Patrimonialism & Petro-Diamond Capitalism: Peace, Geopolitics & the Economics of War in Angola

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Introduction: Re-imagining the ‘Worst Country in the World’

The longest and most miserable civil war in Africa ... has also been the most misrepresented and misunderstood of the continent’s many colonial and post-colonial conflicts (Goldman, 1999).

This is not the time, it is suggested, to wait another six months for a new report. The guilty parties who are conspiring to undermine the Security Council resolution, and who are subverting a host of national and international laws, are getting off scot-free. It is time they were brought to book (UN Sanctions Committee chairman Robert Fowler (2000:18) Angola: Exposing an International criminal conspiracy, United Nations Sanctions Committee, ‘The Fowler Report’, May 2000)

In 2001 it seems almost a ceremonial ritual to begin a discussion of Angola by noting the tragedy of how this country, so ‘fabulously endowed but massively wrecked by conflict’ (Cramer, 1996:481), has come to occupy its present ‘position’ on the contemporary map of African politics. Hajari and Mabry (2001:24), for example, describe Angola as the ‘worst country in the world’ and outline the now familiar story of how one of Africa’s potentially richest countries now teeters on the ‘edge of the abyss’. For others, like Anthony Goldman of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), this is the ‘longest and most miserable civil war’ that Africa has ever known but, more importantly, it has also been amongst ‘the most misrepresented and misunderstood’ (Goldman, 1999:2). Various contributions to this issue of ROAPE also make a number of observations about how the conflict in Angola has been ascribed particular (simplistic) ‘causes’, singular explanatory factors which are somehow held to account for the conflict and its prolongation. As Goldman (Ibid.:1) observes:

At various stages, the violence has been characterised as anti-imperial and revolutionary, a Cold War proxy, or a brutal competition between rival elites for a wealth of natural resources.

Any analysis which reduces the causes of extensive social conflict to a single determinant should be treated with caution (Guimaraes, 1998; Kwamba et al. 1999; Marcum, 1978; Minter, 1994). Angola has after all been in the ‘extraordinary situation of no war/no peace’ (Messiant, 2001:308) for a quarter of a century now. One would expect a number of causal factors to have been in play during this time. Moreover, in that time its regime has had a changing material base which is ‘now centred on financial interests, whether legal or illegal, individual or collective’ (Ibid.:304). Many economists and political observers see the ongoing conflict in very simplistic terms...
and fail to consider this shifting material base, using an often pejorative discourse to characterise the war. For the World Bank, for instance, ‘greed’ for diamonds and other lootable commodities has ‘fueled’ war, and little additional explanation is deemed necessary. Other economists talk of the ‘belligerent investment in the continuation of war’ or represent war in the country an ‘incremental addition to sunk or past costs’ (Cilliers, 2000:2). In a variety of important ways Angola is being drawn increasingly into the orbit of dominant economic ideological discourses of neoliberalism with implications for the way in which Angola’s colonial past/post-colonial present is understood and accounted for (Abrahamsen, 2001).

Much is made, in many analyses, of the ‘curse’ of Angola’s wealth in fomenting conflict. The relationship between natural resource abundance and war, which appears to have made the Angolan conflict self-sustaining, has frequently been misunderstood, however. Certainly, Cold War patronage has been replaced by ‘resource war instrumentalisation’ (Ibid.:3). Yet such an argument is not without its problems as a means of explaining the country’s turbulent past. It is important not to obscure the crucial geographical, historical, sociological and cultural origins of the war, nor their continued salience (Chabal, 1998). On many occasions the political geography of the Angolan conflict has been misrepresented, or overlooked altogether, despite the various ways in which struggles for power, privilege and authority have been linked to the territorial power of the state and its perceived legitimacy. As Cilliers (Ibid.:1) observes, by the year 2000 the war had again mutated into a new kind of violent politico-economic interaction which operated across a range of geographical scales:

*By the turn of the century Angola appears to reflect the political-economic agendas of a new, evolving mode of violent political-economic interaction at the sub-state, national and regional level.*

