

Argument across the Portuguese-Speaking World: A Discursive Approach to Diaspora

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There is no doubt that the Portuguese are widely dispersed. The histories, encounters, and conditions that have led to this dispersal are, however, highly varied and paradoxical. Once the center of a global empire, Portugal now stands at the periphery of Europe; both the earliest and the last Western colonial power, it was also arguably the weakest; the source of an emigration diaspora that spans the globe, it has become more recently the destination of immigrants from Africa, South America, and Asia (Baganha; Costa-Pinto). What is particularly intriguing and challenging about how "Portugueseness" is used in the world is the fact that colonialism, emigration and immigration, and nation building have been inextricably intertwined and historically overlapping processes.

This collection brings together studies of identity formation from spaces that share a significant historical intersection with Portugal. Each of the cases is situated within one of the very different material and political realities that characterize the various strands of the Portuguese dispersal: Sieber and Lubkemann explore discourses and practices of nation and transnation "at home" in Portugal; Sarkissian and Leal analyze revivals of a sense of being Portuguese in postcolonial states that Portugal once dominated; Noivo and Klimt focus on notions of belonging that have emerged in relatively recent immigrant communities in very different corners of the world.¹ The strategic juxtaposition of these examples from the rich and intriguing diversity of the Portuguese dispersal provides insight into the multiple ways in which Portugueseness can be imagined, constructed, and deployed.

The process of reflecting on the complexity of the Portuguese case pushed us to examine theoretical approaches to the study of diaspora and eventually led us to recast the parameters of current definitions. Our aim in the following discussion is to explore the analytic possibilities of conceptualizing "diaspora" as a discursive argument—an historically embedded and typically contentious

social discussion that involves engagement with particular kinds of questions but does not necessarily lead to similar kinds of answers.²

Diaspora as Discourse

Much recent debate has circled around the question of how to distinguish a diaspora from other forms of population dispersal. What, in other words, constitutes a "genuine" diaspora? In more narrow formulations of the concept, dispersed populations count as "diasporic" when they are fully deterritorialized—that is, belong to a nation whose political existence has been frustrated or eradicated, often through the violent processes that produced dispersal in the first place. In this formulation, communities are diasporic when they suffer specific conditions of dispersal, organize group identities around a political aspiration oriented to making nation and state coincide once again, and continue to claim their place of origin as their true home (Cohen; Safran). The Armenians and pre-1948 Jewish populations are, according to this definition, paradigmatic exemplars of diasporas.

Others have argued for more inclusive definitions, in some cases, expanding the term to encompass all multidirectional dispersals from a common point of origin, regardless of the political fate of the original place, the degree of orientation towards the ancestral homeland among the dispersed, or the extent of suffering, loss, and marginality in the process of dispersal. This move opened up the exploration of new forms of connectivity and identity formation in an increasingly mobile world but, according to some critics, also constantly risks stripping the concept of the specificity that lent it analytical and explanatory power (Tölölyan, "Rethinking").

We found that insistence on a clear-cut yes-or-no answer to the issue of whether the Portuguese are a "real diaspora" obscured the local specificity of social identity construction in different corners of the Portuguese-speaking world. Rather than trying to formulate and apply a uniform and objectively defined set of criteria that establishes whether the millions of people of Portuguese descent around the globe constitute a bona fide diaspora, we want to examine how conceptualizing diaspora as a particular type of identity discourse opens up new avenues of analysis. Just as nations are and must be imagined (Anderson); traditions, invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger); and notions of home, discursively constructed (Rapport and Dawson, "Home"), so too, we argue, "diaspora" is a particular way of imagining, inventing, constructing, and presenting the self. If, as Rapport and Dawson point out, "the self is given content, is delineated and embodied, primarily in narrative constructions or stories" ("Home" 28), then the discourse of diasporicity needs to be distinguished from and given just as much attention as questions about the sociological characteristics of dispersal.

