Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

From Family Solidarity to Social Classes: Urban Stratification in Angola (Luanda and Ondjiva)*

CRISTINA UDELSMANN RODRIGUES

(Université Montesquieu)

The analysis of recent social transformations in two Angolan cities – Luanda and Ondjiva – highlights the maintenance and strengthening of groups and social networks based on family ties on the one hand and, on the other, the construction of new solidarities and identities derived from a traditional framework and recreated in the urban context in recent decades. Family solidarity and reciprocity in the post-independence, post-war context in Luanda and Ondjiva are the basis of social strategies, and the new forms of urban extended family have supported individuals during rapid urban growth and socio-economic uncertainty in multiple ways: providing economic support, a main point for social reference and security, among other things. In Luanda this organisation has generated an atomised social structure, and in Ondjiva the urban social tissue that was completely erased during invasion and war relied for many years on rural solidarity ties. However, with the gradual yet massive migration towards the capital city, the return of displaced populations and the arrival of new migrants in Ondjiva, newer, broader and more complex forms of solidarity and social identity have emerged in recent years. The increasing complexity, along with the decrease in the capacity to sustain reciprocity and dependency networks, tends to lead to the formation of clearer social strata and the preponderance of new criteria. Both in Luanda and in Ondjiva, the urban reference – the integration, adoption and practice of an urban/modern lifestyle – together with the consolidation of a market economy and economic stratification, generates new social differentiation and tends to produce different layers within the urban population. In both urban centres, urban/cosmopolitan references tend to assume a central role in the formation of social differentiation, producing new forms of social identity and social status.

Introduction

The integrated analysis of two different urban contexts in Angola – Luanda, the capital city, and Ondjiva, the capital of Cunene province – highlights two different stages of a similar socio-economic process taking place in Angolan cities over the last few decades. Understanding these processes may contribute to an increased awareness of the main issues, trends and conditions of the growth and socio-economic recomposition that characterise post-war urban centres. It may also help scholars to move on from the analysis of the African crisis and the growth of urban poverty as exclusive situations taking place in African cities and, therefore, to understand socio-cultural processes and the logic and trends of local recomposition. Until recently, Angolan social analysis – and especially the political

DOI: 10.1080/03057070701292566

approach – has been focused on the opposition between the elite and the remainder of the Angolan population. New analysis, based on empirical data and research, accounts for other social trends, ranging from the recomposition of civil society to the construction of new identities, clearly reaching beyond the dualist approach.[1]

The research on which this article is based was carried out in Luanda between 1995 and 2004.[2] It addresses social recomposition and, particularly, social stratification, the latter defined as unequal access to assets, services and opportunities, which generates hierarchical strata. It is simultaneously an economic and a social category, generating differentiated behaviours and power relations between different social strata. To Georges Balandier, the triple history of social criteria inherited from the past, from the colonial period and after independence – therefore the heterogeneity of African societies – contributed to unachieved social classes.[3] Thus, the nation, the state and the modern economy are still under construction, and a marked gap exists between rural and urban contexts, and the only well-established class is the leading elite. In these two urban centres, this article employs social stratification analysis in an attempt to look beyond the previously clearly marked dual society, in which only the political/military elite represented a differentiated and privileged social group.

This approach also tends to go beyond analysis that sees social stratification dynamics as processes resulting in a vertically organised society. Instead, it follows a line of argumentation, better adapted to a sub-Saharan African context. Here, families (the basic social group) and clientelistic relations have their own internal stratifications. However, this does not imply that broader, well-defined and national level strata have been created but rather suggests that new complex interconnections and interrelations characterise the present social organisation.[4] The contemporary Angolan elite – a fusion of the old Creole and the more recent Creole urban groups, which had 'taken advantage of new capital accumulation' in the 1990s with the adoption of a market economy – has been internally stratified to some extent as a consequence of unequal opportunities and investment. As a result, new strata have appeared within Angolan society as whole.[5] The complex economic shift in the Angola of the 1990s – from a highly centralised economy to market-oriented reforms which started in 1987 with the SEF (Economic and Financial Programme) – together with an increase in corruption and the widespread growth of the informal economy, contributed to equally complex social transformations. Indeed, the war that began in 1975 and lasted until 2002 (only briefly interrupted in 1991–1992 and in 1994–1998) was not necessarily the most disruptive economic factor. The difficult economic reorganisation and transition in Angola have heavily conditioned socio-economic resilience, since Independence in 1975. Although war and the financial cost of this war have been identified as the main causes of economic decline

---

1 I. Brinkman, 'War and Identity in Angola: Two Case Studies', *Lusotopie* (2003), pp. 195–221; N. Pestana, 'As Dinâmicas da Sociedade Civil em Angola', *Occasional Papers Series*, 7 – *CEA-ISCTE* (2003).
2 Fieldwork in Luanda involved surveys and interviews with families in peri-urban districts during November 1999, in the municipalities of Cazenga, Rocha Pinto in Maianga, Boa Esperança in Kikolo-Cacuaco (under the auspices of the research project 'Rapid Urbanisation in Luanda and Maputo, CEsA-ISEG-UTL of Portugal - LS – Luanda Survey, Lisbon, CesA', in which the author was responsible for the socio-anthropological research) and interviews in other districts. In Ondjiva, surveys and interviews, which the author co-ordinated, were carried out in all twelve of the city's districts (OS – Ondjiva Survey, Government of the Province of Cunene, 2004).
3 G. Balandier, 'Problématique des Classes Sociales en Afrique Noire', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, 38 (1965), p. 131–42.
4 J. Cilliers, 'Resource Wars: A New Type of Insurgency', in J. Cilliers and C. Dietrich (eds), *Angola's War Economy: The Role of Oil and Diamonds* (Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies, 2000), pp. 1–20.
5 T. Hodges, *Angola: From Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Diamond Capitalism* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 262. The 'old Creole' refers to David Birmingham's 'old black indigenous bourgeoisie families of the 19th century' and the 'new Creole' to the 'mixed and black assimilated educated in missionary schools that competed with the colonists' (*Ibid.*, p. 66).

in Angola, some specialists consider that had the right options and measures been taken, the Angolan economy could have performed better, even in a war context.[6]

This stratification is the result of two main factors that have taken on new importance in Angola: the market economy and cosmopolitan references. At an economic level, unequal access to resources constitutes the basic indicator of differentiation. On a social level, urban and modern references, habits and types of consumption mark social differences and confer unequal social positions on individuals and groups. In other words, the process of globalisation has a clear influence on Angolan urban society and has the potential to introduce profound changes in Angola's social structure.

