

**Post-war state-led development at work in Angola.  
The Zango housing project in Luanda as a case study**

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Social Sciences, at Stellenbosch University

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## **Declaration**

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a case study of the Zango social housing project in Luanda, the capital of the southern African state of Angola. Through an examination of the Zango project, which was born on the cusp of peace after nearly 30 years of civil war in 2002, I provide insight into the nature, workings and possible outcomes of post-war state-led development in Angola under non-democratic conditions.

I do so by analyzing how the Angolan state ‘sees’ and does development, as well as how this development works. Empirically, this thesis argues that post-war state-led development is controlled by the Angolan presidency and financed and managed through extra-governmental arrangements. This both enables as well as limits state-led development as it allows for the maintenance of a gap between a ‘parallel’ and the formal state of Angola. In this process, local governments and citizens are largely side-lined as development actors. Yet, through an analysis of local governance and housing allocation arrangements in Zango, I show that the formal Angolan state is no empty shell and that its officials and those they engage with may operate in ways that take ownership of development directed from above.

Theoretically, this thesis then argues for a research approach to the African state and state-led development that is empirically grounded.

## Opsomming

Hierdie tesis is 'n gevallestudie van die Zango sosiale behuisingsprojek in Luanda, die hoofstad van die Suider-Afrikaanse staat van Angola. Ek poog om insig te gee in die aard, aktiwiteite en moontlike resultate van na-oologse staatsgeïnisieerde ontwikkeling in Angola onder nie-demokratiese toestande deur 'n ontleding van die behuisingsprojek wat in 2002, met die aanbreek van vrede na die 30 jaar burgeroorlog, aangevang het.

Dit word gedoen deur 'n analise van hoe die Angolese staat ontwikkeling 'sien' en onderneem, sowel as hoe ontwikkeling ontplooi. Hierdie tesis redeneer dat empiries staatsgeleide ontwikkeling na die oorlog beheer word deur die Angolese Presidensie en gefinansier en bestuur word deur buite-staatsinstellings. Dit fasiliteer sowel as beperk ontwikkeling omdat dit 'n gaping tussen 'n 'parallele' en die formele Angolese staat handhaaf. Hierdie proses sluit beide plaaslike regering en burgers grootliks as ontwikkelingsakteurs uit. Deur middel van 'n ontleding van die plaaslike bestuur en die toekenning van wooneenhede in Zango, toon ek aan dat die formele staat tog nie 'n lëe dop is nie en dat amptenare en ander betrokkenes eienaarskap van ontwikkeling gerig van bo kan neem.

Dus, teoreties, word aanspraak gemaak vir 'n benadering tot die staat en staatsgeïnisieerde ontwikkeling in Afrika wat empiries gefundeer is.

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Over the past three years, it has been great to note that there is a growing research interest in Angola, which allowed me to present parts of my work at the following events: the conference on 'The study of Angola: towards a new research agenda' from 1-2 July 2011 at Oxford University in the United Kingdom; the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS) from 18-24 June in Cortona, Italy; the South African City Studies Workshop on Empirical Studies, Theory and Criticism from 19-20 November 2012 in Johannesburg, South Africa; and the African Studies Association's 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting 'Research frontiers in the study of Africa' from 29 November to 1 December 2012 in Philadelphia, USA.

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate this thesis to my sisters Lisette and Joyce. Nothing will tear us apart.



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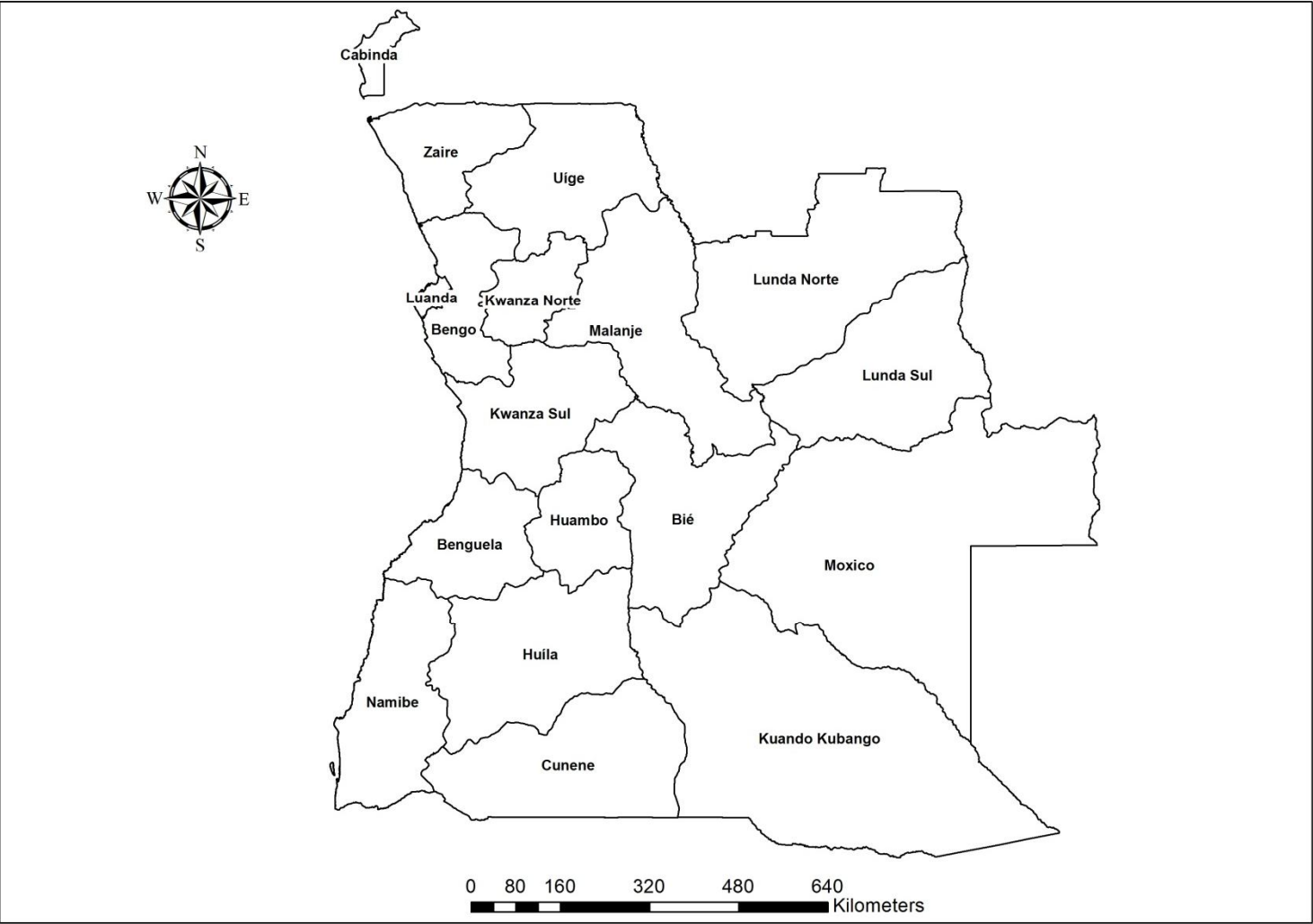
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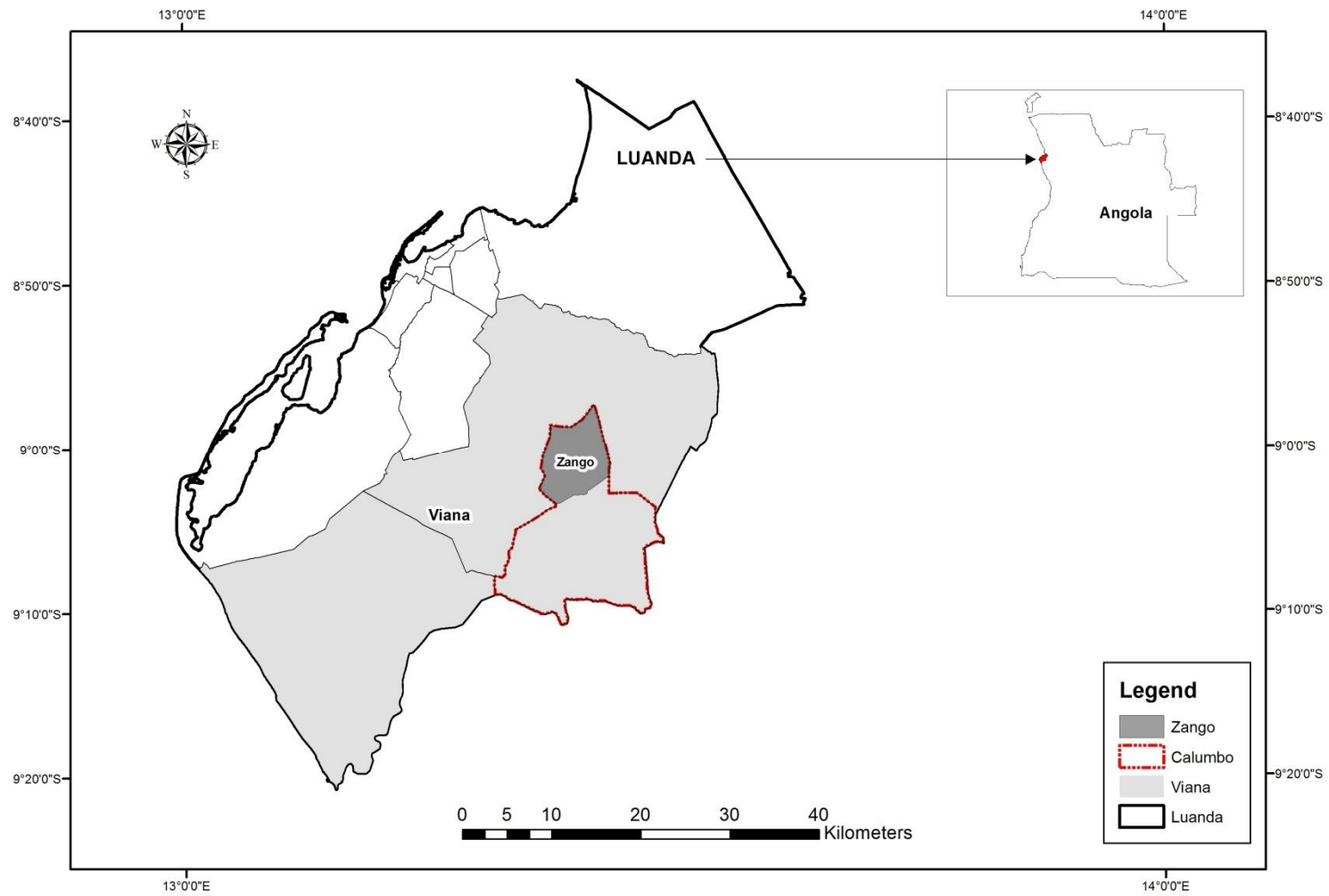
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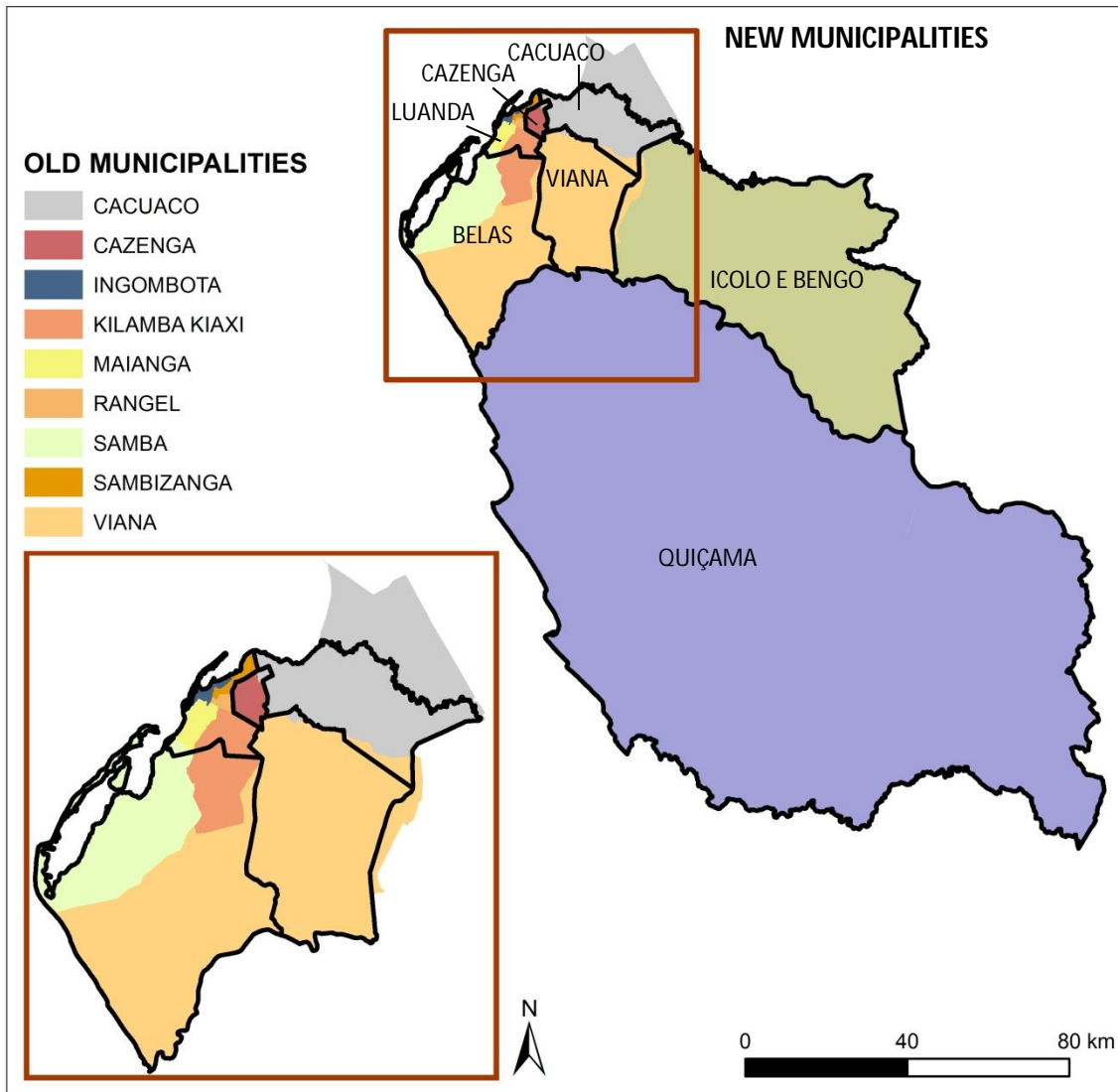
CPB	<i>Comissão Popular do Bairro</i>	Popular Committee of the <i>Bairro</i>
FESA	<i>Fundação Eduardo dos Santos</i>	Eduardo dos Santos Foundation
FNLA	<i>Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola</i>	National Front for the Liberation of Angola
GOE	<i>Gabinete de Obras Especiais</i>	Office of Special Works
GRN	<i>Gabinete de Reconstrução Nacional</i>	Office for National Reconstruction
GTRUCS	<i>Gabinete Técnico de Reversão Urbana do Cazenga e Sambizanga</i>	Technical Office for the Urban Reconversion of Cazenga and Sambizanga
INH	<i>Instituto Nacional de Habitação</i>	National Housing Institute
IPGUL	<i>Instituto de Planeamento e Gestão Urbana de Luanda</i>	Urban Planning and Management Institute of Luanda
MAT	<i>Ministério da Administração do Território</i>	Ministry for the Administration of the Territory
MINARS	<i>Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social</i>	Ministry of Social Assistance and Reinsertion
MINUC	<i>Ministério de Urbanismo e Construção</i>	Ministry of Urbanism and Construction
MPLA	<i>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola</i>	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
PEH	<i>Programa de Emergência Habitacional</i>	Emergency Housing Programme
(P)PHS	<i>Programa (Provincial) de Habitação Social</i>	(Provincial) Programme for Social Housing
PRP	<i>Programa de Realojamento das Populações</i>	Programme for the Relocation of the People
Sonip	<i>Sonangol Imobiliária</i>	Sonangol Real Estate
UNITA	<i>União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola</i>	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola



**Map 1. Republic of Angola**



**Map 2. Luanda province with location of Zango before the new politico-administrative division 2011**



**Map 3. Luanda province before (left) and after (right) the new politico-administrative division 2011**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This dissertation is a case study of the Zango social housing project in Luanda, the capital of the southern African state of Angola (see map 1). Through an examination of the Zango project, I seek to shed light on the workings of the Angolan state and the ways in which it sees and does development in order to provide insight into the nature, workings and possible outcomes of state-led development under non-democratic conditions.

Whilst most scholars acknowledge that post-war reconstruction in Angola represents a form of state-building by the ruling MPLA government, this process is generally seen as illiberal and of little benefit to the population. In this thesis I seek to interrogate this assumption by focusing on the ‘hows’ of state-led development in post-war Angola. Thus, instead of following the work of Africanist scholars who argue that the workings of the African state make development ‘impossible’, in this thesis I am more concerned with bringing into view the state ‘at work’. In doing so, I intend to show that the formal Angolan state is no empty shell and that its officials and those they engage with may operate in ways that take ownership of development directed from above.

In addition, while I look at the extent to which developmental policies may be effectively implemented by the Angolan state, I do not seek to argue in favour or against the Angolan state as a ‘developmental state’ or for the developmental state as a model for development. Instead, this thesis represents an inductive study in which I use the concept as a tool to deconstruct the workings of the state and state-led development as part of a dynamic and transitional process of state formation, which can take various forms without always being successful.



In the first section of this introduction, I introduce the case of Zango in order to motivate my choice for the project as a case of state-led development. Hereafter, I discuss the bodies of work that I use to theoretically, conceptually and methodologically frame the study of this case. I conclude this introduction by outlining the structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 Introducing the case of Zango**

Zango is a social housing project that is located on a state land reserve covering a total of 90 km<sup>2</sup> some 30 km south east of Luanda's city centre in the municipality of Viana. It lies between the old colonial centre of Viana town, a satellite town designed by the Portuguese because of its proximity to the northern railway line and the road linking the capital to the interior of the country (Afonso da Fonte, 2007: 229), and the administration of the *comuna* of Calumbo, one of Viana's three sub-districts (see map 2). Until the end of the war in Angola in 2002, Zango was largely a rural area, inhabited by subsistence farmers. Currently, it can be considered peri-urban in the sense that it combines rural with urban features (Allen, 2003).

Initially built in order to rehouse a group of evicted families from the area of Boavista, an informal settlement close to the harbour of Luanda where landslides had killed several people after the rains in 2000 and 2001, Zango has expanded over the years to accommodate people from areas in Luanda's inner city that are displaced as a result of urban development interventions carried out in the context of the country's post-war reconstruction programme. Today, it houses an estimated 120.000 to 200.000 people (interviews Luanda, March and May 2012; GoA, 2012).

Physically, Zango consists of about 30.000 single-story housing units that in terms of their construction are similar to the low-cost houses built in post-apartheid South Africa under the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Khan and Thring, 2003). Houses in Zango have been built in batches of 3000 to 4000 semi-detached houses in four phases that geographically expand to the south-east, which are referred to accordingly as Zango 1, 2, 3

and 4. Lined up row after row, quarter after quarter, houses are painted in different colours ranging from green to yellow and from orange to purple as they stretch out for miles along Zango's main road (see figures 1.1-1-4).

**Fig. 1.1 Satellite image of Zango and Fig. 1.2; 1.3; 1.4 Houses in Zango**



Source: Development Workshop (fig. 1.1) / author (fig. 1.2-1-4)

Upon the start of the project, it was widely criticized by domestic as well as international observers as an exclusionary project aimed at separating the poor from the well-off. The first relocations to the project in 2001 were compared to apartheid practices and Zango's houses to those built by the Portuguese for the 'indigenous' population (see eg. Hodges, 2004; Pearce,

2005). Currently, Zango represents one of the fastest growing areas in the city with other state housing projects and private development mushrooming around it. Luanda itself is estimated to house about 7 million people (about one third of the total population) and average urban growth in Luanda has been estimated to be higher (5.79%) than in any other Southern African city between 2005 and 2010 (UN-Habitat, 2008: 137).

Apart from houses, Zango currently counts a mixture of public and private services such as schools and health centres, and a growing number of private businesses and establishments, often set up in houses of the project or built in vacant spaces scattered inside the project, ranging from shops to beauty salons, pharmacies to banks and bakeries to churches, no longer forcing residents to constantly make their way to Luanda city as had been the case in the first years after the project's creation (Odebrecht, 2011; GoA, 2012).

Zango first caught my attention in 2010, after having participated in a study on informal land markets in Luanda when I was still working as a free-lance researcher and consultant, prior to commencing my doctoral studies. This study had introduced me to another social housing project, called Panguila, located north east of the city's town centre and inhabited by about 10,000 people at the time of the study. I had never known much about social housing projects in Luanda, as they were located in areas in the city's periphery which only in recent years had become more easily reachable through new roads that were being built as part of the national reconstruction programme. Finding out that Zango housed, from what I could gather at the time, an estimated 80,000 people and that it had started to be built in the transition towards the end of the war in 2002 sparked my curiosity.

At the time, there was much talk about state-led housing development in Angola, with the construction of one million houses having been announced in the run-up to the first post-war elections in 2008 and the adoption of a new constitution in 2010, which consecrated the universal right to housing and quality of life. However, many of the announced projects in the metropolitan area of Luanda as well as in other parts of the country were still under

construction and little to no research was available on those that had been completed or inhabited so far. This made Zango seem like an interesting case study for investigating state-led housing development under the banner of national reconstruction. What motivated this type of development, how did it work and what kind of impact was it having on people's lives?

The project equally interested me for the controversy its creation had sparked both inside and outside the country. As I read up about the project in reports of the national and international media and organizations, I found out that the first residents of Zango had been forcibly relocated to the project and that many people had been put up in tents in the area before effectively being rehoused, a practice that had continued ever since (HRW, 2007; Croese, 2010).

Yet, the state's actions had not gone uncontested. Residents of Boavista, who had been the first ones to be relocated to Zango, had set up a committee in a bid to defend themselves against impending evictions (AI, 2003). Such an initiative contradicted what I knew about the peri-urban areas of Luanda, where research carried out in the period prior to the evictions had pointed to the weakness of solidarity and the capacity for collective action among communities (Robson, 2001; Robson and Roque, 2001). Indeed, most of the literature on Angola paints a bleak picture of prospects for local collective action. Despite the government's post-war liberal discourse, in terms of its political rights and civil liberties Angola is considered to be 'not free'.<sup>1</sup>

An important explanation for the contradiction between the discourse and practice of rights and liberties is that in Angola the President, José Eduardo dos Santos, and those connected to him exert discretionary power over a big share of the state's revenues which are generated in off-shore oil fields. This means that they are not dependent on the state and citizens for their

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance the ranking by Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/angola> [last accessed 4 August 2013].

survival, allowing them, as one observer has remarked, to ‘run the country like their personal ATM’ (Redvers, 2013).

With a production of almost 2 million barrels per day, Angola is the second largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria, with oil representing more than 60% of Angola’s GDP, 97% of exports and around 80% of government revenue (EIU, 2012). Yet, according to observers oil is not used to develop the country but to ‘lubricate a system of patronage that can successfully buy off or co-opt potential rivals and opponents at an order of magnitude that has few parallels elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa’ (Hodges, 2007: 175). This has allowed the ruling party MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* or Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) to maintain its rule since independence. Post-war reconstruction is then considered to be ‘illiberal’ and ‘managed by local elites in defiance of liberal peace precepts regarding civil liberties, the rule of law, the expansion of economic freedoms and poverty alleviation, with a view to constructing a hegemonic order and an elite stranglehold over the political economy’ (Soares de Oliveira, 2011: 288).

Thus, the MPLA government’s discourse on transparency, decentralisation and participation is therefore largely considered to be a farce, aimed not at strengthening the state but its power over it (Messiant, 2007). As a result, civil society continues to be regarded as weak and democratisation as not more than a lip-serving exercise (Vidal and Pinto de Andrade, 2008; P. C. Roque, 2009). Hence, a second question that interested me was the extent to which state-led development under these conditions was providing ‘space’ for citizen participation that was organically claimed or created from below, such as the committee created by Boavista residents (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> According to Cornwall and Coelho (2007), in democratizing countries spaces for citizen participation may be ‘closed’, ‘invited’, or ‘organically claimed/created’.

In sum, I saw in the case of Zango a possibility to address the tension between common scholarly conceptions of Angola as a failed state which is ruled by a predatory elite and the practice of developmental interventions carried out in the post-war period of national reconstruction. The conditions under which state-led development has been pursued by the Angolan state seem indicative of a growing desire amongst authoritarian African governments to emulate the economic success of developmental states in other parts of the world without effectively transitioning into full-fledged democracies. In order to analyze such interventions, this thesis takes the work on developmental states as a conceptual point of departure, as state-led development in Africa is rarely addressed in the established literature which generally approaches development as market-led and/or brought to the continent by foreign donors and organizations. To account for the non-democratic nature of political rule in Angola and the consequences thereof for the nature and workings of state-led development I draw on the literature on new authoritarian states.

### **1.3 State-led development and authoritarianism**

In 2001, an article was published called *Thinking about developmental states in Africa*, in which the Malawian scholar Thandika Mkandawire argued against the ‘impossibility thesis’ that was marking the literature on African states. According to Mkandawire (2001: 289) ‘one remarkable feature of the discourse on the state and development in Africa is the disjuncture between an analytical tradition that insists on the impossibility of developmental states in Africa and a prescriptive literature that presupposes the possibility of their existence’. This had led to a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which efforts to promote neo-liberal development in Africa resulted in measures that so maladjusted African states that they ended up providing proof of the impossibility argument that produced them in the first place.

From Mkandawire's point of view, Africa's 'maladjustment' has obscured a critical examination of the developmental experience of African states in the pre-adjustment era and the subsequent replication of this experience by emerging developmental states such as Botswana and Mauritius, as well as the experience of successful developmental states elsewhere (2001: 309-310). In a more recent article, Mkandawire (2010: 74-77) reaffirms his call to 'bring the developmental state back in' by pointing to the demise of the Washington consensus, the presence of vast natural resources in African countries and the emergence of new economic powers as conditions that will enable the construction of more developmental states in Africa.

Indeed, over the past years an alternative model of development seems to have emerged, embodied by what observers have called the 'Beijing consensus' (Ramo, 2004; Halper, 2010). As a model that favors state-led over market-led development and economic growth over democracy, it has challenged what was thought to be 'the end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992), or the victory of Western liberal democracy after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. China's willingness to assist other countries in the replication of its development model by financing public investment projects such as infrastructures in return for natural resources and political support has contributed to the spread of the Beijing consensus over the rest of the world and Africa in particular (Alden *et. al.* 2008).

On the other hand, a democratic version of the developmental state has emerged, of which emerging powers such as India and Brazil can be seen as possible examples. These states have also been actively strengthening their ties to African countries, but do so as social democracies.

The rise of these emerging powers must also be seen in a context of increasing competition for natural resources, which has resulted in a ‘new scramble for Africa’ (Carmody, 2011). This has lessened the emphasis on ‘good governance’ as a condition for aid, trade and investment by China and democratic powers such as India and Brazil alike. While some observers see this scramble as a new form of colonialism (Lee, 2006; Southall and Melber, 2009), others, like Mkandawire (2010: 76-77), suggest that Africa’s natural resources and new economic partners may have opened up new choices for African development by reinforcing the agency of African states (see also Mohan and Power, 2008; Mohan and Lampert, 2013; and Corkin, 2013 on Angola).

Indeed, even international financial institutions such as the World Bank have recently started to argue that ‘subsoil natural resource endowments and their associated rents’ – long seen as a curse – ‘if well harnessed and managed – can be a boon to developing countries’ (Barma *et al.*, 2012: 1). Scholars of non-Western development add that natural resources have the potential to turn countries into ‘resource developmental states’, as long as they ‘reinvest the gains from natural capital extraction into their own society and citizen’s welfare rather than giving control over the resources to foreigners or feuding over the gains’ (Joshi, 2012: 359).

Over the past decade, Africa’s economies have grown faster than those of almost any other region of the world (The Economist, 2011). With trade and investment levels on the rise and inflation and poverty levels going down, the World Bank recently concluded that ‘Africa could be on the brink of an economic take-off, much like China was 30 years ago, and India 20 years ago’ (World Bank, 2011: 4). In its economic report on Africa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) recommended that

Based on the failure of earlier approaches to development in Africa—state-led and



market-driven— [...] African countries [should] adopt a developmental state approach that uses the market as an instrument rather than a sole mechanism for fostering long-term investment, rapid and sustained economic growth, equity and social development. It suggests these recommendations in the context of an inclusive, transparent and comprehensive national development framework. The developmental state approach as the core of the development strategy will enable Africa to transform its economies and to achieve its primary economic and social development goals (ECA, 2011: xiii).

The case of Angola forms an illustration of how this approach is implemented in practice. After over four decades of civil strife, starting in 1961 with the liberation struggle that turned into a civil war after independence in 1975, peace was finally achieved in 2002. By that time, the war had resulted in millions of internally displaced people, large mined areas and the destruction and degradation of most of the country's physical, economic and social infrastructure and services. According to international agencies Angola was facing 'a serious humanitarian crisis' and on top of that it was also heavily indebted (IMF, 2003). Yet, contrary to common practice, post-war reconstruction in Angola did not end up being financed and led by the West.

Instead, and initially more forcibly than the Angolan government is willing to admit<sup>3</sup>, national reconstruction has been largely fueled by oil-backed credit lines given by emerging powers such as China and Brazil. With double-digit economic growth between 2004 and 2008, Angola has become one of Africa's fastest growing economies, which allowed it to settle most of its debts with the Paris Club in 2007 (Vines and Campos, 2008: 22).

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<sup>3</sup> The Angolan government's official explanation as proposed most recently in the first television interview given by Angolan President dos Santos in 22 years is that the West was reluctant to finance Angola because it was seen as having sufficient means of its own to finance reconstruction, while it is generally known that the Angolan government was reluctant to abide by the conditions imposed by the West regarding the transparency in the management of any potential funding.

In rebuilding the country, the MPLA government has employed its own mix of economic and social development policies, combining socialist Brazilian inspired pro-poor policies<sup>4</sup> with Chinese market pragmatism. The Angolan economy is therefore officially referred to as a ‘social market economy’ (MPLA, 2012). Oil continues to form the backbone of the economy, but efforts are made to ‘angolanize’ the oil sector on the one hand (Ovadia, 2013), while using oil revenues to stimulate the rest of the economy and help reduce the dependence on oil revenues on the other.<sup>5</sup>

However, so far, the most important aspect of national reconstruction has consisted of the construction and rehabilitation of public infrastructures and services. State-led housing development has become an important pillar in this regard, culminating in a government pledge in 2008 to build one million houses in the country.

Thus, there is consensus that the end of the war in Angola has heralded a period of ‘new-fangled statist activism’, coupled with the resurrection of ‘a vocabulary of state-building and social concern for average Angolans’ (Soares de Oliveira, 2011: 288; 296), which stands in stark contrast to the social neglect displayed in preceding years. Yet, this statist activism has also been accompanied by a reinforcement of the ruling party’s hegemonic power. Since the first multiparty elections in 1992, the MPLA has always enjoyed the incumbent advantage of controlling the conditions under which elections have taken place, which has allowed it to establish a strong hold over the state (Messiant, 1992; Schubert, 2010).<sup>6</sup>

The case of Angola then suggests that while a changing geo-political context may have given African countries more leeway in their choices for development, it also seems to be allowing

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<sup>4</sup> In the same interview, dos Santos said that his example of a statesman is ‘Lula’, the former president of Brazil. The interview can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KewJNFyuE2k> [last accessed 29 July 2013].

<sup>5</sup> For instance through agricultural subsidies and the recent creation of a US\$5 billion sovereign wealth fund, the second biggest of Sub-Saharan Africa after that of Botswana (EIU, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Doubts about the free and fairness of the last two elections in 2008 and 2012 have not been subject to widespread denouncements, confirming the shift from ‘good governance’ to economic growth (‘development first, democracy later’) that marks Angola’s contemporary international relations.

some governments to consolidate their power, halting the ‘third wave of democracy’ (Huntington, 1991) that swept over Africa in the 1990s. Liberal multi-party democracy has now formally been established as the dominant political system and seen as the only legitimate way to exercise power and promote development (ECA, 2011). However, in practice about half of Africa’s current democracies have not transitioned into full-fledged democracies and are now considered to be ‘electoral authoritarian regimes’ (Roessler and Howard, 2009: 116-117). Such regimes cannot be compared with Africa’s repressive ‘big man’ dictatorships of the 1980s and 1990s. Instead, they combine a formal democratic framework with a certain degree of authoritarian practice, often resulting in one-party dominance (Doorenspleet and Nijzink, 2013).

An emergent literature has started to refer to the seemingly unlikely combination of ‘elections without democracy’<sup>7</sup> as ‘new authoritarianism’. According to Schedler (2006: 5-6), this literature recognizes new forms of authoritarian rule as what they are: ‘neither democratic nor democratizing but plainly authoritarian, albeit in ways that depart from the forms of authoritarian rule as we know it’.

In the rapidly expanding literature on ‘new authoritarianism’ (see for a review eg. Morse, 2012), electoral authoritarian regimes are usually compared to *closed* authoritarian regimes, which represent regimes in which there are no multicandidate national elections, such as China, while *electoral* authoritarian regimes, depending on the degree of contestation that is permitted by the incumbent, can vary between *hegemonic* and *competitive* authoritarianism regimes. In hegemonic authoritarian regimes, the incumbent ensures that there is never any uncertainty in the outcome of national elections; the incumbent nearly always prevails. Competitive authoritarian systems, on the other hand, permit a substantial higher degree of

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<sup>7</sup> This was the title of a special issue of the *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2) 2002, which was subsequently reprinted in Diamond and Plattner (2009).

contestation, leading to greater uncertainty in the outcome of the elections between the ruling party and the opposition, although the incumbent still uses fraud, repression and other illiberal means to create an uneven playing field between government and opposition (Roessler and Howard, 2009: 107-108; see also Levitsky and Way, 2010). About half of the current democracies in Africa are considered to be electoral authoritarian regimes (Roessler and Howard, 2009: 116-117).

This means that many states in Africa, in terms of their institutional landscape, *look* like electoral democracies, with constitutions, elections, parliaments, courts, local governments, subnational legislatures, agencies of accountability, as well as private media, interest groups and civic associations. Yet, in practice these institutions may not operate under the kind of political freedom and legal security that can be found in liberal electoral democracies (Schedler, 2006: 12-15). Scholars have therefore warned against the uncritical ‘celebratory rhetoric’ around African developmental states, the most commonly cited case being Botswana (see eg. Leftwich, 1995; Taylor, 2005; Meyns, 2010), which, in spite of possessing ‘a functioning electoral democracy’ is ‘marked by an illiberal authoritarianism and presidentialism that is characterized by an elitist top-down structure of governance’ (Good and Taylor, 2008: 571).

The same caution is needed when approaching other African countries that have displayed significant state-led economic growth and/or have publically advanced the case for pursuing a developmental state strategy, and are therefore seen as potential ‘new’ developmental states (Kelsall, 2011) such as Rwanda (Booth and Golooba-Muthebi, 2012) or Ethiopia (Vaughan and Gebremichael, 2011), which are formally democratic while displaying new authoritarian traits. So far, Mauritius (Carroll and Carroll, 1999; Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller and Teichman, 2007) and, to a lesser extent, post-apartheid South Africa (Southall, 2006; Fine,

2010) seem to be the only African states that can be considered to be developmental as well as relatively consolidated social and liberal democracies.<sup>8</sup>

Questions can then be raised about the kind of development that will be produced by states that are formally democratic, but authoritarian in practice. What kind of developmental policies do such states pursue? How are such policies pursued? With what kind of outcomes? In the next section I discuss some of the literature that underpins the research approach that I adopt in order to answer these questions in this study.

#### **1.4 Research approach**

Studying state-led development is a tricky exercise since the ‘developmental state’ remains a somewhat elusive and contested concept. State-led, as opposed to market-led, development can be seen as having its roots in 18<sup>th</sup> century Western Europe (Bagchi, 2000), but the notion of the developmental state as it is currently generally used was first introduced based on Japan’s post-World War II economic miracle (Johnson, 1982), followed by the experience of other East Asian newly industrializing countries such as Taiwan and South Korea (Wade, 1990) and more recently, China. The literature that builds on the examples of these classic developmental states generally takes a somewhat technical view of developmentalism, focusing on the different factors that need to be in place in order to successfully achieve state-led economic development. In this literature, developmentalism is not seen as depending on any particular regime type, although most of its examples include authoritarian states from East Asia.

In line with this view, Leftwich (1993: 613) argues that ‘there is no necessary relationship between democracy and development, nor, more generally, between any regime type and

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of other potential or aspirational developmental states in Africa, see Routley (2012).

economic performance' as 'both democratic and non-democratic developing Third World regimes have been able to generate high levels of economic development'. However, when identifying six major components of the developmental state, he emphasizes the importance of a state being strong, in the sense that it has a determined developmental elite; relative autonomy; a powerful, competent and insulated economic bureaucracy; while civil society is generally weak and subordinated. In addition, according to Leftwich (1995: 405), developmental states generally reflect an effective management of non-state economic interests and the presence of a mix of repression, legitimacy and performance. Based on these characteristics, he defines developmental states as 'states whose politics have concentrated sufficient power, autonomy and capacity at the centre to shape, pursue and encourage the achievement of explicit developmental objectives, whether by establishing and promoting the conditions and direction of economic growth, or by organising it directly, or a varying combination of both' (1995: 401). This is generally motivated by factors such as nationalism, regional competition or external threat, ideology and a wish to 'catch up' with the West (idem).

While scholars such as Leftwich argue that political regime is not a determining factor for a state to be considered developmental, others defend a view that the '21<sup>st</sup> century developmental state' is necessarily social democratic in order to deal with '21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and historical legacies that do not match East Asia's unique circumstances' (Evans, 2010: 38). According to this view, state-led development needs to be equitable and sustainable and therefore it should not only entail interventions directed at industrialization and economic development, but also at social development, through the provision of basic goods and services. Thus, 'democratic developmental states should, by definition, cater to their poor citizens and produce policies which address their needs, rather than merely the exigencies of economic growth' (Robinson and White, 1998: 6). Democratic developmental

states, such as India, Chile, Mauritius and Costa Rica are therefore necessarily social democracies (Sandbrook *et. al.* 2007).

