

University of Windsor

Scholarship at UWindsor

Political Science Publications

Department of Political Science

2017

Trajectories of large-scale land acquisition dynamics in Angola: Diversity, histories, and implications for the political economy of development in Africa

Aharon de Grassi

Jesse Salah Ovadia
University of Windsor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/poliscipub>



Part of the [African Studies Commons](#), [Comparative Politics Commons](#), [Development Studies Commons](#), and the [Political Economy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

de Grassi, Aharon and Ovadia, Jesse Salah. (2017). Trajectories of large-scale land acquisition dynamics in Angola: Diversity, histories, and implications for the political economy of development in Africa. *Land Use Policy*, 67, 115-125.

<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/poliscipub/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Political Science at Scholarship at UWindsor. It has been accepted for inclusion in Political Science Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholarship at UWindsor. For more information, please contact scholarship@uwindsor.ca.

Trajectories of Large-Scale Land Acquisition Dynamics in Angola: Diversity, Histories, and Implications for the Political Economy of Development in Africa

Aharon de Grassi
Independent Researcher

Jesse Salah Ovardia
Corresponding author
Department of Political Science
Chrysler Hall North 1136
University of Windsor
Windsor, ON N9B 3P4
CANADA
Tel: +1 519 253 3000 X 2353
Email: jesse.ovardia@uwindsor.ca

ABSTRACT:

Numerous large scale land acquisitions have occurred in Angola since partial political and economic liberalization in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and further increased after 2002 and the end of armed conflict. They have occurred in conjunction with the emergence of a range of large state-coordinated agricultural projects, often by foreign contractors, for domestic food, and involving plans for backwards and forwards linkages to agro-processing and manufacturing initiatives. Altogether such land allocations and projects involve several billion dollars and several million hectares. These activities appear to often also involve high-level officials and/or wealthy Angolans and are often interpreted as neo-patrimonialism, state-sanctioned private accumulation, and instances of continuity in extractive institutions. Yet examining specific agrarian transformations illustrates how land and rural poverty in Angola are much more complex than a zero-sum game of elite accumulation of private land concessions. Key are Angola's geo-historical trajectories of colonialism, war, socialism and liberalization, which the article examines in two concessions in Malanje Province. We address the relationships between international enterprises and domestic elites, and the relevance of land dynamics within a long-term political economy perspective on capitalist industrialization and structural transformation in Angola and Africa.

KEYWORDS: Land, Agriculture, Industrialization, Political Economy, Conflict, Reconstruction, Angola

HIGHLIGHTS

- Dynamics of prominent LSLAs in Angola result from combined legacies of colonialism, socialism, war and liberalization
- Land dynamics are shaped by spatial and structural issues that go beyond path-dependent extractive institutions
- Policy reform is both more possible and more challenging from this approach
- Context specificity can help creatively build broader alliances to pressure for reform

1. Introduction

Amidst considerable attention to Large Scale Land Acquisitions (LSLA) over the past decade, scholars, policy-makers, and advocates have continued to struggle to understand and shape the important roles of states and politics in LSLA processes.¹ Reflecting on Angola's experience with LSLAs is important and revealing because the country has since the 1990s experienced the allocation of millions of hectares of land concessions. Moreover, carefully understanding Angola's experiences is important because the country – with its long histories of slave, diamond, and oil trades – is often (mis)understood as a particularly clear extreme example of how extractive politics result in LSLAs. In contrast, we view extraction and land dynamically and hence analyze LSLAs in Angola not as inevitable outcomes of inertial institutions of extraction, but rather as contingently produced through cumulative combinations of multiple geographical and historical processes. Our analysis has implications not only for Angola as a large and regionally significant country, but also more broadly for approaches to LSLAs, the state and development.

LSLAs are part of broader tendencies in Angola that are not clearly attributable primarily to extraction and elite accumulation, though those are important. Rather, as we detail in two significant instances below, LSLAs in Angola are better understood as part of broader tendencies that have emerged from the cumulative combinations in Angola of processes of colonialism, socialism, war, and liberalization (CSWL). Practically, our different perspective also recasts the obstacles to progressive change on LSLAs and suggests new promising avenues for advocacy. In this introduction, we lay out conventional approaches to understanding Angola and LSLAs, then address findings of other detailed research on LSLAs, elaborate our own approach emphasizing combined processes, and provide some brief background on land in Angola.

Angola features prominently in influential theorizations of African political economy (Bayart, 2009; Cooper, 2002: 140-4; Ferguson, 2006: 27-42, 196-210; Reno, 1998: 61-77), which in turn have shaped studies of and prescriptions for land and property regimes (e.g. Cotula et al.,

¹ Cotula et al. (2016), Edelman and Borras (2016), World Bank (2016). Hall et al. (2016: 46) recognize that “The role of the state” remains a major unresolved issue in LSLA research and advocacy.

2016: 13-14; Peters, 2004: 88).² These perspectives suggest viewing LSLAs in Angola as visible spatial examples of continuities in Angola's inertial institutions of extractive politics (Chabal, 2001; Hodges, 2001; Kyle, 2005; Soares de Oliveira, 2007, 2015).³ In previous centuries, such arguments contend, colonial rule and the associated "creole" elite power centered on extracting wealth from coastal control of trade in slaves (Angola being one of the largest historic sources) and commodities, and then replaced by Portuguese colonialists operating a few enclaves of diamonds, cotton, sugar, coffee, and oil. Post-independence socialism from 1975-1989 saw creole elites resume power (also returning from exile sustained through geopolitical patronage), and extract foreign aid and revive enclaves. Then, fueled by off shore oil (furnishing about 80% of state revenue), war is seen as involving elite extraction through military expenditure and appropriation of enclaves, while liberalization boosted elite extraction through trade and privatization of enclaves. Hence, each major period of Angolan history is viewed as continuing in various forms the same basic sort of underlying elite extractive politics and enclaves.

In such a view, the example of a large land concession passing from colonial, to socialist, to military and private elite hands therefore appears as a self-evident tangible example of land access being determined by a continuity in extractive politics across different periods of history. This view of Angola is marshalled in Peters' (2004: 88) influential analysis of the structural constraints to negotiability in customary tenure in Africa (drawing on Hodges' (2001) prominent book): "Even the attempt to address the problem of land access by the mass

² Analysis draws on 2.5 years of field research between 2008 and 2013, involving ethnography, hundreds of semi-structured interviews, and review of archives and grey literature, primarily in Malanje and Luanda. Hundreds studies and regulations related to rural land in Angola are listed in deGrassi, Aaron. 2015. Provisional reconstructions: Geo-histories of infrastructure and agrarian configuration in Malanje, Angola. PhD Dissertation, Geography, University of California, Berkeley).

³ E.g. "Once established, institutions gain a life of their own and are extremely difficult to bypass" (Soares de Oliveira, 2015: 47). This is also termed "path dependence" in other literature. Similarly, Cooper (2002), and Bayart's (2009: xxxi) emphasis on the "the historicity of extraversion," also reference Messiant's complex work, which emphasizes "continuities" and sometimes rests on "personal analysis" (1997: 131). This emphasis on continuity also meshes with using neopatrimonialism as a lens to understand land, agriculture and development in Africa (Alden Wily, 2011: 738-9; Cotula et al., 2016: 13-14; cf. deGrassi, 2008). Compare also Mahoney and Thelen's (2015) review of the changes, debates, and diversity in related historical institutionalist approaches. Much of that literature draws on North's (1990: 3) problematic definition, "Institutions are the rules of the game in a society," with 'extractive institutions' "designed to extract incomes and wealth from one subset of society to benefit a different subset" (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2011: 76). In that sense we refer to analysts' problematic views of neopatrimonialism and rent-seeking as institutions or 'norms' of behavior associated with extraction.

of peasants was railroaded by the coastal elite to acquire large areas of land in the interior. The case of Angola may be extreme, but it parallels affairs in other countries ...”

Consequently, the present article’s reexamination of LSLAs in Angola is not matter of identifying exceptional local particularities, but rather has implications for more broadly re-conceptualizing the politics of LSLAs, poverty, and development. Ever more detailed research on LSLAs has moved beyond general interpretations such as those mentioned above and increasingly emphasized the importance of diversity and history in understanding LSLAs, and especially for formulating more locally adapted approaches to land (Hall et al., 2015a; Wolford et al., 2013). Reviews of LSLA research find multiple, varied complex geo-historical processes (Cotula et al., 2014; Hall, 2011), which complicate binary narratives of untrammelled powerful elites accumulating by dispossessing passive victims, though of course LSLAs can be associated with corruption, patronage, and various forms of elite accumulation.⁴ Indeed, what is notable about conventional narratives emphasizing an Angolan historic continuity in extractive institutions is that such narratives often are not based on fine-grained analysis of history and extraction. In contrast, close research on the “dual nature” of the oil industry and other sectors shows, for example, how policies can both create some economic growth while also enabling new forms of elite accumulation (Ovadia, 2012, 2016, 2017). A deep rethinking of the political economy of land is long-overdue and necessary to make more sound use of archives, literature, and new research in Angola.

