

What Effects From Peace in Reducing Poverty? A perspective from empirical records collected in the cities of Huambo and Luanda

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Abstract

Based on narratives made by Angolans living in the cities of Huambo and Luanda, the present article, anchored fundamentally on the assembled empirical records, searches for clues pointing to an answer (even if provisory) to the question posed in the title. Has peace in the Angolan context endorsed substantial progression in the reduction of poverty? This article explores, from the perspective of the interviewed individuals, several analytical axis: some consequences of the military conflict constituting impoverishment factors; benefits produced by war; self-attribution from the actors about their living conditions (how they position themselves in regard to their situation/condition of poverty and in relation to others) and respective expectations about the future. The article is the outcome of an investigation produced for the research project 'Poverty and Peace in the PALOP, focused on the connections between poverty and war/peace in these countries and the manner this relation is perceived by the social actors.

Introduction

Successive decades of military conflict have caused in Angola not only substantial losses of material (equipments, infrastructures, housing) and human capital, but have also caused effects, which have joined to generally achieve a reduction in the welfare of Angolans: compulsory displacements, insecurity, alimentary insecurity, bad nutrition, serious difficulties in accessing healthcare and education, these are some of the consensually recognized consequences. These poverty factors are added by constraints resulting from the volatility, precariousness and rising in negative circumstances connected to the possibilities of productive occupation and opportunities for producing income.

The occurrence of peace, since April 2002, has changed significantly the balance of factors in this equation.

The purpose of this approach is to determine its context and identify, from empirical records, which dimensions and features the end of the military conflict has had repercussions over the living conditions of the population that, at the present time, performs income-producing activities in the cities of Huambo and Luanda. The suggested methodological proposal is a thematic analysis based on the narratives of operational actors, obtained in the course of a field research, performing in this selected informal economy. It is relevant to sustain a comparative dimension between the information recorded in these two Angolan urban centres (Luanda and Huambo), distinctively affected by the armed conflict and by the peace accords. For the record, it

will be also relevant that, due to its aim and nature, the followed stance does not fall deliberately into a reflective approach of conceptual questions¹.

Methodological approach

The chosen methodology is founded in the exploration of synergies resulting from the combination of documental analysis and the elaboration of empirical records, obtained by means of qualitative techniques (interviews with actors and expert informants) during a field research produced in July/August 008.

The scarce statistical records available were assembled by the UNDP, on behalf of the Provincial Government of Luanda and Huambo and the Ministry of Planning.

The fieldwork produced between July 30th and August 5th 2008 in the city of Huambo has permitted listening to ten individuals, whose characteristics are resumed as followed: eight men and two women, from which eight come from Huambo Province, one from Bié Province and one from Uíge Province; concerning their occupation, seven interviewees are traders, two are motor-taxi drivers and one is a housekeeper; the traders work in *Alemanha* market, the largest marketplace in town with essentially informal features; only one interviewee – the housekeeper – works as a waged worker, all the other interviewed individuals are labouring as freelancers. All the interviewees work in an informal manner.

The fieldwork conducted in the city of Luanda, between August 6th and August 16th 2008, has put us in contact with 25 individuals, whose characteristics are resumed as followed: 18 men and seven women, mostly coming from Luanda Province (6), Malange Province (5) and Uíge Province (5), being too represented in the sample the provinces of Kwanza Norte, Kwanza Sul and Lunda Norte (two individuals each), Huambo, Benguela, Moxico and Huíla (one individual each); in terms of occupation, fourteen of the interviewees are traders, four work as security guards in private companies, three are *doleiros* (negotiators in the business of buying and selling currency), one driver for a private educational institution, one refrigeration technician, one ambulant street seller (*zungueiro*) and one housekeeper; 13 of the 14 traders perform their activities in the Roque Santeiro, Gamek and Cazenga markets in an essentially informal manner; six of the interviewed – the housekeeper, the driver and the security guards – carry out their activities as waged workers, from all the remaining individuals 17 are freelancers and one is an entrepreneur. Most of the interviewed individuals (21) work in an informal manner, since only four individuals have an activity of formal character (three of the security guards and the driver).

¹ Poverty is understood to be, in this document, a situation of deprivation resulting from insufficient resources (Bruto da Costa et al, 2008), deprivation from welfare manifesting in the several dimensions influencing each other mutually, and that can be measured by individual access to income, nutrition, health, education, resources, housing and to a certain set of rights in a context of socialization (World Bank, 2001.). Informal economy (OIT, 200X) is understood to be the “continuum” that contemplates all economic activities produced by manpower and by economic units not covered – either by legislation or by practice – under official regulation which would define, control and discipline them; they are excluded from their field of activity, illicit, and criminal (narcotics and weaponry trafficking, contraband, etc...)

Context

I – The political and institutional environment that framed the evolution of the Angolan economy since the independence in 1975 has gone through five distinctive stages until the present day: 1) *the transitional period into a centralized economy*, between 1975 and 1977, during which were constructed different mechanism of state control and the administration of the economy (nationalizations, foundation of monopolistic state enterprises in all different sectors of economic activity, etc.) was centralized; 2) *period of economic centralization and governmental regulation of the economic system*, which lasted from 1977 until 1987; 3) *embryonic period of transition to a market economy*, positioned between the approval of the SEF –Economic and Financial Sanitation Program in 1987 and the ratification of the Constitution of 1992, by way of a progressive liberalization of economic activities, extinction of some state-owned monopolies, dismantlement of some mechanism of governmental control over the economic activity, restricted process of privatization aimed to allocate a concentration of resources in the hands of the political, military and administrative elites; 4) period between 1992 and the end of the armed conflict in 2002, marked by a *conditioned continuity* of the transition process to a market economy, with irregular expansion and reliability of the economic measures applied, attributable to the reciprocal influence of numerous factors, among which we underline the submission of economic policies to the demands of warfare, inconsistency and incoherence of the adopted programs of economic policy, maintenance of a mechanism of regulation for the productive activity and segmentation of resources of administrative and clientelist nature in several economic sectors and segments, an extensive economic crisis and macroeconomic instability; 5) *macroeconomic stabilization period during peacetime*, going from 2002 until the present day, broadly characterized by an international conjuncture mostly favourable to the Angolan economy, due to a tendency of continual growth of the oil prices, by a nonetheless slow rehabilitation of the economic and productive infrastructures destroyed during the military conflict, and by a relative accomplishment in the policies of macroeconomic stabilization. This complex and rough path of transformations been followed in the last 30 years has had repercussions on the extension, nature and qualities of the informal economy in Angola, as well as on its respective evolution, to which the capital of the country represents a mandatory observatory.

