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Refracted governmentality: space, politics and social structure in contemporary Luanda

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ABSTRACT

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António Andrade Tomás

My thesis argues that political authority produces very particular regimes of informality. The description of the city of Luanda that I undertake is concerned with explaining the process of political transformation. The city of Luanda was mostly built during colonialism to spatially accommodate extant race and class divisions. The million or more Angolans who occupied those differentiated spaces in the aftermath of independence challenged the colonial distribution of space. I explain the recent transformation that the city has undergone by focusing less on the theory and practice of urban planning, and more on the inscription and influence of political patronage onto space. Political power, then, has been a force in the spatial transformation of Luanda.

These developments have taken place against backdrop of a very particular politico-economic structure, which has two consequences that I explore in the remainder of the dissertation. The first one concerns the disjuncture in formal terms of the relationship between the state and society. As one of the second largest oil producing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria, the Angolan government is not dependent on the population for the extraction of tax resources. Consequently, the government is not only unaccountable to the population and civil society, but by being out of joints with large swaths of the population forces most Angolans to reproduce themselves beyond any formal intervention of the state.

The second consequence can be seen in the informal links between rulers and the ruled which are sustained by other institutions of intermediation, such as the ruling party, but even more importantly the family. In post-socialist and neo-liberal Angola, family is no longer the domain of private relationships. Family has come to signify the intermediation between the state and society. For affluent Angolans, family ties to the political elite allow them to share the distribution of national resources. For poor Angolans, family is the unit of production by means of which ends can be met.

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It goes without saying that the persons referenced here are not responsible for the content, the ideas, and especially the errors that may yet be found in this dissertation.

To Kesha Fikes and Guerrivaldo Tomás

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the interplay between space, politics and social structure in contemporary Luanda, the capital of Angola, analyzed through the lens of informality. My aim is to provide an ethnographic account of the relationship between informality and regimes of political authority. By this, I hope to provide an understanding of contemporary Luanda where regimes of informality – non-bureaucratic and unofficial mechanisms for distribution of power – are mobilized to serve the specific political purpose of reinforcing the relationship between rulers and ruled. To explain this, I use the concept of refracted governmentality, which attempts to make sense of two processes: the first of disjuncture, and the second of juncture. On the one hand, the state is seemingly detached from society in formal ways. Tax resources are mainly extracted from foreign oil companies, and the citizenry does not participate in decision-making about the ways the GDP is allocated. This may explain, for instance, the scarce investments in social services, such as education and health care. On the other hand, a juncture between the state and society is manifest in myriad of informal ways and spaces, such as: the deployment of violence in the effort to build (apparent) consensus; the emergence of a morality that justifies the corrupt appropriation of national resources and contributes to state fragmentation; and the centrality of the ruling party, the MPLA[1] – rooted in a language of single party –, effectively or symbolically controlled by a discreet number of political families.

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[1] Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola).

To provide an entry point for this discussion, I would like to tell the story of how an ethnographic moment and its implications made manifest to me the relationship between economy and violence. Only by directly and indirectly taking part in a spectacle of violence did I come to terms with the sometimes uneasy and uncomfortable position of the ethnographer who works on his “own culture” and with his “own people.” Violence made apparent to me the thin line between merely observing and participating. The insight provided by this episode allows me to reflect theoretically and methodologically not only on the conditions by which the ethnographic materials I present here were collected, but, also, and more importantly, on the relationship between this ethnographic moment and the general argument of this dissertation. Through violence, I became aware of both the limits of the state and the processes of its interference with what is exterior to it. Furthermore, the act of violence in which I was myself implicated annihilated the anthropological dichotomy between insider and outsider. Reflecting on this fact will allow me to discuss, on the hand, the relationship between violence and ethnographic methods, and, on the other, the centrality of violence in the city of Luanda and its consciousness.

I conducted a great part of my fieldwork in Roque Santeiro, which, in its heyday, during the 1990s, provided the perfect metaphor for the state of the country: a vibrant informal market installed in a waste dump. The production of Roque Santeiro as a commercial space took root at the intersection of two politico-economic processes and the encounter between two demographics. On the one hand, there was the civil war, and, on the other, the passage from socialism to neo-liberalism. The first one accounted for the hundreds of thousands of Angolans trading the countryside for the improbable security of Luanda. The second one accounted for the relaxation of the strict rules of the socialist regime, which allowed the emergence of a class of entrepreneurs to take advantage of their proximity to the state. The destitute poor flocking to Luanda did not have any other way to make ends meet than to engage in various degrees of the overwhelming "buy-and-sell economy."[2] Roque Santeiro then became a gigantic outlet that simultaneously served the purpose of the most obscene forms of accumulation and the most basic forms of survival. The market came spontaneously into being as a totality to encompass every desire and need of its operators and consumers. In this regard, the novelist Pepetela, a keen observer of Angolan reality, aptly captures the vibrancy of the market: "that which is not in Roque Santeiro has not been invented yet."[3] There, people could buy grocery products, various beverages, and assorted homemade and industrially produced commodities, from traditional beverages to imported clothes, and car parts. But there was also enough to entertain everyone for as long as necessary: restaurants, barbershops, makeshift movie theaters, music selling points with the latest national and foreign hits, and even a red light district. But, for most people and the central authorities, the market was more like a gigantic waiting room for lack of a more dignifying situation.

So, November 4, 2008, started as a normal day in the life of Roque Santeiro. But something happened that disturbed the always-fraught balance between "order" and "disorder." In Roque Santeiro, the distribution of space was never clear. There was no separation between the unpaved roads, the areas of the stalls, and the houses surrounding the market (houses that served mostly as makeshift warehouses). On the morning of that day, a taxi driver, in a hurry to make his day's earnings, lost control of his car, veered off the road and hit a wall, which, as it collapsed, instantly killed a woman. The taxi driver did what everyone in such circumstances does in Luanda, especially in the peri-urban areas: he abandoned the car and ran for his life.

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[2] Winden and Gamito, *A Family of the Musseque.*

[3] My translation. In the original: "se não tem no Roque Santeiro é porque ainda não foi inventado." Pepetela, *Jaime Bunda*, p. 84.

Unfortunately, he did not make it more than ten meters away. He was caught by the family of the woman and passers-by, and was beaten to death on the spot. All of a sudden, disorder took hold of the market. Thieves and passers-by seized the opportunity to steal and to beat up sellers, entrepreneurs and customers alike. When the police came a couple of hours after the occurrence, the market had been transformed into a battle scene. Everything was in disarray: pieces of stalls, unsold products, and burned tires lay at random. On the road, in front of the house whose wall had been hit, lay the body of the taxi driver, exposed beneath the bright sun, unrecognizable. The young man's genitalia had also been pulled from the body.

This form of violence is not uncommon in Africa and has nearly been turned into a staple of journalistic coverage in some parts of the continent, particularly South Africa.[4] In the social sciences, particularly in anthropology, the theme of popular violence tends to be classified under two main rubrics. The first puts emphasis on a break-down of the formal system of the administration of justice, which forces the community to revert to expedient forms of unmediated retributive justice and vengeance.[5] The second tends to dismiss the claim that those forms of justice are driven by spontaneous impulses, and derives a great deal of evidence from the organization and *modus operandi* of vigilante mobs.[6] In the latter case, the seeming informality of mob justice is shown to follow regular and normative patterns.[7] Both these perspectives explain to a great extent what has taken place in a number of peripheral neighborhoods in Luanda where people have had to organize themselves to fight high levels of criminality. The administration of Roque Santeiro, for instance, had organized a group of vigilantes who were authorized to bear arms and to shoot-to-kill at thieves. However, based on both my own observation during the time I did my fieldwork there, and a number of journalistic accounts,[8] I believe it is unlikely that such organized groups, alongside national police officers performing their duty, would interfere with any attempt by the local population to punish wrongdoers. I believe that these forms of unmediated retributive justice are largely spontaneous.[9] However, what concerns me most is less the phenomenology of popular violence and more what the eruption of these moments of turmoil tells us of the ways in which the state operates.

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[4] For a recent rendition, see, for instance, Bearak, "Watching the Murder of An Innocent Man."

The killing of the taxi driver on that day is what I call the ethnographic moment, by which I mean an event, an image, around which an ethnographic narrative can be articulated. This capacity for ethnographic narration arises not only because this episode cannot be deemed as isolated from the fabric of the social and political life in contemporary Luanda. But it also forced my active participation even if I was not present at the time of its occurrence. Makassamba, my key consultant in the market, called me not only to report on what was happening, but also to beg for my intervention. He lived next door to the house of the slain woman, which meant that the body of the taxi driver and the vengeful multitude were in front of his house, preventing him from leaving it. The reason why I was not in the market as well as my exact location on that day, deserve some attention, since it cuts through my particular experience of fieldwork. I am Luandan, with family connections at various levels of Angolan society (party members, government officials, journalists in various public and private outlets, as well as people in the most modest position in society), and the data I could amass, for better or worse, cannot be appraised without addressing this fact. I hope to convey an idea of the entanglements in which I found myself by narrating this short sequence of episodes. The method and the process of gathering information that I used are themselves embedded in this narrative.

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[5] For such a perspective, see, for instance, Benda-Beckmann and Pirie, *Order and Disorder: Anthropological Perspectives.*
[6] Barbara Oomen, "Vigilantism or Alternative Citizenship? The Rise of Mapogo a Mathamaga."
[7] For a further discussion on the relationship between violence and the state in Africa, from the standpoint of vigilante groups, see, for instance, Grätz, "Vigilante Groups and the State in the West Africa."
[8] See, for instance, http://morrodamaianga.blogspot.com/2011/10/barbarie-em-luanda.html.
[9] The larger question in a great deal that has been written on violence in Africa is whether or not it is senseless and irrational. Here, I will refrain from justifying the rationality of this form of violence. Since, for making this argument, I would have to determine the end that these forms of violence are expected to accomplish, which is not my goal here. What concerns me here is rather the form of the state that this kind of violence allows us to see.

When Makassamba summoned me to go to the market to see with my own eyes what was going on there, I could not go because I was so traumatized that I could not take a taxi. Had not something else happened shortly before, I am sure that I would have been at the market that day. But a couple of days earlier, on a Saturday at the end of October, I was with my cousin Edson, who is a taxi driver and was working the Roque Santeiro-São Paulo route. After driving back and forth several times, we were at the São Paulo stop when my cousin's *chamador* (helper) decided to leave the car and rehearse some steps of *kuduro* (a very popular Angolan musical and dance style) on the road. Like many taxi drivers and *chamadores*, my cousin's helper dreamt of becoming a famous *kudurista* and had asked me to videotape him singing his songs and dancing. I had been doing so since the morning of that day with a little device I used for my fieldwork. But when I was videotaping him on the road near the São Paulo stop, one of the *lotadores* (informal workers who attract riders for the taxis) came to us and insisted that I was filming him. I tried to show him the images that I had taken, and, while I was trying to do so, he repeatedly hit me in the face. My cousin then managed to take his car out of the confusion. Seeing me treated in that way in front of him was far worse than being beaten up himself. He was on his turf, I was in his car, and although he is eight years my junior, he felt that he had to protect me. He had even pledged to my mother that he would do so.

Edson is very used to brawls, since, as for many other taxi drivers, altercations on the road have often to be solved by physical fights. During the time we worked together Edson told me a number of stories in which he had to get out of his car and fight with other taxi drivers or riders. So he would not let this incident go. He drove to the 9th Precinct, in front of Roque Santeiro, where I filed a formal complaint of physical aggression against the *lotador*, while Edson tried to convince the agents to come with us to São Paulo to detain the youths who had beaten me up. But it was Saturday, the precinct was understaffed and the work of the police was simply overwhelming. On the outskirts of Luanda, people rarely call the police to settle their problems. When somebody is caught in the act of wrongdoing, for instance, it is likely that people will beat the accused to the verge of death, and only then take the person, nearly dead, to the precinct to avoid the hassle of having a dead body on their hands. Sometimes the hall of the precinct resembles the emergency ward of a hospital, such is the carnage. Wanting to teach a lesson to the youth – that they cannot beat up people who are shooting or taking pictures on the street – and curious about the ways the police operate in those situations, I decided then to use my own connections in this matter. I called a friend of mine, who worked for the newspaper *Novo Jornal*, and he called the police commandant who authorized the precinct to give us means to seek the aggressor.

By the time we got to São Paulo it was already night. Edson and I were in a police pick-up car with a half dozen officers who, when we arrived at the location, descended from the car and quickly seized the opportunity to look for their *Gasosa* (bribe money) by threatening to arrest the taxidrivers who could not produce driver's licenses. As Edson did not want to wait for the police to finish their 'job' and was personally motivated to settle the score with my aggressor, he looked for the young man in the square and when he was told his whereabouts, he proceeded to the parking lot where these young men wash cars at night. Edson was walking fast, I was almost running to keep up with him, and we were on our own without the protection of the police agents. When we got there, my cousin found the person we were looking for, grabbed him, and tried to bring him to the square where the police car stood. The youth called his friends who were just a couple of meters away and all of a sudden more than ten youth were running in our direction, armed with beer bottles. I managed to escape and call the police, and later, when I caught up with my cousin, he told me that those young men had broken the beer bottles on his body, and he had a cut on his right shoulder. The police had captured one of the youths, not the one who had beaten me, but the one who had broken the beer bottle on Edson's shoulder. Two days later, I was summoned to the precinct, and a police officer made a proposition: file charges against the youth they had detained as if he were the one who had beaten me up. I refused to do so, but the youth was not freed (since he was the one who had hurt my cousin) although he was never charged in a court, since, in the Angolan system, the police tend to replace the judiciary itself.

So the day Makassamba called me to go to the market I could barely board a collective taxi. The act of sheer and gratuitous violence of which I had been the object had broken the mental protection that had allowed me to work in Roque Santeiro. Only then had I realized the risks that I had undergone during the time of my fieldwork in those locations. I had been robbed once (my cell phone), but I was convinced that somehow I would not be physically abused. I had seen many people being beaten up by crowds in the market. I only slept near the market a couple of nights, but other than that, I did everything people did there. I took care not to drink the water, preferring bottled beverages, but I shared the food given by the people I worked with or visited in their houses, in the market's kitchen, eating meat whose origin could not be certified, and, even if it could, that had lain for too long periods in the sun and been exposed to flies. I boarded taxis driven by drunk taxi drivers when I knew perfectly well the high percentage of accidents involving collective taxis.

Although I was not present that day in the market, the fact that Makassamba called for help forced me to take part in what was going on there. Makassamba was not calling me to simply inform me of the tragic occurrences taking place in front of his house. He was soliciting my help by using the local language of obligation by which Angolan individuals informally contract themselves to each other. Luanda, more than many other places in Africa, is a place where frequently even the most mundane situations have to be solved by the repertoires that a given person may contrive based on the position he/she occupies in complex webs of obligations and expectations. Family name, for instance, may be evoked for someone to escape the payment of a ticket for parking. By calling me, then, Makassamba was expecting me to do something for him. And, perhaps, I could have done more to help him out. At the moment he called me I was spending the weekend at the country house of a relative who is a top official in the ruling party. As I have had many clashes with family members over the nature of my work (in Angola people with political responsibilities are often very critical of those who work on matters such as poverty and human rights), I tried as much as possible to keep them out of it. I then called Pedro Cardoso again, the journalist from *Novo Jornal*, telling him what was going on in the market, and asked him if some publicity for those events could help the people in the market. He said he would send a reporter to investigate the occurrence.

The point I want to make here regarding violence is analytical. I am less concerned with the ontology of violence per se, and more with what violence first and foremost may tell us on the relationship between the state and those spaces in its interior as well as it exterior. As mentioned above, violence was instrumental in the way I conceived of my approach to work in the market. And this goes beyond the acts of violence I witnessed. It has also to do with the fact that because of violence (and the fear of it), the safest way for me to continue my work was to work intensely in a relatively few safe environments. For instance, when I approached the administration of the market for permission to carry out my research, the deputy administrator pointed out that the week before two members of a cinema crew had been killed in the market when they were participating in a film on violence in Luanda.[10] So the administration used the threat of violence to control my movements in the market – and this example can be extrapolated to the ways Luandans deal with violence and risk more generally. As a result, I spent a great deal of my time in Makassamba's compound, which, in hindsight, had the positive outcome of giving me the opportunity to fully understand the functioning of a family as a unit of production in Roque Santeiro (Chapter Five). Moreover the events that prompted the violence with which I commenced my narrative also reveal much about the deeper structures of fear that operate in this society – and that have implication for any ethnographic documentation. Luandans, in general, are very suspicious of cameras. Although it is not a crime to take pictures in public situations, doing so has been the cause for many people, Luandans and foreigners alike, to be detained or harassed by the police. These practices are remainders of the socialist order, but the authorities have never attempted to change such things. More importantly, the population has taken up these interdictions in general. Out of concern for having their images in the archives of the *Segurança do Estado* (Security of the State), the secret police, or for any other reason, some people advocate their right to not be captured in images in a very aggressive way, as the experience I recounted demonstrates. Giving interviews is almost the same thing. Normally people are cordial, and can talk for hours, but, whenever there is a device to record sounds, it is hard to have a conversation. These factors impacted profoundly the decisions I made regarding my work in the market.

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[10] The two members where probably killed by police agents, in the sequence of a scene in which they had to run in the market, with a crowd yelling "thief! thief!" at them. In certain parts of Luanda this is almost an authorization for passers-by to kill whoever is accused of stealing. They were then taken for thieves and shot down on the spot. See, for instance, http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/493149/actors_shot_to_death_while_filming.html

But violence is also what allowed me to understand informality, not only in economic terms, as this concept has mostly been dealt with in the literature on Africa, but in a broader sense, as that which forms the hinge of inside/outside relation with the state apparatus. Instrumental to this understanding is Rosalind Morris' insight from her research and violence and accident. When reflecting on a very different situation, namely the idea of accidents in the mines of South Africa, she adduces: "Accident is the experience of violence when such violence cannot be named as a crime."[11] Morris agrees with Shula Marks and Neil Andersson when they state that "it is the acceptance of the accident as normal that marks the violent nature of society" in South Africa.[12] The first lesson to draw from this statement is that crime is only one of the possible ways to label a violent act. Concomitantly, forms of collective and spontaneous retributive justice may only be deemed crimes in a context in which those events take place inside the state's prerogative to label actions.[13] Otherwise, without the background of positive law, they may be construed as mere "accidents," or events that take things away from their supposedly natural course. Or, violence may be seen as the matter of restoring order, rather than violating it. And, after the fact, people may explain it away as an accident produced in the context of rage, or by the collective's desire for justice.

The fact that certain kinds of accidents, the death of the taxi driver, can take place without being labeled as crimes forces us to conceive an underside (rather than a resistant other) of the state. Here, I am interested in the relationship between the state and

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[11] Morris, "The Mute and the Unspeakable: Political Subjectivity, Violent Crime, and "The Sexual Thing" in a South African Mining Community," p. 63.

[12] Cit. in Morris, p. 63. See also Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology and Culture of Violence."

[13] Instrumental for this understanding the distinction between "sanctioned and unsanctioned violence" made by Walter Benjamin. Here Benjamin is concerned with an understanding of violence that supersedes the limits of both natural and positive law. See, Benjamin, "Critique of violence," p. 279.

informality, or everything that is formed beyond the gaze of the state, but within its (territorial) frame. The definition of the state that I find useful in this context, among the many others that could be provided, is the one proposed by James Scott, as that institution that takes "exceptionally complex, illegible, and local social practices, such as land tenure or naming customs, and create[s] a standard grid whereby it can be centrally recorded and monitored."[14] The state is, here, understood as an overcoding machine, in Deleuze's and Guattari's terminology.[15] This is also a concept that Mahmood Mamdani hints at when he opposes the bureaucratic and calligraphic state (the colonial state that produces laws and gives names to practices and customs), to other segmentarities and forms of being subsisting in its interior, and geared up under very different processes and laws of reproduction and operationality. This dual regime is what Mamdani calls a "bifurcated state": it contains both civil society, the realm of those bearers of rights, and the customary, which, under colonial and postcolonial conditions, includes "previously autonomous social domains like the household, age sets, and gender associations – to cite three important instances – often the latter were written into the scope of chiefly power."[16] The less codified the chiefly power, the more discretionary the authority of the chiefs. Mamdani's point is that chiefly power was enhanced within colonial states, and postcolonial realities are often shaped by the personalistic forms of power that were produced so ironically by the bureaucratic regime. That is certainly the case in colonies such as Angola, where, despite pledges to the contrary, the Portuguese have never tried to amend the laws vaguely understood (because so named by colonial authorities) as customary, nor to encompass that which is outside the realm of legibility.[17] What is relevant here, for the sake of this argument, is the existence of a domain, the customary, with its cruel and violent practices *within* the modern state, but imagined as its other.

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[14] Scott, *Seeing like a State*, p. 2

[15] See, for instance, Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.

[16] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p. 110.

In making this claim, my intention is not to collapse the concepts of customary and the informal, since both operate on different kinds of realities, and impose, to a great extent, contrasting dynamics. The customary, as Mamdani has shown, is not the customary for its peculiar characteristics, but, rather, in virtue of being captured by the state (colonial and post-colonial alike), turned into legible and iterable categories, and deployed as a means to homogenize a vast array of practices.[18] Conversely, the informal belongs to a different domain. The informal belongs to the realm of improvisation: it has to be adjustable and not formalized. And as far as Africa is concerned, it does not hinge upon any definition of tradition.[19] Although it does not depend on the state for its existence, it nonetheless exists in a zone of contiguity with the state. Accordingly, in this dissertation, I sometimes use the idea of the formalization of the informal, by means of which certain informal practices are written into law. This will be clear in my discussion on the formalization of hyper-presidentialism in the recently approved Angolan constitution. An exceptional concentration of executive power that was deemed necessary during the civil war to circumvent the procedures of the parliamentary system has become the hallmark of the Angolan's third republic.[20] By this, I do not mean that the process by which certain procedures are turned into written laws contribute to their congealment into normativity. What I mean, instead, is that by writing down these processes a gap emerges between what becomes the written law and the reality that the law is supposed to normalize. So governance, and the administration of justice, in particular, is the mode of interpretation or conversion of law into reality. Above all, this is the domain in which techniques of informality are exercised. Certain social phenomena are not illegal because they collide with moral precepts. Rather, they are illegal because they are written in law as such. This framework allows as the think of the residue of the informal that unstably subsists inside the formal.

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[17] For a discussion on colonial customary law in Angola, see, for instance, Adriano Moreira, *Administração da Justiça aos Indígenas* (Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955); Mozambique was the Portuguese colony where the attempt to systemize custom into written law went further, however, this project was inclusive. For a discussion of such process, see for instance, Gonçalves, *Projecto Definitivo do Código Penal dos Indígenas de Moçambique,* and Gonçalves*, Mitologia e Direito Consuetudinário dos Indígenas de Moçambique*.

[18] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

[19] Tradition was during colonialism, and even today in certain postcolonial contexts, the hallmark of customary law arrangements. See, for instance, Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order*.

Ali Mazrui speaks of it in slightly different terms in his discussion of the relationship between constitutional change and cultural engineering in Africa. To articulate the ways in which states in Africa have harnessed forces outside the state, he writes:

> "In the political domain, Africa's worst evils are the danger of tyranny on one-side and the risk of anarchy on the other. Tyranny is too much government; anarchy is too little. The tyrannical tendency is frequently a centralization of violence. Anarchy is decentralized violence – often neighbor against neighbor. Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique and Liberia have experienced both centralized and anarchic violence."[21]

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[20] As in the French system, Angola starts a new political order everything a new constitution is approved. The first republic was socialist, and it went from 1975, the country's independence, to 1991, when MPLA-government and UNITA signed the peace agreement. The second republic (1991-2002) was characterized by multi-party democracy, albeit the continuation of war. The third republic, initiated in 2009 has been more characterized by the adoption of presidentialism. The features of this system in Angola, and its implication for an understanding of politics in Angola, will be discussed in (Part One, Chapter Three).

[21] Mazrui, "Constitutional Change and Cultural Engineering: Africa's Search for New Directions," p. 24.

I agree with the ways in which Mazrui conceives of violence through an interior/exterior relationship from the state point of the view. However, as far as Angola is concerned decentralized violence, which was the order in Angola when Ali Mazrui had probably written this essay (the essay was published in 2004, but it describes the country's reality that prevailed until the end of the civil in 2002) does not shut violence out of the body polity. Tyrannical and anarchical tendencies of the state coexist in the same order, since violence used by the state under the framework of sanctioned violence goes beyond what is legitimized. The National Police tend to do a great part of the work of administering justice, and, more often than not, detainees can spend so much time waiting for trial that waiting becomes the punishment for the crime itself.[22] Consequently, the resolution of conflicts involving private parties is most often left to the rules of "culture" or custom, on the one hand, or to the informal, on the other, as I have already shown in the killing of the taxi driver. But this is no less political. Law enforcement authorities are more concerned with political "crimes" – or what they classify as political crime, such as distributing flyers with anti-regime messages on the street – than with bringing to the courts the perpetrators of taxi driver's murder, whose story opens this introduction. Consequently, the state itself creates an anarchic interior where the violent subversion of law renders impossible the formation of a civic community. However, this anarchic interior serves the ends of the personalistic state.[23]

This brings us back to the body of the taxi driver and the story that opens these reflections on informality in contemporary Luanda. My contention is that the killing of the taxi driver is not an isolated act, even if not every such accident ends up in furious crowds killing the culprits. But when it does happen there is a "structure of the event,"[24] or a conflation of practices, whose interpretation may help us to make more general comments on social order and social structure in Luanda. In other words, my intention is to link the body of the taxi driver to the body politic, or the master signifier.[25] I draw on Deleuze and Guattari when they conceive of a regime of signs that "is not simply faced with the task of organizing into cycles signs emitted from every direction." They negate the idea that this correspondence is linear: "it must constantly assure the expansion of the circles or spiral, it must provide the center with more signifier to overcome the entropy inherent in the system and to make new circles blossom or replenish the old."[26] So the death of the taxi driver, taking place at the margin of the system, in a place supposedly exterior to the state, only makes sense in relation to the center of political power that emits the signal. As such, commenting on Franz Kafka's *Trials*, Deleuze and Guattari touch on something that helps illuminate what is at stake here: "finally, the face or body of the despot or god has something like a counterbody: the body of the tortured, or better, of the excluded."[27]

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[22] See, for instance, some of the conclusion on the judicial system in a work commissioned by the Presidency of Republic in Angola, Santos and Van Dúnem, *Luanda e Justiça*.

[23] A mild version of L'état c'est moi" (I am the state), a quote which has been famously attributed to Louis XIV, King of France, when the parliament challenged the enactment of some royal decrees.

The despot I am referring to by citing Deleuze and Guattari is not the modern state, if we agree with Weber's idea of the state as the "monopoly of the legitimate use of force."[28] Here I am referring to another force that not only predates, but maintains, to a certain extent, a relation of irreducibility to the *community*. I am referring to social structure, that which is permanent, almost perennial and immutable, in the conceptualization of British anthropologists, such as Radcliffe Brown.[29] To a certain extent, then, the state, in a number of locations in the world, is nothing more than a layer over social structure. Or to put it differently, modern state in many locations of the world has not succeeded in imposing over its subjects any "type of techniques of the body."[30] Foucault has seen in the "body of the condemned" the major institutional transformations in governmentality: "the modern rituals of execution attest to this double process: the disappearance of the spectacle and the elimination of pain.[31] For Foucault what is important in this transformation, from the seventeen century on, is that power, the command, was then subsumed in the procedures and functioning of social institutions such as the family, the school, the hospital, giving rise to what he calls "techniques of the self."[32] In brief, what becomes clear in this transformation, according to Foucault, is that power migrates from the outside, through punishment, to the inside of the subject under the rubric of reforming its mind and soul.[33]

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[24] Sahlins, *Islands of History*.
[25] By Master Signifier, I mean the instances of power from which order derives. Key to this formulation is Hannah Arendt's statement with Heideggerian overtones: "in politics, there is no way of distinguishing between being and appearance." So politics, as a master signifier creates it own conditions of possibility. See Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 94.
[26] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* p. 114.
[27] Ibid., p. 115.
[28] Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 1.

This statement by Foucault helps us also to see what is not the state in many parts of the world. In Angola, as in many places, in Africa, the modern state has never attempted to fashion citizens in the ways Foucault claims to have taken place in the West.[34] But neither has the community, or Hobbes's *Leviathan*, fully bequeathed to the state the right to kill. Esposito belabors this point in his very successful attempt to expand Foucault's concept of biopolitics.

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[29] Brown, "Social and Function in Primitive Society."
[30] Mauss, "Techniques of the body."
[31] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 11.
[32] See also Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.
[33] See, for instance, the chapter "docile bodies", *Discipline and Punish,* pp. 178-87.
[34] Achille Mbembe makes this distinction when he talks about the differences in terms of the techniques of subjectivation in colonial and postcolonial modes in Africa. "Colonialism was, to a larger extent, a way of disciplining bodies with the aim of making better use of them, docility and productivity going hand and

> "Contrary to much of what we have been led to believe, such a conception [biopolitics] doesn't concentrate the supreme power of killing only in the hand of the leader *[capo]* – as happens in classical dictatorships – but rather distributes it in equal parts to the entire social body. Its absolute newness lies in the fact that everyone, directly or indirectly, can legitimately kill everyone else."[35]

My broad point here is that the killing of the taxi driver belongs to the realm of the informal, rather than the customary. For this gesture is not authorized by the force of any cultural precept dictating that people should pay with their lives for the act of accidently taking other people's lives. Proof of that is the fact that it does not happen the same way every time such occurrences take place. As I have already said, the eruption of these forms of retributive punitive justice is hinged upon the confluence of a number of variables and is deprived of any structural regularity. In other words, violence in these terms is contextual, and expedient, but rooted, nonetheless, in the functioning and social dynamic of places such as Roque Santeiro market: a space, as I will demonstrated in Chapter Four that is simultaneously inside and outside the state. Coming to terms with these events may thus help us understand the fabric of the state in Angola, and particularly its manifestations in Luanda, since they allows us to see the link and the levels of integration and concatenation between state and society, which, for the sake of the argument of this dissertation, I call refracted governmentality.

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hand." In the postcolony, Mbembe argues subjectivation is tied up with the macabre and obscenity in order to produce obedience. See, "Aesthetics of Vulgarity," pp. 115-16.

[35] Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, pp. 110-11.

I use Luanda rather than Angola as a unit of analysis. Luanda is not only the country's capital, but it is also the dominant center of a highly centralized country. Local power in Angola is not formalized in the constitution or any other legal ordinance. That means that the President of the Republic appoints the provincial governors. Furthermore, in many places party leaders compete with the authority of those governors. This may explain the recent trend of coinciding the party's *Primeiro Secratário* (First Secretary) and the provincial governor in the same person.[36] When it does not happen the tendency is for dual governance, in which the ruling party's representative takes part in very major decision taken by the provincial governor. In this sense, Luanda is one of the few places where political activity really counts. [37] As the country is practically governed by Luanda,[38] the analysis of politics in the capital gives a good idea of politics in the whole country.

Argument and scope of the dissertation

This dissertation examines the relationship between informality and regimes of political authority. Since, informality here emerges in the context of a paternalistic state, I will devote particular attention to institutions such as family and the party in the context of the city of Luanda. As mentioned above, this link is here discussed in two moves, the first being one of disjunction, and the second one of junction. In the first one, the state is an entity seemingly autonomous from society. Angola is a rentier oil economy, which means that the state is not forced to extract tax resources from the citizenry. As a result, society has very few means to impose priorities on the ways the national resources are allocated. In this sense, state resources mostly tend to trickle down to society (to the extent that they do) in rather informal and indirect ways. The ruling party and the family are then the institutions that orchestrate the distribution of resources.

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[36] When it does not happen the tendency is for dual governance, in which the ruling party's representative takes part in very major decision taken by the provincial governor.

[37] Political parties, such as the UNITA (*União National para a Independência Total de Angola* – National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) or the PRS (Partido Renovador Social – Party for Social Renovation), with significant constituencies in other parts of the country (UNITA in the South and PRS in the East) spent the great part of the effort and resources in Luanda. Luanda is where it is located not only the only parliament (there is only the national parliament), the only daily newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*, published in the whole country, and the totality of the weekly newspaper published by the private press.

[38] For example, provinces do not collect taxes, and the items of the budget for the provinces are executed by the central government, through ministries. For the execution of the budget for education in a given province is executed by the Ministry of Education, through it provincial representation, and not by the government if this given province. For a discussion on the politics of Angolan budget see, for instance, Isaksen, Amundson, Wiig, and Abreu, *Budget, State and the People*.

The broader point I am trying to make here is simply that although entities such as the state and society are found in most forms of political organization across the world, the dialectical way in which this dichotomy functions varies from place to place. This is the context in which it is worth re-visiting Foucault's discussion of governmentality, which marks the origin of the modern state. And this is one of the instances in which the concept of governmentality has more critical purchase than that of the state, since governmentality is less a rigid concept, a description of a thing per se, but tells us more about the particular relationship between the state and a society in place. Foucault developed the concept of governmentality to buttress a critique of the *raison d'état*, whereby the state deploys the techniques of governance with an absolute end to attain. Foucault saw in the novel concerns over the population in the sixteenth century, a moment in history where a particular form of governmentality, the one that characterizes the West, came into being.[39] This idea of how to govern only took root in the wake of the publication of the essay *The Prince*, by Machiavelli. The contentious reactions to the thesis that espoused the unlimited power of the sovereign over the subjects originated a trove of works, which Foucault reads as defining a split in political theory: between the shepherd-flock game and the city-citizen game.[40] From then on, in Western political science, power becomes the capacity to govern as a means to fulfilling an end: *raison d'état* in stark contrast to other forms of governing, such as pastoral power.[41] The form of governmentality that Foucault unveils is that which includes in its functioning the imperative for the rulers to care for the well-being of the populations under their rule. Foucault argues that this is the root of the modern notions of welfare. Building on this concept, for instance, Partha Chatterjee makes a number of important contributions that allows us to apply of this concept to non-Western worlds. Chatterjee's point of departure is the Gramscian distinction between civil and political society. Whereas the former is the realm of "qualified life"[42], the latter is the domain of the population, or in the term coined by Chatterjee, the "heterogeneous social."[43] Chatterjee sees the applicability of the concept of governmentality in the way the state, through its agencies, incorporates the well-being of the disenfranchised populations who are not yet "proper members of civil society […] and not regarded as such by the institutions of the state."[44]

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[39] Foucault, *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*.

Furthermore, the concept of governmentality may more productively encompass those forms of state that traditional political theory has found difficulties to address. For the relationship between rulers and ruled is found in many locations and many historical times, even if the specific terms in which this relationship takes place are not universal. To understand the proclivities of power in Angola it is no longer enough to import the categories of personalized power conceived by Weber,[45] since a simple opposition between charisma and bureaucracy does not provide us with any critical purchase. Political power in Angola gets to a great extent its force by the ways in which a highly personalistic rule is inscribed into the bureaucratic apparatus. I will discuss this point at length in the conclusion, but for the sake of the introduction I will illustrate it with a few brief examples.

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[40] Dean, "Demonic Societies: Liberalism, Biopolitics and Sovereingty," p.42

[41] For an exhaustive exegesis on Foucault's thinking in regard of this concept, see, for instance, Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*.

[42] See, for instance, Arendt, *The Human Condition*; Agamben, *State of Exception*; Agamben, *Homo Sacer.*

[43] Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed.*

[44] Ibid., p. 38.

The importance of the census for the functioning of the modern state cannot be overstated.[46] However, in Angola, such is not the case. Since independence, Angola has not organized a single census (the last one was conducted in 1972, during colonial times). The first one will only take place in 2013. As such, any rational management of the population is formally impossible. Interestingly enough, an officer of the *Centro Nacional de Estatísticas* (National Center for Statistics), interviewed about the conditions for the realization of the census, said that he believes that now the census will take place since there is "political will."[47] He thereby suggests, in hindsight, that there were forces impeding the state from producing an accurate count of the number of Angolans. The question one should ask is less whether or not the failure to produce a number of the Angolan population speaks of the shortcomings of the Angolan state, and rather what kind of imagination is at work here. For this confusion, or the lack of specificity, has yielded considerable gains for the ruling party. The National Electoral Commission is the only institution that has national numbers, for the purpose of elections, via its control of the Database of the Electoral Registration. The problem here is that the Database is not controlled by an independent agency, but by the MPLA-controlled government through the Ministry of Homeland Affairs. According to a number of local observers, it is only in the context of a generalized ignorance of the size and the average age of the country's population that the ruling party may claim 4 million Angolans as effective members, and the read this as the basis for a mandate to govern.

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[45] Particular relevant to this discussion is the ways in which Weber opposes charismatic to institutionalized power. The more power depend on the charisma of the leader the weaker the institutions that give force to bureaucratic power. See, for instance, Weber, *Economy and Society,* pp. 941-56.

[46] See, for instance, Scott, *Seeing Like a State;* Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors.*

[47] http://club-k.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5534:angola-nao-realiza-censo-populacional-ha-40-anos&catid=2:sociedade&Itemid=174

These examples, forms of punishment that do not take place according to the written law, and statistics on the population that are not what they should be, speak of an exceedingly informal world. To understand a world such as this, I argue, we have to invert the concept of governmentality. I use the concept of refracted governmentality to conceptualize the techniques, procedures, and practices that link the categories of "state" and "society." My hope is that such an inversion allows us to include informality into state modes of operationality. I understand the coupling between state and society through the lenses provided by the work of the French anthropologist Pierre Clastres. In reaction to the debate over whether or not the crystallization of the state is the feature that distinguishes civilized societies from barbaric societies, Clastres construes a domain of the political outside coercion and violence – in response to the Weberian concept of the state. He then proceeds to explain the mechanism and institutions that the Savages have developed to halt the formation of the state, in what he also calls *society against the* *state*.[48] The point here is not to evoke similarities between Angolan contemporary political organization and savage communities.[49] For Clastres' critique of western societies, according to Claude Lefort, says less about the political organization of the Guayaki Indians and more about Clastres' anarchist proclivities and the debate in which he was participating (regarding Marxism, anthropology, and his vision of the construction of a more egalitarian society).[50] My hope is that using the notion of *society against the state*, "not as an ideal type, or as a rigid designator of a sociological species, but as an analyzer of any experience of collective, relational life,"[51] may illuminate some features of politics and social structure in Luanda. Here, to a certain extent, it is as if the morality of the groups, notions of economy and violence, the centrality of a chief in the political system (the president and, to a lesser extent, the party, as the master signifier) challenges the crystallization of the state. This is not different from what patrimonialists have said about politics in Africa, and specifically about their application of Weberian concept of charismatic power to Africa.[52] However, only through a concept such as *society against the state* does it become clear that the interior/exterior relationship of individuals to the state is what allows people, particularly those engaged in the affairs of the state, to speak from an exterior position. It was none other than the First Lady, Ana Paula dos Santos who, asked why her children attend the Portuguese school and not a public one, replied that "nobody should play with the education of children".[53] And the president, José Eduardo dos Santos has also famously said that in Angola "nobody lives off their salary"[54] – himself included, people added. These statements allow us to understand the institutionalization of informal practices that halt and foreclose the formation of the state. And, in Angola, if there is an institution that challenges the crystallization of the state it is the ruling party, the MPLA.

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[48] War, according to Clastres, is one of those institution that allows, on the one hand, the fragmentation of community into different groups, halting the process of concentration of power in the hand of one person (the chief), and, on the other, the constitution of alliances for the purpose of waging war against neighbors. Clastres, *Archeology of Violence*, pp. 237-77; See, also, Clastres, *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians*; Clastres, *Society Against the State*.

[49] I agree with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's reading of Clastres' *Archeology of Violence*, when he adduces that from a non-evolutionary perspective modernity does not surpass other forms of social and political organization but integrates them into its modes of systemic reproduction. See Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Introduction". But this is also a line of enquiry explored by many other scholars attempting to understand the modes of coupling between capitalism, pre-modern economic forms and the state. See for instance, Karatani, *Transcritique on Kant and Marx*. Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal, and Money.*

[50] For the influence of the French anarchist La Boétie on Clastres, see Lefort, *Writing*.

[51] Castro, "Introduction", p. 27

[52] See, for instance, Bayart, *The State in Africa.*

What I am trying to get at here becomes clear by juxtaposing the work of two French anthropologists who personally, theoretically and ideologically, could not be more at odds with each other: Pierre Clastres and Claude Meillassoux.[55] They were at the opposite ends of the political spectrum of the French left. Clastres was an anarchist who shows in his work a genuine commitment to demonstrate the historicity of the state (by provincializing the modern state, or by showing the extent to which the state is not an universal form of political organization); Meillassoux, on the other hand, as a Marxist anthropologist, shared the same interest in "savages societies," but located instead the savage, or the primitive, not in a zone of exteriority with the state (or the capital), but rather, in its interior. In other words, Meillassoux, as many other Marxist anthropologists, was interested in the extent to which the primitive subsists within the modern state, by looking at institutions such as the family, and the kinds of relations and modes of production irreducible to the logics of state and capital.[56] I use the insights of both authors to make clear two aspects of the Luandan's social dynamic. On the one hand, there is the centrifugal tendency of the system, by which political agents undermine the sedimentation of the state (when for instance social relation overrides the expected objectivity of the judicial system), and, on the other, the structuration of the relations within the state derives to a great extent from the language of institutions such as the family and the moralities that are implicit in it.

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[53] Ana Paula dos Santos, the first lady announced in an interview (1997) that the son of the presidential couple would be enrolled in the Portuguese School, "because of the law quality of the public educational system in Angola". See http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ana_Paula_dos_Santos

[54] dos Santos, *Discursos.*

[55] For an idea of those divergences, see, for instance, Clastres, *Marxists and Their Anthropology.*

It is not surprising, then, that the MPLA has adroitly used the language of the family to reinforce the bond between the state and society. Recently, a Portuguese scholar, Margarida Paredes, has noticed the frequency in which, even in formal communications, the ruling party has referred to its membership as the *MPLA family*. In an attempt to unpack this, Paredes suggests that it may come from the migration of the concept of the Methodist family (since many of the founders of the MPLA were Methodists) into the organization of the party.[57] I only partly agree with Paredes when she discusses the cultural fundament for understanding contemporary politics in Angola, but I believe that to understand the role of the intermediation between the state and society as conceived by the party, one has to look elsewhere: in the particular regime of relationality that the party attempts to forge between the state and society.

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[56] See, for instance, Meillassoux, *Maidens, meal, and money*. For an exhaustive discussion on Marxist Anthropology, see, also, Godelier, *Horizon, Trajects Marxists en Anthropologie*. The chapter on the concept of economic and social formation that deals with the appropriation of land by pre-capitalist states such as the Inca is particular relevant to understand how this anthropological school conceived of the relationship between savage community and the state.

[57] Paredes, "Deolinda Rodrigues, da família Metodista à Família MPLA," p. 13.

The notion of the party, or the kind of work that the party is expected to do, is linked with the question of representation, or which social groups the party represents.[58] It is sufficient to recall, for instance, that one of the most acute problems with which the Post-Fordist European Left struggled was the determination of the contours of the class the communist party represented.[59] Dealing with this *problématique*, Claude Lefort asked in late 1970s: "to which necessity corresponds to the proletariat the constitution of a party?"[60] To respond: "the party will not constitute itself as historical direction but only as the instrument of the revolution, not a body functioning according to its own laws but a provisional detachment purely conjectural of the proletariat."[61] In the Global South, where in the age of the revolution such vanguard forces as the proletariat could not be found, the party had to hinge its operation to other groups such as peasants, as in the China of Mao Tse Tung; or on the lumpenproletariat as in the Guinea-Bissau of Amilcar Cabral, because of a relative lack of industrialization.[62] In post-revolutionary contemporary Angola, where half the population is unemployed and where a great part of the income for many families comes from various illegitimate practices, which class and social groups does the party represent? What is the link between the single party and the population when most Angolans reproduce themselves outside formal settings? My provisional answer to these questions pertains to the level of informality that permeates the relationship between the party and society. And the language of family, or the language that structures expectations and obligations within kinship, is mobilized by the party as techniques of governmentality. Let me give two examples to make this point clear: one pertains to paternalistic authority; and the other to the incorporation of the poor into the channel of the distribution of amenities organized by the party as a way to stave off poverty.

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[58] For this question in Africa, see, also, Randell, *Political parties and the representation of social groups.*

[59] These questions were raised by a number of leftist theoretician. See, for instance, Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*. See, also, Lefort, *Éléments d'une Critique de la Bureaucratie*.

[60] "à quelle nécessité correspond pour le proletariat la constitution d'un parti," p. 32.

[61] My translation. In the original: "Il ne se constituira pas comme direction historique mais seulement comme instrument de la revolution, non comme corps fonctionnant selon ses lois propres mais comme détachement provisoire purement conjuncturel du proletariat," p 37

[62] See, for instance, Cabral's writing on social structure, See Cabral, *Unity and Struggle.*

First, in the wake of the *Arab Spring*, anonymous letters and blogs circulated to invite the population to gather on the night of March 27 to protest in favor of ousting president José Eduardo dos Santos. In contrast to the use of refined dictatorial practices, the recently approved constitution is very advanced in terms of its Bill of Rights. According to the constitution, the intention to organize a protest has to be communicated to the authorities, who do not have the power to halt protests. As from a legal point of view the protest was legitimate, no institution of the state, such as the Supreme Court or the National Police, could dissuade people from taking part in it. But the ruling party could. The MPLA then played the shepherd-flock card by saying what the population should or should not do – for its own sake. Party leaders made public statements threatening the population: "we will whip those who adhere to the protest."[63] In the same vein, two days before the date of the event, the party organized gigantic rallies in support of President dos Santos (with the requisite enticement of beer and T-shirts) in various cities of the country. Just in case, the MPLA also organized gangs to disperse protesters on the night of the demonstration. Only 20 people showed up, five of them journalists who were detained by the police, "for their own protection," i.e. on the grounds that they would be beaten up by the gangs.[64]

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[63] http://www.radioculturaangolana.com/noticias/politica-angolana/539-dino-matross-avisa-quem-se-manifestar-vai-apanhar-.html

Second, as I have already mentioned, Roque Santeiro market catered for the hundreds of thousand of Angolan who, flocking to the city, did not have any other way to make ends meet than to engage in the buy-and-sell economy. The ways in which the party/state has been dealing with requests of how to incorporate these populations into the formal consumerist society shows a slight change of the contract between the state and society. The destruction of the market may be better understood in the context of the debate that is going on in Angola on poverty alleviation. The government, for instance, has announced the implementation of a program, inspired by the Brazilian experience, called *minimum income*. The program intends to distribute financial resources to families in Angola, especially in rural areas, who live below the line of poverty ($2/day). The electoral purposes of this paternalistic approach to poverty reduction cannot be hidden. First, it will start in the year of the next election, in 2012. Second, while in Brazil, the plan is overseen by an independent agency (to preclude political interference), in Angola the plan will be controlled by the Presidency of the Republic itself. [65] My point is that this plan shows a major shift, first in terms of mobilization of the population, and second in terms of decentralization. In the former, we can see the attempt here to demobilize the population, by the expansion of the circuits of clientship that will no longer include the members of the civil society, but will also include those of political society. Second, the local administrations themselves are the state institutions purported to carry out this measure. This step, though, has to be seen within the framework of the decentralization of the country's administration. In this way, the administration of the country is decentralized (by allowing, for instance, the emergence of local power), but, at the same time, there is a new centralization in formation, since membership in the party will be fundamental in the ascription of this kind of support.[66] In brief, the ways in which the state asserts its authority through indirect ways, either by mobilizing the rhetoric of the family, or by organizing the distribution of means of livelihood according to political allegiance, is what I have been calling refracted governmentality, and it is the main feature of politics in Angola. Luanda, for being the iconic center of these processes, presents the best case for the study of this question in Angola.

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[64] Cardoso and Margoso, "Momentos do 7 de Março."

[65] MPLA, *Programa Social de Transferência Directa de Recursos Financeiros para a População em Situação de Pobreza Extrema.*

To break this argument down into chapters is not an easy task, especially because the kind of ethnography that I am doing here straddles a number of areas of anthropology that tend to be dealt with separately such as politics, economy, kinship, urbanism, and materiality. To develop an argument that moves from death and violence to publicity and intimacy, from the morality of community to the rules of the state and the making of the constitution, I will rely on a lesson from Bruno Latour. In his book, *We have never been Modern*, Latour comes to terms with a writing technique that moves between and across topics as diverse as economy, politics, the sciences, books, culture and religion.[67] He is primarily referring to his reading of newspapers, but he is also building on the style of ethnography that allows anthropologists to give exhaustive pictures of very complex systems:

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[66] I owe this insight to Mamdani. *Define and Rule.* Forthcoming 2011.

[67] Latour, *We have never been modern*, p. 9.

> “If an anthropology of the modern world were to exist its task would consist in describing in the same way how all the branches of our government are organized, including that of nature and hard sciences, and in explaining how and why these branches diverge as well as accounting for the multiple arrangements that bring them together. The ethnologist of our world must take up her position at the common locus where roles, actions, and abilities are distributed – those that make it possible to define our entity as animal or material and other as free agent; one as endowed with consciousness, another as mechanical, and still another as uncouncious and incompetent. Our ethnologist must even compare the always different ways of defining – or not defining matter – law, consciousness and animals’ souls without using modern metaphysics as a vantage point.[68]

In the spirit of Latour’s suggestion, my dissertation is not linear. My main goal is to ethnographically illuminate some intricacies of the urbanscape and social structure in contemporary Luanda. Being a dissertation on the relationship between political authority and informality in Luanda, I will divide the body of the text into three parts. The first part will examine the relationship between the production of urban space and the political system that is effective in Angola, with particular incidence to Luanda. Chapter One is a description of the decay of urban forms in Luanda, and the ways in which life in the city has been experienced as a crisis. Chapter Two is concerned with the various solutions experimented with by the government to solve the impending problem of urban crisis and decay. This chapter argues that what is going on in Angola shows the extent to which space has acquired a political dimension, by the ways in which urban land has been defined under the Land Law (2004) and the constitution (2009), which authorizes the government to create the "land of state reserve". Through this dispensation, the government has enormous latitude to clear areas of the city for the purpose of public interest. To understand the larger political implications of this political structural change, I discuss in the third chapter the process of constitution making. Here, I argue that the politics of spatial allocation in the city of Luanda, and in the rest of the country, may only be understood under the rubric of two other provisions of the constitution. The first one extends the executive powers of the president of the republic, and the second eliminates the direct election of the president of the republic by the population. My point here is to understand the politics of space in relation to the political logic that is in place.

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[68] Ibid., p. 15.

As the first part is concerned with the identification of the moment of disjuncture between the state and society, the second one is concerned with the description of the manners in which this disjunction becomes apparent. For such, I provide in the first chapter of this section (Chapter Four) a thick description of Roque Santeiro market, which, created in the mid-1980s, became the hub of the informal economy in Luanda. The point here is also to reflect on a structural change that took place in contemporary Luanda, where most components of the urban infrastructure set by colonial power to perform certain kinds of tasks are no longer relevant. For the city's waste dump to be transformed into a vibrant market, for instance, there was the need first for a local reconceptualization of conditions of livelihood by which that place could be occupied. In this sense, with the decay and deterioration of the urban fabric, the resulting crisis became the condition of possibility for the emergence of new forms of sociality, more adapted to the situation. For example, when infrastructural means of connectivity such as the telephone could no longer allow economic agents to conduct business at distance, Roque Santeiro became a privileged site for economic interaction, for allowing prospective buyers and sellers to conduct their businesses. In Chapter Five, I introduce the family of Makassamba, my key consultant for the fieldwork I did in Roque Santeiro. My aim here is to give a poignant example of the ways in which a number of Angolans live at the limit of formal link to the state. In Chapter Six, I describe the system of public transportation to provide another instance in which vital areas of the economy and political organization of the city take place outside any formal control of the state. The general argument of the third part is not to show the extent to which the state has become irrelevant in Angola. The point is rather to show how the state and society in Angola are more connected in informal than formal ways. In this vein, the Chapter Seven examines the imbrication of the party in society in two different ways. In the first one, it describes the informal system of circulation of music, set up by taxi drivers and other informal agents, to show the extent to which the party is dependent on these informal modes of publicity and public culture to build consensus among the population. And to end this section, I provide an exhaustive discussion of kinship and family. If the first chapter of the first part is about the physical forms of the city, this last chapter is about the substance that fills the city: forms of sociality. This chapter analyses the relationship between politics and kinship and explores how a particular configuration of family has become the dominant form of conviviality Luanda. This chapter intends to go one step further by providing a theoretical discussion on the question of kinship already alluded to in the second part of the dissertation. For such an endeavor, this chapter deals with questions of ideology. By discussing the novels of two “organic intellectuals,” namely Pepetela and José Eduardo Agualusa, I reflect on the formation and institutionalization of the “creole family." My point here is also to write against the grain of a number of studies of kinship relationships in Africa that tend to take categories such as kinship as perennial and immutable. I show not only the origins of this form of kinship, in the "creole society" of the end of nineteenth century, but also how this social formation has been transformed through the various ways in which the national bourgeoisie has emerged in the aftermath of a civil war that was characterized by massive social dislocation and the rapture of previous bonds. To finish, in Chapter Eight, I examine the imbrication of the party in society through a discussion of popular culture and music in Luanda. The attempt by the ruling party to control the informal insfrasctruture for circulation of music is here presented as an example of the ways in which the party has also attempted to control the population at the level of the uncounscious.

Luanda: field/home

As mentioned above, my intention in starting this introduction with a description of a violent episode is also methodological. I want to reflect on what it is to describe a process in which the ethnographer is an active participant. My point here is to conceive of violence as one of those instances that annul the insider/outsider relationship, and, from this standpoint, to make a couple of observations that may be relevant to the métier of the anthropologist in general. I have already noticed that my consultant at the market, Makassamba, did not summon me to Roque Santeiro as an ethnographer (he had called me often times as ethnographer: either to go with him to a funeral of a seller, or to see a piece of land that he was buying). He called me that day as a fellow countryman who could help him in a moment of distress. He was calling to someone he knew, who had already became part of his network of relations, and who could do something for him, by mobilizing his own resources and network. By describing this episode here I am also trying to go beyond some dichotomies on which the anthropological endeavor has rested, namely those of the insider/outsider, and the mythic field/home. Working on Luanda, a city that I have come to inhabit as a local and that is part of my coming of age and formative experiences,[69] presented me with theoretical and methodological problems that I can only reflect upon after the fact. To address the question of how it is to work in a familiar environment, it is important, first of all, to revisit the debate regarding native anthropology.

As colonialism served as the main institutional support for a great part of anthropological work (in Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world), it was understandable that the end of this long process had plunged the discipline into disarray.[70] In the soul-searching that then ensued one of the recurrent themes discussed was the question of native anthropology, whose ripple effects reverberated also in various other areas of mainstream anthropology. The larger question was on how to conduct fieldwork research in those parts of the world saturated by ethnographic descriptions that ended up being auxiliary tools of domination for colonial power. And this question was particularly crucial for a generation of anthropologists who, originally, were from these parts of the world. At stake was whether or not these anthropologists could produce objective account of their field sites. Unfortunately, this debate was prematurely put to rest without yielding a robust body of literature. And this was especially because, for a number of anthropologists coming from the Global South, such as Kirin Narayan, the native anthropologist could not claim any form of "authentic perspective," since, she continues, "a person can may have many strands of identification available, strands that may be tugged into the open or stuffed out of sight", that is to say that a native anthropologist was someone caught in a multiplex of shifting identities.[71]

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[69] I owe to my adviser Rosalind Morris the insight of moving away from identity and thinking instead of consciousness as material for ethnographic reflection. The question of consciousness was the kernel of a course on ethnographic imagination taught by Rosalind Morris at Columbia University, in the spring semester of 2009, in which I served as a teaching assistant.

[70] For the terms of this moments, see, for instance, Talal Asad, *Anthropology & the colonial encounter*.

The problem here, in Narayan's stance, pertains less to native anthropology per se and more to the notion of identity itself that is implicit in it. As Matti Bunzl has reasoned, "Pragmatically, this seems to solve the problem: No anthropologist is ever really native – minimally because she operates as an anthropologist seeking to represent other people, mainly because she inhabits multiple identities that confound any essentialization of native status."[72] But as Bunzl concludes, this explanation leaves the concept of difference untouched, since the terms of the debate are still the dichotomy between the anthropological self, and the native other.[73] In other words, the attempt to de-essentialize anthropological theory, by claiming that "cultures are not pure or homogenous; that subjectivity is never outside the discursive practice that constitutes it,"[74] ended up producing the same effect as that one proposed by essentialists – or the classical anthropology that put things the other way. Since, according to David Scott, they failed to ask questions about the epistemological conditions that allowed them to precisely address these types of questions.[75]

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[71] Narayan, "How 'native' is native anthropology?", p. 673. For an account of the diverse perspectives of this debate, see, Appadurai, "Putting Hierarchy in its place"; Abu-Lughod, "Fieldwork of a dutiful daughter"; Panourgiá, "A Native Narrative," as well as the various contributions of *Anthropology at Home*, edited by Anthony Jackson.

[72] Bunzl, "Boas, Foucault, and native Anthropology, Notes towards a new Boasian Anthropology," p. 436.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Scott, *Refashioning futures*, p. 17.

The way I deal with this particular question in my work in Luanda is to go beyond the insider/outside divide by problematizing the methodological tools with which I collected ethnographic materials on/in Luanda. My main reference in this regard is the point Clifford Geertz makes when famously discussing the relationship between culture and ethnographic observation. For him, culture has an eminently contingent character without which the concept of man cannot be understood.[76] Or, as he adduces: "believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."[77] I think through this in the fact that I am now writing on Luanda, where I was born and formed as a subject. The city here is then an object upon which I reflect. By this, I am not claiming any sort of emotional understanding of my fellows Luandans. But I do believe that having come of age is Luanda provides me a particular location from which I can simultaneously provide an account of the city and reflect upon this in as a local.

The recognition of this aspect, for instance, led me, primarily, to deal in a very strategic way with the process of collecting facts and insights in the field. For instance, more often than not, histories, proverbs, comments on Angolan politics were conveyed to me when I was not "working," but around family members. And this is even more relevant as the thrust of a part of my enquiry was on questions of social structure, kinship and family. As I was pursuing and asking questions about strategies used by members of given families I could not fail to realize that my own research was made possible by various members of my family who helped me not only out of family's obligation, but, more importantly, out of the calculation that helping me was a way to enhance the symbolic capital of "our family", in a social environment whereas individuals find their places in society determined to the importance of their families. The person who put this in the most emblematic way was my cousin Edson, whom I approached and asked to help me with the research on taxi drivers, since he is, himself, a taxi driver: "You know what, Toy (my nickname among my family), I will help you because the work you're doing is very good for our family."[78] In brief, the larger fact here is the realization of the extent to which my own "work" has become for those who helped me a sort of "work" intended to accrue symbolic capital.

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures.*
[77] Ibid., p. 5.

The second aspect is of a more psychological nature. Luanda is part of several experiences through which I came to better understand myself as a human being. Many stories that I narrate in this dissertation were experienced by me as by many other Luandans who happened to be in the places where those events took place. The breakdown of infrastructure that plunged the city into a crisis is part of my memory of growing up in a city in decay. And this has profound implications. I conceive of the space of the city as a language, not only in the way described by Michel de Certeau, for whom "the act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statement uttered,"[79] but also in terms of cognition. We learn a second language by using the native tongue as a basic structure. In this guise, Luanda is for me the template over which I became familiar with others cities where I have resided, namely Lisbon, and New York. Besides I have always being fascinated and intrigued by Luanda, since the city has always appeared to me with its hint of phantasmagoria, like a haunted place. And this feeling comes from the fact, as I narrate in the first chapter, that Luanda is a city that was abandoned by the population for whom it was built. I remember that in childhood we could still visit apartments in my building whose original owners had left furniture, books and pictures. In a sense, then, to have come of age in Luanda was reminiscent of occupying a house after being abandoned by the owner who has left in a hurry.

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[78] Private Communication.

[79] De Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, p. 97.

In this sense, if the materials related to Luanda that I use are mostly from my fieldwork, I believe that the presentation of them has to do with my memory of the place. In other words, the chapters are based on my own notes, on the formal and informal interviews that I conducted, but I have filtered my ethnographic materials through the consciousness formed by me living in Luanda. Furthermore, when I state that I infuse my consciousness into my writing, the point here is not to recycle any precept of dialectical materialism, according to which consciousness is the result of the material conditions under which individuals are socialized – but to ascertain the extent to which I am part of a community in which communicative acts take place, that end up shaping the consciousness of those who take part in it. Whether or not those participants can reflect upon the conditions of their situation is a question that does not demand my attention here.

