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Modernity and colonization in an African megacity: the case of Luanda

Ana Vaz Milheiro

Introduction

The Republic of Angola has an area of 1,246,700 sq. km and an estimated population of 28,728,193 in 2018, of which roughly one-third live in the province of Luanda. The history of the city places its foundation in 1575, with the second arrival of the Portuguese explorer Paulo Dias de Novais (ca. 1510-89) to the territory. Novais was also the Governor of Angola who was responsible for establishing the country's capital in the city, then known as São Paulo de Loanda, as opposed to on the island of Luanda, which was the first choice but was abandoned as it did not present the geo-morphological conditions considered ideal by Portuguese town planners at the time. The settlement of the city that was begun in the 16th century benefited from several unique qualities: an exceptional natural port and a bay protected by the aforementioned island. The São Miguel hill (originally given the name of São Paulo hill) constituted a natural barrier to the southeast, guaranteeing protection from the Savannah and possible attacks from indigenous peoples. The dichotomy of the low-lying city/high city, which was used to describe Portuguese-generated human settlements ever since Portuguese architecture set out to define its own identity in the sphere of international historiography (Alves Costa, 1994; Rossa, 2002), found in the morphology of Luanda the ideal context for its application. Angola achieved independence on 11 November 1975, at the end of the liberation war that began 14 years earlier and after four centuries of Portuguese occupation. During this brief period, the modernization of the territory leveraged by the late colonial economy was to have a profound impact on the modern-day urban landscape.

In contrast to the rest of Angola, modern-day Luanda is a densely populated area, where approximately 7,976,907 inhabitants are distributed unevenly over an area of roughly 18,826 sq. km. The population of the city itself is calculated to be some three million. Ambundus, Congos and Ovimbundos are the ethnic groups that make up most of the social fabric of Luanda, which also includes Europeans – the majority of which are Portuguese – and, more recently, Chinese, a direct result of multiple cooperation programmes between the State of Angola and the People's Republic of China. These have increased in particular since the signing of the Strategic Partnership of 2010, which has had a considerable impact in terms of public works and the creation of infrastructures. Also in 2010, Luanda was one of the host cities (in addition to Cabinda, Benguela and Lubango) of the Africa Cup of Nations, the most important football tournament on the African continent; that was manifestly a reflection of Angola's new geopolitical standing in Africa.

Up until 2014, in line with other economic sectors, the construction sector, which relied predominantly on foreign capital and focused preferably on urbanized regions or on the recovery of the large-scale infrastructure projects (transport networks, power generation

and the intensive exploitation of raw materials, i.e. continuing many colonial policies), benefited from the economic growth of the country, which was a direct result of the high prices paid for a barrel of oil up until the crisis of that year. From 2014 onwards there was a slow-down in the Angolan economy with a generalized increase in unemployment across all sectors and significant decreases in the country's annual GDP. Even though oil was very much at the epicentre of the recession, the mono-productive nature of the Angolan economy was not abandoned¹. Nevertheless, the recession highlighted social inequalities and had a negative effect on public and private investment; generally speaking, it had a multiplicative effect on the poverty levels which continue to ravage parts of the urban population.

If one considers the three essential factors that make up the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index launched by UNO in 2015 – health, education and living conditions – then one-half of the Angolan population lives in poverty². The figure for urban areas is as high as 30%. In the quantitative context described above, the challenges the Angolan capital faces are not so different from those of other African cities that were founded in colonial times, underwent troubled decolonization processes and suffered long and destructive civil wars³.

This chapter⁴ describes and contextualizes some of the dysfunctionalities Luanda suffers from, through analysis of case studies and focusing on infrastructure inherited from the colonial period, while taking into consideration the consequences of urban segregation that persist today and presenting a number of current strategies. Modernity and colonization are, in this context, inseparable, and their inter-relationship is something that is confirmed by post-colonial historiography, even if this chapter does not delve further into the arguments presented by authors such as Gillen and Ghosh (Gillen and Ghosh, 2007).

[Figure 36.1 here]

Caption figure: Luanda, 2019. Photo: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2019 [Credits: Coast to Coast – Late Portuguese Infrastructural Development in Continental Africa (Angola and Mozambique): Critical and Historical Analysis and Postcolonial Assessment PTDC/ATP-AQI/0742/2014 (PI – A.V. Milheiro)].