However, to assume that the histories and diversity of different politics and forms of LSLAs are *primarily* important to enable better tailoring of projects and policies to local contexts also risks downplaying fundamental questions of who can actually mobilize (and how) the political pressure and means for such tailoring. Indeed, the above-mentioned different approaches to conceptualizing history and diversity themselves can imply drastically different actions for advocacy and policy. We contend that emphasizing the ways in which diverse situations are produced through combinations of multiple common broader processes can help make mobilization efforts resonate across different sectors, identities, and areas, and hence help forge

⁴ Marques de Morais, R. 2016. Land-Grabbing as a Path to Riches and Status in Angola, *Maka Angola*, 29 January 29, http://www.makaangola.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11842, accessed July 2016.

the broader popular political alliances necessary for effectively changing policies, institutions, and societies to better address issues of land, poverty and development (Hart 2002).

Our examination of LSLAs in Angola illustrates how they emerge as part of broader developmental and problematic *tendencies*, which in turn result from combined CSWL *processes*. On one hand, developmental tendencies included emphases on regional development, integrated agro-industry, infrastructure and logistics, import substituting industrialization, poverty alleviation, protections against market speculation, and domestic reinvestment. On the other hand, more anti-developmental tendencies include modernism, excessive formalism and bureaucracy, technocratic perspectives, importation of foreign models, militarism, patriarchal and masculinist practices and institutions, lack of evaluation and accountability, and, as we particularly emphasize below, top-down approaches, large-scale and capital-intensive projects, emphases on material logistics over administration, and foreign contracting. These tendencies are important to understand in their own right and are not epiphenomena reducible ultimately to elite gain; rather, as we show in the next sections, they have emerged through the cumulative combination of various processes.

Because LSLAs in Angola involve not simply extraction but rather a range of tendencies, therefore explaining LSLAs requires addressing a range of issues, and not only invoking how LSLAs function as elite accumulation. Consequently, research and action will also need to go beyond the issue of LSLAs in order to substantively address pressing concerns of dispossession, poverty and accumulation in the Angolan countryside. The complex mix of tendencies also means that challenges for agriculture and development in Angola are much deeper than just land grabbing to be remedied by liberal prescriptions of good governance. But, more encouragingly, it also means that Angolan political economy is not beset by immutably extractive institutions prohibiting substantial development and poverty alleviation.

To understand Angola's important diversity and history, some basic details are necessary. Angola has 125 million hectares (ha), approximately twice the size of France, and around 35-60 million ha of arable land, of which 5 million are used (8-14 percent of arable land).⁵ About

⁵ FAOSTAT, <http://faostat.fao.org/site/377/default.aspx#ancor>, last accessed July 2016; (2013) 'Angola with 35-million hectare arable surface,' ANGOP, November 18; ANGOP refers to the Angola Press Agency's online articles at <http://www.angop.ao/>, last accessed in May 2016.

two thirds of economically active people are engaged in agriculture, but only about 38 percent of Angola's population of roughly 25 million are classified as rural (INE, 2011). Millions of people were displaced by armed conflict from 1961-2002, in which approximately one million people died, with economic losses possibly over \$200 billion.⁶ Agriculture's share in the budget has continued to decline to below a few percent, with national poverty rates of 68 percent in 2001 and 37 percent in 2009 (though overwhelmingly rural, and calibrated slightly differently) (INE, 2011).

Under independent Angola's first constitution of 1975, land became nominally state-owned (Article 12), though there now is some freehold tenure, and state-recognized 'traditional' authorities have re-emerged after the socialist period (1975-89) and end of conflict in 2002. Since the first post-independence land law in 1992, according to the consultants JMJ Angola (2011: 7), "the land distributed [to 'agribusiness units'] may have exceeded the amount held by the former colonizers," which was 4-5 million hectares (though disaggregated numbers and information sources for contemporary concessions are needed). Land projects have involved local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donor agencies, and international organizations, with some influence and awareness raising, but otherwise have not much changed policy and administrative content and processes. The land law was updated in 2004 with some civil society participation, allowing for rural community title, though mainly addressing urban issues, and private concessions continued apace. Concessions must be approved by a provincial governor (up to 1,000 ha), the Ministry of Agriculture (1,000-10,000 hectares), or the Council of Ministers (over 10,000 ha).⁷

The following sections recognize that relations between LSLAs and accumulation, dispossession, poverty and development are shaped by extraction, but often in complex and/or indirect ways. To understand how so requires viewing extraction as enacted through complex partial projects, in contrast to taking extraction for granted as an underlying determinative structure, or an 'independent variable,' and hence as an 'analytic black box.' Projects of extraction differ and change over time, dynamically shaping and being shaped by certain conditions (e.g. labor, infrastructure, or finance) that are organized or assembled socially and

⁶ See footnote 2; e.g. United Nations (1989).

⁷ Law 9/2004, November 9; General Regulation on Land Concession, Decree 58/2007, July 13.

spatially in changing ways, and these changing conditions shape subsequent projects of extraction (Bunker and Cicantell, 2005; Watts, 2004). Extraction and infrastructure related to one another in multiple changing ways as the processes of CSWL cumulatively combined and thereby produced the mixed tendencies that include LSLAs we see today.

As we next show in more detail, LSLAs should be situated with regard to Angola's trajectory in which an early colonial labor-intensive dispossession occurring through a combined indirect rule-resettlement-roads-taxation-labor complex lead to the independence war and consequently to a second, late-colonial colonial infrastructural complex that used diamond and petroleum revenues to bolster labor-substituting infrastructure and mechanization for military and economic counter-insurgency. This second complex was diversified and capital-intensive, and it was this which the post-independence state tried to revive and restructure along socialist lines, and which was attacked during the conflict to gain negotiating strength, and which shaped the war-battered state's reconstruction efforts funded by booming post-war deep-water oil revenues. Different successive processes combined cumulatively in relation to previous ones, not as repetitions reflecting an unchanged underlying structure.

Consequently, while the reported millions of hectares of LSLAs in Angola do, by definition, constitute elite accumulation, understanding their significance requires situating patterns of claiming and enclosure in relation to overall agrarian structures and broader political economies. The particular examples of LSLAs often cited (e.g. Hodges, 2001) – in the Luanda hinterlands and in the south, of privatized coffee plantations, state farms, and cattle ranches – should be contextualized in relation to types of investment, specific patterns and extents of claims, access to markets, complimentary livelihoods, etc. Mobility and access to key resources can be more important, for example, to pastoralists than aggregate size of land concessions. To take a prominent example, more than a decade after the start of what Hodges (2001: 136) described as a “serious land crisis” in the southern ranching province of Huila, currently concessions reportedly only amount to about 10 percent of the province's land.⁸

The range and dynamics of government approaches to land and rural development require understanding LSLAs in relation to CSWL processes. This helps, for example, better account

⁸ Despacho 12-W/97, Art.4; (2015) ‘Huila: Distribuídos mais de mil títulos de posse de terra,’ ANGOP, April 26; Pacheco (2002); Santos and Zacarias (2010).

for sometimes contradictory land law changes in August 1992, December 1995, November 2004 and July 2007. These measures were not a *carte-blanche* for land grabbing, and included both positive and problematic rights-based smallholder protections and participatory processes, as well as limits on land speculation, concentration, and unproductive absentee ownership. And difficulties implementing projects and regulations went beyond elite manipulation of the administration and judiciary for reasons complicated by the paternal and bureaucratic aspects of the land regime inherited from colonial and socialist periods combined with systematic inadequacies and biases that were significantly, though not completely, caused by a decade of super-power efforts to undermine the Angolan state. We therefore can distinguish 1990s concessions related to state farms privatized amidst simultaneous economic crises and military concerns, while since 2002 post-war land concessions were driven by the circulation of speculative offshore-oil revenues amidst a devastated rural state. Finally, the patterns of how concessions have been contested – for example, in extent, effects, participants, successes, failures, processes, mechanisms and forms (e.g. Jul-Larsen et al., 2011; Filipe, 2015) – are also shaped by CSWL (a topic that merits its own dedicated examination and is not detailed here).

Section 2 develops our alternative reading of how Angola's mix of problematic and developmental tendencies emerged out of combined processes of colonialism, socialism, war and liberalization. Section 3 then illustrates this framework by examining two important connected LSLAs in Malanje Province.

2. Cumulative Colonialism, Socialism, War and Liberalization in Angola

Contemporary agrarian dynamics and reconstruction in Angola are shaped by the cumulative combination of CSWL processes, though aspects of each process may be only indirectly related to land. This section shows firstly that Portuguese colonialism should be understood not as restricted to enclaves and extraction, but rather as economically and spatially extensive. Particularly influential were tendencies to control labor through the top-down military and economic coordination of logistics of large-scale capital investment, often through contracting. Consequently, independent Angola's socialist restructuring of the colonial economy was also

an extensive project with such tendencies. Socialist restructuring did not fail primarily due to the elite’s purported disconnection and external geopolitical orientation, but rather was undermined by conflict. War focused on destroying the extensive colonial infrastructure that the post-independence government hoped to restructure for socialist ends. War influenced development strategy, and, after 2002, the socialist plans thwarted by war were revived in new guises shaped by militarism and liberalization. Key implications for LSLAs are that dispossession of peasants occurred primarily during the colonial period, and contemporary elites’ accumulation is based less on capturing land, and more on businesses related to capital-intensive infrastructure.