The recent Fowler Report, which documented UNITA sanctions violations in an effort to ‘name and shame’, identified a number of international miscreants for their contribution to the crisis. It accused Burkina Faso and Togo of helping the rebel movement in exchange for diamonds; Bulgaria of violations of the arms embargo; and Belgium of allowing the Antwerp diamond markets to facilitate the trade in UNITA diamonds. In fact, the geography of international complicity in Angola’s war economy has been even more complex and dynamic. A number of private financial institutions (which according to the IFIs need less rather than more regulation) continue, like other transnational enterprises in Angola, to be part of the country’s war economy. As such, they bear at least some responsibility for its prolongation – for its ultimate resolution and for the promotion of a peaceful settlement. Embargoes on oil and arms transfers to UNITA have existed since 1993 but have been openly flouted (Human Rights Watch, 1997, 2000). The Report even felt the need to urge the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to do more to monitor the application of sanctions against UNITA. This call led to some degree of prohibition on arms and fuel sales and delivery to UNITA, the prevention of the sale of diamonds by UNITA rebels, and the freezing of UNITA-owned funds and assets (De Beer and Gamba, 2000). Amazingly, however, only in June 2001 did SADC successfully improve the monitoring of Angolan air space with mobile radar equipment established in South Africa, thereby ‘drastically reducing’ the number of illegal flights to UNITA-held territory (Angola Peace Monitor, July 2001).
The Geography of International Complicity

This complex geography of international complicity also links UNITA to various US administrations in a number of interesting ways (see Wright, this issue). When Herman Cohen, former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the first Bush administration (1989-1993), recently published his 'practitioner's memoir' (Cohen, 2000:xii), he described many 'typical African states' in terms of their 'tendency toward extreme harshness and murder to maintain power' (Ibid.:198). As with many other readings of African politics, Cohen fails to see or understand the historical or geographical construction of the 'weak state politics' he examines.
(Jackson, 2001). In an account that is almost surreal, Cohen inadvertently hints at the complex interplay of economic and geopolitical interests that have come together in the Angolan war. Describing US efforts to heal a rift between Jonas Savimbi and Mobutu Sese Seko, in order to strengthen UNITA’s negotiating position in relation to the MPLA, Cohen (Ibid.:97) recalls how:

Mobutu received us on the terrace under a brilliant Riviera sky ... After ordering aperitifs, Mobutu ... said [to Savimbi:] ‘In front of our American friend Cohen, I pledge to you that I will support you to the end’. He offered his hand and Savimbi took it. That was that. We then adjourned to the swimming pool terrace for the birthday party, with 250 guests and a jazz orchestra flown specially from Kinshasa for the occasion.

The result of this Riviera reconciliation was the resumption of arms flows to UNITA from the United States via the territory of Zaire. In an ironically-entitled conclusion (‘Superpower in Africa: Mediator or Meddler?’), Cohen lists some of the lessons he ‘learnt’ from his involvement in Bush’s ‘aggressive policy of diplomatic intervention in African conflicts’: ‘starting early is better than starting late’; ‘talk to everyone’; and ‘beware of signature obsession’ (Ibid.: 222). Cohen’s book implicitly confirms that conflict management in Africa by superpowers is always subservient to their own perceived national interests and strategic geopolitical goals (Jackson, 2001). Peacekeeping and conflict management are represented as neutral and impartial enterprises but successive US administrations have preferred conflict management to conflict resolution in Angola, thus undermining claims to neutrality on the part of mediators and peacekeepers. The disappearance of cold war patronage has not made the geopolitical context of the Angolan war irrelevant: the ‘Orphan of the Cold War’ (Anstee, 1996) is now twenty-six years old and Angola remains, in a very real way, subject to the legacies of Cold War history. As Messiant (2001:291) has put it, ‘[t]he conditions of war ... have served to entrench various distinctive features of the Angolan state, some old and some rather new’.