Here, I am emphasizing the fact that I was exposed to Luanda long before I could have imagined that I would end up becoming an anthropologist. Luanda is one of those cities that have puzzled many writers and intellectuals who produced representations that have became, I truly believe, elements in my process of cognition and socialization.[80] In other words, the ways in which a given city is represented is also part of, in various degrees, the sensorial apparatus of those who inhabit or visit it. This question is of utmost importance for understanding the relationship between Luanda and the concept of *Angolanidade*, which has been defined by Mário Pinto de Andrade "as the language of the historicity of a people."[81] Angolanidade, then, is the cultural substance of the national form. If Geertz is right when he says that countries have to be created first so that the national individual can take shape,[82] Luanda is an apt embodiment of this assumption. In many ways, Luanda diverges from other cities of the country. Traditionally, it has always been the redoubt of detribalized populations. Portuguese was for the most part and throughout the last one hundred years the language of communication, and the cultural patterns cobbled together African and Portuguese elements. In an attempt to make sense of the ways those differences cast Luanda from the rest of the country, the Angolan critic and literary historian Mário António called the city *Creole Island*. António was heavily influenced by the theories of acculturation, propounded by the Columbia School of Anthropology, that were popularized in the Lusophone world by the Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre. His series of essays, Luanda *Creole Island*, commissioned by *Agência Geral do Ultramar* (The Portuguese Agency of Colonies), came at a moment in the history of Portuguese colonialism when it no longer sufficed to justify the occupation of Angola under political terms, but the language of culture had to provide a justification for colonialism.[83] In his writings, António's first gesture is to discuss the concept of creolity. He dismisses the primacy of the biological centrality of creolity, and opens up the way for understanding the cultural formation of Luanda. He calls Luanda a "cultural island" in the sense that the culture that was predominant there cobbled together in myriad ways Portuguese and Angolan aspects. And he then gives an examples of the forms of cultural integration in various aspects of Angolan life, namely in religions where catholic practices came to be fused with aspects of "black ethno-religiosity"[84]; in "human communication,"[85] where the Portuguese spoken in Luanda acquired a local tonality and was enriched by a number of vernacular words, and in domestic life, through the "need for the constitution of the family inter-racial basis that resulted in a intimacy of conviviality that contrived the principal of its Creole character."[86]

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[80] For a discussion of Luanda in literature, for instance, see, for instance, Macêdo, *Luanda, cidade e literatura.*

[81] Cit. Luis Kandjimbo, *Angola: etnias e nação*, p. 131.

[82] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures.*

However, it was not a coincidence that the question of *angolanidade* was being discussed at this particular juncture of the history of the country, when violent nationalistic claims had already been made in 1961. To placate the nationalistic fury, the strategic colonial response would hinge on two domains: the military and the social. In the first one, a vigorous military operation was carried out to obliterate the presence of the guerrilla movements from the territory. In the second one, a number of vicious colonial practices were relaxed. Forced labor, for instance, was abolished. Furthermore, among these measures were also some of more cultural leaning for the purposes of promoting *Angolanidade*. The point here was to show that the manifestation of local cultures was not inimical to the project of colonialism, but were, rather, a way by which different cultures could co-exist in a Portuguese whole, in anticipation of what could be a multicultural Portugal. This ideological framework then found its way in the fabric of the city.

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[83] See Mário António, *Luanda, "Ilha" Crioula*.
[84] Ibid., p. 29.
[85] Ibid., p. 32.
[86] My translation. In the original: "Numa sociedade onde, desde os primórdios, houve a necessidade de constituição da família em bases inter-raciais, é óbvio que nessa intimidade de convivência, como na mestiçagem dela resultante, se forjasse o principal do seu carácter crioulo." Ibid, p. 48.

The city of Luanda would then develop around two different poles: the Portuguese matrix that was at the apex of the cement city, and the slums for Africans, that were the cradle of *angolanidade*. To put this in starker terms, it is helpful to evoke the ways in which Ruth Benedict put forward her understanding of the integration of culture. The criticism that Ruth Benedict made of Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* may help us to understand what was at stake here. Benedict mentioned that the most valuable contribution of Spengler's work was less the discovery of the laws by which civilization have their life cycles, and more the "original analysis […] of constructing configurations in Western Civilization,"[87] by positing the destiny of the civilized men between Apollonian and Faustian tendencies. The first tendency is the one that produces laws and order, whereas the second one is the tendency that posits men in front of doubt and uncertainty and that drives men's actions toward the infinite. For what is relevant to understand the case of late Portuguese colonialism in Angola, the contradiction was less between Apollonian and Faustian tendencies, and more, in a Nietzschian way, between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Where the first were the bearers of colonial order, the crafters of the law and the builders of the city, the second were mostly Angolans for whom the concept of *Angolanidade,* in its cultural meaning, made sense. This order was destroyed with independence, in 1975, and Angola as a political entity could only be maintained by the enforcement and expansion of *Angolanidade* to the rest of the country's population, amidst an insistence and violent claim of these populations against the dominance of the creole population. From then on, the production of the national subject rested upon the inculcation of *angolanidade* into his/her mind.

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[87] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture,* p. 53.

Moreover, the Apollonian/Dionysian hypothesis is still valid to understand the division of labor between builders and inhabitants of the city in post-colonial Angola. As I have said Luanda was built for a population that abandoned – or was forced out of – the country by 1975 with the country's independence. And for the most part, as in many other colonies, Luanda has never had city planning school, or municipal departments endowed with the power to enact the design of the city and the determination of land use, without the interference of Lisbon. Things did not change after independence, where the expansion of the city, and the construction housing, freeways, dams, and other infrastructure have been to a great extent carried out by the Cubans, the Portuguese, the Brazilians, and more recently the Chinese. In other words, the transformation of the city follows a logic that does not have to do with any internal debate on space and land use. Political authority has imposed these changes without paying heed to what the citizenry thinks of them. In this sense, Luandans today are as empowered as those who inhabited the city during colonialism. The city, for the most part, is still thought by foreigners, even if Luandans claim rights to the city by the ways in which they build informal settlements.

I am attempting here to draw the lesson from my experience with urban violence in Luanda and to put it at the service of understanding the city through the consciousness that it projects onto its inhabitants. As my experience with violence that opens this introduction was meant to discuss the protocols of my participation-observation by showing that even not being physically present I was not less part of the occurrences of that day in the market. Makassamba, by summoning me to the market was appealing to me as a local countryman, a member of a particular cluster of social relations that could be mobilized so as to help him in that moment of distress. Concomitantly, the city of Luanda summoned me in different, but, nonetheless, significant ways. My memory and past experiences in the city may have drawn my attention as an anthropologist to very particular places, and to choose very particular classes of individuals to speak to. After all, what is a city, as Also Rossi would ask, if not that which remembers its own past, or collective memory?[88]

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[88] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*.

PART ONE

[*The City*]

CHAPTER ONE: THE COLLAPSE OF LUANDA AND ITS METAPHORS

> When I was born, Luanda was still using a melodious and beautiful Christian name: São Paulo da Assunção de Luanda. An old mulatto matron, she was proud of her ties to cities like Havana, Saint-Louis in Casamance, or São Sebastião of Rio de Janeiro. There were Brazilians, anyway, who came to its rescue when, in 1641, the Dutch took advantage of the Iberian distraction to occupy the São Miguel Fortress. I saw my city becoming African. I saw the proud buildings in Downtown —which the colonial bourgeois abandoned days before independence—occupied by the wretched of the *musseques*. I saw them (the wretched) raising chickens in the pantries, baby goats in the bedrooms, and starting little fires in the middle of the parlors with their libraries abandoned by the colonists. Later I saw these same wretched abandon the apartments in ruins, in exchange for fortunes (for some) or for nothing (others), being replaced by the newest urban bourgeois, or by expats paying their weight in gold.[89]
>
> **José Eduardo Agualusa**

In March 2008, a five-story building collapsed in Luanda, killing more than one hundred people. People saw the accident as the result of almost three decades of official neglect of Luanda's urban infrastructure, during which the city, once hailed by the Portuguese as a hub of modernity in Africa, was decolonized and squatted in by more than one million people. The surprise for most people was not that a building in the city collapsed in a matter of hours. The surprise was that the collapse did not take place in Quinaxixe Square, the part of Luanda that boasts the largest number of inhabited derelict buildings. This possibility seemed so self-evident that the most respected Angolan novelist, Pepetela, wrote a novel, *Desejo de Kianda* [The Desire of Kianda], in which he predicted that the buildings of Quinaxixe would fall, one after the other, to the astonishment of camera crews from all over the world who had convened in Luanda to record the tremendous event. Pepetela's prophecy did not fulfill itself, but this is not the main point of *Desejo de Kianda.* In this allegorical novel, the collapse of the city goes hand in hand with the escalation of the civil war. When UNITA lost the country’s first democratic election in 1992, the party abandoned the capital, and resumed the civil war for ten more years. Pepetela’s novel touches on something that I will demonstrate in this chapter: the collapse of the city has been produced less by the deterioration of physical infrastructure, and more by the social and moral decay that erodes the socialities without which physical infrastructure cannot function.

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[89] My translation. In the original: Agualusa, *Barroco Tropical*, p. 93.

This chapter is about Luanda’s urban crisis. My purpose here is twofold. First, I wish to provide a description of Luanda that lays the ground for the remainder of this ethnography. Here, I will not only discuss how the city came into being, but I will also examine how it has been transformed. Second, I will undertake an ethnographic description of the ways in which Luanda’s inhabitants have been coping with the city’s crumbling infrastructure and living amidst its ruins. By doing this, I anticipate the discussion undertaken in the next chapters on the transformation of the city. My main concern will be to examine the ways in which an economic problem was turned into a political one, through the making of a constitution that gives full power to the state over the use of land. In the aftermath of this process, the distribution of people over space tends no longer to be contingent on where people can live, but on where the government allows people to live. For, the concept of eminent domain embraced by the constitution annuls claims on land ownership by many of the poorest.

To make this point, I will divide the present chapter into four parts. In the first one, I will offer a personal history of an Angolan subject, my uncle António Andrade, and of his relation to the city, especially the building he has inhabited since independence. Here, I follow Walter Benjamin when he suggests that stories are materially embedded in the lives of those who produce and tell them in the form of what he calls "experience." The fact that I have known Andrade for so many years is not only what allows me to tell his story, but it is also part of my own "experience." The second move will be to understand the ways in which inhabiting Luanda has become a liminal experience for some many people. To this end, I will analyze the conditions that enabled Luanda's coming into being. The dynamic of colonial urbanism, as well as the challenges of postcolonial city planning will be addressed. Thirdly, I will describe the ruins that most of Luanda has become and consider how its inhabitants have coped with the harsh living conditions, conditions which, in many cases, are life threatening. Fourthly, I will briefly deal with the revival of the city geared around the valuation of oil in the global market, for it is the oil boom that has produced the vibrant real estate market in Luanda. What is important here is that although real estate speculation is clearly an economic question, the solution found by the Angolan government is, to a great extent, political. And this is paramount for grappling with questions of governmentality in contemporary Angola.

My uncle: a short story

In the rush to squat in an apartment in downtown Luanda, António Andrade may have run into those city dwellers, mostly white settlers, who were leaving the city for good in that dry season (from mid-May to mid-September) of 1975. It was the end of almost 500 years of the so-called Portuguese Empire in Africa, and those settlers were rushing from a country that would very soon be ruled by former guerrilla fighters. The contents of their apartments and residences, in the fantastic description by the polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski, were transferred from the "stone city to the inside of the wooden city," or the thousands of crates standing in the main downtown streets, or in backyards, waiting to be shipped to Portugal, Brazil, or South Africa.[90] I can imagine my uncle Andrade wandering amidst the debris of a civilization already past, through the remnants of this phantomlike city, to lay claim to a place in the cement city that had been built for settlers, or the people who were abandoning Luanda *en masse*.

A year before, in April, 1974, in Lisbon, the Movement of Armed Forces had staged a coup d'état that overthrew the *Estado Novo* regime, whose political cornerstone was the amalgamation of Portugal and its colonies in Africa. In late colonialism *Estado Novo* claiming to build multicultural societies in Angola, even if the practices by which it was pursuing this goal produced urban realities more akin to those of Apartheid's South Africa. The Portuguese colonial order in Africa was violently shattered by the bloody events in the North of Angola when two (until then) little-known armed groups, the MPLA, and the FNLA (Frente National para a Libertação de Angola – National Front for the Liberation of Angola) attacked prisons, in Luanda, and massacred whites and blacks alike.[91] Unlike other colonial powers, such as Britain and France that were decolonizing at this moment, Portugal sent hundreds of thousands of soldiers to partake in a protracted anti-colonial war in three of its five African territories, namely Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. Quarrels over the best way to fight the guerrillas in Africa, particularly in Guinea-Bissau, bred resentment within various factions of the Portuguese military itself. Conspiring to overthrow the regime was then seen as the only way out for a dignified end to the war without compromising the prestige of the colonial army.[92]

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[90] Kapuscinski, *Another Day of Life*. For a trenchant critique of Kapuscinski's literary license, see also Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands.*

[91] For a graphic description of these events, based on the archive of *Estado Novo*, Mateus and Mateus, *Angola 61.*

In the period between the Carnation Revolution in April 1974, and the signing of the Alvor Agreement in January 1975 (in Algarve, Southern Portugal), various colonial interests still believed that it was possible to cling to the territories in Africa. The model was Rhodesia, where the proclamation of independence had, for a period whose end was not yet visible, nonetheless allowed this country to be governed by settlers of European origin. However, when the military forces of three national liberation movements, MPLA, FNLA and UNITA were allowed to enter into the capital, the military and political situation deteriorated very quickly. When negotiations for a division of power among the movements reached a stalemate, it became clear that the strongest force would form the government of the soon-to-be country. And the strongest was the one that succeeded in clinging to the capital, Luanda, by expelling the opponents. By mid-1975, the situation in various Angolan cities was of open civil war. The Portuguese government abandoned Angola even before independence, and organized the repatriation of more than half a million Portuguese and a few thousands Angolans.

Andrade, then, was one of the million Angolans who squatted in the houses of the settlers before and after independence. And his personal story is a paradigmatic case of the ways the city was occupied, used and transformed; it followed the dramatic ups and downs of the country's recent history. In the early 1970s, in his late teens, Andrade was a promising long distance runner. After independence he proudly wore the colors of the country in Olympic games and marathons throughout the world. Before claiming his place in the cement city, Andrade was living in the *musseque* of Prenda with family members of unknown and untraceable blood relation. And then, with independence approaching, he moved to an apartment building in Coqueiros, a cozy neighborhood, only one block from the famous Marginal. That area of Luanda was flatteringly described by the soon-to-be Nobel prize laureate in literature, Gabriel García Marquez, in a visit to the country in 1976, as a "French Riviera" because of its sidewalks planted with palm trees in front of rows of glass buildings.[93]

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[92] For the description of the political social and military situation that that led to the Carnation, see, for instance the book published by general Antonio Spínola, governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese troops in Guinea, who would become the first president of Portugal after the Carnation revolution, in 1974. See, Spínola, *Portugal and the Future*.

Like many other Angolans, Andrade did not occupy only one apartment. He was young and unmarried, but he took four apartments. His estate in this building consisted of one apartment on the first floor, another one on the third, and two more on the fourth. Besides, he also controlled the little service rooms in the corridors, those spaces that colonial architects had designed for black janitors. Those cubicles, where a bed could hardly fit, would be in high demand decades later, when the city became a hub for speculators. Andrade would later on use these rooms to accommodate family and friends.

One of the reasons Andrade could amass such property was because he was a soldier and an athlete of CODENM (the then powerful military sports club), as well as a member of the ruling party, the MPLA. Well regarded by the political elite, a recipient and distributor of gifts in a culture of favors instituted by the single party, Andrade encountered no obstacles to leading the tenants' commission that oversaw his building. But things would change dramatically over the course of his life. As he aged, his physical energy was dwindling at the same pace as his political prominence. During these years, roughly from 1975 to 1990, from the years of socialism until the opening of the market economy, he gave away all three of the apartments that he had secured, but kept one on the first floor, which was a studio that he shared with his teenage daughter, Geni, born early in 1980. When Geni got pregnant, at the age of 15, Andrade swapped his studio for the two bedrooms apartment on the fourth floor.

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[93] Gabriel García Márquez, *Por La Libre*, p. 162.

The Angolan state never recognized the property rights and claim to title of the squatters who occupied those buildings. By the Law of Appropriation and Nationalization, enacted in 1976, the Angolan state became the sole proprietor of the entire urban stock.[94] In the first years of independence, amidst the significant supply of urban space, and in a context of the demonetization of the economy, those apartments were almost deprived of monetary value: they could be acquired, and exchanged, almost for free. But things would change in late the 1980s. Luanda would become the final destination for thousands of Angolans fleeing the lack of economic prospects in the countryside and for many foreigners coming to work. Urban dwellers, or the tenants of the state could still informally acquire apartments, as long as they could navigate the bureaucratic labyrinth of the Housing Board to get their names on the payment receipts.

Taking hold of those receipts so as to transfer the apartment to her name was the plan of Andrade's subletter on the third floor. The neighbor became close to Andrade's daughter who would invite her over. One day, when Andrade was out, she managed to sneak in, and stole the pile of receipts that Andrade kept in a drawer. A few days later, when Andrade was set to go to the Housing Board to pay the rent, he realized that the papers were not there. As he did not have any doubt about who might have stolen his papers, he went downstairs to his neighbor's apartment, and confronted her over the missing documents. She denied stealing them, an altercation ensued, and Andrade slapped her twice in the face.

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[94] Law number 36 of June 19, 1976, published by the Revolutionary Council.

Time went by, and Andrade decided to sell the apartment that his neighbor was occupying. One day, a young man came to his house, and told him that there were two potential buyers downstairs. Andrade went down to find those two men, well dressed, inside an expensive black car, probably an Audi, which in those years was one of the cars more likely to be driven by a minister, MP, or general. Andrade was invited to get inside the car, to listen their proposition. He acquiesced, and only after taking his place in the middle of the back seat, between the two men, did he realize that one of them was a general from UNITA, who had recently been integrated into the unified national army.[95]

The situation began to become eerie when the car stopped by Quinaxixe (in the center) to drop off the young man who had ascended to his apartment to invite him for the ride. Outside the car, night was approaching and the city was getting darker. All of a sudden, the men began to hit him. Andrade was beaten so badly that at the moment the car arrived at its final destination, Cacuaco, a satellite city of Luanda, he had lost his senses. He felt nothing when he was dragged outside the car to a secluded place, and, laying with his belly on the ground, shot three times in his back with an automatic rifle, an AKM.

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[95] Angolan peace agreement was signed in August 1991, in Bicesse, Portugal, and one of the terms was the integration of the UNITA army in the Angolan national forces. See Anstee, *Orphan of the Cold War.*

Almost miraculously, the bullets failed to kill Andrade. When he recovered consciousness, in the middle of a pitch-black night, he managed to drag himself to the closest village to get help. But first, he had to convince the people he found in the village that his appearance was not the outcome of an ill-done job – as it was a time when thieves were subjected to vigilante justice – but a failed murder attempt. He was then taken to the Military Hospital, in a pick up truck, where he would only be admitted after paying a *gasosa* (bribe money). Andrade spent several months in the hospital, but as soon as he was discharged he filed charges against his third floor neighbor and her associates. Nothing happened to her, since her material involvement in the affair was never proved. The young man who went to his apartment, however, was condemned to 15 years in prison, and died after 10. The general was never condemned, but he died a couple of years later, from natural causes. Today, Andrade still lives in the same building and to make a living, ironically, he is working for a group of Portuguese who lost property during independence and are trying to get it back.

Past inscriptions

To fully understand the living situation of Luandans or the extent to which many of them have been forced to cope with the deterioration of urban living conditions, a little detour has to be made here. Although urban living conditions in Luanda have deteriorated on account of postcolonial events – the civil war that drove millions of people to Luanda, and the laissez-faire policies which allowed people to indiscriminately occupy houses – the root of Luanda's urban deficiencies may be traced to the colonial era. Key to this understanding is how the city was planned. Contemporary Luanda was built around the opposition between a center, for settlers, and a periphery, for the large mass of Africans. To be more precise only the center, also called the "consolidated urban nucleus"[96] was planned. And the rationale for the various urban plans that were devised, and only partially implemented, was to expand the center further and further. The slums of the periphery were seen by the city's authorities less as permanent residential areas amenable to planning and the provision of services, but a temporary residential area to be cleared out and its population relocated to a space even further from the center.

In terms of layout, Luanda is a young city, whose configuration only began to acquire its contemporary shape in 1946, with the construction of the Port of Luanda. The construction of this vital infrastructure signaled the affluence brought to the colony by the rise in value of coffee in international markets. Furthermore, this affluence also enabled the expansion of the rail and the road systems. As the economy diversified, becoming progressively more tertiary, Luanda became the administrative and economic center for the whole country.

One of the oldest cities built by Europeans in Africa, Luanda was founded in 1576 by the Portuguese captain Paulo Dias de Novais. *Cidade de Assumpção de São Paulo de Luanda*, as it was baptized, was geographically a bay punctuated by a number of islands, such as the Island of Luanda and Mussulo, that housed some fishermen's communities.[97]

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[96] Magalhães and Gonçalves, *Moderno Tropical*, p. 31.

[97] For the earlier history of Luanda, see, for instance, Castro Lopo, *Angola do Passado*.

This part of the country was administratively a subdivision of the Kingdom of Congo, but Luanda was given to the Portuguese, who were searching for gold in that part of Africa. Although precious metals were never found, the Portuguese very soon found other products that would drive the growth of the region: slaves. For the next three centuries, the slave trade was the motor of the colonial economy in Angola.[98]

Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the city grew thanks to the expansion of the interests of the military and religious apparatus. Forts and barracks to protect the city from attacks of other colonial powers and pirates, as well as establishments of many religious orders – such as the Jesuits – came to dominate the layout of the city. Luanda fell to the Dutch in 1641, after they seized the northwest of Brazil in 1620 and needed direct access to a source of slaves. Proof of the overwhelming importance of Angola in a world economy dominated by slavery is the fact that it was from Brazil, and not Portugal, that a powerful fleet departed to liberate Angola in 1648. From then on, the economy of Angola would be a subsidiary of the interests of Brazilian slave owners until the times of the abolitionist campaigns in the Atlantic that prompted the end of the slave trade.[99] As the slave economy would be so ingrained in the fabric of the city to the point of becoming its *raison d'être*, the decline, and then the abolition of the slave trade, unsurprisingly, constituted the primary cause for its initial demise. With the abolition of slavery in Angola, in 1856, a great part of the white population left the territory, which fact would plunged Angola into a crisis that would last almost a hundred years, until the mid-twentieth century – with the construction of the Port of Luanda.[100]

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[98] For an extraordinary account of the capitalism and slave trade in Angola, see Miller, *Way of Death.*

[99] For a discussion of the Brazilian interests in slave trade in Angola, as well as the abolitionist campaigns, see, for example, Alexandre, "Portugal e a abolição do tráfico de escravos."

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the organization of the city had not changed much since the time of its foundation. The city was roughly divided into two sections, the *Cidade Alta* (Higher City) where the edifices of political, military and religious powers stood, and the *Cidade Baixa* (Lower City), which was primarily the residential and commercial sector. Both sectors were within a perimeter demarcated by Brito Godins Avenue, which imposed the limit to the east – the direction toward which the city would expand in the following decades. In the late period of slavery, and throughout Luanda's decades of crisis, one of the most important social developments was the ascension of a local bourgeoisie consisting largely of creole families that dominated the political, economic and cultural life of the colony. Many of them, such as Dona Ana Joaquina, had made a fortune during the slave trade, and left architectonic marks on the layout of the city. Others had business in agriculture, and since the colonial law of this time prohibited white settlers from going to the hinterland to negotiate directly with the indigenes, this class was an important intermediary link between colonizers and colonized. Furthermore, members of the creole society were also instrumental for Portugal in the so-called war of occupation – during the scramble for Africa – under the obligations assumed by Portugal at the Berlin Conference, regarding the vast territories that this country claimed in Africa. As recompense for these services, a number of those Angolans received land in Luanda, in the form of *Sesmarias* – by which the King distributed land to his subjects for exchange of, or compensation for, services[101] – , which was a vital instrument for effective occupation and domination by Portugal in America, Asia and Africa. As such, until the first quarter of the twentieth century Africans could not only afford to live in the city but were also landlords, deriving a great deal of their income by renting residences and commercial establishments.[102]

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[100] Amaral, *Ensaio de um Estudo Geográfico da Rede Urbana de Angola*, p. 74.

Until those years, Luanda was expanding at a very slow pace. To provide an idea of the state of public works, it suffices to say that running water was only installed in 1889, and electric power as late as 1939. And these improvements only benefited very restricted parts of the city. The need to improve living conditions in Luanda came as part of an overall debate about the best way to turn the colonies into a profitable venture. The context in Portugal was the end of the monarchy and the proclamation of a liberal state in 1910, which toyed with the decentralization of the administration of the colonies. Meanwhile, a very ambitious High Commissioner, Norton de Matos, was sent to Angola in 1912, where he laid the ground for a modern colonization project. Like Lord Lugard and other colonial officials of the time, de Matos believed that a new civilization was taking shape in the "South of Africa, like the other that was formed in the North of America, [which] will seek hegemony in all the continent."[103] To fulfill such an endeavor, the Portuguese had to "fixate our race in the African soil that belongs to us with the highest intensity, so that the qualities of endurance, resistance to distress and untamable courage [...] give it a Portuguese imprint."[104] This understanding of the novel role that Africa should play translated into the first major interventions in the city.[105]

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[101] Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*, p. 119.
[102] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 210.
[103] De Matos, *A Província de Angola*, p. 12.

These interventions were motivated by perceived need to segregate the urban population according to race and class. They occurred when the city was afflicted with smallpox epidemics, in a process that has been identified and written about regarding other places in Africa.[106] Entire neighborhoods such as Coqueiros and Ingombotas were razed and their inhabitants, mostly blacks, relocated beyond the center of the city, or the *cordon sanitaire*. These areas were seized from their native owners, who were dispossessed of their property by the publication of decrees, such as the one of November 11th, 1911 which stipulated that "Africans could occupy patches of this land [in the city], but this occupation could not give them property rights over this land". Little by little, Luanda became increasingly segregated in a manner famously construed by Frantz Fanon: "the colonial world is a compartmentalized world."[107]

The relationship between Portugal and its territories in Africa was changed when a *coup d'état* ousted the liberal government, giving the leadership of the country to António Salazar, who became President of the Council (Prime Minister) in 1932. Salazar terminated the liberal experience of autonomy of the colonies, by integrating them into the (definition of the) Portuguese nation. The purpose for such an arrangement was to use the colonies to overcome the archaic underdevelopment of Portugal.[108] Angola and Mozambique increasingly became reserves of cheap labor and markets for goods produced in Portugal, especially textiles and wines. For instance, to guarantee that African natural resources were exploited with minimal investment, the 1933 Native Law stipulated that natives could be conscripted to work for almost no pay in public works.[109] Furthermore, other legislation prohibited colonial agents from buying manufactured products other than Portuguese ones, and prohibited entrepreneurs from creating industries that could compete with those in the mother country.[110] In this way the circle was complete: the Portuguese would extract resources in Angola by way of a very modest investment, those resources would go to Portugal to be transformed, and then the resulting finished goods would be exported to the colonies for sale.

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[104] Ibid., p. 12.

[105] For a discussion on Norton de Matos and his project of modernizing Angola, see, Afonso da Fonte, *Urbanismo e Arquitectura em Angola: De Norton de Matos à Revolução.*

[106] See, for instance, Curtin, "Medical knowledge and urban planning in Tropical Africa"; Bissell, *Urban design, chaos, and colonial power in Zanzibar.*

[107] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 251.

To put in motion this economic scheme an important movement of population had to take place. On the one hand, the natives were dispossessed of the best lands, which were given to white agriculturalists.[111] This left the natives with three main alternatives: migrate to neighboring countries such as Congo, where the Belgians paid better wages; become part of the growing rural proletariat;[112] or move to the cities in pursuit of better income opportunities. At the same time, the Portuguese recently arrived in Angola as a result of the *Estado Novo*'s campaigns to attract settlers to the colony, ensued that the white urban population also grew dramatically. To get an idea of this growth we may note that the white population in Luanda was approximately 9,404 people in 1940. This number grew to 21,018 in 1950, then 55,567 in 1960 and finally 123,226 in 1960, which means that a growth rate of 56.52%, 123.5%, 164.3% and 127.1% respectively took place in each of three decades.[113] To attract these people to Angola, the colonies had to offer living conditions comparable to those in the cities of Portugal. And after 1961, when the national liberation struggle began, the formation of white cities in Africa became an important Portuguese asset against the claims of the nationalist movement. At stake was the idea that the Portuguese were building multicultural societies in Africa.[114]

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[108] For a discussion of the relationship between Estado Novo's ideology and colonialism, see, for instance, Alexandre, "Ideologia, economia e política."

[109] There was no difference between public from private work. Colonial administrators under this law recruited thousands of Angolans to work in the coffee fields and diamond mines. For a description of this process, see, for instance, Ferreira, "A lógica da consolidação da economia de Mercado em Angola, 1934-1974." For an overview of labor practices in Africa, see also Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; O'Laughlin "Class and the customary."

[110] Oliveira, *Memórias de Africa.*

[111] Wheeler and Pélissier, *História de Angola*, p. 205-6.

[112] By rural proletariat, I mean peasants who were wage earners.

In practice, however, the distribution of whites and blacks in the city followed, to a great extent, racial lines. Against the backdrop of the vast majority of studies conducted in Portuguese Africa – paid for by colonial institutions, and policed by censorship –, the Portuguese geographer Ilídio do Amaral lamented that, contrary to the propaganda of *Estado Novo*, Portuguese cities in Africa were missing the opportunity to become "laboratories for the fusion of races, where whites and blacks could harmoniously integrate themselves, around the same ideal: humanity."[115]

It was to compartmentalize people and to distribute them around the spaces of the city that urban planning took root in the organization of Luanda. A reading of the orientation of the various colonial city plans shows that Luanda was conceived in the guise of a planned center, called a "consolidated urban nucleus."[116] This nucleus was surrounded by unplanned shantytowns, locally called *musseques*, that were "real midden, without sewage, water, or electricity, [and] without paved roads."[117] For Fernando Mourão, who has written extensively on the history of the city, this is the moment when Luanda became a white city: "not only for the growth of the white population, but also in terms of their occupation of the city's physical space." The 'cement city' becomes predominantly white comparable to the '*musseques* city'."[118] Furthermore, what Mbembe writes in the context of the urbanization of Johannesburg may also be applied to Luanda: the "rationalization of relations of production (…) and rationalization of the social sphere" would become part of the master plan itself.[119] As far as Luanda was concerned, this rationalization meant that the city was designed so that the urban center could benefit from the cheap labor of the people who lived in the outskirts but close enough to commute to the center.

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[113] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 83.

[114] The Portuguese used the idea of the Brazilian Anthropologist Gilberto Freyre who had extensively written on the plasticity of the Portuguese, instrumental for the alleged formation of a racial democracy in Brazil. Although it was a theory, also known as *Luso-tropicalismo*, easily debunked by the facts of racism in Brazil, Estado Novo did not hesitate in using this as a way to circumvent the pressures to decolonize Africa. For the theory of Luso-tropicalism, see Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*. For the application of the theory of Luso-tropicalism, see, for instance, the travel notes taken by Gilberto Freyre throughout the Portuguese empire in Africa, Freyre, *Aventura e Rotina*. For the reception of Freyre's ideas in Portugal, see Castelo, *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo.*

[115] Amaral, *Ensaio de um Estudo Geográfico da Rede Urbana de Angola*, p. 85.

Colonial urban engagement in Africa has been largely presented as a merely technical procedure intended to find the best ways to rationally distribute space. Against this, Gwendolyn Wright has shown the extent to which colonial administrators and urbanists perceived the connection between politics and culture as "complementary techniques or strategies for asserting power" over the colonies.[120] In a different vein, William Bissell, based on the history of urbanization in Zanzibar, demonstrates that the effectiveness of urban plans to modernize African cities was problematic, since the process of developing, approving and implementing those plans was chaotic and produced more harm and disorder than order.[121] Both points of view open important questions for understanding the challenges of bringing social order to Luanda through planning. It is true that only a very small fraction of the plans proposed to organize Luanda were implemented. However, those parts that were transformed, cleared, and organized, were subjected to a particular vision of culture and politics, which ordered the city by demarcating a space of order and a space to colonize by urban design. Reflecting on the colonial city, Bissell argues that a number of contemporary African cities deal with the legacy of colonial city planning by reflecting more and not less colonial order: "in cruel irony, many Zanzibarians now look to the British and admire their alleged designs, when it was precisely colonialism that laid the uncertainties and disorderly foundations of the present."[122] And this is also true in Luanda. Moreover, contrary to Zanzibar and other places in Africa, where the interventions of colonial urbanists were almost superficial, Luanda was conceived as a *tabula rasa*, a city that had first to be destroyed so that a new one reflecting the planners' idea of social order could come into being.

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[116] Magalhães and Gonçalves, *Moderno Tropical*, p. 31.
[117] Amaral, *Ensaio de um Estudo Geográfico da Rede Urbana de Angola*, p. 59.
[118] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 309.
[119] Mbembe, "Aesthetics of Superfluity," p. 37.
[120] Wright, *The politics of design in French colonial urbanism*, p. 8.

To a great extent, Luanda was planned according to the principles set out by the modernist school of Le Corbusier. As has been amply demonstrated, the kind of planning that Le Corbusier propounded conceived of space as an empty slate. In Le Courbusier's planning theories, which influenced a number of schools of architecture and urban planning, the plan should not make, as James Scott adduces, any “reference to the urban history, tradition, or aesthetic tastes of the place in which it is to be located.”[123] Commenting on Le Corbusier’s planning projects, Scott perfunctorily adds: “the cities depicted, however striking, betray no context; in their neutrality, they could be anywhere at all. While astoundingly high construction costs may explain why none of these projects was ever adopted, Le Corbusier’s refusal to make any appeal to local pride in an existing city cannot have helped his case.”[124] Nonetheless, if Le Corbusier’s more delirious plans may not have ever been realized,[125] but they influenced many more effusive planners.

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[121] See, for instance, Bissell, *Urban design, chaos, and colonial power in Zanzibar*.
[122] Ibid, p. 252.

While the history of urban planning in Luanda does not start with Corbusian urbanists, they nevertheless left their imprint on the city. As late as 1944, the Ministry of Colonies created the office of Colonial Urbanization, based in Lisbon, with the mission of managing “the execution and urban design of the colonies.”[126] One of the ideas of the Office was to give a “Portuguese” stamp to the development of African cities, by relying on architects and urbanists trained in Portuguese schools. Among the many detractors of the office were those, such as the writer and colonial official Henrique Galvão, who derided the project as being “unrealistic on account of the distance between Lisbon and the colonies.”[127] This may partly explain the astounding number of projects commissioned by this Office that were deficiently implemented or not implemented at all.[128] It was not until the end of the 1950s, and particularly after the beginning of the national struggle, that the Office was decentralized through the creation of different branches in the Portuguese territories of Africa. Difficulties in implementing some projects pertained to the interests of the mother country, which, as we have seen, intended to conflate the development of Angola with the survival of *Estado Novo*, and clashed with the interests of the colonists in Angola themselves. There was a small group of colonizers who were born in Angola who felt a stronger emotional link to Angola than Portugal. As colonial laws discriminated against the Portuguese born in Africa, many of them became the most ardent supporters of a progressive autonomy of Angola from the mother country. [129]

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[123] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 104.

[124] Ibid, p. 104.

[125] Like Le Corbusier’s projects for the URSS. See, for instance, Starr, “Le Corbusier and the URSS.”

[126] Milheiro 2009, p. 80.

[127] The Office for Colonial Urbanization would change its name to Office of Overseas Urbanization, after the Constitutional Revision of 1955, which changed the legal status of the African territories, after which were no longer designated as colonies, but overseas territories. Magalhães and Gonçalves, *Moderno Tropical*, p. 30. Founded in 1944, and operating through 1974, the Office, with different designations would always have its headquarters in Lisbon. See Milheiro and Dias, “Arquitectura em Bissau e os Gabinetes de Urbanização Colonial,” p. 84.

The first urban plan, the Urbanizing Plan for the City of Luanda, was designed by the French architect Étienne de Groer and David Moreira da Silva. The former had authored a number of projects in Portugal, including the urban plans for cities such as Lisbon and Sintra. For Luanda, the duo presented a plan in 1942 intended to prepare the city for the threefold growth of its entire population – largely through the arrival of new contingents of settlers. This was to be accompanied through the expansion of the urban fabric on the East side of the city. But, as this proposal allegedly hurt private interests, its implementation was scaled back. Groer and Silva's plan was followed by another one, in 1947, the General Plan for Urbanization of Luanda, this time proposed by the Office of Colonial Urbanization in Lisbon, which was a significant revision of the previous plans. From one to another the same areas and zoning were maintained, as well as a zone for the expansion of an African city, beyond the Senado da Câmara, which was formally know as the frontier of the asphalt – or the line of separation between the asphalt city and the *musseques*. One of the few innovations of this plan is Alvalade, an affluent neighborhood, surrounded by a "large green area, to a certain extent a protection zone."[130]

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[128] For a chart of the projects for Guinea-Bissau that were not implemented, see Milheiro and Dias, "Arquitectura em Bissau e os gabinetes de urbanização Colonial," p. 86.

[129] Portuguese laws discriminated between the whites born in Africa and those born in Europe. Until 1940, Portuguese born in Africa were legally classified as 'second-class.' This explains why, for instance, settlers born in Africa sought at least economic autonomy. Industrialization was one of the areas in which the interests of Angolan settlers and Portugal clashed. Lisbon's official position even during the last decades of colonialism was to halt Angola's industrial development, so that Portugal could act as re-exporter of raw material produced in Africa. Colonists in Angola diverged on this matter, and by the early 1960s colonialist lobbies had successfully overturned legal sanctions on industrial growth. For a brief discussion on industrialization of Angola, see Oliveira, *Memórias de Africa*.

The plan of 1952 opened a new area for the expansion of the city at the South, by removing the railroad that cut the city in two, as well as the Emilio Carvalho Airport that stood in the center of Luanda. Further, this area belonged to an important agricultural company that started to sell lots of land as soon as the their value rose on account of the speculation that in the following years drove the urban expansion in Luanda. Five years later, the Regulator Plan was realized and is now considered by a number of authors to have been the quintessential plan of the city. Indeed, it was the first plan realized by Luanda's branch of the Office for Colonial Urbanization, and was produced by architects and urban planners who lived in Angola and who were thus attuned to the interests of the local bourgeoisie. Innovative techniques were used to realize this plan, such as photograms taken from the air.[131]

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[130] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 312.

[131] Ibid.

This plan left an indelible mark on the layout of the city. It was designed by a cohesive group of architects, profoundly influenced by Le Corbusier's modernist school. Their impact was important and is still visible today in a number of buildings. These architects –Silva Dias, Castro Rodrigues, José Pinto da Cunha, and especially Vasco Vieira da Silva, author of the Regulator Plan – were central to what historian of Portuguese architecture José Manuel Fernandes has called the *African generation*.[132] Trained in architecture and urban planning schools in Lisbon and Porto, these architects were motivated by a desire to develop grand projects. In Luanda, they founded an aesthetic council with a mission to pursue as much as possible a purely "urban conception of the city,"[133] within the City Hall: very likely another teaching by Le Corbusier, who advised his followers, as much as possible, to infiltrate municipal services.[134]

The possibility to work in an environment where architects and urban planners could "deforest, build and modernize"[135] - the motto of *Estado Novo* for Africa – was coterminous with the vision of this school of architecture that conceived space as a blank slate. However, they were more architects than urban planners in the proper sense of the term. And this is visible in the overall layout of Luanda. By the early 1960s, real estate became one of the soundest ventures for investments. The result was the densification of the urban fabric in the center by a number of very narrow streets flanked by high towers. Or, as Ilídio do Amaral has put it, "the more expensive the lot for urban construction the highest is the interest of the builder in augmenting the number of floors to guarantee intensive use and promote the means for a faster amortization."[136] A possible explanation for this state of affairs is the fact that those architects who were public servants at the City Hall also worked for private ateliers and, more often than not, were called to approve the construction and oversee the projects they had helped design.[137]

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[132] Fernandes, *Geração Africana.*

[133] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial Através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 313.

[134] Le Corbusier, *The Athens Charter*.

[135] Fernandes, *Geração Africana*, p. 16.

In terms of urban design they would also emulate Le Corbusier's "fondness for demolition-based schemes."[138] Le Corbusier's modernist school emphasized zoning, because "it was of course vastly easier to plan an area zoned for a single use than one zone for several."[139] In the Regulator Plan, for instance, Vasco da Costa conceived of the construction of a vast recreational area beyond the Senado da Câmara Avenue which subsequently found a stringent resistance from the interests around the Industrial Association of Angola. But typical African huts that characterized the architecture of much of Luanda were not afforded the same treatment. Those huts were destroyed and their dwellers were moved to beyond the Senado da Câmara Avenue, as I have remarked, the stark line that marks the frontier between the asphalt city and the *musseques*. Futhermore, one of the main innovations of the 1957 plan was the anticipation of the construction of a city – the *Residential Zone for Indigenes* – for the indigenous population that lived on the south of the city, where the new airport was also to be built.

My point is that although these plans were only partially implemented, looking at them comprehensively gives us a clear idea of how the city was imagined, the amount of planning that was executed, and the subsequent challenges to contemporary Luanda that they produced. For instance, although the *Residential Zones for Indigenes* was never built the affluent Alvalade was constructed. Also, an innovative solution was proposed to simultaneously link and separate both sections. This area had two functions: on the one hand, it protected Alvalade for the rest of the city, since Alvalade was mostly an upper end residential neighborhood – with virtually no sidewalk, it was not intended for pedestrian traffic. On the other hand, pedestrian paths cut through the green zone, allowing people to reach the neighborhood from faraway places. Albuquerque Mourão, for instance, hailed this solution as revolutionary, since it allowed people to reach the center of the city by foot. However, the inspiration for this solution is clearly Le Corbusian, as demonstrated by the reading of Vieira da Costa's project for a satellite city in Luanda. Long before moving to Luanda in 1949, da Costa presented the project to earn his degree at the University of Porto, right after an internship at Le Corbusier's atelier in Paris. What he then proposed was not very different from what he would then execute in Luanda:

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[136] Amaral, *Ensaio de um Estudo Geografico da Rede Urbana De Angola*, 56-7.

[137] Fernandes, *Geração Africana: Arquitectura e Cidades em Angola e Moçambique, 1925-1975*, p.18.

[138] Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

[139] Ibid, p. 134.

> "It is the work of the European to induce in the indigenous needs for comfort and a more elevated life, in this way impelling him to the work that will force him to settle, and that will ease the acquisition of a more stable pool of manpower. Housing spatial orientation and the location of indigenous neighborhoods are the two major elements that should dictate the composition of a colonial city. (…) In this way, we have preferred to situate the indigenous settlements surrounding the central nucleus, trying carefully to locate them leeward of the European housing, which will still be isolated by a green corridor, large enough to not allow mosquitoes to cross it. It is indispensable, from a hygienic and social point of view, that indigenous populations will form various dispersed groups, which, as little satellites, will encircle the European nucleus, in such a

> way that each nucleus will be served by an indigenous group. In this way, we shorten the [indigenous'] distance from work to the residence [For the indigenous worker]."[140]

This is how contemporary Luanda came into being. The city was conceived "radiocentrically" so that the "consolidated urban nucleus" expanded by destroying huts and other urban forms, and pushing the poor further out, a fact which illustrates the contempt Le Corbusian modernists had for slums.[141] And this is self-evident in Quinaxixe Square itself, the center of the center. An immense statue of a Portuguese heroine, Maria da Fonte, occupies the square. From where she stands, four large avenues cut the city in the direction of the four cardinal points. When it was built in the early 1950s, the square was located at the far north end of the urbanizing city. It pointed to the North as if signaling the direction of the conquest of disorder by order. In the next decades, a line of buildings constructed on the Avenue of Combatants expanded to the Senado da Câmara the 'asphalt frontier'. In the middle of the square, the architect of the city left his mark: Quinaxixe Market. Built in 1952, the Quinaxixe Market, "a manifesto of modernist architecture"[142] was probably one of the biggest buildings ever built in Angola. And the influence of Le Corbusier was imprinted on it. The building was a solid structure, in the form of a box, occupying the whole block. The building was supported by thin pillars (or *pilotis*, in Le Corbusier's jargon), lining the entire outer edge of the galleries. The exterior arcades were punctuated by inbuilt stores, which, by casting a zone of shadows, may give the impression that the building was suspended. The market, properly speaking, was a set of open-air galleries, with ten meters-high wall slats, or "vertical elements in concrete that simultaneously provided its ventilation and shadowing."[143]

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[140] See Magalhães and Gonçalves, *Moderno Tropical*, p. 31.

[141] See, for instance, Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, p. 116. For the aversion of Le Corbusier to slums, see, Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, p. 116.

[142] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 314.

Ruins/Collapse

Today, Luanda is a city haunted by its colonial past. Key to this is perhaps the disjunction between the functions that underlie the forms in the times of their construction and the functions that are given to those forms now. To walk today through certain parts of Luanda gives a certain experience of phantasmagoria very akin to the one that Walter Benjamin found in the ruins of Naples, which he deemed a "transiency of empires."[144] The decay of Naples for Benjamin had something allegorical because of its irreducibility to the architectural forms that were triumphing all over Europe. The arcades of nineteenth century Paris, to which Benjamin dedicates his most important life's work, had been incorporated in the modernist design of buildings in Luanda. The decay of Luanda may also be decoded in such allegorical terms. Likewise, the center was conceived to have a vibrant commercial life. But here arcades have been tropicalized: they are open to the city. As in the Quinaxixe Market, buildings are supported by *pilotis* so as to form shades protecting passers-by from the irradiating sun with space for in-built-in stores. Even if a number of those stores had been refurbished and operated normally, a great number of these spaces are in ruins. Today, a number of those arcades are simply showcases of the infrastructural problems that afflict these buildings: water leaking and parts of the structure at the verge of collapse.

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[143] Magalhães and Gonçalves, *Moderno Tropical*, p. 212.
[144] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, p. 24.

Proponents of grand scale architecture are moved by the desire that houses may be designed in anticipation of a variety of uses that their dwellers may give them. Paul Rabinow says that "utopian schemas for regulating a functionally organized whole, once unmoored from the metaphysics of representation, would provide elements and techniques for later non-utopian schemes of power, knowledge, society, and space."[145] Theorizing the relationship between the permanence of form, and the formation of subjectivity, De Certeau has proposed a new theoretical constellation: "in the technocratically constructed, written, and functionalized space in which the consumers move about, their trajectories form unforeseeable sentences, partly unreadable paths across a space".[146] This might have been so during colonialism where colonizers found their own ways to subvert the rigor of the modernist forms. But it is even more the case for contemporary Luandans who, by manipulating the city-form, have created a totally new grammar of the city.

Most dwellings in Luanda were built for colonial clerks, mostly the Portuguese that were working in Angola as part of the economy of services that supported the primary sector. Those people formed a young demographic, most of them as young couples, or unmarried men and women. The housing in the "urban consolidated nucleus" was meant to reflect this demographic. António Andrade, as noted above, was young and single, when he occupied the apartments in the building in Coqueiros. But this was not the case for most people who moved to the apartments downtown. Entire families, sometimes including as many as three generations, occupied apartments meant for far smaller households. Those new dwellers brought the styles of life they were used to in the

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[145] Rabinow, *French Modern,* p. 17.

[146] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xiii.

musseques to these places, modes of living that were at odds with the ethics of those for whom those places had been built. The open corridors that modernist architects had imagined would solely be used as passages from the building galleries to the apartments, to provide air circulation, were transformed into common yards, where neighbors would cook, and sometimes raise domestic animals. As such, if those apartment buildings had initially been to segregate Africanness and keep it outside the center, the *musseque* would strike back after independence. Since life in most Luandan apartment buildings is similar to what Benjamin experienced when visiting Naples he compares the communal life of this European city to an African Kraal: "what distinguishes Naples from other large cities is something it has in common with the African kraal; each private attitude or act is permeated by streams of communal life. To exist for the Northern European the most private of affairs, is here, as in the kraal, a collective matter."[147]

What urban dwellers did to accommodate the increasing number of people in their household is simultaneously a case study in both the limits and the potential transformation of architecture. Those verandahs, designed to allow sunlight to enter the room, were often transformed into extra rooms, covered by walls, sometimes made of bricks and cement, or in some cases by wood and corrugated tin. In almost every terrace full-blown apartments were built using the same kind of materials. The cubicles in the large corridors, and in the galleries of the buildings, to be used by janitors to store their maintenance materials were transformed into miniscule apartments, often shared by a few people. When the elevators stopped working, since the technicians were among those half million people who left the country, people used the shafts as garbage bins. When the garbage invariably piled up to the higher floors of those buildings, dwellers cleaned it up and cemented the shafts altogether. Today, only a handful of the buildings in downtown Luanda have functioning elevators.

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[147] Benjamin, *Reflections*, p. 171.

What made things worse was that from 1975, the year of independence, to roughly 1990, Luanda added very little new construction. The exception is maybe the few hundred buildings constructed by the Cubans; although they slightly increased the city's housing stock, they did nothing to improve life in the city, since those buildings did not have amenities (such as running water), and were built in neighborhoods worst affected by lack of urban infrastructure (including sewage and draining systems). Moreover, during this period Luanda's population was increasing. First, since the high natural birth rate had doubled its population around this period; second, the demise of agricultural production, and, more importantly, the civil war, brought millions of people to Luanda.

These factors together progressively worsened living conditions in Luanda. Buildings are physical structures meant to support a certain weight during a certain period of time. However, the excess weight to which those apartment buildings were subjected took a heavy toll on them. Moreover, there was also the general breakdown of an already weak infrastructural network, without which those buildings could not "function" the way they were designed. Most of them, for instance, have no running water. Dwellers do two things to access water: they can pay one of thousands of homeless boys to haul buckets of water to their houses; or, if they have money, they can install a cistern downstairs linked to a motor-pump to bring water to their taps. Needless to say, water leaking from the walls and ceiling is not conducive to the conservation of these buildings, in so far as it has raised the levels of humidity, which has corroded the cores of their foundations. Distribution of electricity has also been problematic, which has driven dwellers to seek different solutions, all of them, again, threatening the integrity of these buildings. Candles, and especially oil lamps, used during the frequent power outages have put many buildings in danger of fire. More recently, since the population in general has become more affluent, people have taken recourse to the use of powerful generators, whose intense vibration is certainly the cause for some fissures that have crept up the walls of these buildings.

One of the Angolan writers who has best captured this feeling is the novelist Pepetela. In his already mentioned book *The Desire of Kianda*, he conflates two forms of crisis: the post-electoral crisis of 1992, (when UNITA lost the first multiparty elections organized in the country since independence, rebuked the results, and resumed the civil war), and a fictional urban crisis, when the buildings of Quinaxixe start to collapse, one by one, with no apparent reason. The first to collapse is the building of the Lagoon, and here Pepetela seems to be in conversation with Vieira's *City and Childhood*.[148] In *City and Childhood*, Vieira reminisces about episodes of his childhood, marked by the erasure of nature, the forest, and the lagoon of Quinaxixe, which was drained so as to allow the construction of high-rises, roads, and so on. In Pepetela's novel, Kianda, the divinity of waters, a goddess who lives in the Lagoon of Quinaxixe, plots the destruction of those infrastructures so as to free the waters repressed by the concrete structures, and bring back the lagoon to the city.

Pepetela builds up the plot of his novel around the not-so-stable foundations of the buildings of Quinaxixe – as the metaphor for the not-so-stable foundations for the

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[148] Pepetela, *O Desejo de Kianda.*

Angolan postcolonial reality. For those infrastructures to be put in place the Square had to be constantly drained. And now, as the Angolan government has not paid due attention to these issues, groundwater has accumulated again in the last years, which turns the novel by Pepetela into a sort of premonition. The situation of these buildings is so deteriorated that people are not guessing whether or not they will collapse, but which one of them will collapse first. Water has taken the best of the foundations of those building, and cracks may be spotted everywhere. The Cuca Building, for instance, the most ambitious of the complex in Quinaxixe is a case in point: an imposing fifteen-story building, with exterior walls covered by bright and luminescent blue tiles, it was never inhabited before 1975, since, although the construction was almost finished, Portuguese engineers failed to drain the waters that were creeping up in the soil. After independence, hundreds of people squatted in the building. By 2000, life in this building had become a study in human resilience. Water ran freely over the walls, leaving a green trace of mold on them; in some parts of the structure, the humidity had already eaten away the walls revealing water pipes and electric cables. On the other side of the Square was a building in even worse shape: the Building of the Lagoon. This construction was literally on top of the lagoon, and, unlike the Cuca Biulding, it was unfinished at the time the Portuguese left the country. It is also a towering structure, still in red brick, with no doors or windows, but sheltering also hundreds of families. The building does not have banisters, and over the years children and drunks alike have died.

Surprisingly enough, none of these buildings has collapsed yet. In fact, the only building to fall thus far has been the headquarters of the infamous Criminal Police (known as the DNIC). For Luandans in general, and for political authorities in particular, the collapse of the DNIC was an indictment of the state of Luanda's infrastructure. Newspapers, especially the weekly *Semanário Angolense*, dedicated a considerable amount of space to stories on other buildings on the verge of collapse. It was as if people expected the city to collapse altogether. I was in Luanda then, just starting my fieldwork in the Roque Santeiro market, and I had an intuition that the significance of the fall of the DNIC went far beyond urbanism: it touched on questions that I was interested in, such as the economy of emergency. It has been a long time since the inflation rate hit 3,000 percent in Angola. During the period of hyperinflation, the exchange rate fluctuated wildly every day, and the value of salaries (paid in Kwanzas for public workers) depended on how fast workers could redeem Kwanzas for dollars. Sometimes it was only a matters of days before the money would lose its value altogether. But even today the urge to get money can be a matter of life or death for most Luandans (the story of Andrade, for instance). So when the DNIC building fell, it was as if in the public perception, the value of life and the value of money had been conflated. Everyday, I went to ground zero to see the place being cleared and to listen to what people were saying. When the debris were covered by corrugated tin sheets, I heard by-standers saying that the National Police were just secluding the area so that they could rescue the millions of dollars, diamonds, and cocaine hidden in the safes of DNIC. I also heard a woman saying that the collapse was God’s punishment for the ignoble things that had that happened in that building.

Indeed, this building was one of the last to be finished when the Portuguese were about to pull out of the country. It was a brand-new hotel that Agostinho Neto, the first president of Angola, decided to convert into a dungeon. From 1975 onwards, thousands of the so-called “enemies of the revolution” were detained, persecuted, tortured, and sometimes sentenced to death there. Cuban military engineers repaired the building so as to accommodate two more underground floors to which they would transfer the detention cells. Any colonial engineer familiar with the proclivities of Luandan soil would not endorse this project. Part of Luanda, and not only the area of Quinaxixe, is swampy. The Portuguese would only urbanize this part of the city, Rangel, after painstakingly planting thousands of eucalyptus trees, not only for construction purposes, but also for the sake of draining the area, which would reduce the habitat of malaria carriers, the mosquitoes, breeding in the water environment. However, after independence, on account of the shortage of electricity and cooking gas, people would harvest these eucalyptus trees to burn and make charcoal. Consequently, the increase of the levels of ground waters made buildings in the area more vulnerable.

Among the people observing the work of the relief team, at the DNIC site, someone remarked on the dexterity of Cuban engineers for successfully carving out two underground floors in such a small space. Over time such an intervention did not seem like a good idea. There were numerous signs that the construction of the underground floors had further weakened the building’s foundations. There were a number of cracks in the walls, and it had been reported that the first basement was flooding. During a period of time in the rainy season, prisoners on the lowest floor were immersed in filthy water up to their waists. However, no action was taken. On the night of March 30, 2008, the building collapsed amidst the agonizing screams of the detainees. Of the more than 100 people who died, most of whom were women, detained for petty crimes, such as stealing cell phones, or even selling (food and produce) on the streets.

It is not an easy task to convey a form of political economy that would account for these regimes of expenditure – or for death as a form of excess as Mbembe has suggested following Georges Bataille.[149] In most anthropological undertakings, these forms of life have been explicated under the rubric of non-negotiable subjectification, a process whereby the subject irrevocably surrenders himself to power or capital.[150] This may hold true in many contexts, as in the case for the hundreds Angolans who died that night in the underground cells of the DNIC building: they were detained in those cells against their volition. But for a significant number of Luanda's inhabitants, the everyday negotiation of liminality is itself a means by which the life of the city is experienced. For a significant number of Luanda's inhabitants, dealing with the urban environment brings out a certain disregard for or indifference to human life. Interestingly enough, those forms of debasement of life to which people are subject are often, if ironically, self-inflicted. It is true that the lack of housing has driven people to risky solutions. But it is not less true that some people inhabit liminal lives out of greed, and, sometimes, sheer madness. Life for many Luandans is reminiscent of the life of subhuman species in the science fiction films: people eking out a living in undergrounds, circulating in decrepit, humid, and fetid places, oblivious of the death that may come any time in the form of crumbling concrete.[151]

To be able to describe these forms of life ethnographically, I started regularly visiting that part of the town to interview its dwellers when I read in the newspapers that one of Nelito Soares' buildings could be the next to collapse. Indeed, no place offers a better case to understand imminent collapse and negotiations of liminality than the complex formed by five buildings, with twelve apartments each, distributed in six stories, located in the Municipality of Rangel, in the neighborhood of Nelito Soares, not very far from the former DNIC building. This housing project, built in the early 1970s, signaled a shift in Portuguese urban policy, when the housing for Africans started to also take on the form of vertical construction. And the size of these apartments does not leave any doubt that they were intended for large families: almost every apartment has three bedrooms. Those buildings were erected very quickly, since the Portuguese were applying a recently developed South African technique of pre-fabrication, that consisted in erecting an iron structural grid, built elsewhere and assembled in the place, which would then receive a thin layer of cement. As for many other buildings in Luanda, those were only inhabited after independence, when the Housing Board distributed the keys for these apartments to a number of its clerks. Now, 42 families (roughly 250 people) live there. Time has eaten away the cement that covered the building. The aspect of the walls, with large holes, through which the rust iron structure is visible, is reminiscent of a putrefying animal. In the first floor, where the signs of decrepitude are most prominent, industrious tenants have tried to repair the damages. Parts of the iron structure have been welded to pieces of tire rims. As almost everywhere in Luanda, water was probably the key cause for the deterioration of this complex.

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[149] Mbembe, "Necropolitics," p. 15.

[150] For the second case, see, for instance, Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*.

[151] This is the atmosphere of the novel by José Eduardo Agualusa whose action takes place in 2020. See Agualusa, *Barroco Tropical*.

Dwellers would go long stretches of time without running water, forcing people to fetch it outside the building and then carry it over the metallic structure. However, worse than the lack of water was its sudden appearance: water would start running from the taps with such pressure that pipes would explode, creating leaks, sometimes in parts of the steelcasing. So now, with the walls eroding in most parts, some corridors have only the steel casing left. There are no more stairs, no more banisters, and, in some parts, not even a floor. Talking once with a group of residents in front of the building, I was told the story of D. Filomena's accident, which took place one day when she was hanging clothes in the corridor. The floor beneath her feet collapsed, and she miraculously saved her life by hanging on the wires. In the most deteriorated part of the buildings, the outer walls, which hold the bathrooms, have collapsed. From the streets, those bathrooms, one stacked upon the other, some hidden by curtains, and others not, can be seen, as if the whole building had been longitudinally cut open for an architectural demonstration, intending to simultaneously reveal the interior and the exterior of these apartment buildings.