Figure 1. Timeline of Colonialism, Socialism, War and Liberalization in Angola



2.1 Expansionary Portuguese Colonialism (1880s-1974)

The mix of tendencies shaping post-2002 reconstruction emerges out of qualitative transformations in infrastructural complexes in the early- and late-colonial periods. Early Portuguese colonial rule sought economic viability by shifting from exports of extractive goods to exports of produced commodities, a shift premised on establishing mechanized transport as a substitute to free up labor engaged in portage, and simultaneously to facilitate conquest and administrative compulsion and control of labor. This early period was characterized by a cumulative and recursive spatially expansionary sextuplet of military conquest, indirect rule through ‘traditional’ patriarchal authorities, regularized labor recruitment, extensive road building, concentration of villages, and transport and commercial regulation.

To facilitate colonial administrators' compulsion of labor into commerce through taxation, functionaries spent decades relocating thousands of rural villages away from dispersed locations near water sources and into concentrated linear settlements along flat and straight roads linking administrative posts (a process called 'villagization,' 'concentration,' 'regrouping,' and 'rural reordering'). This was ushered along by Governor Norton de Matos together with censusing of Angolans for taxes and labor recruitment, and construction of 25,000km of motorable roads by 1923. Further construction labor up to 1964 produced a total of well over 100,000km of roads, trails, and paths – far surpassing the few thousand kilometers of paved roads emphasized in conventional accounts.⁹

Linked to transport infrastructure, early decades of individual taxes were a large revenue source (roughly a quarter of total revenue in many years), and cheap compelled laborers also boosted revenues in other parts of the economy (Havik et al., 2015). This expansive sextuplet was, by the post-WWII period, facilitating a booming rural settler agro-industrial economy reliant on cheap and forced labor as well as state credit and subsidies. However, such approaches prompted inter-linked rural and urban anti-colonial revolts in 1961 that initiated the armed national liberation struggle.

The Portuguese responses – buoyed by revenues from booming coffee and oil (the latter commercially discovered in 1956) – involved transformation to a second, late-colonial infrastructural complex established through another round of top-down logistical coordination of large-scale capital-intensive and often contract-based mechanization, this time of production and construction, which shape reconstruction and rural development today. Massive post-1961 mechanized construction of infrastructure extended colonial military control, and was part of still influential top-down counter-insurgency socio-economic programs of rural, regional and “community” development.

Some colonial smallholder land titling slightly blunted expropriation and reinforced gendered divisions of labor and patriarchal property regimes. Land removals were aided by farm mechanization to reduce reliance on local labor, and continued after 1961 well beyond the million people confined to 'strategic hamlets' to hinder the popular support of guerrilla

⁹ Anuário Estatístico, 1964, p. 226; Castro (1975: 108); Missão Geográfica de Angola, 1965. Carta de Angola, Luanda.

movements. Together with post-1961 infrastructure, removals helped spark a still unstudied land rush that meant that Portuguese settlement and land claims were more extensive than recognized (including by backlogged official statistics). Consequently, the conversions of plantations from colonial to state socialist to private have been much messier than sometimes portrayed (e.g. Hodges, 2001).

As part of economic development for counter-insurgency, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw regional development and industrial decentralization commissions, plans and initiatives. The 1970 industrial strategy was geared around a dozen growth poles (including Malanje), which were the subject of studies and symposia in the 1970s that would influence post-2002 activities. In sum, Portuguese colonialism entailed extensive patterns of settlement, infrastructure, agro-industrial economy, and explicitly spatial state approaches to address rural inequalities and development challenges.

2.2 Socialist Revival and Restructuring of an Extensive Agro-Industry (1975-1989)

Appreciating the historically extensive character of Portuguese colonialism helps to recognize how extensive were post-1975 socialist efforts to revive and restructure the economy, which was seen, particularly after the destructive exodus of 300,000 Portuguese, as key to Angola's political and economic independence. Such experiences continue to shape reconstruction and agrarian dynamics, with the current MPLA government explicitly framing itself as pursuing "democratic socialism." This contrasts with conventional interpretations that draw on assumptions of an enclave colonial state to then portray the successor independent Angolan state as similarly enclaved and externally oriented, with post-colonial elite relying on oil revenues and only superficially adopting socialism to capture Cold War aid, but otherwise doing "little in the countryside other than recruit soldiers" (Cooper, 2002: 141; see also Soares de Oliveira, 2015).

The independent Angolan state absorbed many problematic tendencies of colonial period, partly through the extensive nationalization of colonial agro-industrial businesses to form numerous inter-linked state enterprises responsible for coordinating economic activities. State emphases on formal logistics were fostered by nationalizing settlers' agro-industrial logistics

complexes. By 1979, for example, there were 522 state agricultural goods posts and 567 routes to produce and distribute agricultural and industrial goods across much of the country.¹⁰

The post-colonial socialist state's fundamental approaches and practices were shaped by tens of thousands of new, promoted, and/or empowered Angolan functionaries. Mostly lacking university education, they drew on familiarity from prior experiences in extensive colonial administration and agro-industries. Amidst growing conflict, they tried to revive and restructure an extensive late-colonial infrastructural complex that had been transformed (with economic liquidity from oil and coffee booms) to be increasingly capital-intensive, mechanized and militarized to support profits of since absconded settlers.

Newly socialized large plantations were seen as loci to beneficially integrate smallholders into the socialist economy, rather than purported enclaves of continued isolated bureaucratic extraction. Efforts to transform the abandoned large integrated settler plantations into state or cooperative farms by coordinating workers and supply chains were linked to reviving domestic import-substituting industrial production (itself reliant on cheap hydro-electricity and agricultural raw inputs), particularly as oil prices declined. Also key was reviving regional growth poles, with plans for Luanda formed by 1981, followed by Benguela, Huambo, Huila, etc. (Ferreira, 1999). Such characteristics of socialist integrated rural restructuring influence contemporary land dynamics. Moving toward post-war emphases on privatization, private investment, and heavy capital spending, we argue that these have been driven more by state emphases on rebuilding integrated agro-industry than by elite accumulation through LSLAs.

2.3 Dynamics and Legacies of War, 1961-2002: Infrastructure, Logistics, Destruction and Debt

Appreciating the vastness of planned socialist restructuring of colonial agro-industry also illuminates how socialist efforts were undermined less by purported coastal bureaucrats' rent-seeking and capture of enclaves, and more by the destructiveness and expense of war waged deliberately through and on such extensive infrastructure. Successive phases of armed conflict – late-colonial (1961-1974), transitional (1975), Cold War (1976-1991), and post-Cold War

¹⁰ Resolution 55, 17 July 2009, p. 2271.

(1992-2002) – led government institutions and planning to emphasize top-down logistics in constructing infrastructure and operating supply lines. War's crucial importance for contemporary reconstruction and land dynamics involves more than population displacement and landmines (which were concentrated at strategic transport points, and significantly reduced in the post-war years).

The post-independence war in Angola was at root a Cold War proxy conflict, and that fact heightened emphases on capital-intensive mechanization, logistics, top-down control, and contracting. The mechanized logistics of war were used to reduce reliance on Angolan labor essential to colonial armies, and also to counter battalions from South African that used mechanization to amplify influence and reduce exposure of their foreign personnel. Top-down coordination of supply lines was used to try to defend infrastructure from campaigns of destabilization through destruction. As the state-coordinated economy and military were targeted and damaged, private contracting grew in importance. This emphasis included attention to spatial connections, and was also top-down, masculinist, and enriched successful logistics figures, who would remain influential. Such features of post-1961 war enabled elite accumulation, fostered unprofitable LSLAs, and limited post-war reconstruction's effectiveness in improving livelihoods.

Other implications of war for land structures were more indirect – war helped usher in liberal land titling because the heavy state expenses and the destruction of rural state infrastructure and institutions during the armed conflict were used by international creditors to leverage in economic and political liberalization. From 1985-1992, heavy war costs and low oil prices quadrupled external debt to \$10 billion. And from 1975-1990, war refugees to Luanda roughly tripled its population to 1.5 million, straining urban infrastructure, services and spending.

Conflict between the different former liberation movements backed by different Cold War powers continued until the early 1990s. UNITA then shifted to use diamond revenues for cheap weapons from the ex-Soviet Bloc, and, having long-since abandoned Maoist pretensions, heightened its last-ditch destruction of colonial infrastructure throughout the countryside in an effort to improve its negotiating position by choking off the rural economy and food supplies.

