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Two generations sharing Adult Training (EFA) Courses – the impact of EFA certification on Lusophone immigrants and their descendants

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Abstract¹

This paper is part of my on ongoing PhD research entitled "Lives recounted – the impact of the EFA experience on the life trajectories of Lusophone labour migrants and their descendants".

My proposal in this paper is to explain the path that led me to introduce the issue of intergenerational relationships into my PhD research. Initially, the goal was to understand the impact of EFA certification² on Lusophone immigrants' lives. According to the official statistics, it is immigrants who rely most on EFA training courses. However, the first biographical interviews that I carried out showed that the category 'foreign' includes not only immigrants but also the descendants of immigrants who, for family or legal reasons, do not have Portuguese nationality. Many immigrant descendants, in fact, have difficulty in acquiring citizenship, which affects various dimensions of their lives, including access to and continuation in the educational system and labour market. In the official statistics these immigrants and their descendants appear in the category 'foreigners', i.e. despite being born in Portugal, a significant number of the descendants of immigrants have never been able to acquire Portuguese nationality.

The situation found in the fieldwork has thus led to the resizing of the sample, which now considers not only Lusophone immigrants but also the descendants of Lusophone immigrants as a key object of analysis. I aim to understand the different impacts of EFA certification on their lives, treating the generational differences as a crucial point of analysis. Despite these two generations sharing the certification processes, I start from the assumption that the discourses on the impact of the EFA experience in their lives can be differentiated.

In this paper I intend to show that the official statistics in the 'foreign' category embrace different groups and different generations, which appear interchangeably in a single category. On the basis of interviews conducted to date, I argue that being a Lusophone immigrants and the descendants of Lusophone immigrants form two distinct categories – for we are referring here to different generations that, despite the firmly established relationships between them, ultimately (self)evaluate the EFA experience differently.

Key-words: Lusophone immigrant; descendant of immigrants; generations; impact of certification.

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in a globalized world", which was co-organized by the Doctoral School in Sociology & Doctoral School in Political Science (Univ. of Turin), the Graduate School in Social and Political Science (Univ. of Milan) and Collegio Carlo Alberto (Moncalieri, Turin). It took place from 23-27 July 2012 in Moncalieri, Turin.

² Dual training courses (academic and vocational) aimed at adults over 18 years of age.

Introduction

This paper is part of my ongoing PhD research entitled "Lives recounted – the impact of the EFA experience on the life trajectories of Lusophone labour migrants and their descendants". The main purpose is to analyse the (self) perceived impact on Lusophone labour migrants and their descendants of vocational training courses for dual certification⁵ – educational and professional. These have been promoted as part of a government initiative entitled 'Novas Oportunidades' (New Opportunities).

This initiative was intended as an integrated response to public policies in education and training. Its main purpose is to provide qualifications and certification for adults in Portugal, where the leading indicators register low levels of schooling (Benavente, 1996; Ávila, 2008; Cavaco, 2009). Despite the work carried out to improve skills and literacy among the population, a structural pattern persists in which, despite the measures taken, education continues to be socially undervalued.

The increasing number of adults involved in the various arrangements in the National Qualifications System is directly linked to the fact that, in terms of the economic development of the country, it is essential to provide the working population, including foreign labour, with the necessary skills.

Currently, apart from the demands of the general population, we are witnessing an increased demand from immigrants for qualifications and certification. This may be associated with the fact that this group is more vulnerable to unemployment, though the problem cuts across Portuguese society (Peixoto, 2011; Machado et al., 2011).

In the initial PhD project I intended to analyse the impact of certification on adults' lives. Specifically, using biographical interviews, I wanted to understand the impact of certification, as (self) perceived by national and foreign adults at the personal, social and professional levels. The fieldwork proved to be essential in that it identified an object of study that, in my view, shows how the study of immigrants and their descendants is more complex than it may seem. This is because the official data standardizes a situation that is quite heterogeneous, by considering both groups as 'foreigners'.