"Discourse" is, of course, a term used by theorists in very different ways. We understand "discourses" to be systematically and densely interwoven arrays of signification that provide the symbolic milieu for generating specific "frames" for categorizing and interpreting social actions, events, and identities (Goffman). "Framing," for our purposes, is a process of constructing specific interpretations by emphasizing certain connections and neglecting or often actively forgetting and de-emphasizing others (Cole). Rather than providing uncontestedly complete definitions of social action or identity, "discursive frames" specify particular questions as the relevant ones for dispute. "Discourse" is thus a framing of the terms and parameters of debate.

We take it as axiomatic that alternative categorizations and interpretations of actions, events, and identities always exist as latent (and sometimes socially suppressed and subordinated) possibilities. Yet the activation and eventual social legitimation of any one particular version of identity is not derived so much from objective historical conditions—such as a history of out-migration from a common point of origin—but rather from the ways in which the politics of the present encourage certain processes of selective emphasis, invention, or suppression of histories of dispersal and transnational connection. Thus, rather than identifying "diaspora" as a particular category of social formation, we see it as a kind of framing of identity that leads people to emphasize particular types of social connections and disconnections over others in their formulations of self.

In focusing on the framing qualities of discourse we do not in any way draw attention away from broader institutional contexts, material conditions, or relations of power in which such framings are produced and sustained (Foucault). Yet rather than conflating signifying practices with the specific, power-ridden contexts that produce them, we find it more useful to reserve the term "discourse" for the more narrow arrays of signification itself. Maintaining this distinction allows us to investigate more clearly the ways in which arrays of signification (for example, engagement with questions around diaspora) and institutions, histories, and relations of power (for example, the various conditions of the Portuguese dispersal) are mutually constitutive.

The importance of connecting narrativity, consciousness, and imagination to material conditions, institutional contexts, and particular histories of dispersal has run through many recent theoretical discussions of identity, place, and transnational movement. Cultural geographers have persuasively argued for the importance of exploring the "imagined spatiality of diasporic politics" and for connecting understandings of the "so-called real and the so-called metaphorical" (Keith and Pile 17) relationships between space and identity (Featherstone; Massey, "Double Articulation"). Harvey points out

that the "real as well as metaphorical territories and spaces of power" must be given equal weight in our analyses of location and connection within a changing global social order (Harvey 3). The growing attention to the narrative construction of "home" and "place" within contexts of increased mobility has also led to a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between facts of geographic location and notions of belonging (Massey, "Place"; Fortier; Olwig, "Cultural Sites"; Morley; Rapport and Dawson, "Home"; Sarup). The growing body of work that addresses the emergent realities of transnationalism also explores the significance of "nostalgic imaginings of the home country." However, the balance tends to be tipped towards documenting the actual existence and shape of the "multistranded social relations that link societies of origin and settlement" (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc 74; see also Foner; Goldring; Grosfoguel and Cordero-Guzman; Pries, "New Migration"; Smith).

Within these discussions, however, evidence of diasporic consciousness, myths of return, and narratives of transnational belonging has primarily served to substantiate arguments as to whether a particular dispersal constitutes a "genuine" diaspora. Drawing on the theoretical insights from discussions around the meanings of "space," "place," and "home," our project here is to give equal weight to expressions of the "imagined geographies" of belonging and connection rather than simply to deploy them as evidence with which to document the real article. In the process, we hope to call attention to the variable ways in which the "real" conditions of dispersal and the "metaphorical" understandings of dispersed peoples constitute one another. How, in other words, do histories of movement and concomitant local and global contours of power articulate with the continual making—and unmaking—of "conceptual spaces of identification" (Olwig, "Epilogue" 236)? Our argument is that distinguishing discursive practices of diaspora from the sociological realities of dispersal—rather than treating one as derivative of the other—makes it possible to problematize and investigate the relationship between these two processes.

There are obviously numerous overlapping and intertwined types of identity discourse. In our view, narratives can be considered "diasporic"—and be distinguished from related "ethnic," "minority," and "immigrant" scripts—if they engage a number of core propositions. These include: an orientation to an original place claimed as the sole source of dispersal; a sense of dual and not mutually exclusive transnational attachments to both original and current place; an asymmetry that gives primacy to the center as the authoritative source of authentic culture and personal allegiance; a sense of commonality with others who have been dispersed from the place of origin to different destinations; and a radial structuring of

affinity, in which connections among dispersed communities are negotiated via the original center rather than directly with each other. Engagement with this set of issues distinguishes "diasporicity" from other practices of social identification and performances of self.

