



**THE AFRICAN'S DIASPORA:
INMIGRANTS AND STUDENTS
LIVING IN PORTUGAL AND BRAZIL**

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The immigration, whether temporary or not, of Young Africans from PALOP – Portuguese Speaking African Countries – and their movings from Africa to Portugal and Brazil make them carriers of specific characteristics of cultures of different groups – from Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe. Moreover of specific original and traditional tribal traits. What is the outcoming of these elements ensemble together with the elements proper of the local culture of the receiving countries?

“African Villages” in Portugal QUINTA GRANDE



QUINTA GRANDE

Quinta Grande, in the outskirts of Lisbon, existed from 1964 to 2001, when its population was reallocated because of the Lisbon city public policy PER (Special Reallocation Plan). As a poor and precarious occupation area, with mostly black and African population, it was for a long time “a temporary space” for immigrants short period stop going to other European countries. Until 2001 it was a mixed population, syncretic culture district, result of a moving space which leading people and groups both from diverse cultural universes to share life and area, share habits and dreams. The reality of such a district involved everyone, adults and children as far as solidarity and sociability, but it would also act within their conflicts.

TENSION FIELD

PORTUGUESE WORLD ⇔ STIGMATIZATION AND DISCRIMINATION

- The discrimination from the outside to the inside would allow identification to the group and place through neighborhood networks or organized groups such as the Young Group, the Quinta Grande Residents Association and others. However, even in these groups relations were not always very easy.



OTHER AFRICAN DISTRICTS ⇔ GROUP OF YOUNGSTERS

- Groups of youngsters would oppose other groups of black districts and refer to them as belonging to that district or site as the “outsiders”. Therefore, in this shock with the outsiders, the district would be as a single unit, although internally there were groups and subgroups, as well as processes of great tension.
- The district => a very fragile and unstable balance, ready to explode at any time.
- In Quinta Grande, as in other similar districts, there different degrees of social homogeneity and, at the same time, a heavy cultural and social heterogeneity.

Two sides of the same coin

- Sometimes integrative, truly intercultural processes
- Sometimes clear opposition and conflict. Inside and outside the district

INSIDE THE DISTRICT

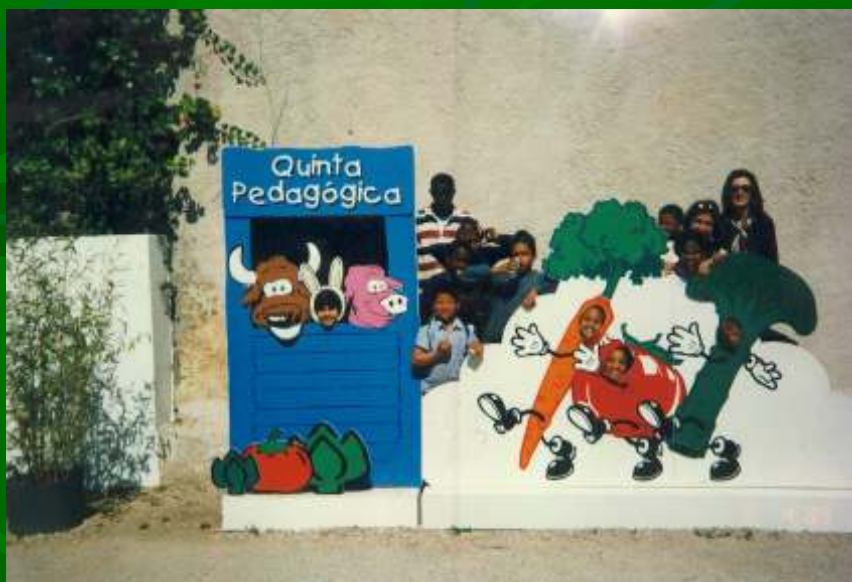
- ↔ **YOUNGSTERS X OLDER ADULTS**
- ↔ **INSIDERS X OUTSIDERS**
- ↔ **ANGOLANS X MOZAMBICANS X
CAPEVERDIANS X ...**
- ↔ **DIFFERENT ETHNICAL ORIGINS**