The dominant urban and residential typologies in the province of Luanda

The urban complexity of the province of Luanda is directly linked to the politico-administrative division of the province, defining the borders between the various municipalities and having an impact on the management of the territory and town planning strategies. Law no. 18/16 of 17 October 2016 defined the number of municipalities in the province as nine – Belas, Cacuaca, Cazenga, Icolo and Bengo, Kilamba Kiaxi, Luanda, Quiçama, Talatona, and Viana. This administrative structure has already gone through different configurations since independence and is extremely volatile and subject to constant alteration. Each municipality presents distinct urban structures, a direct consequence of its contemporary occupation, governmental land management policies, investment carried out during the growth years and their colonial past. Nevertheless, one can identify four typologies (Carreira, 2017, p. 9) that generically define the urbanized

territory and the range of housing types in the province and are present in almost all the municipalities in Luanda Province.

Musseques

The greater part of the population lives in informal neighbourhoods known locally since colonial times as *musseques* (Amaral, 1968). Their hallmarks are: self-built housing, very precarious sanitary and infrastructural conditions, weak public transport coverage and limited access to public facilities or recreational spaces. In 2010 the population living in such areas was estimated at 80% of the population of Luanda (Viegas, 2015, p. 3) – the same figure as that recorded in the final phase of colonialism. Contemporary terminology defines these neighbourhoods as “self-built peri-urban areas”, recognizing, in their origins, the principles established by Henri Lefebvre (1901-91) in 1968 in his arguments for the right to the city (Idem), which largely replaced discussion on the “right to the ground” and transposed the principles to more all-embracing ideas, such as “community.” However, the *musseques* are not a reality that is exclusive to the periphery but coexist with the formal city of colonial origins. Attacks on the conquests of the poorer communities that live in the *musseques* and analogous areas gained international visibility thanks to the dispute over the Chicala zone, based on its real estate value, a consequence of the neighbourhood’s privileged location next to downtown Luanda and bordering on the city’s seafront road⁵.

[Figure 36.2 here]

Figure caption: Luanda seen from the Prenda district: coexistence of the formal city with the *musseques*, two parallel realities inherited from the colonial period. Photo: Isabel Guerra, 2014 [Credits: " LLM - Homes for the biggest number: Lisbon, Luanda, Macao" PTDC/ ATP-AQI/3707/2012 (PI – A.V. Milheiro)]

Historic urban nuclei of colonial origins

A second faction of the population lives in the old historic and colonial urban nuclei. These are the residential areas with the greatest morphological and cultural, social and economic diversity. Many of these neighbourhoods have now reached breaking point. Despite years of economic growth, most of the buildings have not undergone any maintenance or conservation works since independence and are now in an advanced state of disrepair, not only in terms of the construction itself but also in terms of the sanitary and urban infrastructures. Their dilapidated state is a reflection of the lack of basic sanitation, precarious supply of power and potable water and wastewater treatment, constituting a constraint on the lifestyles of their residents (Guerra, 2018)⁶. The lack of investment can be partially explained by the fact that a significant share of the built heritage that has survived since the colonial period, particularly that which can be considered as belonging to the late Modern Movement (1945-74), was only recently accepted by the population as an integral and fundamental part of the country’s history, thus guaranteeing support for the maintenance costs. Academic studies on late colonial architecture and town planning have contributed to this new development, carried out by Angolan researchers from both higher education institutions such as the Agostinho Neto University (for example, Martins, 2000) and public departments involved in urban planning and management, such as IPGUL (the Luanda Institute of Planning and Urban Management) (Correia, 2018)⁷. Campaigns such as *Reviver Luanda* [Relive Luanda], a movement aimed at conserving the historic heritage of

the city, which was launched in 2010⁸, have likewise helped to create awareness amongst the population for the built heritage. Paradoxically, recognition for the campaign was also boosted by the demolition of the former Kinaxixe municipal market⁹ in 2008.