As in the case of Andrade, nobody had owned these apartments, although they may have paid rent for over thirty years. Such was the case, for instance, of João Paulo. He was given an apartment in one of those buildings in the mid-1970s, when he was a young clerk at the Housing Board. After proving to him that I was not an undercover policeman or an envoy of the people interested in evicting him from that area, he showed me a bundle of receipts to prove that he has never defaulted on the payment of his rent (in case I was not who I said I was, he also showed me his MPLA membership card). But it is not only out of necessity that those dwellers are living under such conditions. Nobody in this complex wants to leave their apartments. A couple of years ago the tenants were approached by a developer, certainly one of those investors acting for people in power, to leave their apartments for a total price of 1,000,000 dollars to be divided among 42 families. In addition, they were offered a house in Zango, a social and urban development project, where the government relocates squatters cleared from the state reserves. There is justice in the squatters' reasoning here, for it is not fair for them to be relocated to a place, Zango, that is situated 30 kilometers further from the city's center than the place where they were born, and for which they have paid the rent for many years, especially because they would have to live alongside squatters who have never paid rent. But there is also greed in this story. The houses they live in do not have any value; once they leave, the building will be bulldozed. But this patch of land, which can be the location for a factory, or a Hotel, is worth a great deal, especially in the Angolan prices inflated by the oil economy. But to get that money, which they believe they deserve, they have first to bet with their own lives, by sticking around under such unsafe conditions.

Specular economies

The paradox of Luanda is that the decay and deficiencies in the provision of amenities (water and power, for instance) does not prevent it from being the most expensive city in the world in term of cost of living.[152] The paradox between the premium put on the production of value and the disregard for human life has been poetically, and powerfully, described by the South African writer Michael Cawood Green. The risk of dying as the result of mine collapsing was something lived as an almost permanent foreboding for mine workers. It is true that Green's description refers to sinkholes and accidents in the mines of South Africa, as the formation of capitalism in that part of the continent.[153] But most Luandans are not exempt from having also to bet their own lives and their means of livelihood against the valuation of the space they inhabit. For the construction of Luanda, in its modernist rendition, was itself a bet on the hope that those who benefited from it would be better off than those who did not.

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[152] According to Mercer consulting: http://www.citymayors.com/statistics/expensive-cities-intro.html.

Luanda, in this regard, was a city built in the anticipation that the investment would pay off. Land value skyrocketed and agricultural land was converted into urban development projects even before the arrival of significant contingents of settlers, from 1960 onward. But value was not only a property of space. Value was also a property inherently attached to the production of the subjectivity of those who would occupy these privileged zones of the city. The city, built around the 'cement-musseque' disctinction, was meant to dramatize the distribution of bodies throughout the urban space. So the main point here was not only that settlers were given the best areas of the city. It was that only the best areas of the city were equipped with the amenities that are required for the realization of urban life: running water, electricity, paved waters, hospitals, proximity to the workplace, public gardens and so on. So even if class was not rooted in racial difference per se, the simple fact of the distinction between those who could take advantage of those amenities and those who could not, would be enough for class differentiation.

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[153] Green, *Sinking.* I owe this insight to Rosalind Morris, especially for her discussion on the relationship between crime and accidents. See, Morris, "The mute and the unspeakable: political subjectivity, violent crime, and the sexual thing" in a South African mining community."

To fully grasp the investment of the city builders on how the urban environment would mold its inhabitants, it suffices to evoke the Count of Monte Cristo, in the novel by nineteenth French writer Alexandre Dumas. Becoming the Count of Monte Cristo, as the old man instructs the young in the dungeon of King Louis-Philippe of France, is a transformation more profound than finding the treasure hidden on a secluded island; it concerns above all mastering techniques of the body: learning how to inhabit the body of the Count of Monte Cristo, how to speak and behave like him. So for the Portuguese coming from recondite villages, the poorest places in Europe, from houses with no electricity or built-in bathrooms, the built environment of the African cities was the means by which they would become colonizers. For such an end, the city planners had to choreograph the crucial difference between living in the center, the cement city, and in the periphery, the *musseques*. Briefly, the place where people resided in the city would become a great part of who they were.[154]

In this sense, the city is a *habitus* (Bourdieu), or, to use a different metaphor, an overcoding machine (Deleuze and Guattari), which replicates subjects through the relation they entertain with the built environment. In Luanda, those lucky enough to have come of age in the center went through a process that to a great extent differentiated them from the others. They could aspire to a better quality of life. They had schools and hospitals in walking distance from their houses. They spent less money on electricity and water. For example, according to Alain Cain, referring to a study conducted by the NGO Development Workshop, "the water market showed that, ironically, *musseque* residents were paying up to 10,000 times more for water from the private sellers than the well-to-do were paying for treated water piped to their household taps by the provincial water company."[155] And this study only refers to money, without considering the vast amount of time that *musseque* residents – especially school-age children and adolescents – spent to fetch water.

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[154] This point has been shown by a number of Africanist scholars, see, for instance, Garth Myers, *Verandahs of Power*.

Prices for buying and renting space in Luanda have risen in a way that almost replicates the ups and down of the only product that supports the Angolan economy: oil. However, the relationship between oil and real estate in Angola is more complex. It is true that in times of bonanza the demand for space in the city drives prices up. But it is not less true that Luandans in general have absorbed a kind of consciousness that derives from oil. As the "devil's excrement" oil has the effect of providing to the nationals of the country that live off it the impression of value production outside the realm of labor.[156] Luanda, as we have seen, was for a great part squatted by people who came from the *musseques*. For many years, those houses only had use-value. Now that the space in the city has became scarce, and those houses costs many hundreds of thousands dollars, the impression a number of Angolans have is metaphorically to have found an oil well.

In this way, a number of Luandans have found ventures for businesses that yield them profits without the investment or labor. Or, to be more precise, living off rent has allowed a number of people to de-link labor from income. For the most part, however, this has been the only way to have access to services that are not available in Angola. Take, for instance, the case of Mr. Lemos, a clerk at the Banco Nacional de Angola (Angolan National Bank), who I interviewed in August 2008. He owns a residence in

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[155] Cain, "Housing microfinance in post-conflict Angola," p. 367.

[156] Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State;* Watts, "Oil As money: the devil's excrement and the spectacle of black gold."

Bairro Azul, which has been rented, while the apartment he shares with his daughter and son was given to him as a clerk at the Bank. What Mr. Lemos makes a bank clerk and teacher at a private college is enough to meet his family ends. The proceedings of the residence allowed him to pay the college fees of his sons in Portugal (where he has also purchased an apartment). Furthermore, the money from the rented house has also allowed his daughter to pay for the expensive treatment for her serious health complications, which force her to spend long stretches of time in Lisbon.

To understand the question of the value of real estate and how this informal sector works, I followed two informal real estate brokers. The first one is Abrãao, who could be found everyday in Quinaxixe Square, at a spot between the Cuca building and the Building of the Lagoon, in front of the new branch of Banco de Poupança e Crédito. The other one is Agostinho, whom I met through a friend who was looking for an apartment to rent. The work of these agents consists primarily in visiting dwellers in a section of the cement city, from Mutamba to Quinaxixe, to offer them his services. If the owners of the apartments are interested in renting their spaces, the agents seek clients for them, in exchange for a commission of 10 percent of the contract. Whenever a client seeks him out, he takes that person to visit those apartments.

Any one of the crumbling apartments, some of them simply in ruins, can be rented for $1,500/month, at least. The tenant has to advance a year or two of the contract. Furthermore, tenants are responsible for repairs, either because they have to undertake them in order to make those places livable, or because they are forced to under the contract. At any rate, this provision ends up guaranteeing the improvement and conservation of many of these buildings. In some of these buildings, where more affluent dwellers have rented apartments, there are already functioning elevators. Those interested contribute to its repair and keep the keys. One of the most interesting phenomena of the transformation of these structures is that within those ruined luxury apartments may be found the most delicate and exquisite decoration.

If the real estate business is booming, it is partly due to the indirect investment the Angolan state is making in this sector. Major clients are oil companies, and according to the term of the negotiation between the Angolan state and the oil companies, the former pays for the costs of maintenance of the expatriate labor force. Thus, oil companies will not look at prices when it comes to finding places to accommodate their workers.[157] Furthermore, this system has been replicated in many other areas of the economy, serving as the template for the fixation of a foreign labor force in the country.

Abrãao is left with those clients who do not have the means to do business directly with the rental agencies. And the terms of business are always murky, even for he who knows the labyrinthine complications of the Housing Board. He is trying to legalize the ownership of his family house, a couple of blocks south from Quinaxixe, in a street where a number of owners have already sold their houses, for prices not less than $1,000,000. Those houses have been demolished and in their places high rises are springing up, such as the Hotel Skyna. Selling is always easier than renting, since sometimes tenants may refuse to leave, or may find ways to change the title of ownership of the houses they have rented (as Andrade's tenant once attempted).

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[157] José Cerqueira. Private Communication.

I learned these realities first hand when I looked for Abraão to help me to find an apartment. We went to visit a couple of places, and then we landed on this one studio apartment, in Mutamba. I met the owner, who was sharing the apartment with three or four other young women. The owner set the price at $1,000 a month, on a six months contract. On my way out, I met other brokers with other clients, and at least one of them was from a real estate agency. The next day, I got a phone call from the owner, to undo the agreement. Later, I talked to Abrão and he said that people in Luanda only reluctantly rent their places to Angolans, who more likely will know how to navigate the bureaucratic system and grease the palms of the bureaucrats at the Housing Board. Or this may also be a trick of the owner so as to not have to pay for the intermediary. In most cases, if the owner does not have to pay the commission, they may simply talk directly to the prospective renter, which exposes the precariousness of Abrãao's profits.

This was the situation in the housing system in Angola until 2008, when the country held elections for the second time since independence in 1975. In various assessments of the conditions in which people were living, the government came to the conclusion that the problem was a scarcity of housing, and, it was agreed that speculation could be brought down if the city increased its urban stock. In fact, the city has expanded and prices have come down. However, the devaluation of Luandan's real estate is due less to the expansion of the urban housing stock and more to the global crisis that rippled though the Angolan economy in 2009. What some economists have said is that speculation in the housing sector in Luanda has more to do with bureaucracy and corruption, than the economic relationship between supply and demand. In other words, although the urban crisis is an economic problem, the solution sought is political. It is then to the disjuncture between the political solutions for tackling social problems, on the one hand, and the economic limitations, constraints, and possibilities on the other, that I turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: RESTRUCTURING. OR THE (POLITICAL) ORDER OF IT.

> I saw the beautiful Dona Ana Joaquina Palace being bulldozed, to be replaced by a replica made out of poor concrete, and I thought it was the perfect metaphor for this new era—the old colonial system of slavery being replaced by a ridiculous replica in the nefarious jargon of the *musseques*. Much later (too late) I understood that there was no metaphor, only a big house that fell. Many others followed, among them was the most beautiful Quinaxixe Market, designed by Vasco Viera da Costa, one of the first modernist style buildings made in Africa. In its place there is a fatuous delusion in glass and concrete.[158]
>
> **José Eduardo Agualusa**

As we have seen in the previous chapter, by the end of the 1990s, vast areas of Luanda were in virtual and technical collapse. The main cause for such a state of affairs was the social and moral collapse that affected every aspect of national life, for those were also the years not only of the brutal civil war but also of the corruption that pervaded every sphere of national life. Things would change by the end of that decade as the civil war was about to terminate, and the Angolan state had more resources available for other areas of public life. The regeneration of the city of Luanda became one of the national priorities. But a major question had risen as to what do: repair the colonial city or build a new capital?[159] The answer would be found in the middle: oil money trickling in allowed the state to expand the city beyond the limits imposed by colonial urban designers. We have seen that until 1975 Luanda had been planned around a radiocentric structure, in the middle of which was the cement city, or the *consolidated urban nucleolus*, surrounded by the *musseques*, where the vast majority of the African population dwelled. Until 1995, this dual structure remained unaltered, with the difference being that the population of Luanda grew disproportionally, from about 700,000 in 1975 to more than 5,000,000 in 2000, a growth rate of almost 615 percent. By the end of the 1990s, however, Luanda's urban plan would no longer revolve around the axis cement city-*musseques*, and would open a new area for expansion: *Luanda Sul* (South Luanda).

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[158] Agualusa, *Barroco Tropical*, p. 92-3.

[159] Two options that urban authorities in postcolonial Africa have struggled with. For a discussion of these options, see, for instance, Mabogunje, "Urban planning and the post-colonial state in Africa," pp.121-203.

The return of the presidential palace in the late 1990s to the *Cidade Alta*, in the cement city, from *Futungo de Belas*, in *Luanda Sul*, marked a key moment in the process of Luanda's restructuring. In colonial times *Futungo de Belas* was the summerhouse of the governor, while *Cidade Alta* (Higher City) was his official residence. In 1975, Agostinho Neto, the first Angolan president, transformed the governor's palace into his presidential palace. But he then established his official residence in *Futungo de Belas* a couple of years later. His successor, dos Santos, in the context of cold and civil wars, transformed the whole area of *Futungo de Belas* into a military camp. People were not allowed to pass through, let alone to build houses.[160] At the end of the 1990s, with the transfer of the Presidential Palace to the center, the area was then open for urban development projects.[161] And a number of informal settlements had also proliferated in this area. However, the central government – and its parasital-interests in the form of private ventures using resources of the state for private accumulation– has exercised tight control over what was built, and who could build there. This, then, raises questions of the relationship between political order, and the production of space. This relationship dates from the seventeenth century, according to Foucault, with the publication of Alexandre

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[160] During the 1980s, the Angolan Presidential Guard shot dozens of people for simple getting out of their cars to appreciate the view in Futungo de Belas.

[161] It may also signal a passage from militarization to the capitalization of the area by the upper echelons of the military.

Le Maître's *Metropolitée*, when the connection between the "effectiveness of the sovereign and spatial distribution" was established.[162] The novelty here, for Foucault, is this form of sovereignty by which the

> "sovereign deals with a nature, or rather with the perpetual conjunction, the perpetual intrication of a geographical, climatic, and physical milieu, with the nature of the human species insofar as it has a body and a soul, a physical and moral existence, and the sovereign will be someone who will have to exercise power at the point of connection where nature, in the sense of physical elements, interfere with nature in the sense of the nature of the human species, at that point of articulation where the milieu becomes the determining factor of nature."[163]

Here, I am less interested in the relationship between the sovereign and space, or how space and power may intersect at some point, and more on the rationalization of space, or how space can be managed or refashioned to fulfill a certain kind of purpose. This question is particularly important if we want to grapple with the relationship between space and neo-liberalism, which is the driving force in a great deal of contemporary urban restructuring. If, previously, the state could fashion the city according to particular functions and spatial distributions, nowadays, planning is to a great extent oriented towards the need to open circuits for the circulation of capital. Or as Brenner and Theodore state, "strategies of territorial and place promotion may be introduced in order to channel economic capacities into particular locations and scales."[164] The imperative to turn Luanda into a "global city"[165] is instrumental for understanding its transformation. However, this process also has a very local twist. In the authoritarian tradition that has permeated the government of the country for the last 35 years, this process has taken a double-edged form. On the one hand, there is the need to bring to the city the services and equipment deemed necessary for the functioning of a modern economy, and, on the other, the distribution of this equipment through the city has been driven by the ruling party's politics and interests.

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[162] Foucault, *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*, p. 14.
[163] Ibid., p. 23.
[164] Brenner and Theodore, "Cities and the geographies of actually existing neoliberalism," p. 356.
[165] For the definition of a global city, see, for instance, Sassen, *The Global City.*

Jürgen Habermas shows how one of the psychological constitutive elements of the private sphere in Europe during Enlightenment was their members' perception of being cut off from society. They tended to see themselves as autonomous. They conceived of themselves as free from "governmental directives and control", and they believed that their actions were simply guided "by standards of profitability."[166] The emergence of a domain of economic action autonomous from the social and the political spheres is the cornerstone of the critique of liberal bourgeois state. And those who extolled the virtues of the primitive and non-western societies based part of their analysis on the "economic" system that is unalienable from the social. Building on the work of Malinowski, for instance, Karl Polanyi could conclude that "the economic system is, in effect, a mere function of social organization."[167] In the same vein, Pierre Clastres makes the case that primitive society is not only a "society without economy," certainly, but, better yet, a society against economy."[168] Society, in this case, has mechanisms to prevent economy from being cast outside of political control. Relevant also for this discussion is the insight that modernity does not irrevocably ward off or surpass the primitive. Arguing contrary to Clastres, for whom the primitive remained fundamentally outside of capitalist logics, Meillassoux and a number of other Marxist scholars have argued that primitive society persists not only at the heart of the modern state but it is also the condition of possibility for the reproduction of the capitalist system.[169]

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[166] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 46.
[167] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 52.
[168] Clastres, *Archeology of Violence*, p. 198.

To some extent, these are also the terms in which a considerable part of politics in Africa has taken place. For among the tenets of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism alike are the assumptions that the economic is not freed from the political. Politicians in Africa, the theory goes, no only use their office to seek wealth, but they also use their wealth to build networks of dependency that boost their prestige as politicians.[170] There is no need to rehearse this argument here. What interests me for the sake of this chapter is the manner in which this framework may help in shedding some light on the urban question in it. I have previously shown the extent to which the difficulties encountered by inhabitants of Luanda in formalizing their claims to property may be the culprit for the levels of corruption (and criminality) that pervades the public sector.

This chapter is a step forward in the attempt to understand the relationship between politics and space. The central argument of the chapter is that housing in Angola has been conceived less as an economic problem, governed by the laws of supply and demand, and more as a political one. One may see in the restructuring of Luanda the effects of an excessive aestheticization nullifying formal or informal stakes on urban land tenure. In fact, even the action of many Luandan inhabitants, as I will demonstrate, is less oriented toward organizing resistance to removals, and more toward contriving strategies to be given housing accommodation. In this context, the expectation of modernity does not only operate for the government in its pledge to eradicate slums,[171] but it also compels the action of many Luandan inhabitants who risk their lives in the hope that they will be given decent accommodation.

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[169] Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal, and Money.*

[170] Bayart, *The State in Africa.*

Quinaxixe Square

Urban planning is construed by de Certeau as the science of the future, insofar as it is not only perspective, dealing with the ways space becomes represented, but also prospective: urban planners take the space and transform it into a vision. For only the concept of utopia, De Certeau adduces, can help in surmounting the "contradiction arising from urban agglomeration."[172] Different visions, and different regimes of spatial production, brought about by the interconnectedness of different relations, form a social space in Henri Lefebvre's famous articulation: "social space, and especially urban space, emerge in all its diversity – and with a structure far more reminiscent of flaky *mille-feuille* pastry than of the homogenous and isotropic space of classical (Euclidean/Cartesian) mathematics."[173] As if in conversation with Lefebvre, De Certeau proposes a walk in the city, in an almost *flaneur-esque* way, as a method to unfold the layers of which social space is formed, but also (to demonstrate the irreducibility of actual itineraries to the structural principles of urban planning and ideals). In the same guise, I will propose a walk through contemporary Luanda, to expose not only the layers that give density to the city, but also, and more importantly, to reveal points of contention over the city, between those who concoct its future, in the dream of a utopian city, and the pedestrians, particularly the informal vendors, who appropriate it in the process by which they move through it, bringing with them the memory and trace of previous practices.[174]

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[171] Jose Eduardo dos Santos, "Acto Central do Dia Mundial do Habitat," Presidential speeches. http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/pt_pt/portal/discursos-dos-presidentes/discursos/2008/9/41/Acto-central-Dia-Mundial-Habitat,649746dd-ccbf-4c96-bbd2-84fc24b5686b.html

[172] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 93.

[173] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 86.

Cities, then, are formed by densities, atmospheres, temporalities, and paths. Understanding urban experience in Africa, argues Brian Larkin, depends on taking into account the immaterial and material infrastructures that form it, insofar as "these infrastructures connect certain points in a network, ranking and separating one place from another, enabling the possibility of certain connections while foreclosing other linkages."[175] Larkin is building on Lefebvre's *Production of Space*, but Lefebvre's work on *Rhythmanalysis* is also important for what I want to accomplish in this chapter, since it deals with the description of different rhythms and flows of which cities are composed.[176] By rhythm I do not mean simply time, but also tempo, or repetitive forms of use and abandonment, of movement and stasis, in which the interval as well as the actual gesture give time its 'density'. In a collective project intended to extend and ethnographically map Lefebvre's pathbreaking reflections on the relationship between space and rhythm, Monica Degen, writing about Barcelona's neighborhood Raval, states that "the material expression of these temporalities becomes especially poignant in areas undergoing regeneration where the temporality of decay and regeneration is mapped onto the urban texture, producing both temporal and sensory juxtaposition."[177] This helps to illuminate the density of Quinaxixe Square, and, by extension, the whole of Luanda.

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[174] I owe this understanding to Rosalind Morris, and the ways she describes Chiang Mai in a rather Benjamian way, by not only walking in the city, but by also seeking for "in the architectures of desire and remembrances the ghosts of other times," See Morris, *In the Place of Origins*, pp. 56-79.

[175] Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, p. 93.

[176] Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*; See also Edensor, *Geographies of Rhythm*.

As stated in the previous chapter, Quinaxixe Square was designed on the premises of Le Courbusier's modernism, especially the variant developed by Brazilian architects who worked on the construction of Brasilia.[178] Portuguese architects and city planners learned from that experience and applied it to Luanda's plan. Quinaxixe, the square, properly speaking, is an open space, from which four large radial avenues emanate, leading out of the city in different directions. The architecture of the buildings around Quinaxixe Square is also characteristic of the modernist school of architecture as it was rendered in Brasilia; every building is taller than 5 stories and reflects a particular style of housing stock. Apartments were meant to be spacious compared to other apartments in other parts of the city, and from the square one can see that they were designed to have large windows, verandahs, and to be linked to each other on blocks that form arcades, within which there are a variety of commercial establishments such as stores and restaurants.

Today, Quinaxixe Square has been transformed, fusing the older modernist and more contemporary forms in quite interesting ways. The Square has been revived after decades of neglect, during which physical infrastructure reached a nadir of decay. When the government decided to initiate a process of urban renewal in 2002, their action plan involved the demolition of some buildings, many of which were iconic. In this process, not even the emblematic Quinaxixe Market was spared. The centrality of the market in the consciousness of city dwellers is conveyed by the fact that the market gives its name to the place. In the past, the Square was named after the towering statue of the Portuguese heroine Maria da Fonte (in memory of her deeds in leading the popular insurrection of 1846, in continental Portugal), which stood in its center. After independence, an indigenous heroine, the Queen N'Zinga M'Bandi, substituted for the original, but, in popular toponymy, the place has never taken up the new name.

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[177] Degen, "Consuming Urban Rhythms: Let's Ravelejar."

[178] See, James Holston, *The Modernist City*.

The first gesture of the Square's restructuring was the destruction of the emblematic Quinaxixe Market. It was razed in July 2008, during the electoral campaign, amidst shock and uproar from various sectors of the Luandan population. However, the market's destruction was not entirely a surprise. The Quinaxixe market was crucial when the life of the city revolved around its center. But after independence, a great number of functions of the city were transferred to the periphery – about which more shall be said later. By the early 1990s, Quinaxixe Market was nothing more than a ruin that occupied a privileged space in the center of the cement city inversely proportional to the site's growing economic (or speculative) importance. It was rumored, although never confirmed, that the place was purchased by the First Lady, Ana Paula dos Santos.

As most Luandans were well aware of the capillary economic interests of the presidential family, it was not a surprise that the market was doomed for destruction. Like many of the city's other landmarks, the market was left to decay. One day, sometime in the 1990s, the market was covered by corrugated tin sheets. For almost a decade, the Provincial Court succeeded in postponing the destruction of the market (despite its poor conditions, the market was considered a national monument), on account of a legal action interposed by a group of market advocates. Finally, the market was razed.

On the site where for so long the public market stood, a modern shopping mall is being erected. This indicates not only the concept that is behind the structuring of Quinaxixe Square, but also that which drives the restructuring of the rest of the city. Angolan authorities have a vision of the future of Luanda as a modern, rational, and clean city, with social equipment and infrastructure that de-localizes it. When those authorities refer to new buildings, they use the expression, “this could be anywhere in the [modern] world”.[179] In other words, at stake here is the use of architecture as means for aspiring to globality by effacing its local character. These visions of the future may not have been deployed yet but they are so pervasive that the “culture” that permeates its imagination has to be taken as part of the density of these spaces. In other words, the life of this imagination seems to be doing ideological/pedagogical work, by purveying an iconography of domesticated cosmopolitan bliss. Newspapers and advertisements are full of images promising these futures: couples and children enjoying middle class comfort in condominiums yet to be built. Furthermore, almost every public institution (ministries and courts, for example) has architectural models in their lobbies accompanied by legends and captions, such as “future installations.” When Pope Benedict XVI visited Angola, in March 2009, President dos Santos accompanied him on a visit to an architectural model, installed in his palace, that represented a future Catholic Temple, in the village of Muxima, designed by the architect Júlio Quaresma. In the same way, models of the future Quinaxixe Square have already been presented to the public through ads in Angolan newspapers and on billboards. The shopping center will be a complex structure, encased in shining glass, flanked by two tall towers at its extremities.

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[179] “As anywhere in the world” is the message that accompanies a number of models of Luanda’s improvements. See for instance, http://www.opais.net/pt/opais/?id=1702&det=4213&ss=sambizanga.

Furthermore, the surrounding environs will be the object of a comprehensive restructuring and the open spaces now in ruins will be transformed into luxurious gardens, and adorned by luminescent fountains. Yet it is probable that these features will never be constructed. These gestures, however, perform an important function; by embodying representations and intimations of the future, they serve at least an electoral purpose.[180]

The fact that Angola has an oil-based economy is even more important in this regard. Oil countries provide many of the examples of the realization of dreams of concrete, or, as Apter has put it, the transformation of oil assets into modernizing experiments, or "visions of cosmopolitanism."[181] And what is particularly relevant about these realizations is not the sheer ambition in making them. Many other places in the world, such as Brasília have been planned and built from scratch without recourse to oil money. What singles out these experiences is the fact that oil resources allow the authorities in such places to erect infrastructure without the oversight or input of their citizens. And this makes the structure erected appear to be even more sensuous and sublime, in a way very similar to Marx's characterization of the commodity: "a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties."[182]

To understand the worldliness of Luanda we need a more elaborated theoretical framework. Global cities, as Mbembe and Nuttal argue, are defined less by the "flow of money, skills, knowledge, security, machinery, and images,"[183] and more by the fact that these places constitute hubs of connectivity for the circulation of "ideas, people, images and imaginaries – a cultural economy,"[184] In this sense, cities in the global South are "perfects sites for the archeology of the future."[185] By this definition, Luanda is already a global city. This is so not by virtue of the kind of services available for the management of a modern economy, but by the mobilization of a particular imagination, and imagery that has practical effects in the ways the restructuring of the city has been conceived. This is, at least, what the models of modernist architecture and the advertisement of a delocalized Luanda purvey. But unlike modernism of an earlier era, this one does not presume nor advocate a totalized and systematized rational whole; the new imagery assumes an exceedingly fragmentary city, in which constituent elements develop in different ways according to different temporalities.

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[180] For a similar description, see for instance, de Boeck, "Inhabiting the ocular ground: Kinshasa's future in the light of Congo's spectral urban politics," p. 273.

[181] For the case of Nigeria boom, and particularly the transformation of oil in cultural assets, see Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria*.

[182] Marx, *Capital*, p. 163

[183] Nuttall and Mbembe, *Johannesburg*, p. 3.

Such a transformation requires the imagination of a total transformation of the city. Graham and Marvin have given us a glimpse of how this has been taking place from the point of view of city planning. In times of neo-liberalism, master plans have lost their purchase. What is now in place is "splintering urbanism" by means of which parts of the city are disconnected from the urban whole, in new recombinations. Business districts of cities such as New York and Tokyo, as well as a number of cities in the Global South, have been refashioned in this way. Partha Chatterjee, giving as example some cities in India, such as Mumbai, has explained the ways in which this process has gone hand in hand with these places becoming bourgeois: "by clearing streets and public land of squatters and encroachers, and to reclaim public space for the use of proper citizens."[186]

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[184] Ibid, p. 3.
[185] Ibid, p 4.
[186] Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, p. 131.

More importantly, Chatterjee adds that the transformation of Indian, and other cities in the Global South, has been driven by the circulation of images of what a city should look like. Moreover, a dynamic transformation of urban space and life "has been directly affected by the urgent pressure to connect with the global economy and attract foreign investment."[187] It is not a coincidence then that the debate on Luanda's restructuring has taken place alongside the need to equip the city with financial institutions, such as banks and equity agencies, and, in particular, the Luanda Stock Exchange. It is even less a coincidence that the new infrastructures being built in Quinaxixe are meant to provide a number of these services to the city. The idea, in the near future, is to turn the area of Quinaxixe into a *Business Area*, as it already appears in architectural models and billboards, with high-rises and shopping malls, linked by underground channels, exemplifying the architecture that Koolhaas has deemed *Junkspace*. He was referring to those structures that have filled cities across the world, made of materials and techniques that "exploit[s] any invention that enables expansion, deploy[s] the infrastructure of seamlessness: escalator, air-conditioning, sprinkler, fire-shutter, hot-hair curtain."[188] Koolhaas also alludes to the fact that this form of architecture eludes questions of authorship, style, schools, and genealogy, for its very condition of possibility is the patchwork. Only this fact can account for the ubiquity of Babylonian, Roman and Gothic Columns, recombined with glass and concrete that has come to ornament architectural interventions all over the world. If this is the appearance of the global city, Luanda is no exception.

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[187] Ibid, p. 144.

[188] Koolhaas, "Junkspace," p. 175.

I visited one of these buildings – a 25-story (125 meters above the sea level) edifice and the first of what is called “Luanda Sky Center Complex,” which will be comprised of the Escom Building, the Escom building residence I and II, and the Sky Building Business. This apartment and office block belongs to a conglomerate of companies that operates in such different economic areas as equities, diamond mining, banking, and communications. Encased in glass walls, it is one of the most impressive buildings ever constructed in Luanda. Erected on one of the city’s highest points, its top floors offer a panoramic view of the city. “It is an intelligent building,” as I was told by the manager of a recruiting firm that occupies an apartment on the 18th floor (for the annual rent of $250,000 for a three bedroom apartment). She had in mind the ways the building is equipped with a system of surveillance, automatic generators, a potent water pump, central air conditioning, and all the amenities required to produce the “here-as-anywhere-else” of brand these buildings.

From the window of the firm’s manager, Quinaxixe Square is visible. The day of my visit, in December of 2010, the whole area of Quinaxixe was an immense hole, where men and machines worked to set the foundations of the future edifice, the shopping mall. Although the work started in late 2008, the foundations have not been laid. The reason for the delay is related to the fact that that the excavation of the square is imperiling the ground of the whole area (on account of its swampy nature, as already mentioned in the previous chapter). As a result, the buildings in the area have become even more vulnerable, hastening the evacuation (finally) of the Cuca Building, in December 2010, when new fissures erupted in the walls. The dangerous nature of these fissures was confirmed by the engineers of the *Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia* (Engineering

National Laboratory), who alerted residents and authorities of the imminent collapse of the whole structure. A few weeks later, Lagoon Building was evacuated for the same reason. Dwellers of these apartment buildings were relocated in Zango (one of the most distant edges of the new city), but the buildings on the square remain and have not yet been demolished.

Graham and Marvin, writing from a very technical point of view, have shown the extent to which cities all over the world have become global. The master plan is dead insofar as it was a translation of Keynes's economics into city planning that incentivized the intervention of the state into the fashioning of the urban whole. Neo-liberalism has brought about a new way of dealing with space: the whole is cut off, pierced, disjointed, so that some parts of the city are isolated and recombined into new features, in what they have called "splintering urbanism."[189] It is conceivable that in the near future Luanda will also go through this process of unbundling and recombination. For the time being, however, the process is microscopic, since it touches less on entire areas of the city (at least the colonial city), but works instead on the interiority of those buildings, in a more radical fashion. A number of those apartments that were first squatted in by Angolans from the *musseques* in 1975 were sold or trespassed on by International personnel working in Angola, alongside the Angolan bourgeoisie (composed to a great extent by Angolan citizens who have lived or studied abroad) that have rented or purchased many of these places. As such, it is possible to find alongside apartments with neither water nor electricity, and with walls eaten out by water leaks and the smoke of oil lamps, others in a very different state of conservation. Refurbished and equipped with the best modern amenities – imported from around the world and purchased in downtown Luanda, often three or four times more expensive than at the origin – those apartments symbolize a different world. Satellite or cable television connects the apartment dwellers with the world outside Angola. In some places, exquisite and sometimes expensive contemporary art will hang on the walls. In many of these buildings, those more affluent dwellers have to roll up their pants so that stagnant water leaking from the ceiling and floor does not soak them. In other buildings, affluent dwellers who have contributed to the repair of elevators receive a key that gives them access to the use of those elevators. In the face of this, one may only agree with Lefebvre when he writes: "the worldwide does not abolish the local."[190]

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[189] Graham and Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism.*

The production of locality in Quinaxixe Square runs deeply against the modernizing vision of the government and the private sector. To some extent, Quinaxixe Square is merely a point, or a linkage, to a completely different economy. And this is evident not only in the work of Abrãao, who we have already met in the previous chapter, convincing the cement city squatters to sell or rent their apartments. But Quinaxixe, right in front of the Escom building, is also the last stop for those who come from the northern part of the city, from places such as Cacuaco, and Sambizanga, one of the most populous neighborhoods of Luanda. Outside Quinaxixe, in other areas of the city, the traffic is so dense, that cars take hours to go from one place to another. So Quinaxixe is probably the last stop for the women, called *zungueiras*, who purchase their wares in the market, walking through the city, transporting and selling, fruit, *motorolas* (a sandwich of bread and chicken), and many other products. Likewise, in front of UNITEL (the leading cell phone operator), for instance, there are dozens of young men and women selling counterfeit Nokia cell phones, cell phone chips and other products, in direct competition with goods and services that can be acquired inside the store. Dollars can be exchanged for Kwanzas, and vice-versa, by approaching one of the women, known as *kinguilas* (informal money vendors), waiting beneath the arcades, next to licensed banks.

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[190] Lefebvre, "Reflections on the Politics of Space," p. 86.

A zooming in on the transformation of Quinaxixe Square gives an idea of the vision of the future, and the production of cosmopolitanism that animates it. Furthermore it provides the blueprint to tackle, in general terms, urbanism and planning of the city of Luanda in its entirety. My aim is to understand the physical transformation of Luanda against the backdrop of political economic changes. In the following section, I will open my lens, so as to juxtapose Quinaxixe Square to the rest of the city.

Splintering Urbanisms

In 2008, during the electoral campaign, the Angolan President of the Republic, José Eduardo dos Santos, made a bold announcement: in the next four years, between 2008 and 2012, his government would build one million houses. Details of the mega-operations were only given some time later, the following month, when Angola hosted World Habitat day, at which, in the presence of the head of UN Habitat, Anna Tibaijuka, dos Santos not only reiterated his electoral promise, but he also provided more specifics on his plan to restructure the city. At stake was the need to eliminate the slums by upgrading them into planned, formal and yet affordable housing for the poor. A governmental agency was then created, the Program for Management and Projects, which would see to the construction of 115,000 houses. The private sector would be responsible for 120,000, the cooperatives (such as that of the Veterans) 80,000, whereas the lion's share, 685,000, would fall in the murky and unspecified category of "directed auto-construction."[191]

It is expected that the elimination of the slums as proposed by dos Santos will bring a profound realignment in the fabric of the city. I have already shown the consequences of war and economic crisis on the urban environment. Those who flocked to Luanda built their houses in every available space: within other houses, in buildings, in public gardens and by deactivated railroads. Concomitantly, those years were also marked by the emergence of a not negligible middle class, with very particular tastes in terms of housing and locations to have their houses. But creating and controlling the desire of those groups has become a powerful technique of political control.

The architectural form that predominates in many of the projects of *Luanda Sul* signaled the recent transformations of forms of Angolan's habitation. Whereas during late colonialism, and the first decade of independence, the city's predominant architectural forms were either the housing block and the single family residence, in the cement city, or the shack in *musseques*, *Luanda Sul* brought about a radical innovation: the gated community, or condominium, protected by barbed wire and private security firms. Inside these walls dwellers could enjoy some urban amenities that the city could no longer offer, such as gardens, parks, and sometimes, as in the case for the most affluent ones, swimming pools and tennis courts. This urban model had been imported primarily by South African construction firms, in their first experiences of internationalization after the end of the Apartheid era and the normalization of economic relations with neighboring countries that ensued.[192]

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[191] Ministério do Urbanismo e Habitação, *Relatório Anual de Actividades 2009*.

The first clients for these firms were a number of Angolans, linked in various ways to the government who had the opportunity to travel to South Africa, on official trips, for business, or holidays.[193] There, they contacted South African firms and purchased the houses, which were later assembled in Luanda. The first houses were assembled on the site where the Presidential Palace formerly stood, in Futungo de Belas, and, they are still there, owned by retired generals. Then, the Construction Brigade of the Presidential *Casa Militar* (Military Branch) started to build a number of condominiums, namely the *Projecto Nova Vida* (New Deal Project). And only later did oil companies enter the business. Sonangol (the state owned oil company) and Chevron, for instance, along with state owned banks, built condominiums for their own workers: the motivation for doing this was to seek ways to find cheaper accommodations for their personnel, particularly for the foreign labor force, other than the prohibitively priced housing of Luanda's cement city.

Luanda Sul, in the beginning, looked like a viable solution to tackle the problem of speculation, since the increase of housing supply, as it was anticipated, would bring down the prices. But *Luanda Sul* only worked in the first years when the number of its inhabitants was relatively low. And Luanda Sul, above all, was conceived as a residential area, with limited commercial services. Those who moved to that part of the city had faced a daily commute to town for work and to take their children to school, since the business area was still located in downtown Luanda. Planners thought that expanding the network of freeways that link Luanda to *Luanda Sul* would solve the problem. However, the problem was not only an issue of access to the city. Even if the ride from both points is short, most Luanda's roads are narrow, and get congested quickly. So *Luanda Sul* had to be totally re-planned, not only to accommodate roads, and freeways, but, more importantly, to accommodate a number of services so as to prevent their inhabitants from having to go to Luanda on an everyday basis.

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[192] For an exhaustive discussion on this architectural form, see, for instance, Murray, *City of Extremes.*

[193] Angolans and South Africans were contenders in the cold war. South Africa invaded Angola in 1975, Cuba sent to Angola hundreds of thousands soldier to defend Angolan sovereignty, In the late 1989, an agreement between South Africa and Cuba stipulated the pulling out of Cuban forces, and accelerate Namibia's independence. During those years, South Africa was a county in which Angolan citizens could not set foot, since their passport had a note saying: "valid to all countries, except South Africa." For the involvement of Cuba, and South Africa in Angola in the context of cold war, see Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*.

Very recently, in an interview given to a private newspaper, a leading Angolan economist, Alves da Rocha, made the case that the expansion of Luanda southwards (*Luanda Sul*) has been the main device for siphoning off financial resources from the state to a handful of private entities. The modalities of those transfers have been various, from the simpler to the more elaborated. Bornito de Sousa, high-ranking member of MPLA and currently the acting Internal Affairs Minister, has explained in a journal column how he became wealthy: by moving to the new house given to him on account of the job he holds, and renting his old house, in one of the most expensive neighborhood of Luanda, Alvalade, probably to an oil company for a price that can reach $200,000 a year.[194] Angolan laws concerning foreign investment are very permissive, and allow holders of public office to do business with foreigner investors.[195] Most Brazilian or

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[194] "Look: there are many politicians, members of the cabinet and party leaders, who rented their houses and move to state-owned condominiums and received a rent of $25,000 or $30,000 a month from the oil sector." Alves da Rocha, Interview to Semanário Angolense, Jun 05 2010, p. 14.

[195] It was not for the law per se. But for the interpretation of the law, by creating two regimes of investments, in which foreigner investors would pay less money to open a business in Angola if they could have an Angolan partner.

Portuguese firms investing in Angola have, among their board members, various Angolan politicians. Furthermore, Angola does not produce construction materials locally, and every item (including cement) is imported. The technique for accumulation here is to overprice construction materials, for instance, and transfer the difference to private accounts in western banks.[196]

One of the consequences of corruption and the traffic of influence in the construction sector is that it is only the state, through state owned companies, and oil companies that can invest in this sector. As such, housing in these new projects is so expensive that very few Angolans can afford it, thus reinforcing distribution as an important political tool. For instance, the market price for housing for the middle class is around $200,000, for *Condomínio Nosso Lar* (Our Home Condominium), and $400,000 for *Condomínio Bem Morar* (Good Living Condominium). Those houses are out of reach for the Angolan middle class, unless the prospective buyers have access to a bank loan. But the access to loans from banks is very restricted. Besides the fact that interest rates can reach up to 25 percent, only 0.5 percent of the monetary mass that circulates through the Angolan bank system is in the form of loans.[197] So as a member of the middle class, the only way to access a house is through a working relation to one of the state companies, such as Sonangol. But this is political. MPLA forces workers of state owned oil companies to become MPLA members. Furthermore, not even the urban poor, those who apparently have nothing to trade, are out of reach from this political juggernaut. For instance, last year, after several months of indecision, the government finally announced the official price at which the social housing will be sold: $40,000. And this in a country where the beneficiaries are unemployed, and underemployed, or, if they are employed likely make around $100/month, the official minimum wage.[198]

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[196] According to a recent report published by Global Financial Integrity, this scheme accounts for one of the main devices by which financial recourses are siphoned off the country. Only in 2010, 4,6 billion dollars were unaccounted for. See http://www.zwelangola.com/index-lr.php?id=5582.

[197] With “15 commercial banks operating on the Angolan market, bank credit in 2006 accounted for just 0,5 per cent of the country’s GDP” “Angolan financial system in the service of development,” *Banking in Review*, Deloitte Angola, 2007, p. 9

In a recent development, Sonangol was given control over the housing construction project, through a newly created subsidiary called Sonangol-Imobiliária (Sonangol-Real Estate). This political decision shows that the Angolan government intends to develop the housing sector along the same lines that oil production has been developed. Oil is extracted offshore, by foreign companies, and the vast majority of the population is ignorant of the legal niceties that preside over its production, and the money that it brings to the county.[199] Technology and a specialized labor force are imported. It is likely the same will hold true for construction projects which will be given (as has been the case so far) to Portuguese, Brazilian and Chinese construction firms.

The best example to illustrate this is the construction of the housing project Kilamba City. The Angolan government, through Sonangol, contracted the China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC), and together they launched the $3.5bn construction of a residential project to house 200,000 inhabitants. One of the most ambitious projects developed by the Chinese in Angola, it involves 10,000 workers, of which only 4,000 are Angolans.[200] The first phase of the project was inaugurated on July 11, 2010, by President dos Santos. Kilamba, located twenty kilometers south of Luanda's center, stretches through an area of 52 square kilometers and it is expected to add 20,000 residential apartments and 246 business units to Luanda urban's stock. After its completion, this new district will include 24 pre-schools, nine primary schools and eight high schools. It will also be equipped with two electrical substations, 77 transformer stations, water supply stations a sewage treatment plant and infrastructure for drainage.[201]

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[198] See, for instance, http://www.angonoticias.com/full_headlines.php?id=27266.
[199] Ferguson, "Seeing like an Oil Company."
[200] Power, "Angola 2025."

It is not only from the point of view of infrastructure that Kilamba will be self-sufficient - and cut off from the rest of the country. The management of Kilamba will be rooted in an idea that has gained currency in the Global South, pertaining to the formation of Charter Cities. This, for instance, will be the case of *Cité du Fleuve*, a city that is being built near Kinshasa. According to Filip de Boeck, "if all goes according to plan, the latter will probably be accorded the administrative status of a new "commune," and will be subject to their own special bylaws,"[202] for it "echoes many of the ideas behind concepts such as the "charter city," that is, a special urban reform zone that would allow governments of developing countries to adopt new systems of rules and establish cities that can drive economic progress in the rest of the country." Only part of this holds true for Kilamba.

If profit (by speculation) is the innermost nature of Charter Cities, Kilamba may be different in this regard. Ultimately, Sonangol, the state-owned Angolan company that is overseeing the production of Angolan oil, is not particularly interested in making profit out of real estate. But the government, through Sonangol, may exploit the distribution of housing and space for economic ventures; and for political gain. According to Bornito de Sousa, the Minister of Territorial Administration, it will be the first rehearsal in the government's attempt to decentralize the state administration, through the formation of autarchies. Those autarchies will have financial autonomy, elect their own management bodies and produce by-laws. When Joaquim Marques, was appointed, by the president of the republic, as "President" of the administration of Kilamba a position that does not exist in Angolan administrative law, as cities are administered by governors –the political contours over Kilamba became more visible. The political party Bloco Democrático issued a communiqué denouncing the usurpation by the presidency of the republic of legislative power, insofar as it is for the parliament to legislate on matters concerning local powers. Furthermore, the Bloco Democrático also accused the Executive of forcing in a "non-elected administrative commission to use housing in the new city for electoral purposes, giving access to houses to members of the ruling party who know already how to get access to them."[203]

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[201] CCCS, *Evaluating China's FOFAC commitment in Africa and mapping the way ahead*, p. 28
[202] de Boeck, "Inhabiting the ocular ground," p. 227.

Political spaces

The transformation of material space into political space deprives people of the possibility to make claims over any occupation of land outside politics. This denies citizenship to large swaths of the population, and reduces them to a state of political subjectness, without subjectivity. Rancière has touched on this question in his discussion of Hannah Arendt's axiom that "the rights of man are the rights of those who are only human beings."[204] Disagreeing with Arendt, Rancière painstakingly tries to find positivity in the Rights of Man, by which a new engagement with Ethics posits the abstractness of man beyond the reach of the political community's vagaries. However, until the arrival of this ethical horizon, the political community will always have the power to deprive its members of their rights. The Luandan case at hand shows the extent to which the elimination of disposition of usufruct from the legal system erases the distinction between politics and land tenure. Political space, then, not only allows the government to conduct forced removals, but also opens up new ways through which people can make claims on land. The new class of squatters in formation is no longer comprised of those who expect to legalize their occupational rights on the basis of usufruct in the future, but people who expect to be given accommodation by virtue of occupying the land that the state has marked for various purposes, such as urban development projects, infrastructure, or business ventures developed by private interests under the umbrella of the state.

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[203] http://club-k.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8245:bloco-democratico-critica-mpla-por-pretender-fazer-autarquicas-apenas-no-kilamba&catid=23:politica&Itemid=600

[204] Rancière, "Who is the subject of the rights of man."

Since the end of the civil war, the Angolan government has conducted major slum clearance campaigns. According to Human Rights Watch, more than 3,000 houses were destroyed in only four years between 2002 and 2006, a crisis which affected more than 30,000 people.[205] Although the number people evicted in the period after 2006 is not known yet, the tendency is to increase. This is partly because the constitution has brought a new wave of removals. For instance, when in March 2010, Isaac dos Anjos, the governor of the province of Huíla, ordered the forced removal of thousands of people, he backed his action through reference to the recently approved constitution. Furthermore, the assumption that people forcefully removed are outright squatters may be misleading. When the Land Law was first discussed, in 2002, a window of three years was in the text so as to allow squatters to legalize their occupation rights. However, because the law was poorly regulated, this provision was not implemented or reinforced. Consequently, very few people have taken advantage of it.[206] Some people, like dwellers of the municipality of Kilamba Kiaxi, had bought title deeds from the local administrations that were nullified when orders were given for the destruction of these informal settlements. Let me now illustrate both situations with some examples.

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[205] Human Rights Watch, *They Pushed down the houses,* p. 8.

In April 2009, violent tides once more swept across the Island of Luanda. Such tides are not uncommon; in fact, they occur with such seasonal regularity that they have been integrated into the popular culture not only of the communities of Island of Luanda, but of the city of Luanda itself. Those tides, called *calemas*, have to be appeased by gift-giving celebrations, in which fishermen, in canoes, throw food onto the surface of the sea, to feed the Kianda (or spirit of the waters). This celebration, apparently pre-Christian, is so important that it has entered into the Catholic cosmogony. A church called *Nossa Senhora do Cabo* (Our Lady of Cape) was built in homage to Kianda on the Island of the Luanda. In the first years of independence, these ceremonies were abolished on the grounds that they were promoting obscurantism, if not devil worship. But when *calemas* started taking a heavy toll on fishermen, the celebration was reinstituted. So the tides that swept the Island that day in 2009 were part of fishermen's everyday lives. But this time, the provincial government acted swiftly to clear the area. As such the entire Avenue Mortala Mohamed – the main paved artery on the island – was evacuated. According to *Novo Jornal*'s reporter Sebastião Vemba, in less than 24 hours the provincial government had organized a convoy of several trucks provided by the *Casa Militar*. A woman who had just lost her baby was forced to board one of the trucks with its corpse. Alongside her were thousands more people (roughly 700 families) who were in those trucks with their wares, clothes, furniture, appliances, and other things they could salvage from the tides, first, and then from the destruction by the brigades sent by the *Casa Militar*. After a trip of more than two hours, people were left in Zango, in a sort of refugee camp. Like many others displaced by the destruction of their houses, they were relocated more than two hours from their workplaces, left to live in tents, under the rains, their children without schools.[207] Only recently were a number of these people given accommodations, and the vast majority is still living in tents, a provisional situation that has become permanent. Thus a temporary response to a 'natural disaster' became the alibi for forced relocation.

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[206] Cain, "Housing micro-finance in post-conflict Angola," p. 366.

Later on, the governor of Luanda, Francisa do Espírito Santo, announced that the cleared area in the Island of Luanda would be part of the extension of a recreational project to offer space in the city for a number of leisure activities. A vast sidewalk has been built to accommodate restaurants, bars and other ventures for Luanda's nightlife. If the logic of these removals has been to displace the urban poor so as to build urban equipment for the middle class and the bourgeoning national bourgeoisie, such is also the logic for many other removal operations. For instance, informal settlements in Iraq and Bagdad (named after their Middle Eastern counterparts, probably for being places that received many people fleeing from war in the countryside) were cleared so that the housing project *Nova Vida*, a middle class neighborhood for government officials, could be expanded. The destruction of these neighborhoods in July 2009 was even more merciless than that of the Island of Luanda. With no notice, bulldozers (30 vehicles again from *Casa Militar*) did the job, leaving no one time to save furniture or clothes. This time, the police also encountered a woman giving birth, and waited for her to finish before taking her out and destroying her house. Those displaced staged a protest whose destination was *Cidade Alta*, the Presidential palace. But, on their way, a heavy contingent of the National Police, with armored cars and dogs, dissuaded them from this purpose. Later on, one of those dwellers would tell a journalist that he "ha[d] never seen so many armed men in [his] entire life."[208]

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[207] Vemba, "Vidas Ao Relento," p. 17.

As the legalization of occupied land becomes increasingly difficult under the new legal arrangement, a new strategy is taking place. The government has announced the construction of 1,000,000 houses in the period of 2008 to 2012. Furthermore, as the government has also pledged to clear the slums and build a "harmonious city,"[209] many urban poor expected to be counted for in the new urbanizations. During my fieldwork in Roque Santeiro I came to know a number of people who had moved to the Boavista neighborhood for the purpose of receiving houses as soon as their shacks are destroyed. During colonialism and in the first years of independence, the area of Boavista was the city's refuse dump. By the 1980s, squatters took it over. Boavista, the house for thousands of people, is an informal settlement strategically located between Port of Luanda and Roque Santeiro, and it would not expand without the market that provided for squatters the means to eke out a living by stealing commodities in the Port to be sold in the market, and by supplying the market with a variety of services, such as selling, loading unloading and carrying good goods, and whatever people can keep at their houses to rent to sellers, such as chairs, shades and generators.

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[208] Ibid, p. 18.

[209] dos Santos, *Discursos.*

As the shacks of Boavista have been literally built over garbage and sand, landslides have constantly struck the area. Every year, during the rainy season, a few people die when the ground over which their houses are built collapses. However, unlike other places, the removal of the Boavista settlers has not been treated as a priority by the government. According to informal conversations I had with a number of residents, the distribution of houses for them is a matter of time. Moreover, local government officials have worked in that settlement, registering the households, and attributing numbers to the shacks. Counting and recognizing these houses have given them value, turning them into commodities or assets to be bought and sold. But to be given a house requires more than proof of registration: squatters have to live there. So now, in Boavista, there is no longer a distinction between those who moved to that part of the city because they had nowhere to go and those who have purchased houses so as to get accommodation in Zango. What they share is the experience of living in danger.

Among those who came to this neighborhood for the allure of a new house in Zango is my own cousin Kito. I followed him as part of my research on taxi drivers, and it was almost by accident that I ended up working in Boavista. Kito was born not very far from Boavista, on the other side of the road that divides the Sambizanga municipality from Barrocas (waste dump). When he became a taxi driver, he moved to Kwanza, a neighborhood where a significant number of people work directly or indirectly in the taxi business by fixing cars, selling parts, driving taxis and so on. When he heard of an imminent relocation of Boavista's dwellers, he purchased a very derelict shack, for $2,000. When I reconnected with him during my return to Luanda for fieldwork in 2008, he was in the process of fixing the house.

One Saturday morning, Kito gathered his friends, his business associate, Bari, a native of Guinea-Conakry, his helper (taxi *chamador*), Rei Leão, and many other youth in the neighborhood to help him fix his house. They climbed the hill up to the market, to get a wooden door, half a dozen sheets of corrugated tin, nails and so on. It is harder to climb down with all these wares, but somehow, they managed to do so. They passed through infested alleys that smelled of rotten food and urine, where the most dangerous burglars of the market gazed at them (men who would kill a stranger on the spot to steal a cheap cell phone). They then passed through a clearing, where here and there one could see children and adults defecating. And then, they had to go down the hill, through the zigzag passageway that people have opened through the heaps of garbage.

Kito's house is half way down the hill. It is literally built on garbage. This became apparent when his friends start to dig a big hole, to serve as a WC: an archeological cut through layers of Angolan practices of consumption over time. Hundreds of cans of imported soft drinks, such as Coca-Cola, along with many plastic bags were extracted from the hole. After that, a gasoline barrel was placed about a meter deep in the hole, and its surface covered by a piece of wood pierced with a little hole. "You can do your thing and it never smells, since the heat dries everything," one of Kito's neighbors told me. But, he continued: "make sure to protect [the hole] from water, which acts on this [the latrine] like a fermenting agent." The latrine functions because the bright sundries up human waste in a matter of seconds, and gets pressed by more human waste. And so, they warned: "do not pour water into the latrine." But "what about the rains," I asked, if this place is famous for landslides, and every year dozens of people die. "Aren't you afraid of living here?" According to Kito, it is just as dangerous to live in that part of Boavista:

"houses on this part of the hill don't fall, since there is more garbage here than sand". And Kito is right. Accumulated garbage, formed by a density of cans and plastic bags, coalesces into a thick material that gives consistency and stability to the ground.

Kito did not have money to invest in the construction of the house, so I decided to help him. My plan was to move in with him as soon as the house was ready. As I also wanted to observe the process of building a house in such circumstances, I gave him money to buy sacks of cement. I went to the market with him and he bought 4 sacks (at KZ2,500 each for a total of 10,000kz, or $150). We then paid two men to haul the cement down the hill. It was a Monday, the market's cleaning day, and the place was almost empty. The path from the road to where the hills begin to slope down is easy, even if one of the haulers, carrying two sacks on a hand truck, scratched his arm on the corrugated tin of a market stall and bled all the way down to Kito's place. A couple of days later, Kito hired two experienced neighbors as masons in order to make the floor. For the door and the walls of corrugated tin, Kito did not have to pay for labor, only providing his friends with marijuana and whisky (an imported Indian whisky which comes in little plastic packs). But when it came to the floor, things were different. His neighbors were professionals who had held formal jobs as masons. Kito's neighbors finished the floor on a Sunday morning, after paying a group of children and women to fetch sand from nearby, further weakening the ground. Only with the floor done could Kito move in, for a cemented floor brings more stability to a house, lowering the risk of a collapse.

Kito moved to this house a while after I left Luanda in November 2008. He lived there with his wife for almost two years. When I went back to Luanda in December 2010, he had split with his wife and moved to another neighborhood, Viana. He had someone taking care of the house, and he expects to be given a house if the government decides to relocate Boavista's dwellers.

Boavista then is quintessentially what I am calling a political space. More specifically, it is a space of exception. The transformation of the waste dump into an informal settlement is only possible in the context of a particular understanding of rights and law. Boavista is not a place over which property rights can be claimed. And yet its occupancy allows settlers to make demands for a relocation to decent accommodations. But for this to happen, they must first to live in danger.

The order of things

How to make sense of the relationship between space and politics? And to what extent is the argument of this chapter relevant to understanding contemporary African urban forms more generally? To put it differently, how can one read the Angolan urban restructuring in a way that matters to African studies more broadly? To a great extent, African cities, for their chaos and abjection, are not yet part of the debate on contemporary urbanism. For African cities reflect the flipside of the spaces touched by planning interventions. Such is the point, for instance, recently made by Amin Kamete and Ilda Lourenço-Lindell in their article on the politics of "non-planning," based on recent residential removals in Maputo (Mozambique) and Harare (Kenya). First of all, they distinguish planning from non-planning strategies. They consider politics, in the arrangement of Western cities, but only in so far as "deliberate planning of urban centers was the philosophy that state intervention in urban development was necessary for the good of local urban communities."[210] Contrary to such a view, the only rubric where Kamete and Lourenço-Lindell are willing to admit that there is a semblance of plan in African cities is when it comes to "sanitization campaigns", since, "interventions, although undertaken in the name of some plan, appear to have little or no basis in the existing city plan designs or urban development strategies"[211] But, as I have attempted to demonstrate, even the "sanitizing campaigns" which have taken place in Luanda reflect a particular vision of land use and space distribution.

Kamete and Lourenço-Lindell admit, however, that the restructuring of African cities, as in many other cities in the world, is driven, by "the creation or projection of a city image", that is promoted by governments so as to compete internationally in the attraction of foreign investment.[212] Hence, this is more the work of neo-liberalism and the ways in which it creates new spaces and less of city planning as a science per se. As Brenner and Theodore argue, "neoliberalism represents a complex, multifaceted project of socio-spatial transformation – it contains not only a utopian vision of a fully commoditized form of social life, but also a concrete program of institution modification through which the unfettered capital is to be promoted."[213] So arguing contrary to what Kamete and Lourenço- Lindell indicate, I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, following Graham and Marvin, how neo-liberal imageries work in these places, not by taking space in its entirety, but, rather, by splintering certain parts of the whole and recombining them in different ways.[214]

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[210] Kamete and Lourenço-Lindell, *The politics of 'non-Planning' interventions in African cities: unravelling the international and local dimensions in Harare and Maputo*, p. 890.
[211] Ibid, p. 894.
[212] Brenner and Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of Actually Existing Neoliberalism."
[213] Land Law, 9/04, of November 04, 2004.

Here, I would like to go one step further. Charismatic leadership or personal proclivities of political authority in Africa is so powerful a force and so widespread that very few observers would dispute its analytical purchase to understanding questions of governmentality across the continent. What I have tried to do, in the context of the argument of this chapter, is to understand the connection between these forms of power and the politics of spatial distribution and land use, which trickle down in the form of administrative legal decrees. However, such an argument would not be complete without a discussion of the legal arrangement in Angola that presides over land use. For instance, Article 6 of the Land Law, on transmissibility, stipulates that "there cannot be the acquisition by usufruct any rights to land integrated into the private domain of the state and the domain of rural communities."[215] Article 9 says that the state may "expropriate rural communities by public utility." And Article 13, more broadly, says that the state may subject "land under this law to the category of public domain." This understanding of land use has entered into the constitution under the rubric of "land of the state's reserve" (Article 95). By this provision, urban and rural lands are broadly defined as "state property." Through the administrative interpretation of this law, the state is allowed to curtail any citizen or community's claim to land as long as the land falls under the definition, before or after its effective occupation, of "land of the state's reserve."

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[214] Graham and Marvin, *Splintering urbanism*.

[215] Land Law, p. 5.

To be more concise, my objective here is to link regimes of land use not only to politics and ideology in general, but also to the ways in which power is administered. Building on the case of Cameroon – and holding true for the "postcolony" in general – Achille Mbembe has, very provocatively, defined postcolonial citizens, as "those who can have access to the networks of the parallel economy, and the means of livelihood for survival that the economy makes possible."[216] In Angola, in virtue of an overdetermined presidentialism, the president of the republic is himself at the epicenter of a complex web of client-patron relationships that pervade every aspect of Angolan social life.[217] Land use, and in particular, house distribution, is crucial here. If the very respected analyst of Angolan politics, Armando Marques Guedes is correct regarding his appraisal of a system of "political patronage" set up by dos Santos in the 1980, benefiting "directly or indirectly the four million inhabitants of Luanda,"[218] then the distribution of housing or land for economic ventures, are paramount to this system.