In this working paper, I aim to describe the path that led to introducing the issue of intergenerational relationships into my PhD research. The main purpose is to present the

⁵ These dual training courses go under the title of EFA courses.

steps that led to the current research design, from the perspective of a dynamic process in which the interaction between theory and field work is permanent.

To provide a better understanding of the context of the research, I shall begin by briefly explaining what an EFA training course is.

The EFA training courses – a short contextualization

The EFA programme offers vocational training courses for dual certification – educational and professional. They are aimed at working age adults (i.e. people over 18 years of age) who are seeking to improve their educational and professional qualification levels. It is an initiative that combines education and training, offering dual certification (Rodrigues, 2009: 16) in conjunction with an educational opportunity that respects the life experience of every adult trainee (Rodrigues, 2009: 15). This training opportunity was established in 2000 and then expanded in 2005 under the New Opportunities Initiative, a government measure with the main purpose of promoting and enhancing the skills and certification of the working population in Portugal.

The guide organizes the work into four core areas, each of which is considered necessary for the development of a person/citizen in today's world. These areas are Language and Communication (LC), Information Technologies (IT), Mathematics for Life (ML) and Citizenship and Employability (CE).

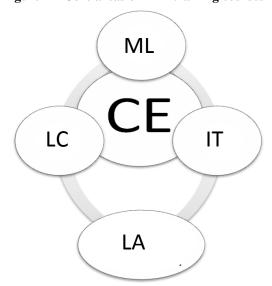


Figure 1 – Core areas of EFA training courses

Source: Adapted from Key Skills Guide for Adult Education – Basic Level (2002)

The curriculum design also includes the module *Learning with Autonomy* (LA). Presented by the mediator of the group, this aims to improve personal and social skills, thus permitting an adult perspective on the course's autonomous and active track. The mediator is not a trainee; he/she acts as the intermediary between all those involved in the certification process. This module is structured on the following three units of competence: a) consolidating integration into the group; b) the work team; c) learning to learn. Learning with Autonomy, through the work of mediation, focuses on understanding every individual's processes in training, learning, and building knowledge (Canelas, 2008), by providing meaningful learning and helping each trainee to seek and build up their own knowledge and reflect on the nature of the construction of knowledge.

The guide also involves a cross-sectional area of knowledge called *Life Themes*, which works as a "nutrient of knowledge and background skills, consisting of a variety of issues and problems that are socially relevant and necessary to understand the world and solve problems in these places" (Alonso et al., 2002: 11).

The *Life Themes* should expand the trainees' existing knowledge and cultural background. They should highlight issues and situations that adults attending an EFA training course have experienced and also help to solve concrete problems that they encounter in their everyday lives. The operationalization of the *Themes of Life* should be dynamic and fluid as "(...) each activity can uncover new topics of general interest for the different members of the training group" (Rodrigues, 2008: 63). The training methods carry out integrative activities that require skills in and knowledge of multiple dimensions.

The *integration activities* work coherently and interdependently in all areas of the curriculum; they are structured around significant problems for trainees – generating questions – thus promoting systematic research, and management and planning tasks. This leads to a set of tasks for which all the actors in this dual certification process have an active role and find their place, and in which, therefore, greater commitment is required by the various participants.

The EFA curriculum model entails a break with more traditional learning practices linked to the classical model of education, where the focus was on the teacher as the

transmitter of knowledge. This model calls for an active attitude on the part of the trainees, who are urged to develop a kind of learning that is meaningful to them.

From the initial general sample to the study of Lusophone immigrants and their descendants – the research steps

The Memorandum of Lifelong Learning presented in 2000 considers the improvement of adult skills as crucial and highlights the importance of focusing on the education and training of migrant populations, given that a large number of migrants possess low literacy rates (OECD, 2008, 2009). In Portugal, the Plan for Immigrant Integration, presented in 2007, stresses the importance of strengthening vocational training targeted at immigrant communities, a line that was reinforced in the new plan submitted in 2010. The two Plans for Immigrant Integration (2007-2010; 2010-2013) present measures aimed at facilitating the fight against school failure and dropping-out among the descendants of immigrants, and at intensifying programmes for the teaching of Portuguese. In addition, they aim to expand the range of vocational training for immigrants.

