Challenging the colorblind curriculum: addressing race, ethnicity, and diversity in Social Work education in Portugal

Erick da Luz Scherf

Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Families and Children

Supervisor: Cláudia Pereira (PhD), Assistant Research Professor, Department of Sociology, ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Co-Supervisor: Inês Amaro (PhD), Assistant Professor, Integrated Researcher, Department of Political Science and Public Policy, ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

June, 2023

Department of Political Science and Public Policy

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Thiago,
for being my support system. You are still the one.

I would also like to dedicate this work to all who have
suffered racism, xenophobia, or any other form of discrimination.
Your stories matter, and your life matters.

[…]

"You know, there's one place that all of the people
with the greatest potential are gathered,
one place, and that's the graveyard." – Viola Davis

"I know you weren't alive at the time of slavery,
but that's no excuse to ignore its legacy." - Anti-Flag

"The plague of racism is insidious, entering into our minds as smoothly and
quietly and invisibly as floating airborne microbes enter into our
bodies to find lifelong purchase in our bloodstreams." - Maya Angelou

Abstract

Title: Challenging the colorblind curriculum: addressing race, ethnicity, and diversity in Social Work education in Portugal

Author: Erick da Luz Scherf

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Social Work education must prepare students for culturally relevant practice, which includes teaching about race and ethnic diversity. To address racism and discrimination effectively in social work practice, social workers need tools to recognize and overcome their own biases while providing better interventions for diverse populations. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate how race, ethnicity, and diversity are addressed in the social work curriculum in Portugal. Given Portugal's history of lusotropicalism and colorblind attitudes, actively challenging systemic racism and discrimination is crucial not only for society but also for social work education. A colorblind curriculum could perpetuate normative discourses and systemic oppression. This investigation examines how the curriculum reflects the experiences of diverse populations, considering factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and sexual orientation, among other things. The study analyzes Study Plans and Curricular Units, surveys Social Work Faculty, and conducts interviews across different Higher Education Institutions. The research employs document and content analysis, an online survey, and semi-structured interviews. The focus is on Bachelor of Social Work programs, as this degree is required to practice the profession in Portugal. The work draws on theoretical frameworks such as Intersectionality, Critical Race Theory, and Anti-racist Education/Pedagogy. The findings indicate that most Portuguese BSW programs cover the proposed topics and competencies, albeit with a stronger emphasis on socio-cultural diversity rather than ethnoracial issues. However, there is room for improvement to ensure a more robust and consistent approach to diversity and discrimination in social work education, equipping students to navigate and transform an unequal and racialized society.

Keywords: race, ethnicity, diversity, social work, education, Portugal

Resumo

Título: Desafiando o currículo sem cor: abordando raça, etnia e diversidade na educação em Serviço Social em Portugal

Autor: Erick da Luz Scherf

Número de palavras: 29,729

A educação em Serviço Social precisa preparar alunos para práticas culturalmente sensíveis, incluindo o ensino sobre diversidade étnico-racial. Os assistentes sociais encontrarão pessoas de diferentes grupos raciais e étnicos, portanto, precisam lidar com racismo e discriminação na prática do serviço social, além de reconhecer seus próprios preconceitos para melhores intervenções. Esta investigação, portanto, avalia como a raça/etnia e a diversidade são abordadas no currículo do Serviço Social em Portugal. A história portuguesa com o lusotropicalismo e o daltonismo racial requer um esforço ativo contra o racismo sistêmico e à discriminação na sociedade e na formação em Serviço Social. Um currículo desconectado dessas questões pode perpetuar discursos normativos e a opressão sistêmica. A pesquisa examina como o currículo reflete as experiências de populações diversas, considerando raça, etnia, classe social, gênero e orientação sexual, entre outras características. Foram analisados Planos de Estudos, Unidades Curriculares e foram realizadas entrevistas com Docentes de Serviço Social em diferentes instituições de ensino. A pesquisa utilizou análise documental, inquérito eletrônico e entrevistas semiestruturadas. O foco foi em programas de Licenciatura em Serviço Social, requisito para a profissão em Portugal. O trabalho baseia-se em referenciais teóricos como Interseccionalidade, Teoria Crítica da Raça e Pedagogia Antirracista. Os resultados indicam que a maioria dos programas incorpora os temas propostos, embora com maior ênfase na diversidade sociocultural do que em questões etnorraciais. Medidas podem ser tomadas para garantir uma abordagem mais ousada e consistente em relação à diversidade e discriminação, fornecendo aos alunos as ferramentas necessárias para transformar uma sociedade ainda muito desigual e racializada.

Palavras-chave: raça, etnia, diversidade, serviço social, educação, Portugal

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Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank God, through whom all things are possible, and acknowledge the miracles He has performed in my life. Secondly, I need to thank my husband Thiago Rios for supporting me both emotionally and financially in life and through the duration of this Master's program. I also owe gratitude to my supervisors, Professors Cláudia Pereira (Ph.D.) and Maria Inês Amaro (Ph.D.).

I am equally grateful to the Erasmus Mundus MFAMILY consortium for having selected me as a student, and to the European Commission for sponsoring my studies with a full-ride scholarship. When I left my home country of Brazil to come to Europe for the first time, I only had a handful of suitcases and a dream, and I can finally say I am closer than ever to living the life I envisioned for myself and my family. I am thankful for all the things I experienced through this 2-year journey, both good and bad, for they have taught me invaluable lessons about life, friendship, pain, failure, and success.

When you are alone in a foreign country and when you have a hard time making friends and forging genuine connections, you are forced to look inward, thus this period of my life was overflown with self-discovery. I learned a lot about myself in the process and discovered new interests and even unresolved childhood traumas. To me, the MFAMILY was not only a professional training program, but it was also a big lesson in resilience, and it proved to me I am more than capable of thriving in the face of adversity.

With that said, this journey was a lot easier because of some awesome people I met along the way. Shereen El Gazzar, you are a gift from MFAMILY that I will be lucky to carry with me for as long as we both live. Your friendship, your advice, and your empathy have shown no limits and I am incredibly thankful for all your support. Freija Jacob and Daniela Arocha, thank you for always encouraging me and rooting for my success. And finally, to all my professors, but especially Vishanthie Sewpaul, Elisabeth Enoksen, and Evelyn Khoo thank you for all your hard work and for the grace you have shown me.

To the 12-year-old Erick, thank you for staying strong and persevering, despite all the ugly things you had to see. I am only here because of you.

Positionality Statement

According to the entry in the SAGE Encyclopaedia of Action Research, positionality refers to a researcher's positioning or stance about the study's social and political environment (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Acknowledging one own's positionality is important because the research process is not neutral, and the best way of remaining objective is by also recognizing our biases, our socio-cultural background, and how they influence the way we go about in the world and how we interpret the social phenomena we are investigating.

For instance, I am Brazilian, and there are several accounts of Brazilians living in Portugal who are or have been discriminated against because of their nationality and often race as well (Santos, 2013). In recent years, reports of xenophobic and racist acts against Brazilians in Portugal have considerably increased (Miranda, 2019), see Figure 1, for instance. At the end of this study, I will have lived in Portugal for a little over a year, and I have experienced xenophobic and microaggressive comments from Portuguese people in public and private spaces including the airport, at university, and more often than not at local bakeries. Therefore, these lived experiences helped me form a vision or impression of Portuguese society that will likely influence the research process. My strategy to overcome eventual biases will include (but will not be limited to): designing a rigorous study that follows previously established methodology and theoretical frameworks; comparing my findings to previously available scientific literature; and journaling about my feelings throughout the research process (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010).

Figure 1. A banner attached to a box with rocks inside that reads "Free if you're gonna throw it at a Zuca". Zuca is a derogatory term used to refer to Brazilians in Portugal. This so-called "joke" was made by Portuguese Law students at the University of Lisbon in 2019. Source: Estadão Conteúdo (2019).

As I am writing about issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity, it is equally important to take note of my own identities as a person. For that, I would like to borrow a concept proposed or popularized by Black Brazilian feminist philosopher Djamila Ribeiro called *lugar de fala*, or 'place of speech' (Ribeiro, 2017). According to her, knowing where we are speaking/writing from is important because our social locus will often determine our ability to be actually heard or be taken seriously (Ribeiro, 2017), especially in male or White dominated spaces such as the academe. As a man in research and academia, I am likely to reap the benefits of male privilege for example (Dancy et al., 2020), even if unintendedly. Yet, as a queer, gay person, I am more prone to being discriminated against than my heterosexual and gender-conforming counterparts. Although being mixed-race and holding tight to my Latino identity, I am visually perceived as White by others, and I never experienced blatant racism. Therefore, I can only speak/write from my own experience, and I do not mean to speak on behalf of anyone else's experiences of racism and discrimination. My goal is not to silence those groups who have historically been in subaltern positions, on the contrary, I aim to question dominant epistemologies that so that we all have a chance to speak and to be heard.

When we, subalternized subjects in the academe, decide to speak about questions of racism or the ongoing legacies of colonialism and discrimination, we are not always taken seriously by our peers. They accuse us of not being "scientific enough" or try to dismiss our claims by saying that academia is not the place for activism. Suddenly our stories, our knowledge, and our lived experiences are reduced to mere political militancy. This is the result, among other things, of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos has called "abyssal thinking" in western societies. He argued that the modern western way of thinking is marked by a dichotomous perception that divides the world into two sides: this side of the line, and the other side of the line (de Sousa Santos, 2007). While this side of the line gets to decide what is 'valid' scientific knowledge, knowledge from the other side of the line is often deemed unacceptable or unapplicable (de Sousa Santos, 2007). This has been characterized by other authors as epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988) or epistemicide (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Thankfully there are ways to escape this conundrum: through pluralism of knowledge and subjectivities, and epistemic healing (Novis-Deutsch, 2020; Khan & Naguib, 2019).

Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

The main objectives of this chapter are to introduce the theme of the research and to contextualize its relevance in line with the goals of the social work profession. Questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity are briefly introduced and discussed, more generally, as they relate to social work as a field of knowledge, and more specifically, regarding their implications in Portugal. Both general and specific objectives of the research are also presented, in addition to its relevance for social work practice with families and children.

1.1.   Research background

The history of social work education in the Euro-American context has been, in recent years, highly criticized for its lack of acknowledgment of the historical contributions made by racially diverse groups to the development of social work as a field of knowledge and practice (Wright et al., 2021). There is an emerging body of literature arguing that, historically, social work education has gravitated towards whitewashed narratives and colorblind ideologies (Constance-Huggins et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2021), which has been particularly harmful to racial and ethnic minorities. It is in the wake of these intellectual contributions related to ethnic and racial diversity in social work education and training that this work has emerged.

As stated in the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles, social workers have a responsibility towards the promotion of social justice (see Principle 3), which includes challenging systems of discrimination and institutional oppression that often perpetuate racism and other forms of discrimination (International Federation of Social Workers, 2018). It is precisely because the classroom is where social work students will form the knowledge basis for their future practice, that the curriculum should encourage discussions concerning race, ethnicity, and diversity. If we look at the latest statement on Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, "[…] knowledge of - human rights, social movements and their interconnectedness with class, gender and ethnic/race-related issues" is cited as a crucial component of social work educational programs (International Association of Schools of Social Work & International Federation of Social Workers, 2020, p. 12). Therefore, knowledge of racial and ethnic issues and dynamics has recently been acknowledged as integral to social work education, research, and practice.

Studying and researching the social work curriculum is an important task because the curriculum, as a formal instrument, is responsible for setting educational goals and teachers' priorities in the classroom (Levin, 2008). Moreover, the choice of the contents that will integrate the curriculum, and what is purposefully left out of it, has profound ethical and political implications that should not be ignored by educators in general (Levin, 2008), let alone social work educators - given the social justice-oriented nature of our profession. According to Lee et al. (2022, p. 762) "social justice is a foundational social work value […]", however, "social work education continues to experience ongoing challenges with how to teach students to embody social justice values". Thus, it is clear that for social work curricula and education to be truly reflective of social justice values, efforts should be made to embrace - among other things - antiracism, respect for diversity, and anti-oppressive principles for practice, in line with the Global Definition of the Social Work Profession (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014), see Figure 2.
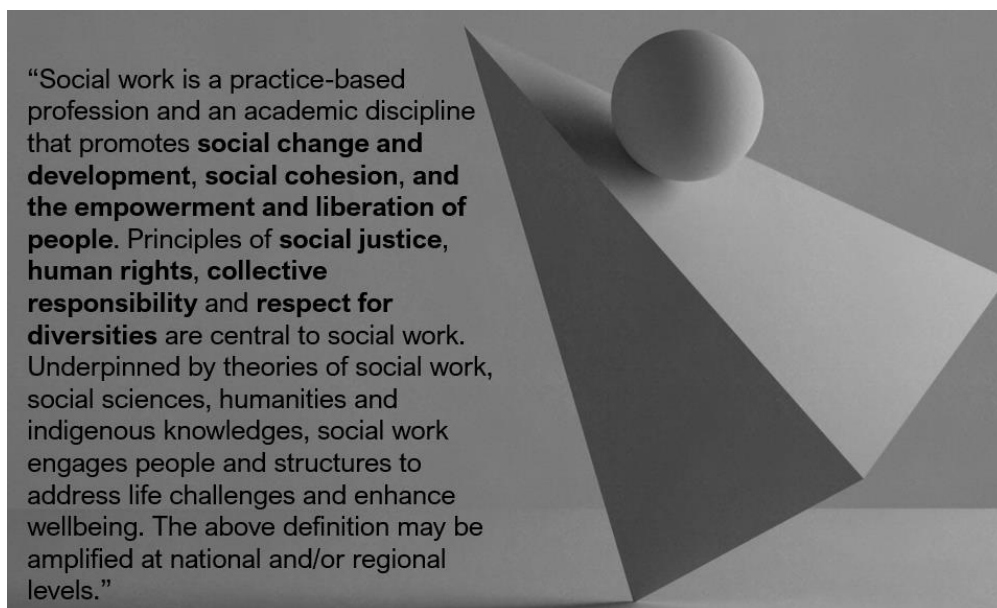
Figure 2. Global Definition of the Social Work Profession. Source: Elaborated by the author based on the International Federation of Social Workers (2014).

In Portugal, the focal point of this study, there seems to be a widespread lack of recognition of racism as a social problem (Casquilho-Martins et al., 2022), even though a recent statement released by the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent has confirmed the "prevalence of systemic racism and racially motivated violence and ill-treatment, racial profiling, abuse of authority, [and] frequent police brutality towards people of African descent" in Portuguese society (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021a, para. 8). The statement also mentions that the school curricula and textbooks in Portugal

fail to properly address the country's history of colonial violence, enslavement, and involvement in the transatlantic slave trade (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021b). Another report, issued by the Commissioner for Human Rights for the Council of Europe in 2021, has also noted increasing levels of racism and the perseverance of related discrimination in the country:

> During 2020, the Commissioner noted a number of assaults on people of African descent and other persons perceived as foreigners, as well as against anti-racist and other civil society activists in Portugal. The incidents reported culminated in July 2020 with the murder of Bruno Candê, a Portuguese citizen of African descent, who was shot dead on the streets of Lisbon. His aggressor reportedly shouted racist slurs before killing him. […] In the same period, racist slurs and swastikas appeared on the walls of several public buildings, including schools, and on the walls of premises of certain NGOs, in particular SOS Racismo (Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021, p. 1).

Therefore, despite the well-documented accounts of racism (Vala et al., 2015), xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination against people of color, ethnic minorities, or those with a migration background in Portugal (Marques, 2012), there is a general misconception in society, politics, and the media that Portuguese people cannot be racist or that they are "less" racist than in other European countries (Araújo, 2006; 2007), see Figure 3. This myth of Portuguese non-racism is deeply rooted in the country's colonial past and its lusotropicalist assumptions, that is, an "[…] idea of a special skill that Portuguese people have for harmonious relations with other peoples, their adaptability to the tropics and their inherent lack of prejudice" (Valentim & Heleno, 2018, p. 34). For decades, this rhetoric has prevailed in Portuguese academia and society, leading to the prevalence of racial colorblindness or colorblind ideologies – i.e. the intent not to 'see color' or to avoid using the term race (Lundström, 2021) – which makes it very difficult to have open discussions on race and ethnicity.

This scenario has started to change, although at a slow pace, and one major development toward antiracist public policies in Portugal was the adoption of the first-ever National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination (*Plano Nacional de Combate ao Racismo e à Discriminação*), in 2021. The Plan has the ambitious goal of promoting equality and fighting racism and related discrimination, through concrete actions and strategies coordinated by interministerial task

forces, committees, and other relevant stakeholders (Conselho de Ministros, 2021). Different provisions in the Plan allow (or actually demand) the introduction of curricular units and discussions around racism and racially-motivated violence, ethnicity, and diversity, as well other themes such as the history of colonialism and slavery as part of the education and training of professionals in Higher Education Institutions across the country (Conselho de Ministros, 2021).

Figure 3. André Ventura, leader of the Portuguese far-right extremist party Chega, and his followers hold a banner that reads "Portugal is not racist" on a street demonstration. Source: Correio da Manhã (2020).

With that said, despite the more recent shifts in narratives towards an acknowledgment of systemic or structural racism in Portugal and its pervasive effects on racialized groups (Araújo & Rodrigues, 2018; Castelo, 2021), the organization of the Portuguese educational system is still pretty much centered around nationalist ideologies and the notion of European identity (Pereira & Araújo, 2017), stepping away from multicultural education, and, as expected, essentially lacking educational guidelines that address issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity. Taking this context into consideration, this investigation is particularly concerned with the extent to which colorblind ideologies might still inform social work education in Portugal. The argument here is that a colorblind social work curriculum may contribute to these normative discourses and possibly to the reproduction of systemic oppression (Choi, 2008).

The research also addresses the importance of diversity in social work education in Portugal and elsewhere, and how it intersects with the question of racial and ethnic identities. While race and ethnicity account for an important aspect of lived experiences of discrimination and

oppression, these 'identity markers' do not totalize the human experience. This is why they are discussed in connection with diversity. Because this study takes an intersectional approach (which is presented and discussed at a later time), it looks beyond the question of racial and ethnic identity, to examine how these intersect with other identity markers including (but not limited to) class, gender, immigration status, and age, among others.

It might be worth noting that, after having performed a preliminary analysis of two of the most prestigious BSW programs in Portugal, I have not found any reference to race and ethnicity in their major curricular components, and only a few explicit references to diversity, which is one of the reasons why I chose this topic and that led me to design this study. According to Sousa and Almeida (2016, p. 546), "[…] ethnicity and racism do not appear to be very important issues in public debates or as a priority of social intervention" in Portuguese society. And after analyzing the social work curricula of all higher education institutions in Portugal, they concluded that "of these 19 social work courses, more than half (12), did not include any curricular units with denomination alluding to diversity, cultural sensitivity or cultural competence" (Sousa & Almeida, 2016, p. 548). Bearing in mind that these themes could be implicitly incorporated into the curriculum, an online survey and five interviews were conducted to fill possible gaps in the analysis and to further characterize the themes explored in the study.

Notwithstanding, the importance of race, ethnicity, and diversity in social work education cannot be overstated. Social workers are responsible for providing services to people from diverse backgrounds, and therefore, they must have a deep understanding of the complexities and nuances of various cultures, identities, and experiences. To effectively work with and advocate for clients or service users, social workers must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to address issues related to social and economic justice, oppression, and discrimination. Race, ethnicity, and diversity are critical components of social work education because they help students develop cultural humility, empathy, and an appreciation for the strengths and resilience of diverse populations. Ultimately, a commitment to promoting equity and social justice requires an understanding of the intersectionalities of race, ethnicity, and diversity, and their impact on the lives of individuals and communities.

1.2.   Research objectives

Taking the previously described context into account, the general goal or objective of this research is to analyze if and how questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity are addressed in the social work curriculum in Portugal. The secondary or specific objectives are:

(i) To discuss the relevance of race, ethnicity, and diversity in education.
(ii) To define the terms "race", "ethnicity", and "diversity", their correlation, and implications for social work education and practice.
(iii) To describe the integration of these themes in the curricula of all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering social work programs in Portugal (15 in total).
(iv) To draw a connection between public policy in Portugal and questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity.
(v) To investigate the opinion of BSW Professors and/or Program Coordinators in Portugal regarding the presence and relevance of these themes.

Because a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree is the qualifying degree required to enter/exercise the social work profession in Portugal according to Law no. 121/2019 (Assembleia da República, 2019), this study focused primarily on BSW curricula from different Portuguese HEIs. Therefore, in line with the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, this research contests the lack of a more intentional approach to culturally sensitive practice and ethnoracial issues in Social Work education and training in Portugal and, in the end, it makes suggestions on how to possibly improve this.

1.3.   Implications for Social Work Practice with Families and Children

Social work education is supposed to prepare students for social work practice with diverse populations, as that is a major component of the global standards for the social work profession. In recent years, Portugal has witnessed an increase in immigration, and the ethnic composition of Portuguese society has been considerably diversified. Therefore, now, perhaps more than ever before, the training and education of social workers need to seriously encompass, among other things, questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity.

One of the major goals of the MFAMILY Master's Program is to prepare students with the knowledge and skills necessary for working internationally with vulnerable children and marginalized families. Thus, to provide adequate interventions to historically marginalized groups, MFAMILY students (and other social work graduates alike) need to develop an array of personal and professional competencies that include (but are not limited to) cultural sensitivity/humility, respect for diversity, and antiracist and anti-discriminatory practice. Otherwise, we run the risk of engaging, even if unintendedly, in the reproduction of oppressive and discriminatory practices (Choi, 2008) in welfare provision and administration.

Learning about race, ethnicity, and diversity is essential for social work practice with families and children because it allows social workers to understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds. By gaining knowledge of these topics, social workers can develop culturally sensitive and responsive approaches to engage and support diverse families and children. This includes recognizing and addressing systemic inequalities, biases, and discrimination that may impact people's lives and accessing appropriate resources and support systems to meet their needs. Ultimately, learning about race, ethnicity, and diversity helps social workers provide more effective and equitable services to families and children from diverse backgrounds and this is why this investigation is intimately connected to the goals of the Erasmus Mundus MFAMILY Program.

1.4. Methods and materials

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach in the form of a mix between qualitative content analysis and document analysis, surveys, and interviews.

As stated by Padgett (2017, p. 28): "Qualitative studies […] emphasize subjective meanings and question the existence of a single objective reality". Concepts such as race, ethnicity, and diversity are social constructs, therefore, from an epistemological viewpoint, it makes sense to employ this type of approach (i.e., qualitative) given its focus on the socially constructed notions of reality (Bryman, 2016).

