

## Forming recognition: exploring bonds with others at school\*

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### Abstract

This article is inserted in an investigation project centered on the problem of hospitality in the way students act in school grounds, viewed through inhospitable and hospitable experiences these actors lived throughout school sociabilities. In the framework of this problem, we intend to observe, in particular, how students who qualify as foreign connect to the school, and, through these bonds, the way they relate to others, in the figure of their peers, within a context of a transformation in school morphology in the last few decades stemming from the rise in the number of foreign students enrolled in the cycles of mandatory schooling in Portugal. Through the theoretical framework commonly designated pragmatic sociology, we intend to analyze how students are engaged in different and compounded regimes of action that seek to make the common in the plural in their respective teaching establishments. For that purpose, we have articulated data from semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations conducted in two public schools within the Portuguese Secondary Education system, with a common trait of hosting large contingents of students originating from contexts of immigration and of different nationalities. Shining a sociological light on several typified spaces that make up the school territory, it is in the exteriorizations by these foreign students when inquired regarding pressing events and about the way in which they inhabit the school that we address and point out the problem of recognition—namely the forming of the recognition of students in their status as foreign and the several experiences in which this recognition is or is not experienced.

### Keywords

Foreign – school sociabilities – Fair School and human rights – Regimes of action

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## What makes the school a school?

This question appears to make no sense. Who would not dare to easily answer this question?

Today, with a massification of schooling at unequal speeds, not having had any school experience is not as common as it once was. We prudently do not generalize the appropriation of this experience, neither in Portugal much less elsewhere.

However, the massification of schooling in the country has caused not only the more prolonged permanence of younger generations that would have, in other circumstances, already abandoned school, but also the increase in the enrolment of students originating from migrant families (SEABRA *et al.* 2011; SEABRA, 2010; MACHADO; MATIAS; LEAL, 2005)<sup>3</sup>. Despite Portugal not being marked, in historical terms, by continuous immigration routes or by cyclical migration; having been, on the contrary a country historically marked by periodical emigration, it has currently been welcoming a growing number of families seeking to establish themselves to live here (PEIXOTO, 2007).

Despite the verification of morphological transformations of the student body in Basic and Secondary School, using the precautionary principle, we think that it is not in vain to have more or less sure ideas about what school is, or about what one can do in school. Even if the experience has not been first hand, or if it has taken place in short periods of their life trajectories, through mediation or personally, the individuals are almost all capable of issuing opinions on this institution.

It has not always been so. The history of schooling shows well how late its implementation was in many countries in different regions. The same has been reported for the case of Portugal (VIEIRA, 2003; ALMEIDA; VIEIRA, 2000; RAMOS, 1988).

The slowness in this endeavor is due to several reasons. One is related to the construction of a school network, a project that was slow to complete, and which has always been below the desired level (RODRIGUES *et al.*, 2015).

But the delay in schooling is also justified by people's lack of will to seek other types of knowledge in schools. They were not prepared for acquiring school knowledge. In other words, schooling made no sense (CANDEIAS, 2001).

Finally, the third reason was the difficult task of managing the fear that this desire, instead of pacifying relations between individuals, would worsen the conflict and violence by those who, after being schooled, seek other opportunities in the sense of realizing other

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**3-** To give an example of the number of foreign students enrolled in Secondary School establishments in Portugal, we turn to the official statistics regarding the 2017/18 school year (DGEEC, 2019). This school year was chosen because it refers to the school year in which this exploratory research was launched and carried out, between September 2017 and July 2018. According to the official data, 17,417 students of approximately 130 nationalities were enrolled in this teaching cycle, be it in public or private education. The morphological composition of the students varies greatly according to nationality. Special highlight is given to students of Brazilian nationality—5,419—followed by Cape Verdean students—1,881—Angolan students—1,807—and the students of families from Guinea—1,121—from São Tomé and Príncipe—1,056—and, lastly, 821 Ukrainian students. We do not discount the contingents of students of Chinese nationality, nor the numerical significance of students from countries part of the European Union, such as Romanians, French, Spanish, Germans, Italians, and Bulgarians. The same applies for the students from English families—241—with a high concentration in the region of the Algarve, to the south of the country. A significant part of this contingent frequents schools in the metropolitan area of Lisbon and of Porto. For a narrower analysis of the composition of these students, see <https://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/97/>

expectations. In this case, the surprise was admitting the possibility that schooling could enable social, professional, and/or territorial mobility (RESENDE, 2003; MÓNICA, 1978).

Indeed these reasons are not enough to explain the fundamentals of the lateness of its extension. This desideratum does not matter here. Its importance resides in the worsening of the delay in constructing the school equipment necessary to learning experiences, but also in the extension of these learning experiences to the different cycles dedicated to transferring the disciplinary knowledge that schooling is committed in the framework of its institutional program (RODRIGUES *et al.*, 2015).