Modern sociological theory has for a long time rejected economic differentiation as the exclusive criterion in class definition. Although Max Weber provided a distinction between class (position in the economic order) and status (groups that share a common 'life style') and stressed that both class and status could interact in complex ways, Pierre Bourdieu's theory is that social actors manipulate different types of capital. In addition, Anthony Giddens' proposal that there are multiple criteria in the definition of class, may help us to understand better these specific African urban contexts in the present day and move beyond Georges Balandier's analysis that postulates the 'unachieved' nature of African social classes. James Ferguson's concept of lifestyles – and localist/cosmopolitan styles – is particularly useful for understanding the ways in which social positions are being defined currently in African urban centres.[7] Ferguson's approach is quite clear about the differences between local life styles – i.e. faithfulness to a rural and traditional life style – and the cosmopolitan style – a desire to move away from rural references and to integrate cosmopolitan references, dominant in the urban space. Although this analytical distinction may be insufficient to explain current urban practices and the creative mixing of local and cosmopolitan styles, it allows us to identify those indicators orientating people's ways of life which do not necessarily correspond to their economic capacities.[8] Moreover, the Zambian example and its pertinence in that context suggests the need to analyse such processes with respect to modernity in other African urban cases.

African cities propagate references emanating from the rural context that urban dwellers reformulate in specific ways. The urbanisation processes and social recomposition are characterised by their long duration and by the simultaneity of continuities and ruptures, as well as the coexistence of rural and urban models, and modern and traditional references. More recently, the movement towards the adoption of new social and cultural models, generally closer to western models and influenced by the phenomenon of globalisation, has become an African reality too. The dimensions of modernity encompass industrialisation and capitalism – implying competitive markets and the mercantilisation of the work force – and produce distinct social forms.[9] Thus defined, modernity is essentially a post-traditional order.[10]

As a result of the interaction of global events and social relations with local contexts, one can often perceive the creation of original and intermediate syntheses. The African city

6 M.E. Ferreira, *Indústria e Guerra (Angola, 1975–1991)* (Lisbon, Cosmos/Instituto de Defesa Nacional, 1999).

7 J. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meaning of Urban Life in the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1999); A. Mbembe, 'Writing the World from an African Metropolis', *Public Culture*, 16, 3 (2004), pp. 347–72.

8 See the discussions on Ferguson's *Expectations of Modernity*, in *Politique Africaine*, 81 (March 2001), pp. 177–95, as well as F. Nyamnjoh, 'Expectations of Modernity in Africa or a Future in the Rear-View Mirror?', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27, 2 (June 2001), pp. 363–79.

9 A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991).

10 A. Marie, *L'Afrique des Individus: Itinéraires Citadins dans l'Afrique Contemporaine (Abidjan, Bamako, Dakar, Niamey)* (Paris, Karthala, 1998).

is a space of new sociability where a civil society – non-existent until the present day – with relative autonomy from the State, is built up (in some contexts more than in others), where informal activities that are relatively independent of State control are carried out (even though effectively related to the modern and state sectors), and an associative life motivated by other types of solidarities emerges, different from the communitarian ones. In the African city, new forms of consumption are created, the religions of an individual adhesion-conversion type grow and democratic awakening and aspiration to other forms of solidarity become visible, namely through the denunciation of communitarian political forms.[11]

These transformations in Angola have so far been opposed and contained by the functionality of communitarian solidarities and by the dominance of clientelistic socio-political solidarities. With the degradation of these solidarities and the shifting of social references, the individual as social actor emerges and social classes become structured on the basis of new standards – economic capacity and urban integration/lifestyles – influencing different urban realities.

During the colonial period in Angola, the primary social reference was the colonial state and its socio-economic organisation, which represented an early globalising process. After independence, family political elites, on the one hand, and general family networks, on the other, were the predominant social references for most Angolans. In contemporary Angola, capitalism and urban lifestyles form the core of the development of differentiated social strata in cities, supplanting a period in which the political elite dominated. The degree of integration and adoption of urban lifestyles, along with differentiation based on wealth (and inherited family/political networks) result in different social positioning. Yet Angolan society is still very much characterised by atomised family solidarity networks, which have supported individuals through war, uncertainty, rapid urban growth and migration. Nevertheless, the pressure put on these reciprocity networks, caused by the real decrease of income-generating opportunities and the burdening of families with family solidarity and reciprocity, has encouraged the replacement of these family networks by new, urban types of social group.

In Luanda, this urban differentiation has become more consolidated due to a longer urbanisation process, while in Ondjiva – although less urbanised than Luanda – the same criterion is also becoming increasingly dominant. Urbanity, as understood here, concerns urban integration and the adoption of urban/modern lifestyles and can be analysed through various indicators, namely the types of economic activity individuals are engaged in, consumption patterns, the types of houses they live in, the languages they use, and formal levels of education. Other studies carried out in Angola in recent years are also quite conclusive regarding the indicators of urbanity: social differentiation between 'townspeople' and 'people from the bush' is gauged specifically on language, certain gestures and greetings, dress or, for example, hairstyles.[12] It should be added, however, that this distinction between rural and urban dwellers – crystallised in terms like *matumbos* (uneducated, rural) or *calcinhas* (Luanda inhabitants who wear trousers and western clothing) – has its roots in the colonial period and has remained active ever since. Moreover, other indicators, such as level of school attendance, the areas in which people live (especially in Luanda, but also in Ondjiva), the type of housing (for example, the existence of a bathroom and/or an interior kitchen or a backyard cooking area) and, more recently, the types of transportation available (and, in upper strata, the type, brand and number of cars that families possess), are all

---

11 *Ibid.* If this proposition can be true for most African countries, for Angola this type of consolidation of civil society is not a fact of broad expansion, although the State's present – and post-war – redistributive capacity may equally be questioned.

