Reciprocal migration: the coloniality of recent two-way migration links between Angola and Portugal

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Abstract

Reciprocal migration—which we define as the mutual exchange of origin and destination by two different migrating groups—is hardly acknowledged in the migration literature. In terms of the temporalities of migration, which are usually seen as sequences or transitions, reciprocal migrations are simultaneous. We analyse the reciprocal migrations between Angola and Portugal over the time-frame of the past 10–15 years. In-depth interviews were carried out with Portuguese migrants in Angola, most of whom moved there in the wake of the post-2008 financial crisis, and with Angolan third-level students and recent graduates in Portugal. A key operational concept in our analysis is the plastic notion of skill and its differential racialisation. Portuguese migrants in Angola are automatically regarded as 'skilled' even when they are not, whereas Angolan students and graduates in Portugal, when they seek work, are often viewed as 'unskilled African migrant workers'. We thus distinguish and deconstruct the geographical binary between transnational origin and destination spaces and the social binary between 'skilled white bodies' and 'unskilled black bodies'. These racialised embodied tropes draw on histories of Portuguese colonisation and the contested notion of 'Lusotropicalism', as well as the so-called Lusophone migration system involving complex transnational relations and two-way migration flows. Theoretically we frame this asymmetrical system of reciprocal migration within a modified version of core–periphery relations, as well as the coloniality of power and its enduring influence over the racialisation of skill, education, culture and language across the Portuguese–Angolan transnational space.

Keywords: Reciprocal migration, Portugal, Angola, Core–periphery relations, Coloniality, Lusotropicalism, Lusophone migration system

Introduction

In this paper we open up a debate—both theoretical and empirical—on what we call reciprocal migration, which we define as the mutual exchange of origin and destination by two different migrating groups. Reciprocal migration is hardly acknowledged in the migration literature. Part of the essence of reciprocal migrations is that they are temporally simultaneous, or at least overlapping. Hence the migration flow from place or country A to place or country B crosses over in space and time with B's migrants moving to A. The temporal coincidence of reciprocal migration thus excludes return migration,

since return can only be a temporally sequenced form of movement, following the initial migration—at least at the level of the individual. Of course, it is possible at an aggregate level that a wave of return migration from B to A will occur at the same time as ongoing migration from A to B. In our view this is not the essence of reciprocal migration, which is about different migrants, those originating in A and those originating in B.

It is intriguing to reflect on the reasons why reciprocal migration has been so overlooked in the literature. After all, most countries which 'send' migrants to a particular destination country also receive migrants from that country who are not returnees. Usually the flows are quite imbalanced, but this does not justify ignoring the migrants who move 'the other way'. The lack of attention to reciprocal migration probably reflects the traditional hegemony of economic principles in 'explaining' migration. Under this rationale, migrants usually move from poor countries/regions/places to richer ones, where they can earn more and enjoy a better life, so why would anyone want to move the other way, from a rich to a poor country?

The answer is highly dependent on historical, cultural, geographical, economic and political context. Both economic and non-economic factors are involved. Where both countries have stratified and segmented labour markets, the reciprocal migration streams may be differentiated by characteristics such as age, gender, education, skill, social class and race. Each flow fills a gap in the destination country's labour market. Non-economic factors can include moves for educational or lifestyle reasons, which may be combined with economic considerations such as cost of living, wage levels and, for students, access to scholarships. Some of these rationales and combinations of factors are relevant to the empirical analysis in this article: the reciprocal migrations between Angola and Portugal over the last 10–15 years.

We address the following questions. First, what are the circumstances which help to explain reciprocal migrations along the Portugal–Angola migration corridor? What are the intersecting roles of colonial history and spatial-economic structures such as core–periphery relations? Second, using the lens of skill and its racialised embodiment, what are the experiences of the two groups of migrants under study: Angolan students and recent graduates who move to Portugal to get qualifications and advance their careers, and Portuguese workers who have migrated to Angola in the wake of 2008 economic crisis in Portugal? How do the two groups respectively frame their migration and how do they react to the way they are perceived and treated in their destinations? Third, which theoretical constructs—beyond standard economic theory—help us to interpret our empirical findings? We will set out some a priori propositions based on our elaborations of core–periphery theory and ideas of coloniality to start us off, but we will also look for new insights emerging from the data.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we review the limited reference to reciprocal migration. Second, we introduce the Portugal–Angola migration corridor and trace its evolution through time in terms of two-way flows. In the succeeding section we discuss the 'coloniality' perspective on postcolonial reciprocal migrations, focusing particularly on the plastic notion of 'skill' and elaborating these migrations within a revised core–periphery framework. A section on methods then follows, where we describe the interviews with Angolan students and recent graduates in Portugal, and with Portuguese 'skilled' works in Angola. Our reason for putting scare quotes around 'skilled' will

become apparent in the final main sections of the paper where we present results from the field research in Portugal (with Angolan migrants) and in Angola (with Portuguese migrants). Throughout the research findings we use the empirical data (mainly extracts from interviews) to continually engage with the key questions and concepts underpinning our analysis—especially skill, core–periphery thinking, lusotropicalism and the 'coloniality of being' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The conclusion recounts the main findings of our research and relates them to wider considerations in migration studies about reciprocal flows and their further study and interpretation in other geographic contexts.

Reciprocal migration

Existing references to, and case-studies of, reciprocal migration are few. That said, we do find, in Ravenstein's 'laws of migration', the statement that 'each main current of migration produces a counter-current' (1885: 199). Ravenstein specifies that counter-current flows are not return migrants, but 'persons… [whose] interests take them away from their homes' (1885: 187).

It seems that the term 'reciprocal migration' was first coined in a little-known paper by Gullick (1977) to refer to the two-way migration link between Britain and Malta. This case has some similarity to Portugal and Angola in that it results from colonial history. The British settled in Malta as colonists, military personnel (Malta was a garrison-colony) and lifestyle-oriented retirees; the Maltese came to Britain as labour migrants and, in much smaller numbers, as students.

Colonial connections have no role to play in another interesting case-study of reciprocal migration: that between Italy and Spain, where the link is described as one of 'elective affinity' (Pumares et al., 2018). The reciprocal migration link between them might seem counterintuitive since they are at a similar economic level and so the standard economic theorisation of migration (from 'poor' to 'rich' countries) does not apply. The authors explain this two-way 'horizontal' migration by reference to two factors. The first is the 'affinity' factor, which comprises the similarity between the two countries' geographies and cultures, the relative ease of learning the other's language, and therefore the condition of 'feeling comfortable' as a migrant. The second factor is common membership of the European Union, enjoying the benefits of free movement.

Our final example from the literature is a paper on 'both-ways' migration between Thailand and 'the West' (Statham et al., 2020). Mass tourism (from 'the West' to Thailand) and marriage migration (of Thai women to 'Western' men) are the main mechanisms for these reciprocal moves. Statham et al. argue that three elements of Thailand's specific encounter with globalisation are crucial to interpreting this case. The first and most important is the growth and scale of tourist mobilities to Thailand which has had a double effect, on the one hand creating cross-border social and personal networks, and on the other leading to the settlement of large numbers of older Western men living permanently in the 'Shangri-la' of Thailand with a younger Thai partner/wife. The second factor is the rapid transformation of Thai rural society which produces 'surplus' mobile women who move to the tourist enclaves of Thailand and thence, some of them, abroad. Third, the restrictive immigration and citizenship regimes of many Western countries in Europe and elsewhere leave few pathways open for these women's legal immigration other than by marriage.