Whatever the nature of the history of Portuguese schooling, our purpose has been to make analytical contributions that allow for the knowledge regarding school. Viewing school from a rigorous approach has demanded from us the use of different lenses (RESENDE; GOUVEIA; BEIRANTE, 2020; RESENDE; BEIRANTE, 2014; DIONÍSIO, 2018; RESENDE; DIONÍSIO, 2016; CAETANO, 2018; 2016).

And its diverse use has allowed us to decipher its meanderings with mischief supported by several entries. Only thus has it been possible to ascertain, in the last 15 years, the contributions of teachers and students about what makes the school a school (RESENDE, 2010; RESENDE; GOUVEIA, 2013).

This one we propose is another path, that is, another attempt at becoming familiarized with the Portuguese school from a unique example. The intention now is to interpret how the students of foreign nationalities make sense of what makes the school into a school at a teaching establishment located in the capital of the country. That is, we intend to discover in some detail what the students enrolled there are capable of doing so that their school experiences identify them with the school.

We then address what makes them, in those contexts, be themselves at school. This option implies observing how students who qualify as foreign connect to the school through others<sup>4</sup>.

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**4-** And it is upon the ways in which some interviewed teenagers attempted that capacity of autonomy that our sociological perspective falls to interpret the data gathered by eight young Sociology students. The field work spanned from September 2017 to July 2018, in two secondary schools: one in the capital of the country and with students from several nationalities; another one located in the county of Oeiras, an administrative territory adjacent to the first, showed a smaller number of students registered as being of foreign nationality. This exploratory study, titled *Entre a Escola e o Bairro: estranheza, estranhamento e hospitalidade [Between the school and the neighborhood: strangeness, estrangement, and hospitality]* included the application of several observation instruments throughout approximately 10 uninterrupted months. The young Sociology students watched classes of different subjects, and for each class they watched, they wrote a report on the way the students interacted with one another mediated by the teacher, or through their own initiative and for any purposes. At other moments, they observed the students at the school's cafeteria, where the school meals took place; other spaces where notes were taken about how teenagers interacted with one another in several activities were the library and the recess spaces, with special focus on the spaces next to the game rooms and to the entrances to both schools. Apart from these records, each of the eight Sociology students involved in the project interviewed 4 students of foreign nationality enrolled in each of the schools. In total, 32 in-depth interviews were conducted. The same number of girls and boys were interviewed in the age group of teenagers entering young adulthood, from 15/16 to 17/18. And finally a questionnaire by scenario was composed and applied in both schools in March and April. All of the students enrolled in the 12th year of schooling—the final year of Secondary Schooling in Portugal—were questioned. The school in Oeiras county hosts students from the last cycle of Basic Education—Primary School— and Secondary Education—High School. It is a school with a modern architecture, with ample recess spaces interspersed by pavilions (3) with classrooms, labs, and space for physical education, as well as a central pavilion with the secretariat, the headmaster's office, and rooms for meetings of the school governance bodies, the teachers' lounge, the cafeteria, the library, with a large room dedicated to public events. The school situated in the county of Lisbon was built in the late 1960s, but was remodeled in 2007/09, and it caters exclusively to Secondary School students. The classrooms, the laboratories, the library, the occupational psychology office, several offices, the teachers' lounge, and the cafeteria are spread through pavilions, with long corridors joining them, some on the ground floor and others on an upper level. The teachers' lounge is near the cafeteria, the school's headmaster's office, the school secretariat,

It is through these connections that it is possible to unveil the ways in which they relate to the other colleagues at the school. We accompanied the arts of making the common in the plural (BOLTANSKI; THÉVENOT, 2006; THÉVENOT, 2006; THÉVENOT, 2015; RESENDE; MARTINS, 2015) at each of the moments when they were captured by the records of one of the Sociology students who dove deep into the school headquartered in Lisbon<sup>5</sup>.

From extracts from her logbook, we have taken some excerpts considered important to the analysis of the compositions of *recognition*, in school, of students in their character as foreigners (SIMMEL, 1999; 2004; STAVO-DEBAUGE, 2017). We will later return to the same trip, but now assisted by information gathered from interviews conducted by that same researcher.

We seek the crucial point of our analysis in the acts of recognition on which the observed students focus (SETTON; MERTUCELLI, 2015). To mitigate dangerous lapses that can lead to an equation of the analysis with exceedingly romanticized interpretations, care was taken precisely in attempting to bring to the reflections all that the students were able to express regarding their school experiences.

From the tests revealed by them in their implications with the school environment and ambiance, we highlight their realizations with themselves through others, which guides us towards a refinement of what we intend to denominate the otherness of the other (RICOEUR, 1990, 1995, 2004). The other here does not appear as the unknown and generalized self (MEAD, 2006), in a certain sense decontextualized or outside a given concrete environment.

On the other hand, the purpose is not to implicate the other in the comparison with oneself. We attempted to go further as much as we could. We progressively refine the image of the other based on the self as the other (*soi même comme un autre*) with whom one relates during one's permanence in school and outside it (RICOEUR, 1990, 2004).