Thus, as Routley (2012: 7) notes, ‘what counts as a developmental outcome is highly contestable’ as it depends on the analyst’s perspective. For proponents of the democratic developmental state, economic growth under conditions of authoritarianism represents a trade-off that they won’t be willing to accept. From this perspective, developmental states should not only aim to achieve socio-economic development, but this development should also be inclusive and operate through a democratic governance framework. However, both theorists of the ‘classic’ developmental state model as well as those of democratic developmental states, agree that economic growth, resulting in increasing living standards and broad based state legitimacy are central elements of developmental outcomes (Routley, 2012: 7).

In this thesis, I do not advance any particular normative view of the developmental state as the case of Angola shows that a state may combine elements from both the classic and democratic developmental state model but be neither. Instead, I propose that grounded empirical research is needed to gain insight into the nature, workings and possible outcomes of state-led development under non-democratic conditions.

To guide the analysis of the empirical evidence that is presented, I follow Fritz and Rocha Menocal (2007), who argue that for a state to be considered developmental it must have a legitimate leadership with some kind of developmental vision. Secondly, this leadership must also have a will to translate this vision to reality, by taking up a developmental role and mobilizing state structures to carry out this role (2007: 533-534). This role may be minimalist, for instance by merely providing and regulating the conditions for other actors to become

involved in development. This role can be expanded to become more active by directly assisting or supporting private actors. When the state becomes interventionist, it becomes involved in directly productive activities, in ways that may replace or compete with these actors (Evans, 1995: 77-81).<sup>9</sup>

In addition, I look at the extent to which state-led development is *effective*. According to most scholars, states need to have a certain level of capacity to effectively carry out state-led development, which is measured by the level of professionalism and autonomy of its bureaucracy. In the case of Japan, Johnson (1982: 315) stressed the importance of the existence of an 'elite bureaucracy staffed by the best managerial talent available in the system' which is 'given sufficient scope to take initiative and operate effectively'. Evans (1995: 49-50) agrees that formal competence is important, but that a state's bureaucracy should not be too insulated from society. In fact, informal networks that are embedded in the bureaucracy can reinforce its formal organizational structure, by allowing for close ties between the public and the private (1995: 41-42). Using Weber's terminology (1968: 215-216), the bureaucracy is then 'rational', in the sense that authority derives from a legally established impersonal order, as well as 'patrimonial', in the sense that authority derives from personal relations, at the same time. In the absence of any kind of rational bureaucracy, a predatory state will result. According to Evans (1995: 45), this was the case of Mobutu-led Zaire, in which the state was able to '[prey] on its citizenry, terrorizing them, despoiling their common patrimony, and providing little in the way of services in return'. Thus, a careful balance between personal and rational rule is needed for developmental states to be effective.

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon White (1984: 102-103) made a similar distinction when looking at 'capitalist' states, which act as an economic entrepreneur and exercise a wide range of direct and indirect controls over economic actors, 'intermediate' states, which severely circumscribe the power of private capital, and 'socialist' developmental states, where private capital is largely eliminated and controls all-pervasive.



When aspiring developmental states do not succeed in effectively exercising their role, Evans (1995: 60) argues that 'intermediate' developmental states result. This has arguably been the case of India and Brazil, which have experienced considerable state-led economic growth in the absence of a bureaucracy that has 'embedded autonomy'. They can therefore not be dismissed as predatory, nor seen as fully developmental.

Based on the cases of South Korea, Brazil, India and Nigeria, Kohli (2004) argues that when studying the effectiveness of state-directed development, attention must also be paid to colonial trajectories and the ways in which these have shaped the functioning of the state bureaucracy. In a similar vein, Vu (2007) emphasizes the importance of the study of the post-colonial trajectory of states and the ways in which this trajectory has shaped the way elites interact amongst each other and in relation to society.

My approach to the study of the Angolan state further borrows from post-modern thought on power and authority as developed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault's work differs from conventional approaches to questions of power and authority or theories of the state in that his perspective departs from what he calls the 'analytics of government' or the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1991). This refers to a type of study concerned with 'how' questions: '*how* we govern and are governed within different regimes, and the conditions under which such regimes emerge, continue to operate, and are transformed' (Dean, 2010: 33). 'Government' then takes place outside the Weberian framework of state sovereignty, legitimacy and the relation of the sovereign and its subjects. Instead, it is 'accomplished through multiple actors and agencies rather than a centralized set of state apparatuses', and therefore 'any *a priori* distribution and divisions of power and authority' must be rejected (Dean, 2010: 37).

Thus, apart from looking at the workings of the state and the ways in which it sees and does development, an approach that Scott (1998) has theorized as ‘seeing like a state’, I argue that it is also important to analyze the state ‘at work’ (Bierschenk, 2010). Such an analysis should not be limited to a Weberian conception of the state that is based on the distinction between ‘state-society’, ‘state space-nonstate space’, and ‘power-resistance’. As Li (2005: 384) has argued, such a conception provides insufficient analytical traction to expose the logic of state-led development schemes or to examine their effects (also Valverde, 2011).<sup>10</sup>

Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava and Véron (2005) propose an alternative approach by ‘seeing the state’. In line with Foucault, this type of approach to the study of the state focuses on the ‘hows’ of government. In doing so, it recognizes that the state is not a monolithic entity that operates separately from society, but that it is ‘best understood as a complicated tangle of networks and relationships and that it is important as scholars to attend closely to this “messiness”’ (Jeffrey, 2007: 598 on Corbridge *et. al.* 2005).<sup>11</sup>

This type of actor oriented approach has also been adopted by other scholars who seek to study the ‘everyday state’ (Fuller and Bénéï, 2001). From this perspective, the state is not defined by the extent to which it fulfills its Weberian functions, but by the practices conducted by those staffing its multiple parts and those they engage in their roles as state officials (Migdal and Schlichte, 2005: 14-15). The French anthropologist Olivier de Sardan identifies two independent sources that use a similar approach in the anthropology of development: an Anglophone pole around the work of Norman Long and a Francophone pole around the Euro-African Association for the Anthropology of Social Change and

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<sup>10</sup> Hagmann and Péclard (2010) make a similar argument against ‘stereotypical Weberian state conceptions’ when it comes to the study of the state in Africa.

<sup>11</sup> Note that throughout this thesis I do try to distinguish between the Angolan *government* and *state*, in order to distinguish between the state’s leadership or executive power, which in Angola is exercised by the President of the Republic, aided by the Vice-President, State Ministers and Ministers, and the Angolan state, which I see as the entire set of institutions and practices that make up the state. However, due to the intertwining of state, government and party in Angola, I may sometimes use these terms interchangeably.

Development (APAD). The work of Long focuses on the study of ‘agency and social actors, the notion of multiple realities and arenas where different life-worlds and discourses meet, the idea of interface encounters in terms of discontinuities of interests, values, knowledge and power, and structured heterogeneity’ (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989: 82 in de Sardan, 2005: 13). Yet, most of the empirical work of Long on planned development interventions has been carried out in rural areas in Latin America (eg. Long, 2001). The empirical focus of the APAD work in contrast has a distinct focus on African countries. Whilst this body of work is limited to French-speaking countries and often covers rural as opposed to urban areas, the analyses and concepts produced by scholars such as Thomas Bierschenk, Christian Lund, Giorgio Blundo, and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan himself have been particularly useful in framing my research findings and references to their work can be found throughout this thesis.

### **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

To further lay the theoretical grounds on which this thesis is built, in the next chapter I will review some of the literature on the African state and development. While this literature is relevant for the case of Angola in terms of explaining the nature of political rule in the country, it does not account for the possibility of the promotion of state-led development by the ruling elites. I therefore also discuss the literature on ‘new’ developmental states which departs from the perspective that patrimonial rulers may mobilize their rule for development. In order to analyze the potentially ambiguous outcomes of state-led development in such a context, I review some of the literature on ‘intermediate’ states and states ‘at work’.

Chapter three is dedicated to a discussion of the research design and methods that I employed to gather the data that are presented in this thesis and the ways in which the research process was influenced by the dynamics of Zango and Angola more generally as a research ‘field’. All of my fieldwork was carried out in Luanda during various trips that took place in the period of

November 2011 to June 2013, although I limit my analysis of the project's management to the period from the start of the project in 2001/2002 until late August 2012 which is when general elections were held, resulting in new administrative changes in the Zango project.

In chapter four, I provide a historical and contextual background to the analysis of post-war developmentalism that is presented in the empirical chapters of the thesis by discussing state-led development in Angola from colonial to post-colonial times against the backdrop of a history of the city of Luanda.

This is followed by chapter five, which discusses the conception, creation and implementation of the Zango project with the aim of illustrating the conditions under which the government, in the transition towards and since the end of the war in 2002 has started to pursue state-led development. Based on this discussion and of state-built housing more generally, I examine and discuss the Angolan governments' post-war vision for development and the role and structures the government has taken up or mobilized to translate this vision into reality in order to shed light on the workings and motivations behind post-war state-led development.

In chapter six I discuss the role of residents' committees in Zango as an entry point into a discussion of the history and dynamics of state formation and local governance in Luanda. Once created by the state itself, these committees are no longer officially recognized, although they continue to have close links to local state and party structures. What does this say about state-society relations, the role of local government and of local space for citizen participation in state-led development?

Building on the analysis of the two preceding chapters, chapter seven aims to shed light on the intended and unintended developmental outcomes of the Zango project on the basis of

narratives of direct beneficiaries, as well as residents that have bought or who are renting a house in the project. I dedicate particular attention to the emergence of a large informal property market in Zango and the implications this has for people's perceptions of and engagements with the state.

The final chapter presents the conclusions of this study, by linking up the research questions with the empirical evidence presented. The chapter also discusses the theoretical and methodological findings of the study and its potential contribution to further research.

## **2. On the state and development**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss three bodies of theory on the state and development that inform the analysis of the research findings that I present in the following chapters.

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the work of some of the main theorists of the African state. This literature is marked by the explicit or implicit view that the workings of the African state are defined by neo-patrimonial rule. From such a perspective, elites employ personal or patrimonial modes of government which results in the existence of shadow states alongside a decaying formal state. Elites are then not interested in developing the formal state and therefore these scholars pay little attention to studying the workings of this state.

The concept of the developmental state represents a useful avenue to open up this ‘impossibility thesis’ (Mkandawire, 2001). Thus, in the second part of this chapter I discuss the literature on ‘new’ developmental states which argues that patrimonial rule does not exclude the possibility of development and may in fact be mobilized to this end. In the last section, I review some of the literature on ‘intermediate’ developmental states and states ‘at work’ which provides insight into the workings of the formal state under conditions of a co-existence of informal and formal rule.

### **2.2 The African state and the ‘impossibility’ of development**

For most of the 1960s and 1970s, modernization and dependency theories dominated the scholarship on Africa: in the writings of scholars such as Fanon (1967) and Rodney (1981) (neo) colonialism was seen as the biggest impediment to state-led development. In a context of growing economic and political crisis, in the 1980s Africanist scholars started to develop theories that instead saw African states themselves as impediments to development. From this

perspective, dependency was not brought upon states by external forces, but by Africa's own leaders. Thus, according to Bayart (1993: 24), Africans are not powerless but autonomous agents that can contribute to and profit from their own *mise en dépendence*.

In addition, contrary to theories of 'state failure' that gained traction in the 1980s and 1990s (Di John, 2010), these analyses of the 'anti-developmental' state were different in the sense that, instead of drawing on Western conceptions of the modern state as benchmarks against which to measure the performance of states, they emphasized the historical specificity of African politics. Thus, although they did not necessarily reach more positive conclusions with regard to the performance of the African state than state failure theorists, they emphasized the importance of knowing African states for '*what they actually are*' (Mbembe, 2001: 9, italics in original). From this perspective, African states are seen to be marked by personal rule, compared to the rational-bureaucracy based rule of Western societies.

Both types of rule derive from the ideal types developed by the German sociologist Max Weber on the sociology of domination, which forms the core of his seminal work *Economy and Society* (Roth, 1968: lxxxii). In this work, Weber identified three types of legitimate domination or authority: rational, traditional and charismatic. He describes the basis for each type of authority as follows:

In the case of legal authority, obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order. It extends to the persons exercising the authority of office under it by virtue of the formal legality of their commands and only within the scope of authority of the office. In the case of traditional authority, obedience is owed to the *person* of the chief who occupies the traditionally sanctioned position of authority and who is (within its sphere) bound by tradition. But here

the obligation of obedience is a matter of personal loyalty within the area of accustomed obligations. In the case of charismatic authority, it is the charismatically qualified leader as such who is obeyed by virtue of personal trust in his revelation, his heroism or his exemplary qualities so far as they fall within the scope of the individual's belief in his charisma (Weber, 1968: 215-216 – italics in original).

Traditional authority does not preclude the existence of a bureaucracy, although 'a master may rule with or without an administrative staff' (Weber, 1968: 228). The difference with rational authority is that under traditional domination, an administration and a military force is developed which are 'purely personal instruments of the master'. This is referred to as '*patrimonialism*, and in the extreme case, *sultanism*' (Weber, 1968: 231). The difference between patrimonialism and sultanism is that patrimonial authority is primarily traditional, even though it is exercised by virtue of the ruler's personal autonomy, whereas sultanistic domination is exercised arbitrarily, without being bound to tradition (Weber, 1978: 232).<sup>12</sup>

According to Clapham, the earliest attempts in the 1950s to analyse authority structures in third world states drew on Weber's third type, that of charismatic authority.<sup>13</sup> This concept seemed to be tailor-made for the nationalist leaders, then at the height of their reputations, and according to Clapham (1985: 46-47) 'perhaps over-enthusiastically applied to them by scholars anxious to identify with postcolonial aspirations'. After the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, one of the classic 'charismatic' leaders, in February 1966, scholars soon moved on to traditional domination as a way to conceptualize political power in Africa. Soon, neo-

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<sup>12</sup> See Bruhns (2012) for a more in-depth analysis of Weber's notion of patrimonial domination and its interpretations.

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Roth (1968: lxxxii) notes that 'in research the complex typology of domination has all too frequently been reduced to the simple dichotomy of charisma and bureaucracy'.



patrimonialism was seen as ‘most often the salient type [of authority] in third world societies’ (Clapham, 1985: 49).

One of the first scholars who adapted and applied the concept of neo-patrimonialism to the African state was Médard. For Médard (1982: 165), concepts that were used by other scholars to analyse personal rule in Africa, such as clientelism, patronage, factionalism, tribalism, nepotism or market corruption, were too narrow to encompass all of the typical practices of the underdeveloped state. He defined this type of state as ‘a state where inefficiency and instability prevail as a way of life’ (Heeger, 1974 in Médard, 1982: 162). Therefore, he found it more useful to refer to the logic of the underdeveloped state as neo-patrimonial, since ‘all of these practices [...] have one point in common which makes each a part of a whole: all suppose the absence of the distinction between public and private domains, or rather the privatization of the public sector’ (1982: 177). According to Médard, what distinguishes neo-patrimonial societies from purely patrimonial ones is the fact that, while both being based on personal rule, neo-patrimonial regimes hide behind a façade of public norms and universal ideologies. This prevents the creation of a modern state, as power remains personal and does not get institutionalized. As a result, politics becomes a kind of business, as political resources give access to economic resources (1982: 180-181). In sum, the state becomes ‘a pie that everyone greedily wants to eat’ (1982: 182).

In theorizing the neo-patrimonial state, Médard established two important aspects with regard to the concept of neo-patrimonialism that continue to resonate in more recent work on the African state. The first aspect is that of the hybrid nature of political rule and the second is that of the causal link between neo-patrimonialism and underdevelopment as a result of the privatization of the public sector.

This line of thinking is followed by other scholars such as Clapham (1985: 48-49), who defines neo-patrimonialism as ‘a form of organisation in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervade a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines’. In this system ‘[o]fficials hold positions in bureaucratic organisations with powers which are formally defined, but exercise those powers, so far as they can, as a form not of public service but of private property. [...] Imposed upon the structure of a bureaucratic state, they can rapidly gum up the works’.

Van de Walle (2001: 51-52), uses the following definition of a neo-patrimonial state as one that has ‘all the trappings of a Weberian rational-legal system, with a clear distinction between the public and the private realm, with written laws and a constitutional order. However, this official order is constantly subverted by a patrimonial logic, in which officeholders almost systematically appropriate public resources for their own uses and political authority is largely based on clientelist practices, including patronage, various forms of rent-seeking, and prebendalism’.

This is exacerbated in countries where the state has access to substantial amounts of external economic rent, particularly oil rent, which reinforces the use of the state as a source of income and consumption, turning it into what Yates (1996) calls the ‘rentier state’.

Thus, under neo-patrimonial rule, holders of state power pose significant limits for any type of development. In addition, Bratton and Van de Walle (1997: 274-275) argue that neo-patrimonial rule also limited the outcome of and prospects for transitions to democracy in Africa in the early 1990s. They explain this by arguing that while practices associated with neo-patrimonialism such as presidentialism, systematic clientelism and the use of state resources for political legitimation are ‘informal, partially hidden, and extralegal [and

therefore] sometimes difficult to observe’, this does not mean they are not *institutionalized* and concrete and consequential enough to limit regime transition. Thus, they follow Médard and Clapham in the sense that they contend that African politics is personal and not bureaucratized, but according to them this does not mean that it does not follow patterns ‘to which all political participants are attuned and which impart structure to political life’ (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997: 274).

In a subsequent study on structural adjustment reforms, Van de Walle comes to a similar conclusion with regard to the influence of neo-patrimonialism on the potential for economic reform. According to Van de Walle (2001: 16), neo-patrimonial systems tend to favour consumption over investment, produce unsustainable economic policies and systematically underinvest in institutional capacity, which threatens power holders. When faced with crisis in the 1970s, in some countries, like Sierra Leone, leaders lacked the discipline and political skill to maintain the neo-patrimonial order and over time, rent-seeking tendencies spun out of control, resulting in state decay and even a descent to warlordism (2001: 17). Yet, in other countries, such as Côte d’Ivoire, the reform process, as propagated by Western donors, was instrumentalized by leaders through the recentralization of power in the presidency, the redesign of rent-seeking networks and the state’s withdrawal from development through the delegation of development activities to private and non-governmental actors, often linked to state elites (2001: 159-166). In these cases, neo-patrimonialism contributed to regime survival, even in the face of persistent economic crisis.

Van de Walle’s analysis was inspired by the work of, amongst other Africanist scholars, Bayart, although Bayart does not identify himself as a proponent of the term ‘neo-patrimonialism’ for he believes in the historicity of African societies. Hence, his book *The politics of the belly* (1993) describes what goes on behind what Médard called the ‘neo-

patrimonial façade' through the introduction of the notion of the 'rhizome state', which operates parallel to the formal state as 'an infinitely variable multiplicity of networks whose underground branches join together the scattered points of society' (Bayart, 1993: 220). Everyone, rich or poor, participates in the world of these networks, which is ruled by the logic of the 'politics of the belly'.

Others have developed this notion of an indigenous parallel state further with reference to what they call the 'shadow' state, suggesting that 'the post-colonial institutional state is no longer the principal authority that many have assumed it to be since the independence of [...] Africa generally' (Reno, 1995: 3). Again, the existence of a shadow state alongside the formal state is most starkly pronounced in resource-rich states, where the generation of state revenues can take place in 'extractive enclaves' without ever entering in direct contact with the state's citizens (Ferguson, 2005).

Chabal and Daloz on their part identify neither with neo-patrimonial nor with what they call hybrid models of the state. According to them, Médard's neo-patrimonial approach emphasizes the failure of political-institutionalization on the continent, while Bayart's hybrid state approach stresses the success of the rise of a genuinely different 'indigenous' African state (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 9-10). Chabal and Daloz (1999: 10) also make reference to a third approach to the study of the state by reference to the work of Badie (1992) on the transplanted state, which is 'no longer the modern Western state nor is it properly a hybrid. It is generally distinct'. Englebert draws on this notion to explain the prevalence of neo-patrimonialism in African states. Because these states are 'imported' states, that is 'states formed by colonialism and appropriated by new domestic political elites upon independence', they lack legitimacy. This results in a permanent quest for hegemonic control by these elites through 'patronage, nepotism, corruption and other patterns of political behaviour that are

occasionally subsumed under the category of neo-patrimonialism. [...] In the process, the modern state is reduced to a merely instrumental role, a set of resources that rulers use to foster their power' (Englebert, 2000: 4-5).

Yet, according to Chabal and Daloz these approaches have tended to overestimate the impact of colonialism on the formation of the contemporary African state. They argue that it is far from certain that the colonial administrative experience did in fact eradicate 'pre-colonial' political traditions and lay secure foundations for the proper institutionalization of the state after independence (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 11). As a result, African states are 're-traditionalizing', in the sense that the informalization of politics has come to represent the defining feature of their socio-political order (1999: 14). The state is then 'no more than a décor, a pseudo-Western façade masking the realities of deeply personalized relations' (1999: 16). Hence, what Chabal and Daloz in fact propose is the African state as entirely *patrimonial*, without the 'neo' features implied by other scholars.

Yet, with their focus on tradition, Chabal and Daloz' analysis of African politics pays little attention to its interconnectedness of the informal with the formal state, nor with the outside world in a context of increasing globalization. According to Ellis (2011: 102), the official and the unofficial state 'cannot be detached from each other. They are like two sides of a single piece of paper with different writing on each side'.

In terms of the connection between shadow states and the outside world, Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1999) argue that a new form of *politique du ventre* may be emerging, in an international context which is new in at least two different respects. Firstly, with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the good governance discourse, international donors no longer tolerate criminal practices as they did before. At the same time, the globalization of

trade has provided significant new opportunities for illegal activities. These conditions have altered the relationship between economic accumulation and tenure of political power in Africa, by the late 1990s resulting in the rise of the ‘felonious state’ or ‘*the routinization, at the very heart of political and governmental institutions and circuits, of practices whose criminal nature is patent* [...]’ (Bayart *et. al.*, 1999: 16, italics in original). According to Bayart *et. al.* this signifies a definite rupture with the ‘politics of the belly’ as a mode of governance, which represented classic forms of corruption, predation or kleptocracy (1999: 25).

Bayart *et. al.* then point to a development which according to Mbembe (2001: 66) has been overshadowed by ‘the fuss over transitions to democracy and multi-partyism in Africa’. For Mbembe, until the advent of structural adjustment policies a postcolonial compromise existed, at least in some countries, which rested on the trinity of violence, transfers, and allocations – the foundation of postcolonial African authoritarian regimes (Mbembe, 2001: 45). Neo-liberal deregulation policies disrupted this compromise on two levels. On the one hand, by undermining the material and social bases on which the regimes had rested, and the imaginaries that sustained them; on the other, by undermining the way in which these regimes had secured their legitimacy (2001: 56).

The de-linking of Africa from formal international markets and its integration into the circuits of the parallel international economy has subsequently resulted in the fragmentation of public authority and the emergence of multiple forms of *private indirect government* (Mbembe, 2001: 67, italics in original) or what Ferguson (2006) calls ‘transnational apparatuses of governmentality’. According to Mbembe, private indirect government entails ‘the proliferation not of independent power centers but of more or less autonomous pockets in the heart of what was, until recently, a system. Such pockets are intermeshed, compete with one another, and sometimes form networks. They form links in an unstable chain where parallel

decisions coexist with centralized decisions, where everything and its opposite are possible'. As a result, 'functions supposed to be public, and obligations that flow from sovereignty, are increasingly performed by private operations for private ends' (2001: 80).

As novel technologies of domination are taking shape over almost the entire continent and a struggle for the control over the means of coercion unfolds, Mbembe argues that the outcome may well be the final defeat of the state in Africa as we have known it in recent years. On the other hand, 'it might equally well be a deepening of the state's indigenization, - or more radically, its replacement by dispositifs that retain the name but have intrinsic qualities and modes of operation quite unlike those of a conventional state' (2001: 67-68).

Mbembe's latter proposed outcome, the deepening of the state's indigenization, is supported by the work of Hibou on the delegation of public and administrative services by the state to private actors as a source of self-enrichment, a practice also alluded to by Van de Walle (2001) as part of the instrumentalization of economic reform. According to Hibou, state privatization refers to a new way of exercising power and government, which is indirect and therefore does not meet the Weberian ideal type of a rational-legal and bureaucratic state. Hence, 'it is in no way synonymous with the retreat of the state, or even the primacy of private over public. [...] it rather must be seen as the capacity of the political to find a place for the non-institutional, the unofficial, the non-central. In other words, privatisation of the state is not a form of political de-construction or withering of the state, but a wholly separate form of state formation' (Hibou, 2004: 36-37).

Like Bayart, Hibou follows the tradition of historical sociology of the state and therefore she criticizes the term 'neo-patrimonialism' for representing a 'taxonomic' view of the state. While making it possible 'to emphasize that practices confusing public and private interests are commonplace', this view does not allow us 'to discern the developments and breaks with the past currently taking place'. A historical sociological approach on the other hand, does not

define the political and the state *a priori*, nor does it lay down a clear *a priori* separation between economic and non-economic, political and non-political, public and private (Hibou, 2004: 20).

Interestingly, like Mbembe, Hibou draws on Weber and his idea of ‘discharge’ to bring out ‘what goes on behind the appearance of ‘dissolution’, ‘implosion’ and disappearance of the state on the African continent’ (2004: 3). In this context, discharge represents a historical form of state intervention, which is non-bureaucratic and does not include its direct involvement but does allow for its on-going consolidation. Privatisation is then the contemporary representation of discharge and according to Hibou it has become one, if not the, dominant form of negotiation and formalisation of power relations today (2004: 15).

The uncertainty, fluidity and arbitrariness that come along with state privatisation then do not signal the weakness of the state. Rather, they are part of a mode of governing that reinforces the power of the ‘rhizome state’ (Hibou, 2004: 32). As such, privatisation under conditions of neo-liberalism does not lead to a reduction of the state, but to a redeployment of political power from inside to outside of the formal or public realm (Hilgers, 2012).

### **2.3 ‘New’ developmental states**

As we have seen, some Africanist scholars do not use the term neo-patrimonialism directly in their analyses, sometimes even expressing a certain disdain with regard to the term. Yet, apart from perhaps Chabal and Daloz, no-one outrightly dismisses the co-existence of patrimonial practices and a formal state or a recognition thereof by ruling elites, rather seeing the practices that take place parallel to formal state structures as more important to understanding the empirical reality of African politics.



Thus, critics of the term neo-patrimonialism generally do not reject what the term represents, but the lack of empirical grounding when it is invoked (Theobald, 1999: 494; for earlier criticism of the term see Theobald, 1982). For instance, with reference to the use of the term in relation to the study of agricultural development in Africa, de Grassi points to the prevalence of ‘a priori assumptions about the existence of neopatrimonialism and hasty invocations of the phenomenon [...] without thorough documentation of [its] precise forms, characters, origins, transformations, contestations, extent, and other important features’ (de Grassi, 2008: 122). Therkildsen (2005: 49) comes to the same conclusion when studying the application of the term with regard to public management in that ‘it takes for granted what needs to be investigated’. Migdal and Schlichte (2005: 27) on their part conclude that the term ‘neo-patrimonialism’ may be ‘the theoretically strongest and empirically most grounded characterizing post-colonial African states. [...] But the term alone does not offer any insight in the dynamics that have led to this form, nor does it tell much about contemporary changes’.

It seems that the second aspect of neo-patrimonialism, as developed by Médard, that of its causal role in relation to development seems to be more of a point of contention. Indeed, while most of the abovementioned scholars argue that there is a direct link between neo-patrimonial rule and underdevelopment, others argue that this is not necessarily the case.

For instance, Mkandawire, one of the most vocal proponents of African developmental states who was introduced in the introduction of this thesis, argues that ‘other than indicating a style of governance, neo-patrimonialism does not tell us much about what policies a state will pursue and with what success’ (Mkandawire, 2001: 299). He uses this argument to explain the fact that the performance of many African states until the mid-1970s would have qualified them as developmental states, but which now seem anti-developmental because exogenous forces brought the economic expansion of these countries to a halt (2001: 291). Furthermore, Pitcher, Moran and Johnston (2009: 134) point to the example of Botswana to argue that ‘neo-patrimonial authority is compatible both with high levels of legitimacy and with economic

development'. It must therefore 'be understood in context, evaluated for its positive as well as negative consequences, and not be used as a one-variable explanation for broad national outcomes' (Pitcher *et. al.* 2009: 149).

Indeed, examples of classic developmental states in Asia have shown that neo-patrimonial rule may also be mobilized or even instrumental in the pursuit of development. Thus, 'neo-patrimonialism does not need to permeate the entire state, but may be of varying intensity, with the result of different patterns of interactions between the public and private sphere, and an ongoing ability to produce public policies' (Gazibo, 2012: 1-2). Indeed, in later work Médard (2000 cited in Bach, 2011) made a distinction between 'regulated' and 'unregulated' neo-patrimonialism as a way to distinguish between states in which patrimonial practices are, to a certain extent, controlled and also used for redistributive purposes and states in which patrimonial practices are all-encompassing and only used for predatory purposes.

Such a view of neo-patrimonialism allows for a delinking between political rule and development, thereby opening up the possibility of neo-patrimonial states also being developmental. According to Bach (2012: 223), this shift in thinking is 'at the core of the emerging states' syndrome, namely their ability to combine rapid economic transformation with poverty reduction despite the persistence of high levels of corruption and, at times, authoritarian/totalitarian rule'.

Recently, a new body of literature has started to be developed that takes this shift in thinking further in the context of Africa (Kelsall, 2011). Inspired by the economic success of Asian developmental states, scholars argue that neo-patrimonial governance is not incompatible with strong economic performance as Asian states have not necessarily been *less* patrimonial, rent-seeking or corrupt than their African counterparts. The difference is to be found in the *type* of patrimonialism that is employed, or the way in which patron-client networks and

economic rents are organized (Kelsall and Booth, with Cammack and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010: 5-6, italics in original).

In line with Mkandawire, these scholars use the example of a number of African case studies from the early 1970s (Côte d'Ivoire 1960-75, Malawi 1964-78, Kenya 1965-75, Tanzania 1967-78), as well as the more recent case of Rwanda (2000-2010) to argue that 'centralized, long-horizon rent seeking, when combined with broadly pro-capitalist policies, can generate dynamic growth for periods upwards of a decade', referring to such with the term 'developmental patrimonialism' (Kelsall *et. al.*, 2010: 26). In addition, they point to countries such as South Africa, Malawi, Ethiopia and also Angola as examples of other 'aspiring developmental patrimonialists' (Kelsall, 2011: 84).

According to Kelsall (2011: 78-79) 'rent management is centralised when there is a structure in place that allows a person or group at the apex of the state to determine the major rents that are created and to distribute them at will' suggesting that the centralization of rent management is more probable in an authoritarian political context, where state power is centralized. With regard to the aspect of long-horizon, Kelsall states that 'it is a long-horizon when leaders have a vision that inspires them to create rents and discipline rent-seeking with a view to expanding income through productive investment over the long term'.

Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2012) develop this argument further based on the case of Rwanda, where the RPF-led regime has followed a distinctive approach to political involvement in the private sector of the economy. Central here is the role of party-owned enterprises. Instead of these being used as sources of private accumulation, Booth and Golooba-Mutebi argue that in Rwanda the relationship between the party and these

enterprises is strictly formal and that they have played an important role in kick-starting capitalist development in the country.

This would distinguish the case of for instance Rwanda from that of Zimbabwe. Whilst rent-management in Zimbabwe is also quite tightly centralized by the ruling party ZANU-PF and its holding companies, the regime does not seem to be growth-oriented. Therefore, contrary to the case of Rwanda, the management of rents has been ‘short-term, parasitic or predatory and thus growth-retarding’ (Dawson and Kelsall, 2012: 61-62).

Yet, even ‘patrimonial developmental’ states need to have some effective bureaucratic institutions. Cammack and Kelsall (2011: 88) in this regard point to the importance of a strong technocracy that must be subject to vertical coordination, such that it receives and is responsive to policy directives emanating from the political leadership, and the existence of technocratic integrity, meaning that technocrats are typically willing and able to provide robust, technically informed advice to leading politicians.

#### **2.4 ‘Intermediate’ developmental states**

Literature on ‘intermediate’ developmental states such as India and Brazil describe states that are strong in their developmental intentions, but weak in their capacity to translate this into reality. Such a view of developmental states is only possible when distinguishing between the state as representing the practices of a political class and the state as an institution, but in full acknowledgement of the *effects* of the existence of such a dual structure (Erdmann and Engel, 2007).

In this context, Erdmann and Engel (2007: 105) use the concept of neo-patrimonialism as a heuristic device in the analysis of systems of rule which represent ‘a mixture of two co-existing, partly interwoven, types of domination: namely, patrimonial and legal-rational

bureaucratic domination'. In such a context, 'formal structures and rules do exist, although in practice the separation of the private and public sphere is not always observed'. According to Erdmann and Engel, the result of this co-existence is usually *insecurity* about the behaviour and role of state institutions (and agents). Practices such as clientelism or corruption must therefore be seen as strategies that arise to respond to this insecurity (2007: 105-108).<sup>14</sup>

As Corbridge *et. al.* (2005: 152) note, 'government officers will find it hard to behave like a Weberian bureaucrat when they lack the support of a Weberian bureaucracy'. In the absence of this support, public officials as well as citizens become involved in practices that function as a way of managing and overcoming uncertainty. Berner and Trulsson (2000) refer to this as the practice of 'manoeuvring' in an environment of uncertainty. However, at the same time, such practices also contribute to the reproduction and intensification of this uncertainty (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan, 2006: 105-106). As Bierschenk (2010: 13) puts it based on the study of the West African states of Benin, Mali, Ghana and Niger 'at work', 'the inadequacy of the official rules and regulations, which are often ill adapted to reality (because contradictory in themselves, in part obsolete and frequently simply not applicable), necessitates de production of informal norms which actually enable the minimal functioning of the state apparatus – albeit, in a negative feedback loop, intensifying its functional problems'.

Corruption then becomes one of several informalization and privatization strategies, which simultaneously resolve and reinforce the functional problems of the bureaucracy (Bierschenk, 2008: 103). Informal practices hence explain both malfunction as well as survival of the system, stabilizing itself at 'a low level of performance' (Bierschenk, 2008: 106).

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<sup>14</sup> Drawing on the work of Clapham (1982), Erdmann and Engel (2007: 107) further distinguish clientelism from patronage based on a distinction between the recipients, between 'individual' (land, office, services) and 'collective' benefits (eg. roads, schools). Patronage is then part of high-level politics and an important instrument in creating and maintaining political cohesion, while clientelism concerns individuals and, thus, is based on personal relations.

However, informal political relations do not always prevail. Officials or official institutions may resort to the rational-legal authority they formally exercise whenever confronted with competing clientelistic demands or when facing any other circumstances under which the interests of the politically or economically strong are better supported by the official legal-rational rules than by personal ones (Erdmann and Engel, 2007: 108). Whilst this type of legal pluralism may not necessarily affect the relationship between the state and senior government officials, who are not directly involved in the implementation of formal rules, lower level or 'interface' officials are often exposed to situations in which the state contravenes the terms of its own contract. This results in what Bierschenk (2010: 14) calls the 'double bind' to which lower level officials may respond with a wide range of practices.

By looking at 'what lower-level officials actually do in the name of the state' (Gupta, 1995: 376) scholars have shown that these practices may contradict the interests of the central state. In his study on the South African immigration bureaucracy, Hoag (2010) shows how local government officials may be '*within* but not necessarily *of* the state', ie. 'variously at odds with other individuals and policies constituting it, and sometimes even in solidarity with the public they are called on to control', thereby 'problematizing the neatness of the dichotomy of 'subaltern versus state', and the methodological biases contained therein' (Hoag, 2010: 20). This is also noted by Bawa (2011: 502) on municipal officials in India who are responsible for water delivery, but are 'as much recipients of municipal services as they are distributors, thus they make claims on the state of which they are agents, further complicating the boundary between politics and administration'. The state is then, as Herring (1999: 324) puts it in the context of India, too embedded in society, resulting in 'a porous state [which] only intermittently approach[es] state goals'.

The nature of the local state in turn affects people's perceptions of and engagements with the state, although this may depend on social context and position (Fuller and Harriss, 2001: 15).

Thus, those citizens that are part of what Chatterjee (2004: 219) calls ‘political society’: poor people who may be targets of particular government policies without being regarded by the state as proper citizens possessing rights and belonging to the properly constituted civil society, will usually resort to ‘paralegal’ or temporary, contextual and unstable arrangements that are arrived at through direct political negotiations.<sup>15</sup>

Similar analyses are put forward by Bayat (1997; 2000) on the politics of the ‘informal people’ who turn into ‘quiet rebels’. This type of politics is ‘marked by quiet, largely atomized and prolonged mobilization with episodic collective action – open and fleeting struggles without clear leadership, ideology or structured organization’ (Bayat, 2000: 545-546). Benjamin and Bhuvanewari (2001) in turn describe what they refer to as ‘politics by stealth’, which represent ‘low key, strategic, and ‘non-visible’ subversive practices that are enabled by the ‘porosity’ of the local bureaucracy (see also Benjamin, 2004; 2008). In doing so, these scholars point to practices that cannot be characterized as acts of resistance, nor as the type of organically claimed or created participation from below that is analyzed by scholars such as Cornwall and Coelho (2007) or in the ‘urban governance’ literature more generally (eg. McCarney and Stren, 2003; Devas, 2004).

Based on his work in Brazil, Holston (2008) conceptualizes such acts as practices of ‘insurgent citizenship’ that challenge entrenched forms of differentiated citizenship.<sup>16</sup> Holston stresses that practices of insurgent citizenship do not represent acts of resistance as they function to manage social differences by legalizing them in ways that legitimize and reproduce inequality, thereby sustaining the regime of differentiated citizenship. Yet, by showing how the *working classes* in the urbanized neighbourhoods of the periphery of São Paulo through the process of autoconstruction ‘gained political rights, became landowners,

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<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the urban middle classes, or those who claim to be proper citizens inhabiting civil society, usually get what they want without this being turned into an object of negotiation (Chatterjee, 2011: 16).

<sup>16</sup> In a prior work, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia* (1989) Holston applied the concept of insurgent citizenship to describe the practices that arose as a response to the construction of the new city of Brasília.

made law an asset, created new public spheres of participation, achieved rights to the city, and became modern consumers' (Holston, 2008: 9), he makes a case for a type of citizenship that is much more transformative than the para-legal practices carried out by India's political society.

