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Reducing difference in the Portuguese empire?

A case study from
early-modern Goa

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In 1951, the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre made a short visit to Goa. This was part of a trip during which Freyre travelled through the Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia to observe the results of the miscegenation process that, in his view, characterised Portuguese colonialism (Castelo 1998; Souza 2008; Bastos 2003; Cardão and Castelo 2015; Bastos 2015). During that visit, Freyre considered that Goan society was one of the best expressions of Luso-tropicalism, of that benign Portuguese colonialism that adapted physically and culturally to tropical contexts, creating mixed societies (Freyre 1953).

Ironically, five years later, the Portuguese geographer Orlando Ribeiro, who, among other Portuguese intellectuals, espoused Luso-tropicalist theories, had a different impression of the same territories and society, warning Salazar about the near absence of Lusophile feelings, and that the Portuguese presence in Goa was in danger (Ribeiro 1999).

How can these different narratives be explained? Was Freyre mistaken? Or was Ribeiro too apocalyptic (which he was not, since in 1961, Goa was annexed by the Indian government)?

To understand the diverse perceptions that Freyre and Ribeiro had, in the same decade, of the same territories and society, it is necessary to go back in history. Freyre and Ribeiro were seeing parts of the end of a process that had started four centuries before. Probably each of them was struck by different outcomes of that process, which led to their contradictory perceptions. In his short visit, Freyre was apparently unaware of the resistance to the Portuguese presence felt by many Goans (Catholic or Hindu, but usually of Indian descent) in those very same years. He was, in fact, “guided” by well-off Goans of Portuguese (perhaps mixed) origin and by Catholic elites of Indian origin completely adapted to the Portuguese imperial idiom, and sometimes the first to trumpet the virtues of the Portuguese empire. Ribeiro, in contrast, had a longer stay in Goa. In his 1956 report, requested by Salazar, his perplexity is clear when faced with the intricacies of Goa. He obviously did not expect to hear the narratives of the many representatives of the demographic majority that had been excluded, from the 16th century onwards, from the benefits that imperial domination brought to a few. In fact, these narratives were in deep contradiction with the Luso-tropicalist fantasies.

In revisiting the first centuries of the Portuguese presence in Goa and the strategies followed by the Portuguese crown in order to keep those territories and people under Portuguese rule, I shall discuss why Freyre and Ribeiro’s perceptions were simultaneously correct, mistaken, and complimentary.

The first two sections will scrutinise the Portuguese physical and cultural miscegenation policies in early modern Goa, and their long-term consequences. How successful were these policies? To what extent the “Lusitanisation” of Indians was complete? Were they full members of the imperial political body, or stigmatised subjects with a liminal status? And what happened to the children of mixed couples (Van Gennep 1909; Goffman 1963; Turner 1969)? In the third section, I argue that the inclusive and assimilationist policies of the 16th century led simultaneously to the reduction of difference and the multiplication of distinctions and hierarchies not only between “colonisers” and “colonised”, but also between “colonised” and “colonised”, in what could be called a colonial expression of the community problems of “the established and the outsiders” (Elias and Scotson 1994). If in the 16th century Estado da Índia, the Portuguese colonists ironically played the role of “the established”, in the following centuries, this equation gained a different complexion, calling into question the expected balance of power, and the necessary hierarchy between “colonisers” and “colonised” (to compare with other imperial experiences, see Stoler, 1995; Belmessous, 2013). Finally, in my fourth section, I shall revisit the initial paradox and draw some conclusions on the tensions and dilemmas between inclusion and exclusion in the early modern Portuguese empire.

MIXED MARRIAGES

Controlling the forms of social reproduction was central to the durability of colonial societies, as pointed out by Ann Laura Stoler and others (Stoler 1995; Stoler 1997; Young 2005). Social reproduction in the imperial territories laid the foundations for the political identity of these places, the rights of belonging to the political community, the terms of this belonging, as well as the location of the various actors in the social scenario. It was the awareness of its significance that led Afonso de Albuquerque (1453-1515), the 2nd viceroy of India, to propose a policy to Manuel I (1469-1521) that, in his view, would constitute the basis of maintaining the new Indian Ocean territories and of further territorial advances in India.

