Postcolonial mobility and keywords of migration: The Portuguese in Luanda

Lisa Åkesson

This article explores the workings of some familiar keywords when applied in a context where migration patterns diverge from conventional expectations in public debate and research. It focuses on the Portuguese seeking a better future in Angola, and it analyses emerging configurations of keywords of migration in this postcolonial setting. By focusing on this unconventional case, the article illuminates some of the stereotypical notions linked to central keywords of migration. Departing from the concepts "migrant", "expatriate", "returnee" and "integration", it explores emic constructions of the Portuguese mobile subjects' identities, incorporation processes in Angola and shifting postcolonial power positions. Moreover, it uses the emic viewpoints to discuss some globalised connotations of the four keywords. The analysis will make clear that the context-specific workings of these concepts are influenced not only by the particularities of this case but also by powerful international discourses on human mobility. On a conceptual level, the article argues for using keywords as a tool for social analysis. Arguably, ethnographic explorations of the usage and understanding of purportedly simple words can open up profound insights into shifting social values.

KEYWORDS: North-South migration, keywords, Angola, Portuguese, postcolonial, migrant, expatriate, returnee, integration.

ÅKESSON, Lisa (lisa.akesson@gu.se) – University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A MIGRANT? WHAT DOES INTEgration entail? As we all know, questions of this kind pervasively circulate in contemporary popular discourse and public debates. Across the globe, people discuss in highly effective ways values and social characteristics related to keywords such as migrant and integration. This article analyses the workings of some of the familiar keywords of migration when applied in the context of postcolonial North-South mobility, namely the recent Portuguese migration to Angola. Between 2008 and 2015, the conjuncture of economic crisis and unemployment in Portugal and an unprecedented growth rate in the Angolan economy generated the movement of more than 100.000 Portuguese to Angola. Thus, the article focuses on European emigrants seeking a better future in an African ex-colony, and it analyses emerging configurations of some of the most common keywords of migration in this postcolonial setting. The broader aim of this exercise is to explore how an analysis of the changing meanings of purportedly simple keywords may open for understandings of social processes and positions. By examining their normative character, I explore them as a novel tool for social analysis.

The keywords the article explores are migrant, expatriate, returnee and integration, and it looks into how Portuguese mobile subjects and Angolan "hosts" living in the capital of Luanda deploy these concepts when they talk about the Portuguese in Angola. The article analyses their use as it has emerged in everyday encounters at workplaces, and it relates this to the particular Luandan culture of money-making. During the boom years in the Angolan oil-fuelled economy, many Angolans and Portuguese shared a desire for earning fast and easy money. They also shared a vision of work-life as a highly competitive field, where rivals surrounded them. This outlook influenced the use of keywords of migration in relation to the Portuguese. The craze of money-making possessed natives and migrants alike, permeating all social strata in both groups.

In today's interconnected world, the values and characteristics of keywords of migration are highly globalised. As I will make clear, this is evident in the present case. Yet, a specific colonial history has also been central to creating the social position of the Portuguese mobile subjects. Deeply unequal and violent power relations have marked this history, but it has also produced a sense of intimacy between Angolans and Portuguese, though of a very conflictive nature. With regard to this history of fraught interdependency, the article discusses the social position of the Portuguese as it stands out in the use of the concepts of migrant, expatriate and returnee, and it looks into local understandings of their integration. A critical example of their local use is that the Portuguese are not depicted as migrants. This is so, firstly, because they are too well known to be perceived as outsiders and, secondly, because of lingering postcolonial hierarchies. Thus, the analysis of the characteristics and values related to the four keywords also illuminates the shifting postcolonial

positions of power that permeate the relationships between Angolans and Portuguese.

The discussion of the keywords, thus, moves between different scales and temporalities. It connects them to the culture of money-making, to the colonial and postcolonial Luso-Angolan history and to the contemporary global discourse on migration. At the same time, it analyses the position of the Portuguese in a specific place – Luanda – and their status as mobile subjects during a particular period of time – the recent boom years in the Angolan economy.

UNDERSTANDING KEYWORDS OF MIGRATION

The four keywords discussed in this article comply with Raymond Williams's often-cited central definition in his landmark text *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. According to Williams, they are "significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation; they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought. Certain uses bound together certain ways of seeing culture and society" (1981 [1976]: 13). Thus, keywords are concepts that are "freighted with importance for a particular domain" (Durant 2006: 4), and are "vital, pivotal and even indispensable" (Moran 2015: 31) in everyday conversations. Moreover, they tend to be both familiar and controversial, and they typically relate to real-life problems and social frictions. This means that they often have a normative tenor. In short, they are concepts of fundamental importance in ongoing societal discourse, and they relate to topics that matter to many people. This is undoubtedly true for keywords of migration.

In Raymond Williams's work, originally published in 1976, there are no entries for migration and related concepts. This indicates that at the time, migration did not play a pivotal role in Anglophone discussions on culture and society, although large numbers of labour migrants had moved to Western Europe and North America. In itself, this is a reminder that keywords dramatically change their meaning in relation to discursive preoccupations. In a more recent compilation entitled *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, edited by Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris (2005), mobility appears as one of the keywords, and besides geographical and social mobility, the entry includes mobility of capital and information. This volume was published when debates about globalisation were spreading across the world, and accordingly, the book presents mobility as significant in relation to several different social domains.

Within migration studies, a few publications have centred on keywords. One example is a collaborative writing project entitled "New keywords: migration and borders", published in *Cultural Studies* (Casas-Cortes *et al*. 2014). In contrast to Williams's and his followers' approach, this publication gives specific academic definitions rather than exploring their public use. It departs

from the discipline of cultural studies and aims "to focus on critical concepts that deconstruct and transform the established repertoires of both traditional and critical migration studies" (*ibid*: 59). Thus, this publication not only limits the scope to academic discourse, but also to a quite specific strand within academia. The volume *Keywords of Mobility: Critical Engagements*, edited by Noel Salazar and Kirin Jayaram (2016), is closer to Williams's approach, as its entries incorporate both academic conceptualisations and ethnographic examples. As the title indicates, the volume's focus is on mobility rather than migration, which entails that its eight keyword entries focus on understandings of flux, circulation and movement in a broad sense. The choice of keywords such as capital, freedom and gender suggests the extensive nature of the approach. In contrast to these publications, my ambition is more closely related to migration studies, and it is ethnographic and context-specific. In addition, it destabilises some of the conventional expectations on contemporary migration and thereby the use of the keywords that the article builds on. In the following, I will first briefly present the recent movement of Portuguese people to Angola, representing a historical shift, namely the first massive out-migration from a former European colonial power to a former African colony.