Engagement does not, however, imply agreement. These propositions represent an agenda for argument—that is, a set of ideas that are reacted to, argued over, and disagreed with. "Diasporicity" is thus a particular line of argumentation, not a distinct shared set of beliefs about the self. As a particular type of framing, "diasporicity" specifies particular questions as the relevant ones for dispute, rather than legitimizing particular answers to these questions over other possibilities. Diasporic discourses frame terms of argument rather than terms of definition. While, in some cases, the results may be a championing of all of the assertions about the nature of diasporic connectedness, in other cases, some, or even all, of these propositions may be challenged.

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In reflecting on the various cases in this collection, the most interesting issues that emerged for us were how, when, why, and under what social and political conditions narratives of diasporic connectedness were invoked, reworked, invented, or discarded. The specific lines of inquiry that opened up for us were how the discursive practices of diaspora (1) develop over time; (2) are deployed within the very differently constituted spaces found within the Portuguese dispersal; (3) engage multiple levels and fields of power; (4) are legitimized, authenticated, and "naturalized"; and (5) interconnect with other related narratives of self. We were also led to reflect on the positionality of the researchers vis-à-vis the variously situated spaces of the Portuguese-speaking world.

Our proposed conceptualization of "diaspora" as a discursive process and ongoing argument encourages a diachronic analysis of how social connectedness is remembered and nurtured, forgotten or suppressed, invented or reworked within particular communities. In our view, it opens up new analytic possibilities for examining the histories of the relationship between diasporic identities and the configurations of institutions and contexts in which they are formed. Tracing situated narratives of belonging over time and through shifting historical conjunctures and material conditions provides insight into how and why memories of diaspora are selectively appropriated, remembered, or forgotten. This approach also makes it possible to compare the degree to which diasporicity comes to play a role within collective identities. In this volume, we thus explore how the most sparse and tenuous of ties to an "original

Portuguese homeland," neglected for decades (Leal) or even centuries (Sarkissian), have been activated and placed at the center of new constructions of social identity in Brazil and Malacca/Malaysia, even while much more immediate connections may be actively relegated to the realm of the forgotten or ignored among first-generation emigrants to Africa (Lubkemann), Australia, or North America (Noivo). Comparisons between similarly situated, first-generation emigrants in North America and Germany (Klimt) also reveal that collective "remembering" of even the most directly experienced connections is an active, selective, and fragmented, rather than a unilinear or inevitable process.

Formulations that view diaspora solely as a particular historical and sociodemographic condition tend to assume a high degree of homogeneity among the resulting chips off the original old block. In contrast, thinking of diaspora as a particular type of identity discourse rather than as a type of population dispersal encourages us to locate discussions of diaspora within specific social struggles that perforce must vary from place to place. Thus, rather than assuming a common sense of attachment to place of origin among dispersed communities, our approach invites investigation of the ways in which attachment is variously felt and constructed within differently constituted spaces, institutional arrangements, and material conditions. As Brah has pointed out, "[d]iasporas ... are often composite formations made up of many journeys to different parts of the globe, each with its own history, its own particularities" and each diaspora "is an interweaving of multiple travelling; a text of many distinctive and, perhaps, even disparate narratives" (183). The articles in this collection ethnographically build on her argument that "diasporic community" is differently imagined under different historical circumstances" (183) and demonstrate that across the dispersal, affinity to Portugal is constituted with very different content and in the service of very different political ends. Ferreting out points of debate rather than assuming lines of consensus also illuminates key tensions across the dispersal, especially between hegemonic narratives of the center and the challenging counter-narratives forged by communities in the dispersed periphery. Furthermore, the range of cases considered in this collection highlights the question of how the different diasporicities within a "single" dispersal confront, contend with, and shape each other in broader political fields of power.