We can think of reciprocal migration within a framework of 'migration corridors'—a meaningful, functional connection of two places (typically, countries) between which people migrate, either predominantly in one direction or bidirectionally (Carling, 2010). Our focus in this paper is the Portugal–Angola migration corridor. This corridor is not exclusive of other migration links that either Portugal or Angola maintain: indeed Portugal, especially, has historically demonstrated a remarkable variety of both emigration links and source countries of immigration. The attraction of the corridor metaphor, like that of the broader transnational perspective, is that it connotes a setting for multiple two-way flows, not only of people but also of remittances, goods, ideas and cultural influences.

The Portugal–Angola migration corridor within the Lusophone migration system

Reciprocal migrations between Portugal and Angola have evolved over many decades and are part and parcel of the position of Angola in the Portuguese colonial and post-colonial space. Not uncontestedly, Baganha (2009) has identified and described a 'Lusophone migration system', built upon the linguistic colonising effects of the Portuguese empire. In her words, the system 'is well structured and stable… held together by multiple exchanges and flows of people, goods, services and remittances, and sustained by informal dense webs of contacts, relations and agreements' (2009: 10). The reciprocal nature of many of the migration flows within the system is emphasised by Góis and Marques (2009: 24): 'the Lusophone migration system cannot be analysed solely from the perspective of countries of origin or destination because the central nodes in the system both send and receive migrants, albeit to varying degrees'. Portugal has always been positioned at the centre of the Lusophone migratory system which, however, Góis and Marques (2009: 40) characterise as tricephalous, since Brazil and Angola have also acted, like Portugal, both as sources of emigration and as poles of attraction for immigrants. In fact, we also find reciprocal movements between Portugal and Brazil, involving different forms combining work, student and marriage migrations; these, too, cannot be dissociated from the decolonial critique (França et al., 2018; Raposo & Togni, 2009; Silva & Malheiros, 2022).

Although the essence of the Lusophone migration space is the reciprocal and multiple movement of Portuguese-speaking migrants along the corridors within the system, the system is highly open to engagement with other global-scale migration systems—which is one of the critiques on an over-emphasis on *lusofonia* (Malheiros, 2005). To put it simply, Portuguese have not only emigrated in large numbers to ex-colonial countries (Brazil, Angola, Mozambique etc.) but also to France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the UK (in the European migration system) and to the United States and Canada (North American system). On the migratory flip-side, immigrants to Portugal have come not only from former Lusophone colonies but also from India, Bangladesh and Eastern European countries such as Romania and Ukraine. For Angola, whilst the main migration corridor (both for emigrants and immigrants) is to Portugal, Angolan emigrants have also ventured in significant numbers to Brazil, South Africa and the UK; and alongside the recent Portuguese immigrants we also find Chinese and Congolese, amongst others.

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One of the foundations of the functioning of the Lusophone migration system, and its presumption that Portuguese, Angolans and other Portuguese-speakers prefer to move within this linguistic realm, is the (quasi-)theory of Lusotropicalism, which became the underpinning ideology of Portuguese colonial identity and practice in the later colonial period. In the 1950s, the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal mobilised the Lusotropical ideology as a legitimising force to counter anticolonial pressure from the rising independence movements in the African colonies—the so-called 'PALOP' (*Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*). The Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, widely credited as the key protagonist of Lusotropicalism, contended that the particular history of the Iberian peninsula (including its Moorish colonisation and the presence of Africans in Portuguese cities since the Middle Ages), as well as its warm climate, predisposed the Portuguese colonists (in Brazil and then in Africa) to a greater degree of empathy, biological and cultural mixing, and benevolent governance than was found in the British and French colonies.[1] In sum, Lusotropicalism was an attempt to spin a unified historical and cultural narrative out of the complex and unequal encounters of the Portuguese colonial era—a story that came to be elevated to the level of a national cultural and civilisational identity.

In fact, Lusotropicalism was a camouflage to obscure the realities of Portuguese colonialism which were, in practice, built on hierarchies of geographic origin, 'race', education and the ability to speak and behave like a 'true Portuguese'. One of the many problems that the Lusotropicalist narrative presented was the division between so-called 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' Africans—between those 'natives' who could be deemed *assimilados* and those who were not 'assimilated' to the Portuguese way. Whilst the former were better off under the colonial system than the latter, in practice the 'civilised native' could not attain the same status as the Portuguese colonisers, even in cases where the 'native' was the better educated and more skilled (Bender, 2004). This mismatch between status and education/skill is replicated in the recent waves of reciprocal migration between Portugal and Angola. Indeed, some of the widespread ideas of Lusotropicalism were reproduced by our research participants—both in Portugal and in Angola, and both by Portuguese and by Angolans. This internalisation of Lusotropicalist thinking, in the context of our research, is part of the 'coloniality of being' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) that we develop further in the next section.

A coloniality perspective on Portugal–Angola reciprocal migration

In his study of Jamaican migration, O. Alexander Miller proposes the 'Colonial Capital Theory of Migration' (Miller, 2008: 12–13). Colonial capital comprises four aspects: family background and skin pigmentation, education, social graces, and financial capital: through this multivariate prism, precise analysis of migrants' statuses and experiences can be made. Colonial capital intersects with migration in a sequential way: to pre-migration colonial capital are added layered shifts in economic standing and cultural values acquired in the receiving society and then mobilised upon return. The combined elements of colonial capital serve two purposes: migrants use them to make sense

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[1] For Freyre's key texts on Lusotropicalism see Freyre (1946, 1961); and for detailed explanations and critiques see Åkesson (2018: 33–56); Anderson et al. (2020); Augusto (2021: 84–121); Castelo (1998).

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of their own status, either abroad or back 'home'; and others use these components to judge each migrant (Miller, 2008: ix).

Miller's formulation of colonial capital resonates well with a broader 'coloniality' interpretation of the relationship between Angola and Portugal, including the mindsets and behaviours of migrants who move reciprocally between the two countries. For a definitive statement on coloniality we turn to Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243):

> *Coloniality is different from Colonialism. Colonialism denotes political and economic power relations in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation... Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of Colonialism, [and] which define cultural, labour and intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration. Thus, Coloniality survives Colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self...*

Maldonado-Torres and others who write about the school of (de)coloniality trace their origins to Latin American scholarship on *dependencia*—'dependent development'. They argue that although parts of the world like South America and Sub-Saharan Africa exist in a postcolonial state, this world has yet to be decolonised.[2] Indeed, it remains in a state of economic, political and cultural peripherality *vis-à-vis* the former colonial powers and their successors as the power-holders of the global capitalist system—basically Europe and North America.[3]

Reciprocal migrations along the Portuguese–Angolan migration corridor are a revealing example of coloniality in practice. They represent differentiated aspects of the 'coloniality of power' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) at both a macro-scale level of economic dominance and in the way that racialised (post)colonial power dynamics are manifested in terms of attitudes, language, education and the flexible conceptualisation of embodied skill. Maldonado-Torres' (2007) allied concept of the 'coloniality of being' reflects the ways in which people, in our case migrants, internalise the oppressive power structures produced by colonial histories. On different sides of the same colonial hierarchy we observe, on the one hand, how Angolan migrants (and non-migrants) accept their precarious predicament and their subaltern status in face of the Portuguese (former) coloniser and, on the other hand, how Portuguese migrants exercise the power and privilege they have through their 'white' and 'European' origins.

Combining the concept of the coloniality of power with our earlier discussion on the Lusophone migration system enables us to develop a novel perspective on the longstanding debate in economic geography and global political economy concerning the structuring of the world into core, periphery and semi-periphery (Seers et al., 1979;

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[2] See, notably, papers in the special issue of *Cultural Studies* on 'Globalisation and the de-colonial option', especially those by Escobar (2007), Maldonado-Torres (2007), Mignolo (2007) and Quijano (2007). The special issue was subsequently republished in Mignolo and Escobar (2010). Of course, the parallels between the Latin American and African experiences of decolonisation and coloniality are somewhat limited by the different chronologies of independence—in the early nineteenth century for much of Latin America (including Brazil, 1822) and mid-to-late twentieth century for Africa (1974–1975 for the PALOP); see Cahen (2013).