POSTCOLONIAL PORTUGUESE MIGRATION TO ANGOLA

After nearly 500 years of Portuguese colonial rule, Angola gained independence in 1975. When the decolonisation process started, more than 300.000 Portuguese settlers left Angola for Portugal. These people are still known as the *retornados* (returnees) in Portugal. Upon independence, a civil war broke out in Angola, and the Angolan people suffered the consequences until 2002 when the parties of the conflict finally signed a lasting peace agreement.

As a consequence of the war, most basic infrastructure in Angola was devastated. A few years after the peace agreement, the Angolan MPLA government launched several large-scale reconstruction initiatives, financed by the revenue from the abundant oil resources. At the same time in Portugal, the oversized construction sector was entering a deep crisis, and all the major Portuguese construction companies redirected essential parts of their activities to Angola. From 2008 onwards, the North Atlantic financial crisis aggravated Portugal's already troubled macro-economic situation. Unemployment rates rapidly grew, and in 2012 nearly one-fifth of the population was unemployed (Portugal 2015). Simultaneously, the Angolan economy had grown at an unprecedented rate during the second half of the 2000's. For 2007, OECD (2011: 52) estimated a record growth rate of 27%. During these boom years, Angolan oligarchs invested heavily in Portuguese key sectors, such as banking, telecommunication, media and energy. Notably, the angolanisation of the Portuguese economy mainly took place in industries that both economically and

symbolically constituted the hearth of Portuguese economic life. This led one commentator to remark: "Maximizing financial returns is not necessarily the point here; some observers see instead Angolan elites gaining satisfaction in lording it over the former colonisers in Lisbon" (Sogge 2011: 89).

At the same time as the Angolan capital entered the Portuguese market, more and more people left the country. For centuries, Portugal has been a country of emigration, and it is still one of the European countries with the highest emigration rate (Marian 2017; OECD 2015: 181). The country has functioned as a migrant-sending periphery in Europe, but also as one of the cores of a Lusophone global migration system (Augusto and King 2020). Yet, except for the migration to Brazil in the first half of the 20th century, this was the first time that numerous Portuguese migrated to a former colony. The Portuguese migration to Angola peaked between 2009 and 2014. During these years, Luanda was an Eldorado for fortune seekers from all over the world who dreamed of easy and fast money. Some of the Portuguese also shared such ambitions, while others merely hoped to earn more than they would have done at home. In either case, economic motives were the strongest pull factor.

The powerful actor behind the particular economic development in Angola was the MPLA party-state. The party-state's control of the oil revenues created enormous wealth for top party members and their closest allies. Yet, the inner circle of Angolan investors consisted of only some hundred insiders plus their family members and friends (Oliveira 2015: 140). The oligarchs' many investments focused on quick profits rather than long-term sustainable production, and many international economists would characterise the Angolan capitalists' businesses as an evolved form of rentierism" (Oliveira 2015: 137). In a speech in 2013, the president defended the elite's economic activities by referring to these as "primitive accumulation" and arguing that Angola was undergoing the same kind of economic transformations that had occurred in Europe "hundreds of years ago" (Santos 2013); thus Marxian rhetoric mixed with the colonial evolutionary idea that Africa "lags behind". The "primitive accumulation" economy driven by the MPLA elite led to a peculiar business climate characterised by a mixture of complicity and paranoia that involved the Portuguese working in Angolan companies or serving Angolan clients. Moreover, the fabulous wealth and extravagant lifestyle of the local oligarchs and their families fostered a desire for quick money not only among the opulently rich but also among all those who lived in difficult economic circumstances. The combination of high living costs and the idea that the benefits of the economic growth were accessible to everyone who was smart enough created a cultural and social environment where (only) money talked (see Schubert 2016). In this environment, both foreigners and locals partook in shaping a culture of money-making.

By the end of 2014, the Angolan economic boom came to a complete stop. The international price of crude oil decreased drastically, and, more or less

at the same time, Bank of America halted its supply of dollars in reaction to rumours about Angolan banks being used for financing "terror organisations". In consequence of this development, the MPLA government cut public investment by 45%, and many projects financed by the party-state and its clients in the Angolan elite came to a standstill. As some Portuguese in Luanda stated at the time "the party is over". Simultaneously, Portugal cast aside some of the harshest austerity measures imposed by European creditors and the Portuguese economy started to recover. Taken together this meant that migration from Portugal to Angola more or less stopped and that many of the Portuguese working in Angola returned to Portugal.

During the boom years, the Portuguese in Luanda were a heterogeneous group. One important distinction was that some were in Angola for the first time, whereas others had lived in the country as children and then moved to Portugal together with their parents in 1974-75. Thus, in Portugal, they belonged to the category of *retornados.* In terms of socio-economic attributes, there was a mixture of highly paid senior professionals, middle-class people, sometimes with specialised technical training, and working-class labourers. The last category mainly consisted of male construction workers. Some had been posted in Luanda as "intra-company transfers" by Portuguese companies that had relocated their activities due to the crisis in Portugal. Others had adventured on their own and arrived in Angola before having secured employment. Some of these adventurers worked illegally for uncertain salaries and struggled to secure immigration documents. Thus, as a group, the Portuguese did not easily fit conventional labels such as "labour migrants" or "highly skilled mobile professionals". Nevertheless, many of the Portuguese were employed in higher positions than they had been in Portugal. For example, young students who in Portugal probably would have been reduced to look for an internship (or not employed at all), were in Angola employed in leadership positions.