It is clear that we do not void the relationship of the self as the other of all experiences of affect, that is, the acts of affecting the other and being affected by the other (BREVIGLIERI, 2016)<sup>6</sup>. But we do not neglect observing if the self while being the

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and offices for meetings of the bodies of the teaching establishment. Near the schools are cafés and restaurants where students meet either during recess or between the morning and afternoon activities. These spaces are important territories for school sociability.

**5-** Anastasya Kasprova, at the time a second-year undergraduate Sociology student at the School of Social Sciences was one of the young people who made up the research team. It was a team made up of six students from the same class. One of the authors of this text taught this magnificent group of young people. Anastasya worked at the school headquartered in Lisbon with Rita Almeida and João Pedro Timóteo. Margarida Lima, André Caixinha, and Marta Cunha worked at the school in Oeiras county. Under the scientific and methodological tutoring of Professor José Manuel Resende and during a sabbatical year (2017/18), these young students conducted an intense *in loco* research training. Only the great quality of the data collected by Anastasya enabled the writing of this text. In this field work, we also counted on the active participation of Professor Gerson Tavares, who, at the time, was developing a research project on school retention under the tutoring of Professor José Manuel Resende. Inserted into the CICS.NOVA research center, Professor Gerson Tavares, of the State University of Northern Rio de Janeiro [Universidade Estadual Norte Fluminense Darcy Ribeiro] was with us until July 2018.

**6-** In the relations of affect taking place between ones and others at school, the proposition of this article is observing how the others—students, colleagues, or friends of Portuguese nationality—are identified by being notified as foreign, but who, being enrolled as students, present themselves in this territory with equal statutory equivalence, regulated by the statute of the student body. However, and following the warnings of Breviglieri (2016), in many occurrences faced by the being from outside who captures the being from inside—the outlook of the foreign regarding the native—the capacitive anthropology that connects to the struggle for its recognition in school must be seen with caution. Their identification attributed by the other natives with whom they establish bonds throughout the time they spend at school becomes the result of plural and different experiences, in which the capacity of oneself in the face of an other is not always the result of expected reciprocities, and, thus, the recognition

other also appeared in that context with a voice, and not only subjected to the will of the voices of others.

On the other hand, we also do not neglect the other side of the problem formed by a capacitive anthropology that, in and through schooling, prepares the self as the other to earn the autonomy of oneself in the face of another (BREVIGLIERI, 2007a). If the preparation for having a voice is a sign of that maturity that one earns in adolescence, and which is one of the manifestations of the singularized autonomy in the self as the other, it is not possible to discard reversed experienced, that is, inversed (BREVIGLIERI, 2016).

Hence the care in pointing out minute dynamics (PIETTE, 1996), be it through the occasional manifestation of frailties or vulnerabilities of the self as the other, be it to account for elements that, without these notes, would pass unnoticed. Giving these aspects visibility enriches precisely the description of what the arts of making ordinary in its plurality in school, but equally not neglecting to point out in this exposition the ways of weaving this ordinary, which is made out of hesitations, of fears, of apprehensions, and even questions that lead the self as the other to come and go among multiple references.

It is this that is important to mention when the bonds of the student as a foreigner are attempted with others at school, on several occasions and circumstances. What are the most comfortable connections observed at this school in which their dignity is not put into question before others? And what are the reversals in which the voice of the students qualified as foreigners manifest their strangeness, and through it expose their discomforts, their embarrassments?

In fact, the habitability of school does not neglect to contain these compositions, at time so imbricated precisely due to their complexity. Thus it must be taken into consideration, from the analytical point of view, this coming and going between the comfort and consolation of being at school, and simultaneously of showing oneself at school based on moments of disenchantment, of dejection, that is, situations that experiment fatigue in the face of the requests and tests to which they are subjected, be it in the face of colleagues, be it in the face of adults.

### **The musical chairs: the cafeteria as a place for conviviality and learning of oneself as the other of equal worth**

It is based on the manners these inquired students described the way they inhabit the school that we will approach the problem of recognition, not only in its manifestation as a struggle for their existence as beings with rights (HONNETH, 2011), but also from the perspective of an economics of mutualism through the generosity in giving and receiving without putting reciprocity into question (RAYOU, 1998; RICOEUR, 2004). The cunning eye is drawn to the way in which the acts of inhabiting are composed of the recognition

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of oneself as a foreigner in the face of the other, a native, goes through painful experiences, full of suffering, and, in this sense, less pleasurable. The densification of these experiences is not automatic, it takes time and requires an economics of mutualism (RICOEUR, 2004) between some and others that is explored almost always in a sinuous manner. Having an assurance that one's voice is answered by another is done by attempts based on cunning gestures, with delicate stratagems. It is in this sense that the commitments aligned in reciprocity slowly sediment themselves, and almost always through *philia* (RAYOU, 1998).

in the perspective of reciprocity, but also by moments in which the donor receives nothing in return other than the recognition of the generosity of the act of one who gives oneself to oneself due to a manifest dedication.