The weaving of a diasporic consciousness involves an interplay among many different levels of social organization, from the familial and the local to the state and the supranational. Consequently, many different and often contradictory interests intersect in discourses about the nature of transnational belonging. Narratives of belonging are constructed in relation to the logic of particular

places. However, as the following Portuguese cases make clear, when diasporic connectedness is invoked, identity becomes a multi-sited and multilevel negotiation, the outcome of which is not always neat or predictable (see, e.g., Dusenbery). Diasporicity as a macro-political project of the state (Sieber), for example, may contradict and conflict with the diasporicities of dispersed communities (Noivo) or locally rooted scripts of family membership (Lubkemann). Ultimately, the extent to which local identities become more or less diasporic depends on the complex interplay among local-level, identity micro-politics and the macro-politics of multiple states and supranational entities (Klimt, Leal, Sarkissian).

As with all processes of identity construction, efforts to make a diasporic identity plausible rely heavily on cultural performance, especially for those constituting themselves as diasporic. Approaching diaspora as a type of discourse leads us to questions about how its performance is authenticated or contested within and across particular fields of social power. Convincing performances are not just the result of a physical "geography of belonging" but are the very processes through which histories of movement and a sense of connectedness are invoked, created, and rendered authentic (see Gilroy and Fortier for analogous approaches to connections between transnational identity and cultural performance). These stagings include the most pedestrian of practices, such as everyday conversation (Klimt, Noivo) and kinship interaction (Lubkemann); far more ritualistic and formalized public performances, such as those aimed at tourists (Sarkissian) or public events orchestrated by the state (Noivo, Sieber); and even the configuration of academic debate itself (Leal). Harvey's reminder that "the fierce contest over images and counter-images of places is an arena in which the cultural politics of places, the political-economy of their development, and the accumulation of a sense of social power in place frequently fuse in indistinguishable ways" can effectively be expanded to explore contests that span multiple places across the globe (Harvey 23). Questions as to how directionality, authority, and hierarchy across the web of attachments are accepted, naturalized, and debated become important. What idioms and images, for example, establish—or contest—a hierarchy that privileges place of origin over dispersed progeny and makes visible only that which comes from the center out to the dispersed? Who, of those involved in the debate about what counts as Portuguese, has the power to authorize the authenticity of cultural performances and claims to diasporic affinity?

A frequently raised question is whether a migrant population maintains diasporic connections with the homeland or has re-oriented its identities and aspirations towards its new place of residence. The following explorations of the various narrative constructions of identity emerging out of the historical processes of

population dispersal reveal that the narrative frames of diaspora, ethnicity, and minority are not sequentially related stages in an "acculturation process," nor even are they necessarily mutually exclusive phenomena. In fact, these different identity frames are often cobbled together in mutually constituting ways. It is quite possible—in fact, quite common—for the same group of people to deploy different frames simultaneously for different reasons and to combine in complex ways discourses about origins and transnational connectedness with narratives of commitment to newly formed communities and more place-bound allegiances (see especially Noivo). Lines of investigation thus productively shift to questions about what particular relations of power and social conditions produce which kinds or combinations of identity narratives.

How best to deal with the role of the anthropological interlocutor in the documentation and translation of the discourses of others has been at the heart of the last decade of anthropological debate (Clifford and Marcus). Taking a discursive approach to diaspora does not really add anything new to our understanding that the subject positionality of both the researcher and the researched matters. But it does underline the importance of critical self-reflection, especially with regards to how a researcher's own diasporic identity intersects with that of the population she or he is studying. Personal experience with migration, displacement, transnational connection, and multiple allegiance, as well as position within the hierarchy of diasporic spaces, obviously shapes the conversations and relationships in the field; the analytic purview and political agenda of the research project; and the authority granted to the researcher to draw conclusions and speak on behalf of others. As the multiple combinations of diasporic positionality brought together in this collection clearly illustrate, the politics of diaspora permeates the politics of research for all ethnographers, regardless of where they are positioned vis-à-vis others engaged in the diasporic argument.