ETHNOGRAPHIC MATERIAL

The article builds on 62 ethnographic interviews carried out during four month-long visits to Luanda between 2013 and 2015. In terms of contextualising the interviews, my earlier long-term experience from Luanda was an important asset. I lived and worked in the city from 1988 to 1991, and since then, I have followed the rapidly changing development in the country. In finding people to interview, I relied on earlier contacts as well as on one Angolan and two Portuguese research brokers, who helped me identify and contact informants. The interviews focused on everyday encounters at Luandan workplaces and on how Angolans and Portuguese negotiated power relations and postcolonial identities. Discussion on the Portuguese' position as mobile subjects constituted an integral part of the interviews, and informants frequently

referred to the four keywords that I discuss here. In particular, many brought up whether the Portuguese should be categorised as migrants.

The ethnographic material does not represent all socio-economic strata in the Luandan society. The Angolans I interviewed all have experience working with Portuguese and they all have a formal job, which sets them apart from the absolute majority of the population in Luanda, who make an uncertain living in the informal market. Most of the Angolan interlocutors were semi- or highly skilled, which was a consequence of the fact that many years of schooling generally were needed to compete for formal employment, even when the job in itself was unqualified. For example, I interviewed Angolan waiters and construction workers who simultaneously studied at the university. Among the Portuguese there were quite a few labourers with comparatively few years of schooling, mainly in construction. Still, despite many efforts, I did not manage to set up any interviews with them. Their long working hours could partially explain this, but it was also clear that differences between them and me in terms of gender and class also played a role. In addition, power relations between Northern and Southern Europe were at play. Some Portuguese declined to talk with me because I was a Swede. Through this, I learnt that many Portuguese were critical of the lingering existence of a "domestic Northern European orientalism" (Peralta and Jensen 2017) that imagines countries in Southern Europe as characterised by a lack of responsibility, productivity and rationality. This tension was particularly evident during the crisis years in Portugal when the country was subjected to EU austerity measures. Thus, the two groups' negotiations of the emic constructions of the keywords represent urban middle-class perspectives.

This article represents Angolans and Portuguese as separate identities, even though these identities (as most others) are multiple, fluid and contingent. In the present case, the long history of interdependency has created complex mixtures related to language, culture, nationality, race and family history. For many people, there is certainly a fluidity with regard to identity and belonging. Yet, with only one exception, everyone I interviewed performed as either Angolan or Portuguese, although they would also discuss and question these basic patterns of belonging. It is possible that the way I presented my project, that is, as an investigation into the relationship between Angolans and Portuguese, reinforced this dichotomy. Yet, nobody described the Portuguese as strangers and outsiders in Angola.

MIGRANT

One key distinguishing feature of the word migrant is associated with notions of a stranger coming from somewhere else. According to Georg Simmel's oftencited definition, a stranger is a person who "comes today and stays tomorrow"

and whose position in the group "is determined, essentially, by the fact that he [*sic*] has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself" (Wolff 1950: 402). In the present context, the Portuguese are not strangers. Instead, the relationship between Angolans and Portuguese is characterised by a strained interrelatedness with deep and partly violent historical roots. As late as 1973, more than 300.000 white Portuguese settlers lived permanently in Angola (Castelo 2007). These settlers controlled the colonial administration and monopolised all kinds of professions in the private sector. Even the tiniest grocery store was in the hands of the Portuguese, and Angolans were locked out from all positions of importance for the creation of a modern state. Consequently, the Angola of today rests on a particular hybrid nationalism, which builds on the Portuguese language, education, bureaucracy, etc. (Schubert 2017; Oliveira 2016).

Moreover, a hybrid cultural formation has emerged from a long-term colonial extinction of local meanings and practices. Angolans in Luanda sometimes lament that they have lost what they call "African culture". The intensive colonial penetration has resulted in a hybrid postcolonial interrelatedness, which is especially strongly felt in Luanda (Åkesson 2018). Both Portuguese and Angolans in Luanda talked about this interrelatedness but in different ways. Portuguese interlocutors tended to underline the existence of a Luso-Angolan commonality across borders. In a discourse that tended to be characterised by "willful blindness", they often indulged in descriptions of the cultural similarities between themselves and members of the Angolan middle class. Some argued that Portuguese and Angolans were involved in what they called "a love-hate" relationship. The belief in a shared Luso-Angolan space made the idea of being a migrant foreign to the Portuguese in Angola, as the figure of the migrant is associated with border crossings that are not only administrative but also cultural and social. Those who had lived in Angola as children or had other family ties to the country tended to be especially concerned with pointing out similarities and continuities. For these persons, understandings of Luso-Angolan connections included not only the two nations but also their intimate familial belonging. Often people in this group would start our conversation by declaring, "I am Angolan", and many of them had also acquired Angolan citizenship, as that put an end to problems related to immigration documents. Yet, this did not imply that Angolans, other Portuguese (or they themselves) generally saw them as Angolans. In everyday interactions, they would be defined as Portuguese.

Many Portuguese saw the Luso-Angolan connection as a sign of an important national history of discoveries and expansion and of a specific Portuguese ability to mix with other people. In contrast, to Angolans, the idea of a shared historical Luso-Angolan space seldom had positive connotations, although

middle-class Angolans also talked about similarities between the Portuguese and themselves. They saw the shared history as characterised by oppression and slavery, but the idea of continuity was still there. One Angolan man described the Portuguese as "a bigger brother who has been beating his little brother for five hundred years". Thus, also from the Angolan viewpoint, there was a quality of intimacy, but of a fraught and violent kind. This implied that most Angolans did not see the Portuguese as strangers but as a particular category, "the Portuguese", the former colonisers who now had returned in a different capacity. Another Angolan interviewee argued that the Portuguese might be migrants in a formal sense but that this had little influence on how they behaved towards their Angolan "hosts". Despite nominally being migrants and, thus, supposedly in a position of inferiority, they continued to treat Angolans as subordinates. This, she contended, had to do with the history of slavery and colonialism, which made invisible the Portuguese' status as migrants.