But the regime of political patronage in place has to be understood in virtue of the relationship between two further constitutional dispositions, namely the executive power of the president of the republic and the modalities for the election of the president of the republic. Only in this context, may one understand the sweeping powers of the president of the republic who can engage his private army in removal operations, and sign laws that nullify any claim made over land lawfully or unlawfully occupied by the people. In other words, central government has unlimited power over spatial distribution, and the definition of land use. But, under the new constitution, Angolans have less power over the choice of their representative, especially the president of the republic. This has only been made possible by a definition of presidential power and mission that casts the incumbent outside of competitive politics – the president of the republic is not directly elected. In other words, the figure of the president is the embodiment of the exception itself. The context in which this understanding of executive power came into being is the long civil war that plagued the country for almost 30 years. If war is the exception, and if the broadening of the executive power of the president cannot be seen outside the war, then, we may conclude, that only exception explains the Angolan social order by which citizens find themselves stripped of their rights. I will develop this argument in the next chapter, after closing this section with a brief conclusion.

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[216] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 84.

[217] For the nature of patron-client relationships in the context of oil economies, see, for instance, Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty*; Oliveira, *Oil and politics in the Gulf of Guinea*; Coronil, *The Magical State.*

[218] Guedes, *Sociedade Civil e Estado em Angola*.

I attempted to read the restructuring of the city through the imageries deployed by the government based not only on what has already been realized in terms of construction, but also on what has been anticipated based on the circulation of architectural models and advertisements. I also show how this imagery has trickled down, exemplified in the ways the urban poor have staked their claim over urban land in the hope of securing a place in the new housing project developments. My point is to see these interventions beyond the framework of "sanitizing campaigns." For the blueprint behind them appropriates to a great extent the neo-liberal doctrine regarding what a modern city should look like. However, I also tried to show that this has a particular twist in Angola that cannot be understood without considering the relationship between presidentialism and Land Law. The recently approved constitution authorizes the government to clear areas deemed "reserves of the state." In order to understand what is at stake here, in terms of the constitution of the political and social fabric in Angola, an analysis of the constitution has to take into account the interplay between the definition of "reserves of the state;" the executive powers of the president; and the modalities of the election of the president of the republic. And this requires a reflection on political form today and the emergence of Angolan political logics in war. Only by engaging with the trauma of war, and the ways in which war has found its way into the Angolan legal system, can we understand the extent to which large swathes of the population are cast out formal ways of social reproduction.

CHAPTER THREE: CONSTITUTION AND (REFRACTED) GOVERNMENTALITY

"It is not our intention to impose atypical indirect elections"[219]

José Eduardo dos Santos

In his reflections on the aftermath of 9/11, Giorgio Agamben propounds a counter-intuitive understanding of the relationship between order and anomie. He argues that war and violence have a relation not only of exteriority, but also of interiority, with the political order. Agamben wants to correct the overwhelming tendency to see the state of exception and anomie as that which is outside the political, and not as something that has been incorporated within the democratic system.[220] Dealing with the nature of societies very different from those that Agamben talks about, Achille Mbembe also suggests an understanding of African polities that "confer central place to thoughts and practices of power as thoughts and power of war."[221] In a twist of Clausewitz's famous formula – politics as a continuation of war by other means – Mbembe asserts that "war, in other terms, has become one of the main sources of emergency, with the consequence that death has been assigned a central place both in the process of constituting reality and in the general psychic economy."[222] Based on this framework, I examine in this chapter the extent to which the Angolan social and political order derives a significant part of its logic from the economy of war that plagued the country for almost three decades.

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[219] http://www.angonoticias.com/full_headlines.php?id=24828.
[220] Agamben, *State of Exception*.
[221] Mbembe, "On politics as a form of expenditure," p. 299.
[222] Ibid, p. 299.

To put it more bluntly, contemporary Angola provides an example of a continuation of war by other means. And this has less to do with military violence per se, or the deployment and the invocations of military violence, and more to do with the preservation, as much as possible, of an order that was itself the product of the war. Tactics and strategies concocted as ways to destroy the enemy have not yet been dismantled and are now at the service of the management of populations by the government. To give just one example, the Presidency's Military Brigade has taken an active role in the removal of squatters from a number of slums in Luanda and other provinces of the country. These exceptional procedures are not simply *ad hoc*, informal, ready to be deployed whenever necessary. Exception was not only incorporated into the constitution, but it is also the language by means of which the constitution was crafted.

The "Presidential" Constitution

By the end of 2008, the debate over the promulgation of a new constitution was heading to a stalemate. Only a week before the parliamentary elections of September 2008 were Angolans informed that the future legislature would have the mission of crafting and approving a new constitution. In the run-up for its approval, MPLA and UNITA did not manifest important differences in terms of the Bill of Rights that the document should consecrate. But the parties held irreconcilable positions regarding the three more contentious points of the draft: the executive powers of the president of the republic, the processes for the election of the president of republic, and territorial sovereignty and land ownership. President dos Santos, who took the initiative in the whole process, had already supported indirect elections, after saying that it was not the intention of his government "to impose atypical indirect elections."[223] In his view, the president should be elected by the parliament and not directly by voters in universal suffrage. However, when Kwata Kanawa – the then Party Secretary for information – was interviewed by *Novo Jornal* as to which side of the debate the MPLA was favoring, he dismissed the indirect elections alternative.[224] So most people in Angola assumed that the subject was dead. But dos Santos would revive this debate. The opportunity came in August 2009, when South African president Jacob Zuma made an official visit to Angola. Dos Santos seized the occasion to manifest his desire that the future Angolan president be elected in a fashion similar to that of South Africa: as member of the parliament, in what he would call "atypical direct elections."[225]

The indirect, atypical, election of the president of the republic would become law with the approval of the constitution in January 2010. Along with this provision, the MPLA also succeeded in imposing the other two most contentious points, those on land ownership and on the executive power of the president of republic. For some observers, the main problem with the Angolan constitution was that it did not have a system of checks and balances.[226] Whereas the president holds total executive powers, and power to appoint the cabinet, judges for different courts, provincial governors, military chiefs, and even university presidents, there is not a single provision that allows the parliament to impeach the president. But, more significantly, the president is indirectly elected, given that, as in South Africa, he/she is elected as a member of the parliament. In practice, the fact that the president is elected as a member of the parliament renders this institution ineffective, since this arrangement transfers power from the legislature to the executive. In fact, the presidency competes with the legislative branch, by its prerogative to produce laws in the form of presidential decrees.

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[223] http://www.angonoticias.com/full_headlines.php?id=24828.

[224] In Interview for Novo Jornal Kwata Kanawa said presidential elections would take place right after the approval of the new constitution, in *Novo Jornal*, February 2010.

[225] Novo Jornal, "PR mantém indirectas," August 21, 2009, p. 6

[226] The Portuguese constitutionalist Jorge Miranda, who was invited by the UNITA to produce a legal opinion on the constitution, made this point. See, Jorge Miranda, *Constituição de Angola de 2010.*

This arrangement alone would not make the Angolan constitution an anomaly. There are numerous constitutional orders that allow the chief of the government to produce laws. It only seems an oddity in Angola when this disposition is analyzed in the context of the whole political system. Unlike the Angolan case, political orders that bestow on the president a great deal of executive power tend to make the chief of the government accountable to the parliament. Furthermore, in the Angolan case, the president of the republic is not elected by his/her peers, not even by party members, but chosen by party structure.

This novel Angolan political order raises a number of questions, particularly on the relationship between law and of *social facts* – out of which the law is formed. Angolan lawyers and students of the Angolan constitutional system who I have informally interviewed are quick to refer to South Africa as the main inspiration for the Angolan government system, innovatively called “parliamentarian-presidential.” Heinz Klug has made a compelling case for the ways in which the South African constitution is the result of a complex system of power sharing, and the accommodation of various groups' interests.[227] In other words, the processes of constitution-making in South Africa crystallizes a particular history of race and class relations that is somewhat different from the political process in Angola that led to the making of a new constitution.

The recently approved Angolan constitution formalizes numerous of practices that were already there, albeit not codified into written laws. And to understand what is going on with the formalization of the exceptional practices, or their translation into law, it is necessary to analyze the combination of the three more controversial provisions of the constitution. Firstly, as I noted, the constitution gives full executive powers to the president of the republic without setting up a proper system of checks and balances. The power of the president overrides the authority of the Constitutional Court whose members he appoints. Furthermore, legal provisions of the Marxist-Leninist era that oblige the Supreme Court (which acted as a Constitutional Court) to obey to president's directive are still in place.[228] Despite having all these powers to influence every aspect of national life, the president is not directly elected. Nor are a number of other presidents in systems such as the United States, for instance.

But there is a trick here. For a citizen to become the president of the Angolan republic, the constitution says that he/she has only to have his/her name at the top of the list presented by the party that obtains the highest number of votes. Apparently, this is not different from the South African system, for instance, where, according to the constitution, "the National Assembly must elect a woman or a man from among its members to be the President" (Article 86).[229]In Angola, however, as the president of republic is previously chosen by the party, and only confirmed by the parliament, this provision allows him/her to clinch election even when the president of the republic acquired less than 50 percent of the ballots. In brief, on the one hand, the president is voted in as in a parliamentary system (such as in Germany), but then he governs as the head of a presidential system (such as the United States).

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[227] Klug, *Constituting democracy: law, globalism, and South Africa's political reconstruction*. For an overview on the subject, see, for instance, Bruce Ackerman, "The Rise of World Constitutionalism."

[228] Assembleia Nacional, *Lei nº 5/* 9 de 7 de Abril, art. 3, 2.

The implication of the sweeping power to intrude into people's lives comes when those provisions, on executive powers, and elections, come to bear upon the land and territory questions. I have already shown the change in Land Law that allows the government to clear areas of the city without properly compensating people whose property is destroyed. This should help us understand the extent to which the logic of war has been played out upon the organization of space.[230] The Angolan constitution has been hailed by neo-liberal observers for the importance it gives to private rather than state initiative. But it is not as generous to autonomous communities, given the higher premium it puts on the profitability of land. According to the constitution, the state is the sole proprietor of land, which it "manages and administers in the name of the Angolan people," and which "may be transmitted to singular and collective persons, for a rational and effective use" (art. 15, n. 1 and 2, and art. 98). By this principle, the state not only abrogates the idea of communal land, or the idea that land may be held by certain communities, as the state has the right to determine which land will fall in this category, and determines its uses. Furthermore, there is also a neo-liberal gesture here, or the appeal to rationality, that gives the state the right to determine the ways land can be used in a "rational" way. In this sense, it is as if the people of Angola have been deprived, even symbolically, of the sovereignty (ownership, in most cases) over their land.

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[229] Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/index.htm.

[230] For thoughtful discussion on the relationship between the military apparatus and urban planning, see, for instance, Paul Virilio, *The Overexposed City*.

War and the contours of power

Angolan constitutional history was inaugurated in 1975 with the Fundamental Law that allowed the proclamation of independence.[231] But the circumstances in which the nation was born were far from normal. The colonial order collapsed in 1974, when the military, in Lisbon, seized power in the Carnation Revolution. The new Portuguese regime then began negotiating with the nationalist movements in Angola, MPLA, UNITA and FNLA, for the transfer of power. However, an atmosphere of suspicion pervaded the negotiations, and the idea that independence would be proclaimed by the movement that occupied and succeeded in maintaining the capital until the day of independence, November 11, 1975, gained currency. Supported by a significant part of the population, the MPLA succeeded in driving the other forces out of the capital and proclaimed independence. On the night of November 11th, 1975, when, to "Angola and to the world", Agostinho Neto proclaimed independence, MPLA forces, helped by Cubans, were engaged in fierce combat to stop the progression to the capital of FNLA and Mobutu's forces, coming from the North, and UNITA and the regular South African army, from the South. The MPLA prevailed, FNLA disbanded its forces, and its leaders received amnesty and went into exile. UNITA proclaimed a short-lived republic, in Huambo, before being chased out by the Cubans and the bourgeoning Angolan army.[232] UNITA's survivors went to Zambia, regrouped, and then returned to Angola to wage the first phase of the civil war.

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[231] Up to independence, the Angola legal system was a province of the Portuguese constitution. During the Portuguese Republic, for instance, the Portuguese territories in Africa were not part of the constitution, but they were integrated in the constitution of 1933, under Chapter V, on the administration of the Portuguese overseas territories. For an overview on Angola and the various Portuguese constitutional order, see, for instance, Feijó, *A coexistência normativa entre o Estado e as Autoridades Tradicionais na Ordem Jurídica Plural Angolana*.

In brief, this was the political context in which the constitutional law of 1975 was approved, creating the conditions for the crystallization in Angola of one-party state dictatorship.[233] This law instituted the MPLA as the "vanguard of the revolution" and was meant to accommodate various anti-democratic provisions, such as those intended to prevent and severely punish "crimes against the security of the state," under which thousands of MPLA militants were tortured and killed, in the aftermath of a failed coup d'état in May 1977.[234]

The profound political, economic and social transformation that the country underwent in the late 1980s brought about the imperative for a constitutional revision. Key realities had to be accommodated into the law concerned: first, the party's renunciation of a centrally planned economy, and, second, the advent of a multiparty system. In May 1991, the Angolan government and the guerrillas finally reached a peace agreement, signed in Bicesse, Portugal. The text of the constitutional revision that the one-party parliament turned into law introduced for the first time fundamental guarantees, such as freedom of press, speech, and association. Given that Portugal, and particularly Portuguese constitutionalists, were directly involved in the process, the Angolan fundamental law borrowed much from their legal order, which explains the semi-presidential, or parliamentary feature of the law of 1991.

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[232] See, for instance, Bridgland, *Jonas Savimbi*.
[233] Paulo, *A posição do presidente no sistema angolano*.
[234] See, for instance, Mateus and Mateus, *Purga em Angola*.

Multiparty elections were organized for the following year amidst a climate of suspicion, and imminent civil war. UNITA did not disarm, and the whole electoral process took place amidst heated complaints by both sides. On September 5th and 6th, Angolans cast their ballots. The MPLA won with 53.7 percent of the votes as opposed to UNITA, which trailed in second with 34.1 percent. Presidential elections did not settle the matter, since the incumbent president, dos Santos, fell short of winning by getting 48.9 percent, while Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA, was behind with 40.1 percent. Despite the fact that the international community, represented by observers, had deemed the process, overall, "free and fair," UNITA refused to accept the results. Savimbi, alongside his retinue, abandoned the capital, and UNITA occupied a number of Angolan major cities, such as Huambo and Bié. The war would go on for ten more years.

The world in which Jonas Savimbi had maneuvered during the first civil war (1975-1991) was no longer the same. The Cold War was over, and Jonas Savimbi was having a hard time in making the case that he was still a "freedom fighter." After all, the MPLA was no longer a socialist party, but business-friendly, and Angola passed from a country where people could go to jail if found in possession of foreign currencies, to being the standard bearer of one of the most openly savage forms of capitalism. Without official sources of support, Savimbi was then forced to revert to the black market to purchase weaponry. Diamond mines, that the guerrillas occupied and exploited in the eastern part of the country, were Savimbi's main source of income.[235] For the MPLA-government, however, things were not very different. Frustrated with the weak signs that both contenders were committed to pursuing a way out of the war, the UN approved the so-called Triple Zero Clause that prohibited both forces from legally acquiring arms. If this was intended to force both parts to negotiate peace, the measure backfired, since it only increased the resolve of the MPLA-government to escalate the war until a final victory. Given the impossibility of both forces purchasing weapons, the Angolan civil war entered a new phase in which legitimate and illegitimate means were confused. The country's financial resources from oil were directly channeled to the private accounts of a number of top Angolan officials, namely the president of the republic, who directly dealt with arm dealers, such as the Frenchman Pierre Falcone and the Russian Arkady Gaidamak.[236] These violations of international law, and the intensification of the war, led finally to the end of the war, with Savimbi's death at the hands of government troops in February 2002.

A definitive peace agreement was signed between government forces and the beleaguered UNITA army. The point then was to pick up the democratic process where it had been interrupted in 1992. Constitution making was a central component of the next phase.[237] But the differences over the constitution were so significant that consensus could not be reached. Although the MPLA had the majority in the parliament, its position was not so dominant as to single-handedly approve a new constitution. During those years, from the end of the war in 2002 to the realization of general elections in 2008, the country lived a disjuncture between law and practice, or *de jure* and *de facto*.[238] On the one hand, the constitution in place had its mechanisms of checks and balances, and distribution of power among different branches of the government, but, in fact, the country was ruled by a centralized oligarchy. So it was for translating politics to the law, or to be more precise practice to law, that drafting a new constitution became an imperative. Only a week or so before the general elections did President dos Santos announce that the new legislative body to be elected would have the task of crafting a new constitution. The MPLA won the elections in a landslide, although international observers only reluctantly deemed them just and fair.[239]

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[235] See, for instance, Potgieter, "Taking Aid From the Devil Himself —Unita's Support Structures"; Henri-Lévy, *War, Evil, and the End of History*.

[236] According to a report produced by Global Witness (GB), top officials of the government of Angola have used the excuse of self-defense to "rob the country of its wealth through kick-backs related to over-priced arms deals, financed by oil-backed loans." GB calculates that more than 3,5 billion dollars have been transferred from state's accounts to private accounts of government top officials, such as the president himself, members of his family, and his international allies such as Pierre Falcone and Arkady Gaidamak. See, Global Witness, *All president's men*.

[237] According to the Angolan constitutionalist Raul Araujo neither MPLA nor UNITA agreed with the terms of the constitution of 1992. Both parts signed it to speed up the process, since there was the assumption among the contenders that the election winner could draft a new constitution to better serve its

Right after elections, the president of the republic announced the formation of a commission to deal with the constitution making process. The whole process was marked by a number of errors of procedures that were harshly denounced by the opposition and individuals and civil society organizations. Among the concerns were whether or not the legislature had the mandate to approve a new constitution, whether or not the constitution did not violate article 159 of the old constitutional order, or the "democratic lock,"[240] as the Angolan journalist and political commentator Reginaldo Silva called it. This

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political goals. See Araújo, *O Presidente Da República No Sistema Político de Angola* (Casa das Ideias, 2009), p. 343.

[238] See, for instance, Feijó, "O Semi-Presidencialismo em Angola. dos Casos à Teorização da Law in the Books e da Law in Action," *Revista Negócios Estrangeiros* (2007).

[239] The election took place amidst generalized chaos. Electoral precincts opened very late and some of them did not open at all.

[240] According to Reginaldo Silva, http://morrodamaianga.blogspot.com/2011/01/constituicao-e-estrategia-politica-do.html

provision would prevent any further changes in the constitution that might violate the principle of universal suffrage. And, finally, whether or not a new process of constitution making is dependent on a provision of the previous order is a question that many lawyers in Angola have squabbled with. The fact that this principle was repealed, or not observed, caused many observers to describe the whole process as a constitutional coup.

dos Santos' constitutional coup

By nature, the figure of the president of the republic is an uneasy notion in the modern political system. This uneasiness, perhaps, stems from the fact that the president of the republic is a common citizen who occupies the place of the classical sovereign and who, in extremis, has to "decide over life and death," in the famous definition of Carl Schmitt.[241] For the French sociologists Bernard Lacroix and Jacques Lagroye, the crux of the matter resides in the fact that in the juridical-political contemporary order, there is the tendency to separate the "functioning of the institution" from the "juridical forms that codify the legitimate usages" of the office holders. To acquire analytical purchase over the question of the presidency of the republic, they suggest then the need to look at the institution outside of the juridical order. Only by this procedure, they emphasize, can the observer understand "the construction of the (presidential) institution as the outcome of engagements and heterogeneous activities not controlled by anyone."[242]

For Agamben, the strangeness of the figure of the president of the republic stems also from the fact that in the modern sovereign "public and private [have] enter(ed) into a zone of absolute indistinction."[243] The problem of the indistinction between public and private has elicited more debate in Africa than anywhere else. Indeed, for numerous scholars, personal rule is still the most appropriate way to understand politics in Africa.[244] Part of the evidence collected by scholars in this regard stems from the constitutional arrangements African presidents take pains to enact to perpetuate their grip on power or to step down under the condition of their choosing, by, for instance, appointing their own successors. Although this is no longer the common practice in Africa, where the vast majority of constitutions determine presidential term limits, "the imperial president" still survives in Africa.[245]

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[241] Schmitt, *Political theology: Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty.*
[242] Lacroix and Lagroye, *Le Président de la République,* pp. 9-10

Throughout its political history since independence, Angola has tried different politico-legal systems. The consecration of imperial presidentialism may simply be the last resort to protect an order that sooner or later has to change. The ideology of the MPLA that took power in 1975 was steeped in the socialist international movement, infused with Leninist overtones with respect to the party's role as the vanguard of society.[246] Besides, the MPLA was a very contentious party with different factions. So executive power was evenly distributed among different institutions, such as the Revolutionary Council, the Political Bureau, and the government, properly speaking, whose work was presided over by a prime minister. The president of the republic, at the time of Agostinho Neto, was primarily a symbolic figure and his work was conceived as arbitrating among those different institutions. The opportunity to enforce the power of the president came when Neto's opponents staged his ousting in the failed coup d'état of 1977. In the purge that followed, thousands of the MPLA's top members were killed, imprisoned, and forced to seek exile abroad, which curtailed Neto's ambitions to have more control over the process of decision-making.[247] Revisions of the fundamental law that ensued were meant to increase the powers of the president, who could then lead the cabinet, nominate provincial governors and the members of the Revolutionary Council.[248]

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[243] Agamben, *State of Exception*, p. 83.

[244] See Jackson and Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*.

[245] Prempeh, "Africa's 'constitutionalism revival': False start or new dawn?"

[246] Gramsci believed that the role of the party was to be the catalyzer of hegemony, see, for instance, Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, especially the chapters "The Modern Prince," and "State and Civil Society," pp. 123-209. For another interesting discussion of the state in socialist regimes that also expands the concept of hegemony concerning class formation, see Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*. For a very interesting discussion on the role of the revolutionary party as society's guiding force, as it was conceptualized by Vladimir Lenin, see, for instance, Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, pp. 147-79.

Chosen by the Political Bureau to replace the recently deceased president Neto, in September 1979, José Eduardo dos Santos would find a less contentious party than the one that Neto led until 1977. After nudging Neto's loyalists out of power, dos Santos initiated an unprecedented consolidation of executive power. In the following years, he succeeded in transferring the central nerve of decision-making from the organisms of the party to the presidential palace *Futungo de Belas*, where he was seconded by a number of technocrats and other unelected bureaucrats.[249]In the following years, dos Santos would promote various constitutional revisions that made him the army's Commander-in-Chief and the President of the People's Assembly.[250]

As this design for the distribution of power or concentration of executive powers was deemed unfit in the constitutional order that had to accommodate multiparty democracy and a market economy, the president of the republic was, at least in the letter, deprived of other executive functions, aside from leadership of the state. In the constitutional order of 1991, as the National Assembly became independent of the executive power, a new president for this organism was elected. A prime minister dealt with the cabinet's current affairs.

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[247] For a description of this period of Angolan history, see, for instance, Mateus and Mateus, *Purga em Angola.*

[248] Araújo, *O Presidente da República no Sistema Político de Angola*, p. 238.

[249] Ibid, p. 260.

[250] Ibid, p. 262.

With the political crisis that ensued after the resumption of the war, in 1992, dos Santos made the case that the process of decision-making, in exceptional circumstances, would be more expedient, the fewer the people involved in it. So, in 1999, President dos Santos, "on account of the serious political-military crisis made, for the first time, use of special powers."[251] He used the "blank check" given to him by the Constitution "so as to enact any means necessary in case of constitutional dysfunction."[252] Once the war was over, there was no attempt to go back to the previous order, but, on the contrary, there was an attempt to formalize the state of exception. Although the juridical order was semi-presidential, the conduct of politics was in fact presidential. The constitutional coup came in 1988, when the president did not nominate a prime minister, and, instead of declaring a state of emergency, solicited a legal opinion from the Constitutional Court about which organ, the presidency of the republic or the prime minister, was in fact the head of the cabinet. The Constitutional Court, whose members were also card-carrying, party members, produced an opinion that put the president of the republic at the head of the cabinet, and thereby freed him from the constitutional obligation of having to appoint a prime minister. With this decision, José Eduardo dos Santos became simultaneously chief of state and head of the cabinet.

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[251] Ibid, p. 289.

[252] Ibid, p. 288.

So the period between 2002 and 2008 was one of legal indeterminacy. The war was finished and, thus, the political facts that led to the seizure of executive powers by the president were no longer there. But dos Santos did not manifest any intention to let go of the powers that allowed him to almost create a parallel government. What dos Santos then did with the constitution was not only to formalize the state of exception, but to recombine features of the past order (from the Marxist-Leninist period), with the demands of parliamentary democracy and the market economy. In this sense, the constitution making of South Africa looked like the best example to emulate,[253] since it provided the Angolan constitution with a recognizable model, while concealing the differences between the two systems.

The notion that these actions were part of a constitutional coup orchestrated by dos Santos' men occurred to me during my fieldwork in Luanda, which coincided with the electoral process of 2008, when I was surprised to see the name of the president of the republic on the list of party representatives for the national parliament. The idea, I was told by several people I asked, was to prevent a political crisis, in case the opposition disputed electoral results. In other words, this configuration of power was meant to avoid the president being caught up in a political limbo, similar to what happened in 1992, when not winning the election forced dos Santos to govern the country without a legitimate mandate for 16 years. According to the Constitution in place during the 16-year period, dos Santos was constitutionally neither the president of republic nor a member of the parliament.

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[253] Recently, the Comaroff have written that "politics itself is migrating to the courts" Comaroff and Comaroff, *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, p. 26. If this is the case for the South Africa, in the context of the post-apartheid Constitutional order, Angola has not emulated this practice. Judiciary power is irrelevant and totally depended on the politicians, if not legally, by the letter of law, at least informally, by the fact that the MPLA has ramification in the judiciary system.

So only on the basis of political facts, or a formal provision, did dos Santos succeed in imposing an effective concentration of his power. This became clear when in his annual New Year's speech of 2009 he did not anticipate presidential elections. Instead dos Santos conditioned the realization of the election on the approval of a new constitution. During that year, on a visit to Portugal, dos Santos was asked at a press conference about the legitimacy of his rule. He said that the legitimacy of his rule came from the fact that he was the head of the party representatives elected by the National Assembly. With this move, dos Santos had elected himself retrospectively, by finding his legitimacy under a constitution that would be approved only later.

Refracted governmentality

Michael Schatzberg argues that the "widespread presence and use of the metaphors of father and family in Cameroon and other African states both reflect and reinforce a deeply rooted and largely implicit comprehension of the polity" that he calls the "moral matrix of legitimate governance."[254] I agree with such a point of view, and I will later in this dissertation come back to my own understanding of the relationship between the metaphors of family and the polity. For the sake of this chapter, however, I would like to point out that any description of politics in Africa that takes as privileged standpoint the question of personal rule should relate it to formal and bureaucratic arrangements. African politics is too complex a domain to relinquish the critical purchase of the relationship between formality and informality. This is, for instance, the line of enquiry followed by Momar-Coumba Diop and Mamadou Diouf in a study of political transitions and presidential successions in Africa, when they make the case for the need to reflect on these processes in Africa, not only through coup d'état and other exceptional procedures, but also "on the basis of provisions and constitutional procedures."[255] More forcefully and specifically, Luc Sindjoun argues that the "person" of the president, an unstable figure in Africa, has to be apprehended in the context of the "political construction attached to relations of force," since the "person of the president is nothing without the force of the presidential institution."[256] Much of what I have said so far is an indication of the fact that, as far as Angola is concerned, personal rule goes hand in hand with the bureaucratic apparatus. However, the fact that president dos Santos is at the center of these two systems is not particular to "Africa." The intertwining of those forms of governmentality that privilege care, on the one hand, and citizenship, on the other, is at the core of modern politics. It is worthwhile to make a detour here and revisit Michel Foucault's theory of governmentality.

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[254] Schatzberg, "The Metaphors of Father and Family," p. 1.

In his course of the academic year of 1977-78, at College de France, Foucault sets out to discuss the relationship between security, territory and population, through the relationship between mechanisms of power and the economy. He locates the origins of the modern state in the debate that followed the publication of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, since it marked the first time in the political theoretical literature that the state is starkly distinguished from the sovereign. The key distinction, between one and the other, broadly speaking, concerns governing over people and governing over things. Governmentality is then defined as mechanisms of power intended to govern over a particular "complex constituted by people and things", according to Foucault quoting an author of that time Perrière, such as "men, through their relations, their links, through the intricacies with things that are wealth, resources, subsistence, territory and border."[257] Foucault discusses at length the previous form of governmentality, that over people, or soul, as is exemplified in the Christian pastoral, or pastoral power. Here, Foucault writes, "power is exerted over a multiplicity rather than a territory", like the power of the shepherd over the flock. Foucault admits that his notes are provisional, and he is never forthright when it comes to looking at the ways in which pastoral power has been embedded in modern forms of governmentality. For example, Foucault is never clear on whether forms of pastoral power may have ended in the eighteenth century, or if they have found their way in the constitution of modern states.[258] However, these inconsistencies are productive, since they allow us to fill in the gaps.

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[255] Diop and Diouf, *Les Figure du Politique an Afrique*, p. 8.

[256] My translation. In the original: La personne du president n'est rien sans la force de l'institution présidentielle, sans la position centrale occupée dans le systéme d'action hégémonique. Le charisme de position découle de la puissance du systeme de domination politique. La centralité de la fonction présidentielle est une construction politique liée aux rapports de force." Sindjoun, "*Le Président de la République du Cameroon à l'épreuve de l'alternance néo-patrimoniale e de la «transition démocratique,*" p. 66.

Partha Chatterjee, only obliquely builds on this contribution by Foucault. Chatterjee's main point is an attempt to think through the eruption of the population, which he calls the heterogeneous social, into the political arena, and literally and figuratively into the city. To deal with the ways in which in India, and in most parts of the world, the state governs this heterogeneous social, Chatterjee dismisses the centrality of the concept of civil society, since for him, the state incorporates the "pastoral" functions that Foucault construes as pre-modern, and, through agencies, "delivers certain benefits even to people who are not proper member of civil society or of the republican body of true citizens."[259] Furthermore, as Chatterjee also adds, these policies are carried out with electoral purposes, since they "widen the arena of political mobilization." In other words, the provision of social functions within a violent gift economy, to secure dependency, loyalty and thus legitimacy for power. The point here is to understand two forms of contract between the state and citizenry. The first one takes the social as civil society, or those who bear rights and duties. The second only takes the social merely as population. And this is the reality of many places in the Global South, where most people are simply in the confines of the population. This analytical framework is of use for understanding the breach between formal and informal politics in Angola.

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[257] Foucault, *Sécurité, Territoire, Population, 1977-1978*, p. 100.
[258] Ibid., p. 169.

The problem in Africa, as anywhere else in the Global South, is that, as Chartterjee argues,[260] those polities have failed to integrate the population into the civil society – an old promise of the nationalistic movement. In Angola, rights are less the capacity to have a voice in political matters, and more the presence in networks of distribution. For the vast majority of the population, the only way they can be included into these networks is through the vote. But not even here is the link of the same nature. The president of the republic and the MPLA are free to use the resources of the state to cement their grip on power. And their use of public goods is not subject to any form of control or oversight. Furthermore, they are also beyond the vagaries of electoral processes. One of the consequences of this order of affairs is the disjunction between the modern and highly bureaucratic state, on the one hand, and other forms of life on the other. The former produces laws to regulate every aspect of people's lives, controls the circulation of money, and adjudicates oil resources. However, due to the lack of social policies, the population is left to reproduce itself on its own terms. The management of this sector of the popular is the work of the ruling party. I will now attempt to come to terms with this disjuncture between, on the one hand, the works of the state and, on the other, the ways in which the population reproduces itself according to its own means, and how these forms of reproduction are, on various counts, informally controlled by the ruling party. I will have more to say on these forms of management of the population. For now, let me illustrate this point with two examples.

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[259] Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, p. 47.

[260] Mahmood Mamdani makes also the same argument, although he conflates civil society with the urban population and the heterogeneous social with the rural population, or those under the spell of customary law. See *Mamdani*, *Citizen and Subject*.

Commentators on the Angolan constitution defend its innovativeness and claim that it goes further than any previous one in terms of the ways traditional authorities are recognized by the modern state. This recognition is compensatory to the extent that it is addressed to those forms of power that were destroyed, or instrumentalized by colonialism.[261] However, it is known that, at least in countries such as Angola and Mozambique, the power of traditional authorities was eroded by an aggressive politics of land confiscation. But the recognition of traditional authorities in Angola did not imply that the state would restitute the land that was part of those kingdoms and the ground of their 'authorities' and which is now part of the national territories. It simply implies the recognition of the "chiefs."[262] In the conceptualization of traditional authority, the functions of the chiefs as the embodiment of local power has been mostly defined in ways that only imply control, guidance, and explanation. According to Fernando Pacheco, when chiefs are asked about their relationship to the state, chiefs say they are

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[261] For a critique of the ways in which colonial powers have instrumentalized traditional power see, for instance, Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

[262] Feijó, *A coexistência normativa entre o estado e as autoridades tradicionais na ordem jurídica plural angolana*.

"partners" of the state. But when the discussion turns towards issues of subsidies and salaries, chiefs argue that they are "representatives of the state among the population."[263] This inconsistency is precisely what Michel Foucault has characterized as pastoral power. Furthermore, the ruling party is that which determinates who is the legitimate representative of the state. As a recent report on political violence has shown, outside of Luanda, in the vast majority of villages, only the MPLA's flag is authorized to hang.[264] This shows the nature of the inclusion of indigenous forms of power into the Angolan modern state. Traditional authorities have been co-opted into forms of clientelism organized by the party, so that they can use their 'pastoral' power over the population they control for the end that the ruling party fits necessary.

A visit of the then Governor of BNA to Roque Santeiro is another example that may help explain the disjuncture between government action and management of the population. With the end of the war, in 2002, there was the urge to deal with a number of social problems. Resources once diverted to the war could then be used in the recuperation of infrastructure. Since the war had also created economic instability, a skyrocketing rate of inflation, and so on, the government's priority, was to fix the economy.[265] After all, the international conjuncture was also favorable: 2002 was the beginning of an ascending movement of oil prices in the global market that would peak in

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[263] Pacheco, *Autoridades Tradicionais e Estruturas Locais do Poder em Angola*, p. 10.

[264] Those were the allegations made by members of the UNITA that have been the target of post-conflict violence in a number of places in Angola. Sent to investigate these allegations, a commission formed by National Assembly's representatives produced a report dismissing them. UNITA accused the commission of being partisan and provided a number of cases wherein people were not authorizes to hang the flag of any other party except the MPLA's. http://angola24horas.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5334:unita-rejeita-relatorio-da-cpi-por-escamotear-a-verdade&catid=2:politics&Itemid=14

[265] To give an idea of the problem, in the late 1980s, the rate of inflation reached 3000 percent. See, for instance, Rocha, *Opiniões e Reflexões.*

2008, when the barrel reached 160 dollars. In this year, according to a report by Global Witness, Angola oil's crude production was 695,708,000 barrels, equivalent to 1,906,000 barrels per day, at the average price of $92.433 per barrel. Although from the numbers presented by the Ministry of Pretroleum and Ministry of Finance there is a discrepancy of almost 87 million barrels,[266] the country has made only in income taxes $3.8 billion in income taxes.[267] Nonetheless, for the first time in Angola, since independence in 1975, the country was reversing years of negative growth, and, more importantly, the inflow of hard currency was higher than the outflow. As a backdrop to this, the Angolan financial institution would try to stabilize the exchange rate between the dollar and the national currency, the Kwanza.

So in 2002, the governor of BNA (Banco Nacional de Angola – Angolan National Bank), Amadeu Maurício, visited Roque Santeiro Market, then the most important outlet in the Angolan economy, and the central nerve, the nodal point, of a subterranean, if not the "real", economy (where there is the an almost perfect equilibrium between supply and demand). The volume of transactions in Roque Santeiro was so important that the market did not only determine the prices of commodities, but, more importantly, the exchange rate. Hence the interest of bank authorities was in what going on there. Followed by a retinue of journalists, Maurício talked to a number of sellers, particularly *kinguilas* (informal money sellers), trying to understand the reason why prices of commodities and money in the informal economy were not depreciating. After all, as he later said to journalists, BNA had not only depreciated the value of the Kwanza (narrowing the difference between formal and informal exchange rates), but it had also liberalized the market, allowing any person to purchase any amount of dollars at any commercial bank at the official price. In brief, Maurício was puzzled that the availability of cheap money in the formal circuit was not driving down the prices in the informal economy.

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[266] Global Witness, *Oil revenues in Angola*, p. 14.
[267] Ibid, p. 32.

Maurício then concluded that the disparity in prices was being caused by the fact that a number of commodities being sold in the market were still priced at their acquisition before the implementation of the economic measures. He anticipated that once the economic agents had replenished their stocks by paying for the new stock with cheaper hard currencies, the price of the informal market would drop. But Maurício was not right: the prices of the commodities and money came down but not to the point where the second would be redundant. The difference between the formal and the informal exchange rate would always open a space of arbitrage, whose rules are very specific and derive from, for lack of better term, the moral economy.

The perplexities of Maurício stem from his failure to understand how the laws of formal economy did not apply to the economy of Roque Santeiro. The point is not that formal and informal economies do not communicate on various counts. It is exactly the other way around, the informal economy in many contexts is simply a subsidiary of the formal economy, whereby the former performs services to the former.[268] But laws of supply and demand did not govern the economies of Roque Santeiro. The market was to a certain way a privatized space, created by agents with links to the state and particularly to the ruling party. Those agents with privileged access to credit, acquisition of foreign currency at official prices, were linked in their turn to sellers and entrepreneurs by a complex web of patron-client relationships. In this sense, Roque Santeiro was more a political then an economic space. Among the rationales for the emergence of the market was the adoption of laissez-faire policies that allow practices of wealth creation, even when those practices were outright criminal and illegitimate. On the other hand, as an Angolan official has put it, Roque Santeiro stemmed also from the need to allow people recently uprooted from the countryside to engage in strategies of survival. However, Roque Santeiro was a space of exception, stemming from the never declared state of emergency: a problem to be solved as soon as there was improvement in the country's political economy.

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[268] For a discussion on this topic, see, for instance, Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

To conclude, I argued in this chapter that regimes of political subjectivization in Angola are subsumed in the formalization of the exception that has been incorporated in the Angolan constitution. This formalization is the product of two different but mutually constitutive aspects. The first one is the civil war, and how it has served as an excuse for the concentration of power in the hand of the president. The second one is related to the fact that the civil war has allowed the normalization of a number of illegitimate practices, such as the transfer of financial resources from the state to the hand of a restricted number of Angolans. Accordingly, the consecration of the president as an institution above the political game may protect from the judiciary reach those who were involved in all the shady deeds deemed necessary for smashing the military opposition (crimes of war and corruption), but the cost is that it prevents the crystallization of a social world uncontrolled by politics. As such, the link between the state and society does not take place thorough formal channels, but rather through informal ones. And the ruling party plays an important role here, as I will show in the remainder of this dissertation.

PART TWO

[*Informal economy*]

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ECONOMIES OF ROQUE SANTEIRO

"That which cannot be found in Roque Santeiro has not been invented yet"[269]

Pepetela

Leaving downtown Luanda by Cacuaco Road for the satellite-city Cacuaco – Roque Santeiro Market – or the space that for so long was the site of Roque Santeiro – is on the left side of the road. During the heyday of the market the first signs of its materialization were, perhaps, the dense traffic congestion, marked by the highest concentration of *candongueiros* (the blue and sometimes blue and white Toyota Hiace used as taxis) in the entire province of Luanda, maneuvering among sellers, customers, and the thousands of people who offered a myriad of services vital to the functioning of the market. Physically speaking, Roque Santeiro market was a huge wasteland in a depression a couple of feet below street level: an area as large as four soccer fields that would descend abruptly to the slopes of Boavista slums, and then the Port of Luanda. Social geography is critical to understanding its emergence as the central nerve of an informal/subterranean economy. Roque Santeiro was strategically located between the formal city and the sprawling *musseques*, at less than five kilometers from the colonial line of demarcation between those two structural parts of Luanda: beyond the enigmatic *Prédio do Livro* (a modernist building in the form of an open book) a hundred meters away from the Administration of Sambizanga Municipality. Furthermore, this market sat at the juncture of two major roads. Cacuaco Road, which passes in front of the market, links Luanda to agricultural rural hinterland belt, and, for as long as it existed, this meant that the market was the marked intersection between the rural and the urban, and an important point of distribution for fresh produce. Roque Santeiro became an easy place for lorries to supply the market with agricultural produce, which was then redistributed to other markets. Boavista Road is on the other site of the plateau where Roque Santeiro stood. This road serves the Port of Luanda, and this proximity was no less instrumental for the formation of the market. A great variety of the items sold in the first years of the market's existence were directly diverted from the Port of Luanda.[270] Furthermore, Boavista Road is one of the most treacherous roads of Luanda. During the rainy season a number of potholes open up in the road, often causing container lorries to capsize. The goods that were then looted were directly sold in Roque Santeiro market.

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[269] Pepetela, *Jaime Bunda*.

The site of Roque Santeiro market – "the largest open air market in Africa," as Angolans liked to say – is a space full of signification, and its transformation indexed the recent history of the country itself. In 1977, it was an area secluded enough to become the grave for the thousands of Angolans who disputed the leadership of Agostinho Neto through a failed attempt of *coup d'état*.[271] Roque Santeiro provided a living metaphor for Angola's various crises (economic, political, social). When I visited that part of town in December 2010, the market was no longer there. Government officials had already publicized their intention to transform that space into a modern urban complex to support the oil industry with residential and office areas, equipped with modern amenities such as luxurious gardens, tennis courts, and swimming pools.[272] Meanwhile, the whole area had reverted to what it had probably been before: an immense wasteland. The difference is that Roque Santeiro had attracted hundreds of thousands of people who built houses in that part of the town, and who are still living there, despite being deprived of the market that for more than two decades was their main income source. Those people now use this place in very different ways: as a passage from Sambizanga to Boavista; as a recreational area, where the youths play soccer; Boavista residents also use the wasteland as a dumping ground for buckets of sand to protect their houses from landslides in the rainy season (for houses are on the slope of the waste dump, so the less sand beneath them – more garbage – the more resistant they are to the landslide).

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[270] See, also, Lopes, *Roque Santeiro*, p. 57.

[271] See, for instance, Francisco, *Nuvem Negra;* Botelho, *Holocausto em Angola.*

With the peace agreement signed by the government and UNITA in 2002 and particularly with the boom in oil prices that brought a bonanza for the governing regime, the spontaneous economy of Roque Santeiro became irrelevant. Roque Santeiro was an outlet of wealth creation for some, and survival for others. It perfectly served those who wanted to accumulate wealth in the ruins of the failed socialist regime and those millions who were abandoning the countryside in exchange for a peaceful, and conflict-free zone, a place to live in the capital. But the economic priority in Angola today is to attract large-scale investment,[273] and less and less for the networked multinational "economy of the container," thanks to which Angola became a point on the "map of global exchanges,"[274] through the transnational action of migrant communities – Lebanese, Nigerians, Senegalese and people from many other places. The fact, then, that the market was dismantled and successfully relocated elsewhere is extremely significant. For many years, skeptics of the possibility of the removal of Roque Santeiro argued that the ramifications of interests that allowed the market to exist involved a great number of people with stakes in national politics. This is, for instance, what I was told over a lunch in New York with a prominent Angolan economist in April 2010. However, when the Provincial Government of Luanda issued the decree that authorized the removal of the market in August 2008 – during the electoral campaign ahead of the elections that would give the MPLA 82.2 percent of votes – the market was inevitably doomed for destruction. Finally, in September 2010, the PGL started to relocate sellers to other markets, such as the Panguila, in Cacuaco, at 30 kilometers' distance from Roque Santeiro.

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[272] When the market was removed, various newspapers published news and architectural model of what was the called *Sambizanga XXI.* However, more recently a commission has been created for the Requalification and Urbanization of Sambizanga and Cazenga, and there is the possibility that the government will build social and affordable housing in that area. For information of Sambizanga XXI, see, for instance, http://www.opais.net/pt/dossier/?id=2036&det=12528.

[273] The Law of Foreign investment recently approved fixes a cap of at least $1,000,000 the sum of money to invest in the country. See Silva and Filipe "Um milhão não é nada – projecto de lei sobre investimento privado, *Novo Jornal*, April 15, 2011.

As I have stated before, Roque Santeiro was not part of my initial research project when I arrived in Luanda for my fieldwork. The first time that I went to the market in February 2008, I was accompanying a Brazilian photographer, André Vieira, who had invited me to contribute a text on Roque Santeiro to a Brazilian magazine that was to publish his photos. It was not my first time to visit Roque Santeiro. I had visited the market before, and still today I have vivid recollections of the stories of acts of violence perpetrated there: moral tales, perhaps, on punishment with the end of dissuading people from stealing in a society where formal justice does not work. What primarily struck me on that visit there (with the Brazilian photographer) was the combination of the obscene amount of money changing hands everyday (at one time estimated at 20 million dollars) and the condition in which sellers and entrepreneurs conducted their moneymaking activities. Given that the market sat over a functioning waste dump that was riddled with garbage, people would sell, sleep, eat and defecate amidst heaps of garbage. Moreover, as the whole place was unpaved, the dust that lingered over the air gave Roque Santeiro the appearance of a refugee camp. And in fact Roque Santeiro was more of refugee camp, considering the fact that its population was comprised mainly of internally displaced people. That these people could eke out their living in such places was certainly a reason why Angola had so few refugee camps during the war.

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[274] See, Peraldi, *Cabas et containers*, and "*La fin de Norias*?"

By the time I started my fieldwork in Roque Santeiro, the impending removal was the main concern among sellers. Anxiety over the future increased when the removal of the market was formalized in August by the publication of a decree issued by the Provincial Government of Luanda. The relocation was problematic and highly controversial on various counts. First of all, the market to which sellers were to be relocated was outside Luanda. As I noted, Roque Santeiro only became such an important nodal point in the Angolan economy because of its location. Roque Santeiro was at the intersection between the cement city and the sprawling *musseques*. It was close enough to the center to allow people from downtown Luanda to shop there on a regular basis. In the location where the government was planning to send sellers, there was no such proximity, nor the opportunities associated with it. Secondly, Roque Santeiro was more than a market. Half the people who regularly operated there were providers of various services. But the plan to relocate Roque Santeiro's population only involved sellers, and left out the service providers who would be unemployed in the aftermath of the market's closure.

The central government was expecting a backlash about its decision to relocate the market. That was the reason why, according to my key interlocutor, Makassamba, the government postponed the date for the removal. August would not be a good time, since parliamentary election would take place in the first week of September. And this would certainly hurt the ruling party. So for Makassamba, and other people I informally spoke with, the relocation would take place right after the parliamentary election, around October or November, so that the ruling party could appease the population ahead of the presidential election, scheduled for the first week of September 2009. But, as I noted in the previous chapter, president dos Santos started to condition the realization of the presidential election on the approval of a new constitution, and when the new constitution was approved, he wrote presidential elections out of the constitution. In this context, the removal of the market was no longer a problem. By this legal arrangement, there was less likelihood that the voices of the million Angolans whose subsistence depended on the market could voice their protest through elections.

My point is not to link directly the constitutional arrangement with the removal of the market. Rather, the case I am making pertains to the political, economic and social transformations that were simultaneously instrumental *both* for the rewriting of the constitution and the removal of the market. It was a very particular context that created the conditions for the concentration of power in the hand of the president of the republic. But those were also the conditions that made the market redundant. In the gains of peace, the Angolan elite had found other ways for the accumulation of wealth.

To a certain extent, Roque Santeiro was the materialization of the economic and political crisis that affected the country in the 1980s. But the formation of Roque Santeiro was also the outcome of a different kind of crisis: the impossibility of conceiving of social life under normal conditions. Independence, in 1975, and the repatriation of the middle class and skilled workers (overwhelmingly formed by settlers) plunged the city into a virtual collapse. Neither the nationalization of the means of productions, nor the attempt to substitute the colonial work force by Cubans and Eastern European nationals could prevent the collapse of what had become normalized as a way of living in the urban setting of Luanda. By the early 1980s the networked infrastructure, without which business could be conducted was in total disarray. Formal economies could no longer function over inefficient systems of infrastructure which prevented people from different time-spaces from engaging in commercial transactions. The urban environment was collapsing, as was the tele-communication system. When the latter worked it did not reach the whole city, and the distribution of electricity frequently failed for long periods of time. In such circumstances, the transfer of the commercial hub from the center to the periphery was the only way the economy could function.

This is no longer the situation of Luanda, where, as I argued in previous chapters, oil money has ignited an ambitious program of urban restructuring. Given that the space where the market once stood is also an important target for the restructuring, it is worth performing here an exercise in archeology. Through this, I intend to not only reflect on the production of such a space of exchange as Roque Santeiro, but also to look at the regime of governmentality that was implicit in the market's formation. Roque Santeiro was a private (or privatized) space, bearing some characteristics of "private indirect government," as defined by Achille Mbembe. With this concept, Mbembe covers the fragmentation of the state in Africa as the result of the constraints imposed by the programs of structural adjustment. The “African” debt to the international donors, which gives them powers that involve “a range of direct intervention in domestic economic management, credit control, implementing privatization, laying down consumption requirements, determining policies, agricultural programs and cutting costs – or even direct control of the treasury”[275] is not the case for Angola. After all, its abundant oil resources have helped the country to raise funds among international creditors. But Mbembe’s theorization of the relationship between taxation and rights may help us shed some light on the politics of the market. The fact that sellers are subjected to regimes of payments outside formal taxation is part of my argument about the privatization of Roque Santeiro.

This chapter argues that the emergence, and especially the longevity of Roque Santeiro, was less due to the rebellion of sellers who occupied that part of the town for the right to survive, and more to the complex web of patron-client relationships that linked sellers to investors, and to members of the ruling party. A speech of the president of the republic on a recent visit to the area proves the point. In that speech, dos Santos vindicated the position of his government in removing the market, despite the “economic and financial interests”[276] that controlled it. So, to begin, this chapter examines the condition that presided over the formation of Roque Santeiro. I argue that the market was the product of the encounter between two logics: on the one hand, the logic of wealth accumulation enacted by a handful of Angolans who found money making opportunities in the liberalization of the economy, and, on the other, the logic of survival of thousands of Angolan who migrated to Luanda for various reasons, especially the war. Secondly, I describe in more detail the regimes of patron-client relationships that pervaded the activities of a great number of Roque Santeiro operatives. Thirdly, I delve into the regimes of management of the market, by describing the encroachment of the state-controlled administration, and the involvement of the ruling party not only in the management of the market and the control of the masses, but more importantly, on the creation of the conditions that allowed the market to be removed without the escalation of public unrest.

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[275] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony,* p. 74.

[276] http://club-k.net/politica/8315-inicio-de-obras-no-antigo-roque-santeiro-e-um-marco-historico-segundo-pr-

Transition: from socialism to neo-liberalism

The market was named after the most popular Brazilian soap opera ever broadcast by the Angolan public television: Roque Santeiro. Although many people have told me in interviews that the market being named after the soap opera is simply a coincidence,[277] there are a number of common features that should not go unnoticed. The Roque Santeiro soap opera narrates the story of a saint crafter in a fictitious small town called Asa Branca. When an infamous gang threatens to invade and plunder the town, the young man, who later would be called Roque Santeiro, is the only person who offers to stay in the city to protect the church from being deprived of its most important relic: a golden monstrance. But Roque Santeiro himself steals the monstrance, and goes somewhere else to build his fortune. Unbeknownst to him, after the gang left his hometown, his countrymen assumed that he had sacrificed his life in a failed attempt to protect the relic, which was stolen, anyway. Roque Santeiro becomes then a soon-to-be saint, waiting for beatification by the Vatican, and the evocation of his name finds its way into the syncretic practices of the local catholic community and becomes a powerful miracle maker.[278]

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[277] Since there were during that time many other informal market being nominated after the Brazilian soap opera, such as Beato Salu and Asa Branca.

Roque Santeiro market resonates with this soap opera in its capacity to produce miracles. The market was, to a great extent, the first avenue for wealth accumulation available for Angolans. Roque Santeiro market offered the opportunity for people to become rich overnight by deploying money making techniques with no regard to ethics or law. Roque Santeiro emerged during a time in the recent history of the country when the precepts of neo-liberalism were trickling in. Among the political leadership it was becoming clear that one of the main deficiencies of the country's economic structure was the absence of an entrepreneurial class that would provide society with a number of services that the state could not provide. Furthermore, the creation of a local entrepreneurial class was also a form of dealing with an enduring legacy of colonialism in Angola. During colonialism, in Angola as elsewhere, very few Angolans had climbed the ladder into the middle class. In the 1950s, Portuguese migrants, recently arrived to the country, filled the top and middle level positions in the colonial economy and administration. To create a national bourgeoisie, in the wake of a failed socialist project and civil war, was hailed as a necessary and inevitable step in the development of Angola.[279] As it was in so many other Africa countries.

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[278] Interestingly, the name also inverts that of another ambiguous saint, saint Rocco (Roque), who ministered to the pariah of the world, those with the plague, and was disavowed by and even unrecognized by his own community. He was famous for living with the poor, indistinct from them, and was always accompanied by a dog.

It is true that the MPLA's intellectuals who took over power in 1975 had strong Marxist convictions, and dreamed of transforming Angola into a "fatherland of workers," according to a well-known political slogan of those times. However, the march of the country toward socialism was a decision more motivated by necessity than ideological commitment. During colonialism, the settler community dominated every single area of the national economy. Under colonial laws, Angola imported construction materials, industrial materials, and a number of other finished goods, via commercial enterprises that were managed and owned by Portuguese. Even the local commerce, or the distribution of food staples, was mainly controlled by small-scale Portuguese shopkeepers known as *fubeiros* (*fuba*'s sellers: *fuba* is the Angolan national staple), located in the *musseques*.[280] With independence and the repatriation of the vast majority of Portuguese, the whole system of distribution was dismantled. In this conjuncture, then, the state took over the sector. After a few years of scarcity, the socialist regime instituted a centralized system of distribution. Rationing cards were issued for a population segmented into three primary groups: "directors," "chiefs" and the "people." This system more or less worked to a point where the majority of the population in Luanda appeared to be accountable within these categories. But things were drastically changing in the country's demography, with serious implications for the social fabric of the capital. The failure of the programs of agricultural collectivization brought hundreds of destitute to Luanda. More importantly, the civil war was a main cause for the exponential growth of Luanda. The UN has put the number of Angolans displaced by the almost thirty years of civil war at 4 million.[281] A great part of those displaced came to the cities, particularly Luanda, and formed a kind of excessive population, unanticipated and unaccounted for, and unabsorbed by the government into its schemes of distribution.

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[279] For a discussion the need for a national bourgeoisie, see, for instance, João Melo, "Capitalismo Angolano."

[280] For an overview of the Angolan colonial economy, centered around the debate whether or not Portugal has underdeveloped Angola, see Newitt, *Portugal in Africa*. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese*. For an overview on the relationship between Angolan and Portuguese economies in late colonialism, see, for instance, Ferreira, "A Lógica da Consolidação da Economia de Mercado em Angola: 1930-1974."

It was primarily as outlets of goods distribution that the emergence of selling points outside the control of the central state can be appreciated. From 1975 to 1985, those who had access to state subsidized stores found business opportunities in the fact that they could buy products fixed at official prices and sell them at (black) market prices. Sometimes, the marginal gain for the diversion of products and services from one economy to the other could yield a profit of more than 30 times. Besides this simple subversion, a complex system of barter was set in place to run parallel with the beleaguered official economy. People's stores, for instance, sold small portions of rice, beans, oil, sugar, soap sometimes, and little more. Only in the "chiefs'" and the "directors'" stores, could customers acquire beer, for instance, which then became the real currency in those years.[282] To buy clothes, for instance, those who were consumers at the people's stores had to exchange their rice and beans for beer, and then sell the beer to finally buy clothes. So the selling points that started to sprout up in the cement city, but more insistently in the *musseques* – with evocative names such as *Ajuda Marido* (Help your husband), and *Cala-a-Boca* (Shut your mouth), were in fact, gateways to "paths for diversion."[283] In this sense, many of those selling points emerged spontaneously out of the aspiration of agents to bring about a sphere of exchange in which goods could attain value in the relation between demand and desire that the dynamic of the new economy was bringing forth.

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[281] http://www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?InDepthId=52&ReportId=71948.

[282] See, for instance, Brooke, "Adam Smith Crowds Marx in Angola."

The laws and prohibitions of the socialist regime also informed the fact that the diversion of products from one economic sphere to the other was enormously productive. In those years, the police would crack down on informal selling points, sometimes injuring and even killing sellers. Many other sellers would have their goods confiscated. These risks associated with informal vending are the primary reason that sellers and entrepreneurs violently expelled from other selling points, such as *Calemba*, and *Tourada*, as well as a number of street vendors, ended up in a part of the municipality of Sambizanga, to create Roque Santeiro market. The rationale implicit in this move was, perhaps, that nobody would be harassed or arrested by law-enforcing authorities to conduct an economic activity, in times of scarcity, in a waste dump. In other words, what would be a better place then a functioning waste dump, where sellers had to carve out their selling place over heaps of garbage, and where, until the last day of the market, zealous municipality workers would unload garbage cargo and burn it? If one juxtaposes this version of the market, upheld by a number of sellers who I interviewed, with the official one, the result provides an interesting idea of the role of the market in the overall Angolan economy.

According to the official version, the formation of Roque Santeiro market was facilitated by the government, in order to give to the Luandan population opportunities to make ends meet in times of dire scarcity.[284]This narrative contradicts the accounts I collected in the many formal and informal conversations I had with sellers and entrepreneurs. They tend to cast their own narrative in the language of rebellion, the right to sell, and survival. But these versions are not incompatible. The spontaneous formation of Roque Santeiro makes perfect sense. However, there would not have been a Roque Santeiro without the active compliance of the central government, and especially of particular interests that were becoming autonomous of the central government in times of an inchoate and incipient neo-liberalism.

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[283] Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things.*

It is not a coincidence, therefore, that Roque Santeiro emerged contemporaneously with the first round of negotiations between the Angolan government and the IMF. In the mid-1980s, Angola was on the brink of economic collapse. Oil prices had plummeted to an historical low, and the Angolan government was forced to solicit a loan from the IMF. The Fund's recipe for the alleviation of Angolan economic ailments was not different from what had been given to other African countries afflicted by the same problems: Angola had to dismantle the centrally planned economy and embrace the market economy; the state should relieve itself from the burden of sustaining an unproductive labor force by laying off workers in the public sector, or alienating them to the private sector; and, more importantly, the state should stop interfering in monetary policy (leaving it for the national bank), so as to allow the exchange rate between the

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[284] Lopes, *Roque Santeiro.* p. 56.

Kwanza and the dollar to fluctuate; furthermore, state-owned companies should be privatized.[285]

The Angolan government presented few objections to these impositions with one exception: laying off the unproductive public service workers. During my fieldwork research, I asked a top Angolan official why it was so difficult for the Angolan government to consider laying off part of the public service labor force, which, in 2008, was hovering around 200,000 workers.[286] I was told, in a half- half-serious, half-joking tone that the workers, even the unproductive ones, represent the "reserve army of the party."[287] So Angola did not take the loan. After all, the country, given its oil reserves, was in a slightly better position than its other African counterparts to resist the imposition of the IMF. But the negotiations with the IMF were not pointless. The MPLA understood that, under the circumstances of the globalizing economy, some reforms had to be carried out, and that only the application of some tenets of a market-driven economy would rescue the country from stagnation caused by the constraints of a centrally planned economy. The government, then, appointed a commission, which presented a plan, known as the SEF (*Saneamento Económico e Financeiro* – Economic and Financial Clean-up), whose main inspiration was the practices of economic reforms being carried out by socialist countries, such as Hungary, ahead of the fall of the Berlin Wall.[288]

One of SEF's chief priorities was to create a culture of entrepreneurship in the country that could foster the sought after national bourgeoisie. But in practice things did not go this way. Instead of a private sector what was then produced was a vigorous subterranean economy, as the late Angolan anthropologist Ruy Duarte de Carvalho has so insightfully noted.[289]A provisional explanation for this has to deal with the fact that the party-government failed to conceive of the economy as an area totally distinct from politics. As such, the holders of political office were naturally in key positions in the savage system of accumulation that would ensue.[290] What happened, basically, was that a number of economic activities were decriminalized, such as money arbitrage. In a country deprived of national production, and highly dependent on imports for the satisfaction of a great deal of national consumption, the access to dollars was vital. Before the SEF, for instance, a number of people were sent to jail only on suspicions that they were in possession of dollars.[291] So while the possession of dollars was decriminalized, the access to dollars was not liberalized. The result was the emergence of loopholes by which some people could acquire dollars at official prices, and use them in various ways with enormous profits. In general those with access to dollars either sold them directly in the informal money market, or they bought goods at *Lojas Francas* (state subsidized stores that only accepted dollars), such as beer and other kinds of liquor in high demand; or they used it as capital for the import of commodities that would end up in the informal market settings.

