Antiracist, modern selves and racist, unmodern others: Chronotopes of modernity in Luso-descendants’ race talk

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A B S T R A C T

I discuss the metadiscursive work in race talk among transnationally mobile Luso-descendants, who frequently compare race and racism in French and Portuguese contexts. Participants’ race talk may index the speaker’s stance toward referent, i.e. racialized others whom they discuss. It may also index the speaker’s demeanor as a racist/antiracist type. As such, the indexicality of Luso-descendants’ race talk is multifocal. Participants shift the indexical focus from referent to speaker, when they invoke personalist ideologies which interpret talk as reflecting the speaker’s inner beliefs about racialized others. Based on assumptions about those beliefs, participants then assign speakers to spatiotemporally locatable types: the French, modern “antiracist,” vs. the Portuguese, nonmodern, “racist.”

1. Introduction

How do people come to understand certain ways of speaking, and certain speakers as racist or antiracist? Recent scholarship has taken the notion of racism/antiracism out of the realm of the psychological, i.e., beyond focus on an individual’s static set of cognitive dispositions, intentions, and beliefs, situating participants’ display and interpretation of racial attitudes in culturally situated, ideologically mediated, discursive interaction (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Bucholtz, 2011; Dick and Wirtz, 2011; Hill, 2008, 2009; Pagliai, 2009, 2012; Reyes, 2011; Van Dijk, 1987, 1993). That said, as Jane Hill has noted, the notion that racism resides in the thoughts and intentions of the individual speaker is a persistent folk belief. Hill describes this belief as part of a language ideology of personalism, i.e. that speech directly reflects an individual’s inner beliefs and intentions (see also Keane, 2002). She explains the role of personalism in contemporary US understandings of racism, which many locate in the mind of the individual, rather than in social practices and structural inequalities. Participants draw from personalist ideologies when they try to “decode” the racist intentions behind a troublesome utterance, or to unmask the utterer as a particular antiracist or racist type (Hill, 2008, 2009; Reyes, 2011). Ultimately, these authors argue that such decoding practices ultimately foreground speakers’ own “white virtue,” rather than elevate people of color, or challenge or dismantle more general racialized social hierarchies.

In this article, I build on discussions of how antiracist discourse often highlights speaker virtue, more than it elevates or displays deference toward people of color (Hill, 2008, 2009; Reyes, 2011; Van Dijk, 1987, 1993). I show how personalism shifts the indexical focus from referent to speaker in race talk among young adult Luso-descendants (LDs), the adult daughters of Portuguese migrants, raised in France. That is, participants shift their attention from the focus of race talk on people of color, to focus of race talk on speaker identity. This article thus shows how personalist beliefs play a powerful, mediating ideological role in making race talk indexically performative of specific social types.

In particular, I examine LDs’ spatiotemporal constructions of antiracist “speaker virtue.” I show how participants situate racist/antiracist speaker identity types chronotopically, i.e. in highly elaborated images of space, time, and person (Agha, 0271-5309/$ - see front matter © 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2013.04.001
2007b; Bakhtin, 1981; Dick, 2010; Gal, 2006). With her description of her participants’ images of racism and racists as marginal relics of remote times and places, Hill (2009) suggests a chronotopic dimension of race talk. I elaborate this point by discussing the meanings of those times and places. My participants understand ways of “doing” race talk as coming in spatiotemporally situated, ideologically ordered pairs (Irvine, 2004, p. 107). They evoke two types of race talk, relative to images of an old-fashioned, rural Portugal and a modern, urban France. Participants themselves may then reflexively interpret race talk by self and others as indexing more or less enlightened, virtuous, and contemporary ways of being, relative to those of a less enlightened, less moral past. Ultimately, participants’ self-presentation as antiracist is part of a larger concern with enacting not only virtuous, but “modern” selves (Besnier, 2011).

I seek to explain two recurrent trends in LD race talk. First, participants frequently present Portugal as more racist and more backward than France, and because they have grown up in France, they are more antiracist and modern. Second, in a task where I asked LD participants to comment on recordings of other LDs, they judged each other as sounding more racist when heard speaking Portuguese, than when heard speaking French. Specifically, LDs sometimes found the same speaker to be open-minded and antiracist in French, and less progressive and more racist when heard describing the same events in Portuguese. I try to account for these systematic differences in self and other perception as racist/antiracist.

1.1. Race talk as a window into presentation of self and other

My interest in LDs’ race talk emerged during a larger study in which Luso-descendants seemed to consistently enact distinct types of locally recognizable personas in stories of personal experience told in French vs. Portuguese (Koven, 1998, 2004a, 2004b, 2007). Both speakers themselves, and a set of listeners who reacted to audio-recordings of the original speakers, would remark that the speakers seemed to transform into a different kind of person in each language. In Portuguese, they would consistently summon up distinct types of “old-fashioned,” elderly, and reserved personas, connected with the rural, migrant, world of their parents. In French, they would evoke for themselves and for listeners of similar backgrounds, more youthful, modern, urban, and rebellious personas, connected with the urban, youthful world of their peers.

In my narrative corpus, Luso-descendants often told stories in which they presented and evaluated “there-and-then” narrated racialized and racist characters, toward whom they took up various current “here-and-now” evaluative stances. Because of their very elaborate enactments and critiques of racist and antiracist personas, it became clear that race talk was a site where processes of experiencing selves and others as particular types came into sharp relief. LDs’ concerns with modernity/backwardness in race talk are connected to larger concerns with modern self-presentation that suffice and extend beyond LDs’ talk about race/racism.

This article also contributes to current discussions of cultural citizenship among transnationals, by attending to how participants construct identity positioning, relative to both “receiving” and “sending” societies. LDs are deeply concerned with constructing likeness to and difference from others in both Portugal and France. Participants’ discussions of French vs. Portuguese racism/antiracism is one site where they position themselves relative to juxtaposed, morally evaluative images of the “sending” and “receiving” society. Through their connections to France, they assume a “modern” antiracist voice; through their connections to Portugal, they have less ready access to an “equivalent” voice, and may evoke a voice attributed to those of a less tolerant, bygone era.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. I explain how notions of indexical order (Silverstein, 2003) help to explain how race talk becomes a sign of speaker demeanor. Ideologies of personalism (Hill, 2008; Keane, 2002), and ideologies that position France as more modern than Portugal play mediating roles in making particular types of language use and language users seem inherently more antiracist and modern vs. racist and backwards. I then show examples of race talk through which LDs ascribe and inhabit French vs. Portuguese, modern vs. backwards, antiracist vs. racist voices. These materials come from the following sources: 1. a corpus of recordings of spontaneous conversation among Luso-descendants; 2. a corpus of interviews Luso-descendants conducted with each other; 3. a corpus of interviews with me, in which I asked Luso-descendants to listen and react to recordings of unknown Luso-descendants’ ways of speaking; 4. fieldnotes of Luso-descendants in a variety of settings. I will focus on the different ways LDs evoke and align with multiple types of racializing and racialized voices across French and Portuguese sociolinguistic contexts. I conclude by discussing the implications of this work for the study of racist/antiracist discourse and for the identity categories transnationals negotiate.