In addition to the specific postcolonial history that pervaded relations between Angolans and Portuguese, contemporary globalised understandings of mobile subjects played a role in determining the Portuguese's position. As a middle-class Angolan woman remarked: "They say they aren't migrants because they have a contract with the government [formal high-status employment]. Migrants are the poor who illegally cross the border". As this quote demonstrates, people in Luanda conceptually link the word migrant to people from other African countries living in vulnerable legal and economic conditions in Angola. The stereotypical migrant is black, poor and male. The similarities are apparent with the current European discourse on migrants. As many observers have made clear, the term migrant is often racialised, classed and postcolonised (*e.g.*, Gullestad 2002; Leinonen 2012; Lundström 2017). Moreover, both in Angola and in Europe, "the migrant" also tends to be imagined as a Muslim and, therefore, a threat to the prevailing order. In the Angolan case, this is evident, for instance, in a newspaper article entitled "Immigration. The risk that comes from the outside with costs for the Angolan state" ("Imigração: o perigo que vem de fora com custos para o Estado Angolano") (Neto 2015). The article describes migrants as unreliable Muslims driven by sinister motives, and in the article's comment field, many readers support this view. Another characteristic of the keyword migrant is that it has a connotation of forced mobility both in Luanda and in the globalised discourse on human mobility. Migrants are people who are forced to move because they live in poverty or because they need to escape from armed conflicts or natural disasters. The status difference between forced and voluntary migration was underlined by a highly-skilled Angolan man working in the construction sector who said: "A Portuguese architect would never admit that he had to go to Angola because he was unemployed in Portugal". This was true also in many of the conversations I had with highly educated Portuguese in Luanda, who were eager to

underline that they had chosen to go to Angola out of free will. As Ruben Andersson (2014: 7) remarks, mobility has become both a privilege and a stigma. To be on the move because one has no other options is stigmatised migration, whereas long-distance movement based on aspirations for professional advancement is high-status mobility.

In sum, Angolans in Luanda did not see the Portuguese as migrants but as "the Portuguese", a term loaded with historical significance. The cultural interconnectedness of the Luso-Angolan space and lingering postcolonial power relations are defining "the Portuguese", and the recent wave of migration to Angola has not fundamentally changed this. The Portuguese are not migrants, as they are neither strangers nor subordinates or forced migrants. Sometimes Angolans called them "Tugas", a vernacular expression for Portuguese, derived from Por*tuga*l. Initially, it was a pejorative term, with roots in the Angolan fight for independence. Yet today, the word sometimes has a more playful and intimate tone, alluding to a well-known character.

EXPATRIATE

Expatriate is an increasingly common term globally, both in popular and academic discourse. The expatriate is the privileged traveller, the inverted version of the migrant (see, *e.g.*, Fechter 2007; Fechter and Walsh 2010; Leonard 2010; O'Reilly 2000: 142). "Expatriate" indicates a position of economic and professional superiority. Thus, the expatriate is what the migrant is not – rich, white, excoloniser. The two words are conjuncted to each other, shifting their meanings in relation to each other. This relatedness was apparent in the Luandan case, where the concept of *expatriado* took on a new meaning.

As was formerly the case in English, in European Portuguese the term *expatriado* primarily refers to a person who has been banished from his/her native country. In contrast, the concept's connotations in middle-class Luanda had accumulated a meaning that differed from the usual connotations in English as well as in Portuguese, at the same time as it reflected the local context. Both Angolans and Portuguese related the word squarely to work-life and to economic conditions stipulated in work contracts. The term *expatriado* was in Luanda used for a foreigner who had a part of their salary paid abroad in hard currency, commonly euros. An *expatriado* was also typically entitled to special benefits, such as housing allowances and free holiday trips. This implied that not all Portuguese who worked in Luanda were *expatriados*. For example, so-called trailing spouses were sometimes locally hired and earned their income in Angolan kwanzas, which disqualified them from being *expatriados*. Arguably, this new meaning of *expatriado* demonstrates the central importance of incomes and economic benefits in the Luandan setting. As mentioned, making money is a significant concern for almost everyone in the city, and

consequently Angolans categorised Portuguese people according to their earning capacity. All Angolans were highly aware of the vast differences between their own salary and the economic privileges of (most of) their foreign colleagues, and they would primarily identify these colleagues with their high salaries and fringe benefits. The focus on economic benefits was true also for most of the Portuguese. The majority of them were in Luanda to work, reap the benefits of the booming economy and earn as much money as possible (see also Candeias *et al*. 2016: 225), and the same applied to other foreigners. Often, Portuguese interviewees told me that they did not like living in Luanda and felt *saudade* (longing, yearning, nostalgia) for their home, but stayed on for economic reasons. Thus, the new and acquired meaning of *expatriado* made a lot of sense to both Portuguese and Angolans. It was all about money-making.

Accordingly, race, socio-economic status and postcolonial legacies interplay to shape the positions occupied by migrants and *expatriados* in Luanda. In these processes, local as well as globalised notions come to the fore. When it comes to another keyword, namely returnee, it is primarily the Portuguese – Angolan colonial history that shapes the ambiguous connotations related to that concept.

RETURNEE

In contrast to the other keywords in this article, "returnee" is not loaded with racialised, classed and postcolonised connotations. The everyday sense of the word simply refers to a person going or coming back, and in that sense, some of the Portuguese in Luanda were actually returnees as they had lived in the country before and then come back. These returnees belong to the so-called *retornados*. As mentioned, in Portugal, the label *retornados* (returnees) refers to the many settlers who returned from the Portuguese African colonies during the decolonisation processes in the mid-1970s, and some of the Portuguese who recently moved to Angola were among them as children or teenagers. In the Portuguese context, the return of the *retornados* has been seen as permanent, and the re-return of some of them to Angola was a new and unexpected turn. Thus, the *retornados* in Angola are middle-aged people who, together with their parents, once returned to what was perceived to be their country of origin (Portugal), and now they have re-returned to their country of birth (Angola). Yet, nominally they were born in Portugal as the colonial regime categorised Angola as an "overseas province". To distinguish this group of people from other Portuguese in Angola, I will continue to call them *retornados*.