II – Overall, it is possible to identify five major stages in the process of evolution of the informal economy in Angola: 1) before the independence, the informal activities had a strictly subsidiary role in regards to the formal economy, dominant, structuring and equipped with the necessary mechanisms of control and regulation. The informal economy was restricted to traditional handcrafted activities, services sector – namely domestic labour – ambulant trading, doorway trading, to markets in the *musseques* (slums) and activities related to the construction and accommodation of autochthon populations residing in the peripheral areas; 2) the growth course started in the years 77/78 lead the informal activities – *esquemas, candonga* – to spread quickly into different sectors of the economic activity and to the distinctive dimensions of intervention of the social Angolan actors, in the socializing context of a administratively regulated centralized economy; 3) the dismantlement of most mechanisms presented in the economic centralism throughout the process of transition to a market economy (1987-1991) has permitted a transition from parallel activities to informal activities, but has not produced any substantial modifications to the dynamics of fast growth in the Angolan informal sector, which has been increasing at a swift rate, although some

sectors such as transportation, urban markets and currency exchange have become structured and complex; 4) between 1992 and 2002 was registered a generalized increase in informal activities and behaviours, which have found a safe ground for development in the ambiguity and impreciseness of a process of liberalization and transition towards a market economy that coexisted within the framing and administrative or monopolist logics in some sectors of activity, a process emblematically represented by a vast succession of economic restructuring programs that never came to a conclusion and, in some cases, weren't even implemented; 5) after 2002, with the occurrence of peace and the adoption of macroeconomic stabilization policies, particularly in currency exchange and the internal sectors, in a framework of conjectural evolution extremely favourable to oil prices in the international market, was noticed a significant retraction of some segments of the informal economy (exchange dealers, marker traders).

This process of accelerated growth of the Angolan informal economy has been a result of the conjoint action of several factors: a) a prolonged and intense migratory flux toward the provincial capitals and to the nation's capital, as consequence of the long-term armed conflict; b) the results of distortions generated by a centralized state system of economic organization, making possible a relative profusion of instruments, mechanisms and circumstances prone to consent to the appropriation of earnings; c) rising incapacity of the formal sector, both public and private, in providing formal employment; d) progressive disarticulation of salaries as main sources of subsistence for families; e) progressive decline in the availability of products and public services provided by the State, whose main concerns are to allocate resources to the warfare, comply to the minimum compromises stipulated by credit institutions in regards to the external debt, and satisfy specific interests of possession of the empowered socio-political groups and their respective support networks; f) adoption of macroeconomic policies, objectively producing mechanisms for the appropriation of wealth and resources by the socio-political groups in power (artificially inflated exchange rates, recurrent devaluation of salaries in Public Service, etc.).

While there are not definite records about the extension of the informal economy in Angola, the relatively scarce surveys available seem to agree about the socioeconomic relevance of the informal activities. A report made by the UNDP (1999) draws an outline of the evolution of the Angolan economy in 1998, highlighting the importance of the informal sector as an alternative source of employment and estimating its contribution to the non-oil based GNP (gross national product) to be around 20 to 30%. A study by the UNDP (2000) about the Policies for Reduction of Poverty declares that in Luanda 41% of the population aged between 15 and 60 years old is involved in some sort of informal activity. The results gathered by the survey on Expenditure and Income of Family Units (INE, 2000) brought to the conclusion that a proportionate group of individuals have primary activities of informal nature corresponding to 62.8% of the economically active population (PEA), although geographically this proportion may vary between 52% and 80.2%. Recently, F. Schneider (2005) estimated the participation of the informal economy to the official Angolan GNP as approximately 45.2%, slightly inferior to the established average of this index in Austral Africa (45.5%), from the surveys carried out in a gathering of nine countries.

III – The official statistic records about poverty in Angola are insufficient and usually unreliable. Feliciano et al. (2008: 84) demonstrates, based on the available figures, that in 2001 68% of the Angolan population could be living in conditions of absolute poverty, while 26% would live in a situation of extreme poverty.

This outlook is plummeted by an increase of inequalities, demonstrated in the rising concentration of incomes in the petroleum sector and inside the city of Luanda, and in a Gini coefficient of 0.64 in 2005 (BAD/OCDE, 2008: 115). The country's capital contains roughly one quarter of the total population (over 4 million residents) and holds 75% of industry, 65% of commerce and 90% of banking and financial activities. The economic development is until now focused on the petroleum and diamond extraction sectors (the GNP from agriculture and manufacturing does not represent more than 12-15% of the total GNP), which correlated to declining employment and income opportunities does not contribute to the reduction of poverty and, to be more precise, extreme urban poverty. Unemployment rates remain high and large segments of the population are kept in a condition of either poverty or extreme poverty. In this setting, the informal market comes up as a resourceful segment to the survival of the urban pauper, particularly those implicated in informal small retail businesses (Pestana, N., 2008).