In sum, massive government campaigns over decades tried to coordinate – across a vast, varied and changing physical, social, political and military terrain over several decades – hundreds of

thousands of soldiers (including thousands of Soviet and Cuban personnel), millions of displaced people, and billions of dollars' worth of weapons, supplies and equipment (enabled in the 1990s by increasing offshore oil revenue). This trajectory contradicts influential models of extractive institutions in which the Angolan state is viewed as having “lost interest” and “utterly forgotten” the “useless spaces” of the countryside and hence not made “any effort at controlling it” (Soares de Oliveira, 2007: 78, 102).¹¹ The cumulative, multifaceted experiences of war would inform post-2002 reconstruction in terms of the strategies marshalled for continued MPLA rule and the accompanying practices of elite accumulation.

2.4 Leveraged Liberalization: Debt, Privatization, Logistics, and Contracting (1985-2000)

After years of low oil prices, an ever more costly defensive war that destroyed infrastructure and debilitated the economy, and a boycott by major international financial institutions, the increasingly indebted government turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1987, which came to insist on an economically and politically unrealistic “full package” of “shock therapy” reforms amidst socio-economic turmoil and a brief fragile hiatus in conflict. For several years the government negotiated small debt rescheduling, and implemented some contested and reversed partial reforms (devaluation, price liberalization, and privatization). A key problem appears to have been military spending covered by printing money, and hence the tight stabilization and structural adjustment measures were seen as potentially severe threats, not only to social stability (strikes had been legalized, and soon occurred in cargo and oil sectors), but also to military security and the government's very hold on power.¹² With some trade liberalized, imports boomed, straining foreign exchange, increasing high inflation, and prompting popular discontent that was met by xenophobic crackdowns on new shops often run by foreigners selling imports.

Rather than view economic liberalization solely through the lens of adapted elite strategies of accumulation (Ferreira, 1995; Vallée, 2008; Ovadia, 2013), and in addition to emphases on elites' self-serving ideological malleability (Soares de Oliveira, 2015: 80, 96, 133; Chabal,

¹¹ See also Ferguson (2006: 39-40, 199-204), Bayart (2009: xxx, xxxiv-xxxv), and Cooper (2002).

¹² E.g. Coulson, A., 1990. ‘Angola devaluation up in air with currency chaos,’ Reuters, October 21. See footnote 2 for further details.

2001: 228), we underscore that liberalization was only reluctantly and partially accepted after being required by coordinated international creditors after the American- and South African-backed war deliberately destroyed Angola's economy and socialist efforts.

Understanding liberalization as leveraged amidst war allows a fuller appreciation of its contradictory character, particularly with regard to LSLAs that occurred amidst contested state presence in rural areas, shifting political allegiances, mixed protective legal measures, and a lack of state investment funds. Such conditions had rendered unsustainable the state subsidies for coffee sector revival (particularly since world coffee prices had dropped to a quarter of their 1970s high). Consequently, by July 1991 the government started privatization processes for 33 mostly degraded and unprofitable coffee plantations, apparently involving staff and allied elites. In December 1991 it formulated new legislation on land to facilitate private concessions.

Liberalization also influenced the long-term, pervasive logistical attention to space in the form of contracting through state expenditures on private military suppliers. This also shaped the state's logistical approach to post-war reconstruction and agrarian development through private contracting with enterprises from China, Brazil, Portugal, and elsewhere for dozens of large agricultural projects and numerous agro-industrial growth pole projects. During breaks in the war in the 1990s, the colonial and socialist emphasis on Regional Development Poles was renewed, but the ruined finances and economic infrastructure influenced shifts to private contracting, foreign investment, and public-private partnerships.¹³ Such spatial development measures continue to be promoted also to diversify the economy and reduce the concentration in Luanda of people, wealth, administration, and commerce, resulting from colonialism, war, and an oil-dependent economy.

¹³ See for example the 1994 Lead Plan for the Reindustrialization of Angola (drafted through official cooperation between Angola and Portugal, and involving various organizations), the 1997 Industrial Policy, the 2000 Strategy for the Relaunch of the Sugar Industry, the 2008 Industrial Development Strategy, and current plans for 20 networked Industrial Development Poles.

3. CSWL and Contemporary LSLAs in Malanje Province

The two LSLAs discussed below must be understood in provincial and national context. Located in north-central Angola, Malanje is one of the country's five major agricultural regions, and has long been an intermediary place connecting coastal Luanda's hinterlands with north-eastern areas. Malanje was key to broader exports of slaves, ivory, wax and rubber up to the 20th Century, experienced significant colonial agro-industry, and was heavily contested during the war, not least due to diamonds in the east.

Malanje Province covers about 10 million ha (slightly larger than Portugal), while the western Cacuso Municipality, where the two LSLAs are based, is nearly 700,000ha. Malanje Province's urban and rural populations are 530,000 and 440,000, giving an average rural population density of about 4.5 people per square kilometer (municipal densities range from about 2 to 12), lower than the national average of about 7, and much lower than the central highlands (mid 20s) (INE, 2016). The Malanje plateau has four agricultural regions, relatively fertile soil, two rainy seasons, and key products of cassava, sweet potato, peanuts and charcoal sold to cities. Patterns of private concession claims, sizes and usage vary across Malanje (most Malanje municipalities reportedly have 1%-20% of land allocated to concessions, with Cacuso at 21%).¹⁴

The following analyses of the private Kolo Lands plantation and the public-private Biocom sugar complex illustrates how cumulative combinations of CSWL processes have shaped and produced contemporary forms of LSLAs, as well as reconstruction more generally.

Understanding combinations of CSWL processes helps illuminate and explain why there are contradictory mixes of problematic and developmental tendencies, how such contradictions work, and what can be done about them – all key tasks necessary to understand and shape broader capitalist industrialization, elite actions and structural transformation.

[insert "Figure 2: Map of Angola, Malanje, and LSLAs" about here]

¹⁴ See deGrassi (2015), op cit. The regions are the mostly flat plains of the West (cassava, maize, peanuts, and sweet potatoes), the more forested and hilly north (cassava, though formerly timber and ranching), the hot eastern lowlands with dark soils (formerly cotton), and the more sandy riverine areas to the south (formerly rice).

3.1 The Private Cahombo/Kolo Lands Plantation

In the mid-2000s, approximately 18,200ha encompassing the colonial Cahombo plantation in western Malanje Province was acquired from the state by Rodrigo Pereira (a pseudonym) and rechristened Kolo Lands Plantation. Pereira is an elite figure involved for decades in Angolan diamond mining and related transport industries, especially around the Kwango River east of Malanje, a controversial alluvial field known internationally due to conflict and labor abuses. However, even in this suggestive instance, the actual dynamics of accumulation, dispossession, and development in the Kolo Lands LSLA can be explained by the extensive logistics and spatial transformations of combined CSWL processes, rather than just the conventional narrative of coastal extractive elites accumulating wealth from enclaves and dispossessing local farmers. Kolo Lands emerged amidst colonial agro-industrial provincial networks. When the plantation was nationalized in the 1980s, deteriorated during the war, and then was privatized, it represented less a continuity of exploitation from Luanda than new conjunctures of specific processes in which complex, spatial military-business logistics have been key.

3.1.1 Cahombo and the Extensiveness of Transforming Portuguese Colonialism

Following the rise of colonial administration, roads and railroads, and coffee plantations, in 1937 the Cahombo Plantation was established near the Luanda-Malanje rail line, and then acquired by a provincially important Portuguese settler agro-industrialist, A. Santos Pinto, to grow sisal (used for sacks to transport coffee), as well as some tobacco, maize, and some coffee and cotton. During the colonial period, it profited from forced labor and favorable subsidies and regulations. The colonial cadaster map for Cahombo shows village settlements removed by the 1950s and 1960s in long-standing processes of rural village ‘reordering.’ Consequently, when the plantation was nationalized in the late 1970s and then privatized in the late 2000s, it does not appear that many peasants were newly dispossessed since colonial administrators had already relocated them many decades prior.

Like other plantations, after 1961 Cahombo mechanized production to reduce reliance on Angolan laborers. With further village removals and the accompanying land rush, the

plantation expanded into cattle ranching and meat processing. The A. Santos Pinto firm also expanded into the flourishing construction and commerce logistics business driven by coffee and oil revenues (and in Malanje also by cotton revenues) as well as by counter-insurgency military spending on infrastructure and personnel. The firm reinvested its profits and loans to diversify into vehicles, heavy consumer goods, and insurance. Cahombo then merged with CUCA, one of the largest diversified colonial business groups, involved in the national beer company, agro-industry, trade, construction and other sectors.

Cahombo Plantation was not a confined enclave, was not only extractive, nor did it have an unchanging logic. Rather, it, like other similar networked and transforming settler firms numbering in the dozens in Malanje and hundreds throughout Angola, was an expansionary agro-industrial conglomerate that was increasingly complex, productive, mechanized, and spatially and sectorally integrated.