Gated communities

Finally, a small percentage of the population lives in communities made up of single-family homes that gradually established themselves on the periphery of urbanized areas, constituting impenetrable and walled neighbourhoods. These are occupied by the better-off classes and by groups of ex-pats working for large corporations. As the face of “neoliberal Luanda” (Viegas, 2015), which took off in 1992 thanks to the landowning reforms that enabled the entry of private investors into the real estate sector, these gated communities are financed by diverse enterprises and companies linked to construction as a means of meeting the demand for residential neighbourhoods inspired by the US American suburban models. The South Luanda Programme (Luanda Sul), also known as the Self-Financed Infrastructure Programme for South Luanda, was first established in 1996 (Idem, p. 91) and was to be the main driver of this type of land occupation. The most paradigmatic cases were first implemented in the municipality of Talatona (Idem, p. 192 ff.), whereby they actually constituted the transposition of Brazilian models (designed by Brazilian specialists and encompassing identical building, functional and aesthetic programmes), and replicated examples already built in the urban regions of the São Paulo metropolitan area. Lower-cost versions for the middle classes and civil servants were encouraged in the form of cooperatives belonging to the provincial governments. The gated communities, irrespective of their configuration, today represent the most segregated facet of Luanda’s urbanized territory.

New centralities

More recently, between the end of the civil war and 2012, the year of the first direct presidential elections, the Angolan government outlined a number of strategies that included the foundation of new centralities (Guedes, 2018), i.e. autonomous urban settlements consisting of high-rise residential units (towers) located on land belonging to the State, diverse rural zones or low-density zones (Viegas, 2015, p. 198 ff.). These new “satellite cities” serve mostly to fill the housing gaps in the province of Luanda, attracting part of the middle classes (or groups with a median income) that also have difficulties finding dignified housing. Those that already exist, and here one can highlight in particular the city of Kilamba, inaugurated in 2011, are slowly beginning to provide primary health care and education services to the population (Guedes, 2018). Most of them are located more than 30 km from the centre of Luanda and do not yet benefit from an effective road network that would allow for the consolidation of public transport routes to guarantee the daily commute to work for the residents or their rapid access to central medical or higher education facilities. Consequently, dependence on the automobile and the insufficient road infrastructure, which itself depends very much on pre-existing roads and strategies defined during the colonial period, are aspects that affect mobility and accessibility during working hours, resulting in long hours stuck in traffic, increased pollution and a dysfunctional urban landscape.

The situation described above represents in essence what is today the residential and urbanized fabric of Luanda, even if it is a simplification of a much more complex reality that coexists between frontier territories and new typologies built on land that has recently become vacant, be it as a result of the demolition of old colonial structures or removal of the *musseques*. Reflection on the production of “tropical” architecture, i.e. architecture designed in line with the climate, has re-emerged, opening up of a front of reconciliation with the built heritage of the colonial period, where such principles have a strong built legacy. In terms of the urban layout, however, the segregation that dictated the social organization of the colonial space, left profound marks on the lifestyles, a direct consequence of the modernization of the city, which still subsist from the preceding models. But some “urban utopias” that were outlined during the colonial period have influenced the contemporary way of thinking that seeks to find ways of attenuating the city’s breaking points. Modernization in the service of colonization thus offers a two-fold reading.

Modernization and colonization

In 1963 Fernão Lopes Simões de Carvalho, an architect who was born in Luanda 34 years earlier into a family of white European settlers who had settled in Luanda some time before, manifested his futuristic vision for the city. Angola was then governed by a colonial regime that was to last for more than another decade, in defiance of international guidelines that unconditionally favoured independence for the new African and Asian countries. Portugal, the colonial power, was one of the few European countries where a fascist-inspired dictatorship had survived the end of World War II practically unscathed. The Portuguese government, of a state known as the *Estado Novo* [New State] since the constitution was changed in 1933, continued, well into the 1960s, to be led by António Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), the regime’s main founder and ideologist. Two years before Simões de Carvalho was to put his vision on show, the liberation war began in Angola, which came to be known to the Portuguese as the Overseas War. It was fought at the same time in what is now Guinea-Bissau and, from 1964 onwards, in Mozambique. The war was to bring important legislative incentives in the area of territorial infrastructuring, and principally in the context of the housing promoted by the State and by private entities as part of the stimulus for European and urban settlement. It was thus at a key moment in Portuguese colonialism, when it had become imperious to change the state of things and, above all, to tend to the welfare of the “indigenous” (the terminology used by the Portuguese colonial bureaucracy to designate the African populations) that Simões de Carvalho was to develop a new urban strategy for Luanda.

In his strategy, Simões de Carvalho described a city which, in a not-so-distant future, some 20 years later, in the 1980s, was, in his version, to be made up of neighbourhood units, i.e. neighbourhoods of 3,000 to 10,000 residents equipped with creches, kindergartens, primary schools, health centres, cinemas, a church (Catholicism was part of the “civilizing” doctrine of Portuguese colonialism and had had a presence in the city ever since the Jesuits arrived in the 1580s), shops and handicraft studios (as a means of encouraging “indigenous” economic activities), and tree-covered recreational and sports spaces (Carvalho, 1963, p. 27-29).