2. Race talk, indexicality, and speaker type

2.1. Stance, category, and indexical order

There has been much discussion in linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic literature about how people link “stance” with “identity” categories (Dubois, 2007; Eckert, 2008; Jaffe, 2009; Ochs, 1990). Following Lempert (2009),

1 This is like notions of temporality (Irvine, 2004, p. 107) and notions of style (Irvine, 2001) more generally.

2 A full discussion of “modernity” is beyond the scope of this article. I draw from Besnier’s (2011) discussion of “modernity” as a dimension of personhood, time, and place that people construct and enact indexically in everyday contexts.

3 Let me be clear that I, as an analyst, will not be determining whether one society is “really” more or less racist. Instead, I examine participants’ constructions of racist peoples, places, and ways of speaking.
stance-taking involves inter- and meta-discursive activity. That is, people re-interpret stance-taking, within and across events, as emblematic of social types. The current article shows how Luso-descendants read (perceptions of) others’ stance-taking as indexing particular categories of people as “racists” or “antiracists.” In my materials, participants re-analyze stance toward non-present racialized others as signaling speaker identity. The notions of indexical order and indexical focus (Agha, 1993, 1994, 2007a; Silverstein, 1985, 2003) help to systematize how participants come to infer identity from stance. Through personalist and chronotopic language ideologies, participants shift the indexical focus of race-talk from signaling speaker’s stance toward racialized others, to the speaker herself as a particular type of person (Agha, 2007a; Silverstein, 2003).

Following Silverstein, people can only “read” the meanings of indexical signs through culturally situated language ideologies. However, such ideologies are never singular or static—across a population, across time, etc. There are often multiple, language ideological frameworks through which people may construe the “meanings” of a way of speaking. The multiple frameworks may stand in dialogic relationship to each other, i.e. they are “ordered,” as people may read one framework through another, like Bakhtin’s peasant who evaluates “languages” through each other (1981, p. 296). Following the serially linked indexical orders discussed in Silverstein (2003), participants may then draw from a subsequent ideological framework (a n+1st order) to reinterpret indexical signs, previously construed through a prior ideological framework (nth order). The n+1st order framework may depend on, coexist with, and in some cases, eventually replace the previous nth order. When speakers become aware of multiple ways of “saying the same thing,” use of each may become a potential index of speaker identity. Silverstein (1985, 2003) discusses this process in the case of gender politics and the case of third-person anaphoric pronouns in American English. Before the 1970s, many interpreted the use of anaphoric “he” in utterances such as “everyone should take his book,” as an index of the speaker’s mastery of standard English. Starting in the 1970s, within a framework of gender equity and inclusiveness, some reanalyzed such uses of “he” through a subsequent indexical order, i.e. no longer as a sign of mastery of standard, but as a sign of the speaker’s stance toward gender equity, and ultimately as an index of speaker’s identity as a sexist. This new indexical order allowed participants to re-interpret how speech indexes social type.

There are parallels in the present discussion of LDs’ race talk. Participants first interpret race talk, such as a speaker’s use of one particular ethnoracial label rather than another to reflect speaker stance toward (or more colloquially, attitude about) a racialized other, referred to in speech. However, participants do not read discursively displayed stance in race talk as transient. Informed by personalist ideologies, they interpret stance as reflecting the speaker’s inner, perduring beliefs about racialized others. Through a personalist interpretation of stance as signaling speaker’s “inner thoughts” (“what he/she really thinks/feels about ‘those’ people”), participants then read race talk as signaling speaker type (“who he/she really is”). People’s appeal to personalist language plays a critical role in shifting the indexical focus from referent to speaker (Agha, 1993, 1994, 2007a; Silverstein, 2003), that is, in redirecting participants’ attention from race talk as displaying stance or attitude toward racialized others, to race talk as indexing the speaker as a particular type of person. This account systematizes previous discussions of how participants often interpret race talk as simultaneously being “about” racialized others, as well as “about” the speaker’s self-presentation. Applying the notion of indexical order allows the analyst to better understand how referent and speaker focus are interwoven, and actually depend one on another to derive their “meaning.”

### 2.2. Chronotopes and indexical orders

Furthermore, participants may understand the social types to which they assign speakers in spatiotemporal terms. As such, this article suggests the centrality of the notion of chronotopes (Agha, 2007b; Bakhtin, 1981; Dick, 2010; Gal, 2006), as organizing and ordering the multiply positioned language ideologies through which participants engage in and interpret each other’s race talk. In other words, when someone comes across as a virtuous or immoral type of speaker in race talk, i.e. sounds like a racist or antiracist, this involves participants’ perceptions of speakers’ alignment with and/or distance from chronotopes as particular culturally situatable, and often juxtaposable “packages” not just of space and time, but also of person (Agha, 2007b).

Specifically, LDs’ race talk critically engages imagined contrasts of Portuguese and French space–time. France and Portugal have often been seen as unequally modern, connected with their different economic situations within Europe. At the time of Luso-descendants’ parents’ departure from rural Portugal for urban France in the 1960s and 1970s, metropolitan Portugal was a poor, agricultural country, under dictatorial rule, sending labor migrants abroad. In contrast, France was enjoying a post-war economic boom, known as ‘les 30 glorieuses’ and was receiving labor migrants from former colonies and Southern Europe.4 LDs’ parents imagined emigration to France as a path to socioeconomic mobility, affluence and modernity.5

My LD participants contrast the virtuous antiracist whom they imagined as urban, French, and modern, relative to the less virtuous, ignorant racist whom they imagine as rural, Portuguese, and old-fashioned. Invoking larger cultural chronotopes through which LDs construct Portugal as less evolved, relative to France (Koven, 2009, in press), and implicitly aligning themselves with the latter against the former, talk about racist and racialized persons is one among multiple sites where LDs perform and interpret citizenship in mundane interactions. In these everyday performances, they implicitly juxtapose France and Portugal, aligning the former with modernity and the latter with backwardness (Besnier, 2011).

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4 In fact Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1994) has called Portugal a semi-peripheral society, at the center of its former colonies, and on the periphery of Europe.

5 See Dick (2010) for a parallel case.
In what follows, I discuss the indexicalities of race talk, as a site not only for the display and inference of racial bias (racism/antiracism), but as a site of struggle over participants’ relationships to national belonging, modernity, and youthfulness. We will see how participants position themselves and others relative to different invoked “types”—the modern, urban, hip, antiracist, and French vs. the nonmodern, rural, racist, and Portuguese. These then become voices that participants can inhabit or which others may ascribe to them.

3. Ethnographic contexts of race, racism, and antiracism in France and Portugal

It is tricky for a North American to write about race and racism in continental European contexts; these very notions may not translate well across national contexts (Beriss, 2004a, 2004b; Bethencourt, 2012; Chapman and Frader, 2004; Pina-Cabral, 2012). As such, I try to address the local meanings and attributions of racism/antiracism.

3.1. Race, racism, and antiracism in France and Portugal

Participants invoke larger cultural models as interpretive frameworks for producing and evaluating various types of race talk. Within France and Portugal, notions of racism and antiracism have been in flux over the past 70 years. In both France and Portugal, debate continues about the legacies of colonialism, and about the status of citizens, migrants and their descendants who may continue to be marked as culturally, linguistically, religiously, and/or phenotypically other. In official discourse in both countries, each society is inherently antiracist or nonracist. In both countries, there is also a tendency to locate racism/antiracism in the mind of the individual social actor, rather than in institutions or more widely distributed social practices (Bleich, 2004; Erel, 2007; Fikes, 2009; Gibb, 2003; Rodriguez Maeso and Araujo, 2010). Finally, particular forms of late 20th century antiracism emerged in both countries, which many interpret as a shift toward European, cosmopolitan, and ultimately modern ways of being. In mid 1990s France and Portugal, when these materials were collected, it had become highly undesirable to be perceived as a racist, and highly desirable to be perceived as an antiracist.