3.1.2 Socialism and Cahombo: Nationalization of Agro-Industrial Logistics

After independence, Cahombo was nationalized and run as a cooperative state enterprise until conditions deteriorated amidst expanding war and declining oil prices in the 1980s. In 1977 Cahombo was grouped together with other large integrated former settler agro-industrial plantations to constitute the Cacuso Group of Production Units, one of six production groups in Malanje. These groups formed part of the state's detailed broader plans to transform Malanje into a socialist breadbasket for the surrounding region. In addition to multiple visits by officials and encouragement of dozens of farmer cooperatives, in 1980 President José Eduardo dos Santos spoke at the plantation, exhorting increased production. By 1985, Malanje had a couple hundred farmer associations with nearly 20,000 members. Cahombo, far from being a mis-managed socialist enclave amidst state neglect of the countryside, was actually a large link in a vast network of party-state organized logistics channels trying to distribute agricultural inputs and consumer goods to numerous peasant cooperatives in return for agricultural produce for urban sustenance and industries.

3.1.3 War and Cahombo

Conflict is important in understanding the Cahombo plantation for several reasons. The original colonial owner had initially benefited from the economic growth of late colonial military spending on infrastructure. The subsequent destruction of infrastructure and state institutions during the post-independence war deliberately then made even modestly achieving the dreams of integrated socialist production by the Cacuso Group next to impossible. Controlling the plantations and other areas around cities also became important to military strategy in terms of ensuring supply lines. With government facilities and finances thrown into disarray, private contractors grew in importance.

UNITA fighters reached Malanje by late 1983 with bolstered organization, supplies and funding. As fighting and landmine risk increased, people fled the countryside. Equipment and materials such as fuel, construction supplies, tractors, generators, reports, trucks, seeds and inputs were damaged, requisitioned, stolen or deteriorated. The transport situation worsened by 1985 as the MPLA prepared eastern operations and UNITA counter-attacked bridges, roads, and the railroad. In response, government troops requisitioned material from Cahombo. By 1986, for example, deterioration, requisitions and land mines left only six of the nearby Cacuso Agriculture Enterprise's 61 tractors in operation.¹⁵ The tight links and coordination necessary to the transformational work of post-independence integrated socialist agro-industrial development were literally being blown apart. With American weapons and funding reaching UNITA by 1986, conflict deepened and spread. Integrated socialist agro-industry was precluded and state efforts over the next 15 years turned to merely securing food for survival and attempting some military and administrative control.

The spatial logistics during war were also key to the rise of the future owner of the destroyed Cahombo plantation. Pereira worked with an international Caterpillar tractor supplier in Africa called ITM, which, for roughly a decade after 1976, was contracted by the Angolan state to manage the complex supply of hundreds of heavy vehicles and equipment along the heavily contested 500km main highway inland from Luanda to the state's lucrative mechanized alluvial diamond fields east of Malanje.¹⁶ ITM substituted for Caterpillar's former colonial

¹⁵ Field research, interviews, provincial archives, and BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB) (footnote 2).

¹⁶ Originally, Investment Trade and Management; a later Angolan spin-off was ITM Mining.

Portuguese supplier in Angola, which had fled and then been nationalized. ITM was able to import American Caterpillar equipment through a New York branch of a Singaporean intermediary. Because of ITM's logistical and construction expertise, it grew increasingly important after UNITA's 1983 attack on the Luanda highway's Kwilo bridge outside Malanje and attacks on Kwango mines in 1984. The war-ravaged Angolan state became financially indebted to ITM and in 1986 transferred management of the concession to ITM from de Beers. ITM boosted revenue for the state by hundreds of millions of dollars by reconstructing infrastructure to the area and carrying out an enormous 25km diversion of the Kwango River and tributaries to mine the diamond-rich river bottoms, until the area was overtaken by UNITA in 1992.¹⁷

The state obtained revenue, and Pereira wealth, not by signatures in the coastal capital, but rather through complex logistics provision, increasingly under military convoys, and even by air when attacks and damage blocked inland highway from Luanda (cf. Ferguson, 2006: 37). With such expertise, one of Pereira's companies also flew food aid during the war for the United Nations' World Food Programme, and perhaps for the government, with some attacked and planes shot down near Malanje and Huambo. War was significant to the subsequent Cahombo/Kolo LSLA not through isolated capture of enclaves and coastal imports, but rather by the ways that war compounded colonial and socialist tendencies through conjoined geographies of destruction of state farm infrastructure and prioritization of top-down control of capital-intensive military, mining and construction logistics, and all of which subsequently also combined with aspects of leveraged liberalization.

3.1.4 Liberalization and Kolo Lands

In the late 2000s, Pereira purchased Cahombo, with varying reports of expected investment of \$2.6 and \$6.2 million, and 47 jobs to be created.¹⁸ Several years earlier, in 2003, just after the end of the war, Pereira had co-founded the construction company Brafrikon, which in 2006-

¹⁷ Ramos, Rui (1990) *Semanário* (Lisbon), July 21, p.7; (1990) *Jornal de Angola*, August 19, p.6; Sardanis (2007).

¹⁸ See ANIP (2015) 'Relatorio Annual,' http://www.anip.co.ao/ficheiros/pdfs/Relatorio_Anula.pdf, p. 67, accessed June, 2015; (2013) 'Malanje governor visits farms in Quizenca commune,' ANGOP February 4; (2013) 'Governador inteira-se do funcionamento da fazenda Terra de Koló na comuna de Soqueco,' ANGOP, February 3.

2008 reconstructed a portion of the paved Luanda highway from Cacusso to Malanje, which passes a couple dozen kilometers from Cahombo. By 2013, the new Kolo Lands Plantation reportedly had about 4,000 cattle imported from Brazil, 24 residences, a restaurant, airport, slaughterhouse, and some maize production.¹⁹ It was a potential buyer of livestock feed (maize and/or soy) from the Kapanda Agro-Industrial Pole (KAIP) several dozen kilometers south. As discussed further in the next section, KAIP is an ambitious regional project on 443,332 ha of state reserved land, and is the largest and one of the most prominent and earliest of numerous agro-industrial poles. KAIP consists of several large mostly state-owned plantations currently producing several thousand hectares of maize and beans (well below planned levels), and the Biocom sugar plantation.²⁰

The Kolo Lands Plantation is best understood not in terms of continuities in extraction and enclaves, but rather in relation to Angola's transforming processes and spatial patterns and interconnections. The state privatized Cahombo/Kolo not simply to enrich an elite figure but rather because war-induced state incapacity forced increasing reliance on private means – involving in this instance wealth and expertise deriving from spatially extensive logistics of mining and construction – as way to revive ambitious regional agro-industrial projects that began long ago during the colonial period, and whose socialist transformation was thwarted by war. Certainly this privatization was elite accumulation, however understanding why it happened, and its relative significance despite a lack of contemporary direct dispossession of smallholder land, requires recognizing qualitative historical shifts and spatial issues beyond elite accumulation through LSLAs. The following section's analysis of Biocom and KAIP further illuminates how a mix of developmental and problematic tendencies emerge out of cumulative combinations of CSWL processes.

¹⁹ (2013) 'Malanje governor visits farms in Quizenca commune,' ANGOP, February 4; (2013) 'Fazenda Terras de Koló realiza primeiro leilão de gado Zebu,' ANGOP, June 7.

²⁰ SODEPAC (2010) 'Pólo Agro-Industrial de Capanda: Master Plan/Plano Director,' pp. 141, 814, <http://sodepacangola.com/joomla/pdfs/cap2.pdf>, <http://sodepacangola.com/joomla/pdfs/cap7.pdf>; ANGOP (2009) 'Fazenda Pungo Andongo conta com fábrica de ração animal,' ANGOP, May 13. See Decreto 36/08 of June 3, 2008 on the Kapanda land reserve.

3.2 The Public-Private Biocom Sugarcane Plantation

The Biocom sugarcane plantation in Malanje is a self-described public-private investment to diversify the economy, create jobs and economic growth in times of low oil prices, substitute for imports, and lessen the need for foreign exchange. Despite delays, this ambitious project – the largest plantation in KAIP – was by 2016 producing 51,500 tons of refined sugar, as well as some ethanol, and generating electricity from burning cane residue.

As early as 2006 officials were discussing a sugar project in Malanje. The plantation and refining facilities started operating in 2014, built by the large Brazilian multi-sector construction conglomerate Odebrecht, which has been involved in numerous projects throughout Angola for several decades, and had more recently moved into sugar ethanol in Brazil.²¹ Biocom is a joint venture of Odebrecht (40%), the private Angolan conglomerate Cochan held by the presidential consultant and businessman General Leopoldino Fragoso do Nascimento (40%, reportedly purchased in October 2014 from Damer Indústria), and the state oil company, Sonangol (20%). At the time of Biocom's October 2007 company registration, Sonangol's CEO Manuel Vicente (later Angola's Vice-President, 2012-2017) also held among his numerous business interests shares in Damer Indústria (formed in July 2007), generating controversy and lawsuits.²²

After a test run, Biocom cultivated 4,000ha in 2015 (producing 25,000 metric tons (MT) of refined sugar, 10,000 cubic meters of ethanol and 42 megawatts (MW) of electricity), and then 14,000ha in 2016. The area planned for the first \$750 million phase is 37,000ha, operated by a mostly Angolan work force of around 2,000-3,000. The 2020 goal is 256 MT, 170-235 MW of electricity, and 28,000-33,000 cubic meters of ethanol.²³ In 2015 the state mobilized financial guarantees for the second \$520 million phase, with reports of possibly doubling production by

²¹ (2016) 'Biocom supera meta e atinge um quinto da produção de açúcar,' ANGOP, November 12.