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[285] For an overview of the relationship between Angola and the IMF, see, for instance, Rocha, *Economia e sociedade em Angola*; see, also, Hodges, *Angola: Anatomy of An Oil State*.
[286] A number provided by the Minister of Labor, António Pitra Neto. Private Communication.
[287] Private Communication.
[288] According to the SEF's principal mentor, José Cerqueira. Private Communication.

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[289] Carvalho, *Actas da Maianga.*

[290] There is a vast literature on this subject in Angola that primarily deals with the patrimonialist nature of the MPLA. For a short list, see, for instance, Messiant, "The Mutation of Hegemonic Domination: Multiparty Politics Without Democracy"; Hodges, *Angola: Anatomy of An Oil State*; Ferreira, *A Indústria em Tempo de Guerra*; Chabal and Vidal, *Angola: The Weight of History*.

[291] As it was the case in the famous trial of the Camanguistas, people who traded diamonds and foreign currencies such as dollars. In this revolutionary trial, the accused were considered "enemies of the people." Some of them were punished with death penalty, but were later on pardoned.

Roque Santeiro was a privileged destination for those repertoires of wealth creation. In the beginning the market was a selling point for agricultural goods that came from the provinces, although *comércio interno* (internal commerce, or products such as rice, beans, oil, sugar, and so on, which were imported by the powerful Ministry of Internal Commerce to be centrally distributed through the system of official stores) products were also available. In the early 1990, networks of importers were controlling the supply of the market. Nigerians, Conakry-Guineans and Senegalese, linked to groups at home and in Europe, inundated Roque Santeiro with products such as car parts, lamps, generators, and so on. Angolans then could be in the shadow facilitating the paper work necessary for those imports. Roque Santeiro was the first destination for a number of products, which were sold wholesale there and then distributed to other markets in Luanda and even throughout the country.

But those are not the only reasons why Roque Santeiro would grow to the point of becoming the central nerve of the Angolan economy. In an economy such as that of Angola in those years, Roque Santeiro became the unavoidable economic interface between the formal and the informal economy. When, by the 1990s, a number of warehouses dedicated to the import of finished goods opened, they occupied the avenue Lueji Ankonda Avenue, on the road to Cacuaco. To support this economy, people in the market had to create their own infrastructures to provide the conditions of possibility for the reproduction of life in such circumstances.[292] Roque Santeiro then became a vast area of services. For the market to function, sellers and other operatives needed generators, chairs, water, cooked food, transport, security, loans, and so on. Roque Santeiro provided every service to ease the life of its sellers and customers. The market had more than 200 kitchens, hundreds of barbershops, and bathrooms operated by entrepreneurs in association with administration officials. In addition there were hundreds of warehouses where sellers could leave their goods at the end of the day, some of them equipped with makeshift movie theaters, and, in some cases, providing rooms to rent and prostitution services. The informal settlements of Lixeira, Madeira, Boavista, grew to surround the market. So it comes as no surprise that the survival strategies of those inhabitants depended to a great extent on services they could provide to the market. And, as such, Roque Santeiro brought about very particular social relations to the city's fabric.

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[292] I owe this insight to Abdul Maliq Simone. See Simone, *For the City Yet to Come.*

Patron-client relations

The key aspect of the market, the driving force that made it work, was the particular form of relations that it brought about. During colonialism, urbanization and ruralization were set apart as two irreconcilable poles. The city was isolated from the country and movements within it were controlled and disciplined by a number of techniques subsumed in laws (pass laws, for instance), architecture and urban planning – as I have already demonstrated. The collapse of the conditions of possibility of this form of life brought the countryside to the city. Economic liberalization and deregulation may not result in the laying off of the public workforce, but they certainly prevented new jobs from being created. For the vast majority of Angolans coming to the city, or coming of age in the city, the informal economy was what was left for them to eke out a living. All in all, these newcomers were integrated in various networks of patron-client relation. The texture of political relation among different actors in the market is an indictment of the modes and regimes of this integration.

So the point here is that the newcomers to the city could not be integrated into the formal economy, nor into the networks of clientship already in place. For many of them did not have any skills, or links to the Luandan's traditional families. So the market and other similar venues of the informal economy provided the only way they could make their ends meet. However, this move did not take place outside of the political system. On the contrary, the affluence of such people reconfigured the relationship between the state and society, via what I have been calling refracted governmentality. In essence, the nature of the state had to change in order to encompass these peoples within its operationality.

To make this point clear, we have to rehearse, and write against the grain, of some key tenets of moral economy. This concept has found analytical purchase by giving a cultural substance to alternative logics and systems for the validation of moral claims, particularly those which are at odds with the universalizing precepts that sustain the idea of the modern state. James Scott, for instance, gives voice to the dominant model of the moral economy school in his seminal book *The Moral Economy of the Peasant,*[293] in which he talks about the deep seated beliefs that preside over the peasant's actions.[294] Eldman, commenting on this literature, notices that such a framework does not account for change. This is also the line of thought that Janet Roitman follows, in her rendition of the ethics of illegality in Cameroon, when she says that the philosophical matrix that guides the criminal actions of the agents involved in wrongdoing is not a morality per se.

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[293] Deeply influenced by Thompson and Polanyi.
[294] Edelman, "Bringing the Moral Economy Back."

It comes out of practice and gives agents the possibility of frameing their actions according to a multiplicity of behavioral patterns. It is worth noting here that Roitman is writing against the grain of the main tenets of moral economy. The main thrust of Karl Polanyi's theory, which Scott also embraces, is that in many parts of the world, with the exception of the West, economy is not conceived as a domain of life outside of the social. So morality, in this case, is the ways in which the social communicates with economy. By disentangling morality from the social, and by presenting the rationality of illegality as "both economically strategic and socially productive,"[295] Roitman opens up a way to look at actions undertaken by agents alienated from all other cultural matrices.

Roitman's reasoning helps us to find an alternative way to grasp the various ways in which formal and informal economies communicate since, at stake here is to account for the multiplicity of possibilities that frames the action of those who operate in informal worlds. It is true that the seminal work on informal economy in Africa by Keith Hart, on the repertoires developed by informal workers in Ghana, implicitly makes the case for the existence of a cultural matrix that guides strategies of survival which do not conform to the logics of state. But Hart makes also another contribution that has been almost overlooked, which pertains to the modes of articulation between the formal and the informal. Thus, for example, he examines not only the ways in which the informal sector serves as "a buffer against unemployment," but also the weight of the informal in the overall national budget.[296] And this is particularly relevant to the present discussion. The kind of labor that is produced in Roque Santeiro, and particularly the sexual division of labor in the market, and the kind of labor that women are expected to perform, should count not only toward an understanding of the fabric of patron-client relations, but, more importantly, the place of the market in the Angolan general economy.

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[295] Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience*, p. 188.

[296] Hart, "Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana."

Women may have formed almost 80 percent of Roque Santeiro sellers. Although one may find a number of purely economic explanations for this, there is a cultural one that may help also explain it.[297] Labor value produced by women is not culturally conceived as the same as the labor value produced by men. Cristina Rodrigues, who has worked in Luanda's *musseques*, speaks of a tendency among men to refer to their counterparts as "not working," whenever their occupation is selling in the informal markets.[298]And the idea that women's work is unproductive may also be implied in the way certain activities are marked by gender. For instance, whereas the women who sell dollars are called *kinguilas*, which derives from the verb "to wait," men doing exactly the same thing are designated by *doleiros*, which derives from dollars. In the market, for instance, whereas men tend to be involved in forms of labor that require action – they haul commodities, they provide skilled labor, as mechanics, painters, carpenters, and so on – women are most associated with those forms of labor that requires low levels of skill and a great deal of waiting. In this sense, the market is a venue that allows women to be professionally active without relinquishing the activities society expects them to perform.

To a certain extent, the market allows women to extend into the public sphere the kinds of work they were previously expected to perform in the seclusion of their homes.[299] In other words, there is a continuum between the house and the market that allows women to engage in child rearing, preparing the meals, or buying food for home (what is often the only meal that a number of Luandan's households can afford a day). This may help explain the fabric of the social relations in the market, most of them outright forms of patronage. Roque Santeiro, to a large extent, puts in contact, on the one hand, people with resources to invest, and, on the other, people, especially women, whose only asset is the time they use as a means of exchange.[300]

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[297] For an anthropological take on the relationship between culture and practices of labor, see, for instance, Strathern, "Kinship and Economy: Constitutive Orders of a Provisional Kind"; Graeber, *Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value.*

[298] Rodrigues, *O Trabalho Dignifica o Homem*, p. 45.

And this shows the extent to which these relations are contrived between on the one hand those who have money or access to value, and, on the other hand, those who have no other asset to provide then time. Basically there were two major ways by which sellers and entrepreneurs relate to each other, and to the institutions of power. And this links are mediated by modalities of access to capital, or means of investment. For instance, one of the most interesting aspects of the organization of the market is that sellers are grouped together by the goods they sell. In a whole sector of the market, for instance, women would sell foodstuffs. For this to happen without degenerating into disputes over clients, sellers have to obey to certain principles. For instance, sellers working together, like the canvas sellers, do not call clients. They have to wait to be addressed, and only then they can initiate the business. But if the client leaves the area, any of the sellers can follow him/her and offer a better deal. Things are not always like this. I went once to buy flowers in front of Alto das Cruzes Cemetery, and was called by a seller, who offered be a better deal then her colleagues. The other sellers used very sharp words against her to make the case that she was violating the rules of the business.

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[299] This is not in Africa. British Feminists have noted that there is still a great number of professions that are the continuation of home, such as teaching, taking car of children and elders and so on. See, for instance, Barrett and McIntosh, *The Anti-social Family*

[300] The investment is sometimes the salary of a man who works in the official sector. See, for instance, Rodrigues, *O Trabalho Dignifica o Homem*, p. 143.

I became convinced, through observation, that those forms of collaboration are directly related to access to means of investment and supply. The more a group of sellers depended on each other to acquire their goods and to sell them the more the rules of a certain moral economy (everyone has the right to make money so as to feed the family) are strictly observed. For the sake of clarity, I would call these rules horizontal, so as to distinguish them from the vertical – in which the operators depend on people better positioned in the social hierarchy to conduct their business. The formation of Roque Santeiro has been explained under the premises of this principle of horizontality. I have already shown that according to the official history of the market, it was created by a central government initiative whose end was to alleviate the suffering of the newcomers to the city. This is not the whole story, even if the connivance of the government cannot be totally ruled out. But to a vast majority of sellers operating in a market, selling was a right that the government could not curtail.

The second form, the vertical, reveals to a greater extent the imbrication between the "financial and economic interests" that president dos Santos referred to and sellers in the market. A great part of the money that was invested and re-invested in the market came from those Big Men, designated as *impresario*, with whom a great deal of sellers entertain relations of inferiority and patronage. During the eighties, the law prohibited official wholesalers to sell their goods in retail. This law was then enforced like a custom in the market. Even during the last months of the existence of Roque Santeiro, wholesalers were not allowed to operate in the market, normally after noon. As such, *impresarios* were forced to "employ" informal sellers to make their goods go faster. The group of cloth sellers that I interviewed may illustrate this dynamic. Dona Francisca, a woman in this group, has worked in the market for 20 years. She started selling in a little market in Boavista, and she then did *zunga* (street vending), before working at *Cala-Boca* market for a while, until the market was destroyed. Then she found a place at Roque Santeiro, at the very beginning, "when there was no administration, and not even stalls to sell out cloths." She was working in the market, and the interview she gave me reflects the change in regimes of dependency that took place throughout the years in the market.

According to Francisca, the *impresarios* who had their warehouses in places such as Hoji-a-Henda and São Paulo imported cloths from countries such as Côte D'Ivoire, China and India. So each female seller had her own "warehouse," and her own *impresario*. The business relation starts when a prospective seller seeks out one of these places and "you explain your need to the *impresario.*" If he agrees, "he may ask you to pick up the samples which are very expensive." Samples are the best cloth, with the best colors. When you come back to him, after selling the samples, he will feel: this person lost money to buy these samples." For the *impresario*, this was the proof that this person was serious and worthy. If somebody else comes his way and proposes to be his client, "he can't change, and the person has to find another person to work with him." For the client, "to be his client is to depend on him," says Francisca.

For coal sellers the relationship *impresario*/client is no different. They identify themselves as "workers" of this or that truck. Coal trucks come to the market very early in the morning, and sell the coal in sacks to those sellers with whom owners have agreed to do business. They are not allowed to sell retail, and have to sell coal in bulk sacks.

Some customers may buy those sacks, but the sellers' main clients are the women who buy those sacks, open them, drop their content into buckets and sell the coal by the buckets. Those buckets will then be bought by a number of customers, in particular another group of women, who will sell them in little mounds. The wholesale/retail dynamic in the market runs clockwise. Wholesalers tend to work in the morning until noon, so as to allow the retailers to make their own money. So by the end of the afternoon, only the women who sell in little mounds may be found in the market, and they serve the most destitute population who can only afford to buy coal in small portions, whenever they have some money for it. This groups includes, especially, those who work in the market until late. By noon, however, the three groups of women coincide selling in the same spot, which has the characteristic of being by the road, so as to allow the trucks to get into the market, with the result being that the sand there is blackened by the coal. Contrary to cloth sellers, coal selling is so fractionalized that it ends up protecting the sellers, since, the truck "employees" who, for any reason, may not be at the market at the break of the day can simply buy sacks from other "employees" and sell the coal in buckets.

When I arrived in Roque Santeiro vertical forms of investment were not as important as they had been previously. Important distributors, knowing of the market's impeding relocation had perhaps already reconverted their activities to legitimate ones, or were operating in other markets. For these investors, Roque Santeiro was then only one venue to sell their commodities among many others. For others, Roque Santeiro was more of an outlet of survival, where horizontal forms of raising money (forms of mutual funds) for investment was paramount. Canvas sellers offered an insightful example of this. I interviewed a group who operated together in Roque Santeiro for the past ten years. They were friends before, and one day one of them started the business and the rest of the group followed him. Canvas selling was one of those kinds of businesses that tend to be dramatically seasonal. Only when it rains do people rush to buy canvas. Truck drivers and truck owners were the principal customers in this business where canvases can cost from $400 to $1,000. Sometimes sellers can sell 4 or 5 in a day. The canvases they sold were imported from Namibia and the process by which they acquire them is as follows. They pay the expenses of the person who goes to Namibia: ticket, hotel, etc., who is always the same person: "he has the ID which allows him to buy the canvas." He then spends up to a month in Namibia, and then brings the canvases back overland: "we trust him", says the canvas seller I interviewed. But they know very little about the real prices of canvas at their point of origin and the commission the intermediary makes.

Unlike the cloth and coal sellers, canvas sellers and many others who still worked in the market when it was losing its importance, making money by selling was not the main reason they were there. Being in the market allowed them to partake in various forms of association, such as *Kixikila*. These forms of credit have been located in many parts of the world and Clifford Geertz has generically called them "rotating credit associations." Located in places as distant from each other as Japan and Africa, as well as Latin America, these forms of credit have been technically defined as "a lump sum fund composed of fixed contributions from each member of the association, which is distributed, at fixed intervals and as a whole, to each member of the association in turn."[301] It has also to be added that in many places they are more flexible and do not require a fixed amount of contributions. In Roque Santeiro, groups of sellers tend to form associations in which the form of payment depends on the membership's size. Take the case of meat sellers, for instance. They have to get up very early in the morning, 4.30 a.m., or 5.00 am, to go to the slaughterhouse to pick up the meat of cattle they have previously purchased, sometimes from places as far as the Southern provinces. "If the meat is good, we take it to the market, if not we burn it." To make some money they have to buy the cattle at KZ70,000 ($933.33) or 80,000 ($1,066.66) maximum. At the time I conducted the interviews they where making approximately KZ120,000 ($1,600) for a cow, which is not enough to keep up the business. They have to pay at least KZ15,000 ($200) in expenses, including KZ3,000 ($40) to butcher the cattle at the slaughterhouse, and then transport it for KZ7,000 ($93.33). Neither is it true that they make money during holidays, since everything is expensive: "Sometimes not even the KZ10,000 ($133.33) you have put in will you get."

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[301] Geertz, "The rotating credit association: a 'middle rung' in development," p. 243.

Fish sellers are in a similar position. Dona Fernanda, for example, began as a bread seller, but when her business failed, her sister, who also sells fish, brought her to the market. When I interviewed her, she complained that she had had better days. Fish sellers were selling the fish at very high prices, and they did not have clients, and those who make real money are the women who buy fish from the fishermen themselves (*impresarios*) at the port. Relative to meat sellers, fish is more perishable and sellers cannot have it exposed on the stall for the whole day. For many fish sellers, their *impresarios* are not the fishermen, or the owners of the fishing boats, but the owners of the refrigerating chambers: an important investment that those women cannot afford, not

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only because of the cost of the refrigerators, but also because the market did not have electricity and the equipment therefore ran on fuel that had to be purchased and hauled everyday. This cut into their profits. In 2008, the business of these women, as everyone's businesses in the market, was dwindling. They were selling a box of mackerel at KZ4,200 ($56) with a margin of profit of KZ1,000 ($13.33) or even KZ500 ($6.66) although they had to invest KZ4,000 ($56.33) for each box. When they failed to sell the fish they found themselves in a worse position than meat sellers, who, although they cannot afford the equipment to conserve the meat overnight, count on the fact that meat has a greater demand (than fish). And, in the event they do not sell it during the day, meat sellers rely on a few frequent customers, such as restaurant owners (sometimes from the overpriced restaurants in downtown Luanda), to take up the excess. Furthermore, meat sellers did not have to drop their prices, unless they are selling mounts of giblets – the only diet of meat that the urban poor can afford. As for brisket and loin, for instance, the sellers always have customers to buy them at the price they fix. For fish sellers the business is different: if they do not sell their products by 4 p.m. they are forced to lower the price so they can still make a small profit, or they take it home for their own consumption.

Accordingly, these fishmongers, like many other sellers in the market, were relatively dependent on *Kixikila*. In a business whose gains are so uncertain *Kixikila* was for them a sort of safety net. Female fish sellers put in KZ1,000 ($13.33) – when on a good day they make KZ2,000 ($26.66) and KZ500 ($6.66) in a bad day – every day so as to receive KZ70,000 ($933.33) at the end of three months. No matter that that was an amount of money they would have to secure with great difficulty if they were not put the whole system at peril. In same cases, they would borrow money from another member of the association. In this sense, *Kixikila* was the real wage of these women since it allowed them not only to raise capital, but also to not default on a number of payments, such as rent, tuition for their children's school, and food.

Tia Paula was one of the sellers with whom I spent the most time. I would stop by her stall sometime at lunchtime, and especially at the end of the day. In the long hours I spent with her, talking about her life, the robberies she experienced in the market, responding to questions on my life in New York City, I rarely saw her being approached by customers. The problem for these kitchen utensils sellers was the same as that of the cloth sellers: warehouses can now sell in retail, and, to make things worse, the products they sell, knives, glasses and so on, are not the kind of things that people have to buy on an everyday basis. For these women, then, the link of solidarity was even stronger. To a greater extent, they could only survive by helping each other. For instance, they did not even have to go to the market to show their kitchenware on the stalls. They had only to pay haulers to pick up their goods at the warehouses and then leave them by their stalls. Whenever one of them did not come to work, a colleague was there to open the bundle of wares and sell their products.

For the great majority of the people I talked to the end of the market came as a breach of the "contract" between them and the state. This perception came out of the new legal provision that allowed warehouses to sell not only in wholesale, but in retail as well. This change was brought about by the dynamic of the economic transformation itself, wherein, with the end of the war, the private sector started to claim a number of services that were in the hands of the informal. For instance, after decades of abandon, many downtown stores were recuperated. There are now a number of transnational networks that supply those new stores, with products purchased in Brazil, Portugal or South Africa. As such, some businesses in Roque Santeiro, such as cloth selling, were dramatically castigated. Cloth sellers were still dependent on their *impresarios*, but those *impresarios* were already diversifying their intermediaries. Thanks to these provisions, a number of clients could just go directly to their warehouse and stores, instead of visiting Roque Santeiro. Consequently, many of the market women who would end their day making as much as KZ4,000 ($53.33), or KZ5,000 ($66.66) – when they purchased whole bales of cloth at their *impresarios* to sell at $600.00 pocketing 10 percent – were struggling the make ends meet by end of the market's life. For a number of people, what the government had done was to deprive them from the means to "sustain their children," as Tia Paula told me, leaving them with as little as KZ200 ($2.66) a day.

The destruction of the market was the result of political calculation. The point here was less to provide sellers with alternatives, such as to distribute them to other markets, but to reduce them to other forms of political patronage. One of these transferential processes is the requalification of Sambizanga, by which the neighborhood in which the market stood will be upgraded. And the other is the inclusion of these populations into the system of minimum income, by which those below the line of property will benefit from a direct transfer of financial resources from the government. As already noted, this program is controlled by the presidency itself. These transformations were already implicit in the most significant step in the run-up to the closing of the market. Roque Santeiro was removed from the jurisdiction of DNMF (*Direcção Nacional para os Mercados e Feiras* – National Direction for Markets and

Fairs) and put under the oversight of oversight of Municipality of the Sambizanga. In formal terms, this move legitimated itself on the basis of the fact that Roque Santeiro was not a market in the proper sense of the term, or rather it was a market improvised on top of a waste dump.

The emergence of Roque Santeiro market propelled the mushrooming of informal settlements, to such an extent that the division between market and neighborhoods was no longer meaningful. But as I will describe in the next section, the management of Roque Santeiro was under the informal control of the ruling party. As the Municipality of Sambizanga was heavily controlled by the MPLA's provincial secretariat, one may affirm that these provisions were intended to manage the removal of Roque Santeiro.

The management of Roque Santeiro

On my first week of work in Roque Santeiro, I approached the Administration for their permission to develop my research there. I was told that I needed a formal authorization, signed by the Municipal Administrator of Sambizanga, José Tavares, before interviewing Vitor Kitecolo, the market's administrator. When the authorization was granted, I was informed that I should report to the deputy administrator of Roque Santeiro, Dona Rosa, anytime I had to conduct interviews with sellers. The argument invoked for such control was my own security. A week before starting my fieldwork in Roque Santeiro two members of a film crew shooting a movie on criminality in Luanda had been killed by the police. The justification that was then given by the police was that the young men did not have authorization to shoot the film in the market. Consequently, they were taken by real thieves, forcing police officers, as I was told, who had been alerted of the on ongoing robbery, to be summoned to the scene, where the deadly shooting then occurred. Based on that tragic event, I was advised to not ask questions in the market and to report to the administration whenever I had to do my work.

It turned out that I did not need the help of the administration to interview the sellers. I spent part of my time in the market at Makassamba's house, or walking around with Makassamba, and through him, I could talk to anyone. Nevertheless, I followed the administration's requirement to do my work in the market, and I checked in at the administration regularly. This was also the only excuse I could come up with to have access to the almost fortified compound of the administration. Kitecolo had assigned to Dona Rosa the task to be my contact in the market. When I stopped by her office, before she could find one of the fee collectors to accompany me on my errands, Dona Rosa invited me in. The interview she gave me did not produce much information, because she was concerned about not disclosing anything that could compromise her position. But the informal conversation I had with her, and the time I spent observing her doing her work, gave me insight into the fraught imbrication of the state into the affairs of the market.

From what I could gather from the time I spent observing and talking to her, she did not appear as someone that had much to do. Most of the time she was simply there. She has worked in the market for more than 20 years. First, she worked as a seller in the *Comércio Interno* section, where she still has a stall currently -- being used by a relative. Now she is in the administration of the market. She is a prominent member of the local branch of OMA (Organização das Mulheres Angolanas – Angolan Women's Organization), the women's branch of the MPLA. She has a little office in the administration compound, bare except for a table, chair and a calendar on the wall. Her tasks in the market are above all those of protocol. The administrator of the market, Victor Kitecolo, treats her as if he was doing her a favor by having her as his deputy. And she has very few tasks but to take care of visitors, like me.

Her real work consists of filling out blue cards, little pieces of thick paper, on which she glues the pictures supplied by sellers, and then signing them in the name of *Mercado Municipal da Boavista* (Municipal Market of Boavista), Roque Santeiro official's name. I asked her about the process of making those cards. She told me that she had instructed the fee collectors to ask sellers in their sectors to provide two ID pictures and a photocopy of their national ID. I asked her how many cards were to be issued that year, 2008. She anticipated what I suspected: "I don't know," she said. I asked her how many cards she had made the previous year. "I don't know," she replied.

It was not a surprise that Dona Rosa could not, or was not willing to, spell out the number of sellers that are registered in the market administration. The fact that there was no way to arrive at an estimate of how many people were working there (and if there were, no one in the administration would convey this information) was one of the startling facts of the administration and its inscription in and of Roque Santeiro. It bespeaks the unstable relationship between the state and the informal sector in Roque Santeiro. According to the Angolan typology of markets, Roque Santeiro is considered an open market,[302] which means that the market is not enclosed by fences or walls, and that people enter and leave the market at any time. In the 1990s, there were seven thousand stalls registered in the interior area, and an indeterminate number outside. But every year cards were distributed, and every day sellers paid fees. The fact that there were no effective bureaucratic procedures that accounted for that was of particular interest to me. For, although the administration of Roque Santeiro operated under the umbrella of the state, and shares with the public service a number of procedures, practices and routines, the work of the state there was of a different nature. That is to say, the administration of Roque Santeiro functions as a form of "private indirect government," operating to a certain extent under the modes of fiscality, as defined by Achille Mbembe, which consists of the "appropriation of means of livelihood," through the concentration and deployment of coercion.[303]

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[302] Lopes, *Roque Santeiro*, p. 74.

To understand the imbrication of the state administration, it suffices to look at the ways in which the administration is inimical to the market. Roque Santeiro was not created by the state, and it functioned for many years without the oversight of the state. The sellers and entrepreneurs who found this place and developed there their illegal activities took care of the administration themselves. When Roque Santeiro started to provide moneymaking opportunities, and attracting people with money to invest, the area became one of the most crime-stricken neighborhoods in the whole country. Violent crime became rampant there, and often, Roque Santeiro's people resorted to extrajudicial and harsh forms of punishment. The form of capital punishment most used at the market was the one that become popular in South Africans early during the Apartheid years, known as *necklacing*: a mode of punishment intended to mark collaborators.

Violence did not favor business, even if it augmented risk, which was an important ingredient in the market's price formation. It prevented people from going to the market and turned Roque Santeiro into a mythic place, based on the rumors that circulated: one to avoid at all costs. So when in 1991, an administration was installed in the market, the gesture was welcomed by a vast majority of sellers. It was the year when the government and UNITA had signed a peace agreement, and the former was engaged in extending the state to places where the state administration had never been before. Roque Santeiro was integrated into the network of the city's markets under the jurisdiction of DNMF. The administration worked from a container installed in center of the market. One of the first signs of the presence of the state was perhaps the decreased level of crime. The administration came in with the police, which, on the one hand, improved the crime prevention, and, on the other, gave sellers the option to turn thieves to the police instead of killing them. Violence was also privatized.[304] The administration formed its own militia, consisting of a dozen young men authorized to carry automatic rifles AKM and use deadly force.[305]

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[303] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 67.

The main reason for the installment of the administration, at least in the early phase, derived from the attempt behind the economic interest of certain groups to tap into that powerful means of wealth creation. Evidence for this, according Roque Santeiro's people I interviewed, is the attempt of the administration's personnel to charge commission over sellers' profits. This fact is adduced as the main cause for the assassination of the first administrator, in 1995, killed in front of his house, not very far from the market, on the same day he had an altercation with a group of vendors. That in the moment of his death, according to Makassamba, he was carrying two big bags full of money, seems to be part of the myth. But it says something about the process of money making in the market and its mixture between accumulation and disorder.

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[304] Under the terms of what Mbembe has called Private indirect Government. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 59.

[305] Victor Kitecolo. Private Communication.

Drastic changes only came in the late 1990s, when Victor Kitecolo became administrator of the market. Victor Kitecolo, a man in his early 50s and a senior clerk of the DNMF – unlike the first administrator – has managed a number of other markets, such the São Paulo Market. He is the one who built the more dignified administration compound in the middle of the market, a huge contrast to the rest of the space. The grandeur of the administrators' compound notwithstanding, on account of the threat of destruction that has always loomed over the market, Roque Santeiro never overcame its provisional appearance. There was no running water, no electricity, the stalls were on wood, covered by canvas and corrugated metal sheets. On Mondays, for instance, the cleaning day, when there was no selling in the market, it was almost as if Roque Santeiro did not exist; the place reverted to its initial state, a waste dump. To a certain extent, the market resembled a provisional military camp, where the whole site could be removed in a few hours. But the administration compound was a solid pink building made of brick and cement. There was a huge yard, where only the administrator parked his cars, and a couple of other offices. There was a large kitchen that prepared meals for the administration workers, and a small cubicle for the police (barely enough space for four officers), with a TV set suspended on the wall. The support of the TV on the wall doubled as a post to which handcuffed suspects were tied. During the hours I spent in the yard of the administration, waiting for Dona Rosa to indicate a fee collector to guide me in the market, I occasionally saw policemen physically punishing supposed thieves without stopping watching the Brazilian soap opera *Escrava Isaura* (Isaura, the Slave).

In addition to building these permanent structures, Kitecolo also opened roads so as to allow cars to get in and out of the market. This measure brought more business to Roque Santeiro, since, on the one hand, it increased security by allowing clients to go to the market and purchase goods without leaving their cars[9] and, on the other, some importers could sell their products without leaving their cars. Even more significantly, Kitecolo reorganized the whole market by sectors. Whereas before people could sell anything anywhere, Kitecolo designated the areas where people could sell their goods. Sectors 1 and 2 were dedicated to products as diverse as fresh fish, perishable food (such as meat) and textbooks. Sectors 3, 4, 5, were for the selling of imported clothes – which, during the heyday of the market was one of the sectors with the highest level of demand in the market. Sector 6 was for the selling of *comércio interno* (internal commerce) products, which are those goods, such as rice, sugar, beans, and so on, imported by the Internal Commerce Ministry, for distribution in special stores and often diverted to the market. Sectors 7 and 8 were for imported goods such as stoves, fridges, and furniture, and it was also where the famous ring was located, where *doleiros* (money changers) tended to concentrate. Finally sectors 9, 10, 11, and 12, were for a different array of products, from imported beverages, diverse kinds of cereals (wholesale), agricultural stuff, and some imported clothes. It was also the place where at the crack of the dawn wholesalers sold their products without leaving their cars.

So, the re-organization of space had an economic dimension. By ascribing sellers to certain places, the administration could target them for purposes of fee collection. Market workers were divided into three groups. Paying KZ100 ($1.33)/day were people in the first group, formed by wholesalers, kitchen owners, and so on. Those in the second groups, mostly retailers, such as cloth sellers, and other people with stalls, paid KZ200.00/day ($2.66). A third group was formed by those people who operated at the end of the market, and who buy from retailers to resell, paying KZ100 ($1.33). Finally, the last group is mobile and is formed by the haulers who pay KZ50 ($0.66). During the day, the market had a checkpoint where for cars, especially *candongueiros*, the price was KZ100 to get into the area of the market. However, sellers complained that these costs were not translated into the improvement of their conditions of work. Besides what they paid as fees to sell in the market, they also had to supplement with a contribution of KZ50 a week for clean up, even if the place was an active waste dump, which was visited by lorries that unload garbage on a regular basis.

The "appropriation of the sellers' means of livelihood," through fee collection, was one of those instances in which the disjuncture between the market administration and the state was apparent. In fact, Kiteloco was the only clerk in the administration whose salary is paid by the state. All other members of the administration, including Dona Rosa, had to contrive ways to make ends meet. They had a share in fee collection, although the lion's share of their income came from the various ventures in which they took part, either as distributors of commodities, as providers of selling space, or as raisers of capital, for businesses from which they received commissions. People often said that Kitecolo only went to the market to pick up his share, which he then took with him, and that that money did not enter the banking system. After giving the share to his associates, members of the ruling party, it is said, he kept his own part.

The modalities of payment for the market personnel were more akin to the informal then the formal sector. Administration's workers had their own "day." For instance, fee collectors were attributed sectors of the market. They started their journey very early in the morning, when they passed through their sectors and distributed vouchers. As the number of sellers on a given day was always floating, fee collectors had to make sure that those selling would pay the due fee. They were so efficient, and they knew people in their sectors so well, that they were even successful in collecting fees from the haulers, who are mobile operators. By 10 a.m., they had returned to their sectors to collect the vouchers they had previously distributed with the corresponding amount. It is in respect to collecting fees that not having a real accounting of who sells in the market is profitable. Fee collectors had to produce a fixed amount. If they brought in more than the expected, they could keep the difference, and pay their own associates, especially those who had helped them to get the job in the first place. If they defaulted, which was rare, they were in debt. They made their own wages in the fees they collected on a given day, “their day,” a Friday, or a Saturday, when the proceeds from their activities was exclusively for them. The same system was also used by the checkpoint collectors (although Roque Santeiro is an open market, which means that cars can get into the market from many other locations) who, after office hours, kept the return for themselves.

The administration in the market was, then, a kind of phantasmagoric reproduction of the state, capable of deploying the shadows of it, sometimes through the use of force. There was an Angolan flag hovering high on the administration flag-pole, even if in front of the compound, thieves were beaten to death. And Victor Kitecolo’s office was no different from the office of any other government official. The same furniture: heavy tables and leather couches, and the portraits of the first Angolan president, Agostinho Neto, and the incumbent José Eduardo dos Santos, on the walls. The same practices: Victor Kitecolo never receives visitors in his office; he leaves his office to meet his visitors in the waiting room.

However, administration workers and sellers and entrepreneurs only met in certain gateways, at the moment of the extraction of fees, which effused a certain juxtaposition of logics, rationales, and especially times. The market itself had its own temporality and only during certain moments of the day did it exhibit the temporality of the administration, which is also the temporality of public service in Angola. For that, Roque Santeiro was composed of a number of rhythms that were juxtaposed in very complex ways: a rural rhythm of being in the market by the crack of the dawn, and an urban rhythm of the office hours of the Angolan bureaucratic system; an affluent rhythm of wholesalers, and the impoverished rhythm of those who can only afford to go to the market at the end of the day.

The first sellers to arrive were the wholesalers, especially those of foreign nationalities, such as the Senegalese, the Malians, and the Congolese, part of networks of distribution. They arrived at the market by 6 a. m. and did not even have to leave their cars to sell their commodities. Some of them left as early as 9 a.m. But a number of them stuck around until lunchtime, at noon, when, either they left the market in their cars, or packed their wares in one of those makeshift warehouses that surround the market. Fee collectors were already operating at this time, while the administration compound only opened at 8 a. m. Dona Rosa, the deputy administrator, only arrived at 9.00 a.m. in her own car, which she parked in front of the compound. Normally dressed in exquisite attire of African inspiration, she was regularly greeted by the employees of the administration who stopped their errands to receive her.

The administrator arrived later at 11 a.m. in a pick-up with three or four bodyguards. Since his predecessor had been slain he did not venture outside of the compound. He left a little bit later, after lunch, with sacks full of money. Dona Rosa would stick around a little longer, until after 3 p.m., when the administration closed (the compound was open to the public from 8 a.m. to 3 a.m.). And then the market reverted to its previous "natural" order. Wholesalers by this time had already abandoned the market. At this point, thieves came from Boavista, and from other places nearby to rob the poor sellers and customers, who were among those who mostly used the market this late in the day.

By 4 p.m. the last sellers started to pack up their wares. They did it slowly so as to attend customers if they should appear. By this time, the haulers were already there to pick up the sellers' wares and deposit them in one of the 200 makeshift warehouses that encircled the market. They would then leave in groups of four or five, an orderly fashion, in the direction of the taxi station. It was as if, Kitecolo once told me, "they have received an order to leave and they leave orderly." Kitecolo also told me that that was the most "spectacular moment" in the market, and advised me to try to observe this moment from the terrace of the police headquarters right in front of the market. I did not do it, although I myself have often abandoned the market at the same time. Only later on, reading through my notes, did I understand what Kitecolo thought was so spectacular about the closing day of the market. For people leaving the market in a place that resembles a spontaneous concentration is surely a politician's fantasy. A flock that receives an order to abandon the pastures is an instance of the pastoral power that Michel Foucault has identified in various forms of pre-modern politics.[306] And this raises interesting questions about the form of power in Roque Santeiro, and about the ways in which the MPLA has succeeded in taking control of Roque Santeiro. I will come back to this in the last chapter.

In this chapter, I have made an incursion into the last days of Roque Santeiro market to give an ethnographic example of what I have been calling refracted governmentality. The point was to move away from the terms in which (moral) economies have been described in a great deal of literature. Moral economies, in many cases, have been described as the moral setting of those who have no power, or those who maintain a relationship of exteriority with power and the state. The material I have shown thus helps us to see things in a different light. There is a relationship of conviviality between those with power and the powerless. However, this relationship takes place at the margin of the bureaucratic state and not in a moral universe that is entirely outside or beyond the state. Here, the state is intimately involved with, and produces circumstances that encourage the moral economy – precisely at the point where its own power fails. In the next two chapters, I will delve more deeply into this question. I will show with more detail the ways in which people may develop their lives outside the state, even if they encounter it in its phantasmagoric form, and leave on the margins of its always effective but also incompletely determining contours.

CHAPTER FIVE: A FAMILY IN THE MARKET

> "It is, therefore, almost a tautology to say that exchange brings about socialization: for exchange is form of socialization. It is one of those relations through which a number of individuals become a social group, and 'society' is identical with the sum of these relations."[307]

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[306] Foucault, *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*.

In December 2010, two years after I completed my fieldwork research, I went back to the place where for more than twenty years Roque Santeiro stood. The purpose of my trip was to pay a visit to Makassamba, my main interlucutor, one of the persons who helped me most during my research there. The market administration was very concerned with me asking questions of people in the market, so they followed my steps. As Makassamba was a 'Big Man' there, a party member, the people in the administration did not object to seeing me in his company. Makassamba had been one of the first people to occupy a patch of land adjacent to the market, where, later, he built a compound containing a residence, and a *casa de processo* (literally house of process, or informal warehouse). I could work from Makassamba's compound, for, to a certain extent, it was a sort of market extension. Very early in the morning and again late in the day, sellers stopped by to leave or to pick up their goods. Makassamba's compound was a sort of waiting room. Sellers came to talk, to drink water, to ask for prices of goods and so on. There, I did a substantial part of my work: I met the people I wanted to interview and, more importantly, I had a place where I could sit down to update my notes, or wait for an interview, or simply kill time before my errands in the market.

Back then, Makassamba was a prosperous man, by Roque Santeiro standards. It is true that he did not have enough money to improve the diet in his house – where children were left to eat only rice at most meals – or to pay a doctor, if somebody in the family fell ill. But the money he made by exploiting that space he owned, around KZ 50,000

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[307] Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, p. 175.

($3,630)/month, considerably dwarfed what many other households were making. With the insistent rumors about the impeding relocation of the market, Makassamba knew that his days were numbered. He tried to secure another source of income before the removal of Roque Santeiro. He mentioned land, in Uíge, the northern province where he was born, left by his father, whose ownership he intended to claim. And he took me once to Cacuaco, the satellite city of Luanda, where he was looking for a patch of land to buy.

But the relocation of the market took place faster than anyone could have expected. Or, perhaps, people in the market were so convinced of the strategic importance of Roque Santeiro in the overall Angolan economy, that they assumed that the government would not go so far as to remove the market. When I met Makassamba in December 2010, he was a shadow of the man I had met before. Yet by the time Roque Santeiro closed, he had succeeded in saving $20,000. After a contentious family meeting on the best way to invest this money, a decision was taken that savings should be applied to purchasing a pick-up truck. The rationale was to get money without labor, since a car as such is an asset in the sense that it can be rented, or sent to the provinces to buy fresh produce at lower prices to be then distributed in Luanda's markets. The Toyota for which Makassamba paid $15,000 ended up being a very bad business idea. It was an old car, which came with so many mechanical problems that it not only failed to yield the money it was supposed to yield, but it also deprived the family of the remaining savings, namely $5,000.

So by the time I visited Makassamba his household income had dramatically dwindled. The money his wife Cristina was making by purchasing slippers elsewhere to sell in front of the compound was their most solid source of income. Furthermore, Makassamba also tried to make some money by exploring a bathroom in his yard – he had basically transferred the structure of the bathroom that he and a couple of the administration's workers were exploiting (rent to use) in the heyday of the market. But expecting to make money out of a bathroom in that part of the town, on an active waste dump, was almost as absurd as selling mineral water nearby a fountain of purified water. By then his household of approximately 15 members was surviving with less than $10 day.

To make things even worse, Makassamba was sick. His right leg was swollen, which was not a serious condition anywhere else in the world but in Angola. He had gone various times to his local hospital, terribly understaffed, but no doctor could see him. The nurse who attended him prescribed the medicines they give to everyone who stops by complaining of any ailment: chloroquine – a drug used to prevent and cure malaria. He then purchased in the market a very powerful cream that most poor people use in similar situations. After applying the cream on the affected area of his leg, Makassamba failed to comply with one of the drug's warnings, which is to not cover the surface of the body on which the cream is applied. So when I met Makassamba for the second time, he had a very swollen leg. He could not walk, and due to the high fevers, he had failed to sleep for the second night in a row. He went back to the hospital and he was given the same drugs. It was on a Saturday, and I took him downtown Luanda so that a doctor could see him. After visiting a couple of hospitals that did not have doctors that day, or did not have a specialist (a dermatologist in this case) to address Makassamba's problem, we headed, with my brother, who has a car, to a private hospital of a state-owned company, Endiama (the diamonds concessionaire), where for Makassamba's treatment I ended up paying $700.

The reason I mention this is to focus on the various disjunctures in which Makassamba's family has been caught up. Firstly, only in the context of the existence of Roque Santeiro could Makassamba have such a large household. As the market was relocated, Makassamba's family lost the capacity to make ends meet. Secondly, as this vignette shows, Makassamba was also caught up on another disjuncture between households' income and the costs of their reproduction. Whereas most people survive with less than the national minimum wage, they are expected to get access to basic services (education and health) at the (inflated) market price. As the government has not intervened in this domain to create a system of social security that would absorb the urban poor,[308] people have to create these networks themselves.

In this context, most Luandans rarely conceive of themselves as members of "nuclear families." Not that this was the case during socialism, but the way people conceive of relations has been profoundly affected by the social, political and particularly economic constraints brought about by economic deregulation. Economic deregulation has had different effects among poor families. The process by which kinship relations are evoked is even more plastic and circumstantial. Perhaps because people like Makassamba have been directly involved in the war, and have experienced situations or heard stories of blood relatives fighting on both sides of the civil war, they know that the 'real' family is constituted by those they care for and those that expect to be cared for, or who were never recognized in the first place.[309] In this vein, what most people refer to as a family is more a prosthetic device, a replacement for the so-called biological family whose members cannot be accounted for. In most situations, blood relations, such as Makassamba's brother, Antonio, will emphasis this fact with wonder, as if they already know that the ethnographer was not expecting to find Makassamba's real family members. As for the others, it is better not to ask: they will never say how they are related by blood, but they also will convey the idea that this is not important.

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[308] For a discussion on social security in Angola, see, for instance, Feliciano and Rodrigues, *Protecção Social, Economia Informal e Exclusão Social nos PALOP*.

Contemporary literature on kinship has distanced itself from the emphasis on blood relatedness that was pervasive in the many studies through which the problem was formulated for the first time.[310] In an introduction to a complication on the history of this concept, Robert Parkin and Linda Stone write that such an inclination has "Victorian" overtones, since the study of anthropology itself lies in the affirmation of the superiority of the West. As such, the other, the different, was perceived as the forgotten or surpassed origin of civilization.[311] As civilization was believed to have evolved from more primordial forms, the study of primitive institutions was seen as a way to get a hint on the origin of the humankind. Family, as a central social institution was key in this regard. Put it differently, the study of the primitive family could shed some light on the origin of the modern and Western family. Subsequent theoretical formulations of kinship have debunked evolutionary claims by de-historicizing them, and have done a very good job in propose a framework that puts more emphasis on affinity than on blood.[312] I build on this recent theory to propose a very particular configuration of the relationship between the state and society, the concept of kinship is fundamental to understand the formation of networks of distribution. To a certain extent, the theory on networks and infrastructure may be of a better service to explain the formation of these groups, and the literature on kinship itself.

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[309] Recent studies on kinship have put more emphasis on ideas such as "caring and being cared for" than on blood ties. John Borneman, for instance, asserts that "the priority of an anthological process – to care and to be cared for – as a fundamental human need and nascent right in the international system". Borneman, "Caring and Being Cared for," p. 42.

[310] See, for instance, Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*; Morgan, *Ancient society; or, researches in the lines of human progress from savagery, through barbarism to civilization.*

[311] See, Parkin and Stone, *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*; Kuper *Invention of primitive society*; Kuper, *The Reinvention of Primitive Society: Transformations of a Myth.*

Various African scholars have proposed readings of Lefebvre's seminal work on infrastructure to suggest ways in which communicative connections are produced in contexts where infrastructure is deficient or inexistent. From different points of departure, Simon and Larkin have made very interesting suggestions in this regard. Simon argues that a definition of infrastructure that only takes into account "the accelerated, extended and intensified intersections of bodies, landscapes, objects, and technologies" leaves out "the collaborative work in the city [that] can be open ended, unpredictable and singular."[313] He then coins the term "people as infrastructure" to mean "the process of conjunction, which is capable of generating social compositions across a range of singular capacities and needs (both enacted and virtual) and which attempts to derive maximal outcomes from a minimal set of elements."[314] In similar vein, Larkin suggests that ultimately "all regimes of capital depend on infrastructure."[315] He elaborates: "infrastructure is the structural condition of the movement of commodities, whether they

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[312] See, for instance, Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. For an example of the application of such theories on the study of Africa kinship, see, for instance, Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship.*

[313] Simone, "People As Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg."

[314] Ibid., p. 71.

[315] Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, p. 219; Larkin, *Degraded images, distorted sounds: Nigerian video and the infrastructure of piracy*.

are waste, energy, or information. It brings diverse places into interaction, connecting some while divorcing others, constantly raking, connecting and segmenting people."[316]

These renditions of the theory of infrastructure may help illuminate the formation of family networks in Luanda, as the economic media and not merely as the end part of suppliers of economy. In this sense, families are sorts of clusters that compose, decompose, and recompose to fulfill certain infrastructural goals. The level of proximity between members of the same family does not necessarily translate any blood level of proximity. In the absence of a state that performs the social functions of agglomeration for the purpose of socializing resources, these clusters operate on a basic level to support people in times of necessity and as a means to seek income opportunities. In the remainder of this chapter, I build on Makassamba's family to give an example of the modes of relation of such a cluster. First, I will explain how Makassamba formed his household. Second, I will give an example of other networks in which Makassamba takes part, especially as these are exemplified by his brothers and sisters in "faith." The point is not to show that Makassamba's church members are part of his prosthetic kinship. Rather, I want to demonstrate the extent to which a number of those networks are called on to precisely execute the kind of tasks, such as the organization of funerals and support in cases of sickness, that families are or were expected to do. To a great extent, but what brings to life and keeps together those constellations of people is not only blood but money. To make this point clear it is necessary to depart first from the way money has been dealt with in most anthropology.

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[316] Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, pp. 219-20.

Money and the social

Like kinship, money has also played a central role in the narrative of progress and modernity, which also grounded the formation of some social sciences, particularly sociology and anthropology. The technologies and the level of consciousness necessary to conceive of all-purpose money were not only deemed as the elements of advanced societies, but they were also some of the characteristics that distinguished the "civilized" from the "primitive." Simmel, for instance, linked the increasing individuation in the West to the fact that at a certain moment in history people freed themselves from serfdom by being allowed to pay taxes in all-purpose money.[317] But this does not mean that monetary progress was a condition for humanity's betterment. It is rather the contrary. Godelier has persuasively shown, for instance, that Mauss's gift was articulated around the idea that the West should learn from the "'primitives' social organization, so as to make their societies more cohesive and less individualistic, and open the way for the construction of a 'social democratic' program" that would be taken up by many European states.[318]

Jacques Rancière has noted the extend to which the nineteenth century "was haunted – negatively by the Platonic paradigm of the democratic dissolution of the social body, by the fanciful correlation between democracy/individualism/Protestantism/ revolution/the disintegration of the social body."[319] This has had two developments instrumental for the formation of the social sciences. On the one hand, there was the pessimism on the future of capitalism (Marx), and the skepticism on ends of rationalization and modernity (Weber), which forcefully resurfaces in the literature of the Frankfurt School, especially in Horkheimer and Adorno, as a critique of the triumph of "instrumental reason."[320] On the other hand, there was another current, especially in anthropology that purported to look at the ways in which certain forms of society were still successful in keeping the social bond. Furthermore, the basic distinction between Western and non-Western society was in the level of development of the state, and particularly in the uses of the symbols of state power. Money, especially paper or abstract money – was paramount for this division. Since, to a certain extent, those people who could keep off currency from their regimes of exchange were better suited for the preservation of the communal bond.[321]

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[317] Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, pp. 285-295.
[318] Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*, p. 4.
[319] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 58-59.

Money reifies, money individualizes by freeing people from the communal bond, and money corrupts, this literature asserts. Michael Taussig was right to find in South America the devil in the form of capital or, in his own words, "a stunningly apt symbol of the alienation experienced by peasants as they enter the ranks of the proletariat."[322] But he was even more right, when, later, he concedes the contingency that was implicit in his interpretation of the devil's pact: "This was a valuable lesson that by necessity I keep unlearning, that things change all the time at the drop of a hat and that an awful lot depends on your perspective at any given time."[323] In Africa, particularly in South Africa, the Comaroffs have defined cattle the "epitome of social and symbolic capital."[324] Money, in such an interpretation, is that which comes to disrupt the whole system: "faced with a need for cash, men of the rank and file were increasingly compelled to sell their cattle."[325] At this point, it is important to evoke a contrasting interpretation suggested by Jane Guyer, namely, that the history of money in Africa can only be understood within a framework of the "multiplicities" of practices of exchange that have taken place in the continent.[326] For Guyer, for instance, Africans the abstruseness of money, epitomized by complex interfaces among different systems of exchange have never been strange to Africans.

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[320] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action,* p. 333.
[321] For such an insight, see, for instance, Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.
[322] Taussig, "The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America" (1980), p. xi.
[323] Michael Taussig, *Walter Benjamin's Grave*, p 80.
[324] Comaroff and Comaroff, "Goodly Beasts and Beastly Goods: Cattle in Tswana Economy and Society," p. 206.

So, in this discussion on whether or not money weakens or strengths social ties, the case of peri-urban Luanda may be of interest. We are talking about populations that only recently have moved to the city, and who, as the literature would suggest, would keep forms of direct exchange, as a way to prevent the dissolution of the communal bond. However, my work in those places of Luanda, especially in Roque Santeiro market, allows me to argue, that it is precisely money, or forms of exchange based on money, that keep those socialities alive. In order words, money is that which serves as the grid for the formation of social relations. For instance, a couple of years ago, a Canadian organization Development Workshop, commissioned a study on forms of "community, solidarity, and collective action." The results surprised the authors of the study in that very few forms of solidarity were found among Luandan communities, besides the churches that seemed to "be only places in which people are ready to contribute with money and other items for the creation of funds, which can be used for the times of necessity of members of the church." Even more revealing is the comment they append to it: "Even so, the most usual funds are those for extreme situations: funeral and sickness."[327]

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[325] Ibid., p. 208.

[326] Guyer, *Marginal Gains: Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa the Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures, 1997*, p. 21.

And this is key to understanding the ways in which family relations in Angola have changed as the state has receded from provisioning social services. In this context, extended social networks are reproduced having family relation as blueprints, in that they are expected to do exactly what family does in terms of assisting its members in cases of sickness and funerals. To capture the content of this transformation, categories such as "inner space" and "outer space", or even public and private, have to be reconceptualized. In what fallows, I will show the extent to which those categories are blurred in the manners in which a number of Luandans conduct their lives. The example of Makassamba's family, and their relation to the market is paradigmatic. On the one hand, there is the market that seems to invade the house, or the inner space of Makassamba's family. But on the other hand, Makassamba's family moves outward, as in the case of funerals. These recent transformations on how funerals tend to take place in urban Luanda show the extent to which family can no longer be conceived outside its relationship to social networks.

Family as a unit of production

Anthropology has had in the house, or forms of dwellings, a way to speak of social organization. In various writing Lévi-Strauss applied the concept of house-society to flesh out the interplay between architecture and the symbolic aspects of house.[328] In

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[327] Robson and Roque, "Here in the City There Is Nothing Left Over for Lending a Hand," p. 622.
[328] See, for instance, Lévi-Strauss, *La Voie des Masques*.

Brazil, for instance, the anthropologist trained at the Columbia department of Anthropology, Gilberto Freyre, could base his ethnographic and historical explanation for the formation of the Brazilian nation on the Big House, the site for the formation of Brazilian patriarchal notions (in contrast to the slaves' dwellings).[329] The centrality of the house in the studies of Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber was instrumental to Freyre's theorization. This becomes apparent in the ways Janet Carsten and Stephen-Jones allude to the theoretical riddle Lévi-Strauss was trying to solve: "He [Lévi-Strauss] first uses the notion of the house as a social group in a reanalysis of Boas's ethnography of the Kwakiutl whose principal grouping, a subdivision of the tribe, seemed to have both patrilineal and matrilineal characteristics."[330] So the house was then linked to social organization, or the ways in which the tribes analyzed by anthropologists conceived of kinship relations.[331]

Here, I will invert this position. The point is not to see the ways in which the house of Makassamba provides us with a hint into social organization. Rather, I am more interested in the manner in which the (physical) construction of the house is the foundation of the family itself. The house then constitutes the condition of possibility for the existence of the household. For, for many Luandans the household is conceived as a unit of production: as a cluster formed by a number of people engaged in the struggle for survival.

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[329] See Freyre, *The masters and the Slaves.*

[330] Carsten and Hugh-Jones, *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond*, p. 6.

[331] This is also the case for a great part of what Pierre Bourdieu has written on the house Kabyle. See, for instance, *Esquisse d'une Théorie de la Pratique*, only partially translated into English under the title *Outline of Theory of Practice.* For a critical reassessment of Bourdieu's work in Algeria, see also, Goodman and Silvertein, *Bourdieu in Algeria*.

I was lucky enough that toward the end of my fieldwork, Makassamba gave me his own handwritten appointments diary. It was a black leather organizer that he filled in the year of 2000/1 as his personal diary.[332] The most interesting aspect of these notes is the fact that Makassamba wrote them in the same year he decided to build his house. Reading his diary from this year, it becomes apparent that – and how – the construction of the house and the formation of the household go hand in hand. And the correspondence between a big house and a big household becomes even more apparent. Big houses in the context of peri-urban Luanda are labor intensive, and, as such, as I will show, they require a large household.

Makassamba is one of those millions of Angolans who left the countryside seeking shelter in Luanda during the civil war. He came to Luanda in the mid-1980s, and he temporarily lived in a neighborhood in a municipality of Sambizanga, before finding a patch of land, not very far from the place in the same municipality where hundreds of sellers had set up stalls, in defiance of the authorities. In the next few years, the market would grow to the point that only a thin unpaved road separates it from Makassamba's house. The space that Makassamba and his cousin Neto found, was of a considerable size: approximately 40 square meters. The first thing they did was to clear the area. Over a period of a couple of weeks (mostly weekends) they removed tons of garbage: the remains of construction, concrete, and junkyard car parts. They had to pay garbage trucks to execute the work. The next step was to divide the space. Neto took a smaller share, since he did not have any intention of living there. Neto was a schoolteacher in the northern province of Uíge, and he found job in a school when he moved to Luanda. So the space he took was put to use to generate extra income. In contrast, for Makassamba, the space would have a different, more immediate utility – not only for the generation of cash values, but also as a place to sustain his family.

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[332] I will henceforth refer to it as Makassamba's Papers, or MP.

Makassamba had different family arrangements before moving to Roque Santeiro. In 2000, he was already in his forties, and the formation of his previous family had been shaped by the tragic history of Angolan civil wars. In 1991, for example, he was living with a woman with whom he had a son. When the peace agreement was signed in May 1991 and "*as estradas abriram*" (the roads opened), as he told me, she decided to go to her province, Kwanza-Sul, to visit her folks. But then "*as estradas fecharam*" (the roads closed) – with the debacle of the peace process after September 1992 – and he saw never saw that woman again.

It was Makassamba's marriage to Cristina, then in her early 20s, that provided the main motivation for him to build a house in definitive terms. This is clear, for instance, by the ways in which he conflates, in his notebooks, observations on the "life in the womb" of Cristina, referring to her pregnancy, with other notes on the price of construction materials, and day-to-day notes on the building of the house ("the construction of the house is over," MP, 01.06.2001). The need to have a better house for the upcoming family is even more apparent if one takes into account the conditions in which Makassamba lived in that house from the moment he squatted in the area until Cristina moved in. Until them, the purpose of the space was to generate money, and little attention was paid to how its occupants lived. Makassamba was using this space in various ventures that afforded him some income. There, the residential and the business areas were not clearly demarcated yet. One of the first things, Makassamba did was to dig a hole in the center of the yard to be used as a well (after cementing the walls). Roque Santeiro has never had running water, and buying water from water lorries to resell to other squatters and sellers seemed to him a good business. Makassamba then opened a school in the yard, and although he was almost illiterate, it did not prevent him from trying to teach the students. He was helped in this task by Neto, and Avelino, an elementary school principal, he participated in this venture as a way to supplement his meager salary. The school functioned until the day none of the students showed up. Neto and Makassamba thought that the disappearance of students was related to the refusal of the Ministry of Education to grant them authorization to issue certificates. But later on, they found out that Avelino had “stolen” the students and taken them to another school that he had opened in another yard. Makassamba then transformed that part of his own yard into a makeshift movie theater where he exhibited pirated copies of American blockbusters such as *Rambo* and *Comando*. When this venture failed, and with the expansion of the market that reached the entrance of his compound, he abandoned this venture, and created space for the storage of goods. When Cristina moved in he erected walls in cement and mortar that signaling that he wanted to carve out a space of intimacy in the middle of his commercial ventures.

But this decision may also be the result of a tragedy that took place in the first years of the house. When Makassamba occupied the space, the largest area was reserved for commercial ventures, and only a fraction of it was occupied as a home. The house was then a thick canvas supported by wooden poles. Not having a family yet, the space was more like a refugee camp where Makassamba gave shelter to many people. One of the persons to settle down at Makassamba’s compound was Jordão. In the late 1990s, he was in the military, on probation in a camp not very far from Luanda, in Bengo. Jordão had accidently killed a teenager when she was washing clothes on the other side of the river, and he was cleaning his AKM rifle. In Bengo he got himself in trouble, when, in the company of other soldiers, he decided to slaughter the cattle belonging to a traditional chief in the area. He fled from the camp when the commandant discovered that he was involved. The commandant then sent a handful of soldiers who showed up at Makassamba's place, beat Jordão to the brink of death, and deprived him of his military uniform, boots, and official insignia. So Jordão stayed, helping Makassamba in various enterprises. Jordão then had serious problems with alcohol consumption and Makassamba was forced to "fire" him. In his notebook, Makassamba very interestingly describes the episode by mimicking the language of state bureaucracy: "Gonçalves Jordão woke up very early. He woke me up to open of the warehouse. He was warned to stop working at the storehouse on account of being an alcoholic. Thereafter, Mr. Artur André (brother) and Mr. António took over Mr. Jordão's work" (MP, 01/09/2001). But Jordão ignored the orders and kept doing his chores, and was later readmitted to his work. He then met a woman who also had alcoholic problems and moved to the compound with her teen-aged daughter. In the interview Jordão gave me he spends some time describing the appalling living conditions in the compound. As already stated, Roque Santeiro is on an active waste dump, which forced residents to live with insects, particularly the variant of mosquito called *Anopheles Gambiae*, famous for being the carrier of one of the deadliest parasites in the world, the *plasmodium falsiparum*. In a year when heavy rains inundated the shacks, the people living there did not have any protection against the water pouring through the holes in the canvas and forming pools of stagnating waters inside the house. A teenage girl contracted malaria and died a couple of years later. The family of Jordão's partner took her from the house. This death took place shortly before Makassamba decided to invest his funds upgrading the shacks into a definite house.

