

## Portuguese Diaspora Narratives

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**Abstract:** *This study seeks to understand the consequences of this phenomenon (Diaspora) in the relocation of human resources from other countries to Portugal and to evaluate this impact. With decolonization and later integration into the European Union, some changes occurred in social and cultural identity. Portugal has become a host country. This study examines the narratives of the portuguese settlers of Angola and the fiction narratives about this subject. We created a database with information about individual characteristics of the portuguese settlers of Angola (gender, age, education level, qualification level, occupation, and emotions). We opted for the use of qualitative method for agreeing Stiles (1993, in Gill, 2000), who argues that the purpose of qualitative methods for the condensation of human experience into words isn't the reduction in its symbolic numbers. In analyzing the content of these interviews we opted for the analysis of narrative research method that has been increasingly used, namely to study specific periods (Farrell, Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1993, in Zilber et al, 1998), such as migrations. This project aims to re-interpret and re-think the effects of portuguese diaspora, during and after colonialism period by giving voice to those who were categorized as returned people. Moreover, this study also aims to take into account the visions of portuguese writers, in order to consider their perceptions*

**Keywords:** diaspora, narratives, fiction, *luso-tropicalism*, homeland.

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### 1. Introduction

This study seeks to understand the consequences of portuguese diaspora in the relocation of human people in Portugal and to evaluate this impact on their lives, through life stories and through fiction narratives.

#### 1.1 *The luso-tropicalism*

In this project we pretend to understand the named concept *luso-tropicalism* as the main responsible for the frustration feeling of the returned people this feeling has contributed to compose a specific self-image in which returned portuguese people can be included.

The *luso-tropicalism* provides the national imaginary and reaffirms the relationship between Portugal and the tropics such as Gilberto Freyre (1940) sustains about the proximity and cooperation between portuguese and the other peoples of tropics. This concept can represent the most original feeling of those who lived in these countries, namely, in Angola. This feeling allows us to understand how it touches the identities of both countries and gives them a unique way of life representation.

After 1945 the formulation of laws were mainly guided by the will to project the image of a united Portugal in accordance with the cultural cognitive understanding of the African colonies, therefore legitimizing a fight to keep them under portuguese rules.

The *Organic Charter of the Portuguese Colonial Empire* was renamed the *Organic Law of the Portuguese Overseas Provinces* in 1953 to erase references to the notions of 'colonies' and 'empire' in Portuguese Law. Indeed, facing an increasing international anti-colonization movement, Portugal put great emphasis upon its singularity as an *atypical* colonialism. Meanwhile the propagandistic process was based upon the ideal of *luso-tropicalism* according to which the portuguese had cultural inclination towards adaptation and miscegenation, mutual understanding and equal treatment. Therefore Portugal reaffirms that the overseas territories were Portugal's country. So this situation allowed Portugal to justify the use of force to defend the country's territorial unity and reaffirmed the equality of status between the colonies and Metropolis Portugal. Freyre's ideas were largely divulgated by mass media in the provinces, in the metropolis, in the universities, and so on. Therefore, he talked with politicians and writers, such as António Sérgio, Aquilino Ribeiro, João de Barros, Ferreira de Castro e Casais Monteiro.

According to Freyre, portuguese people not only felt respect towards the other, but also loved the miscegenation with the other, assumed the affectionate alterity, and became with the other one family. Gilberto Freyre also refers that, since 1950, the efforts upon the necessity of understanding Portugal and the provinces like a whole and singular country became the main preoccupation of the Estado Novo.

They thought that it would be possible to build a new way of life, with only one language, one identity, one territory, one great feeling of "portugalidade".

In 25th April, 1974, the "Movimento de Oficiais das Forças Armadas" the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), finished the Estado Novo, Salazar regime, the last dictatorship of Europe, and that was in power since 40 years, and negotiated the decolonization of its African colonies. Angola became independent in November 1975.