[3] Even if these global dynamics are shifting with the rise of China, India, Russia and the oil-producing Gulf States as power brokers within the global economy.

Wallerstein, 1974). Portugal's position within various versions of the core–periphery model has always been ambiguous; not least because, in reality, neither the 'core' nor the 'periphery' are homogenous entities. Above all, notions of core and periphery are relational (e.g. peripheral to what?) and subject to change over time, according to different rates of development as well as geopolitical events.

Conventionally, Portugal has been seen as 'semi-periphery' (Arrighi, 1985; Góis & Marques, 2009; Santos, 1985). On the one hand, it was (and to a large extent still is) peripheral to the main global economic cores located in North-West Europe and North America, to which it has sent large numbers of labour migrants, as already noted. Yet, on the other hand, Portugal was the colonial metropole-core of its own imperial periphery with reciprocal migration dynamics: sending out colonial settler migrants and receiving migrants of varying skill level in return.

Angola's position within the core–periphery system is also not straightforward, being peripheral in a global perspective but a regional geopolitical and economic power in Central and Southern Africa. Its location within the global and Lusophone periphery needs to be re-evaluated as a result of the oil boom which has transformed its economy in recent decades, especially since the end of the Angolan civil war in 2002. This led to substantial new immigration from Portugal in the wake of the post-2008 financial crisis, as well as from Brazil, China and neighbouring African countries.

Therefore, recognising that both Portugal and Angola are simultaneously sender and receiver countries for migrants, we propose a more nuanced typology of the core–periphery system. As it is part of Europe, we see Portugal as 'semi-core', given that it still sends migrants to Northern Europe (so it is a kind of 'periphery within the core'), but at the same time it receives migrants from its ex-colonial periphery, including Angola. The latter, meantime, is peripheral to the Portugal-dominated Lusophone migration system, sending both labour migrants and students to Portugal but, due to its oil and mineral deposits, it also attracts migrants from the range of countries mentioned above. We therefore label Angola a 'semi-peripheral' country, or a 'core within the periphery'. Following Portugal and Brazil, Angola is the third most important node within the Lusophone migratory system (Góis & Marques, 2009: 43).

As is evident from the very name of the Lusophone migration system, language was inscribed as a key element of Portuguese colonialism and of postcolonial culture and geopolitics. Language was the essential element through which Portuguese culture, including the educational system, was spread across the so-called 'Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries'. Within the 'imagined' Lusophone space, the single imperial language, albeit with its variable pronunciations and inflections, was, and remains, the cornerstone of the political and cultural narrative of both colonialism and, in the postcolonial era, of coloniality (Abadia et al., 2018: 346).

The ways in which language, education and skill function as vehicles of coloniality within the Portugal–Angola migration corridor will be the focus of our empirical analysis. We know, however, from the literature on 'one-way' migrations within the Lusophone migratory space that the Portuguese language and education system play a hegemonic role, affecting in turn the plastic evaluation of 'skill' as it is manifested in the racialised bodies of Portuguese and African migrants (Abadia et al., 2018; Åkesson, 2016, 2018, 2021; Alves & King, 2021; Augusto & King, 2020; Candeias et al., 2019; Dos

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Santos, 2016; Vala et al., 2008). Our paper provides a more complete, combined analysis based on reciprocal migrations between Portugal and Angola. We turn to this analysis in the rest of the paper, starting with a description of field methods.

Methods

Research for this paper derives from the recently completed doctoral theses of the first two authors (Alves, 2021; Augusto, 2021), respectively relating to Angolan students and recent graduates in Portugal, and to Portuguese migrants in Angola.[4] The intention is not so much to develop a simple comparison between these two migrant groups but to make a combined empirical reading of flows that move at the same time in opposite directions. This allows the identification of some common interpretive elements that illuminate the nature, complexity and relevance of reciprocal migration. Such a reading also contributes to the debates on centre–periphery perspectives and (de)coloniality in the migration field.

For the first study, 26 Angolan students and recent graduates (16 men, 10 women) were interviewed in Portugal, mainly in Lisbon. Some graduates who had returned to Angola were interviewed online. Most of the participants were interviewed twice, initially when they were in the final year of their study programme at a Portuguese university (either bachelor's or master's degree), and then one or more years later. By the second interview, some had graduated and either remained in Portugal or returned to Angola to pursue their careers. Most came from family backgrounds that were urban, professional and middle-class; hence they were relatively privileged and well-off by Angolan standards. Participants were contacted as a sequel to an online survey (where there was a question asking about willingness to be interviewed) and from the researcher's personal networks, followed by snowballing. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours. They were mainly designed to capture mobility pathways and study and career plans, but also gave ample scope for participants to talk about their academic and everyday-life experiences as students and (for some) as recent graduates in Portugal, including interactions in the classroom, workplace and wider social environments.

For the second study, the core group of research participants were 22 Portuguese emigrants working in Angola, most of whom were also interviewed twice. The initial encounter was a typical semi-structured interview lasting up to one hour; the second session was a more informal, conversational encounter, not always recorded (at the interlocutor's request), and often lasting much longer. A supplementary set of interviews was carried out with 13 Angolan participants who were either employers of Portuguese migrants or co-workers with them. For both the Portuguese and the Angolan interview samples, approximately equal numbers of men and women were interviewed. Especially for the Portuguese migrants, the socio-demographic profile of the interviewees, reflecting the complex relationship of Portuguese migration to Angola, was quite diverse, including a variety of socio-occupational backgrounds and prior migration experience. Most of the 13 Angolan interviewees had tertiary education, acquired in a variety of

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[4] The second two authors were both involved as supervisors of the two theses and as co-developers of the theoretical frameworks for this paper and the comparative analysis of the empirical results.

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countries including Angola, Portugal, Brazil and South Africa. Some also had previous work experience outside Angola. The fieldwork was located in Lubango, a city of around 250,000 in south-west Angola. One of the reasons for choosing Lubango was the researcher's prior knowledge of the city and hence his access to personal networks for contacting potential interviewees. Another important reason was that parallel research on Portuguese migrants in the capital Luanda was being carried out by Swedish anthropologist Lisa Åkesson (2018, 2021), and it was important to avoid interviewing the same participants as her.

For both studies, standard ethical procedures for research with migrant subjects were followed, including informed consent to be interviewed and recorded. All participants have pseudonyms and any identifying details, such as names of firms, employers or universities, are omitted. The interview extracts given in the next sections of the paper are 'typical' examples of the experiences and opinions of participants, selected from much larger bodies of narrated data.

Angolan students in Portuguese universities

In this first section of empirical results, we use the Angolan students' narrated experiences to reflect on some of the main conceptual ideas outlined earlier around (post)colonial hegemonic power and the coloniality of being, especially as regards the role of language and the value of a Portuguese university education in terms of status enhancement and future career prospects in Angola.

When asked why they chose to pursue their third-level studies in Portugal, the participants volunteered reasons which coalesced around a number of key factors, often in combination. These were the following: knowledge of the Portuguese language; esteem for the quality of Portuguese universities, especially in comparison with those in Angola (where the choice of degree programmes is more limited); the availability of scholarships and sponsorships; the relative ease of access in terms of visa requirements; and the presence of earlier-migrated relatives in the country. All of these factors reflect, in different ways, the 'coloniality of power' exerted by Portugal over its former colony, and the internalisation of these power relations in Angolans' 'coloniality of being'—their often subconscious awareness of their subaltern status as racialised former colonial subjects within the Lusophone education system.