Although the need to generate income presides over the distribution of space at Makassamba's house, it is nonetheless similar to many other houses in the periphery of Luanda. The yard is the pivotal part of the house where the family spends a great part of the time. However, at Makassamba's place the yard is the place for domestic chores as it is for business. It is in the yard where the children play, Cristina washes and dries clothes, the meals are prepared, and dishes are washed. It is also in the yard where sellers pile up their unsold commodities. There is a permanent welder's workshop, and, in one of the corners, there is always a group of women pounding *fuba* (manioc starch, the food staple in Luanda) or coffee.

The house is now a solid construction, in cement and mortar, covered with corrugated tin, supported against rain and wind by an array of objects such as car parts, tires and chairs. It has three bedrooms, one for the couple, another one for girls, and the third for boys. Those rooms are in the part of the house that also has a kitchen, rarely used, and a bathroom. The other part of the house is occupied by a large living room, which is the area for the adults, where Makassamba receives his guests. This is the male space and I used that part of the house to take my notes. I avoided eating at Makassamba's, since I knew that I would have meat or fish on my plate whereas the children would have only rice in theirs. And I only saw Cristina there once, when I took my then-girlfriend to Makassamba's compound. The living room is equipped with a TV-set that Makassamba used during the day, for watching games, and the rest of the family at nights, for the Brazilian soap opera, whenever there was no power outage. There is also a refrigerator, which Makassamba has never used. Only when electricity was installed in Roque Santeiro ahead of the elections, and Makassamba planned to open a new line of business by making ice cream, did I understand the utility for a refrigerator in the living room. In the fridge, Makassamba could keep his books and documents out of sight and beyond the appetite of rodents. But at Makassamba's, the line between dwelling and business is utterly blurry, and Makassamba rents spaces in his living room for sellers' expensive products, such as cosmetics. Separating the area of the bedrooms from the area of the living room, there is heavy irongate, which is closed with a thick lock whenever Makassamba is not in the house, or when everyone is sleeping. And there is no exception: the day I slept in the living room, after dining and watching a soap opera with Makassamba's family, he locked me in the middle of the boxes of cosmetics and dried fish.

Only after the house was finished did Makassamba constitute his household. Benda Malungo was the couple's first child to be born in that house. In his notes of 2001, Makassamba refers to a "secret son," apparently a boy who showed up claiming to be the son taken by his mother six years before (1995). I could not ascertain whether or not the "secret son" is Paizinho (literally little father) who was around 12 years old by the time of my fieldwork research. But Paizinho may also be Cristina's son conceived before moving to Makassamba's house, which would make sense, in terms of family resemblance. Shortly after Benda was born, Cristina got pregnant again, and Makassamba wrote in his notebook that "Cristina Jorge invites me to touch both parts of her belly. Between them, one, I mean, I feel a little bowl, which means, an embryo, a human life" (MP, 03.11.2001). I asked Makassamba who that baby was, and he told me that the baby did not survive. The couple would have more babies, namely Malungo, Lírio and an infant still unnamed (odds that babies die before delivery or shortly thereafter are so high that in some parts of the country babies are only named after a couple of months). By the time I met Makassamba's family, in 2008, they were 3, 2, and 3 months respectively.

The high number of children at home increases the hours of domestic labor and this is probably the reason for Makassamba having 3 teen-aged girls at home, of which only one is his daughter (who showed up as the secret son had, claiming to be his daughter from a past relationship). The other two are Cristina's sisters. In contemporary Angola, the civil war, the lack of basic services, especially schools in vast parts of the country, and widespread poverty, are some of the causes for the fact that some people cannot raise their offspring. But there is also here the long-standing practice of sending children to the most affluent members of the kin group. The use of children and adolescents for domestic labor, to free up the labor of the adults, is a long-standing practice in Africa. In an introduction to an edited book on Slavery in Africa Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff use the anthropological notion of "rights in person" to consider the various widespread transactions involving people in Africa, which "constitute some of the basic elements of which kinship systems are constructed".[333] They elaborate: "for instance, a lineage in need of money, or forced to pay compensation for homicide or some other crime, or unable to feed all its members in time of famine, might transfer all of its rights in a person to another lineage in return for goods and money."[334]

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[333] Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, p. 10-11.

[334] Ibid., p. 10.

It is not that those kinds of transactions are currently practiced in contemporary urban Angola, particularly Luanda. But we are aware of the fact that more often than not modernity is the palimpsest overwritten with the inscription of practices that some would want us to deem atavistic.[335] Still today most people in the provinces are willing to send their daughters (more than their sons) to Luanda so that they can be released from the burden of having to feed more people and also so that they can hope that those sent can attend school. Those girls will then have to execute domestic labor in exchange for shelter. Not surprisingly, this system is more used in poor households, since the wealthier ones can afford to pay domestic laborers.

Observing the amount of domestic labor that is required to maintain the house, one understands the cultural imperative of having young women in the house. This may be the case because of the fact that Makassamba's compound does not have the kinds of amenities that in other places have freed women from domestic responsibilities. I am not referring to washing machines, and the like. I am referring to more basic amenities, such as running water. When Makassamba got rid of the well he had built in the yard, he had to allocate daily funds to purchase water. For a number of households in the *musseques* – even in downtown Luanda – a significant amount of time spent in domestic chores is for fetching water. Women are the ones who execute this task for a combination of cultural and physical reasons. Water is carried in buckets with a five-gallon capacity over distances that can stretch sometimes to a few miles. So the only way to carry such large amounts of water is to place the bucket on the head, which is deemed not to be a manly thing to do (men can carry water on their shoulders). For the maintenance of

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[335] For an account of the survival and transformation of those practices, see, for instance, Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*.

Makassamba's house, women have to fetch 20 buckets to fill the well, if it is empty. This water will be used for cooking washing clothes and dishes, cleaning, and for personal hygiene. The price of a bucket is KZ50 which means that Makassamba disburses at least KZ1,000 (around $12) on an almost daily basis.

Electricity also has to be paid on a daily basis. In this regard, Makassamba has tried many schemes. In the past, the electricity for his compound came from a far-flung factory, on the other side of Boavista Road, through poles and cables that crossed the slopes of Boavista's informal settlement. But one day, on account of heavy rains, one of these poles fell over and killed a child. The matter was settled when Makassamba paid the mourning family and no charges were filed against him. He then was forced to abandon this scheme. Later on, he got a deal with a neighbor who is on an almost legitimate "contract" with EDEL's workers. They stretch poles and cables from a nearby distribution box to Roque Santeiro, and they charge their clients. Those who benefit from this scheme have their own clients, whom they also charge. It is hard to determine how many people benefit from this system. Judging by the flickering electrical current, and the constant interruptions, it looks like those cables feed many houses.

Expenses such as water, electricity and food, have to be paid for on a daily basis. So Makassamba's businesses have to yield profit on a daily basis. Most of Cristina's work falls under the rubric of reproductive labor, as characterized by Meillassoux[336], including: child rearing, preparation of meals, and cleaning the house. But she also works outside the home. During the time of my fieldwork, Cristina had a stall where she sold second-hand clothes. Although Cristina spends most of her time at home, especially during the afternoons, she does not interfere in the exploitation of the yard. This is work for the men, Jordão and Makassamba. Jordão takes care of the small projects. He gets up very early in the morning, by 5 a. m., and charges the sellers who left their stalls and burdens in the middle of the yard overnight. Those sellers are the poorest in the market, the ones who only look for a place to leave their goods when the market is closing, or as second thought, instead of taking them to their homes. *Roboteiros*[337] are Jordão's main clients, which explains the fact that after a certain time of day the yard of the compound is full of hand-trucks that the *Roboteiros* themselves manufacture (from pieces of wood and a tire) that it is difficult for people to move in it.

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[336] Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal, and Money*. For a further theorization of Meillassoux's contribution, see, also, Schlemmer, *Terrains et Engagements de Claude Meillassoux*.

Makassamba takes care of the big *projects*. As noted above, the expansion of Roque Santeiro in the 1990s put Makassamba only a road away from the closest stalls. This allowed Makassamba to reconvert all the uses of that space (water, school and movie theater) into storage. Makassamba's compound is a U-shape one-story construction, whose only frontal part is the house, which is flanked by little divisions, or warehouses that Makassamba calls *projects*. Those cubicles are mostly rented to foreigners. There is a Chinese firm, whose (Chinese) workers only very rarely show up in the market, unless they have to send trucks full of goods to the provinces. There are also the Nigerians, who pay around $200 or $300, to house the industrial products they import from Nigeria, such as parts for cars and motorcycles. Makassamba, who is always looking for ways to expand his ventures, asked me once to translate a conversation he wanted to have with the Nigerians. Instead of renting space to them, Makassamba wanted to be their partner. They said that they would purchase whatever Makassamba wanted in Nigeria, if he could enter in the business with $20,000.

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[337] Informal haulers, in many cases are young peasants from the countryside, especially from Benguela, who temporarily migrate to Luanda in the low season. The word *Roboteiro* comes from *robot* and designates the labor of these young men for the incredible amount of weight they are able to carry. For a discussion on Angolan informal professions, such as Roboteiros, see Carlos Lopes, "Candongueiros, Kinguilas, Roboteiros and Zungueiros a Digression in the Informal Economy in Luanda."

Despite the apparent affluence of Makassamba's household (whose income puts him not only above the poverty line, but also above the income of the many families that live on a minimum wage of $100), Makassamba's family lives on the verge of destitution. The money they make is not enough to buy food so as to have a balanced diet. The reason for this is the pressure on Makassamba's income from other payments that in Angola are not taken from granted. Tuition payments for the children and the girls in school (even those who attend public schools) have to informally pay their principals and teachers, a few hundreds of dollars a month. Besides, health services for the urban poor are almost non-existent in Angola. Not only do people live in conditions that endanger their health (in waste dumps, for instance, or other mosquito-infested environments), but medical care is problematic to such a degree that many people die after being assisted in the hospitals.[338] For instance, in 2008, Makassamba was very sick. He had broken his arm, when one day, he was riding a collective taxi, in the front seat, with his hand on the door. Another car hit the car's door. Taken to the hospital, Makassamba underwent a surgical procedure in which a piece of iron was inserted into his flesh to reinforce the broken bone. In 2008, the piece of iron was not only rusting, but part of it was sprouting from within the skin at the base of this thumb. Makassamba took days going back and forth to the Hospital, and he even slept a couple of nights in the corridors of the hospital's ward, before seeing a doctor who removed the plaque.

This long description of Makassamba's informal activities and his household routines reveals a number of issues aspects that deserve to be analysed and emphasized. As I have already mentioned, Makassamba's family is forced to maximize income generating-activities to pay for services that the state does not provide. A substantial part of Makassamba's income is spent in water and electricity, as well as in health and education.[339] In this sense, Makassamba's household is not simply a source of love and affection. It is above all a unit of production. Its formation has been motivated by the amount of activities that have to be performed. So the household is to a great extent the embodiment of survival's necessity.

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[338] To give an idea based on recent numbers, from May 2 to 8, six days, 99 children died in one of Angolan's main hospital, the Pediatric Hospital of Luanda.

The funeral of Maria

Comparing the notes written by Makassamba in 2000 (from the notebook he gave me), and my own fieldworks notes, I notice a difference in terms of his participation in social networks. In 2000, Makassamba was a devout Catholic, and his notebooks are full of descriptions of the activities in which he took part: mass on Sundays, and sometimes during the week, prayers, and so on. Furthermore, Makassamba also took part in many other social activities promoted by his Church, Dom Bosco, such as workshops on catholic entrepreneurship, and on human rights. At that times, Makassamba was not yet a party member. As a matter of fact, the only reference to party politics is his diary: "talking to the youths on party's incidents" (MP, 09.04.2000). However, when I met him, in 2008, his priorities had changed dramatically. He was a card-holding party member and he had volunteered to store the MPLA's propaganda material in the compartments of his storage space. Briefly, what changed is that before Makassamba was trying to get things done through his association with many other civic organizations. But with the outreach of the party, ahead of the elections, and the amount of money that was invested in including the urban poor into the MPLA's political activities, it was understood that party militancy was the condition of possibility of solving problems at the level of neighborhood.

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[339] By this, the problem here is not that these fundamental sectors for any country's development have been privatized. If this were the only problem I would not have any concern. But these sectors have been informalized without being privatized. To the extent that as these are among the sectors with the lowest public investment, workers sometimes have to revert to a number of repertoire to make ends meet. Public schools function with the tuition that the principals unlawfully charge on students; hospital personnel make money by charging people for the service.

By the time I met Makassamba, there was only one activity that linked Makassamba to the Church. It was a group that met every Thursday at 6 a.m. at the Church of São Pedro, near Roque Santeiro. With the exception of Makassamba himself, Neto and Avelino, women, many of them sellers in the market, had formed the group. Makassamba did not sever ties to this group, since, perhaps, this group allowed him to have access to services that the party did not provide. And here I fully agree with the findings of Robson and Roque, when they point out that Angolans only act collectively in cases of sickness and death. The fact that those moments are the ones that traditional families have to take care of is what is of note here. Families, as we will see, occupy tend now to occupy the space of the state in the provision of certain services. In this sense, families expand outward. The transformation of funerals is a case in point.

Funerals, and marriages, in Angola are deemed to be those rituals that enhance social cohesiveness. And this is not unrelated to money. In the case of marriages, for instance, after a decline in the practice of *alembamento* (bride price) in the first years of independence, it has strongly resurfaced when the country took the neo-liberal turn, by early 1990s. This is the reason for which people cultivate family connections (clusters) rather selectively. The mobilization of family members for contributions to *alembamento* payments determines the kind of alliances a given family can enter into. In other words, in the context of economic deregulation, family networks are constituted according to the logic of accumulation. And this has changed the institution of the marriage. The nuclear family has forcibly to enter into other forms of cooperation to meet the increasing demands of *alembamento* payments.

The case of funerals is more dramatic, since it not only touches on changes in terms of the notion of funerals, but it has also brought about changes in the space of funerals. During late colonialism, and the first years of independence in Angola, funerals took place in the house of the deceased. Cultural practices dictated that the mourning family (especially the weepers) not abandon the house. The state was, if not formally, at least informally complicit with this practice. On the one hand, the state granted to mourners leave of absence that could add up to three months, and, on the other hand, there were a number of schemes available for those with the task of organizing funerals. As the traditional dish served in funeral is *Canjika* (a stew based on beans, hominy, and palm oil with fried fish as side), those with links to state-owned companies, for instance, could request, or buy at special prices, food to feed the mourners. Now that the state is no longer there to fill up this space, families have not only moved in, but the practices of funerals themselves have left the confines of the family house and entered into the public domain, under the laws and the logics of market economy.

More than a cultural practice, funerals are now part of the market economy. In the last years, a number of agents have created funerary agencies, and funerals increasingly take place outside the family homes. A number of public places, such as theaters, and clubs, have been reconverting their spaces so as to accommodate the rising demand for funerals held outside the home. Rooms such as those of *Liga Africana*, and *Clube dos Caçadores*, may charge $1,000 for services that last less than twenty-four hours.[340] Although the urban poor cannot afford such prices, they have nonetheless followed the practices of not organizing funerals at home. In the context of Roque Santeiro, where, at least during the time of my work there, it is rare that a week passes without the death of a person, one understands how vital is the participation in those networks whose principal concern is to create funds to support their members in case of sickness, and, more importantly, death. Derrida rightly says that the gift is impossible, since "there could be a gift only at the instant an effraction in the will take place, at the instant all circulation will have been interrupted and *on the condition* of this instant."[341] In other words, the gift is only possible under a structure of *différence*.[342] In contemporary Luanda, then, these rituals by which money is transferred to honor the dead is one of those instances in which the social is strengthened through deferral by getting one day in the future what has been given today.

A paradigmatic case in this point is the funeral of Maria. Maria was a seller in the market in her early 40s, and Makassamba's "sister" in the group that meet on Thursday at the crack of the down. She was pregnant, and like as many other women in the neighborhood, she gave birth at the house of a midwife. Everything went very well, and she was allowed to go back home. A couple of days after delivering the baby, who was in good health, she nonetheless came to the realization that her belly was again swollen. She went back to the house of the midwife to be treated again. What follows in the narration of people from whom I heard the story mixes reality and magic. The midwife rubbed her belly, until a huge bowl of blood was extricated. At the instant that the blood came out, people commented, "her eyes flickered and she died." Some people attributed the tragic end of Maria to witchcraft, and more, in a more realistic tone, to the fact that she was beyond the age of having baby, that she was afflicted with excruciating stomach pains, that she had had too many miscarriages, and put the blame on her family for having forced her to keep on having more children.

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[340] http://www.opais.net/pt/opais/?id=1657&det=12768&ss=clube%20dos%20ca%E7adores

[341] Derrida, *Given Time*, p. 9.

[342] By *difference* comes from the French verb deferrer and means both to defer and to difer. Derrida uses this concept in the context of literary interpretation to mean that the word can not be apprehended in the moment of its utterance, and its meaning is always postponed, or deffered. This concept this also central in Derrida's reading of the gift, by which the actualization of the gift is always a postponement, since the gift is always split in two moments, or the time of giving and the time of receiving, structurally apart. This is the reading that I think may shed light in what I mean here in the context of forms of kinship and association in Luanda. The moment of giving and receiving never coincide, and to give is a gesture that somesbody does in the hope that it will bring him something in the future. For a discussion on Mauss' gift by Derrida, see, *Given Time*.

Maria's group from her church, of which Makassamba is part, organized the funeral. The group bought the coffin, and rented a yard for the service. When I went to pay my respects to her family, the coffin was on the podium, which was on a sort of canopy, whose poles were covered with white sheets. This decoration, the bed and the podium, was rented for $50 per day. There were also a number of other costs involved. The cars that took the mourners from the house of the funeral to the cemetery had also to be paid for: no less that KZ5,000 ($66.66) each. At the cemetery, undertakers also have to be paid to do their job. Undertakers earn the national minimum wage. But they supplement their income through the many ways they strike deals with families of the deceased. In the structure of prices for funerals in Angola, very few families can, by themselves, decently honor their dead.

To conclude this chapter, a couple of more words. In this chapter, I have given an example of how to live at the margin of the state looks like. I have examined this question by describing the lifes of newcomers to the city, especially Makassamba's family. I also attempted to analyze the impact of economic deregulation on family rituals such as marriages and funerals. My point is not to affirm that during socialism families in Angola were confined to private sphere. I was, rather, to notice, quite ironically, that it is precisely during the times of accumulation that the family goes outward. And it occupies in many respects the public sphere, sometimes at odds with concepts of family in the most traditional theories of anthropology.

CHAPTER SIX: THE CITY THAT *CANDONGUEIROS* HAVE CREATED

Various sections of this dissertation have dealt in many ways with the exponential growth of Luanda. The city has grown from a mere 700.000 people at the time of independence to roughly five million people. The main point of this chapter is to argue that to make sense of this growth the system of collective transportation has to be taken into consideration. If Luanda has become an informal city where the formal structures and practices (since a great part of the population get products and services through the informal economy) have collapsed, then the formation of the informal system of transportation is embedded in this trajectory. When formal transportation could no longer operate, because of the deterioration of the roads, *Candongueiros* (taxivans) filled the space.[343] In other words, the system of collective transportation has been instrumental for the expansion and the decentralization of the city. I have already described the radiocentric form of Luanda's original city plan: the asphalt city conceived as the center, and the townships (*musseques*) around it. The itineraries of public transportation also followed this structure. During colonialism and the first years of independence, buses had their main terminals in downtown Luanda, in squares such as Mutamba and Quinaxixe. However, with the growth of townships and the construction of *Novas Centralidades*, such as Kilamba, the city's central nerve (first of all Roque Santeiro and the zone of the city's expansion *Luanda Sul*) moved to the periphery. *Candongueiros*, in the 1980's, that took riders from one point of the periphery, say Roque Santeiro, to another, say Nzamba II (points that were to a great extent invisible in the original city plans), were following not only a more realistic city design, linking two poles of highly populated nodes, but were, more importantly, contributing to the refashioning of the city itself, albeit informally.

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[343] I will be using the term *Candongueiros*, even if in Luanda the practitioners of this activity and people in general tend to call them taxis. The word Candongueiros better captures what is at stake here. Candongueiros is the "portuguesation" of the *Kimbundu* word *candonga*, which means illicit economic practice. Although during the socialist years the word was used for many other commercial practices, soon it becomes restricted to the activity of collective transportation. See, for instance, Lopes, *Roque Santeiro*, p. 165.

So the city that started to take shape in the mid 1980's was to a greater extent informal, as has been demonstrated in the first part of this dissertation. The term informal, as I am using it here, refers more a way of doing things, a mode of distribution of activities, responsibility, and repertoires between the public and the private spheres. The system of public transportation nicely illustrates what is at stake here. This system is not informal in the way the buy-and-sell economy (Chapter Four) has been described as informal. Firstly, the system of public transportation involves technology and a substantial amount of know-how. Cars have to be maintained and kept, and sometimes assembled almost from scratch. Secondly, and far even more than the buy- and-sell economy, the system of collective transportation depends on the work of a considerable number of people being able to navigate the labyrinth of the state bureaucracy. Cars have to be imported, and values (often in the form of bribes) have to be paid for the many licenses that legitimate the cars presence on the road. Last but not least, this transportation system significantly involves a higher degree of investment (compared to the simple buy-and-sell economy). And here is where the system of public transportation is supported by the cultural substratum of social structure. In a country where formal ways to raise capital are almost out of the reach of the majority of the population (even if owners of small businesses such as transportation were eligible, interests would be unpayable), family, and other similar associations are the only way people can collect enough resources to venture into such economic activities. More than this, however, the transportation system operated by virtue of these informal modes of capital accumulation and investment, enabled the development of residencial areas, and forms which had not been planned, and which constitute an interior layer in the urban landscape – at once heterogeneous and informal.

In this chapter, I will first show how the system of public transportation has contributed to the informalization of Luanda's cityscape, by remaking an informal city and inscribing it over the layers of the formal one. Only in the context of the expansion of this system can we understand the formation of many informal settlements situated in the dense nodes of circulation of intersection within the system of *candongueiros*' circulation. Secondly, I will analyze increasingly informal practices of labor to reveal the extent to which Luanda has become a predominantly informal city. I have already begun to delve into that question when, discussing the demographics of Roque Santeiro, I attempted to account for the predominance of women vendors in the market. I have explained that this may have to do with the nature of women's labor itself. As unschooled and unskilled, women in Luanda are devoted to domestic activities, and the venues of the informal economy allows them to conceive of their work outside the home as a continuation of their domestic chores, rather than as labor, more properly speaking. To put it differently, informal activities allow women to pursue income-generating activities without relinquishing other activities such as childcare. But I have also made the point that these activities cannot be understood as totally disconnected from the formal sector. Take for instance the case of Makassamba. Makassamba is technically unemployed, and he receives no salary. However, he works to supplement the means of subsistence for himself and for his family. As Makassamba is not in any unemployment program and does not receive any help from the state (subsidies and so on), he is not a burden for the state. This discrepancy is important for an understanding of the myriad ways formal and informal economies are yoked together.

Thirdly, I also hope that this chapter will help to put into perspective the anecdote with which I opened this dissertation – and anedocte which centered on a murder of a taxi-driver. In the introduction, I proposed a reading of this act of violence that allowed me to make a couple of comments on the relationship between informality and politics in Angola, using Luanda as a unit of analysis. Here, by describing the world of *candongueiros* in Angola, I hope it becomes clear how the informal system of transportation is prone to disaster. In order to do so, I will describe the aftermath of Moreno's traffic accident. My ultimate goal is that by discussing the relationship between accident and event something can also be said on the interplay between the state, social structure (in this case, the family), and informality. My own understanding of accidents derives from a double notion. First, it owes itself to the concept of short-circuit as proposed by Žižek. Žižek offers the short-circuit as a metaphor for critical reading, which occurs when there is a "faulty connection in the network – faulty, of course, from the standpoint of the network's smooth functioning."[344]A crossed wire, then, is what allows Žižek to explore a world of possibilities. Accidents, in this sense, are like short-circuits, for they do not imply that communication becomes irreversible, but simply that communication continues on different terms. This is for me the best way to pass from the accident to the ways in which the consequences of accidents are assessed. In this particular case, it was in the aftermath of Moreno's traffic accident that I understood the role of social structure as the substratum of the *candongueiros'* system.

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[344] Žižek, *The Parallax View*, p. ix.

Secondly, I also follow Rosalind Morris's attempt at writing a history of contingency in post-apartheid South Africa, by ethnographically engaging with traffic accidents and carjacking, in particular when she states that "modern historians, thus do not simply ask whether an event causes another, but attend to how people's perceptions of that event structure their actions in such a manner as to generate other events."[345] This allows us, again, to deal with the relationship between event and structure, or the link between the traffic accident and various systems and sub-systems that were involved, as is to be expected, given the discussions of the previous chapter. Family is important here, contrary to the example provided by Morris. In South Africa, securitization tends to pass from state-owned to private companies; in Angola, it is the family (alongside informal types of institutions) that supports the burden of risk-management associated with collective transportation. In other words, one may assert that in Angola the prominent social role of the family is also a protection subjects may rely on against risk. I have already shown the extent to which family in Angola comes to occupy such a position and there is no need to reiterate such an argument here. What I would like to attempt here instead is to provide a description of the system in which taxivans circulate in Luanda. My intention in this chapter, in brief, is to demonstrate that the system of collective transportation in Luanda is not only a by-product of the informal economy, but that the system in which taxis operate is the condition of possibility for a series of imbrications, namely, formal and informal, center and periphery, formal salaried and informal modalities of work and compensation, state and family.

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[345] Morris, *Accidental Histories: Post-Historical Practice?* pp. 26-27.

The system of collective transportation

The fact that the subject of cars has been overlooked in much of the social sciences literature is a point a number of authors have insistently made. Daniel Miller, for instance, has written that although "many anthropological colleagues had found the car to be significant within their fieldwork […] it was as if it had not yet been made legitimate as a topic to focus upon."[346] Mimi Sheller and John Urry have pointed out a similar deficiency when they complain about the manner in which "social sciences have ignored the motor car and its awesome consequences for social life."[347] One of their main contributions to this topic is the ways in which they relate auto-mobility to the fabric of the city itself, by stating "mobility was a necessary feature of growth and modernization, but had to be stabilized by association and anchored within place."[348]

In the same vein, Anne Pitcher writes on the relationship between the city and auto-mobility, using Luanda as a case study. She emphasizes the fact that people living in the center of Luanda and paying rent (the occupation of the cement city treated in Chapter One) to the state far below the market price has liberated them from costs associated with housing and given them opportunities to invest money in the purchase of cars. Furthermore, she also notes that the extent to which "those who can afford it [cars] are moving to new middle-class housing developments outside of Luanda and relying on personal transportation to commute to city for work."[349] In other words, the sprawling of the city can only be conceived of within the context of auto-mobility. In the first chapter, I outlined the radiocentric colonial architectural design of Luanda by which a great part of the services were concentrated in that part of the town. The development of a third axis of the city, South Luanda, was only possible with the relative affluence of many Angolans, brought by oil, which allowed them to live outside the perimeter of the city. But this process, by which the city was re-designed by and for the motor vehicle, may also be narrated in terms of the emergence of an official system of collective transportation that has profoundly impacted the lives of the urban poor, giving them alternatives for auto-mobility, and locality. In this regard, the system of *candongueiros* was instrumental.

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[346] Miller, *Car Cultures Materializing Culture*, p. ix

[347] Sheller and Urry, "The City and the Car."

[348] Ibid, p. 741.

Collective transportation refashioned a new city, out of new nodal points and intersections, by allowing cars to go further, to places not accounted for in the official system. It made possible the emergence of a new social geography that de-centered the colonial city, and gave prominence to other places on the periphery. This is the context, for instance, in which the central Market of Quinaxixe lost its relevance, and Roque Santeiro Market became the central nerve of the new city. Not surprisingly, after the formation of Roque Santeiro, the market became the main stop for *candongueiros*, demonstrated by the traffic congestion. During the heyday of the market, Monday was the calmest day for driving in Luanda, since it was the day that the market was closed for cleaning. Consequently, the number of commuters was so low that taxi-drivers also often took this day off.

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[349] Pitcher and Graham "Cars are killing Luanda: Cronysm, Consumerism, and other assaults on Angola's Postwar, Capital city," p. 180.

During colonialism, the system of collective transportation basically followed the centralizing features of the city. Buses linked sectors of the cement city, and some buses linked the center to the periphery. But the main terminal stations were in Downtown Luanda, such as the one at Mutamba less than a mile away from Quinaxixe. Additionally there was also a taxi service, exclusively operated by white settlers, who rarely ventured to the peripheries of the city.[350]

This transportation system was only partially dismantled with colonialism. The taxi system disappeared altogether, since the vast majority of taxi drivers left the country, along with many other Portuguese in the summer of 1975. The then socialist government created a public company TCUL (*Empresa de Transportes Colectivos e Urbanos de Luanda,* or the Company of Collective and Urban Transportation of Luanda), which in terms of itineraries simply reproduced those put in place during colonial times. But the system was changing very fast as new informal settlements were being formed. Furthermore, the emergence of places such as informal markets, in the periphery of the city, brought about the imperative that those points be linked without necessarily passing through the center of the city.

Another factor that led to the dismantling of TCUL was that this company was based on an economic project that was no longer viable. After independence, Angola, as many other countries in Africa, tried to overcome the dependency on the West by replacing imports with domestic production. Buses operated by TCUL were for the most part assembled in Angola factories. With the crises of the 1980s, and the intervention of the IMF and WB in the Angolan economy, the policies that allowed the functioning of these services were substituted by the tenets of neo-liberalism whose goal was to free the economy from state interference so as to create free markets.[351]

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[350] This is shown in a very popular song of the 1960, *Plaza Chauffeur* (taxi driver), when taxi drivers refused to take client to the *musseques*, especially during the rainy season to not “dirt the car.” For an interpretation of the song’s lyrics, see Moorman, *Intonations*, p. 34.

The result was complex: on the one hand, cars became not only expensive, since they had to imported, but, more importantly, they also became one of the most effective instruments to lure and accommodate the beneficiaries of the informal and corrupt regime of oil revenue distribution.[352] Angolans have extravagant taste in cars and members of the government, and the new tycoons, who happened to be the same in most cases, do not transport themselves through the city in cars that cost less than $100,000. On the other hand, the bankruptcy of the TCUL created a space full of opportunities for wealth creation. The solutions that were found had the mark of the intervention of people well-placed in the regime.

It was in the mid-1980s that *candongueiros* started to operate. *Candongueiros* were mostly taxivans, Toyota Hiaces, operated by newcomers to the city: primarily Angolans who had been refugees in the Congos, and Congolese nationals who had seen already witnessed the debacle of their postcolonial states, resulting in massive immigration to other parts of the world, especially Europe. The importation of cars to Angola, in the first moment, was based on the transnational networks linking immigrant communities in Europe, in countries such as Germany, France, and Belgium, to other immigrant communities in Africa. Cars were purchased in these countries, dispatched in boats, to arrive in Angola six months, or even a year later. But for these cars to be cleared through Customs, civil servants had to be bribed. Customs clearance was so complex and bureaucratic and the risk of cars being stolen was so high, that the importers were forced to constitute different kinds of association with custom clerks. These cars then had to pass through the *Serviço de Viação e Trânsito* (the traffic body of the National Police), to be registered. Only later, in the nineties, did the Associação de Transportes de Luanda (ATL – Association of Transports of Luanda) emerge in any attempt to regulate and the system.

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[351] Silva, “A influência de políticas económicas e da economia informal no desenvolvimento empresarial: o desenvolvimento de bens alimentares em Luanda,” p. 76.
[352] Ibid., p. 117.

Exploiting cars in the *processo* (process, as the system of public transportation is called) rapidly became a profitable business, to the point that it quickly became a path to enormous accumulation. The system not only involves a huge level of investment, but also inside information and contacts. First of all, capital had to be raised, and very few people had the privilege of buying dollars at the administrative exchange rate – necessary to purchase cars abroad –allowing them to buy foreign currency at a lower price. By the early 1990s, a number of government officials had their cars in the *processo*, some for their own benefit, but others to help family members.

This modality of accumulation went alongside the disinvestment of the state in the conservation of the city's physical infrastructure such as roads. Soon buses even those operated by private companies, such as MACON (that started to operate in early the 1990s), could no longer serve the population. The massive importation of cars for personal use clogged the Angolan roads to such an extent, for instance, that a bus in present day Angola needs an average of six hours to cover a distance of 15 miles, or from Futungo de Belas (South Luanda) to the center, at Quinaxixe, for example. Furthermore, potholed roads were not repaired for years, and the rising of ground waters, which we saw in the first chapter, had a devastating effect on roads. In a lot of places on the periphery, only the *Hiaces* could navigate. And this has to do, primarily, with the characteristics of the car. *Hiaces* are resistant, and easy to find parts for; with some spare parts could even be produced locally in makeshift repair garages. They also allow a great deal of *bricolage*. Local inventiveness has also "tropicalized" this car in many ways.[353] The original had the capacity for 12 persons, but the seats were taken out, and upholstered with metal or wood benches so as to accommodate at least 16. In the end, however, what has counted for the decisive success of those cars in Angola was the social system on which the acquisition, circulation, and transmission of these motor vehicles rested.

Practices of Labor

To legally and officially operate the system of collective transportation requires a significant investment. The registration fee alone costs $1,200, which accounts for the fact that only 20% of the cars that circulate in this system are legalized.[354]A great number of the cars that serve the population do not only circulate illegally (since they are not licencsed, or certified by any regulatory authority) as they are also produced and reproduced on a very different system, which accounts for the risks and the provisionality that the activity entails. In various parts of Luanda, people may find makeshift car stands that sell Toyota *Hiaces*, which are advertized as "like new" (which only means that these cars have been recently imported, since these models of Hiaces have already been discontinued) for $15,000. These cars, after purchase, enter into the system and may circulate from six months (the normal life expectancy of a car in *processo* before starting developing problems) to two years without major mechanical concerns. Then these cars are discarded, abandoned on the streets, in yards and garages, and this is the moment when people like Edson and his partner Bari enter the picture. They buy these defunct cars for $2,000 or $3,000.

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[353] I borrow this expression from Verrips and Meyer who have traced the biography of a car in Africa, which illuminates the conditions of maintenance and circulation of taxis in Ghana, which is also the case for many other places in Africa. Verrips and Meyer, "Kwaku's Car: The Struggles and Stories of a Ghanaian Long-Distance Taxi-Driver."

[354] According to the numbers of 2003, out of 4200 cars in circulation were illegal. See, for, instance, Lopes, *Roque Santeiro*, p. 164.

When I started my fieldwork in Luanda, *candongueiros* were not part of my initial project. I do not drive, I do not even hold a driver's license, and I have never been curious about cars. But taxivans are so ubiquitous in Luanda that any work on the informal economy that does not take them into account is incomplete. Besides, as I had also to commute in taxis from and to the market, I started to take notes and to ask questions about the system. Only later did I contact my cousin, Edson, to ask him to allow me to follow him around. This gave me the opportunity to talk and to meet many other taxi drivers, and to develop a methodology of investigation in the system that was more intensive than extensive. For a certain period, I practically lived with my cousin. One of the preliminary lessons that I took from this experience is that the system of collective transportation cannot be divorced from the social order in which it is embedded.[355] And this is not only activated in moments of conflict resolution, of which I will say more later. But it is also evident in the ways in which labor is organized.

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[355] Relevant to this understanding is Polanyi theory of the embeddedness of economy into the social, see, for instance, Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.

When I started following Edson I was interested in the whole process of acquiring a run-down body and putting it back on the road, since, I thought, observing Edson driving his car only gave a very incomplete perspective of what was at stake in this business. Watching him assemble a car would give me a metaphorical understanding of the many parts of which the whole system is formed. So the opportunity came when a neighbor of Edson approached him and proposed a deal: he would buy a body part, and give it to Edson to assemble, then put the car in *processo*. As payment, Edson would operate the car for the first months, and then restitute it to its owner. A contract then was signed and although Edson's neighbor changed his mind after Edson had performed the initial work – finding another mechanic – this event gave me the opportunity to observe the practices of labor associated with the system of collective transportation.

Edson is a cousin-like-a-brother, as one says in Angola, since he is a son of the youngest sister of my mother. He spent a couple of years of his childhood with my family, but he was not good in school, so he was dispatched to the house of another uncle, where he could be taught a trade. My uncle was a mechanic, which was a métier in high demand in those years after independence. My uncle had studied at the Industrial School in the colonial era, having acquired the highest level of education that during the Portuguese colonialism most Africans could achieve: a trade. When the settlers left, in 1975, and the professional workforce abandoned the country, my uncle was one of the few people in the country who was a qualified mechanic. His specialty was the Mercedes-Benz truck and he collected the bodies of those lorries, repaired them and put them back on the road. As those were the years of the centralized distribution of food, and the trucks sometimes had to go to places of the country embedded in military convoys, he soon amassed considerable money. For the provinces were even more deprived of good than Luanda, and prices there in many cases higher than in Luanda.

This was the environment in which Edson learned his mechanic's skills. But when he came of age, he decided to reconvert to a business that looked more suitable: taxivans. His decision also had to do with the possibility of raising capital. As he did not have money, and he was not on very good terms with our uncle, he had to fight his own way into the ownership of a car. And the best way to do this was to drive a car for six months, giving the daily money to the owner, after which period the car would be his. To better explore the opportunities to work in this business, Edson moved to the neighborhood of Kwanzas. This neighborhood, in Palanca, is the place where Congolese and Angolan refugees from Congo, preferred to build their homes. One way in which these neighborhoods differ from other informal ones, is in the size of the roads. Unlike other *musseques*, Palanca and Kwanza have large roads, indicative of the fact that the management of collective transportation activities occurs here. Everywhere throughout the neighborhood different garages and repair shops (for mechanics, welders, panel benders, electricians, and so on), may be seen and constitute a large part of the economy upon which these places rest. Furthermore, the neighborhood also has a market, the Market of Kwanzas, with a number of sellers specialized in selling car parts, if not in the interior perimeter of the market, at least in the houses that surround the market.

Edson moved then to this neighborhood, with one of his three wives, and shared a yard with another taxi driver. He installed a makeshift repair garage in front of his house, where for the most part there are always one or two car bodies. The one he was working on, for his neighbor, cost $ 3,000 and could return to the *processo* with an investment of $2,000. The metal scrap was almost intact and what the car needed was a new engine.

That same day, Edson started working on the body. The first thing to do was to extricate the old engine. In Edson's life, there is no separation between work and leisure and house. He keeps his tools at home, as well as the valuable car parts. And he uses the manpower of the teenagers of the neighborhood, who are old enough to go to school (but are mostly elementary school dropouts) and still too young to be eligible for a job – if there were jobs available. Edson pays them for each day they work, and they do things that in other circumstances would have been done with the help of tools. In any other place, for instance, they would need a crane so as to pull out the engine. At his garage, Edson and his helpers do it by the force of their muscles. By the way they do so, it becomes clear why the Toyota *Hiace* has conquered the Angolan roads, since its repair and maintenance is perfectly adapted to the conditions of makeshift garages such as Edson's. The engine of the *Hiace* stands beneath the front seat, and it can be pulled out from the interior without recourse to mechanical intervention. Furthermore, the engine does not have to leave the car. It can be deposited in the rear side of the interior (with the benches removed) that forms a secluded capsule protected from the dirt, where the work of disassembling and then assembling the engine can take place.

Before being put back on the road, the car has to go to the electrician, who installs from scratch, or simply fixes, the electrical system. The next step is to take it to the welder, who welds the exhaust pipe and smoothes the sheet metal. Because, according to Angolan law in this matter, *Hiaces* that serve as taxis have to be painted in white and blue, the taxi has to be taken to a painter. The last professional to intervene is the upholsterer who installs iron or wood seats inside the car. With an investment of $ 8,000 (far below the price of a car "like new") the car is back on the road. However, as Verrips and Mayer have shown for the case of Ghana, the mechanic's professional service is so dubious and the roads are so full of danger and challenges, that it is very hard to make a substantial profit in this fashion.[356]

Confronted with the seeming disjuncture between "entrepreneurial success and managerial performance," using as a case study the business of garages in Nigeria, Sara Berry has framed this question in the context of the irrationality of the African worker.[357] Berry was writing in the time when social sciences in Africa were constructing a theoretical framework that explained informal activities as a viable alternative for the lack of formal jobs in Africa.[358] One of the problems with the African proprietor, she says, citing a number of studies, is that he "does not always draw a clear distinction between the interests of the firm and those of his (extended) family."[359] In the Angolan case, however, uncertainties and risks involved in the business of public transportation are so vast that family is the last recourse of help and support. To a certain extent, one may say, family bonds are, or at least are expected to be, more resistant than the cars, exactly because cars are disposable.

So it is only an irony that those cars are hailed as simultaneously resistant and flexible, and that endure the devastating conditions of Luanda's roads, are also disposable. Their resistance, as we have seen, is the main reason why they have imposed themselves on the Angolan roads among many other competitors. But the whole system that moves them has to be flexible enough to allow the social to work. The make of the Toyota *Hiace* that is used in this collective transportation system is the Commuter, which was discontinued decades ago by the original automakers. It is improbable then that the automakers still produce original parts. But those parts are very easily made, and during the 1980s, a number of makeshift repair shops manufactured spare parts for those cars. This moment was superseded by the recent affluence brought about by the hikes in oil prices, which have rendered the imports cheaper than the solutions locally produced.[360]

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[356] As shown by the story of Kwaku and his car told by Jojoda Verrips and Birgit Meyer. See Verrips and Meyer, *Kwaku's car: the struggles and stories of a Ghanaian long-distance taxi-driver*, p. 153-80.

[357] Berry conveys such a vision, especially in chapter 6 of her book. See Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons*, pp. 135-166.

[358] This is one of the main assumptions of the seminal work of Hart. See Hart, "Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana."

[359]Ibid, p. 137.

The Hiaces are also disposable, which may account for the risk that operating them entails.[361] This is not merely because the break down, but because their inexpensiveness and the manner in which they are used facilitates their abandonment. *Hiaces* are easy to steal, and they have been reportedly involved in a number of crimes, not only of robbery, or transportation of stolen products, but also of murder. The death squads of the national police, responsible for the killing of many people in Luanda, such as those young people of the *Frescura* case, transported themselves in those cars.[362] In case of accidents, especially in those that result in death, the driver typically flees to save his life. This not only accounts for the disposable nature of the cars, but, more importantly, for the regime that presides over their exploitation: the car has to yield profit in the shortest period of time, so as to reimburse its owner for the investment, before an 'event' or accident occurs.

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[360] For the production of spare parts in Nigeria, see Latouche, *L'autre Afrique: Entre Don et Marché*.

[361] Toyota Hiaces are also involved in case in which they are objects and means of transportation for chop cars, in a fashion not very different from South Africa. For an account on the relationship between accident, risk, and cars, see, for instance, Rosalind Morris, "Accidental histories: post-historical practices?"

[362] The so-called Frescura case took place in July 2008, when a group of undercover police officers killed seven youth in a zone of Sambizanga Municipality called Frescura. They agents came in a Toyota Hiace and, arriving at the place, surprised the youth, forced them to lay on the floor, and shot everyone. The police were after suspects of having robbed a bank. But the majority of the youth killed were cleared of any wrongdoing.

From salary to *Falida*

The relationship between salary and temporality does not have to be emphasized here.[363] Salary, as has been shown in numerous anthropological studies, throughout Africa, is the institution through which a temporal horizon of expectations is organized. This is the reason why for authors such as James Ferguson, Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman, the crises brought about by the erosion of modernity, when the salary could no longer organize the temporality on which the lives of workers was constructed, was perceived by many Africans as a "crisis of meaning."[364]Whether on the Zambian Copperbelt or in Cameroon, as these authors argued, the culprit for the woes in which the African workers found themselves, was the structural adjustment programs imposed by the IMF. In the wake of these impositions, Mbembe argues, the great transformation in terms of the transfer of financial resources from the state to society was the shift from salary to modalities of one time-payment, or expedient forms of "allocation."[365]

To understand the ways in which this *problematique* has played out in the Angolan context, one has first to consider the ways in which the logic, or the structural consciousness of the informal economy, has been incorporated in the formal job market.

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[363] For a discussion on the relationship between labor and time, see for instance Cooper, "Colonizing Time: Work Rhythm and Labor Conflict in Colonial Mombassa"; Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism."

[364] Mbembe and Roitman, "Figures of the Subject in Times of Crisis." Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*.

[365] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 45.

Here I follow Bruno Lautier in his claim that formal and informal economies relate to each other in terms of the relationship between form and content. In this sense, both the formal and the informal are the manifestation of the same bureaucratic and institutional arrangements.[366] Both systems complement each other, as is demonstrable in the case of the understanding of salary in Angola, and the way out of salary, namely *falida*. Here I will use an ethnographic example of the modalities of payment for taxi drivers to make my point.

In the summer of 2007, I went to Angola to work on a short project on the relationship between monetary policies and wages. At that time, Angola had an informal monetary system that produced a dual exchange rate, the official and the unofficial, that had a serious and devastating impact on workers' purchasing power. In recent years, the erosion of the salary has been almost imperceptible, but in the past, particularly in the 1990s, when the inflation rate reached 3,000 per cent, conservation of the value of one's salary was dependent on the exchange of Kwanzas (salary was in most cases paid in national currency) into dollars.

Two positions regarding Angolan salaries have been advanced in recent years. The first one is held by a number of economists of a classical persuasion, among them Alves da Rocha, for whom salary has to be seen in the context of production, and increases in salary have to reflect a rise in the level of national productivity. In this vein, Rocha argues that given the levels of productivity in Angola, average salaries should not surpass the range of $72.32 and $91.94 (per month).[367] On the other side, the position held by the Ministry of Labor itself, which presided over the policies regarding the transfer of financial resources from the state to society in the form of salaries. In this form, as Mbembe has argued, there is no "automatic relationship either between work (its quantities and its value) and salary, or between the salary earned, the utilities produced, and the resulting general wealth."[368] In this sense, salary in Angola is part of the social contract between the state and society. For instance, the Ministry of labor defines salary as the amount of money necessary for the subsistence of the worker's household during a certain amount of time, conventionally a month. Through my interviews with officials of the Ministry of Labor, I came to the conclusion that they tend the invert the question of economists such as Alves da Rocha. It is not that wages have to conform to productivity, but it is rather that the wage has to be high enough to motivate the worker to produce. In other words, they argue that it is because of low wages that workers tend to under-perform. According to the Law of Minimum Wages, approved in 1991, the rationale for the minimum wage is "not only the way workers acquire income, but also as an incentive to guarantee the *increase in productivity* [my emphasis] so as to improve the performance of the organizations, and stimulate workers" (CNSC, 2007).[369] The underlying assumption here is that salary does not have to translate gains in productivity. Wages should rather translate the amount of basic products that during a certain period of time the worker may acquire for the subsistence of his or her household.

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[366] Lautier, De Miras and Morice, *L'État et L'informel*.
[367] Rocha, *Opiniões e Reflexões*, p. 18.

As noted in Chapter Three, the laying off of the unproductive labor force was the reason why the negotiations between Angola and the IMF stalled. Furthermore, the conversation about the labor force has gone hand in hand with the erosion of the working conditions brought about, as in any other places, in Africa, by the shift from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. The partial privatization of Angola Telecom (the national telephone company), and many other state-owned companies, and the sudden valuation of physical space, for instance, led to the de-capitalization of a number of public services. In such cases, the lack of effective work has liberated the time of workers would could then invest it in other remunerative activities.

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[368] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 45.
[369] Private Communication.

A great deal of the effort and time of the formal workers is invested in procuring alternative opportunities: by diverting the resources of their work place (to sell in the informal market), or by using their salaries in the form of capital so that investment be redirected to the development of a venture in the informal economy.[370] In this guise, as Lautier has proposed, the informal economy has to be seen as flexible enough to accommodate modes of imbrication with the formal. I have already outlined the flexible, provisional and plastic nature of the informal economy in Chapter Four. There is no such thing as an informal occupation, or professional category. The person who sells bread today may have to reconvert her occupation into something else the next day. So the system has to be open enough for different repertoires and types of performances. *Falida*, or *falideira*, is not the only one, but it embodies many of these practices.

Falida comes from the Portuguese verb *falir*, to bankrupt, and is used, according to Edson, "as a help to the driver" (*uma ajuda ao condutor*). *Falida*, Edson elaborates, "is like a firm. For instance, I am sick and I can ask you, my cousin, to work in my place. You work and the money you make is yours. But the salary is mine, since my name is the one that is registered in the firm."[371] Relevant in this explanation is not only the doubling, replacement, and supplementarity that the system allows, in so far as people can take other people's place in the workplace, but, more importantly, the distinction between salary and money, and the fact that Edson, for example, pointed to a definition of salary that does not represent money per se, but translates the contractual relationship between a firm and a subject. In other words, salary is the form, and money is the content.

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[370] See, for instance, Rodrigues, *O Trabalho Dignifica o Homem.*

In the conventional contracts for operating taxivans in Luanda, the driver gives the car owner KZ10,000 for five days during the week, and he takes the sixth day, as the day when he makes his own "salary," If he makes more than the value that is due to his owner, he can keep the difference after paying the *chamador* (the one who collects fees), KZ 2,000, gas, and the cleaning. The driver has also to put some money aside for the eventuality of being approached by the traffic police and to pay for a new category of professional, the *lotadores* (loaders), who make their way on to the street by force (by beating drivers and *chamadores*), and, who have the responsibility of filling the car with riders. To make this amount of money, driving a car on the potholed and congested roads of Luanda may be quite a nerve-wracking activity. The driver has to start working early in the day, by 5 a. m., to collect the first workers on their way to the workplace, or people going to the market. To top up the KZ 10,000 amount, he has to have already made it by lunchtime, since workers in Luanda leave at 3 p. m. After this time he may start making money for himself, and for his other expenses.

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[371] Original: "Falida é tipo uma firma. Por exemplo, eu estou doente, e eu posso pedir-te a ti, meu primo, para trabalhar no meu lugar. Tu trabalhas, mas o dinheiro que tu fazes é teu. Mas o salário é meu, poise u é que tenho o nome na firma."

The money can also be made through the different ways in which time and distance are manipulated. Although the state has very little bearing on the activity, the price of the ride, KZ50.00, like the price of bread and many other products, is determined by the *Direcção Nacional para os Preços e a Concorrência* (National Direction for Prices and Competition). Until September 2009, the gas in Angola was subsidized by the state, so the police enforced the price for the system of collective transportation. Ultimately, only the modest price of KZ50.00 (then the price for a car ride), the low wages can be sustained. But taxi drivers have a number of tactics to circumvent this imposition. Taxi drivers may simply avoid the parts of the city, especially the center, where for most of the day traffic is heavily congested. They may risk the payment of a fine by charging riders KZ100, since undercover officers of the economic police take a ride in taxis for this purpose. They may also pay the officer instead of the state. But in most cases, they charge the same amount of money for shorter distances. For instance, instead of doing the route from Roque Santeiro to Quinaxixe for KZ50, they go half the way, from Roque Santeiro to São Paulo, and then from São Paulo to Quinaxixe, for the same amount of time, and then drive back to the origin.

Very few drivers work every day. On other days, they may run some errands, or solve bureaucratic problems, attend a funeral, or help a friend or a relative who is sick. Besides, driving a car is physically exhausting. Cars that circulate as taxis on the roads of Luanda are worn-out, already in their "afterlives,"[372] with weak shock-absorbers and stiff steering wheels, all of which makes driving a car a painful experience. Edson once said to me: "this car, for instance, you don't understand mechanics, this car is good, but the steering wheel is not very good. It turns easily on the one side, but it is hard to turn on the other side."[373] Edson does not drive everyday. Sometimes he just prefers to stay at home resting or recovering from his back pain. And it is never easy to find someone to replace him. For the most part, very few people like to have a contract, or to be on a salaried position in relation to a car owner. It is far more comfortable, for Mauro, for instance, Edson's brother to work as a *falideiro*. He manages to work whenever he needs to, he does not have to argue with the boss, and, in case of accidents, he can leave the car on the road, with the *chamador* taking care of it, and call the driver to pick it up. And if the accident involves the property of another person, as we have seen above, it is up to the driver to put pressure on the *falidero* to pay for the damages.

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[372] On the life and death of cars, see, for instance, Young, "The Life and Death of Cars: Private Vehicles on the Pitjanjatjara Lands, South Australia."

This is the situation in which Edson, Bari, and Moreno found themselves on the day of the accident. Edson and Bari are partners in the business of assembling cars, and driving them as taxis. Bari does not drive, which means that Edson is both owner and driver. But he hires Moreno as his replacement as a driver, who also uses his driver's license. As the other owner of the car involved in the accident suggested, Moreno using Edson's driver's license was part of the *falida*.

Moreno's traffic accident

Traffic accidents occupy a great part of the life of a taxi driver in Luanda. And this has to do with a number of factors that have already been dealt with, namely the state of the roads that is conducive to accidents, the deficient maintenance of the cars used as

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[373] In the original: "Este carro, por exemplo, tu não entendes mecânica, o carro é bom, mas o volante não é muito bom. É fácil virar o caso para um lado, mas não é muito fácil virar para o outro lado."

candongueiros, and the logic of careless exploitation until the car has redeemed the investment. *Candongueiros* account for an important percentage of traffic accidents in a country that has been in the last years among those with the highest levels of accidents, alongside countries such as India and South Africa.[374] In the remainder of this chapter, I use the traffic accident as an event to look at the social forms and logics that support the circulation of *candongueiros* in Luanda.

During my fieldwork in Luanda, I had the opportunity to document the aftermath of a traffic accident when, one Sunday morning, my cousin, Edson, called me. That day, Edson told me that Moreno, his driver, had had an accident with his taxivan, and he invited me to join him on a trip to the market to buy spare parts. When I got to his repair shop, approximately an hour later, he had already purchased the parts he needed, and he was applying them: bumper, new lights, and so on. Later, looking inside the car, he realized that his driver's license was not in the place where he normally leaves it. His driver's license is more part of the car than a personal document, and he leaves it there, alongside other documents, such as his national ID and electoral card, and the license to operate as a taxi driver. He does not mind if those who use the car also use the driver's license, if they get stopped by the police. So, Edson had no doubts that Moreno was responsible for the disappearance of his driver's license. However, when Edson confronted Moreno with this possibility, the latter denied the allegations.

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[374] According to Novo Jornal, which dedicated a special on traffic accidents, Angola is the third country in the world with the highest number of fatal traffic accidents. In 2009, the National Police has registered 10,900 accidents in the whole country, in which 2,622 people died and 9,207 were injured. The highest number of fatalities in relation to the total number of accident may suggest that a great number of the deceased were in collective transportations. Luanda accounts for 22% of this total. See, "Sinistralidade Rodoviária: terceiro país no mundo com mais mortes," *Novo Jornal*, January 6, 2012.

Edson, his partner, Bari, and I, went to the house of Rei Leão, the *chamador* who, like drivers in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, “stay in the vehicles, and assist the drivers in collecting fares, controlling passengers and monitoring the traffic to the rear.”[375]The house was in Boavista and, when we arrived he confessed everything: that Moreno hit a car driven by a middle-aged woman, and that, even before she would open her mouth, Moreno had given her Edson’s driver’s license. He promised her that he would just take the people in the car to their destinations and then he could come back to settle the matter. But Moreno did not go back to the site of the accident. Instead, he headed to Edson’s repair shop, vaguely mentioned the accident, but did not utter a single word about the driver’s license. And he only admitted that later on that Sunday, when we met him at his place.

The problem then was how to get Edson’s driver’s license back. But at this point, it was very likely that the woman had already gone to the police to file charges against Edson. The best way for Edson to solve the problem was to go to the police himself and denounce Moreno. In this case, he would also have lots of questions to answer, such as how it was that Moreno was using his driver’s license. Furthermore, it would not solve the problem altogether. Since even if Moreno was put in jail, it was not certain that Edson would have his driver’s license back. So, they agreed, the best solution was to involve Moreno’s family in the matter.

The first attempt was to involve one of Moreno’s uncles who is an officer in the National Police himself. He not only refused to help Moreno but also advised Moreno not to go to the police. Moreno then called another uncle, Adriano, who invited us to stop by his house in Sambizanga. By then, our group was larger. Besides Edson, Bari, Rei Leão, Moreno, and myself, we also had Moreno's wife, Maria, and Edson's brother, Mauro, who came to drive the car. When we arrived at the house of Moreno's uncle, Adriano, we found the scenario for a family's meeting. Adriano was a man in his late sixties, shirtless but with spectacles, with the appearance of a retired clerk. He was sitting on one side of the yard, between two women; one of them was breastfeeding her child. On the other side of the room there were white plastic chairs for us.

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[375] Lawuyi, *The world of the Yoruba taxi driver*, p. 4.

After the introductions, Moreno was the first one to take the floor: he explained to his family why we were there. He had had an accident and he had given away the car owner's driver's license. He needed help from his family. Without the driver's license, Edson could not work and feed his family. And as he did not have money, he proposed to pass the debt to his family, particularly to his uncle Adriano, by having him sign a paper stating so. In exchange, he would work to pay off the debt with his uncle. But Moreno's uncle refused to help. He said that a couple of months before, Moreno and another cousin of his beat up one of his brothers, their uncle, and he promised to never again intercede in the problems of his nephews. Moreno had one last recourse: blackmail. He reminded his uncle that the house he was living in now was his mother's and that Adriano had not paid the rent in the last few months. Adriano calmly replied that he did not owe Moreno's mother anything, since he had made some repairs on the house. And then the meeting came to an end.

The only solution left was to go to the police. Nobody had a plan, since having Moreno in jail would be of no help for Edson's predicaments. But Moreno had to be forced to find a solution. So we took him to the police, and Edson pointed out to him that from the point of view of his family, it would be cheaper to pay for the replacement of Edson's driver's license (around $800) than to pay for his release from jail.[376] So the best case for all the parties was to prevent Moreno from going to jail, and having him drive the car, with or without a driver's license, until he paid the debt. But Moreno had to go to the police and use an excuse to find out whether or not the owner of the other car involved in the accident had already gone to the police to file charges.

Edson was informed of the fact that the woman had already done so but she had not left Edson's driver's license at the precinct. Instead, she had bribed a police officer to put her in contact with Edson. She already knew that having the driver who hit her car would not pay any damages. So she was willing to surrender the driver's license if a compromise could be reached on the payment for the car's repair. Knowing this, we went to the police headquarters, and the officer she had bribed introduced us to her. In the heated argument that followed, the woman said that she already knew that the driver's license she was given by Moreno was somebody else's. And that she was told by a friend that Moreno was a *falideiro* (the one who does *falidas*), and that holding Edson's driver's license was the only way to have the repair of her car paid for, since Edson would have to force Moreno to drive until the value of the debt was met.

Moreno and Edson agreed on that and they went with the woman to a modern automobile stand to get an estimate for the repair. The total costs for the damage would be around $1,000 dollars. But in the end nobody paid for it. Moreno fled to the countryside and the last time I saw Edson, in 2010, he was still incommunicado. Edson got a replacement for his driver’s license, which cost less than the price of fixing the woman’s car.

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[376] According to a report elaborated by an Angolan NGO, *Associação Mãos Livres*, some of the problems of Angolan prisons are excess of preventive imprisonment, which some times end up being the punishment itself. Starvation, outbreak of epidemics, such as cholera and so on, are some of the problems that prisoners face in detention centers. See http://www.radioecclesia.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4110:associacao-maos-livre-denuncia-em-relatorio-casos-de-fome-nas-prisoes-em-angola&catid=130:sociedade&Itemid=483

What does this story tell us? And what does that which I begin this dissertation tell us? Can we say that the death inflicted on those who accidently kill pedestrians may be seen as an indicator of the breakdown of the social system? This may make even more sense in the context of the examples discussed in this chapter, which show the extent to which even the informal social system seems never to work as it is supposed to work. For instance, Moreno took us to the house of his uncle in the hope that the uncle would be willing to assume his debt, but even if his uncle accepted the agreement, he would never pay him back. Edson first agreed to pay the damages on the car that Moreno hit, but then he found a cheaper way to resolve the situation by getting a replacement for his driver’s license. In a world such as this, where nothing seems to work, violence may tentatively be thought of as a way to address risk.

To understand this situation it is useful to consider Luhman’s explanation of system theory: the rules by which a system operates are outside of the system itself. For instance, if prices are destabilized, “they must be capable of changing from one moment to the next in order to make fluctuation in supply and demand generated outside the system communicable within it. If it had a rigid price structure (and the internal reaction to precisely this rigidity as a self-created certainty), the system would be locked into its own operational foundations in a way increasingly estranged from its environment.”[377] The way out of this, for instance, may be to solve this in a moral way, “Prices ought to be

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[377] Luhmann, *Social Systems,* p. 50.