12 I. Brinkman, 'War and Identity in Angola: Two Case Studies', *Lusotopie* (2003), pp. 195–221.

indicators of social differentiation and stratification that must be considered in the analysis of these urban/rural perceptions and practices.[13]

The capital city – where urban growth was already significant during the colonial period and rapidly increased after independence due to the 30-year war that forced many people to migrate – now has nearly four million inhabitants according to some estimates, but under 3.5 million according to official sources.[14] In Luanda the integration of millions of Angolans from other provinces has been a lengthy process, and for many years family ties and family self-support have been the main references in the building of social identity. Together with a political/military social stratification – which created a small elite group – the urban social fabric has, for many years, been bipolarised and atomised. In Ondjiva, the context is radically different. Profound urban disintegration, due to war and military invasion that emptied the city, has been reversed only recently (over the past 10 years) with the return of hundreds of displaced families and additional rural migration. The integrated analysis of these two different urban settings reveals the diverse urban processes that have recently characterised Angola. In addition, this shows how common tendencies may come to characterise such different contexts: similar criteria of social stratification – grounded on urban integration and on economic stratification – have become equally important in both contexts, and post-war social recomposition has tended to be based on these features.

Comparison of the Two Urban Settings

In both cities (although in different years), rapid growth (Table 1) and the low economic conditions of the respective migrant populations are exacerbated by the absence of effective urban planning and management. This has led to the rise and expansion of spontaneous districts (in Luanda, the *musseques*) dominated by poverty, precarious and self-constructed housing, and poor infrastructure and living conditions.

In general, urban growth in Luanda has been rapid and extensive, whereas in Ondjiva growth was very slow after 1992 up until 2001, with rapid and significant growth taking place from 2002. South Africa's invasion and the war in Ondjiva from 1975 to 1989, resulted in most of the population leaving the city. Data for 2002 and 2004 obtained from Ondjiva. indicate the presence of a high percentage of people born in other provinces, especially Huíla.[15] This can be explained by the high percentage of refugees in Huíla during the invasion that returned *en masse* to Ondjiva between 1998 and 2000. In Luanda, war refugees and migrants arrived from almost all of the Angolan provinces, especially from the North. This resulted in Luanda becoming a predominantly Portuguese-speaking city – Portuguese is the language shared by people of different origins – while in Ondjiva the Kwanhama language (the language of the Cunene area) is still significant. In 2001, 59.8 per cent of the population of Luanda had learned to speak Portuguese as a first language, 9.6 per cent Kimbundo (the language of the Luanda area), 8.8 per cent Umbundo, and 5.3 per cent Kikongo (the language of the North). In Ondjiva in 2001, only 30.4 per cent of its inhabitants had learned to speak

13 The spatial correlation of social groups in Luanda is quite well described in recent studies. See, for example, M.C. Mendes, 'Slum Housing in Luanda, Angola: Problems and Possibilities', in R. Obudho and C.C. Mhlanga (eds), *Slum and Squatter Settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa* (New York, Præger, 1988), pp. 231–43; A. Mingas, *Interferência do Kimbundu no Português Falado em Luanda* (Luanda, Chá de Caxinde, 2000).

14 IDR – *Índice de Despesas e Receitas dos Agregados* (Luanda, National Statistics Institute, 2001). The household expenses and income index is produced by the institute, based on a survey carried out in seven provinces. In Luanda, 2,625 urban households and in the Cunene province, 742 households in the capital, Ondjiva, were surveyed. Population data and characterisation refer to all household members.

15 OS – Ondjiva Survey (Government of the Province of Cunene, 2004).

Table 1. Population in Luanda and Cunene

	1999	2003	Variation
Province of Luanda	2,534,800[5]	3,309,500[4]	23%
Province of Cunene[2]	575,056	731,312	20%
City of Luanda	2,534,800[5]	2,600,000[4]	23%
City of Ondjiva	4,796[3]	28,529[1]	83%

Note: Province and City of Luanda 1999 estimates are similar because they are not disaggregated in these studies. Ondjiva's high growth rate presented here is a result of a much undervalued estimate (F. Amado *et al.* (eds), 'A Urbanização e a Desurbanização em Angola', Cadernos de População e Desenvolvimento, 1, 1 [1992].) and the more accurate data collected by the municipal administration of Kwanhama in a peace-time context. Hodges' calculation, based on an air survey, clearly shows that Luanda's satellite cities (Viana, Cacuaco) and surrounding areas have a strong weight on population estimates for the provinces.
Sources: 1 Municipal Administration of Kwanhama; 2 Government of the Province of Cunene; 3 Amado *et al.*, 'A Urbanização e Desurbanização em Angola' (estimate); 4 United Nations/DIESA, World Urbanization Prospects (2004) (www.un.org) (estimate); Hodges, *Angola*; 5 UNDP, *Relatório do Desenvolvimento Humano – Angola* (1999).

Portuguese as a first language, while the percentage of those who had learned Kwanhama was only a little lower – 28.2 per cent.[16]

Unlike Luanda, most jobs in Ondjiva (68.9 per cent) are in the formal sector, i.e. either in public administration or in the private sector. In Luanda, only 14.7 per cent of the population have a public job and 18.7 per cent work in the formal private sector.[17] It should be stressed, however, that the scarcity of formal sector employment opportunities in Luanda is a consequence of overpopulation rather than of the reduced number of formal sector activities. The informal economy, being more developed in Luanda, also absorbs a higher percentage of the active population, while in Ondjiva the workforce depends more on State incomes and on very small-scale commercial and service activity. The main effects of the concentration of population in the cities are the densification, growth and expansion of *musseques*, as well as the general degradation of the population's living conditions, revealed in the aggravation of poverty levels.[18] Along with the rather radical changes to the economic system the concentration of population in Luanda – together with the reduction of the possibilities of income generation through the formal economy – has stimulated the growth of activities in the informal sector.[19]

The high population concentration also generates a range of housing alternatives (Table 2). In Luanda, rapid growth has encouraged owners to construct conventional housing (usually made of concrete blocks and zinc roofs, a self-construction alternative). However, in Ondjiva, where a higher percentage of the population consists of rural migrants, this has led to the dominance of the construction of traditional housing. Traditional housing in Ondjiva retains elements of the traditional *eumbo* of the Ovambo area, and consists of sets of separate compounds with different uses. There is no latrine or kitchen incorporated in these traditional houses – which can be a broad indicator of poorer housing conditions as well as suggesting the weaker degree of urbanisation. In Luanda, although most families who live in conventional housing do not have access to the urban sewage and water network or cannot

---

16 *Ibid.*
17 *Ibid.*
18 This trend, although already taking shape during the colonial period in Luanda has become accentuated in recent decades (I. Amaral, 'Luanda e os seus Muceques: Problemas de Geografia Urbana', *Finisterra*, 18, 36 (1983), pp. 293–325; F. Amado *et al.* (eds), 'A Urbanização e Desurbanização em Angola', *Cadernos de População e Desenvolvimento*, 1, 1 (1992), pp. 57–91.
19 Ferreira, *Indústria e Guerra*.

