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Mozambique and Angola – The weight of history

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This article examines the political developments in Mozambique and Angola, using the analytical framework constructed by Chabal and Daloz in their book Africa Works. *It shows how MPLA and FRELIMO adopted a Marxist-inspired ideology to establish a narrow political elite in power. The text follows the policies pursued by this elite through civil war and the era of the Washington Consensus and shows how it managed to circumvent the conditions which international donors tried to impose. It explains why, after nearly fifty years of independence, Angola and Mozambique remain among the poorest countries in the world while their rulers rank among the richest in Africa.*

Keywords: civil wars, decolonization, Washington Consensus, UNITA, RENAMO, FRELIMO, MPLA, neo-patrimonialism, Chabal, poverty

Moçambique e Angola – O peso da história

Este artigo examina os desenvolvimentos políticos em Moçambique e Angola, utilizando o quadro analítico construído por Chabal e Daloz no seu livro Africa Works. *Mostra como o MPLA e a FRELIMO adotaram uma ideologia de inspiração marxista para estabelecer uma estreita elite política no poder. O texto analisa as políticas seguidas por esta elite durante a guerra civil e a era do Consenso de Washington e mostra como conseguiu contornar as condições que os doadores internacionais tentaram impor. Explica por que razão, após quase cinquenta anos de independência, Angola e Moçambique permanecem entre os países mais pobres do mundo, enquanto os seus governantes estão entre os mais ricos de África.*

Palavras-chave: guerras civis, descolonização, Consenso de Washington, UNITA, RENAMO, FRELIMO, MPLA, neopatrimonialismo, Chabal, pobreza

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In 1999 Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz published *Africa Works.* In this book they looked at the prospects for African countries evolving towards what the West understood as liberal democracy. Having dismissed these hopes as illusory, they then set out to explain how and why politics in Africa – following the expectations and norms of neo-patrimonialism – operated in a wholly different way from politics in the West.

> The desirability of democracy is in principle not to be denied, [but] an assessment of the prospects for greater democracy demands that we approach the task of explaining contemporary African politics from a different analytical angle. (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p. xvi)

Chabal and Daloz questioned whether the international aspirations and projects for African development were in accord with the realities of African political culture. During the relatively short colonial period in Africa which had lasted only from the 1890s to the 1960s there had been a recognition that Africa could not be isolated from what was happening in the rest of the world and an attempt was made to integrate Africa fully into the global economy, based on the cultural assumptions and values of the western liberal, capitalist world. This had largely failed, as the capitalist business model which the colonial powers employed turned out to be purely exploitative, and the last ten years of colonial rule, when government-directed development policies were adopted by all the colonial powers, was far too short to make any long-term impact. Nevertheless, when the African colonies became independent in the 1960s, it was assumed that Africans would attempt to follow the same objective of western-style development and modernisation. This also proved an illusion largely, as Chabal and Daloz pointed out, because the African ruling elites, although they sometimes paid lip service to western values, in fact established regimes based on patrimonialism and rent-seeking, which were more securely rooted in African culture.

The changing world order in the 1990s renewed the objective of aligning Africa with the values and practices of western democratic politics and economics, this time rooted in the ideas and programmes of the Washington Consensus (Washington Consensus). And once again these hopes and expectations proved illusory.

This text will examine the extent to which the story of these two countries matches the analysis offered by Chabal and Daloz. It will reflect on the parallel experiences of Angola and Mozambique since their independence from Portugal in 1975. Although the elites of both countries have, in different ways, tried to break with their colonial past, they have found themselves adopting many of the

ideas and political programmes which had characterised the colonial era. In this way their present is rooted firmly in their recent and not so recent history.

The late colonial period

It is often assumed that, until the end of its colonial rule in Africa in 1975, Portugal did next to nothing to promote the social, economic, and political development of its colonies. This was the narrative that was widely accepted during the nationalist wars of independence which broke out, initially in Angola, in 1961. However, this was certainly not the case, and as the colonial wars ground on throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, considerable changes in fact took place. The development plans that had been drawn up after the Second World War had led to major infrastructure projects, settlement schemes, and the establishment of a wide range of consumer industries (Clarence-Smith, 1985; Newitt, 1995). Although European immigrants provided most of the skilled and semi-skilled workforce (Castelo, 2007), considerable numbers of Africans were involved. The *indigenato* was formally abolished (though in many areas forced labour continued in practice) and education was expanded to help provide a literate workforce.