These new Neighbourhood Units were to be strategically located along the roads that linked the old original nucleus around the port and the bay – the Luanda downtown area – to the new suburbs where industrialization was beginning to take over former rural areas, resulting in the modernization of the Luanda cityscape. Radial growth (in the form of a half-ring) (Milheiro *et al*, 2015) revealed the various phases of expansion of the urbanized area as land was won from the surrounding Savannah. The new neighbourhoods idealized by Simões de Carvalho – for example, the famous Neighbourhood Unit no. 1 in the Prenda district (1961-63, in partnership with Luiz Taquelim da Cruz) – were already approaching the environs of the international airport that had been extended the decade before (Barata; Veres, 1952). Ordinance survey maps of Luanda City in the 1950s show just how fast urbanization was advancing, which, in terms of colonial planning, meant the presence of European settler populations, given that the *musseque* was not represented on official maps. The effects of the new migratory policies of the Portuguese government were progressively felt. These were to be reflected in the following decade in significant demographic growth, with the white population going from 14.6% of the total population in 1950 (of a universe of 141,647 residents) to almost one-quarter of Luanda residents (out of a total of 224,540 inhabitants) (Amaral, 1968; Viegas, 2015, p. 61-65). This population was encouraged by the colonial government to invest in the local economy as a form of achieving the indefinite occupation of the territory of Angola. The words of Simões de Carvalho himself also reflected Angola's future continuance as a colony. However, some alterations to the bureaucratic and administrative paradigm of the city – particularly in the transformation of the racially segregated character of his new neighbourhoods – were to be profoundly questioned by his urban designs.

[Figure 36.3 here]

Figure caption: Overlapping of the location map for Luanda Airport before 1952 and the new neighbourhoods of the Master Plan drawn up by the Town Planning Department at Luanda City Council (ca. 1962-66)¹⁰ and identification of the main road axes from pre-independence days. [Credits: F. Fiuza and A. V. Milheiro, “Coast to Coast – Late Portuguese Infrastructural Development in Continental Africa (Angola and Mozambique): Critical and Historical Analysis and Postcolonial Assessment” PTDC/ATP-AQI/0742/2014 (PI – A.V. Milheiro)].

In line with Simões de Carvalho's humble origins, he lived as a child in the *musseque*, a place historically associated with African groups only (Amaral, 1968)¹¹. The presence of poor settler families, although they were few and far between, was a reality in Luanda's *musseques* (Idem), anticipating at the time the housing complexities and scarcities which the city was already experiencing and which also placed a question mark over the social cohesion desired by the colonial authorities. At the time, the geographer Ilídio do Amaral (1926-2017) identified a need to build on average one thousand dwellings per year if one was to fill the gap identified in the official reports (Amaral, 1968, p. 117). This goal was impossible in terms of the financial possibilities of the colonial administration, which also goes some way to explaining the accelerated proliferation of the *musseques*.

The personal experience of Simões de Carvalho of life in the *musseque* was to mark his future urbanistic discourse. The coexistence with the everyday problems inherent in the life

of these informal neighbourhoods, to whose proliferation the Portuguese government turned a blind eye, led him to imagine a society in which the public space could be the embryo for the coming together of Europeans and Africans, a situation he was well aware was far from being the case in the early 1960s. He was convinced that school facilities were the main trump card for the future cultural and racial miscegenation of the city, as they contributed to the construction of a new social order. What Simões de Carvalho presented was a personal reading of the theses he had heard at the Institut d'Urbanisme in Paris, where he had studied with the disciples of Robert Auzelle between 1956 and 1959, whilst also completing an internship in the service of André Wogenscky (1916-2004) (Milheiro, 2012).

Whilst the mixing of the various racial groups was the result of new sociological conditions, which were in the hands of social scientists and colonial bureaucracy, an architect had the responsibility of integrating the various functional components of the modern city that would create the suitable conditions for said racial mixing. Following his own argumentation for the Prenda district, and despite the constraints imposed by the private developers who built and sold the residential units, Simões de Carvalho conceived an urban structure that was based on the sociological make-up of the existing city, bringing it into line with the sociological theses of the day: residential towers for singles and European families with no children, housing blocks for average and large-sized European families and single-family homes for African families.