Some of the most recent analysis suggests that the combined effects of peace and the high levels of economic development registered between 2004 and 2007 have had a positive impact in reducing poverty. The rise of employment, as a result of augmented levels of both public and private investments, linked to the program of national reconstruction, the absorption of migrant labour force and some reactivation in the agricultural activity would have permitted an improvement to the living conditions of Angolans (BAD/OCDE; 2008: 115). This conviction is shared by the vice-minister of Planning, Carlos Alberto Lopes, according to whom "(...) poverty in Angola has diminished 12% between 2001 and 2007, going from 68% down to 56% (...)", adding that among the advances recorded in the last few years turns up the relocation of over four million people since the end of the conflict, an increment in student population of 75%, and the rise of the national minimum salary which has almost doubled since 2003, going from 4.014 Kwanzas (little over 50 Dollars) to 8.067 Kwanzas (approximately 120 Dollars) (*Africa21*, June 2008). In the opposite track, the British Secretary of State for Africa, Asia and United Nations, Mark Malloch-Brown has said in the inauguration of the 10th Forum Angola at Chatham House (April 2009), that "the high levels of wealth produced by the oil industry have not yet translated in gains for the poorest".

Angola has an estimated population of 18.5 million inhabitants, of those around 12.5 million are poor because they live on an income of roughly 1.7 Dollars per day, in a situation of diminished basic services, low social indexes and fragile system of rights. In this country, poverty is related to the structural vulnerability of families, to diseases and inadequate access to basic services (Pestana, N., 2008). The social circumstances in the country may be similarly illustrated by its human development indexes (HDI), in terms of basic infrastructures, employment offers, healthcare and nutrition, education, characteristics of family units, urbanization and citizenship rights, in positions of reduced access to basic services and underprovided conduct by the part of the welfare state (Pestana, N. 2008).

Even though there is in action a strategic plan to reduce poverty, drafted in 2004 and denominated Strategy of Combat against Poverty (ECP – *Estratégia de Combate à Pobreza*), whose main guidelines concern to social reintegration, demining, alimentary safety, rural development, fight against HIV/AIDS, education, health and basic infrastructures, and was the source for a plan of development in middle-long term, it is disclosed that, its influence over recent public policies, in the period between 2005-2009, has been very feeble. Some of the fundamental goals of the ECP (according to the ODM) were to reduce by half of the impoverished population and to decrease the child

mortality rate. It must be remembered that the ECP listed the following causes for poverty in Angola:

1. Armed conflict that caused, for almost three decades, dislocation of populations, destruction of traditional systems of economic activities and social solidarity, damages in social infrastructures and communication routes and unfeasible distribution of products and other essential supplies, originating dramatic humanitarian disasters;
2. Strong demographic pressure, resulting from a very high rate of fecundity, high rates of dependence on family units and massive migratory movements toward urban centres;
3. Destruction and degradation of social and economic infrastructures as a direct consequence of war, but also as an immediate consequence of deficient maintenance and conservation and deregulated systems of organization and supervision of public investment assets;
4. Fragile functionality of services providing education, healthcare and social protection, as the result of insufficient technical and human resources, avoiding an appropriate use of these systems and services by the most vulnerable populations;
5. A very accentuated fall in internal availability of important products, particularly essential goods;
6. Debility of the institutional frame, explained by a low average qualification of administrative and skilled workers and reduced productivity;
7. Lack of qualifications and depreciation of human resources, caused by the disadvantages and damages done to the educational and instructive systems, instability in sanitary conditions, low salaries and extensive unemployment and underemployment;
8. Inefficiency of macroeconomic policies in correcting strong macroeconomic unbalances occurred during the 1990s.

IV – Both cities where the research took place have characteristics reflecting their distinctive evolution. The city of Huambo is the provincial capital of the Huambo District, which is then organized in 11 municipalities and 37 communes. The city of Huambo is integrated in the main municipality, integrating the Communes of Huambo, Calima and Chipipa. The provincial population may have increased, from 1.055.380 residents in the year 2000 to more recent figures of 2.301.524 (GPH, 2005) and 2.336.734 (GPH, 2006). The available records show a population of 962.111 (GPH, 2005) and 1.055.380 (GPH, 2006) in the Huambo Municipality, while the Huambo Commune would contain 950.369 residents (GPH, 2006). In April 2006, the Municipal Administration of the Huambo Commune talked about 1.242.614 residents in its judicial region, to which were added 54.539 residents in the Calima Commune and 35.001 in the Chipipa Commune, totalling 1.332.154 residents in the Huambo Municipality. The city of Huambo has recorded a strong demographic growth together with urban spread, as a result of combined effects from natural growth, rural exodus and enforced relocations due to the conflict. The commercial activity in this city is at a stage of reactivation and rehabilitation, while the formal commercial activity controlled by a few corporative groups dedicated to wholesale commerce (Arosfram, Angoalissar, Comalca, Golfrate, the final two are owned by Indian and Lebanese entrepreneurs), the retail business made

in stores isn't substantial enough yet, comparing to the trade happening in markets. A significant part of the commercial activities and business services (barbershops, hairdressers, repair shops, locksmith shops, tailors, shoe shops, photographic studios, etc.) have an informal nature.

Luanda is the economic and administrative capital of the country and core of the main political, financial, social and entrepreneurial institutions. In the year 2000, the capital's population was approximately 2.534.800 residents (KPMG/Ministry of Planning, 2003). The existent records consensually deduce this population growth to be accountable not only to vegetative growth (natural increase), as well to strong contributions from immigration (regular and war-induced). Luanda congregates 19.3% of the urban population of Angola (KMPG/Ministry of Planning, 2003) and its demographic rate has been followed by an extensive non-premeditated occupation of space. The commercial activity, for its business extension and volume, plays a crucial role in the economic background of the city, acting as a platform of provisions for the economic agents in provincial regions. Wholesale, semi-wholesale, retail and micro-retail trade are entwined in a commercial and services network, where the modern structures face competition from traditional institutions, namely from markets and fairs. The informal component, both in commercial activities as in business services, comes out in Luanda at its maximum exponent in the Angolan background.

Some notes about the general impact of the military conflict in the cities of Huambo and Luanda

Concerning the city of Huambo, if the first confrontations in August 1975, during the transition period towards the independence, had caused limited damages and, in the brief period of reconciliation lived through 91 and 92 in the aftermath of the Bicesse peace accords gave time to make some rehabilitations in the city, the return to war after Unita's non-acceptance of the results from the elections in October 1992 has caused devastating consequences. After 55 days of extensive attacks, Unita took over the city in March 1993, situation replicated in November 1994 when the Government regained control of the city, from which resulted in further obvious scars of massive destruction in one of the youngest Angolan cities.