Therefore, in a spatial sense of the word, the *retornados* in Angola are returnees. Yet in scholarship on returnees, as well as in public discourse, it is generally taken for granted that the country of return is the same as the country of emigration, which, in turn, is the same as the country of birth. Although

academic notions of "transnational returns" (Eastmond 2006; Hansen 2007) have replaced the traditional view of return as the end of the migration cycle, most studies rest on the assumption that there is a congruence between country of return, country of emigration and birthplace. One exception to this is what variously is termed "second generation return" (Reynolds 2011), "counter-diasporic migration" (King and Christou 2010), "roots migration" (Wessendorf 2007) and "descendants return" (Sardinha 2008). These concepts refer to return movements of descendants of migrants, that is, of persons born in their parents' (or grandparents') country of immigration who move to their ancestors' birth country. Even if these returnees move to a country where they have not lived before, at the same time, they return to a place they perceive to be an origin or a homeland, although this origin is not individual but familial or ancestral.

In the case of the *retornados* in Angola, the question of origin and belonging is even more complicated. First and evidently, the colonial settlers occupied a land already inhabited by an indigenous population. Although the Portuguese colonial regime tried to represent Angola as a nation with many races (Andrade 1961) and thereby frame the Portuguese presence as a natural part of the nation, the anticolonial uprising made it entirely clear that this was not a view shared by the colonised people. Second, many of the *retornados* lived a relatively short time in Angola. The majority of the adult settlers were born in Portugal. The massive influx of Portuguese settlers to Angola took place during the last two decades of colonial rule, when settlement became the colonial regime's strategy to counteract Angolan liberation.

Yet another complicating factor is that these returnees' movement to Angola was driven by aspirations to migrate rather than by desires to return. A combination of un- or underemployment in Portugal and wishes for a better income and career opportunities made them leave Portugal rather than a dream about returning to a place that once was "theirs". Thus, Angola is rather a migration destination than a country of return. Yet, in addition to describing Angola as a place of work and wage-earning, the *retornados* still talk about a partial belonging and a curiosity to rediscover the place where they and their parents once lived.

Thus, the *retornados* appear to be a highly ambiguous kind of returnees, which was evident in the way people in Luanda related to the notion of the Portuguese as returnees. For obvious reasons, Portuguese people avoided the term when talking with Angolans about themselves as a national group. They feared that any ideas connected to a national return could be interpreted as a questioning of the supreme power of the Angolan party-state. As the Portuguese were dependent on the party-state for their right to live and work in the country, they carefully avoided such references. Internally, however, they often made a clear distinction between those new in the country and those

who lived there before 1975. In particular, this concerned how people in the two categories related to the Angolans they met and worked with and how they perceived their role in relation to the development taking place in Angola. The *retornados* often criticised the newcomers for being arrogant, only socialising among themselves, indulging in excessive partying, being in Angola only for the sake of money and lacking interest in understanding "traditions and culture" in the country. They also implicitly depicted themselves as more committed to the country and its people through such statements.

The newcomers, on their part, tended to describe the *retornados* as "more racist" and as "having a colonial attitude". Indeed, the vocabulary of the *retornados* sometimes echoed colonial times. They could, for instance, talk about "blacks", "natives" and even "retarded people" (*pessoas atrasadas*), whereas the younger newcomers always said "Angolans". The differences between the newcomers and the *retornados* also had to do with generational differences as the latter were in their middle age, whereas the newcomers often were younger. When summing up the differences between the generations, one newcomer in her late thirties said:

> "Some of the elder are humbler, although sometimes they are racists and see this as a colony, but still, they understand some things. They love the population and feel at home here. The young, my generation, feel that they shall get rich very fast. They have a bad attitude at beaches and restaurants, a lot of arrogance."

This quote conveys a central aspect of the behaviour of the *retornados*. On the one hand, they were often personally engaged in everyday Angolan life and had an intense relation to it. It mattered to them in a stronger and more complex way than it did to the younger Portuguese. On the other hand, their attitudes were often straightforwardly racist regarding language use and understanding of hierarchies. Seemingly, some of them just took for granted that as white Europeans, they were "by nature" superior to black Angolans. A sense of inherited superiority often informed their attitudes. Understandings of superiority were also common among younger Portuguese, but they seldom framed these in explicit racist terms.

Among Angolan interlocutors, some voiced concern over a Portuguese reconquest and talked about the return of the Portuguese in national terms. Some highly educated Angolans used words such as "neo-colonialism" and "re-colonisation". Yet, they were particularly concerned about the massive entrance of Portuguese people into the upper-scale labour market. Young Angolans with a university degree who competed with the Portuguese for coveted job positions saw them as an impediment to the social mobility they believed themselves were entitled to. Many Angolans pointed out that Portuguese who influenced

the hiring of new staff often favoured family members, friends and ex-colleagues in Portugal. As a female bank employee said:

> "They want to support their ex-colleagues, so they say there are no qualified people here. Instead they send for a Portuguese. My sister has recently graduated from university, and she can't find a job. The Portuguese take the Angolans' places, and many with a university education don't get a job or only an unqualified job."

In addition, many Angolans mentioned the strong ties between the Angolan and the Portuguese elite. Some described the return of the Portuguese as part of a political conspiracy set up by the two elites together. This idea was underpinned by constant rumours about their top rulers not being true Angolans, that is, a suspicion that they were born outside the country. Consequently, whereas the Portuguese tended to avoid references to any kind of national return to Angola, some Angolans made a political reading of the risk of a Portuguese return and re-conquest. Sometimes they saw this as a plot set up in agreement with the MPLA leadership. Yet, in the first place, the fear of re-conquest concerned the Portuguese' access to highly paid positions and other economic assets.

INTEGRATION

It is clear that in Europe "integration" has become a highly politicised and normative concept. Only to a limited extent does the term denote social processes of coming together and creating a cohesive social whole, as it initially did in social science (see, *e.g.*, Durkheim 1983 [1897]; Evans-Pritchard 1940; Radcliffe-Brown 1964 [1952]). Instead, "integration" has become a dominant discursive tool in debates about how migrants conform to social norms and cultural values that are seen as fundamental to belonging in a society (Olwig and Paerregaard 2011). It is telling that conforming is part of the general understanding of integration in Europe, as conforming implies a degree of submission.