²² Capai, E., Viana, N., 2016. Em Angola, a Odebrecht no espelho. A Pública (Brazil) February 22. Discrepancy apparently lies in viewing the Public Probity Law apply to direct shareholdings, but not to holding shares in companies that form the joint venture. Responding to Marques' complaint, the Angolan Attorney General declared that Vicente and others 'are not and never were partners of the mentioned corporation [Biocom], [and] do not exercise and never exercised executive functions in it' (p. 28), see 'H - BIOCOM - COMPANHIA DE BIOENERGIA DE ANGOLA, LDA.' pp. 26-30, <http://apublica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/6.Pages-26-30-BIOCOM.pdf>, last accessed July 2016.

²³ (2016) 'Malanje: Biocom atinge capacidade plena de produção em 2021,' ANGOP, April 28; (2016) 'Malanje: Biocom inicia colheita de mais de 500 mil toneladas de cana-de-açúcar,' ANGOP, June 17; (2016) 'Malanje: Biocom inicia comercialização de açúcar em Julho deste ano,' ANGOP, June 20.

2025 to 70,000ha and doubling employees. Biocom's director remarked that it is "the largest private investment in Angola outside of petroleum," and it could make Angola the third largest producer of sugar in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁴ In 2014, Angola was importing 90% of its refined sugar from Brazil, amounting to 407 MT and worth \$178 million.²⁵ The aim to reduce sugar imports was featured in the MPLA's 2008 and 2012 electoral manifestos, and hundreds of references, images and news articles about Biocom have proliferated in Angola and in news across the globe.

The following analysis elaborates how the mix of developmental and problematic tendencies in the Kapanda Agro-Industrial Pole and in KAIP's Biocom anchor can be understood through the combination of CSWL processes, rather than viewing Biocom only as a land grab for elite accumulation and/or based current direct dispossession of peasants. Elsewhere, analysis has emphasized Biocom's "dual nature" of both some economic growth and also elite accumulation (Ovadia and Croese, 2017). We also situate Biocom in relation to KAIP, which includes 100,000ha for environmental protection, with 5,000ha occupied by some 188 villages mostly well to the east of Biocom.²⁶ KAIP was initially launched in association with the state's massive 520 MW Kapanda hydro-electric dam project begun in 1982 on the Kwanza River in south-west Malanje. The dam was built by Odebrecht and Russia's Technopromoexport, taking 25 years and roughly \$3 billion to complete.²⁷ Financed by Soviet aid and loans to Angola as well as by Brazilian lending repaid in oil shipments, the government initially justified the dam as a means of integrated development, with irrigation to help convert colonial plantations into

²⁴ (2015) 'Biocom suspende operações por falta de matéria-prima,' *Expansão*, October 12; Faria, Luis (2014) 'Biocom já realizou 90% de investimento de USD 750 milhões no agroalimentar e energia renovável,' *O País*, December 13; (2014) '18 fotos da nova usina de açúcar e etanol da Odebrecht em Angola,' www.novacana.com, September 12; Soque, Manuel and Colin McClelland (2015) 'Angola's \$750 million sugar-to-fuel project to start in June,' *Bloomberg*, May 26; (2015) 'Garantia soberana do Estado cobre investimento da Biocom em Angola,' *Lusa*, November 3; (2015) 'BIC Angola aumenta o investimento em dívida angolana para 366,4 mil milhões,' *Diário Económico*, May 20; Marcondes, João (2014) 'Feito (100%) em Angola,' *Odebrecht Online*, n176, November 2; Biocom (2015) 'Biocom estima receitas de 200 milhões USD,' May 25, <http://www.biocom-angola.com/pt-br/biocom-estima-receitas-de-200-milhoes-usd>, last accessed December 17, 2015; Despacho of October 20, 2015; Decreto 193/15.

²⁵ Angola's sugar market is 600 MT, according to an April 2016 estimate by a Biocom director; (2016) 'Biocom de Angola atingirá capacidade máxima de produção em 2021,' *MacauHub*, April 29, <http://www.macauhub.com.mo/pt/2016/04/29/biocom-de-angola-atingira-capacidade-maxima-de-producao-em-2021/>, last accessed September 30, 2016. See www.fao.org for trade figures.

²⁶ See Biocom (2015), *op cit*; SODEPAC (2012: 176).

²⁷ (2005) 'Angola inaugural primeira fase da Barragem de Capanda,' *Lusa*, November 8.

socialist mechanized farms.²⁸ By KAIP's re-launch in mid 2004, centuries of often violent local, national, and international dispossession had long already displaced much of the sparse population from western plantation zone of the pole.

3.2.1 Portuguese Colonialism, Kapanda and Biocom

Biocom and KAIP emerged out of colonial production of plantation crops, sugarcane, and electricity in an extensive colonial agro-industrial economy that was increasingly integrated, capital-intensive, and mechanized. The region around Kapanda has faced protracted depopulation, first by centuries of slave trading (Miller 1988), then by colonial forced labor and land appropriation, war, and, according to colonial land planners, acidic iron-rich soils and trypanosomiasis-carrying tsetse flies near the Kwanza River. After Portuguese control increased in the Nineteenth Century and a railway to Malanje was established by the early 1900s, European settlers increasingly appropriated land to produce maize, sunflower, cotton, tobacco and sisal. They depended on state support, forced and contract labor, and later mechanized production, and Angolans in the area brought their experiences with some of those approaches into the post-independence state.

The post-2002 revival and expansion of Kapanda was to be a key economic stimulus building on Angola's significant colonial transformations in sugar production. Brazilian sugarcane rum (*aguardente*) had long been imported in the slave trade. Local sugar production grew after improved import tariffs and export incentives following the Berlin Treaty in 1885 and declines in rubber from the early 1900s. Colonial sugar production was based near Luanda and Benguela in the south, as well as minor amounts in central Malanje. Propped up by the cheap compelled labor of 5,000 workers, as well as tariffs, subsidies, regulatory practices, and tied trade, total production peaked in 1972 at 84,000 tons, largely for the domestic refined market.²⁹

Kapanda also emerged because demand for colonial electricity increased with urbanization, industrialization and construction during late-colonial economic booms and counter-insurgency. Cheap hydro-electricity for Luanda's Viana industrial zone was essential, and a

²⁸ (1982) 'International Relations: Angola,' BBC SWB, September 10.

²⁹ See 'Government Strategy for the Relaunch of the Sugar Industry,' Resolution 23 of October 13, 2000, and Ball (2015).

1972 Kapanda plan followed after the 1962 Cambambe hydro-electric dam (144 MW) just outside Luanda.³⁰ Administrators envisioned using such hydro-electricity for regional development and thereby assuaging Angolans of decent life under continued colonialism.³¹

3.2.2 Socialism, Kapanda and Biocom

Biocom and KAIP also arise out of the challenges of restructuring colonial sugar and electricity complexes to serve post-independence Angola's strategies of socialist import substituting industrialization. Colonial sugar complexes shifted to worker management, and were nationalized (as a National Sugar Company in 1977-81, and then, following a sectoral study initiated in October 1980, as regional state companies). State enterprises replaced colonial traders and managed to distribute some sugar unevenly throughout the country. However, the government was challenged by restructuring sugar production and marketing that was formerly based not only on settler expertise and capital that had since absconded, but also significantly on artificially cheap Angolan labor that was no longer tenable.

Post-independence socialist industrialization also required cheap electricity, as did Luanda's growing population, increased by war refugees. The Kapanda hydro-electric dam project was announced in 1982, with numerous staff gaining formative experiences over the years, including Manuel Vicente.³² In 1981, at age 25 Vicente began six years of work at the electricity agency involved with Kapanda during the height of socialist transformation, and there he saw firsthand the plans for the expansive project emerge and then be thwarted by war. He started as an engineer in the Projects Department's electricity transmission systems division, and in 1985 trained in Brazil on substations and transmission lines with Furnas, a Brazilian state company contracted for Kapanda.³³ This important history of Vicente's early

³⁰ A \$4 billion 2,067MW dam was recently built by Odebrecht at Laúca downriver from Kapanda. See <http://www.miga.org/projects/index.cfm?esrsid=131>, last accessed April 2015.

³¹ See Marques (1964, 1970); (1967) 'Ceremonia da assinatura do contrato, Aproveitamento Hidroeléctrico do Cuanza,' *Boletim Geral do Ultramar* 390: 145-152; Leal (1960); see reports (1958-74) listed at: <http://arquivos.ministerioultramar.holos.pt/>, last accessed April 2015.

³² BBC, 1982. 'International Relations: Angola,' SWB, September 10.