Table 2. Type of Housing in Ondjiva and Luanda (%)

Type of housing	Ondjiva	Luanda
Brick dwelling	1.7	4.8
Traditional housing	83.4	14.1
Apartment	0.0	5.1
Annex	2.5	15.4
Hut	4.4	4.4
Conventional housing	7.2	54.9
Others	0.9	1.3

Source: IDR – *Índice de Despesas e Receitas dos Agregados* (Luanda, INE, 2001).

afford such access, they consider the building and integration of a kitchen and/or a bathroom into the main house a priority.[20]

Another differentiating factor is the level of education. This is higher in Luanda where the migrant population is less transient and has greater permanence than in Ondjiva (Table 3). The population of Ondjiva has a very low average level of education: 49 per cent have four years or fewer of schooling and only 20 per cent have completed six years at school.[21]

With respect to society in general, the references that dominate three distinct periods in Angola's recent history, although different, blend together over time. The colonial society reference was the European model, urban and modernising, introduced by Portuguese colonisation. The subsequent period of independence allowed the rise of a small elite group based on political and military networks, while families in general developed and strengthened extended family networking in order to cope with socio-economic transformation. The recent period, with the economic reorientation towards the market, has emphasised the importance of wealth in social stratification, while at the same time modern, urban models have been revitalised and become preponderant.[22]

The colonial period is essentially characterised by the generation and consolidation of social groups according to their relations with the colonial structure – especially at an urban level – even though many traditionally inherited social features remained active, such as social structures and traditional techniques of political management.[23] In this sense, during the early colonial period it was already possible to describe Angolan society as being composed of three distinct layers: Europeans, Africans and Africans integrated according to the European model.[24] At an economic level and especially at the level of work and labour relations and with respect to certain social structures such as family, the influence of the new social model started to become evident in the more developed urban centres. Towards the end of this period, social organisation based on wage work predominated in the urban milieu and especially in Luanda, and integration in the capitalist economy in general became the basis for defining social status, along with the incorporation of urban lifestyles. The categorisation by the colonial administration of the Angolan as 'civilised', 'assimilated' and 'indigenous'

---

20 LS – Luanda Survey (Lisbon, CEsA, 1999).
21 OS – Ondjiva Survey.
22 In all of these periods, former references were not immediately or radically replaced. Many references of the colonial or post-independence phases were recovered, transformed or remain vigorous, in line with a vision of permanence and rupture. See C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Afrique Noire: Permanences et Ruptures* (Paris, Payot, 1985).
23 I. Castro Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola: Dinâmicas Comerciais e Transformações Sociais no Século XIX* (Lisbon, Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical and Instituto da Cooperação Portuguesa, 1997).
24 Acculturated Africans holding positions such as civil servants or in the army, *pumbeiros* (engaged in trading in the hinterland), agricultural workers, mechanical artisans. See J.A. Venâncio, *Economia de Luanda e Hinterland no Século XVII: Um Estudo de Sociologia Histórica* (Lisboa, Editorial Estampa, 1996), p. 51.

Table 3. Level of Education in Ondjiva and Luanda (%)

	Luanda	Ondjiva
1st level (4 years)	13.2	35.8
2nd level (6 years)	21.2	16.9
3rd level (9 years)	27.1	7.1
12 years	24.1	1.4
Higher	3.1	0.4
No school level	11.3	37.8
Total	100.0	99.4

Source: LS – Luanda Survey (Lisbon, CEsA, 1999); OS – Ondjiva Survey (Government of the Province of Cunene, 2004).

became consolidated, establishing and confirming the social status of a specific set of elites.[25]

In Ondjiva, this process was rather different. The last battle to conquer Pereira D'Eça (Ondjiva's previous name) took place in the twentieth century – in 1915 – and subsequent colonial penetration was slow and weak. Unlike what happened in other Angolan urban centres such as Huambo or Benguela (Table 4), the colonial system does not seem to have produced a significant group of Africans integrated on the colonial model here in the 'forgotten' southern regions of the country.[26] Thus, European influence made less of an impression in the Cunene region with respect to the adoption of the Portuguese language, for example. Certain aspects of daily life (such as dress or religion), however, have changed considerably, exerting an influence on the lifestyles of the people in the region.[27]

The definition of social groups in Luanda and Ondjiva in the post-independence period has also significantly diverged. The transformations caused by war led to the appearance of elites connected to the political and military structures throughout the country and concentrated in Luanda.[28] The South African invasion of Ondjiva, from 1975 to 1989, emptied the city for a long period and the local political/military structures moved to the province of Huíla, from which they were supposed to rule the Cunene province. Along with an adopted centralised economic system, class differentiation then involved distinguishing a very small elite from all other Angolans. In the absence of varied social stratification and due to the difficulty of access to this elite group's assets, families revitalised traditional organisational models based on solidarity, reciprocity and kinship. In the presence of economic and social insecurity, the family became one of the most important social networks, able to mitigate the risks associated with radical economic transformation, social resettlement, war and migration. This revitalisation of the family occurred not only in the already overpopulated city of Luanda but also among the Cunene migrants and displaced people. Thus, both in small towns and in the capital city, when people faced situations

---

25 See C. Messiant, 'Luanda, 1945–1961: Colonisés, Société Coloniale et Engagement Nationaliste', in M. Cahen, (ed.), *('Vilas' et 'Cidades') Bourgs et Villes en Afrique Lusophone* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989), pp. 125–99. 'The *assimilado* was the rootless African that had cut cultural bonds with original African society in order to acquire and perfect European habits and usages' (M. Jorge, *Para Compreender Angola* [Lisbon, Dom Quixote, 1998], p. 55). 'Civilised' corresponds to the population of European origin (with some subdivisions based on whether one's birthplace was the metropolis or the colony) and 'indigenous' to the Angolan who did not 'reach' the status of *assimilado*.