3.2. French antiracism and group difference

In race talk in France, people struggle with how to identify others in terms of essentialized group-linked difference, while still displaying antiracism. For example, France is legally a color blind society, where “race” has no official status (Bleich, 2004; Chapman and Frader, 2004). Because French citizenship has long been understood in terms of voluntary assimilation of the individual to the values of the republic, it is notoriously tricky to discuss or defend group-based (religious, cultural, and/or ethnoracial⁶) difference (Chapman and Frader, 2004). In fact, many in France deplore “American” recognition of racial and ethnic identification, as they believe this inevitably leads to social fragmentation (Lamont, 2004). There have been a series of antiracist movements in France, from those at the time of the Dreyfus affair, to those following the period following World War II, to movements to decolonize in the 1960s, and finally to those responding to the mid 1980s’ rise of the far right National Front (Bleich, 2004; Chapman and Frader, 2004; Gibb, 2003; Lloyd, 1991, 1996, 2003). It is relative to this last wave, that I situate my LD participants’ dilemma of talking about often essentialized group differences in modern, antiracist terms. Many evoke antiracism as simultaneously French, universal, liberating, and ultimately modernizing (Lloyd, 1996).

These struggles to reconcile displays of antiracism with talk about essentialized group differences emerge in both public and mundane talk about the “problems” of the “integration” of people who are visibly “different.” Given the legacies of colonialism, the differences attributed to people identified as belonging to particular groups are currently treated as intrinsically problematic, i.e. those of North African, Antillean, Sub-Saharan descent. The differences of these groups from mainstream French society may be essentialized as “cultural” in ways that may not be not very different from earlier biological essentialisms (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991; Beriss, 2004a, 2004b; Chapman and Frader, 2004; Grillo, 2003; Silverstein, 2005; Taguieff, 1990; Tetreault, 2013).

3.3. Luso-descendants’ position in French spaces of similarity and difference

Where are Luso-descendants positioned in French discussions of group difference? Most LDs identify as white, European and Catholic, and therefore different from those of North African descent. However, LDs may sometimes find themselves declared essentially different from the “Franco-French” population. Regardless of actual legal citizenship, some described being treated as “foreigners.” Some of my participants talked about being phenotypically marked as visibly darker, more hirsute, or more “from the south” than French peers. Sometimes their non-French sounding last-names made them feel separate and different. Some described having been mistaken for North African, and wanting to distinguish themselves from this more historically problematized population. Indeed there have been lengthy scholarly and face-to-face discussions by and about Portuguese in France as a “model minority,” relatively “invisible” and “integrated” relative to other ethnically, nationally, and/or religiously defined communities (Cordeiro and Hily, 1999). With this background, LDs’ own sometimes ambiguous

⁶ Both “race” and “ethnicity” are considered highly problematic terms in France. I use them interchangeably to discuss essentialized group differences which my participants evoke.
positioning in French contexts matters in any discussion of how they position themselves relative to different groups in France, including their commitments to antiracist discourse.

3.4. Portuguese antiracism and group difference

Portuguese frameworks for discussing race and racism parallel and diverge from those in France. There are multiple historical and contemporary ideologies that frame contemporary understandings of race/racism in Portugal. Prior to the contemporary era, relevant ideologies include beliefs about Portuguese ethnic homogeneity (Correia et al., 2005; Maeso Rodriguez and Araújo, 2011: 16), along with Lusotropicalist beliefs about the multiracial, tolerant nature of the Portuguese empire (Fikes, 2009; Freyre, 1933; Peralta 2011; Vala et al., 2008). Finally, in the 1990s, a new form of antiracism emerged (Correia et al., 2005; Fikes, 2009; Vala and Pereira, 2012), when Portugal changed from being the center of a colonial empire to being part of the EU. Some 10 years later than in France, this transition introduced new discourses of tolerance toward those deemed visibly different, in particular those of African descent. As in France, racism is now widely recognized as undesirable and antiracism as desirable. Within this framework, people of African descent are no longer subjects of the Portuguese empire, but immigrants with different “cultures.” Legal nationality notwithstanding, citizenship is thus often implicitly understood racially, with Portuguese citizens (including emigrants and Luso-descendants) imagined as white, and immigrants as Black (Fikes, 2009). Whatever problems accompany these newer understandings, many embrace them as more tolerant, European, and modern. And indeed, researchers are also concerned with determining the level of racial bias in Portugal, relative to those in other EU member states (Correia et al., 2005; Vala and Pereira, 2012). As in France, “cultural racism” may persist (Vala and Pereira, 2012). Similarly, people tend to situate racism in the individual mind as prejudice (Maeso Rodriguez and Araújo, 2010, 2011; Vala and Pereira, 2012). Adopting an antiracist orientation in mid 1990s Portugal signaled an orientation toward Europe and modernity.

This mid-1990s framework may only be partially enregistered in more elite, urban circles throughout Portugal, and to a lesser extent elsewhere in Portugal and the Portuguese diaspora. It coexists with other frameworks, including those that prevailed 20–30 years earlier when participants’ parents emigrated from the countryside. Through their interactions with their parents, with people in Portugal during return trips, and with others in the diaspora in France, my Luso-descendant participants’ different types of race talk may invoke these different historically situated interpretive frameworks. As with the French frameworks for race talk, it is also challenging to balance the tensions between discussing group-linked differences, while displaying one’s commitment to modern antiracism through the available Portuguese frameworks.

3.5. Luso-descendants’ position in Portuguese discussions of difference

Emigrants and their LD children occupy an ambivalent status in Portugal, and are frequently targeted for being linguistically and culturally different from Portuguese who did not emigrate (see Koven, 2004a, in press). Those in Portugal may be perplexed by LDs’ linguistic and cultural difference, as there is a widespread belief that those in the diaspora should bear an inherent likeness to nonmigrant Portuguese (Koven, in press). Therefore, their whiteness is not in question in Portugal. Instead, LDs and nonmigrants are concerned with LDs’ modernity and backwardness relative to their emigrant parents and relative to nonmigrants.

Furthermore, discussions of modernity vs. backwardness recur across Portugal and the diaspora. Since Portugal’s decolonization, the end of the Salazarist dictatorship, membership in the EEC and EU, and rapid economic development, many seek recognition of Portugal’s transformation into a modern, developed European democracy. Charging others with being nonmodern is a common activity. This criticism can be transposed across participant frameworks, where the critic, positioned as modern, laments the backwardness of others: nonmigrant urban Portuguese may complain about nonmigrant rural Portuguese; nonmigrants may complain about emigrants, for evoking an ambivalently remembered rural peasanthood (Gonçalves, 1996); Luso-descendants may accuse nonmigrant Portuguese of greater backwardness than those in France. Contrasting the modern self with the more backward other is a general practice, which LDs enact in their talk about racism and antiracism. Specifically their concern with their own and others’ relative modernity indexes their simultaneous connections to multiple, broader, hierarchically constructed paired identity categories—i.e. French vs. Portuguese vs. European; emigrants vs. nonmigrants; urban vs. rural; youthful second generation vs. older first generation migrants. This discussion of French and Portuguese contexts of antiracism and identification of group-specific differences form the backdrop for discussion of LDs’ race talk.