## 1.2 The new homeless

This study seeks to understand the consequences of the decolonization phenomenon in the relocation of human people, specifically, people from Angola to Portugal; and evaluate the impact of these "migrants", including help to clarify the mechanisms for determining the integration and interactions in the new context.

Returned portuguese people who participated in this study were formed in this conceptualization, integrated in the *luso-tropicalism* ideal, so, they felt portuguese, they thought portuguese, they were proud of their largest fraternity with native people that they thought they were portuguese too.

When they were forced to leave Angola, they felt completely disoriented. They could not understand the changes in their lives: they couldn't stay in Angola, because it wasn't their homeland, but they couldn't return to Portugal because they had no home, no family, no affective land.

Adriano Moreira (2001) refers that Portugal had configured a new humanism and had also implanted a human democracy in those countries to where Portugal expanded, and this also accentuates the christian role of human relations in the whole portuguese nation mainly because of the absence of prejudiced ideas against miscegenation.

The post 25th April, the civil wars in the new nations, such as Angola, the chaotic and under pressure decolonization, seemed to reveal the *luso-tropicalism* without sense, but it was only in 1996, with the Lusofonia project, that has been created the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP), united in a common feeling and interests.

Portugal and the CPLP recuperated the portuguese language as something that could restore the *luso-tropicalism* ideal.

We opted for the use of qualitative methods, for agreeing Stiles (1993, in Gill, 2000), who argues that the purpose of qualitative methods for the condensation of human experience into words isn't the reduction in its symbolic numbers. In analyzing the content of these interviews we opted for the analysis of narrative research method that has been increasingly used, namely to study specific periods (Farrell, Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1993, in Zilber *et al.*, 1998), such as migrations.

In this framework, the "decolonization/return" phenomenon would be classified as non-normative event of life, since only a minority of the global population migrates due to either the lack of economic resources (mainly) or other reasons.

Decolonization/return is a modification event at several levels, such as relationships, routines, roles, which might interfere with the concept of the subjects about themselves and the world (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995, *in* Pinheiro and Ferreira, 2002).

Adaptation may also be influenced by other variables, such as the individual's perception regarding the event and the characteristics of pre and post return contexts.

Mobility is a transition that can be seen and felt as a crisis, only if the subject considers it as such, (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998), highlighting the importance of the perception of the phenomenon.

Bronfenbrenner (1986, *in* Campos, 1990) argues that one of the moments of transition that occurs in people's lives is the passage from a micro-system to another, being this passage considered a troubled moment. This troubled moment is associated normally with high level of stress.

Hood and Ferreira (1983, *in* Caires & Almeida, 2001) envisage the high levels of stress associated with changes regarding three often difficult processes: the geographical separation, the emotional separation and the validation of the ability to be successful (Pereira, 2004).

Venâncio (2000) said that this moment must be considered as "crisis", at which the existing balance is questioned because there is a need for personal and relational re-organization that leads to the development of new structures and strategies which are appropriate for the new situation.

Furnham (1997, *in* Samutelela, 2001) considers that the main difficulties for migrants are the adaptation to a new culture and the feeling of nostalgia for the family and the home country. In this specific case, and this specific migration, the returned people are a specific kind of migration. It's a migration to the same country but it's an imposed and non-volunteer mobility. Returned people are inserted in the same culture, in the same way of life, in the same history and in the same identity, but the feeling of nostalgia is evident, in many cases due to the family separation, in other cases due to the home separation and also, in this particular case, due to the instability of the revolutionary period.

Fisher and Hood (1987) define homesickness as nostalgia which is characterized by a strong worrisome concerning home and family, a need to return home, a feeling of regret (pain) towards home and family and, moreover, a frequent feeling of unhappiness, discomfort and disorientation in the new place.