The military and administrative needs of the newly created Estado da Índia (1505) demanded more and more people. However, until the second decade of the 16th century, the majority of Portuguese imperial agents returned to Portugal at the end of their commission, normally staying three or a few more

years. In contrast with the Atlantic islands (the Azores and Madeira) and, from the 16th century onwards, with Brazil, where Portuguese settlement became the rule, the Portuguese presence in Asia was characterised by mobility (Russell-Wood 1992; Russell-Wood 1998).

To overcome these difficulties – few colonists to hold vast and distant territories – Albuquerque proposed to the king of Portugal that his soldiers be allowed to marry Indian women, transforming the newly conquered cities of Goa, Kochi, Malacca and Hormuz, into settlers' societies of a sort. The perception of India as a place of alterity, as worth less than the kingdom, legitimised these marriages of the Portuguese men with (lower caste) Indian women. In addition, the Aristotelian generation theory still prevailing at this period, which stressed the dominant position of the male semen in the moment of generating a child, supported the belief that the blood of the children of these couples was mainly Portuguese (Needham 1959; Darmon 1977; Hespanha 1993; Felici and Siracusa 2000).

The legal terms of the agreement between the Portuguese crown and its subjects who accepted these marriages were exacting, both regarding the more enticing parts of the proposal – the granting of lands and other rewards as compensation for the unions – and the qualities required of the spouses.

The brides should have the fairest skin possible and had necessarily to convert to Christianity (Barros 1988, I, 198; Boxer 1961). Birth (*natio*) and baptism (*regeneratio*) were equivalent identification criteria in Portuguese law, which meant that these women theoretically became Portuguese after their baptism.

The land grants were given under a regime of emphyteusis, by which transmission could only occur through inheritance. This helped to attach the couples and their progeny to the Indian land. The renewal of the idea of *pater familias* with corresponding economic implications, underpinned the legal rules that sustained this policy, where the *topoi* “house”, “land”, “farm” were directly associated with “marriage”.

The immediate results of Albuquerque's strategy were not negligible: in the second decade of the 16th century there were hundreds of mixed couples – from that moment onwards known as the *casados* – and mixed children who were subjects of the Portuguese crown. The majority of them were from Goa, where these initiatives were more successful (over 500 mixed couples), besides unsanctified unions between single men and slave women or concubines. A letter from Diogo Mariz, a clerk of the Goa Council, is very suggestive. According to Mariz, the city of Goa had 1,000 children of Portuguese fathers,

considering them as future loyal soldiers to defend the empire. The other towns under Portuguese rule had fewer *casados*, but there were still a number of children conceived from these unions bearing typically Portuguese names: Afonso, Jacome, Ines, Joana, Brísida, Francisco, Pero, Ana (GTT, 10, n.º 23; IAN/TT, CC, P 2, Mç 3, n.º 154; Mç 17, n.º 27 e 30).

Like their parents, these children had full rights and obligations in matters of public and private Portuguese law. Since Portuguese law did not predict interference in the private affairs of the communities that were under Portuguese dominion but were not Portuguese (or Christian), this legal aspect was not irrelevant (Hespanha 1995; Suárez 1971, 6, § 18-22). At the time, in fact, the Portuguese king exercised direct rule only over a minority (the Portuguese people and the few Indians converted to Christianity) of the thousands of people living in those territories, which meant that nearly all the empire's inhabitants were not, strictly speaking, subjects of the king of Portugal (Thomaz 1994a; Hespanha 1995).

Besides increasing, in demographic terms, the crown's power in those territories, physical miscegenation changed, in the long term, the relation between "colonisers" and "colonised". From the second decade of the 16th century onwards, the community of "colonisers" became more heterogeneous, including a social group of Indian descent, which was, to some extent, the historical proof of what was argued by Freyre. However, in contrast with the positive assessment of Freyre, the malaise towards the *casados* and their children was high, eventually leading to the suspension of Albuquerque's policy of physical miscegenation (which Freyre was apparently unaware of).