The Portuguese Case

The Portuguese case is an especially promising one through which to explore the theoretical possibilities of conceptualizing "diaspora" as a particular kind of identity discourse. The following reflections lay out the ways in which the articles in this collection address some of the central questions raised by this approach.

Multiple Intersections. Claims to Portugueseness and affinity with Portugal are, in each of the cases presented in this collection, constituted in demonstrably different terms and in the service of very different political ends. In some cases, as in that of the

Portuguese communities in Canada and Australia (Noivo) and Germany (Klimt), the historical continuity of links to Portugal is strongly evident in practices of return migration and frequent social and cultural interaction. In others, as among Luso-Malaysians (Sarkissian) and Azorean-Brazilians (Leal), the notion of connection to Portugal is more strongly mediated by reinventions of tradition that draw on indirect associations with histories of empire rather than on a history of unbroken continuity of cultural practices or sentiments of attachment. In examples from the center of the Portuguese dispersal, attempts to forge a cohesive national narrative about how best to "be Portuguese" selectively rework the overlapping histories of colonialism, endemic emigration, recent immigration, and aspirations for a European modernity (Lubkemann, Sieber).

The approach to diaspora we are advocating highlights questions about how various macro-level formations of power affect on-the-ground processes of identity formation. The policies, actions, and ideologies promulgated by the Portuguese state have, together with those of the states in which the Portuguese have settled, clearly shaped the environments in which locally specific discourses of diasporicity are produced.

Identity discourses in societies Portugal once dominated have obviously emerged out of transformations in postcolonial relations of power. In her analysis of the revitalization and reinvention of versions of being Portuguese in the erstwhile colonial outpost of Malaysia, Sarkissian points to the ways in which shifts in the national self-imaginings of Malaysia and changing conceptualizations of Portugueseness by the Portuguese state intersected with local identity politics. Similarly, Leal explains that the resurgence in southern Brazil of an Azorean identity politics and diasporic consciousness among descendents of nineteenth-century immigrants is due to the interplay among rapidly changing narratives of belonging at the local, regional, and national levels in both Brazil and Portugal.

Within the center of the Portuguese dispersal, postcoloniality has also recast the terms of national identity politics and its relationship to locally situated processes of social identity formation. As Lubkemann points out, postindependence "returnees" from Africa were leaving spaces that had been, but no longer were, Portuguese and were forced to reengage with a center whose colonial versions of belonging had collapsed. In his analysis of the images of the Portuguese-speaking world produced through the Lisbon-based music scene, Sieber describes state-backed efforts to counter images of Portugal's peripheral status in the world. He shows how, ironically enough, Portuguese national claims to geopolitical importance that depend upon invoking a special relationship with its former colonies, go hand-in-hand with efforts to assert and preserve an

unpolluted and untouched Portugueseness "at home." Both Lubke-mann and Sieber discuss the complex ways in which Portuguese-ness came to stand as a sign in the negotiation of national and racial identities in postcolonial Portugal and demonstrate how narratives of race and diasporicity mutually implicate each other.

Within non-colonial settings of the Portuguese dispersal, overarching changes in the location and definition of national boundaries have also affected local shapings of diasporicity. In her account of the Portuguese in Germany, Klimt shows how this group of migrants has dealt with boundaries that have been constantly changing around them. The collision of arguments about parameters of Germanness, Europeaness, and Portugueseness have all contributed to creating the context in which migrants imagine and enact notions of home that remain firmly rooted in Portugal. Noivo examines how the Portuguese in Canada and Australia negotiate their identities in an extremely complex discursive field that includes the narratives of the Portuguese and host states, of extended family members and "home communities" in Portugal, of other emigrants settled elsewhere, and of other minority groups in their host countries.

Discourse at the Center. Most analyses of diasporic populations focus primarily on how marginal populations construct their relations with their actual or mythic homeland. The conceptualization of diaspora as discourse invites us to examine how the multidirectionality of cultural flows dramatically shapes discourses of nationness at the center of the diasporic web. Such influences include the cultural transmissions and movements of goods and people back to the country of ancestral origin. In other words, this approach invites us to ask also about the uses of diaspora "back home."