Concerning the effects created by the long-lasting war over the productive infrastructures and economic activities in the city of Huambo, the most significant are the following: generalized insecurity for the economic agents, whether in rural or urban areas; severe limitations to free circulation of merchandise and people; widespread destruction of manufacturing infrastructures (factories, roads and rail networks, bridges, etc.) and social infrastructures (schools, hospitals, etc.); paralysation of transportation/distribution circuits; stagnation of agricultural, mining and industrial production rates; broad difficulties regarding the availability of essential merchandises.

The prolonged military conflict has caused more than forced displacements², has also affected indirectly the characteristics of the exposed populations, specifically increasing the cases of poor nutrition and situations of dependence on humanitarian alimentary aid and, as a result, increasing the mortality rates, the quantity of malformations and

² Oppenheimer, Raposo and Carvalho (2001) observe what may be considered, in Angola, two large waves of war refugees, one before and another after the multiparty elections of 1992. The authors mention an assessment by the Angolan government of about four million refugees in 2000.

mutilations³, the number of orphaned children and situations of widowhood. To these can be adjoined a few other consequences, particularly noticeable in the city of Huambo: accelerated expansion of informal housing areas and alterations in the geographic profile of the city; enlarged dimensions in family units and increase in the number of families headed by women; modifications in the attributes of urban inhabitants and economically active populations, explicitly in age segmentation, gender, ethnic origins, patterns of educational and professional skills, customs and way of living; significant changes in employment projections; reduction of work opportunities from companies in the formal sector and, in particular, from the public sector; increase in unemployment and sub-employment rates; reduction in governmental ability of delivering basic goods and services, such as education, healthcare, potable water, electricity and basic sanitation; additional obstructions to industrial production, mostly related to electricity, water and raw materials supplies; retraction of manufacturing capacity in the formal sector (public and private) and reduction of its relative importance on consumer satisfaction; increase in the socio-economic significance of informal activities as the population's labour source, in generating income and producing products and services; general increase in poverty rates.

Focusing on Luanda, the most significant impact of the armed conflict has substantiated in the massive flux of war refugees entering the Angolan capital, with noticeable consequences on the urban housing planning, since these accommodations have expanded in the vicinity of the city in a disorganized manner. The acceleration and continuity of these migratory fluxes has led to an accelerated population growth, a significant addition to population density rates, besides a substantial rise in the population within active age excluded from any possible formal occupation. The prolonged conflict has ultimately affected different levels of the economic activities developed in the city. The corporative groups located in Huambo perform a similar task as happens in the capital, where the formal commercial activity has some diversity, being carried on at hypermarkets and other large commercial establishments, at medium and small stores and at tiny retail spaces. Business conducted in markets counts as an important fraction of the global commercial fluxes that supply the city and just like happens in Huambo, there are strong or even stronger components of informal nature in the commercial sector, either in wholesale trading, in retail trading or commercial services.

Perception of the actors about the effects of the military conflict and peace

Impact of war

The impact of the armed conflict is mentioned throughout the accounts made by the informants as the originator of multiple causes of impoverishment: physical and psychological deprivation, death and disappearance of relatives, loss of family members, forced displacements, school abandonment, constrained circulation and restricted access to several services and products, and change of income resources. Among the gathered information were selected four accounts, two by informants residing in Huambo and two by informants residing in Luanda, that exemplify some of the impoverishment factors mentioned below:

³ An official statement by the Government of the Republic of Angola, dated March 13th 2002, quantifies the outcomes of war: 4 million displaced refugees, 100,000 mutilated, 50,000 war orphaned children and 150,000 ex-combatants and demobilized soldiers.

E., vendor in the *Alemanha* market, shares a spot with many other fellow landsmen where they trade batteries and generator parts, most of it bought from warehouses and markets in Luanda. He is a twenty five year old married man with one child who attended the 11th grade in school, has experienced the effects of war (first in Chinguar, Bié Province, having been forced to flee with his family to the city of Huambo) and afterwards the 55-day war that shattered this town: "... in the war of fifty five days had much hunger, much suffering... I lost siblings and other relatives... the city was very ruined, nothing like it is today, this beautiful..."

H., a 30 year old single men with three children, from the Chivela quarter in the outskirts of the *Alemanha* market, where he sells motorbikes, and has abandoned school in the 6th grade "... because of the war". In a rather contradictory manner, he declares to have a diversified commercial activity (lady's shoes, tape recorders, cattle) that would entail regular trips to Luanda, Benguela, Namibia and Lundas in high-risk conditions: "... during the war it became really hard... I couldn't go to Benguela, Luanda, Namibia... it was hard even to get food... just a little portion of salt was precious... in those times there was no fuel..."

K., 54 years old, comes from Uíge Province and has arrived with his parents and siblings to Luanda, where he has been living for 49 years. He attended the 12th grade, lives in cohabitation and has seven offspring (the oldest is 26 years old while the youngest is 12 and is studying in the 6th grade). They all live in the same house, plus his mother-in-law and sister-in-law. His wife is a teacher, one son works as an engineer for Sonangol and another works for Taag. They all contribute to the family budget. He works as a security manager for a private parking lot. He lives in Prenda neighbourhood. "My life? I have done many things... I was a teacher from 1976 to 1980, was a soldier from 1972 to 1992... I was part of the colonial army... next I was part of the Eplas, after that Fapla... I was demobilized in June 27th 1992, acted as an assistant commissioner for the Rocha Pinto Commune... Now I am retired, I get a monthly pension of 65 thousand AKZ... I went into a real war, with gunshots, war was never a good thing anywhere in the world... from war folks come out mutilated, some deceased, others orphaned... I had many family members who died, after the elections of 1992 my life was at risk... Now the country is at peace, there will be elections and there won't be any troubles... the Angolan people does not wish for more wars..."