THE RESPONSE OF “OTHERS”

■ ORGANIZATION

- GROUP OF YOUNGSTERS
- RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
- S.O.S. ANGOLANS DEFENSE
- CHURCH AND CIVIL BODIES (NGO'S, CATHOLIC HOSPITALS)

BEING A CHILD, BEING YOUNGSTER BEING BLACK, PORTUGUESE AND AFRICAN



- **THE CHILD** – represents a unique moment in collective life
- **THE YOUNGSTER** – beyond age, it represents going through several modes of being, result of social demands due to generation mobility, cultural and social reproduction

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

- AFRICANITY => African district in Portugal
 - => Creole and argot
 - => Distant Africa
- NEGRITUDE => black movement (American)
 - => slangs, rap, reggae
 - => dressing, walking and speaking codes
- YOUNGSTERS do not reject their parents' or their original cultures, but felt more part of the Portuguese culture than their elders. This would create an ambiguous relationship between what they believed to be and what they wished to be within the Portuguese society.

AFRICANITY AND NEGRITUDE

Due to living context

- Elements of African origin from parents and grand-parents would allow the youngsters to reaffirm such a difference which would give him/her a possible identity, which within the Portuguese society would demand negotiation. By making use of a origin referential, they would do so more due to reaffirmation of what they were and the position they had in Portuguese society than what would actually reaffirm Africa itself. For them Africa was as distant as any other country of continent.
- They actually wanted to be exactly were they were, but thinking of a bigger world. They wished to reaffirm themselves, but this did not mean denying their negritude, especially because they had it in themselves in the color of their bodies, in their uses and behavior. The ambiguous circumstances they were dove in required their not denying their negritude, although their parents thought they were becoming less black because they were among white and lived with and as the Portuguese.

YOUNG CULTURES

- ETHNICITY

- INTEGRATION / EXCLUSION

- More inclusive, more open or more closed, young cultures, therefore, would emerge always marked by ethnicity of their subjects and based on the position they held in a white, Christian, European society, with permanent integration – exclusion processes.

REALLOCATION



- Gale which virtually destroys Quinta Grande
- District no longer exists.
- In its place, social work dwellings
- NEW MOMENT – Blurred spaces, place of belonging and shelter
- NEED – re-invent spaces, re-arrange places of belonging and shelter – a new battle field, a need of achievement of the unknown, the not dominated, since it involves new subjects, other logics, new power fields.

PRESENT CHALLENGE

FIND WAYS TO REAFFIRM

- AFRICANITY
- NEGRITUDE
- A NEW WAY OF REAFFIRM ONESELF
AS PORTUGUESE AND BLACK

Africans in Brazil: immigrants, blacks and foreigners

- The huge diversity of ways of being and living in Brazil is evident in great metropolitan areas, such as Campinas, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Rio or Fortaleza – which requires considering not only the diversity of nationalities, but also of cultures and ethnies in Brazilian lands.

BEING HERE (BRAZIL)



COMING FROM OUT THERE



- The spatial distribution, the forming of heterogenous groups with a strong local sense, mutual aid, the same way as in Portugal.
- Factors related to dwelling, family, economical, gender and specificities, among others, work as the several parts of a Japanese hand fan, with its complex and rich drawings.
- Basically, whether actual immigrants or temporary immigrants such as secondary or University students – they cannot be thought of as subjects belonging to a homogeneous reality or a community of equals.

WHAT COLLECTIVITIES ARE

- Groupings of individuals coming from the same place, since Born in Africa, although from diverse national, ethnical and tribal contexts.
- Individuals who, in different urban areas, in a context of immigration or shelter, are part of a interaction and inter-relation *locus*, not immune from competition and conflicts. They dedicate themselves to the production of personal and collective life, within a complex network of operations, decisions and negotiations which organize social representations, fed by a *coming from out there* (Africa) *being here* (Brazil).