When middle-class Angolans discussed the Portuguese that recently had come to the country, understandings of integration were quite different, although they used the same word (*integração*). References to integration in terms of cultural norms, values and practices were largely absent. Instead, in the Luandan context, "integration" connoted sociality and the creation of social ties, thus an understanding closer to the one found in classical social science. To Angolans, to be integrated implied enjoying living in the country, socialising with local people and creating friendships. In line with this perspective, some were critical of Portuguese colleagues who appeared to be

in the country solely to make money, and who did not care about the people around them and invested as little as possible of their income in Angola. Thus, although Angolans and Portuguese generally shared a culture of money-making, the former could criticise the latter for solely focusing on earning money. As one Angolan man said:

> "They don't like us but have had to come here for economic reasons. They live in Angola but don't mix with Angolans. They come to Angola only to work. They send their children to special Portuguese schools. Their children do not go to school with Angolans. They are not here to integrate."

In some of my conversations with Portuguese people, the idea that they were in the country only because of economic motives was substantiated. For instance, a middle-aged bank manager complained:

> "I miss home. I don't like it here. I don't have an African soul. It's too messy, the simplest thing, to cross a road. I've to make a decision soon about staying or leaving. My kids are 15 and 12; the oldest says he wants to go to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], which costs a fortune. I skype with them twice a week. I pay their expenses, but they don't have me."

Yet some of the Portuguese I met presented a more optimistic view of their sojourn in Angola. Typically, they mixed ideas about an easy-going life and good career opportunities with complaints about the "horrible" traffic congestion in Luanda. Many also hinted at constantly living with feelings of fear of armed assaults and worries about getting ill without access to affordable and reliable health care. The postcolonial notion of "this is Africa" resonated through many interviews.

When I explicitly asked Portuguese about their integration in Angola, the typical answer was that they – as Portuguese – were good at mixing socially with Angolans. Thus, their conception of what integration should entail was closer to Angolan understandings than to the common European definition. Many Portuguese voiced an idea about the national self as good at integration. This notion echoes two different and particular historical discourses. The first has to do with the comprehensive history of Portuguese emigration. For centuries, people have left the country searching for a better life, and Portuguese media and popular discourse tend to portray *o emigrante* (the immigrant) as a hard-working person with a strong capacity for adaptation to new and challenging conditions. The second discourse relates to the ideology of lusotropicalism, which underpinned the late Portuguese colonial project during Salazar's regime. A fundamental idea in lusotropicalism was that the Portuguese have a unique and innate empathy for tropical lands and

people (hence lusotropicalism). In the propaganda of Salazar's regime, Portugal's alleged position as a semi-peripheral colonial nation was turned into something positive, and the regime launched *lusotropicalismo* as its ideological forte. Through this move, it tried to turn the historical stigma of inefficiency and incompetence into a marker of openness, mixture and non-racism. In the regime's publicity, a new and different version of Portuguese colonialism was propagated in the metropolis as well as in the colonies. A 1950s fascist version of hybridity was turned into Portuguese pride.

Ideas about an exceptional capacity for mixture still influence how the Portuguese in Luanda describe their positionality in the present (Åkesson 2018). Portuguese anthropologist Miguel Vale de Almeida (2008) uses the concept "postlusotropicalism" to describe the contemporary Portuguese narrative about the national character. According to the postlusotropical narrative, integration and mixing is still a Portuguese specialty, as illustrated by the words of a female Portuguese teacher in Luanda:

> "The Portuguese are exceptionally well integrated in Luanda. The Portuguese have a special capacity that goes hundreds of years back. The Portuguese interact, they mix, they enter into different societies, especially in Africa. The Portuguese feel perfectly at ease [*à vontade*] in the space that is Angola. The Portuguese feel at home."

As exemplified in this quote, postlusotropicalist accounts tend to evade the violence and unequal power dynamics that historically underpin postcolonial relations. This kind of willful blindness could be an asset in the Luandan context, where many Portuguese were emotionally and socially as well as economically dependent on creating an image of smooth integration.

Brazilian sociologist Freyre described miscegenation as characteristic of Portuguese lusotropicalism. According to Sousa Santos (2002), the commonality of miscegenation was not a consequence of an absence of racism, but of sexist rules that allowed the white Portuguese man to have sex with the black woman, but not the white woman with the black man. In postlusotropical Luanda, Portuguese informants often discussed contemporary intimate relationships between Portuguese and Angolans. In particular, they had many opinions about what they described as Portuguese male constructions workers' "obsession" with young Angolan women. Especially females and highly educated Portuguese were critical of this kind of relationship. They criticised the construction workers for exploiting very young girls, betraying their wives in Portugal and "losing their heads" and believing in "love' when the Angolan women only dated them for money. Obviously, complex and intertwined dimensions of race, class, gender and age were at play (for an in-depth discussion, see Cardoso 2019), but what is interesting in relation to integration is

that intimate relationships between Portuguese males and Angolan females still were described as an ambivalent epitome of the relationship between the two national groups.

Thus, even though many of the Portuguese primarily were motivated by economic reasons, their narratives about integration were closely linked to a postlusotropical imaginary. Yet, when I asked middle-class Portuguese and Angolans working at the same workplace whether they socialised with each other it became clear that they generally had little contact outside work. There were exceptions, but in general there were few signs of Portuguese and Angolans creating social ties based on friendship and mutual sociality. Besides the intimate relationships, integration – the Angolan way – was not very common.

THE PORTUGUESE IN ANGOLA: KEYWORDS AS TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

As Noel Salazar remarks in his introduction to the volume *Keywords of Mobility*, "people have always been on the move, but […] human mobilities have been variously valued and interpreted through time and within as well as across cultures and societies" (2016: 6). This article has used four keywords of migration to explore how people in Luanda constructed the Portuguese mobile subjects' identities and power positions and how they valued their incorporation into the local society. In the interviews with middle-class Angolans and Portuguese in Luanda, all the four keywords appeared and had a shared and familiar meaning. Two of them – expatriate and integration – have moved from a restrictive use to a more common sense. The last decades' politicised and affective attention to human mobility has turned these rather specialised concepts into words that frequently are used not only in Luanda but across the globe.