Scholars such as Lund (2006) further stress the blurred boundaries between state and society and the public and the private that can be found in contexts in which formal and informal rule co-exist, by looking at the ways in which non-state actors may exercise public authority. In doing so, he seeks to investigate '*how public authority actually works* in the face of obvious state failure and impending collapse' (2006: 674 – italics in original).

Strategies to compensate or overcome the effects of neo-patrimonial rule are not only devised by lower-level officials, citizens or non-state actors. They may also be employed by governing elites themselves. For instance, in order to by-pass a bureaucracy that is too embedded in society these elites may resort to the creation of 'pockets of efficiency' within the bureaucracy. This way, political leaders modernize the state apparatus by addition rather than transformation (Geddes, 1986 cited in Evans, 1995: 61). Leonard (2010: 91) calls such institutions pockets of 'effective agencies' and defines them as 'public organisations that are reasonably effective in carrying out their functions and in serving some conception of the public good, despite operating in an environment in which most agencies are ineffective and subject to serious predation by corruption, patronage, etc.' By looking at '*what is working* [in the state], *how and why?*' (Roll, 2011: 1 – italics in original), this allows for a view of such institutions as possible development agents under conditions of patrimonial rule (Hout, 2007).

While the co-existence of informal and formal types of rule can be found in different types of regimes, including liberal democracies such as India and Brazil, Erdmann and Engel (2007:



111) note that ‘there seems to be agreement that neo-patrimonial rule belongs to the realm of authoritarian regimes’ since authoritarian leaders are less constrained by the rule of law.<sup>17</sup>

Neo-patrimonialism also serves a purpose in new authoritarian states as it is through the maintenance of a legal-rational order that power is accessed, while personal rule allows for this power to be kept. As Way (2006: 169-170; also Schedler, 2009; Svobik, 2012) notes, new authoritarian states often lead a ‘dual life’ as state and regime, while officially separated, in practice are conflated. As a result, public institutions are not only engaged in formally prescribed tasks, but they are also mobilized to carry out informal tasks associated with the preservation of incumbent power. Therefore, Jones, Soares de Oliveira and Verhoeven (2013: 9-10) conclude that what they call ‘illiberal state-builders’, will ‘simultaneously operate mixed strategies: institutions *and* networks, juridical *and* illegal means, patrimonialism *and* bureaucratic rule’ (italics in original).

## 2.5 Conclusion

Whilst Africanist scholars generally have dismissed the possibility of endogenous development in Africa, arguing that states merely function as a façade, studies of ‘new’ developmental states represent a shift in thinking about the relationship between neo-patrimonialist rule and the advancement of development, allowing for the study of state-led development in Africa – albeit with a distinct focus on economic development.

Studies of ‘intermediate’ developmental states in turn allow for a view of this development as ambiguous in contexts where formal and informal modes of rule continue to co-exist. The strong/weak nature of such states opens up an ‘inevitable gap between what is attempted and what is accomplished’ (Li, 2007: 1). However, instead of dismissing this gap as an indication

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<sup>17</sup> Although Erdmann and Engel (2007: 111-112) also contend that regimes that are largely governed by a legal-rational bureaucracy and the rule of law can also be authoritarian, such as the case of Germany during the second half of the nineteenth century.

of failure, it is worth being studied if one intends to gain insight into the various practices and actors that emerge when such a state is 'at work'.

Whilst the literature discussed in this chapter prepares the theoretical and conceptual ground for the framing and analysis of my research findings, I have not made any specific reference to the literature on Angola. I will therefore review some of this literature in chapter four, which deals with the country's history.

### 3. Doing research on Zango

*All research is political, 'from the micropolitics of interpersonal relationships, through the politics of research units, institutions and universities, those of government departments and finally to the state' – which is one reason why social research is not 'like it is presented and prescribed in [textbooks on methodology]. It is infinitely more complex, messy, various and much more interesting*

(Bell and Encel 1978: 4, in Oakley, 1981: 54).

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to provide an account of my research process that captures its 'complex, messy, various' but also 'much more interesting nature' as per Oakley's quote above. This is not a common practice in the literature, which tends to consist of systematic and analytical, but rather dry, accounts of research methods. However, instead of trying to cover up the messy nature of research, there is much value in reflecting on the challenges that researchers encounter when doing their work and the ways they find to overcome them. This helps to make research content reflect research process (Thomas, 2008).

With the aim of providing a rich description of my research, I start this chapter by discussing the research design, methods and aims that I formulated before starting my fieldwork. I then juxtapose this discussion with an account of my research as an interactive and continuous process. I describe in detail how the continuously changing nature of Zango as a research site or 'field' and of Angola more generally defined my entry into the field and the ways in which I was able to access and interact with my informants. On the other hand, these dynamics were also reflective of the workings of the Angolan state and administration and I describe some of the research findings that were yielded during the research process. I conclude this chapter by illustrating the limitations of doing research in Angola through a practical example.

### 3.2 Research design, methods and aims

According to Ragin (1994: 191 in Flick, 2004a: 146), a research project or design is

a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he or she has posed. The design of an investigation touches almost all aspects of the research, from the minute details of data collection to the selection of the techniques of data analysis.

My choice to use a case study method for this study was mainly motivated by the state of the scholarship on Angola, or what Gerring (2007: 62-63) calls ‘the state of the field’, which I saw as being characterized by a lack of in-depth qualitative research. Most of the scholarship on the country covers the period of the war and the research produced in the post-war period is dominated by political scientists who generally take a top-down approach to the study of the state.

Yet, the use of a case study methodology is not unchallenged. According to Gerring, ‘much of what we know about the empirical world has been generated by case studies, and case studies continue to constitute a large portion of the work generated by the social science disciplines [...], [however] the case study *method* is generally unappreciated – arguably because it is poorly understood’ (2007: 8, emphasis in original). Many works are therefore dedicated to explain the method and refute the common misunderstandings that exist about case study research (Flyvbjerg, 2006; see also Ragin and Becker, 1992). Others on the other hand do not see case study research as a methodology but as a choice of what is to be studied (Stake, 2005: 443).

In this dissertation I follow Creswell, who views case studies both as a methodology as well as a product of the inquiry. Case study research then represents

a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection

involving multiple sources of information (eg. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes' (Creswell, 2007: 73, italics in original).

Case studies can be distinguished by the size of the case, which can involve one or several individuals up to an entire program or activity. In addition, they can be distinguished in terms of their intent. Thus, case studies can be instrumental, in the sense that one or multiple cases are selected to illustrate a particular issue or concern. An intrinsic case study on the other hand focuses on the case itself, because it represents an unusual or unique situation (Stake, 1995 in Creswell, 2007: 74). My study of Zango as a state-built housing project represents both an intrinsic and instrumental case as it is one of the few projects that has been fully inhabited for a number of years, rendering it quite unique. On the other hand, as a project that represents state-led development in the post-war era it can be seen as an instrumental case, which may shed light on other state-led public interventions, not just in Angola but also in countries that share some of the characteristics of the Angolan state.

With regard to the analysis of the data described through a case study, Yin (2009: 18) adds that this usually benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. Thus, 'case studies tend to involve, in complex ways, a combination of scientific objectives: including both theory development and theory testing' (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 140). Theory development forms an important part of grounded theory, an approach which seeks to generate theory from research grounded in data rather than deducing testable hypotheses from existing theories. Theory development then does not come "off the shelf", but it is grounded in data from research participants (Creswell, 2007: 63). I was inspired by this inductive approach to research, although I did not intend to follow the grounded theory approach as a method, as this involves a systematic and rigorous research design guided by theoretical sampling, coding and the categorization of large bodies of data in order to generate new theory (eg. Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006).

In line with my case study approach and in view of the dearth of data available on the Zango project, I planned on using multiple, mainly qualitative, sources of information for my research. This generally involves the use of three data collection techniques: *observation*, *interview*, and the review and analysis of site-generated or –related *documents* (Mabry, 2008: 218).

My first aim when starting my fieldwork was to draw up a narrative of the history and current functioning of the Zango housing project through a collection, review and analysis of relevant secondary data such as reports, policy documents, legislation, official government statements, online media records and media archives. I would subsequently gather primary data in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews and through observation. On the one hand, this would help me to triangulate the information obtained, a method that is generally applied to validate information, generalize research discoveries and attain additional knowledge (Flick, 2004b), as well as to develop a more subtle understanding of my case (Mabry, 2008: 218).

The first group of interviewees I targeted were government officials at national, provincial, municipal and communal level, firstly to gain the necessary authorizations for my research and secondly, to gain first-hand knowledge on the motivations that had underpinned the creation of the Zango project. With a view of interrogating the official story that would arise from these elite interviews (Burnham *et. al.*, 2004) and gaining insight into views of Zango ‘from below’, I also planned to interview members of residents’ committees. Based on my experience in previous work in peri-urban areas of Luanda, I also hoped that residents’ committees could function as gate-keepers and help me gain access to residents in the project.

According to Neuman (2003: 372) a gatekeeper is ‘someone with the formal or informal authority to control access to a site’. This position usually derives from the role they fulfill in a community and the knowledge that comes along with this role. This can have positive or negative impacts on research, depending on their attitude towards the validity of the research and its value or the approach to the welfare of the people under their charge (Reeves, 2010:

317). Gate-keepers are also often potential ‘key informants’ or expert sources of information (Marshall, 1996, see also Tremblay, 1957). In my case, an additional interest in residents’ committees in Zango resulted from what I had read about their creation as a response to the evictions in Boavista. By interviewing members of residents’ committees not only did I hope to obtain relevant information about the Zango project or gain access to residents of the project, but I also intended to find out to what extent (if any) existing committees in Zango represented the committees set up in Boavista and what kind of role they were currently playing in the project in order to gain insight into the local space for citizen participation.

In the later stages of the research I planned to gain further access to residents through snowball sampling in order to conduct in-depth interviews which would help me to gain insight into the impact that their relocation to Zango had had on their lives. In addition, I intended to make use of ethnographic methods in the form of direct observation, written up in field notes, allowing me to reflect on the data I collected in an on-going fashion.

Ethical clearance for my research was obtained through the University’s Research Ethics Committee in September 2011. This clearance was valid for a year and was extended for another year upon my request in October 2012.

### **3.3 Research process**

Whilst a research project can be designed based on relatively superficial knowledge of a topic, the moment that it starts to be put into practice signals the start of a process that takes a life of its own. This process represents a complex interplay between the data that emerge from the research, the research field and the researcher him or herself. In addition, the data that emerged also led me to revisit and explore different bodies of theory in order to frame my research findings, adding to the inductive nature of the study.

The first leg of my fieldwork in Zango made me particularly aware of this interplay and of the dynamics of Zango not only as a place where or about which I sought to carry out research,

but also as a continuously changing research field or ‘space’ that is occupied and imbued by different actors, forces and relations of power (Stein, 2006). Studying Zango therefore resembled studying a moving object, something that was constantly in transition and ‘in-between’. In the next sections I discuss some of the dynamics of Zango and Angola more generally as a research field, and the ways in which this affected the research process.

### 3.3.1 Defining and delimiting the field in a context of flux

During the time that I carried out research in Zango<sup>18</sup>, the project, just as the entire city of Luanda, underwent continuous changes, both physically and spatially, but also politically and administratively. As a result, I was forced to make a number of choices with regard to the geographic and temporal boundaries of my research.

Whilst I had thought that the choice for a geographically ‘bounded’ case such as Zango would facilitate my research, I soon realized that there was in fact not just one Zango. On the one hand there was Zango the social housing project, built to compensate people for the demolition of their house by the state, the planned subject of my research. On the other hand, there was, to paraphrase Scott’s (1998: 130) work on Brasília, the ‘real’ Zango<sup>19</sup>. The real Zango in fact consisted of multiple Zango’s (and I refer to them here in the way that they are locally known): of the Zango’s of the ‘periphery’ (*Zango da periferia*), inhabited by farmers who had lived in the area long before the state started building houses; of Zango ‘of the tents’ (*Zango das tendas*), an area largely inhabited by people who were relocated from the Island of Luanda (*Ilha de Luanda*) in 2009, awaiting to be rehoused; and of the new Zango’s that started to emerge through *auto-construção* or self-help building, either state-led with the Provincial Government allotting plots of land and some construction material, but more often

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<sup>18</sup> All of my fieldwork was carried out in Luanda during various trips that took place in the period of November 2011 to June 2013, while my analysis of the project’s management is limited to the period from the start of the project until September 2012.

<sup>19</sup> James Scott noted in his study of Brasília that each social engineering intervention breeds ‘an ugly twin’. Thus, ‘the real Brasília, as opposed to the hypothetical Brasília in the planning documents, was greatly marked by resistance, subversion and political calculation’ (Scott, 1998: 130). See also Holston (1989).



informally, as fortune seekers found their way to the area, hoping that the shacks they built would one day be replaced by a house by the government.

Furthermore, Zango remained unfinished as it continued to expand during the course of my research. Whilst Zango 1 and 2 had been completed in 2007, the subsequent construction of the third and fourth phase was still on-going, as well as respective relocations to these parts of the project. In addition, two other housing projects were rising up in the area: Zango 5, located past Zango 4 along the road towards the commune of Calumbo and consisting of single story houses and small apartment blocks; and the new *Zango centralidade* or Zango ‘of the towers’ (*Zango das torres*), a project consisting of multi-story flats, built along the highway that divides Zango from the centre of the municipality of Viana. Whilst apartments in the *Zango centralidade* started being sold and rented out by the government against subsidized prices towards the end of my fieldwork in early 2013, a number of buildings had already been inhabited by residents of a building in Luanda’s inner city that was demolished because of the construction of a shopping centre.

In September 2011, just before I started my fieldwork, a new politico-administrative division for the province of Luanda and the adjacent province of Bengo was adopted which stretched out the borders of Luanda province to the south by annexing two municipalities, Icolo e Bengo and Quiçama, previously part of the adjoining Bengo province while detaching a part of the northern municipality of Cacuaco. In addition, a new municipality was created, while six of Luanda’s formerly nine municipalities were joined into a single municipality of Luanda which was given the statute of City of Luanda. (Law 29/11; see map 3). This new City was to be governed by an ‘administrative committee’ whose president went on to respond to an equally newly appointed provincial governor of Luanda (Presidential decree 277/11 of 31 October).

It is commonly known that reshuffles follow at the level of the municipalities after the nomination of a new governor in Angola, practically paralyzing them for months. Whilst the

municipal administrator of Viana, of which Zango is part, was spared<sup>20</sup>, changes did eventually take place at the level of the Provincial Government's Social Housing Programme (PHS), which was in charge of the management of Zango 1 and 2 and some land and self-help building around it. These changes incorporated an expansion of the programme from the promotion and management of social housing and self-help building to include the relocation of people, something that thus far had been the responsibility of the PRP, an entity which responded to the presidency and which had been in charge of construction in and relocations to Zango 3 and 4. I had heard about these impending changes as early as March 2012, but they only became effective after the elections of August that year (and naturally, were accompanied by the replacement of the former PHS coordinator). Whilst I still carried out research after the elections in September as well as May of the following year, I decided not to include these changes in my discussion of the project.

In sum, although the main focus of my empirical research remained with Zango's state-built social housing, the 'real' Zango was crucial in informing my analysis of the project.

### **3.3.2 Entering the field**

Since the end of the war, it has become easier to do research in Angola – or at least in the capital of Luanda. My entry into the field was facilitated by the fact that compared to foreign researchers I did not have trouble getting a visa to enter the country as I have an Angolan mother and therefore an Angolan passport. In addition, I speak Portuguese and had experience of living and working in Luanda. Still, doing research was a challenging task.

Challenges in conducting research in Angola are firstly caused by the fact that information is not readily available in the public domain, a common feature of non-democratic regimes (Barros, 2011), giving particular salience to the idea that 'knowledge is power'. Whilst the Angolan government has been making efforts to make information available, as part of efforts

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<sup>20</sup> See Jornal de Angola (2011) for an overview of the changes made by the new provincial governor Bento Bento, which includes the replacement of the entire supporting staff of the governor's office as well as all the municipal administrators of Luanda, except for those of the municipality of Cazenga and of Viana.

to be perceived as more transparent, for instance by launching websites for all government institutions in recent years, most of the information published is scarce and rarely updated. In my case, there was no official website available on Zango, or any of the other state social housing projects, where I could find information about the project such as the number of houses and inhabitants. This type of information is also not structurally included in government reports or publications, despite the estimated US\$1 billion that has been spent on social housing projects in Luanda (Jornal de Angola, 2007).

Thus, researchers often depend on the compilation of government press releases and statements as well as private sources of information. In my case these included reports on evictions in Luanda by international organizations, as well as records of private newspapers. In trying to collect more general information on urban development, housing policies and local government, the state gazette proved to be a useful source of information, allowing me to situate Zango in a legal framework. Nevertheless, I only gained access to the most relevant secondary sources during the research process through the interviewees and informants that I met with.

In view of this context, primary sources are invaluable in Angola and he who has knowledge usually knows it is worth much and will not readily share it. As a result, access to information or to people who can help you gain access to information strongly defines the research field. I sought to overcome this challenge by accepting that the ways in which I intended to obtain information were conditioned by the circumstances in which I found myself. This meant that I could not always choose who I spoke to and that neither myself nor my informants were always prepared for an interview as I would speak to people as the opportunity arose. Therefore, especially in the first stages of the research, many of the interviews I conducted took the nature of 'informal interviews', guided by memorized topic areas (Reeves, 2010: 317). Furthermore, I saw gaining access not as a single event but as an interactive and on-

going process that I needed to revisit continuously while doing research (Duke 2002, in Reeves, 2010: 322).

### **3.3.3 Access to and interactions with informants**

In a way, gaining or not gaining access to informants and the research climate in general in Angola was also indicative of the informal nature and workings of the state, as well as local power relations. Thus, in many ways, the ways in which I would or not gain access to someone was as important in terms of research data as the information I would get from someone I would get access to.

For instance, when I started my fieldwork I approached the municipal administration of Viana, as this seemed like the most appropriate government level to target in order to get authorization to work in Zango as well as to conduct interviews with key officials of the municipality and with residents' committees. To my surprise, my letter was returned to me after a week with one word written on it: 'PHS'. When I contacted the PHS office, officials on their part referred me to the PRP. Yet, in order to speak to the local PRP staff in Zango, I had to request authorization from the PRP's coordinator, and former vice-governor of Luanda, who reports directly to the President and has an office in downtown Luanda. It would take months and many visits and phone calls to get this authorization during an interview that was eventually granted to me with the PRP coordinator.

Whilst this example on the one hand shows how centralized the administration of Zango is, other examples show how informally, the central government could easily be bypassed. For instance, while letters and numerous visits to the communal administration of Calumbo as well as to local party structures did not result in any interviews being granted, within five minutes of coincidentally running into the MPLA secretary of the commune (and former communal administrator) I managed to secure an interview with him.

Indeed, informal introductions or ‘cold’ access was often more productive than going through the official channels as these often required clearance from above. Thus, although my official request at the municipal administration was not successful, I did manage to get in touch with a lower level official at the administration through an informal introduction. This official subsequently gave me access to the presidents of Zango’s residents’ committees and also became an important informant that I revisited several times over the course of my research.

A similar sequence of events followed after I submitted a formal request for an interview with the president of the José Eduardo dos Santos Foundation, who took an interest in my research. Through his personal connections, I easily managed to gain access to a number of high-level informants, which otherwise had been out of reach for me.

Gaining access may also depend on perceptions that are held of the researcher, which may be shaped by the researcher’s ‘personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 5). In my own case, I learnt that the way in which I was perceived depended on the type of informants I approached, which in turn influenced the way I was able to present myself and my work.

High-level officials would generally see me as a young woman and because of the macho culture among these powerful men not take me too seriously. I would usually play along with this role and try not to ask questions that could be seen as too critical, which could disturb the power balance between us and potential further access. Technocrats at ministries or provincial government were generally less old and I could feel that they saw me less in terms of my gender and more in terms of a fellow or at least future member of the urban upper middle-class. Like me, most of these officials would have studied abroad and they felt comfortable in discussing issues that were critical of the government.

In my interactions with lower level bureaucrats, presidents of the residents’ committees and residents of Zango on the other hand, I felt that my social class and race set me apart from my

informants. This group of informants was part of what the MPLA calls the *povo*, or the ordinary people, traditionally working class people and farmers. From the way I talked and from the fact that I was doing research it was obvious that I had been to university, which is a level of education that the average Angolan is not able to attain and therefore it is usually associated with the elites. Furthermore, whilst race does not represent a significant political issue in Angola, there is a perception that creole people or *mestiços*, such as myself, are better off. This perception is understandable because of the historical roots of *mestiços*, as we shall see in the next chapter, although it is not entirely supported by the racial make-up of the current Angolan elites. Still, many *mestiços* tend to be part of the middle class and therefore I would stand out when walking around in Zango, where the majority of the population is black.

In general terms, I learnt that it was important to present my work as non-threatening as possible: my informants were the experts and I was there to learn from them. In addition, I would emphasize that my research did not serve any agenda apart from purely academic purposes. One high-level informant went even further by warning me that my work should be “technical, not political” (former PEH coordinator, 26/3/12). Therefore, while observation formed an important part of my research I did not insist on attending meetings of residents’ committees nor for instance actual relocations of people to houses in Zango in order to avoid giving the impression that my work was political.

More specifically, one of the things that helped me to close the gap between myself and my informants was the fact that I was able to return several times to the field over the course of two years. This allowed me to build up rapport, revisit some of my informants and develop relationships of trust with them.

The main person with whom I developed this kind of relationship was Pedro, a young man to whom I was introduced by a mutual acquaintance. Pedro was a former resident of Boavista and played an active role in the Zango community and I initially saw him as a gate-keeper and

potential key informant. After my second time in the field in March 2012 I found that myself somewhat stuck in terms of gaining access to residents in the project. Interviews with current presidents of residents' committees had resulted in interesting data and referrals to former presidents, but not so much to 'average' residents as the relationship between them proved to be more complicated than I had thought. I tried to compensate for this by mobilizing my personal contacts, which only resulted in a handful of interviews. It was around this time that I met Pedro and I asked him whether he could help me to gain access to more residents in the project.

During the visits that followed in the months of May and September of 2012 and my final fieldwork in May 2013 my access to residents improved significantly as Pedro mobilized his personal network to recruit potential interviewees. This way I was able to interview residents from all four phases of Zango, whereas if I had relied solely on snow-balling my sample might had been more limited. In addition, not only did Pedro help me to gain access to residents and share with me his personal history and insights into the project, he also personally accompanied me on the interviews which over time we started preparing and evaluating together. This greatly contributed to situating, validating or simply making sense of the narratives I was able to collect.

The interviews I conducted were generally semi-structured to unstructured of nature, allowing me to play the role of unknowing researcher and be flexible and responsive to any issues people brought up themselves (Bryman, 2001: 314-315). Questions would depend on the kind of interviewee. Thus, interviews with government officials tended to be exploratory and revolve around their knowledge of the project in the initial stages of the project. In later stages, as I became more acquainted with the project, they served more of a validating purpose. In the case of the presidents of the residents' committees, the first half of the meeting would generally be guided by questions about factual data regarding the areas represented by the presidents in order to allow for the establishment of rapport, while most of the issues

discussed in the second half would be raised by the presidents themselves. Interviews with residents would revolve around questions about their relocation to the project and their experience of living there. In the last stage of my research, I used a basic questionnaire with open ended questions related to their prior residencies and cause or motivation for moving to Zango as well as their perceptions of the project to guide these interviews. In total, 70 informants were interviewed for this study, some of whom were revisited several times.

Consent to interviews was always obtained verbally and few interviews were recorded in order to make respondents feel at ease. Instead, I made detailed notes of the interviews, which I would usually process the same day together with my field notes. Interviews and conversations would vary in length and nature, depending on the informant, but all were carried out in Luanda and in Portuguese, the national language of Angola. Six officially recognized African languages are spoken in Angola, of which the three main ones correspond with the country's three main ethnic groups: the Ovimbundu, whose language is Umbundu; the Mbundu, whose language is Kimbundu; and the Bakongo, whose language is Kikongo. In Luanda, Portuguese has always been widely spoken because Portuguese settlement was concentrated here. This has been reinforced in post-colonial times by rapid urbanization and the impact of television, as well as the fact that the language has been promoted by the post-independence (Portuguese speaking) government as an instrument of national unity, which made it the exclusive medium of instruction in schools and in the military. By 1996, Portuguese was the second most widely spoken language in the country, after Kimbundu, and almost half of Angolan children were being brought up to speak Portuguese as their first language (Hodges, 2004: 23-26). Thus, although many residents of Zango are originally from other provinces of the country, I had no difficulties in communicating with them in the Portuguese language.

Notes and transcriptions of those interviews that were recorded were made in Portuguese, only translating those citations into English that I used for the dissertation. Field notes on the



other hand were written up in English. All translations from Portuguese from written sources in the thesis are mine, unless otherwise specified. Informants are referred to with their (upon request fictitious) first name or with the capacity in which I interviewed them.

### **3.4 Research as content**

By ‘studying up’ (Nader, 1972) my interactions with government officials revealed interesting insights about the workings of the different tiers of the state administration and the gaps between them. In Angola, there are no ‘state housing practitioners’ as defined by Charlton (2012) in her study on RDP housing in South Africa as a group of bureaucrats who ‘conceptualise, implement, administer, evaluate and pronounce on the outcomes of the program’. Instead, decisions with regard to state-led housing development are made on a highly centralized level, with tasks that are subsequently delegated to a handful of senior public servants within special agencies that are directly accountable to the presidency.

Some of these high-level public servants turned out to be political appointees with little (willingness to share) practical knowledge about the workings of the project. On the other hand, representatives of special agencies such as the PRP were strikingly knowledgeable and professional although they seemed to be drowned in work and therefore difficult to gain access to. However, the eventual interviews I managed to conduct would be informative and to the point, although often, and especially in the case of the PRP coordinator, continuously interrupted by work phone calls and requests.

When walking into the PRP’s or the state oil company Sonangol’s offices, one is welcomed by cool air-conditioning and pretty receptionists. Step into the building of a Ministry or the Provincial Government, or worse, that of a Municipal or Communal Government and *confusão* generally awaits you. Yet, my interactions with Ministry and Provincial Government officials and Municipal and Communal Government officials pointed to the existence of an important gap between them.

Despite the increasing emphasis that is placed on the recruitment of *quadros*, or trained professionals, in the Angolan government, resulting in the emergence of a new generation of technocrats at the level of ministries and provincial governments, in practice these technocrats are largely side-lined. Thus, officials at the Ministry of Urbanism and Construction, the Provincial Institute for Urban Planning, the Provincial Directorate for Social Housing and the National Institute of Housing whom I expected to have been at least minimally involved in policy making confirmed that the management of the Zango project side-lined many of, what formally would be considered as, the designated entities to be involved in the project of the nature of that of Zango.

Informally, many of these officials would express their frustration about the lack of coordination between the various institutions involved in housing and urban planning, the centralized nature and the lack of consultation with regard to policy formulation and decision making as well as the lack of information on the execution of resulting projects. I would sometimes be surprised and even uncomfortable about the level of discontent that was voiced by these officials, sometimes while still sitting in their offices. All of them were relatively young and well educated and while often MPLA card carrying members, they did not seem to feel a deep-seated loyalty towards the party, rather using membership as a way to gain entry into the public service, while often setting up private businesses on the side. As such, they had no interest in even pretending to defend or promote a project that they did not feel part of. Interviews with these officials often turned into long informal conversations, without much external interruption.

On the other hand, lower level officials at municipal or communal government are usually less educated and operate under very restrained technical and financial conditions. As one informant said about communal administrations: “there, they still work on the ‘tac-tac’ (gesture of typing on an old typewriter) (Field notes, 7/9/12). Indeed, as I learnt from my observations and interactions with officials of the administrations of Viana and Calumbo,

their way of working has not changed much since the end of the war or the first years of independence for that matter. These so-called ‘interface bureaucrats’, or the officials who have direct contact with the citizens, (Bierschenk, 2010: 4), are rarely subject to government reshuffles and are therefore well-known amongst most residents, who usually refer to them by their first name. They were very well informed about the ‘real’ Zango and relatively open to sharing this knowledge.

Interviews and conversations with presidents of residents’ committees in Zango on the other hand showed that another layer of local administration could be distinguished which functioned in a grey area between the state and the people, challenging my conception of residents’ committees as representing possible spaces for citizen participation. Making sense of these committees involved a process of tracing back their historical and legal origins, something which is discussed in chapter six.

### **3.5 Limitations**

After nearly two years of studying Zango, I knew that there was still much about the project that I did not know. Much information was probably still out there because the informants I had spoken to had not been willing or interested in sharing it with me, or because I simply had not met them. However, I thought that I had covered at least the basics in terms of the projects’ history.

I was therefore surprised to be told by a young architecture student during my last fieldtrip in May 2013 that the first phase of Zango had been designed by an Angolan architect who was teaching at Agostinho Neto University. I had never so much as heard the architect’s name and I decided I had to meet with him to find out what his role had been in the project. The architecture student sent his professor an email on my behalf to which he received no reply. In class, the student was told that he would only agree to meet with me after I submitted an official request for permission to the head of the department of architecture. I promptly did so

and was promised to be called back, but in the absence of a phone call I went back a week later to find out whether I had been given a response. The response was positive, but I could not be assisted with actually setting up the interview with the architect and the department's head secretary was unwilling to share his contact details with me. Another professor who was in the same office while I was speaking to the secretary sympathized with me and passed me the architect's phone number when the secretary was attending to someone else. This allowed me to get in touch with him directly and he agreed to meet with me at 8 am on a Wednesday morning at the university. I felt elated, but at the same time cautious. Indeed, on the day of the meeting I woke up to find a text message from him to say that he was not feeling well and that he would be travelling the week after. Despite several attempts to get in touch with him, until today I have never spoken or with him and I have not been able to uncover what his role was in the project's design.

This last example shows how the nature of Angolan the state on the one hand represents opportunities when doing research, but at the same time also limitations. Had information about Zango's design been publically available I would have been able to contact the architect in a much earlier stage of the research. Instead, I depended on the goodwill of a number of individuals to circumvent formal procedures and gain access to others. While, this worked successfully in most cases, it was bound to fail in others.

Therefore, none of the observations or conclusions put forward in this thesis can be seen as definitive or conclusive. They provide at best a snapshot of a social reality as I was able to find and interpret it through the access I had.

Finally, while I deal in this thesis with state-led development in *Angola* my empirical work has been conducted in *Luanda* and more specifically in *Zango*. The slippage between the different levels of analysis in my case may lead critical readers to question the generalization of my research findings. Yet, since political power is concentrated in Luanda I argue that it is worth studying the workings of the state at the city level, all the more so because so far many

studies of Angola have been limited to the study of the central government only. Apart from opening up possible comparative research avenues with other cities across the continent, the thesis may also contribute to comparisons between the study of state-led development and the local state in urban versus rural contexts in Angola.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have sought to describe the practice of doing research on Zango as a case study. I describe this practice as an iterative process in which I had to be conscious of Zango and Angola more generally as a research ‘field’ and of myself as a researcher. These dynamics influenced the ways that I gained access to and interacted with my informants and turned access into an interactive and on-going process that I revisited continuously while doing research.

Recurrent stays in the field and the relationships I developed with informants greatly contributed to the ways in which I was able to situate and make sense of the research data I collected.

The research process also helped me to gain a better understanding of the different tiers of administration in Angola and their workings. Thus, my interactions with and observations of high-level officials working within special agencies, senior technocrats working in regular state institutions such as line ministries and provincial government, lower-level or interface bureaucrats and residents’ committees and their respective categorization directly informed research content.

As such, my reflection on the complex, messy and various nature of the research process does not end here, but it represents a constant and integral part of the analysis that is presented in this thesis.

#### **4. From colonialism to war: the politics of MPLA post-colonial state-building**

*“The capital is not the country [...], but what is realized here, what is done here, what we are able to conquer here, will necessarily have repercussions in the entire country.”* (Agostinho Neto in February 1975, cited in Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 117).

##### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I seek to provide a historical background to the analysis of post-war state-led development in Angola that forms the core of this thesis. In order to understand the dynamics of this development, I argue that it is important to understand the nature of the Angolan state and how this nature is embedded in the country’s historical, political and economic context.

Against the backdrop of a history of the city of Luanda, I discuss three different periods of Angola’s history of state-building. Firstly, I discuss the country’s colonial history, with a particular focus on the period of late colonialism, as it was only then that Portuguese colonialism effectively took off. Paradoxically, this period also heralded the demise of colonial rule and in this context I discuss the struggle for liberation and ‘revolutionary legitimacy’ (Heimer, 1979) between Angola’s liberation movements in the transition to independence. In this context, I focus specifically on how this struggle was won by the MPLA in Luanda.

I then move on to a discussion of the period of independence, which was marked by an on-going civil war between the MPLA and its main rival UNITA. With Cuban assistance, the MPLA sought to build a Marxist-Leninist one party state, while it continued to compete with UNITA to gain control and legitimacy as a government in a ‘war for people’ (Pearce, 2011). This changed in the early 1990s when the MPLA won the country’s first legislative elections

after formally adopting multi-partyism. This allowed it to consolidate its power over the state, while increasing oil revenues allowed for this power to be simultaneously privatized and concentrated in the presidency, contributing to the emergence of a parallel state.

## **4.2 Portuguese colonialism**

Many historians see Portuguese colonialism as a backward form of colonialism compared to that of other colonial powers. The nature of Portuguese colonialism has been intimately linked to Portugal's own underdevelopment and the nature of rule in the mainland, which became increasingly authoritarian after the fall of the first Republic in 1910. In the following sections I will first review the first centuries of Portuguese presence in Angola, after which I will turn to the period of late colonialism, which represents a time of rapid economic growth, urbanization and development, but also a time during which the armed struggle for independence unfolded. Central to the outcome of this war were the events that took place in Luanda, after the fall of the Portuguese dictatorial regime in April 1974.

### **4.2.1 Building a colony**

The earliest inhabitants of Angola were nomadic hunters and gatherers. From 1300 onwards Bantu peoples started to establish themselves in Angola, forming and founding numerous tribes and independent kingdoms. The first Bantu kingdom, known as the Kongo kingdom, was founded in the fourteenth century along the Congo river in the north of Angola. When the first Portuguese arrived in the fifteenth century, during the era of Portugal's great discoveries, they made contact with this kingdom. This signified the start of flourishing trade relations, namely in slaves (Wheeler and Pélissier, 1971: ch. 1).

Over the following three centuries, Portugal's relations with Angola were dominated by the slave trade and few Portuguese settlers lived in the colony. Luanda was founded in 1576 as slave trade expanded to the south of the Congo river to meet the increasing need for labour in

Portuguese plantations across the Atlantic Ocean in Brazil. Soon after, south of Luanda a port was opened in Benguela, followed by one further south towards the border with what now is known as Namibia, called Moçâmedes (after independence called Namibe). These coastal cities came to be effectively ruled by the 'Afro Portuguese', a powerful group of African families of Portuguese descent who dominated the slave trade<sup>21</sup> as well as the church, farming and the administration and military at the local level and over time came to form an urban middle class of *assimilados* (Newitt, 2007: 50).<sup>22</sup>

Until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, Luanda was mostly referred to as São Paulo or São Paulo de Loanda, after the first Portuguese who had set foot in the bay of Luanda, Paulo Dias de Novais. After the city was liberated from the Dutch, who had occupied it from 1641 to 1648, on 15 August, Assumption day, it was renamed São Paulo de Assunção de Luanda (Amaral, 1968: 39). Thus, while never planned to become a capital, by then it had already come to represent the colony's centre of power and over time the city became the dominant cultural, political and economic centre of the country. In 1900, about 20,000 people inhabited Luanda – from 6,000 in 1846 – but it was still considered to be 'creole – an African city, patrolled by African police, protected by an African army, repaired and waited on by African workman [...] with a few elements of European life' (Wheeler and Pélissier, 1971: 68- 70).

Although effective occupation had been achieved through the levying of local taxes and the recruitment of (forced) labour, in many areas of the interior the Portuguese governed through indirect rule. According to Clarence-Smith (1983: 172) in 1910 probably not more than a

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<sup>21</sup> According to Newitt (2007: 28) from 1600 until the second half of the nineteenth century about two million slaves, who were sourced from African kingdoms in the interior were exported from the ports of Angola.

<sup>22</sup> According to the Angolan anthropologist Sandra Roque (2009: 30, note 31): 'With regard to the highly heterogeneous group that would come in the XX century to be termed *assimilados*, designation varies depending on the historical period and on the perspective of the author'. Thus, Miller (1988) who studies the slave trade in Angola refers to them as 'Luso-African', while Birmingham (2002) uses the term 'old creoles'. Other scholars who study Angola's modern history, such as Messiant (2006), refer to the group as 'old' *assimilados* to distinguish them from the 'new' *assimilados* who reached this status under the official policy of assimilation that was adopted in the twentieth century.



tenth of the total land area of Angola was under direct Portuguese control. Traditional law continued to be applied in the local courts and all public and private business was carried on in the local languages (Newitt, 2007: 45). This period of Portuguese colonialism, in particular the nineteenth century up until the early twentieth century, is thus also referred to as the 'liberal period' (Marques Guedes, 2003: 40-42). Essentially, Angola was little more than a site of resource extraction, ruled from the distant mainland.

It was only after the Portuguese monarchy was toppled and a Republic was instated in 1910, that Portugal adopted a particular policy in relation to its 'overseas provinces' and that the shift to the imposition of effective central government became definitive. Each Province was to be administered in accordance with its own 'state of civilization', which was defined by the degree of effective occupation of the territory and the degree of civilization of its inhabitants. Thus, the *Carta Orgânica da Província de Angola* of 1917 divided the country up in administrative districts which were subjected to either civil or military rule, depending on whether or not the area had already been 'pacified'. The administrative boundaries within the districts were drawn in accordance with territorial divisions between the white and assimilated and the native (*indígena*) population (Marques Guedes, 2003: 42-43).