Resistance to physical miscegenation started from its beginnings, in India and in the kingdom. First, the parents of the Indian women refused to give their daughters to Portuguese men. Only later, when they saw them "honoured with land and richness that they did not have before", the poorer ones agreed to this kind of union. However, the daughters of upper-caste Indians did not integrate this marriage market, probably because their parents didn't need to have honours and richness, and preferred to keep their own way of life (Barros 1998, I, 198). Secondly, from the outset, there had also been Portuguese nobles who were against such unions, arguing that similar arrangements would neither be welcome nor honoured. Since there were concurrent theories of generation (originated by Hippocrates and Galen), and some of them questioned the male dominance, the fear of blood contamination was also present. In addition, there was the question of colour – the colour barrier –,

which did not have any legal standing, but to which most Portuguese were hardly indifferent (Boxer 1961, 1963). João de Barros, who praised Albuquerque's decisions, complained against these critics, arguing that the Romans had married the Sabine, and nobody evoked those beginnings of Rome as being impure; and in the Portuguese colonisation of the Atlantic islands there had been mixed couples, too. Again, there were no complaints against it (Barros 1998, I, 178, 470-73, 550).

Another important variable to take into account at the moment of analysing the changing perceptions towards the mixed marriages happening in India is the emergence of the ideology of purity of blood. This ideology evoked the alternative generation theories, in which the role of the female substance in the moment of generation is active, too. Purity of blood became hegemonic during the 16th and 17th centuries Portugal, arguing that until the fourth generation the "impure" Jewish male or female blood did not vanish. The outcome of this was that most people of Jewish descent were not eligible for the offices, benefits, privileges and distinctions of the Portuguese crown. The significant presence of Jews and New Christians in the imperial Portuguese territories, as well as the fact that some of the *casados* were married to daughters of New Christians, helped the transfer of this ideology to India, and its impact on the perception of the *casados* and their children (and later, of the Indian converts, too) (Tavim 2003; Rego 2011; Xavier 2011).

Along with this, in Europe there were debates on "the perfect marriage", the proper behaviour of couples, the role of the Christian *pater familias*, and the education of children. These debates that later would have a normative expression in the Tridentine decree entitled *De Reformatione Matrimonii* of 1563, adopted as law in Portugal in 1564 (Fernandes 1995; Caetano 1965; Xavier 2010), fuelled questions such as: How could marriages between unequal parties be considered "perfect unions"? How could an Indian woman recently converted to Christianity raise a child as a true Christian? Or, how could an "Indianised" Portuguese man behave like a *pater familias* (Xavier 2014)?

The perception that the *casados* were gradually becoming less and less interested in the crown's military campaigns, and more involved in their own private projects also contributed to their negative image in the kingdom. Already in 1524, the captain of Goa, D. Henrique de Meneses, had written to João III stating that he could not trust the Portuguese settled in Goa to defend that city, because "they had no honour, instead, they were all married to niggers" (Subrahmanyam 1995).

If increasingly detached from the Portuguese political body, how could these people guarantee the maintenance of the Portuguese imperial presence in Asia?

One of the measures taken by the Portuguese crown to cope with this problem was to suspend the policy of physical miscegenation, while sending Portuguese orphan girls to India intended to marry the sons of the *casados*. Frequently daughters of royal officers who had died in military campaigns in Africa and the Indies, these girls brought with them a dowry of land and the right to collect rents. The sons of the *casados* who would marry them would receive an office in the local imperial administration (Boxer 1961, 1975; Coates 2002). The King's circle of advisers believed that this would help to reconstruct the dependence of the *casados* and their families on the king and the kingdom, recover the "Portuguese identity" of the Portuguese families settled in India, and, simultaneously, to *whiten* their offspring.

Started in the decade of 1540, the new marriage policy continued to be adopted during the Habsburg period (1580-1640), when Portugal was under Spanish dominion. Politically undesirable, the practice of marrying local women did not stop completely. In order to prevent it, in 1596, Filipe II of Spain (and I of Portugal) forbade those that married Indian women to receive any office in the imperial administration. Later, marriages between the Portuguese orphans with people of "lower quality", namely those of Jewish and Indian origins (in general, the descendants of the first *casados*) were also discouraged. In contrast, the crown stimulated the marriages between Portuguese girls and bachelors of "quality" (the children of the second *casados*, considered purer than the first) (APO 1992, f. 3, 620-628; CCLP 1603-1612, 1854, 105; IAN/TT, Livro das Monções, nr. 2, 314; nr. 21, 55v; DRI, 1880, I, 191-203).