Out of the three indicating a social identity – migrant, expatriate and returnee – *expatriado* was the word most commonly used for designating the Portuguese as mobile subjects. As I have demonstrated, people's understandings of *expatriado* differed from common perceptions of the English "expatriate". At workplaces, people made a fundamental difference between those who earned their living in local currency and the *expatriados* who received a part of their salary in hard currency and were entitled to other benefits, such as free accommodation and a car. The concept *expatriado* was adapted to expound on this difference, and thereby it became a keyword for talking about the Portuguese and others from the global North. In the post-war boom economy characterised by the craze of money-making, the competition between colleagues was often tough. Thus, middle-class Luanda people saw each other primarily in terms of successes and failures related to well-paid jobs, increasing incomes, and different economic benefits. The non-belonging evoked by the Portuguese concept of *expatriado* had lost its negative connotation. Instead, it pointed to the economic privileges linked to the status as a foreigner. This shift indicates

that the keywords explored in this article have accumulated new meanings in relation to living conditions in contemporary Luanda.

People in Luanda rarely used the word migrant about the Portuguese. In the global order of things as well as in the local space of Luanda, migrant is a racialised and classed concept. In Luanda, it was also intertwined with a specific colonial and postcolonial legacy. The reluctance to categorise the Portuguese as migrants pointed to continuous power relations based in colonial hierarchies. Seemingly, the recent and dramatic changes in macro-economic power relations between the two countries did not fundamentally challenge this continuity (see Åkesson 2018). This is in itself an important finding, which points to the enduring influence of the postcolonial world order. Yet, the view of the Portuguese as something else than migrants also derived from the specific Luso-Angolan history of interrelatedness and hybrid social formations. As demonstrated above, there was a certain sense of identification between middle-class Angolans and Portuguese, although of a tense and conflictive nature. The Portuguese were both well-known and part of the hybrid national social and cultural configuration in Angola. They were not strangers and, thus, not migrants. From the Angolan perspective, this continuity builds on oppression and the eradication of local culture(s). In contrast, many Portuguese imagined this interrelatedness as a result of a specific Portuguese capacity to mix and integrate.

Many of the Portuguese in Angola were returnees in the factual sense that they had lived in the Angolan space as children and teenagers. Yet, in the company of Angolans, they avoided talking about themselves as returnees out of fear of evoking ideas about re-colonization. Internally, however, they constantly discussed differences between *retornados* and newcomers. To Angolan middle-class interlocutors, the threat of the return of the Portuguese was not re-colonization in the common national and political sense of the term but a re-colonization of the upper scale labour market. In consequence of this re-colonisation, Angolans with a university degree found it hard to find a well-paid job. In the same way, Angolan managers who competed for access to the oligarchs' ears and wallets found that Portuguese rivals out-manoeuvred them. According to some informants, Angolan business owners valued the Portuguese' competence and long-term experience. Some also preferred Portuguese managers because they were not involved in the ruthless politics of the Angolan party-state and, in addition, sometimes had an uncertain visa status (see Åkesson 2016: 278), and thereby they were easier to govern.

In the same vein, when Angolans talked about the integration of the Portuguese, they often talked about economic issues. Critique of failing integration did not primarily concern non-compliance with social norms and cultural values. Rather, the critique was aimed at Portuguese who supposedly were in the country only for the sake of money and then invested all their earnings in

Portugal. In addition, many Angolans strongly criticized Portuguese colleagues for avoiding creating ties of friendship with them. Portuguese interlocutors shared the understanding of integration as primarily related to the creation of social ties. In contrast to Angolan interlocutors, however, they generally painted a picture of the creation of mixed social ties as a Portuguese speciality. As mentioned, this understanding has its roots in the colonial ideology of lusotropicalism, and it was striking how strongly postlusotropical notions echoed in the discourse of the Portuguese in Luanda.

Thus, while the four keywords partly have developed their meanings in relation to the globalized powerful discourse on migration, they are also clearly historically and contextually specific. Both the Luso-Angolan socio-historical space and the lived realities in contemporary Luanda inform their uses, and this gives them a special weight. Deep postcolonial continuities in combination with the Luandan culture of money-making undergird the construal of the Portuguese as mobile subjects. In Luanda, the Portuguese are both recognized and disliked, and they are clearly competitors in the tough economic and social market.

Finally, and in the spirit of Raymond Williams and his followers, I would like to argue that analyses of the changing meanings of supposedly simple keywords – such as migrant – can open up insights into important social processes. In Williams's tradition, keywords are often familiar concepts that may remain unnoticed because of their mundane character. Nevertheless, they play a pivotal role in the construal of social identities and hierarchies. They bind together particular ways of understanding identities and social processes, and are both familiar, complex and controversial. They accumulate meanings historically and across different geographical scales, while at the same time are contextually specific and, therefore, related to a certain place and a certain time. Last, but not least, their strong normative tenor turns them into promising tools for social analysis. Keywords talk about things that matter to the people who use them.

REFERENCES

ÅKESSON, Lisa, 2016, "Moving beyond the colonial? The new Portuguese migrants in Angola", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africains*, LVI (1-2): 267-285.

ÅKESSON, Lisa, 2018, *Postcolonial Portuguese Migration to Angola: Masters or Migrants?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

ALMEIDA, Miguel Vale de, 2008, "Portugal's colonial complex: from colonial lusotropicalism to postcolonial lusophony". *Working paper*, Queen's University, Belfast.

ANDERSSON, Ruben, 2014, *Illegality Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. Oakland: University of California Press.

ANDRADE, António Alberto Banha de, 1961, *Many Races – One Nation: Racial Non-Discrimination Always the Cornerstone of Portugal's Overseas Policy*. Lisbon: Silvas.

AUGUSTO, Asaf, and Russell KING, 2020, "'Skilled white bodies': Portuguese workers in Angola as a case of North-South migration", *The Geographical Journal*, 186: 116-127.

BENNETT, Tony, Lawrence GROSSBERG, and Meaghan MORRIS (eds.), 2005, *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

CANDEIAS, Pedro, Jorge MALHEIROS, José Carlos MARQUES, and Ermelinda LIBERATO, 2016, "A nova emigração para Angola: integração diferenciada e forte ligação a Portugal", *in* João Peixote *et al*. (eds.), *Regresso ao Futuro: A Nova Emigração e a Sociedade Portuguesa.* Lisbon: Gradiva, 199-233.