Contact with the field provides close interaction with the adults attending EFA training courses, especially at the B3 level⁶. While I carrying out the fieldwork⁷, in addition to the observations on the training that I was doing, I had informal conversations with various stakeholders in the process. I also conducted exploratory interviews with trainees who were in the final phase of an EFA training course. These interviews proved to be crucial since they allowed me to look into issues that seemed to be important in the biographical interviews. For example, I gained access the immigrants' perspectives on the trajectories of their lives, paying particular attention to the periods before, during and after the EFA training course. The interviews led to the construction of a list of issues to be addressed in the biographical interviews⁸.

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⁶ This is equivalent to 9 years of schooling and EU Level II.

⁷ The first immersion in the fieldwork took place between January 2009 and June 2010 at a Vocational Training Centre in a municipality belonging to the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and at a cooperative in another municipality in the same area.

⁸ Within the framework of comprehensive sociology, my aim is not so much to access life stories as to present the lives of the adults involved in the histories, i.e. I try to capture the non-linearities of their everyday lives from their own points of view, and give an account of the discontinuities inherent in life in the knowledge society, where challenges to (re)adapt to constant change frequently arise – change that occurs rapidly and in a demanding manner. Capturing the discourses constructed and reflected by the

The existing perception is that the number of foreigners enrolled in EFA training courses has grown gradually. Initially, this perception relied exclusively on field observations, as I did not have official data to support my empirical observations. At a later stage, the data was supplied by both the IEFP⁹ and the ANQ¹⁰. It led me to conclude that the number of labour immigrants registered in employment centres and EFA training courses had indeed increased visibly towards the end of the last decade. Despite the growing number of adults (Portuguese and foreign)participating in different types of training programme over that period, it should be recognised that the growing demand for EFA training courses may be partly linked to the rise in unemployment, as it implies that people are available for a specific time. As a general rule, an EFA training course takes up between six and seven hours a day for about 18 months, i.e. it involves a significant commitment for a significant period of time.

As part of the New Opportunities Initiative, the EFA training courses have absorbed an increasing number of immigrants seeking further qualifications. Graph 1 identifies the nationalities with the greatest number of entrants since 2008. During this period, the information on adults involved in EFA training courses and certification has been systematized on an electronic platform called the Information and Management System for Educational and Training Courses (SIGO)¹¹. The four nationalities with the highest numerical representation among the foreigners registered and certified in EFA training courses correspond to Portuguese-speaking countries – Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau – all of which possess important differences in their process of integration into Portuguese society.

According to previous studies, these differences appear in various dimensions, including a varying knowledge of and proficiency in Portuguese. This is seemingly associated not only with the different strategies of integration into Portuguese society (Machado, 1996; Seabra, 2009), but also with the way of learning Portuguese and the people's relationship with the language in their country of origin.

subjects involved in the process seems crucial to an understanding of the impacts on various scales, i.e. not only the personal but also societal and professional impacts.

⁹ Institute of Employment and Professional Training.

¹⁰ National Agency for Qualification.

¹¹ SIGO is a database for the subjects available in various training programmes that are currently part of the National Qualifications System.

1400 1200 1000 800 Male 600 Female 400 Total 200 S. Torne e Principe 0 Cape Verde Guinea Hissau Worth America Angola Mozambique Asia

Graph 1 – Foreign trainees who have started EFA training courses since 2008, according to nationality and gender

Source: ANQ, 2010

Portuguese citizenship policy – a brief contextualization

For many decades, Portugal was a country of emigration. With the April Revolution of 1974, the country also became a country of immigration. The decolonization process in the 1970s and entry into the European Community in 1986 contributed decisively to the transformation of migration flows. For example, membership of the EEC led to huge changes in the construction sector, which resulted in an increase in immigration.