Unexpectedly, upper-caste Catholic Indians began to request royal protection for their own marriages, too. Initially these marriages occurred strictly within the Indian community, following caste rules. But from the second half of the 17th century, a new sort of mixed marriage was taking place, namely between poor Portuguese noble men and the daughters of well-off Catholic Brahmans and Charodos, those castes that had adopted the imperial vocabulary and presented themselves as pure blood Indian nobles. The systematic conversion of the local population to Christianity and its structural effects on the local social order played a key role in this new scenario of physical miscegenation.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL CONVERSION

If controlling the forms of social reproduction was central to the durability of colonial societies, governing the forms of cultural reproduction became even more important in some territories of the Portuguese empire. Complementing the whitening and westernisation of the children of the *casados*, the Portuguese crown realised that the conversion to Christianity of the demographic majority (the Indians) was the most efficient tool for maintaining and expanding the Estado da Índia territories. Although this had theoretically been a mission of the Portuguese crown from its initial presence in the Indian ocean (Thomaz 1994b), it was only in the reign of João III that the material conditions for Christian conversion were established, namely the bishopric of Goa in 1534 (which soon became the biggest Archbishopric of the Portuguese monarchy).

In the third decade of the 16th century, João de Barros reproduced the well-known humanist *topos* “a word lasts more than a stone” to defend the linguistic colonisation of India and other territories under Portuguese dominion. Together with other humanists influenced by Erasmus circulating in the king and queen’s circle, Barros also believed that the spread of Christianity would bring universal dominion and ever lasting peace. *Romanitas* and *Cristianitas* intersected, defining the political fabric that nurtured the government of João III, converting the exercise of political power into something quite different from his father’s rule. In that period, the Roman emperors Augustus, Marco Aurelius, Constantine and Theodosius became role models for the construction of the imperial society, which was shared by the inner circles of the crown and by many imperial agents, too (Buescu 1996, 2005; Deswarte 1992; Moreira 1991, Xavier 2008b). In addition to that, the conflicts and wars caused by the religious divisions in Europe reinforced the idea that a prince’s subject should share his faith: the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*. The ideal political community was, therefore, one where all subjects shared the same religion as their prince, the only way to guarantee their political loyalty. In Portugal, as in Spain, Italy, Germany, or England, this principle led to an alliance between political and religious agents and to the use of Christianity as a way to build a certain type of society (Prodi 1994; Prosperi 1996; Hsia 1989; Palomo 2004; Paiva 2006, 2011; Xavier 2008b).

This means that religious conversion became an instrument of politically including Indians, with the goal of, over time, attaining political and cultural

conformity. The arrival of increasing numbers of missionaries in Goa, many bearing papal dispensations that allowed them to engage in judicial and secular activities – i.e. to actively behave as agents of the king – played an important part in this structural change in the exercise of the *imperium* (Xavier 2008b, ch. 2).

First under the orientation of the vicar-general of the Estado da Índia, Miguel Vaz, of the Franciscan bishop Juan de Albuquerque and the Franciscans, and later with the help of the Jesuits, local Goan Hindu temples and objects of worship were destroyed during the 1540s, the local priests expelled and public worship of Indian religions prohibited, in a process of material and symbolic decapitation of the local religious culture (Xavier 2010; Robinson 1998).

Legal violence was also pursued systematically, aiming to promote the full Christianisation of Goan social order. Provisions in 1541 channelled the assets of local temples into Christian ones. These actions were accompanied by others with equally profound impact, covering aspects such as the family, inheritance, land, residence, labour, and political rights. A law signed by Queen Catarina of Austria in 1559 – following in the footsteps of previous legislation – called again for the destruction of all temples, namely those that were hidden in private houses, prohibiting the celebration of any local rite, in public or at home. These and other normative tools intended to “persuade” Indians (and, in particular, Indian elites) to convert to Christianity by reducing their local power if they did not. Significantly, the preambles of many of these orders explicitly stated that “by depriving them of this honour, they shall be more easily converted to our Catholic faith” (APO F. 5, P II, 543-545, 612, 903-903). Other decrees favoured Catholics in the distribution of the most productive lands within villages with Catholic and non-Catholic populations, and subverted the traditional distribution of power, prohibiting the access of non-Catholics to decision-making positions. Ecclesiastical laws, like decree 27 of the First Provincial Council of Goa (1567) reinforced this, when stating that “no office, dignity, honour, pre-eminence or domain shall be given to a non-believer over a believer”, a decree that evoked the *Summa contra Gentiles* of Thomas of Aquinas, and that would have a legal expression in the law of the crown (APO F. 5, P II, 543-545).