Following these paths, we focus first on the identification of gathering places for reflection. Thus, from the accounts left by the young researcher, one notices that the school cafeteria is a place of habitual and excellent gatherings at several moments in the day-to-day routine of the teaching establishment.

In fact, from the intense list of recorded instants, one can see the effort in tracing the way the students move in a constant flow of entering, remaining, and leaving a space with a given configuration. From the described inventory, we perceive that the cafeteria is a space of permanent turnover.

Conviviality is created based on these moments in which they are there together. The quasi-momentary nature of their movement from table to table, with several gatherings, hinders the identification of those who enter, of those who remain, and of those who leave there for other places.

The impossibility of identification of who is whom by an external eye on occasions such as those forces the ethnographer's apprentice to employ other equipment, in this case, pieces of clothing to make some sense of those movements. They are attempts at composition that are not easy to maintain the rigor of the observation, given that the commotion at the territory in the school gains the character of its agitated nature, when not sizzling.

Let us take this example of recording one such occasion:

Meanwhile, the group of teenagers in blue sweaters (Brazilians) enters the cafeteria again. At this moment, the teacher who has been accompanying them and showing them the cafeteria suggests they stop. She then turns to the students sitting at the tables, asking loudly "Who here is from Brazil?" At this point, the student sitting at the table next to the foreign student who was alone, himself accompanied by a colleague of foreign origin and a colleague with a red sweater, said "I am." The teacher called the student and asked him to talk to the Brazilian teenagers. In parallel, the talk between the student and the teacher was drowned out by the music that the students sitting at the table to our right were playing, next to the lockers.

When the teacher enters the cafeteria with a group of foreign students visiting the school, she invites a student of the school from the same nationality of those who have just arrived to join this group. Who here is from Brazil?

In the face of the noise, and in the difficult task of identifying the students present there by name, she uses their nationality for that search. Reciprocal exchanges are facilitated if someone is immediately recognized as a person who can facilitate intercommunication between those who remain and those who have just arrived but are visiting (SIMMEL, 1999, 2004). Thus, in that circumstance, the customary use of that convention makes perfect sense (WEBER, 1993; BOLTANSKI; THÉVENOT, 2006). And from it arises the identification through the record of the nation to which one is connected.

It is through this form of qualification that conversation is carried out, despite the impossibility of following the contents of those talks. They are speakers of a same language, but with different accents, and with the use of some words that do not carry the same meanings into one or another linguistic context. Immediate empathy is brought on by the presence of speeches with common traits.

This time, it was electronic music. These students laughed loudly while they used their cellphones. However, it was possible to hear the teacher ask the Brazilian student “How many years have you been here?” Soon, the teacher thanked the student and guided the group of teenagers in blue sweaters outside the cafeteria.

This scene is concluded by hearing the question the teacher makes to the student of the school who had identified as being of the same nationality as the teenagers who had gone to the school as visitors. Nothing else could be heard of the conversations they had. The music coming from the cellphones was loud, and they took turns between the genres of hip-hop and electronic<sup>7</sup>.

However, [the observer continues to tell us] three more students enter the cafeteria, and arrange chairs. While two of them sit to our left side, their backs turned to the lockers, one of the students drags his chair to the table where sat the Brazilian student, another student of foreign origin, and a female student who appeared to be Portuguese, wearing a red sweater. Looking at their colleague, the other two students hurried toward that table as well. Thus, the table became occupied by a female Portuguese student, two students of foreign origin and three students who also appeared to be Portuguese.

The movements continued with the dragging of chairs to make up the groups and their arrangements with the mediation of the cellphones in the hands of the students moving from table to table. It all was recorded by the detached participant as if it were a dance choreography performed under her watchful eye.

Her watchful eye perceives that, after the Brazilian teenagers leave, a foreign student who had been at the back of the cafeteria is included into the conversation with colleagues who had been there participating on a rehearsal of theater and singing. This act had begun before the entrance of the Brazilian teenagers.

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**7-** As referred by Rayou (1998), the pieces of sound equipment heard in the cafeteria are technological devices that facilitate multiple arrangements that, on the one hand, enable the creation of affinities that can transform, in time, into elective affection of an amicable character, but that, on the other, make it possible to shift regimes of engagement of familiar action and of proximity to the regimes of the plan (THÉVENOT, 2006). Out of these two regimes of engagement of action mentioned here, the former is experienced through the bonds of *philia* (RAYOU, 1998; RESENDE, 2010). The latter are strengthened by schoolwork, individually or in groups, conducted through portable computers—laptops. Through the former, teenagers rehearse political ways of the ordinary in school and outside it, using humor, jokes of a sarcastic nature, etc. These rehearsals are often tests, based on which the teenaged beings and those entering into young adulthood learn in school, and in the territories surrounding it, ways and means of acting with maturity gains, in which the discussions, the arguments cross into an argumentative rhetoric whose fundamentals are adjusted to what is expected of the debates held in the public arenas (CEFAÍ, 2017). Indeed there is a playful side to these experiences, asides that, among them, acquire other meanings less committed to public matters. But even at those moments it is not insignificant to state that there may also be political gains, for instance, when sexist jokes are opportunities for discussions on homophobia or gender inequality (RESENDE, 2010; RESENDE; GOUVEIA, 2013; RESENDE; DIONÍSIO, 2016).