CASAS-CORTES, Maribel, *et al*., 2014, "New keywords: migration and borders", *Cultural Studies*, 29 (1): 55-87.

CARDOSO, Carolina Valente, 2019, *The New Portuguese Presence in Angola: Traces, Emplacements and Interactions of a Post-colonial Encounter*. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, PhD thesis.

CASTELO, Claudia, 2007, *Passagens para África: O Povoamento de Angola e Moçambique com Naturais de Metrópole (1920-1974)*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento.

DURANT, Alan, 2006, "Raymond Williams's keywords: investigating meanings 'offered, felt for, tested, confirmed, asserted, qualified, changed' ", *Critical Quarterly*, 48 (4): 1-26.

DURKHEIM, Emile, 1983 [1897], *Självmordet*. Lund: Argos Förlag AB.

EASTMOND, Marita, 2006, "Transnational returns and reconstruction in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina", *International Migration*, 44 (3): 141-166.

EVANS-PRITCHARD, Edward E., 1940, *The Nuer.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

FECHTER, A., 2007, *Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia*. Aldershot: Asgate.

FECHTER, Anne-Meika, and Katie WALSH, 2010, "Examining 'expatriate' continuities: Postcolonial approaches to mobile professionals", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36 (8): 1197-1210.

GULLESTAD, Marianne, 2002, "Invisible fences: egalitarianism, nationalism and racism", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 8 (2): 45-63.

HANSEN, Peter, 2007, *Revolving Returnees: Meanings and Practices of Transnational Return among Somalilanders*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, PhD thesis.

KING, Russell, and Anastasia CHRISTOU, 2010, "Cultural geographies of counter-diasporic migration: perspectives from the study of second-generation 'returnees' to Greece", *Population, Space and Place*, 16: 103-119.

LEINONEN, Johanna, 2012, "Invisible immigrants, visible expats? Americans in Finnish discourses on immigration and internationalization", *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 2/3: 213-223.

LEONARD, Pauline, 2010, *Expatriate Identities in Postcolonial Organizations: Working Whiteness*. Farnham: Ashgate.

LUNDSTRÖM, Catrin, 2017, "The white side of migration: reflections on race, citizenship and belonging in Sweden", *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 7 (2): 79-87.

MARIAN, Jacob, 2015, "Number of people born in the given country currently living abroad, as a percentage of the current population". Available at <https://jakubmarian.com/emigration-in-europe-destination-countries-and-percentages-of-emigrants/> (last consulted September 2022).

MORAN, Marie, 2015, *Identity and Capitalism*. London: Sage.

NETO, L. Kiambata, 2015, "Imigração: o perigo que vem de fora com custos para o Estado Angolano", *Agora*, 24 July.

OECD – ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, 2011, *Economic Diversification in Africa: A Review of Selected Countries*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD – ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, 2015, *Connecting with Emigrants: A Global Profile of Diasporas 2015*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OLIVEIRA, Ricardo Soares de, 2015, *Magnificent and Beggar Land: Angola Since the Civil War*. London: Hurst & Company.

OLIVEIRA, Ricardo Soares de, 2016, "The struggle for the state and the politics of belonging in contemporary Angola, 1975-2015", *Social Dynamics*, 42 (1): 69-84.

OLWIG, Karen Fog, and Karsten PAERREGAARD, 2011, *The Question of Integration: Immigration, Exclusion and the Danish Nation State*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

O'REILLY, Karen, 2000, *The British on the Costa del Sol: Transnational Identities and Local Communities*. London and New York: Routledge.

PERALTA, Elsa, and Lars JENSEN, 2017, "From austerity to postcolonial nostalgia: Crisis and national identity in Portugal and Denmark", *in* Stefan Jonsson and Julia Willén (eds.), *Austere Histories in European Societies: Social Exclusion and the Contest of Colonial Memories*. London and New York: Routledge.

PORTUGAL, Pedro, 2015, *The Portuguese Economic Crisis: Policies and Outcomes*. Gütersloh: Policy brief, Bertelsmann Stiftung.

RADCLIFFE-BROWN, Alfred R., 1964 [1952], *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. Aberdeen: The University Press.

REYNOLDS, Tracey, 2011, "Caribbean second-generation return migration: transnational family relationships with 'left-behind' kin in Britain", *Mobilities*, 6 (4): 535-551.

SALAZAR, Noel, 2016, "Introduction", *in* Noel Salazar and Kirian Jayaram (eds.), *Keywords of Mobility: Critical Engagements*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 1-12.

SALAZAR, Noel, and Kiran JAYARAM (eds.), 2016, *Keywords of Mobility: Critical Engagements*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa, 2002, "Between Prospero and Caliban: colonialism, postcolonialism, and inter-identity", *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 39 (2): 9-43.

SANTOS, José Eduardo dos, 2013, *Discurso do Presidente da República sobre Estado da Nação*. Available at <http://www.embaixadadeangola.pt/discurso-do-presidente-da-republica-sobre-o-estado-da-nacao/> (last consulted in September 2022)

SARDINHA, João, 2008, "'Even if the only thing for me to do here was to milk cows': Portuguese emigrant descendant returnees from Canada", *Diaspora*, 17 (3): 316-339.

SCHUBERT, Jon, 2016, "'A culture of immediatism': co-optation and complicity in post-war Angola", *Ethnos,* 82 (2): 1-19.

SCHUBERT, Jon, 2017, *Working the System: A Political Ethnography of the New Angola*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

SOGGE, David, 2011, "Angola: reinventing pasts and futures", *Review of African Political Economy*, 38/127: 85-92.

WESSENDORF, Susanne, 2007, "'Roots-migrants': transnational transnationalism and 'return' among second-generation Italians in Switzerland", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33 (7): 1083-1102.

WILLIAMS, Raymond, 1981 [1976], *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Glasgow: Fontana.

WOLFF, Kurt, 1950, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel: Translated, Edited and with an Introduction by Kurt. H. Wolff*. New York: The Free Press.

Receção da versão original / Original version	2020/06/05
Receção da versão revista / Revised version	2022/02/02
Aceitação / Accepted	2022/02/18
Pré-publicação *online* / Pre-published online	2022/09/19