Many commentators, however, continue to have enormous faith in the willingness and capacity of the party-state to operate effectively in any post-war reconstruction, a view which suggests a rather naïve appreciation both of the nature of state power in Angola today and of its territorial configuration. Will an end to the war immediately imply more stringent standards of ‘transparency’ and ‘accountability’ by Angolan government officials and the international community? Are these ‘standards’ being promoted by international institutions out of ignorance of the nature of patrimonial states in Africa, as Chabal and Daloz (1999) would seem to suggest? Patrimonialism in Africa works, they argue, because attempts to institutionalise a rule-bound democracy, democratic politics and economic liberalism (attempts made partly at the behest of aid agencies) are frustrated by political processes on the ground. Any political settlement in Angola will clearly require ‘a major rethinking of development initiatives if an end to the war is to be more than an interregnum in the on-going conflict’ (Cilliers, 2000:345). Conventional development discourses have such a limited relevance to the Angolan context and a radical rethinking is required. True, the state in Angola is still the main economic and political actor, a position arising from the fact that it remains ‘the largest proprietor, the only exporter (and consequently the only agent generating foreign exchange), the major importer, the largest employer in the economy, the largest consumer of resources, the largest debtor and the largest investor ...’ (V.P. de Andrade, 2000:8). Yet this same state is also unable to carry out vital governance functions of law and order and social service provision in those areas it (periodically) occupies. War has thus pushed Angola from being a one-party state towards becoming a kleptocracy – and even something of a

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'phantom state' – rather than towards becoming a multiparty democracy. It is a state with international recognition but one that does not necessarily perform many of the normal functions of a sovereign state. This state has an extremely limited concern for its own citizens; instead it seeks to serve an off-shore legality and the interests of transnationals scrambling for profit (Cilliers, 2000). To date the process of negotiating a peaceful future has not been sufficiently broad and participatory – although, since 1997, civil society groups and church organisations have become increasingly vocal, for example in their condemnation of extravagant arms purchases (Vines, 2000). Nor has it been notable for much insight and forward planning. There has also been a growing realisation that 'Angola has not responded well to peace-keeping on the cheap' (Cilliers, this issue) and that the state 'remains singularly unprepared to help the Angolan people' (Cilliers, 2000:8). The evidence of the second and third UN Angola Verification Missions (UNAVEM II or III), for instance, would suggest that peace will likely result in a massive programme of demobilisation. It thus has little to offer soldiers and guerrilla fighters for whom war has been 'mais um dia de vida' (another day of life) for more than three decades. Demilitarisation and demobilisation campaigns have enjoyed varying degrees of success but they remain poorly conceived and incomplete and need to be much more closely related to the particular case of Angola than in the past. One recent map of humanitarian access (see over) in Angola highlights just how little these organisations really know about UNITA rebels and their families or about their settlement and social organisation. Additionally, efforts to control trade in illicit diamonds and the other commodities that support the UNITA war effort reveal wider and more complex trends, including increasing cross-border trade and the growing size of the informal, unregulated (and often illegal) regional economy. Both sides seek the perpetuation of the militarised systems of control which they have instituted, a situation that will, for a whole variety of reasons, not be easy to change. Shortly after signing an agreement with the Congolese President on joint oil exploration along their common borders, for example, President Dos Santos recently declared that a contingent of FAA forces would remain in the Republic of Congo for the foreseeable future (IRIN, 2001). In his analysis of the MPLA's seismic shift from 'Afro-Stalinism' to 'petro-diamond capitalism', Hodges (2001) argues that the notion of a resource-cursed country is simplistic and needs to be criticised. He suggests instead that the country's mineral wealth has allowed competing elites to pursue their exclusionist agendas since the 1970s and so 'ruin' their country, all the while talking of national liberation and 'development'. Hodges examines the staggering military expenditures since the 1980s, the fluctuation in oil values and the economic mismanagement and widespread corruption of government officials. Mineral wealth in and of itself does not 'ruin' a country, he argues. What does is the uneven social distribution of this wealth and its (mis)appropriation by political elites who have long since lost the right to talk of liberation and development. The resources simply provide these strata with the means to promote their particular agendas. Oil and diamonds afford both sides access to a range of material resources and political connections beyond the borders of Angola. As Reno argues, oil is a key component in the regime's ability to gain access to international political and material resources; not just to markets (as with diamonds) but also to 'diplomatic channels and more politically connected commercial networks that directly advance the MPLA's security strategy' (2000:219). The use of private security armies, he suggests, is highly reminiscent of the forces employed in the defence of colonial development projects.
Attention needs to be focused not just on the oil and diamond industries but also on the range of financial institutions and banks that have often profiteered from the Angolan war. In 1998, for example, the US Import-Export Bank guaranteed a loan to Sonangol in exchange for the bank’s investment in Cabinda’s oil well services and a $360m investment in Angola’s hydrocarbon sector (Reno, 2000). Oil-backed loans have taken all sorts of shapes and forms (HRW, 1999) but have been used regularly to purchase weapons. Thus a range of public and private lending sources are linked directly to the deaths of Angola’s war victims and to the destruction of Angolan society. The presence of oil and banking businesses like these helps to generate the revenues which finance the MPLA government’s war against UNITA (Global Witness, 2000). Joint ventures also provide further opportunities for individual Angolan officials in that in some cases these ‘partnerships’ can bring access to security companies and by implication to weapons procured on their own account.