Yet, I also wanted to measure the frequency in which the themes appear in the curriculum, as well as the perceptions of Social Work faculty over the topics explored in this thesis. The primary questions posed by this research are the following:

1) Are issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity addressed in the social work undergraduate curriculum in Portugal?

2) If so, how? These questions are intimately linked to the research purposes and aim discussed previously.

To identify if and how questions of race/ethnicity and diversity are introduced in the social work curricula of various BSW programs in Portugal, this research will adopt three distinct yet complementary techniques, i.e., (i) Qualitative and quantitative content/document analysis; (iii) Online survey; and (iv) 5 Semi-structured interviews, see Figure 4 for a visual representation of the research process.

Document analysis can be understood as a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Document analysis calls for data to be studied and interpreted to extract meaning, gain insight, and create empirical knowledge, similar to other analytical techniques in qualitative research (Bowen, 2009). As priorly defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1278), "research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text […]". Therefore, the task goes beyond simply counting words, it requires understanding how language is used to describe certain phenomena, in addition to coding and identifying themes or patterns that emerge from the textual data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).
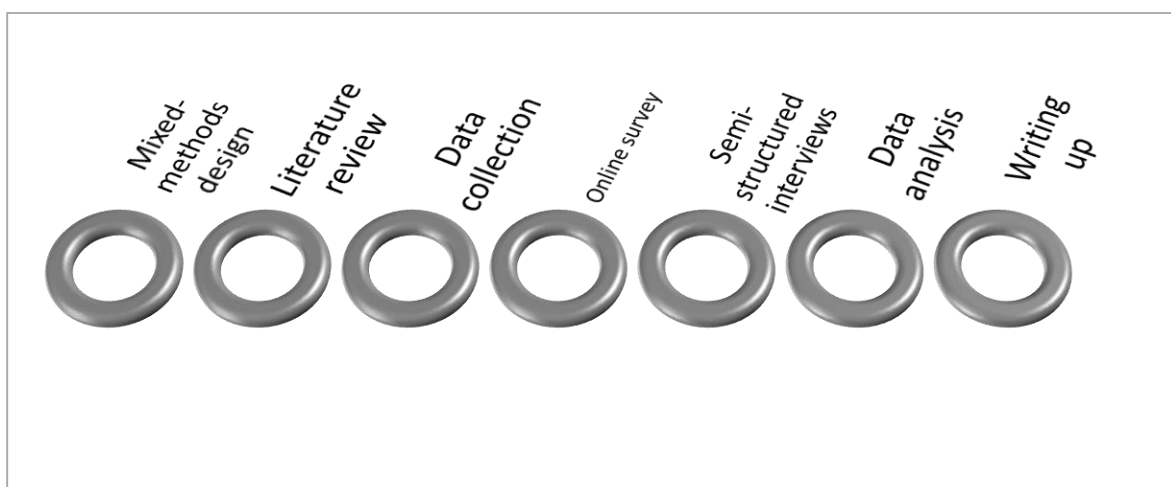
Figure 4. Visual description of the research process. Source: Elaborated by the author.

Why is looking at documents important at all? As argued by Delanty (2005), the social sciences – which includes social work - are becoming increasingly viewed as a communicative system that interacts with society from a reflexive standpoint. That entails that social scientists, and social work researchers, are constantly engaged in discursive practices that help shape the social world (Delanty, 2005), and our professions. Documents, including (but not limited to) Codes of Ethics, Statutes, Regulations, and Curricular Guides, play a very similar role. They often encode or shape the legal and axiological basis of the social work profession in different contexts. It is important to note that the intent is not to interpret these documents as complete or definitive representations of reality, however, we shall acknowledge "[…] how documents as vital objects can drive and shape political, economic, medical and scientific activities just as much as do humans" (Prior, 2008, p. 833). Documents analyzed included: institutional landing pages, syllabi (*Planos de Estudos*), and curricular guidelines, that is, mostly materials easily accessible online. The results and discussion are presented in a standalone chapter.

Furthermore, as part of the research process, a literature review was also performed, in connection with the specific objectives of the investigation, aiming to establish the bulk of knowledge that is available regarding race, ethnicity, and diversity in social work education. I also introduced the theoretical frameworks that guided the development of this work and that were used to interpret the findings.

To complement the analysis and make it more complex or nuanced, an online survey/questionnaire was also conducted with Social Work Professors and/or Program Directors from Portuguese Higher Education Institutions, in addition to one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The survey was sent by email to different Faculty members across all BSW programs in Portugal and was part of the data collection process and methodology (see Appendix I). Semi-structured interviews were conducted as well (see Appendix II for the interview guide). This three-way process has allowed for a better understanding of both formal and informal curricula, as well as for data triangulation.

1.5. Ethical considerations

Regarding ethical considerations related to the research process, some points are worth highlighting. Even though an electronic survey and interviews were conducted, it was not

necessary to gain ethical clearance or approval from a designated Institutional Review Board. The respondents were not considered to be vulnerable subjects in light of international ethics guidelines, and the risk to harm was low. Nonetheless, this research did abide by certain ethical principles and standards of conduct.

Firstly, attention was given to the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, published by the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (2017). Principles and good practices brought forward by the Code were taken into consideration concerning every stage of the research process, from initial design to publication/dissemination. Other legislation and guidelines related to ethics in research will also be consulted at the supranational level of the European Union (see, for example, European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2013), and at the national level, including the Code of Ethical Conduct in Research published by the University Institute of Lisbon-ISCTE (ISCTE, 2022).

Writing about and discussing sensitive topics such as racism and discrimination can unveil negative feelings for both reader and writer (Sanjari et al., 2014), alongside other unintended harms. Thus, ethical principles need to be considered with the goal to minimize harm as much as possible (Homan, 1992), even though it might never cease to exist. Questions of privacy, consent, and anonymity are relevant principles and were respected during the research process (Bryman, 2016; Sixsmith & Murray, 2001). Ethical considerations were noted concerning data collection, research writing, and the publication process (Sixsmith & Murray, 2001).

From the viewpoint of the researcher, strategies applied to this study to minimize harm included emotional distancing and self-reflection (Sanjari et al., 2014), journaling, and most importantly conducting the research in line with pre-established ethical protocols, guidelines, and codes, such as the ones already mentioned here.

Chapter 2. Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity in the Portuguese Context: The View of Public Policy

Although the perception of racism and related discrimination has for many years in Portugal been guided by notions of colorblindness and rooted in lusotropicalist assumptions (Araújo, 2006; 2007; 2013; Valentim & Heleno, 2018), the so-called 'management of difference' in the context of Portuguese society is not so straightforward. Therefore, the main goal of this chapter is to identify and describe the main initiatives and strategies - especially in the public policy arena - that aim to respond to the 'complexification' (Scholten, 2020) of diversity in Portugal. The main areas of concern for policymakers, in that sense, seemed to be: (i) racism, xenophobia, and related discrimination; (ii) the treatment of Roma populations; and (iii) and the management of migration. In the debate between the so-called 'problem alienation' and 'mainstreaming' in policymaking (Scholten, 2020), Portugal seems to follow the latter, with a focus on 'transversal' strategies. Social work and public policy are intimately linked, as social workers often work within the framework of public policy to help service users and even entire communities. All over the world, social workers not only *can* be but often *are* involved in the process of creation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies. This is one of the reasons why social work education needs to provide students with a sound understanding of public policy creation, implementation, and analysis/evaluation.

2.1. Race, ethnicity, diversity, and the management of difference

The history of racial/ethnic relations and diversity in Portugal cannot be fully understood without looking back at the history (and ongoing legacies) of racism and colonialism. While modern colonialism in the early twentieth century was built on racist assumptions (Go, 2004) - i.e. the idea that colonized groups were in essence racially inferior - Portugal has for decades been regarded as a "benevolent" colonizer, therefore avoiding claims of racism (Araújo, 2013). The historical portrait of Portugal as a good colonizer was drawn from Gilberto Freyre's idea of *lusotropicalismo*, the notion that the Portuguese were better colonizers than other Europeans and that race relations were remarkably peaceful and friendly under Portuguese rule (Araújo, 2013; Valentim & Heleno, 2018). According to Vale de Almeida (2005, p. 79, my italics):

> Issues such as Luso-Tropical specificity, historical miscegenation, racial democracy, or the nonracism of the Portuguese and the Brazilians have been faced

in diverse ways: as ideologies that mask a harsher reality; as an outcome of racial hegemony; *as a form of naive wishful thinking*, compensating for the structural weaknesses of both countries; or as having some validity and an unaccomplished potential that can become a political project for the future. Miscegenation, mestiçagem, and hybridism remain discursive knots that contaminate emancipatory practices with ambiguity.

These historical constructs, although often built on misguided assumptions, have managed to become social facts (Vale de Almeida, 2005), to the extent that ethnoracial discrimination has been institutionalized in many instances, not requiring any specific legislation targeting racialized and minoritized individuals but merely by failing to address existing hierarchies of power and privilege within Portuguese society (Araújo, 2016). Moreover, Araújo (2006; 2013) argues that the myth of Portuguese non-racism during and after colonial times contributes to the depoliticization of the debate on colonialism and racism, which, until today, fuel common narratives that portray Portugal as a country "at ease" with diversity (Araújo, 2013, p. 29). Therefore, there is a strong argument that the socio-political-historical background of colonialism and race relations largely influences the so-called 'management of difference' in Portugal even in contemporary times.

This idea of a "natural" inclination toward tolerance and acceptance of difference in Portuguese society (Vala et al., 2002) – may it be differences in national origin, race, ethnicity, gender identity, or others – makes it hard to have public discussions on the meanings and ongoing impacts of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. In the contemporary public policy arena, two sorts of general trends persist according to Araújo (2013, p. 30, my italics): "[…] 1) *a national identity* strongly anchored in Portugal's imperial past and the supposed exceptionality of its history of 'expansion'; and 2) the *universalistic values* of Portuguese society, seen as less racist than other European societies".

Nonetheless, the management of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity at the public policy level in Portugal has not received enough attention, not only in politics but also in the academic literature published in English. While Portuguese society has experienced profound transformations since the late 1960s due to urbanization, demographic shifts, globalization, and immigration (Marques, 2003), in terms of managing difference and diversity there seems to be a lot left to be accomplished. Portugal cannot tackle new (and old) challenges concerning

diversity, immigration, and minority populations by using assimilationist or "one size fits all" strategies (Barbosa & Cabral-Cardoso, 2010), nor should it ignore the pervasive and long-lasting impacts of racism, slavery, and colonialism.

Notwithstanding, t is worth noticing that important initiatives targeting diverse populations in the public policy sphere have been launched over the years, including the creation of the Portuguese High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities in 1996 (renamed to High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue in 2003 and now called the High Commissioner for Migration), The Commission for Equality and against Racial Discrimination (CICDR) in 1999 (Law no. 134/99), and the adoption of significant anti-discrimination laws and regulations in 2017 (mainly Law no. 93/2017), among other initiatives. However, despite these efforts, complaints of discrimination - especially racial discrimination - have increased over the last few years. See Figure 5.
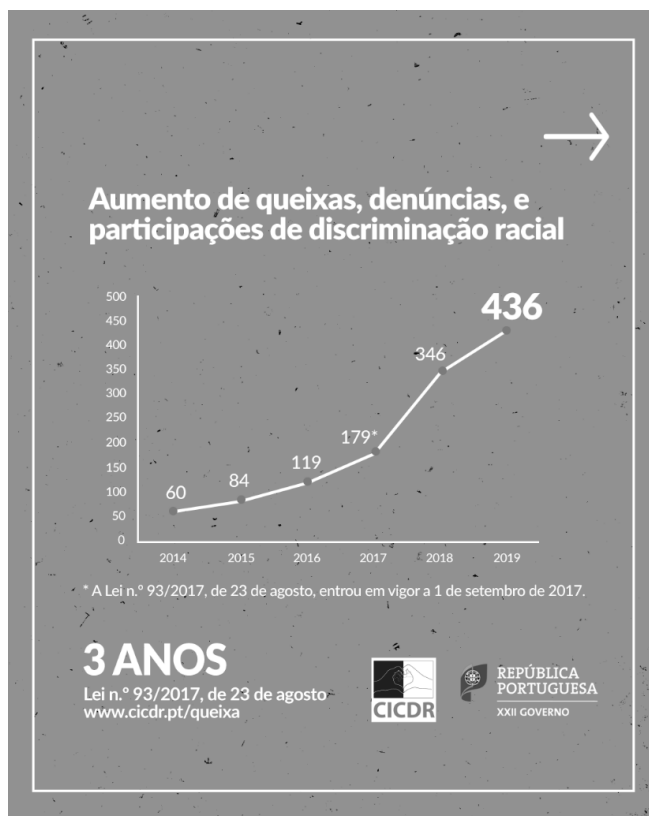
Figure 5. Formalized complaints of racial discrimination in Portugal (2014-2019), as registered by the CICDR. Source: European Commission (2020).

Therefore, we can see that Portuguese society has not entirely come to terms with diversity, despite the sociopolitical transformations brought about by immigration, globalization, and other social phenomena. Going forward, some key public policy initiatives in the realm of diversity are briefly explored and discussed, about Roma populations in Portugal, migrants and refugees, and the question of racial and ethnic discrimination. It is important to remember that public and social policy directly affect the work of social work professionals in the field. For instance, policies may limit or expand the resources that social workers have to address the issues their clients are confronted with. Therefore, social work students need to be aware of key policies that will likely influence their practice in the future.

2.2. The National Strategy for Roma Populations/Communities

The Roma, or the Romani, is a heterogeneous cultural and ethnic group of people who are believed to have migrated from northern India to Europe and settled across the continent from the 9th century onwards (Amnesty International, 2015). While the Romani identity is intrinsically diverse, depending on history, language, and profession, among other characteristics, a lot is shared between these different groups, including the Romani language and its many dialects (Amnesty International, 2015). Although they were quite known in the past for their nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, Roma populations are now usually settled in one place, in different locations worldwide. According to Matache et al (2020, p. 9): "the Romani diaspora today consists of approximately 15 million people dispersed across the globe. It has a rich and diverse history and is characterized by fluid local identities that defy a simple, uniform characterization".

In Europe, Roma and Traveller communities are among the ones who suffer the most from discrimination and economic and social deprivation (Council of Europe, 2023). This situation builds upon centuries of oppression and persecution against Romani people in the European continent. Roma populations have been persecuted since the Middle Ages; they were enslaved in several countries (especially in Romania) and subjected to expulsion and laws seeking to annihilate their culture (The Open University, 2020; Amnesty International, 2015). During World War II, they were also targeted by the Nazi regime: "During the Holocaust, *70 percent of the Romani population in Nazi-occupied Europe was exterminated*. Persistent racism in Europe following the Second World War has worsened in the past decades" (Matache et al., 2020, p. 9, my italics). Since then, Anti-Roma racism and prejudice have been on the rise. Currently, there are many issues affecting Roma communities in Europe which are usually a result of systemic racism and discrimination:

> Roma and Traveller communities are one of the most discriminated and disadvantaged groups in Europe, facing hatred and human rights abuses every day. Roma are refused access to decent housing, evicted without notice and left open to attack by prejudiced neighbours. They are blocked from the jobs market and from opportunities to get better education and vocational training. Roma children are bullied at school, or sent to schools meant for people with learning difficulties.

Roma women have been sterilised against their will (Council of Europe, 2023, para. 2).

Although many of them refuse to only be seen only as 'victims', Romani populations are indeed at a particular disadvantage as an ethnic minority group in Europe and are more vulnerable to prejudice and human rights abuses. Their situation and social status are not any different in Portugal. Widely known across the country as *Ciganos* (the Portuguese term for *Gypsies*, which is considered a racial slur by many Romani people and organizations), Roma individuals and communities "[…] are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion" in Portugal (Calado et al., 2020, p. 119), as they often encounter "[…] poor housing conditions, low levels of schooling, and discriminatory situations, practices and behaviours" (Calado et al., 2020, p. 119). To address this and other issues, the Portuguese Government launched the *Estratégia Nacional para a Integração das Comunidades Ciganas 2013-2022* (ENICC) (National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities, which is briefly discussed hereinafter.

As the Portuguese Government does not collect demographic or statistical data that considers race or ethnicity, it makes it quite hard to know exactly how many people in Portugal identify as Roma/Romani. However, the last data collected by the High Commissioner for Migration in 2016 suggests that there were at least 37,000 Portuguese Roma men and women living in Portugal at the time (Calado et al., 2020). While Roma communities in Portugal in the past could benefit from "transversal" public policies[1], the National Strategy was the first specialized initiative at a national level aiming to "integrate" these populations into Portuguese society (Pinheiro, 2013). Despite concerted actions brought forward by the National Strategy, in addition to other programs and policies, "[…] vulnerabilities remain at different levels, such as the lack of literacy, education and qualification, the existence of poor housing conditions, and inequalities in access (and success) to education, training and employment offers" (Calado et al., 2020, p. 135). It is also important to note that the National Strategy has expired, and so far no other policy was developed to replace it (Pereira, 2023).

Ethnic discrimination remains a huge barrier to Roma people's full participation in Portuguese society. According to the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) (2019, p. 1), "[…] many persons belonging to the Roma

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[1]Transversal is a popular term in Portugal used to describe overarching policies or initiatives that are comprehensive in nature and are not designed for a particular group and that cut through different stakeholders and levels of society. The term is also used in Education.

communities continue to be subjected to direct and indirect discrimination and continue to live on the margins of society". Another barrier - which has been described before Araújo (2013) and (Marques, 2003) - is Portugal's tendency towards homogenization and assimilationist policies. Portuguese authorities insist that the country does not have any national minorities (ACFC, 2019), and on top of that, there is a widespread lack of knowledge about Romani culture, language, and history among the majority population, which leads to the reproduction of biased views and negative stereotypes (ACFC, 2019).

2.3. The Adoption of the UN Global Compact for Migration

While many international instruments address the situation of refugees and migrants worldwide, including the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, its 1967 protocol, and several ILO Conventions, among others, the United Nations Global Compact for Migration is "[…] the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions" (United Nations, 2023, para. 6). Therefore, it is a relevant instrument at the UN-level, at least from a symbolic viewpoint, as it is not a legally binding document. Portugal however was the first UN member state to draft a *National Plan for the Implementation of the Global Compact*, as stated in the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 141 of 2019 (ACM, n.d.).

According to the Portuguese National Institute of Statistics (INE) (2021), Portugal has around 542,165 people of foreign nationality, representing 5.2% of the total population. Among them, Brazilians are the most representative nationality, making up 36,9% percent of the foreign-born population in the country (INE, 2021). In terms of geographical distribution, the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Algarve concentrated the majority of the foreign community in Portugal (INE, 2021). In terms of the reception and integration of migrants and refugees in Portuguese society, there are different public policy initiatives at national, regional, and local levels, following a model of 'shared responsibility'. Of all initiatives, perhaps the most robust one would be the High Commissioner for Migration (*Alto Comissariado para as Migrações*), or ACM.

The main goals of the ACM are to promote the integration of immigrants and defend public policies for their reception[2] in Portuguese society (Drechsler, 2019). Despite its relevant contributions, Góis et al (2019) argue that, on the other hand, the ACM via its National Centers of Support to the Integration of Immigrants (*Centros Nacionais de Apoio à Integração de Imigrantes*) privileges migrants living in the regions of Lisbon, Algarve, and Porto, leaving many others across the country without access to their services. That is why they call for the decentralization of services and policies concerning migration, with greater involvement of local authorities (Góis et al., 2019). The authors also highlight that, despite the progressive legislation that Portugal has concerning migrants and refugees, there is a stark difference between the law and actual practices (Góis et al., 2019). In Portugal, there are several constraints concerning services and institutions designed to serve migrant populations, including a lack of capacity to provide services, lack of specific training, outdated procedures, unnecessary bureaucracy, and poor communication between service providers, in addition to language barriers (Góis et al., 2019).

With that said, we can infer that the adoption of the Global Compact into Portuguese legislation does necessarily mean an automatic improvement in the living situation and well-being of migrants and refugees in the country. Recently, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has conducted a study with local civil society organizations in Portugal providing services for people with a migration background about their perceptions of the National Plan for the Implementation of the Global Compact and its findings are quite interesting (IOM, 2022). The positive aspects of the Plan highlighted by the NGOs and charity organizations were: the reinforcement of a common vision regarding migration, especially in the sharing of objectives, ii) the transversality and systemic perspective associated with the Plan, highlighting the coordination of efforts and the standardization of processes, iii) the promotion of the rights and quality of life for migrants; iv) the promotion of the integration, and v) the visibility of the question of immigration (IOM, 2022). Nonetheless, shortcomings or negative aspects were also mentioned: for example, i) bureaucracy related to assistance services for the migrant population, especially the malfunctioning of the Foreigners and Borders Services (SEF) agency, ii) the format, content, and applicability of the Plan, including issues related to the long length of the document and absence of monitoring in connection to its execution and a discrepancy with

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[2] For the lack of a better translation for the word *acolhimento*.

reality; iii) the lack of binding force of the Pact, and iv) the need to bring forward improvements in specific measures to support the integration of migrant communities.

In sum, many barriers still prevent the full integration of migrants and refugees in Portuguese society, including, but not limited to, huge bureaucratic hurdles, unequal distribution of resources across the country, lack of interagency cooperation across a wide range of services and stakeholders (Góis et al., 2019), language barriers, and of course, discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity, and other identity markers (Casa do Brasil de Lisboa, 2020).

2.4. The National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination

A child of immigrants from Guiné-Bissau (a former Portuguese colony), Bruno Candé Marques was born in Portugal, in 1980 ("Bruno Candé," 2022). He grew up to be an actor with the theater company *Casa Conveniente*, portraying roles in TV and theater stages; he was also a father to three children ("Bruno Candé," 2022). On July 25th, 2020, Bruno Candé was sitting on a bench in *Avenida de Moscavide* (located in Lisbon Greater Metropolitan area), accompanied by his dog Pepa and a radio player, when Evaristo Marinho, a White male in his 70s shot him four times ("Bruno Candé," 2022). Three days before his tragic death, the same man had shouted several racial slurs at Bruno because his dog allegedly barked at him: "'Go back to your land, you n(-word)! You have your whole family in the slave house and you should be there too"; "'F****ng n(-word), I'll kill you" (Marcelino & Câncio, 2021, para. 2-3), and he did. Yet, according to Police reports, no racial motivation was found in connection to this crime (Marcelino & Câncio, 2021).