In the Portuguese case, the dominant notions of national belonging promoted at different points in history clearly incorporated both Portugal's dispersed migrant population and its colonial subjects into the legal and imagined Portuguese body politic (Brettell; Feldman-Bianco, "Multiple Layers"; Feldman-Bianco, "Immigration"). Although the Portuguese "abroad" have long been part of the constructions of Portuguese nationhood, Sieber and Lubke-mann's pieces push for an even more critical analysis of Portuguese national identity, by examining how the flow of culture and people from the periphery to the center has been rendered within identity discourses in Portugal (see also Vale de Almeida, "Epilogue," "Leitura").

The tense interplay between persistent essentialist versions of Portugueseness and emergent images of multiculturalism, fusion, and hybridity that Sieber examines in his article illustrates the

play of power and politics in the discursive construction of nation and diaspora. In his analysis of Lisbon's contemporary music scene, he shows how connectedness between Portugal and its former colonies is presented as a "one way street," emphasizing Portuguese influences elsewhere while rendering influences back on Portuguese culture itself as largely invisible. His discussion clearly demonstrates how connectedness is hegemonically constructed and validated as unidirectional from the center out to the peripheries. The long history of vibrant musical influences from the ex-colonies back to Lisbon is not granted an integral role in ideologically dominant definitions of Portuguese music. Music "at home" is cast as "unpolluted" original national culture; music in and of the former colonies and emigrant communities abroad is contained within the distinct category of "lusophone," or "Portuguese-influenced" music. "Multiculturalism" is something exotically different, imported from the ex-colonies to be consumed in the center, but its influence on a "Portuguese essence" itself is denied. Imagining diaspora as unidirectional outflow from the center effectively obscures or recasts evidence of hybridity in order to maintain images of a pure Portuguese national culture that maintains its dominance vis-à-vis former colonies.

In the wake of colonial independence, the notions of cultural—and racial—purity at the diasporic center, sustained by the entrenched images of unidirectionality, were dramatically challenged by the massive influx of racially mixed Portuguese citizens from former African colonies. Lubkemann examines how the deployment of a diasporic discourse in rural Portugal imbued migration with a particular "moral economy" that devalued emigration to Africa relative to other established destinations and examines how this ultimately resulted in the stigmatization of returnees from Africa after decolonization. The moral economy he describes constitutes a set of expectations among those who remained in Portugal that emphasized the continued obligations of those who emigrated towards family members who remained behind. He thus demonstrates how diasporic discourse was deployed by those "back home" in the center to make claims on those who emigrated. In contrast to emigration to other destinations in Europe and the Americas, emigration to Portugal's African colonies was seen by family members who remained behind in Portugal as permanent and definitive and thus in violation of core social expectations about the meaning of kinship. Also, in contrast to those Portuguese emigrants whose connection with their Portuguese homeland was largely symbolic and voluntary, this population was thrust into an involuntary return and forced to engage narratives of belonging that explicitly excluded them. The return of these emigrants in the wake of decolonization instigated an intense argument within Portugal over

the rights of returnees to claim Portugueseness based on their own contrastive construction of diasporicity.

In her discussion of the experience of Portugueseness for emigrants in Australia and Canada, Noivo approaches the question about how diasporicity is constructed at the center from a slightly different angle. The discursive and political incorporation of nonresident populations into the nation has, as she points out, long been a central theme in the hegemonic emphasis on commonality across the Portuguese-speaking-world. However, encounters between migrants returning to visit Portugal and those who have remained "at home" reveal very different definitions of membership and affinity. Migrants who went to connect with family and friends in their communities of origin, expecting signs of inclusion and acceptance, were instead met with othering discourses, which discounted and ridiculed their claims of common Portugueseness. Noivo reveals how on-the-ground constructions of diasporicity in Portugal effectively marginalized and excluded those of the diaspora from their purported home and existed in tension with other, often state-promoted, discourses of commonality and inclusion.