IMF analyses of Angola suggest that the conflict is very similar to many other civil wars in Africa in that corruption becomes integral to the political system and leads to the construction of networks of loyalty and compliance through the distribution of patronage to key individuals (Ayoob, 1995; Collier, 2000). In this analysis, it is either greed or grievance which is held to explain everything, set alongside the rather vague ‘economic causes’ which are given for the continuation of war: Collier argues, for example, that it is the ‘feasibility of predation’ which determines the risk of conflict and it is this, rather than the ‘grievances’ of rebels, which drives Angola’s war:

Diamonds ... made UNITA so rich that nothing that donors could offer would matter, while renewed predation offered massive rewards (Collier, 2000:18).

Excessive creditor pressure, so this argument goes on, is also risky in that it destabilises established patronage-based bureaucracies and could lead to ‘anarchy rather than efficiency’ (Charap and Harm, 1999). Against this, of course, it could be argued that the greater risk to Angola comes from international financial bureaucracies, like the World Bank and IMF, who ignore the nature of Angolan social and spatial relations, intoning instead the holy mantra of adjustment, transparency and economic efficiency. Their brutal reform policies and simplistic causal explanations seem designed to shift attention toward forms of ‘predation’ other than their own. More attention needs to be given to the ways in which highly contested neo-liberal ideologies of development are promoted by predatory IFIs that simply seek to lubricate Angola’s emerging relations with the global system of trade and investment. This has been a common misunderstanding within the governance agenda of many international donors in Africa (Szeftel, 1998).

The World Bank, IMF and Security Council have the power also to affect significantly the success or failure of any future regional or international peace initiatives in Angola. At present the IFIs exercise their considerable leverage in ways that are inconsistent (even on their own terms) and often misplaced. Angola already has moved towards a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and is subject to inflation reduction measures, accelerated privatisation, a liberalisation of foreign trade, a revision of tax laws and commitments to reduce state spending and monitor government expenditures. But the country arguably still lacks appropriate and coherent donor policies and thus the conditional engagement of the IFIs needs radical rethinking. Are their alternatives and what might these look like? The first attempt at producing a Staff Monitored Programme (SMP) in 1995 was terminated within months because of the slow pace of reform and the fact that President Dos Santos had more pressing priorities than transparency and reform, such as the defence of
clientelism' (Le Billon, 2001:72). Structural adjustment has to be seen then in this context, with government encouraging the development of business enterprises and engaging in privatisation but also allowing major economic offences to be committed with impunity. Far from discouraging illegality, privatisation actually interacts with and underpins illegal activities in common use (Messiant, 2001:295). The *Angola: Trade and Investment Guide* produced by the Angolan embassy in the US says nothing of these illegalities, promising instead that '[n]ew regulations will reduce or eliminate business taxation' (Embassy of Angola, 2000:7). A kind of patrimonialism clearly drives the expansion of economic activity in Angola and Angolans have had to adapt to this particular politico-economic order.
The Regional Geopolitics of Angolan Underdevelopment

Angola has been the setting for a huge range of experiments (Maria da Conceição Neto, 2001:48).

Similar to the DRC, with which it [Angola] shares a long and unguarded border, governance in Angola extends only to the urban limits of Luanda, to most provincial capitals and to those areas where the Angolan armed forces, the FAA, are deployed. This does not imply that UNITA holds sway everywhere else. The reality is that large expanses of terrain remain unguarded and without policing or administration of any type ... (Cilliers, this issue).