4. Luso-descendants’ repertoires of French and Portuguese ethnoracial labels

My LD participants encounter the dilemma of how to discuss group-linked differences, while displaying antiracism. They were very sensitive to the different ways people may display their attitudes toward different racialized others, or more precisely, to people’s displays of (anti)racist stances toward people who were phenotypically marked. One way in which people do this is through use and selection among racial labels. Of course ethnoracial labeling is only one strategy for “doing” race

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7 Lusotropicalism is an ideology that the Portuguese are inherently nonracist, because of the exceptional ease with which they interacted with those in the colonies. Salazar appealed to Lusotropicalism to justify maintenance of its colonies in Africa as an expanded, multiracial version of Portugal.
talk, and must be considered in its discursive context. However, by making race salient, merely using a racial label may present interational challenges, as noted for US-based contexts (Bucholtz, 2011; Bucholtz and Hall, 2008; Pollack, 2005). And following Silverstein (1981) and Errington (1988), as easily isolable lexemes, ethnoracial labels are an easy focus of speaker attention. My participants were very reflective about the potential indexicalities of different labels, both for what the use of a particular label may reveal about the speaker’s stances toward racialized others, and about their own virtue as antiracists. As I argue, these labels’ indexicality is multifocal, as their use can be interpreted as referent focused—a sign of the speaker’s stance toward the often non-present racialized person or group referred to (Agha, 1993, 2007a). Their use can also, simultaneously be re-interpreted as speaker focused – a sign of speaker identity (Agha, 2007a; Morford, 1997; Silverstein, 2003).

4.1. French ethnoracial labels

In my materials, participants were most sensitive to labels for nonwhite individuals of African descent. In Table 1, I list the different ethnoracial terms my LD participants recognized and/or used for those of African descent, as documented in conversations and interviews with me and with other LDs. I list whether my LD participants used the term, its referent-focused and speaker-focused indexicality.

I never heard participants use the nègre in their own mouths, though they indirectly showed their awareness of it, by quoting it as an off-limits term. Its referent focus is considered highly pejorative. It may also be heard as an index of an old-fashioned, racist speaker identity, linked to a French colonial past. LDs interpreted noir, as relatively neutral, in terms of referent and speaker focus. By itself, it displayed neither racist nor antiracist stance or speaker identity⁸; black, from English, could index a positive, even celebratory stance toward the person of color to whom it refers. The use of black may also index the speaker as antiracist, youthful, and hip. Africain may index a speaker’s neutral and/or positive stance toward the person referred to, highlighting that person’s non-European continent of origin, rather than skin color. Africain could also index the speaker’s more general antiracism. And finally de couleur could index a positive speaker stance, and a scholarly, antiracist identity. As such, we see how my participants understood ethnoracial labels through the multifocal indexicality described above—signaling neutral, positive, or negative stance toward the racialized person/group referred to, while also signaling the speaker as more or less youthfully antiracist, scholarly, and/or modern.

4.2. Portuguese ethnoracial labels

In my corpus of recorded interviews, conversations and fieldnotes, I heard participants use both preto and negro to refer to individuals and groups of African descent. There was more controversy over the indexicalities of these Portuguese terms than we saw for the French terms. Through their use of Portuguese ethnoracial labels, people may display and infer each other’s alignments with older pre-1990s frameworks vs. modern antiracism.

What are the indexicalities of preto and negro, to Luso-descendant participants, to nonmigrant Portuguese speakers in Portugal and to first-generation Portuguese migrants in France (see Fikes, 2009, pp. 51–55)? Table 2 presents my participants’ use of these terms, as well as their potential referent-focal and speaker-focal indexicalities. Most LDs reported growing up having heard preto as the term used by their parents. Indeed preto was relatively widespread in Portugal of the 1960s and 1970s, when my participants’ parents emigrated. Many of my participants’ fathers spent time or completed military service in Africa, and were heirs of colonial racial discourses that predate the more recent shift to antiracist multiculturalism. And indeed, for some LDs, this is the only Portuguese term they know, and as such, they may interpret preto as neutral. Some LDs may not have access to the indexical order of modern 1990s Portuguese antiracism through which to evaluate it as pejorative.

⁸ This contrasts with the usage of the young French people of North African and Sub-Saharan African descent with whom Fagyal (2010, p. 86) worked. Use of Noir, even among participants themselves of Sub-Saharan African Descent was taboo, whereas the term verlan Renoi, (inverting the syllables), was tolerated. Fagyal’s participants’ different usage shows how locally specific particular enregisterments may be.
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grants and all nonmigrants in Portugal).
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negative stance toward the person referred to, and indexing the speaker as old-fashioned, rural, and racist.
those LDs aware of
from urban, middle class Portugal, and age-matched peers encountered during summer trips to Portugal, some (but not all)
ultimately allows the LD speaker to present herself as more progressive than the discursively constructed Portuguese figures.
We see LDs evoke chronotopes of modern French antiracism and backward Portuguese racism in the following excerpt,
5.1. Participants position Portugal/Portuguese as “more racist” than France
In talk with each other and with me, participants regularly compared French and Portuguese inter-group/interracial rela-
tions, histories, and attitudes, often describing France as more “progressive,” “open-minded” antiracist than Portugal. Of
course, comparing racial imaginaries and realities across countries is no simple matter (Vala et al., 2012). I am not arguing
whether France is “really” less racist than Portugal. Instead, I address participants’ attributions of racism/antiracism. Having
grown up in France, where antiracist campaigns and associated ways of talking arose earlier and circulate more broadly, some
of my participants judged Portugal as reactionary through what they perceive to be more progressive French ears/eyes. This
however, many come to either evaluate preto through modernist Portuguese antiracist ears, and/or through modernist
French antiracist ears (even in the absence of access to modern urban Portuguese registers of antiracist discourse). In the first
case, LDs are not necessarily limited to their parents’ ways of speaking and evaluating Portuguese. Many aspire, if not always
successfully, to speak Portuguese like young urban middle-class Portugal. Through trips to urban Portugal, Portuguese teachers
from urban, middle class Portugal, and age-matched peers encountered during summer trips to Portugal, some (but not all)
were aware of the contemporary urban shift away from their parents’ use of preto, to negro, to index modern antiracism. To
those LDs aware of preto and negro as alternate ways of referring to a person of color, they may interpret preto as indexing a
negative stance toward the person referred to, and indexing the speaker as old-fashioned, rural, and racist.
But even to LDs who do not consistently recognize or produce negro as a register alternate of preto, they may still judge
preto through French modernist frameworks.9 Through its associations with their parents, whom they often view as reaction-
ary, LDs may interpret preto through French modernist frameworks as evoking negative stance and racist speaker type. And in
addition to hearing the utterer of preto as backward and racist (as one might through the post 1990s Portuguese framework),
LDs may also link backwardness and racism to an imagined homogeneous Portugueseness, (conflating older first-generation mi-
grants and all nonmigrants in Portugal).
Participants’ ethnoracial labeling thus may index speaker’s stance towards racialized persons, as well as the speaker’s
more or less modern, more or less youthful, and more or less Portuguese or French identity. My LD participants often eval-
uate Portuguese race talk as old-fashioned through French ears. Through the intersecting lenses of personalist language ide-
ologies that read talk as reflecting individual intention and belief, and chronotopically mediated ideologies that read
particular types of French and Portuguese as more or less modern, LDs remain vigilant for signs of racial bias, and of speaker’s
backwardness. And some may link the backwardness not just to a remote time and place within Portugal, but to Portugal
more generally.