26 W.G. Clarence-Smith, *Slaves, Peasants and Capitalists in Southern Angola (1840–1926)* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979).

27 R.L. Monteiro, *Os Ambós de Angola Antes da independência* (Lisbon, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, 1994), pp. 117–18, 230.

28 See M.E. Ferreira, 'La Reconversion Économique de la *Nomenklatura* Pétrolière', *Politique Africaine*, 57 (1995), pp. 11–26.

Table 4. Population of Lower Cunene

		Native	Mixed	Europeans	Total
1947	Men	31,450	72	98	31,625
	Women	36,727	61	49	36,837
	Total	68,177	138	147	68,462
1957	Men	46,984	118	167	47,269
	Women	58,019	98	111	58,228
	Total	105,003	216	278	105,497

Source: J.P. Neto, *O baixo Cunene: subsídios para o seu desenvolvimento* (Lisbon, Junta de Investigação do Ultramar, *Estudos de ciências políticas e sociais*), 68 (1963).

of insecurity, they recomposed, recreated and reactivated traditional solidarity and family networking, and these still play an important role in the present-day urban milieu. On a broader level, this atomisation of solidarity and reciprocity conditioned the development of a broader social stratification and allowed the maintenance of a bipolarised society – an elite of families based on political and military power, with the rest of the population organised into family groups.

Solidarity and Reciprocity as Basic Social Dynamic

For many years after independence, solidarity and reciprocity, based on personal relationships and trust, represented the main social and economic strategy to cope with rapid transformation and insecurity. In Ondjiva, rural/urban ties, refugee solidarity and family solidarity allowed thousands of displaced Angolans to overcome the difficulties of migration, poverty and uncertainty. During the period when most of the Ondjiva population migrated to the Huíla province, they managed to organise their own school and market facilities there, as well as to conduct the administration of the Cunene province. At the same time, they kept alive relations with those relatives living in Cunene's rural areas (who remained there both during the South African occupation and during the war), as revealed in field surveys. In Luanda the effects of migration and urban concentration, as well as the capability to deal with the increased growth of the capital's population and the resulting decrease of economic opportunities, made family solidarity a vital strategy. Family solidarity remained vital even though rapid urbanisation and socio-economic changes introduced recomposed networks of urban solidarity. This 'reinvention of order', more intense in urban centres, implied the creation of new forms of solidarity, exchanges, arrangements and interdependencies, to cope with rapid socio-economic change as well as to compensate for the failure of the State.[29] In Luanda the integration of newly arrived relatives, for instance, has generally followed the model of building annexes for them in an already settled family yard, including them in an economic activity (either trading or work that requires training, such as automobile repair or carpentry) and providing them with access to administrative structures and/or local authorities who can help them to find a place of their own. In Ondjiva the recent return and/or rural migration of relatives to the city relies on a similar type of family support, and intense rural-urban reciprocity leads to the recreation of extended solidarity networks, providing the extended family group with diversified access to agricultural and industrial supplies.

---

29 T. Trefon (ed.), *Ordre et Désordre à Kinshasa: Réponses Populaires à la Faillite de l'État* (Paris, Karthala, 2004), p. 22.

Family solidarity and reciprocity are developed by a group of people, related by alliance and/or consanguinity, which may also include members whose kinship is voluntarily attributed, in other words, reciprocally agreed upon and accepted. These groups develop a strategy based simultaneously on the concentration of resources – within the group, redistributed among members – and on the spread of the activities required to acquire resources: the combination of formal and informal economic activities, the combination of different sector activities, the deployment of family members through a wholly different and diversified set of income-generating activities.

Yet it is within this group that individuals develop and define the more important social status and social recognition, which are essentially related to the capacity to generate and manage resources and reciprocities. Those within the family group who are able to provide important resources acquire an often proportionate social importance. Their opinions are respected and more frequently sought, and the decisions they take are more frequently regarded as appropriate. Of course this may – and in many cases, does – generate ambiguous and dissonant situations. Seniority, a traditional African value, may be threatened by successful young members of families. Women in the informal economy, who almost always provide more resources to the network, may see their status increased, leading to the inversion of traditional gender roles.

Family solidarity ties are thus the basis for the group's reproduction and, in terms of development strategy, of the social promotion of the family.[30] To survive and socially reproduce, family groups follow – and reinterpret and reformulate – the rules of rural solidarity, consisting of multiple, non-institutionalised forms of social security. In addition, these family groups become an important factor of integration in the new urban reality since they represent freely chosen security networks.[31]

Although other social networks have naturally emerged in new urban situations – such as neighbourhood relations, religious identities or economic networking – they have not completely replaced family support and reciprocity.[32] The greater or lesser importance attributed to non-family solidarity networks is related to the precariousness and questioning of communitarian solidarities in a climate of contradictions and increasing tensions that characterises contemporary African reality.[33]

People view these new urban networks (apart from family) as supplementary, activated in specific circumstances, such as for obtaining small-scale credit, providing small-scale services and when seeking preferential recruitment and co-operation within an economic network. With respect to these networks, however, the hardening of economic conditions and the reduction of the possibility of generating and obtaining resources condition urban solidarity and leave people with 'nothing left to help' others.[34] Generalised impoverishment generates the pressure to maintain informal forms of micro-social solidarities, which rarely extend beyond the family system.[35] As in other African urban contexts, material and financial

---

30 This is also true in other African contexts such as Ghana. See G.J.S. Dei, 'A Ghanaian Town Revisited: Changes and Continuities in Local Adaptative Strategies', *African Affairs*, 362, (1992), pp. 95–120. See also C. Rodrigues, *O Trabalho Dignifica o Homem: Estratégias de Sobrevivência em Luanda* (Lisboa, Colibri, 2006) and A. Costa and C. Rodrigues, 'Estratégias de Sobrevivência de Famílias em Luanda e Maputo', *Estudos de Desenvolvimento*, 8 (2001), pp. 69–81.
31 T. Locoh, 'Formes Modernes et Traditionnelles de Solidarité', in J.-C. Chasteland *et al.* (eds), *Politiques de Développement et Croissance Démographique Rapide en Afrique*, 13 (INED, Congrès et Colloques, 1993), pp. 215–34, p. 220.
32 See P. Robson and S. Roque, 'Aqui na Cidade Nada Sobra para Ajudar': Buscando a Solidariedade e a Acção Colectiva em Bairros Periurbanos de Angola, Development Workshop, *Occasional Papers*, 3 (2002).
33 Solidarity funds, mutual assistance societies, unions, parties as referred to by Marie, *L'Afrique des Individus*, p. 81.
34 Robson and Roque, '*Aqui na Cidade nada Sobra para Ajudar*'.
35 Marie, *L'Afrique des Individus*, p. 102.