In fact, from the moment of their baptism, the Indians of Goa enjoyed, at least theoretically, the same legal rights and obligations as the Portuguese (DRI vol. II, 66-67). For some it meant social mobility, or an unexpected

legal autonomy, as was the case of women converts. If converted, women could access their own parents' inheritance, and take precedence over their non-converted male brothers; and widows were allowed to marry a second time, and to receive part of their husband's inheritance (APO F. 5, I, 171-173; 175-178). Again, as had happened with the *casados*, but with undesirable consequences, to interfere in women's local *status* was to intervene directly in the process of social and cultural reproduction in Goa.

If with the physical miscegenation policy, the number of the king of Portugal's subjects had risen, the increase was drastic after the systematic conversion of Indians: in Goa, from only a few thousand in the mid-16th century, their number increased to over 100,000 by the start of the next century. This meant that in the medium and long run, the people of Goa would be submitted to the same legal and fiscal system, share the same military obligations and owe the same type of loyalty to the king. They would also be educated both as Christians and "Portuguese".

The monarch's inner circle of advisers did not foresee the social consequences of the reordering of colonial society resulting from these policies, namely at the micro-level. In fact, if conversion expanded exponentially the power of the king in these territories, it also reduced the legal and political distance between "colonisers" and "colonised", challenging the position of the first.

The *casados* of mixed origins heavily resented the conversion of the Indians and the legal consequences it entailed. They were already stigmatised because of their physical and cultural Indianisation (Xavier 2014). Because of that, the crown distrusted the level of their loyalty, quality, and "Portugueseness" to perform the best offices of Estado da Índia, choosing, instead, *reinóis*, the Portuguese born in the kingdom (APO F. 5, P II, 543-545). Like the civil institutions, the religious orders also hindered the entrance of mixed blood Portuguese born in India, or did not allow them to occupy higher offices (DRI vol. I, 155-161). If in the beginning, these *casados* were, in the view of the Portuguese crown, "the established", now they too were becoming "outsiders" of a kind.

By the end of 1630s, the anxieties of this group were expressed in a short treatise written by Friar Miguel da Purificação, a Franciscan born in India of Portuguese descent (Machado 1752, vol. 3, 481). His *Relacion defensiva dos filhos da Índia Oriental* (A Report in Defence of East Indian Children) protested the "quality" of the Portuguese born in India, stating, first, that

Portuguese blood did not change under different climatic conditions; and secondly, that the Portuguese born from Portuguese settled in India were neither “mixed” nor “niggers”. Purificação argued that these “Children of the East” were able to govern, and should not be excluded from all honours and dignities, in contrast with the true “niggers” – the Indians –, who should not be allowed to occupy those positions (Purificação 1640, fls. 13, 31, 57v).

Purificação’s arguments denote the criticisms coming from the kingdom, as well as from the ambitious Catholic Indians. Among these, there were those that openly claimed ancient noble origins and purity of blood, knowledge and written skills, arguing that they were, in fact, the best intermediaries of the Portuguese power locally. From the mid-17th century onwards, many of them, like the Brahmans, accused the *casados* of being “sons of niggers and fishermen”, therefore unfit for governing them. Writing his *Espelho dos Bragmanes* (The Mirror of the Brahmans), in Latin and Portuguese, the Brahman Matheus de Castro (1504-1677), the first bishop of Indian origin, started a Brahman literature in European language where their authors legitimised their position within the old social order and inscribed their aspirations in the new one (ASCPF, SOCP 1, “Epistola Domini Mathæi à Castro Episcopi Chrysopolitani, ad Brachmanes, ad rebellionem exhortatoria dicta speculum Brachmanum” fls. 154r-163rv; “Espelho dos Bragmanes”, Portuguese version, ff. 180r-195v).