L., a 32 year old woman from Canhe, Huambo Province, married with five children. She came to Luanda because of the war, with her Uíge native husband: "... I was in Huambo when the 55-day war started... it was complicated to find food, find firewood... I had to walk a lot to run away from Huambo..." She resides in Golfe 2 quarter and explains the changes in mobility patterns of the Angolans: "... I still have some family left in Huambo... since

the war, it became difficult to get there... the last time I went to Huambo, in 2003, I rode in a taxi and it took almost a full day to travel... nowadays the roads are improving...”.

Causes for the impoverishment induced by the military conflict	Number of references		
	Huambo	Luanda	Total
Physical and psychological deprivation	2/10	2/25	4/35
Death and disappearance of relatives	3/10	5/25	8/35
Separation from family members/forced displacement	3/10	10/25	13/35
School abandonment	1/10	2/25	3/35
Mobility restrictions	3/10	5/25	8/35
Constrained access to some products and services	1/10	4/25	5/35
Change in income resources	3/10	3/25	6/35

The differentiated features of the armed conflict seem to have created distinctive impacts in Huambo and in Luanda: the memories of the destructive outcome of the conflict appear to be more vivid in the accounts made by the residents of Huambo or by those who were active agents in the conflict, ex-combatants demobilized from the war, in the case of Luanda. Concurrently, it happens more in the accounts by older persons, compared to those by younger ones. Effects such as the forced displacements, death and disappearance of relatives, the involuntary separation from family units and restricted mobility, and changes in occupation and income source are the most recurrent references in the accounts of the interviewed individuals, both in Huambo and in Luanda.

Benefits of peace

The benefits of peace are equally obvious in most narratives. The rehabilitation of material assets, retrieving territorial mobility in safe conditions, finding lost family members, and crescent opportunities for business and better access to products and services are the main consequences pointed out by the interviewees. Below are presented three statements, two from Huambo residents and another from Luanda, that embody most of the benefits that peace has brought, from the viewpoint of the social actors.

B. is 30 years old and was born in the Calima municipality, Huambo Province. He is married and has three children, and works as a motor-taxi driver since 2002. Before, he was a farmer and worked in his family land. The military conflict took him to the provincial capital. Six years after the end of the hostilities, B underlines that “... now, there is safety again, and tranquillity...” adding that he got back to his farming activities: “... I have my own *xitaca* (small farm) there in Calima... I go there every week and bring potatoes, beans, produce to consume at home...”

J. is a 22-year-old seller of sneakers in *Alemanha* market (Huambo), is single and lives with his mother and siblings. He attended the 8th grade and at that time he became a vendor in the departed São Pedro market, where he negotiated in face creams and several other merchandises.

He remembers that during wartime travelling used to take much longer, the roads were awful and there were muggings, so it was safer to travel by airplane. Since peacetime "... I can take a trip to Luanda by land... people are living better, there are no problems... they can buy more things..." J considers that his activity earns him enough income to pay for "... the essential expenses". The young vendor has awareness about the wide range of circumstances in the market, remarking the clear stratification in the abilities of earning money: "... I am not poor, but I am not rich either... those who sells motorbikes make more money than I do... the *roboteiros* (carriers) win less than I do... it depends on the business... those who win the most are the wholesalers..."

M. is 24 years old, was born in Luanda but his family is originally from Bié: "... my family escaped the military conflict in 1981". He only speaks Portuguese, is single and has two daughters, lives in Sambizanga, has attended middle school and would like to study computer science. "I sell books and an office material, what I earn is enough to keep my family going (I have two children, one is six and other is three years old)... it is enough to pay for food and healthcare..." About his activity, he says that "...I have been in Roque since I was thirteen... First I started as *zungueiro*, I sold batteries, radio appliances and every bit I thought could give me more profit... I managed to save some money and now I am selling books... and I also do some work repairing computers..." He declares that since he arrived, the market hasn't stopped growing: "... many businesses which did not exist before are done now... since 2002 you can feel people's inner peace... There is more variety of merchandise, before there was no communication between the Provinces... The stress has practically vanished and folks are getting more relaxed..." About the living conditions of the market workers, he assures that "... there are persons who have a harder life, those who sell cookies, popcorns, a lady who spends the whole day with a tub full to brim with popcorn and at the end of the day will only make 500 kzs, ... but there are also those who live way better, like those people selling food, those who trade in sector 12 of the market make a lot of money..."

The connection between the end of the military conflict and the rehabilitation of material assets, regained mobility, better access to basic services and business opportunities comes as a common denominator among the interviewed individuals from Huambo and Luanda. In Luanda, three of the informants referred to the declining latent hostility amid the citizens, besides the internalization and consolidation of peace which make people feel progressively less threatened. The interviews done in Luanda suggest

that for the interviewed individuals, peace is a given, even in the midst of the pre-electoral period.

Benefits of peace	Number of references		
	Huambo	Luanda	Total
Rehabilitation of material assets	3/10	4/25	7/35
Retrieved territorial mobility	4/10	6/25	10/35
Safety	2/10	4/25	6/35
Lesser tension, hostility and stress	1/10	3/25	4/35
Reuniting with family members	1/10	4/25	5/35
Multiple access to goods and services	1/10	4/25	5/35
Multiple business opportunities	1/10	2/25	3/35

However, it should be emphasized the lack of unanimity in the outlook of the interviewed individuals regarding which effects the end of the war has had over Angolan life. Some suggest that nothing has changed. Three of the individuals interviewed in Roque Santeiro market expressed their conviction that, although there were many induced advantages, the end of the conflict was prejudicial as well to businesses performed in marketplaces. This is the instance in the narrative of N., a 32-year-old candies seller from Malanje. The war has brought her to Luanda: "... I came to Luanda on holiday, but then the conflicts started and I did not return home..." She lives in Cazenga and has been working at the Roque Santeiro market for seven years: "... first, I started at the internal retail section and now, for the last three years, I've been selling candies..." G. believes the peace has carried a negative result to the dynamics of the market business: "...Since peacetime, there are more products, but we have fewer clients... They used to be more during the war, because the roads were closed, but then the canteens got organized and now people do most of their shopping in warehouses..."