Despite these colorblind views reproduced by many Portuguese public authorities, Bruno's assassination had a clear racial motive. The truth is that his killer had already threatened him with death three days before the incident after repeatedly shouting racist insults against him, therefore, the premeditated nature of the murder leaves no room for doubt that this was a racially motivated crime. Following his death, even in the middle of the pandemic, several demonstrators took to the street across Portugal to show support and demand justice for Bruno and other victims of racism in the country (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Street protest in Lisbon following the assassination of Bruno Candé, a 40-year-old Black Portuguese actor. Source: Henriques (2020), photo credit LUSA/MIGUEL A. LOPES.

Bruno Candé's death is not an isolated event, racism in Portugal is both systemic and structural (Araújo, 2008; Roldão, 2022). Discrimination and violence based on race or ethnicity, or both, are not uncommon, despite the huge under-reporting of racially-motivated violence in the country (Roldão, 2022). Therefore, the is an urgent need to face racism as a real element built into the daily life of Portuguese social relations (Santos & Vasconcelos, 2019), something that has been avoided over several decades (Matias & Pinto, 2020). With the ambitious goal of facing the ongoing legacies of Portuguese racism, colonialism, and slavery, in 2021 the Government approved the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination, through Resolution No. 101/2021 of the Council of Ministers.

The Plan employs a human rights-based approach and argues that racism and racial/ethnic discrimination violate several rights enshrined in international legal instruments, including, but not limited to, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Portuguese Constitution, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, among others (Conselho de Ministros, 2021). It is anchored in four main principles: (i) deconstruction of stereotypes; b) coordination, integrated governance, and territorialization; c) integrated interventions in the fight against inequalities; and d) intersectionality (Conselho de Ministros, 2021). In its goal to promote anti-racist and anti-discriminatory policies in Portugal, the Plan addresses ten main areas of intervention, see Figure 7.

	1. Governance, information and knowledge
	2. Education and culture
	3. Higher Education
	4. Employment
	5. Housing
	6. Health and social action
	7. Justice, security and rights
	8. Participation and representation
	9. Sports
	10. Media and Digital Communications

Figure 7. Areas of intervention of the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination. Source: Elaborated by the author based on the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 101 of 2021 (Conselho de Ministros, 2021).

In the Plan, we can find many provisions that support the integration of race, ethnicity, and diversity in education. For instance, in Area No. 2, *Education and Culture*, one of the proposed goals is to provide pedagogical resources that promote education for equality and non-discrimination, including the communication of historical facts and their impact on racism in contemporary times (Conselho de Ministros, 2021, Objective 2.2). In Area no. 3, the Plan incentivizes the elaboration, in partnership with HEIs, of recommendations to promote the inclusion in curricular plans of education against racism, diversity, and the history and societal contributions of people of African descent and Roma populations in Portugal, in particular (Conselho de Ministros, 2021, Objective 3.2). Nonetheless, despite its robustness and wide scope/reach, it is not entirely clear how Portugal will implement all of its provisions in a time frame of five years. The final text approved by the Council of Ministers does not mention concrete strategies to evaluate the Plan or its implementation. While recognizing its historical importance, Bruno (2022) argues that it has gaps and problematic absences that greatly compromise its effectiveness in meeting the objectives proposed.

2.6. Preliminary conclusions of this chapter

In conclusion, the historical legacy of colonialism and ethno-racial discrimination has had a significant impact on contemporary Portugal's management of difference, which often fails to address existing hierarchies of power and privilege. The myth of Portuguese non-racism has depoliticized the debate on colonialism and racism, making it difficult to discuss ongoing issues of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. For instance, ethnic discrimination continues to be a significant barrier to Roma people's full participation in Portuguese society, and assimilationist policies hinder the integration of migrants and refugees. Although the Portuguese government has recently adopted a National Action Plan Against Racism, it remains to be seen how effective it will be in addressing the gaps and problematic absences that compromise its implementation.

Essentially, the notion of a "natural" inclination towards tolerance and acceptance of difference in Portuguese society has made it challenging to have public discussions on ongoing issues of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. Furthermore, two general trends persist in the contemporary public policy arena: a national identity anchored in Portugal's imperial past and the supposed exceptionality of its history of "expansion", and the universalistic values of Portuguese society, seen as less racist than other European societies. However, managing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in Portugal still needs attention, and assimilationist or "one size fits all" strategies cannot address new and old challenges concerning diversity, immigration, and minority populations. It is also crucial not to ignore the pervasive and long-lasting impacts of racism, slavery, and colonialism, which require a dramatic shift in institutional arrangements and public policy priorities.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

This chapter aims to review the existing literature in the areas that inform this research. The main goal of a review of the literature is to determine the existing body of knowledge on a certain subject and to structure the review such that it may serve as a context and rationale for your inquiry (Bryman, 2016). In addition, reviewing the literature helps the researcher identify possible gaps in their area of study. Building on prior work also sets the path for more detailed description, conceptual expansion, and refinement of ideas related to the topic under investigation (Padgett, 2017). As well described by Riessman (2008), every study is positioned in given a context, therefore, summarizing and analyzing the literature helps position the research in a wider net of existing knowledge.

It is worth noticing that the topics chosen for this Master's thesis were only partially addressed in one other study in Portugal (Sousa and Almeida 2016), at least considering the literature published in English and written for an international audience. Most studies in this field, as the Literature Review reveals, were developed in the North American context, so this current study proves to be innovative, and it brings forward a very important yet largely understudied topic in social work education, research, and practice in the Portuguese context.

The preliminary keywords used for the literature search were: "race", "ethnicity", "diversity", "social work", "education", and "curriculum". "Portugal" was also added as a keyword in a second search. The aim is to first retrieve all relevant works that address race /ethnicity and diversity in social work education, independent of context, to form the knowledge base of the study. Then, the review should focus on works conducted specifically about Portugal. All searches will be performed using adequate Boolean Operators. The databases initially selected for the review are the following: (i) Google Scholar (GS); (ii) Scopus; and WEB OF SCIENCE (Clarivate Analytics).

A narrative review of the literature was conducted (Bryman, 2016), based on relevant peer-reviewed articles and book chapters selected from a larger pool of sources retrieved from the databases mentioned earlier. The criteria used for inclusion were: (1) preferably works published in English; (2) published between the year 2000 and 2023, with priority for those published after 2010; (3) preference for peer-reviewed articles in major social work journals; and (4) works that fit within the scope of the review. The review was divided into two parts. The first part addresses the place of race, ethnicity, and diversity in social work education in

general, and the second one explores the history of social work education in Portugal, also in connection with those themes.

This Literature Review was developed in connection with the research goals and objectives, which includes assessing if and how questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity are addressed in the social work curriculum in Portugal. However, as there is a huge gap in the literature pertaining to this topic, the focus was on discussing the relevance of the themes for social work education (in connection with the specific objective I), as well as how other scholars have approached these themes in the past.

3.1. Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity in Social Work Education and Practice

Historically, social work professionals around the world have engaged considerably with so-called 'vulnerable groups' and diverse populations (Gitterman, 2014). Given the rights-based nature and the social justice focus of their profession, social workers have delivered interventions to individuals and entire communities intending to facilitate sociopolitical change and to provide service users with the resources they need to thrive (Pawar, 2014). This is the 'good side' of the history of social work as a profession.

Yet, social workers have also been accused of perpetuating harm and reproducing the same inequalities they once swore to combat (Asher BlackDeer & Gandarilla Ocampo, 2022). For instance, Calvo and Bradley (2021) argue that social work as a discipline and profession is highly influenced by notions of White supremacy and that this manifests in different ways in teaching, research, and practice. According to them, "higher education institutions sustain and reproduce this approach to the profession by normalizing the knowledge, experiences, and values associated with whiteness" (Calvo & Bradley, 2021, p. 920). Therefore, there is a growing body of literature in the field of education more generally speaking, and social work more specifically, demanding that we decolonize, diversify, and deconstruct the curriculum (Housee, 2022; Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2011; Asher BlackDeer & Gandarilla Ocampo, 2022), so that social work training and education is capable of living up to its promises of social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusivity.

With that said, there is an array of knowledge already produced and available about this topic, especially in the United States (US), that emphasizes the importance of integrating these themes into the social work curriculum. Carrillo et al (1993) explore the mandate of the Council on

Social Work Education (CSWE) concerning the teaching of race, ethnicity, and diversity. According to them, social work educators must help students become more aware of their own biases and monitor how their attitudes change after being exposed to information about diverse populations (Carrillo et al., 1993). This commitment to cultural and social diversity has been part of the CSWE since the 1980s. The authors argue that "many students are unaware of their biases or are unaware that they may hold firm beliefs that may be discriminatory to others" (Carrillo et al., 1993, p. 264), which is why social work education and training needs to encompass questions of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disabilities, among other components of human diversity (Carrillo et al., 1993).

Roberts and Smith (2002), on the other hand, seem to be a little more skeptical about how diversity is taught within predominantly White Schools of Social Work.[3] They argue that "CSWE standards pertaining to diversity have been criticized for being vague and impotent" (Roberts & Smith, 2002, p. 189). Yet, they still agree that "social work education has *a clear mandate* to prepare graduates for competent practice with diverse groups and to work toward the empowerment of those who are marginalized and discriminated against" (Roberts & Smith, 2002, p. 190, my italics). They are critical of how Social Work programs have tried to demonstrate their commitment to diversity throughout the foundation curriculum, syllabi, course titles, or other course content, which may create a mere "illusion of inclusion" (Roberts & Smith, 2002). Thus, they argue that to challenge racism, discrimination, and oppression in social work education, a significant change in the organizational climate of HEIs needs to happen, through a movement toward the transformation of the organizational environment and of oneself (Roberts & Smith, 2002).

Jong Won Min (2005) discusses the role of cultural competency as key to effective social work practice with racially and ethnically diverse populations, with a focus on minority elders. According to the author, several factors prevent or discourage racially and ethnically diverse elders from accessing health and social care services: these factors can be "[…] attributed to barriers to access the services in terms of language, lack of economic resources, cultural reasons, discrimination, and insensitivity of institutions toward minority elders" (Min, 2005, p.

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[3] In the United States, predominantly white institution (PWI) is a term usually used to describe Higher Education Institutions where at least half or more of the student population is White (Lomotey, 2010). It also refers to Faculty members and instructors, who are also predominantly White. Predominantly white Schools of Social Work fall within this definition if they historically and presently lack racial and ethnic diversity among students, professors, and other staff members.

349). Min (2005) argues that, while social work is in principle well equipped to address the different needs of diverse/minority populations due to its commitment to fighting oppression, marginalization, and social isolation, a better understanding of culturally competent practice is needed to meet the complex needs of minority populations. According to him, for effective social work interventions with racial/ethnically diverse clients to occur, social workers need to acknowledge how language barriers may affect their work while aiming to build cross-cultural understanding and communication (Min, 2005). That also requires social work education and training to focus on cultural sensitivity and the facilitation of culturally competent skills as a part of the core curriculum (Min, 2005).

As part of the larger mandate to teach about diversity and cultural competence/sensitivity, Johnston (2009) describes the experience of a specific Social Work Diversity Course as part of the 'Human Behavior and the Social Environment' curriculum. The author argues that social work students need to develop critical thinking skills and engage in self-reflexivity while in contact with issues of race and ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation (Johnston, 2009). Strategies employed in this diversity course involved creative expression exercises and out–of-comfort-zone incidents, among other pedagogical tools which instigated students to utilize self-reflection and to 'think outside of the box' concerning the content debated in the classroom (Johnston, 2009). Adopting and adapting the methodologies suggested by Johnston (2009) in the social work classroom can be one of many ways through which social work educators will introduce issues connected to race, ethnicity, and diversity to social work students.

Bowie et al (2011) investigate the integration of diversity into social work education at the graduate level through the view of African American social work graduates over a 30-year. Essentially, their study was developed based on "a sample of African American respondents [that] were surveyed to assess their perceptions of diversity and multiculturalism content […] [in connection with] courses they took while matriculated at their respective master of social work (MSW) degree programs" (Bowie et al, 2011, p. 1082). Among other results, their findings suggest that social work graduates from Historically Black Colleges and Universities consistently received higher diversity content in comparison to those who attended Predominantly White Institutions (Bowie et al, 2011), which means that "[…] unless there are substantial numbers of African American faculty and other faculty of color present at an

institution, diversity and multiculturalism content may simply receive cursory coverage, as opposed to meaningful curricular integration" (Bowie et al, 2011, p. 1090).

Similarly, Jani et al (2011) discuss the access to intersectionality content and competence in light of social work education diversity standards. They describe how, over the years, diversity standards in social work education in the US have shifted from the idea of non-discrimination to the emergence of cultural competence in an increasingly multicultural environment (Jani et al., 2011). Yet, they challenge what they consider positivist/modernist views of culturally competent practice and suggest a shift to intersectionality as a way to "[…] help create innovative methods of community organizing, advocacy, and resistance that promote greater civic participation among traditionally marginalized populations" (Jani et al., 2011, p. 296). A theoretical discussion regarding the concepts of intersectionality and cultural competence can be found in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Teasley and Archuleta (2015) have reviewed social justice and diversity content in diversity courses intending to measure the extent to which these themes are incorporated into social work course syllabi in the US. The aims and methods of their research are quite similar to those of this study, which shows that the assessment and evaluation of social work curricula still is a relevant method. Their analysis encompassed, in general, course titles, syllabi content, and course objectives (Teasley and Archuleta, 2015). Their findings suggest that in the US at least, "a substantial number of diversity courses incorporate race, culture, ethnicity, gender and oppression into their syllabi" (Teasley and Archuleta, 2015, p. 618). They recognize that social work education and training programs have not yet found a coherent and effective method to teach about diversity, however, that is not an excuse for the curriculum to lack these core competencies: "when developing diversity course syllabi, instructors should *explicitly state the content* to be covered with specific attention to the issue (e.g. sexism, racism, and ageism) or group (e.g. women, minorities, and the disabled) to be covered by course materials" (Teasley and Archuleta, 2015, p. 620).

While also looking at social justice and diversity content, Deepak et al (2015) analyze the delivery of these themes in social work education with a focus on the implicit curriculum. According to them, social work education and practice indeed demonstrate a longstanding commitment to social justice and cultural competency/sensitivity, nonetheless, this is repeatedly "shadowed by the profession's complicity in historical injustices, often affecting poor people and families of color" (Deepak et al, 2015, p. 107). This is why it is so important

to revisit, time and again, how issues of racism, discrimination, and oppression are dealt with in the social work classroom. The results of their study shed light on the elements that facilitate or pose obstacles to the effective delivery of diversity and social justice content (Deepak et al., 2015). As for the barriers, they mention several factors including (but not limited to) the lack of faculty and student racial diversity and also "[…] Faculty discomfort in addressing issues of race and other forms of social oppression in social work education" (Deepak et al, 2015, p. 121).

Rosen et al (2017), on the other hand, focus on the teaching of diversity through the lens of cultural humility, which essentially means that social work students need to be encouraged to engage in self-reflection and cultivate "[…] respect for and a lack of superiority toward a client or community's cultural background and experience" (Rosen et al., 2017, p.), considering that as professionals they will frequently engage with individuals and communities that are amongst the most marginalized in society (Rosen et al., 2017). Therefore, to the authors, critical self-reflection and cultural humility are core competencies to be developed through diversity coursework (Rosen et al., 2017).

To finish, Olcoń et al (2020) have performed a systematic review of teaching about racial and ethnic diversity in social work education. They have identified and analyzed twenty-five studies published between 2007 and 2016, in search of the "best teaching practices for preparing social work students to work with clients from historically excluded racial and ethnic groups" (Olcoń et al., 2020, p. 215). Their findings suggest that in more than half, 56% of the studies to be specific, "*pedagogical interventions had a positive effect on student learning about racial and ethnic diversity and cultural competence or related outcomes*" (Olcoń et al., 2020, p. 229), while in 40% of the studies, the results were mixed. Despite that, the authors conclude that "social work education [in the US] lacks an intentional and systematic approach to teaching about racial and ethnic diversity and to evaluating student learning outcomes related to these concepts" (Olcoń et al., 2020, p. 231).

In sum, it seems that there is not one single approach to how to incorporate issues of race, ethnicity, and sociocultural diversity in the social work curriculum or how to deliver diversity content through social work teaching. Nonetheless, it is still important that social work education encourages students to exercise self-reflection and cultural sensitivity in their practice, especially with historically marginalized groups. Teaching about racism, discrimination, and diversity of lived experiences is a crucial task for social work educators.

When it comes to this educational goal, both the implicit and explicit curriculum matter (Teasley and Archuleta, 2015; Deepak et al, 2015), which is why is so important to revisit, time and again, how these issues are dealt with in the social work classroom. A major limitation is that the majority of the studies available about this topic are from the United States, which means that their findings are necessarily representative of other experiences with teaching about race, ethnicity, and diversity in other parts of the world. For a summary of this literature review, please see Table 1.

Author(s) / Year	Title	Journal	Main topics
Carrillo et al (1993)	Assessing social work students' attitudes related to cultural diversity: a review of selected measures	*Journal of Social Work Education*	The education of social work students concerning issues of social and cultural diversity; CSWE curriculum policy; outcomes of students' exposure to the curriculum on diversity.
Roberts & Smith (2002)	The Illusion of Inclusion: An Analysis of Approaches to Diversity Within Predominantly White Schools of Social Work	*Journal of Teaching in Social Work*	Approaches to diversity within predominantly white Schools of Social Work; school's culture; organizational transformation; racism and higher education.
Min (2005)	Cultural Competency: A Key to Effective Future Social Work With Racially and Ethnically Diverse Elders	*Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*	Racial/ethnic diversity among the older population; social work practice with minority elders; gerontological social work and cultural competence.
Johnston (2009)	Critical Thinking and Creativity in a Social Work Diversity Course: Challenging Students to "Think Outside the Box"	*Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*	Creativity and critical thinking skills in social work diversity courses; race and ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.
Bowie et al (2011)	Integrating Diversity Into Graduate Social Work Education: A 30-Year Retrospective View by MSW-Level African American Social Workers	*Journal of Black Studies*	Integration of diversity into graduate Social Work education; Social work and Afrocentric theory; race/ethnicity, diversity, and multiculturalism.
Jani et al (2011)	Access to intersectionality, content to competence: deconstructing social work education diversity standards	*Journal of Social Work Education*	Social work education and diversity standards; critique of cultural competence; intersectionality as a pedagogical tool in diversity coursework.

Teasley & Archuleta (2015)	A Review of Social Justice and Diversity Content in Diversity Course Syllabi	*Social Work Education: The International Journal*	Standards of practice for diversity in social work education in the United States.
Deepak et al (2015)	Delivering Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Education: The Power of Context	*Journal of Progressive Human Services*	Critical race theory; the implicit curriculum; barriers to the delivery of diversity and social justice content.
Rosen et al (2017)	Teaching critical self-reflection through the lens of cultural humility: an assignment in a social work diversity course	*Social Work Education: The International Journal*	Teaching diversity through the lens of cultural humility; self-reflexivity; pedagogies to promote culturally competent social work practice.
Olcoń et al (2020)	Teaching About Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Social Work Education: A Systematic Review	*Journal of Social Work Education*	A systematic review of teaching strategies pertaining to racial and ethnic diversity in the US.

Table 1. Summary of literature review, Part I. Source: Elaborated by the author.

3.2. Social Work Education and Practice in Portugal: History and Challenges

The objective of this second part of the literature review is to shortly describe the core characteristics of social work education in Portugal, its history, and further particularities. At some level, the integration of race, ethnicity, and diversity is also discussed, although not the focal point, as there are only a few academic texts published on how Portuguese Schools of Social Work deal with these specific questions.

The history of the social work profession in Portugal is very distinct and it accompanied the country's social and political transformations over the years. Carvalho (2010) analyzes the emergence of social work education and training in Portugal by reviewing textbooks, research articles, and her work teaching in Portuguese Higher Education Institutions. She divides the history of the profession into four eras: the first would be marked by the institutionalization of social work as a profession and field of training, which happened between the 1930s and 1940s (Carvalho, 2010); the second took place in the 1950s, 60s, and mid-70s, and refers to social changes and "professional discontinuities" which took place across these three decades (Carvalho, 2010); the third one spans a period that encompasses the April Revolution of 1974 (popularly known as the Carnation Revolution), until the 1990s, and is marked by a reaffirmation of the profession (Carvalho, 2010); the fourth *époque* is situated between the 1990s and 2004, and is characterized by a strong consolidation of the social work profession in the country (Carvalho, 2010). Ultimately, according to her, the contemporary portrait of the profession is defined, among other things, by the period of education reform following the Bologna process,[4] neoliberalism, and the global financial crisis, as well as ongoing struggles for recognition and professionalization (Carvalho, 2010).

Ferreira and Pena (2014) also provide a historical overview of social work education and practice in Portugal in their book chapter. According to them, the history of social work education in Portugal started with the creation of the first Portuguese School of Social Work, the 'Lisbon Superior Institute of Social Work', in 1935, followed by the creation of the Coimbra Social School in 1937 (*Escola Normal Social de Coimbra*). At its birth, social work education in the country was oriented toward social intervention of different kinds (Ferreira & Pena, 2014). Carvalho (2010) also notes that social work practice in Portugal during its 'first era', as

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[4] As an initiative established at the EU-level, "under the Bologna Process, European governments engage in discussions regarding higher education policy reforms and strive to overcome obstacles to create a European Higher Education Area" (European Commission, n.d., para. 7).

aforementioned, was strongly marked by ideals of social control, especially over poor and marginalized populations in favor of dominant political ideologies. Nonetheless, over the years, both social work education and practice in Portugal have transformed considerably to respond to challenges brought about by European integration, globalization, and other factors, for example:

> Postgraduate education was developed in different fields of training: Postgraduate courses, Social Work Masters courses and Social Work PhD courses. There was investment in training the teaching staff, qualifying it according with the university system demands. Scientific cooperation agreements were established with foreign universities in Europe and outside Europe, in order to qualify the Social Work education to respond timely and effectively to the emerging social problems in a democratic, participatory and globalized society, whose theoretical-scientific framing passes through grounded theories based in the context of social theories (Ferreira & Pena, 2014, p. 160).

Similarly, Carvalho and Pinto (2015) offer a historical overview of the social work profession in Portugal, while highlighting the current challenges it faces as well. They argue that, even though social work education and practice in Portugal emerged in a dictatorial context (under the *Estado Novo*[5]), social work knew how to reinvent itself and face the oppressive regime by integrating democratic principles and values associated with civic, political and social rights (Carvalho & Pinto, 2015). It also transformed its nature from voluntarism/assistentialism to professionalization built on theoretical and practical evidence, forming a journey of autonomy and scientificization (Carvalho & Pinto, 2015).