That some of these aspirations were successful can be interpreted from the words of António José de Noronha, the bishop of Halicarnassus, another Portuguese born in India, who, a century later and with a certain disdain, summed up the position of the local elites. In his *Systema Marcial Asiático* (The Military System of Asia), Noronha explained that “the majority of the natives on the island of Piedade and Chorão bequest to their sons the Books of Law, and in the same place you can see a lot of rich houses: they are lawyers (*Solicitadores das Causas*), chieftains (*Naiques*), baillifs (*Meirinhos*), scribes (*Escrivães*), mayors (*Alcaldes*), and all related” (Noronha 1994, 24-25; Garcia 1872; Pereira 1964-5).

This late 18th century perception of the social position of the “colonised” upper-caste, and the jealousy over their “many rich houses” is ironic. In this period, the Catholic Indian elites rejected the sons of *casados* and agreed, instead, to marry “meritorious Portuguese born in the Kingdom.” This inversion of positions had been witnessed by Giovanni Careri, an Italian traveller who visited Goa in the 17th century and left some interesting observations on its

social organisation (Guglieminetti 1976, 700). It was also supported by the complaints of the *casados* of Goa in this period, as well as by viceroys' decrees on the issue (Frias 1702; Paes 1713; Xavier 2008b, ch. 7, 2012; Županov 2009; Xavier and Županov 2015).

Does this mean that these Indian elites were recovering their pre-Portuguese centrality?

Not completely. If the power of Indian elites increased after conversion, it is also true that their aspirations to equality could not be completely satisfied. Social opposition and reaction to their transformation into a kind of Portuguese was frequent and harsh. Parallel to the raising of upper-caste Catholic Indians – the structural trend that singularises Goan experience when compared with any other within the early modern Portuguese empire –, were the systematic attempts to reinstate difference between “colonisers” and “colonised”.

THE DILEMMAS OF REINSTATING DIFFERENCE

In fact, the Portuguese crown was not completely insensitive to the anxieties of the *casados*, thinking up new ways to prevent the complete integration of Catholic Indians that conversion to Christianity theoretically implied. Further norms – many of them inspired by those in the kingdom to prevent New Christians from having the same rights as old ones – restricted access of the “Christians of the land” to the high local imperial offices, namely the access to military orders, forbidden to people of non-Christian ancestry (former Jews, Muslims and “Gentiles”) (APO F. 2, 115-116; F. 5, I, 390-392; F. 6, I, 739 et seq.; 776 et seq). At the same time, a crown officer called the *Pai dos Cristãos* (Father of the Christians), whose initial mission was to protect the converts from discrimination, was given power to decide who among them could have access to offices (and which offices) in the imperial order. Generally, he channelled the converts to subaltern positions, such as doorman, helper, cleaner, and so forth. Rules such as those forbidding Portuguese from being domestic servants or from working for non-Portuguese, or from being treated by local doctors, also aimed to prop up the imperial hierarchy (HAG, *Assentos da Relação de Goa*, n.º 8779, fl. 109; HAG, *Livro Vermelho*, 1, 6). Through this route, as had happened in the kingdom with the New Christians, Indian converts were given a transitory status, a kind of liminality: they were neither inside nor outside; they were “equal”, but not completely (Fabre 1999).

The local Indian elites did not forget the promises that had been made to them at the outset of Portuguese colonisation. The archives are full of petitions addressed to the king of Portugal that reflect their dissatisfaction, resorting to the dominant political rhetoric in the kingdom, recalling the contract they had made with the monarch, a contract whose violation would free them of their obligations to cooperate (IAN/TT, CC, Parte I, Maço 58, nr. 7; DRI vol. II, 263-264, 412-413).