Central to the factors promoting conflict in Angola has been the way in which the war remains fluid and inchoate in many places on the ground and the way in which it has regularly become part of wider, regional conflicts. Although the government has been successful in recent years at driving UNITA from large areas it previously controlled, UNITA’s guerrilla army FALA (Forcas Armadas de Libertacao de Angola) relies on the country’s informal economy, on seizing supplies from the FAA and on a kind of banditry practised for decades. Driven by logistics, fighting tends to be periodic, seasonal and spatially diffuse whilst ‘victories’ reflect not so much the strength of opposing forces but the weaknesses of their enemy. The administration of territory remains inconsistent and incomplete, sometimes temporary and invariably contested (Cilliers, 2000). Then forces of both sides are capable of splintering and disintegrating over time given their limited capacity to control state territory. The recent regionalisation of the war, as the MPLA has sought to isolate UNITA from its support structures in the DRC, Republic of Congo, Zambia and Namibia, could well contribute further to such disintegrative propensities. Historically a whole variety of different African states have become embroiled in one or more of Angola’s various periods of war. In the context of regional geopolitics and SADC, Angola has often figured ambiguously, occupying uncertain coordinates whilst rarely contributing to any regional consensus or coordination.

Yet for all the evidence of fluidity and change, the forces fighting over Angola have exhibited a remarkable tenacity and resilience. Both sides in the war still represent relatively coherent forces, fighting organised campaigns – which speaks volumes for the extent of support, intimidation and patronage available to both (Cilliers, 2000). Nonetheless commentaries and observations on Angolan development can only speculate about what is happening in some areas of UNITA-held territory or in those areas inside Angola which were traditionally sympathetic to UNITA but are now controlled by government forces. Many representations of Angola’s political geography thus only offer partial ‘truths’, an incomplete and partial picture.

The government has recently established the Commission for Peace and Reconciliation in June 2001 and continues its strategy of encouraging UNITA troops to desert Savimbi. The credibility of claims by both sides to be interested in peace and reconciliation remains badly damaged, however, particularly in this continuing climate of ‘spoils politics’ (Allen, 1999). In August 2000, a report of the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping focused on how local parties sign peace accords for a variety of reasons ‘not all of them favourable to peace’. This report focuses on ‘spoilers’, that is groups (including signatories) who can renge on accords, have independent income sources to buy guns, enrich the leadership and pay soldiers and ‘may even have the motive for war’ (UN, 2000b). In this context, Savimbi’s eligibility to stand in any future election seems extremely problematic. Contested by political parties predominantly from Luanda (some of which have merged to form stronger
opposition parties following the MPLA’s indication that there will be an election), there must be questions about the extent to which its results would be honoured throughout the country? Can the people of Angola be asked to believe that Savimbi and UNITA present a coherent political ideology which might offer something different from institutionalised criminality and corruption? What would be the implications for various material interests if a political settlement were reached and how would other interests be expressed if electoral democracy were to be realised?

One key area here is the oil industry which, although by nature capital intensive and providing only limited employment, has provided an increasing amount of the revenues used to service Angola’s estimated external debt of almost $11 billion (largely incurred by arms purchases). Angola may eventually supply more than 20 per cent of all US oil imports through Exxon, Mobil and Chevron – hence the shift of international support to the MPLA from UNITA.

The interconnections between petro-capitalism and Angolan debt and development are varied but one common thread concerns the diversion of crucial resources from oil revenues in favour of arms purchases and militarisation. Human Rights Watch have documented some of the complex international transfers of arms and small weapons which have linked Angola to a web of international criminality and corruption (Human Rights Watch, 1999). This work and some of the specific research HRW have conducted on landmines in Angola and Mozambique highlights the destructive character of this war, resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties and inflicting permanent physical disabilities on many Angolans. HRW have also looked at the complex international space of weapons flows to and from Angola in the 1980s and 1990’s and have shown how ‘international prohibitions on arms supplies to Angola were neither conditional nor enforced’ (Ibid.:1). The map of international arms transfers they construct centres on Russia, China and the USA but also includes Portugal, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Poland, South Africa, Slovakia, Ukraine, India, Israel and Kazakhstan. One of the largest standing armies in Africa has been equipped throughout this period with new tanks, armoured personnel carriers, multiple rocket launchers, surface-to-air missiles and howitzers – often bought with borrowed money, using future oil production as collateral.