## 2. Methods

We created a database with information about individual characteristics of the portuguese settlers of Angola (gender, age, education level, qualification level, occupation, and emotions). We opted for the use of qualitative methods for agreeing Stiles (1993, *in* Gill, 2000), who argues that the purpose of qualitative methods for the condensation of human experience into words isn't the reduction in its symbolic numbers. In analyzing the content of these interviews we opted for the analysis of narrative research method that has been increasingly used, namely to study specific periods (Farrell, Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1993, *in* Zilber *et al.*, 1998), such as migrations.

Portuguese adults (women and men) between the age of thirty five and 90 years were interviewed. The results showed that migrants that have left Portugal in the 40 decade in search of economic opportunities, and that were forced to return to Portugal, or people of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (most of them born in Angola) had a history of trauma; the other inquired people who had emigrate to Angola after the independence to work there, but without diaspora stories, revealed feelings such as: surprise (for the patrimony that portuguese have left in Angola), respect for those portuguese, cordiality for the natives, cooperation, but also a desire of opportunities.

This study utilized a qualitative, exploratory approach to better understand the data produced using methods of narrative inquiry.

### 3. Analysis

The return of the colons to the metropolis creates a great anxiety in the returned people such as in the host population, both are experimenting the political revolution (25<sup>th</sup> April, 1974) and people couldn't understand this context. Everyone was afraid against the future.

This context was specifically dominated by adaptation and integration variables such as: self-esteem, self-realization, self-confidence.

Meeting the new event creates some anxiety that results in the loss of signs and reference points, such as social rules to guide their actions and to understand the behavior of the others. Social shapes the individual.

One must realize that factors such as an enormous number of returned (500.000) could affect employment and could affect the social relations.

Pacheco (1996) argues that the representations of the host society are marked as a "filter", and defined strategies, ranging from accommodation, in order to save the "bonds of the past", assuming a mode of relationship that allows them to relate to others without profound identity transformations.

The host community was in revolution process, the returned population was suffering the consequences of process revolution.

Returned people couldn't understand the non-acceptance and the resistance of this community that was the same, portuguese population, but seemed to be another.

The feelings of cultural identity are configured in a dynamic process throughout life, so, the confrontation with the other, especially when it comes to live in the same place (metropolis), implies a questioning of the self and the other, a process in which conflicts necessarily occur, either personal, either interpersonal or social. Yet, it is within these challenging situations that occur personal or social development. The returned people follow the same process.

Cardoso (1996, *in* Brito, 2001), argues that integration is a social process in which minorities freely confirm its identity.

Pinheiro and Ferreira (2002) define that in literature, social resources, in general, and perceived social support, in a specific manner, have been hailed as the enablers of personal and social adaptation of individuals in a variety of experiences.

Thus, according to several authors (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995; Cutrona, 1982, 1986; Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline & Russell, 1994; Russell & Cutrona, 1984, 1987; Schlosseberg, Chickering & Lynd, *in ibid*), the existence satisfactory interpersonal relationships and perceived social support may be obtained from them the enablers of adaptation.

Both the returned people and the host population are involved in contradictory and paradoxical feelings. They were both afraid; because of the present; because of the future.

The returned people seemed to discover that they are portuguese people but they had lost the portuguese home.

It was evident the feeling of nostalgia towards the home country that they have lost. They belong and they don't belong to Angola. They belong and they don't belong to Portugal. These questions were intrapersonal and not formal questions, because everyone could obtain government benefits for the social integration.

1. In this study we also seek to understand what portuguese fiction stories related about the portuguese diaspora. We analyzed three narratives and we verified that the contextualization, the characters, allows us to verify the same reasons of discomfort on the integration in the revolutionary period and also the same feeling of nostalgia.

### 4. Discussion and main results

The investigation which is taking place led to acquisition of information related to decolonization people, who

are located in Portugal. The gathering of these data allowed us to understand the profiling of these people regarding their lives changes. In this communication we present the first results of this study.

In the obtained sample we verified that the returned people are from Angola.

As shown in the sample the number of people who is implicated in this study, were pre Estado Novo migrants (90%), while the rest have an inferior number (post Estado Novo).