5. Ascribing and inhabiting racist and antiracist speech and identity

5.1. Participants position Portugal/Portuguese as “more racist” than France

In talk with each other and with me, participants regularly compared French and Portuguese inter-group/interracial rela-
tions, histories, and attitudes, often describing France as more “progressive,” “open-minded” antiracist than Portugal. Of
course, comparing racial imaginaries and realities across countries is no simple matter (Vala et al., 2012). I am not arguing
whether France is “really” less racist than Portugal. Instead, I address participants’ attributions of racism/antiracism. Having
grown up in France, where antiracist campaigns and associated ways of talking arose earlier and circulate more broadly, some
of my participants judged Portugal as reactionary through what they perceive to be more progressive French ears/eyes. This
ultimately allows the LD speaker to present herself as more progressive than the discursively constructed Portuguese figures.
We see LDs evoke chronotopes of modern French antiracism and backward Portuguese racism in the following excerpt,
where two LDs present themselves in the narrating Frame as antiracist, and the narrated Portuguese characters as racist. G
was interviewing S about her bad experiences in Portugal. S told a story about her encounter with a Portuguese character
whom she presented as racist, which led her to characterize all Portuguese as racist. Because of the stance he takes toward

9. When I queried LD participants about this, some in fact believed negro to be more problematic, because of its formal similarity to the extremely pejorative
French nègre. Some LDs may then actually say preto, to display their antiracism, without knowing its changed indexicalities to many Portuguese speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese Ethnoracial term</th>
<th>Used by</th>
<th>Referent-focused indexicalities</th>
<th>Speaker-focused indexicalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preto</td>
<td>LDs’ parents use; Some LDs may use</td>
<td>Neutral for some</td>
<td>Neutral for some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some may try to avoid</td>
<td>Negative stance for others, evoking pre 90s’ colonial era racism</td>
<td>To urban, Portuguese elites, post-1990, speaker is a backward racist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signaling backward racism for urban Portuguese and to some LDs</td>
<td>Speaker may be older. Speaker may also be imagined as rural and uneducated. Neutral with respect to speaker’s nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signaling backward, racist, and Portuguese for to some LDs</td>
<td>To post 1990s urban Luso-descendants raised in France, speaker is backward, racist, older, and also potentially Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negro</td>
<td>Urban Portuguese elites; Some LDs may use</td>
<td>Antiracist, stance</td>
<td>Speaker is antiracist, modern, and oriented to urban Portuguese norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some LDs may not use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative, racist, through association with French nègre</td>
<td>Speaker is racist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Luso-descendants’ Repertoires of Portuguese Ethnoracial Labels
people of color, S and G perceive him as a racist type. Both LD participants position themselves as different from those in the nominally presented, racist image of Portugal, and like those in the presented, antiracist image of France.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative about Racism in Portugal</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-mm, ouais, c'était cet hiver euh, je je je parlais avec quelqu'un que je je trouvais bien, quoi, c'est un, ch' trouvais qu'il l'air intelligent, en plus c'est ça qui m'a déçue, il avait l'air intelligent et puis euh, on commence à parler ouvertement, et puis euh, chais plus pourquoi, on parlait de noirs, on commence à parler de noirs</td>
<td>S-mm, yeah, it was this winter um, I I was talking to someone I thought was a good person, y'know, it's a, I thought he seemed smart, on top of that, that's what disappointed me, he seemed smart and then um we start talking openly, and then um, I don't remember why, we were talking about Black people, we start talking about Black people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-mh</td>
<td>G-mh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-après il fait, “Mais moi, Suzanne, chuis pas raciste, hein,” et moi je fais, “C'est très bien ça, moi non plus, c'est très bien, c'est l'ouverture d'esprit, c'est très bien,” après il fait, “mais, mais avoue, quelque chose, Suzanne, ben, mais mais les les les noirs sont moins intelligents que les blancs, non ?” alors il m'a sorti ça comme ça, “Chuis pas raciste,” et après il me sort ça comme ça, donc ça m'a, ça m'a vraiment déçue, ç-, j'ai trouvé ça nul, quoi, j'entends</td>
<td>S-after he's like, “But, Suzanne, I'm not a racist, eh.” And I'm like, “that's great, me neither. That's great, that's open mindedness, that's great.” After he's like, but, but admit something, Suzanne, well, but but black people are less intelligent than whites, right?&quot; so he blurts out to me that like that,&quot;I'm not a racist,&quot; and that he blurts out to me that like that, so that that really disappointed me, I found that lousy, y'know, I hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- G- [mh</td>
<td>- G- [mh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-de gens, en plus là-bas, dire des trucs comme ça, ils se disent pas racistes, p'ce que c'est mauvais, de dire G-[bien sûr</td>
<td>S-of people on top of that over there say things like that, they say they aren't racist, because it's bad to say G-[of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-[qu'on est raciste, mais ils t' sortent des p'tits trucs comme ça qui, en plus, c'est pas la peine de discuter, p'ce que c'est jamais les mêmes euh, (.) les mêmes opinions puis</td>
<td>S-[ that you're racist, but they blurt out little things like that to you, on top of that, it's not even worth discussing because it's never the same opinions um (.) the same opinions then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-mh</td>
<td>G-mh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-on voit pas pareil, nous, chais pas, chais pas,(.) p'ce que nous, on est quand même euh habitués, j'ai l'impression, on est habitués, 'êt entouré, on a, on a</td>
<td>S-we don't see things the same, us, I dunno (.) because we are totally used to, I feel like, we're used to, being surrounded, we have, we have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-[oui bien sûr</td>
<td>G-[yes, of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-[on a plein, mais eux, j'ai l'impression qu' non(.) i' veulent pas les choses comme nous, chais pas</td>
<td>S-[ we have tons, but them, I don't think so (.) they don't want things like us, I dunno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-et ça se passait aussi no Alentejo ((PA))</td>
<td>G-and that also happened in Alentejo ((place name said in Portuguese))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-non, ça se passait à Lisbonne</td>
<td>S-no, it happened in Lisbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-ah ouais</td>
<td>G-oh yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-en plus</td>
<td>S-on top of that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-[en étais sûre, quand tu m'en parlais, je S-ah ouais ?</td>
<td>G-I was sure, when you were talking to me about it, I S-oh yeah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G- je voyais ça tout à fait à Lisbonne, ouais</td>
<td>G- I totally imagined that in Lisbon, yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-c'est à Lisbonne</td>
<td>S-it's in Lisbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-mh, (.) d'accord .</td>
<td>G-mh (.) okay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S volunteers a story about a conversation with someone in Portugal. S presents herself as having been disappointed by her Portuguese counterpart's attitudes, both at the time of the narrated event, and in her current interaction with her LD interviewer. She condemns him to the interviewer, because of her perception of his attitudes toward non-present “Noirs.” She then turns him into an example of a type: the Portuguese racist.