Nonetheless, albeit these transformations, it is important to highlight that the emergence and the institutionalization of the social work profession in Portugal were characterized by ideas of racial superiority and repressive morality (Carvalho, 2010; Carvalho & Pinto, 2015). It was also dominated by women of the bourgeois classes and highly influenced by reformist ideas linked to the national education political project, which carried the motto "God, nation, and family" (*Deus, pátria e família* in Portuguese) (Carvalho & Pinto, 2015).

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[5]*Estado Novo* (or "The New State" in English) was an authoritarian regime that took place in Portugal from 1933 to 1974, established and initially led by António de Oliveira Salazar. The regime was generally marked by authoritarianism, political conservatism, with nationalist and fascist inspirations.

In the years following democratization, especially in the early and mid-1970s, Portuguese social work practice and education took a turn toward what Santos and Martins (2016) called critical trend(s). From 1973 onwards, Portuguese social work grew closer to the class struggle and union movements, also advocating for the end of the *salazarista* dictatorship (Santos & Martins, 2016). Therefore, it started to question the supposed neutrality of Social Work and its positivist nature, aiming to conceive the profession in light of current developments (at the time) of critical thinking, either through the dialogue between Christianity and Marxism, or through the pedagogy of Paulo Freire (Santos & Martins, 2016). Also noteworthy, during this period, was the great influence of the Reconceptualization movement within Latin American Social Work (Santos & Martins, 2016). Between the 1980s and early 2000s, several other important transformations took place as well regarding social work education in Portugal, especially after the country joined the former European Economic Community in 1986 and after adhering to the Bologna Declaration in 1999 (Santos & Martins, 2016).

Apart from that historical account, Santos and Martins (2016) have also looked at curriculum plans or units (*Planos de Estudo*) of different Schools of Social Work in Portugal, and they also conducted interviews with professors and course coordinators/directors, to investigate the role of critical thought in social work education, especially related to the theoretical traditions of Critical and Radical Social Work practice (Santos & Martins, 2016). Their findings indicate that within those frameworks, different traditions are discussed during the education of social workers in Portugal: from Feminist theories/interventions to Critical/dialectical Social Work and Anti-discriminatory, Anti-oppressive, and Empowerment practices (Santos & Martins, 2016). However, in their work, it is not very clear how Schools of Social Work in Portugal implement Antiracist Pedagogies or diversity-related content. Furthermore, after reading their research findings (Santos & Martins, 2016), one can think that there seems to be an ongoing struggle between two forces within social work education in Portugal: one that is oriented toward homogeneity/order/regulation within the profession, and another one that privileges critical traditions, including anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive frameworks.

Sousa and Almeida (2016), on the other hand, decided to look specifically at the place of diversity and culturally sensitive practices in social work education in Europe, with a focus on Portugal and Portuguese universities and institutes. Their article is based on research that aimed at finding out if there are mandatory curricular units within Social Work programs that explicitly address culturally sensitive social work, cultural competencies, and diversity content

(Sousa & Almeida, 2016). They performed an online survey and a document analysis of the curricula of all Portuguese courses in Social Work (Sousa & Almeida, 2016). First of all, according to them, social work courses and programs in Portugal have different curriculum programs, as the country lacks National Standards of Education in relation to social work education (Sousa & Almeida, 2016). This is why looking at different curricula and syllabi is an important task, given that social work education in Portugal does not have a common curriculum based on national educational policy or accreditation standards (Sousa & Almeida, 2016). Their findings suggest that "in general, from the main outcome of the study, it may be concluded that the courses of social work do not have a curriculum offer that addresses diversity/cultural sensitivity/cultural competence as compulsory" (Sousa & Almeida, 2016, p. 14). Moreover, they argue that "the absence of well-developed cultural competences can lead to a color-blind view of reality and to a certain cultural daltonism" (Sousa & Almeida, 2016, p. 14). Their findings have contributed significantly to my choice of pursuing this theme for the Master's thesis, in hopes of challenging colorblind ideologies that can eventually be reproduced in social work education in Europe in general and in Portugal more specifically.

Carvalho et al (2019) explore recent shifts in social work education in Portugal, from what they characterize as 'exclusivity' to a 'massification' process. They employ a critical understanding of higher education and argue that although Education is a right, "[…] it has become a commodity as a result of the Bologna process" (Carvalho et al, 2019, p. 690). Many challenges have arisen in recent years according to them, including a "[…] dispersion of an educational project theoretically, methodologically, and ethically consistent in our country, defined by social workers and trained by them (in schools) to a mass model where any teacher from these universities and institutes could also teach social work" (Carvalho et al, 2019, p. 702). They also blame the reduction of years required to graduate with a social work degree and the lack of teaching guidelines for the scientific areas of social work and related fields (Carvalho et al, 2019) for the reduction in quality and the massification of social work education in the country, among other things.

Sousa and Almeida (2021) reiterate the problem regarding a lack of standards and guidelines for accreditation of social work education in Portugal, therefore, they argue that "standards in social work education should set out what students need to learn to do, what they need to be able to understand, and the competences they must have when they complete their training to be prepared for the labor market" (Sousa and Almeida, 2021, p. 202). Menezes (2021) also

mentions the role of academic training in social work in Portugal as a structuring and identity element; she argues that initial training in social work should encompass reflective teaching, based on the consolidation and internalization of new forms of social work research, practice, and education (Menezes, 2021). For a summary of this literature review, please see Table 2.

3.3. Preliminary conclusions of this chapter

In sum, incorporating issues of race, ethnicity, and sociocultural diversity in social work education remains a challenging task, with no single approach or consensus on how to deliver diversity content through teaching. However, it is crucial for social work educators to teach about racism, discrimination, and diversity of lived experiences, encouraging self-reflection and cultural sensitivity in practice, particularly with historically marginalized groups.

Although the majority of the studies on this topic are from the United States, Sousa and Almeida (2016) shed light on the place of diversity and culturally sensitive practices in social work education in Europe, specifically in Portugal. Their research findings suggest that social work courses and programs in Portugal lack compulsory curriculum units that address diversity/cultural sensitivity/cultural competence, which can lead to a color-blind view of reality and cultural daltonism. The absence of well-developed cultural competencies highlights the need for standards and guidelines for the accreditation of social work education in Portugal. As Menezes (2021) argues, academic training in social work should encompass reflective teaching based on new forms of social work research, practice, and education.

This literature review underscores the importance of continuously revisiting how diversity and culturally sensitive practices are dealt with in the social work classroom to improve the education of future social workers.

Author(s) / Year	Title	Journal / Book	Main topics
Carvalho (2010)	Serviço social em Portugal: percurso cruzado entre a assistência e os direitos [Social Work in Portugal: Crossroads Between Assistance and Rights]	*Revista Serviço Social & Saúde [Journal Social Work & Health]*	Social work in Portugal; education and practice; historical overlook of the social work profession in Portugal, its roots and developments.
Ferreira and Pena (2014)	Research in Social Work: Education, Process, and Practice in Portugal	*Social Work Research Across Europe: Methodological Positions and Research Practice [edited collection]*	Social work education in Portugal; history of social work education, research, and practice; academicization of social work.
Carvalho & Pinto (2015)	Desafios do Serviço Social na atualidade em Portugal [Challenges faced by Social Work in Portugal nowadays]	*Serviço Social & Sociedade [Social Work & Society]*	Historical and ongoing challenges affecting social work education and practice in Portugal.
Santos & Martins (2016)	A formação do assistente social em Portugal: tendências críticas em questão [The training of social workers in Portugal: critical trends in question]	*Revista Katálysis [Katálysis Journal]*	Social work education in Portugal; critical trends and competencies; critical and radical social work.
Sousa & Almeida (2016)	Culturally sensitive social work: promoting cultural competence	*European Journal of Social Work*	Social work education in Portugal; diversity and cultural competence; cultural sensitivity; Portuguese social work curricula.
Carvalho et al (2019)	From exclusivity to massification of social work education in Portugal. Limits, potentialities, and challenges	*Social Work Education: The International Journal*	Standards on social work education in Portugal; proliferation of Schools of Social Work in the country; quality of education and job prospects.

Sousa & Almeida (2021)	Social Work Education in Portugal	*The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Work Education [edited collection]*	Historical analysis of social work education in Portugal; Portuguese higher education system and structure; the impact of the Bologna Process on social work education in Portugal.
Menezes (2021)	Ser assistente social: A formação académica em serviço social (Portugal) enquanto elemento estruturante e identitário [Being a social worker: Academic training in social work (Portugal) as a structuring and identity element]	*Revista Temas Sociais [Journal Social Themes]*	Social work education and training in Portugal; professional and personal identities of Portuguese social workers.

Table 2. Summary of literature review, Part II. Source: Elaborated by the author.

Chapter 4. Theoretical Frameworks

This study takes an interdisciplinary stance and therefore relies on a multitude of theoretical frameworks from within and outside the discipline of Social Work. Because this research is concerned with social work education and training, it employs theories and methods from the field of Pedagogy and Education Sciences as well. At a glance, the theories employed are the following: Critical Curriculum Studies, Critical Race Theory and Anti-racist Pedagogy, Anti-racist and Anti-oppressive Social Work Practice (Dominelli, 1997; 2002), Culturally Sensitive Practice and Cultural Humility (Gottlieb, 2021), and the Intersectionality Framework/Approach.

First and foremost, it is important to state that race and ethnicity as concepts are the cornerstones of this investigation. It is important to notice though, that there is not a single universally accepted definition for either of them. Race and ethnicity are two different, distinct, and often contested categories. However, they are interdependent (Dominelli & Lorenz, 2001), and it would not make sense, in the context of this research, to address only one or the other. While race as a scientific/biological category has been largely rejected by the international scientific community (Rastas, 2019), race as a social construct or social category still is pretty much valid as a conceptual-analytical tool to explain the lived experiences of racialized groups in society concerning racism and discrimination (Rastas, 2019).

Therefore, in the context of this study, race will be understood not as a natural or biological marker but as a social, pattern-based concept that reveals how humans are still hierarchically organized based on racialization processes (Gonzalez-Sobrino & Goss, 2019; Yudell et al., 2016). Ethnicity, on the other hand, is generally understood as a term for an identity "[…] bestowed on groups or categories defined by their distinctive cultural attributes such as language and religion" (Berreman, 2001, p. 7380). Differently from racial categorizations, "[…] ethnic classification is normally more accurate of a cultural group because it is defined by the group itself" (Baumann, 2004, p. 12). However, none of these categories are static; given their socially constructed characteristics, they often change across contexts and time.

As important as they are though, race and ethnicity are only one aspect of a person's identity. Humans are cultural and social beings; therefore, race and ethnicity alone cannot describe the complexity of the human condition despite their importance as 'identity markers'. Thus, more

recently, social researchers have also drawn attention to the notion of intersecting identities, that is, "[…] the reality that we simultaneously occupy multiple groups - both oppressed and privileged positions - and that these positions intersect in complex ways" (DiAngelo, 2012, p. 191). This is why this research is also preoccupied with diversity in social work education and training, which was used as an umbrella term to refer to multiple, often intersecting factors, including but not limited to gender identity, class, race and ethnicity religious beliefs, and sexual identity and orientation (Bolding, 2020).

4.1. Critical Curriculum Studies

Critical Curriculum Studies is not a theory per se, it rather is an intellectual movement, which this thesis draws inspiration from. While many academics and educators may take the curriculum for granted, there is a growing movement in and outside academia that views "[…] course syllabi as a generator of inequality" (Murphy, 2021, p. 169). According to Murphy (2021, p. 169): "course syllabi, those seemingly mundane and functional institutional artefacts, have come under increased scrutiny for their valued-laden, ideologically biased forms of knowledge construction […]". Therefore, critical curriculum scholars tell us that the curriculum or course syllabi are not neutral, on the contrary, they are the result of power struggles over what is or is not valid knowledge (Apple, 2018).

Thus, because social work is a profession guided by principles of social justice, the social work curriculum needs to reflect the lived experiences of diverse populations, especially those who have been historically minoritized and marginalized. To interrogate the role of the curriculum in (re)producing unequal power relations, Professor Michael W. Apple poses a series of questions that might illustrate what being critical about the curriculum may look like:

> Whose knowledge is this? How did it become 'official'? What is the relationship between this knowledge and how it is organized and taught and who has cultural, social and economic capital in this society? Who benefits from these definitions of legitimate knowledge and who does not? What are the overt and hidden effects of educational reforms on real people and real communities? What can we do as critical educators and activists to challenge existing educational and social inequalities and to create curricula and teaching that are more socially just? (Apple, 2018, p. 2).

Movements toward contesting the curriculum in higher education have taken place in the United States, United Kingdom, and France since the 1960s (Murphy, 2021). Notwithstanding, recent mobilizations such as the *Why is My Curriculum White* movement in England have gained notoriety as they highlight a lack of awareness that the curriculum often reflects 'White ideas' written by 'White authors', as a result of colonialism, epistemic violence, and the naturalization of whiteness in educational settings (Peters, 2015). Historically, and across different contexts, "[…] higher education has taken on a significant role in furthering white supremacist philosophies, in theory, policy, and with the abuse and dehumanization of black and brown racially identified individuals" (Sawyer & Waite, 2021, p. 3).

However, many White educators are still resistant to recognizing the harmful, ongoing legacies of racism and colonialism in the curriculum of different higher education institutions (Picower, 2009), especially in previous white-settler colonialist societies. In Portugal, this historical amnesia has been frequently reproduced in education, politics, and society. Marta Araújo (2013) argues that education, most notably in the Portuguese history curriculum and textbooks, imposes or reinforces an anachronical image of a homogeneous nation, marked by a White, Christian, national identity while downplaying colonialism and inequalities tied to the race/power binary (Araújo, 2013).

The result is an education that is frequently disconnected from the mental and material aspects of colonialism, institutional racism, and related discrimination (Araújo, 2013; 2018). If left unchallenged, the reproduction of this mentality in social work education can have several negative implications on social work students (Abrams et al., 2021), especially minoritized ones, and for the present and future of the social work profession. Teaching about race, ethnicity, and diversity is a crucial task in the larger strategy which is to decolonize and diversify the curriculum (Housee, 2021). Efforts are needed to address discrimination and personal biases in social work education programs, especially in the Portuguese context. Moving forward, these themes are debated in connection to social work theories and frameworks for practice.

4.2. Critical Race Theory and Anti-racist Pedagogy

Since the 1980s, in the field of education research more specifically, and social research more broadly, there has been a growing body of literature that has positioned racial issues as central to the discussion of research methods and epistemology (Pillow, 2003); authors writing from different fields have challenged Eurocentrism and racism in existing frameworks and epistemologies and have argued for race-based methodologies to be taken seriously by educational researchers (Pillow, 2003). Within this intellectual tradition lies Critical Race Theory (CRT), and more recently, theories for Anti-racist Education. According to Delgado et al. (2012, p. 1):

> The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious.

CRT as a theoretical framework is relevant to this study because it allows us to recognize and challenge structural/systemic racism and intersectional forms of oppression and discrimination in and outside of the classroom (Morton, 2022). It may help reconcile the curriculum with the lived experiences of people of color (Morton, 2022), something that liberal theories of education are not equipped to do. At the same time, theories of Anti-racist Education or Anti-racist Pedagogy are often utilized to explain and combat racism's enduring effects, focusing on praxis to advance social justice and the establishment of a fully democratic society (Blakeney, 2005). Anti-racist Pedagogy tells us that is not enough for education to not be racist/discriminatory, it needs to actively question racism and other systems of oppression (Blakeney, 2005).

Both CRT and Anti-racist Pedagogy have been adopted in the field of social work education, training, and practice. On one hand, according to Constance-Huggins (2012), when tackling societal inequities and injustices, fully adopting CRT in social work education can help to overcome the shortcomings of the multicultural approach which is dominant, especially in North America. She argues that "despite social work's concern for racial inequality, this topic is not always addressed within the multicultural approach used in social work pedagogy" (Constance-Huggins, 2012, p. 3). On the other hand, an Anti-racist Pedagogy, applied to social

work education, aims to develop social work professionals who can effectively challenge racism and White supremacy at different levels (Copeland & Ross, 2021). Therefore, these different yet complementary frameworks provide the basis for an anti-racist social work education and practice, rooted in the activism to fight against racism and related discrimination and "[…] by recognizing it accurately and thinking critically about White supremacy's origins, manifestations, and impact" (Copeland & Ross, 2021, p. 768).

4.3. Social Work Theories and Frameworks for Practice

4.3.1. Anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice

Teaching about race, ethnicity, and diversity is not only connected to educational goals in the social work curriculum but it is also tied to values and principles that guide practices and larger developments in the field of social work and beyond. Theories or frameworks for anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice highlight the importance of addressing these issues in social work education, training, and practice. Although different from one another, they are complementary and can help us back up the argument for a more diverse curriculum.

Anti-oppressive practice is part of a larger theoretical-praxis movement within the modern critical social work framework, with roots in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s (Healy, 2022). Anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices are based on the acknowledgment of unequal power relations resulting from structural societal forces and institutions that deem certain groups of people more vulnerable to oppression and discrimination (Healy, 2022). Healy (2022, p. 226) points out that "a large and diverse body of education and research articulates the relevance of anti-oppressive practice in a variety of practice contexts including with children and families […]". One of the core assumptions of anti-oppressive practice is that:

> […] social workers should incorporate critical reflection on how they may inadvertently contribute to 'oppression and injustice in case of gender, sexuality, class, and race' and to seek instead to develop a more collaborative relationship and critical responses to the social problems impacting service users' lives (Healy, 2022, p. 227).

How can social work students possibly exercise self-reflexivity in the classroom, concerning different structures of power and oppression, if the curriculum lacks crucial competencies and

skills in that area? Anti-oppressive practice proposers tell us that we need to assess how personal, cultural, and structural processes influence the problems service users experience (Burke & Harrison, 2004; Healy, 2022), which is why social work education needs to encompass a serious discussion of how race, ethnicity, and diversity (of abilities, national origin, age, and social status) intersect in complex ways to create opportunities and disadvantages for the diverse populations social workers serve or will serve.

In 1997, critical social work scholar Lena Dominelli launched the book *Anti-Racist Social Work: A Challenge for White Practitioners and Educators*. In this groundbreaking volume, she addresses, among other things, how social work training in Britain (and at some level across the rest of Europe and North America as well) is embedded in racist beliefs (Dominelli, 1997). According to her, "social work educators have done little to challenge the racism inherent in their theories and practice" (Dominelli, 1997, p. 42). She emphasizes how British universities have essentially failed to adopt anti-racist measures as a compulsory part of the curriculum (Dominelli, 1997, p. 42). In line with anti-oppressive principles, she argues that *social work is not apolitical* and that social workers need to seriously recognize unequal power relations among different social groups and become aware of how this affects their work with people of color (Dominelli, 1997). Therefore, if social work education and training do not address racist assumptions inherent to the profession's theories and modus operandi, we run the risk of reproducing racism, and the inequalities tied to it, in social work practice:

> The failure of white social workers to take on board the specific conditions affecting black people has meant that they have colluded with the continued denial of their access to resources, dignity and justice […] Social work's poor showing on racism indicates the intractability of the problems confronting anti-racist social workers and trainers. It also means that to attack racism, white social workers and educators must adopt political and theoretical perspectives which are more than just ethnically sensitive. They must produce theories of welfare which acknowledge social work's social control function, recognise its dual position within state structures - a controller of substantial resources and the upholder of a caring ideology - and promote anti-racist social work practice (Dominelli, 1997, p. 36).

Thus, teaching anti-racism and adopting anti-racist pedagogies within social work education seems to be a crucial step toward challenging oppressive and unequal power structures in

society that are a result of institutionalized racism and discrimination. The curriculum bears a great amount of responsibility for what should or should not be discussed in the classroom. If social work training and education do not address these issues, they are bound to be disconnected from the values of the social work profession and its commitment to social justice. However, because racism is not the only problem affecting minoritized and racialized individuals and communities, the next section addresses the importance of culturally sensitive practice and cultural humility in social work interventions with service users from diverse backgrounds.

4.3.2. Culturally sensitive practice and cultural humility

The notion of culturally sensitive practice in social work was originally brought forward by Mel Gray and her colleagues in Australia in the early 2000s to address the idea of 'cultural competence' in the social literature at the time (Gray & Allegritti, 2003). Since then, the concept has considerably evolved and has been regarded as a central aspect of social work practice with diverse populations. According to Forkuor et al (2019, p. 864), "in order to effectively practice in a culturally sensitive and competent manner, practitioners must develop the skill and ability to bridge the gaps between the demands of culture and the values of social work practice". Therefore, social work education should encourage discussions around the meaning of culture for different people, with the freedom to question dominant/normative assumptions around culture often reproduced in social welfare. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) proposes a very interesting definition of culturally sensitive or culturally competent practice:

> Cultural competence requires social workers to examine their own cultural backgrounds and identities while seeking out the necessary knowledge, skills, and values that can enhance the delivery of services to people with varying cultural experiences associated with their race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, age, or disability [or other cultural factors] […] (NASW, 2015, p. 8).

Thus, social work education needs to train social work students to be able to adequately respond to different cultural identities (Osborn & Karandikar, 2022). This framework is particularly helpful for working with families and children from minority or immigrant backgrounds, for instance. However, the notion of cultural competence has been criticized over the years for its

unintended consequence of giving practitioners a misguided notion of expertise just because they read a book or heard a lecture about working with service users from certain racial or ethnic backgrounds (Fisher, 2021, p. 692). With that in mind, different authors have proposed the notion of cultural humility in social work practice. This study follows the definition of cultural humility proposed by Gottlieb (2021, pp. 464-465):

> […] Cultural humility has been distilled to the following three principles, each of which will be discussed: (1) *committing oneself to an ongoing process of compassionate self-awareness and inquiry*, supported by a community of trusted and cognitively-diverse colleagues; (2) *being open and teachable, striving to see cultures as our clients see them*, rather than as we have come to know or define them; and (3) continually considering the social systems – and their attendant assignations of power and privilege – that have helped shape reality as both we and our clients experience it. The use of a cultural humility paradigm also assumes that the practitioner is aware of their considerable power – both real and perceived – within the worker/client relationship, and that we have a desire to equalize that imbalance to the greatest extent possible.

Through the above definition and the definition of the NASW aforementioned, we can see how these different theories and frameworks for practice are actually in dialogue with each other. Anti-racist social work, culturally sensitive practice, and anti-racist pedagogy are interrelated concepts that can form a coherent framework within the social work profession. Each of these concepts is focused on addressing the systemic and institutional discrimination that exists in society and the impact it has on individuals and communities. Taken together, they provide a comprehensive framework for social work education, training, and practice that is grounded in a commitment to social justice and equity. By actively challenging systemic racism, understanding and respecting diverse cultural backgrounds, and creating inclusive learning and practice environments, social workers can help to create positive social change and support the empowerment of marginalized communities, while challenging multiple systems of oppression.