We draw a parallel between the Lusophone migration system, discussed earlier in the paper, and the Lusophone education system: the geographical mobility of students unites the two systems. Language, therefore, was frequently nominated as a prime factor shaping the decision to study in Portugal. In the words of César:

> *We are students from Portuguese-speaking countries, so we have that reason which is the language. Portuguese is our official language: we see that those at the top [in Angola] speak Portuguese well, with a good accent. So I wanted to come here and learn to speak like the Portuguese [in Portugal]. Those who study here and then go back [to Angola] are seen as the competent ones, who take work seriously.*

César's final comments, that in Angola there is a strong correlation between command of Portuguese, spoken with the 'correct' accent, and socio-economic status, is a widespread view which will later be triangulated with the interview results in Angola.

Nevertheless, some participants were aware that their 'African'-accented Portuguese might be a problem—as we will see presently.

Often the language factor was paired with the perceived value of a Portuguese university diploma, including the anticipated higher quality of teaching and (for postgraduate students) research and the attraction of encountering well-known authors. Law student Leonor articulated this reasoning in the following way:

> *I was curious to see what the study of Law was like here in Portugal, since in Angola we learn from Portuguese authors, we are studying books by Portuguese authors. So why not go to Portugal and 'drink at the fountain'... and see what these authors are really like?*

Quite aside from the vector of language, this way of seeing Portuguese education and 'well-known' academics seems highly reflective of the colonial past and former 'empires of knowledge' (Barrett et al., 2014: 61). Writing specifically about the postcolonial nature of Portuguese and British higher education, Ploner and Nada (2020) define the 'epistemic heritage' of education as 'a modern colonial project... exported to, and imposed on, the racially, culturally, and geographically distant Other' (2020: 375). Moreover, unlike the UK's colonial strategy of founding British-style universities in its African and Caribbean colonies, Portugal adopted a centralised academic strategy largely supported by a single University (Coimbra) serving the metropolis and the empire until the nineteenth century. The strategy of educating the colonial elites in the metropole-core contributed to align their interests and thinking with those of the metropolis, also ensuring some mechanisms of social and political control. The tardy development of universities in Brazil and in Angola and Mozambique (in the latter two only in the 1960s) prevented the development of 'local academic variants' and led to the construction of a Portuguese 'empire of knowledge' with Coimbra as the structuring and symbolic element. Therefore, the academic imagination of Brazilian and African youth remained dominated by the metropolitan academic space and its features, a process that supports the power of academic coloniality. Within this line, still today, most of the foreign students in Portuguese universities come from former colonies such as Brazil, Angola and Cape Verde (França et al., 2018).

Experiences with scholarships and the visa required for entry were variable, depending on personal circumstances—a mirror-image, as we shall see, of the experience of Portuguese migrants in Angola. Highly bureaucratic regulations are characteristic of both countries—another legacy of the colonial era. For Angolan students desiring to enter Portugal, delays were frequent, with the result that students either arrived late, after the course had started, or had to wait until the start of the following academic year, as happened with Inácio, who was applying for a postgraduate course in Portugal:

> *The visa application was not easy. A lot of bureaucracy, a lot. First, you have to have documents recognised, including the [Angolan] degree certificate. The difficulty started at the Angolan university, which couldn't get me those documents... it took six months... I was supposed to come a year earlier... After that I had to go to a public notary, then to the Ministry of Interior, and the last step to the Consulate... where there was a huge queue of people who want to come here to study... I had to spend the night there.*

Finally, the prior existence of family and social networks in Portugal played an important role for many Angolan (and other PALOP) students in deciding to come to Portugal: another legacy of historical migration circuits within the Lusophone migratory space, especially of labour migrants seeking work in Portugal (António, 2013; Liberato, 2012). Participants especially mentioned siblings and cousins, but also uncles, aunts, even grandparents, as well as friends and neighbours from their hometowns and teachers and professors from the Angolan schools and universities. Given the urban, middle-class background of most of the participants, the desire to study abroad also reflected family traditions and aspirations, and strong parental support (also financial) and encouragement. Two typical quotes from the interviews illustrate some of these points:

> *I have cousins studying here, whilst others have returned to Angola. I always talked with my cousin and she told me how things were here, and that she enjoyed it. And I noticed her growth [as a person] (Francisca).*
> *I had the experience of some professors back at the university where I did my degree. Some were Angolans who had also studied abroad; others were Portuguese. They told me Portugal is a good place to do further study (José).*

If Portugal is a 'good place' for higher education and if Francisca's cousin 'enjoyed' being a student in Portugal, how do these opinions match participants' own experiences?

Academic experiences

Ploner and Nada (2020: 380) write that the experiences of students migrating in pursuit of 'European' higher education tend to reflect prevailing postcolonial knowledge structures. Following Maldonado-Torres (2007), such structures are examples of the exercise of the 'coloniality of power', whilst the students themselves experience at an everyday existential level the 'coloniality of being'. On the one hand Angolan students in Portugal can—and should—be regarded simply as 'international students'; on the other hand the reality is that they are often seen by the host society as 'black immigrants' and are subject to the prejudice, discrimination and racism that such a label implies (Alves & King, 2021; Vala et al., 2008). By virtue of their origins from the periphery of the former Portuguese colonial empire, being African and having perceived cultural traits (less serious, less clever), they are 'othered' by Portuguese students in the classroom and socially. They may also be victimised for not speaking Portuguese with the 'right' accent, something they can become self-conscious about. Graduate Alice bore witness to her experience of studying at a Portuguese university.

> *You ask a question in the classroom and they say, 'Sorry, we don't understand what you are saying', and that automatically pushes you back, exposing your doubts about being understood. They also have this idea which really pisses me off, of trying to typecast us, saying we are the ones who study the least... It's really tedious, especially when you are confident that you know your stuff, you completed your assignment on time.*

Alexandre, a Master's student, gave a typical account of other dynamics at play in the classroom, especially when students have to organise themselves for group work.

What happens to the students here in class? There is a lot of competitiveness and when they arrive in the classroom they want to discover who is the best. After the second week, when the working groups start to be formed, the best ones always join together. We find out later that there are groups of people who understand a lot and others who know very little about what is going on. And usually, foreigners and immigrants are in these [latter] groups.

The two quotes above strongly suggest that, amongst students at Portuguese universities, there are splits along lines of geographic origin and, by implication, 'race'. Such findings are not unique to Portugal; they also resonate with the experience of black and immigrant students in the United States and elsewhere, where there are perceived boundaries between those who are 'white' and those who are 'non-white' (e.g. Quinton, 2020; Yao et al., 2019).

The linguistic and social exclusion suffered by Angolan students in academic settings must be leavened by certain caveats. First, the linguistic barrier works both ways, according to some participants, especially in the early days when newly arrived students have difficulty in 'tuning in' to the timbre of formal academic teaching. As Mário related:

At university, the first adaptation was the language. Although we speak Portuguese, in the beginning it is a process of adaptation. The listening, picking up the accent… People in Portugal speak very fast. I remember the first time I was in class I didn't understand anything the tutor said, nothing. But then, with time, listening to the news, the TV, your ears adapt to the way the Portuguese speak.

Secondly, many participants praised the lecturers and fellow-students for their help, understanding and friendship. To restore the balance of our overall account, we close this subsection of the paper with some more positive impressions, including a retrospective appreciation of the things learnt by the challenges experienced.

The teachers here are top. The relationship with them is good, very good. They are always available—very different from where I come from. They are always, always available and that's good, especially for us immigrants (José).

I already feel Portuguese. Angola and the PALOP have an affinity with the Portuguese… so I feel Portuguese, I already feel at home (João).