The initial proposal of a mixture of one-third Europeans to two-thirds Africans was eventually to be subverted, of course; nevertheless, the original spirit was maintained. The dwellings for Africans were to be constructed as self-builds based on residential typologies Simões de Carvalho was developing at the time, as seen in the particular case of the Bairro dos Pescadores in Ilha de Luanda (in partnership with José Pinto da Cunha, 1964-65). That development has since disappeared, but it constituted a laboratory for experimentation in the context of the residential programmes Simões de Carvalho designed for the local communities. Possibly owing to the resistance on the part of the authorities to implement his strategies, or a consequence of the independence which prevented completion of the Prenda district project, the colonial “utopia” was not to be realized. Luanda thus remained a segregated city, and despite the efforts of specialists such as Simões de Carvalho to change the mentalities of the colonial decision-makers, the reality as given was not transformed structurally by the end of the colonial period.

Even though his plans were thwarted, it is worthwhile taking a look at the urban world Simões de Carvalho conceived in the short period of time he spent as the head of the Urbanization Department at Luanda City Council (1962-66). His plans included measures for diminishing the high density in the centre of Luanda (based on the idea that the urban fabric would be unable to support high levels of automobile traffic and parking) and his stances against the marginalization or complete demolition of the *musseques*, arguing in favour of the already consolidated “urbanization” (Nóbrega, 1969). By wanting the planning instruments to remain in the hands of the State, with private entities being responsible for execution of his plans, he maintained control over what he considered to be a “sustainable” development for Luanda. Many urban plans and strategies developed post-independence were based on these ideas, even if his Urbanization Plan for the city was

never approved. The longevity of his vision can be explained in part by the impact he had amongst generations of Angolans who were born in the final years of the colonial period and studied architecture after independence. They saw in Simões de Carvalho a trailblazer in matters of the idealization of a city that is more united and technically sustainable because it is adapted to the available resources, climate, geography, sociology and history.

In this new century invitations to lectures in Luanda, academic studies of his work, organized visits to his atelier in Linda-a-Velha (Portugal) have ensured sufficient dissemination of his theses, as well as contemporary reflection on the proposals he made and supported, often to the detriment of the achievements of other equally important urbanists from the colonial period. Post-colonial visions on the role of modernization and the modern city in the colonization effort have looked at this process in an exclusively critical way, tending towards diminishing the role of modernity in the construction of a better urban existence (Domingos; Peralta, 2013). The world of Simões de Carvalho was already changing and if the political regime was unsustainable, ideas for a more balanced city and territory were certainly at the roots of his thought (Fonte, 2012; Correia, 2018; Guedes, 2018, p. 140).

Musseques and new centralities

In addition to the Prenda district, other neighbourhoods planned by Simões de Carvalho's team in the 1960s were progressively built by private developers in the colonial period. However, none of them achieved the same degree of completion (20 collective housing buildings built out of 28 planned, and at least three schools of different levels. Cf. Milheiro *et al*, 2015, p. 215). Many are today only visible thanks to the presence of blocks or towers of more modern configuration in the middle of *musseques*¹². The capacity of the *musseque* to occupy all the voids in the formal city, absorbing the latter and turning it into an almost archaeological artefact is one of the most dynamic phenomena in cities such as Luanda. The pioneering work of Brazilian architects in observing similar phenomena have changed the perspective these structures provide of the contemporary city (see Carlos Nelson Ferreira dos Santos, 1943-89), even if it is true that, politically, resistance to the inclusion thereof in the open debate on the future of the city persists.

Even in the colonial period, geographers and social scientists warned that it was impossible for the State to stop the multiplication of such informal land occupation (Amaral, 1968; Rendinha, 1973), which often led to the denial thereof (in official documents) or to it being downplayed and rendered “invisible” in the formal cityscape. The Prenda district, for example, coexisted since its construction began with the Prenda *musseque*, without the latter ever disappearing as an entity or its nature being altered. And Simões de Carvalho himself, as seen above, defended the Luanda *musseques* from random destruction by the colonial State, recognizing certain qualities in them but also acting pragmatically, given the level of coverage they had reached even before independence. On the eve of the first presidential elections, the Angolan government used the existence of the *musseque*, which stood out from the formal cityscape, as an argument for accelerating the transformation of the city and introducing urban expansion models based on liberalization of the economy (Viegas, 2015, ref. to Presidential Decree no. 59/11 of 1 April 2011 – *Integrated Urban*

Expansion and Infrastructure Plans for Luanda and Bengo). If, on the one hand, one recognized the existence of the *musseque*, on the other, one rejected the possibility of attributing to it an urban role, generally opting for abolition of the *musseque*, an objective which, based on the immediate lessons that one could draw from the colonial period, would be destined for failure. The political decision in favour of the new centralities, which was to prevail at the end of the first decade of this century, ended up diverting attention away from the central role of the *musseque* in any debate on the future. The *musseques* thus remain on the margin of more official reflection and receive a treatment that does not differ much from that given them by the colonial authorities.