4.3.3. Intersectionality framework/approach

The term 'intersectionality' was originally coined by Law Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s (Crenshaw, 1989) referring particularly to how Black women experience racism and

sexism through what she called the "intersectional experience", which is greater than the sum of those two (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). The concept of intersectionality was employed, by her, at the time, "[…] to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). Since then, the concept has considerably evolved and has been adopted by and adapted to different fields of knowledge and praxis. Nowadays, intersectionality is frequently used as a lens to visualize how different identities intersect in complex ways to create both privileges and disadvantages, see Figure 8, for instance.

In Crenshaw's words: "intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects […]" (Crenshaw, 2017, para. 3). It is, on some level, about how people, especially historically marginalized groups, experience oppression at several fronts. Applying an intersectional approach to social work education, training, and practice, allows students and practitioners to understand how service users' many intersecting identities are often associated with uneven and disproportionate outcomes (Simon et al., 2022). Simon et al (2022) argue that understanding intersectionality is crucial for delivering effective social work interventions.
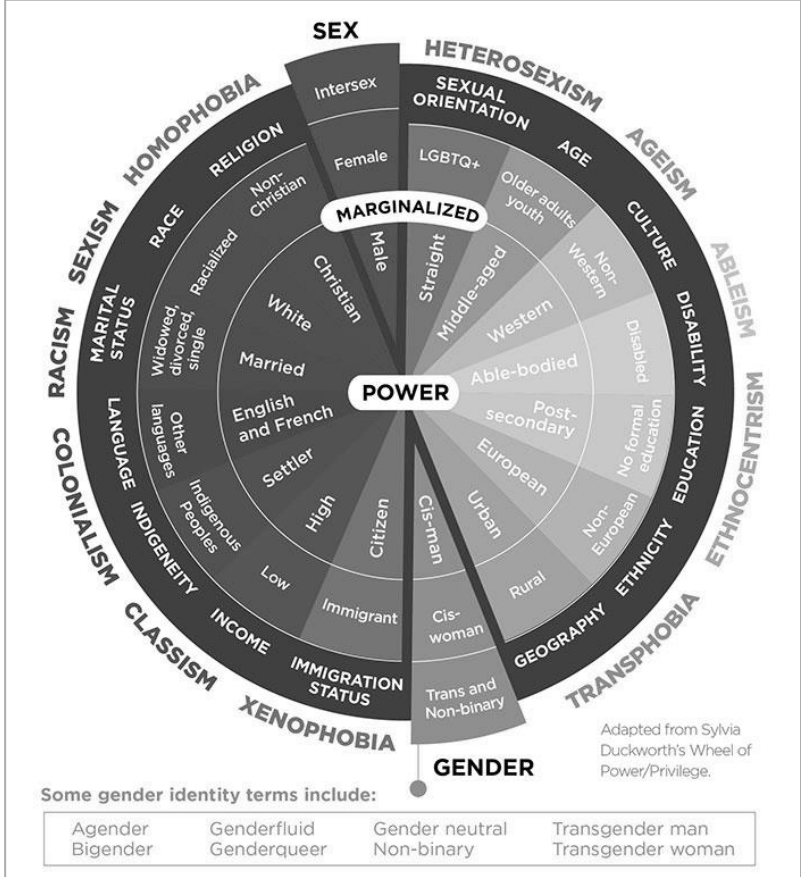
Figure 8. Intersectionality framework and the relationships of power and privilege. Source: retrieved from Bauer (2021).

The authors also mention that intersectionality highlights the interconnected aspect of an individual's multiple identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class,), whose idiosyncratic combination results in an augmentation of barriers (Simon et al., 2022).

Therefore, in conjunction with other theoretical frameworks aforementioned, intersectionality can be used in the classroom as a tool to generate questions and discussions around power relations, privilege, and oppression and how they impact the lives of the people we serve. It might be used as a self-reflexivity exercise as well, as students learn to identify their own experiences of privilege and marginalization and how it may affect their work/practice.

To sum up, intersectionality is crucial for effective social work interventions as it highlights the interconnected aspect of an individual's multiple identities, which can result in the augmentation of barriers. By using intersectionality as a tool in the classroom, students can generate discussions around power relations, privilege, and oppression, and identify their own experiences of privilege and marginalization.

4.4. Preliminary conclusions of this chapter

Ultimately, there is not a 'one size fits all' strategy for addressing racism, discrimination, and diversity in social work education, as previously demonstrated through the Literature Review as well. This is why, throughout the curriculum, several frameworks and approaches can be presented and discussed to introduce and debate these issues. However, regardless of the chosen lenses, these topics must integrate the social work curriculum, otherwise, students will lack the skills and competencies necessary to adequately work with diverse populations, especially those from a minority background. Some roadmaps are given through the theories introduced in this Chapter. Overall, this work is informed partially by a larger intellectual movement called Critical Curriculum Studies, which aims to unveil the power struggles over what is supposed to integrate the curriculum. Ultimately, it is important to acknowledge that social work education must challenge structural/systemic racism and intersectional forms of oppression and discrimination in and outside of the classroom.

Chapter 5. Results and Discussion

This chapter aims to introduce the data collected for the study and discuss/analyze them in light of the theories and previous works published about the topics of race, ethnicity, and diversity in social work education. This portion of the study introduces the results from a keyword search of curricular plans and syllabi of undergraduate (better known as 'first cycle') Social Work programs in Portugal. It is important to notice that the analysis only accounts for explicit mentions of words and concepts in the formal curriculum, and not for 'tacit knowledge' or the 'hidden curriculum'. The chapter also presents data collected from social work educators and/or administrators in Portugal and their views on the proposed themes.

Before starting the description of the findings and their subsequent analysis, I think it is important to mention a few difficulties I have encountered throughout the research process, especially when trying to recruit research respondents and participants from HEIs in Portugal. The online questionnaire was sent to at least 58 professors and/or program directors and coordinators, and I have tried to contact them several times to ask for their participation in the study. Yet only 18 of them answered the online survey. I conducted interviews with five BSW (present or former) program directors from different Schools of Social Work across the country (you can see the Interview Guide in Appendix II) but also had a hard time recruiting them, which is why the sample is not larger.

The main research objective was to analyze if and how questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity are addressed in the social work curriculum in Portugal. The main finding following the research aim was that these topics are addressed in fundamentally different ways across the various Portuguese BSW programs analyzed. That is, there is a wide diversity in addressing diversity: while at some Schools of Social Work, the themes are well developed throughout the curriculum, others lack a more systematic approach to ethnoracial and diversity issues in social work education and training.

5.1. Analysis of Portuguese BSW curricula

As part of the research methodology, I have looked through the curricular plans and units of all active Bachelor of Social Work programs across Portugal and have performed a word search for the terms race, ethnicity, diversity, and related themes. This type of research with the same

methodology has been executed before in different contexts (e.g. Teasley & Archuleta, 2015), including research about social work education in Portugal (Santos & Martins, 2016; Sousa & Almeida, 2016). As mentioned before, looking at the curriculum is an important task because it is not merely a piece of document, quite the contrary, it reflects broader power struggles over what is considered valid knowledge. It is also important to mention that, in general, when analyzing any curriculum, they often can be separated into two categories: the explicit curriculum and the implicit curriculum (Herr et al., 2020). According to Herr et al (2020, p. 1268):

> The explicit, or formal, curriculum is the official version that is usually taken as the one-and-only curriculum and which is detailed in official documentation; however, an implicit curriculum exists, comprised of subtle messaging about professional norms, values, and beliefs that are tacitly communicated through both positive and negative role modeling.

This first part of the results is only concerned with the explicit or formal curriculum and does not account for the implicit or hidden curriculum. While the review of the literature has revealed that there is not one single approach on how to incorporate issues of race, ethnicity, and sociocultural diversity in the social work curriculum or how to deliver this content in the classroom, perhaps all authors consulted would agree that the incorporation of these themes into social work education is a crucial task. Social work education needs to encourage students to exercise self-reflection and cultural sensitivity in their practice, especially with historically marginalized groups. Therefore, teaching about racism, discrimination and diversity of lived experiences is a fundamental mandate for social work educators.

In 2020, the Portuguese National Council of Education (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*) released a recommendation concerning the role of anti-racist education in the country. The document mentions the persistence of institutional blindness to racism and discrimination, and a failed attempt of Portuguese society to implement a "post-racial strategy" as if we simply stop talking about race/ethnicity it will make racism and related discrimination simply go away (Menezes et al., 2020). Considering this background of colorblind assumptions in education, politics, and society, the Council suggested, among other things, the inclusion of anti-racist, anti-discriminatory, and diversity content in all levels of formal education in Portugal (Menezes et al., 2020). This goes hand in hand with the provisions established in the National Plan to

Combat Racism and Discrimination. Despite these provisions and recommendations, is it not completely clear how Schools of Social Work across Portugal incorporate (or not) these themes into the formal curriculum, which is why this investigation was developed in the first place.

After going through every curricular unit of every syllabus available, a few patterns could be identified. The first one is that the content in the formal curriculum varies greatly among HEIs in Portugal. As mentioned before in the Literature Review, Social Work education in Portugal does not follow nationally established guidelines, which means that universities are pretty much responsible for deciding what is going to integrate the formal curriculum and what is not. Therefore, one BSW program can look very different from another in terms of core courses and competencies. Secondly, it was possible to identify that the majority of BSW programs integrate at least some content about diversity, especially cultural diversity, in the core curriculum. Thirdly, while some syllabi integrated topics related to discrimination, racial and ethnic discrimination appeared in way less frequency in comparison to other topics. In Table 3, you can see the results of the curricular analysis.

One of the key reasons why the social work curriculum should explicitly address questions of ethnic-racial discrimination and socio-cultural diversity is that social workers are often called upon to work with individuals, families, and communities from diverse backgrounds. To provide effective and culturally competent services to these populations, social workers need to have a deep understanding of how culture, ethnicity, race, and other social factors and identity markers impact people's experiences and needs. Social workers need to be able to recognize and address issues of racism and discrimination in their practice, and to work towards creating more just and equitable systems and policies. Additionally, by viewing this through the lenses of Critical Curriculum studies and Antiracist Education theory (Blakeney, 2005; Murphy, 2021), education is seen as a powerful tool for social change, and the curriculum becomes an important site for transformational discussions. Therefore, by explicitly mentioning these questions in the social work curriculum, social work educators and students can help to challenge and transform oppressive systems and structures.

Table 3. Results from the review of Curricular Units (UCs) and course syllabi of Portuguese BSW programs.

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	RACE/ETHNICITY, RACISM, AND RELATED DISCRIMINATION	DIVERSITY (SOCIAL AND CULTURAL), AND/OR INTERSECTIONALITY	MIGRATION-RELATED CONTENT	"TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES" (THESE MODULES ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL MAJORS)
ISCTE-IUL, University Institute of Lisbon	No	Yes **02846 - Laboratory in Social Work Settings and Fields**, 2. Children/young people, Seniors, Gender, Dependencies, Exclusion processes, Interculturality **L6102 - Social Classes and Stratification** 1.7. Classes, gender, ethnicity – intersectionality *Mandatory*	Yes **L5133 - Sociology of International Migrations** *Optional*	Yes **Diversity in the workplace** (1 ECTS) **Intro. to gender equality and diversity** (1 ECTS) *Optional*
University of Lisbon (ULisboa)	Yes **9238209.Anthropology** Unit 3.1. Race, Ethnicity, and Nation; Unit 3.2. Ethnic	Yes **9238209.Anthropology** **9238111. General sociology.** Unit II, Gender and Sexuality.	Yes **9238209.Anthropology** **9238202. Applied Sociology**	Not applicable

	relations: majorities and minorities. **9238310. Contemporary Theories of Social Work** Unit 3.2.1 Feminism, anti-racism, anti-oppression and social activism. **9238502. Models of Intervention in Social Work**	**9238310. Contemporary Theories of Social Work** Unit 3.2.1 Feminism, anti-racism, anti-oppression and social activism. **9238502. Models of Intervention in Social Work** 2.6 Empowerment and advocacy; 2.7 Critical model, anti-oppression and anti-discriminatory practice **9238604. Social Work and Ageing** *Mandatory* --- **9238115. Social Work in the Areas of Disability and Mental Health**	**9238308. Demography**	
	Mandatory	*Optional*	*Mandatory*	
University of Coimbra	No	Yes	No	Not applicable

		01010213. Theoretical Foundations of Social Work Mentions of multiculturalism, advocacy and empowerment, intercultural mediation, and reflexivity in social work practice **01010197. Sociology of Development** 2. Cultural diversity and multiculturalism **01010298. Educational Gerontology and Active Aging** **01741796. Rehabilitation in Special Populations** Disability studies *Mandatory*		
Universidade Lusófona	No	Yes **ULHT119-16426. Intervention in the Area of Diversity and Interculturality** **ULHT119-22372. Intervention in Social Gerontology**	No	Not applicable

		Optional		
University of Açores	No	Yes **0102047. Introduction to Sociology** 4.2. Culture and Society **0106053. Vocational Social Work Contexts** Social work with diverse populations *Mandatory* --- **0102012. Sociology of Culture** *Optional*	No	Not applicable
Catholic University of Portugal – Lisbon (Universidade Catolica de Portugal)*	Yes **Sociology I** 2.4. Race and ethnicity **Cultural Anthropology** 2.3. Race and ethnicity **Social work: paradigmatic fields and theories**	Yes **Sociology I** 2.1. Culture and Society 2.5. Sex and gender **Cultural Anthropology** 2.2. Sexuality, identity and culture	Yes **Seminar: Social Work Laboratory** 3.2. Social Work, migration processes and refugees	Not applicable

	3.5. Critical theories: radical and anti-oppressive Social Work practice	3.1. Multiculturalism, interculturalism and acculturation **Social Work and Human Rights** 5.3.Critical perspective, guarantee of human rights and respect for cultural diversity		
	Mandatory	*Mandatory*	*Mandatory*	
Universidade Lusíada, Lisboa	Yes **L4401. Anthropology of complex societies** Racism, ethnicity and identity **L4405. Seminar: Introduction to Social Problems** 2.7 - Racism, prejudice and ethnic and religious discrimination	Yes **L4401. Anthropology of complex societies** Cultural diversity, sex and gender **L4403. Globalization and Inequalities** **L4405. Seminar: Introduction to Social Problems**	Yes **L4405. Seminar: Introduction to Social Problems** 2.1 - Demographic social problems: population and migrations	Not applicable

		2.6 - Criminality, discrimination and gender and sexual violence **L4407. Human development contexts** "6. People with special needs and developmental problems" **L4409. Social Work and Society** 3. Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Local Identities: dilemmas and challenges of Social Work *Mandatory*		
	Mandatory		*Mandatory*	
University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD)	Yes **12622. Introduction to Sociology** 2.2 Ethnicity **12640. Social Psychology** IX - Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination	Yes **12623. Introduction to Social Sciences** Module 6 - Analysis of social and cultural reality **12613. Social, family and generational dynamics**	Yes **12615. Political economy of globalization** 2. […] Migratory movements, flexible work, new forms of poverty, discrimination and social exclusion. *Mandatory*	Not applicable

	Mandatory **12630. Migrations and interculturality** 4. Migration, ethnicity and racism 4.3. From the lusotropicalist myth to post-colonial racism in Portuguese society 4.4. Biological racism, new racism and institutional racism **12643. Theories of social intervention** 4.1 Anti-oppressive practice 4.2 Radical Social Work *Optional*	6. Family and gender relations in contemporary Portugal **12638. Developmental problems** Cognitive diversity **12609. Culture, and society: anthropological perspectives** **12606. Citizenship, social exclusions and empowerment** *Mandatory* **12630. Migrations and interculturality** *Optional*	**12630. Migrations and interculturality** *Optional*	
Higher Institute of Social Work of Porto (ISSSP)**	No	No	Yes **SS2210209. Societal Phenomena II** 1.2.3. The social and cultural integration of migrants in host societies *Mandatory*	Not applicable

Polytechnic Institute of Leiria***	No	Yes **9238507 Social and Cultural Anthropology** **9238520 Problems of Contemporary Society and Culture** **9238528 Multiculturalism and Intercultural Education** *Mandatory*	No	Not applicable
Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre	Yes **Social Work, Inequalities and Social Exclusion** Prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, stigma. The importance of anti-oppressive practice and critical reflection on the practice of social work. **Vulnerable Populations** 5.3. The Roma ethnicity in Portugal: characterization, main problems and possible solutions *Mandatory*	Yes **General Sociology** 6. Gender, sexuality and gender inequalities **Social and Cultural Anthropology** 3.2. Cultural identities, multiculturalism and cultural relativism **Rehabilitation, Disability and Mental Health**	Yes **Vulnerable Populations** 5. Immigrants and Ethnic Communities. 5.2. Immigrant communities in Portugal: characterization and perspectives of social inclusion	Not applicable

		Mandatory	Mandatory	
Polytechnic Institute of Beja	Yes / But partially only **923823 - Theory of Social Work II** 7. The perspective of Anti-oppressive and Anti-discriminatory intervention	Yes **923802 - Contemporary Social Problems** 5. Some social problems and needs associated with specific groups: 5.3. People belonging to ethnic-cultural minorities **923810 - Social and Cultural Anthropology** 4. Multi-interculturalism 2. Sociocultural unity and diversity in Portugal: ecology and society **923816 – Sociology of the Family** 4. The family in contemporary society: diversity of family forms *Mandatory* **923830 - Option 2 – Social Work Intervention -b) Intercultural Mediation** *Optional*	Yes **923802 - Contemporary Social Problems** 5. Some social problems and needs associated with specific groups: 5.2. Migrants *Mandatory* **923830 - Option 2 – Social Work Intervention -b) Intercultural Mediation** *Optional*	Not applicable

	Mandatory			
Polytechnic Institute of Viseu****	No	Yes **3186501208 Sociocultural Anthropology** Learning goal: "to reflect critically on the problem of unity and human diversity" **3186502116 Sociology of the Family** III.1 Plurality of forms of the family **3186502117 Intergenerational Social Work** *Mandatory*	No	Not applicable
Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco*****	Information not available online	Information not available online	Information not available online	Information not available online

Miguel Torga Institute of Higher Education******	Information not available online	Information not available online	Information not available online	Information not available online

*At the time of consultation, information about the BSW program at this HEI was only available regarding the first year of courses, information about years two and three was missing from their website. See: https://fch.lisboa.ucp.pt/pt-pt/licenciaturas/programas/licenciatura-em-servico-social/plano-curricular

**At the time of consultation, information about the BSW program at this HEI was only available regarding the first and second years of courses, information about year three was missing from their website. See: https://www.sigarra-isssp.pt/isssp/planos_estudos_geral.formview?p_Pe=630

***Information about specific contents in the syllabi was missing from this HEI's website; only a list of courses was available. See: https://arquivo.pt/noFrame/replay/20221125215619/https://www.ipleiria.pt/curso/licenciatura-em-servico-social/

****Information about several Curricular Units from the BSW program at this institution was missing. See: https://www1.estgl.ipv.pt/fichas-ects-de-ss

*****This HEI did not disclose the contents of the Curricular Units on its website: See: https://www.ipcb.pt/esecb/ensino/licenciatura-em-servico-social

****** This HEI did not disclose the contents of the Curricular Units on its website: See: https://ismt.pt/pt/servico-social#study-plan

Source: Elaborated by the author based on online information available at HEIs' institutional websites.

A quantitative summary of the curricular analysis is displayed in Table 4.

	Race/ethnicity, racism, xenophobia, and related discrimination	Diversity (social and cultural), and/or intersectionality	Migration-related content
Number of BSW programs with explicit mentions in the formal curriculum (mandatory courses only)	**5** (38.4%)	**13** (100%)	**7** (53.8%)
Total number of programs analyzed: 13 (a total of two programs were left out of the count for not having information available online)			

Table 4. Quantitative content analysis of BSW programs in Portugal concerning the selected themes. Source: Elaborated by the author.

The above findings from the analysis of the formal curriculum alone are preoccupying because race, ethnicity, and/or ethnic and racial discrimination appear in the Curricular Units at a much lower rate than the other topics. With that said, while Portuguese BSW programs perform relatively well in integrating diversity and migration-related content in the core curriculum, race/ethnicity, racism, xenophobia, and related discrimination rank the lowest among the topics selected for this study. When we view these findings through the lenses of Critical Race Theory (CRT), for instance, CRT would tell us that addressing systemic racism and related systems of oppression must be a foundational component of social work education (Williams, 2022). CRT would also compel "[…] us to address the complexities of systemic racism as they relate to social justice issues in the field of social work" (Williams, 2022, p. 2). Considering Portugal's history of institutionalized racism and colorblind attitudes - as extensively explored in previous Chapters of this thesis – an absence of these themes in the formal Social Work curriculum might lead to an unintended colorblind view of reality. With that said, from the viewpoint of CRT and Anti-racist Pedagogy, Portuguese Schools of Social Work could benefit from incorporating these themes into the curriculum in a more objective manner, so that social work educators can engage in meaningful discussions about the ongoing implications of ethnoracism, racial injustice, and so on.

On the other hand, in terms of the diversity content, culturally sensitive practice and cultural humility emphasize the importance of acknowledging and respecting diverse cultures, values, and experiences in social work education and practice (Gottlieb, 2021). The finding that the integration of migration-related content is relatively strong in Portuguese BSW programs aligns with these frameworks, as migration is a significant aspect of cultural diversity. However, in

terms of socio-cultural diversity, diversity content is usually delivered through either Sociology or Anthropology courses (see Table 4 one more time), which means that it is not clear how this content is translated to cultural competencies in social work practice, therefore, there might be a need to further develop cultural sensitivity within the curriculum, so that social workers can work effectively with diverse populations.

5.2. Characteristics of research participants/respondents

As highlighted in the SAGE Encyclopedia of Research Design, "demographic information provides data regarding research participants and is necessary for the determination of whether the individuals in a particular study are a representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes" (Lee & Schuele, 2010, online). While organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA) recommend the inclusion of racial/ethnic group membership and socioeconomic status of participants (Hammer, 2011), the Portuguese Constitution and legislation prohibit collecting information about a person's race or ethnicity, which is why this information is not reflected here. With that said, some demographics of the respondents are showcased in Table 5.