Perceptions of poverty

The perception of poverty, one's own and of others around us, is presented in narratives of several informants. These individuals were asked to position themselves, in absolute terms, corresponding to different categories (poor, average, rich) and in relative terms, in comparison to their neighbours or other economic agents. Among the collected information were chosen five statements, two by informants from Huambo and three by informants from Luanda, which seemed emblematic and evocative of the inquired sample.

F., a 37-year-old seller of female clothing in the *Alemanha* market (Huambo), has been in this commercial activity for 19 years. She has completed the 4th grade, is married with seven children, discloses that the income provided by her business is enough to cover for her family needs, adding "...there are some folks having a rough time, here at the market... there are persons who have had money and now don't have it anymore, and vice versa...no, I'm not rich (laughter)... there are people selling bedcovers made in Namibia who earn a lot more..."

C., one of the two taxi-drivers interviewed in Huambo, expresses his perception: "... I live a life of poverty... there are paupers who have to find food in the garbage... those selling in the streets have it worse... in the *hiasses* (*hiasse* is the name which Angolan people give to the vehicles involved in minibus taxi industry. Its

origin results from an adaptation of the term Hiace, that corresponds to a Toyota vehicle model) you win more money, but it is still a survival existence...”

O. is a 18 years old attending the 9th grade, lives at the Bairro Operário quarter in Luanda in a catholic family, with his mother, father and four siblings. His father is an automobile mechanic and mother is a doctor: “...I am a refrigeration technician, air conditioning, automobiles... I learned it from master Francisco... if the day goes well, I can earn three thousand, four thousand or five thousand Kwanzas... the earnings depend on how the day goes, in a good day I can end with around 100 Dollars... family life in the last years has been kind of alright... in my neighbourhood there are poor folks, they wash cars, carry merchandise, some sleeping in the streets, living roughly, but there is also some people living better... these are people making more money... I earn more money a day than a hiase driver... if I do some car maintenance, I can win almost 400 Dollars...”

P. is a 23 years old single woman from Luanda, living with her parents and two siblings. Attended school until the 9th grade, but then dropped out “...for I had no conditions”. She has been selling tableware (glasses, bowls, lamps, etc.) at entryways for four years. Before, she used to sell candies in the doorway of her home, in the Bairro Popular neighbourhood, near Cazenga market. She used to be present at Nzinga’s itinerant and 1^o de Maio fairs: “I have a merchant license... my father is a tailor, my mother is a seamstress, everybody does their share... I buy merchandise in the warehouses at São Paulo, Kinaxixe... when I cannot be at my bench, either my mother or my helper cover for me, I pay her minimum wage so I can help her make a living...” P., claims that “business is enough to earn your keep” and that “... live has improved for some, for other has gotten worse, there is people suffering a lot, living very poorly, who don’t get assistance in hospitals... Peace is something good, we got water and energy not so long ago, schools are being reconstructed... some folks are having a much harder time than my family, living modestly, in the dirty quarters and at the Anangola neighbourhood there are a lot of modest folks... those are living from the *zunga*, in houses like slums... but there are some traders too, who go to China, Dubai and Congo, they sell at the markets, even at Roque, and earn piles of money...”.

Q., 60 years old, was born in Gabela municipality, Kuanza Sul Province, and lives at Estrada da Samba. Married with five offspring, the oldest is 43 and the youngest is two, he was one of the earliest residents in the quarter. He has been living in Luanda since 1975, where he arrived when was 15 years old: “... I was working in a lady’s house in Gabela where I got paid 60 Escudos a month... after that, I’ve been always working in the tourism business... I’ve been here in this commercial establishment since 1986.” About his life path, he mentions: “... unfortunately, I only

attended the 7th grade, but I had training in touristic lodging at the tourism school of Bicesse... I assisted in the management of several hotel units, later this governmental corporation closed down..." Talking about the changes induced by peace, he supposes "... things are changing, the infrastructures... healthcare, education and nourishment are still reserved for some... there are still many people living poorly, many people without an occupation in the suburban areas... even those holding a job are paid poorly... my wife works in the Ministry of Geology and Mining and earns 15,000 AKZ (200 Dollars)... there are a lot of people struggling, but there are many people living a good life too... my life is not better nor worse since the peace time, I am the same... comparing to my neighbours, I am poor, the only thing I have is my apartment... I get by, business pays me enough so I manage to feed the children, and in a good day I make 6 to 7 thousand Kwanzas of raw earnings, which is a profit of 1500/2000... I expect things to get better..."

From the narratives of the interviewed individuals, it is concluded that even during peacetime many individuals are living with difficulties. Part of this population considers their personal situation as being the same as it was in the war. Most of the actors perceives and identifies a stratification of activities according to their potentially produced income level.

It is taken into consideration that such stratification is reasonably connected to this sample's characteristics. The interviewed, even those with patrimony or considerable income, never assume to be rich. However, they only rarely assume to be poor either. From the narratives of the informants, it is possible to delineate a pyramid of activities consistent with potential monetary income, having at the bottom activities such as carrying/ hauling merchandise (*robotoiros*), ambulant selling (*zungueiros*), alluring clients or car washing. In the following stage are the activities performed by salaried workers in formal, low wages occupations: teachers, security guards, domestic workers. In a second stage are found small retail sellers in markets of several kinds of merchandise, or sellers of low value products, like second-hand clothing. In a third stage are the activities connected to salaried services of informal nature, such as *hiasse* drivers and motor-taxi drivers, fare collectors, and freelancing activities related to services (masonry, etc.). In the fourth stage is positioned retail selling of alimentary products, clothing and other essential goods. It is followed by retail selling of non-perishable goods, and above stand the proprietors of *hiasse* and motor-taxi vehicles. In the seventh stage, the informants have put the retail sellers of highly profitable products (positioned in the sector 12 of Roque Santeiro market). Finally, on top of the hierarchy are located the market agents dedicated to wholesale and semi-wholesale trading.