The end of colonization brought around half a million Portuguese back to Portugal, all of whom had to be reintegrated into the society. Simultaneously, civil wars in the former colonies forced many Africans to flee their countries as refugees, with many finding refuge in Portugal. These population movements not only transformed Portugal into a more heterogeneous society but also contributed to an increase in social problems at a time of economic crisis and unemployment (Peixoto, 2007).

During this period – the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s – economic growth largely corresponded to a demand for workers in labour-intensive industries such as construction, commerce, catering, cleaning and caring. In parallel, the capacity of the domestic labour market to respond to economic growth was, and still is, severely affected by factors such as low fertility rates, the increased ageing of the Portuguese population and continuing emigration, despite the high proportion of women in the workforce. Less rigorous immigration policies in Portugal compared to other European countries also contributed to this increase in immigration flows (Peixoto, 2002; 2007).

The migration from PALOP countries¹² and Brazil intensified over the 1980s and 1990s, on account of the historical, linguistic and cultural ties with Portugal. Many Lusophone immigrants from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, i.e. Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe, either brought children with them or, in many cases, had children waiting for them in Portugal. Many of the children brought to Portugal, however, could not acquire Portuguese nationality due to the regulatory framework in place for many years.

According to Portuguese law, "those who cannot prove that they have Portuguese nationality are considered foreigners"¹³. An immigrant is therefore considered a foreigner – a person who is not a national of the country in which he or she lives. Now, when foreigners come to Portugal for holidays, study purposes or health reasons, their status is that of a foreigner and not an immigrant. When Portuguese-born children of immigrants continue to reside on Portuguese soil but cannot take out Portuguese nationality, they remain foreigners in their country of birth.

In relation to national citizenship policies, until 1974¹⁴, children born in Portuguese territories – i.e. Portugal and its colonies – were Portuguese citizens. The end of the Portuguese colonial empire raised the issue of whether Portuguese nationality would be lost or retained by those born or living in the former colonies. The law denied the right to Portuguese nationality to thousands of Portuguese who were the descendants of Africans. Only people born in Portugal¹⁵ or of Portuguese descent had the right to keep their Portuguese nationality. However, Article 2 of the law allowed for the retention of Portuguese nationality by individuals born in the former colonies (including spouses and minor children) who had been living in mainland Portugal or its islands for more than five years¹⁶. Even so, many PALOP citizens living in Portugal did not request nationality on the basis of this article, for many believed they had automatically acquired it. As a result, many became "foreigners" without even knowing. The law retroactively created a foreign community, i.e. Africans who had lost their Portuguese nationality but whose families were progressively growing due to family reunification (Baganha and Marques, 2001: 29).

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¹² Portuguese-speaking African Countries.

¹³ Article 2 of Decree-Law No. 244/98 of 8 August, the Immigration Law.

¹⁴ Decree-Law No. 2098 of 29 July 1959.

¹⁵ Understood as the area contained by its European borders, plus the islands of Madeira and the Azores.

¹⁶ Madeira and the Azores.

In 1981, a new nationality law¹⁷ confirmed the decline of the *jus soli* principle in favour of one based on *jus sanguinis*. This change meant that it was more difficult for those born in Portugal to non-Portuguese parents to acquire nationality. The situation was particularly problematic for the descendants of PALOP immigrants. According to this law, the Portuguese-born children of foreign citizens had the right to Portuguese nationality if their parents had been living in Portugal for at least six years and they declared a will to become Portuguese (Peixoto, 2007).

In 1994, a reformulation of the nationality law¹⁸ introduced measures that were more favourable to people from Portuguese-speaking countries: they made the acquisition of Portuguese nationality by foreign citizens' children dependent on the legalised status of their parents. The right to Portuguese nationality for Portuguese-born children of immigrants was limited to those whose parents had lived in Portugal with a valid residence permit for at least six years, in the case of Lusophone parents, or ten years, for other foreigners (Pires, 2003: 129).