In the cities, a model of 'private administration' (*administração privativa*) was proposed through municipal councils and commissions as well as local boards, starting in Luanda, Benguela and Moçâmedes (where the largest numbers of white settlers resided). Members of these entities could only include and be elected by those that were considered Portuguese citizens, excluding the non-assimilated native population. The Governor-General of the province was the one that decided over the attribution of citizenship to *indígenas* (Marques Guedes, 2003: 46-47). Four conditions had to be met for *indígenas* to acquire the right to citizenship: knowing how to read and write the Portuguese language; having the necessary means to sustain themselves and their families; displaying good behaviour as attested by the administrative authority of the area of residence; and divesting themselves of the usual habits

and customs of their race (art. 259 of the *Carta Orgânica da Província de Angola*, as cited by Marques Guedes, 2003: 46, note 29).

Although the Republic also produced new laws and regulations that brought certain reforms in politics, religion, education, labour and the economy as well as investments in the economy and infrastructure, in practice these were often not followed and abuses related to taxation, forced labour and land alienation continued to exist (Clarence-Smith, 1983: 176-187). Thus, Wheeler and Pélissier (1971: 111) conclude that while 'Angola was given greater political and economic autonomy [...] the undercurrent was in fact the opposite direction'. Governor-Generals (from 1921 onwards High-Commissioners) acquired 'quasi-omnipotent powers' which they made sure to use (*ibidem*: 113).

Of the seven different highest officials that governed Angola in the period between 1910 and 1926, José Norton de Matos, who served as Governor-General between 1912 and 1915 and High-Commissioner between 1921 and 1923, is the most notorious. Under his command, *assimilados* were increasingly excluded and marginalized from economic and political life and their growing protest and resistance was countered by fierce political repression (Chilcote, 1972). It was also under his rule that several laws on urban structure and planning were produced, providing for the creation of *bairros indígenas* on the outskirts of the country's major urban centres where the native population was to live, thereby laying the foundations for racially segregated urban development (S. Roque, 2009: 55-56).

In 1926, Portugal's First Republic was overthrown by a military coup and eventually substituted by António Salazar's dictatorial *Estado Novo* (New State). Under this regime, Portugal's grip over its colonies tightened even more. The Colonial Act of 1930 officially established the statute of the *indigenato*, dividing the population into two separate juridical categories. Only those blacks and *mestiços* that were considered to be sufficiently civilized could become legal citizens, a status that the whites automatically acquired, irrespective of

their level of education or civilization (Bender, 2004: 149-155, also Wheeler and Pélissier, 1971: 130-136).<sup>23</sup>

In the 1940s, a coffee boom fuelled spectacular economic growth in Angola which culminated in the 1960s, a decade which, in the words of the Angolan historian Maria da Conceição Neto (2000 cited by Robson and Roque, 2001: 27), ‘changed the face of the country more quickly and profoundly than all the previous decades of the century’. Coffee remained the most valuable agricultural export until independence, together with products such as cotton, sisal, and sugar constituting over 60 percent of the country’s exports, although this declined to less than 45 percent by 1970 as exports of mineral products such as diamonds, iron ore and oil grew (Whitaker, 1979: 206). The country’s economic boom was particularly felt in Luanda, where more than 56% of total urban civil construction in the country and more than 62% of construction in the main cities of the country<sup>24</sup> took place between 1945 and 1965 (Amaral, 1968: 106-107; Teixeira de Sampayo, Novais-Ferreira and de Almeida Santos Jr., 1973: 133).

In each decade from the 1940s onwards the total population of Luanda doubled, representing more than half of the country’s total urban population by 1970 (see figure 4.1). During this time, Luanda became known as the Paris of Africa: ‘no longer that forgotten city where pioneers converge in search of fortunes’<sup>25</sup>, but a destination in its own, attracting migrants from the mainland as well as from the country’s rural areas (Monteiro, 1973). Robson and Roque (2001: 27), contrast the 1960s to previous times, in which migratory movements to Luanda were more the result of the flight from recruitment to forced contract work, or the

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<sup>23</sup> Because the policy combined segregation with assimilation, it is referred to as ‘selective assimilation’ (Wheeler and Pélissier, 1971) or ‘tendentiously assimilationist’ (Messiant, 1989). In 1950, only 0,7% of over 4 million blacks, who represented the majority of the Angolan population, had achieved *assimilado* status (Bender, 2004: 151). Little progress was made until the abolishment of the *indigenato* in 1961.

<sup>24</sup> The main urban centres of Angola at the time were: Luanda, Huambo, Lobito, Benguela, Lubango, Malanje, Silva Porto (now Bié) and Moçâmedes (now Namibe).

<sup>25</sup> Undated copy of *Cartaz* magazine from the 1960s with a special on Luanda as ‘the great city’ (*Luanda. A grande cidade*) shared by Aaron de Grassi.

result of the contract itself (that brought to the capital city many workers for public services such as the port, the railway and municipal services), while from 1961 onwards migration to the city became a result of attraction to the city, with families of those already settled in the city helping the integration of new arrivals.

**Fig. 4.1 Population of Luanda, 1930-1970<sup>26</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>1940</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>
<b>White population</b>	6,008	8,944	20,710	55,767	126,233
<b>Mestiço population</b>	5,557	6,175	9,755	13,593	39,255
<b>Black population</b>	39,001	45,844	111,112	155,325	314,879
<b>Total population</b>	50,588	61,028	141,647	224,540	480,613
<b>Percentage of total urban population</b>	45,94%	47,46%	57,33%	58,01%	65,18%

Source: Cahen (1989: 204).

#### **4.2.2 Late colonialism and the struggle for independence**

With rapid urban growth also came an expansion of slums or *musseques*<sup>27</sup> where those immigrants came to live for whom there was no space in what was increasingly becoming a white city. While at the start of the century blacks had inhabited all parts of Luanda, by the 1960s they had been pushed out of the city's centre. Administratively, the municipality of Luanda was divided in three wards or *bairros* (see figure 4.2). The first *bairro* represented the planned 'white town' as it accommodated only 19% of the population, but almost 47% of the whites of Luanda. Basic services and overall urban management generally did not reach beyond this *bairro*. The other two *bairros* housed the rest of the population, mirroring the

<sup>26</sup> Like most scholars, I follow the colonial census language which distinguishes between 'whites', 'blacks' and 'mestiços'.

<sup>27</sup> The word *musseque* is derived from the Kimbundu language, in which 'mu' means place and 'seke' sand, in order to refer to the sandy grounds of Luanda.

racial dichotomy between the white ‘city of asphalt’ and the black *musseques* that had been introduced under the rule of Norton de Matos (Pélissier, 1978: 338-339).

While urban planning had been on the agenda since the early 1940s, this was initially mainly driven by aesthetic motives (Magalhães and Gonçalves, 2009; Milheiro and Dias, 2009). Thus, throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, several master plans for Luanda were drawn up but it was not until 1957 that an aerial survey was actually carried out as a basis for such a plan (Mourão, 2006: 278-279). In practice, the municipal government could not keep up with the growing demand for housing and due to the lack of financial and administrative capacity, its work would usually be limited to the a-priori recognition of illegally built neighbourhoods in the city (Amaral, 1968: 98-99; also Bailey, 1968: 405-407).

Fig. 4.2 Composition of the population of Luanda, by administrative *bairros*, in 1960 (1 - whites; 2 - mestiços; 3 - blacks)



Source: Amaral (1968: 64).

In the face of the rapid expansion of the *musseques* and growing and increasingly radicalizing clandestine anti-colonial political activity, from the 1950s onwards city planning became an issue of national security. Ways had to be found to control the population in the *musseques* more effectively in order to guarantee the security of the city's white residents. In this context, Mourão (2006: 281) speaks of the installation of a dual system of administration in the city: of the municipal administration on the one hand, and of the secret police on the other, which kept extensive records on all movements in the *musseques*.

With the installation of the Portuguese political police, the PIDE (International Police for the Defence of the State) in Angola in 1957 this system of control was consolidated, allowing for a clamp-down on anti-colonial political activity. This activity mainly consisted of small groups of intellectuals and students who met secretly in the *musseques* of Luanda and other cities in the country to discuss colonialism and its violent demise. In parallel to these meetings, Angolan nationalists had started organizing in Lisbon, where a number of *mestiços* and *assimilados* went to obtain their university degrees. However, after the PIDE clamp-down many prominent leaders of the nationalist network were imprisoned, pushed underground or into exile (Guimarães, 2001: 38-41).

By this time, two different liberation movements could be distinguished: the MPLA, largely formed by the urban *mestiços* and *assimilados* from the Mbundu dominated area in and around Luanda, whose leadership went into exile in Congo-Brazzaville; and the UPA (later to become FNLA ) which represented the Bakongo people from the north of Angola. Operating from neighbouring Zaire (later to become the Democratic Republic of the Congo), UPA's leader Holden Roberto was already a well-known and connected figure and as a movement, compared with the MPLA, UPA was relatively well organized and established (Guimarães, 2001: 48-50).

As a wave of decolonization swept over the African continent, Angola experienced two violent uprisings in February in Luanda and in March 1961 in the north of Angola, claimed by the MPLA and UPA respectively. This marked the official start of the armed fight for liberation. However, Portugal retaliated forcefully, not only militarily but also by embarking on a strategy of 'counter-insurgency': it opened up the colony to foreign capital in order to stimulate economic growth, it revoked the statute of the *indigenato* and passed reforms in the area of labour and education to achieve greater development and integration of black Angolans in society. This way, it aimed to win the hearts and minds of the population, discredit the nationalist guerrilla and strengthen Portugal's hold over the country (Heimer, 1979: 12-13).

Yet, there was no stopping to the struggle that unfolded and despite the fact that according to most observers the MPLA did not organize the 1961 Luanda uprising due to the relatively weak organization of the movement at the time 'the effect of that action, after the MPLA claimed it for itself, was overwhelming' (Guimarães, 2001: 53). According to Heimer (1979: 28-29), from about 1964 onwards the MPLA's profile became more defined as it managed to mobilize support both in Luanda and other cities as well as in the oil-exclave of Cabinda and in the East of the country. Under the influence of African countries that had adopted socialist models, the movement's ideological orientation became more revolutionary and it started drawing support from these as well as eastern European countries.

In the following years, the MPLA set up six military fronts in various parts of the country, creating pockets of liberated areas, but the Portuguese fought back and by 1974 the MPLA was militarily severely weakened. Moreover, internally it suffered from a leadership crisis with three different factions vying for power: the 'Presidential Wing' led by Agostinho Neto, the official MPLA leader; the intellectual 'Active Revolt' led by Joaquim Pinto de Andrade that opposed what was seen as the 'autocratic presidential rule' of Neto; and the 'Eastern



Revolt' led by Daniel Chipenda, who was in charge of the MPLA guerrilla troops in the East of the country (Heimer, 1979).

When a coup took place in Portugal in April 1974, bringing down the salazarist regime and making independence suddenly a realistic option, the MPLA seemed in no condition to face the competition represented not only by the FNLA, but also by the emergence of a third liberation movement, UNITA. This movement was led by ex-UPA cadre Jonas Savimbi and brought together mainly Ovimbundu people from the central highlands.

In the period that followed the coup, the provisional military government in Portugal released political prisoners and authorized Angolans to organize, assemble, and speak freely for the first time ever, which led to a plethora of white, black, and multiracial political parties to burst upon the scene. Yet, according to Marcum (1978: 243), the over 300,000 whites in Angola, 'long accustomed to Lisbon's centralist, authoritarian rule [...] unlike their Rhodesian counterparts, lacked the political experience, audacity, and organization with which to assert a unilateral independence'. The Portuguese leadership therefore decided that only those three liberation movements that had gained 'revolutionary legitimacy' by fighting the Salazar regime were recognized as legitimate representatives of the Angolan people (Heimer, 1979: 52).

In January 1975, a transitional government for Angola was signed into being in the Portuguese town of Alvor by the Portuguese government and the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA and the date for independence was set for 11 November of the same year. From then onwards, an 'electoral campaign in a broad sense' started in which each movement tried to secure its traditional strongholds and mobilize wider sympathies and support, initially in view of the elections for a Constituent Assembly as part of the Alvor agreement but also 'for any other situation that might arise', making it increasingly clear that a peaceful transition to an independent state in which power was shared between the three would not be achieved (Heimer, 1979: 61). Thus, while political mobilization initially took place though the

organization of mass meetings, parades and neighbourhood activities, the use of mass media and posters/wall inscriptions and the creation of each movement's own women's and youth league, labour union, it did not take long before the contours of a civil war appeared (Heimer, 1979: 61-62).

Crucial for the MPLA's military and political supremacy upon independence was its co-optation of *poder popular* or 'people's power', representing a myriad of urban grassroots organizations that had emerged during the struggle for liberation (Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 49-50). Not only did this contribute to strengthening its urban social base, it also allowed for the creation of armed militia which functioned to counter increasing attacks by the FNLA to MPLA positions in Luanda (Heimer, 1979: 67-68). On the other hand, this co-optation is illustrative of the early signs of authoritarianism within the MPLA leadership and it had a profound limiting impact on grassroots activism, aspects that are generally understudied in accounts of the country's liberation struggle as they are often biased in favour of the MPLA.<sup>28</sup> However, as we will see below and in more detail in chapter 6, the MPLA's handling of *poder popular* went on to reshape (urban) local governance and it continues to define people's political behaviour and relationship to the party until today.

For the purpose of the present argument, it suffices to point out that as the MPLA gained strength, a political solution for independence started to seem less viable than ever. Consequently, more and more support was drawn from abroad. Here, perceptions of the FNLA as a champion of anti-communism and a bulwark against Soviet expansion contributed to it receiving support from the US while the MPLA, which symbolized the struggle against capitalist imperialism and neo-colonialism, started to receive increased support from Eastern European countries (Heimer, 1979: 69-70).

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<sup>28</sup> An example of the latter is *Angola in the frontline* written by Michael Wolfers and Jane Bergerol (1983), who were, in the words of Lara Pawson (2007: 4-5), MPLA 'devotees' that worked closely with the MPLA leadership in this period. In general, as Gleijeses (2002: 251) notes, few scholarly works are available that shed light on the events that took place in the period towards independence in 1975.

In July 1975, the MPLA managed to take hold of the capital through a combined action of its army and *poder popular* militia and by early September, the transitional government had collapsed and the MPLA controlled the capital, 11 out of 16 district capitals and virtually the entire coastal area, including the oil exclave of Cabinda. Yet, this triggered more support by the West for the FNLA and UNITA, the latter which until then had been very weak militarily, started to receive support both US as well as South African support (Heimer, 1979: 75-76). In the face of a growing counteroffensive, with the FNLA and UNITA taking over the entire southern part of the country by mid-November, it was only thanks to an increase in Soviet arms supplies and the last-minute arrival of thousands of Cuban troops that the MPLA was able to secure its hold on the capital, allowing it to unilaterally proclaim the People's Republic of Angola on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1975 (Hodges, 1976: 55-56).<sup>29</sup> By then, about 90% of the Portuguese settlers had left the country, taking all of their belongings with them.<sup>30</sup>

#### **4.3 Post-colonial state-building**

Despite the MPLA's military victory upon independence, it soon faced major challenges in governing the country in a context of economic collapse and continuing military conflict. While political debate had thrived in Angola throughout 1975 and 1976 through the diverse organizations of *poder popular*, Birmingham (1978: 554-555) argues that 'gradually the need was felt to curb some of the freedom of rhetoric and establish a more unitary ideological driving force', in other words, to move from a liberation movement towards the creation of a 'party' with a 'correct' political line.

This perceived need was a response to what was seen as the emergence of a countermovement, centred around Nito Alves, who had been appointed as Minister of International Administration after independence in a bid to institutionalize *poder popular*

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<sup>29</sup> It is important to note here that the FNLA and UNITA simultaneously proclaimed the Democratic People's Republic of Angola in Huambo, although this state was never internationally recognized.

<sup>30</sup> This is vividly described by Kapuscinski (2001). According to Sogge (1992: 7), of the estimated 335,000 Portuguese civilians in 1974, less than 30,000 remained in 1976.

under the MPLA's direct control. Alves was seen as using *poder popular* to strengthen his own position, which led to the creation of a commission of enquiry to investigate factionalism within the movement. This commission was led by a member of the Polit Bureau, called José Eduardo dos Santos, who went on to become President of the MPLA and the Republic after the death of Agostinho Neto in 1979 (Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 212). When in early May of 1977 the results of the enquiry confirmed the accusations of factionalism, leading to the expulsion of Alves, as well as his ally José van Duném, from the Central Committee of the MPLA the stage for a *coup d'état* had been set, an attempt at which took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May. In response to this attempt, a massive rectification campaign was ordered by the MPLA leadership to purge the party from possible enemies and centralize party control over state and society.

The need for MPLA control was equally felt in face of the mounting challenge to its rule by UNITA. While the FNLA had largely crumbled after independence, UNITA had started to occupy significant parts of the country with American and South African support to the point of establishing a bush capital, called Jamba, in the south-east of the country, near the border with Namibia, thereby effectively creating another state within the state (Pearce, 2012: 15).

In the next sections I will discuss how the MPLA under these conditions sought to build a Marxist-Leninist party state, after which I discuss the transition from one-partyism to formal multi-party rule.

#### **4.3.1 Building a party state in times of war**

After the attempted coup in May 1977, in December the MPLA officially changed from a movement into the MPLA-PT, which was followed by a massive rectification campaign followed to purge the party from possible enemies and centralize party control over state and society. Starting in Luanda, followed by other large towns, groups of urban party cells were built up. By December 1980, rectification had covered the entire country and party

membership had dropped significantly: from 110,000 to 31,098 members, 15,294 of whom were party militants and 15,804 who were aspiring members (Wolfers and Bergerol, 1983: 168-169).

After this, the conditions seemed to be in place to take up the question of people's power again, this time under strict party control. Hence, the year of 1980 was declared 'Year of the First Extraordinary Congress and of the Creation of the People's Assembly' (Wolfers and Bergerol, 1983: 185). The Revolutionary Council that had functioned until then was replaced by a People's Assembly as the supreme organ of the state. People's Assemblies were also to be established at the provincial, municipal and communal level, allowing for 'greater administrative decentralization of the tasks necessary for the constant improvement of the conditions of life of the People' (Law 7/81 of 4 September). However, elections for these assemblies were entirely directed from above and concentrated in Luanda and the country's other main coastal cities, according to Bhagavan (1986: 37) because of the continued attacks by the South Africans and UNITA in the central and southern provinces and the fact that no census had been held since 1970, complicating the compilation of electoral rolls.

As a result of the rectification process, party membership became more exclusive. Only a minority of the party membership was assigned to full time fully paid party work and corresponding privileges, while the great majority carried on with their usual work as peasants, industrial workers or office employees. For this latter group, party work was unpaid work that had to be done in addition to earning their livelihood. They received no privileges through party membership; rather they had to take on extra duties and responsibilities for the sake of their political commitment (Bhagavan, 1986: 36).<sup>31</sup> Despite the decline in formal party membership, Neto (2001: 44-45) notes that this did not mean a decrease in political

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<sup>31</sup> Still, while party membership was not in itself sufficient for access to certain opportunities (such as employment, higher education, and housing) it became a condition for access: this led to greater social benefits for some party members (Neto, 2001: 44).

mobilization as such. Now that the state and party were considered to be one, there was simply no longer a distinction between the two. Thus, mass organizations not only functioned as ‘conveyor belts’ for directives from the top of the party, but they were also used to carry out campaigns of literacy, sanitation and vaccination.

As in many other African newly independent countries who had chosen socialism as their ideological camp, the main pillars of state-building during these first years of independence were political education and state-led development or ‘national reconstruction’, which mainly involved the aim of recuperating pre-independence production levels. As noted earlier, the conditions under which the MPLA had taken over the colonial state were precarious and Cuban military assistance had been crucial to maintain its hold over the capital. After independence, the MPLA government set out to establish its control over the country’s entire territory and with Cuban support it took hold of cities in areas formerly controlled by UNITA. With the help of Cuban ‘comrades’, it also started rolling out a series of programmes in the social sector. Thus, as Pearce (2011: 131) notes, during this time the MPLA built its legitimacy on its ability to construct a state and Cuban assistance was crucial to this project of state-building.

According to George (2005: 158-160), Cuban civilian internationalists were involved in 35 areas of activity, divided into three branches: medical, teaching and technical (in particular construction). Following independence, large medical teams were posted to hospitals in Luanda and clinics were opened across the country to provide basic treatment to people living in remote areas. By 1978, three-quarters of all doctors working in Angola were Cuban. In the area of education, cooperation started in 1977 and mainly consisted of Cuba offering scholarships to Angolans and sending around 2000 teachers (of all levels) to the country.

The third and largest branch of non-military assistance to Angola was the technical aid given to reconstruct infrastructure and build new houses for people in the cities (George, 2005: 160-161). This formed a particular area of concern in Luanda, where the population had reached almost one million in 1980 as a result of a massive influx of exiled returnees from Zaire<sup>32</sup> as well as migrants from the countryside (Robson and Roque, 2001: 29-31).

With independence, the colonial technicians who had mapped out and administered the country's land cadastre and housing registry left, and in some cases, destroyed or took maps and registry information with them. The MPLA government sought to solve this by nationalizing all land and property upon independence. In Luanda, some efforts were also made towards the rehabilitation of Cazenga, the largest *musseque* of Luanda and an important cradle of anti-colonial activism, in a bid to honour the MPLA's pre-independence social base. In addition, land allotment was promoted in order to facilitate self-help building. However, these efforts were generally short lived and state-built housing, with assistance from Cuba and to a lesser extent Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union became the main government practice (Mendes, 1988).<sup>33</sup> With Cuban technical assistance, a master plan was also drawn up for the city of Luanda and in the period of 1977 to 1987, about 3,000 5-story flats were built by the Cubans, mainly in Luanda and the adjacent provinces of Benguela and Kwanza Sul (Greger, 1986: 9).

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<sup>32</sup> These started to return after the settling of peace with Zaire in 1978. Until then, Mobutu had supported the Kinshasa based FNLA. The peace opened the way for the return to Angola of tens of thousands of old Bakongo exiles who had fled northern Angola in the aftermath of the 1961 uprisings and their Zaire born children (see Birmingham, 2002: 153-158).

<sup>33</sup> There are few studies available that provide insight into the extent to which state-led self-help building as established by law (Decree 188/80 of 17 November and Joint Executive Decree 91/80 of 13 December) was translated into practice. An example given by Mendes (1988: 238-242) on the Golfe area in Luanda suggests that it was short lived in the city. The Golfe project was to be developed through a system in which residents helping to build their own houses were paid a salary while the state supplied the necessary materials. However, with the entrance of Cuban advisers, it came to be directly controlled by them and self-construction was substituted with imported prefabricated materials. Another study confirms that the use of prefabricated material without any modifications resulted in a "fiasco" (Greger, 1986: 4). As we shall see in the next chapter, state-led self-help building was taken up again as a government policy in 2009, but again without much success.

Yet, as UNITA gathered strength with renewed military assistance from the South African Defence Forces (SADF), the civil war was re-ignited. In a context where the government was not in control over the territory it officially represented, control over people became instrumental for claims to statehood and legitimacy, leading to what Pearce (2011) following the work of Davidson (1972) and Brinkman (2005) on the anti-colonial war, has called a 'war for people'.

In the early 1980s, the effects of this war were most felt by rural communities in southern Angola, who saw themselves forced to move to the relative safety of the cities such as Huambo and Lubango, cross the border to neighbouring countries or go into the bush with UNITA forces. In the mid-1980s, UNITA began to use Zaire as a base and mount operations in the northern part of the country, sparking a movement of people towards Luanda (Robson and Roque, 2001: 30). In response to UNITA's increasing military strength, the MPLA would force rural residents into government-held towns to separate them from UNITA guerrillas (Pearce, 2011: 145; also Sogge, 1992: 8).

According to Pearce (2011: 153-162), many people in government-controlled areas came to see themselves as belonging to the MPLA, whether or not they were actively involved in the party and its associated organisations. This way, space became associated with political identity, since within any one political space there was no possibility of expressing any political choice. Yet, political identity went beyond people's mere location, it also had to be demonstrated by obeying and collaborating, such as, in the case of the MPLA, working for the civil service or attending party events.

Pearce (2011: 161-162) goes on to arguing that for the MPLA, control over people in or from the countryside did not just allow it to cut off support for UNITA, it also allowed it to forge a relationship between the MPLA party-state and people who had previously been beyond the reach of the state. This relationship was built on the one hand through the provision of humanitarian assistance (even if most of this aid was provided by foreign donors working



under the auspices of the MPLA government) to people who arrived in towns and on the other hand through the provision of security. This required the creation of a perception of fear and the construction of an enemy. Thus, the maintenance of a discourse that pictured UNITA as a foreign aggressor and the MPLA as the unique representative and defender of the nation became a very important tool for legitimation (Pearce, 2011: 163-165). The fact that the MPLA held most of the urban centres throughout these years meant that state-building activities were increasingly limited to the cities, fixing the urban character of the state that the MPLA created and the idea of the state as something essentially urban, with little to offer to rural people (Pearce, 2011: 122-126).

#### **4.3.2 The emergence of a ‘parallel’ state**

Thus, during the first decade of independence the MPLA still showed a certain commitment to social development and national reconstruction, even if this served as an important instrument for legitimation in a war for people. However, as the country spiralled into civil war, investments in social development virtually came to a halt while military spending went up, amounting to up to half the national budget each year throughout the 1980s or in 1990 about four times the expenditures on health and education combined (Sogge, 1992: 117-118; Pereira, 1994: 10). In this period, the MPLA leadership became more and more disconnected from the people as the country’s increasing oil production, which rose more than six fold after 1983 (Hodges, 2004: 141), allowed it to access substantial amounts of external economic rent, increasingly turning the Angolan state into a ‘rentier state’ (Yates, 1996).

While the availability of such rents does not necessarily need to result in negative effects, most scholars agree that the problem is that these rents are ‘unearned’, in the sense that the state apparatus has not ‘put in any organizational and political effort in working with its citizens to get its money’ (Moore, 2001: 389). This turns the state into a ‘rentier’, or ‘a social agent who does not actively participate in the production process yet still shares in the fruits

of the product' (Yates, 1996: 17). This weakens the state's capacity as its 'rentier mentality' turns the state and its agents blind to the finite nature of its resources, instead encouraging short-term predatory behaviour. As a result, what seems to be a blessing becomes a curse, not only negatively affecting the economic performance of states, but also encouraging authoritarian rule and conflict (Rosser, 2006; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

Indeed, during the 1990s Angola presents itself as a classic rentier state as the war increasingly became a profitable business, fuelled by the proceeds from the oil and diamond industry (Malaquias, 2001).<sup>34</sup> Despite several international attempts to bring peace to the country, the war continued until the death of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi by government forces in 2002.<sup>35</sup> During this time, most of the infrastructures that had been left by the Portuguese or built up under national reconstruction were devastated and an estimated three million people were displaced, most of whom sought refuge in the relative safety of Luanda, which experienced massive uncontrolled growth (Robson and Roque, 2001: 32; see figure 4.3).

After a peak in 1985, from 1987 onwards the investment in housing in the cities had fallen to almost zero and informal and unregulated building became the most common form of construction in the cities (Amado, Cruz and Hakkert, 1992: 45). New areas of land were occupied in the outskirts of the city while even more people moved into areas that were already occupied. Some people built outhouses adjacent to existing houses, while others occupied the edges of certain roads or empty parcels of land (Robson and Roque, 2001: 33).

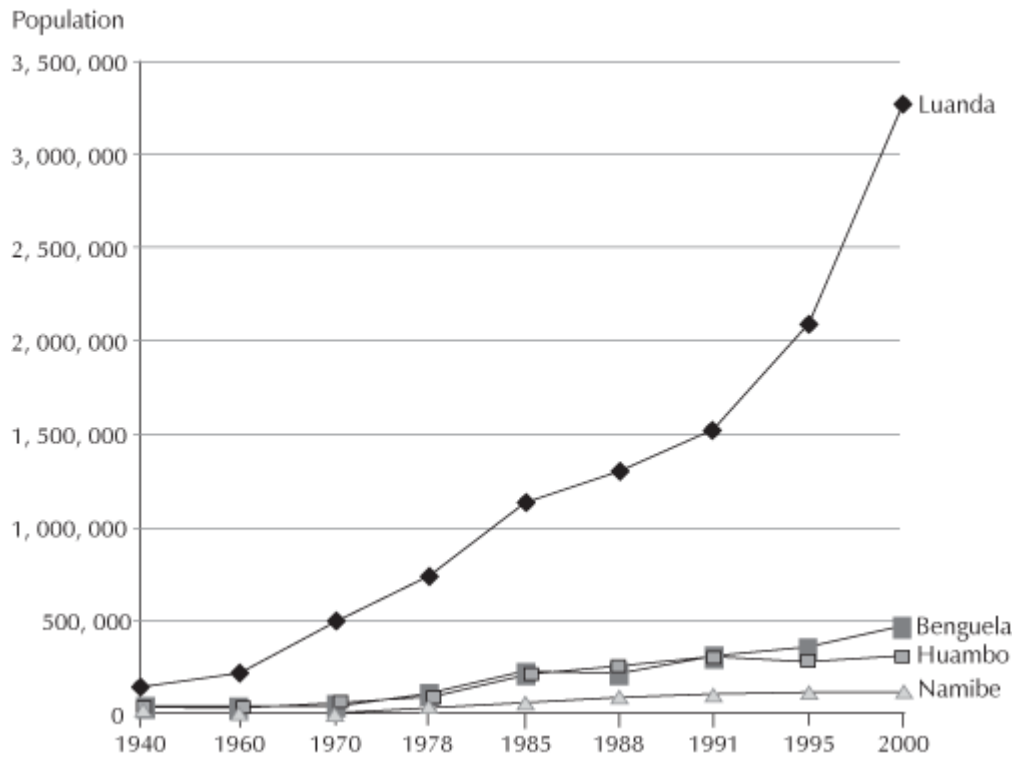
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<sup>34</sup> See on Angola's war economy eg. Cilliers and Ditrich, 2000; LeBillon, 2001; as well as all articles that make up the special issue on 'Patrimonialism and petro-diamond capitalism: peace, geopolitics and the economics of war in Angola' in the *Review of African Political Economy* 90, 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Brief respites took place in 1991-1992 and 1994-1998, following the signing of the Bicesse peace accords and the country's first multi-party elections and the Lusaka protocol respectively. See Pereira (1994) on the return to war after the elections in 1992 and Anstee (1996), who was the UN's Secretary General's Special Representative to Angola, for a personal account of the collapse of the peace process in 1992-1993. See HRW (1999) for an analysis of the rise and fall the Lusaka Peace process.

According to Amado *et. al.* (1992: 42), in the case of Luanda, this led to the ‘rurbanization’ of the city, denoted by a mix of rural and urban cultural patterns.

**Fig. 4.3 Urban growth in Angola, 1940-2000**



Source: Cain (2004).

Messiant (1992: 22) describes the twin process that led to this crisis as the ‘dollarization’ of the economy and a ‘desocialization’ of state services to the population. In a context where the agricultural and manufacturing sector had collapsed and oil had come to represent a growing part of the state’s revenues and almost the total of its foreign currency, revenues were increasingly used for imports. This created ‘an almost purely speculative economy grafted on state imports’ in which access to dollars or goods or services at official prices and their reselling on the black market became the way of life. The fact that there was a huge gap between the official and parallel market rate of the dollar, reaching some 60 to 80 times its

official value on the black market, made this a highly lucrative business for a minority that had access to foreign exchange at the official market rate.<sup>36</sup>

Messiant (1992: 23) continues: '[p]arallel to this dollarization of the economy, there was in practice also, as the war expanded and became more costly, a 'desocialization' of state services, with a progressive but very severe collapse of education and health, as in fact of all public services (water, electricity, transport). Instead, the state turned ever more to providing individual solutions for privileged or 'strategic' sectors of the population'. In such a context, the fulfilment of basic needs for most people depended on the art of, what in the context of the Congolese capital of Kinshasa (eg. Trefon, 2004) is often referred to as 'se débrouiller' or, 'getting by'.

Various researchers describe the difficulties faced and strategies employed by city dwellers in their struggle for survival in these years (Lopes, 2001; Udelsmann Rodrigues, 2006), in a 'do it yourself' economy (Van der Winden, 1996). Research carried out by Robson and Roque (2001) eliminates any romantic connotations of this notion, by stressing that the characteristics of peri-urban life; high levels of poverty and vulnerability; growing monetisation of inter-personal exchanges; social heterogeneity and dispersion of social networks; and a low level of confidence in institutions, particularly those of the state, and in communal initiatives, had significantly weakened solidarity and the capacity for collective action among communities. Neto (2001: 45-46) further points out that despite the absence or inefficiency of the state to provide services to the people, it gave little autonomy for communities to resolve their own problems in an organized way. The repression of people's power had ruled out most popular initiatives and militancy out of conviction, and until the adoption of Law 14/91 on Associations one could not legally establish an NGO in Angola.

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<sup>36</sup> See also Morice (1985: 118-119) who speaks of the resulting polarisation of two classes in Luanda: those who sell or trade to live and those for whom exchange is just an end in itself.

As the formal state entered into decay, a 'shadow state' emerged through a process that Parsons (2003: 36-37; 44-45) calls state '(de-)formation'. This process does not entail an 'undoing of a previous, ordered form, but [...] a transformation from one form of order to another'. Parsons describes the Angolan state as an increasingly informal state, which fails to fulfil even its most basic functions such as territorial control, even if by the late 1990s the MPLA had regained control over most of the territory of the Angolan state.<sup>37</sup> This process of informalization was further compounded and intensified by global trends since 'an informalised state is better able to co-opt the proceeds of informal trade and activity by intertwining itself with those activities' (Parsons, 2003: 47-48).

During this time state functions were increasingly privatized, with multi-nationals and private military companies driving and protecting the extraction of mineral resources and thereby the generation of state revenues, while international NGOs started providing social services after the withdrawal of Cuban assistance from Angola in the late 1980s.<sup>38</sup>

The state was then increasingly reduced to a nominal structure of sovereignty, what Cooper (2002) has called a 'gatekeeper state', used by its power holders to certify its legality and international legitimacy on the one hand while functioning as a source of self-enrichment on the other (Ferguson, 2006). In the words of Soares de Oliveira (2007: 596), Angola had become a 'successful failed state', reflected by 'the extent to which a nominal failed state can go on surviving and indeed thriving amidst widespread human destitution, provided that the basic tools for elite empowerment exist to ensure the viability of incumbents'.

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<sup>37</sup> In 1999, UNITA's capital Jamba as well as the last urban centres it held (Andulo and Bailundo in the Central Highlands) fell to the government's armed forces, see Pearce (2011).

<sup>38</sup> This followed the infamous battle of Kuito Kuanavale in 1987, which was nearly lost by the Cuban-MPLA armed forces, forcing the MPLA to agree to signing peace accords which established that South Africa would retreat from Angola and give up its control over Namibia (leading to its independence in 1990) while in return Cuban forces would withdraw from Angola. See George (2005: ch. 8) for a discussion of the 'linkage' negotiations that led to this agreement.

Central to this mode of government were not just international NGOs or private companies, but also Sonangol, the Angolan state oil company. Although having been nationalized upon independence, Sonangol never embraced the central planning and state-led economic policies of other state owned enterprises in the 1980s and the oil sector itself was never nationalized, allowing American multinationals to continue exploring oil, despite US support for UNITA (Soares de Oliveira, 2007: 600). As regular state institutions imploded, Sonangol remained ‘a strategic island of competence ring-fenced against chaos elsewhere’ (Shaxson, 2007 cited by Soares de Oliveira, 2007: 596). It was therefore central to the survival of President dos Santos’ regime, which had come to consist of the President and a group of unelected officials and businessmen around him, essentially operating a ‘parallel state’ with a parallel system of finances, working vastly more efficiently than Angola’s dilapidated state structures (Soares de Oliveira, 2007: 606-607). According to Hodges (2004), on average, between 1998 and 2002, 36% of government expenditure was off-budget and 11% could not be accounted for at all and probably disappeared into what is referred to as the ‘bermuda triangle’ between Sonangol, the Treasury and the National Bank.

Although state privatisation enabled the predatory activities of the parallel state, the country’s persistent economic and humanitarian crisis and President dos Santos’ rising unpopularity started to become an embarrassment to the government. In May 1996, calls were circulating to protest on the streets against government corruption, while the Angolan church, media and civil society were becoming increasingly vocal about the need for the war to end (Messiant, 2001: 306-307; Comerford, 2005). In a bid to appease growing social unrest and improve his image, the President fired the country’s prime minister and launched a populist economic

reform programme called *Nova Vida*,<sup>39</sup> while starting to hinder the activities of NGOs and setting up its own state-controlled alternatives to reinforce his power (Hodges, 2004: 91-92).

It is in this context that the creation of the José Eduardo dos Santos Foundation (*Fundação Eduardo dos Santos* or FESA) must be viewed. Founded as a non-profit charity organization formed by and around its patron in 1996, FESA officially dedicates itself to ‘the pursuit of social, cultural and scientific progress’, distributing goods and resources to ‘just about all the “vulnerable” and “target” groups in vogue internationally’ (Messiant, 2001: 298). In doing so, some FESA projects are financed by the state, while private financing is obtained through the practice of ‘taxing’ the main foreign companies interested in doing business in Angola, such as oil and oil-service companies, *diamantaires*, major engineering and construction companies, as well as some banks, by requiring them to pay a business start-up fee and through soliciting contributions to various of its projects. Not only foreign companies are members or sponsors, but also the main Angolan state-owned companies<sup>40</sup> as well as various smaller companies which see an interest in developing a link to the Foundation, a status which offers the double advantage of being close to the source of power while also making a display of charity (Messiant, 2001: 297).

Thus, while Messiant (2001: 297-298) argues that FESA ‘blatantly competes with the state itself, building its own fortunes on the ruins of the state’ its creation can also be seen as the start of a shift in the logic of the parallel state from predation to legitimation. Here, the weakness of the regular state bureaucracy becomes a justification for the expansion of the

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<sup>39</sup> This programme was introduced at the height of social tensions as the country experienced hyper-inflation, peaking at an annual rate of 12,035 percent in July 1996. By introducing a fixed exchange rate, rigid import licensing procedures and price controls inflation was reduced somewhat. However, this went against IMF advice, which had already abandoned an IMF-staff monitored programme in December 1995, and significantly increased public domestic debt (Hodges, 2004: 106-107).