The positive thing has been to know how to deal with whatever the world throws at you. Thankfully, the friends I now have, helped me a lot. They are another family that I have here. I met them in college, also at the Angolan students' association, in the parties and events that we organise (Francisca).

A couple of throw-away phrases in the above interview extracts should not pass unnoticed. Note how José, in the first quote (and Alexandre in an earlier quote), allies himself with the self-definition 'us immigrants', rather than identifying as an international student (cf. Alves & King, 2021). In the second extract João echoes the Lusotropicalist narrative of similarity and affinity between Portugal and its (ex-)colonies; in other words, for Angolans in Portugal, the 'coloniality of being' is to 'feel' Portuguese and to be 'at home' in Portugal. The third quote shows that, whilst engaged in their multi-faceted student

migration, participants become active agents in their own maturing and resilience, and the co-creators of intercultural capital (Madge et al., 2015).

Experiences outside the university

Outside of the academic setting, Angolan students and recent graduates faced challenges in other aspects of their lives, such as when seeking accommodation and paid work. They were seen by the wider Portuguese host society via the racialised stereotype of the 'poor, black immigrant' projected onto previous generations of labour migrants coming from Portugal's (ex-)colonies in Africa. Traditionally, and still to a large extent today, PALOP immigrants lived in deprived neighbourhoods of Lisbon's metropolitan area and their employment was largely confined to poorly paid, often casualised sections of the labour market—in construction, domestic cleaning, low-grade service jobs and informal trading (Malheiros, 1998; Pereira, 2010). This structural positioning of African workers in low-skilled sectors of employment created the widespread view that all 'black immigrant bodies' were 'unskilled', thereby limiting the opportunities offered to Angolan students and graduates.

Students with low purchasing power generally face problems in accessing satisfactory accommodation, unless, as happened with some of our participants, they had a place allocated in university residences, or their parents were sufficiently wealthy and generous to support their rental costs, or they were able to lodge with relatives. Angolan students dependent on parental support conveyed by monthly bank transfers recounted the hardships they endured when their parents suffered loss of income in the volatile Angolan economy, or when the bank payments were delayed or never arrived. Alice was one of many who referred to the difficulties with receiving regular bank transfers:

Unfortunately, I needed to work, because I lost my parents' support. Not because they didn't want to support me anymore, but because they have no way to. Right in the first semester of the first year of the course, problems started: there were no longer any bank transfers between Angolan and Portugal.

Many students thus needed to find work to support themselves. Problems of accessing legal work are compounded by the wrong idea that students do not have the right to work.[5] Between some lack of knowledge and taking advantage of the situation, many companies prefer to hire students clandestinely, which limits their welfare rights and income-earning possibilities. As Paula said in her interview, 'I am not allowed to work, I am here only as a student… I need the residence permit in order to work, but for that I must have a contract with a company'. The part-time, 'off-the-books' jobs that Angolan (and other PALOP) students can access are likely to be in construction, cleaning, hotels or shopping centres, far from their study fields and expectations, and often demeaning to students used to a middle-class lifestyle in Angola. Moreover, such jobs are likely to compromise their academic success and detract from their social life. Doing paid work needs somehow to be fitted around their study timetable, or they miss classes in order to

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[5] A student holding a residence permit to study in higher education may exercise a professional activity as long as s/he presents i) an employment contract or a self-employment declaration issued by the tax authority, and ii) evidence of registration in social security.

survive financially. For the lucky few, like Mário below, eventually a part-time job within the university might come up:

> *When I arrived in Portugal, I worked in a factory that made cardboard, but I did not stay long as it was far away from where I lived. Then I went to McDonalds, there I had a more flexible schedule: it was part-time and I could reconcile it with my classes. I stayed there for two years. Then I started working at the university library.*

For most interviewees, the plan was to return back to Angola where, for graduates trained abroad, there were perceived to be good job opportunities, due both to the shortage of highly skilled workers and to the added prestige of a Portuguese degree over one from an Angolan university. Some participants, however, decided to stay on in Portugal to gain some extra qualifications and/or work experience, and perhaps also to enjoy the Portuguese urban lifestyle. Yet, as Paula relates below, access to graduate-level jobs is hard for Africans because of their lack of local contacts into the favoured job sectors.

> *With the education I have [she had done both her first degree and master's in Portugal], I will not be valued as much here, in terms of salary and career, as I would be in my home country. Here, you can only get [good job] opportunities through connections… and I don't have any. The only work I could get [as an Angolan woman] would be in catering or cleaning. And I don't see myself, with a bachelor's and a master's, doing that kind of work!*

Paula hints, but is not explicit, about the racism inherent in the Portuguese labour market and the automatic demotion of African women as 'unskilled black bodies' destined only for gendered types of menial manual labour; or, for men, as other interviewees pointed out (including Mário, above), categorised as factory, construction or fast-food employees.[6]

We conclude our account of Angolan students in Portugal with some wider references to their experiences of discrimination and racism, interpreted through the lens of a coloniality critique of Lustropicalism.

Most interviewees did not complain of excessive or oppressive racism in Portugal; rather, they referred to incidents which occurred occasionally, for instance on public transport or in supermarkets. They noted that usually the perpetuators were older people. Most of this racist behaviour (looks, gestures, off-hand remarks etc.) was subtle, even unintentional, in their view. They were inclined to tolerate it as part of living in Portugal, even noting that the situation in Portugal was not as bad as in other countries. As Paula said, 'I have been through that experience of racism, and I am still going through it today. But I don't take it too personally'.

Several insightful participants argued that whilst the outlawing of racism in Portugal meant it 'supposedly' was no longer present, nevertheless many covert attitudes remain beneath the surface. Paula, again, opined that 'racism seems not to exist, yet it is still evident—we feel it in our skin'. Miguel was more outspoken:

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[6] The situation in Portugal is not unique in this regard. Research in Finland likewise shows the vulnerability of non-European students through their precarious labour conditions. The need to have a job, for financial reasons and to support their studies, makes them accept poorly paid jobs in low-skill sectors; if they do acquire jobs in more qualified fields, closer to their programmes of study, such jobs are underpaid or even unpaid (Maury, 2020).

> *I have felt discrimination many times... many times... many times. Racism as an ideology has been banished but it continues as a belief of some people... it's quite clear... I have felt discriminated against sitting on public transport, in shops and so many other places.*

Some of the participants' insights and experiences quoted above are consistent with the findings of more in-depth survey research in Portugal which has pointed to the role of anti-racist laws and norms in masking more covert racist attitudes amongst the people, especially those who are older and less-educated (Vala et al., 2008). Such results challenge the historically embedded thesis of Lusotropicalism and the construction of the Lusophone migration system as a space of conviviality and racial harmony for Portuguese-speaking people (Abadia et al., 2018). With this in mind, we now switch our focus to the counter-stream of reciprocal migration: Portuguese migrants in Angola.

Portuguese workers in Angola and the plasticity of skill

Now we shift our locational perspective to the other end of the Portugal–Angola migration corridor and compare and contrast the experiences of recent Portuguese migrants in Angola with those of Angolans in Portugal. Our main operational concept is the plastic notion of skill and its racialisation via the coloniality of power. In essence, the contrast is between Angolans' 'unskilled black bodies', analysed above, and the construction of Portuguese workers in Angola as 'skilled white bodies' (cf. Andrucki, 2017; Augusto & King, 2020). Based on interviews with Portuguese migrants working in Lubango and with Angolan employers and co-workers, evidence in this section is presented under three heads. First, we briefly reflect on the theme of education from the Angolan geographical perspective and triangulate these perceptions with those articulated above by Angolan students in Portugal. Then, in the main subsection, we explore the experiences and self-perceptions of Portuguese migrants in Lubango through the lens of skill. In the final subsection we give voice to the Angolan interviewees in Lubango and hear their views and experiences of working alongside the Portuguese migrants.