In 2006, Portugal changed its nationality law again¹⁹, this time clearly broadening the criteria for acquisition. The law now grants nationality immediately to "third generation immigrants", i.e. individuals born in Portugal to parents who were also born on Portuguese territory. The granting of nationality has also been made easier for "second-generation" immigrants, as now only one parent has to have resided legally in Portugal for five years. In addition, the mandatory period of residence in Portugal for foreign residents applying for nationality was set at six years for all. Under the former law, only the nationals of Portuguese-speaking countries benefited from this reduced length of legal residence; all other immigrants were required to provide proof of a tenyear period. The new citizenship law, however, is more demanding with regard to Portuguese language skills. Candidates who do not possess a certificate issued by an official Portuguese school are required to pass a Portuguese language test. This is organised by the Ministry of Education on a two-monthly basis (Peixoto, 2007). One of the intentions of the new law is to adapt the legislative framework to the European Convention on Nationality, specifically in relation to the prohibition of discrimination

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¹⁷ Decree-Law No. 37/81 of 3 October.

¹⁸ Decree-Law No. 253/94 of 20 October.

¹⁹ Decree-Law No. 2/2006 of 17 April.

²⁰ We use the terms 'second' and 'third' generation just to clarify the fact that we are talking about two generations of immigrants' descendants.

on the basis of national origin and the granting of citizenship to those born and legally resident in the territory (Healy, 2011).

This law has strengthened the *ius soli* principle for those born on Portuguese soil as the children or grandchildren of immigrants, by facilitating the access of people born in Portugal to Portuguese nationality. The right to nationality on the basis of origin is granted to those born in Portugal as long as at least one parent was also born in Portugal or at least one parent was legally resident in Portugal for more than five years before their birth, irrespective of the type of residence permit (Healy, 2011: 63).

Foreigners – the hidden reality

When I started the second stage of fieldwork²¹, I wanted to interview immigrants who had received certificates in EFA training courses. However, the fieldwork held some surprises. The first "immigrants" interviewed were, in fact, foreigners who were born and raised in Portugal. For reasons that, in most cases, they did not control, these 'immigrants' had various nationalities other than that of the land that bore them. I interviewed people from Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe who knew little to nothing about their 'home country'. Legally they were foreigners but in reality they were Portuguese – without the legal right to be recognised as such.

The fieldwork led me to question the hiding of two distinct groups within the official data. The records use the concept of "foreigner" when in fact they should systematize this population clearly as either immigrants or descendants of immigrants. This would carry different realities with it, and different ways of being and living in Portugal.

The official statistics make no distinction for children and young people who were born in Portugal. Despite living their daily lives in Portuguese neighbourhoods and schools, they are statistically diluted in the numbers, appearing as 'foreigners' and being bearing an ethnicised form of representation. Many of the children of PALOP immigrants "(...) carry with them the double and ambiguous condition of being and not being Portuguese (...)" (Gusmão, 2004: 2). These two conditions are reflected in many of the interviews already conducted. If, initially, we considered the hypothesis of not including these

²¹ The second systematic round of systematic fieldwork began in October 2011 and is ongoing.

'foreigners' in our sample²², during the interviews we chose to collect the evidence and somehow give them a voice. So, from this point, I was interested in understanding how these 'foreigners' deal with to their condition of not belonging to a recognized nationstate, i.e. I wanted to understand to what extent they felt they belonged to and identified with Portugal.

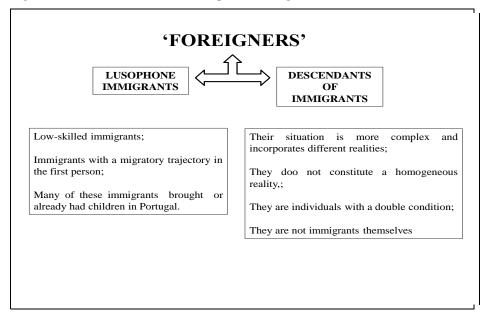
The category of 'foreigner', as commonly presented by the official statistics in Portugal, in fact incorporates different generations and different ways of perceiving the experiences of everyday life in Portugal. In the case of immigrants from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, I found that many Lusophone immigrants have Portuguese nationality, while others who were born in Portugal are not recognized as citizens (Gusmão, 2004: 21).