<sup>40</sup> For instance, the vice-president of FESA and member of the board of patrons is Manuel Vicente, long-time CEO of the state oil company Sonangol and vice-president of Angola since September 2012. See for a list of all FESA members: <http://www.fesa.og.ao/fundacao/orgaos.htm> [last accessed 5 November 2012].

parallel state to the realm of social and developmental activities. As stated on FESA's website: 'the changes in the world no longer allow for the state to be solely in charge of the nation. Its work needs to be shared with civil society'.<sup>41</sup>

In the years after the creation of FESA, a number of other state organized 'civil society' organizations were created to provide channels of support to the president as well as to 'help' the state to fulfil its social obligations, such as the National Spontaneous Movement (*Movimento Nacional Espontâneo*), as well as the Fund of Social Solidarity (*Fundo de Soliedaridade Social Lwini*), led by the country's First Lady Ana Paula dos Santos,<sup>42</sup> and the Association of young Angolans that are returnees from Zambia (*Associação dos Jovens Angolanos Provenientes da República da Zâmbia*, AJAPRAZ). In July 1999, the government launched the National Emergency Programme for Humanitarian Assistance, with a secretariat in the Ministry of Planning and \$55 million of government funding, and set up an inter-ministerial committee to oversee the programme. Although still small compared with the level of international humanitarian assistance, according to Hodges (2004: 92) the move demonstrates another indication of the reassertion of the government's influence vis-à-vis the NGOs. Meanwhile, international donors started to scale back their development and humanitarian relief assistance, out of frustration at the slow pace of reform and concerns about government corruption (Hodges, 2004: 119).

In sum, during the first half of the 1990s state-building had become characterized by the emergence of a parallel state formed by the President and those individuals and institutions connected to him. What had been drivers of state-led development before, such as territorial integrity, control, and legitimacy, were increasingly replaced by private interests. In this process, the formal state became increasingly dilapidated, while the parallel state gained

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<sup>41</sup> The original text is: "As mudanças ocorridas no mundo não permitem mais que o Estado fique sozinho no commando da Nação. O seu trabalho tem de ser compartilhado com a sociedade civil". See <http://www.fesa.og.ao/fundacao/apresentacao.htm> [last accessed 5 November 2012].

<sup>42</sup> FESA is a member of its board of patrons, together with a number of companies, MPLA deputies and (wives of) powerful businessmen. See [http://www.fundacaolwini.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/CURADORES\\_COMPOSICAO.pdf](http://www.fundacaolwini.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/CURADORES_COMPOSICAO.pdf) [last accessed 5 November 2012].



strength and expanded. However, the creation of state organized ‘civil society’ organizations such as FESA indicates that towards the end of the war this parallel state was starting to be used for purposes of legitimation and regime survival instead of just rentierism, in a sense representing a return to the logic of state-building of the first years of independence.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has looked into the politics of development and state-building in Angola from colonialism to the end of the civil war. Based on this discussion I argue that three aspects are crucial for an understanding of the contemporary Angolan state.

Firstly, the issue of legitimacy, a lack of which derives from the conditions under which the MPLA government has come to and subsequently has been holding on to power. A narrow urban social base and external military support resulted in a victory upon independence that was recognized internationally but contested internally. As a result, a continuing struggle for control and legitimacy unfolded, which was most intense in the 1980s after the MPLA’s power was contested in an attempted coup and as a result of UNITA’s challenge to MPLA rule.

Secondly, the urban character of the Angolan post-colonial state, which is not uncommon in Africa but particularly salient in the case of Angola. This can be explained by the fact that the MPLA’s support was concentrated there and it was through the movement’s control over the capital Luanda that it was recognized as the legitimate successor to the colonial government upon independence. In addition, formed by mainly educated *mestiços* and *assimilados* the MPLA was better placed than the other liberation movements to take over the largely urban colonial state left behind by the Portuguese. Most importantly on the long term, it was the civil war that limited the construction of statehood beyond the cities, as for much of the war the majority of the rural population was not in reach of the MPLA government (Pearce, 2011: 122-126).

Thirdly, the concentration of power in the presidency that was consolidated over these years, resulting on the one hand in a growing disconnect between state and society, and on the other hand the emergence of a parallel state through the privatisation of state functions. Yet, while government corruption continued to be rife, towards the end of the war the predatory logic of this parallel state was proving to become increasingly unsustainable.

## 5. Post-war Angola: building a developmental state from above

*The past is an impediment, a history that must be transcended; the present is the platform for launching plans for a better future (Scott, 1998: 95).*

### 5.1 Introduction

When peace accords were finally signed in 2002 with UNITA after the death by government forces of Jonas Savimbi, decades of war had resulted in millions of internally displaced people, large mined areas and a destruction and degradation of most of the country's physical, economic and social infrastructure and services and according to international agencies Angola was facing 'a serious humanitarian crisis' (IMF, 2003). However, international aid would depend on the government improving transparency in the management of its oil revenues and reconstruction being guided by poverty reduction strategies and IMF-monitored economic and financial reforms (Tvedten and Orre, 2003; Pacheco, 2006).

This chapter shows how, contrary to the initial international hopes or expectations, post-war reconstruction took a different turn, as the country's oil revenues allowed the government to obtain alternative funds to finance reconstruction. Post-war reconstruction in Angola is usually described as a 'high-modernist, patronage-based and illiberal' process which is 'managed by local elites in defiance of liberal peace precepts regarding civil liberties, the rule of law, the expansion of economic freedoms and poverty alleviation, with a view to constructing a hegemonic order and an elite stranglehold over the political economy' (Soares de Oliveira, 2011: 308; 288).

Whilst this chapter does not necessarily refute these claims, it shows how post-war reconstruction is also motivated by a wish for regime legitimation. Post-war reconstruction can then also be seen as representing a process of developmental state-building. I illustrate

this argument through a discussion of the creation of the Zango social housing project, from its conception to its implementation, after which I provide a more general discussion of the vision that underpins the pursuit of post-war state-led housing development in Angola, as well as the role and structures that are taken up and mobilized to this effect.

## **5.2 A genealogy of Zango**

In order to understand how and under what conditions Zango came to life as a social housing project, I will first provide some necessary background information to urban planning in Luanda. Contrary to what is generally believed, urban planning already started before the end of the war. Yet, it was only well into the first post-war years that this practice was followed by changes to the country's legal and institutional framework. It is in this limbo that Zango came to life.

### **5.2.1 Conception: prelude**

In view of Luanda's rapid growth during the war, a proposal for a large scale urban expansion had been put forward in the early 1990s by a Brazilian company. This gave rise to a public-private partnership between the provincial government of Luanda and a Brazilian architectural firm, denominated EDURB. One of the principal proponents and initial financial supporters for this joint venture was the Brazilian company Odebrecht, which went on to becoming the main contractor for the project, which was named *Luanda Sul* (South Luanda) (Jenkins, Robson and Cain, 2002a: 146).

Odebrecht had started to operate in Angola in 1984 when it started building the Capanda hydro-electric dam in the province of Malange under the economic, technical and scientific cooperation agreement signed between the Brazilian and Angolan government in 1980. Brazil had been the first country to officially recognize the MPLA government upon independence and the partnership between the two countries forms an understudied prelude to Angola's post-war cooperation with China. Indeed, while observers tend to refer to the 'Angola mode'

in the context of Angola's provision of oil in return for infrastructure provided by China (Foster *et. al.* 2008), the construction of the Capanda dam was already partially paid for in oil and the Brazilian oil company Petrobrás, that has been active in Angola since 1979, was equally involved in these countertrade practices (Santana, 2003: 170; Rizzi, 2008: 303). Moreover, when in 1995 the government was at the height of its debt, an agreement was negotiated which allowed Angola to pay back the US\$1 billion in credit lines it owed Brazil with oil and in turn receive 45% through new credits for the export of Brazilian goods and services (O Estado de S. Paulo, 2003).

Brazil's special relationship with the MPLA government is also illustrated by the fact that it contributed troops to the UN peacekeeping mission that was implemented as part of the Lusaka peace protocol (United Nations Angola Verification Mission or UNAVEM), sending the largest Brazilian contingent since the Second World War as part of UNAVEM III (Pimentel, 2000: 13), even though Brazilian consultants had assisted the MPLA on its 1992 election campaign.<sup>43</sup>

As Angola's first 'self-financed urban infrastructure program', the *Luanda Sul* project presented itself as involving a process of 'careful land-use management and planning' in order 'to improve living conditions in the city and to meet the immense unmet needs of low-income and displaced communities' in three areas south-east of Luanda's city centre, denominated *Talatona*, *Novos Bairros* (New Districts) and *Morar* (To Live). Yet, the project ended up mainly facilitating high-end real estate development in the area of Talatona with Odebrecht building Angola's first residential gated community and shopping centre.

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<sup>43</sup> Since then they led the MPLA twice more to victory in the elections of 2008 and 2012. In 2012 it was made known that half of the projects carried out under the US\$3.2 billion credit lines made available by the Brazilian government to Angola had been executed by Odebrecht, whose CEO reportedly enjoys a close relationship to President dos Santos, allowing it to build a business empire that is the largest employer after the Angolan government (Fellet, 2012; Osava, 2013). Odebrecht has expanded its portfolio since its first entry into Angola, from infrastructure to diamond exploration in the Lunda provinces, and with the *Luanda Sul* project it added urban development, construction and real estate to its activities.

According to Jenkins *et. al.* (2002a: 146), by 2000 only an estimated 1500 lower income residents had received land (and in some cases also housing), casting doubts over the projects' receipt of the Dubai International Award 'for best practices in improving the living environment'.<sup>44</sup>

Most of the low-income families that were resettled through the *Luanda Sul* project had been living in the area close to the Presidential Palace in Luanda's city centre which was targeted to be redeveloped as a new politico-administrative centre. The development of this politico-administrative centre had been initiated after the death of Angola's first President Agostinho Neto in 1979, with the construction of a gigantic rocket shaped mausoleum. During the war, President dos Santos had been operating from the presidential compound in *Futungo de Belas*<sup>45</sup> south of the city, but as the war was seen to be coming to an end he wanted to complete the project in order to move back to the city (MINUC consultant, 15/3/12; PRP coordinator Zango, 27/3/12).

For this purpose, in 1998 the President created an Office for Special Works (*Gabinete de Obras Especiais* or GOE) as 'a body of consultation, analysis, information and technical support to the Presidency of the Republic, in the process of the conception and implementation of the programme of reconstruction of the political and administrative centre of Luanda as well as any other works determined by the President of the Republic' (Decree 57/01 of 21 September). This office also became responsible for the relocation of people and institutions that had come to live in the area in and around the political and administrative centre during the war to houses in the municipality of Viana, a project that came to be designated as Viana II, as well as land in the area of *Novos Bairros*.

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<sup>44</sup>See website Dubai Award, <http://www.dubaiaward.ae/web/WinnersDetails.aspx?s=31&c=9> and website UN-Habitat, <http://mmc.habitat.org.ua/modul2/pract1/pppp0593.htm> [last accessed 5 February 2013].

<sup>45</sup> *Futungo de Belas* or *futungistas* is how the president and his inner circle came to be referred to during the war, see eg. Soares de Oliveira (2007). The compound used to be the beach house of the governor of Angola under colonial times.

Despite the fact that the provincial government of Luanda was a partner in EDURB, its autonomy with regard to urban planning was significantly limited, even though in 1999 a new law on local government established that provincial governments became responsible for urban development, planning and construction in their territories (Decree-law 17/99 of 29 October). Thus, a Strategic Map for Luanda that aimed to decentralize activities, services as well as technical and financial means to local government in the city, elaborated by the provincial government with technical assistance of a Portuguese firm in 2001 was never put in practice, according to Raposo (2007: 227) because it clashed with the lines set out for the GOE. The provincial governor under whom this plan came to light, Aníbal Rocha, was dismissed by the President in 2002 and replaced by his vice-governor, Simão Paulo.

### **5.2.2 Implementation**

It was in this context of curtailed autonomy that the provincial government had to act when in September 2000 three children were killed as a result of landslides in the informal settlement of Boavista, after heavy rains had hit Luanda. According to Amnesty International, 107 houses were subsequently registered for demolition, but as no relocation site could be found to place these families they remained in Boavista. When more landslides occurred in the following year, Simão Paulo, then vice-governor of Luanda and coordinator of the Committee for the Relocation of the People of Boavista, announced in a television program that the government intended to evacuate people from Boavista to a safer area. Between June and September 2001, an estimated 4.000 families were moved from Boavista to Zango (AI, 2003: 6).

Evictions took place in a climate of resistance, violence and repression, and in Zango no proper conditions were in place to accommodate the evicted families who ended up being packed together in tents (AI, 2003: 6-9). The events were quickly picked up by international organizations and journalists. Justin Pearce (2001a; 2001b; 2005), a South African journalist for the BBC in Angola at the time who was barred repeatedly from trying to cover the story,

compared the first relocations to apartheid practices. Similarly, well known human right activist Rafael Marques spoke of the unravelling of Angolan apartheid while according to established Angola expert Tony Hodges the events surrounding Boavista confirmed the existence in Angola of ‘subjects without rights’ who could be evicted and relocated at will (Hodges, 2004: 85). In private newspaper articles of the time, residents are quoted calling Zango a ‘nazist concentration camp’ and wanting to abandon the camp after having been ‘tricked’ by the provincial government into moving to Zango (Agora, 2001). The negative international coverage of the events added to the pressure that had been mounting against the government because of its failure to bring an end to the war and the resulting widespread human suffering.

In October 2001, the Chairperson of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (a covenant ratified by Angola in 1992), urged the Angolan government to provide clarification on the situation in Boavista ‘within the shortest possible timeframe’ (AllAfrica, 2001). A week after this call, President dos Santos visited Zango for the first time, reportedly ‘to observe the inhospitable conditions in which the displaced of Boavista were living’. According to this source, ‘when visiting the camp [...] President Eduardo dos Santos observed with his own eyes that which misleading reports had hidden: the construction of houses for people of Boavista is proceeding very slowly’ (CEDOC, 2001a). During this time, self-help building was taking place in Zango with some South African technical assistance. Former Boavista residents were called on to help in the production of adobe bricks, fuelling further discontent, and it took on average 3 to 4 months to finish one house.

In response to this situation, the President invited the president of FESA, the President’s own non-profit charity organization that I discussed in the previous chapter, and the director of the GOE to set up an alternative plan to accelerate the construction of houses with a view of building 20 houses a day. To this effect, a working group was set up, integrating not only FESA and GOE officials, but also representatives from National Security services, the



Ministry of Social Reinsertion, the Provincial Government of Luanda, and private companies (CEDOC, 2001a).

This account is confirmed by the president of FESA, Dr. Ismael Diogo da Silva, who at the time was consul-general for Angola in Rio de Janeiro. During his time there he had been asked by the President to study best practices of low-income housing solutions in Latin America, which explains his appointment as coordinator of the working group for Zango. In his words,

[...] Mister President created a working group which at the time was coordinated by myself, to think, reflect, about solutions; agile, practical, economically viable, and most of all fast solutions, because at the time we were being criticized a lot, many insinuations with regard to the violation of human rights, that we were allowing many families to die, neglected, abandoned in risky conditions right in the heart of the city of Luanda [...] So, we, or comrade president, arranged this trip, this visit and we all went and met in a tent with comrade president himself [...] and that's when comrade president in fact outlined the programme. He assessed the conditions on the ground and determined that the programme should not continue the way it was running, that it should adopt a new vision.<sup>46</sup>

Under the Emergency Housing Programme (*Programa de Emergência Habitacional* or PEH), formally under the auspices of the provincial government, the construction of 3.000 houses

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<sup>46</sup> Transcript of filmed interview with FESA president, courtesy of Orion (2012). Orion ([www.orionangola.com](http://www.orionangola.com)) is a marketing, advertising and audio-visual production company, which caters mostly to the Angolan government and (formerly or semi) state-owned companies such as Sonangol, the National Bank of Angola and telecom operators Unitel and Movitel. It also has been involved in the MPLA electoral campaigns in 1992, 2008 and 2012. The Angolan activist Rafael Marques de Morais (2010) therefore describes it as the 'pivot of the official propaganda of the government and the MPLA'. The main shareholder in Orion is the MPLA holding company GEFI (70%), while various MPLA figures hold the rest of the shares.

was commissioned, all of which were to be given to people free of charge as a compensation for the loss of their demolished house.<sup>47</sup>

The contracting process for the construction of these houses was led by FESA's president, who served as an intermediary between the president and the companies that were hired. FESA officials were involved in the supervision of the construction process and the handover of houses to officials from the Social Reinsertion Ministry (MINARS), who were responsible for the registration and relocation of people, as well as the housing allocation process.

According to a representative of one of the construction companies that built houses in Zango, he was personally approached by the FESA president to become part of the project. As a former Sonangol director, he had managed the construction of a yard and base to service oil companies in the town of Soyo in Zaire province in the late 1970s. Based on this experience, Dr. Ismael knew he was "a person who can get things done" (Mr. T. 10/7/12). The FESA president also personally approached the director of the Angolan branch of the Lebanese engineering firm Dar-al-Handasah that had carried out the construction works in Soyo.<sup>48</sup>

In 1995, Dar-al-Handasah had already been contracted to carry out a study on the metropolitan area of Luanda, which had resulted in a Plan for the Management of the Urban Growth of Luanda which was adopted in 2000 (Resolution 27/00 of 24 November). This plan was to provide the basis for a future master plan for Luanda and in the following years Dar

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<sup>47</sup> Companies were only contracted to build houses, while the government was responsible for the (gradual) installation of infrastructures (such as sewerage systems, roads, water and electricity networks) and services (such as schools and medical centres).

<sup>48</sup> The entry of this company in Angola in the late 1970s represents the start of a personal relationship that the company's founder and chairman, Dr. Kamal Shair, would build up with President dos Santos over the years, to the point that virtually all major public infrastructure projects in Angola are now overseen by this company. Shair recounts the entry of the company in Angola and his first meeting with dos Santos in 1986 in *Out of the Middle East: the emergence of an Arab global business* (2006). It is worth quoting the following passage on this meeting: 'I wanted him to feel that I was different from other business people he'd met – that my interests were broader than just making money from the country. So I told him: "Consider me an Angolan". He smiled and asked me what I meant. I explained: "I come from a region of the world that has also had its troubles. We understand the fear and bitterness that civil war sows. We understand the pain and suffering your country has been through in its fight to rid itself from colonial rulers. We sympathise with you. Of course, we want to help you in planning, designing and supervising your development projects, but we will be doing that professional work with a passion that comes from the solidarity we feel for you and your aims." He nodded and I felt that I'd touched something inside him that other foreign businesspeople had never, and probably didn't understand.' (Shair, 2006: 228).

prepared a number of reports to this effect.<sup>49</sup> Dar-al-Handasah was also contracted to develop a plan for the redevelopment of the area of Boavista, which ties into plans for the entire redevelopment of the municipalities of Sambizanga and Cazenga as part of a project called *Luanda Norte* (North Luanda).<sup>50</sup> For Zango, Dar was asked to draw up a separate master plan which was presented in 2005 at a time when 3000 houses (semi-detached units) had been built and a further 3000 were under construction. This plan foresaw the construction of a total of four clusters of houses, referred to as Zango 1, 2, 3 and 4, including all infrastructures and services necessary to turn Zango into a small city (Dar-al-Handasah, 2005).

While the local construction companies that had been involved in the construction of the first 3000 houses had joined together to form a consortium with the aim of building another 3000 houses to be sold on credit (Mr. T. 10/7/12; PortalAngop, 2006a), most construction works under the second phase of Zango were passed onto Odebrecht, which had already been involved in the production and delivery of production material, such as concrete (PRP coordinator Zango, 27/3/12). These works were to be financed under a credit line of the Brazilian government (Jornal de Angola, 2005). According to an Odebrecht representative, by 2006 the company had built 6300 houses in Zango and installed infrastructures for the same amount of houses. In 2007 it was contracted to build another 4000 houses and to install infrastructures for 10.000 houses (Odebrecht representative, 24/11/11).

From 2007 onwards, the Zango project entered a new phase as it officially changed from an emergency programme aimed at relocating people living in ‘areas of risk’ such as Boavista, to a project aimed at accommodating people living in so-called ‘areas of social impact’, meaning

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<sup>49</sup> See the website of Dar-al-Handasah, [www.dargroup.com](http://www.dargroup.com) for more information about these *Integrated Plans for the Urban and Infrastructure expansion of Luanda and Bengo*.

<sup>50</sup> For information and images of the planned redevelopment of Boavista see the website of Dar-al-Handasah, <http://dar.dargroup.com/Projects/Boavista-Sambizanga-Park>. On Luanda Norte, see the Facebook page of the Technical Office for the Urban Redevelopment of Cazenga and Sambizanga (GTRUCS), [www.facebook.com/LuandaNorte](http://www.facebook.com/LuandaNorte).

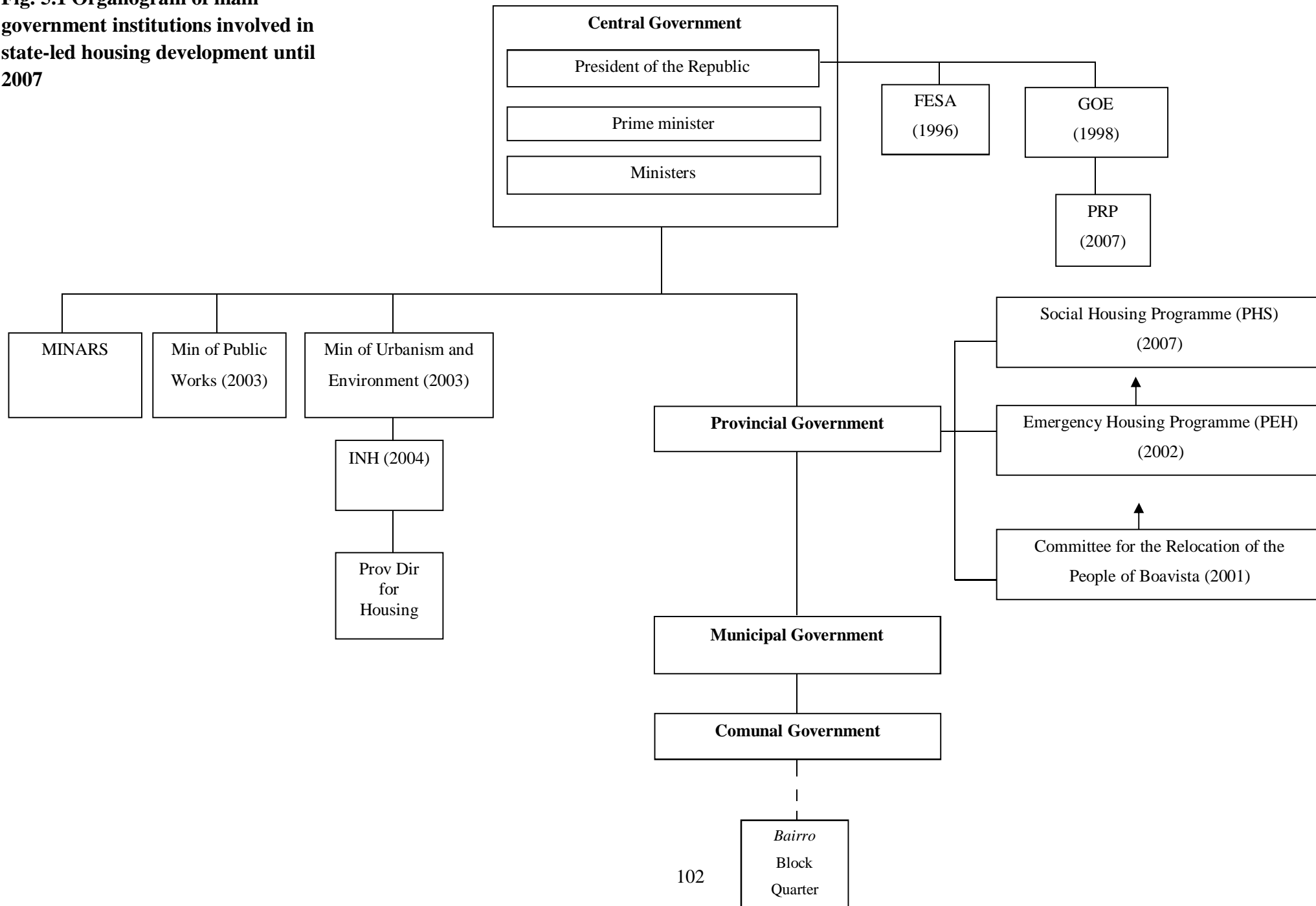
those areas earmarked for urban development in the city centre.<sup>51</sup> In the meantime, two other social housing projects had been set up in other peri-urban areas of the city that were modelled on the Zango project; Sapú in Kilamba Kiaxi and Panguila in Cacuaco municipality, although Zango remained the main destination for relocation (PRP coordinator Zango, 27/3/12).

For this purpose, the department of the GOE that had carried out relocations as part of the redevelopment of the new politico-administrative centre was turned into an autonomous entity, called the Programme of the Relocation of People (*Programa de Realojamento das Populações* or PRP). Led by the head of the GOE, the PRP became responsible for the registration and relocation of people living in areas targeted for intervention by the central government. It also came to manage the financing (under the Brazilian credit line) and supervision of the construction of houses in the relocation areas, such as Zango (Dispatch 8/07 of 13 April). The administration of Zango 1 and 2, where construction had been completed by then, as well as state-led self-help building in Zango 3 and other areas in the Zango land reserve, was passed onto the Provincial Government under what was called the Programme of Social Housing (*Programa de Habitação Social* or PHS). On-going relocations to Zango from Boavista and other areas of risk such as the Island of Luanda continued to count with the involvement of the provincial delegation of MINARS (see fig. 5.1 for an overview of institutions involved in state-led housing development).

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<sup>51</sup> These mainly include areas in the municipality of Cazenga, as well as the (pre-2011) municipalities of Sambizanga, Rangel, Maianga, Kilamba Kiaxi and Ingombotas, where over the course of the past years extensive infrastructural works, such as the widening of roads, drainage and water works, have taken place, although this has also opened up space for private development, such as the construction of high-end real estate, offices and hotels.

**Fig. 5.1 Organogram of main government institutions involved in state-led housing development until 2007**



### 5.2.3 Housing allocation

Housing allocation in Zango has not been grounded in any explicit policy or regulation due to the legal limbo in which the project has existed since its creation. Legislation which defines and regulates access to social housing only started to be discussed after the adoption of a Framework Law on housing in September 2007 which identified four different housing types: urban or rural houses; social houses; market-rate houses; and self-built houses (art. 5 Law 3/07 of 3 September). With regard to social housing, this law established the existence of a Housing Fund that was meant to benefit all public, private and cooperative entities that promote the construction of social houses as well as citizens in general (art. 24 Law 3/07). A bylaw to regulate the financial, functional and organizational structure of this Housing Fund through the Ministry of Finances and the Ministry of Urbanism and Housing was adopted two years later (Decree 54/09 of 28 September), but so far the Fund has not started functioning. In addition, a decree on the promotion and access to social housing through the National Housing Institute was finalized in November 2009, but while it has been available online since January 2010 it has not yet been passed into law.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, in practice houses in Zango and other social housing projects have been entirely state subsidized and distributed free of charge as a compensation for the demolition of a registered house that is located either in an area of risk or in an area targeted for urban redevelopment. This notion of compensation has been enshrined in a land law (Law 9/04 of 9 November) and a law on territorial planning (Law 3/04 of 25 June) that were both adopted in 2004. According to these laws, the Angolan state may expropriate land for public use, such as

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<sup>52</sup> This decree defines social housing as ‘low or medium income housing supported by the state or collective entities that is destined to create better conditions for the access to quality housing for those who have less capacity to acquire such housing, including the most underprivileged, in the terms fixated in particular and specific regulations’ (art. 2). Social housing may be partially or completely subsidized, depending on the citizens’ income. Access to social housing is through rental or purchase, which is organized and regulated by the National Institute for Housing. The decree can be downloaded here: <http://www.mincons.gov.ao/VerLegislacao.aspx?id=409> [last accessed 19 July 2013].

the installation of infrastructures that are of the public interest. This kind of expropriation annuls any rights established over this land and obliges the state or local governments to pay the affected holders of these rights a ‘just compensation’ (art. 12 Land Law 9/04 and art. 20 Planning Law 3/04). However, on what grounds rights are considered and what exactly constitutes just compensation is poorly regulated.<sup>53</sup>

When social housing is used as compensation, generally the amount of houses received per beneficiary corresponds with the number of houses demolished, although the agencies involved in the allocation of houses also seem to have established their own rules in this regard. For instance, the PRP takes not only the number of houses, but also their value into account: houses with a certain amount of compartments, such as four or five rooms, an *anexo* (backyard shack) and a large *quintal*<sup>54</sup> built with quality construction material may be compensated with two or three houses (PortalAngop, 2011b; PRP coordinator Zango, 27/3/12).

All social houses remain property of the state, meaning that housing beneficiaries do not receive ownership of the houses which are given to them. Instead, in Zango residents receive what is called a *guia de entrega*, a document that proves the delivery of the house by the state and its reception by the citizen. This document generally includes the beneficiary’s name, registration number and the number of the house received and until 2007 a note which stipulated that beneficiaries were not allowed to ‘sell, rent out, or abandon the conceded house without a justifiable motive and prior communication to the [authorities] or use them for any

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<sup>53</sup> For instance, article 30 (4) of Decree 58/07 stipulates that compensation should correspond to *the real and current value of the land*, but there are no rules on how this should be calculated. In addition, compensation only applies to those who have a provisional, definitive or full property title (Article 30 (1) Decree 58/07), but the case of Zango shows that social housing may be given as a compensation for land expropriation even in the absence of regularized land tenure. More on this in chapter 7.

<sup>54</sup> Lit. ‘backyards’, which according to S. Roque (2009: 37-38) during the slave trade in Angola were used to gather slaves before they were shipped. Nowadays, the *quintal* represents ‘the centre of social life for most urban Angolans. It is the place where guests are received, washing is done, meals are eaten, children play, goods are sold, and just about every other activity that could take place in the household is undertaken. For many people, a house is worth very little if it lacks a *quintal*’ (Gastrow, 2012: 5).

other end than that of residency, under penalty of losing it to the state' (see for examples appendices 1 and 2).

In acknowledgement of the basic state in which houses are delivered, residents are allowed to do basic works in the houses, such as plastering and painting the interior of the house, laying tiles, installing burglar bars on doors and windows as well as ceilings without prior authorization. However, more extensive works that would alter the appearance of the houses such as the construction of an annex, fence, *quintal* or *marquise* or the installation of a water tank, latrine, electric wiring, piping, air conditioning are subject to prior authorization (see for an example of a document that stipulates this appendix 3) and, from 2007 onwards, to payment.<sup>55</sup>

In 2010, the Provincial Government of Luanda announced the start of a process of property registration for residents of Luanda's social housing projects (PortalAngop, 2010b). At the time, a number of proposals were being discussed by the Council of Ministers that would involve the alteration of the country's Civil Code, the Land Register Code as well as the Notary Code, all still unaltered since independence. These reforms would reportedly facilitate the regularization of property tenure as per the new land law (Angonotícias, 2010a). The land law had called for the regularization of informally occupied land within three years after the publication of the law (art. 7, Law 9/04), a timeline which was extended in 2007 to 2010 (art. 215, Decree 58/07 of 13 July).

As a symbolic gesture, 23 surface rights (*direito de superfície*) deeds, which are documents that are needed in the process of property registration and the subsequent payment of property taxes, were officially handed over to residents of Zango in August 2010 by the provincial governor (PortalAngop, 2010b). However, no further continuation was given to the initiative.

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<sup>55</sup> The latest prices charged for construction works as stipulated by the PRP (and illustrative of the most common alterations) on a notice that could be found in their Zango office (effective as per 17 January 2012): 6000 kz (about \$60) for *quintal*; 4000 kz (about \$40) for *anexo*; 4000 kz (about \$40) for water tank; 4000 kz (about \$40) for *marquise*; and 3000 kz (about \$30) for latrine. For these alterations to be authorized, a written request had to be submitted, together with a copy of a document of the house and ID. Payment for the alteration was to be made in a bank account held by the PRP.



To date, no formal land or property registry exists for Zango or in Luanda in general, despite the on-going delivery of houses as well as land for self-help building.

### 5.3 Developmental vision, role and structures

Whilst thousands of houses have been built in Zango over the past years, the Zango project did not start off very well and a certain sense of apprehension is described by some of the projects' close observers and even government officials with regard to the project's development. Would promises be delivered on or would Zango turn out to be a disaster? In view of the negative internal attention initially given to the project, the stakes were high and it is evident that the President felt a personal interest in turning the project into a success.

Zango should then be seen as a type of testing ground for the state-led housing developments that were to follow. In the years that followed Zango's creation, a legal and institutional framework for state-led housing development started to be developed and in 2008 the construction of one million houses became part of the MPLA's election campaign.

At the time, Angola's housing commitment was officially referred to in the following way: '[..] to build new homes and real estate projects in order to achieve the 1 million houses goal, through state initiatives and public-private partnerships [..]' (MPLA, 2008: 73). This promise was reiterated in a speech by President dos Santos during World Habitat (PortalAngop, 2008), which was hosted in Luanda after the MPLA's landslide electoral victory under the theme 'Harmonious Cities' and subsequently launched as the National Urbanism and Housing Programme with the Brazilian inspired slogan *Meu sonho, minha casa* ('My dream, my house').<sup>56</sup> Under this programme, two thirds of the one million houses were to be built through state-led self-help building (*auto-construção*) while the rest would be constructed by the state, the private sector and cooperatives, affirming the state's role as 'a guide, organiser and regulator' in solving Angola's 'housing problem' (Resolution 77/09 of 7 September).

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<sup>56</sup> Brazil's housing programme is called *Minha casa, minha vida* ('My house, my life') and was announced in March 2009, equally targeting the construction of 1 million houses.

Concentrated in Luanda, state-led housing development has changed the landscape of the city with mass housing projects being built in the city's periphery, extending its borders and adding an expected 50.000 units to the formal housing stock.<sup>57</sup> Today, Zango is no longer an isolated settlement in the periphery, but it represents one of the fastest growing areas in the city with other state housing projects and private development mushrooming around it.

In the next sections I discuss the kind of vision that can be said to have underpinned state-led housing development in Angola over the past decade. Furthermore, I analyse the type of state role and structures that have been mobilized to this effect.

### **5.3.1 Developmental vision**

Soares de Oliveira (2011; 2013) invokes the work of James Scott when analysing the development vision that underpins national reconstruction in Angola as 'high-modernist'. For Scott (1998: 4-5), high-modernist development originates from a combination of four elements: the administrative ordering of nature and society; a high-modernist ideology; an authoritarian state that is willing and able to use the full weight of its coercive power to bring high-modernist designs into being; and a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans.

Most observers tend to follow this line of thinking when characterizing post-war reconstruction in Angola as underpinned by a vision that 'advocates top-down, accelerated high-technology economic development, with heavy emphasis on investment, big projects and borrowing to build infrastructure.

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<sup>57</sup> Calculation based on number of apartments built in the first phases of the 'centralities' of Kilamba, Zango, Cacuaco, Capari and Km44.

It is a vision of master planning resting on a premise that the state can save the nation's ills. [...] state planning solves most problems and there is little room for the poor, who are often seen as an obstacle to, rather than the primary focus of, development. Their route out of poverty, in this vision, is through entry into the formal sector' (Vines, Shaxson and Rimli, with Heymans, 2005: 6).

When translating this vision to urban development, the 'modernist' city is then seen as the ideal city form, a view which has its roots in the ideas of the French architect Le Corbusier. This ideal was applied in post-World War II master planning (as Scott illustrates by using the example of Brasília) and in countries under colonial or communist rule, but nowadays it can also increasingly be found in countries in the global South who seek to be associated with being modern, with development, and with 'catching up with the West' (Watson, 2009: 174)<sup>58</sup> or in countries where natural resources allow for the financing of 'modernity' (Karl, 1997). Therefore, it can be said that it is no surprise that it is found amongst Angola's urban oil-flushed elites, who never finished their project of national reconstruction with Cuban assistance on the foundations of the late colonial state, as I described in the previous chapter.

Indeed, the housing and development plans that have been developed over the past decade on the one hand represent a mix of modernist colonial and socialist development policies, while simultaneously reflecting a profound aspiration to do away with the old, 'anarchic' way of construction that was produced by these same policies. In the context of other African cities Steck *et. al.* (2013) refer to the reactivation of the old colonial spatial order as the emergence of a 'neocolonial spatial order'.

Thus, on the one hand the government promotes self-help building, a policy that was introduced under socialist rule in the early 1980s, while on the other hand it seeks to

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<sup>58</sup> Watson (2009: 174-175) lists the following characteristics that are involved in urban modernism: prioritisation of the aesthetic appearance of cities; high-rise buildings; dominance of free-flowing vehicular movement routes; wide routes; separation of land use functions into areas for residence, community facilities, commerce, retail and industry; spatial organisation of these different functional areas into separate 'cells'; different residential densities for different income groups.

transform Luanda into a true ‘world class city’ or ‘a modern, efficient, creative and unified metropolis’ that connects the country to the outside world (GoA, 2007 – part III: X-46). This view is formulated in the long-term development strategy entitled ‘Angola 2025. Angola a country with a future: sustainability, equity and modernity’ that was adopted in 2007.<sup>59</sup> This plan in turn follows a colonial master plan that was adopted at the height of the late colonial development boom in 1973 which identified three areas around the city of Luanda for the development of growth poles: east of the city around Cacuaco, south-east of the city around Viana and south of Luanda.

The government’s desire to order society is most clearly reflected in the laws that have been produced over the past years and the government discourse that has accompanied their production. Thus, the Framework Law on Housing states that there is a need for ‘new and dignified spaces for urban housing’ that follow ‘the rules for territorial planning’ (preamble Law 3/07). Social housing in turn serves to contribute to: ‘a balanced decompression and reorganization of the cities and their peripheries; the reconversion of degraded areas and neighbourhoods in the cities through the creation of new urban spaces destined for integrated social housing development; [and] the general improvement in the quality of urban life’ (art. 7 of Law 3/07). In line with this view, government officials have repeatedly expressed a desire to ‘eradicate’ the *musseques* (eg. Jornal de Angola, 2010).

This vision is accompanied by a certain view of the ideal Angolan family as a modern, nuclear middle-class family employed in the formal sector, although the government has little knowledge about the average Angolan family as the last census that was carried out in Angola dates from before independence.<sup>60</sup> A ‘documentary film’ on Angola commissioned by FESA which features Zango is illustrative of the government’s view of development. Images of

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<sup>59</sup> This document is largely unknown to the public and only started to be made public reference to by the government in recent years, which provides further testament to the top-down nature of planning.