She narrates him initially as a potentially antiracist modern Portuguese person. He had seemed “intelligent” and talked “openly” with her.10 As noted by numerous scholars (Bakhtin, 1981; Besnier, 1993; Buttny, 1997; Goffman, 1979), speakers

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10 Note some of the interactional strategies she adopts to say that the two narrated characters (her Portuguese interlocutor and herself) started a conversation about noirs, in itself a relatively neutral instance of racial labeling, roughly translatable as “black people.” However, perhaps because in her interaction with a fellow LD, race talk itself may be interactionally risky (Bucholtz, 2011), she repeats herself, saying she doesn't remember anymore how they began this topic (chais plus pourquoi I don't remember why). Her interviewer responds, with a back channel, Perhaps S is reflecting any criticism for having even initiated a conversation about race.
often use quotations to evoke images of types of people, while implicitly taking and inviting evaluative stances toward such types in the current interaction. S quotes this character in a way that condemningly presents him as racist (see Buttny, 1997). She first quotes his antiracist declaration, followed by her quoted approval. She next quotes him saying something that is decidedly incongruous with an antiracist persona. S has changed her mind about him, and concludes that he is in fact a different socially locatable, undesirable type. S, on the other hand, presents herself as antiracist in both the narrating interaction with her LD interviewer, and in her interaction with the gentleman in the narrated event.

S follows up this quoted exchange with a segue into a comparative, general discussion of Portuguese people as more racist than French people. As she moves from her narration of this incident with a single individual, to generalizing remarks beyond this narrated encounter, she switches from “I found that lousy, you know, I just found that it’s bad.” to a habitual present tense, “j’entends plein de gens, en plus, là-bas, dire des trucs comme ça” I hear lots of people, on top of that, over there saying things like that.” Her counterpart has become a particular type, as the rest of her talk is about “them” and what “they” do in a nomic present (Silverstein, 1993), making his statement somehow typical, “ils se disent pas racistes” (they say they aren’t racist), because it’s bad to be racist. Throughout the interaction, her LD interviewer assents, displaying her recognition of the interviewee’s typification. She continues to juxtapose “them over there” with “us.” “Us” may designate both the interviewee and interviewer, Luso-descendants who live in urban France, and/or people in urban France more generally. “We” don’t see things the same way, we are accustomed to being surrounded, they don’t see things like us.” The interviewer again assents with this contrast between “them” in Portugal and “us” in France. Note that the interviewer then wants to ascertain where in Portugal this narrated and enacted conversation occurred—in a more rural, remote region or in the urban capital Lisbon. The interviewer suggests the relevance of the rural vs. urban distinction to summoning up an image of this racist, Portuguese character. In this exchange, these LD women thus summon up a “racist” Portuguese persona as a type in Portuguese space–time, different from the “us” of the immediate interaction, and implicitly also, of modern, urban France, which the interviewee claims is more tolerant, because of being “surrounded.” (Note that the notion of being surrounded itself may evoke notions of a different implicit “us” and “them.”)

I will note that when S was subsequently interviewed by a different LD interviewer about the same incident, the second interviewer also appeared to recognize a similar “type,” but also added “são sobretudo os mais velhos que respondem mal assim” it’s especially the older people who respond badly like that.” Like the first interviewer, the second interviewer also recognized a type whom she explicitly situated in the elderly generation, nuancing somewhat the interviewee’s typification of all Portuguese. Relative to this narrated gentleman and the type he is made to embody, these LD women—interviewers and interviewee—can then position themselves as more virtuous (Hill, 2008), more sincerely antiracist than a Portuguese “them.”

In such stories about Luso-descendants’ encounters with racist others in Portugal, the participants conjure up and jointly recognize racist types presented as Portuguese, situated either in a different (national) space or in a different generational cohort, from which they collaboratively distance themselves. With their exposure to urban France, they are different from these Portuguese types. France and Portugal, French and Portuguese are presented as distinct places and peoples. In these examples, relative to narratively presented racist others, situated in a distinct place, LDs can do being modern/antiracist with each other in the here-and-now.

Note also, that in stories like this, Luso-descendants narrated interactions between themselves and implicitly, white Portuguese characters. These are not directly stories of interracial interaction, as characters of color only emerge as non-present generalized types toward whom white Portuguese characters display disdain. Such stories construct contrasting social types in nationally and historically situated space and time: narrated racists social types that are Portuguese and backwards, and narrating antiracist social types that are French and progressive. This type of race talk becomes a way that LDs position themselves relative to their parents’ sending society and French receiving society. My LD participants distinguish themselves from those in Portugal. Their antiracism is more “evolved.” They repeatedly link narrated and narrating participants’ stances toward people of color with speaker identity.

5.2. Adopting one’s “own” “Portuguese” voice in race talk

In the above materials, we saw LDs’ perception of French antiracism and Portuguese racism as something that they discussed in relation to distinct places and groups of people, relative to which they could clearly separate or align themselves. They took stances toward (their perceptions of) other people’s stances toward racialized others.

However, things can get blurry. A Luso-descendant might herself partially appropriate or evoke this spatio-temporally situatable voice of old-fashioned “Portuguese” racism through code switching. As scholars of code switching have long noted, in some instances different “languages” become indexically associated with different locally recognized social types (see Woolard, 2004 for an excellent synthesis). The distinction between French antiracism vs. Portuguese racism and its links to old-fashionedness vs. modernity could also be recursively projected (Irvine and Gal, 2000) onto the two languages, so that the contrast could emerge as an image of the two voices in the same utterance, from the same speaker.

In my field notes, I noticed multiple instances where LDs would switch to Portuguese, when making more disparaging comments about racial minorities than I ever heard them make in French. In one instance, three LD friends were jovially talking about attending an event in a Parisian neighborhood that they deemed a little “dangerous.” One woman switched from

11 Brodkin (1994) discusses how her grandmother would code switch to Yiddish from English to make disparaging comments about African Americans.
French to Portuguese to say that the area was dangerous because of the presence of "os pretos," the older, and potentially more derogatory racializing Portuguese term for people of African descent. The other participants responded with giggles. Said in Portuguese, no one appeared to respond to her utterance as troublesome. However, it is extremely unlikely that she would or could have said anything remotely equivalent in French. In French, this would have likely elicited strong sanctions from the other participants. And in other French-speaking contexts, I heard this same woman articulate strongly antiracist positions. However, by saying os pretos, in this way, in this context, she adopted a linguistically mediated voice that was recognizable to her peers, perhaps as an ambiguously, or at least partially ironic mimicry of something their parents might have said in Portuguese. In such switches that evoke a particular enregistered "voice" of a stereotypic-chronotypic figure of personhood distinct from the surrounding speech, the speaker’s distance from and responsibility for the portions of the utterance in Portuguese become ambiguous (see Hill and Irvine, 1993). It is unclear how fully aligned the participants are with this voice that they might otherwise condemn from someone else. Because it was said playfully, it is unclear that the speaker was held responsible, for either the charged potential referent-focal indexicalities, displaying stance toward racialized figures, or speaker focused indexicalities, through which participants could have interpreted the utterance as a sign of the speaker herself embodying the type of the Portuguese racist.

In the previous examples, LD participants’ display some metapragmatic awareness of particular types of “Portuguese” voices from which they distance themselves, or as in the last example, that they at least do not fully appropriate as their own. To variable extents, this “voice” is placed in the mouths of types of people situated in a different time (their old fashioned, rural parents from a different generation) and/or place (Portugal vs. France).