Angolan views of education hierarchies

Recall from our earlier account how Angolan students esteemed Portuguese (higher) education and saw a degree from a Portuguese university as a ticket to career progress, especially if they returned to Angola, as most of them intended. Unsurprisingly, a similar view of the hierarchisation of education, and some appreciation that this results from Portuguese colonial history in Angola, was narrated by the research participants in Angola. Here is Maria, a white Angolan business manager[7]:

> *I have many Angolan graduates who come to me looking for jobs but I do not employ them, because they are incompetent. Maybe I employ those who studied outside of Angola but those Angolans who studied here in Angola are not good for employment... That is why we have Portuguese migrants.*

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[7] Although most of the Portuguese colonial-settler families returned to Portugal in the mid-1970s in the wake of Angolan independence, some remained and form part of the business, intellectual and administrative elite, alongside, but distinguished from, a significant mixed-race population. White Angolans are often annoyed at being confused with recent Portuguese in-migrants (Augusto, 2021: 70).

Technically, Maria was speaking about Angolans in general, but as a white-Angolan descendant of Portuguese colonial settlers, in reality she was referring to black Angolans and to those who had graduated locally; those who had studied abroad were more 'competent', in her view. The concept of 'empires of knowledge' used above when discussing the process of educational choice of Angolan international students extends here to the labour market, namely to the representations of employers and to the way these influence their options.

Actually, the dynamics of racialised educational capital also extend to private universities and schools in Angola, where hiring Portuguese teachers and lecturers is assumed to be a guarantee of the quality of education. Solange, a black Angolan professional, stated:

> I send my children to private school because they have Portuguese teachers there. Portuguese teachers are really good and they are not like Angolans. They do not take gasosa [euphemism for bribes]. Children taught by Portuguese teachers learn well.

The views of Maria and Solange may appear strikingly simplistic and racist, yet they were echoed by many other interviewees, both Portuguese migrants and some Angolans. It is worth emphasising that racial stratification via education and employment is not only happening in spaces dominated by white Portuguese, it is also indirectly encouraged by black *assimilados* (like Solange) who simply do not trust in the capacity of black Angolans and black Africans in general (Soares de Oliveira, 2015). The syndrome of 'Afro-pessimism' is pervasive and an obvious legacy of the colonial era; indeed it is one of the most psychologically powerful vehicles of coloniality. In the case of the *assimilados* there is a complex interaction between 'race', class, culture and continuing prejudice. Black Angolans become 'assimilated' by speaking Portuguese with the 'correct' (i.e. 'Portuguese') accent, adopting Portuguese manners and etiquette, and presenting themselves as 'civilised' and 'competent'. Often, this results from having studied and spent time in Portugal. There are at least two ironies here. The first is that the very definition of being a true 'assimilated' Angolan relies on criteria that are purely Portuguese—a deeply insidious expression of coloniality. Second, even though black assimilates are present in government and other elite Angolan circles, this does not prevent the construction of racialised tropes relating to 'skill', 'trust' and 'competence' from permeating how the Angolan labour market functions.

Portuguese workers in Angola

The experience of Portuguese migrants in Angola reveals how the strong historical legacy of Portuguese colonialism survives to the present day. As we have already noted, it persists through the deep cultural, linguistic and behavioural patterns and values in post-independence Angolan society. And it is manifest in its most material sense in access to jobs, the classification of the kind of jobs that the Portuguese do, and in wage and salary structures.

We start our account with a reflection on the reasons behind this 'North–South' migration, which at first glance seems counter-intuitive since its leads (using the spatial terminology suggested earlier) from the 'semi-core' of Portugal at the northern end of the migration corridor, to the 'semi-periphery' of Angola to the south. The macro-scale factors shaping this migration, aside from colonial linkages, have largely to do with

economic trends: the temporal coincidence between the fall-out of the European (and global) financial crisis on Portugal in the late 2000s and the Angolan economic expansion driven by oil revenues that lasted until 2016 and an improved political situation after the end of the Angolan Civil War in 2002.

Equally important has been the role of the Portuguese language. So, just as Angolan students choose to pursue their higher education in Portugal largely for linguistic reasons (refer back to the interview quotes from César and Leonor), so the same rationale operated for Portuguese reciprocal migrants. As Ana-Maria, a lecturer at an Angolan private university, said:

> *My decision to come to Angola was influenced by the Portuguese language. I could have gone to other countries but it would have taken me another year to learn the language... coming to Angola there was no need... Everyone here seems to speak and understand Portuguese; even people on the street, they speak funny but one can understand what they are trying to say.*

For Ana-Maria, language functions as a form of cultural and social capital, helping Portuguese arrivals to find, or be offered, jobs and to quickly integrate into the Angolan labour market. Other elements in her narrative should not pass unremarked. There is a condescending tone in her saying that local people 'speak funny but one can understand what they are trying to say', and therefore an assumption of superiority in her own 'correct' pronunciation of Portuguese, coming from the former colonial metropole and the fount of Portuguese culture and 'civilisation'.

Both in the past and at present, it seems that the Portuguese have had little interest in learning anything from black Africans because they considered them backward, inferior and uncivilised. Hence the latter's need to 'assimilate'; but even then, racialised barriers remain. Black African bodies are seen as 'unskilled' and only useful as a source of manual labour; in the past forced or indentured, in the present as unskilled workers, whether in Angola or as migrant labour in Portugal (Bender, 2004; Jerónimo, 2015). Portuguese migrants, on the other hand, are seen as the embodiment of high skill levels, and as being reliable, competent and trustworthy. From the interviews carried out with Portuguese and Angolan employers and workers of various categories, the stark contrast between 'skilled white bodies' and 'unskilled back bodies' was frequently evident, sometimes in a disturbingly explicit way. The contrast was manifest via a range of discursive tropes relating to lifestyle, attitude and work ethic, the most negative and pervasive of which was the constructed myth of the 'lazy native'. Regarding this latter myth, Justino, a Portuguese manager, said:

> *I have been working in Lubango for the last three years; before that, I worked in Luanda for two years. I can tell you that I have a very good relationship here with Angolans. However, working with them is sometimes not so easy. They turn up late for work—not all, but most of them... This is not to say that Angolans are bad, just that sometimes you have these problems with time and with them not taking work seriously.*

Paired with the 'lazy African' trope is the discourse of the 'Portuguese work ethic', which combines capacity for hard work with reliability and trustworthiness. This is not

only promoted by Portuguese migrants as a self-congratulatory narrative justifying their decision to come to Angola as a perceived 'land of opportunity', but is also internalised by many local Angolans, as we shall see presently. For both groups, it is part of their 'coloniality of being' as well as a survival of colonial-era power relations and mentalities. The work ethic functions as a shield for Portuguese migrants to protect their privileges such as higher salaries and better working conditions than local qualified Angolans. In the words of Ernesto, a Portuguese businessman:

There are lots of opportunities here in Angola. If you work hard you can make it here... You just need a vision and hard work. Most Portuguese I know work really hard, that is why they can make it here. In Angola the key for success is work and nothing else. The conditions are perfect here. In Portugal you have so many people competing for the same thing. Here in Angola there is not much competition, all you need is vision and hard work.