Throughout the 1990’s, sanctions on arms transfers to Angola were being broken from all directions and the sense of frustration has been widespread: ‘[h]ow can allowing weapons to flow into Angola help secure peace? Angola needs reconstruction, not more weapons’ (Ibid.:4). Attempts to effectively estimate arms expenditure within the national budget in Angola have only ever told half the story, with sometimes less than half the actual amount being recorded. To further compound the shortcomings of the international community in forcing a reduction in arms expenditures by both sides and in enforcing international law, very few if any individuals have been prosecuted for violating arms embargoes in Africa (Cilliers, 2000:355). The recent UN conference on Small Arms Transfers in July 2001 was also problematically focused on a poorly defined notion of ‘illicit’ arms, without addressing state responsibility for weapons proliferation and offering only a ‘program of inaction’ (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

The war has allowed the government and UNITA also to extract premium payments on commodities sold to the garimpeiros (diamond diggers) of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul, themselves hostage to ‘mafia-like protection rackets’ run by the FAA, UNITA and local warlords (see De Boeck, this issue). This, too, is an aspect of the conflict which has been misrepresented and misunderstood by many commentators. The breadth and reach of these informal economic networks and their interconnections with war
make it essential that they become an important part of the calculations surrounding peace efforts. This not least because, as Reno (2000) argues, the *cumulonimbus*, the informal economy in Angola, involves many Angolan women (as producers) for whom exchanges between rural communities and urban markets have been severely disrupted by the war. This so-called ‘illicit’ economy is clearly not central to the patrimonial networks it serves (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Humanitarian aid has found its way onto these circuits, too, whilst many goods ‘disappear’ in a port like Luanda. As Messiant (2001:293) puts it:

The most important cases of embezzlement of public money and international aid, of plundering from banks and public enterprises and of systemic theft of goods at the port and airport in recent years, all remain crimes officially unsolved. The evidence suggests that such misdeeds must enjoy at the very least a degree of complicity in senior ranks of the civilian bureaucracy, the police or the army... The result of this is a generalized system of theft at the lower levels of society and of corruption (known as gazoza), of illegality and violence, aggravated by the impunity enjoyed by the government’s security forces ...

Many goods are imported illegally from the DRC, particularly since the implosion of Mobutu’s Zaire in 1997. Without military force to back up the 1993 arms embargo, the two-way flow of diamonds and arms between Angola and Zaire is ‘impossible to stop’ (Human Rights Watch, 1999:10). Similarly, the networks that supply UNITA with the commodities for war, including food, fuel, arms, ammunition, training, proviant, tyres, clothing and medical supplies, involve civilian ‘entrepreneurs’ and political and military officials at various levels in almost every country of the region and sometimes beyond (Potgieter, 2000). Morocco, for example, trained several hundred UNITA officers in logistics and communications in 1998 (Human Rights Watch, 1999). A complex chain of military resources and commodities for UNITA’s war effort therefore extends across the map of Southern and Central Africa and beyond. Entebbe airport in Uganda, South Africa’s Gateway International Airport or the N’Djili airport in Kinshasa have been important trafficking hubs in the movement of military equipment to UNITA. Weapons destined for UNITA sometimes have been transported also by rail from Dar es Salaam to Kisumu on Lake Tanganyika, from where they were ferried by boat to Kalemie in Zaire and from there by plane to UNITA forces in Angola (Human Rights Watch, 1999). A large part of the western Zambian economy, in particular, has become closely integrated into UNITA’s regional sources of support. There are now significant numbers of Zambians who derive a living from the Angolan war and who are (like so many others in the region) dependent on its continuation.

