of immigrants and racism is widespread in Europe, but that the Portuguese people stands out in their ability to relate to other people. This portrait of the Portuguese people as particularly open to multiculturalism has its roots in a simplification of the Lusotropicalism theory of the sociologist Gilberto Freyre, that was largely spread through cinema, among other means by *Estado Novo* regime (Castelo, 1998; Piçarra, 2015). Also the idea that the Portuguese colonialism was "better than the other colonialisms" was present during the debates. Several authors discussed the general tendency for ingroup favouritism (Tajfel, 1982; van Dijk, 1992). In this case, we observed that the valorisation of the alleged Portuguese characteristics is done on two fronts: on the one hand they differentiate themselves from the Africans because they perceive them as "immature", "sloppy", "lazy", etc., on the other hand they do not see themselves as "intolerant" and "cold" as other Europeans.

Isabel – We are friendly people.

Catarina – Friendly.

Luísa – It also depends on where they come from, because they come from countries dominated by violence and racism, etc. ... They come here often to "escape" from their society.

Sandra – Yes, I think we're welcoming, we are a friendly people and that in general people integrate well here. (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

Christina – Portuguese society somehow... somehow... must be the people who best accept them because we had a great bond with them in the past. And the soldiers who were there, they know deep down that they are people, not animals. So the soldiers are in the background to portray some sort of close connection that they had with the Blacks who lived with them directly. Now here, they are in a way, a little better accepted, when compared to most European countries. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

Discursive strategies of denial and disregard

During the discussions we observed that in the conversations about "race" participants used strategies already revealed by studies in the field of discursive critical analysis (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; van Dijk, 1984, 1993) to avoid being perceived socially as racist. In the scope of this paper there is no room to elaborate an in-depth critical analysis of

this phenomenon which in itself indicates the existence of racism and also its rejection, at least in formal and social terms, and in the context in question. However, it seems important to remark that a number of surveys (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Gomes, 2013) point out that in the context of ingroup conversations, racism can be expressed more explicitly than in the presence of elements external to the group, as would be, in the present case, the presence of the moderator.

Participants often used linguistic modes, rhetorical strategies and technical devices that allow the individuals to articulate the mental pictures and scripts provided by dominant thought. It is important to note that these options can only be considered ideological by repetition, and repetition in the same discursive contexts (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; van Dijk, 1987). It is the use of the same resource that makes it analysable as an expression of a group. The dialogue parts we transcribe are therefore merely exemplary of trends we have noted, but do not aim to be exhaustive.

Strong racial ideas often have a tendency to be expressed in a logic of "yes" and also "no" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Incorporating in the discourse the opposite perspective to what one wants to say allows to express rather controversial ideas in racial terms.

> Marta - I think that sometimes there are certain people who come to Portugal because they think that here they will have more perks and sometimes they come just because of this, because if we look closely there are many people out there... I do not say there are no people who do not come here looking for work and a better life, but there are others who only come to take advantage. A small minority, because I do not believe that a person wants to be always dependent on a person or that ... (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

> Diana: I think it's also the immigrant people themselves... because when they immigrated here, there was a lot of racism ... and of course it helps a lot to keep them in the group... (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

Strategies of disclaimer or denial, followed by a racist affirmation, are largely present in the debates. They can appear as an apparent denial, apparent concession; transfer or contrast and are built on the positive representation of the self and negative representation of the other (van Dijk, 1992). As an example of apparent denial we observed the statement almost always in rather emphatic terms that "I am not racist" flowed by the "but" conjunction to which follows, as a rule, a very strong statement from the racial point of view. As in the previously transcribed comment:

> Carlos – I am everything, but racist! But, let's see, 75% of the robberies in downtown Lisbon are done by whom? They are done by East European immigrants... (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

An example of apparent concession would be the statement previously given by a high school student in a discussion about *Li ké terra* "I do not say there are no people who do not come here looking for work and a better life, but there are others who only

come to take advantage". But also:

> Alberto – There are also many people there who work, but many of them end up living from schemes… (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

There are also examples of disclaiming by transfer or contrast.

> Clara – Usually older people are more [racist]. Those who came from Africa aren't that much so, but those who stayed here in Portugal, those are racist. (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

> Casemiro – (…) I mean, we were very organized … very methodical and they were not … a little to live for living, with no purpose in life. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

Another resource used by participants in the discussions is the diminutive, which allows them to express positions that could be otherwise considered racist without seeming so (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The diminutive also serves to soften the ingroup racist attitudes.