'just.' This way of thinking had to be abandoned when the "societal differentiation of the economic [is] increased. Both a purely economic solution ("a market economy") and a political one have been favored as a replacement."[378]

Morris seems to point in that direction, when, she notes, for instance, that the securitization of the automobile industry in South Africa is a system that not only "metonymizes the entire economy,"[379] but is also outside the system itself through a complicated calculation of risk management. Understanding this apparent paradox may help explain the system of public transportation in Luanda. As the judicial system is almost inoperative for the great majority of wrongdoings that take place on the road, people have to revert to expedient forms of justice, which I believe, address the future rather than the past. Accordingly, killing those who kill on the road is a way to address uncertainty, and diminish indeterminacy, which is different from traditional forms of understanding punishment. For here, punishment is no longer a way to make somebody pay for what he/she has already done, but, rather, a way to make a statement about the ways in which future cases will be handled, so as to bring awareness to the cost of risk taking.

A few words to conclude this chapter. This chapter is the last one in the part of the dissertation that intends to address the sites of the informal economy in Luanda. I have talked about Roque Santeiro market, and I have described the dynamic of a family in the market. Through the description of the world of *candongueiros* in Luanda, I have tried to go one step further. I described the system of collective transportation in conjunction with the growth of the city. *Candongueiros* have to a great extent contributed to the reorganization of the city, by allowing commuters to settle in parts of Luanda that were not on the itinerary of the official system of collective transportation. I have also discussed the system of salary and other forms of remuneration to give a sense of the infiltration of the state into the many ways people in Luanda reproduce themselves, as well as the ways in which that has been adapted and indeed subverted. By this, I also hope to have made even clearer my understanding of informality. The regimes of informality I am interested in are less those that define themselves as opposed to state and regulation, and more those which straddle the legitimate and the illegitimate, the legal and the illegal. To this end, a couple of more words on the relationship between the state and citizenry must be said. To describe the lives of these people as being at the margin of the state does not mean that the state does not exist, nor that the state does not exert its effect over people's lives. People whose lives I have talked about have benefited by the fact that Angola is a country awash in oil money. They have to pay the entirety of their medical bills whenever they need to go to a public hospital. Still, they meet with the state bureaucracy regularly. They are both inventors of informal paths amid the structured forms of the state, and adherents to those structures. In this context, the system of *candongueiros* is a means and exemplary instance of the process that inhabits the space between. It requires a great degree of investment, and a number of licenses, and contacts with people at key positions in the state bureaucracy. But it enables people to live beyond the designs of urban planners and government designs. However, to understand the modes of imbrication between the state and society, something else must be said about how these linkages work. In the remainder of this dissertation, I will discuss a number of cases to give an idea of the modes of (informal) linkages between the state and society.

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[378] Ibid., p. 50-51.

[379] Morris, *Accidental Histories: Post-Historical Practice?*, p. 30.

PART THREE

[*Networks: family and the party*]

CHAPTER SEVEN: FAMILY OR THE PRODUCTION OF A SIGN

“In the colonies the economic structure is also a superstructure”[380]

Franz Fanon

In the previous chapter, I attempted to give an ethnographic account of how the family in Luanda works. I tentatively used the concept of cluster to make sense of the ways people constitute themselves in “family” units. I argued that in many cases, family is less about blood-relatedness, and more about different kinds of strategic alliances, to the point that sometimes it is not an easy task to figure out real, which is to say biological kinship relations. Some of the complexity, and the levels of affinity, may be found in the everyday language. I noted many instances in which everyday language does not only convey affinity, but creates affinity itself. For instance, I remember that a little while after meeting Makassamba, he started calling me *minha família* (my family). It was surprising to me since I had never heard anyone use this expression (people in Luanda with no family relations may call each other “família”, but never *minha família*). I believe that with this gesture Makassamba was putting expectations into play. In many other cases affinity erupts into language through emphasis. Makassamba, for instance, treats a lot of people as brother or sister. When I met his brother, António, he emphasized that he has his a real brother (and, this, perhaps, also “unreal” brothers): “Makassamba é mesmo meu irmão” (Makassamba is really my brother). Besides, Luandans really use expressions such as half-siblings, unless they really mean it. There is also the habit of advancing a degree in kinship affinity. Cousins become brothers, and uncles and aunts are called father and mother, especially when they have corresponding obligations. The concept of great aunt is not used in Luanda’s normal parlance, I remember, my cousin Edson introducing me to everyone: “*este é o meu irmão*, *Toy*, *a minha mãe e a mãe dele são irmãs, portanto nós somos irmãos*.” (This is my brother, Toy, our mothers are sisters, so we are brothers.)

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[380] Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 5.

So the question here is: how to make sense of it? What is the interpretive universe that allows these formations to take place? The purpose of this chapter is to rehearse a theoretical explanation for dealing with the emergence of these highly mutable forms of kinship. For such an endeavor, I will reflect on the social constructedness of family in Luanda. I will do so via the description and explanation of a few briefly vignettes. The first one will be the refusal of President dos Santos to recognize a woman who claims his paternity. The point here is not to grapple with the question of whether or not the alleged daughter was legitimate. I am rather interested in the language used by dos Santos to disavow her, since it will take us to a discussion of names and family names as signs of belonging.

In the reminder of this chapter, I will be reading novels and journalistic pieces. I will discuss *The Book of Chameleans*, by José Eduardo Agualusa, to gain insight into the emergence of the sensuous quality of the names in Luanda. And I will discuss *Gloriosa Família*, by Pepetela, where the question of the ideological formation that animates family names provides interesting ethnographic material. Both novels are staunch critiques, if not parodies, of the importance Luandans attach to family and particularly to their family names – whenever they have a sound one. But as we have learned from Bakhtin, novels are heterogeneous, open to different and contradictory meanings, and sometimes they even help disseminate the meaning that their creators intend to criticize.[381] Noteworthy for the sake of this chapter is that for Bakhtin novels are not simply multivalent; they also contain the stratified language of a social world, which is hierarchally organized. So the heterogeneity is evidence for him of the social real, with its contradictions and differently positioned speakers. Accordingly, I read these novels for the ways they help to crystallize the consciousness of an *époque*. For novelists cannot help but work with the signs their cultures make available to them.

In broader terms, this chapter aims to reflect on the informal ways by which state and society are connected. Family is one of the two main vectors of this connection (the other one being the party). As far as Angola is concerned, we would not be able to understand the relationship between the state and the family, if we had as our standpoint a framework that limits itself to the extent to which family is fashioned and refashioned by the state.[382] And this takes place in a myriad ways: through the recognition of statuses; through the regulation of transmission of property and through the assignation of the status of privacy to the family, while nonetheless regulation sexual relations within it.

In the case of Angola, the question should be posed otherwise. Put it differently, the point is not that the state models society, and more the extent to which the state is refashioned by society. In this sense, the state is to a great extent the mirror of family, since to a great extent the state partakes in the logic of the family. And this does not only have to do with the language of state power that derives its efficacy from the metaphor of the family. Of more immediate concern here is the question of how family relations contrive particular ways for the access and distribution of (national) resources, which would otherwise be imagined as the purview of the state.

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[381] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination.*

[382] A very popular argument in the sociology and anthropology of the 1980. See, for instance, La Fontaine, “Anthropological perspective on family and social change”; Barrett and McIntosh, *The Anti-social family*; and see, also, Strathern, *After nature.*

(Not) giving name

José Eduardo dos Santos, the Angolan President, has always been a very circumspect person, in a way that singles him out from many other dictators in Africa.[383] He may be fond of the reproduction of his image on the national currency, and on billboards all over of country, but these images appear as if they were part of a cult of personality that he does not condone, and take place beyond his own volition. There are no books or documentaries about him, and the last time he sat down for a long interview with a journalist was in 1991, when, in the run-up for the first democratic elections in Angola, he spoke to the cameras of a Portuguese channel, RTP, with the journalist Maria Luisa. He avoids crowds, he is not even popular among Angolans, and he rarely speaks off script. In this regard, if he has become the most powerful institution in the country, dwarfing even his own party, it is because of the ways he has succeeded in building what is a different context was called a "rhetoric of invisibility."[384]

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[383] Whether or not dos Santos is dictator is a question that have been hotly discussed in Angola. To the extent that dos Santos himself was forced to weigh in. He said that Angola does not qualify as a dictatorship, since there were no political prisoners. Interestingly enough dos Santos could only say this, in his annual speech on the State of the Nation, after having ordered the release of twenty youths that were detained for being protesting against his long presidency, under the slogan: “32 é muito” (32 is too much). See, http://blogdodanieldantas.blogspot.com/2011/09/primavera-chega-angola-32-e-muito.html

The president thus caught the whole country by surprise when in September 2010 he responded to a journalist of the Angolan Television who had approached him to ask a "personal and intimate question."[385] Interestingly enough, the journalist did not have to spell out the facts the he wished the president to comment upon, but asked him simply if he had heard the rumors that where circulating through the private press outlets claiming that dos Santos had fathered a Congolese child during the years that he was living in Congo – in the context of the national liberation struggle being waged there in the early 1960s. That child, now a woman, was then in Luanda claiming his paternity. Dos Santos spoke to the TV, in prime time, for four minutes, without being interrupt by the journalist, on facts of his life that he had never commented on publicly. He started his remarks by saying that he had not read the material – he has never admitted that he reads the private press, which he cannot control as he controls the public press – but that members of his family had briefed him on the contents of the reports. He then commented on the allegations. He first advised Josefa to keep looking for her father, since, according to the information she gave, "Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos" is not her father – referring to himself in the third person. Secondly, he rebuked the evidence Josefa gave regarding her paternity. She was looking for an "Edú," which is a diminutive of Eduardo, but he has never been called by this name. "I am not Edú. I am José. In my house, my relatives call me Zé (…)," and he then proceeded by giving a long list of the names he has been called him since his years in high school. Eduardo, he argued, was not his name but his father's name. Furthermore, dos Santos said that he had arrived in Congo in November 1961, when he was nineteen years old and left for the Soviet Union in July 1963, at the age of twenty. During these months, he only thought of Angolan politics, and did not befriend any Congolose family, let alone, have any sexual intercourse with a Congolese woman. Therefore, he philosophically concluded, "there cannot be any child."[386]

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[384] I owe this insight to the Portuguese philosopher José Gil. Gil, *Salazar, a Retórica Da Invisibilidade*.

[385] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGEWuKE1Pn8.

Dos Santos only weighed in on the hotly debated subject of his possible paternity to stop the ubiquitous rumors. Some people also speculated that dos Santos was only having a private conversation in public with members of his family, who had received Josefa Matias with the promise of introducing her to her alleged father. In this sense, dos Santos was sending a message to that part of his family, while reassuring the other part, particularly his heirs, that he would not recognize any other child. A vast majority of commentators on popular Angolan sites, such as *Angonotícias*, for instance, wondered why dos Santos did not simply submit himself and Josefa Matias to DNA testing so as to prove or disprove the veracity of her allegations, since by going public to comment on such matters he was giving his word against scientific evidence, or against something that could be proven scientifically.

But this was not necessary, since it was not the truth that was at stake here. What was important was the voice of the president, or that he addressed the matter in his own voice. In a system of signs such as that in Angola, where dos Santos is the master of a "master signifying" system, or the chief encoder of the encoding machine, he does not only create statements, but he also creates the conditions of validity for these statements.

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[386] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGEWuKE1Pn8

These were, for instance, the terms that I earlier discussed regarding the run-up for the approval of the Angolan constitution. Dos Santos' voice, the embodiment and materiality of his will, is a source of law. In this sense, what is relevant here is not that Josefa is or might be dos Santos' daughter, but whether or not he will recognize her. By this gesture, dos Santos was performing an illocutionary act, which has been defined by Austin as performing an "act in saying something."[387] Or, as Alexei Yurchak has suggested in a different context, dos Santos, in this case, is engaged in a performance that does not have to be true or false, but rather successful or unsuccessful.[388] In this sense, calibrating the success of dos Santos' utterances requires us to deal with the conventions and the proper context in which dos Santos' speech act was deemed successful.

Before going any further, a point has to be made here. Dos Santos is a very powerful chief of state who has, to a great extent, drawn the force of his power outside of the formal law (or by formalizing informal law). He was able to do this by incorporating the state of emergency into the law. But he is not a brutal or a pitiless dictator. His long tenure in power is explained by his outstanding negotiating skills. He knows how to satisfy and please his diverse constituencies. In a certain way, the best way to characterize his form of power is through the analogy with the Indian chief evoked by Pierre Clastres. For Clastres, power among in the Indians was less based on the legitimization of violence and the use of coercive means (as in the Weberian states), and more on the ways in which the chief succeeded in making his desire coincide with the law of the group.[389] This is what the case of Josefa shows. Refusing to avowing or recognizing Josefa, dos Santos attempted to merely enacting the will of the ones whose interests he claims to represent. But, of course, because he is President, this apparently personal refusal was also an act of state.

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[387] Austin, *How to do things with words*

[388] Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, p. 258.

[389] Clastres, *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians*, pp.106-7.

I hope by now, the link between the way people talk about family, as I opened this chapter, and dos Santos refusal of paternity is becoming clear. The link is ideology, or the ways in which ideas of family circulate, and are communicated, through society, via the written culture, and the mass media. Only in these terms, one can perhaps understand, why dos Santos had to make the refusal of his alleged daughter a public act. Dos Santos has rested a great part of his symbolic power on the ways he talks to Angolans. Written discourse, to a great extent, is the only way he communicates with the country. He seems so conscious of it by the way he has become a master in the way he manipulates the space between the oral and the written word. In his more than 30 years as president, one may count the number of times that he has spoken unscripted. He has always written down everything he says in public. However, the reverse is also true. Dos Santos knows the power of the unscripted (or pretended unscripted word), to the extent that the more memorable quotes during the time he has served as president are those which come from moments when he seems to stray off script. Whether this straying is real or contrived is not the issue. It is the appearance of spontaneity that gives his so-called unscripted remarks their peculiar force. It is interesting to note here that his speechwriter (or at least one of them) for the last twenty years or so is a celebrated playwright, José Mena Abrantes, and director of a theater company, *Elinga Teatro*. I believe that the collaboration between dos Santos and Mena Abrantes has made both of them conscious of the fact that the written word disguised as oral and spontaneous is even more powerful than the formal speech. This is what gives dos Santos's the force that can be identified with his presence. In this context, dos Santos's denial of the paternity of Josefa is no less an act of statecraft than any of his official speech.

This vignette also reveals another very important aspect of Luandan political culture: the importance people attribute to names and family names. It is noteworthy that the thrust of the argument for dos Santos to refuse the paternity of Josefa was her failure in calling him by the proper name: José, or his nickname Zé (since Edú is his father's name, even if for the whole country, dos Santos is also known as Zé Dú). This shows the extent to which names in Luanda have a sort of double contingency.[390] A name is not only the designation by which someone is known. Whoever addresses another person by a name is marking the degree of relationship with this person. In this sense, this is not just to say that intimate people have the license to call people by their nickname. But the name one chooses to address establishes the pattern of the relationship between the addressed and the addressee. In this sense it is understandable that some people take their father's names instead of their father's family names, since this is how a given family sees the continuation of the father in the son. For instance, although in Angola, as in everywhere in the Portuguese former colonies, people tend to take their family names as the last name, in Angola some people may have their father's personal name as the last name. A person called Miguel da Silva Pedro, for instance, is likely that he is taking Pedro, his father's personal name, and placing it after da Silva his family's name. However, even in this case, the family name is no less important, as I will show in the remainder of this thesis. Here, we may simply note that Luandans, by the way they pronounce names, can turn common names into marks of distinction. In the Portuguese of common usage in Luanda, people may say that a given person *belongs* to a given family: *ele é dos da Silva* (he is of *da Silva*'s family), it is implicit that who hear it knows who are the *da Silva*, and that those da Silva that are referred are not any da Silva, but a very particular cluster of the *da Silva*.

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[390] As defined by Luhmann, see *Social Systems*.

So, the issue here is that to be a part of the family is to be granted the right to use a particular name, or to be granted the opportunities associated with a particular class of people, or a cluster, that are associated with a particular name. This, as we will see throughout this chapter, may give a number of advantages – license to pursue certain careers, for instance – but it also gives to people a share in or access to channels of distribution. The link between family and economy does not have to be stressed here. Long ago, Engels made the case that the formation of a particular kind of family, private, is the product of capitalism, especially when it comes to matters of inheritance.[391] In Luanda, however, in a context of the emergence of capitalist forms of appropriation, this is not the case yet. For someone like Josefa, for instance, the desire for being part of dos Santos's family is less motivated by the expectation of inheritance, and more by the opportunities that such association can bring.[392] Key to this is that family has been conceived as a unit of production.

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[391] Engels, "The origins of family, private property and the State."

[392] For the various businesses ventures the daughters and sons of the president are involved in, see, for instance, Rafael Marques, http://makaangola.org/2011/12/os-diamantes-da-tchize/?lang=en.

The seller of past or genealogical anxieties

In the novel by José Eduardo Agualusa, *The Book of Chameleons,*[393] the main character, Félix Ventura has a very uncommon métier: he sells pasts or, less poetically, he fakes genealogies. His business card reads: *ofereça aos seus filhos um futuro melhor* ("provide your children with a better past") and his clients are the members of the "new bourgeoisie," or people who need a good past, "a name that resonates nobility and culture."[394] To forge personal histories he has to have an eye on history. He is an archivist, a collector of facts, storing news from newspapers and TV, that he uses in quite contradictory ways: as the necessary supplement of truth that gives subsistence to his fictions, but also as a way to vindicate the truth. He also uses the same material when he suspects that the president of the republic has been replaced by a double by comparing the hand the president uses to make his signature in his archived footages of TV News.

Ventura sees himself as an artist, and his work is not simply faking documents, for the construction of genealogies, and for the insertion of a subject into a given family tree, requires more than that. It is important that the subject inhabits the space that is opened up by the invention of memories. This is what takes place when, one day, Ventura is visited by a new client who wants to become José Buchmann. Ventura provides him with faked documents, such as ID, passport, and a faked biography. He is the grandson of Cornélio Buchmann, a Boer who immigrates to Angola in the beginning of the twentieth century. He is among the South Africans allowed to live in the Southern Angola locality Chibia, founded by Portuguese from the island of Madeira. Ventura and Buchmann become friends, and the first observes the second going through a metamorphosis, by changing the ways he dresses, the way he speaks, and so on.

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[393] The original title is O Vendedor de Passados, or the *Sellers of Pasts.* I prefer to refer to this book in its original title for what it seems to be lost in the translation.

[394] José Eduardo Agualusa, *O Vendedor de Passados*, p. 29.

Later in the novel we learn that José Buchmann is the Portuguese Pedro Gouveia who used his fabricated identity to perform an act of revenge for the torture he was subjected to during the events of May 27, 1977. Although, the novel lacks verisimilitude, in the sense that in the almost lawless society of post-war Angola nobody has to go through all this to commit a crime, the book is more on satire of the attachment to family name in contemporary Luanda, than a commentary on vengeance. There is, for instance, the story of a minister who hires Ventura to dust off his genealogy. Ventura not only inserts him in the family tree founded by Salvador Correia, the liberator of Angola from the Dutch occupiers, in 1648, but Ventura also ghost-writes his memories, in which this genealogy has an important part.

Although this story seems to have been taken from the canon of magic realism, there is some truth in it. In fact, Agualusa has only translated into novel form a number of stories that have been circulating for years in Angola and mostly in Luanda about the anxieties over family names. I can give an ethnographic example that shows the extent to which Luandan's reality has been the major source of inspiration for Agualusa. During the time I did my fieldwork in Luanda, I visited the *Banco de Poupança e Crédito* (Bank of Savings and Credit) to interview a veteran clerk, who, in the summer of 1975, had taken part in the founding episode of the Angolan National Bank, called the *Assault on the Bank*. Ever since the Carnation Revolution had taken place in Lisbon in April 1974, and it had become clear that colonialism was coming to an end, settlers increased their remittances to Portugal. To prevent the soon-to-be country of Angola from experiencing a financial hemorrhage, a number of low-ranked Angolan clerks took over the bank and nationalized the reserve.

This was the story whose details I wanted to explore. Now retired, the former clerk received me in the towering BPC building, where he still maintains an office. During our conversation, I tried to ask him various questions on the subject I was interested in, but he kept changing the topic to the history of his family. His family name is Fernandes, a quite a common family name, and yet he considered himself *a* Fernandes from the main branch of the family tree, and thus a direct descendant of a Portuguese ancestor who had moved to Angola in the early nineteenth century. More significantly, he told me that over several years he had painstakingly amassed information on his family history, which he then tried to publish in the form of an illustrated book. But he has not done so because he encountered resistance from a cousin who threatens to sue him if he publishes the book. His cousin is the son of a single mother, who raised him and his siblings by washing clothes at home for white clients during late colonialism. This is a common story in Luanda for people who came of age during the last years of Portuguese presence in Angola. And Fernandes' cousin himself has recounted it many times. It was in the heyday of socialism and Angola was the "fatherland of workers," and people sought to emphasize their working class roots. But things have changed and in the quest for belonging to the bourgeoning national bourgeoisie a "better past" has to be invented.

Perhaps in Agualusa's satire, Fernandes' cousin would be good material for Ventura's creative powers. But reality, in Luanda, as elsewhere in the world, is always more complex than anything fiction can convey. Past or genealogy is simply one of the terms by which the family sign comes into being. If we may use here Saussure's distinction between diachronic and synchronic identities, genealogy only explains the term succession, or, as Saussure has it "relations between successive terms that are substituted for each other over time."[395] The other element is selectiveness, which, although it also cuts through time, is more synchronic than diachronic. For understanding the case of Angolan families that claim a status of quasi-nobility, the reflections of Denise Youngblood on the disappearance of her black grandmother from her narrative stories is worth consideration.[396] Although addressing a very different context, what is relevant here is the relationship Youngblood construes between the family and nation to suggest that the criteria by which certain family histories circulate and others are occulted may be related to the body politic and its politics of memory. Or, as she puts it, the rhetoric of family is only supported when "defended by the prevailing national ethos, and sustained by the centrality of a specific kind of people."[397]

I follow Youngblood in these considerations, since she provides a very interesting alternative to the terms in which family, or kinship, have been debated in much of African studies. The critical purchase of such a line of enquiry reveals not only the relationship between family and nation, but more importantly the relationship between family and ideology. If nationalism is the production of the nation's imagination, the family in Angola is the best site to understand nationalism.

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[395] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p. 140.

[396] Youngblood, "Rainbow Family, Rainbow Nation: Reflections on Relatives and Relational Dynamics in Trinidad."

[397] Ibid., p. 64.

Today, the powerful Angolan families claim to have ancestors among or to be related to the creole society that flourished in the late nineteen century.[398]Although the Portuguese crown claimed the possession of the Angolan territories, Portugal did not have the capacity to fully dominate the vast country. So a number of natives gained great prominence in various aspects of national life: in the army, the clergy, the colonial administration, and in commerce. Some of them became prominent journalists, and intellectuals who flirted with nationalistic ideas of liberalism current at the time.[399] As the economy of Angola was particularly dependent on slavery, the fortunes of the native elite were anchored in the slave trade. Still today, a part of the distinction between those who belong to the elite – within the same families – and those who do not is tacitly predicated on the distinction between those who are descendents of slave masters and those who are descendants of slaves.

As noted in Chapter One, local families of Luanda lost their political prominence with the brief experiment in the decentralization of Angola, in the 1910s, when Norton de Matos was appointed Angola's high commissioner. De Matos decreed and created conditions so that the "colonization by white families exclude from the colonial nucleus individuals of black race."[400] So when large numbers of Portuguese came to Angola from the 1930s on, and especially to Luanda (as noted in Chapter One), local families had to be relocated from the center of the city to the new *musseques*. A number of those families were the descendents of the creole society of late nineteenth century.[401] This is why the literature on Angolan nationalism persistently remarks the protest of Angolans against the loss of certain privileges that the members of those former elites experienced, and sees this protest as continuous with a more vehement liberation struggles.[402] Some evidence of this can be found in the fact that a number of the family names of the individuals that led the country to independence, namely those from the MPLA's *assimilados* and mulattos, had the same family names as many of those who fought in the late nineteenth press for the autonomy of the province, or make the case that Angola should have been colonized by an advanced power, such as the British, instead of the Portuguese. However, the history of Angolan families is more complicated than that.

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[398] Dias, "Uma Questão de Identidade: Respostas Intelectuais às Transformações Económicas no Seio da Elite Crioula da Angola Portuguesa entre 1870 e 1930."

[399] For a discussion of the nationalistic project of this generation, see, for instance, Andrade 1997.

[400] Matos, *A Provincia de Angola*, p. 30.

[401] See, for instance, Monteiro, *A Família nos Musseques de Luanda*.

If those names, as floating signifiers, have passed from one generation to the next, it was not on account of a patriarchal society that tends to preside over these things. Rather, single mothers guaranteed the transmission of those family names. The family story of Fernandes's cousin, rather than being the exception, is, in fact the rule. Although some members of Angolan society had been prominent in the colonial period, the colony did not offer them the condition for the reproduction of any privileges. Fernando Mourão, for instance, says that it was not for being dispossessed from their land by the state that the prominence of those traditional families dwindled in the next decades. Those families' patriarchs have many offspring, which has contributed to the dispersal of their wealth.[403]

Access to education was limited, and with the transformation of Angola into a settler colony, those Africans who precisely held elevated social positions quickly moved down the social ladder. Very few households subsisted in this process. Polygamy was common. A significant number of the Angolans who attended school in the 1960s[404] were raised by single parents. Some of them took the names of their fathers, who had other families, and sometimes had the tuition paid by them.[405]But this generation relied mostly on the effort of mothers washing white men's clothes to make ends meet. It was not uncommon for women to have children with different fathers, but raise them by themselves, or with the help of an estranged father. These women were the guarantors of the continuity of those family names that later served as the symbols of the emerging bourgeoisie. This is the case of many families that may now claim to descent from powerful masters on the nineteenth century. When those who make these claims are pressed to tell the stories of their families, one finds out that the central figure is not a patriarch, but it is likely to be a woman, who had children with different men, and whose children took their various fathers' names. That some of these names have become respected, and that their bearers have rewritten their genealogies, is to a considerable degree the work of economy and ideology, and is related to the forms of self-justification by which Portugal attempted to maintain its colony.

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[402] See, for instance, Laban, "Mário Pinto de Andrade: Uma Entrevista a Michel Laban."

[403] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de Uma Leitura de Luanda Uma Interpretação do Desenho Urbano*, p. 210.

From the standpoint of ideological production, this process began long before independence. When the British and the French were preparing their African territories for decolonization, the Portuguese had either to follow suit, decolonizing, or to justify their mission in Africa. The massive Portuguese migration to Africa, particularly to Angola, was recent and could not aspire to bring about the sort of political reality that the South Africans were pursuing with *Apartheid*. So when nationalistic claims for self-determination reached the UN, the Portuguese, to discredit it, made the case that their colonial rule was instrumental in creating multi-racial societies in Africa. The theories the fascist Portuguese state employed were a free adaption of the Luso-tropicalism proposed in the 1930s by the anthropologist Gilberto Freyre as the model to explain the formation of Brazilian society, or the so-called Brazilian racial democracy. For Freyre, Brazil was a racial democracy in virtue of the patriarchal structure of the society formed in the sixteenth century, which cultivated intimacies between masters and slaves. Contrary to the British colonies of North America, Freyre argues, in Brazil masters mixed with slaves, sexually and culturally, and the outcome was the formation of a racially diversified society free of the racial tensions that characterized many other post-slavery societies.[406]

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[404] Portuguese colonialism intentionally thwarted the progress of the Africans. Until late 1950, a number of laws prevented African from advancing beyond primary education. For a discussion on these laws, and their eradication, see, for instance, Oliveira, *Memórias De Africa, 1961-2004.*

[405] See, for instance, Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de Um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*.

Freyre had studied in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University, in the 1920s, where he was a student of Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict. It is not a surprise that the work of Freyre bears the stamp of the ideas developed by this department in those years. Columbia's school of anthropology was then at the vanguard of debunking the evolutionist theories used to explain the formation of human groups. Instead of biology, this school would emphasize culture; instead of innate characteristics associated with races, this school would argue that the social milieu has a decisive role in cultural differentiation. Freyre comments on this, echoing, to a great extent, Boas's thinking: "once we have discarded ethnic as well as geographic and economic determinism, and look upon race, milieu, and techniques of production as forces which conditions human development without determining it rigidly and uniformly we are free to interpret this development in terms of its own dynamics."[407]

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[406] Gilberto Freyre was a prolific writer, and he developed his oeuvre in dozen of books. For an idea of Luso-Tropicalism, see, for instance, the two central thousand odd pages book around the formation of the Brazilian society. Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties.*

More significantly, Freyre also stresses that the benign character of the Brazilian people is due to the plasticity of the Portuguese, who were already historically infused and strongly influenced by Jewish and Moorish traits. In the absence of any good justification for remaining in Africa, the Portuguese appropriated Freyre's ideas to argue that the outcome of their presence in Africa was the formation of multicultural societies as had been the case in Brazil.[408] The *Estado Novo*, then, commissioned Freyre to do a series of works on the Portuguese in Africa, of which the travelogue *Aventura e Rotina* [Adventure and Routine] is the most well known.[409]

The work of Gilberto Freyre has played out in the Angolan present in two major ways. First of all Freyre has brought to the Angolan debate the quest for the social blueprint, for the social matrix of the nation. Secondly, a strong sector of the population, especially the remnants of the creole society, promoted these ideas to mark the fact that Angolans are different from other Africans for having more similarities with the Brazilians. One of the staunchest defenders of such views is precisely José Eduardo Agualusa, the author whose novel has been discussed above,[410] but we will see that he is not the only one to deploy Freyrian concepts when we examine *The Glorious Family*, by Pepetela.

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[407] Ibid., p. 426.

[408] For a discussion of the reception of Freyrian ideas in Portugal, see, for instance, Castelo, *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo*.

[409] Freyre, *Aventura e Rotina*. For a discussion on Freyre travels in the context of anthropological literature, and in particular in relation with Claude Lévi-Strauss *Tristes Tropiques*, see, for example, Cristiana Bastos, "Tristes Trópicos e Alegres Luso-Tropicalismos: Das Notas de Viagem em Lévi-Strauss e Gilberto Freyre."

[410] Angola has an even stronger movement at odds with any form of foreign influence that was deemed neo-nativism by the Angola art historian Mixingi, who puts neo-nativists against neo-luso-tropicalists among whom he situates Agualusa. See, Mixinge, "Barroco Tropical, ou a Beleza de um Panfleto."

Agualusa's most recent novel is unapologetically Freyrian in the manner it praises the adoption of the Portuguese language by Angolans (especially Luandans). Like Freyre, praising the benignity of slavery in Brazil, Agualusa erases the violence that is implicit in the fact that most Luandans speak Portuguese today as their own language. The novel revolves around a study of neologisms being undertaken by a Portuguese linguist of Angolan origin. He is particularly interested in the fact that all of a sudden a number of neologisms have been adopted by speakers of Portuguese in different parts of the world, including Portugal and Brazil. Agualusa's purpose is to celebrate the contribution of African languages to the formation of the Portuguese lexicon. For such, Agualusa has to convert into his project the most recalcitrant enemies of the Portuguese order. In one chapter, Agualusa invokes one of the most illustrious descendents of the creole families, Mário Pinto de Andrade, the nationalist and founder of MPLA, saying: "when he was a child, Portuguese was the language of the house, and Kimbundu, the language of the yard. In the comfort of the bourgeois living room, people spoke Portuguese. In the yard, with servants and friends, people used Kimbundu."[411] And then he refers to those yards as "amiable places of conviviality and exchange."[412] Here we can see some of the topics discussed by Freyre in many of his studies: the house and its divisions, as the space for the masters and the space for slaves. But, there is something else at play here. The case here is not that Mário de Andrade, as nationalist and critic of luso-tropicalism, could not make such statements.[413] What is lacking here is the context that allowed the emergence of these cultural formations: colonialism. Only by the erasure of colonialism in such a context can one understand the extent to which the ideology that was once used to justify the presence of Portugal in Angola is still in use today, albeit for different purposes. The names, and the identities inherited from colonialism, are among those ideological devices still in place.

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[411] José Eduardo Agualusa, *Milagrário Pessoal,* p. 125.
[412] Ibid., p. 125

Family as the economic infrastructure

Frantz Fanon aptly stated that in the colony "the economic infrastructure is also the superstructure."[414] Fanon was referring to the colonial "compartmentalized world" where "you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich."[415] For the postcolony, and particularly for Angola, this formula has to be reworked: the superstructure is the economic infrastructure. For the difference between infrastructure and superstructure, according to Marx, is the ideational system related to a given mode of production. In places such as Angola in general, and Luanda in particular, where the economy depends on oil and its potential for exchange by a price imposed by the consumer countries, exchange becomes itself the mode of production and produces the economic infrastructure.

I owe this line of reasoning to the exceedingly stimulating work of Jean Braudillard on the relationship between exchange and ideology. Baudrillard attempts to dismiss the “absolute contingency”[416] of use value by dismissing “the anthropological illusion that claims to exhaust the idea of utility in the simple relation of human need to a useful property of the object.”[417] Furthermore, Baudrillard castigates Marx for being so vigilant in the ways he unveils the work of ideology implied in the constitution of fetishes, those theological things, while failing to apply the same kind of theoretical alertness to the analysis of use value, which Baudrillard calls a “mythology.”[418] It is then with reference to the system deprived of use value, where every commodity is for exchange, and names constitute commodities that may illuminate the question of symbolic production in Angola.

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[413] Although they had to be read alongside the lines of the critique of Luso-tropicalism by Mário de Andrade. See, for instance, Andrade, *"Qu'est-Ce Que 'Le Tropicalismo'?*"

[414] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth, p. 5.*

[415] Ibid., p. 5

Marx and Engels, as I have already said, have insisted that the formation of the concept of family is not unrelated to property rights in the context of a bourgeoning bourgeoisie in Europe, which is inextricably related to the anxiety of inheritance.[419] Such an argument depends on there being fixed assets to conserve and transfer, whether these assets are reproduced or are the means of reproduction. In Angola, this is not quite the case. For the production of signs of distinction is related to the formation of the networks of distribution and the structures of belonging, that are crucial in an economy where distribution is itself production. As noted in the preceding chapters, the collapse of the centrally planned economy paved the way for this change of course, in the sense that the Angolan leadership became increasingly convinced that the path for development lay in the formation of a national bourgeoisie. Steady steps along this path were taken in 1992. But the peace agreement and the advent of multiparty elections brought about new fear.

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[416] Morris, *In the Place of Origins: Modernity and Its Mediums in Northern Thailand*.
[417] Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, p. 132.
[418] Ibid., p. 134.
[419] Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*.

UNITA of Jonas Savimbi was cleared to participate in the electoral process without disarming their men. Besides, Jonas Savimbi was not only convinced that he would win the elections in a landslide, but he also announced the witch-hunt they would indulge in as soon as UNITA took power. In the run-up to the elections, a number of members of the MPLA abandoned the country and many others sent their families abroad. A luxurious hotel-ship was docked at the Port of Luanda, presumably, to provide shelter to members of the Angolan government in case something went wrong in the days ahead or after the elections.

It was amidst this climate of fear and concern regarding the future that a number of very prominent members of the MPLA convened, in September of 1991, a week before the elections, to create a conglomerate of economic interests called GEPI (*Sociedade de Gestão e Participação Financeiras* – Business Management and Equity Society). Various prominent members of the MPLA, MPLA representatives in the national parliament, and a major Angolan public foundation, *Sagrada Esperança*, signed the company's founding charter. GEPI's portfolio included a diversified set of economic interests including aviation, real estate, fisheries, media, and so on.[420] According to Rafael Marques, the idea that presided over the formation of this group, that would coordinate in the coming years the transfer of public assets to private hand, was to put the vital sectors of the country's economy into a handful of the regime's most trusted people in such a way that if power passed to the hands of the opposition, these people could still maneuver the political scene by their hold on those vital areas of the national economy.

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[420] Marques, *MPLA LTD.*, p. 7.

The orchestration of this plan transpired in a number of private conversations, and even found its way into the pages of Angolan newspapers. And cynically, this move has not been described as corruption, or unlawful, but simply as a necessary step in bringing about a national bourgeoisie whose interests and portfolio could then disengage from the state. The national bourgeoisie, then imagined, had on the one hand to become totally free from the state without, nevertheless, relinquishing its control. This is for instance the spirit of a famous op-ed piece written by João Melo, a prominent MPLA representative in the national parliament, journalist and opinion maker. In his piece published in the official *Journal de Angola*, Melo begins by justifying the MPLA's model of wealth creation by citing Marx saying that "capitalism was born with its hands full of blood."[421] He suggests that corruption, the undue appropriation of state's goods, was a form of wealth accumulation in postcolonial Angola as legitimate as capitalism was for Europe in the wake of industrialism. For him, there is no other way. Colonialism did not allow the formation of a local bourgeoisie, and during socialism private property was subsumed under the "collectivization of the means of production."[422] That said, the only avenues open for private accumulation had to pass through the state one way or another. He then enumerates the five major ways Angolans made fortunes in private business through or with the state: 1) taking advantages of the strategies of the commissions; 2) buying state property at low prices; 3) arbitrating between currency, in the context of a double exchange rate; 4) using privileged information; 5) taking advantage of a position in the government to make business, by demanding participation in projects presented by others, demanding bribes to make projects go through, or putting some projects in their own names, or in the names of figureheads.[423]

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[421] Melo, "Capitalismo Angolano."
[422] Ibid.

In this way, a small group of Angolans detached themselves from the whole population to become members of the first bourgeois class in the postcolonial country. The first phase was then concluded. Melo also voices another assumption that has gained currency among this privileged circle: this loophole had then to be closed. This is being achieved in law through the recent interventions of the president of the republic, on the basis of claims about the high levels of corruption in the country. He did this first through a speech in which he pledged "zero tolerance" for new cases of corruption, suggesting also that old cases of corruption, especially those of illicit enrichment, would be pardoned.[424]

However, the loophole could not be closed, since the class of Angolans who thanks to the operations Melo describes became part of the national bourgeoisie have never become economically autonomous. This class of people still depends heavily on the state to conduct their businesses. It has partly to do with the structure of the Angolan economy itself: the extraction of oil in Angola takes place in enclaves and, as Ferguson states, "very little of the oil wealth even enters the wider society."[425] In this context, then, the circulation of money is not anchored in production, but rather in exchange, arbitrage, and the myriad ways assets can be produced by controlling the paths of money. In brief, proximity to the state is still the only way wealth can be accumulated, and, more importantly, maintained. It is more the rule than the exception that the trailblazers of Angolan capitalism still conduct their businesses from their official government offices.[426]

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[423] Ibid.
[424] http://www.africanidade.com/articles/3286/1/Presidente-JosA-Eduardo-dos-Santos-pede-quottolerAncia-zeroquot-A-corrupAAo-/Paacutegina1.html. Furthermore, the Law of Public Probity closes all the loopholes that Melo refers to. See, Law of Public Probity, Law n. 3/10, of March 29, 2010.
[425] Ferguson, "Seeing like an oil company," p. 378

To have an idea of how family is the linchpin between public and private affairs, it suffices to take a look at the cabinet formed by president dos Santos right after the approval of the constitution. If the constitution gave him sweeping powers over various aspects of the political life, it was first and foremost as the chief distributor that he manifested them. Never before in independent Angola had members of such a restricted group of people been so heavily represented in the country's organs of power, namely, the cabinet, the office of the president, the top echelons of MPLA, and the national parliament. The president, not his wife, Ana Paula dos Santos (who suspended her term at the Parliament to care for her own businesses) and his daughter became parliamentarians (the president's daughter left the parliament to become the director of the Chanel 2 of the Public Television), but he is also brother-in-law with to the minister of Finance, Carlos Alberto Lopes, and cousin to the Minister of National Defense, Cândido Pereira dos Santos Van-Dúnem. Other members of his family in the government include the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Manuel Francisco da Silva Clemente Junior, who happened to be married to a niece of the president (a daughter of his sister Marta dos Santos). Furthermore, the President's Secretary for Social Affairs, Rosa Escórcio Pacavira de Matos, is a niece of Marta dos Santos's husband. The Vice-President of the MPLA, Roberto de Almeida, has his own relatives in government. One of his nephews, Adão Correia de Almeida, is the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, overseeing the Institutional and Electoral Branch. The former Secretary General of MPLA, João Lourenço, is married to the Minister of Planning, Ana Afonso Dias Lourenço. Another member of the Bureau Politico of MPLA, general António Ndalu, is linked to Maria de Fátima Monteiro Jardim, Ministry of Fishing, who is his sister-in-law, on his wife's side. Another general, the principal aid of the President of the Republic, Manuel Vieira Dias "Kopelipa," is related to the Minister of Health, José Vieira Dias Van-Dúnem, and the Presidency's Secretary for Local Affairs, André Rodrigues Mingas Junior. The Chief of Staff, Nito Teixeira, is married to the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Maria de Cândida Pereira Teixeira. The Governor of the Province of Lunda-Sul, Cândida Narciso is married to the Municipal Administrator of the largest municipality, Sambizanga. Another presidential aid, Aldemiro Vaz da Conceição, is brother of Gustavo da Conceição, a parliament member for MPLA, and they have another brother who is the Angolan Embassy's Military Attaché in Portugal, Fernando Vaz da Conceição. Besides the dos Santos, the Van-Dúnem, the Vaz da Conceição,[427] a few other families are also represented, such as the Nelumbas, for instance. They have not only Agostinho Nelumba, Deputy Minister of Defense for Management and Finance, who is the brother of a MPLA central committee member, José Nelumba, in turn married to Carolina Cerqueira, the Minister for Social Communication, and niece of the Archbishop Alexandre do Nascimento. Both, Agostinho and José are brothers of the ex-CEO of the National Company of Electricity (EDEL), Eduardo Nelumba, who is also a member of the MPLA's Central Committee. They are relatives of Maria Nelumba, vice-president of FESA (José Eduardo dos Santos Foundation), who is married to Eduardo Nelumba, who is also a senior official in the Ministry of Fishing.

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[426] Marques, *MPLA LTD*.

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[427] Family to which I am related on my mother's side.

These officials of the state are also involved, or have members of their families involved in the country's different economic ventures. In this way, family has functioned as the linkage between the public and the private, between the state and society. The resources of the state pass along the channel controlled by those with access to the means, a means that is ensured by access to particular names. For such an endeavor, alliances have to be made. For the most parts, as Melo notes, family settings, such as the traditional Saturday late lunches are the occasion when those exchanges take place. Or, as Melo points out, it is at marriages and funerals, that "Angolans do the real politics."[428]

Symbolic reproductions

No other family in Angola has claimed nobility more than the Van Dúnems. They are represented by various members in the government, and in the office of the President. In their family trees, there are various doctors, generals, and colonial clerks who occupy the highest office available to Africans. They claim to have their origin not in the nineteenth century creole society, but in the seventeenth century. According to this narrative, the founder of the Van Dúnem Family was a slave-trading Dutchman, part of the army that occupied Angola from 1641 to 1648. As royal concessioners, they were the owners of the land that stands not very far from what is today the airport of Luanda, which was taken by the state to build the neighborhood of Cassequel.[429] Like many other creole families, they fell into disgrace during late colonialism, and only after independence, and particularly since 1992, have they reclaimed their status of quasi-nobility.

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[428] Melo, "Capitalismo Angolano."

[429] Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*. p. 225.

The foundation of the Van Dúnem family is the theme of the novel *Glorious Family*, written by Pepetela. Although it is an historical novel, whose actions take place in the seventeenth century, Pepetela is clearly writing about the Angolan present, since the kind of social relations he describes are unapologetically contemporary. The novel has some Freyrian undertones, as I have already mentioned. It is not a coincidence then that the subtitle of the novel is precisely *in the time of the Flamingos*, according to Freyre, "a phrase the country folks still use in referring to something unusual, extraordinary, marvelous, almost diabolical, a piece of engineering or art which seems to them beyond the technical ability of a Portuguese or a native son".[430] Through this connection, part of the intention of the author is revealed. Pepetela has argued many times that the Dutch occupation of Angola marked the moment when this territory fell under the control of Brazil: not only during the occupation of a part of Brazil by the Dutch (from 1630 to 1654), who occupied Angola to take hold of slave supply, but especially after the liberation of Angola by an army financed and equipped by Portuguese settlers in Brazil.[431] Portugal would only effectively gain control over Angola at the time of Brazil's independence, in 1822, and particularly with the official end of the South Atlantic slave trade, in mid-nineteenth century. Agualusa, Pepetela may have also been moved by the attempt to explain the formation of Angola through Brazilian Luso-tropicalism.

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[430] Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties*, p. 6.
[431] Marcon, interview with Pepetela, Personal Archive.

Any attempt to read Pepetela's *The Glorious Family* univocally may be complicated by the simple gesture of putting this novel in the context of Pepetela's oeuvre. Pepetela – a white descendent of a family with four generations in the country – is the Angolan author whose oeuvre is most associated with the formation of Angola as a nation. He is a practitioner of a kind of demiurgical literature half way between myth-making and nation crafting. A member of the MPLA almost since its foundation, in the early 1960s, Pepetela was then an organic intellectual in the strictest Gramscian's sense: "as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' a not just a simple orator (…); from technique-as-work one proceeds to technique-as-science and to the humanistic conception of history, without which one remains "specialized" and does not become "directive" (specialized and political)", endowed with "organizational and connective" tasks, exercising the functions of social hegemony and political government", mostly, through building hegemony across society.[432] In this guise, Pepetela wrote the first textbook of Angolan history, taught in guerrilla's camps early in the 1960s, when the project was to justify Angola's autonomy. More significantly, Pepetela is also the author of the widely read *As Aventuras de Gunga* [The Adventures of Gunga], that narrates the life of a boy who was killed by Portuguese soldiers for refusing to reveal the location of a guerrilla military camp. The books were part of the educational curriculum for Angolans who attended school in the first years of independence.

In this sense, as Frank Marcon suggests, citing James Clifford, the oeuvre of Pepetela is allegorical, insofar as the "allegorical dimension of a novel is its capacity to convey something else beyond what is written, something like a moral of a narrative, that constitutes itself as a moral in the head of those who read it."[433] The ultimate goal of Pepetela was to narrate the nation itself, or the project of the nation unfolding since independence. Furthermore Pepetela has also served as the Deputy Minister of Education, and his books have benefited from wide dissemination throughout the country via the school system.

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[432] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 12.

In the late 1980s, Pepetela parted ways with the MPLA and his novels became more critical. He is the author of a novel called *Os Predadores* [The Predators], whose plot revolves around the formation of the national bourgeoisie through the schemes that Melo outlined, by the conversion of public assets into private wealth. *The Glorious Family* is part of this intermediary moment when Pepetela is no longer writing the nation, but he is not yet openly criticizing what the national project has become. Although *The Glorious Family* is assumed to be a satire of the Van Dunéms, and their pretensions to quasi-nobility, it is nonetheless allegorical. If on the one hand Pepetela is deconstructing the myth of the Van Dúnem family's direct descendant from Dutch occupiers – suggesting that Van Dúnem descendants may have inherited the name, since it was the practice that slaves took the names of their masters – he is also invested in working on a structural template of the Angolan family. In this sense, the relevance of the novel for this chapter's argument is to be found in the moments when it fails to be historical. For instance, Pepetela credits the Van Dums (the name of the family found in the novel) for having invented the *Saturday*, which in Luanda is the day the extended family meets for late lunches that often last late into the night. This is for instance the moment that Melo had in mind when he refers to the family lunches as the occasions at which the country's powerful families discuss business and politics.

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[433] Marcon, *Diálogos Transatlânticos*, p. 20; see also Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory."

The Glorious Family narrates the machinations of a Dutch trader, Baltazar Van Dum, who is an inhabitant of Luanda before the occupation of Angola by the Netherlands, in 1641. The Van Dums are a self-contained, and independent family, a unit of production. Baltazar Van Dum could have built his house within the perimeter of the fortification, which is where white people live. But instead he lives in the outskirts, not very far off from what is now Quinaxixe Square. He is the owner of a dozen slaves who work for him on the small plantation he keeps and in the trade with the natives.

Balthazar keeps an "official wife," Dona Inocência, with whom he has eight children. Those are the children of the Big House, recognized as such. The others, the one not recognized live in the yard with the slaves, even if many of them have a skin color, and facial features that leave few doubts that they count among Van Dum's progeny. For instance, one of those children is Catarina, only a year junior to Nicolau, the Van Dum's eldest son. Catarina helps at home with the domestic chores, like a simple maid, for Dona Inocência wants to constantly show her that "she was inferior in rights to her children, born in the home, and according to every precept of the Catholic Church."[434]

The Van Dums are a unit of production in the sense that every member has to channel his/her effort into working for the family in any capacity. Women help in the house, and men and boys work in the slave business or in agriculture. Freyre was an anthropologist with a keen interest in houses and architecture and his books are full of descriptions of the ways people live. Such is also the case for *The Glorious Family.* The Big house is a vast one-story structure, surrounded by the slave quarters, in a yard with other smaller houses, used as warehouses, and rooms for free slaves, slaves, and animals.

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[434] Pepetela, *A Gloriosa Família*, p. 22.

The businesses Van Dum conducts, selling slaves or crops or other products, depends on the alliances he can forge with government officials. It had been this way with the Portuguese and it is not different with the Dutch. So for Van Dum, there is no separation between family and politics. His business opportunities depend on his offspring marrying key people in the colonial administration. For instance, he offers her daughter Matilde to a French Huguenot military officer saying: "I would like to be your father-in-law, it has been such long time since we have business together."[435] Implicit in this phrasing is the ways in which Van Dum does not distinguish the difference between forming kinship with doing business. Furthermore, Van Dum loses business opportunities and business associates, when one of his sons, Ambrósio, gets romantically involved with Angélica Ricos Olhos, a Brazilian prostitute deported to Luanda for having killed a Dutch military officer. This son's affair poisoned Van Dum's relationship with Cornelius Ouman, the Dutch governor, and the other in-laws.

One day, another of his sons, Rodrigo, approaches Van Dum and confesses that he is deeply in love with a young woman. Rodrigo is the most trusted of his sons, seen as his principal heir, so Van Dum is sad that the marriage of Rodrigo will estrange him from his son. But he changes his mind when he realizes that Cristina, the young woman Rodrigo is in love with, is the daughter of D. Agostinho Corte Real, who is the governor of Island of Luanda (the island that at that time was still part of the powerful Kingdom of

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[435] Ibid., p. 280.

Congo). Van Dum reflects in his monologues on the advantages of such marriage between Rodrigo and Cristina: “so far we have got only slaves from Kimbundu-speaking places, who are undoubtedly the best slaves. But it could be advantageous to spread the business within the Kongo kingdom. With the support of Mani-Luanda, who is an aristocrat of the kingdom, it may be easier to establish this liaison. And even among the Dutch we are going to have more influence. Ultimately, we are going to be kin to the governor of the Island of Luanda.”[436]

So when the families agree on the marriage of their children, and the bride price is set, Van Dum is not surprised to realize that it is even more expensive than he previously thought. He raises the funds for he only has his eyes on the advantages of the marriage, and the prospect of expanding his business to the Kingdom of Congo.[437] After the wedding, Rodrigo leaves his father’s house and settles at the house of his father-in-law, from whom he receives help in starting up a business that consists of salting fish to sell. Once when Van Dum talks to Rodrigo, who briefs him on the progress of his business, and the fact that his father-in-law gave him the initial capital for starting the venture, Van Dum realizes that he can no longer count on Rodrigo to take over his business. He then turns his attention to Diogo, teaching him the nuts and bolts of his business. But the problem is that Diogo is one of the sons “born in the yard and never recognized.”[438] Contrary to dos Santos’ refusal to give his name, Balthazar produces an illocutionary act, by giving his name to his son, by means of which Diogo becomes a legitimate member of his family: “now you use my name, because you’re my son, and you will take care of my farm in my name.”[439]

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[436] Ibid., p. 85.
[437] Ibid., p. 90.
[438] Ibid., p. 113.

The incorporation of Diogo into the Van Dum’s family allows us to see what how ideology fits into the broader discussion of family in Luanda. We have seen, as elaborated by Yurchak, that performance can be successful or unsuccessful, independently of the truth-value of the value made. I have introduced an example of each type of performance outcome in this chapter. In the case of Diogo, in Pepetela’s novel, we have a successful performance, by which Diogo is authorized to use his father’s name and, consequently, take care of Van Dum’s businesses. But President dos Santos’s refusal to recognize his alleged daughter – regardless of whether or not she is a daughter of the president – is not less successful. Since, at stake here is not the case of whether or not dos Santos is the real father, but, the extent to which his words have practical effects. And since dos Santos apparition on the TV to deny the paternity of Josefa, the private press put this topic to rest. My goal in adducing these examples is to demonstrate the ways in which belonging, or being included, in these powerful families may open up opportunities for symbolic production, or, in other words, to the myriads of material and affective advantages that may be available by virtue of being part of such a family. More importantly, I am also gesturing to an understanding of family that takes into consideration some premises of descriptivism in analytical philosophy, regarding the relationship between the name and cluster.[440] Kripke states that the “referent of a name is determined not by a single description but by some cluster of family.”[441] Kripke is referring to a name such as Aristotle. To be identified as Aristotle, the philosopher, a number of descriptions have to be added to his name: that he was born in Greece, that he is the author of *The Politics*, and so on. This scheme may also apply for the formation of those types of families in Luanda. Families are clusters, loosely associated with a name, to which a number of properties may be ascribed. This is, for instance, in the example already given, what allowed Fernandes to conceive of his family as a particular class of Fernandes. In the same way as Aristotle is not any Aristotle, the Fernandes form a groups associated with a particular history and thus a particular place in society.

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[439] Ibid., p. 115.

[440] For a discussion of such a debate, see, for instance, Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*.

[441] Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p. 31.

In this chapter I have attempted to make two related arguments. The first one was to substantiate theoretical thinking from the previous chapter that deals with kinship and the survivalist economy of Roque Santeiro. I described Makassamba's family as a unit of production. My point is that Makassamba's family reproduces a very particular logic found in various subsets of Angolan's kinship. I came to this insight not by comparing Makassamba's family with any other real family briefly alluded to in this chapter. Rather, I have done this by discussing Pepetela's novel, *The Glorious Family.* It is true that Pepetela's novel is more of a satirical take on the Van Dum. But in talking about the emergence of the Van Dum, Pepetela cannot help but providing his readers with a reflective thematization for the explication of the formation of urban kinship. And this tells us a lot about the relationship between ideology and cultural practice. The case here is not that Pepetela is a gifted writer in transforming local histories and percepts into novels. What is more the case, though, is the extent to which novels, whenever may also serve as ideological constructs. This was the case in many socialist countries that emerged from the Russian revolution where the novel was an instrument for the formation of the *new man*. So Pepetela in this novel was on the one hand criticizing the importance some Luandans give to their names, but he could not help but working for the social crystallization of the phenomenon he was criticizing.

My second point concerns the relationship between the state and society. I am arguing that family is the linchpin of *both* institutions. State is no longer the set of bureaucratic apparatuses and rationalities described by Max Weber. But neither is the state the realm of moral economies where subjects and social groups cannot help but to act according to strict cultural repertoires, which privilege the collective over any individual. This is clear for instance in a great deal of the literature on the relationship between kinship and African politics.[442] The State is, in Angola, a domain in symbolic exchange with the family. However, it is not the case that the state has the power to shape the family by employing the techniques of bodies that Foucault found in Victorian England,[443] nor the disciplinary apparatus that a number of scholars, following Foucault, have found in the colonies.[444] Rather it is the other way around. The question here is whether or not the state has been organized around a logic that comes from family relations. We have seen this in the instances in which state power has been undermining the crystallization of the law – in the case of the constitution – whenever it collides with the particular and private interests of certain classes of individuals and groups. There, the metaphor of family underwrites an intensive consolidation of personal power (sovereign power, if you will), which nonetheless depends on the state for its actualization, and which works by excluding others who are also claimants to paternal authority in other domains. One might say that the state lets dos Santos be a father unlike any other. I will have more to say about these issues in the next chapter when I talk about the relationship between the state and society from the point of view of party politics.

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[443] See, for instance, *The History of Sexuality.*

[444] See, for instance, Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF INFORMALITY

“The Government is the people’s father.”[445]

Brigadeiro MataFrakuzz

In his seminal article “The Aesthetics of Vulgarity,” Achille Mbembe argues that politics in many parts of Africa straddles various domains that Western categories of knowledge tend to ascribe to different spheres of human action. He uses Mikhail Bakhtin’s work on popular expressions and carnival to conceive of the ways in which those elements of the obscene and grotesque “located in ‘non-official’ cultures” are, “in fact, intrinsic to all systems of domination” in the postcolony. [446] Mbembe forcefully argues that “to account for both the mind-set and the effectiveness of postcolonial relations of power, we need to go beyond the binary categories used in standard interpretations of domination, such as resistance vs. passivity, autonomy vs. subjugation, state vs. civil society, hegemony vs. counter-hegemony, totalization vs. detotalization.” Instead Mbembe suggests that we look at “legitimation and hegemony (*recherche hegémonique*) in the form of a fetish.” By this inversion, Mbembe posits the vulgar, the macabre, and the grotesque as the main signs by which politics in many African locations should be perceived.

I find Mbembe’s suggestion thought-provoking and I believe that very few people working in Africa would have difficulties in finding ethnographic material to support

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[445] From the song, *Cuka*.

[446] Mbembe, “Aesthetics of Vulgarity,” p. 102.

Mbembe's stances on the nature of politics there. Mbembe is right, for instance, when he says that to understand the regime of conviviality between rulers and ruled we should pay more attention to the "symbols" and "constellations of ideas" that give sense to the realms of politics.[447] He mentions, for instance, how verbal extravagances turn silliness into nobility and majesty.[448] In this chapter, I am not concerned with validating Mbembe's insightful suggestions. My preoccupation is rather with the analysis of the material conditions and the symbolic or concrete infrastructures by means of which the circulation of these "symbols" and "constellations of ideas" take place.

I have shown throughout this dissertation that for a great number of Angolans living in Luanda the present is always an unfulfilled utopia. Or, to put it differently, modernity is only attainable through a promise that never fulfills itself.[449] Roque Santeiro, to a great extent, is the embodiment of such a failure. Many thousands of people were forced by circumstance to build their houses on waste dumps. They do not have drinkable water or electricity. Children do not attend school (or, when they do, they have to pay for it) and very few people in those locations have ever been attended to by a medical doctor. So, here, in terms of the relationship between the state and society, the question then becomes: how to account for such a disjuncture? How to account for the breach of the (social) contract implicit in the relationship between the state and the citizenry, that materializes itself in the disjuncture between the expectations of the

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[447] Ibid, p. 103.
[448] Ibid, p. 117.
[449] I owe this insight to the wonderful book by Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity.*

jouissance of a full citizenship and governance practices that fail to take the people's wellbeing as a priority?[450]

In order to rehearse a provisional answer to this question, we have to change the terms in which we discuss the links between the state and society in many locations of the world. The point here is, going beyond what Chatterjee has suggested,[451] to conceive of the relationship between the state and, not civil society – or the domain of those who are bearers of rights – but the social heterogeneous. Only then will we be better equipped to understand politics in many locations of the Global South. Luanda, for instance, has received millions of Angolans in the past two decades. There were no available jobs for these newcomers, and, even if there were, very few would be able to take them. Very few had any school degree and the large majority neither had any professional skills, nor a reasonable command of the Portuguese language, without which integration in Luanda's society is almost impossible. So, when democracy and elections come, the question from the state's power point of view then becomes: how to mobilize these populations into any arena of political intervention and participation? Or, to put it another way, how to regiment these populations into recognizable categories of political subjecthood?

Let me add that although I do not have a conclusive answer for these questions, they are not rhetorical ones. They were not only acute, but were also the same kind of questions that people were asking themselves, and trying to find an answer to, during the time I did my fieldwork in Roque Santeiro. For elections brought to the fore and in a very dramatic way the need to solve this conundrum. It was apparent that Roque Santeiro provided no dignified way for people to make a living. Nonetheless, for a significant part of the population, Roque Santeiro was the only way through which ends could be met. And this problem had to be weighed by party members in their calculations to move the market. For the political strategists of the ruling party the question was how to enact the unpopular measure of moving the market without alienating the population and loosing their vote on the Election Day.

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[450] And this is a breach of the social contract even in the context of the Angolan Constitution, whose article 86 says: "every citizen has the right to housing and quality of life." See, Diário da República, sexta-feira, 5 de Fevereiro 2010, Iª Série, n.º 23, p. 155.
[451] This point was already discussed in the introduction to this dissertation.