Total number of respondents (R)	Age	Gender	Education level	Job position	Years in Higher Education
18	Between 37 and 63 years of age	14 respondents identified as women (cisgender) 4 respondents identified as men (cisgender)	17 = Doctoral degrees 1 = Master's degree	Professors, Researchers, and Program Directors	16 = >10 years 1 = 5-10 years 1 = 1-5 years

Table 5. Demographic data of the respondents. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

While the aim was to have at least one faculty member from every School of Social Work in Portugal, not everyone was willing to answer the online survey, therefore, not all HEIs offering BSW programs are reflected among the respondents, see Table 6 for a complete list.

Name of university or institute
University of Lisbon
Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco
Lusófona University
Catholic University of Portugal
Porto Higher Institute of Social Work
University of Coimbra
The University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro
ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon

Table 6. HEIs represented among the sampled population. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

A total of 58 professors and/or program directors associated with BSW programs across Portugal received the online survey, but only 18 of them completed the questionnaire (which means that the response rate was around 31 percent). This means that the findings are not necessarily nationally representative, however, they do add original data concerning issues that are still understudied in Portugal, mainly about the perceptions of race, ethnicity, and diversity in social work education. The results are discussed going further.

5.3. Results and analysis from the online questionnaire

5.3.1. Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity in Social Work Education in Portugal: Perceptions Over the Relevance of the Themes

In connection to the secondary research objective number V, respondents were asked about their opinion on the integration of race/ethnicity, and diversity-related content in the social work curriculum (see Figure 9).

In your opinion, should the Social Work curriculum in Portugal address race, ethnicity, and diversity issues?
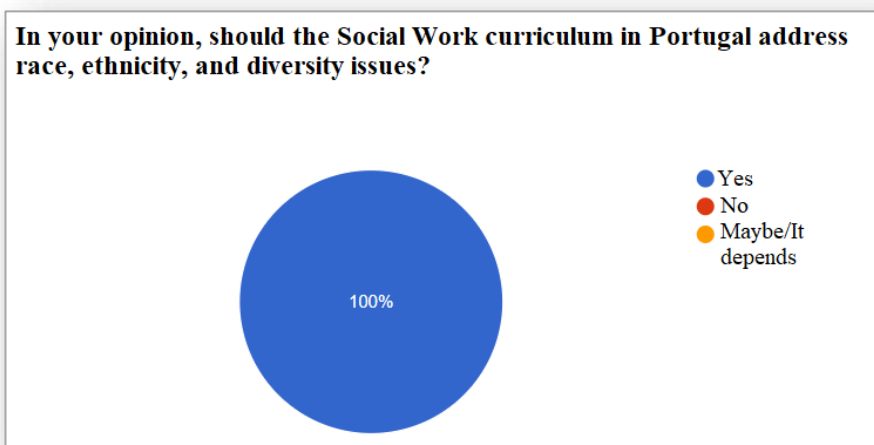
- Yes
- No
- Maybe/It depends

100%

Figure 9. Results from question number 12 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

As demonstrated in the above graph, all respondents have answered yes to the question: "In your opinion, should the Social Work curriculum in Portugal address race, ethnicity, and diversity issues?". While, at first, this demonstrates the openness of Faculty members to discuss these issues in the classroom, respondents might not be completely honest when answering this type of question. Participants tend to respond to this kind of question by providing "socially desirable" or "politically correct" answers, rather than being straightforward or truthful about their feelings concerning the subject or topic at hand.
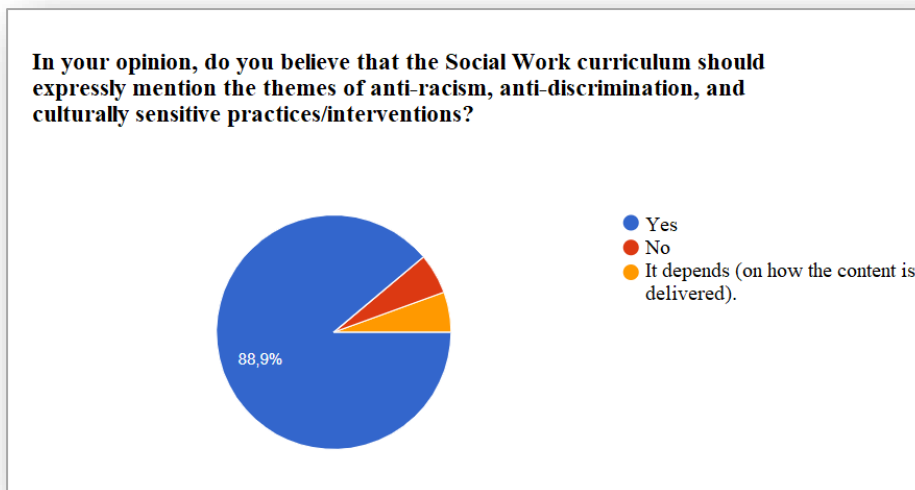

Figure 10. Results from question number 21 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

They were also asked if the curriculum should expressly mention the themes of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and culturally sensitive practices and intervention, see Figure 10 above. The majority of the respondents (i.e. 16 in total) answered yes to this question, while one person said no, and another one said that it depends on how the content is delivered. This demonstrates that – although all respondents previously agreed that these themes should be in the curriculum – there is not a consensus on how they should integrate social work education in Portugal. By looking at these responses from the viewpoint of anti-racist social work practice, teaching about anti-racist, anti-discriminatory, and culturally sensitive practices is essential to encourage students to challenge "systemic structures in society that keeps individuals from succeeding due to their racial [and ethnic] identity" (Vas, 2022, para. 8). Therefore, by leaving these themes out of the formal curriculum, Schools of Social Work might risk missing on important principles attached to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practices. As argued by Pentaris et al (2022, p. 335), social work education needs "to address anti-racist practice by name, as well as promote a greater degree of self-awareness and self-understanding of professionals".
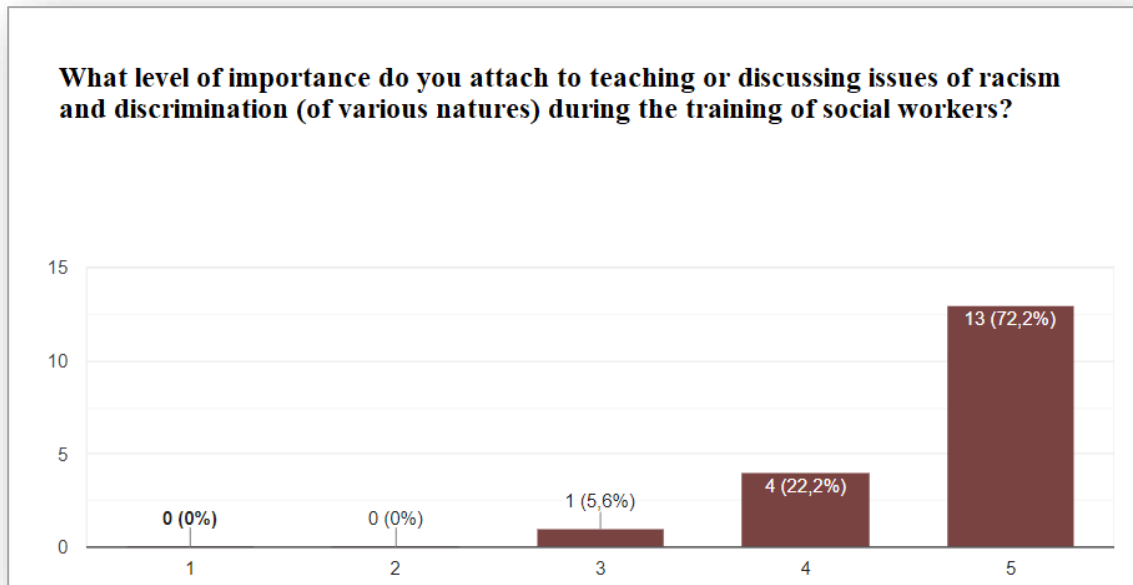
Figure 11. Results from question number 15 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data. **Legend**: 1 = Unimportant; 2 = Slightly Important; 3 = Moderately Important; 4 = Important; 5 = Very Important.

As can be seen in Figure 11, most of the participants think these themes are either important or very important, while one person thinks these topics are only moderately important. Despite these positive attitudes, based on the previous discussions, we could also say that the integration of these themes in the formal curriculum - either through diversity courses or as part of regular social work courses - is important because their introduction in the social work classroom should not depend solely on personal preferences. Especially since previous research has already demonstrated that White educators might be resistant to engaging in meaningful discussions about racism and related discrimination, or they might engage in reproducing hegemonic understandings about race and difference (Picower, 2009; Calvo & Bradley, 2021). Therefore, following the principles that guide the social work profession, including social justice and respect for diversity, teaching about racism and discrimination should be a crucial component of social work education not only in Portugal but everywhere.

5.3.2. Social Work Education and the History of Colonialism and Slavery

One of the goals of the National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination is to develop training and capacity-building for professionals on combating racism and discrimination, which includes information on the history of colonialism, slavery, and the Holocaust, specifically

linked to the Portuguese case (Conselho de Ministros, 2021). Considering that, as well as the fact that many social work educators and researchers, including myself, have argued for the decolonization of social work theory and practice (Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2011; Kleibl, 2020; da Luz Scherf, 2022; 2023), this study also wanted to ask Faculty members and administrators about their opinion on the inclusion of the history of colonialism and slavery in Portuguese social work curricula, see Figure 12.
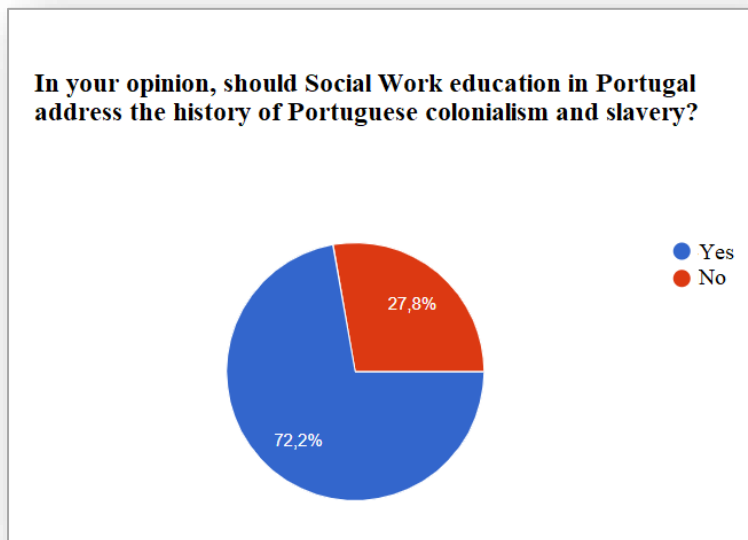

Figure 12. Results from question number 13 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

Considering that Portugal is a former colonial power that was actively involved with and benefited from the transatlantic slave trade, fostering knowledge about the ongoing and unhealed legacies of colonialism and slavery is essential to address and dismantle oppressive structures pretty much still present in Portuguese society. Yet, not all respondents think that social work education and training should address these topics. However, historical reflexivity is essential to question racial oppression as well as other inequalities generated by settler colonialism which perpetuated the genocide and repression of Indigenous populations, people of African descent, and so on (Cox, 2017). As ingeniously said by John Keane (2009, p. 876): "People inevitably misunderstand the present when they live in ignorance of the past".

Please give more details about your answer to the former questions
R1: "It should address these issues but it is necessary to be knowledgeable and careful in dealing with these issues as they can generate discrimination or inequality and social exclusion. We need not wear the Star of David to be Jewish. We have to recognize the differences but treat human beings as equals. All the same yet different otherwise we end up creating ghettos". [Talking about race, ethnicity, and diversity]
R6: "These contents should be acquired in other previous stages of (secondary) education, although naturally, there can and should be references to this and other historical moments in Social Work training" [Talking about the history of slavery and colonialism].

R11: "I do not consider it to be necessary" [Talking about the history of slavery and colonialism].
R12: "I replied in the affirmative, this does not mean that one should focus on these themes almost from a historical perspective but rather articulated with the thinking and perspectives of Social Work. What I defend is that it is one of the examples that can be mobilized to debate the topic. In this sequence, we can do so from the reflections on the models of legitimation of difference by António Magalhães and Stephen Stoer, in the book "Diferença Somos Somos". How can difference and diversity address issues of colonialism without the discussion being "zero-sum"? Also in the discussion of Theories of Practice in Social Work, we approach the theme based on Malcolm Payne's book that warns us about these issues." [Talking about the history of slavery and colonialism].
R15: "The historical view allows for a greater understanding of the present and prevention for the future, on the other hand, the issues of diversity are increasingly on the agenda, with a tendency towards greater complexity, so it is imperative that Social Work is informed and prepared to act with this dimension [Talking about the history of slavery and colonialism].

Table 7. Results from question number 14 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

In justifying their answer, one of the respondents said that students should acquire knowledge about these issues in other previous stages of education, mainly secondary education (see Table 7). Still, on the same topic, one respondent mentioned that they answered "no" because "social work education and training already have human rights as a theoretical framework" (R17, survey data), which should suffice. However, it depends on which kind of approach to human rights professors are using in the classroom. For instance, the Western "universal" human rights discourse is also built upon colorblind assumptions, as the idea that everyone is born equal is a result of European Enlightenment, and it "is also a discourse that proclaims the original knowledges of white privilege" (Tascón & Ife, 2008, p. 307). International human rights law was born of an imperialist global project (Grovogui, 2007; 2011; Harris-Short; 2003), therefore, human rights theory alone (especially coming from Republican and Liberal traditions) may not offer the tools necessary to address the ongoing legacies of racism, discrimination and other systems of oppression in the context of social work education.

5.3.3. Presence of the themes in the curriculum

While the first part of the results and discussion identified the presence (or absence) of the themes in the formal curriculum, this part now looks at the informal (sometimes also referred

to as 'hidden curriculum'), mainly through information provided by the Faculty members themselves. See Figure 13.

Figure 13. Results from question number 16 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

While only one respondent has indicated that the BSW program at their HEI does not address these issues, this data can only tell us so much. It does not indicate, for instance, in what way are these topics introduced in the classroom, and how often are they introduced. Hopefully, the interviews will be able to shed more light on that.

5.3.3.1. Frequency

Respondents were also asked to indicate the frequency with which these themes are debated or introduced throughout the curriculum and their responses varied considerably, see Figure 14.

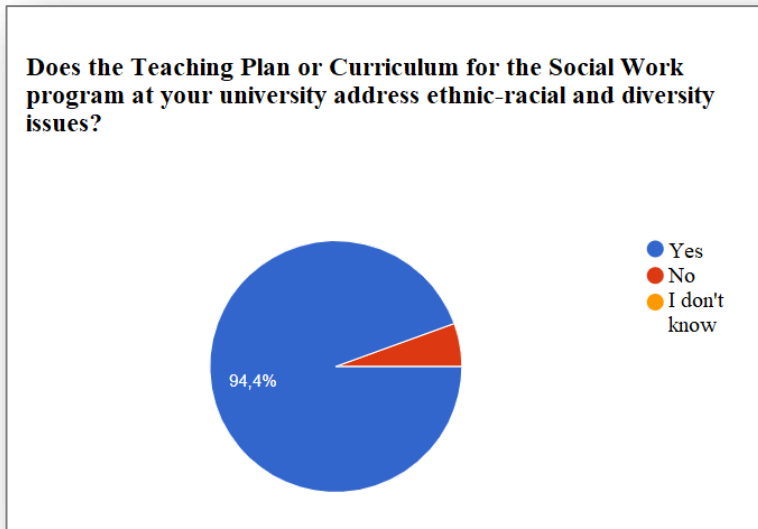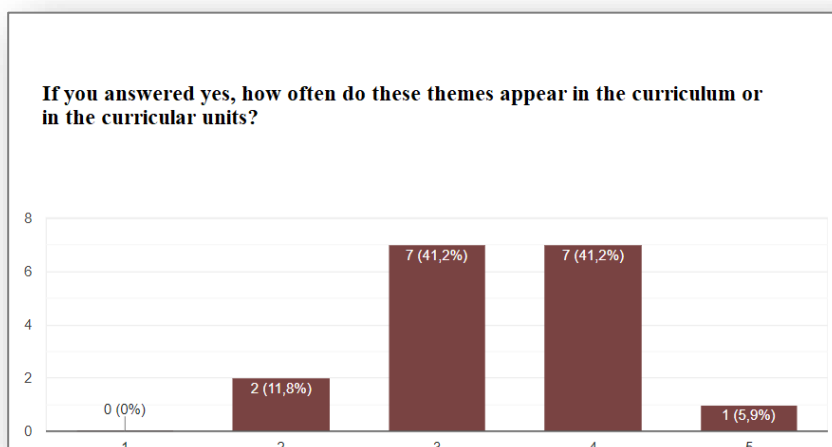**Figure 14**. Results from question number 17 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data. **Legend**: 1 = Rarely; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Often; 4 = Quite often; 5 = Always.

One important aspect of Curricular Mapping, as argued by Al-Eyd et al (2018), is communicability and transparency: "Transparency and communicability are vital for explaining

when, how and what is taught and in what way it is assessed" (Al-Eyd et al., 2018, p. 1). In the case of BSW programs in Portugal, it seems that the frequency in which the themes of race, ethnicity, and diversity are discussed depends on a variety of factors that are hard to objectively assess or measure. To further clarify this point, respondents were also asked to indicate when and how are these themes discussed.

5.3.4. Characterization: When and how are the themes discussed

When asked how or when are the themes discussed, some responses given were a bit vague while others went into more detail, as can be seen in Table 8. While in some cases the themes are addressed in specific moments in the curriculum, in other cases respondents argue that these are "cross-cutting" or transversal, appearing in more or less frequency across the entire curriculum.

Could you characterize how or when are these themes discussed in the classroom?
R3: "In workshops, open classes, and in a Curricular Unit dedicated to these themes."
R4: "Are part of the units or discussed in a practical context."
R5: "Within the scope of the themes taught in several Curricular Units."
R6: "In the various Curricular Units that I teach in which issues of intervention with individuals, families/groups and communities are addressed, in which practical cases are analyzed and discussed and also in the analysis and discussion of internship experiences."
R7: "When we talk about the social question."
R8: "Since there is no specific Curricular Unit, the themes of racism and diversity are addressed in the syllabi of some units, namely Intervention Models in Social Work, Anthropology, and Contemporary Theories in Social Work, among others."
R9: "These themes are addressed in all Curricular Units that relate to: Vulnerabilities and Training Processes, Social Policies and Social Work II; Social Policy; Community Development and Theoretical Foundations of Social Work within the anti-oppressive and critical model."
R10: "In the course on Globalization and Migrations."
R11: "These themes are part of the syllabus."
R12: "I gave examples in the previous question, in short, the theme is debated whenever we talk about the identity of what it is to be a social worker (1st year in all more practical Curricular Units) and when we approach theories and models of intervention. In this logic, it

is a transversal and unavoidable theme. It may not be explicitly reflected in the Syllabi, and that was the reason that led me to answer "3" in the question you asked, "How often do these themes appear in the curriculum...". In practice, there is a "subjective" frequency of knowledge that is addressed in the teachers' discourse, but this frequency in concrete and effective terms is lower and would require a more rigorous analysis of the CUs, I can, however, say that it is not so visible/explicit."

R13: "This theme integrates the approach to the problem of social exclusion."

R14: "In the Curricular Unit (CU) Seminar on Introduction to Social Problems, there is a point in the program dedicated to ideological social problems (racism, xenophobia, sexism, etc.) where there is room for a theoretical exposition and debate activity among students on the subject. Documentaries are also shown. In the CU Globalization and Inequalities different contemporary themes are worked on, analyzing categorical inequalities and analyzing documentaries such as 'the routes of slavery' or others that allow understanding the articulation between socio-historical processes and the present, such as the routes of migratory flows from the Mediterranean. In the UC Professional Contexts in Social Work, practical cases are worked on in which it is reflected how socio-cultural contexts and characteristics or economic conditions can limit access to fundamental rights and services, or condition the quality in which they are provided. Observation exercises are also carried out in different professional fields followed by the preparation of a report and critical reflection on it."

R15: "In the CU of Domains and Fields in Social Work, in the CU of Ethics Laboratory and social work with adults and the elderly, also in the optional course on Social Work and Civil Society."

R16: "Depending on the syllabus of the CUs, it is also a topic that cuts across different models for practice, so it is intrinsically present."

R17: "Diversity themes are discussed in several theoretical-practical and practical training curricular units in the study plan in Social Work. We have a CU in the Master's degree in Social Work dedicated to diversity."

R18: "Through theoretical, methodological contents or in practical training."

Table 8. Results from question number 18 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

The quote from Respondent 12 stands out because it points to a "subjective frequency" regarding when and how are these themes addressed. While some respondents did a better job of highlighting the moments in which these topics are discussed, the majority did not exactly characterize when and how are these themes discussed in the classroom. This is why many Schools of Social Work in Portugal could benefit from a more transparent strategy on how to tackle issues of diversity in social work education and training, so that this subjective frequency can become more objective, allowing for the continuous evaluation and assessment of the

curriculum in line with national and international guidelines and recommendations (Al-Eyd et al., 2018). While the curriculum must indeed be assessed as a whole, in connection to other aspects of social work education and training, knowledge on race/ethnicity and socio-cultural diversity needs to be present in the foundational curriculum (i.e., in syllabi, course titles, or other course content), followed by an organizational culture that favors equity, diversity, and inclusion (Roberts & Smith, 2002).

5.3.5. Perceptions of cultural competence

Considering the growing diversity in Europe and Portugal more specifically, social workers will probably encounter people from diverse backgrounds, who likely profess different religions, speak different languages, and hold different values and principles. Hence, future social work professionals need to be able to navigate this multicultural landscape in a way that acknowledges and respects cultural diversity, providing culturally sensitive services to individuals and communities (Gray & Allegritti, 2003; NASW, 2015; Forkuor et al., 2019). Therefore, cultural competence and knowledge about multiple dimensions of cultures and cultural differences is or should be an essential component of educational programs nowadays (Dursun et al., 2021). Respondents were asked if they believe students are encouraged to develop these competencies during their education and training, see Figure 15.

Figure 15. Results from question number 19 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data.

More than 80 percent of respondents answered that they believe social work students in Portugal are encouraged to learn about other cultures or languages. This contradicts findings from early research (see Sousa & Almeida, 2016), which has indicated that the social work curriculum in many Portuguese Schools of Social Work lacks compulsory modules on cultural diversity and cultural competence. My findings from the content analysis of the Study Plans and Curricular

Units suggest that all BSW programs integrate at least some units about cultural diversity, however, one thing that is not clear, is how this knowledge is translated into frameworks for practice such as cultural competence of cultural sensitivity and humility.