constraints seem to put pressure on solidarity and its implicit altruism, leading to more pragmatic forms of exchange, and to reciprocity.[36]

The atomised character of family solidarity networking and the reduced scope of extra family solidarity has not generated the formation of horizontal stratification at a macro-sociological level and may even have contributed to its constraint. Although the social status of family members differs within the group, dependent upon individuals' capacity to maintain and feed reciprocity relations, the urban social fabric in Angola has remained bipolarised in terms of social stratification, consisting of a very small political/military elite and other non-elite families. This has created a social stratification of families, rather than of individuals, because African social stratification is of a collective type.

Rapid Urbanisation, Economic Change and Urban References

In Luanda, the most important extra-elite group, with a more visible social identity and more intense reciprocity ties, includes people of *Bakongo* origin. Migrants settling in Luanda after 1975, coming from the northern provinces of Angola (Uíge, Zaïre) and/or returning (*regressados* – those who returned) from the former Zaïre (Democratic Republic of Congo, hereafter referred to as DRC) after exile, recomposed social networks, maintained a specific cultural identity. In fact, among urban migrants, this was the only group that did not abandon its original language.[37] This broader, ethnically based group possesses a greater capacity to manage solidarity and reciprocity networks connected to trading (which takes in a vast geographical area, including the DRC) and – although with less weight in the present day – to activities related to the exploration and trading of diamonds.[38] According to recent studies, this group corresponds to an elite of the parallel/informal economy and also (although less so) to a specific political/ideological orientation, i.e. to the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola, a national independence movement).[39] This ethnic group is, however, an exception. The phenomenon of diminishing ethnic identity occurs in other African cities as well: global social collectives – ethnic groups, tribes, clans, lineages – tend to be eliminated as social entities, although the logics and networks may be maintained in the form of partial solidarity networks or as common symbolic references.[40] Rather than completely eliminated, ethnic identity tends to generate resilient networks – simultaneously or alternately retrieved but always in situations in which it is most useful – in order to extend people's solidarity networks.[41] Importantly with respect to this group, ethnic origin, combined with the maintenance of an identity strengthened by the sharing of the same language and customs, constitutes a basic element useful for the establishment and reinforcement of solidarities. These are visible in the common categorisation (although mainly in a negative sense) of *Zairenses* (indicating that a person is from former Zaïre).[42] This classification demonstrates the cohesion and intensity of these preferential and dynamic trade networks. The constitution of an identity on an ethnic basis seems, however, to have only been

---

36　T. Trefon (ed.), *Ordre et Désordre à Kinshasa*, p. 22. See the reference to Villiers' work and discussion on solidarity/reciprocity.

37　Kikongo, originally; but many of those that migrated to former Zaïre also adopted Lingala and sometimes French. See Messiant, 'Luanda, 1945–1961'; Brinkman, 'War and Identity in Angola'.

38　See F. De Boeck, '*Garimpeiro* Worlds: Digging, Dying and 'Hunting' for Diamonds in Angola', *Review of African Political Economy*, 28, 90 (2001), pp. 549–62.

39　Hodges, *Angola*; Brinkman, 'War and Identity in Angola'.

40　A. Marie, 'La Tradition Africaine Face à la Modernité Occidentale', *La Valeur*, 14 (1986), pp. 175–90.

41　Trefon (ed.), *Ordre et Désordre à Kinshasa*, p. 30.

42　J. Mabeko-Tali, 'La Chasse aux Zairois à Luanda', *Politique Africaine*, 57 (1995), pp. 71–84.

reactivated among the northern population. For example, in the Boa Esperança district in Luanda, where a significant proportion of the population of Umbundo origin (from the central plateau) lives, there is an 'absence of solidarity between neighbours and the reluctance to participate in collective interest activities'.[43] This reluctance is often justified by this group's experiences of repression, due to their links with UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência de Angola).

Owing to its ethnic nature, northern identity has not become a broad social indicator. The revitalisation of urban/modern references, widespread in Angolan society, is a global tendency that has taken shape recently, more intensely in urban centres – where more than half of the population is concentrated – and especially in Luanda, where it is a more rapid and accentuated phenomenon.[44] Urban/modern markers reveal themselves in habits, language and types of consumption; they imply a preference for integration in the formal sector and investment in formal education. Families and individuals who became integrated earlier into cities, and with higher educational qualifications and a formal job, tend to be included in a differentiated social stratum, different from the elite but, nevertheless, often related to it. This large group includes former *assimilados*, old traders and artisans, and wage-earning workers and civil servants, as well as others with links to administrative structures and the political party in power. The latter include *sobas*, elements of the municipal administration, neighbourhood commissions and political organisations (OMA, JMPLA, unions). One could say that these families (or at least most of their members) settled in the capital city before the 1980s, and their higher degree of integration in the aforementioned structures reveals the importance of this factor as an element of identity and social status. In Ondjiva, this occurs with the former urban families – especially civil servants – who settled in other Angolan cities (or in Namibia) during invasion and war. These families, who also had access to a formal education and urban facilities, became the first to return to the city in the early 1990s and were integrated into public administration structures.[45] Urban social recomposition, based on urban/modern references, was thus a relatively rapid phenomenon in Luanda, where it became more visible at the beginning of the 1990s. In Ondjiva, these changes only became significant over the last ten years, when mass repopulation began.