³³ See 'Manuel Domingos Vicente,' http://www.sonangol.co.ao/corp/president_en.shtml; and 'Biografia do Vice-Presidente da República de Angola,' http://www.portalangop.co.ao/angola/pt_pt/noticias/politica/2012/8/39/Biografia-vice-presidente-Republica-Angola,0d03a6ee-a64a-472e-9ec5-c71c9f970d50.html, both accessed July 19, 2014.

involvement is neglected in analyses that emphasize only neo-patrimonialism, corruption, conflicts of interests and land grabbing by focusing only on reports of his later 2007 entanglements of public and private interests.³⁴ As with countless other (lesser known) functionaries, Vicente's earlier training and experiences significantly shaped the later formation of Biocom and KAIP.

3.2.3 War, Kapanda and Biocom

The Biocom and Kapanda projects aim to build beyond the war-ravaged efforts at socialist revival and restructuring of colonial agro-industry, even as projects' approaches have been shaped by war-related emphases on strategic infrastructure, top-down control, and formal logistics. The destructive 1980s conflict paralyzed the state sugar complexes by 1991, not least by blocking state marketing links, maintenance and reinvestment.

During the 1980s, UNITA attacked dams and electricity lines to Luanda, rendering Vicente's work on transmission lines all the more important. By 1987, he was a technical director in the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, and announced Kapanda would still produce 520 MW.³⁵ Kapanda hosted a state army contingent and airport, and costly UNITA attacks continued in the 1990s. Hydroelectric dam infrastructure was damaged and Angolan and foreign workers were captured and killed, prompting the government to seek \$300-400 million more in oil-backed credit from Brazil for Kapanda.³⁶ The strategic importance of Kapanda's electricity prompted tight coordination of supply lines for construction and the military during the war, and such tendencies then combined with increasing economic liberalization to eventually shape Biocom and KAIP.

³⁴ Marques de Morais, R., 2010. The Angolan Presidency: The epicentre of corruption, <http://www.makaangola.org>, last accessed April 2015. Marques also states that Vicente was involved with Banco Africano de Investimento, which reportedly helped finance the project. Vicente's involvement also may have signaled to Odebrecht state commitment. Cf. Leal (1960).

³⁵ BBC, 1987. Energy co-operation with USSR, SWB, November 17; See also FBIS (1987) Soviet team discusses Capanda Dam Project, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, MB031417, Luanda, November 3.

³⁶ BBC, 1997. Brazil extends credit to finance repairs to Capanda hydroelectric scheme, SWB, April 8; (2003) Usd 1.9 Billion Already Spent in Capanda Dam, ANGOP, January 26.

3.2.4 Liberalization, Kapanda and Biocom

Biocom and KAIP illustrate how the increasingly large-scale and capital-intensive top-down integrated regional development strategies of the colonial and socialist eras merged with novel approaches during the economic liberalization that was leveraged in by costly war. During the 1990s, imports of sugar (and other consumer goods) boomed after trade liberalization and the related inflation stoked popular discontent. By the late 1990s, the government reportedly lacked funding necessary to reestablish mechanized sugar production on the scale of 120-150 MT that was seen as necessary to out-compete cheap imports from a since-transformed and glutted global sugar industry, and sizeable private investment was not appearing.³⁷

Fundamentally, Biocom emerged as a way to marshal state support to secure sizeable private investments, which also anchor Kapanda and private agro-industrial investment more generally. State support included negotiated Brazilian credit lines linked to oil exports, investment, loan guarantees, guaranteed purchases and prices for electricity and sugar, import allowances, and facilitation of Biocom's partial capture of domestic sugar markets.³⁸ Purchases of Biocom sugar by state supermarkets and military suppliers, and by soda, drink, and beer industries in the Luanda industrial zone (using Kapanda electricity) are all seen as part of a state-led strategy of coordinated industrial integration and logistics, also necessary to compete amidst tight networks of private traders of imported food.

KAIP and Biocom also were facilitated by strengthening relations with Brazil from the early 2000s. Visits by heads of state were followed by oil and construction contracts, a May 2005 credit line of \$580 million, and a ceremony with President dos Santos in Kapanda for Angola's 30th anniversary of independence.³⁹ In June 2006 the President appointed a largely inter-ministerial commission on bioenergy to develop a law for sugarcane concessions, and a policy on future industrial investment in sugar and biofuel. When KAIP's contract was signed in June

³⁷ In October 1995, a commission for the sugar sub-sector was nominated. See sections III(1), IV, and V(d) in Resolution 23 of October 13, 2000, drawing on a viability study by F.C. Schaffer & Associates, Inc, and based on the Lead Plan for Reindustrialization.

³⁸ Further research is needed on the 2012-13 rise in sugar imports from 230,000 to 415,000 metric tons (FAOSTAT), and a study of protective selective tariffs.

³⁹ Gomes, Miguel. 2016. 'A cana-de-açúcar que pretende adoçar o país,' Rede Angola, August 5, <http://www.redeangola.info/especiais/cana-de-acucar-que-pretende-adocar-o-pais/>, accessed August 2016.

2007, KAIP was explicitly framed as being for food self-sufficiency, including sugar.⁴⁰ In August of 2007 – a month after KAIP’s Development Plan was approved – an Odebrecht sugarcane biofuel subsidiary announced it would construct a refinery in Angola to produce biofuels.⁴¹ A further \$1 billion credit line from Brazil was announced in October 2007, but interest in biofuels declined with the 2008 economic crisis and mounting critiques. Little else was reported until the August 2009 signing of the \$272 million investment contract, by which time Biocom apparently shifted its focus from sugarcane for biofuel ethanol to supplying refined sugar for Angola domestic market (meeting over half of demand).⁴² In March 2010, the Parliament nevertheless approved a Biofuels Law with some safeguards, amidst growing domestic and international concern about biofuels.

Understanding CSWL processes helps elucidate Biocom’s contradictions. On the one hand, it involves foreign contractors and equipment, reliance on heavy state investment, a possible conflict of interest, a highly formal approach, disproportionately male staff, few local agricultural links, environmental concerns, production problems and delays, and still slow gains in output amongst rising sugar imports and prices. On the other hand, it has brought in foreign private investment, completed its facilities, produced significant amounts of sugar, planned industrial linkages, trained hundreds of Angolans, employs thousands of Angolans, adjusted to environmental and market concerns, and aimed to diversify the economy and substitute for imports. While critiques of Biocom and the model of state-led development it represents certainly can be and have been made, neither failure nor success can be understood outside of CSWL processes. Moreover, such understandings are key to articulate reforms and alternate strategies in ways that resonate broadly by drawing on experiences of the historical processes through which popular and state desires and expectations actually came to problematically focus on models of large investments in capital-intensive top-down logistics projects.

⁴⁰ (2007) ‘Governo aprova plano destinado à promoção da auto-suficiência alimentar e à geração de excedentes para exportação,’ ANGOP, June 27.

⁴¹ (2007) ‘ETH Bioenergia thinks big,’ *Jornal do Comércio*, August 21.

⁴² (2009) ‘Assinado contrato de investimento para Unidade Agro-Industrial de Cacuso,’ ANGOP, August 21.

4. Conclusion

It is not uncommon to hear various Angolans critique inequality, not least regarding land (for example, “*tudo é deles*” – everything belongs to them, the elite). The practical implications from the preceding analysis are that the popular mobilization needed to leverage substantive rural development requires articulating land in ways that resonate both deeply and broadly, going beyond the abstract grievances in some simplistic narratives. An important way to do this is by articulating how Angolans’ diverse meaningful experiences of land are part of a mix of recognizable tendencies produced through common CSWL processes. For example, participatory land allocation procedures could expand not through memorizing foreign templates with fixed steps but rather from critically discussing how specific problematic contemporary administrative practices have emerged out of more familiar colonial and military practices.

Such pressing relevance of historical transformations – and careful assessment of the possibility of present and future change – risks getting obscured if LSLAs are seen only as driven by age-old extractive politics. The previous sections used two important LSLAs in Angola – a regionally and conceptually important country – to illustrate spatially extensive processes of contestations and responses. Current Angolan approaches to reconstruction rely on neoliberal and military-infused tendencies of sub-contracting and logistical integration, due significantly to past super-power destabilization. These tendencies, and associated top-down and capital-intensive tendencies, are part of re-engaging past efforts (thwarted by war) at socialist revival and restructuring of an extensive late-colonial agro-industry and infrastructure that itself was built by using mechanized military and economic counter-insurgency projects to transform a socially untenable economy premised on extensive restructuring for forced taxation and labor.

It matters practically to recognize that modernist approaches to agricultural development in contemporary Angola are more than just top-down impositions or technocratic pretexts for enrichment. Such approaches also emerged through widespread transformations in on-the-ground day-to-day experiences over many decades. Because of specific trajectories such as CSWL in Angola, generic prescriptions for liberal good governance reforms are not only unlikely to address the deeper issues (in infrastructure, militarism, settlement, inequality, etc),

but are also unlikely to resonate broadly enough with the population to generate sufficient political pressure to be a realistic option. To shift state strategies therefore requires rearticulating in more critical and site-specific forms the popular discourses through which the state officials, politicians, and elite continue to garner legitimacy by espousing modernist approaches.