MORE RELEVANT GROUPS

- IMMIGRANTS
 - REFUGEES
- MAJORITY OF ANGOLANS
-
- UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
- GUINEANS
CAPE VERDIANS
ANGOLANS
OTHERS
-
- SECONDARY STUDENTS → YOUNG ANGOLANS

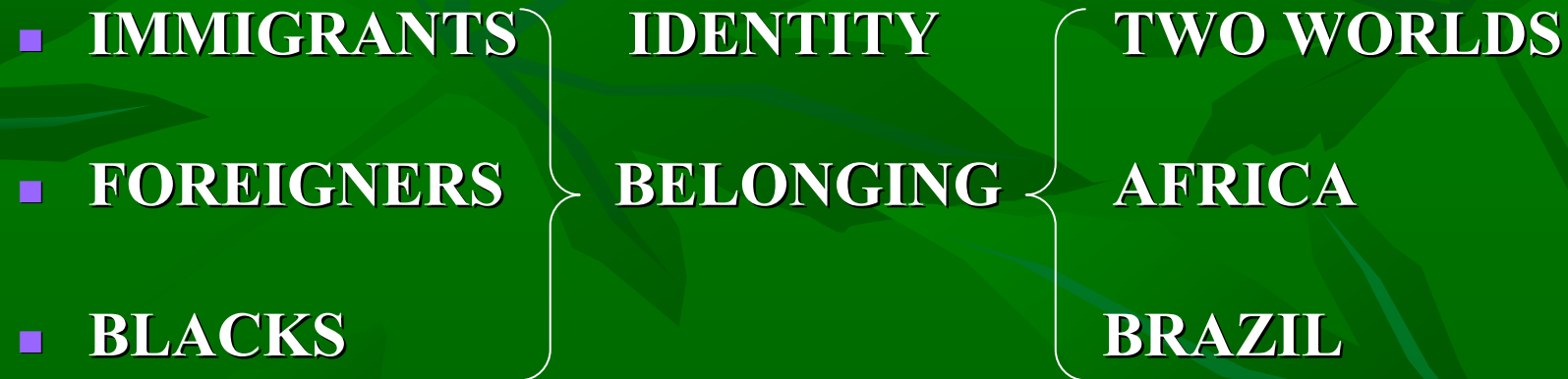
LIVING IN THE LAND OF OTHERS

- The African migrant is incapable of looking at him/herself if not through the eyes of the receiving society. The same as with those who came to Brazil to study, always seen as “foreigners” who live in the land of “others”. The relevance of all that is the mixing of several discourses – the immigrant’s, the African student’s and also the Brazilians’ who they live with.
- Immigrant, foreigners and black, whether students or not, they are marginally included in the Brazilian society. All of them are part of recent immigration – **from the 90’s to the beginning this century** – and the nature of the migratory process involves African realities marked by war, limitations and difficulties.
- The moving between Africa and Brazil takes place due to search for more adequate living contexts and also search for education and the necessary qualification to fulfill of a personal or family project.

QUESTION

- What does it mean being immigrant, African and black in a country as Brazil?

YOUNG AFRICANS IN BRAZIL



(A) OBJECTIVE MIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS
(PERMANENT/TEMPORARY)

(B) SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION
(ALTERITY / IDENTIFICATION / RACISM)

- Integration, more than social inclusion of these immigrants to the specific context of the places they live in and Brazil are in fact a continuing challenge. The social order which ranks the nationals by means of different criteria also ranks “the other”, that one who arrives and establishes him/herself as foreigner and foreign immigrant.
- As such, competences, qualities, positive or negative values are attributed to these subjects. The contact is, therefore, revealing in the cultural field and in the system of values between nationals and foreigners, not taking into account the historical trajectories and whatever comes with it.

(A) OBJECTIVE MIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS (PERMANENT/TEMPORARY)

MOVINGS FROM THE HOME LAND

=> crossing the Atlantic to study

=> crossing the Atlantic as an exile

Most of the immigrants is made up of young people in search of better personal qualification related to their family or their own project and, in this sense, one may infer that Angolans are lonely youngsters (most of them University students) or with their families and they will be the interaction link between Angola and Brazil, the link between their parents' culture – Angolan culture – and the culture of the receiving land – Brazilian culture – both experienced by them in the context of migration as blacks and foreigners. This is not different from those coming from Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and other African Nations.