Although modern and urban lifestyles cannot in themselves be considered categorising elements that establish rigid group and individual stratification, they represent 'clues and signals' that allow us to identify social belonging and specific identities.[46] Or, to use Ferguson's term, they become the whole set of references to cosmopolitan lifestyles.[47] The idea repeatedly propagated in the most diverse circles and among city dwellers themselves is that migration and settling in an urban setting implies the assimilation of new urban practices and values different from those in a rural setting. This is clearly demonstrated in the rapid adoption of the Portuguese language, which is spoken by people of diverse origins, as well as in the adoption of new consumption habits and the formation and growth of new religious and cultural groups.[48] People say, 'Children, born here in the city, can no longer speak the traditional language. They understand it but answer us in Portuguese'. Apart from this, many

43 Robson and Roque, '*Aqui na Cidade nada Sobra para Ajudar*', p. 128.
44 One-third of the 12.6-million Angolan population is concentrated in Luanda. See, for example, UNDP, *Relatório do Desenvolvimento Humano – Angola* (1999).
45 The displaced population of Cunene settled in Lubango city, in Castanheira de Pêra – a small village near Lubango – or in other cities.
46 J.C. Mitchell, *Cities, Society and Social Perception* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987).
47 J. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meaning of Urban Life in the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1999).
48 S. Kasack, 'Os Musseques de Luanda: Problemas do Desenvolvimento Urbano', *Garcia de Orta*, Série de Geografia, 15, 1 (1996), pp. 65–78.

of these children 'no longer want to eat *kisaca* [a traditional dish made from leaves]; they prefer rice'.[49] They may also indicate a preference for other imported products.

Recomposing Social Strata

Due to these urban transformation processes, new social classes based on economic assets are now emerging in Luanda, while in Ondjiva a slower but equally clearly marked trend can be observed. Nevertheless, transformation is made up of commitments and combinations that form a mixed and syncretic urban reality. Understood as the degree to which a person has assimilated urban practices and rationalities, urbanity is defined by the actors themselves when they say, 'We have already got used to the city and can no longer live [in the bush] because there is nothing there'.[50] The assimilation of new urban practices and values is never complete in African societies, however, not even in cities. In Angola one finds a mixture of situations that combine 'modern' and 'traditional' elements to various degrees (the words 'traditional' and 'modern' are used by Angolans themselves). These compromises, however, not only result from the demand, in some areas, to fit into modern/urban structures – such as those involved in education, social security and other areas – they also reveal that transformation implies the articulation of tradition and modernity. The unequal degree of access to urban structures, the transformation of habits and urbanisation, all create different compromises between tradition and modernity among individuals and groups. These differences become evident in the analysis of economic activities, of family structure and organisation, of religion, of education, of housing. One can add other, more visible – but also more difficult to define – indicators to this analysis of urbanity, such as clothing and fashion, the places where meals are taken, urban entertainment and the transformation of gender relations, among others.[51] Or it can also be developed through the analysis of fashion, funeral rites, style, sports, music, sexuality and matrimonial models.[52] In Angola, the most general and visible types of consumption nowadays are related to housing – which neighbourhood people live in and what type of house they possess – the type of transportation they can afford, their clothing, the places where they can shop and the types of leisure to which they have access.

One of the most important aspects related to urban lifestyle, already mentioned, concerns the generalised use of the Portuguese language. Portuguese tends to be dominant in urban areas and to represent not only a factor of social differentiation but also an indicator of an individual's level of urbanity. National languages tend to be replaced by Portuguese in cities, and children born there learn to speak Portuguese. The use of Portuguese in Luanda is one of the clearest indicators of the phenomenon of urbanisation of populations of very diverse origins, and the shared use of the language allows communication between people of different socio-cultural origins and between the population and the administrative structures. As mentioned regarding the period before independence, the spread of Portuguese reflects a certain 'westernisation' and also the degree of urbanity developing in different social strata.[53] Even in Ondjiva, where the Kwanhama language is dominant – shared with the Cunene

---

49 Interview conducted in Luanda, 1999.

50 *Ibid*.

51 E. Dorier-Appril *et al.* (eds), *Vivre à Brazzaville: Modernité et Crise au Quotidien* (Paris, Karthala, 1998), pp. 67, 73, 76.

52 Mbembe, 'Writing the World from an African Metropolis'.

53 R.L. Monteiro, *A Família nos Musseques de Luanda: Subsídios para o seu Estudo* (Luanda, Fundo de Acção Social no Trabalho em Angola, 1973), p. 331; Mingas, *Interferência do Kimbundu no Português Falado em Luanda*.

population and northern Namibians – Portuguese dominates the administrative level and allows contact with central and national institutions.

In addition to the Portuguese language, the type of economic activities individuals have access to is also a social indicator of different degrees of urban integration. Formal work – in the private sector or in public administration – represents a reference not only for rural migrants searching for better opportunities in life but also for the urban population that sees informal activities as indicative of the survival strategies of people who are less integrated and who possess lower educational qualifications: 'He hasn't got a job yet; he's just doing business'.[54] Formal sector jobs are rare – both in Luanda and in Ondjiva, for different reasons – and the informal sector absorbs a great part of the economically active population. Nevertheless, formal salaried work has remained one of the indicators of urban integration ever since the colonial period, including the period of centralised economy, and is at the core of the adopted orientation towards a market economy.[55] Indeed, salaried work represents a central reference in the building up of modern and urban social status.

One of the factors that shows that formal sector employment is at the core of individuals' expectations and aspirations is that networks and reciprocities are the most common ways to gain access to formal employment. Even though people also seek informal jobs through the mobilisation of networks, they must use these networks even more effectively to seek formal employment because of its high social value in Angola: 'Without a (formal) job, a person just keeps doing small things to survive, but it doesn't fulfil you'.[56] The mobilisation of social networks and the substantial investment of effort required to get a job (which normally provides a lower income than informal activities) is apparent from the strategies people use to get jobs: jobs are normally obtained through consulting friends (43.2 per cent), through visits to companies (32.4 per cent) or through consulting relatives (16.3 per cent).[57] Therefore, restricted and low-wage formal sector employment possesses a social interest, constitutes a form of social stratification of individuals and represents a greater degree of urban integration and the possibility of having access to modern/urban structures.