As she narrates in her journal, in that same spot, a theater rehearsal had taken place a little while before, conducted by students of the class on theater and singing.

The group was made up of students of foreign origin and Portuguese students, who sang and acted. The public had been watching from the cafeteria tables and, in a larger number, from the cafeteria ramp. During the performance, it was observed that the topic was religion, and words such as “god” and “persecution” were heard. The students were distributed in a circle, and left the circle one at a time, projecting themselves in several directions. At the end of the performance, the students progressively returned to their initial places. They sang a song in which there was a repetition of “hey lord.” When they concluded, a teacher announced that what had transpired had been a rehearsal of theater and singing, and that the play would take place on the 17th, during one of the recess periods<sup>8</sup>.

This site appears to be a mandatory space of passage for most of this establishment’s student body. Transit was constant, increasing at the times of breaks between classes and especially during lunchtimes. Thus it was predictable to intercept several conversations between its users. On one of the days, the observer perceived the following occurrence.

At one of the tables arranged in the cafeteria,

[...] six female students sat symmetrically, with three foreign students sitting at one side of the table and, across from them, three other students, apparently Portuguese. However, the student of foreign origin who had been there previously was slightly away from the table, sitting in one of the corners, with her back against the lockers. This student continued to use her cellphone, with earphones in her ears and legs crossed. These students are having lunch, eating their baguettes and drinking their sodas. The students discussed some controversy, and some of them seemed indignant. One of the students, apparently Portuguese, says “I didn’t know they said these words,” adding that “I didn’t know they existed, that they still exist.” The same student also comments that “it’s that I’m not yellow or black, I’m not yellow.” The student who was leaning against the lockers said “I’m darker,” seemingly comparing her skin ton with another colleague, regarding something controversial that had happened to one of the students. The students seemed to discuss matters of ethnicity, or national origin, because they discussed skin color, making reference to some occurrence in which, it seems, someone had used the term “black” pejoratively. It is noticeable that, out of the students present, the one who seemed most critical and who expressed herself more emphatically about the subject was a student who seemed to be Portuguese, without any accent. The student seemed to be engaged in the cause of her colleagues, being protective, while simultaneously reproaching the people who “said those names.” The students seemed indignant, and, at a certain point, moved closer to one another (except for the student sitting in the corner), forming a sort of circle and sharing some secret between them. During the interaction between these students, it was observed

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**8-** Here there is an example in which the arts of making the regular are experimented at a place more destined for coexistence than for watching a theater rehearsal. In reducing the commotion at the cafeteria, this space allows the students to give attention, with the least amount of disturbance possible, to the theater and singing rehearsal taking place there. The teacher uses the cafeteria as a stage for this exhibition, exposing the actors of the spectacle in confrontation with an audience that has not received previous warning that such an occurrence was to take place during the moments of recess between classes. And this unlikely audience rose up to the expectations, in which entering and exiting the cafeteria were no obstacle to the conduction of the rehearsal, creating a disturbing and discomforting uneasiness for those rehearsing the play.

that the Portuguese students were very interactive with the foreign students, laughing with them and moving closer to exchange secrets.

Playfulness has been the mark of the commotion that has been permanently discovered in that space through the hand of whomever writes the journal. With different scenarios, the movements will not rest for a minute.

It is a coming and going to purchase a bite to eat, to chat, to hear jokes and jests, but also to watch more prolonged interactive dynamics as it is expressed in the previous excerpt. And it coincided that the young researcher came to know that an unacceptable occurrence had taken place in the school, but, during those communicational exchanges, it was not explicitly revealed.

She realized it had been a problem that made them indignant, and that it had to do with behaviors of a racist character. Such a conclusion resulted from the fact that someone at the school had used the word “black” pejoratively during an occurrence not described in the dialogues held at that moment. With the problem revealed, the debate arises with collections of arguments stemming from the color of the skins of each of the students who join that cross talk.

The incomprehension is generalized because it seems incredible to them that today there are still phenomena such as the one that thoroughly revolts them. Within this conversation, we highlight that one of the colleagues that, being Portuguese, is willing to perform a regime of engagement of a more protective character (BOLTANSKI; THÉVENOT, 2006; THÉVENOT, 2006), reproaching such unacceptable behaviors<sup>9</sup>.

And they use the choreography of the circle and of secrets (SIMMEL, 2004) as a manifestation of the assurance of mutual defense in the face of unjust turbulences stemming from these unjustified manners of action, because they put into question the dignity of the human person of each of them (RICOEUR, 2004; BREVIGLIERI, 2016; SCHILLING, 2013). The itinerary of donation had taken place there.