### 5.3. Using and attributing French, modern antiracism/Portuguese backward racism to other LDs

However, at other moments, these indexical associations of language, persona, time, and place could be activated even more fully so that LDs might perceive each other as completely inhabiting a “racist” voice, when speaking Portuguese and/or using particular Portuguese ethnoracial terms, or French-identified “antiracist” voice, when speaking French.

I particularly noticed this during a larger study mentioned above (Koven, 1998, 2007). In a study about language-specific forms of self-presentation, women were interviewed in both languages, telling in one language and then retelling in the other, a series of stories of personal experience to two different Luso-descendant interviewers of similar background. Participants were not specifically asked for stories about racism or interracial contact, though that was a common, spontaneously chosen topic.

I also conducted a follow-up study where different Luso-descendants from the same background, unknown to the original speakers, listened to French and Portuguese versions of the same stories, and commented on how they perceived the recorded speakers and the various characters in the stories. Both the narrative study and the follow-up listener reaction study provide rich materials about how participants engage in race talk in French and Portuguese contexts, and how listeners inferred the original speakers' identities and attitudes.

In particular, six of the 23 participants recounted experiences of difficult interracial contact. In each of these, the storyteller reported an event in which she presented herself as having been verbally or physically threatened by a character identified as non-white. These stories are remarkably similar to each other. Each presents encounters with a racially identified character who was typically presented as male, physically, or sexually aggressive. These stories racialize the antagonist in both languages (Bucholtz, 2011). Across these stories, in both French and Portuguese tellings, the female LD interviewee invokes the female LD interviewer to align with her, both as current narrator and as a past narrated, victimized, white character. Interviewees also invite interviewers to align against narrated non-white characters, often presented as violent.

However, I have found distinctive patterns between the French vs. Portuguese tellings of these interracial encounters, both in speakers’ discourse strategies in the narratives, and in listeners’ reactions to the narratives. More specifically speakers consistently use ethnoracial labels in French that index them as youthful, modern antiracists, whereas their choices in Portuguese do this less, using older forms. The following excerpt shows portions of one speaker’s French vs. Portuguese tellings of and interracial encounter in French vs. Portuguese, to which I subsequently elicited listener reactions.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Telling of Interracial Encounter</th>
<th>Portuguese Telling of Interracial Encounter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A- j’étais, il y a, j’étais jeune (.) je devais avoir quinze ans, seize ans, on a décidé euh (.) d’aller dans une soirée zouc (.)</td>
<td>A- foi uma (.) je uma soirée (.), une une soirée (.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-mh=</td>
<td>qu’ era (.) só de pretos (.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A= tu sais, une soirée euh (.) ‘fricaine?</td>
<td>música, sabes zouc música assim de- da Martinique, de- da Guadeloupe, isso tudo,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-ouais ouais</td>
<td>e então ? eu fui mais uma prima minha (. ) um amigo ( . )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 A simplified transcript of the entire story appears in Koven (1998).
A- donc je débarque, moi, avec un ami, une amie (.) Puis, sur le coup euh(.) ou quand je commence à danser, arrive vers moi un(.) ben un Black, ’p'qu'ils étaient tous Blacks, on était les seules Blanches' (.) vers moi ? (.) ba et il m’invite à danse:r, e fómos(.) fó?mos dançar, “prontos” (.)

então, num momento, eu ’stava a dançar (.) houve um um Preto que me convidou?

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English translation of French</th>
<th>English translation of Portuguese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-I was young, (.) I must have been fifteen, sixteen years old, we decided uh (.) to go: to a zouc party (.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it was a, (.)a party(in French), a party(in French) (.), that was, (.) only with Pretos(.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-=you know, an (.) African party?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-yeah, yeah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-so I show up (young/fam), me with a friend(male), a friend(female), then at the moment (.) that I start dancing, comes over to me a(.) well a Black, 'cause they were all Black, we were the only whites(women) (.) over to me ? (.) well and he asks me to da:nce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there was a a Preto who asked me to dance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, beyond racial labels, the original speaker used a range of strategies to present self and other. In French and Portuguese versions of both narratives, talking about the first speaker, she engages in interlocutory work in the talk that precedes and follows the use of the racial labels, with discourse markers, parenthetical remarks, and repetition. Note however, that in the French examples, the speakers use ethnoracial labels to identify the male antagonist and the context: 'fricaine, Black, zouc; In the Portuguese excerpt, she says preto, and mentions a connection to Martinique, Guadeloupe, the French West Indies, and isso tudo/all that.

And indeed, listeners generally reacted strongly to something in these excerpts, saying that they liked the recorded speaker better in French, because she seemed more open-minded and less racist. Note the following reactions of two listeners. The first comments on the French telling, making precisely this point. Note how she reprises the same term the speaker used, “Blacks,” with no condemnatory remarks.

Listener Response to French telling

T-pa’ce qu’elle va dans cette- tu vois y a pas d’aprioris de racisme ni rien, elle va dans cette boîte, y a que des blacks. bon, ça la gêne pas ((mouth noise)) .okay,il vient l’inviter. elle accepte. elle aime bien danser. elle se dit, « pourquoi pas machin, » …
donc tu vois elle est assez ouverte euh d’esprit

T-because she goes to this—you see there’s no prejudice racism or anything, she goes to this club, there are only Blacks okay that doesn’t bother her ((mouth noise)). okay he asks her to dance. she accepts she likes to dance. she says to herself, “why not and all okay,” …

so you see she’s pretty open minded.

This listener's remarks engage three interrelated speech events: 1. her interview with me in French, 2. her evaluative description and performance of the recorded speaker's conversation with her Luso-descendant interviewer, and 3. the original narrated event between the speaker as night-club goer in interaction with her racialized antagonist. The listener animates and aligns with the interviewee in both narrating and narrated events. The listener even quotes the original speaker. Note how the listener also makes inferences about the speaker in general—that she has no racism, and is an open-minded person, linking stance toward the racialized character to the speaker’s identity.

Let us now turn to a different listener’s comments in response to the Portuguese version.

Listener Response to Portuguese Telling

R-au début j’ai pas l'impression d’écouter la même personne, là je dirais MK-(unclear)
R-elle aime pas beaucoup les noirs, franchement, R-at the beginning I didn’t feel like I was listening to the same person, there I’d say

R-she doesn’t like Blacks very much, honestly, I (….) sh-
The second listener perceived enough inconsistency between the French and Portuguese tellings, that she reported feeling like she was listening to a different person, with different stances toward the racialized character, and ultimately different displays of racist/antiracist identity. Note how she evaluates and positions herself relative to the recorded speaker, in her interaction with me.

We have striking contrasts in the listener commentary about the recorded speakers’ displays of stance and identity. In reaction to the French version, the first listener seemed to approve of the speaker, highlighting that the recorded speaker was and is open-minded, has no racial prejudices, and is otherwise reasonable. In reaction to the Portuguese version, the second listener disapproved, and decodes the recorded speaker as a racist type.

And note the elements listeners cite to justify their reactions. We see the listener’s talk about the recorded speaker's repeated, unmitigated use of the racial descriptor (pretos). The second listener then makes explicit her own self-positioning/distance relative to the original speaker—she (the listener) is antiracist, and doesn’t like those who aren’t. (Here she appears to be in a similar position to that of S from the earlier excerpt, taking her distance from her Portuguese counterpart, whose declared antiracism was belied by his contradictory verbal display). "Decoding” (Hill, 2009; Reyes, 2011) or interpreting the recorded speaker as racist, allows the listener to position herself as virtuously antiracist.