5.3.6. Evaluation of social work education in Portugal as it relates to the themes

Respondents were also given a prompt and were asked if they agreed or not with the sentence displayed in Figure 16. In this case, 38,9 percent of them either agree or strongly agree that Social Work education in Portugal lacks a more explicit approach to racial issues, discrimination, and diversity. 33,3 are "on the fence" about it, as they do not agree or disagree with the statement. 11,1 percent somewhat disagree and 16,7% strongly disagree with it. This shows that Faculty members also have different opinions on whether or not Portuguese Schools of Social Work are doing enough to address these themes in the classroom. Moreover, as mentioned before, one BSW program can look very different from another, which might be another reason for such a variety of answers.

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statement below:

"Social Work education in Portugal lacks an explicit approach to the issues of racism, discrimination and cultural diversity"
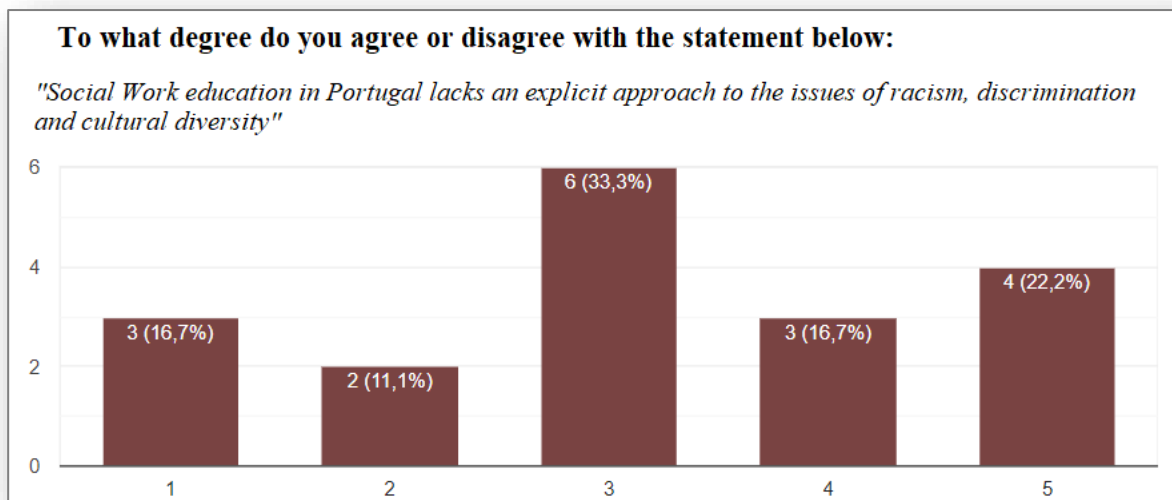
Figure 16. Results from question number 20 in the online questionnaire. Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire data. **Legend:** 1= I strongly disagree; 2= I somewhat disagree; 3= I don't agree nor disagree; 4= I agree; 5= I strongly agree.

While the literature does not provide a consensus on how to incorporate these topics in the social work classroom, an absence of these themes and competencies in the formal curriculum could potentially lead to the reproduction of colorblind ideologies in social work education (Choi, 2008), i.e. given the great influence of lusotropicalism (Valentim, 2018) in Portuguese society, politics, and education, in addition to Portugal's history of institutional blindness

concerning the pervasive effects of racism and discrimination (Braga, 2020), it might not be ideal for these themes to be restricted to the informal curriculum or the professors' discourse alone. Further provisions might be taken to "diversify" the curriculum, which means including issues of diversity as a learning goal of social work courses, as well as critically examining coursework from multiple viewpoints to make sure that materials represent various perspectives (Center for Teaching Innovation, 2023), with special attention given to gender, nationality, race/ethnicity, age, sexuality, socio-economic status, ability, linguistic background, etc. (Center for Teaching Innovation, 2023), among other strategies.

5.4. Results and analysis from the interviews

To obtain further information about how some Portuguese Schools of Social Work address the questions brought about by this research, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with current or past BSW program directors of five different HEIs in Portugal. It was not possible to conduct a higher number of interviews due to the short time frame available for this research to be conducted, as well as due to difficulties in recruiting research participants. Either way, even though saturation was not reached, these interviews give more nuance to the work in general and some of the responses in the online questionnaire.

Furthermore, responses from interviewees were codified into themes or patterns following Bryman's (2016) technique, to help readers make sense of the data. Both the survey and interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, i.e., Portuguese. Interviews were transcribed utilizing the denaturalization technique (McMullin, 2023), and were later translated into English. The creation of the themes followed a data-driven process, which means that themes were set based on patterns that emerged from the data.

When it comes to the demographic information of the participants interviewed, they all identified as women (total = 5), their ages varied between 42 and 58 years of age, they all have doctoral degrees, and have been working in higher education for more than 10 years. Any further information was concealed to preserve their right to anonymity. Purposeful sampling was the method employed to select participants.

5.4.1. Theme 1: References to the Curriculum and Teaching Practices

The first question asked to the participants was if the BSW program at the university where they work addresses or not the themes from the research. If it does, they were asked to say in which modules or Curricular Units (CUs) the themes are present. Some of the interviewees had already responded to the online survey, which means they were more familiar with the study. To those I was contacting for the first time, I had to take a few minutes to explain the aims and purpose of the research as well as its guiding concepts. The first participant mentioned that, at their social work program, there are not necessarily Curricular Units dedicated to ethnoracial or diversity issues:

> *There is no Curricular Unit that is specific that is called or that has that denomination, you see? What happens is, these themes are eventually addressed, in the Curricular Units that address gender and cultural and racial diversity and in teaching practices. That is, imagine, I teach a subject on Theories of Social Work, and there I speak, in some way, about cultural and racial issues, and so on. But, with very light contents that are not deepened.* (Participant 1, personal communication, 2023).

According to Participant 1, these themes are debated across different CUs, but they do not specify which ones. The Participant also mentioned that they try to address these issues in one of the courses that they teach but that the discussions are not in-depth. This piece of data converges at some level with prior responses from the online questionnaire, which indicate that in many HEIs there is a "subjective frequency" related to the discussions on race, ethnicity, and diversity. Nonetheless, Participant 5, for example, indicates that although not always expressly mentioned in the curriculum, these topics are indeed addressed by social work professors:

> *Although these terms - or if you like, the issue of diversity - may not be described in a nomenclature of a Curricular Unit, when we try to understand what the syllabus has, we find some Curricular Units in which these issues are addressed. In general, I think any of us, and I also speak for my colleagues, I think that all of us normally, whatever the subject, whatever the discipline, we are very careful to relate all of these questions to diversity itself, whether in terms of culture, whether in ethnic or racial terms, because in fact, thinking about Social Work, it would always have to be thought in that way, wouldn't it? That is, from our definition [of the profession], so it wouldn't make sense for us not to talk about it.* (Participant 5, personal communication, 2023).

Notwithstanding, although many respondents have indicated that the themes are "intrinsically" or "transversally" present - if one cannot identify these topics throughout the formal curriculum, it makes it harder to objectively evaluate their presence, or absence for that matter. On the other hand, at other HEIs, their strategy to address these issues seems to be clearer, at least in the teacher discourse:

> *Let's say that even before we get exactly to practical training, we have the Curricular Units, for example, more linked to the methodological-theoretical repertoire of Social Work. For example, Intervention Methodologies: I teach a Curricular Unit, together with a colleague, in which we start by defining the approaches to reality, in the context of intervention, that the social worker can have, and then we have guidelines, for example, much more linked to Critical and Radical Social Work, and to Structural Social Work. And within this Critical Social Work approach, when we dismantle it, we end up addressing anti-oppressive practices, anti-discriminatory practices, and, obviously, here within discrimination, then all these dimensions enter, obviously from the context of ethnicity, racism, etc.* (Participant 2, personal communication, 2023).

In this case, it seems like the chosen pedagogical approach aims not to discuss these themes individually, but in connection with social work theories, including theories on anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory social work practice (Dominelli, 1997; 2002). The participant also mentioned that, while implicitly present on both theoretical and practical CUs, these topics are not always brought up in classroom discussions:

> *That is, there are situations in which the student or us [the professors] may not bring this up in a specific intervention, I don't know, if we're talking about a senior context, for example, maybe it's not this approach that is predominant, but as the sessions are collective, and there is a transfer of knowledge here, so, deep down, all students also end up having contact with this reality. But if you ask me: is this the ideal situation? That is, if this is a topic, like on your scale from zero to five, right? Is it the most discussed topic? It is not! I think it wouldn't be.* (Participant 2, personal communication, 2023).

On the other hand, at another BSW program, for example, the themes seem to be addressed more frequently, at different moments throughout the curriculum:

We have [these themes] in the Study Plan, every year, from the first to the fourth year, we have several disciplines that specifically work on these issues. I'm thinking, for example, that we have a specific one on Contexts and Inequalities. Then we have the subject of Vulnerabilities even in the first year… We have the various subjects of Sectoral Policies that also allow this illustration, that is, beyond what the legal frameworks are, it opens up this opportunity to have this discussion. Then we have other disciplines, such as Family Psychosociology […] Therefore, concerning the Study Plan, there is this possibility [to address these questions]. Also, for example, one of the things I do is to approach this theme via the works of Maya Angelou, to work on the issues of racism and segregation, which has a specific theoretical tendency, doesn't it? (Participant 3, personal communication, 2023).

Some of the methodologies mentioned by Participant 3 seem to be in line with the goals of anti-racist social work education, which include incorporating the worldviews of Black authors, scholars, and practitioners, into the social work classroom (Asher BlackDeer & Gandarilla Ocampo, 2022). They mentioned several good examples of how they introduce the themes of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and anti-oppression through poetry, music, and other arts-based approaches to professional education (Leonard et al., 2018):

The discussion is also done through videos and songs, and now, in the first year, in the Social Policy course, we have analyzed song lyrics that deal precisely with issues related to racism, related to diversity, and even specific situations of poverty, namely in Latin America. Just to get an idea, for example, we analyzed the song 'Canción para un Niño en la Calle' by Mercedes Sosa,[6] which I don't know if you're familiar with, but I highly recommend it, which doesn't talk about specific issues of racism, but talks about childhood poverty and which obviously brings a very concrete context. And then the students also bring, for example, the documentaries of Emicida and so on,[7] and of other singers who are "intervention musicians",

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[6] Mercedes Sosa. (2021, May 11). *Canción para un Niño en la Calle*. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/iTYY3lYfaBY

[7] Emicida is a Brazilian rapper, singer, and songwriter. In 2020 he released a documentary movie on Netflix titled *AmarElo,* which explores Black and peripheral history and culture in Brazil, among other themes including racism, slavery, and hip-hop culture. Prior to this, Emicida played the leading role in at least three other documentaries.

through which these issues are discussed and evaluated. (Participant 3, personal communication, 2023).

This is a positive example of how to incorporate ethnoracial issues and diversity content in the social work curriculum through arts-based education, something that this work did not necessarily explore but that is intimately aligned with the theories it employs as well as the goals and guidelines for global social work education. At another BSW program, where the curriculum has been recently remodeled, these themes also seem to have received more attention:

> *Our curriculum has now been restructured, and it was one of the themes that we really took into account because we think that the issue of immigration, racism, even prejudice, and human rights, has to be increasingly present in the curriculum that we offer to our students [...] So, since first year, the courses on Sociology and Anthropology will work, I won't say, directly on racism, but on the levels that are sometimes necessary to reach this theme or ideas that are complementary to this. Therefore, when I saw the survey, yes: we have a few Curricular Units with the name itself, but I think it is dealt with very assertively in several CUs.* (Participant 4, personal communication, 2023).

Therefore, based on these findings, one can conclude that, among other things, ethnoracial issues and diversity content are addressed in fundamentally different ways across various BSW programs in Portugal. While at some HEIs, they occupy a more privileged space in the curriculum, they appear in less frequency at others. The pedagogical tools and methodologies chosen to introduce and debate these themes also seem to be fundamentally different across the HEIs represented in this study.

5.4.1.1 Discussion of preliminary findings in light of the theories

Three tendencies or patterns could be identified here: 1) some BSW programs adopt a more "shy approach" to race, ethnicity, and diversity content, i.e., it is often not explictly mentioned in the formal curriculum but it rather is "intrinsically" or "transversally" present; 2) while other BSW programs adopt a "bolder approach", by expressly mentioning these themes in the curriculum as well as having open discussions about them in the classroom; 3) and finally, some

BSW programs present a mix of these two approaches: they bounce back and forth between shy and bold strategies to diversity and ethnoracial issues in social work education.

On one hand, concerning the "shy approach": CRT scholars and anti-racist social work educators would probably critique this approach, as it can be colorblind or silent/complacent to racism (Jones, 2021), suggesting that it reproduces the dominant White norms and fails to adequately address systemic and structural issues faced, especially by marginalized individuals and communities of color (Constance-Huggins, 2012; Morton, 2022; Williams, 2022). They might argue that an explicit acknowledgment of race and ethnicity is necessary to challenge racism and discrimination, and to promote social justice through social work education and practice.

On the other hand, the "bolder approach" recognizes the importance of openly confronting racism and other systems of discrimination and oppression, by engaging in critical dialogue to challenge unequal power dynamics and systemic inequalities. Critical Curriculum scholarship would support the idea that a bold approach helps social work students develop a deeper understanding of ethnoracial and diversity issues and prepares them to work effectively with diverse populations (Apple, 2018; Copeland & Ross, 2021; Fisher, 2021; Murphy, 2021).

At last, by applying the lenses of CRT, Anti-racist pedagogy, and Critical Curriculum scholarship to the "mixed approach", one could argue that this approach can be inconsistent and potentially inadequate in addressing systemic racism and other systems of discrimination and oppression (Blakeney, 2005; Copeland & Ross, 2021; Housee, 2021; Sawyer & Waite, 2021). These theories would emphasize the need for consistent and explicit attention to race, ethnicity, and diversity in the curriculum, to disrupt and dismantle ethnoracial hierarchies, prejudice, and oppression.

Overall, the theories or frameworks priorly mentioned would likely advocate for a social work curriculum that explicitly recognizes and addresses ethnoracial issues, promotes critical consciousness and self-reflexivity, and empowers students to challenge racism and other forms of discrimination in their practice as social workers. They would encourage HEIs in Portugal to adopt a bolder and more consistent approach to diversity and racial justice in social work education, providing students with the necessary tools to navigate and transform an unequal and racialized society.

5.4.2. Theme 2: Opportunities and Challenges in Embracing Diversity in and Outside the Classroom

Another pattern that emerged from the interviews was related to the challenges and opportunities in embracing discussions around race, ethnicity, and diversity in the social work classroom. Here, many participants referred to the political, economic, and socio-cultural spectra of Portuguese society, and how this context may facilitate or not the integration of these themes in social work education. One participant also mentioned pedagogical limitations, including a lack of adequate training to address these topics:

> *Because actually, wow, I don't think I have the training to do it. Because talking about this topic is not for everyone. Because we can create, let's say, even discrimination when we are talking about this issue is that is not always easy to deal with it, and it's not in our culture to approach it. On the other hand, after the internship and supervision, when there are internships with culturally different groups and ethnic groups, such as the Roma, anyway, it's not quite another race, because we're all part of the human race, right? We have that philosophy, but actually saying we're all part of the human race doesn't mean there's no racial discrimination, right? And then there will eventually be some questions that are reflected on some of these themes.* (Participant 1, personal communication, 2023).

Therefore, Participant 1, for example, shows concern over the sensitivity of the topics, especially as it relates to racism and related discrimination, and feels like they lack the adequate tools to introduce this conversation with their students. They also mention a widespread tendency to avoid these discussions, in and outside the classroom:

> *On the one hand, this is not part of our educational culture, to talk about this topic, it is a topic that is somehow still hidden. On the other hand, as we don't talk about it, we don't have enough knowledge to address it, because there is a current of thought on these issues, isn't there? It comes from postmodernism, et cetera. We don't have this background, and then also in cultural and political terms, we are a country that, despite being colonialist and also having this history of slavery and a set of other issues, these topics are not often discussed. We tend to, not really hide it, but to leave that past away, kept in a drawer.* (Participant 1, personal communication, 2023).

Similarly, Participant 2 also demonstrated some concern over the persistence of discrimination (of various natures) in Portuguese society. They argued that some advances have been achieved in this area, but also mentioned that social workers cannot ignore the barriers that stand in the path toward equality and non-discrimination:

> *Now, let's not get under any illusions, shall we? We are not going to say that Portugal, as we sometimes hear, "Portugal, is not a racist country", in fact, it is often part of our DNA, right? And discrimination based on many factors is still part of it and, therefore, it is through education that we are overcoming it, and through communication, through interaction… There has been some investment in this area, but it is not an ideal situation. And if we are, for example, to go to other areas of the country where there are Roma communities, for example, what happens is that there is discrimination based on lifestyles and professional occupations and, therefore, there are still areas where we witness [this discrimination], and if not, there are issues of discrimination based on other factors such as sexual orientation... It is clear that we still have many situations of discrimination, and they can come from several sources of oppression. As Social Workers, then, we cannot live under the illusion that the situation is ideal.* (Participant 2, personal communication, 2023).

Participant 4 also mentions the necessity to evaluate and challenge students' pre-conceived ideas and prejudices as they can hinder a culture of respect for diversity, especially if we take into consideration the growing influence of far-right extremism in Europe more generally speaking, and in Portugal more specifically:

> *And we see this [these themes] not only from the point of view of the work that our students are going to do in their internship, placements, and the intuitions where they are going to work, but also because we think that students, as citizens, themselves have to be challenged at this level, and we noticed that first-year students come to us with some prejudice issues that often need to be worked on. We see the level of prejudice, and we all have prejudices, we have preconceived ideas, but we don't want them to go from prejudice to other levels of violence and all that. Moving on to the panorama that we have at the European level, for example, not wanting to talk about politics, but the extreme right gaining some weight here, it is*

an issue that concerns us because we think that, for example, in terms of immigration and other minorities that may exist at various levels, it can call human rights into question (or put it in check). (Participant 4, personal communication, 2023).

Another interesting fact or challenge brought up by one of the participants was that, after the Bologna process, professors had considerably less time to address certain topics, considering the reduction of years that students spend on a BSW program:

The degrees already offer so little time, right? I did it in 5 years, and now it's 3 years or 3 and a half years, it seems too short to me, and it's almost as if we couldn't go deeper, right? Therefore, we try to ensure that students are able to take at least the ideals, which means that this issue of culture, diversity, and discrimination, are topics that are addressed, so it is not something that is strange to them. However, we will probably have to leave the more specific subjects for continuing education and training, in which they can actually go deeper into certain types of subjects that are of more interest to them. (Participant 5, personal communication, 2023).

On the other hand, a couple of participants have also mentioned factors that facilitate the introduction of these topics in social work education, such as the existence of professors - within the different Schools of Social Work - who conduct research in this area. For instance:

Another situation, a little different, has to do with the concept of diversity and super-diversity,[8] but here we also have a slightly specific situation, which is the trajectory of one of our professors, that is their professional and academic trajectory. It's easier for us to get to this discussion, for example, because we have someone who has this knowledge and this depth. So, taking into account all the contexts of diversity that we have, right? We realized, for example, that it was very relevant that the Second Cycle had a Curricular Unit already centered on this concept [of diversity]. But here, we also benefit from what is the know-how of one of our professors, as it allows us to have this qualification and, therefore, face this

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[8] According to Vertovec (2007, p. 1024), in the context of Britain, for example, super-diversity refers to "a notion intended to underline a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything the country has previously experienced. Such a condition is distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade."

educational proposal with some tranquility and with some foundation as well. (Participant 2, personal communication, 2023).

The same participant also mentioned the larger role of research being conducted by graduate students for example, who choose to address these topics in their research projects, which ends up serving as a potential kickoff to get these conversations started:

> *A dimension that is very important for this area is the issue of research, that is, the fact that we have doctoral students, and master's students who can do research in this area is also a contribution, isn't it? It is a result that can also lead to more up-to-date reflection. I always say that the dynamism of a discipline is very noticeable due to the production of knowledge that it has. Therefore, the knowledge that we are producing is also a way of feeding, on the one hand, our theoretical repertoire, but also in the case of social work, the repertoire of action, isn't it? This connection is very dialectical in social work, and therefore, I believe that, often, what we bring to the Curricular Units is also very much a reflection of what is being produced by our students, and by researchers, and us, as teachers, as a result.* (Participant 2, personal communication, 2023).

Participant 5 mentions a similar situation in their social work program, i.e., the influence of an ongoing research project led by a graduate student which addresses the role of gender in social work education:

> *I have a student doing the same type of research, but regarding gender issues, in two universities, one is Portuguese and one is Spanish. And by chance, she did the assessment [of the curriculum] [...] These dissertations sometimes help us too, don't they? Helps us rethink and try to see what is done elsewhere. I mean, this became very clear to me with this dissertation on gender issues in Curricular Plans.* (Participant 5, personal communication, 2023).

In sum, in the Portuguese context, many barriers still stand in the way of fully embracing diversity in and outside the classroom, including (but not limited to) the persistence of discrimination (of different sources), an unwillingness to address the history of colonialism and slavery, as well as the advancement of the conservative agenda in politics and society. However,

participants have also cited opportunities to address these questions in social work education through research and collaboration at different levels.

5.4.2.1 Discussion of preliminary findings in light of the theories

When the statement that "talking about this topic is not for everyone" (P1) is analyzed from the perspective of CRT, one could argue that discussing sensitive topics such as race and racism can indeed be challenging and uncomfortable for social work educators who have not received adequate training or education on these issues (Deepak et al, 2015). Yet, when applying the lenses of anti-racist pedagogy and anti-racist frameworks for practice, the lack of training also mentioned by one of the participants would be seen as a call to action rather than a reason to avoid discussing these issues in the social work classroom (Blakeney, 2005; Dominelli, 1997). To offer a secure and inclusive learning environment for students, anti-racist pedagogy emphasizes the need to actively address and combat racism in educational environments (Blakeney, 2005). Both CRT scholars and proponents of anti-racist pedagogy would urge educators to become aware of their prejudices and to regularly participate in self-reflection (Deepak et al, 2015; Morton, 2022; Williams, 2022). This also reveals the need to offer social work faculty the opportunity to engage in continuing education programs, in this case with a focus on critical, anti-racist, or anti-discriminatory pedagogy.

Anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive approaches can also be useful to address some of the challenges mentioned by participants, including (but not limited to) the persistence of discrimination (of different sources), as well as the advancement of the anti-rights agenda in Portugal and beyond. For instance, the anti-oppressive framework brought forward by Dominelli (2002), focuses, among other things, on the necessity to eradicate racialized discrimination and other sources of oppression, both in social work practice as well as in society more generally. The author also mentions the role of human rights in anti-oppressive social work practice as "starting points for ethical responses to meeting the welfare needs of people throughout the world" (Dominelli, 2002, p. 70), as long as non-Western views are not devalued in the process.