And that donation has moral reasons (JOAS, 2015). And to this probable carapace that surrounds them, represented by the metaphor of a curve that closes on itself, it also gives new strength to the normative guidelines of political character that this enabling action seems to reveal on the registered occasion.

The way this fact is narrated, one should not disregard the possibility that these students are engaged by firm bonds—in a regime of engagement of proximity. When discussing a delicate subject, which, in other circumstances, has proved to be a matter of difficult and prolonged debate in the Portuguese society, the teenagers, in exhibiting this ease in discussing the subject expose themselves to one another.

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**9-** We note the complicity that the act of protection engages a—native—student with the others, who are foreigners. The inference denoting the idea of protecting someone who expresses, through their indignation, the hurt identity (POLLAK, 1993) of one disturbed by the racist act, despite being a manifestation of a regime of engagement of proximity (THÉVENOT, 2006) between ones and others, still shifts to another regime of engagement of action on the matters of justice with a public nature (BOLTANSKI; THÉVENOT, 2006). Now, in school sociabilities, the arts of making the common in the plural embrace experiences that touch intimacy—the colleague who felt discriminated against—but that equally allow for a switch to the public aspect, in which the racist act is judged as an unjust act, disrespecting the common humanity to which all have a right. Not recognizing others as themselves (RICOEUR, 1990), those who are singled out as different for the color of their skin feel diminished, and their capacity to act autonomously can be suspended or prevented (ELIASOPH, 2010) so as not to create a commotion.

These bonds of reciprocity present a moral nature. They demonstrate that they are connected by bonds that provide them with the assurance of trust. And this is how maturity is built in adolescence, with the assumption that the political, in the scope of public matters, begins to be one of the crucial tests to be presented in public (BREVIGLIERI, 2007a).

The voice is not yet completely audible when spoken out loud. But its preparation is, according to the report, a possible promise that is inferred from that learning.

Argumentation begins due to it being of a superficial nature, with a fragile and unrefined coating. But the notion that the consequences of conversations of a racial nature, whether jokingly or seriously, lead to the disqualification of the being already emerges from this experience.

The incredulous discovery of the persistence of this manner of qualifying others creates in indignation the idea of a non-equivalence between humanities that equip themselves as distinct. Using the color of the black skin pejoratively is reducing the humanity of those born with it. And this is unacceptable and intolerable (BREVIGLIERI, 2009).

By the proof given by the Portuguese colleague, of wanting to ensure a political qualification to the other foreign colleagues, the position of the body also enabled a certain relaxation. They could count on her sympathetic voice.

The circular disposition appears to represent the metaphor of the assurance and mutual trust in preserving the humanity they transport through each of their bodies. Shielded by the circular line, closed within the circle, they felt that the following moment was that of laughter and jokes.

The observed students were not alone in that fight. The possible exclusion due to what had taken place, and which had weakened them, had already passed.

Even in the eventuality that what had happened had not involved them directly, there is the recognition that one day it might be them in that situation. Hence the apprehension, the fear that could be seen there. But simultaneously they realized they can have the right to be indignant. And that assured them the realization of themselves as others of equal dignity. And this learning allows for the creation of the experience of a regime of engagement about the matters of fairness (BOLTANSKI; THÉVENOT, 2006; RICOEUR, 2004; 1995).

The peace and comfort in inhabiting the school are preserved. Hence the emotions of the body's relaxation (BREVIGLIERI, 2012).

### **Closing to reopen again: it's not *all roses* and the successful affinities in school sociabilities**

As mentioned before, the school territories in Portugal have been inhabited, in the last few decades, by children, teenagers, and young adults from different ethnic and national contexts. Perhaps their political visibility has increased in the transition of the 20th century to the 21st century. The different immigration cycles have been proof of this numerical growth, with higher rates in the morphologies of teaching establishments in the country's two large metropolitan areas: Lisbon and Porto<sup>10</sup> (PIRES, 2003).

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**10-** The integration of the foreign student into the Portuguese teaching system mirrors the patterns of distribution and residence of the foreign population living in Portugal. Thus we perceive the affluence of the foreign students enrolled in Basic and Secondary Education in the region of

The coastal location of these metropolises facilitates the settlement of the families that, coming from outside the country, intend to, in Portugal, re-establish their family life with assurances of security and well-being. Those are territories where it is easier to find work, be it for skilled workforces, be it for less qualified labor. Its attraction is no news, given that, in the 50s, it had the same prevalence during the internal migrations, north to south of the country (MACHADO, 1994, 1997).

This trend notwithstanding, this does not mean that there are no immigrant families settled in other regions. University hubs, tourist activities, and the activities of the agricultural sector today provide a certain drive for a smaller concentration of these family aggregates in the large metropolitan areas (RODRIGUES *et al.*, 2013; FONSECA, 2008; MACHADO, 2003).

That is why forming recognition in the Portuguese teaching establishments also involves giving visibility to these experiences now brought to the fore by voices and bodies of students of other nationalities. These students are confronted with the novelty of enrolling in a yet-unknown or not well-known school.