It remains indeterminate whether the listener perceived the speaker as more racist in the Portuguese telling, because of the recorded speaker’s use of the contested term preto, and/or to her use of (old-fashioned) Portuguese more generally. It would be interesting to know how the listener would have reacted, if the speaker had substituted negro for preto. Might the listener then have perceived a more modern Portuguese antiracist type? However, as most of my recorded LD speakers said preto rather than negro in Portuguese, undoubtedly echoing their parents’ usage, this is largely a hypothetical question. However, these LD listeners heard preto through modernist French indexical orders. As such, they nonetheless perceived preto as evoking a larger chronotope of backwardness and racism, which some linked to an image of a more generalized Portuguese openness.

By advocating an interactional, discursive, ideologically mediated approach to the “meanings” of race talk, rather than a psychological one, analysts must beware of their own personalist interpretations, something which I may have failed to do in earlier work (Koven, 1998). Despite appearing more antiracist to listeners, one cannot declare that the recorded speakers are objectively more or less open-minded/antiracist in French. In fact, in full versions of stories, beyond what is shown (see Koven, 1998, 2007), French tellings may in some ways actually present more negative images of racialized characters than the Portuguese. Following Besnier (1993), presenting a third person character through quotation, and in particular a racialized character (Buttny, 1997; Buttny and Williams, 2000; Buttny, 2003), is often a less transparent way to make a character look bad, without the narrator overtly criticizing him/her. Indeed, original speakers’ quotations of racialized others present them as more violent in the French than in the Portuguese, screaming hysterically, causing scenes. Enacted covertly, the stereotypes of men of color, may therefore actually be more negative in the French versions. And this impression is borne out through listener responses. The speakers come off as more likeable and antiracist in French. However, listeners also found racialized characters more dangerous in French. On the other hand, in reaction to the Portuguese tellings, listeners were more likely to judge the recorded speaker as racist, but perceived racialized characters as less dangerous.

However, by using particular “modern/youthful” ways of speaking in their own mouths, the speaker nonetheless comes off as more likeable and antiracist. In other words, rather than actually communicating more valorizing images of nonwhite characters, speakers’ antiracist discourse strategies, including “modern” ethnoracial labels, effectively index the speakers as particular modern/antiracist/urban types. The quoted performances of racialized characters may actually be more sinister. So
in these materials, explicitly antiracist discourse strategies do not alone challenge negative images of people of color, or racial hierarchies, so much as affirm the virtue of the LD speaker.

Across the materials presented in this article, we see complicated relationships between 1. people’s perceptions of others’ displayed stances toward racialized others, 2. perceptions of those others as local racist/antiracist types, and 3. then people’s own current stances toward both.

6. Discussion

Supporting Hill (2008) and Bucholtz (2011), LDs’ race talk does not simply reflect speakers’ inner beliefs about racialized groups. Displays and inferences of racism are complex discursive and metadiscursive accomplishments. Beyond signaling the speaker’s stance toward racially identified others, I have shown how my LD participants’ race talk is multifocal, indexing stance and speaker type, as more and less desirable, situated in space and time. Through race talk, LDs appeal to a larger set of cultural chronotopes through which they may evaluate places, ways of speaking, and types of speakers as less progressive. With this bias, many are quick to judge others accordingly. This may explain how LD listeners evaluate other LDs as “more racist” in Portuguese than in French, hearing Portuguese ways of talking associated with a particular culturally situated space and time through French chronotopically situated language ideologies. In these materials, “doing being” a virtuous antiracist requires using ways of talking that juxtapose types of people, relative to, and conjured up in contrasting spatiotemporal frameworks.

Race talk becomes speaker-focused through indexically ordered language ideologies (Silverstein, 2003). At one level, or indexical order, speakers use forms that seem to point to their stances toward racially described others. If participants are aware of multiple registers of race talk, within and across French and Portuguese, they may interpret different usages as creative indexes (Silverstein, 1976, 2003). If a speaker uses a form understood by a listener as “old-fashioned” relative to other forms, the listener may then infer the speaker’s negative stance toward the person referred to.

However, when participants read indexes of apparent stance through personalist ideologies, a subsequent indexical order becomes relevant. With recourse to such ideologies that communicatively indexed deference to racialized figures is centrally about the individual speaker’s perceiving inner beliefs and prejudice, this shifts the indexical focus. That is, listeners may reinterpret a way of speaking as a sign of that speaker as a type. And when personalist ideologies intersect with other ideologies that chronotopically position ways of speaking and speakers in contrasting images of cultural space and time, types of race talk can simultaneously become indexes of modern and unmodern personhood. Lusodescendant participants interpret the different, multiple indexicalities of speaker type in race talk, relative to broader cultural chronotopes, that locate ways of speaking and being in space and time, as being generally more or less “progressive” or “reactionary.” LDs intertwine their perceptions of others with other salient dimensions of identity-connected to national belonging, youthfulness, modernity. In the context of a given encounter, participants may draw from personalist and chronotopic ideologies to construe a speaker as already being, or as suddenly seeming to reveal him/herself to be a progressive, French antiracist or a reactionary, Portuguese racist.

These materials show the metadiscursive work that these transnationally mobile women undertake, when they compare French and Portuguese racism and antiracism. If we understand these participants’ talk about race and racism as ideologically mediated interactional practice, rather than inner, cognitive, disposition, it is not surprising to see people appear to “do” racism and antiracism in variable, contextually specific ways. The analyst cannot directly infer racism from talk, without recourse to how participants themselves read their own and others’ stances and identities. By linking participants’ race talk to their more general preoccupations with modernity, one sees how changing and contested norms surrounding race talk do not only indicate attempts to display greater respect or deference toward racialized others. Alignment with different normative usages may not only signal stance toward others, but more centrally, may signal different dimensions of speaker demeanor. This analysis has elaborated precisely how “speaker virtue” gets constructed in an ethnographically situated case. One can ask whether and how, in other ethnographic contexts, talk about race and racism has become a site for simultaneous, ideologically mediated projects of self and other fashioning. And similarly, one can ask how other transnationally mobile participants contrastively construct multidimensional images of self and others, relative to multiple, nationally situated racialized and racializing chronotopes.

As they position themselves between images of: “receiving” and “sending” societies, my LD participants show their ambivalence about France and Portugal in terms of their own and others’ modernity and backwardness. By asserting that modern antiracism inheres to France and backward racism to Portugal, they inevitably homogenize “Frenchness” and “Portugueseness,” erasing the possibility of multiple chronotopic imaginings by differently positioned social groupings within each. Indeed, LDs’ concerns with situating modernity and antiracism in France, and their opposites in Portugal paint each society in monolithic terms. Being a modern antiracist has become a desirable identity, not only for LDs, but for many in both contemporary France and Portugal. As such LDs are less aware of ways in which some in Portugal may also claim modernity for themselves and attribute backwardness to others. Occasionally, LDs would acknowledge this. For example, one commented, “sors de ton bled,” (get out of your boonies), when she heard another LD characterize Portugal as more racist. This LD implies that racism is not a general feature of Portuguese society, but locates it in geographically peripheral areas of Portugal. Indeed, many LDs may be less familiar with contexts in which Portuguese antiracism is enregistered. As Lusodescendants orient to sending and receiving societies, we can conclude that they are actually orienting to juxtaposable spatiotemporal imaginings of both.
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