Without access to diamonds and having lost many of its external patrons, many have assumed that UNITA would not be able to continue its military campaign. Yet, UNITA’s involvement in other forms of ‘illicit’ trade across the region will make it difficult to apply pressure successfully on its diamond income. Moreover, it is worth recalling that much of UNITA’s arms and ammunition and war materiel has historically come from enemy seizures (Potgieter, 2000). Effective regional policing and capacity-building with regard to air traffic control and intelligence capabilities are also needed (Cilliers, 2000) – and are receiving increasing priority from SADC. Current systems for controlling arms brokers and shipping agents are diverse and inadequate, compounded further by the lack of international agreements and treaties and their inconsistent or non-existent application. SADC also needs to develop a more coherent role, particularly the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security which has delayed the development of agreed structures for conflict prevention and resolution.
Conclusion: A Geopolitics of Angolan Development

We are now moving into uncharted territory. The comfortable beliefs of the past no longer apply. Aid agencies have to learn to adapt (Duffield, 1994:97).

Each time Angolan mineral revenues are frittered away on extravagant arms purchases it is not difficult to see the case for efficient and transparent governance. It is much more difficult, however, to see how this can be operationalised in the Angolan context, particularly when there has not always been simultaneous and sustained pressure on UNITA and the Angolan government. The UN estimates that there are some 3.7 million people displaced by war in Angola today but nobody knows with any certainty just how many have suffered in this way or have suffered physical disabilities since the beginning of the wars in the early 1960’s. Few of these people can expect any assistance from their government in the short-term. Too many international humanitarian and development organisations fail to adequately comprehend the nature of the Angolan state, its geopolitics or its contestation by rebels and this has had serious consequences both for the prolongation of the war and for the reproduction of the (corrupt) state. Assis Malaquias (this issue) argues that ‘[e]vidence of the criminal nature of Angola’s political economy is irrefutable, abundant and mounting’ and that nonetheless NGO’s in particular have ‘unwittingly propped up the kleptocratic state’. The result of all this is to place the country’s poor in a dangerous and precarious position:

Angolans are caught between a criminal state that has impoverished and battered the people in whose name it claims to govern and a criminal insurgency that has an equal disregard for the people in whose name it claims to fight (Malaquias, this volume).

There is some talk of the ‘key’ role of Savimbi or the US (Wright, 1997) in determining the likely success of any further efforts at targeted economic sanctions. Four decades of conflict would seem to suggest, however, that there is no ‘key’ to this particular conflict. A far wider degree of national and international participation and cooperation is necessary if a lasting political settlement is to be reached. One measure of the difficulty of this task was the long list of recommendations in Angola Unravels, the Human Rights Watch report of 1999 which was aimed at a variety of countries and organisations. These included the Angolan government, UNITA, the ‘observing Troika’ (Portugal, Russia, the US), the UN Committee of Friends of Angola (China, Coté D’Ivoire, France, Gabon, Russia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, UK, US and Zimbabwe), the United Nations, the OAU, SADC, the EU, other members of the international community, and international oil and diamond dealers.

Much further critical research on Angola’s political economy is needed to understand the complexity of these international networks and to document their implications for Angolan society. As Robson (2001:6) puts it ‘there has been little research about Angolan society at the community level, either in the colonial or post-colonial periods’. Little research has been conducted, for example, on how Angolan disability organisations struggle for recognition of their political and economic rights in Angolan society and little is known about the experience of physical disability in Angolan society (historically or geographically). Angolans can and must participate directly in this research and its goal must be the emancipation of Angolan society. Pacheco (2001) argues that the easiest way of quantifying the social injuries inflicted by Angola’s different wars is ‘to chart the waves of people who have been forced to abandon their homes, communities and regions’. This process, he suggests, began in the colonial era when the colonial administration relocated communities under its psycho-social action programme (Power, 2001). There have also been ‘terrible
psychological scars on much of the population, who have experienced intense personal trauma, and seen their families, communities and customs unmade by violence and poverty’ (2002, forthcoming). This kind of individual and communal suffering is much less easy to quantify, though it is clear that the level of urban impoverishment has escalated considerably during the war (Simon, this issue).