<sup>60</sup> In 2008 and 2009, a national survey on the well-being of the Angolan population was carried out (INE, 2010), and in the absence of a census some reference is made of its results in public policies.

Boavista are followed by helicopter views of Zango's tightly arranged rows of houses while a voice-over narrates:

The terrible living conditions in Boavista led the government to take an interest and create a better living space. A space which has been properly developed, organized, with all the necessary facilities. With running water and water treatment, with electric light, with schools, streets, with hospitals, with recreation and shopping areas. Today, more than 21,000 people live in Zango and now a poly-technical school is being built. There are primary and secondary schools. The housing built in Zango was constructed with 7 person families in mind. The houses are 52 m<sup>2</sup>, with 3 bedrooms, one for the parents, one for the male children and another for the girls.<sup>61</sup>

To provide employment opportunities for Zango residents, a special economic zone has been created in Viana which is meant to accommodate 73 companies or factories and turn the area into a development hub (PortalAngop, 2011a; Fidalgo, 2013).

While modernist in its imaginary, the post-war development vision is also accompanied by a liberal rights-based discourse, which enshrines the universal right to housing 'as a fundamental condition for mankind to fully exercise his citizenship' (art. 2 (a) Resolution 60/6 of 4 September) and presents the Angolan state as a modern, democratic state. This discourse derives from a profound concern with legitimacy as well as a fear of social unrest, an aspect of post-war reconstruction which is often overlooked in the abovementioned discussions on its vision.

Indeed, Leftwich (1995: 418-419) notes that when elites are too ruthless in their suppression, political turmoil will ensue. Therefore, repression must always be accompanied by the delivery of developmental goods so as to ensure a necessary level of legitimacy. Vu (2007:

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<sup>61</sup> The clip can be viewed on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykOT4N1LMsY&list=UUVD3tZznx3zD3df6o6XoXLQ> [last accessed 6 February 2013]. While the *Made in Angola* film was launched in 2009, the images of Zango and the interview with technical director Mamadou Luís da Rocha (who passed away in 2007) indicate that the part on Zango had been made some time before that.

49) adds that regime legitimacy forms a necessary condition for elites to take up developmental roles in the first place. In the case of Zango, this is reflected in the interest that the President had in speeding up the construction of houses. Consequently, although there were never any formal consultations or studies regarding the project, throughout its development there has been sensitivity for perceptions of the project as failed or exclusionary, something that could harm the President's image and provide ammunition for the opposition in a context of impending elections.

In response to negative perceptions, the government has sought to counter the negative image of Zango by publishing stories in the daily state-owned newspaper *Jornal de Angola* that praise the project (eg. *Jornal de Angola*, 2008), but it has also sought to effectively improve certain aspects of the project, for instance by shifting the focus of housing from quantity and delivery to quality and sustainability.

Firstly, an adjustment in the typology of the houses being built has taken place. Whereas the houses in Zango 1 and 2 were often literally delivered as four walls and a roof, houses built in Zango 3 and 4 after 2007 are somewhat larger and come with floor tiles and ceilings. Furthermore, whereas in the first years of the project infrastructures were only gradually implemented after the construction of the houses, Odebrecht started to install water and electricity networks before turning to the construction of the houses. In addition, secondary roads started being tarred and playgrounds built. Under its Sustainability Programme, Odebrecht also set up training programmes in courses ranging from masonry to cooking, apart from providing support for micro-businesses.<sup>62</sup>

There is also an acknowledgement that there was too much focus on the construction of houses only in the first stages of the project and that there hasn't been a sufficient mix of residential and commercial development as well as low and higher income housing and that a

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<sup>62</sup> Observations and informal conversations when I was shown around by a Brazilian official of the Sustainability department in the areas under construction by Odebrecht, the training premises and one of the projects (a small bakery) financed by the company (Field notes, 24/11/11).

more integrated approach to development is necessary. In February 2011, the PHS was reorganized in order to address the deficit of social equipment and services (such as schools, health centres, police, firemen and shops), as well as recreational equipment and infrastructures (roads, drainage and sewerage system), either directly through the state, or through private initiatives or public-private partnerships. In the words of the PHS coordinator:

The aim of the upgrading (*requalificação*) is for Zango not to remain a precarious area, but to slowly increase the quality of life and the value of land in Zango. The stigma of Zango as a resettlement project needs to be reduced (PHS coordinator 8/12/11).<sup>63</sup>

Finally, there is a growing acknowledgement that the free mass distribution of housing is unsustainable on the long term. In the words of the former minister of Urbanism and Environment, ‘in the past ten years [...] the state has invested the equivalent of a hundred million American dollars [in social housing projects], but in return nobody is paying anything. This may be a government policy, but it does not allow for the sustainment of these programmes’ (Jornal de Angola, 2007). In line with this view, so-called *casas evolutivas* have started to be built in Zango, which are T2 or two-bedroom houses (and therefore less costly in terms of the amount of construction material used) that are built by the state on a 15m by 15m plot of land, with space for the resident to expand the house further. In addition, schemes have started to be put into place in housing projects developed after Zango for the (state-subsidized) sale and rental of houses.

### 5.3.2 Developmental role and structures

In promoting its vision of development when it comes to housing, the Angolan government officially aims for the state to play a role of ‘guide, organiser and regulator’ in solving Angola’s ‘housing problem’. Thus, under the National Urbanism and Housing Programme the

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<sup>63</sup> This view was reiterated by other PHS officials, although it must be noted that funds to this effect only became available in 2012.

state took up the responsibility of developing land and infrastructures and improve the access to affordable credit for housing as well as construction material to enable self-help building (Resolution 77/09 of 7 September). However, in practice most state-led housing development has taken place through the direct outsourcing of housing construction by the presidency. To this effect, large swaths of land within the capital metropolitan region as well as in the country's provinces have been turned into land reserves, which have turned them into areas of public utility (Decrees 62–65/07 of 13 August; Decrees 80-112/08 of 26 September – see map of land reserves in Luanda in appendix 4).

Vines *et. al.* (2005: 6-7) help us identify a number of conditions that enable such an approach to development. Firstly, the war destroyed so much in Angola that it is easy to sell a vision in which the visible short-term 'hardware' instead of the enabling long-term 'software' is the primary focus of development. Moreover, external actors with important vested interests can profit from the infrastructural opportunities offered by such a vision. Indeed, whilst the role of countries such as Brazil and Lebanon in national reconstruction is driven by shared historical ties and close personal relationships, as we have seen in the case of Zango, the economic interests of these countries to operate in Angola are just as important.

In addition, rising oil revenues have provided for the increasing means to finance the direct involvement of the state in housing development. Already an established form of external financing during the war (Hodges, 2004: 162-163), over the past decade the number and value of oil-backed credit lines to Angola has increased dramatically, with China emerging as the country's main financier of national reconstruction (World Bank, 2007: 50-51). Credit lines conceded by the Chinese government through the Export-Import Bank of China, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the China Development Bank amount to a value of US\$14.5 billion (Comarmond, 2011; also Corkin, 2013), while at least US\$2.9 billion in oil-



backed loans has been made available by a private entity called the China International Fund (CIF) (World Bank, 2007: 50; also Levkowitz, *et. al.* 2009).

Oil-backed loans can then be seen as ‘homegrown procurement and financing mechanisms’ that have been developed as a survival mechanism during the war (Vines *et. al.* 2005: 7; also Brautigam, 2009: 273-277), but that continue to exist as a way to circumvent regular state structures which have a poor track record when it comes to the financial management of reconstruction. Indeed, according to Jensen and Paulo (2011: xii), before 2008 much money was spent by the government with ‘its eyes closed’.

Thus, while China Exim Bank funds were channelled through the Ministry of Finance, the CIF funds came to be managed by the Office of National Reconstruction, better known as the GRN (*Gabinete de Reconstrução Nacional*) in view of the need to create a mechanism which could ‘systematically and permanently accompany the most fundamental national reconstruction projects’ (Decree Law 6/04 of 22 October). Set up in 2004, the GRN is similar to the GOE in the sense of being a body which operates under direct guidance of the Presidency. Led by one of the President’s closest aides, military advisor General Helder Vieira Dias alias ‘Kopelipa’, the main national reconstruction projects that the GRN was meant to manage are outlined in a 2006 resolution (Resolution 61/06 of 4 September).<sup>64</sup> These include the study and execution of upgrading and rehabilitation works in the city of Luanda, an engineering, procurement and construction contract for a new international airport of Luanda, the construction of 215.000 housing units, as well as the elaboration of a plan for a ‘New City of Luanda’.

The entry of extra-governmental entities such as the GOE, GRN and PRP into housing development may on the one hand represent a desire to keep certain projects away from public scrutiny and open up new avenues for corruption, as argued by Marques de Morais

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<sup>64</sup> See Corkin (2013: 131-134) for a more detailed analysis of the GRN.

(2011a). On the other hand, it may also represent a perceived need for the involvement of institutions that have a certain level of technical competence and capacity to manage resources which is not found amongst regular government institutions.

The special political and financial status of these entities also shields them from external shocks such as the global financial and economic crisis of 2009 which forced the government to seek IMF assistance to restore macro-economic balances and rebuild international reserves.<sup>65</sup> As a result of the crisis, state-led self-help building, meant to be implemented through regular state structures under the National Urbanism and Housing Programme, barely got off the ground while state-built housing projects implemented through special agencies have multiplied. Apart from Zango, these include the new city of Kilamba, a project which had already taken off before the launch of the National Urbanism and Housing Programme under the auspices of the GRN. Inaugurated by the President in July 2011, Kilamba represents the largest housing project ever built in Angola and consists of the construction of 20.000 apartments built in the first phase of the project. In addition to Kilamba, three other housing projects (Cacuaco, Capari and Km 44) have started to arise along Luanda's newly built ring road, as well as one in the state land reserve of Zango, called the *Condomínio Vida Pacífica* ('Peaceful life compound'). All of these projects consist of high-rise buildings constructed by Chinese companies which have been contracted through the GRN.

Despite the special status of special agencies such as the GRN they do not receive a special treatment when it comes to their performance. The practice of side-lining, disbanding or taking over both governmental as well as extra-governmental agencies that are perceived to be failing by the President increased after the approval of a new Constitution in February 2010. This constitution introduced a presidential-parliamentary system in which the leader of the ruling party automatically becomes president, ruling out the presidential elections that were meant to follow the parliamentary elections of 2008. The President is then head of state and of

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<sup>65</sup> A US\$ 1.4 billion Stand-By Agreement was negotiated, see IMF (2009).

the executive branch of government, in which he is assisted by a Vice-President, three Ministers of State: one for civil, one for military and one for economic affairs, as well as regular Ministers who are all appointed by him, as well as commander-in-chief of the country's armed forces.

The following examples illustrate the pattern of presidential intervention as it has emerged from 2010 onwards, which has been accompanied by the expansion of special entities that respond to the Presidency (see figure 5.2). This has contributed to a consolidation and strengthening of the President's parallel state.<sup>66</sup>

In 2007, the head of the GRN had signed the contract for the construction of the Kilamba housing project with its main contractor, the Chinese state-owned company CITIC.<sup>67</sup> Yet, two years into the construction works of the project, like many other government institutions at the time, the GRN was reportedly defaulting on the payments to CITIC. To ensure the continuation of the works, the project was handed over to Sonangol, which paid for the services that were in arrears (Marques de Morais, 2011a).<sup>68</sup> Through its real estate subsidiary *Sonangol Imobiliária* (Sonip), Sonangol subsequently took over the management and commercialization of Kilamba as well as the other housing projects in Luanda and in the rest of the country that had previously been managed by the GRN. The management of other strategic public works was passed onto the GOE, resulting in the official disbandment of the GRN in 2011 (presidential decree 217/11 of 8 August).

A similar fate was faced by the special National Commission that was created to implement the National Urbanism and Housing Programme. This Commission had initially been coordinated by the Prime Minister, assisted by the Minister of Urbanism and Housing and the head of the GRN. Its members included the Ministers of the Ministries of Public Works,

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<sup>66</sup> See also P. C. Roque (2011) who makes a similar analysis of the post-2010 period.

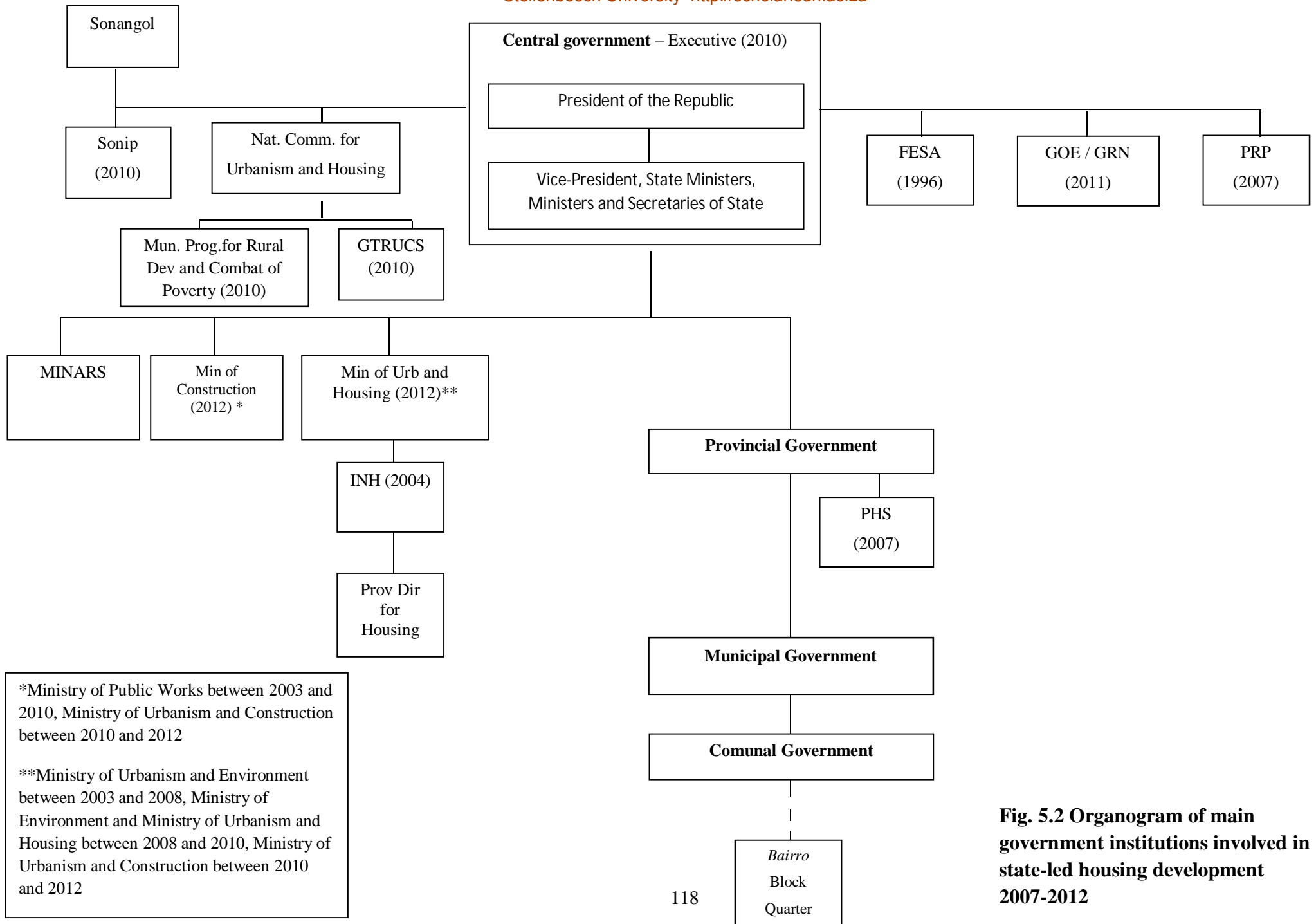
<sup>67</sup> See 'Projects' > 'Ongoing' > 'Angola social housing' > 'project progress' on CITIC website: [www.cici.citic.com](http://www.cici.citic.com)

<sup>68</sup> An IMF report (2012: 34) confirms that in this period Sonangol not only financed housing, but also railway, rehabilitation, and various infrastructure projects, including for special economic zones.

Finance, Administration of the Territory, Interior, Industry, Commerce, Transport, Environment, Media, and Energy, as well as the Secretary of the Council of Ministers, the Secretary of State for Water, the Secretary of State for Rural Development as well as the Economic advisors of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. For the technical and administrative execution of the housing programme, two separate Technical Groups were created. Provisions were also made for the creation of Provincial Commissions (Dispatch 9/09 of 31 March). Yet, in 2010 the President downsized and took over its coordination, assisted by the Ministers of State for civil and military affairs, the Minister of Finance, of Urbanism and Construction and of Administration of the Territory (Presidential dispatch 22/10 of 12 May).

In addition to taking over the coordination of the implementation of the Housing Programme, the President also centralized efforts to redevelop two of Luanda's oldest *musseques*, Cazenga and Sambizanga as part of the *Luanda Norte* project. To this effect he created a new Technical Office for the Urban Reconversion of Cazenga and Sambizanga (*Gabinete Técnico de Reversão Urbana do Cazenga e Sambizanga* or GTRUCS), which was to function under the auspices of the National Commission for Urbanism and Housing (PortalAngop, 2010a). As part of a major government reshuffle in November 2011, the vice-governor of Luanda for technical affairs and a respected technocrat, Bento Soito, was appointed as coordinator of GTRUCS and he subsequently also took over the coordination of the PRP (Angonotícias, 2010b).

Finally, in 2012, as the end of the 1 million houses timeline was approaching, the President also launched a programme which targets the construction of 200 houses in each municipality of the country, to be managed by the Presidency's Secretary for Social Affairs as part of a Municipal Integrated Programme of Rural Development and the Combat against Poverty which had also been created in 2010.



**Fig. 5.2 Organogram of main government institutions involved in state-led housing development 2007-2012**

## 5.4 Conclusion

By looking at the conception and implementation of the Zango project and state-led housing development in post-war Angola more generally, I have not sought to counter views of post-war reconstruction as being high-modernist, patronage-based or illiberal. The MPLA's developmental vision is embedded in high-modernist views and its developmental role is enabled by the support of a close-knit patrimonial network of external allies that have an interest in sustaining the political status quo. However, the Zango project also shows how a desire for regime legitimatization, which during the war was predominantly derived externally, has emerged alongside predatory rentier ambitions. Post-war reconstruction is then also about acquiring domestic support for the regime through state-led development.

As shown through the case of Zango, the Angolan developmental state is being built from above by a parallel state that is controlled by the presidency. This has both enabling as well as limiting effects for development. On the one hand, the centralized nature of decision-making and the access to and creation of parallel sources of financing and extra-governmental special agencies allow the President to circumvent the bureaucracy of regular state institutions and deliver developmental goods in a fairly quick and effective manner. This has been further expanded in the following years, leading to the construction of state-built housing on a massive scale.

However, this has reinforced the weakness of the regular state, which is increasingly sidelined from developmental interventions. Hence, a growing gap has emerged between the practices of the parallel state, formed by the President and those individuals and institutions connected to him, and those of the formal state. The following chapters seek to provide insight into the ways in which this context shapes the dynamics of state-led development on the ground.

## 6. Between the state and the people

*“I am inside the government, but outside of the law”*

*(Mr. Paulino, 18/9/12)*

### 6.1 Introduction

As may be remembered from the introduction of this thesis, the creation of a residents’ committee in Boavista as a response to impending relocations to Zango had sparked my interest in the project as a possible case of collective action or resistance, mobilized from below against the state. As I started my fieldwork, one of my main aims had been to find out if the committee still existed and to what extent it represented a form of citizen participation in the administration of Zango.

The findings from the first leg of my fieldwork were intriguing, as I found a full-fledged structure of residents’ committees in place, maintaining close ties with local government and party structures. Moreover, these committees did not seem to work *against*, but *with* the state, to the point that they were fulfilling administrative functions on its behalf. Yet, this structure seemed to operate entirely informally, that is, without the formal or *de jure* recognition or regulation by the state.

An analysis of the residents’ committees in Zango therefore shows that at the local level institutions may exist that exhibit and exercise ‘formal’ public authority but are not *of* the state, therefore operating in a ‘twilight’ zone (Lund, 2006) between the state and the people. Consequently, this points to the existence of multiple sites, actors and practices through which power is exercised at the local level (Lindell, 2008), an aspect that is often overlooked in analyses of national reconstruction as a process that is entirely top-down.

In this chapter, I start by tracing back the workings of residents' committees to the country's first post-independence years in order to situate resident's committees in Luanda historically, after which I will zoom in on the history and current workings of residents' committees in Zango.

## 6.2 Situating residents' committees in Zango

Residents' committees have a long but understudied history in Angola. They emerged in Luanda in the context of the war for liberation as part of *poder popular* or 'people's power' structures, but were co-opted by the MPLA in its struggle to take over the colonial state. After independence, Popular Committees of the *Bairro* (CPBs) had to contribute to the building of a Marxist-Leninist party state, which gained an increasingly authoritarian character after the MPLA leadership was challenged in an attempted *coup d'état*.

In 1990, when the MPLA formally abandoned Marxist-Leninism the country underwent a number of democratic reforms as it prepared for elections in 1992. A new constitution formally ended one-party rule and provisions were made for the decentralization of government through the creation of elected local government bodies named *autarquias*, which were to exist alongside the local organs of the state (art. 145-147 Constitutional Law 23/92). Yet, although the MPLA government controlled all provincial governments by 2002, 'many municipalities (the second-tier administrative unit) were empty, as were most communes (the third-tier); the fourth-tier of local administration [*povoações* in rural areas and *bairros* in urban areas] was *not active at all, anywhere*' (2007 MAT/UNDP report cited by Soares de Oliveira, 2013: 173 - italics in original). This left 'a great part of the population, particularly in the rural areas, at the margins of the state's administration' (UNDP, 2002: 17).

Since the end of the war in 2002, the government has worked towards establishing its presence throughout the Angolan territory (Soares de Oliveira, 2013). However, until today



local government elections have never been held,<sup>69</sup> contributing to the maintenance of what Marques Guedes (2003: 61) calls a system of ‘direct State administration’ in the sense that local government is not a body representative of its constituents but of central government. Because local government officials are not elected, accountability works upwards, with communal administrators responding to municipal administrators and these in turn to provincial governors – who are nominated by the President of the Republic and in turn nominate municipal as well as communal administrators. While party affiliation no longer is a requirement for the fulfillment of public office as it was under the one party state, loyalty to the party continues to be important and administrators and governors often fulfill double roles, acting as civil servant and party official at the same time or alternating between them.

In addition, only the province, municipality, and *comuna* are represented in the state structure. Areas below the *comuna*, such as *povoações* and *bairros*, despite their rapid growth over the years, have no formal representation in the state administration. Thus, although efforts were made to re-institutionalize CPBs as residents’ committees in Luanda in the early 1990s (GoA, 1993)<sup>70</sup>, scholars generally see Luanda’s *bairros* as self-governed spaces (Lopes, 2001; Robson and Roque 2001; Robson, 2001; Van der Winden, 1996). In the following sections I discuss the founding of what now is called Zango and the settlement of Boavista to examine the extent to which this has been the case.

### **6.2.1 From people’s to party power**

In the years before independence, people’s power structures included a myriad of organizations such as Popular Committees of the *Bairro*, Action Committees, student

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<sup>69</sup> Despite the fact that they were once planned to be held after the first post-war legislative and presidential elections. However, presidential elections (planned for 2009) were first postponed and then abolished through the new constitution that was adopted in 2010. While this constitution continues to provide for local elections, there seems to be no political will for such elections to be effectively held in the near future as per the principles of ‘gradualism’ and ‘functional transition’ (Marques Guedes, 2003: 63-64).

<sup>70</sup> This is interesting since there are also indications that *poder popular* was revived in the aftermath of the 1992 elections when people were armed in order to drive out UNITA supporters, just as had been the case in the transition to independence, although it is not clear whether committees were mobilized for this purpose (Malaquias, 2007: 170; see also Maier, 1996: ch. 8).

associations, trade unions, labourers committees and non-armed political parties (Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 49-50). While most associations were not politically active<sup>71</sup> and under strict control of the Portuguese secret police, they shared a ‘real, albeit diffuse, sympathy for the MPLA’, even though few had ever having been in organized contact with it (Cahen, 1989: 217).

Firstly, this was due to the fact that the MPLA leadership operated from outside the country. From the late 1960s onwards this had allowed for an ‘other MPLA, practically without links to the official MPLA’ to be formed (Mateus and Mateus, 2009: 43). This other MPLA was formed by militants who had survived the (aftermath of the) 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1961 uprisings and had gone into hiding in the north of the country to form the First (out of a total of 6) Military Region (called Dembos) of the MPLA, and those that supported them. When the First Military Region stopped receiving support from the official MPLA structures in the late 1960s, they survived through the men, food, clothes, study books, hygiene products, medication and ammunition sent by networks in Luanda, which are therefore referred to as the ‘Internal Front’ or Regional Committee of Luanda (Mateus and Mateus, 2009: 43-44; Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 79).

These networks also became increasingly active as self-defence militias against the violence in the *musseques* that started emerging in the early 1970s (Cahen, 1989: 216-217). After driving out the whites, ‘popular committees’ were established to organize food supplies and distribution (something previously managed by Portuguese traders) and eventually also public hygiene, social assistance, education and cultural promotion activities, turning the *musseques* into small ‘liberated zones’ (Cédétim, 1977: 122-124).<sup>72</sup> Thus, despite the fact that many accounts seek to display *poder popular* as something that was created by the MPLA (eg.

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<sup>71</sup> Moorman (2008: 171) for instance finds that musicians, and their audiences, actively took part in people’s power structures but that this was more a reflection of ‘the experience of cultural sovereignty and the self-organization associated with the *musseque* club scene than of leftist ideologies found amongst other groups’.

<sup>72</sup> According to a report cited by Heimer (1979: 55, note 223) the first major victory of *poder popular* was the overthrow of the ‘corrupt and colonial-minded city administration of Luanda’ in October 1974.

Wolfers and Bergerol, 1983), according to Heimer (1979: 50) ‘mobilization [of *poder popular*] occurred at first, and well into 1975, in a semi-autonomous way’.

One of the other reasons to explain the initial gap between the MPLA and *poder popular* is that the MPLA leadership was initially reluctant to align itself with it because of its internal leadership crisis. As described in chapter four, at the time the MPLA leadership was divided in three different factions: the Presidential Wing led by Agostinho Neto, the intellectual Active Revolt led by Joaquim Pinto de Andrade and the Eastern Revolt led by Daniel Chipenda. While there were some links between the Active Revolt and people’s power structures, the Presidential Wing was not enthusiastic about pronouncing itself with regard to *poder popular* as, according to Mabeko-Tali (2001: 58) it knew how difficult it could be to control something that it had not created itself. Thus, Heimer (1979: 50) argues that in fact, much of the initiative in bringing people’s power and the MPLA together rested with ‘radical leftist’ groups which had ‘opted for a strategy of infiltration into, or tactical alliance with, the MPLA’. However, as the MPLA started to lose ground in the fierce struggle for power between the three liberation movements that followed the signing of a transitional government for Angola in January 1975, it realized that it could use *poder popular* to fight its adversaries (Cédétim, 1977: 124).

Consequently, when Agostinho Neto returned from exile to Luanda in February 1975, he publically declared the movements’ support for *poder popular* (Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 56-58). In the following months, the MPLA started consolidating its popular support in the city as well as arming people’s power militia in a bid to counter increasing attacks by the FNLA to MPLA positions in Luanda until proclaiming independence on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November (Cédétim, 1977: 124-125; Heimer, 1979: 67-68). Hence, despite the fact that the MPLA did not actively take part in the creation of *poder popular*, it represented a crucial contribution not only to its political regeneration but also to its military supremacy upon independence (Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 65).

However, it soon became clear that the views and ideas of the variety of actors that constituted *poder popular* clashed with what was becoming a hegemonic logic of the MPLA (Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 89). In accordance with this logic, *poder popular* needed to be reorganized in such a way that it in fact had no power at all: ‘committees not as centres of decision, but centres of education’ (Cédétim, 1977: 129). This becomes clear when reading the preamble of the Law on People’s Power, which was adopted right after independence:

The organs of *poder popular* will execute political power under the orientation and control of the revolutionary vanguard, the MPLA, with the aim of defending, consolidating and developing the revolutionary conquests of the popular masses (Law 1/76 of 5 February)

The law further stipulated that organs of *poder popular* were to be elected at the provincial, municipal and communal level, headed up by commissioners who were to be appointed by the Minister of Internal Administration, Nito Alves. Alves had become an important figure in silencing political dissidences from both left and right of the Presidential Wing of the MPLA in the transition to independence (Heimer, 1979: 88). Yet, with the MPLA leadership becoming increasingly repressive and elitist, while barely able to govern the country in a context of economic collapse and continuing military conflict, discontent and resentment within the party and among the urban population grew (Birmingham, 1978: 560-563).

As a black ‘new *assimilado*’ and someone who was well acquainted with grassroots popular power since his time in the First Military Region, Alves easily capitalized on the rising tensions, in the process strengthening himself and the group he represented. In a bid to counter his influence, the central leadership annulled the results of the local committee elections that had been held in May 1976 in Luanda in accordance with the Law on People’s Power and accused Alves and his ally José van Dunem of factionalism, leading to their expulsion in May 1977. By then, rumours had been circulating for some time about a *coup d’état*. An attempt eventually took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May by occupying the National Radio

Station and the prison of São Paulo (where political prisoners were held) and capturing and killing a number of high-ranking MPLA officials (Mabeko-Tali, 2001: 212-213).

Order was quickly restored with Cuban military assistance, followed by the announcement of a state of exception which allowed for a nation-wide witch hunt of those held responsible for the events, costing the lives of at least 30,000 people (Mateus and Mateus, 2009).<sup>73</sup> Popular Committees of the *Bairro* in Sambizanga, Bairro Operário, Patrice Lumumba, Rangel, Prenda, Nelito Soares and Neves Bendinha, where *poder popular* had been most active, were disbanded as they were seen to have been involved in the ‘factionist’ organization of the coup and taken over by the ‘competent entities of the MPLA’ (Dispatch 26/77 of 2 June). This was followed by the complete annulment of the law on *poder popular* during the December 1977 Congress in which the MPLA officially changed from a movement into the Marxist-Leninist Workers Party. According to Wolfers and Bergerol (1983: 165-166), the law on people’s power was annulled on the grounds that it had been passed too soon after independence, allowing for ‘the construction of parallel organizations to the Liberation Movement and government’. Based on ‘mistaken petty bourgeoisie concepts’, it had ‘failed to take into account the basic Leninist principle that the ultimate organ of people’s power is the Marxist-Leninist Party. Now that such a Party was to exist, it would take on the role of guaranteeing the workers’ seizure of power and building of the apparatus of the revolutionary workers’ state’.

### **6.2.2 Popular Committees of the *Bairro* in Zango**

Those living in the city’s periphery initially did not feel much of the social unrest that marked the events surrounding the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, as this had predominantly manifested itself in Luanda’s pre-independence *musseques*.

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<sup>73</sup> I find that the most informative account on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May is offered by Mabeko-Tali, 2001: chapter 14. It is interesting that, otherwise insightful, accounts of Cuba’s intervention in Angola such as that of George (2005) makes no mention of Cuba’s role in suppressing the revolt, even though it did the same in Ethiopia with similar effects, a fact to which only Birmingham (1978) makes reference.

This was the case of Mr. Bento, who arrived in what is now called Zango thirty years ago “because of life”. Originally from Kwanza Norte, he had followed his wife and mother in law who had already moved to the area in 1978. Zango was then referred to as *Caseta* (little house), because of the remains of the colonial railway house that could be found in the area. At the time, about fifty farmers were living there. Mr. Bento referred to them as people from the *mata* (bush) who did not know how to live properly. A carpenter by profession, he set out to work with the farmers, trying to educate them and urbanize the area. He fought to build a school which eventually won the farmers over. The first school was built with traditional construction material. This did not last long and he replaced it with a school made of adobe bricks (Mr. Bento, 29/11/11).

West of the area formerly known as *Caseta*, lies an area known as *Boa Esperança* (Good Hope). The name was given to the area by Mr. Rufino. Originally from Huambo, Mr. Rufino had fought in the first war for independence with the FAPLA (MPLA’s armed forces) until 1981, and in 1982 he came to Luanda: “I saw that in the city there was no space, so I came here. I did not find anyone here, at the time everything here was *mata*. There were monkeys, there were red buffaloes. [...] Mr. Bento founded ‘there’, I founded ‘here’” (Mr. Rufino, 15/9/12).

Mr. Paulino arrived in the area around the same time, in 1982. He settled in an area south of *Caseta* and *Boa Esperança*, what came to be known as *Terra Nova* (New Land). The name *Terra Nova* was given to the area because everyone living there had come from other parts of the country: “it was not our land, it was new land”. There is another area called *Terra Nova* in Calumbo, which is referred to as *Terra Nova* I, so the area of Mr. Paulino came to be known as *Terra Nova* II. “When we came here, everything was *mata*. We found the railway and the old road. We survived with firewood, charcoal, *maboque* (a tropical fruit), peanuts and cashew nuts, cassava [...] we also ate rats and wild animals” (Mr. Paulino, 18/9/12).

For a while, the communities of *Caseta*, *Boa Esperança* and *Terra Nova* lived relatively unperturbed, but as the MPLA started consolidating its presence in the areas under its control in order to counter UNITA's mounting offensive in the countryside, it extended its reach to urban peripheral areas such as Zango. This is in line with Pearce's analysis of that period: 'Both movements extended their programmes of political education to farmers in their respective areas of control: for the MPLA this meant those farmers who had been resettled on the urban fringes, and for UNITA, the farmers who lived within the zones of influence of its bases (Pearce, 2012: 454). This meant that territorial control began to define political identity, which was not only constituted on the basis of where one was, but it also had to be demonstrated by 'collaborating' (Pearce, 2012: 455).

Mr. Paulino describes how "on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October [of 1982], we were taken from the bush by the government. We were considered UNITA people and we had to stay concentrated close to the road". He was subsequently appointed as coordinator of the Popular Committee of his *bairro*, just like Mr. Bento and Mr. Rufino in their *bairros*. This was in line with a resolution that was adopted in 1982 which attributed the administrative statute of commune to the *bairros* in the main cities of the country.<sup>74</sup> This resolution stipulated that in each *bairro* a commissioner would have to be nominated who would have the same statute as a communal commissioner and direct all political-administrative, economic and social activities of the area (Resolution 7/82 of 6 April).<sup>75</sup> This essentially turned CPBs into a local government tier and CPB coordinators into public servants.

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<sup>74</sup> This followed the adoption of a number of laws on local government in the previous years. Firstly, Decree 187/80 of 15 November established a new administrative division for Luanda: 9 municipalities, integrated by zones or *bairros*. Each municipality was to have as many CPBs as it had zones and the headquarters of each zone was to be established at the CPBs (executive decree 36/81 of 23 September). Law 7/81 of 4 September on local government, further stipulated that a special law would regulate the organization of local government at the level of *povoações* in the rural areas and *bairros* in the cities, to which Resolution 7/82 seems to respond.

<sup>75</sup> The organization, functioning and attributions of the secretariats (which form the technical and administrative support structures) of the municipal and communal commissioners and the CPBs are regulated in executive decree 30/83 of 31 March.

In addition, those citizens who were ‘voluntarily prepared to contribute to the defence of the country and its goods and people, against attacks of contra-revolutionary enemies, delinquents and anti-social elements, as well as the economic and social development of the country’ were called to join Popular Vigilance Brigades (Presidential Decree 47/83 of 19 September). These brigades operated as the armed militias of the CPBs. According to Mr. Rufino: “each coordinator had a kind of army” (*um grupo tipo tropa*).

Thus, not only did the CPBs function as conveyor belts between the party and the people and instruments to ensure loyalty to the party, just like other MPLA mass organizations of the time (Neto, 2001: 45), they also had administrative and even military functions.

Work on other post-independence socialist governments in Tanzania (Tripp, 1992) and Mozambique (Grest, 1995) shows how in other parts of the continent pre-independence grassroots movements and organizations were equally co-opted by the ruling party after independence. In the case of Mozambique, the ruling party FRELIMO created *Grupos Dinamizadores* (Dynamizing Groups) which were ‘heralded as the concrete manifestation of poder popular’, but at the same time mobilized to ‘deal with a growing number of problems in the city: rapid rural-urban migration, rising unemployment, the uncontrolled occupation of abandoned properties, the critical food shortages and escalating crime’ (Grest, 1995: 152). In the countryside, they figured prominently in FRELIMO’s efforts to increase and collectivize agricultural production (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 119). Thus, dynamizing groups in Mozambique varied in structure and the specific tasks they undertook and also in what they achieved, which according to Isaacman and Isaacman (1983: 120) was ‘hardly surprising given their ad-hoc nature, their broad range of responsibilities, the lack of political experience and self-confidence among the participants, and the absence of either government or party structures responsible for directly supervising their activities’. However, they contend that ‘despite their uneven record, there is little doubt that dynamizing groups were an important instrument of national unity’.



Whilst CPBs do not seem to have fulfilled the same function in Angola, they were important for the MPLA government in Luanda to establish control over its territory. At least in Zango, for most of the 1980s and 1990s close relationships existed between the CPB leadership, which expanded to include over 20 coordinators over time, and the local administration, which at all times was informed of what was going on in the communities. Mr. Bento comments how “at the time we still had good comrades as administrators”. One of them, the administrator of the *comuna* of Calumbo, had even been his best man when he got married (Mr. Bento, 29/11/11). While the area never reached the density of the urban *musseques*, remaining predominantly a farming area,<sup>76</sup> the population grew steadily over the years, with people arriving from all parts of the country.<sup>77</sup>

Yet, whilst the government was able to affirm its control over the territory and assure itself of some popular support through the CPBs, it managed to do little beyond this. Until the 1990s there were no public schools or hospitals in the area, or services such as water and electricity. In the early 1990s, Mr. Bento managed to receive support from the government’s Social Support Fund (*Fundo de Apoio Social*, FAS)<sup>78</sup>, set up by the government to channel World Bank funding, to build a school, a market and latrines.<sup>79</sup> The construction of a health post was financed by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), indicative of the ‘non-governmentalization’ of public services at the time (Ferguson, 2006).