As another participant pointed out "it is clear that we still have many situations of discrimination, and they can come from several sources of oppression" (P2), therefore, social work education in Portugal could benefit a lot, not only from the approaches mentioned above,

but also from incorporating an intersectionality approach in classroom discussions. Intersectionality scholarship emphasizes how different social and identity markers intersect in complex ways to create unique experiences of privilege and disadvantage or marginalization (Crenshaw, 2017; Simon et al., 2022). Therefore, as an educational or pedagogical tool, intersectionality can help social work educators address diversity based on a strong foundation for transformative practice (Jani et al., 2011), which focuses on intersecting universes of power/privilege/oppression (Dominelli, 2002; Simon et al., 2022).

When talking about their first-year students, one participant mentioned that "we see the level of prejudice […] but we don't want them to go from prejudice to other levels of violence and all that." (P4), These remarks demonstrate knowledge of the need for self-reflection and deliberate attempts to develop mutual understanding and respect by acknowledging the existence of bias while expressing a commitment to stop it from escalating (Muller, 2002), which is clearly in line with cultural sensitivity and cultural humility frameworks for practice (Forkuor et al., 2019). These frameworks would advocate for social work students and practitioners to engage in ongoing learning, challenge their assumptions, and cultivate empathy and respect for different cultures and perspectives (Gottlieb, 2021). This approach can be beneficial to social work education in Portugal, especially when we consider the increase in cultural and socio-linguistic diversity, which means that social workers in Portugal are very likely to be in touch with service users from different nationalities and distinct cultural backgrounds.

5.4.3. Theme 3: Looking Beyond the Curriculum: The Role of Extracurricular Activities

Although the curriculum is a crucial component of social work education and training, learning experiences and knowledge exchange can take place outside the four walls of a classroom. In that sense, participants have also mentioned the role of extracurricular activities as a way of achieving learning goals, which can also result in alternative spaces to create discussions around a number of issues, as highlighted by Participant 3, for example:

> *Then the other dimension, the second dimension that I was thinking about, is through the events that we organize that work precisely on these themes as well, with guests, with professionals, with experts and researchers... Workshops for example, our students love the workshops, even today we were talking that we need*

to decide already on next year's. Last year, on college day, workshops were held that were defined by the students and the themes involved a lot of issues related to respect for diversity. And they even worked on issues of prostitution, for example, and sex workers. That is, on the one hand, there is what is part of the Study Plan for the degree, then, on the other hand, there is a set of events that, are organized during the year and which may be the initiative of the students or maybe the initiative of the professors, where we actually stay very, very up to date on current issues. (Participant 3, personal communication, 2023).

Participant 2 mentioned similar strategies, and they also highlighted the importance of the larger university environment, which can enhance students' contact with certain themes or topics:

We may be inviting students, for example, to participate in a session that is promoted by our Research Center and that addresses this topic and that we can later discuss in the classroom, and this is a contribution that also lasts. And therefore, I also believe that the education of our students increasingly benefits from these different contributions, and therefore, it is done not only in the classroom but also in the wider university environment. And in that respect, the fact that we are at [name of university] brings a lot of benefits, right? Because we have several Research Centers, events are always taking place, there are always people who are thinking about new and interesting things, and this also allows us to feed ourselves and bring to the debate some aspects that we, alone, would not think about [...] Therefore, I would say that, to be more focused on your question, I would say that yes, we can do more and better, but not necessarily in the traditional way of introducing more content in the Curricular Units. The environment in which training is given is also more rewarding for these aspects. (Participant 2, personal communication, 2023).

One participant also mentioned an event organized by the university that was taking place on the day of our interview, which brought together several different nationalities that are present on campus:

I think we are going to address some of these topics, in fact, and maybe we should think about it more often, right? Even because we have some students who are not

nationals, they are international and foreign students. Curiously, I am missing the meeting of the 72 nationalities in the Kitchen Lab, because we have a kitchen laboratory and at the moment, our 72 nationalities are there to do tastings, and I'm here (laughs). [...] But that is to say that the university itself develops activities, that is, not specifically in terms of knowledge or in terms of postgraduate courses, but there is a concern and some work that is done in relation to diversity. So the Kitchen Lab is a good topic, because there are many nationalities, there is a lot of food today, okay? It has an immense variety because I usually say that the gastronomic diversity is even bigger, isn't it? (Participant 5, personal communication, 2023).

Therefore, at least three participants mentioned extracurricular activities as an alternative way to promote knowledge of diversity. This topic was also brought up in some of the answers from the questionnaire, see Table 8 again. The answers indicate that, in the participants' opinion, the wider University environment, especially in the form of events, can contribute to fostering discussions on or bringing attention to these issues.

5.4.3.1 Discussion of preliminary findings in light of the theories

In conclusion, on one hand, the results align with anti-racist pedagogy and CRT by recognizing the drawbacks of conventional classroom-based education, highlighting the significance of alternative spaces for debate and knowledge exchange, valuing different viewpoints, and promoting inclusive learning environments (Anya, 2021; Blakeney, 2005). A more critical and inclusive attitude to tackling issues of diversity and social justice can be fostered in social work education by embracing extracurricular activities and making use of the larger university environment. On the other hand, we also have to consider the limitations or possible shortcomings of this approach, and these include:

(i) *A lack of specificity*: without more information, it is challenging to judge how well these activities provide meaningful learning experiences and address systemic issues of racism, discrimination, and oppression.

(ii) *The risk of tokenization*: tokenization happens when minority voices are included merely for the sake of representation or when they are superficially included without addressing underlying injustices or power disparities (Nicklin, 2021). It is imperative to make sure that varied viewpoints are legitimately incorporated and that marginalized people are not forced to

shoulder the entire weight of educating others or speaking on behalf of their entire communities (Kost, 2020).

(iii) *Insufficient critique of the curriculum*: proponents of Critical Curriculum scholarship, CRT, and Anti-racist Pedagogy would argue for a more fundamental transformation of the curriculum to confront Eurocentric perspectives and address systemic racism and oppression (Delgado et al., 2012; Housee, 2021; Peters, 2015); as a result, Schools of Social Work should not rely solely on extracurricular activities to address ethnoracial and diversity issues in social work education and training.

(iv) *Limited attention paid to structural change*: the findings mainly focus on extracurricular activities and events as platforms for discussion and awareness-building. Despite the importance of these measures, they might not immediately address the underlying structural problems that support racism and other forms of discrimination and oppression (Constance-Huggins, 2019).

To be committed to the elimination of systemic inequities, Portuguese Schools of Social Work might need to emphasize the significance of structural reform in educational systems, which means that without a distinct emphasis on structural/organizational change, these initiatives might end up omitting the need for institutional changes and changes in the curriculum itself. These limitations indicate areas where further research, critical reflection, and action can be taken to ensure that pedagogical initiatives lead to meaningful transformations in social work education toward respect for diversity and inclusion.

Chapter 6. Concluding Remarks

The general goal or objective of this research was to analyze if and how questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity are addressed in the social work curriculum in Portugal. While race is a pattern-based concept that reveals how humans are still hierarchically organized based on racialization processes, ethnicity, on the other hand, refers to cultural heritage, nationality, language, and other shared cultural characteristics. Diversity, in contrast, refers to the variety of differences that exist among people, including (but not limited to) differences in race/ethnicity, as well as culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ability, and other factors. Diversity helps us recognize that people have unique experiences and perspectives that shape how they interact with others and the world around them. Understanding and embracing the interrelations of these concepts is crucial for building inclusive communities and promoting equity and social justice through social work education, research, and practice.

The historical and sociopolitical context of Portuguese society is an interesting one when it comes to dealing with diversity. For many decades, the idea of a "natural" inclination that the Portuguese have toward tolerance and acceptance of difference has prevailed in the public discourse. This normative speech makes it hard to have public discussions on the meanings and ongoing impacts of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination of other natures. Araújo (2006; 2013) argues that the myth of Portuguese non-racism, propelled by Gilberto Freyre's idea of Lusotropicalism, contributes to the depoliticization of the debate on colonialism and racism, which, until today, fuels common narratives that portray Portugal as a country "at ease" with diversity (Araújo, 2013, p. 29). Considering that social work education does not take place in a vacuum but rather is embedded in larger societal processes and structures, it is likely that colorblind ideologies could at least influence the way Portuguese Schools of Social Work navigate ethnoracial and diversity issues.

After analyzing both the formal and informal curriculum of BSW programs in Portugal, it is unequivocal that the curriculum of first-cycle Social Work programs at some HEIs – but not all of them - lacks a more clear and systematic strategy to address the themes of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and culturally sensitive practice. While cultural difference is debated in pretty much every BSW program across the country, violence and discrimination based on racial and ethnic categorizations is not always expressly mentioned. It is important to highlight that, in

Portuguese society, there is widespread social avoidance when it comes to addressing racial and ethnic diversity in public spaces, which is reproduced at some level in the social work classroom. Portuguese politicians refuse to acknowledge the existence of minority groups in the country (ACFC, 2019), and Portuguese legislation prohibits the production of data that reveals a person's racial or ethnic identity. And while in other countries such as the United States, where teaching about race, ethnicity, and diversity has been a mandate of social work education since the 1980s, these issues do not seem to have occupied a privileged space in the history of social work education in Portugal. Therefore, while the Portuguese Social Work curriculum is not entirely colorblind, some BSW programs might be missing key competencies related to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory social work practice in connection to a subjective frequency of when and how these themes are discussed.

Essentially three patterns emerged from the data concerning how Portuguese BSW programs choose to address these topics: 1) Some BSW programs adopt a more "shy approach" to race, ethnicity, and diversity content, 2) while others adopt a "bolder approach", and 3) finally, some BSW programs present a mix of these two approaches. After evaluating these patterns in light of some of the theories employed in this study - especially CRT and anti-racist pedagogy - it is possible to conclude that perhaps Portuguese Schools of Social Work ought to aim for more consistent and explicit attention to race, ethnicity, and diversity in the social work curriculum, aiming to disrupt and dismantle ethnoracial hierarchies, prejudice, and oppression.

Overall, the theories or frameworks adopted in this study would likely advocate for a social work curriculum that explicitly recognizes and addresses ethnoracial issues, promotes critical consciousness and self-reflexivity, and empowers students to challenge racism and other forms of discrimination in their practice as social workers. They would encourage HEIs in Portugal to adopt a bolder and more solid approach to diversity and racial justice in social work education, providing students with the necessary tools to navigate and transform an essentially unequal and racialized society.

It is worth noticing that, throughout the research, only one other work that addressed questions of race, ethnicity, and diversity in social work education in Portugal was identified (i.e., Sousa & Almeida, 2016). Therefore, this is likely to be, at the time of writing at least, the second study in English conducted in Portugal that addresses these questions within the discipline of Social Work, and perhaps the first one that does it comprehensively. While there might be several

limitations to this research, they do not undermine the importance of this work or its originality and contributions to the field.

6.1. Recommendations

To foster an anti-racist and anti-oppressive education, Portuguese Schools of Social Work could aim for a more consistent and comprehensive approach to addressing diversity and ethnoracial issues across the curriculum. This can be done in several different ways and some Schools are already doing it. Good examples should be amplified through knowledge exchange and cooperation between different Social Work programs across the country.

Steps could be taken to ensure that: (i) there is a greater emphasis on diversity coursework, and (ii) there is a serious commitment to anti-racist education in BSW programs in Portugal. Other aspects could involve providing social work educators with specialized programs and training in the area of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I), as well as with competencies necessary to address systemic racism and discrimination.

At the organizational level, steps can be taken to foster an academic environment that embraces and cherishes diversity of perspectives and lived experiences. The classroom and the university in general need to provide safe spaces for difficult conversations to happen, without engaging in harmful practices or oppressive policies. Increasing the number of social work faculty from minority backgrounds is another relevant strategy: research suggests that students who attend predominantly white Schools of Social Work are likely to be less in contact with diversity content throughout their education (Bowie et al., 2011).

6.2. Suggestions for Future Research

One of the major limitations of this study is that only the perspective of social work professors and program directors was taken into consideration due to time limitations. Future research in this area could also consider questioning students about their perceptions of these topics, as well as if they feel like they have been adequately exposed to diversity content and issues of racial and ethnic discrimination. How do students from minority backgrounds, for example, and/or with a migration background feel at the university? Do they feel like they are welcome and that their perspectives are taken into consideration? These questions could also be explored by further research.

6.3. Implications for Social Work Education and Practice

Both the social work profession and social work education in Portugal have a rich, unique trajectory that accompanied the country's social and political transformations over the years. Portugal is an increasingly diverse country, which means that social workers are likely to encounter individuals, families, and communities from diverse backgrounds, and they need to have the adequate tools to work with these individuals in a way that respects their diversity and upholds social work values at the same time. This is not an easy task whatsoever.

However, many good examples from home and from abroad can be replicated and adapted to provide social work students with the tools necessary to work with people who are more often than not racialized and minoritized. This is why this study has concrete implications for social work education and practice. Social work is deeply guided by values of social justice and social change, which is why social work education cannot be static or stuck in time, it has to undergo evaluation once in a while to make sure that learning goals are in line with problems or questions social workers are likely to face in their everyday practice. In this case, addressing race, ethnicity, and diversity is an essential part of training professionals who will be capable of navigating an increasingly diverse world without causing damage or reinforcing stereotypes and inequities.

The Erasmus Mundus Master in Social Work with Families and Children (MFAMILY) is a graduate program that brings together students from all over the world, who speak different languages and come from different socio-cultural backgrounds. This diversity is what makes the MFAMILY experience so rich, especially in terms of mutual learning, by introducing people to cultures, values, and stories they likely would not have met otherwise. However, this diversity is not necessarily reflected in the curriculum. For instance, across the subjects we studied and courses we took, little attention was given to culturally sensitive practices or diversity content more generally speaking.

When it comes to addressing racism, prejudice, and oppression, key theoretical currents such as anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks for social work practice were also not quite explored. Taking that into consideration, I share the thoughts of a former MFAMILY student: "The MFAMILY program is composed of a diverse group of individuals from all over the world and prides itself on bringing international perspectives to the forefront. The educational program can therefore benefit from adopting a more anti-racist perspective." (Bilwani, 2021, p.

62), moreover, "educational and awareness campaigns that dispel colour blind and lusotropical narratives should be incorporated both in the MFAMILY program and other social work programs in the university" (Bilwani, 2021, p. 62).

It is crucial to consider these issues and to implement the study's recommendations: this is just one of many ways that social work education can give future practitioners the skills they need to uphold social justice, fight stereotypes, and advance equity and inclusion in their daily work. Portuguese Schools of Social Work need to make sure that students acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to collaborate with individuals, families, and communities from diverse backgrounds by including culturally sensitive frameworks for practice and a greater awareness of diversity content in the curriculum.

By following these models and approaches, social workers can practice their profession with a greater knowledge of the intersections between race, ethnicity, class, gender, and culture (among other things), while also working to oppose racism, prejudice, and oppression. Social work education ought to build a foundation for students to critically evaluate social structures and processes, challenge prevailing narratives, and advocate for transformative change by actively engaging with anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks. In doing so, social work education and training in Portugal can significantly contribute to the development of future professionals who are dedicated to removing systemic barriers, advancing social justice, and establishing inclusive and equitable communities.

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Appendix I

Invitation to take part in the study sent to professors and course directors by email (original invite was sent in Portuguese).

Invitation to participate in research on issues of socio-cultural diversity in Social Work education

Hello Dear Professor, I hope you are well!

My name is Erick and I am a student in the Masters in Social Work with Families and Children at ISCTE-IUL, School of Sociology and Public Policy.

I hereby invite you to answer an electronic questionnaire on issues of sociocultural diversity in Social Work education in Portugal.

Your answers are extremely important for the development of my master's thesis, and I really appreciate your participation!

This is an investigation into the integration of ethnic-racial issues, discrimination, and diversity (cultural, linguistic, gender, etc.) into the Social Work curriculum in Portugal, with a focus on the First Cycle.

The treatment of responses will follow the principles of anonymity and confidentiality. More information about the study and the link to complete the electronic questionnaire are available below: https://forms.gle/cjSr4SbYrWBfSZvh6

Thank you very much in advance! Any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,
Erick.
erickscherf@gmail.com or elsfz@iscte-iul.pt

Appendix II

Interview guide / Guião de entrevista

Part I - Sociodemographic Data

Name:
Age:
Gender:
Literary abilities:
Profession:
Educational institution that you work:

Part II - Research on ethnic-racial issues and diversity in Social Work education in Portugal: a view of the first cycle

1. Does training in Social Work at the level of the First Cycle in the Higher Education Institution where you work already address the themes of racism, discrimination and sociocultural diversity?

1.1. If yes, in what way? In which Modules or Curricular Units?
1.2. Are these CUs mandatory or optional?

2. What importance do you attach to teaching these topics?

3. Regarding the theoretical, technical and ethical-political dimensions of training in Social Work in Portugal, do you believe that Social Work students should be encouraged to learn, for example, about other cultures or languages?

4. In your opinion, should the Teaching Plans in Social Work from the First Cycle make express mention of the themes of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and culturally sensitive practices or interventions?
5. Who decides the content to be taught during the training of Social Workers?
6. Do you believe that teachers are free to teach topics that are not expressed in the Curricular Units?
7. Is there any final consideration you would like to mention on the subject?

Annex I

Further explanation of the research study. Available on the first page preceding the questionnaire.

Hello Dear Educator and/or Program Director. Thanks in advance for your time and attention. My name is Erick and I'm a student at ISCTE-IUL in Lisbon, in the Erasmus Mundus Master's in Social Work with Families and Children.

Study information:
I am conducting an investigation, entitled *Challenging the colorblind curriculum: addressing race, ethnicity, and diversity in Social Work education in Portugal*, which aims to assess whether and how issues of race/ethnicity and diversity are addressed in the Social Work curriculum in Portugal, focusing on the first cycle.

As a result, I created an electronic questionnaire with a series of questions about this topic, with the aim of collecting information about the experiences and opinions of Professors about teaching aimed at anti-racist, anti-discriminatory and culturally sensitive practices in the field of Social Work.

College advisors:

Claudia Pereira, PhD, Co-coordinator "Migrations, Mobility and Ethnicity" and "CIES-Iscte - Center for Sociology Research and Studies (ESPP)" (Claudia.Pereira@iscte-iul.pt).

Maria Inês Amaro, PhD, Invited Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Policy (ESPP). (Ines_Amaro@iscte-iul.pt)

Student Researcher:
Erick da Luz Scherf (elsfz@iscte-iul.pt; erickscherf@gmail.com); Phone: +351 920 379 691

You are invited to participate in the study, which involves completing an online questionnaire. To participate in it, you must sign a free consent form. This study follows the ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy.

I look forward to getting your responses and opinions. Thanks in advance for your help on this project.

Annex II

Consent form to be signed by the respondents (the original was their native language, i.e. Portuguese).

Consent form: By providing your consent, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or institution(s) involved from their legal and professional responsibilities.

• I read the information presented in the informative letter about a study being conducted by Erick da Luz Scherf, student of Social Work with Families and Children in the Erasmus Mundus Program (MFamily), under the guidance of ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. I had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions and any additional details I desired.

• I have information about the purpose of the study and how the data will be used.

• I understand that excerpts from responses may be included in the thesis following this research, with the understanding that citations will be anonymous.

• I have been informed that I can withdraw my consent at any time, without penalty, by notifying the researcher.

If you have any questions, please contact Erick da Luz Scherf (student) at +351 920379691 or by email to elsfz@iscte-iul.pt or erickscherf@gmail.com

1. With full knowledge of all of the above, I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Mark only one:

Yes
No

2. I agree to the use of anonymous citations in any thesis or publication resulting from this investigation.

Mark only one:

Yes
No

3. Full name (replaces signature)
4. Location
5. Date

Annex III

Complete transcript of questions used in the online questionnaire (the original was developed and distributed in Portuguese and can be accessed here: https://forms.gle/o2xf5Yu9A4NgKoPS9).

Sociodemographic info: a) gender identity; b) age; c) Higher Education Institution where you work; d) your job position; e) your educational level; f) how many years have you worked in Higher Education.

1. In your opinion, should Social Work study plans in Portugal address ethnic-racial and diversity issues?

Yes/No/Maybe

2. In your opinion, should the Social Work curriculum in Portugal address the history of Portuguese colonialism and slavery?

Yes/No/Maybe

3. If you marked any previous questions as no or maybe, please provide us with more details below:

Open question

4. Write your opinion in more detail:

Open question

5. What level of importance do you attach to teaching or discussing issues of racism and discrimination (of various natures) during the training of social workers?

Scale from 0 to 5

6. Does the Teaching Plan for the Social Work program at your university address ethnic-racial and diversity issues? (Please note that this refers only to BSW programs)

Yes/No/I don't know

7. If you answered yes, how often do these themes appear in the curriculum or in the Curricular Units?

Scale from 1 to 5

8. Could you quickly characterize how OR at what times these themes are discussed in the classroom?

Open question

9. Do you believe that, during professional training, Social Work students are encouraged to learn about other cultures or languages?

Yes/No/Maybe

10. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statement below: "Social Work education in Portugal lacks an explicit approach to the issues of racism, discrimination and cultural diversity"

Scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

11. In your opinion, do you believe that the Study Plans in the Social Work degree should expressly mention the themes of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and culturally sensitive practices/interventions?

Yes/No/Others

12. Do you believe that racism and discrimination are social problems of relevance/importance for Portuguese society?

Open question

13. Space for additional reflections

Open question

Annex IV

Letter of Appreciation

To: Erick da Luz Scherf (Norway)
Topic: Challenging the colorblind curriculum: addressing race, ethnicity, and diversity in Social Work education in Portugal

Dear Presenter,

I extend IFSW Europe heartfelt gratitude for your exceptional contribution to the European Conference on Social Work, 21-24 May 2023, Prague.

We greatly value the effort and dedication you invested in preparing and delivering your presentation. Your contribution played a vital role in elevating the overall quality and impact of the conference, and the positive feedback we received from attendees highlighted the inspiration and valuable information they gained during the conference.

Your presentation had a profound influence on the conference, bringing invaluable insights and knowledge that enriched the event.

Once again, we express our sincere appreciation for your invaluable contribution to the European Conference on Social Work 2023.

We look forward to the possibility of future collaborations, as we continue our shared mission of advancing the field of social work and making a positive difference in the lives of individuals and communities.

With warm regards,

Ana Rădulescu
President of IFSW Europe