Another variable to be considered in the analysis of urbanity is education. Most schools are located in urban contexts to allow a greater number of individuals access to education. In fact, the school institution and access to a more favourable social status through formal education represents not only a global urban trend but also lies at the core of rationalities with respect to urbanity. The educational reference in Angola is both inherited from the colonial system and reproduced and strengthened afterwards. Rural people often find that the need to educate their children beyond primary school level is an important reason for migration to the cities. Formal education, placed at the core of reproduction strategies, demonstrates that the means of social ascension and social reproduction have shifted the realm of the family to the realm of modern states and the western way of life.[58] Although this displacement in Angola is (or was) still incipient or incomplete, it formed an important trend in the later years of the colonial

54 Interview, conducted in Luanda, 1999.
55 According to a national survey (IDR) carried out in 2001 by the National Institute of Statistic (INE), only 39 per cent of the population of Luanda holds a job in the formal sector and self-employed workers and non-remunerated family workers represent 60.9 per cent of the holders of a profession or craft. The formal sector is represented by 10 per cent of the workforce in public administration, 4.7 per cent in public companies and 18.7 per cent in the private sector. In Ondjiva, the formal sector absorbs 69 per cent of the workforce, and 82 per cent of the population in the informal economy works in the trading area (OS – Ondjiva Survey. See also Rodrigues, *O Trabalho Dignifica o Homem*.
56 Interview conducted in Luanda, 2001.
57 IDR – Índice de Despesas e Receitas. See also Rodrigues, *O Trabalho Dignifica o Homem*.
58 P. Bourdieu, 'Stratégies de Reproduction et Modes de Domination', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 105 (1994), pp. 3–12.

period and today is one of the references by which families' investments are guided.[59] In recent decades, the possibility of access to higher degrees of education (or access to school at all) has remained dependent upon tangible conditions, such as the general erosion of the educational system (both infrastructure and human resources), allied to the increasing overloading of institutions due to mass migration and the increase of 'extraordinary' payments demanded of families by the formal education system.[60] Nevertheless, the incapacity of many families to provide education to all of their members has not erased the valorisation and importance in social terms of school and formal education.

Economic capacity has also become a clearer stratification factor with respect to the unequal access to consumer goods it implies. After independence, an individual's potential access to goods did not depend on income itself, but rather on his/her position in administrative/political structures. During that period, the market supply system created different kinds of shops to which different kinds of citizens had access. Gradually, with the growth of the so-called 'parallel market' and later with the shift in economic orientation to market economics, income regained its importance and economic differentiation surpassed this former type of stratification with respect to access to goods.

Another important indicator of social differentiation concerns housing conditions and housing location. In Luanda, the contrast between the central neighbourhoods – as well as the new modern districts, such as Luanda Sul – and the peri-urban districts has increased. In Ondjiva, this same spatial distribution of families from different socio-economic strata has also become more evident: the central districts (Pioneiro Zeca, Bangula) contain wealthier and more urbanised families, especially the civil servants who received these houses from the administration during the first years of the city's reconstruction. Nevertheless, in both Luanda and Ondjiva many of the existing houses – located in central neighbourhoods and distributed to state-related families or civil servants (or, in the case of Luanda, occupied after independence by peri-urban families) – do not correspond to present-day economic conditions. 'The type of house [in Angola] where the household lives is not enough, by itself, to explain the poverty' but can only serve as indicators of families longer-established in the urban context.[61] The type of construction, building materials and the conveniences included in houses reveal various income levels. The places where families can shop (informal markets, modern shops), the type of products to which they have access, the means of transport they use, clothing and type of leisure, among others, represent a whole range of resources that can be obtained at different levels and in various combinations.

Modern material resources as well as lifestyle thus become the basis of social differentiation, conditioned by economic capacity and moulded by urban/modern references. In Angola until very recently, social differentiation reflected the dual opposition between the elite and the rest of the population. The introduction and/or strengthening of other socio-economic indicators, such as economic capacity, urban lifestyle, education and access to formal-economy networks, has introduced into Angolan society clearer differentiations between strata, middle classes and their subdivisions, and has made social mobility more possible and more effective, in other words the possibility of economic accumulation (which also allowed access to education, in certain strata) and of the adoption of modern, urban lifestyles, has become less restricted even though the poverty figures are still alarming. The racial and political factors still have weight but, as it is often mentioned, 'money is now ruling' (*agora o dinheiro é que está a mandar*).

---

59 Monteiro, *A Família nos Musseques de Luanda*.
60 These informal charges (contributions for teachers; contributions for stationery, exam sheets, among others) are quite widespread in most schools in Angola.
61 GMCVP-INE, *Nota da Pobreza* (Luanda, INE, 1998), p. 12.

Conclusions

Today's social structuring is not developed through the relative positioning of individuals. The acquisition of status is subject to integration in a family network whose internal dynamic and capacity to manage reciprocities and solidarity (the basic social reproduction strategy) allows individuals to acquire positions in a certain social group. Internally, family members also build their social status by demonstrating that they have the capacity to support family reciprocity (the concentration of varied resources and their distribution) to different degrees. Still dominant, family-based groups structure the whole of society, creating an atomised social reality, each of these groups being vertically and autonomously organised.

At the same time, however, in an urban context new social networks emerge, and economic capacity becomes crucial to the definition of social strata as well as the integration and utilisation of modern urban markers. Although Angolan urban society is still characterised by a mixture of urban and rural elements of different origins, articulated with different economic, religious, social and political practices and logics, it is possible to foresee that in a context of a growing market economy and the demands of democratisation and globalisation, urban social structures may tend to adapt and to adopt social stratification models. The current dominant models are based on economic, educational and status premises, and the main indicators that stand out are modernity and urban lifestyles. The longstanding cosmopolitan nature of Luanda has introduced rapid and profound changes in the lifestyles of city dwellers, but in smaller and more peripheral cities like Ondjiva – sites of war and forced displacement, as well as late colonisation and delayed urbanisation – modern and urban references also emerge.

Given this trend towards social recomposition, many questions need further exploration in order to better understand recent social phenomena. One question concerns the conversion of the elites' social capital into market assets and the political implications of this conversion for the Angolan democratisation process. Another is the recomposition of rural/urban relations, the new relations emerging and the reciprocal influences reshaped by the intensification of social and economic exchanges. Also, with the shift of social references from family to broader social strata, the new social dynamic appears to be replacing the family's centrality both for reciprocity issues and status building. The growth of individualism and the possibilities of individual social mobility brought about by modernisation, by capitalism and by new social references, tend to build a new society in which values and ideological references are now more urban and cosmopolitan, part of an ongoing process of globalisation. The hybridism that characterises processes of social transformation, however, is what makes it more difficult to define which social forces are nowadays more vigorous and which will more rapidly and radically change. Finally, we need to explore the implications of these social stratification processes for the vital issues of development and poverty.

Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues
Centro de Estudos Africanos – Edifício ISCTE, Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisboa, Portugal. E-mail: crisrodrigues70@gmail.com