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<sup>76</sup> People would mainly cultivate cassava for the production and commercialization of flour, as well as different nuts (peanuts and cashew nuts) and leaves/vegetables (*kisaka*). Not everyone lived permanently in the area: some only stayed there during harvest season and spent the remainder of the year in the city. According to some informants, the area of Zango derives its name from the word *kuzango* which in Kimbundu (the language spoken by the Ambundu ethnic group which dominates Luanda and the north-western provinces of Bengo, Malange and Kwanza Norte) means ‘to lift’ or ‘to rise’ up, a reference of farmers to the fertility of the land and/or the growth of the area.

<sup>77</sup> I spoke to people who came all the way from Kuando Kubango, or other provinces in the south and south-east of the country such as Moxico and Bié and the Lunda provinces, reflecting the migratory movements that took place throughout the 1980s in accordance with SADF invasions in southern Angola and UNITA’s expanding presence towards the north of the country, setting off a continuous movement of people into the towns, provincial capitals and then to Luanda, as described by Roque and Robson (2001).

<sup>78</sup> On the impact of the work of FAS in the municipality of Viana in the 1990s, see Van-Dúnem (2008).

<sup>79</sup> When he came up with the idea of building latrines, his wife thought it ridiculous: “with all the open land around them, why would they need them?”. Today, the market can be found just before the first houses of Zango 1, on one side of the main road and the latrines and school on the other. The school carries the name of Mr. Bento’s first mother in law, who has already passed away, but whom he wanted to pay tribute to.

This changed when one day “in the time of Simão Paulo”,<sup>80</sup> “the Provincial Government” came to see Mr. Bento to announce the construction of houses in the area and ask him to show them where it was best for them to start building (Mr. Bento, 29/11/11).

### **6.2.3 The Committee of the United Residents of Boavista**

In the meantime, on the other side of the city, residents of Boavista had been notified that they would be evicted from the area. Close to the city’s port, Boavista had been inhabited by contract workers from Cape Verde in the years before independence. As internally displaced people moved into the area in post-independence years, Boavista started covering the slopes that lead up to one of the city’s most noble neighbourhoods, Miramar, one the one side while expanding to the Roque Santeiro market on the other.

Most of Boavista’s residents directly or indirectly made their living on Roque Santeiro, by some considered to be ‘Africa’s largest open air market’ (Tomás, 2012: 155). The Angolan anthropologist António Tomás, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on Roque Santeiro, which was demolished in 2008, provides some insight into what living in Boavista must have been like. He characterizes the market as a space that was ‘simultaneously inside and outside the state’ (Tomás, 2012: 19). It was ‘not created by the state, and it functioned for many years without the oversight of the state’ (2012: 187), yet it was directly controlled by economic and financial interests residing with the state’s elites, something that even President dos Santos reportedly admitted and therefore a reason for many to doubt that it would effectively come to the demolition of the market (2012: 16). It was a place which represented the product of the country’s transition from socialism to savage capitalism, where ‘obscene’ amounts of money would change hands every day (at one time estimated at US\$20 million), but also a place of extreme destitution in which ‘people would sell, sleep, eat and defecate amidst heaps of garbage’ (2012: 157-158). The area also represented ‘one of the most crime-stricken

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<sup>80</sup> Simão Paulo was the coordinator of the Committee for the Relocation of the People of Boavista in the capacity of vice-governor of Luanda until 2002, after which he became governor.

neighbourhoods in the whole country' with people resorting to *necklacing* as a way to punish criminals (2012: 187).

While an administration and police units were installed in the market in the early 1990s, bringing some safety and order to the area (Tomás, 2012: 188), Boavista remained a tough place to live. Former residents would often refer to Boavista as the ghetto, a place without any rules other than the rules of the street. Indeed, what most of the media reports that I read on the first evictions in Boavista did not mention was that some residents had in fact been reaching out to the government prior to the first evictions in order to improve their living conditions or even to move them someplace else.<sup>81</sup>

Whilst the municipality of Sambizanga, of which Boavista administratively forms part, is known to have residents' committees, it is probable that these were not very active and strictly government controlled (since the original ones in this area were shut down after 1977). This explains the creation of the *Comissão de Moradores Unidos do Bairro Boavista* (Committee of the United Residents of Boavista) to provide a channel for negotiation with the authorities after the first houses in Boavista had been registered for demolition. According to Jenkins, Robson and Cain (2002b: 123), the events in Boavista seemed to indicate that 'at the grassroots, *musseque* residents have shown themselves capable of playing an active part in service provision and in negotiating with the official service providers, [...] local residents' committees, officially perceived as mere subordinates of the local state administration, are now in fact playing an active role in negotiating with the state over evictions in the *musseques*'. Could this lead the way to effective resistance, or even participation?

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<sup>81</sup> One of my informants remembered that they had "fought and written letters to the government to take them away from that place" (Dona Paula, 9/5/13). According to other accounts, lured by the prospect of a better life, some of the first people to be relocated to Zango had voluntarily done so (Mr. Lito, 23/11/11).

A report by Amnesty International (2003) indicates that the committee was not taken seriously by the authorities, who did not respond to the letter its members sent to express their concern about the way in which houses were being registered as well as the prospect of being relocated to an area outside of the city. Violent confrontations followed after forces of the paramilitary Rapid Intervention Police, members of the ordinary (public order) police, and the army appeared without notice in Boavista and started forcing people out of their houses in early July 2001. The coordinator of the committee, José Rasgadinho, was arrested once before and once during the demolitions that eventually started a week later and continued in bouts until the end of September, resulting in the relocation of over 4,000 families to Zango where they were accommodated in tents (AI, 2003: 6-8).

Local press reports portray Zango as a heavily politicized area in which the ‘displaced’ of Zango are forbidden to speak about the conditions of the camp or receive donations from opposition parties (CEDOC, 2001b; Agora, 2001; Agora, 2002). After the first houses started to be distributed in Zango in November 2002, the residents’ committee complained that most of the beneficiaries were not residents from Boavista but family members of officials of the municipal administration of Sambizanga and the provincial delegation of MINARS, which had overseen the registration of Boavista residents (Folha 8, 2002), sparking unrest as many former residents of Boavista had been living in tents ever since they got to Zango, often shared with other families. After complaints about the irregularities were brought to court and to the National Assembly in January 2003 with the assistance of well-known human rights lawyer David Mendes, President dos Santos requested the General Inspectorate of State Administration to hold an inquiry into the allocation of the houses (Actual, 2003; Folha 8, 2003).<sup>82</sup> Yet, this did not speed up the construction of houses, despite the working group that by then had been instated by the President to this effect. In June 2003, former Boavista

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<sup>82</sup> Thirty days were given to present the results of this inquiry, according to the presidential dispatch that ordered it. To my knowledge, the findings of this inquiry, if any, were never made public.

residents reportedly occupied about 300 unfinished houses and burned down 121 tents (CEDOC, 2003a; 2003b). They were forcibly evicted by the police the next day, while Rasgadinho was arrested and accused of organizing the burning of the tents (AI, 2003: 8-9).

Rasgadinho's high profile is indicative of the importance that the residents' committee in fact had. Based within the community, the committee was able to monitor the state's distribution process of the houses and voice and even mobilize against perceived irregularities. Residents remember that as the construction of houses gained pace, the 'war for houses' intensified. Tensions further arose between the first residents that had moved from their houses in Boavista into tents and new arrivals who moved directly into a house (*de casa para tenda* versus *de casa para casa*). Crime started to get out of hand as former Boavista gangs took over the streets of Zango. Names given by residents to certain parts of Zango, such as *saber andar* ('know how to walk') and *parte braço* ('arm-breaker') are a reminder of these days.

### **6.3 Local administration takes over**

In 2004, the local press reported on the existence of another residents' committee, reportedly formed in 2001 in order to represent residents of Terra Nova II, where the first tent camp was set up to accommodate people from Boavista.<sup>83</sup> This committee in turn claimed that individuals linked to different local government entities were trying to 'destroy' it and form another committee (Folha 8, 2004). Around the same time, rumours started circulating that Rasgadinho had started to collaborate with the authorities and was involved in the growing illegal sale of houses in Zango, leading to his subsequent arrest (Agora, 2005).<sup>84</sup> In 2005, elections were held for the position of president of Zango's residents' committee in which 4

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<sup>83</sup> This is then a different committee from Mr. Paulino's one. I asked around about this committee and its president, but current residents of Zango were not familiar with the committee nor with its president or with the fact that this person had been president of the referred committee.

<sup>84</sup> I tried to find Rasgadinho, but according to informants he died in Luanda's Comarca prison under conditions that I have not been able to establish.

to 5 people participated, resulting in the appointment of Mr. Lito, a MINARS official (Mr. Lito, 23/11/11).

According to Mr. Lito, these elections had arisen from a need to find someone who could represent the entire Zango community, confirming that José Rasgadinho had never been acknowledged as such by the government. Yet, in view of the growing unrest in Zango, it is more probable that Mr. Lito was put forward by the local administration in order to have a trustworthy element on the ground who could neutralize this unrest by taking over the role of intermediary between the people and the state. In doing so, the local administration also gained control over people's claims to property, something that had allowed Rasgadinho to challenge the housing allocation process.

In the next sections I describe how the local administration has 'taken over' residents' committees in Zango and what kind of impact this has had on local governance dynamics.

### **6.3.1 'Formalizing' residents' committees**

In the years that Mr. Lito was president of the committee, between 2005 and 2011, he became responsible for the entire area of Zango, including the surrounding peripheral areas where people like Mr. Rufino and Mr. Paulino continued to live with their communities.<sup>85</sup> Their committees continued operational and went onto be referred in Zango as 'sub-committees'. During this time, Mr. Lito continued to work as a MINARS official, something which, in his words, "complemented and facilitated" his work with the committee as he was not paid for this (Mr. Lito, 23/11/11).

It is difficult to gauge the kind of work that Mr. Lito exactly carried out during this years, which represented a period of rapid change: thousands of houses were built, while

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<sup>85</sup> Only about a hundred farmers were accommodated in the project, including Mr. Bento.

administratively the project underwent various changes. His main contribution appears to have been that during this period of transition, he represented a factor of continuity. As he lived in Zango, he experienced daily life in the project but as a MINARS official he was equally inside the government, which meant he represented an ideal bridge between the residents and the project's administration.

Several residents stressed the importance of continuity in local leadership. In the words of one resident of Terra Nova II, Mr. Paulino's *bairro*:

I cannot choose someone I don't know. [...] A new person cannot step in all of a sudden, we need to know who this person is, where is he from, is he a good person, a thief or a traitor. [...] The coordinator is a farmer [just like us], he knows who lives here without having to look it up in a book, otherwise people can just infiltrate into the *bairro*. [...] Each *bairro* needs to be able to tell the story of its people, a new coordinator, a new resident won't be able to tell the history (Field notes, 18/9/12).

Yet, in view of the growth of the project, which by 2011 had reached Zango 4, one committee was no longer deemed adequate to 'represent' all the residents of the project. This motivated the municipal administration to expand the number of committees, a process which it referred to as the 'decentralization' of the committees. For each sector in Zango, ranging from Zango 1, to 2, 3, which was divided up in 3A and 3B, and 4, a committee was created and elections to staff these committees were held accordingly through a system of 'representative democracy' in which block representatives voted on behalf of residents (Viana municipal administration official, 8/12/11).

In addition, a house in Zango 1 was allocated to accommodate the committees' members, while in Viana town a new office was built in order to accommodate those members of the committee of Viana town as well as a municipal administration official in charge of liaising with all committees and the municipality's traditional authorities.<sup>86</sup>

While elections had been organized by the municipal administration, the inaugural ceremony of the members was held at the communal administration. Administrative aides such as badges, identifying the committee presidents as such, as well as stamps, were also issued by the communal administration. These instruments allow presidents of the committees to execute administrative tasks, such as the issuing of proofs of residence and other kinds of documents, which function as informal title deeds, thereby fulfilling an important function of control over who can and cannot claim the right to live in Zango.<sup>87</sup>

The committees' 'formalization' followed the adoption of a provisional regulation for all residents' committees in Viana, which outlines, amongst others, the objectives, organization, attributions, mandate and the relation between the committees and the municipal administration 'until its substitution with a legal or normative instrument instated by the Central Executive or the Province of Luanda, thereby assuming a temporary and local character' (GoA, 2011: art. 1). It is not the first time that provincial government has demonstrated intent to institutionalize residents' committees. In the past, several provincial governors have convened with residents' committees, calling them 'important partners' of the local state (PortalAngop, 2005a). In addition, municipal administrations reportedly play an

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<sup>86</sup> The municipality of Viana has two chiefs or *sobas* that are recognized by the authorities: one in Viana town and one in Kassaka, in the *comuna* of Calumbo. Like the residents' committees, traditional authorities are also not regulated by law, but they are on the state's payroll and recognized as one of Angola's pillars of 'local power' through their seat in local consultative bodies of the state administration (see Law 17/10 of 29 July and Constitution 2010, art. 223-225). However, Orre (2010) describes how their statute remains vague and therefore subject to instrumentalisation by the state. For a similar analysis of these local consultative bodies or CACSS see Pestana (2012).

<sup>87</sup> The importance of this function is further illustrated in the next chapter.



active role in their management. For instance, in 2012 the municipal administration of Cazenga was reported to have ‘restructured’ its residents’ committees in order to ‘confer a new dynamic to its governance and bring government closer to the people’ (Portalangop, 2012a).<sup>88</sup>

However, this practice has not been translated into any of the current legislation on local government<sup>89</sup> and senior government officials indicated that the state has no intention to legalize what are seen as obsolete remnants from the one party era (Head of the legal department of Ministry Administration of the Territory, 7/12/11).<sup>90</sup> In the absence of this legislation, practice reflects the norms that were laid out for Popular Committees of the *Bairro* in the early 1980s as well as subsequent attempts by the provincial government to codify local practices.

The continuity in these practices is partly explained by the fact that in Zango, many of its ‘subcommittees’ continue to be led by the same coordinators that were appointed upon their creation under the one party state.<sup>91</sup> Thus, when these coordinators describe their work, this largely reflects the responsibilities that were laid out for them in 1982 (article 3 of Resolution 7/82):

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<sup>88</sup> According to data collected by the NGO Development Workshop, in 2010 Cazenga had 46 established residents’ committees (DW, 2010).

<sup>89</sup> I have found only one referral in paragraph 4 of article 81 of the Constitution on ‘youth’, where mention is made of ‘organizations of residents’ that together with “families, the schools, the companies, the cultural associations and foundations and collectives of culture and leisure” should help the State in promoting and supporting youth organizations in the pursuit of their objectives.

<sup>90</sup> Central government officials I interviewed generally knew about the existence of the committees but discarded my questions about them. Senior officials within the PRP and PHS would refer to residents’ committees as nothing more than ‘communitarian organizations’. When I confronted an architect who works for Luanda’s Urban Planning and Management Institute with the fact that committees perform administrative state-like functions, he said that for the Institute documents issued by residents’ committees such as declarations of residence have no legal value and that he did not understand why they were still used (IPGUL representative, 19/3/12).

<sup>91</sup> The same continuity is noted in Maputo, Mozambique: in the peri-central neighbourhood of Urbanização ‘the current *bairro* secretary was part of the first *grupo dinamizador*, and used to be the FRELIMO branch secretary’. In addition, the office of the *bairro* secretary is located in what used to be the premises of the *grupo dinamizador do circulo do bairro comunal* (Bénil-Gbaffou *et. al.* 2013: 32).

- a) maintain the connection between the municipal commissioner and the population, working together with the structures of the Party in the mobilization of the residents for political, economic and social tasks of interest for the *Bairro*;
- b) explain and defend the political line of the MPLA-Workers Party, working towards its practical realization together with the residents;
- c) incentivize residents to maintain hygiene, cleanliness, order and security in all areas;
- d) take notice of the complaints, anxieties and concerns of the residents, taking initiatives towards a respective solution;
- e) maintain the census of the residents of the *Bairro* updated, receiving to this effect from the civil registries the statistical maps of the registrations of birth, death, marriage, etc.;
- f) take notice of the movement of residents in the *Bairro*;
- g) perform other tasks that may be delegated from above.

Mr. Paulino, coordinator of the Terra Nova II committee then describes his work as follows:

Indeed, I have been doing this for 29 years and have had 4 mandates, every time I get re-elected. [...] Everything that happens, I take it to the authorities. I also issue proofs of residency (*atestados de residência*) and household registrations (*agregados familiares*). [...] We meet with the other presidents of the committees depending on when the communal or municipal administration calls us, this can be every 3 or 4 months. I stay in touch with them over the phone. After a meeting with the administration, I tell the population about it. Also, if they have problems they come to me and I take it to the competent authorities. [...] Problems can be crime, domestic violence and social and civil disrespect. If the committee is not able to solve the problem I take it to the police. I work together with OMA, JMPLA, everyone in the community. [...] We had an office, now we work 'manually': under a cashew tree or

just here. We are five members of the committee: a president, a secretary, a counsellor and two *vogais* [those members of the committee that look after the observance of its statutes] (Mr. Paulino, 18/9/12).

Another long-term coordinator of a farmers settlement in Zango referred to as Km 40, listed the following activities as responsibilities of the committee:

control of the population, who is living in the area, who is coming and going, control of the midwives, coordination of cleaning of the *bairro* and use of the latrines, control of crime, meetings with the population to discuss the concerns of living (*preocupações de vivência*) [...] the minutes of these meetings are shared with the communal administration twice a month (Mr. Bernardo, 6/12/11).

The regulation that was adopted in 1993 by the Provincial Government of Luanda, a little booklet to which numerous presidents made reference, introduces the committees' vocabulary as it is still used now: residents' committees instead of CPBs, presidents instead of coordinators, as well as the administrative composition of committees. It defines committees as entities that 'aim to create conditions for a healthy *convivência* and collaboration with the purpose of developing activities related to the maintenance of hygiene and the conservation of community patrimony, as well as the development of cultural, sportive, recreational and other activities' (GoA, 1993: art. 2). It makes no explicit mention of the committees' relationship with the authorities or the party, although it does stipulate that municipal administrations are responsible for holding the elections for committees as well as to propose lists for candidates for *cargos directivos* (GoA, 1993: art. 57-57).

The latest regulation on committees, as adopted in Viana, states that 'a residents' committee is a communitarian organization of philanthropic character that participates in the organization of the communities for their social well-being together with [the] state' (GoA, 2011: preamble).

In line with this regulation, all presidents of the committees created in 2011 to represent the residents of Zango 1 to 4, when asked about how they would define the role of the committees, responded something along the lines of the committee being: an “intermediary between the people and the state” in terms of informing local administration about problems or concerns of the community and a “partner of the state” in terms of helping it to solve these problems.

All of the presidents I met with spoke with detailed knowledge and a sense of responsibility about their work, carrying their badges with a stamp of the communal administration identifying them as representatives of the community with pride when they were (as they referred to it) “on duty”. One president took great care in keeping the picture taken after his inauguration at the communal administration in which he solemnly featured in a suit.

However, their inability to answer questions about the resolution of existing problems in the project with regard to basic services or the status of areas such as Terra Nova II, where farmers have not been incorporated in the project and still live in what is now an island of shacks lying between the state-built houses of Zango, exposed the lack of effective power of the committees. While presidents of the committees are seen as state representatives by residents, they do not have the corresponding means to solve their community’s problems, apart from taking it to a higher level of authority. In addition, while presidents of the committees can be seen as the ultimate ‘interface bureaucrats’ (Bierschenk, 2010), the fact that they represent both the people as well as the state creates conflicting loyalties. A number of presidents would express their frustration about this. As Mr. Paulino eloquently put it: “I am inside the government, but outside of the law” (*estou dentro do governo, mas fora da lei*) (Mr. Paulino, 18/9/12).

The practice of ‘formalization’ of residents’ committees in Luanda resonates with practices elsewhere on the continent. For instance, according to Attahi (1997) similar structures were institutionalized in Francophone West African countries such as Cote d’Ivoire in the context of formal decentralization in the 1990s as a way to strengthen the central government’s power over the local. Bénit-Gbaffou *et. al.* (2013: 31-32) refer to similar practices in South Africa and Mozambique where popular structures have been captured by the dominant liberation movements and subsequently used to entrench party structures at the neighbourhood level, either through their mobilization for government ends (South Africa) or through their formalization (Mozambique). In Maputo, the *grupos dinamizadores* of socialist times have evolved into local government structures, headed by *secretários de bairro* who are paid and elected municipal employees and fulfill ‘a wide range of [...] local administrative functions’, such as the monitoring of waste collection (Grest *et. al.* 2013: 129). However, researchers have found that in practice the election of these secretaries has been inconsistent and untransparent. In a study by Bowen and Helling (2011: 6-7), *secretários de bairros* were described as a “trunk of the [Frelimo-party] state” and the elections as merely an attempt to bestow false legitimacy. In such a context, local government becomes an instrument to reinforce the power and control of the ruling party in the city (Ginisty and Vivet, forthcoming cited in Bénit-Gbaffou, 2013: 31).

### **6.3.2 The role of the party**

Whilst not entirely *of* the state, residents’ committees operate in a similar way as regular state structures in their relationship to the party. As mentioned above, party affiliation is no longer a requirement for the fulfillment of public office since the country’s transition to multi-party democracy. However, loyalty to the ruling party continues to be important to gain access to government jobs. Indeed, all of the presidents I met with, from the old CPB coordinators to Mr. Lito and the current presidents of the committees, had a history of activism in the MPLA:

from being a member of OPA, MPLA's national children's organization upon independence, to having served in the FAPLA, MPLA's armed forces, during the war. Most of them also fulfilled a position in local party structures, or had done so in the past. Similarly, local party officials would often have a history in their local residents' committee, such as the current first secretary of the MPLA's Special Committee for Zango, which was created in 2008.

Thus, party loyalty seems to be a prerequisite for entry into the government. In the words of one president: "we are people of the government, we are people of the party, we are people of the army, we are everything, that's why we were elected" (Mr. José, 19/11/11). There is also a strong conviction that loyalty is a sign of trustworthiness: "a party in power will want trustworthy people in the rearguard" (Mr. Julio, 30/11/11). Consequently, the expectation is that this will eventually be rewarded: "we have to work hard to show them [that we are capable] [...] I don't make anything, but if I stop working, things will go bad (*as coisas estragam*). I always have to work, one cannot be a troublemaker." (Mr. Rufino 15/9/12). Another president concludes: "In the end, if you work hard, you will be compensated" (Mr. Bernardo, 20/9/12). As political loyalty and commitment are seen to eventually translate into benefits, work in the residents' committees, as was the case under one party rule, is carried out without any financial compensation, a situation often referred to as working *por amor à camisola*. (lit. 'for the love of the shirt').<sup>92</sup>

Whilst the party acts as a gatekeeper to the state, at the same time the state is seen as something transitional. Indeed, in an environment such as Zango where formal local government is not physically represented, while the party counts with offices for the Special Committee, the party's Women's league (OMA), the Youth league (JMPLA) and over 50

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<sup>92</sup> In Brazil this expression is used when soccer players play for a team without being paid; a player then literally plays for the love of the shirt of the team. In a business or working context the expression is used when someone works for the love of an ideal or out of passion or dedication.

Action Committees<sup>93</sup> and where party offices in Calumbo and Viana are shiny and well maintained while local administration buildings look decrepit, it makes more sense to pledge allegiance to the party. The party then is the true and permanent holder of power and as such it represents the main avenue of social mobility, a dynamic which is also found in other hegemonic authoritarian regimes such as Mozambique (Sumich, 2010). Hence, one may temporarily fulfill his public duty, but party membership is for life. This explains why some former presidents were critical about their own performance “in office”, acknowledging that they were seen by residents as collaborators of the state because they were not able to do enough to meet people’s needs, without this affecting their loyalty to the party.

On the other hand, the shadow role played by the party makes for a very tricky playing field as the party easily retreats in moments of state failure. For instance, when asking a member of the MPLA’s Special Committee of Zango about the time it would still take to house the thousands of families that have been living in tents in Zango since 2009 he replied that “here, the party is begging the government [for houses]” (*aqui o partido é que está a chorar no governo*) (MPLA Special Committee representative, 20/9/12). Thus, the complex relationship between the state administration and the party in Angola adds to the ‘twilight’ nature of residents’ committees in Zango.

## 6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how current local governance arrangements in Luanda are strongly embedded in the country’s political history. As *bairros* in Angola have no formal representation in the state administration, residents’ committees function as important bridges between the state and the people. The challenge that the Boavista residents’ committee

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<sup>93</sup> *Comités de Acção do Partido* or CAPs are local party cells. According to the first secretary of MPLA for the *comuna* of Calumbo, Calumbo has 101 CAPs, of which 51 to 56 are based in Zango and the rest in Calumbo and surrounding areas (First secretary of MPLA Calumbo and former administrator of Calumbo, 16/5/12).

represented as one that had autonomously emerged, explains the local administration's actions towards taking over the space between the state and the people.

The 'formalization' of the residents' committees in the absence of their formal recognition by the central government shows how the local administration is able to create its own sphere of government that operates relatively independently from the central state. In addition, this 'formalization' as well as the mobilization of people's political identities by the local administration has contributed to the generation of a sense of legitimacy and loyalty amongst the presidents of the residents' committees. At the same time, the close relations between the residents' committees and local administration and party structures also create a space for central government and party control, as can be found in other countries on the continent such as Mozambique.

Thus, the 'twilight' zone in which residents' committees find themselves has also put presidents in a position in which they are torn between history and present, between loyalty to the state and party and between their own interests and that of their communities.

This has resulted in the creation of a context in which there is little space for substantive citizen participation that is organically claimed or created from below.



## 7. Taking ownership of Zango from below

*“Change is man-made”*

*(Luís, 2/5/13)*

### 7.1 Introduction

As described in chapter five, housing allocation in Zango has been directed from above without being grounded in any explicit policy or regulation due to the legal limbo in which the project has existed since its creation. The previous chapter in turn showed that in the absence of the formal regulation of the organization or functioning of the state administration beyond the *comuna* level in Angola, informal norms determine local governance arrangements in Zango.

According to Juul and Lund (2002: 5), ‘legal and institutional pluralism combined with a state unable, or unwilling, to ensure constancy in rules and hierarchies, encourages people to renegotiate the state of affairs in order to either confirm or change it’. Therefore, when looking at tenure, one needs to look at what people *do* to secure these rights, rather than defining tenure security in legal terms since it is in the tension between the existence of multipurpose forms of authority on the one hand and multiple laws and rules on the other, that people act to secure or improve their access to and control over land and property (Juul and Lund, 2002: 3). In this process, multiple actors can be involved in claiming or recognizing rights to land or property. This process should therefore be seen as on-going and cyclical in the sense that rights and institutional legitimacy are not recognized once and for all but will be vindicated and recognized (or not) in everyday practices and politics (Lund, 2002: 15).

In this chapter, I describe the everyday practices that have emerged in Zango as a response to the poor formal regulation of housing allocation and the consequent emergence of an informal housing market. I describe the workings of this market through narratives and case studies of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of houses in Zango to provide insight into the multiple actors, interests and repertoires that are involved in the practice of claiming and recognizing rights to housing. In the last section of the chapter, I show how this market can also be seen as an illustration of the changing perceptions of Zango from an undesired to a 'good' place.

## **7.2 Housing allocation in practice**

According to informal estimates, about 50 to 70 percent of the current residents in Zango 1 and 2 are not the original people that were relocated from Boavista (PHS official 1, 8/12/11) and anecdotal evidence suggests that the same is the case in Zango 3 and 4. The informal market in houses in Zango has been part of the reality of the project since its early days, and it has been a constant complaint of senior government officials for representing 'immoral and opportunistic behaviour', as well as a contributing factor to the delay of further relocations from Boavista to Zango (PortalAngop, 2005b). Hence, repeated threats have been made about the confiscation of houses occupied by non-beneficiaries and the introduction of new registration systems in order to improve the state's control over the relocation process (PortalAngop, 2006b; 2011b; 2012b).

Yet, in the absence of a system in which land and property tenure is regularized, government officials have few instruments to exercise control over local land and property markets. This has opened up space for a multiplicity of actors to claim or recognize rights to property. Furthermore, the fact that threats about confiscations and new registration systems have not actually been realized, apart from a number of high-profile arrests, have made people wary (albeit still cautious) about the state's will or capacity to enforce its rules. As time has passed by, residents of Luanda have become familiar with the relocation process and in response to

this they have come up with various strategies to access houses. I will discuss some of the practices and actors that have emerged as a result below.

### 7.2.1 Pedro's houses

When I first met Pedro in May 2012, I knew he had come to Zango in 2006 from Boavista. He had showed me his house in Zango 2 and I always figured this was the house that had been given to his family after being relocated to the project. A year later, he had moved to a different house in an area known as 'INEA', named after the National Roads Institute which had relocated people to the houses there and in our conversations he started mentioning other houses that belonged to his family. I asked if I could 'formally' interview him and record our conversation to help me understand his housing situation.

Sylvia: so when you moved to Zango, you received a house. Was it just one house that your family received?

Pedro: yes, we moved here, and we had more than one house (*tivemos tipo mais de uma casa*). We received two houses in Zango, three houses in Zango, yes.. [...]

Sylvia: Why three houses?

Pedro: because in Boavista we also had three houses. Real houses, three houses and a plot of land. [...] These houses that we had were demolished, the number of houses that we had is the number of houses that we were given. On the plot of land we had built an *anexo*, which was my room. [...] For this *anexo* we received a plot of land here in Zango. [...]

I noted that he had recently moved to INEA and he told me that this house belonged to his mother.

Sylvia: how did she manage to get a house in INEA?

Pedro: [...] We were living in Zango 2 and [a business man] said, I want this house, I will give you US\$60.000. We said, no, we will spend this money. So he suggested to buy us a house,

[which he would remodel or upgrade] and give us US\$2400 and we accepted. He gave us US\$2400, he gave us the house, but then [the upgrading of the house] we will have to conclude. [...] But the positive thing is that he gave us the house, we have a house.

Sylvia: so that leaves you with four houses?

Pedro: we have four, actually, six houses

Sylvia: Six? What about the other two?

Pedro: In Zango 4.

Sylvia: and how did you get a hold of those?

Pedro: I would have to ask my mom about that..

I prompted him and a confusing story followed from which appeared that the first three houses that they had been given in Zango were in fact not the first ones they had.

Pedro: [...] we had a house at the green ones (*nas verdes*) [among the first houses to be built in Zango 1]. So my mom in 2004, when it was time for me to start fighting to get into highschool, they said it would be difficult, expensive. Since I am the only boy, she has two girls, I'm the only boy, she thought, I will have to spend a lot of money, so she sells this house. At the time she sold it for US\$5000. [...] So she keeps this US\$5000, which was not much, but she kept it anyway, she managed to buy a plot of land [in the area of Zango 1]. She bought the land, they took it, demolished and gave a house in Zango 4. [...] She also bought another house [...] a house of adobe on a plot of 20 by 20m. [...] But she's living in a shack. She's still fighting because she wants another house!

Sylvia: so what is her objective, in buying these houses? Do you think she sees them as.. as an investment?

Pedro: inheritance. An investment. She told her husband: I may die, but my children will not live as poor people. At least my son has something, he can sustain himself, he has a roof over

his head. [...] For instance, the rent we get for the house in Zango 2 is mine. [...] I can get US\$250, US\$200 in rent for the house [...] but I am not renting out the entire house, just the back for US\$150 because in the front I want to set up a business (*um projecto*). If I do this, I can charge more rent. In other words, I know that two years from now, I can make my life with the rent of this house. And life goes on.

Pedro's story (Pedro, 2/5/13) contrasted with the story of his friend Luís (Luís, 2/5/13), whose family had been relocated to Zango in 2001 but only received a house in 2004.

Luís: Yes, we only have this house because [...] we were amongst the first to be registered for demolition (*enumerados*). [...] We did have an *anexo*, but it was only much later that we found out that this could also be registered as an existing house. [...] It was all very fast and people did not know about anything, they were innocent.

Pedro affirms: with us it was different, the second batch, it took a lot of time. From 2001 to 2006, we had more time, we were thinking. At the time of demolition we had one house *nas verdes*, the one I told you about, that my mother sold for US\$5000 in 2004. So she starts informing herself about things. How do things work, what's the *procedimento*. That's when she buys a plot of land in Boavista, quickly builds a shack, puts in a tenant and when they came they registered it.

A couple of days later, Pedro and I were going around Zango in search of people he knew that had not received but acquired a house in Zango. I had been thinking about what he had told me about his mother and I wanted to confirm whether she possibly had any connections to the MPLA which could have helped her in gaining access to houses in Zango.

Pedro said she did not have any party connections and that the fact that she knew 'how to get around' was the product of years of experience. Having come from the village of Kikulungo in Kwanza Norte, she had moved to Luanda in the early 1980s before he was born. First she stayed in Bairro Operário, a neighbourhood in the municipality of Cazenga, with family until

she managed to buy a plot of land in Boavista. There she built a zinc sheet house (*casa de chapa*) first, after which she slowly started to turn it into a cement house. Pedro spoke fondly of his childhood memories of growing up in Boavista, although he said he was aware of the price his mother had to pay to provide him with a ‘more or less stable’ life. She would work in the informal trade, buying fish from fishermen and then reselling them. Often she would be arrested by the police, on the hunt in groups of three, called by Pedro and his friends *três/quinhentos* (three/five hundred) because they would always ask for 500 kwanza as bribe. She would always resist arrests and then they would have to go fetch her at the Sambizanga police station (Pedro, 7/5/13).

Pedro’s account forms a useful entry point into a discussion of the informal housing market in Zango as it allows us to understand a number of its characteristics. Firstly, it shows how this market is shaped by the complex relationships between government officials and citizens. Whilst officially governed by laws and regulations, in daily life these relations are characterized by a large degree of complicity as state officials may act as enforcers as well as violators of the law. The poor central regulation of the law contributes to the emergence of informal rules and arrangements on the ground. Thus, as soon as people started finding out that newly built shacks were also included in the registration process, they responded to this, thereby sowing the seeds for a pattern of accumulation. In this context, popular knowledge of informal rules and the ability of applying this knowledge seems to be more important than wealth, connections or direct clientelist relationships. As a result, in practice strategies have quickly shifted away from being oriented towards organizing resistance to removals as described in the previous chapter before the first demolitions, but instead towards the formulation of strategies to be given housing.

### **7.2.2 The role of ‘*fiscais*’**

An important part of the success of strategies to gain access to housing is having a house registered for demolition. This is confirmed by Tomás (2012) in his research on Roque

Santeiro in 2008, where he found that people in Boavista had started to buy or build shacks after the first demolitions so as to get accommodation in Zango. While none of these people would acquire legal titles when doing so, the fact that these houses had been registered and attributed numbers 'had given them value, turning them into commodities or assets to be bought and sold' to the point that they were being sold for US\$2000 each (Tomás, 2012: 119). Similar practices can be found in Zango itself, where prices for shacks that may be demolished range between US\$800 to US\$1000 or US\$2000 up to US\$4000, depending on the area.

As a result, those with the authority of registering or validating the registration of houses for demolition have become important actors in the housing allocation process. It is in this context that the role of *fiscais* must be seen. *Fiscais* are generally officials that carry out monitoring, supervision or controlling duties. As described in the previous chapter, at the start of the Zango project the Boavista residents' committee challenged the supervision of the housing allocation process by state officials which led to its replacement with a committee that operated in line with the local administration's interests.

Yet, in practice state officials themselves continue to undermine the housing allocation process through their involvement in the illegal sale or appropriation of houses, something which is publically known.

According to one Zango resident:

*Fiscais* are easily corrupted. Whenever demolitions start and you have a *cabana* [shack] in the area, which might even have been built quickly in the back of the area to be demolished, the only thing you need to do is approach a *fiscal*, give him US\$5000 or US\$6000 and he will pass you the *ficha* [a document similar to the *guia de entrega*] and the key and the house is yours (Vicente, 20/5/13).

According to another resident,

the *fiscais* of Zango do not pay attention to the informal trade in houses. They will only intervene when for instance seeing an empty house. In fact, those most involved in the informal trade are the *fiscais* themselves (*fazem uma candonga que não vale a pena*). In the time of Simão Paulo, one could get a key to a house for as little as US\$50, this went up to US\$5000 and currently is as high as US\$10.000. Some *fiscais* have as many as 5 houses in Zango, they will rent these out, or give them or have them occupied (*tomar conta*) by family members (Albano, 24/5/13).

The practices of *fiscais* are also denounced by central government officials, such as the head of the PRP who has frequently made reference in the press to the ‘collaboration’ of state officials in the sale and rental of houses in Zango (eg. PortalAngop, 2011b). In a bid to counter such practices, the PHS has resorted to working with members of the residents’ committees with a view of monitoring the housing allocation process.

This has been the case in Terra Nova II, the *bairro* of Mr. Paulino, who was introduced in the previous chapter. After having been surrounded by farmlands for years, Terra Nova II is now an island of shacks lying between the state-built houses of Zango and therefore it is seen as an area where demolitions will inevitably take place.

Some people in Terra Nova II had received a financial compensation for the loss of their farmlands (although this was by many considered as much too low), while houses were subject to various registration processes that took place over the years. The first process had been carried out by MINARS, which used white spray painted numbers to enumerate those houses registered as eligible for compensation. The second registration process had been carried out by the PRP, which also used a number, followed by an ‘X’ by the PHS. In these processes, care was taken to exclude potential profiteers. Thus, only houses made of zinc sheets where residents were present at the time of registration were included in the process, while those made of wood and mud (*pau a pique*) or abandoned shacks were excluded and demolished without any compensation. More importantly, in the case of Terra Nova II the



PHS also worked together with Mr. Paulino to validate the registration of houses as another way to exclude profiteers (Mr. Paulino, 18/9/12). This practice has been repeated in other areas targeted for demolition, such as ‘Zango of the tents’.

‘Zango of the tents’ is largely inhabited by people who were relocated to Zango in 2009 by the Provincial Government after seasonal tides hit the *Ilha de Luanda* (Island of Luanda), a peninsula located at the bay of Luanda that for centuries had been inhabited by fishermen. In the following four years, repeated promises were made about the relocation of the *Ilhéus*, as the former island inhabitants are called, into houses. However, only a group of about 100 people received plots of land for self-help building in an area that is managed by the Provincial Government, by locals referred to as *Ilha Seca* (‘dry island’).