In repeatedly stressing the key role of hard work, Ernesto overlooks other factors such as 'ethnic capital' and its intersection with the plastic notion of skill (cf. Andrucki, 2017; Armbruster, 2010; Augusto & King, 2020). Åkesson (2018) demonstrates how many of the Portuguese migrants in Angola operate under the banner of highly skilled workers or specialised skilled labour despite having questionable qualifications for these labels. In other words and put simply, a Portuguese migrant regarded as highly skilled in Angola would not be accorded that status in Portugal. This is due to differences in the nature of the two labour markets which derive from disparities in levels of development; these in turn are underpinned by inherited, often covert, racialised prejudices related to the syndrome of Lusotropicalism and the coloniality of power.

Aware of these labour-skill hierarchies, Portuguese workers are able to exploit their privileged position in several ways. First, jobs which would not normally be classified as highly skilled if being done by an Angolan are categorised as such if carried out by a Portuguese worker. Sabina, a Portuguese migrant who has a beauty salon, is classified as a skilled worker even though there are other salons run by 'less-skilled' Angolan women. Sabina charges more for her services because it is considered more prestigious, also for local Angolan clients, to go to a salon run by a Portuguese migrant. Second, Portuguese workers have their job descriptions elevated when they come to Angola: an electrician becomes an 'engineer', an administrator a 'manager' and a school teacher a 'tutor' or 'lecturer'. This means that it is common to find Portuguese migrants working in jobs classified as highly skilled without fulfilling the normal requirements for such a position. A case in point is Teresa, who works as a lecturer in a private university despite only having a bachelor's degree and a background in Portugal as a high-school teacher. When asked how she managed to secure her post in Angola, she replied:

Yes, I only have a bachelor's, but it's different to have a bachelor's degree in Angola and Portugal. The Portuguese educational system is far better and more demanding than the Angolan one. A student with a bachelor's degree in Portugal is the equivalent to a Master's or more [in Angola]. The standards in Portugal are higher in comparison to those in Angola. I can see this from some of my Angolan colleagues... some of them have a Master's degree but they cannot even write in Portuguese properly.

Teresa's experience of the jobs market in education in Angola is applicable to other sectors too, and is yet another reflection of the coloniality of power, in this case evidenced through the lens of educational qualifications and their symbolic and material value. Hayes and Pérez-Gañán ([2017](#)) trace a similar process in their study of Spanish workers escaping the economic crisis and migrating to Ecuador in order to parlay their qualifications and their 'European' cultural capital towards higher-status job positions in a former territory of the Spanish empire.

Hayes and Pérez-Gañán ([2017](#)) see post-2008 Spanish migration to Ecuador and other South American countries as exemplifying 'the asymmetric expulsions of late capitalism' and coin the term 'geographic arbitrage' to denote how Spanish migrants are able to 'live better' through accessing rewarding jobs in a low-cost economy. Much the same goes for Portuguese migrants in Angola. However, rather than see themselves as 'economic refugees' or even, indeed, as 'migrants', many of our Portuguese informants regarded themselves as 'agents of development' motivated by altruism. Let us return to the interview with Teresa to hear more about this justification. Teresa also expounds on a common complaint of the Portuguese in Angola: the bureaucracy and the difficulty of getting a visa to work legally in the country.

> *We are here to work and help to develop this country and give more to this country than we take. They should make the visa process accessible to us: we are bringing in skills and they should not treat us like foreigners. We speak the same language, we are brothers and sisters… Look, I can go to Namibia and South Africa and stay there for three months with a tourist visa—no need to even apply for a visa because I get it on arrival. But here in Angola, where we have so much in common, it is hard for us to get a visa… and for a work permit it is even harder. It is like you are going to some advanced country but then, when you arrive here, you look around and there are lots of problems with basic needs.*

Here, Teresa's narrative is revealing of her sense of her own self-important positionality as a 'development agent' and of Portugal's enduring colonial-type relationship with Angola. Her 'brothers and sisters' remark and the reference to 'the same language' are redolent of a Lusotropicalist interpretation of the relationship between the two countries, which blends together a false co-ethnic and consanguineous fraternity with disparaging comments on Angola's backwardness and issues with 'basic needs'. Her frustrations over the Angolan visa bureaucracy mirror those of Angolan students trying to formalise their status in Portugal, noted earlier.

The views of Angolan co-workers and employers

Interviews with Angolan participants in Lubango revealed a fascinating set of contrasting responses to the presence of Portuguese migrants: on the one hand accepting the need for their strategic contributions to the labour market and their qualities (both real and symbolic) as serious, trustworthy personnel; and on the other voicing justified criticism over differential treatment and wage levels. Typical of the latter, more critical vein is this extended quote from Abel, a black Angolan scientist:

I have worked with Portuguese migrants on various projects. On one of them, my boss was less qualified and less skilled than me. She only had a bachelor's degree and a few years of work experience whereas I have a PhD and 13 years of work experience in Angola and abroad. To make matters worse, she did not know much about the project [on malaria eradication]. Technically, I had to do most of the work because it was the first time she had worked on this topic. Nevertheless, she was appointed senior manager and got paid twice as much as me. Besides her salary, her accommodation and transport were paid for, including visits to Portugal twice a year. This is just one of the examples that are happening here. You look around and you think that everyone who comes here under the umbrella of 'skilled' is skilled in some way; however, it is a bit more complex than that. At first, it really bothered me—she was not incompetent but she did not have a clue about malaria prevention. We never had any conflict for the two years that we worked together. However, the truth is that she was paid more because of where she came from. Here in Angola, skills are not enough—people think that if you come from Europe, you know every-thing and deserve to be treated as special.

Clearly, the coloniality of power, especially in regard to salary differences and other privileges such as free housing and transport, creates a situation of latent conflict between Angolans and their Portuguese co-workers. Skilled Angolans crave the privileges and advantages granted—in their view unfairly—to Portuguese migrants. And yet this jealousy seems only to add to the respect and admiration which most Angolans have for Portugal as a country and for Portuguese migrants. Alfredo, a black Angolan politician, put it like this:

When you live outside Angola you experience all kinds of discrimination but you train yourself to cope with it because it is not your country and you long for the day when you will go back and all this unfairness will stop. But then you come back to Angola and you see the same things you experienced outside of your country. You feel like speaking out but you cannot do that. If Angolans were to earn more than the Portuguese in Portugal just because they are coming from Angola, it would be a big scandal in Portugal, but when that happens here, it is accepted as the most normal thing. Angolans, some of them, think it is perfectly OK.

Part of this acceptance of the need to view and treat Portuguese migrants 'differently' is an internalised acceptance of some of the stereotypes projected towards Angolans by the wider Portuguese-influenced Angolan society. Bety, a black Angolan economist, gave a forthright opinion on the Portuguese work ethic compared to Angolans' relaxed view of life:

Angolans like to party… If you ask them to work, they will not do it, but if you organise a party they will come… this is how things are here. The Portuguese know how to separate work from partying, but the Angolans don't.

Bety went on to explain why she was a patron of Sabina's beauty salon, even if she had to pay a bit more to have her nails done.

People here trust the Portuguese migrants because they see them as serious and professional. These people are coming from Europe, they are accustomed to being

professional… If they say you can come for an appointment, then they have a place reserved for you. They are used to keeping their word because they have a different culture and standards of work. That is why I have my nails done at Sabina's beauty salon. She is always professional while the Angolan salons are always busy and you have to wait. They tell you to come even when they are fully booked.

Da Cruz (2019) argues that, partly because of the heritage of Lusotropicalism, race is a taboo subject in postcolonial Angola, and that people turn a blind eye to it and rationalise what are in effect racist attitudes behind a discursive veil of skills and competence. This is indeed a thin smokescreen, as Angolans' actual behaviour and talk reflect the racist stratifications which are clearly evident in Angolan society. Daniel, a black Angolan who runs a business in the construction sector admitted that:

If you have a business here and you can afford to have a white person as a manager, it is better. The banks and your clients will take your business more seriously… Sometimes I prefer my white manager to deal with the banks because they trust him more than me, the owner of the business!