The concept behind the new centralities can easily be interpreted as more or less based on the famed (and amply “utopian”) “satellite cities” which recurrently dominated urban visions in the colonial projects that emerged in the period before the end of World War II; examples of this are the plan by urbanists Étienne de Groër (1882-1952) and David Moreira da Silva (1909-2002) of 1943. Moreover, the new centralities of Viana and Cacuaco were launched during the colonial period, a testament to the persistence of a modern imaginary in post-independence urbanism. Furthermore, analyses of their evolution were to have an impact on the new centralities created after 2012 (Guedes, 2018, p. 143)¹³. And, it must be said that seeking a relationship between the new centralities and the proposals that were based on colonial urban expansion models, while tempting from the historiographic perspective, deviates from the purpose with which said models were conceived. Without autonomy in terms of job creation and landmark facilities, these “cities” remain dormitories, leading to an increase in problems already mentioned herein, such as mobility-related issues. Paradoxically, these issues have gained in visibility progressively as the cities were built, even in direct comparison to their colonial counterparts which, owing to the speculative nature with which they were generally programmed, were free of necessarily having to be concretely realized.

The establishment of the new centralities followed several measures defined by the previous Angolan government, with José Eduardo dos Santos (born 1942)¹⁴ as its president. The measures were first introduced with the launch of the National Urbanism and Housing Programme (PNUH) in 2008 that was aimed at achieving, within four years, the goal of one million new dwellings for low and medium-income families in the whole country (Melo; Viegas, 2015, p. 130-131; Guedes, 2018, p. 138 ff.). In 2009, the programme was renamed “My Dream, My House”, replicating a programme that was implemented on the other side of the Atlantic, “My House, My Life”, thus confirming the strong hegemony of Brazilian models in recent Angolan thinking. This was clearly a “post-colonial” assertion and a way of coming up with alternatives to the Eurocentric solutions of the late colonial period. The difficulties in implementing the plan – which are described by Sílvia Leiria Viegas in his doctoral thesis (Viegas, 2015) – immediately began with the amounts of money involved (which, in 2011, were as high as one-half of the Angolan GDP, estimated at USD 84.2 billion, *Idem*, p. 112 ff.) and with the scale of the infrastructures required (the construction of 30,000,000 hectares of land with roads, drainage works, electric, power supply facilities, drinking water, basic sanitation and telecommunications, *Idem*). The involvement of foreign capital – mostly Chinese – in the form of investment funds, led to an increase in the internal and external criticism many of these undertakings met with,

particularly the high-profile case of the city of Kilamba¹⁵, which was also criticized for its lack of diversity in terms of the social fabric of its target population (Melo; Viegas, 2015). The negative assessments also extended to the non-existence of up-to-date studies on the lack of housing in the province at the time, and in the specific case of Kilamba, to the lack of topographic surveys of the site and detailed drawings of the residential typologies and architecture of the new buildings, and the non-critical adoption of Chinese building regulations that frequently contradicted Angolan laws (Viegas, 2015, p. 270 ff.). Suspicions that the design of the development had previously been presented to the Venezuelan government of Hugo Chávez by the same Chinese group gave more credence to the critical voices (Idem, p. 275).

[Figure 36.4 here]

Caption figure: Kilamba City, 2015. Photo: A.V. Milheiro [Credits: “LLM - Homes for the biggest number: Lisbon, Luanda, Macao” PTDC/ATP-AQI/3707/2012 (PI – A.V. Milheiro)].