In one of the last weeks of my fieldwork in Luanda, the first demolitions in ‘Zango of the tents’ and subsequent relocations to houses in the project finally started. Pedro called me early Sunday morning to warn me and the next day we visited the demolition site. Here we found several people walking around with neon vests and badges that identified them as ‘fiscal of Zango of the tents’ (*fiscal Zango das tendas*). When I asked a PHS official about this a couple of days later he confirmed that these had been members of residents’ committees with whom the PHS worked in order to ‘counter infiltrations’ in the housing allocation process (PHS official 2, 24/5/13).

These examples on the collaboration between the PHS and residents’ committees show how the state may act to compensate for the failure of its own *fiscais* to enforce the law. Yet, in doing so, it has opened up opportunities for residents’ committees to get involved in the housing business and to do so under the veneer of public authority. This is enabled by the fact that Mr. Paulino and presidents of other sub-committees in the periphery of Zango are still able to issue residence certificates. On the one hand, this allows them to help people stake legitimate claims to ownership by providing them with what can be seen as (informal) title deeds. For instance, some people whose houses were demolished as they were not deemed

eligible for compensation (for instance by not being present at the time of registration) rebuilt these houses with the approval of Mr. Paulino who could attest to them being long-time residents of the area. On the other hand, it also allows them to recognize illegitimate claims to ownership. Thus, various residents confirmed that sub-committees are involved in the concession or recognition of the occupation of plots of land as well as shacks, for which payment is charged.

This has resulted in an expansion of the amount of shacks in Zango, which in areas such as Terra Nova II, can be bought for up to US\$5000 including 'documents', such as a proof of residency issued by the residents' committee, which is seen by residents as a valid proof of tenure. Shack owners may in turn pay or support people to live in shacks in order to ensure its occupation and therefore subsequent registration for compensation upon demolition. Hence, despite the bad living conditions, caused by a lack of basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity of people living in shacks in Terra Nova II or 'Zango of the tents', the security that they feel with regard to the expectation of future compensation is sufficiently powerful for residents to either stay or move into these settlements.

Yet, similar to what took place in the first years of the project in response to the perceived challenge represented by the Boavista residents' committee, there are indications that the local administration has attempted to curtail the power of the sub-committees. Thus, recently Mr. Rufino was relieved from his duties after decades of service. The area of *Boa Esperança*, where Mr. Rufino lives, is surrounded by farmsteads that have come to be owned by very wealthy and well-connected people (including the famous *quinta do Nandó*, the former vice-president of the Republic Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos). According to residents, land in this area used to be "just occupied" after which symbolic prices of about US\$50 started to be charged by the residents' committee for the recognition of plots of land of 20 by 20 metres. As the demand for land has risen, private individuals have become involved in the sale of land and prices have reached "US\$5000 to US\$6000, bargaining", going up the closer plots get to

the open water conduit that carries water from the Kwanza river (Field notes, 13/9/12). Small plots of land can be obtained through the communal administration for which residence certificates are issued as proof of occupation (Mr. Rufino, 15/9/12).<sup>94</sup> This suggests that the local administration is attempting to take over control of the local land market by starting to take up a role that until then had been fulfilled by residents' committees. In a similar bid to curtail potential committee power, the three residents' committee presidents of 'Zango of the tents', are also not allowed by the local administration to issue any type of documents.

These examples show how the interests of the different levels of government may collide. Whilst the actions of government agencies such as the PRP and PHS are directed at ensuring a fair housing allocation, the mobilization of residents' committees for this purpose counters the interests of the local administration which then seeks to curtail this power as a response.

### **7.3 The housing market**

Towards the end of my fieldwork I realized that the informal rules regarding the housing allocation process had resulted in a relative sense of security amongst residents. While a decade ago the delay in the housing delivery in Zango led to violent confrontations between the state and the people, the prospect of a house has led current tent dwellers to relatively calmly await demolitions.

It should be noted that some dwellers of 'Zango of the tents' have challenged their eviction with the assistance of the NGO SOS Habitat (personal communication Rafael Morais of SOS Habitat, Email 2/11/12). This NGO helps victims of forced demolitions in Luanda to bring their cases to court, however with little success so far. According to a SOS Habitat report, reasons for this lack of success originate from the lack of a 'juridical culture' in Angola. Access to justice for poor people is limited due to the lack of financial means and social

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<sup>94</sup> By law, all land continues to be of the Angolan state which may concede the use of this land. Concession of land in urban and sub-urban areas of up to 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> may be authorized by the Municipal Administration. However, in the absence of an updated land registry, there is little control over such concessions and in practice payment may be charged.

standing, whilst the legal system itself suffers from serious deficiencies (Abreu, 2012: 159-161). Human rights lawyers such as David Mendes (who helped to bring complaints about housing allocation irregularities in Zango to court in 2003 as described in the previous chapter) therefore have come to prefer negotiation over legal solutions to settle such cases (Abreu, 2012: 162).

In the words of one resident whom I spoke to before the first demolitions in ‘Zango of the tents’:

We were moved out of the *Ilha* in 2009, so we have been here for three years now. First we were about 3000 to 4000 families, now we seem to be already 5000 to 6000. We are here under the control of MINARS and the Provincial Government. The municipality of Viana doesn’t want to recognize us before we are moved into houses. Everyone [...] has promised us that we will get houses ‘soon’, but that ‘soon’ is taking a long time. [...] There has been talk about invading houses, but if we would do that other people would try to infiltrate. It’s better not to make *confusão*.” (Mr. João 20/9/12).

This was confirmed as I walked around ‘Zango of the tents’ on the day after the first demolitions. While I expected the climate to be tense, the contrary seemed to be the case. In my field notes I wrote (20/05/13):

*Although the demolition site was next to a police squad, which I had expected would be a problem for us, no one bothered us and I was amazed at how relatively calm things were. No confusion, no violence, no resistance. Everyone seemed to quietly await their turn to be relocated, although two women and a man with an MPLA cap on we spoke to, who were sitting under a makeshift umbrella to protect them against the sun, said that some people whose houses had been demolished on Saturday had been sleeping in the open air since then. According to them two quarteirões [sub-*

*divisions of a block], each consisting of 100 houses had been demolished, with the same amount still to go. They said some difficulties had arisen as shacks that were counted as one seemed to have had different compartments or more than one family living in them. They had heard that the houses that were being received were T3 or T2 houses with space to expand the house [so-called casas evolutivas] and seemed to be satisfied with that. This seemed to be the general feeling amongst those waiting to be relocated.*

While for many people the main avenue to a house in Zango is through the demolition of their house (which may have been built for this purpose), others acquire houses through beneficiaries. This is facilitated by the relative ease with which houses in Zango nowadays can be obtained.

For instance, while before the first relocations to Zango only one house at a time was registered, over time separate rooms, *anexos*, even storage rooms (*dispensas*) became eligible for registration and subsequent compensation. As a result, people started receiving more and more houses, sometimes 6 at a time. The increased supply of houses is reflected in the increasing amount of ads hanging around Zango on houses, doors and electricity poles that publicize the sale or rental of houses. In addition, housing intermediaries (usually young male or female residents of Zango) have started to become involved in the housing market.

### **7.3.1 Buying a house in Zango**

During the time that I conducted research in Zango, the selling prices for houses was mainly determined by its location, which is linked to the level of commercial development as well as its distance to the highway. Thus, in Zango 1, which is considered to be most developed and closest to the highway, prices ranged between: US\$60.000 to US\$80.000; US\$40.000 to US\$50.0000 for a house in Zango 2; maximum US\$30.000 for a house in Zango 3; and about US\$26.000 to US\$27.000 for one in Zango 4. In addition, the quality or finishings of the

houses would contribute to the demand for and price of houses. Hence, for unfinished *casas evolutivas* or the ‘capapinha’ houses (built under provincial governor Job Capapinha) average prices range between US\$10.000 and US\$15.000. Rental prices for a house or *anexo* would range from US\$60 to US\$250, equally depending on the distance and state of the houses.

While houses in Zango 1 and 2 are considered to be more attractive because of their state of development this also makes them more expensive. Hence, most of the sales in houses were taking place in Zango 3 and 4. In addition to people moving into the project from outside, people also seemed to be moving around more within the project. For instance, several residents mentioned how they moved to a different house within the project to save up on rent.

Apart from the sale and rental of houses in Zango, the informal land market also seemed to be growing. Plots of land of 15 by 15 m in the periphery of Zango were being sold for about \$10.000 in Zango 1 and \$7.000 in the area of self-help building.

In the absence of title deeds and formal instruments to regulate the housing market in Zango, I was interested in finding out more about the ways in which people would secure their claims to houses. The following case study about Elisa provides insight into some of the steps that some people may undertake when acquiring a house in Zango as a non-beneficiary.

Elisa, a 32 teacher lives in Zango 3 with her brother. Originally from Lobito, she had moved to Luanda in 2005, living with family before finding her own place in 2007. Her uncle had wanted to help her buy a place in Calemba II.<sup>95</sup>

At the time, houses in Calemba II were for sale for US\$25.000, but Elisa preferred not to depend on her family and buy a place of her own. She found this house in Viana, close to *Morar* project, which is also part of the *Luanda Sul* project, which she bought

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<sup>95</sup> Calemba II is also known as Viana II, the housing project in *Luanda Sul* that was meant to accommodate people as part of the redevelopment of the President’s new politico-administrative centre that was discussed in chapter five).

for US\$13.000. It was a small house built in an alley, with a kitchen, two bedrooms, a living room and a small bathroom and after 6 years she started looking for a place with better conditions. Her brother had heard about a privately developed residential compound which was located along the main road from the highway to Zango, in which houses were for sale for US\$70.000. Elisa had never considered living in Zango, the stories she had heard about the project had made her feel sorry for those living there. However, out of curiosity she drove through the project with her brother and through intermediaries they started finding out more about houses that were for sale.

Through one of these intermediaries she eventually found a house in Zango 3, owned by a woman who was originally from the province of Uíge. She had walked to Luanda with her husband during the war and had settled in Boavista. In recent years she had started to build a house on a plot of land in Benfica and when she was evicted from Boavista and received a house in Zango she had initially lived in there herself until her house in Benfica was ready, after which she started looking for a buyer (Elisa, 11/5/13).

In acquiring her house, Elisa says she followed the common practice of buying houses in Zango. This consists of drawing up a contract or *termo de compromisso* in which the owner of the house passes on the use of the house to a third party. Thus, in this contract the house is not sold, but 'ceded' from the beneficiary to another person. To add legal value to this document, it is notarized, in her case at the municipal administration of Viana for the price of Kz10.000 (about US\$100). Parallel to the *termo de compromisso*, a *contrato de venda* is drawn up between the seller and buyer in order to ensure that the seller does not cede the house to more than one person. In Elisa's case, payment for the house (US\$27.000) was transferred to the bank account of the intermediary, for which an additional receipt was drawn up, after which he passed on this money to the owner.

While Elisa was aware that she did not have a title deed for her house in Zango which qualified her as the owner of the house, she felt that the range of documents she had collected regarding the transfer of the house to the previous owner to her, which she kept together in a safe place, were sufficient to prove her ownership of the house.

Research carried out by the NGO Development Workshop (DW) Angola on land markets confirms how informal mechanisms regulate the property market in Luanda, which explains why there is little knowledge about tenure as a legal concept. In 2003, 80% of residents of Luanda had occupied land through informal mechanisms but 86% felt secure on their land, while only 13% of them had a reasonable perception of issues related to land rights (DW and CEHS, 2005: 107-109).

A similar study that was carried out in 2010 confirmed the informal nature of the urban land market, but also indicated that it was increasingly commercializing. If at the time of the first study 33% of the respondents had gained access to land through informal purchase, in 2010 DW found that this had risen to 61.3%. In addition, while in the first study, less than 20% of the respondents had what could be considered legal property titles, in the second study this had decreased to a mere 6.8%. Yet, 85% considered the transactions they made to access land to be secure and legitimate and in over half of these cases the type of documents that are held by Elisa such as a *termo de compromisso* (49%) or a *contrato de compra e venda* (12%) was seen as a legitimate document to prove tenure (DW, 2011).<sup>96</sup>

### **7.3.2 “He will know how to explain”**

Whilst for people like Elisa – who represents an emerging group of middle class residents of Luanda who have started to buy houses in Zango – the possession of ‘formal’ documents contributed to her feeling of tenure security, for others a widespread feeling of negotiability seems to contribute to a sense of ownership and security.

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<sup>96</sup> The DW study uses the terms ‘purchase/sales declaration’ and ‘contract of sale’.



Whilst I had assumed that most of the negotiations in the housing allocation process took place in terms of the recognition of houses for demolition and subsequent compensation, a number of residents told me about cases in which residents had been able to negotiate with state officials about the house that was allocated to them, *after* their relocation to Zango. For instance, according to Santana, a 24 year old resident of Zango 3 who was relocated there in 2009, residents have some say in the part of Zango in which they are given housing when houses do not meet the promised standards:

We got here with the rains in April, April 18<sup>th</sup> [...] First they took us to Zango 4 and they wanted to leave us there, but the houses did not have electricity, nor water. And here [in Zango 3] there was already electricity. So the people argued (*o povo discutiu*). And yes.. Some were taken and brought here. Other just stayed there. Those who decided not to argue stayed (Santana, 13/5/13).

In addition, while houses officially may not be used for any other purpose than residency, in practice the abundance of commercial establishments located in and in front of houses in Zango, often straight after moving into these houses, shows how in practice this is open for negotiation.

Moreover, there seemed to be no widespread fear regarding the threats of the confiscation of houses occupied by non-beneficiaries and even if such threats were to materialize, there is a certain confidence that one will talk their way out of such a situation. The knowledge about corrupt practices of government officials contributes to giving residents a sense of leverage in this regard. In the words of Luís: ‘so many *dirigentes* of that time got houses, so they have no way of impeding the people, they don’t know which law they would apply in this case’ (Luís, 2/5/13).

Thus, Paula affirms that if government controls were to happen,

people who sold their house will know how to respond, they will explain why they sold [the house]. That the house was his, he received it [...] but having been moved here, life was critical, he did not know what to do, the solution was to sell. He will know how to explain himself against the government. (Dona Paula, 9/5/13)

#### 7.4 Changing perceptions

It is difficult to reach any conclusive conclusions with regard to the developmental outcomes of the Zango project. As this chapter has shown, the current reality of Zango is one of a project that is inhabited by people and in ways that were not targeted or intended by the government upon its creation. At the same time, the project also no longer reflects the views of Zango that circulated widely in the earliest stages of the project as a *bairro indígena* of colonial times or a place in the periphery where poor people are moved to be out of sight of the elites, although this view still lingers on in the imaginary of those that inhabit other parts of the city. This is confirmed and fed by the songs of young Angolan musicians in their critiques of the government to this day. For instance, the Angolan rap artist MCK in one of his songs called *O país do pai banana* ('the banana republic') sings: Everything is theirs, from Talatona to the Ilha, the diamonds are theirs, the oil is theirs, the real estate is theirs / (...) for us there is only Zango and Panguila / The boss is the colonizer, in the banana republic.<sup>97</sup>

As such, the public knowledge and views about Zango reflect the nature of urban growth in Luanda, which is so rapid that it takes time for its own residents to catch up with. I would also find this in people's reactions to my work. Initially, some could not believe that I would do research all the way in the 'province', even though Zango lies not much further away from the city centre than more established neighbourhoods such as Talatona in Luanda Sul. Yet, over time, more and more people I would mention Zango to would be familiar with the project.

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<sup>97</sup> For a discussion of this song and the album *Proibido ouvir isto* ('Listening prohibited'), see Marques de Moraes (2011b).

Many of the residents I spoke to confirmed that there is still much ignorance about the project, while at times admitting that they had themselves been unfamiliar with the project before getting to know it.

One resident stressed the difference between outsiders and inhabitants of Zango:

[in Zango] a new city is growing (*está a nascer uma nova cidade*) [...] those who do not speak positively of Zango are ignorant [...] people who live in Zango are proud of it' (Group interview Zango I, 14/3/12).

Dona Anita, a 35 year single mother of four who is renting a house in Zango 2 says:

I found out about Zango through some of my friends, some sisters from church, I had a sister who lived here [who said] you have to get to know Zango, the conditions, how things are. I came, I started getting to know the area, I started investigating and I liked it. The most important thing I liked was the school because I really wanted a school for my kids. [...] That's what I really wanted [...] and a place that is urbanized, with water and electricity. That's what I really liked (Dona Anita, 7/5/13).

Although the provision of basic services in Zango such as water and electricity continues to be insufficient or irregular, much like elsewhere in the city, those residents I spoke to generally considered the project to be safe and 'organized' compared to other parts of the city.

In the words of Dona Paula (9/5/13):

Zango.. Zango is good. Despite the fact that electricity is not good. But Zango is good. Zango is good for who works. Even if you don't have a government job, you get by if you have a way to make your daily bread, for instance by trading (*fazer um comércio*) or working as a domestic worker. Yes, Zango is good, a calm place. Everyone in their own house, no turbulences, none of these things we had too much of in Boavista, or in Cazenga, or Sambizanga, Zango is very different from that. You are in your house, you paid for your water, you paid for your electricity, you have a job, that's good.

Zango is different from these *bairros*, very different. I'm thinking Zango is good, I don't have any reasons to complain, I don't.

When asked to compare Zango with other social housing projects such as Panguila or Sapú, residents would generally see Zango as being more developed. The attractiveness of Zango compared to these projects is reflected in the prices that are practiced in the housing market in Zango, which are much higher than in the other projects. For instance, in Panguila the prices for houses seem to have stayed within the US\$20.000-US\$30.000 price range since 2007 (DW, 2011).

Still, most residents I spoke to would not see themselves living in one of the new state housing projects, such as the 'new city' of Kilamba, partly because they would see this as being beyond their financial means, but also because of the high-rise construction in these projects. Indeed, Gastrow (2012) has questioned the suitability of this new architecture to the practices of city dwellers who have come to use their incrementally built single story houses and the space around it for a range of social as well as economic purposes. Indeed, the set-up of houses of Zango offers numerous opportunities to set up informal businesses, which for many residents continues to be their main source of income.

Various beneficiaries also noted that the conditions of life in Zango, especially in the earliest stages of the project had stimulated them to become entrepreneurial. Whilst businesses in the city usually consisted of straightforward buying and selling, the lack of services and commercial establishments in the early stages of Zango prompted residents to set up a range of businesses, ranging from kindergartens to small restaurants. This in turn has attracted private investment in the project and most of the country's main commercial banks are now represented in Zango. As such, residents feel they have contributed to the development and improved living conditions of Zango. In the words of Luís (2/5/13): 'change is man-made (*o homem é que faz a mudança*). Society is not static. And that forces us. So if we are doing better, we have ourselves to be thankful to'.

According to FESA's president Ismael Diogo da Silva, Zango now represents 'a landmark in social housing and a reference point for housing projects in other parts of the country' (FESA president, 11/9/12). Furthermore,

[...] when seeing Zango [now], people are in fact dazzled, satisfied because it represents a great contribution to getting the Angolan people out of dangerous areas (*tirar da sinistralidade aos angolanos*) [...] but also to giving the citizen back his citizenship. [...] Zango, Viana, Morar, also, Sapú, are all communitarian projects, thought and realized by His Excellency the President of the Republic to attribute citizenship, give back citizenship to the Angolans, those Angolans that were living in areas, in alleys, in ghettos, in neighbourhoods without any kind of proper living conditions.<sup>98</sup>

In light of the role and ways in which local actors have shaped the development of Zango it would be a step too far to consider the creation of the project as equal to the attribution of citizenship to Angolans. However, the project has enabled some residents of Luanda to change their lives by taking ownership of Zango in ways that suit them best.

## 7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to provide some insight into the Zango project through the eyes of its residents. The examples, narratives and case studies I have presented with regard to the practice of housing allocation show how both residents and state officials have started to appropriate the housing allocation process for their own ends.

In doing so, a market has emerged which covers the full relocation chain from the sale and rental of shacks and plots of land in areas that are targeted for demolition to the houses in Zango itself. The informal rules of this market have given rise to a certain sense of predictability or certainty that can be mortgaged, for instance by buying or selling shacks in

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<sup>98</sup> Transcript of filmed interview with FESA president, courtesy of Orion (2012).

areas targeted for demolition. Demolitions as well as houses have therefore become a source of business rather than a source of contestation. In order to secure claims to ownership, various 'formalization' strategies emerge: either through the residents' committee or through the registration of housing transactions, which are marked by a widespread sense of negotiability.

Thus, despite the fact that residents of Zango have no legal tenure, houses have become valuable assets. This is not only illustrated by the prices that are paid for houses on the informal market but also by their use as sources of investments or income generation.

## **8. Conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

My decision to study the Zango housing project was motivated by an interest in post-war reconstruction in Angola in a context in which the general scholarship on Angola considers post-war reconstruction to be illiberal. Under these conditions, how could the Zango project provide insight into the kind of state-led development that is taking place in post-war Angola? By looking at the ways in which state-led development is pursued and its outcomes, I also aimed to provide some insight into the effectiveness of state-led development in post-war Angola.

A second question that interested me was the extent to which state-led development under these conditions was providing ‘space’ for citizen participation that was organically claimed or created from below.

I aimed to answer these questions by taking an empirically grounded approach to the study of the state in which I would not only look at the ways in which the state sees and does development, but also at the ways in which development works as a process. In doing so, Zango functioned as the lens to make the Angolan state and its workings visible from below.

In this conclusion I will first discuss some reflections on the study’s contribution in terms of its methodological and theoretical approach after which I move on to the empirical findings of the study. I conclude with some thoughts about the potential relevance of this study for the study of other African countries.

### **8.2 Studying state-led development in post-war Angola**

Most of the scholarship on Angola covers the period of the war and the research produced in the post-war period is dominated by political scientists who generally take a top-down approach to the study of the state. This is in line with the established literature on African

states that I described in the first part of chapter two, which is preoccupied with the analysis of the practices of state elites and sees the formal state as an empty shell.

Although the use of the concept of the developmental state as a conceptual point of departure still makes this study state-centred in nature, I have sought to take a different approach to the study of the state by studying up rather than just down. As I described in chapter three, this entailed an iterative research process in which I sought to be conscious of the dynamics of the research ‘field’ and of myself as a researcher in my interactions with informants.

Such an approach allowed me to bring the multiplicity of actors and their agency at the local level into view, thereby challenging the binary categories ‘state-society’, ‘state space-non-state space’, and ‘power-resistance’ and providing insight into the complex space between them.

#### *Parallels between post-independence and post-war state building*

In addition to the use of this empirical approach to the study of the state, an understanding of Angola’s historical, political and economic context was crucial in making sense of the data I collected. For instance, by discussing the creation of Zango against the backdrop of an analysis of colonial and post-colonial state-building interesting parallels were revealed with regard to the ways in which current post-war reconstruction resembles the state-led development that took place in the first years after independence. The current building of the post-war Angolan state can therefore be seen as a continuation of the post-independence project of national reconstruction that was left unfinished due to the war, almost literally answering Mkandawire’s (2010) call to bring the African developmental state of the 1970s back in.

However, just as in the first post-independence years, post-war reconstruction represents a process that is concerned with establishing control and legitimacy with little regard for local



views or practices. This is enabled by the involvement of external actors in state-led development.

While Cuba played an important role in this regard during the first decade of independence, foreign partners such as Brazil and Lebanon have come to play a similar role during this first decade of peace. In describing the relationship with these countries, I emphasize the importance of historical and personal ties as well as pragmatism that characterizes Angola's international relations, thereby providing insight into an understudied prelude to Angola's post-war cooperation with China, which has received much more attention in the literature.

State-led development continues to be concentrated in and largely limited to Luanda. On the one hand, this can be explained by tracing back the roots of the MPLA leadership and its traditional social base to the capital and the fact that state-building was limited to the country's cities during the war. In the post-war period, the concentration of state-led development in the capital is also a response to the massive growth of the city and the challenges in terms of planning that have come along with this growth. This planning is characterized by a high-modernist vision of development, which is translated through a mix of colonial and socialist development policies.

The role that the government has taken up to translate this view to reality is enabled by its access to external sources of financing, such as oil-backed loans. Contrary to the period of war, in which such loans were mainly used to finance military expenses, most oil-backed loans are now targeted at financing public infrastructure. In managing these loans, formal government structures play a minimal role, as negotiations and plans for their allocation are made at the level of the presidency. Extra-governmental institutions that respond solely to the President in turn are largely responsible for the management of the projects that are financed and executed through these loans. As I showed in chapter five, this has allowed President dos Santos to become actively involved in the construction of housing by the state.

Thus, the parallel state that emerged in the last decade of the war continues to exist, but it is no longer entirely predatory as the President has become increasingly sensitive to negative perceptions about him which could affect his legitimacy. This has resulted in a growing focus on ‘redistribution’, which was one of the main electoral slogans during the last MPLA election campaign. A fear of social unrest also defines this focus, which is something that has come out quite clearly in the government’s panicked response to youngsters who, inspired by the Arab Spring, started to take the streets of Luanda in March 2011, something which has been repeated a number of times since then.

Hence, despite the President’s recent moves to strengthen his power, this has been done within the framework of a formally democratic state. At the same time, a concern with the discourse of legislation, rather than its enforcement has resulted in a practice in which the law has started to be used as an instrument of rule with little regard for the rule of law.

#### *The nature and workings of political rule*

Political rule in post-war Angola can therefore be considered as neo-patrimonial, in the way that I defined it in chapter two with Erdmann and Engel (2007: 105) as a system which represents ‘a mixture of two co-existing, partly interwoven, types of domination: namely, patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic domination’. In such a context, ‘formal structures and rules do exist, although in practice the separation of the private and public sphere is not always observed’.

As is typical for ‘new authoritarian’ states, the maintenance of a legal-rational order then serves to access and legitimize power, while personal rule allows for this power to be kept. In the case of Angola, this rule is strengthened by the control that the President has over the use of the country’s natural resources and of the law. However, instead of letting these characteristics determine Angola’s development path, in this thesis I have sought to provide insight into its workings and effects.

Through my research on Zango, I identified a gap in post-war Angola between (the absence or regulation of) formal rules on local government, land and housing, on the one hand, and practice on the other.

In order to understand the origins and working of this gap with regard to the workings of local government, in chapter six I traced back the workings of residents' committees in Zango to the first years after independence in Luanda. In doing so, I have dedicated relatively much attention to the attempted *coup d'état* of May 1977, but I have done so as I believe that these events may contribute to explaining why local government at the level of the *bairro* is unrecognized and unregulated to this day. In my view, the events point to the continuation of a deep-seated uneasiness amongst power holders in the state with regard to local power as residents' committees in Luanda were seen as having turned against the state in the run-up to the attempted coup. The fear of losing control over local power is also reflected to this day in the continuous postponement of local government elections at the level of municipalities.

The residents' committees are then reflective of the ways in which the workings of local government in Luanda continue to be embedded in the country's political history. Firstly, they show how practices that were established in the first years of independence under the one party state have continued to exist. Secondly, they show how the local administration may fairly autonomously act to take over the space that could exist for local participation at the level of the neighbourhood in order to exercise control. This reveals the void that exists at the level of neighbourhoods in the city, which despite their growth continue to be administratively unregulated. In this context, the role of residents' committees as intermediaries between people and state is almost inevitable. Thirdly, they show how at the local level party loyalty continues to function as a way to tie people to the state.

The 'twilight' nature of the residents' committees allows them to exercise public authority without being *of* the state. However, this poses complicated questions for the presidents of residents' committees themselves, who are seen as representing both the people as well as the

state, creating conflicting loyalties. In addition, this twilight nature also functions to legitimize the role of residents' committees as actors that may recognize claims to land and property which in turn can be used for ends that are not in the interest of the state.

This is described in chapter seven, as part of an analysis of the informal rules and arrangements that have emerged in Zango in a context in which the housing allocation process is directed from above without being grounded in any explicit policy or regulation.

I describe the workings of the informal housing market to which these rules and arrangements have given rise through ethnographic narratives and case studies of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of houses in Zango. One of the central arguments of this chapter is that as a result, resistance to housing demolitions, as was the case after the first demolitions in Boavista, has been replaced by the formulation of strategies to accommodate and profit from demolitions. This is enabled by the recognition of illegitimate claims to compensation by state officials, who are meant to supervise the fair allocation of housing, as well as residents' committees who, ironically, are mobilized by the state to counter such practices. As a result, many current inhabitants of Zango are not the intended direct beneficiaries of the project, but have acquired their house in Zango through the informal housing market.

Whilst on the one hand this is reflective of the relative ease with which houses in Zango nowadays can be obtained, it also shows how Zango has become an attractive destination which allows residents to take ownership of state-led development, using it for their own ends. The residents that were involved in this study expressed a sense of community, ownership and security about living in Zango, thereby pointing to a change in perceptions of the project from initial views of Zango as an undesired place that marginalizes the poor to views in which life in Zango is considered to be 'good'.

*The fragmented nature of the state*

Throughout the thesis, I allude to the existence of various levels within the Angolan state, distinguishing between high-level officials working within special agencies, senior technocrats working in regular state institutions such as line ministries and provincial government, lower-level or interface bureaucrats. In addition, public authority may be exercised by actors, such as residents' committees, that represent neither state nor society. In doing so, I have sought to show that the state is made up of different state officials that may have different conceptions of and interests in development, which in turn determines their actions.

In the case of Zango, there seems to be a particular gap between high-level government officials who are appointed to manage projects such as Zango and those who have to implement the principles that underpin these projects on a daily basis without much control or regulation. As a result, their actions may clash, as illustrated by the ironic example of the collaboration between the Programme for Social Housing (*Programa de Habitação Social* or PHS) and residents' committees in Zango in order to compensate for the widespread corrupt practices of the state's own officials and the local administration's response to this.

Bringing the fragmented nature of the Angolan state into view then contributes to understanding why irregularities in the housing allocation in Zango are widely denounced, but not easily overcome. The Angolan state is then not a monolithic entity nor an empty shell, but one that in daily life is made up by the practices of lower-level officials which are embedded in society. This context and the resulting perceptions that are held of state officials determine the daily interactions between state-officials and citizens and thereby the effectiveness of state-led development.

*'Intermediate' development*

The case of Zango then shows how state-led development in Angola is ambiguous in its outcomes as a result of the nature of the state, which is neither fully predatory, nor fully developmental, as per Evans' (1995) definition of 'intermediate' developmental states.

However, this intermediateness reveals a precarious balance. When 'seeing the state', Corbridge *et. al.* (2005) were concerned with bringing into view the spaces of empowerment that may be created by development interventions in India. In a way, I had hoped to find an example of this in the Boavista residents' committee. However, the experience of the Boavista committee was short-lived. Current residents' committees in Zango represent neither state nor society, while ordinary residents are involved in practices that can neither be characterized as resistance nor as participation. Thus, whilst people are involved in taking ownership of development, they have few legal means to effectively participate in development as citizens or in ways that challenge the government's domination in the way described by Holston (2008) in the case of Brazil. This relegates them to the realm of 'political society' (Chatterjee, 2004) in which arrangements are arrived at through direct political negotiations.

The case of Zango therefore shows that a proper understanding is needed of the 'politics of everyday life' (Robins, Cornwall and Von Lieres, 2008) when studying state-led development. Moreover, this understanding should be grounded in the particular context of each country. Thus, for countries such as Angola that are ruled by new authoritarian de facto one party regimes, it is important to study the role of party politics. As Bénit-Gbaffou (2012: 179) affirms, this is 'generally absent, only anecdotal, and in any case vastly under-theorized, in understanding "who governs" the city'. Various references were made in this thesis to possible comparisons in this regard between Angola and Mozambique. Yet, more studies are needed on similar contexts on the continent that provide insight into the ways in which the

ruling party operates at the local level and how the party contributes to tying the people to the state and thereby to regime survival.

In the case of Angola or the city of Luanda specifically, this is an important point considering the relationship of the current presidents of residents' committees in Zango with the MPLA. To what extent will the next generation that is not familiar with the post-independence Popular Committees of the *Bairro* (*Comissão Popular do Bairro* or CPB) and for whom party loyalty or the expectation of entry into or rewards from the state be sufficient to do the work of current presidents of the committees?

In addition, whilst residents' committees have played an important role in the first stages of the Zango project in terms of the extension of the local administration's control over the area, to what extent will residents' committees be useful instruments in later stages of the project? Will they be able to continue to play the role of local administration without the legal or financial means of doing so?

The future of Zango and the administration of state-built housing in Angola is therefore uncertain. Recent moves have been made to delegate some of the responsibilities for housing development from the level of the presidency to provincial government by expanding the functions of the PHS to include the relocation of people, something that thus far had been the responsibility of the Programme for the Relocation of the People (*Programa de Realojamento das Populações* or PRP). For the administration of other housing projects in Luanda, such as the new city of Kilamba, special administrative committees have been appointed that operate on a level between provincial and municipal government. However, these actions have not altered the upward direction of accountability in local government and they may in fact even contribute to weakening municipal administrations.

In addition, this leaves the issue of the regularization of tenure unresolved. While Zango's informal housing market indicates that so far this has not formed an impediment to the

commercialization of houses, formally houses in Zango continue to be owned by the state.

How and when will this be dealt with?

### **8.3 The African state and state-led development**

Post-war Angola represents unique features as a case of state-led development in Africa due to its long years of war, massive urban growth, but at the same time its access to substantive financial resources as a result of its oil riches. Yet, despite the unique and case-based nature of this study, its findings may be of relevance for other African states that share some of the characteristics of Angola.

Avenues for comparative research would include studies that link resource richness and/or the nature of political rule to urban development or housing policies specifically. Upcoming countries such as Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda, as well as resource rich countries such as Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are increasingly investing in urban infrastructures, services and housing. In addition, urban renewal projects are underway in all of these countries involving the construction of entire new cities (Kermeliotis, 2013).

What do the ways in which housing or urban development projects are financed, implemented or managed and the role that local actors are allowed to play in this regard say about the role of resources and politics in this regard? In doing such comparative work, a focus on the empirical workings of the state and its embeddedness in history and society would represent a fruitful approach.



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Appendix 1 *Guia de entrega Zango 2006*

  
REPÚBLICA DE ANGOLA  
GOVERNO DA PROVINCIA DE LUANDA  
PROGRAMA DE EMERGENCIA HABITACIONAL

OFISCAL  
[Signature]

Numero de Ordem \_\_\_\_\_  
Realojamento Numero 010  
Data 16 / 12 / 06  
Nome Paula Rosa Gomes  
Filho de Fernando Antonio  
E de Dionisio Gomes  
Bilhete de Identidade 4453926  
Numero de Registo na Boavista 1417 E - A  
Recebi do P.E.H no Zango II, a casa nº 0502 Quadra II

**NOTA IMPORTANTE**

Comprometo-me perante o Estado, a respeitar os seguintes princípios relativamente a casa cedida: não vender, alugar, abandonar sem motivo justificável e previamente comunicado ao P.E.H. e não usá-la para outros fins que não sejam habitacionais, sob pena de perde-la a favor Deste (Estado).

Luanda 16 / 12 / 06

**REPENSEMOS NA CIRCULAÇÃO RODOVIARIA DA CAPITAL.  
"JUNTOS POR UMA LUANDA MELHOR"**

Assinatura  
[Signature]



Appendix 2 Guia de entrega Zango 2009



REPÚBLICA DE ANGOLA  
GOVERNO DA PROVÍNCIA DE LUANDA  
DIRECÇÃO PROVINCIAL DE ASSISTÊNCIA E REINserÇÃO SOCIAL

**GUIA DE ENTREGA**  
BOAVISTA-SAMBIZANGA


<b>Nº do cadastro:</b>		<b>Nº CASA Nº</b>		
Rua:	E422DG		Comuna:	
Município:	Bairro: ZANGO			
Provincia:				
<b>Dados do Proprietário</b>				
Nome:	Elisa Dimuca Paugo		Apelido:	
Nome do Pai:	BERNARDO COTE		Nome da Mãe:	
Data de nascimento:	02/04/1969		Natural de:	
Nacionalidade:	ANGOLANA		Bilhete de Identidade nº	
Arquivo de Identificação:	VIGE		Emitido aos:	
Outro Documento:			Emitido por:	
Sexo:	FEMENINO	Estado Civil:	SOLTEIRA	
Habilitações Literárias:	8ª CLASSE		Nº Agregado:	
Ocupação Actual:			Profissão:	
		DOMÉSTICA		
<b>Agregado Familiar do Proprietário</b>				
Nº	Nome	Parentesco	Profissão	Idade
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

EXPEDIRAM  
D.P.A.R.S. .....  
P.R.P.R.P.LS .....



O PROPRIETÁRIO  
Elisa Dimuca Paugo  
LUANDA, ...../...../2009

### Appendix 3 List of possible alterations of houses in Zango

  
REPÚBLICA DE ANGOLA  
GOVERNO DA PROVINCIA DE LUANDA  
PROGRAMA DE EMERGENCIA HABITACIONAL  
COORDENAÇÃO TÉCNICA

REALOJAMENTO Nº 010  
ORDEM Nº 14  
CASA BOAVISTA Nº 1417E -A  
CASA ZANGO Nº 105EF

**CARO MORADOR**

1. AS ALTERAÇÕES QUE PODEM SER FEITAS SEM AUTORIZAÇÃO DA COORDENAÇÃO TÉCNICA DO PROJECTO, SÃO AS SEGUINTE:

- Rebocar o interior.
- Pintar o interior.
- Colocar mosaico.
- Colocar azulejo.
- Colocar gradeamentos no interior, nas portas e janelas.
- Colocar tecto falso

2. AS ALTERAÇÕES QUE NÃO PODEM SER FEITAS SEM AUTORIZAÇÃO DA COORDENAÇÃO TÉCNICA DO PROJECTO, SÃO AS SEGUINTE:

- Construir anexo.
- Construir alpendre.
- Construir marquise.
- Construir tanque de água.
- Pintar o exterior.
- Executar instalação eléctrica.
- Executar instalação hidráulica.
- Instalar aparelhos de Ar Condicionado.
- Alterar o quintal.
- Construir fossa.
- Colocar porta social e portão na entrada para viaturas.
- Outras.

**NOTA IMPORTANTE**

Comprometo-me perante o Estado, a respeitar os seguintes princípios relativamente a casa cedida: não vender, alugar, abandonar sem motivo justificável previamente comunicar ao P.E.H. e não usá-la para outros fins que não sejam habitacionais, sob pena de perde-la a favor deste.

Assinatura

\_\_\_\_\_

COORDENAÇÃO TÉCNICA DO PROGRAMA DE EMERGÊNCIA HABITACIONAL.

Luanda, aos \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / 200\_\_.

O Coordenador  
Mamadou Luís da Rocha

Appendix 4 Map of land reserves in Luanda