Daniel's account of the cynical marketing of 'white bodies' was repeated many times by other participants interviewed in Lubango. Tomas, a black Angolan owner of a computer store, reinforced this point and enlarged the discussion to other settings:

Here in Lubango, people respect and admire Portuguese migrants. If you have a shop or any other business and you want to sell well, it is better that you employ a Portuguese migrant. Then the customers will believe that the goods you are selling are genuine. You see, there are many fake goods sold here and they are all sold by langas [migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola's less-developed neighbour]… You pay more to hire a Portuguese migrant, but employing a white face results in miracles happening—this is how things are here… Have you noticed that most of the supermarket workers in Lubango have white faces? This is a marketing strategy.

Tomas' account might seem like self-hate but, as Fanon (1986) asserted long ago, this is the usual condition in postcolonial societies where whiteness is equated with everything that is positive and blackness with the opposite, especially if that black person comes from an even more inferior position in the migration and development system, such as the DRC.

Concluding discussion

Let us first recap the three key questions posed in the Introduction. First, what are the circumstances that help to explain reciprocal migrations along the Portugal–Angola transnational migration corridor? Second, using the lens of the racialised embodiment of education and skill, what are the contrasting experiences of the two groups of migrants under study—Angolans in Portugal and Portuguese in Angola? Third, which theoretical constructs help to interpret the empirical findings presented in the two main sections of the paper?

Throughout our account we have attempted to maintain a conversation between our empirical data and the theoretical ideas that were set out in the earlier sections of the

paper, so that the above questions can be confronted in a holistic manner. We take the second question first. The two empirical parts of the paper provided abundant evidence on this question about the racialised and embodied experiences of education and work as well as allowing more generalised insights.

The two main migration streams under study are, on the one hand, mirror-images of themselves—black Angolans going to 'white' Portugal to study and (some of them) to work, and white Portuguese migrating to 'black' Angola to work. But on the other hand the findings at either end of the migration corridor are quite consistent. Located within the Portuguese–Angolan postcolonial transnational space, shaped by a long series of migration exchanges across the Lusophone migration system, our participants were both the bearers and the victims of racialised stereotypes which affected their everyday lives and ability to plan their futures. At both ends of the reciprocal migration chain, education systems and labour markets on the one hand, and students and workers on the other hand, are seen through a dual lens. White Portuguese students and workers are seen (and often see themselves) as more intelligent, hard-working, highly skilled, professional, competent and trustworthy. The Portuguese education system, especially tertiary education, is also seen as better organised and of higher intellectual quality in terms of teaching and research. By contrast, black Angolan students and workers are seen as inferior to Portuguese in all settings—in Portuguese universities and on the labour market in both Portugal and Angola. Black Angolans are seen as lazy, prone to partying, less clever, less hard-working, less skilled, less professional and less trustworthy. These stereotypes are partly in the nature of self-fulfilling prophecies as we have seen, especially in the way that they are internalised by both groups. They may also be manipulated and exploited for profit—as in the case of black-owned businesses in Angola hiring 'white faces' for client-oriented encounters with the wider population.

The comparison of experiences of the two groups of migrants finds consistent patterns at both ends of the socio-spatial transnational context. African students face academic and social discrimination in Portuguese universities. When they seek work, either part-time to support their studies, or to get work experience in Portugal after graduation, they are not seen as intelligent students and qualified graduates but as 'unskilled black bodies'. Black Angolans are subject to similar discrimination in the jobs market in Angola, where they are seen as inferior in all respects to Portuguese migrant workers. This is the case even when Angolans are more highly qualified than the Portuguese migrants, who are often able to access jobs above their formal qualification level in a form of arbitrage (Hayes & Pérez-Gañán, 2017).

Questions one and three on the list can be answered together as both pertain to theoretical explanations—respectively of the evolution of the Portugal–Angola reciprocal migration phenomenon, and of the contrasting experiences of the migrants themselves.

The reciprocal migration between Portugal and Angola is shaped by two theoretical frames which interact and reinforce each other. The first has to do with colonial history and the early establishment of migratory layers binding the two territories as part of the Lusophone migration system. This system, which also involved other Portuguese colonies in Africa as well as Brazil, saw the establishment of family and ethnic networks linking Portugal and Angola which have acted as precursors and facilitators of the more recent migratory exchanges. Secondly, the demands and opportunities for study within

the Lusophone educational system, and the structures of the labour markets of the two countries, have shaped the reciprocal migration flows. For Angolan students, the combination of the perceived low quality of their own country's higher education system, and the much higher prestige accorded to degrees from Portuguese universities, has driven the northward flow of students. For Portuguese workers, southward migration to Angola is driven largely by economic factors—loss of jobs and income during the Portuguese economic crisis and the availability of financially attractive opportunities within the booming Angolan economy, even if this boom is fragile in its over-dependence on minerals exploitation. These economic and educational drivers are encased within a reshaped version of the core–periphery model: Portugal as semi-core (marginal within the European core–periphery system yet the metropole of a former empire), and Angola as semi-periphery (a former colonial territory of that empire located in the less-developed realm of Africa yet capable of attracting selected labour flows to sustain development and fill skill gaps in its labour market). This revision of the core–periphery model advances previous writings on Portugal and Southern Europe as semi-periphery (Arrighi, 1985; King, 2015; Santos, 1985; Seers et al., 1979). An alternative historical-economic model to explain this reciprocal migration is to see it as part of the 'asymmetrical expulsions of late capitalism' (Hayes & Pérez-Gañán, 2017)—the 'asymmetries' referring to the unequal relations between to the two countries and the selectivity of the reciprocal flows, middle-class students going north and opportunistic workers heading south.

How to explain and theoretically interpret the diversified experiences of the reciprocal migrants is more of a challenge. The broad historical and political-economic macro-structures of core–periphery relations and the specific migrations produced under late capitalism are useful platforms to start with. But these insights need to be interleaved with other theoretical ideas which draw on coloniality and the specificities of the Portuguese/Angolan colonial and postcolonial trajectory. We have, throughout our empirical discussion, referred to the relevance of the key concepts of the 'coloniality of power' (Quijano, 2000) and the 'coloniality of being' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Following Quijano, the coloniality of power represents a long-term historical process whereby the Eurocentric domination of the world economy survives through neocolonial relations based on past imperial structures and spaces. Social classifications persist based on race and the hegemonic power vested by 'Europeans', 'Portuguese' and 'whites' over subjugated peoples denoted variously as 'blacks', 'natives' or 'Africans' (2000: 217). Latterly this framework has been recast as 'racial capitalism' (Bhattacharyya, 2018), a version of capitalism that utilises the logic of 'race' as a deliberate criterion for allocating specific hierarchical roles in the global economy and division of labour (see also Boatcă, 2017). Meantime, the coloniality of being is the individual-scale experience of subjectification by the power dynamics of coloniality: an ontological sense of having been colonised in the past (or being the coloniser). It is about how everyday life—as recorded in the language and practices of our participants—becomes scripted in certain ways, due to the ongoing survival of colonial relations. The condition appears inescapable due to the depth of its influence over ways of thinking, culture, language and deeply rooted power structures, including racial (self)identification. This translates into a racial division of labour that is plainly evident in our participants' narratives. Finally, there is the specific twist of the Lusotropicalist philosophy which holds to the myth of a harmonious society

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under the spurious proposition of common culture and descent. This, too, inflects the participants' narratives, which are nuanced between an acceptance of the Lusotropicalist view and a critique of Portuguese and Angolan society as driven by intersectionally related racial, class, linguistic and geographic differences which are brilliantly exposed when comparing reciprocal migrations.

Declarations

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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