Furthermore, elections brought another dynamic that is more relevant for the sake of this chapter. It brought a new economy in which political support could be exchanged for favors. In this way, new types of political agents (party activists) and new forms of political demands came into being. For instance, many people I talked to in the market dismissed the signs that the Roque Santeiro was about to be relocated on account of the ruling party would not dare to challenge its constituency in this way. But the tactics used by these political agents, as we will see, could not be classified in terms of recognizable forms of political activity. Instead of protests, petitions, and other techniques for advancing social causes, some people tried to influence party decisions by using the language of the party and under the conditions of the party. Even though many openly voiced non-compliance with government measures, and went as far as to threaten the government with civil disobedience, many others did not agree with this measure and preferred to negotiate the relocation within the very limited idioms of political interventionism that the party allows. This conviviality between the party and the poor constituency was, in turn, to the great advantage of the former. The anticipation that the relocation of Roque Santeiro could trigger social unrest was the main reason for the successive postponements of the operation. But when the market was finally removed in September 2009, law enforcement agents sent to the place met only minor resistance. Moreover, the removal of the market also coincided with one of the most unpopular measures undertaken by the government elected in the elections of 2008. In September 2008, following an old imposition by the IMF, the government decided to end the historical oil subsidy. In brief, within a week, a significant part of the population lost not only the main city's market, but also had to pay twice as much for the collective transportation fare (the rates jumped from KZ50 to KZ100: from $0.66 to $1.33). The point here is that these measures were enacted with the total acquiescence and compliance of the population.

My larger argument in this chapter is that politics has to become informal in order to address these social worlds. And here, by informal, I do not only mean informal procedures or techniques and repertoires to get by – some of them have already been described. My point is that something has to be found beyond it. There has also to be a consciousness that derives from the informality. In order to develop this argument, I will first of all provide some examples of popular politics, or how the MPLA has worked among the Roque Santeiro's constituencies. Secondly, I will provide a description of the informal infrastructure of the circulation of music. The point is to account for the changes in the field of music production, and to see how these changes have impacted politics. For instance, in the past, given the prices of sound registering, mastering and distribution, the party, through RNA (*Rádio National de Angola* – Angolan National Broadcast) could control the infrastructure for the production and circulation of music. However, in recent years, thanks to the technological changes by which many Luandan youths have come to be able to produce their own music, the party has lost this means of persuasion. However, contrary to what many people would expect, civil society – understood as that which is outside the state – did not emerge out of this process of emancipation. The battleground for winning the population is at the level of the unconscious. To make this point, I will briefly discuss the relationship between irony and the symptom (as defined by Žižek) in the context of politics in Luanda.

The Party in the market

At first sight, Roque Santeiro is not different from other places in the world where life is lived in despair, abjection and lack of hope. Perhaps, the more appropriate metaphor for this space of the market – where hundred of thousand people still live – is the waiting room: a gigantic room for people waiting for a train that will never arrive. Meanwhile, violence is rampant. People kill and are killed for less than nothing. Life in general is abject and hopeless. Interestingly enough, Roque Santeiro was one of the most politicized places in Luanda. During the time I conducted my fieldwork in Luanda, during the electoral campaign for the elections of 2008, the space of the market was the central nerve of politics in the whole country. And this probably has to do with the materiality of the market itself, which should account for the ways in which we discuss the conditions of possibility for civil society in Africa. Not long ago, in an important introduction to the question of civil society in Africa, the Comaroffs denied that such a concept had any critical purchase for understanding politics on the continent. For them, civil society does not say anything about the relationship between the state and society, or whether or not society is against or in favor of the state. However, they insightfully add that, in order to grasp politics in Africa, the intention of the anthropologist should be to "fathom why and how civil society serves as the social imagination, as a cultural construct and an ideological trope, in particular times and places; how those imaginings interact, ever so fruitfully with the logico-philosophical traditions of Western intellectual endeavor."[452] In other words, civil society is not a category of knowledge, or a thing *per se*. However, it can be easily animated by the evocation of a "social imagination," and by the ways in which this social imagination can be put to work to meet particular political ends.

On these grounds one can understand how and in what ways in which Roque Santeiro has become an important arena of politics. Either Roque Santeiro had to be incorporated in the dynamic of party politics or the market would become an important site of resistance or anti-hegemonic power. To make sense of this possibility we have to invert the question of the spaces of formation of civic positions and consensus in the classical literature of civil society. Jürgen Habermas, for instance, recognized that *coffeehouses*, particular houses, and other similar spaces were important sites at which certain debates took place.[453] We have already seen, in Chapter One, the extent to which this is not possible in formal urban Luanda. Colonial cities, especially those in which space had to function as a buffer to preserve class and racial differentiation,[454] such as Luanda, were not endowed with public spaces in which deliberation could take place between members of the society. No one could leave behind their identity upon entering the private public sphere spaces of the restaurants – as required by Habermas's theory of the Public Sphere. Against these private public spaces, the postcolonial African city has truly open spaces, marked by informality. Informal spaces such as markets of Roque Santeiro's sort become crucial vectors through which deliberation took place. Markets in Africa have been hailed as the sites at which to perform such functions since the 1950s, when the contributors to a book on markets in Africa pointed out the extent to which those spaces are instrumental for the circulation of people and information.[455]In a country such as Angola, this is even more the case, by virtue of the breakdown of formal infrastructures and the absence of state-sponsored venues for buy and sell exchange. In Luanda, only a very small portion of the population can read newspapers.[456] The government controls with an iron fist the radio and television. As such, Roque Santeiro was for a number of people one of the few places in the country where they could have access to unfiltered and uncensored information. And the size of the market made this aspect important. More than 6,000 sellers and entrepreneurs frequented the market daily; and more than 20,000 people a day would go there to conduct different kinds of businesses.[457] In this sense, Roque Santeiro functioned also as an amplifier of political messages, which made the market an important political space of its own.

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[452] Comaroff, *Civil Society in Africa*, p. 8.
[453] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.
[454] For an important discussion of this idea using Johannesburg as a case study, see, for instance, Murray, *City of Extremes*.

The unfolding of the function of Roque Santeiro was apparent to me during my fieldwork there. Roque Santeiro was the main national arena for civic, political and even commercial campaigns. Dog Murras, and many other popular singers, have used the market to launch their CDs. One day, during the time of my work in the market, I met NGO activists who had scheduled a meeting with the administrator, Victor Kitecolo, to get authorization to introduce to sellers a new water filter for the prevention of malaria. The next day after I met this team, I went to the market to see them working. The administration had cleared an area in the center of the market where the people of the NGO workers had installed their equipment. On another issue, they had also hired a theater troupe that performed a short play on the dangers of drinking untreated water. Furthermore, the *Conselho Nacional Eleitoral* (CNE - National Council for Elections) also conducted a number of campaigns whose goal was to familiarize sellers and market-goers with the intricacies of the electoral process. And the market was also an important battlefield for political parties.

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[455] Bohannan and Dalton, *Markets in Africa.*
[456] As I noticed in the introduction, in Angola only a daily newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*, is published. Besides *Jornal de Angola*, there is also a half dozen of weekly newspapers with issues that rarely goes beyond the 5,000 per week.
[457] Relatório sobre a Transferência do Roque Santeiro.

There is the assumption, never confirmed, that people on the peripheries of the cities do not support the MPLA. So it is natural that other political parties invest a considerable part of their energies in tapping (or attempting to tap) this source of dissatisfaction. That was, for instance, the idea of the PDA (*Partido Democrático de Angola* – Democratic Party of Angola), at the end of the 1990. This party, according to Makassamba, tried to rally the population against the MPLA ahead of the elections of 1992. Furthermore, Roque Santeiro was also, in the beginning, a challenge to the ruling party. It was, to a great extent, formed by people from the northern provinces, people like Makassamba, who traditionally tend to support other political forces, more ethnically marked, such as UNITA and FNLA. In fact, the party's effort to establish hegemony over the market was less motivated by any central order, and more by the dynamic of the appropriation of politics as a survival mechanism. Ahead of the 2008 elections, the MPLA had defined an increase of its membership to 4 million sympathizers as the goal for the pre-electoral campaign. To meet this end, the party had to rely on a vast number of low-ranking party members, for whom the recruitment of members had become their main occupation.

The need to find a semblance of institutional support – albeit informal – might have been at the core of the administrative changes to the market. By the time the 2008 elections took place, Roque Santeiro was no longer part of the DNMF (*Direcção Nacional de Mercados e Feiras* – National Direction for Markets and Fairs), but it had been integrated into the municipality of Sambizanga (Chapter One). In this sense, Roque Santeiro was no longer administered as a market, but rather as a neighborhood of the city. This was a political gesture that I would only realize when I interviewed José Tavares, the administrator of the municipality of Sambizanga.

After waiting for one month for this interview with José Tavares, he finally agreed. However, when I was invited into this office, I noticed that he was not the only person seated at a large meeting table with more than twelve chairs. The other person in the room, to whom he quickly introduced me, was the First Secretary of the party for the Municipality of Sambizanga. I then realized that that was the materialization of one of the last "orientations"[458] of the party, which was to make coincide in the same person of a given administrative unit the highest representative of the party with the highest holder of political office. For example, the president of the party is also the president of the republic. First Secretaries for the party in the provinces tend to be also the provincial governors. And whenever that did not happen, as was the case of the municipality of Sambizanga, the representative of the party took a seat in the process of decision-making.

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[458] As party ordinances are known among MPLA members.

This intertwinement of local power and political control makes sense if analyzed from the point of view of the ends that it is supposed to accomplish. Given the need to control population, the preoccupation with providing infrastructure, for instance, has become as much a problem for the state, or for the government, as it is for the party. This is not different from many other places in the world. What then may be peculiar in the case of Angola is the ways in which the party seeks to occupy the place of the state. This may help explain the incredible mushrooming of *Comités de Acção* (Action Committees), or the local organization of the ruling party cells. I have visited a number of them in the area of Roque Santeiro. It is worth noting here that a number of these cells were not created under any indication of the party leadership. The expansion of these cells throughout the *musseques* is a very good example of popular politics. That was one of the instances in which party power had been decentralized. Any cardholding party member could seek out a party's provincial secretary, register his or her intention to open an Action Committee, and receive the material necessary for doing so. Moreover, the *Comités de Acção* did not only work in regimental support for the elections. In a number of instances, some *Comités de Acção* took up the functions of local administrations.

For instance, one of the stunts organized by the MPLA ahead of the elections in 2008 was to install electricity in Roque Santeiro, despite the fact that the market and the surrounding neighborhoods were meant to be razed. I followed for a couple of days the work of a team of EDEL (*Empresa de Distribuição de Electricidade* – the Electricity Distribution Company) that was doing the work. With the help of a crane installed in a car, they erected dozens of the poles that would support the cables that would transport power from the substation, located at the perimeter of the market (and a couple of feet from the house of Makassamba), and the sections of Sambizanga municipality that would benefit from this infrastructural provision. It was clear, as I discussed with a number of people watching the work, that the stunt was provisional. The ground of Roque Santeiro is a thin layer of sand, with meters of layers of garbage beneath, and the poles were not being installed at a safe enough depth to resist the first rain. But this was not the point, as could be discerned from the political spectacle that followed the works of the EDEL team, which was always accompanied by a number of party members wearing the party jerseys, and displaying the party's flag. It was an enormous media opportunity.

This brand of informal (if not outright corrupt) politics may have also accounted for how the ruling party succeeded in destroying the market and moving its sellers and entrepreneurs. Key to this might have been, as I have already said, the ways in which the MPLA has succeeded in turning local problems into party ones. I came to this conclusion when Makassamba tried to get involved in the market relocation.

One of the most controversial aspects of Roque Santeiro people's relocation pertains to the numbers. By the time I was doing my field in Roque Santeiro, the market of Panguila, where Roque Santeiro sellers to which about to be moved to, was already in the final stage of its construction. However, Panguila Market could accommodate far fewer people than resided in or worked at Roque Santeiro. As we have already seen earlier, the administration of the market has always recognized a number far bellow the real number of sellers. For a great part of the income for the administrative personnel lay exactly in the difference, for fee extraction purpose, between the declared number and the actual number of market operatives. Besides, Panguila was a finished market, which would not need many entrepreneurs whose work was instrumental for Roque Santeiro functioning. For instance, Panguila had built-in storage space, which means that people such as Makassamba, whose income was totally dependent on the space he rented in his house, would not be given any opportunity to make money in the new market.

So, one day, in the month of July 2008, during a conversation with Makassamba at his place, I mentioned that the people in the market should be able to come up with an approximation of the real number of sellers and entrepreneurs in the market. I was just thinking out loud, since it seemed to me that the relocation of Roque Santeiro was being based on an assessment that was significantly underestimated the market population. I also added that there were methodological techniques that could help us do that, and, although I did not have any expertise in this sort of operation, I could try to help him with that.

So next day, when I stopped at Makassamba's place, I found him uncommonly well dressed. He then asked me to accompany him to a meeting with the members of a *Comité de Acção,* so we could present them with "our idea." In hindsight, I have to say that in trying to sell this idea to the party, Makassamba may have been less motivated to execute it than to make peace with the party, since his relationship with the party was going through a low period. I have also to point out how the involvement of Makassamba in the party speaks of the ways in which the MPLA has succeeded in incorporating Luanda's poorest dwellers. Makassamba had given me his notebook where he was scribbling his thoughts and musing for the year of 2000. And, according to it, back then, he was a devout catholic, with almost no political activity. However, when I met him in 2008, he was not only a card-holding party member – reducing his religious activities to the basics – but he was one of the party's big men in Roque Santeiro. And he knew how to play by the book. For instance, Makassamba was the person who helped me to get permission from the Roque Santeiro administration to conduct my fieldwork there. Once, we went to the administration compound and asked to talk to the administrator. As the security prevented us from entering, Makassamba, incidentally or on purpose, but overtly, dropped his schedule book, showing his party affliation, so that he could exhibit it to the receptionist in the gesture of picking it up. I do not know whether or not this trick works, or whether or not this is a sort of secret code, but the truth is that we were allowed in to the administration compound.

However, by around May 2008, Makassamba was visited by members of a local *Comité de Acção*, who accused him of being a supporter of the opposition party, UNITA, and took with them all the propaganda material that Makassamba was keeping in his house. Makassamba has never told me this story. I heard it from his brother, António, the day in July when he came to visit Makassamba, and I was helping António to fix the roof of Makassamba's house. António told me that those party members did not have any reason to do what they did and their action was undeniably motivated by envy, triggered by the ascending status of Makassamba within the party. And António could be right. This helps explain, for instance, that Makassamba did not look for any *Comités de Acção* in Roque Santeiro to pitch his idea. He took me to this *Comité de Acção*, whose first secretary was known to be close with a number of influent party members in Sambizanga, especially with António Tavares, the administrator of the municipality of Sambizanga.

So Makassamba and I went to the house of this party members in which "second" house (or the house of his second wife) his *Comité de Acção* was to convene. He was shirtless when we arrived, but I soon realized that the meeting was very far from being relaxed. He brought white plastic chairs, he introduced us to the other members of the meeting (other party members, and a member of another party, the PCA - Angolan Communist Party), and introduced the agenda: to vote for a project to be submitted for funding at the highest "levels of the party." When Makassamba was given the opportunity to present his idea for discussion he asked me to explain the project of counting the number of Roque Santeiro sellers. I took the floor and explained what I had in mind and how this project could be executed. When I finished speaking, we were admonished for bringing forth this topic again for consideration. The fact that sellers were about to be moved and not every one was to find a place to work in the new market was a forgone conclusion. The meeting proceeded, and the *Comité de Acção* ended up approving a project on garbage collection to be presented at the level of the provincial administration.

The key lesson to be extracted from this episode is the fact that there was a rough coincidence between the interests of the party and the interests of the people involved. This is true even if we acknowledge that the interests of the party did not suit a number of those people involved in the *Comités de Acção*. A number of those party members had interests in the market, and a number of them had wives and relatives whose income was tied up with the commercial activity performed in Roque Santeiro. To try a preliminary answer to this question one has to think of the link between the ruling party and the population. And only then will we be able to shed some light on the relationship between informality and the materiality for the circulation of the symbols and the constellation of ideas that Mbembe talks about.

The informal networked infrastructure

As I have already stated, to understand the ways in which politics becomes informal, it does not suffice to map out the repertoire by means of which political agents define the terms of their intervention. I have done so in the first section of this chapter. Now, I am going one step further. I will define one of the material conditions in which informality takes place. Only then we can discuss the subliminal property of informality. To make this point clear I will discuss the infrastructure for circulating music in Luanda. I will discuss and compare two very popular musical genres in Luanda, *Kuduro* and *Semba*. However, what interests me here is less the music per se and more what can be done with the evocation of a particular musical style. The point is not only, as McLuhan has famously coined, that the medium is the message, but also that the message is itself the medium.[459] In the context in which I am interested – informal politics in the peripheries of Luanda – it means that the message is less the lyrics but the consciousness that the given style is purposed to represent.

I started to think about this question when one day I took the *candongueiro* from downtown Luanda, where I live, to Roque Santeiro. To my surprise the car was playing a campaign song in favor of the MPLA. I could not take note of the precise lyrics, but I remember that it has to do with calling on the population to vote for the MPLA. Two things called my attention. Firstly, that a *candongueiro* was playing a political song. *Candongueiros* have to cater for a population that is politically heterogeneous, so they tend to be politically neutral, as many Angolans rarely reveal the party they sympathize with, or the party they vote for, unless it is the MPLA. For *candongueiros*, concealing their party preference is even more strategic. Whenever there is a rally, by the MPLA or any other party, dozen of them are hired to transport the population. So the less overt they are about their political membership, the more opportunities they have to make money by working for different political parties. The *candongueiro*, I mentioned above, for instance, could be have been campaigning by virtue of the song it was playing. The car was almost empty, unusual for the time of the day (around 10 a.m.), and the *chamador* (helper) was a grown-up man, who had passed by far the age of the youths who work as *chamadores*.

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[459] McLuhan, *Understanding Media: the extensions of Man*.

The second aspect that called my attention was that the rhythm of the song was not *Kuduro*,[460] which I had heard often during the campaign – infused with outright or disguised political content – but a *Semba*. This style has a very popular rhythm that some scholars and many Angolans deem to have embodied the consciousness of Luanda's peripheries in the late years of colonialism. *Semba* was almost forgotten in the first years of independence, but it was, during the time I did my fieldwork, experiencing a period of revival. By using this song in that context, it seemed to me, the MPLA was engaged in a different kind of political strategy. The ruling party was not only asking the population to vote, but was appealing for votes by evoking a certain mental disposition, a consciousness, or a collective memory. The circulation of this music, and the context of context in which those songs emerged, as I will show, may also be seen as a small part in a very large project, deployed by many repressive and dictatorial regimes, that consisted in presenting itself as being above politics, or apolitical.[461] And it was done through the integration of the informal circuit for production of music into the party's functioning.

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[460] For the Angolan musical style, *Kuduro*, see, for instance, Brown, "Buzz and Rumble: Global Pop Music and Utopian Impulse," *Social Text* 28, no. 1 102 (2010): 125.

Candongueiros are one of the main vectors for the circulation of pirated and informally produced music. The ubiquity of music in *candongueiros* speaks of many Angolans' fondness for dancing rhythms. Nightlife in Luanda is deemed frenetic, since Angolans, especially Luandans, although self-professedly very poor musical players,[462] do tend to excel in dancing. From time to time, there are new dances and styles; some are genuinely new, others are simply variations of other dances, or the mix between indigenous dances and styles, and foreign ones. Not surprisingly, the baptism of a car, or the moment by which a *Toyota Hiace* becomes a *candongueiro*, in the proper sense, is not achieved through a ritual, as is the case in many other places in Africa,[463] but the moment when the car is equipped with an amplifier system. In most cases, the car's speaker is so big that it occupies the entire width of the rear seat. The sound that the car produces is so loud that the whole car vibrates with the beat of the music. Some riders complain, and others, especially the elderly, avoid the noisy cars, but the vast majority of riders only take a *candongueiro* ride if there is music playing, and if they enjoy the music that is playing.

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[461] This is not very different from what Pemberton talks about by which the government party conceives itself as being apolitical, or above the political dispute, turning elections into statements not on the validation of the work, but rather into a festivity. See, Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"*, p. 8.

[462] Which can be ascertained by the fact that none of the Angolan musicians can expect to make as much money in shows as the like of many Africans, such as the Cape Verdian Mayra Andrade, or the Congolese Lokua Kanza, not to mention the Americans of the like of Jay-Z, who is reported to have been paid half a million dollars for a show in Luanda.

[463] Verrips and Meyer, "The World of the Yoruba Taxi Driver"; Lawuyi, "An Interpretive Approach to Vehicle Slogans."

So it is no coincidence that aspiring musicians use the system of *candongueiros* as a platform to launch their careers. In Angola, and even in Luanda, when every year thousands of children do not find their place in the educational system (those who find it rarely finish elementary school), music (or becoming a *kudurista*) is seriously considered one of the easiest paths to upward social mobility. Not that anyone expects to make a living by selling music. But being a famous singer is the best way to get the attention of government party organizers, or concert promoters,[464] and such attention gets the singer half way to being on the roster for concerts with decent *cachets*. Furthermore, the number of famous *kuduristas* who did stints as taxi drivers and *chamadores* is itself the confirmation that success is possible there. The connection between the music world, or the possibility of a musical career, and the *candongueiro* system may hinge on the fact that the latter tends to be used as focus groups for the former.

Putting this system into a wider context, the extent to which the informal infrastructure of circulation of musical content has subverted the formal one, tightly controlled by the government party becomes clear. During late colonialism, the production and circulation of music was a commercial activity with slight or almost no intervention from the colonial state. The *Estado Novo* was a dictatorship, and especially when the anti-colonial war began in 1961, censorship was tightened. Nonetheless, it did not prevent Angolan music from flourishing. The emergence of a robust circuit of Angolan popular music coincided with the ascendance of third world countries to nationhood, which sparked a vivid interest in the production and circulation of those new cultural manifestations.[465] Angolan musicians, then, were in conversation with other genres and styles produced in Africa, such as the music of Congo, a neighboring country that had just become independent. As Marissa Moorman has shown, although the songs sung by this generation of musician did not necessarily have any political content, they were nonetheless political in the sense that they were the harbinger of a national consciousness or "cultural sovereignty" that predated the formation of Angola as a political entity.[466]

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[464] Those figures tend to coincide in the same person, as for example Riquinho, who is not only the leading figure in Angola music scene, but he is also a prominent party members, who, two years ago, came to public and demanded the payment of $1,000,000 that the party was owing him for organizing concerts for the party's electoral campaign of 2008. See, for example, http://morrodamaianga.blogspot.com/2011/02/os-kilapis-nao-pagos-do-mpla-segundo.html.

In this sense, music was an infrastructure of circulation not because of the message that it conveyed. But it constituted the *medium* itself. This music, *semba*, constituted the conduit by which the circulation of constellations of ideas could be possible. And these ideas did not have to be political whatsoever. They espoused a certain way of being, a way of being modern in Africa; a certain disposition for enjoying and consuming cultural products: all of this adds up to a sort of style of life.

This system was shattered with independence. The half million Portuguese and Angolans who left the country in 1975 took with them a substantial part of the know-how necessary to produce the vinyl records that were ubiquitous in the cultural scenes of late colonialism. Furthermore, the de-capitalization of the country, following the guidelines of socialism, deprived the population of money to purchase music. After independence, RNA (Rádio Nacional de Angola – Angolan National Broadcast) became the sole arbiter of the Angolan music. The fact that still today RNA is the only broadcaster in the country authorized to diffuse in A.M. is proof of how important this activity is for power.[467] In the years of one-party rule, RNA recorded musicians and disseminated their music. Later on, with the liberalization of the economy, this circuit became highly corrupted. Radio Disc Jockeys not only started to charge musicians to play their music, but they even opened their own production houses to take advantage of the positions they held at the official broadcast.[468] What has changed, then, with the emergence of *Kuduro* is the formation of a parallel circuit that challenges the centrality of RNA in the determination of Angolan musical taste. This was conceivable only thanks to the vernacularization of the techniques of sound recording, mastering, and reproducing music. If previously, music had to be produced in highly expensive studios, and doctored by competent professionals, today, any Luandan, in the *musseques* of the city, equipped with a rudimentary computer, a microphone and an equalizer, can create the kind of music that circulates in the informal infrastructure.

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[465] For the ways in which the circulation of music in Africa was linked to idea of cosmopolitanism, see, for instance, Waterman, *Juju*; White, "Congolese music and other cosmopolitanisms."
[466] Moorman, *Intonations*, p. 2.

So the music that was born in the suburbs of Luanda beat other styles, such as *Kizomba*, in a process with counter-hegemonic overtones. The *Kuduro*, then, epitomizes the triumph of the *musseque* over the asphalt, in a process, as previously noted, of de-centering the asphalt in favor of the *musseque*. In the beginning, *Kuduro* (meaning hard butt[469]) was a word well-educated Luandans avoided saying. With its frenetic dancing, with steps borrowed from break-dance and its lascivious pelvic and butt moves, the

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[467] This problem can be exemplified by the battle that the Angolan Catholic Church is fighting against the regime, over the authorization of broadcast in A.M. throughout the country. Rádio Ecclésia was founded in 1955. During the socialist regime in Angola the radio was outlawed and the state confiscated a great deal of the property owned by the Catholic Church. With the democratization of the country, the state gave back much of the confiscated property and allowed the Catholic Church to re-open the radio, but only in F.M., and as a local radio to the province of Luanda.

[468] Afonso Quintas, for instance, who is the owner of the label *Made in Angola*.

[469] For a discussion on the emergence of *Kuduro*'s history, see, for example, Moorman, forthcoming.

kuduro first triumphed outside the country before being “officially” adapted in the country after being broadcast by the national radio. *Kuduro*, then, had first to triumph in the West, since it is aggressive music, “echoing like the sound of warfare,”[470] and its acrobatic performances – in videos on Youtube where it is common to see even disabled people dancing – became the metaphor of a country ravaged by a long and violent civil war.[471] Only then, was *kuduro* accepted in the formal circuit and only then could it become trendy in the Angolan mainstream.

Despite the acceptance, the *kuduro* circuit has not changed. The *kuduro* system of production and distribution is still the one I became familiar with during my work in the suburbs of Luanda, particularly with *candongueiros*. One of the recent trends in the activity of *candongueiros* in Luanda, as Carlos Lopes has shown, is the formation of *staff*: “informal organizations of drivers, *chamadores* and *lotadores* whose end is to provide support in case of situations of risk,” such as breakdowns, traffic conflicts, sickness and death.[472] Furthermore, *candongueiros*, since their activity takes places to a great extent outside the law, more often than not need some muscle to regulate affairs between them, such as when it is necessary, for instance, to recover a debt. As the staff also operate in the recreational domain, it is very common that those associations function as support for the launching of careers of their members.

Although Rei Leão, an aspiring *kudurista* was not a member of any staff, he nonetheless depended on his *bosses* (Angolans have adapted the English and Dutch word to designate the owner of a *candongueiros*), Edson and Bari, who were weighing the possibility of funding the production of one of Rei Leão's songs. They followed the recording of the song, in the makeshift studios of DJ Danny and DJ Carcaça, in Boavista. After singing his rhymes over a beat created by the DJs, the song would later be re-mastered with the help of computer software, after which, the DJs, or Edson and Bari, would offer $100 to buy blank CDs. The trick here is that Rei Leão does not have to record a whole album. A single song is enough because it can then be inserted into a 10-hit CD. Then the DJs themselves, Danny or Carcaça, will climb the hill to Roque Santeiro to start to work on the distribution of the CD. Only a small fraction of CDs will be sold and the vast majority will circulate in other ways through venues inside and outside the market. Besides the ones given to *candongueiros*, other copies will be distributed to commercial establishments, such as barbershops, clothing and electrical appliances stalls, and so on. The more the song plays, the more interest it generates, as I was told by DJ Carcaça and DJ Danny, and soon new CDs containing the song will be produced in the market, in the stalls equipped with computers to burn music into cell phones. But those new CD's will have to reflect the public taste: the song jumps positions in the chart, until it hopefully becomes number 1. It has been calculated that an investment of KZ200,000 ($2,000) or KZ300,000 ($3,000) is required to turn a song into a success. However, if the "song is really good, it will have a presence on the [asphalt] city's dance floors."[473]

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[470] Brown, p. 140.
[471] Ibid.
[472] Lopes, “Dinâmicas do Associativismo na Economia Informal,” p. 386.

Overall, this is the informal system developed outside formal power which the party-as-government was tapping into. And the process by which this was done is akin to the circulation of *Bandiri* in Nigeria. *Bandiri* is a genre, as described by Larkin, that combines Indian film tunes and words to praise the prophet Muhammad. Larkin draws a substantial part of his argument from a mathematical definition of a set – "the combination of different elements interlinked to form a totality"[474] – to give a persuasive ethnographic account of the extent to which *Bandiri* "can be seen as an epiphenomenon of a historical trajectory that brings certain social sets (Indian film and Hausa praise songs) into articulation in the crucible of Kano."[475] Moreover, Larkin's argument may be pushed even further so as to extend his understanding of informal network in a way that the Indian film tunes are themselves infrastructures within infrastructures carrying the words of *Bandiri*.[476] But this is only possible, either in the case of *Bandiri* in Nigeria as *Semba* in Angola, if we deal with the role that consciousness may play in such formations. There needs to be a structure of anticipation that prepares hearers for a given content. *Semba* is so interwoven in the cultural and political history of the country that people easily connect it with a particular atmosphere, and a particular historical time.

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[473] http://www.platinaline.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1130:saiba-porque-o-kuduro-perde-terreno-para-house-na-%C3%B3tica-de-kelly-stress

As such, although the MPLA has taken advantage of the informal infrastructure set in place by *kuduristas*, the music could not be *Kuduro*, since *Kuduro* does not appeal to any longstanding collective unconscious. Furthermore, by the elections of 2008, Kuduro's songs had lost their counter-hegemonic aura. The MPLA did a great job in paying off *kuduristas* and *rappers*, before and after the campaign, to either sing praise songs for the party, to not join the opposition parties, or simply to not voice political opinions.[477] In this sense, the choice of *Semba* may seem a fresher field to tap into. It was likely based on this idea that the members of the government party who approached DJ Carcaça e DJ Danny invited them to participate in the production of the MPLA's electoral campaign song and required that it be a *Semba*. The song they recorded, which did not win the contest, *Semba de voto no número 10* (Semba for the vote on number 10 – 10 being the position of the MPLA on the electoral ballot) was not very different from the one I heard in the *candongueiros* that day. For the circulation of such a song, it is hard to tell whether or not the MPLA has paid the informal distributors, or if the song went viral following the "natural" steps described above. It is certain, however, that the choice of *Semba* suggested a work of memory that may help explain the "contract" between the party-as-government and the people.

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[474] Larkin, "Degraded images, distorted sounds", p. 94.
[475] Ibid, p. 108.
[476] I own this understanding to what Brian Larkin has argued elsewhere regarding piracy. See, for instance, Larkin, *Signal and Noise;* Larkin, "Degraded images, distorted sounds," 289-314.
[477] Just to give some example, Afroman, MCK, and more recently Phai Grande.

For many Angolans, especially those who came of age in the last years of colonial rule, the evocation of the 1960s and early 1970 brings nostalgia. Economic growth from 1960s to 1973, even if it benefited the settlers to a great degree, nonetheless trickled down allowing for the first time a number of families to send their children to school. The expansion of the job pool and different forms of credit allowed many Africans to find housing in recently constructed urban development, and to buy the electrical appliances that, as signs of modernity, were advertised on the radio and billboards. More importantly, this affluence also turned many Angolans into avid consumers of music, through purchasing and collecting vinyl records and taking an active part in the parties, dancing *matinées*, and other venues of diversion, that animated life in those years. To a great extent the musical genre *Semba* was not only paramount in this atmosphere, but it tends to be recalled nowadays as the quintessence of the nightlife of those years.

Furthermore, the magic of *Semba* has also to do with the same kind of "articulation," through the combination of different elements that Brian Larkin talks about. There has been in the last few years an important movement to salvage the style. A number of compilations of those songs have come out under rubrics such as “golden years” of Angolan music. There is a musical group, Banda *Maravilha*, which in the time of my fieldwork performed every week, at *Cinema Nacional*, some of those successes of *Semba*. And this movement has taken place alongside another important movement of colonial nostalgia, which had its epicenter in Lisbon. The overall impetus of such a movement is to present colonial times in a brighter light than in the socialist years. A number of books were published in which former settlers reminisce about their prosperity and happiness in late colonial Angola. The films, and documentaries, and especially the “Postcards from Angola,” many of them available[478] on Youtube, often have *Semba* as the soundtrack. And this also speaks of the integration of cultures I mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation. The city of Luanda, the pinnacle of modernity brought about by the Portuguese, with its modernist apartments and office buildings, its geometric squares, and its luxuriant parks and gardens, is haunted by songs sung in *Kimbundu*, whose lyrics very few Portuguese but many Luandans could understand.

Although the content that circulated through the infrastructure of *Semba* was seemingly innocuous, and mostly deprived of openly political messages, this genre, as Moorman has argued, brought together a public attuned to the impending independence of the country.[479] Among the vast majority of musicians who were highly politicized, a number of them were sympathizers of the MPLA, which did not yet have a strong presence in the urban centers, fighting a war for the independence in the *maquis*, and in the neighboring countries, such as Congo. The so-called *Carnation Revolution*, in April 1974, in Lisbon, that toppled the dictatorship in Portugal brought about the certainty that the archaic Portuguese colonialism was coming to an end and this expectation radically politicized the *musseque* population. Musicians, as Moorman has shown, were in the vanguard of this movement. Their network, their contacts, and shows, and so on, were used to spreading the message of the MPLA, whose directorate had opened headquarters in Luanda. However, until 1975, when the country became independent, very few musicians had compromised their art in the service of the diffusion of the party's messages.

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[478] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uu7DK9qfMFw&feature=related

[479] Moorman, *Intonations.*

Moorman distinguishes a cultural from a political sovereignty to give an account of Angola's first years of independence from the point of view of the production of culture. The vanguard of Angola's cultural hegemony, at the top of which were these musicians, was precisely that which the MPLA strove to subsume. Most members of the MPLA were natives of Luanda themselves, and this factor helped the population to choose this party among the others, including UNITA and FNLA, whose constituencies were mostly outside the capital: the south for the former; the north for the later. As Mabeko Tali has argued, the MPLA did not play an active part in the re-organization of this liberation movement in the city.[480] Tensions arose over how the party should relate to the masses. The party used a top down model of power, but groups of Luanda organized in "neighborhood committees," action committees, students' and workers' commissions believed power should be held by the masses.[481] The tensions were tragically resolved in May 1977 when the failed coup d'état against the Agostinho Neto-headed government gave the movement the opportunity to engage in political cleansing. According to estimates, as no official record exists, more than thirty thousand people were killed.[482] To a great degree, May 27 was a sort of cultural revolution, by which the ruling party decanted itself from the members who did not share the same vision of the way the country should be ruled, and the events of 1977 had profound consequences for the development of Angolan music. Many musicians, the ones who were key in the acceptance of the party by the masses were victims: some left the country, others were imprisoned and tortured, some were executed.

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[480] Mabeko-Tali, *Dissidências e Poder de Estado*, p. 36.

[481] This is implicit in the way Mabeko Tali discusses the Action Committees and the way their leaders and members espoused the concept of popular power Jean-Michel Mabeko Tali, *Dissidências e Poder de Estado*, p. 6.

That spelled the end of Angolan popular music as it had existed in the late colonial period. The musicians who were spared in the purge had to convert their songs into praises to the party. The collapse of the Angolan recording industry made the RNA the sole producer and distributor of Angolan music. May 27 also killed many instrument players, which partially explains the fact that Angolan music is predominantly electronic. It started in the 1980s, when the keyboard conquered pop music. In Angola, musicians would adopt this instrument to develop a musical style that would become the quintessence of postcolonial Angolan music: *Kizomba*. When, early in the 1990s, *World Music* emerged, and Lusophone musicians such as the Brazilian Caetano Veloso and the Cape Verdian Césaria Évora, became worldwide stars, it was also by virtue of the acoustic sonority of their music, in stark contrast to the dominance of electronic music of the precedent decade. Very few Angolan musicians could take advantage of this wage. Those who did, such as Bonga, Valdemar Bastos, and Paulo Flores, had resources to have their bands predominantly composed by Portuguese, Brazilian and Cape Verdian instrumental players. To a great extent, the mainstream Angolan music kept its electronic nature. The subsequent development of Angolan rhythms, either *Kuduro* or *Semba* may be explained under this perspective: the possibility of making music through the intervention of machines and computers. Curiously, this is exactly the condition of possibility for the re-emergence of *Semba*. Although there are a few bands, and a few musicians who can compose *Sembas*, a great number of the songs in this genre are produced by DJs.

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[482] For descriptions of the tragic events of May 1977, see, for instance, Botelho, *Holocausto Em Angola*; Mateus and Mateus, *Purga em Angola*.

Semba is the rhythm of nostalgia, since it reminds people of those putatively "good times," before the collapse of independence. Some people have vivid recollections of the vibrancy of *musseques* in those years, with parties in the yards and so on. For many Angolans, that was the moment when everything was perfect, there was no civil war, families were together, and the salary a head of the household made was enough to feed the whole family and to send the children to school.[483] For the government party, this was the time of politics in the *musseques*, popular power, even if part of history that is silenced is precisely that this movement was at odds with the party's direction. But the MPLA has always conceived of its power as an alliance with the masses, translated into the ubiquitous slogan: "the MPLA is the people, and the people is the MPLA." Furthermore, the leadership of the MPLA has never doubted that in times of crisis the people ought to take their side. That was the case in 1992, when Savimbi refused the result of the elections. This kicked off ten more years of civil war, starting in Luanda when the MPLA distributed weapons to the *musseques*' population, convinced that they knew who the targets ought to be.[484] Equally, in the elections of 2008, the MPLA distributed money to the *Comités de Acção* in the *musseques*, convinced that those destitute populations knew who they had to praise, and for whom they were to vote.

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[483] See also Moorman, *Intonations.*

[484] For the collapse of the peace process in 1992, see, for instance, Anstee, *Orphans of the Cold War*.

The point I am trying to make here that there is a the relationship between the emergence of a consciousness, identified by many authors as *Angolanidade*, that has also being portrayed as the culture of the *musseques*, and the culture of the anti-colonial resistance.[485] The formation of this particular consciousness may be independent from the nationalist struggle, as many authors have suggested.[486] However, for the project of the MPLA to be vindicated, the party has not only to control the message, but it has also to control the *medium* and the whole infrastructure for the production and circulation of music, message and style. To make this point clear we have first to locate the symptom.

Government is the people's father

I am not trying to argue here that the MPLA by attempting to control the infrastructure for the circulation of messages within society has to be seen as a totalizing force in Luanda, since, for any hegemonic tendency, there are always counter-hegemonic tendencies. Dealing with the counter-hegemonic nature of power does not require that we identify how the actual order of things will be overcome, but it may help us to understand the ways in which politics plays out in the category of the unconscious. Let me illustrate this with an example.

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[485] Shown in many novels by Luandino Vieira, such as *A Vida verdadeira de Domingos Xavier*, adapted into film by Sarah Modoror, under the title Sambizanga. For a review of this film, see, for instance, Sayre, "New film about Angola tells of oppression and determination."

[486] Including Marissa Moorman, *Intonations.*

Early in 2011, when the first protest to oust President José Eduardo dos Santos took place, the rapper Brigadeiro Mata-Frakkuz, who would later become one of the organizers of the demonstration, released the song called *Kuca*. Rhythmically mixing various Luanda's styles, such as *Semba*, *Sungura*, *Kuduro*, the song referred to the state owned beer company, Cuca, the brand that sponsors all MPLA's political rallies. At those events, beer is sold below the market price, which, needless to say, is the main reason why a number of people attend political rallies, given that it takes place in a country where alcohol consumption has become a huge social problem.[487] The song narrates the story of a man, Arlindo Bolota, leader of an orchestra whose musical instruments were made of material related to alcohol: bottles, cans, glasses. The man, the song says, "could pay every instrument, but only made out of Cuca." Bolota and his colleagues would only take the floor and sing after being drunk almost beyond the state of responsiveness. The song continues by revealing a number of paradoxes of Luanda, where beer is cheap, but people don't have milk, food, and health care. After making these complains in public, Arlindo Bolola is killed, presumably at the party orders, and a voice says: "*O governo é pai do povo/Nós aqui estamos em paz/se nos picam a mão no olho/também temos funerais*" (the government is the people's power/we are in peace here/but if people poke us in the eye/we also organize funerals." This voice sounds more like the chorus in a Greek Tragedy that has the function of conveying the norm or the law of the community that people should abide by. The fact that such a resource is used in a song that criticizes power speaks of a forceful component of oral literature in Africa that more often than not has been overlooked in a great deal of writing on the continent.

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[487] For a message of alert on this matter, see, for instance, Vunge, "Os jovens e o consumo de álcool," p. 19.

A common practice in writing on Africa is to glean a number of sentences and dictums and interpret them as if they stand for the truth for a given community.[488] Long ago, Pierre Bourdieu had already criticized anthropologists for confounding the *mot* for the *parole*. For him it was not enough to interpret what people say; he advocates that anthropologists should pay more attention to the fact that sentences are part of more complex combinations or constellations of ideas.[489] In a similar guise, Clifford Geertz takes issue with the ways in which anthropologists tend to take messages for granted by the failure to problematize the processes by which people distinguish a "wink" from a "twitch", or even a wink from a mocking of a wink. By this, Geertz also champions a new political and epistemological attitude for anthropology, since, he argues, "the essential task of interpretive anthropology is not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others, guarding other sheep in other valleys, have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said."[490] Geertz is gesturing here to the many layers a socially mediated reality may have, and to the ways in which a "thick description," which permits the distinction between a wink and a twich may be attained by conveying as many layers as possible. I agree. My point is that the analysis of irony, and other forms of speech, is important in this regard, for such rhetorical strategies, when recognized, allow us to see in a better light the several layers that may compose a given speech. Or, to put it another way, the manner in which the symptom appears in the crack between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic speech.

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[488] Shatzberg, "The metaphors of father and family," p. 1.

[489] Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une Théorie de la Practique.*

[490] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 30.

A sentence such as the "government is the people's father" reveals the modes in which the relationship between the MPLA-government and the people are actualized. As being a form of irony, or a device that turns the message upside down, or inside out, it also classifies as a symptom, in the way this concept was defined by Žižek. Reading Lacan against Freud, Žižek discusses Marx's discovering the symptom in the "commodity-form," a sort of Kantian "transcendental object."[491] As an example, he discusses the double nature of money and how it has a material embodiment, metal, or paper, and an immaterial one, value, that transcends the former. What is particularly relevant for the sake of this argument is the idea that the "Marxian procedure of 'criticism of ideology' is already 'symptomatic': it consists in detecting a point of breakdown *heterogeneous* to a given ideological field and at the same time *necessary* for that field to achieve its closure, its accomplished form."[492] The point here is not to find the symptom as that which will overcome the prevalent constellations of ideas, to narrate. Or how the protests are themselves the negation of the totalizing nature of the MPLA. It is, rather, to see the extent to which there is an unconscious dimension that underlies the political activity – as in the case of the MPLA, the bearer of the anti-colonial nationalist resistance, deploying musical forms that nostalgically recall the colonial era.

Key to this understanding is the manner in which the MPLA has invested so much in the subliminal and the unconscious. In some sense, the MPLA does not operate as a typical party. The goal of the party, to a great extent, is to replace the nation itself. In a way, as I have already said it is as if the party had taken the mantle of *Angolanidade*. To achieve this, power has to be naturalized or subsumed under other practices. The Party's power, then, is not conceived of as a mandate, but, instead, as a style, a memory, a way of being. I have mentioned this earlier in this dissertation when I discussed how the MPLA presented the candidacy of its 32 years incumbent president, as "natural." This naturalness is parallel to the recent affirmation of an historical member of the party, Lopo do Nascimento, for whom, the MPLA is no longer a party, but, rather a "philosophy of life."[493] To buttress this contention, he mentions that his own children, who are not active party members, will always vote for the party whenever there is any election. Nascimento ascribes this order of things to the ways in which party members of his generation have succeeded in passing down the sentiment of party allegiance to the next generation. For Nascimento, the MPLA has become more like a family.[494]

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[491] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology.*

[492] Ibid., p. 21.

Family is family, Luandans will say, no matter what. Family members can be wrong, can even do despicable things, but people should always support them. For the MPLA, it is the same. People should support and vote for the MPLA regardless of how the party governs, whether or not it fulfills its electoral promises, or find ways to curb the levels of corruption and cure the country from the many ills that came from its governance. Moreover, this concept of family that Nascimento is referring to may be a product of a very specific urban formation that I have written about in the previous chapter. And this form of kinship may be the product of the encounter between colonialism, indigenous forms of kinship, and the crystallization of a number of practices put forward by a formerly socialist state. To be part of a family is less to integrate a system of obligations and expectations, the terms in which classical anthropology has defined kinship in Africa, but to be part of a network of distribution and consumption, in which members of a given family can turn their membership in these networks into business opportunities and other kinds of social advantages. If, for a number of people, the name counts, and the family name that someone carries may open doors (*abrir portas*), membership in the party partakes in the same constellation of symbols. To belong to the party also "opens doors."

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[493] A couple of years ago the MPLA congress has decided to slush the name of the party from the acronym is should stand for. In the official document, MPLA is no longer an acronym that stands for Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, but it is a word itself that could be written like this: Mpla.

[494] Lopo do Nascimento in interview to Novo Jornal. See, *Novo Jornal*, "Vitória do MPLA nas eleições é uma questão de percentagem," June 3, 2011, p. 32.

To finish this chapter, a concluding note on power. Power is a relation, as Foucault has famously put it, that does not belong to anyone. It is a relation of forces, a situation that belongs to community as a whole, exceeding every social constellation. So to move the understanding of power from the government to community, in order to understand the nature of power in Angola, we have to focus not only on the messages of power that convey obeisance, and the "commandment,"[495] but also the infrastructure that allows these messages to circulate. For in many cases the infrastructure, or the medium, is the message itself. This is what I have attempted to explore in this chapter. I started off by discussing Mbembe's argument on the nature of power in the postcolony, agreeing with him, especially when he says that we ought to engage with the production of symbols and ideas, on which the exercise of political action rests. However, to engage with the subliminal nature of power we also have to understand the infrastructure through which ideas of power circulate. The discussion on the infrastructure for circulation of music was intended to show this aspect of Angolan politics, with emphasis in the province of Luanda. The larger argument here is the extent to which state (or party) power, to be effective has to naturalize itself, by appropriating categories of consciousness, such as *Angolanidade*. The brief discussion of irony was less to challenge the totalizing nature of MPLA, and more to reveal the arena of the unconscious in which social attitudes and consensus, but especially difference and dissensus are built.

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[495] As conceptualized by Mbembe, see "On Commandment."

CONCLUSION

This dissertation analyzes the recent transformations of Angola's political economy. I hope to have successfully identified a new paradigm in the changing nature of the relationship between the government and the population. The 'social contract' established during the civil war that authorized the suspension of civil rights has now been deployed by the ruling party for the reduction of vast swaths of the population to regimes of political subjectedness. It is not a surprise that this process has taken place in the space between transition from the war to the consolidation of the democratic system, but democracy also enabled the restitution of personalistic power. I have remarked that the end of the war allowed new figures of power to emerge, the most important of which is the concentration of the means of deliberation in the hands of the president of the republic. I agree with Agamben when he adduces that democracy is not necessarily inimical to exception.[496] The instrument that emerged during the informal but never declared state of emergency to better fight the guerrillas is now at the service of the consolidation of a new particular political order.

A more critical literature on democracy in the Global South has made the case for an engagement of this concept (democracy) with the very particular regimes of political culture in place. For instance, scholars such as Mahmood Mamdani and Partha Chatterjee have written on the exclusive character of civil society in those locations. For them, the realm of civil society in the Global South only comprises a minority of the citizenry.[497] In a recent book, Chatterjee makes the case for the political vulnerability of those who are not members of civil society, and who only participate in political society (the domain of the heterogeneous social) by virtue of their power to vote. Put differently, the vote is what allows the masses to be included into the modes of operations of government agencies and political parties, though it does not grant them nor it is accompanied by full political subjectivity. Paul Veyne, commenting on Ancient Greek democracy, said long ago that an important question overlooked by many scholars of Ancient Greek Democracy is the difference between the democratic ideal, or what has been written out, and how it has functioned.[498] This is a question that we should also be cautious of when we discuss democratization in the Global South. For Western liberals, the expansion of democracy into these parts of the world has been explained as a way to free individuals from various sorts of cultural bondage. This is particularly relevant for the African continent where tribal and ethnic allegiance has been depicted as an impediment to democracy. Universal suffrage has been hailed as the means by which old bond can be shucked off. But in practice this is not what has been happening. Studies on the politics of Brazil have shown the transformation of the old system of patronage. The recent monetization of the economy has diluted the old system in which the poor exchanged their votes for protection and services. The fact that politicians now have to "buy votes" has brought about a new economy.[499] Although there are not many studies on this issue in

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[496] Agamben, *State of Exception.*

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[497] For instance, Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; Chatterjee, *The politics of the Governed*.

[498] Paul Veyne, *Les Grecs ont-ils connu la démocratie?*

[499] See, for instance, Goldman, "Uma teoria da democracia: A política do ponto de vista do movimento negro de Ilhéus, Bahia, Brazil"; Villela, "O dinheiro e as suas diversas faces nas eleições municipais em Pernambuco"; Ansell, "Auctioning Patronage in Northeast Brazil, the political value of money in a ritual market."

Africa, money has gained importance in a number of elections throughout the continent.[500] Simmel could have thought that the abstractness of money and exchange could liberate the individual from bondage, but what is going on in most places is simply the re-signification of people in different kinds of bondage. For African scholars such as Nicolas van de Walle, the result of presidentialism and clientelism, which characterizes so many political systems in Africa, is "illiberal democracy."[501] And this phenomenon is particularly acute in Angola.

In the precedeeing chapters, I have sought to describe the modes of re-signification of post-civil war Angola. It is for this reason that I began the dissertation with a description of the city, that had a twofold intent: first, to describe the material conditions in which a great majority of Angolans live; and, second, to depict, through the metaphoric language of decay, the logic implicit in the government's intervention in Luanda. I then moved to describe the visions of the future that are part of the ways in which the city has been re-configured. I introduced the concept of political space to denote the processes by which the government attempts to fashion modalities of land use and land occupancy. My point was that although Angola follows the tenets of neo-liberalism, the driving force that is implicit in the definition of space is more political or illiberal, rather than economic. In order words, the government has politicized the housing system to such a great extent that it has become merely another instrument of political patronage.

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[500] With few rare exceptions. See, for instance, Basedau, Erdmann and Mehler, *Votes, Money and Violence*.
[501] Van de Walle, "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's emerging party systems."

I also argue that this process has far-reaching consequences that go beyond any explanation that urban theory can provide. Since the question is also more political than technical, I examined the Land Law, which created the conditions for a free application of eminent domain. This reading of the space by which the state can water down claims on private land has also found its way into the constitution. To deal with the effects of this transformation, I read this provision alongside the other two most controversial provisions of the constitution, which were approved despite significant protests by other political parties and organizations within civil society. Here, I note the discrepancy between power and political responsibility. Although the president of the republic has the power to define the distribution of space, such as sending his private army (the Military Brigade) into operations of slum clearance, the constitution gives the president of the republic power that places him above competitive politics.

One of the best examples of this transformation is provided by the removal of Roque Santeiro. The market was conceived as a sort of buffer, where the emergence of this environment in the interstices between the legal and illegal, would serve two main priorities. First, many Angolans capitalized on the lax rules and laws of the socialist regime; second, the millions of Angolans coming to Luanda from the countryside were forced by necessity to take part in the informal economy. Talks of the imminent destruction of the market have accompanied it since its first day of existence. For a number of national observers the market served such a large part of Luanda's population and its existence was so tied to powerful interests that any attempt to destroy it would certainly bring unrest. But when in September 2009 the government sent the National Police to remove the market, there was no resistance. My tentative explanation for this occurrence is based on an ethnographic description that shows that the lack of resistance to the removal of the market was achieved through the involvement of low-ranking members of the MPLA in the administration of the market, who had also assumed an important role of intermediation between the central government and the disgruntled vendors. I have argued that the destruction of Roque Santeiro can be understood in the context of the formation of a sort of popular politics, by which the "wretched of the earth" become themselves instruments of their own domination.

For such an autocratic regime to work as exists in Angola, there has to be a certain degree of compliance if not collaboration. To make this point, I tried to look at the intersection between the state and society. To a great extent, this relationship is less institutional, and less mediated by civil society organizations, and more informal. Family relationships are to a great extent the linkage between the state and society, or between rulers and commoners. This is true at the level of actual relations but also at the level of symbolic codes and concept-metaphors. My approach has been to see the ways in which the state has been privatized through an examination of the role that the family has played in contemporary Angola. I emphasize the link between family and informality. Angola is not the only case in which the gains of neo-liberalism have brought family relationships, or family anxieties, into the forefront of the public life.[502] But for the sake of my argument, I tried to avoid patrimonial and neo-patrimonial explanations for this for their heavily reliance on a sort of Hegelian-Maussian theory of recognition and reciprocity that is at odds with my understanding of politics in Africa.[503] Metaphors of the family are used to explain the nature of politics in Africa. My own understanding on this subject is quite different even if I also use family as a mode of explanation. But my concern here with the concept of family is rather functional. First, I make the case that certain ideologies have to be set in place to allow a number of practices to arise. In the cases I am dealing with, I argue that ideology anticipates a certain understanding of families as clusters, or units of production. In contemporary Angola, it is less that "fathers have to feed their sons," and more the case that various members of families enter into common association to maximize their business opportunities. For this to work, the distinction between family and household is blurred, since what is at stake here is a form of selectiveness that puts people together no matter the level of blood relation. Contrary to what Shatzberg and many other says about family in Africa – and the obligation of the powerful to feed their dependent family members – in Angola, what is important, is the right a member of a family has to use a name, and thereby to acquire value. Therefore, there is an affinity between symbols, and particularly the symbolic meaning of names, and ideology.

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[502] Morris, "The mute and the unspeakable: political subjectivity, violent crime, and "the sexual thing" in South Africa.

My intention in this dissertation is not to explain the high levels of informality through the ideology of the family, but rather, to relate the ideology of the family to the privatization of the state. The definition of the state that I have in mind is not the one that is defined by the manuals of political science, or that defines it as the apparatus capable of deploying processes of bureaucratization and rationality, while monopolizing violence.

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[503] Part of what I see as problematic in this theory is the centrality of the gift as a way to explain the reason why rulers and commoners are bound together. Even corruption tends to be explained this way. See, for instance, Sardan, "A Moral economy of corruption in Africa?"

Nor do I understand the state as merely the absence of these capacities that is to a great extent the staple of many studies on Africa. Rather, the state functions in between these two realities, namely, on the one hand, bureaucratization, and, on the other, personalism. The state, then, is merily the logic that governs this system, which in the context of Angola is heavily influenced by the logic of family relations. This characterization is crucial to understanding the relationship between law and informality that underpins my dissertation. In my discussion on the constitution, I have refrained from presenting any judgment of it. My point was not to say whether or not the Angolan constitution was unjust, but to identify in it what kind of social realm it intended to bring about. I follow Max Weber on this particular point. Weber's theory of disenchantment has worked out a new fundament for the ground of morality. For him, law is that which legitimates not only politics, but any particular form such as morality or system of power.[504] Or, as Habermas puts it: "the legitimacy of power monopolized by the modern state consists in the legality of its decisions, in its keeping to legally established procedures, where legality depends in the end of the power of those who can define what counts as legally established procedure."[505]

So when I refer to the informality of the political, I primarily intend to signify the space dictated by the possibility for abstractness between the personal rule and the rule of law. My understanding of the contours of this space derives from my work in Roque Santeiro. Here, by informality, I do not mean a domain totally detached from the formal, where actors' actions are validated by a sort of moral economy.[506] I hope to have made this point clear in my discussion of taxi drivers. Informality in this regard is just an ordinary way of doing things, a space of actions that opens up between the disjunction of two different worlds, allowing subjects to straddle the official and unofficial, the legitimate and the illegitimate, and the morally acceptable and the unacceptable. Writing from this point of view, I was more interested in finding the loopholes between officially recognized and the surreptitious, and to find out the modes of action and repertoires that allow subjects to subvert the law whenever it is necessary.

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[504] Weber, *Economy and Society.*

[505] Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, p. 324.

I hope it is now clear that I am not making the case that the Angolan state operated on rather informal rules. My concern is rather to interrogate the force and the mechanism for the enforcement of the law in particular places. Nor am I saying that Angola is a law-less country. But the domain in which the law operates is rather abstract. On the one hand, there is the process of law-making. But on the other hand, there are very few means by which the law is enforced. My take on this question has been highly influenced by Micai Akech, who, has disagreed with the tenets of neo-patrimonialism on the grounds that imperial presidents in Africa are not figures of lawlessness. In Akech's understanding, it is exactly the other way: it is only because of law, and the fact that leaders can manipulate it, that imperial presidents in Africa stay in power. "Neopatrimonialism in Africa is not merely evidence of the absence or failure of law; it is enabled or facilitated by formal law. Likewise, the African imperial presidency is not epiphenomenal; it is a creature of formal law,"[507] Akech writes. But, a question that

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[506] For a similar discussion on the relationship between morality economy and law, see also, Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience*.
[507] Akech, *Constraining Government Power in Africa*, p. 97.

Akech does not deal with is to what extent a law is formal. Or what by what yardstick the level of informality of a given practice or provision can be measured?

One of the ways in which Akech explains how dictators in Africa cement their formal rule – by informal mechanisms – is through the lag between the law de facto and the existence or non-existence of mechanisms by means of which the law can be applied. Much of the legal code is published without the corresponding provisions of administrative law, which stipulates how those laws should be enforced.[508] An example of this can be found in the recently approved Probity Law in Angola. The Law, which was approved by the National Assembly (Angolan Parliament) in the wake of a discourse made by the President of the Republic on zero tolerance for corruption, stipulates what corruption is and what is not corruption.[509] However, there are no legal mechanisms that allow the law to be applied to every case in which there is a suspicion of wrongdoing. In Angola, the judicial system is not autonomous or apolitical, and the General Attorney, according to the law that regulates his action, depends on the authorization of the president to take any legal action.[510] In many cases, the will of the president of the republic is the law itself. For instance, the governor of Luanda, José Maria dos Santos, was recently dismissed from office on the ground that he tried to take a commission of $25,000,000 on a piece of land sold to an Israeli firm. The president of the republic considered that José Maria dos Santos should not be persecuted on the ground that "loosing his job was punishment enough."[511]

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[508] Ibid.

[509] Law no 3/10, of 03/29/2010.

[510] Law no 5/90, of May 1990.

[511] Costa, "José Maria Demitido."

In brief, an underlying point that my dissertation grapples with is the relationship between law and the reality it produces. My inclination is to argue that regimes of informality do not necessarily derive from lawlessness. On the contrary, those realities I have described are highly regularized. But what is important to note is that the law – the written text – is merely used as a fetish manipulated by those in position of power, so as to deal with very specific problems. Here I will provide another instance of this process. The Angolan Parliament has recently approved a law against domestic violence. Although domestic violence is already considered crime as typified in the Angolan Penal Code, the utility of having a specific law for a given problem allows this provision to be detached from the whole and be used in a rather "ad hoc" way. In this sense, in a context in which the judiciary is weak, and, where the judiciary cannot enforce the law independently from the political establishment, the law sometimes unevenly allows for organizations such as OMA (the women's branch of the MPLA) to mobilize resources so as to punish wrongdoers, by the use of "ad hoc" means, more often than not without the recourse to judicial institutions.

In this context, informality is that space that opens up between the ad hoc interpretation of the law and its enforcement. In this sense, it reproduces the same kind of problems that I noticed when I discussed the formation of Roque Santeiro. In a context of prices pre-determined by the government, the market was the product of the difference between the official price and the black market's price. Roque Santeiro only came into being as the materialization of an informal life in between the official and the unofficial price. Concomitantly, the social world that I have attempted to describe in this dissertation is the life between law and its application. As the enforcement of the law in the Angolan context is almost arbitrary, and depends to a great extent on the will of those who hold political power, there is a vast space that exists between law and punishment that most Angolans inhabit and try to find there a sense of normality.

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