From the accounts of the interviewed individuals, it is supposed to have a relation between the conditions of performance for every activity and the perception of poverty, fundamentally anchored on the notion of risk linked to each category placing in the lowest rank of the hierarchy those working as free agents, above them property owners and businessmen, and on top the salaried workers. This relation is demonstrated in the narratives of these actors, both those interviewed in Huambo as those inquired in Luanda.

B., a motor-taxi driver: "... I take home enough to support my family... (But) motor-taxis are a part of the poor list... the poor

have to exist, because everyone has a place... some people are having problems in finding something to eat... Teachers, security guards, they are not on the poor list, since they have a profession and guaranteed income... for the *hiasse* drivers it depends, those who own their vehicles are not on the poor list...”.

The idea of security and income stability as the better options appears once more in the narrative of A., a housekeeper with past experience as street seller at the Cacilhas fair: “... There are many vendors making a good earning, and others who don’t... Life in the fairs is very insecure, you can earn money or not... and there is always those moments when the Government decides to close or relocate the fair...” and in the account of F., lady’s clothing seller in the *Alemanha* market: “... I want to work for a company, for the State, as long as one is being paid, one does the job...”.

R., 27 years old, born in Benguela and living in Luanda since 2008: “... I came to earn my living, where I come from one can not move forward...”. He resides in the Rocha Pinto neighbourhood, sharing quarters with two brothers (24 and 22 years old), and works as an ambulant seller (*zungueiro*) of brooms, buckets and mops. He attended the 6th grade, dropped out of school because he had no means to keep studying. About his business, he reveals that “... I have a spot in Chicala... I get there on foot, there is no money for taxis... it is a long journey, my regular arrival time is 7:30 a.m. and at 8 I am already working, then I leave at 17:30... Business is only enough to survive... I buy my merchandises at the São Paulo warehouses, buy brooms for 280 Kwanzas and sell them for 400 Kwanzas... Yesterday I made 6,000 Kwanzas... it is sufficient to save a bit of money... There are many people doing *zunga*, but the police harasses us once in a while... in the neighbourhood some folks are having it hard, those working in construction say they have more money... but there are people with loads of money in the neighbourhood, traders... in peace time, the entire Angola is changing for changing, the city, the roads, the buildings... on the subject of employment, the opportunities are better here in Luanda... I would like to work for a corporation, with a permanent position, because when you are concerned your place is assured...”.

(Self)Perception of poverty	Number of references		
	Huambo	Luanda	Total
I am not poor nor rich	1/10	3/25	4/35
I make enough to provide for my family	8/10	7/25	15/35
I have a survival existence	2/10	1/25	3/35
There are others living worse and having a hard time	5/10	6/25	11/35
There are others making more money	5/10	8/25	13/35
I am poor	2/10	1/25	3/35
Not poor for having a secured income	2/10	2/25	4/35

Both in Huambo and in Luanda, having the ability to reach larger incomes does not necessarily seem to constitute a protection against the risk of impoverishment. Part of the actors considers that having a job with a secure salary is better than having an occupation that results in a larger but less steady income. Only a few consider

themselves to be objectively poor and none believes to be rich. A considerable contingent of the informants declares making enough money to provide for their families' needs. The perception of others living poorer or richer also is mentioned repeatedly in the speeches of the interviewed individuals.

Trajectories of activities/occupations

The occupational trajectories are much diversified. Three facets emerge as the most conditioning over the occupational paths, whether in Huambo or in Luanda: the destructive effects the military conflict inflicted on the activities/occupations, the age rank and provincial origin of the informants. The elders, the refugees and those labouring in the areas more direct and intensely affected by the armed conflict are those presenting a more diversified occupational trajectory.

C. is a 38 year old motor-taxi driver. He was born in the Bailundo Municipality and moved with his parents to Huambo. He attended school up to the 7th grade and his wife sells fertilizer at the *Alemanha* market. They have five children: "... I arrived here at Huambo in 1978, by then it was war time... my parents took me away from Bailundo when I was young... all my siblings died during the war... because of the war... now, I only have my father, my mother is already deceased... I have two brothers living here in Huambo... I began selling in 1998... Would get products here in Huambo then sell them at the markets in other municipalities, but afterwards I got knocked down when I was attacked by a gang of bandits, we were robbed, they took everything... I was left with nothing... My last resource was to take the bike I had at home and work as motor-taxi... I am in this activity because I have no job... this kind of activity we call "scratch a living"... what is left then is needed to provide for the children..."

S. is a 35-year-old man from Uíge, where he used to buy fish to sell at the border. He studied at the Democratic Republic of Congo. Arrived at Luanda in 1992, he would select products from the province and carry them to the capital: "... I travelled by van... even during the war it had no risk for me, God blessed me, but it was dangerous for other people." His wife trades at a roadside stall. What they earn "...is enough for daily expenses and pay for our kid's tuition." They live in the Gamek quarter, at whose market he has been working for two years. Now he's an exchange dealer and sells mobile phone cards and call credits. In a good working day, he "... makes 45 to 50 Dollars." He does not wish to return to Uíge: "... in the future, I would like to attend an accountancy course... these last years my life improved somewhat... life in Uíge was better... I don't want to go back because of the envy..."

T., 29 years old, was born in Kalandula, Malange Province. He arrived at Luanda in 2000 due to the war. He lives in the Cacucaco municipality, married with four children. The interviewee describes his occupational trajectory as such: "... in Malange I worked the land... when I came to Luanda, I was a security guard for a private company, but got a low wage... then I began working

as freelancer mason, saved some money and in 2003 I started as a *doleiro* (moneychanger) in the Cazenga market (former Asa Branca market)... I also sell phone cards and calls paid by the minute... in a good day, I make one or two thousand Kwanzas... today, I started the day with a thousand Dollars... the business is sufficient to take care of my family...”.