Nevertheless, by 2015 some 710 residential buildings, 246 shops, 24 kindergartens, nine primary schools and eight secondary schools, a hospital plus 12 health centres and several sports parks had been built (Guedes, 2018, p. 141), a testament to Chinese efficiency in terms of execution at the immediate level, which was probably one of the reasons that had led the Angolan government to choose the group as a partner. As a means of placating the opposition to the development, the National Reconstruction Office, which was responsible for providing technical support to the Chinese design teams, carried out a number of study visits – not only to recently erected projects but also to historical buildings erected during the colonial period. These visits were aimed at convincing foreign professionals to adopt technical and aesthetic configurations more in line with Angolan urban culture, including in this concept, somewhat innovatively, the colonial architectural heritage (Guedes, 2018, p. 143-144). Whilst the *musseques* were removed and rejected, late colonial architecture was used for the public legitimization of these new urban places which were still seen as products that were exogenous to the reality of the country, their acceptance depending on the renewal of the narratives around the modern environment inherited from the pre-independence period. And whilst the *musseques* continued to exist in the modern parts of the former colonial city, filling in the voids, the new centralities seemed to represent a parallel reality from which the *musseques* had been totally obliterated.

Conclusion

In 2015, a sociological and architectural survey of the current residents of the Prenda district¹⁶ that aimed specifically at those living in the blocks and towers and leaving out the *musseques* residents presented an overview of the vulnerabilities experienced today in these neighbourhoods of colonial origins. The neighbourhood's centrality in relation to the historic city centre, and its iconographic configuration (based on the repetition of architectural elements and the Brutalist aesthetic, which was easily recognizable in the cityscape), were seen as factors of enhancement and identity. Aspects such as neighbourhood security, with only 30% of residents feeling safer there than in other areas of

the city (Guerra, 2018, p. 101), or the education level of the residents, with 38.7% saying they currently attend higher education or have an academic degree, in a country where such figures are extremely low (Idem, p. 97), have helped to create a profile of the population that continues to live in the colonial urban fabric. The typologies of the apartments, initially designed by Simões de Carvalho, José Pinto da Cunha and Fernando Alfredo Pereira for European and “assimilated” population, were also fully appropriated by the current residents, the majority of which have lived there since 1980 (Guerra, 2018, p. 97).

The conversion of all the void spaces in the common areas of the buildings to spaces that added residential comfort (including entrance foyers and lift shafts) helped the researchers involved in the study to understand the pivotal issue of the lack of housing in the everyday life of Luanda. However, the desire revealed by approximately 79.1% of the residents to move, once they reached retirement age, to one of the new centralities promoted by the Angola government, was also a further aspect identified in the survey. This showed how these new nuclei are being assimilated into the contemporary way of thinking and also helps one understand the web of relationships that are now beginning to be established between urbanities that are, on the face of it, so dissimilar. The precarious state of the infrastructures is also revealed as being unsustainable and encouraging the desire to move. In the interviews, relationships of strong dependence and proximity with the *musseque* that occupies the ground level of the Prenda district were also identified. These revealed, for example, networks of economic activities that generated a proliferation of relationships between landlords and tenants amongst the formal and self-built structures.

The dynamics of the formal city/*musseque* relationship could thus not only be analysed through observation of the urban morphology but could become linked to the faces and bodies of the residents. Life stories in Luanda are a direct result of modernization and colonization in the implementation of formally clear projects and in the segregation to which the local populations were relegated and the most vulnerable were moved to the margins of this formal city. The Prenda district is a test tube for contemporary Luanda, its complexities and contradictions and its balances and vulnerabilities. Based on its current configuration, one can define more appropriate parameters for the “type” of megacity Luanda is becoming.

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¹ Regardless of the drop in the price for a barrel of oil, the estimates for 2018 indicate that this raw material still accounts for 95% of Angolan exports.

² See “INE lança consulta pública sobre pobreza multidimensional em Angola”, PNUD, 20/03/2019. Accessed on 5/10/2019. www.ao.undp.org > Página inicial > Imprensa

³ Which, in the case of Angola, lasted from 1975 to 2002, with brief interruptions, and resulting in massive displacements of people (Viegas, 2015, p. 86).

⁴ This chapter was written as part of the IIAS research group entitled “Re-Theorizing Housing as Architecture Research” (2019-2020) and the research projects “Coast to Coast – Late Portuguese Infrastructural Development in Continental Africa (Angola and Mozambique): Critical and Historical Analysis and Postcolonial Assessment” PTDC/ATP-AQI/0742/2014, and “Middle Class Mass Housing in Europe, Africa and Asia” PTDC/ART-DAQ/30594/2017, both funded by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (PI – A.V. Milheiro).