When arriving at the beginning of each school year, they are faced with other human landscapes, architectural landscapes, calendar landscapes, landscapes of uses of times and spaces within the school and outside it, of the school offers, of the degrees of demands regarding acquisition of knowledge, all of this measured by comparisons based on previous experiences, namely the experiences in the countries of origin. Now, facing the new is not easy because it requires several compromises, be it with the new class and schoolmates, be it with the teachers, be it still with other professionals working in different sectors there.

The framework brought on by the novelty of those about to enter for the first time encompasses the care in making the connections that the new being must produce under the command of caution. As they do not yet know the ground on which they step, they recognize that the bodily exercises, conceived in their entirety, must be performed in comings and goings, with hesitations, with fears, and, on some occasions, with frights.

Assuming this care means exercising the principle of restraint in the contact they begin to make with the others that, for themselves, are still beings to get to know. In this sense, they do not fail to perform different appreciations regarding the environment where they attempt the consummation of their connections with one another.

These connections are made step by step, with additional precautions because they intend to prevent, at any cost, that others depreciate or disregard their person in the humanity they carry within themselves. Being attentive to the possible bothersome activities will make them present with tepidness and manifesting perplexities and indecisions.

They expose themselves slowly. They do not reveal everything at once. They safeguard themselves until they verify if it is possible to establish bonds of reciprocity. The case of the indignation over the experience of racial discrimination is an example of that. The circle is the image of a protected, confidential space, of complicity and relaxation, which, if, on the one hand, closes on itself, on the other, the comfort weaved by the

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Lisbon (NUT II), with 56.7% of foreign students, and the Northern region with 13.3% (OLIVEIRA; GOMES, 2019).

habitat of proximity opens other possibilities of preparing for a future public exposition using criticism to reproach the consequences of racist actions.

They realize, due to their initial experiences, that the trust in themselves before others with whom they maintain circumstantial relations, with a certain discretion, is not yet assured. They evaluate by feeling.

They act indecisively. They omit capacities or else suspend them until other future opportunities or possibilities. With the future still being so uncertain, they feel intimidated. In the face of unexpected situations, they do not even know what to do or what is conventional to do. They reveal their vulnerabilities.

Exactly. And, sometimes, I think [HESITATION] if I, like, there's a clique, I'm [HESITATION] I think it's not really shame, but fear of [THOUGHTFUL] intervening and coming up out of nowhere. So I'm a little apprehensive.

The fears manifested by this Brazilian student, just arriving at the school, reveal the frailties she assumes because she has not yet found somewhere to drop anchor. She fears to expose herself because she came without warning. She is not yet someone in the clique.

In the middle of nothing, there are gestures of mutualism. "Yeah, yeah," she continues to answer regarding the ways she has experienced being welcomed at school.

I think they come. For example, I [REFORMULATES] one day I was there keeping to myself. Then, the two girls there, they called me. "No, don't be scared, we can come and hang out, stay with us."

And the interview continues regarding the welcoming after arriving at the school. And she realizes that the recognition of herself as the other is formed gradually, with doubts, hesitations, but simultaneously with the assurance that, in time, comes that anchor for which she yearns so much to feel safe.

Yeah, yeah. I think I got a very warm welcome. Because, I even joke about it [LAUGHS], I say, in Brazil there's none of this [HESITATION]. For instance, if a new student arrives in class, it's after a while that they end up [HESITATION]. Here, I thought they already, like, came to talk to me, you know. Even if there are ones or others who keep more to themselves, they haven't talked to me yet, I think it's because it's a new element, something new that's in the class. So, it really does take a while to [HESITATION].

The intrusion into the class is a sequence of times for them to open themselves to get to know one another. The bonds are still tenuous, first they approach some, but there are others who are still indifferent to their presence. They keep to themselves, that is, the pronoun "she" has not yet become one of "them." She is still not one among them. But she understands the delay precisely because she is new to the class. It is in this sense that the arts of making the common in the plural engage all of these learnings. The welcoming is promised by the group of peers. It is not a quick act. It is formed in time. And we begin with the proximal experience for the inclusion into the class and later into the school.

And she continues to speak of herself in her relation to others.

Yeah, apprehensive, more about the subjects, which have been really hard for me. And [THOUGHTFUL] in the context of friendships, you know? Whether I'm being a nuisance or not. And I'm a bit paranoid [LAUGHS]. I see a person [REFORMULATES] talking and they're looking at me, I already think they're talking about me. So I'm [HESITATION; APPREHENSIVE] like that.

The fear of being evaluated is also a constant in the fears of those who come to the unknown. They do not know how they are seen as human persons, and, thus, presume suspicion. They are not yet on firm ground.

Another example reinforces the recognition of the frailties of those who arrive at a school that is not yet their school. Their school is far away in their birth country.

An Angolan student is adapting to the school because he has only recently arrived at the establishment. During the interview, he is urged to talk about how his colleagues approached him when he arrived on the first day of school.

The classes had begun two weeks before.