Questioning Authenticity. Assertions of authenticity constitute a central—and often contested—dimension of diasporic constructions of belonging. The articles in this collection demonstrate that authenticity is legitimized in strikingly different ways. There are highly varied versions of "being Portuguese" that tend to be anchored in local social and political processes. Interestingly, claims that the culture from the diasporic center should be faithfully replicated is but one among numerous lines of argument.

Southern Brazil and Malaysia, each characterized by historically rather distant intersections with Portugal, have both seen recent and quite intense revitalizations of local notions of Portugueseness. In comparing Leal and Sarkissian's accounts, however, it becomes clear that the ninth-generation descendants of nineteenth-century immigrants in Brazil and the "well-mixed" Luso-Malays who claimed descent from sixteenth-century colonial settlers have asserted the authenticity of their being Portuguese in strikingly different ways. Leal describes a primarily elite discourse in which Brazilian academics, artists, historians, and activists sought to legitimize their largely reinvented Azorean identity through the establishment of new connections with Azorean politicians and scholars. Expertise, knowledge, and formal recognition, funneled into Brazilian debates from "authoritative" sources in the Azores, helped validate the often rather shaky claims to continuity with a shared cultural past. The notion of being Azorean, which had for generations lapsed into disuse and had long been the basis of negative stereotyping, was transformed, through legitimizing voices from the diasporic center, into local sources of pride and political power.

In the complicated jockeying for power within the emerging Malaysian nation, being Portuguese and a particular kind of European became a way to claim status and political influence. Asserting Portuguese-ness was also an effective way to acquire a lucrative corner of the tourist market. Sarkissian points out, however, that Portugal as original source or ongoing cultural authority played a negligible role in local debates about the authenticity of local versions of Portuguese culture. In striking contrast to the relevance of transnational connections in Brazilian contexts, claims to cultural authenticity and to being Portuguese in Malaysia rested on locally rooted understandings and sources of expertise. Within the Portuguese dance troupes at the center of her ethnographic account, commitments to continuity meshed with interest in creative change, and faithfulness to original sources in Portugal was not at the crux of efforts to be Portuguese.

The casting of postcolonial connections and arguments about the authenticity of cultural forms take a bit of a different turn in Sieber's account of musical performance at the diasporic center. Celebrations of hybridity and fusion—similar to those on center stage in Malaysia—are found in relatively peripheral arenas outside the more direct control of the Portuguese state. The dominant narrative he describes clearly distinguishes pure and unadulterated Portuguese music that is purportedly born at “home” and rooted in traditions from a peasant past from the lusophone music that is supposedly created outside the geographic bounds of the nation, by people who connect with, but are not really of, Portugal. (See also Klimt) for arguments about authenticity in a migratory context.)

Arguing Connections. The efforts by the Portuguese state to emphasize the hegemonic authority of the diasporic center have been met with a wide range of responses abroad, as official versions of diasporicity have engaged with local arguments. Attention to discursive constructions of diaspora focuses attention on the particular nature of the various transnational connections that have emerged out of these negotiations between center of origin and centers of dispersal. (See Feldman-Bianco, “Brazilians” for a recent analysis of the complex interconnections between Portugal and Brazil.)

Challenges to official discourse were clearly evident in some emigrant communities, as they asserted their own understandings of what it meant to be Portuguese. Noivo describes how Luso-immigrants in Canada and Australia, who remain oriented towards Portugal but do not aspire to a permanent return, have developed a diasporic consciousness that debunks binary notions of center and periphery. She posits an emergent diasporicity that increasingly values relations flowing *across* immigrant communities and emphasizes the commonality of experiences in dispersal, rather than in attachment to and through Portugal. Members of these communities

have retained a symbolic orientation to a common Portuguese origin, but in ways that increasingly contest those radial notions of affinity that would privilege the place of origin over lateral forms of direct attachment among offshoot communities. Noivo probes the ambiguous sentiments many immigrants feel towards Portugal as they process the contradictions among state-promoted ideologies that attempt to incorporate emigrants into the Portuguese nation, the inability of that state to provide socioeconomic conditions that would have made it possible for them to stay in Portugal in the first place, and the antagonisms they experience on their visits home for failing to act like "real Portuguese." The Portuguese in Australia and Canada have shifted commitments to their communities abroad and maintain connections with Portugal that tend to be intermittent and symbolic, while increasingly nurturing a sense of connectedness with other diasporic centers. Thus Noivo's (and Lubkemann's) analyses both introduce sentiments of antagonism and ambivalence into the concept of diaspora, that has hitherto almost solely emphasized positive sentiments of attachment.