LSLAs are often problematic and need to be reformed – most people would agree on the importance of stopping dispossession of peasant lands for elite accumulation. However, much key potential understanding and action is lost in narratives of extractive continuity that reduce LSLAs in Angola only to dispossession and explain them only by their function in elite accumulation. Moving past a focus on entrenched and disconnected extractive elite allows recognizing different channels for advocacy and how they have substantively influenced (and can continue to influence) state development approaches. Analysis can move beyond producing academic abstractions and general ‘best practice’ insights premised on benevolent actions of enlightened elites, and more towards constant popular collective action and reflection about specific conditions. Attending to CSWL processes also can encourage sufficient attention to other forms of accumulation – particularly around expenditure and contracting – that may involve more wealth than LSLAs, but are less clear, visible, or directly tied to a delimited set of people potentially being dispossessed. In this vein, important future research questions include the gender dynamics of rural production and commerce, gender dynamics of administration and policy formulation, the relative weight in policy and social stability considerations of bureaucratic staff, project and policy formulation and implementation practices, and the details of and points of influence in the budget process. The connection between these issues, land, and LSLAs may be more or less apparent at times, particularly as seen over through combinations of CSWL, but such careful consideration are nonetheless key to substantive and effective reforms and rural development.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the journal editors and two anonymous reviewers for helpful feedback. Aharon de Grassi also acknowledges the support of a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Agrarian Studies Program at Yale University, as well as dissertation research support (mentioned therein).

5. References

- Acemoglu, D., and Robinson, J., 2012. *Why Nations Fail*. Crown, New York.
- Alden Wily, L., 2011. 'The law is to blame': The vulnerable status of common property rights in sub-Saharan Africa. *Development and Change* 42, 733-757.
- Anuário Estatístico, 1951-73, Luanda, Imprensa Nacional.
- Ball, J., 2015. *Angola's Colossal Lie: Forced Labor on a Sugar Plantation, 1913-1977*. Brill, Boston.
- Bayart, J.-F., 2009. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd ed., Polity, Cambridge.
- Bunker, S.G., Cicantell, P., 2005. *Globalization and the Race for Resources*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
- Castro, E., 1974. *Angola, Portos e Transportes*. Sociedade Tipográfica Portuguesa, Luanda.
- Chabal, P., 2001. Angola and Mozambique: The weight of history. *Portuguese Studies* 17, 216-232.
- Cooper, F., 2002. *Africa Since 1940*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Cotula, L., Jokubauskaite, G., and others, 2016. *Land investments, accountability and the law*. International Institute for Environment and Development, London.
- Cotula, L., Oya, C., Codjoe, E.A., Eid, A., Kakraba-Ampeh, M., Keeley, J., Kidewa, A.L., Makwarimba, M., Seide, W.M., Nasha, W.O., 2014. Testing claims about large land deals in Africa. *Journal of Development Studies* 50, 903-925.
- deGrassi, A., 2008. "Neopatrimonialism" and agricultural development in Africa: Contributions and limitations of a contested concept. *African Studies Review* 51, 107-133.
- Edelman, M., Borrás Jr., S.M., 2016. *Political Dynamics of Transnational Agrarian Movements*. Practical Action, Bourton on Dunsmore.
- Ferguson, J., 2006. *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Ferreira, M.E., 1995. La reconversion économique de la nomenkulture pétrolière. *Politique Africaine* 57, 11-26.
- Ferreira, M.E., 1999. *A Indústria em Tempo de Guerra: Angola, 1975-91*. Edições Cosmos, Instituto da Defesa Nacional, Lisboa.
- Filipe, P., 2015. *Nós e a Nossa Terra, Brot für die Welt*, Luanda.
- Hall, R., 2011. Land grabbing in southern Africa. *Review of African Political Economy* 38, 193-214.
- Hall, R., Scoones, I., Henley, G., 2016. *Strengthening land governance*. UKAID, London.

- Hall, R., Edelman, M., Borrás Jr., S.M., Scoones, I., White, B., Wolford, W., 2015a. Resistance, acquiescence or incorporation? An introduction to land grabbing and political reactions 'from below'. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 42, 467-488.
- Hall, R., Scoones, I., Tsikata, D., 2015b. Introduction: The contexts & consequences of Africa's land rush, in: Hall, R., Scoones, I., Tsikata, D. (Eds.), *Africa's Land Rush*. James Currey, Woodbridge, pp. 1-29.
- Hart, G. 2002 *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Havik, P.J., Keese, A., Santos, M., 2015. *Administration and Taxation in Former Portuguese Africa: 1900-1945*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle.
- Hodges, T., 2001. *Angola From Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Diamond Capitalism*. James Currey, Oxford.
- INE, 2011. *Inquérito Integrado Sobre o Bem-Estar da População: Vol. I, Relatório Analítico*. Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Luanda.
- INE, 2016. *Resltados definitivos do recenseamento geral da população e da habitação de Angola 2014*. Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Luanda.
- JMJ Angola, 2011. *Análise do sector de agricultura*. World Bank, Luanda.
- Jul-Larsen, E., Bertelsen, B.E., Pacheco, F., Katiavala, J.M., Jelembi, B., 2011. Social security, poverty dynamics and economic growth in Angola's smallholder agriculture, Working Paper 2011:5, C. Michelsen Institute, Bergen.
- Kyle, S., 2005. The political economy of Angolan growth. *Review of African Political Economy* 32, 269-293.
- Leal, C., 1960. *Peregrinações Através do Poder Económico*, Lisboa.
- Mahoney, J., Thelen, K. (eds), 2015. *Advances in comparative-historical analysis*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Marques, W., 1964. *Problemas do Desenvolvimento Económico de Angola*. Junta de Desenvolvimento Industrial, Luanda.
- Marques, W., 1970. *Estratégia do Desenvolvimento Industrial de Angola*. Secretaria Provincial de Economia, Luanda.
- Messiant, C., 1997. Angola: The challenge of statehood, in: Birmingham, D., Martin, P.M. (Eds.), *History of Central Africa: The Contemporary Years Since 1960*. Longman, London, pp. 131-166.
- Miller, J.C., 1988. *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.
- North, D.C., 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Ovadia, J.S. 2012. The dual nature of local content in Angola's oil and gas industry, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30, 395-417.
- Ovadia, J.S., 2013. The Reinvention of elite accumulation in the Angolan oil sector. *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 25, 33-63.
- Ovadia, J.S., 2015. State-led development in Angola and the challenge of agriculture and rural development. *Portuguese Studies Review* 23, 191-214.
- Ovadia, J.S., 2016. *The Petro-Developmental State in Africa: Making Oil Work in Angola, Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea*. C Hurst & Co, London.
- Ovadia, J.S. 2017. State-led industrial development, structural transformation and elite-led plunder: Angola (2002-2013) as a developmental state. *Development Policy Review*.

- Ovadia, J.S., Croese, S., 2017. Post-war Angola: The dual nature of growth without development in an oil-rich state, in Kanyenze, G., Jauch, H., Kanengoni, A.D., Madzwamuse, M. and Muchena, D. (Eds.), *Towards Democratic Development States in Southern Africa*, Harare: Weaver Press, 257-303.
- Peters, P.E., 2004. Inequality and social conflict over land in Africa. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, 269-314.
- Reno, W., 1998. *Warlord Politics and African States*. Lynne Rienner, Boulder.
- Santos, G., Zacarias, I., 2010. Pesquisa sobre diferendos e conflitos de terras e as formas da sua resolução. Rede Terra, Luanda.
- Sardanis, A. 2007. *A Venture in Africa*, I.B. Tauris, London.
- SODEPAC, 2012. *Pólo Agro-Industrial de Capanda*, Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Pólo Agro-Industrial de Capanda, Luanda.
- Soares de Oliveira, R., 2007. *Oil and Politics in the Gulf of Guinea*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Soares de Oliveira, R., 2015. *Magnificent and Beggar Land: Angola Since the Civil War*. Hurst & Company, London.
- United Nations, 1989. *South African Destabilization: The Economic Cost of Frontline Resistance to Apartheid*. New York: United Nations, Inter-Agency Task Force, Africa Recovery Programme/Economic Commission for Africa.
- Vallée, O., 2008. Du palais aux banques: La reproduction élargie du capital indigène en Angola. *Politique africaine* 110, 21-46.
- Watts, M., 2004. Resource curse? Governmentality, oil and power in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Geopolitics* 9, 50-80.
- Weigert, S.L., 2011. *Angola: A Modern Military History, 1961-2002*. Palgrave MacMillan, New York.
- Wolford, W., Borras Jr., S.M., Hall, R., Scoones, I., White, B., 2013. Governing global land deals: The role of the state in the rush for land. *Development and Change* 44, 189-210.
- World Bank, 2017. *World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law*. World Bank, Washington, DC.