Since the cooperation of Indians, the demographic majority, was central to the maintenance of Estado da Índia, the crown could not but be sensitive towards the arguments pressed in these petitions. In 1572, King Sebastião wrote to the viceroy Luís de Ataíde, telling him to provide offices to converted Indians who were worthy of them. The same order was repeated ten years later, with Portugal now under Spanish domination (DHMPPO, vol. 12, 252; APO, F. 5, II, 748-749, p. 989). In other cases, the king granted some of the demands from Catholic Indians to be appointed to positions already occupied by *casados*. During the 17th century, against the backdrop of the growing fragility of the Portuguese position in the Indian Ocean (Subrahmanyam 1995; Ames 2000), the aspirations of these local elites were heeded even more. In 1617, Filipe III of Spain (II of Portugal) told the viceroy pointedly that it was impossible to maintain the empire without having local populations content, which required granting them more offices in the imperial order. Seven years later, another royal decree determined that “the Christians of the land shall be vested in the offices of which they deserve”, while at the same time prohibiting the elites of Portuguese origin from enjoying the inverse privilege of acceding to posts occupied by these elites in the pre-existing local order. This means to say that the crown simultaneously guaranteed the old privileges of these elites and granted access to new privileges in order to maintain the rule over the Indian populations (DRI, vol. IV, 109-117; vol. V, 139-140; 374-375. HAG, *Relação de Goa, Cartas, Provisões, Alvarás Régios, Regimentos e Leis, Livro 1*, fl. 137v; *Índice dos Assentos & Registos da Relação de Goa*, n.º 8780, fl. 56, 187, 225).

However, these decisions were not easily implemented, as is demonstrated by Matheus de Castro. Castro had studied humanities in the Franciscan college of the Reis Magos, and wished to continue his education in the college of São Boaventura, where he would have earned higher degrees in order to pursue an ecclesiastical career. However, the Franciscans’ head in India, and the archbishop of Goa, dissuaded him. The archbishop, in particular, was

not keen on the ordination of the Brahmans, considering them intellectually incapable of performing higher positions in the Catholic hierarchy.

With his career possibilities thwarted in the Estado da Índia, Matheus de Castro left for Rome between 1621 and 1622, travelling by land. He crossed the Persian Gulf, stopped in Jerusalem, and arrived at the Papal capital in 1625. In Rome, Castro studied with the Oratorians and was protected by the Barberini family and by the powerful Secretary of the recently established Congregazione della Propaganda Fide. Intended to recover the power of Rome over the religious missions around the world, Portuguese included, the Propaganda Fide took on Castro as its agent, sending him with offices granted by the Pope that challenged the Portuguese ecclesiastic hierarchy and rights. Not accepted by the Goan hierarchy, and after several adventures, Castro wrote his treatise *Espelho de Bragmanes*, exhorting the Brahmans of Goa to fight against discrimination and for a better position in the local imperial order (Sorge 1986; Faria 2007; ASCPE, SOCP 1, fls. 180r-195v).

Matheus de Castro's treatise, like that of Friar Miguel da Purificação and other examples, shows that the choice for reducing the difference between "colonisers" and "colonised" was complex, entailing long-lasting paradoxes and tensions. Legal laws and decrees, explicit social reactions and implicit social norms, as well as institutional procedures, just like the statutes on purity of blood (Olival 2004; Rego 2011), built a complex architecture of distinctions that would allow a complicated combination between inclusion and exclusion, equality and hierarchy.

These tensions were reiterated in a decree of 2nd April, 1761, which basically repeated, now in a more modern language, and excluding the religious variable from it, what had already been defined in the 16th century norms. In the new decree, José I explained that there were many conflicts between the local elites and those from the metropole, and ordered that all Christians born in India, in dominions of the Portuguese crown, be granted the same honours, distinctions, rights and privileges as those born in the kingdom. Beyond this, the king established that the Indian Catholics were to be protected from insults, so that anyone who called them "mestiços" (mixed) or "negros" (niggers) was to be strongly punished (Lopes 1996, 39 and following). This decree demonstrates that the several attempts to reduce difference – the inclusive attitude expressed, to some degree, in the choice of mixed marriages and conversion policies – pulled up discriminatory practices. Instead of transforming them into equals to the Portuguese, the

children of the *casados* and the Indians converted to Christianity were “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhaba 1997, 153). And the constant use of the words “nigger” and “mixed” as an insult demonstrates how physical miscegenation became undesirable. Since the early days, it had existed for pragmatic reasons, and was suspended when the crown thought that it was not needed anymore.

Ironically, these processes also fuelled conflicts within the upper-caste Catholic Indians, namely the Brahmans and Charodos. Both competed intensively to be recognised by the Portuguese crown as the true Indian pure blood nobles, of a long Christian ancestry, therefore combining civil and Christian nobility. Besides also being part of the Catholic Indians’ long process of emergence identified by Antonio José Noronha in his *Systema Marcial Asiatico*, the treatises *Aureola dos Índios* (The Indians’ Halo) by the Brahman, António João Frias, published in Lisbon in 1702, and *Promptuario de Diffinicoes Indicas* (Enchiridion of Indian Definitions) by the Charodo, Leonardo Paes, of 1713, express well the internal competition, within and beyond the empire, between the Indian local elites.