Within yet other migrant offshoot communities elsewhere, the official narratives that emanate from the diasporic center have resonated in entirely different ways. Thus, Klimt's earlier account (see note 1) shows how migrants and their descendents in Germany organize their lives and aspirations around a return to their place of origin and engage in a transnational way of life that actively intertwines German and Portuguese spaces. Even after almost four decades abroad, return remains central to these migrants' sense of self. Among Portuguese in Germany, critiques of the Portuguese state largely focus on ways in which the prospect of return and continued connection with Portugal can be better facilitated. In contrast to the Luso-Canadians and Luso-Australians discussed by Noivo, commentary on hostile or unwelcoming behavior by village compatriots in Portugal is notably muted among Portuguese emigrants to Germany. Diasporic discourse in Germany thus tends to de-emphasize evidence that the Portuguese in Portugal exclude and even at times mock their compatriots abroad. It continues to designate Portugal (not Germany) as "home" and does not give much importance to lateral (as opposed to radial) connections across the diasporic web. In other words, the discourse in the German case continues to affirm the primacy of the center.

Positioned Interlocutors. If diaspora is a positioned discourse about connectedness, an important question concerns the authors' positionality vis-à-vis their subjects of inquiry. Each of our very different personal and professional relationships with the Portuguese-speaking world has influenced our selection of research topics, the conversations and relationships we draw on for data, the

interpretations we developed, as well as where our observations are heard and how they are received.

Noivo reflects on how her experience as a Luso-Canadian talking to Luso-Australians profoundly affected her personal sense of belonging, as well as her analytic assessment of the relevance of lateral connections across the Portuguese diaspora. Lubkemann, as an American who grew up and later professionally worked in Lisbon, occupies a position in, but not of the center. He cites a lifetime of relationships, alongside more recent interviews in the field, as his basis for recognizing the discursive transformations in the images of postindependence *retornados* from Africa. Klimt's experience of growing up in an Austrian immigrant family in the US framed her relationships and purview quite differently. Being an immigrant herself allowed for comparative discussions about the experience of dislocation; the fact of not being Portuguese gave her space for asking seemingly obvious questions; being American made critical reflections about life in Germany less awkward to share. Sieber's interest in a Portuguese project was initially stimulated by his many years in the Boston area, where he learned about the Luso-American experience from friends, neighbors, and generations of students. He thus brings a comparative perspective and personal connections not based on blood to bear on his explorations of narrations of Portugueseness. Leal, as a Portuguese academic in Lisbon, is the only author of the diasporic center. His status as a professional from the center, along with his extensive research in the Azores, provided him with an authoritative and in many ways privileged point of entrée with his Brazilian peers who were involved with Azoreanness in southern Brazil. Sarkissian is the only one among us who came to her project not in pursuit of the Portuguese connection but as a Southeast Asianist. Ending up in Malaysia's Portuguese Settlement was the result of her interest in the dynamics of minority identities within postcolonial settings and, as she notes, "a serendipitous conjunction of persons, time, and place" (Sarkissian 4). Prior work in non-Portuguese settings contributes to her ability to situate the Portuguese case within a wider comparative framework.

* * *

Each of us thus has a different, yet complimentary, edge to offer as we take the Portuguese case to wider audiences, and we hope that juxtaposing our respective explorations of this complex set of intersections, with its multiple marginalities and centralities, can teach us something about the contemporary global condition. It is also our collective hope that the approach initiated in these studies of the different configurations of diasporicity within the Portuguese

dispersal will be critically developed in other contexts, further illuminating the interplay between diaspora as a kind of signifying discourse and the arrangements of particular historical spaces and fields of power.

Notes

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