The profile of the returned people in this study according to the gender factor, allowed us to conclude that there is an almost equitable distribution among men (51%) and women (49%).

This way, we ascertained that those people affirmed that when they come into Portugal, they felt some resistance from the host population (100%). They also were afraid for their integration (100%) and they felt insecurity (100%).

The difficulties on integration represent the totality of the people. Also, the way of life is considered by the returned people as suffering degradation (100%).

The analysis regarding the time origin of the migration allowed us to conclude that the feeling of nostalgia has the majority in the pre Estado Novo migrants (100%). Nevertheless the post Estado Novo migrants considered that the new country was good to work, but not so good to live. The feeling of nostalgia isn't present on these people.

The observation of data obtained also allowed us to label the returned people considering the age factor. This way, we ascertained that 60% of the respondents are more than 65 years old, in the sample of pre Estado Novo and no more than 40 post Estado Novo.

After April Revolution (1974), the civil war, or the social and political instability, portuguese population based on Angola, left this country, to enter in Portugal. These migration people were denominated "Retornados" (returned people) but it was a pejorative designation that everyone felt like a way of discrimination.

In this period, many portuguese people preferred not to enter in Portugal and they went to other countries, such as South Africa, Brazil, or Canada.

We also know about integration and feelings of those people, and the consequences on their lives and how the second generation envisages this phenomenon.

Portugal conceived some programs to integrate returned people, but in the revolutionary period and decolonization period, the quantity and diversity of experiences and feelings were so strong that both, continental population and returned population couldn't understand what was indeed changing in their lives. By the analysis of the testimony already done by "retornados" from Angola, it's possible to categorize some elements, such as: feelings, losses and integration.

The feelings more explained by returned people (1st or 2nd generation), were: "saudade", "nostalgia", "revolt", "sadness" "resignation"

The main losses were: homeland, conviviality, properties, identity.

About integration, we have distinguished a changing of level: at the first time (the moment of returning) they mentioned: discrimination, insecurity, but over time they referred partial integration and total integration.

They referred about relevant role of the government and friends or family to consummate the integration, but they also referred a generalized hostility of the portuguese population.

Literature is one of the most pertinent ways of real representation. A national literature allows us to understand the present, to recognize the past and also to predict the future of a community.

The colonial war contributed to portuguese literature. In this period, war was the theme of several authors, but, after 1974, the *leit motiv* of those publications was a guilt feeling, and we can find the tendency to describe the anti-hero. Manuel Alegre in *Jornada de África* represents this situation. But it's also frequent a different vision, with a sarcastic social vision, such as the case of António Lobo Antunes with *Os Cus de Judas* or *O Fado Alexandrino*. The decolonization and the exodus of a population, who felt disoriented and victimized, begun to be exploited also through literature. This population had left Portugal on the 40 decade, and was, in its majority, a poor class victim of the austerity policies of Estado Novo that had suffered the

contingences of the Great War. They had no way to sustain them in Portugal and so, they had to emigrate to survive.

### Which has been the sin of this migrant population?

Only one: instead of leaving Portugal to France or United States, or Canada, they left Portugal to go to Africa. This delocalization and the Salazar's policies contributed to the disaster of a population who didn't understand that was used by the portuguese government.

The narrative analyses (real testimonies and fiction) allow us to achieve the following results:

1. In Portugal: economic difficulties, difficulties of life (no food, no job) and the example of friends who have already left Portugal
2. In Angola: the same privations in the beginning, inhospitable climate, no home, have a lot of jobs to survive, a strong determination. Good conviviality with host population, and a great hope.
3. After decolonization: nostalgia, losses, no homeland, have a lot of jobs to survive, and no hope.
4. The fiction stories analyzed allows us to confirm the results obtained through the life stories. The narratives we had studied proven those ideas, those feelings and how *luso-tropicalism* concept was so integrated in their lives and in their conceptualization project of lives.

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