And, when I arrived, I looked at the class and saw. Whoa, it was very weird. Lots of different people. And they looked at me, like laughing, etc., because they liked it. They'd practically never had a black person in class, and so on. And my *stora*<sup>11</sup> asked me to introduce myself, she was the head of my class. I stood there and couldn't even look at them. I was looking at the floor. I said my name, my age. And when I said my age, they were also very surprised, because at the time I was 15, and they said "You've got the body of a 15-year-old, you already look 17, 16," or something like that.

Revisiting the first approach leads him to evaluate his singularity in the class. For the first time, they had a black student in the class, in his words. Notwithstanding this identification he assumed the others made, they appreciated his coming because they laughed at his presentation, even if he was staring at the floor. These are the notes of the first impressions he had of the others in the class, especially the native colleagues.

Faced with the surprise of having to introduce himself to the class, he did not have the courage to look his colleagues in the face. He hid his face, lowering it to the ground. Thus he felt safer, safeguarded. And the surprise demonstrated regarding his biological age was another component that did not fade from his memory. He seemed older to the others. A fuller-figured body gives him, in the eyes of the others, a young adult profile, when he is still a teenager.

He was not alone in school. Two cousins had also enrolled in the same teaching establishment. This prevented him from feeling the loneliness resulting from being new in school, as it happened to his colleague of Brazilian nationality.

[Later on] I met another Angolan. He started talking to me, and, due to the seating, I already sat with another colleague, who was part of the seating plan. I started talking to him. From him, I started talking to the others. And, in the first physical education class, we played soccer. And I,

**11-** It is the diminutive of *senhora doutora* [Mrs. Dr.]. In the language of the student body, the teacher is called *stora*.

since I'm good at soccer, they liked seeing me play, etc. And that was when they started "This dude is cool," something like that.

If the experimentation of a collective game was a push towards a successful inclusion, it was his way of being that formed the ties that followed in class and outside it. He states "I didn't make friendships because of soccer. But because of the way I am." And he gives motives for that assessment.

I think they like the way I am. I'm a little fun. And I'm also not ashamed to talk to people. I'm not that shy. So, and I think people aren't that shy and talk to me too. They're very good, the friends too. I think now there's no pretending.

Being cheerful helped him consolidate his relations with the others. And he confirmed that he was well-received because there are affinities regarding his fearless, uninhibited side. He was stimulated, and he maintains the same tone. He continues:

I like to always walk with a friend. And, if I had none, I would basically walk alone. I'd always be somewhere listening to music or something like that [...] I've seen that people like that don't have many relationships. And it's not something very good. You have to explore some things too. [...] I have a friend here, I even forgot, I have two. I walk with them a lot. And one of them, since he's not from my class, and he's always with me, he's always calling me. When the bell rings, and we're outside class, I don't know where he is, because the school is a bit big, and he calls me "Hey, where are you? Let's go for a walk," or something like that. Yeah, I think it's very nice.

Exploring is part of his experience (AURAY, 2007; AURAY; VETEL, 2013). Being alone is not for him. To avoid loneliness is to experiment with the environment to which he is connected.

He admits this experimentation was facilitated to him by a friend at this school and in his class. This friend participated in the mutual introductions,

[...] because we, since we already hung out together, he began to hang out with some girls, he introduced me to these girls, introduced me to the boys. And he helped me interact more with the people around here. It really was him. [And this was a native of the country].

It is due to these matrices with several entries that recognition is or is not felt by those who have just arrived at the public arena that is the school in Portugal. These are not dualities that overlap each other.

They instead present themselves combined, engaged, needing plural arts to form them. They are composed of experimentations, as observed in the space of the cafeteria in the teaching establishment.

These do not appear as inaugural art. They are made with charges at different speeds.

The ways of weaving them do not preclude knots, the interjections mixing complaint with acclaim. It all depends on the situations, on the developments, and on the

consequences to those who experiment them daily. One trips to rise again, rises not to fall again. One tries not to let that happen. It is what also results from the surprise that there are still those who do not respect people who are different because they have different ethnic origins. One tries not to fall victim to excessive disquiet or to the fear that paralyzes the engagement in what is common to all. The circle that protects is also the space that strengthens and that trains them for public confrontation.

This is what nurtures the maturation of the beings in school. Nothing in these compositions is dark or light, shadowy or luminous.

The various tones accompany their arrangements in a constant coming and going, in which firm convictions combine with doubts and hesitations. All of these are promises to be fulfilled in the empowering autonomizations to be built through these and other learning experiences offered by schooling.

It is in this sense that school socialization has a political nature (RESENDE, 2010), because it aspires for the links between beings of a lower level of worth to connect to their environments as first experimentations in learning to be in public. It is through initially hesitant experiences that teenagers learn to expose themselves, even in disagreement or according to other disarranged ordinations (BREVIGLIERI, 2007b). School sociabilities are not test tubes in which the being is formatted based on perfected models. They are, on the contrary, the formation of recognitions to be explored between ones and others.

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