Preparing this issue of ROAPE for publication has been a challenging but nonetheless rewarding process, bringing together colleagues in a variety of countries. One of the major difficulties has been in gaining access to Angolan narratives of conflict and development, in making regular contact with Angolan colleagues and researchers. In the context of the poor coverage of Angola by African studies research, this issue attempts to bridge some gaps in the literature and build some bridges with Angolan writers and researchers. This journal welcomes contributions from Angolan colleagues and we encourage future submissions on neglected research themes relating to Angola. The current issue identifies a number of emerging research agendas that deserve further attention. First, many of the contributions focus on the ‘business of war’, on the role of private sector institutions in the prolongation of conflict. Additionally, many of the papers also examine the extent to which the MPLA has understood the business world and sought to find its place within it. With respect to territories held by UNITA, much remains unknown, including their social organisation and their links with wider (shadowy) regional economies. Many questions are also posed here about the nature and conception of ‘development’ in the Angolan context, in a climate of corruption and criminality and the violent struggle over the means of accumulation. The traumatisation, displacement, disablement and disenfranchisement of many Angolans must not be forgotten. How are different civil society groups beginning to press for change and to what extent have they been co-opted? Both sides in the war have imported significant volumes of weapons in the past whilst claiming to be brokering peace, just (of course) as an ‘insurance policy’. Before peace can become a serious prospect, such strategies must end and the fraudulent motives underwriting it exposed and condemned.

**Sumário:** Paz, Geopolítica e a economia da guerra em Angola

Em 2001 parece quase uma convenção para começar uma discussão de Angola anotando a tragédia de como este país. Algumas das contribuições a esta introdução de ROAPE fazem também um número de observações sobre como o conflito em Angola foi causas (simples) atribuídas, os únicos fatores explanatórios que esclarecem de algum modo o conflito e sua continuação. O relacionamento entre a abundância do recurso natural e a guerra que fêz o conflito angolano ‘self-sustaining’ frequentemente foi confundida e entendida mal e não é sem seus próprios problemas nos termos de avançar uma compreensão do passado complexo do país. É importante não obscurecer as origens geográficas, históricas, sociológicas e cultural importantes da guerra nem de sua importância continuada. A geografia política do conflito angolano foi deturpada ou negligenciada completamente, apesar das várias maneiras em que se esforça para a potência, privilegio e a autoridade em Angola foi ligada à potência territorial do estado e de sua autoridade.

A realidade entretanto é que a geografia da participação internacional na economia da guerra de Angola foi complexa e dinâmica. Qualquer estabelecimento político em Angola requererá claramente repensando as iniciativas do desenvolvimento se um objetivo à guerra dever ser mais do que uma pausa provisória no conflito. Angola foi transformado de um estado do imparto, não para a democracia multipartidário mas para um estado que fosse reconhecido internacional mas não necessariamente executando muitas das funções ordinárias de um
estado. Este estado tem uma orientação e um interesse extremamente limitados para seus próprios povos que dão prioridade preferencialmente ao lucro.

A riqueza mineral não arruina um país. O que a lata é a distribuição social desigual desta riqueza e de seu roubo pelos elites políticas que tem por muito tempo desde que perdido a direita à conversa do libertação e do ‘desenvolvimento’. Os instituições financeiros internacionais vêm as guerra angolana como se não eram nenhum diferente do que muitas outras guerras civis em África que o corrupção é integral aos sistemas políticos. Aqui é o ‘greed’ ou a queixa que explicam tudo ao lado das causas econômicas muito vagas que são dadas para a continuação da guerra em um país como Angola. O risco o mais grande a Angola vem das burocracias financeiras internacionais como o Banco Mundial e o FMI que não apreciam a natureza de relações sociais e do espaço angolano, procurando preferencialmente a transparência deslocam a atenção afastado em outro. O Banco Mundial, o FMI e o conselho da segurança podem também significativamente determinar o sucesso de todas as iniciativas do futuro regional/internacional para a paz em Angola. O papel destas organizações em Angola necessitam repensando radical. Longe de desaminar a corrupção, o privatização articula realmente com técnicas ilegais que estão no uso comum. Assim muitas representações da geopolítica de Angola assim oferecem somente verdades parciais, um retrato incompleto. Demasiado muito as organizações internacionais do humanitário e do desenvolvimento não compreendem adequadamente a natureza de esforços políticos e económicos sobre o controle do estado angolano e de seu geopolítica que esta teve implicações reais para a continuação da guerra e para a reprodução (corrupta e criminoso) do estado.

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