Future Expectations

The expectations about the future are wide-ranging, going from the will to perform a certain profession, alongside expansion in the scale or characteristics of a business, to the pragmatic posture of those whose future perspectives basically entail creating better life conditions to their children and those who rather wait and see. Seven of the interviewed subjects (five from Huambo and two from Luanda) have expressed their expectations toward the future in the following manner:

D., a 33-year-old trader of several sorts of merchandise in the *Alemanha* market, is from Uíge and would like to be “... a teacher... I have a certifications from RDC, but is not officially recognized...”.

G., a 23-year-old single man from the city of Huambo is a second year student at the PUNIV, makes business selling furniture (sofas and chairs) at the *Alemanha* market. His ambition is to “... be a nurse and afterwards attend medical school...”.

J., a 22 year old single man, intends to “... get a certificate in computer science...”, while H., a 33 year old motorbike seller, married in the traditional way (he declares to be a single adult) and father of three children, adds that “... I only want to guarantee the livelihood of my children...”.

A similar aspiration is expressed by E., trader of batteries and electrical generator parts, 25 year old man married to a school teacher and father of one child: “... if I can make more money, it will be to pay for the kid’s school...” he also believes he will one day have the possibility of “... improving my business... have a store just like there are so many in town... have more money to afford more merchandise...”.

About his future expectations, U., an office supplies trader at Roque Santeiro market, tells he would “... like to make sure my children do not have to face what I went through (doing the *zunga* or selling in fairs), I want them to study and get a secure job.... I have been told the market is going to be transferred, which is quite an injustice, many families are counting on Roque, many people who have finished their studies and now cannot find an occupation... If the market is relocated it will be hard on me and many people... I’m not sure if I’ll follow, it is too far, too far away, I’ll have to catch more taxis, there will be fewer customers... it would be better to rehabilitate the marketplace”.

V. is 34-year-old single woman with two children, born in the Kwanza Norte Province and arrived to Luanda in 1999, in result of the war. She had a traditional marriage and lived with her husband for seven years, has separated and now is single and the head of her family. For five

years, she was a vigilant in a childcare establishment, and has been working as a housekeeper for the last year and a half: “... I make less; however, I have more free time... I get paid 200 Dollars with meals included, and if I need to go s a doctor ailment my boss helps me... “. In the future “... I would love to have a steady job as an educator... it is difficult to attain because I don’t have a childcare certification, it takes on year and costs 100 Dollars a month to get one at the MINARS school... if it is God’s will... my dream is my daughter becoming a medical doctor and my son an agronomic engineer...” . She considers that “...peacetime has brought many positive things, free circulation, more safety, but the poverty has not diminished since peace has arrived and some people are living worse... Some people only have one meal a day... *zungueiros*, housekeepers... those living better are the ones with good jobs...”.

Future expectations	Number of references		
	Huambo	Luanda	Total
Perform a determinate profession	5/10	4/25	9/35
(Return to) study	3/10	4/25	7/35
Get formal employment	2/10	4/25	6/35
Increase scale of business	2/10	2/25	4/35
Diversify business	2/10	1/25	3/35
Ensure the children’s future	2/10	3/25	5/35
Ensure the children’s education	3/10	4/25	7/35

To perform a specific profession (teacher, nurse, etc.), to have access to formal employment, to study or resume studies, to guarantee their family’s subsistence and their children’s education, these are the shared expectation to most of interviewed individuals in Huambo and Luanda.

Conclusion

The long-lasting military conflict arises from the narratives of the interviewed social actors from Huambo and Luanda as one of the main determinant factors of poverty in the country. It is frequently mentioned the negative impact this war has produced over the population’s living conditions and freedom by conditioning their circulation and creating migratory flows directed towards urban areas and foreign countries, over the functionality of the markets, over production, transportation, sanitation, water and energy infrastructures, and over health and education systems. The political and military instability resulting from, and associated to war, have introduced elements of perturbation while defining and conducting the economic policy. Since the start, from the options offered in terms of allocation of resources which featured in the so-called “war economy”, to the resultant implications from a governmental centralized system of management for the economy, including the circumstances related to a long and complex process of transition into a market economy. Ineffective and unstable global and sectoral economic policies have contributed to engender and enlarge economic and

social inequalities and to increment the risks, vulnerabilities and instabilities disturbing the *modus vivendi* of most of the population.

The majority of the interviewed individuals have identified several dimensions in the outcome of the armed conflict and peace process in their respective life paths. The interviews exemplify the prolonged process of enforced dislocation various Angolan families experienced in the course of 27 years, one of the causes for explaining the accelerated urbanization of the Angolan environment.

The impact of the military conflict over the occupational trajectories of the interviewees constitutes another explanative element resultant from the collect statements. The gathered information suggests more clues about the features of poverty in the realistic context of the chosen sample: the suburban environments and marginal zones of the cities, in most cases densely populated, seem to be habitats where the poverty conditions/situations are felt in the most severe manner; refugees and ex-soldiers are the most vulnerable groups; low educational levels constitute indicators of vulnerability towards poverty. For the younger crowd the precocious school abandonment, caused by numerous different reasons according to their personal life but nevertheless linked to an undemanding job market, comes up as an additional indicator of vulnerability and exclusion.

The advantages of peace as a priced and treasured asset are manifestly an important reality in the interviews, though it does not mean the informants do not possess a clear awareness that, although war has ended, a significant portion of the Angolan population is yet strangled in conditions of deprivation, along with an immense range of social inequalities.

One of the most interesting facts resulting from the information collected in the chosen sample concerns the apparent reluctance of the actors in positioning themselves socially, either as poor or as rich. To better understand the perceptions of these social actors, who have experienced situations/conditions of poverty, to explore the relationships of direct causality between the military conflict and personal/occupational trajectories of the social actors (namely, the correlation linking military conflict and informality) that experienced situations/conditions of poverty and to obtain additional information on which manner the peace accords have induced significant alterations (positive and negative) in the living conditions of Angolans, these are three possible paths for expanding the research focused on the relation between peace and poverty.

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