> Teresa – I think that the Portuguese are sometimes a little "badassy" for people who need help to integrate into the community and reject, or because they are "Black", or because … (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

> Casemiro – Total disorganization, I mean … I think it's a bit … they were not, but… what they want to show is that in the eyes of the Whites it was a little bit like that. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

Projection has been considered an effective and quite common instrument for defending ourselves (Pinto, 2014) and it is also an important tool in creating an "us" vs. "them" identity. The most important aspect of this device for our analysis is that the projection helps us to "escape from guilt and responsibility and affix blame elsewhere" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 64). Projection takes on different forms and degrees of refinement. It can appear in a quite sophisticated form as, for example: "small minority, because I do not believe that a person wants to be always dependent on another person, or that…": in this commentary on *Li ké terra* the participant after a potentially problematic statement projects a kind of emotional identification. However, the projection often appears rather crude. In discussions on both films participants used expressions such as that of Paula, a high school student during a discussion about *Li ké terra* "Blacks are often more racists". According to van Dijk (1992) the argumentative strategy of face-keeping disposes of a strong and complex battery of semantic actions and one of those consists specifically in the inversion: to put the focus on *their intolerance*. Associated with projection, appears the blaming of the segregated people for *their* own condition also very explicitly in several comments:

Gabriela – (...) this sometimes also can be... that they do not open themselves to the people here. For example, a foreigner who comes, we may well welcome, but he does not feel welcomed and does not want to get along. (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

Marta – They are closed in their own culture and do not accept...

Nuno – Nor visions of other parts, of other cultures. (Focus group about *Li ké terra*)

Vasco – (...) is associated the confusion, the rebellion to the Blacks, then in Lisbon it is worse still because there are typically Black neighbourhoods ... I think it is a little also the frustration of them towards the society ... it a little the form of them also of... they are revolted in some way is an integration problem. I guess. (Focus group about *Horse Money*)

It is important to underline that we understand racism as a problem of power; therefore, a societal approach is need. By analysing racism as structural discourse, we aimed to understand how the structures of power, domination and inequality inside a society are reproduced through speech. As Stuart Hall noted (1984, p. 7) "in any society we all constantly make use of a whole set of frameworks of interpretation and understanding, often in a very practical unconscious way, and that those things alone enable us to make sense of what is going on around us, what our position is, and what we are likely to do". The rules of ideology, like those of grammar, are created and learned socially, and therefore the rules of how to speak correctly are not questioned within their social context, since they appear there as "natural".

Final remarks

Despite the serious limitations of some traditional academic approaches to the lifestyle of poor Black communities (Murray, 1984) that often tend to blame the victims, even the most severe critics of these approaches (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) recognize that generally the social and cultural isolation of one group leads to differentiation, growth of cohesion and strengthening of group identity in the segregated group.

In the analyzed films, there is a strong sense of group/community identity on the part of the portrayed characters. The strategy of building and affirming the identities of these groups requires the convening of a collective memory that finds in the cinema a way of becoming cultural memory (Assmann, 2008). On the other hand, the focus groups with young people, between 16 and 21 years old, who live in the north of Portugal, without direct contact to the Black communities of the south of the country that the films portray, showed that social stereotypes about the Black people are endorsed by participants, even though they acknowledge the persistence of racial prejudice in Portuguese society.

During the focus group discussions, the weight of representations forged during colonial period was determinant in the dialogue with the images that were being projected.

However, films provoke different approaches. The cinematographic language of *Li ké terra* is accessible and the protagonists are about the same age as the participants in the focus groups, it could therefore be easy for the participants to identify with them, although several participants seem to endorse stereotypes related to the perceived inertia or lack of concern by the characters.

The first reaction of the participants to *Horse Money* is often the confession that they do not understand it – due to its duration, its narrative complexity, the distance that students have from the historical and cinematographic references that the film summons – but once they get the emotional key to enter the film, they tend to give up blaming the characters for the exploitative situation to which they are subjected and they never put themselves in a position where "this could not happen to me". This happens, we believe, for specific cinematographic reasons, for example, the angle – *contre-plongée* – often chosen to film Ventura and Vitalina, which gives them a noble, respectable, fascinating character. Also the poetic tone of the dialogues, the music, and the silence that the film requires leads to a reading of the characters as archetypes more than as "the others" who live in the degraded neighbourhoods.

The way in which the "Portuguese", "the bosses" are clearly pointed out, in *Horse Money* is different from the discourse used by *Li ké terra* that refers to an exclusion perpetrated by the system, without ever directly addressing the issue of institutional racism. In the first case a situation is imposed in which clearly some have been "exploited", "deceived", the second allows political justifications for segregation. This different political stance leads, we believe, to a difference in the way participants read "race" in the two films.

Converging with other studies (Cabecinhas, 2007; Macedo, 2017; Vala & Pereira, 2012), the analysis of focus group discussions reveals the persistence of negative stereotypes concerning African immigrants and their descendants, indicating that the colonial thought still weights on the present-day imaginary and influences the social identifications of young people. In line with other studies conducted in other European countries (Howard, 2009, 2011), our findings show that the participants reproduce the communicative codes of hegemonic ideology about race; they use the communicative frameworks that allow them to express racism without appearing socially as racists.

The Portuguese students who participated in the focus groups are very open to the discussion about the colonial past, and its consequences in the present, but they are not familiarised with this period. Only recently the issue of racism in the Portuguese society started to be discussed in the public sphere. Cinema can play a central role in challenging hegemonic representations and promote social change. Despite of the "remarkable inertia" (Wagner, Holtz & Kashima, p. 376) of cultural meaning systems, social stereotypes are not static; their change depends on the political interest that is the basis of the social dynamics.

Funding

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