- Young Angolans and their families in the regional Campinas and Sao Paulo context are all immigrants, foreigners and black, aspects which place them in center stage in the debate of processes of identity and belonging to these two worlds – Africa and Brazil. The experience in this multiple circumstance looks problematic and difficult, since they also involve objective migration characteristics as well as the subjective perception of alterity and identity which absorb them and is their own essence.



(B) SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION **(ALTERITY / IDENTIFICATION / RACISM)**

- **Brazilian society view – Young Africans – “dangerous generations”, the same way as in Portugal and Europe today. They are all young, black and, for the press, involved in drug traffic, prostitution in Europe (especially in Portugal) – as well as in Brazil;**
- **Peer View – coming from diverse countries and ethnies. In Brazil, differentiated according to their refugee or student visas. These differences lead to internal Distinctions within the groups and for external considerations, with positive and negative implications in the everyday life lived in the land of others and also are added according to differences in gender, religion, political affiliation in Africa etc**
- **Immigrants of refugees, more than students, reveal little about prejudices and discrimination although they admit the existence of discrimination and racism processes, more frequent from white Brazilians.**

Prejudice and racism in the land of others

JORNAL DO BRASIL

05/02/2000

- Guerra do tráfico no Rio usa mercenários de Angola

Investigação

Minas achadas em favela do Rio podem ser da Angola

Publicado em 22.04.2004, às 08h40 (JC ONLINE)

A segunda guerra de Angola

Angolanos fogem da violência em seu país, mudam para favelas no Rio e passam a ser vítimas do preconceito e do terror imposto pelo tráfico. Matéria de Ricardo Miranda na Revista IstoÉ, número 1753, de 7/5/2003

- Considering the fact that Brazilians and Africans, in general, are not alike “each having his/her own view of things, each having his/her own angle”, leads them to believe that in order to avoid conflicts it is better if “each sticks to his/her own place and position”.
- Subtle racism favors the view of a warm and friendly Brazil, solidary with differences, which makes it hard to perceive when, whether inside or outside the University, one is victimized by prejudice and discrimination. Other times, it is difficult to disguise prejudice. A student in Fortaleza reports his experience:

I was not badly dressed, had white shorts and orange shirt on. They started to close the car window glass fast as if I was to do them any harm, as if I was going to rob them. But what I thought worse from all that was that there was a child in the back seat looking at all that (...) A child seeing all that... (...) This child will keep this image that black people can only be a thief, everything black is bad...

- Finding the other strange is constant behavior and reveal naturalized assumptions, full of socially constructed folklore and imagination about Africa and Africans for Brazilians. Based on this imagination, they are never asked what course they take, but, for being different, whether they play soccer or are hunters in their own land.
- It is based on all this that African immigrants and students build their statements, revealing how they **understand the world being transformed by the diaspora.**
- Through the **coming and going, coming and staying** one understands that the Africans belong to more privileged social classes in Africa and, after graduation, hope to reach better job opportunities and social mobility more in their own land than in Brazil.
- However, they are still exposed to the many problems of their own country countries (misery, low salaries etc), as well as Brazilian problems (discrimination, lack of jobs etc). Obstacles here and there justify possibilities of staying, of returning, not always definite. And, in this context, the **temporary mobility** of those who are here to study and then return changes to **staying permanently**, although wished temporary. One day the return to Africa and their own countries may take place. **One day...**

MEANWHILE...

- The atmosphere within the Portuguese and the Brazilian society seems to be of **permanent tension** which, as a dormant volcano, is always reflecting the fragile relation among man.
- The fact puts at stake the possibilities of a democratic and plural society in face of world processes of **moving, immigration** (temporary or not) and **refuge**.
- It is clear: life in the land of others is not easy.

“we struggle to survive”, going through homesickness, despair, loneliness and “the lack of”