This internal competition continued, with different nuances, in the two following centuries. In fact, the social history of Goa changed significantly, again, from the second half of the 18th century onwards. In this period, the territories of Goa more than doubled. New territories were conquered or annexed (known as “New Conquests”), bringing another relevant demographic change. From that period until the mid-20th century, a great part of the population of Goa was not Catholic anymore (theoretically, at least 90% of Goa was Catholic in the first decades of the 18th century). In fact, conversion to Christianity stopped being a political tool, and the efforts to convert the population of the new territories were scarce. Compared to those previously discussed, these other Indians were of a different sort, indeed more “Indian like”.

This prompted the Catholic Indians of the territories belonging to the Portuguese empire since the 16th century to act openly as “internal colonisers”, now the most fitting intermediaries between the Portuguese crown and the new subjects. At least in this internal scenario, Catholic Indians could play the role of “the established”, relegating the inhabitants of the “New Conquests”, non-Christian, non-Westernised, “uncivilised”, to the place of the subaltern and “outsiders”.

REVISITING FREYRE AND RIBEIRO

The descendants of one or the other of these groups were certainly among those people that Freyre and Ribeiro met in mid-20th century Goa, giving them different versions of the past and of their present condition. That is why neither the sociologist nor the geographer were completely mistaken, or completely correct, but complementary. Their opinions were definitely shaped by their historical knowledge, contexts of interpretation, and direct experience of local Goan society. Goans from the “Old Conquests” and the “New Conquests”, Goans with Portuguese origins or not, Catholics and non-Catholics, from upper and lower castes: the divisions in the local society were immense, but impenetrable at first sight.

Some Goans were more of the Luso-tropicalist type and proclaimed the Portuguese empire as a different type of colonialism, where “colonisers” and “colonised” co-existed peacefully. Since some of the converts increased their local power and riches through the Portuguese presence – and who could rightly be called “collaborationists” –, and that the Goan elites had a special status among all the “indigenous elites” of the Portuguese empire, as many authors have already demonstrated (Silva 2009; Lobo 2013; Oliveira 2015), this interpretation can be considered accurate (Thomaz 1994b).

Others, in contrast, stressed the idea that the Portuguese were racist, and did not want to mix with the locals, especially when they were of a dark colour – which was completely true, too, particularly when we consider the official rejection of physical miscegenation from 1540 onwards, and the constant demand for purity of blood.

And others, namely those coming from the “New Conquests”, had weaker ties with Portugal, the Portuguese people, and the Portuguese culture and empire, remaining almost completely “Indian”. If they were the ultimate “others”, for them the Portuguese represented alterity, too.

Again depending on who they had met, it is not surprising that Freyre and Ribeiro’s views were so different. They only shared with us different stories of an irregular puzzle that still asks to be resolved, a puzzle that was not so singular – if we consider recent literature on Dutch, British and French experiences, for example (Stoler 1997; Belmessous 2013) –, and which reminds us of some of the tensions and dilemmas of contemporary societies, and the side effects of more or less inclusive and assimilationist policies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- APO – Rivara, J.H. Cunha. 1992. *Arquivo Portuguez Oriental*. New Delhi-Madras, Asian Educational Services.
- CC – Corpo Cronológico.

- CCLP – Silva, José Justino de Andrade e. 1854. *Collecção chronologica da legislação portugueza: 1603-1612*. Lisbon : Imprensa de J. J. A. Silva/ Imprensa de F. X. de Souza.
- DHMPPPO – Rego, António da Silva, ed., 1947. *Documentação para a história das missões do padroado português do Oriente: Índia, vol. 12*. Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias.
- DRI – *Documentos Remettidos da Índia ou Livro das Monções, publicados de Ordem da Classe de Sciencias Moraes, Politicas e BellasLettras*, ed. Antonio de Bulhão Pato, Lisbon: Academia Real de Sciencias.
- GTT – *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*. 1960-1977. Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos.
- HAG – Historical Archives of Goa.
- IAN/TT – Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais/Torre do Tombo.

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