⁵ The architect Paulo Moreira has been one of the researchers who has best documented the life of this community and the story of its imminent disappearance in events in various forms, including the exhibition “Tanto Mar” [So much Ocean] (Centro Cultural de Lisboa, 2014). You can also access the website of the Observatório da Chicala: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=10&ved=2ahUKewig7cTSyonLAhVEZlAKHbmRDCAQFjAJegQIAxAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fthisispacifica.com%2Fportfolio%2Fobservatorio-da-chicala%2F&usq=AOvVaw1KVOQjRVlyK3o2OndsEJX7>

⁶ Now and again there is news of some renovation and intervention projects carried out by different Angolan Public Works departments (Correia, 2017), even if with limited practical outcomes.

⁷ In terms of the international academic community, one should highlight the attention the issue has received from Portuguese researchers since the 1990s (see Fernandes, 2002; Magalhães; Gonçalves, 2009; Fonte, 2012; Milheiro, 2012; Rodrigues, 2014; Tostões, 2014, Magalhães, 2015, amongst others).

⁸ Comarmond, Cecile (2010). *Luanda, virada para o futuro negligencia o seu passado* (01/10/2010), Buala. Accessed on 5/10/2019.

⁹ Kinaxixe municipal market (1950-58) was considered by contemporary authors to be the first major work of the Modern Movement built in Luanda. The architect was Vasco Vieira da Costa (1911-82). The building was demolished in August 2008 to make way for a private development. Its disappearance was to contribute to greater awareness amongst the population for the colonial heritage and its contemporary significance.

¹⁰ Legend (colonial toponymy): 2 – Prenda *musseque* – Neighbourhood Unit no. 1 (by Simões de Carvalho and Luiz Taquelim); 3 – Prenda *musseque* – Neighbourhood Unit no. 3 by Simões de Carvalho and Domingues da Silva?); 4 – Urbanistic redevelopment of zone between Avenida de Lisboa, Rua Norton de Matos and Rua António Barroso; 5 – Urbanistic redevelopment of section of Rua Mousinho de Albuquerque and Rua Conselheiro Aires de Ornelas; 6 – Burity *musseque*; 7 – Neighbourhood Unit, located between the restricted industrial zone, São Paulo Hospital, Avenida do Brasil and Rua Senado da Câmara (by Fernando Pereira); 8 – Neighbourhood Unit no. 26, to the south of Bairro Berman; 9 – “Rangel” Neighbourhood Unit (by Fernando Pereira); 10 – Revision of urbanistic layout of neighbourhood to the south of C.U.C.A.; 11 – Neighbourhood Unit no. 9 in Rua Francisco Newton; 13 – Extension of Cazenga neighbourhood (by Simões de Carvalho and Fernando Pereira); 14 – Rehousing Unit no.1.

¹¹ Not only with the local groups but those living in the diaspora, too. As was the case for the Cape Verdean communities living in Luanda, for example (Amaral, 1968).

¹² Recognition of the existence of the plans, according to a survey carried out by A.V. Milheiro and F. Fiúza in Luanda in 2014 as part of the project LLM - Homes for the biggest number: Lisbon, Luanda, Macao" PTDC/ATP-AQI/3707/2012 (PI – A.V. Milheiro).

¹³ In particular, in Luanda province the Via Expressa 2010 express road between Belas and Cacucaco, which was built on the layout of the former colonial Estrada da Cerca, was to constitute the main axis for the new developments, thus confirming the already mentioned continuity arguments.

¹⁴ José Eduardo dos Santos was the African politician to remain in office the longest after independence of their country. He succeeded Agostinho Neto (1922-79) in 1979 and left office in 2017, when he was succeeded by the current president, João Lourenço (born 1954).

¹⁵ China International Fund (CIF) was involved in the urbanistic and architectural projects for Kilamba. The design projects were presented in outline only, not giving the Angolan technical team which accompanied the works – the Specialized Urbanization Group – much scope for contributions (Viegas, 2015, p. 272). Construction was carried out by CITIC - Construction Co., a subsidiary of the Chinese state investment company CITIC Group, formerly known as China International Trust and Investment Corporation (Viegas, 2015, p. 277).

¹⁶ The survey was conducted by a multidisciplinary team of architects and sociologists coordinated by the sociologist Isabel Guerra as part of the project LLM - Homes for the biggest number: Lisbon, Luanda, Macao" PTDC/ATP-AQI/3707/2012 (PI – A.V. Milheiro).