The term 'labour immigrants' implies that we are talking about low-skilled migrants who are part of the labour market segment in which the tasks are eminently physical and the required qualifications are minimal (Carvalho, 2004; Portes, 1999). In this instance, we are referring mainly to the sectors of construction (men) and cleaning (women). They are immigrants who have been arriving in Portugal since the late 1970s, though the migratory flow intensified in the 1980s and 1990s in the case of Lusophone labour immigrants. Many of them brought small children or already had children in Portugal.

With reference to the descendants of Lusophone African immigrants, this population is more complex and reflects different situations. Regardless of their legal status, they are individuals with a double condition black and Portuguese or black and foreign (although in most cases they were born in Portugal). The descendants of immigrants are not immigrants themselves; they do not have a migratory trajectory and most of them do not even know their parents' countries of origin (Machado, 1996).

²² In the first minutes of an interview I realized that, in fact, the person was not an immigrant.

Figure 2 – Differences between Lusophone immigrants and the descendants of immigrants



Final remarks

In proposing this paper I set out to introduce the issue of intergenerational relationships, on the basis of research carried out in my PhD studies. The first biographical interviews I carried out showed that the category 'foreigner' includes not only immigrants but also the descendants of immigrants who, for family or legal reasons, do not possess Portuguese nationality. Many descendants, in fact, have difficulty in acquiring citizenship, which affects various aspects of their lives, not least access to and the ability to remain in the educational system and labour market.

In the official statistics these immigrants and their descendants appear in the 'foreigners' category, i.e. despite having been born in Portugal, a significant number of descendants of immigrants have never acquired Portuguese nationality.

The study of immigrants and their descendants is more complex than it may seem, as the official data standardizes a situation that is quite heterogeneous, considering both groups as 'foreigners'. In the interviews I have conducted to date, it is possible to identify differences between immigrants and their descendants in both their initial expectations and the impact of EFA certification. With respect to 'foreigners', the EFA training courses involve different generations, with different migratory trajectories. Immigrants and descendants of immigrants have different expectations. The reasons for acquiring dual certification also appear to be distinct. I am interested in understanding

the similarities and distances between these two groups, which are incorporated in the same category. I am also interested in understanding if and how they establish intergenerational relationships.

With regard to labour immigrants, all of them had experience of jobs that did not require many skills. When they became unemployed, they chose to enrol in an EFA training course to acquire a professional qualification and school certificate. There are differences, however, in the impact on their everyday lives, i.e. as a consequence of the economic crisis we are experiencing, not all of them have yet felt the impact on their professional lives. Nonetheless, all the immigrants interviewed thus far have emphasized that EFA certification has had a major impact on them, both personally and socially.

When we consider the issues affecting the descendants of immigrants, the acquisition (or not) of Portuguese nationality is of central importance. The EFA training courses are seen as a means of achieving what has been missed in the traditional educational system. In the discourse of the EFA-certified descendants of immigrants, many emphasize that issues related to their legal status affected their school careers. The issue of discrimination is also very present, as these young adults always felt discriminated against at school, which eventually contributed/led to their early exit from the educational system.

On the basis of the interviews conducted to date, I argue that Lusophone immigrants and the descendants of Lusophone immigrants form two distinct categories. We are referring here to different generations that, despite the strong relationships between them, ultimately (self)evaluate the EFA experience differently.

I consider it crucial to continue collecting evidence to bring about and ensure, as far as possible, the representation of different profiles for the universe of immigrants and their descendants who have been certified in EFA training courses. This is therefore an ongoing investigation.

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