By the early 1970s moves had also been made to establish independent budgets for the colonies and for security to be in part handed over to locally recruited forces.

The development policies of the later colonial period (for example the *colonatos*, railways and, above all, the dam projects) deeply influenced the policies and long-term thinking of the regimes that took power after independence and help to explain the gap which was to open up between the populations of the colonies and the revolutionary leadership which took over when the Portuguese left (Isaacman, 2013).

Other aspects of the colonial legacy, it has been claimed, include "entrenched violent forms of political expression" and a "rigid form of bureaucracy that cast a large shadow over the postcolonial administration" (Chabal & Vidal, 2007, p. 3). David Birmingham, writing particularly about Angola, went further. The government of Eduardo José dos Santos (who succeeded Agostinho Neto as president in 1979 and ruled Angola until he retired in 2017) was in many ways a reflection of the Portuguese regime it had replaced. Angola's economy remained dependent on a single product – coffee in colonial times and oil in the twenty-first century. Moreover,

> politics in 2000 was as unresponsive to public opinion as it had been in 1970 [...] Now as then the army kept an eye on political decision-making and had a finger in

> the economic pie [...] wealth was as sharply polarised as it had been in late-colonial times [...] The colonial class of 200,000 privileged and semi-privileged expatriates had been replaced by a similar number of black Portuguese speaking Angolans. (Birmingham, 2015, pp. 118-119)

The Catholic Church presided over the religion of the rulers as it had under Salazar. Moreover, the dictatorship established by dos Santos resembled a colonial regime where there had been no "administration by consent or trial by jury or participatory local government [which] were norms of an open society which the colonial powers had conspicuously failed to introduce into Africa" (Birmingham, 2015, pp. 118-119).

The depth and significance of the colonial legacy were fully understood by the new rulers and, in the case of Mozambique, the president, Samora Machel, was to emphasise again and again that Mozambique was not to be content with just being independent, with installing an African in the governor's palace, but had to free itself from the colonial legacy and create a new nation ruled over by "new men".

Revolutionary leadership

The leadership of the revolutionary nationalist movements that took power in 1975 was drawn from an intellectual westernised elite, many of whose members had been exiles for many years.[1] These men had received their education abroad in Lisbon or Paris and were not very familiar with the people they aspired to govern, particularly the people in the interior.

In Angola the MPLA elite was drawn from the Portuguese-speaking mestizo and creole families long settled in Luanda. This class had lost status during the years of white immigration and for them the nationalist movement offered a route back to enjoying the influence and economic advantages they had been used to in the past and thought of as their right (Marcum, 1969; Newitt, 2015; Oliveira, 2015, pp. 6-7).

In Mozambique, the long-established creole families of Mozambique Island and the vast Zambezian heartlands had lost out when the capital was moved in 1902 to Lourenço Marques. The mestizos and *assimilados* of the new capital had less history behind them and less tradition of local self-government. Even so, the Frelimo leadership largely resembled that of MPLA and PAIGC and, like them, developed influential contacts in communist and liberal western countries. Mestizos, whites and even Goan Indians had a prominent role. In Mozambique

[1] Amílcar Cabral had a doctorate in agronomy, Agostinho Neto was a doctor and Eduardo Mondlane also had a doctorate and worked for the United Nations.

the situation of the capital in the extreme south meant that many of the more prosperous and better educated Africans had closer contacts with South Africa than with the remoter areas of their own country – the story of the Albasini family, for example, shows how interwoven the lives of the Lourenço Marques creoles were with neighbouring South Africa (Newitt, 1995).

However, there were other nationalist movements that were more rooted in the lives of ordinary people, even though the activities of the Portuguese PIDE meant that they too had to be formed among exile communities (Guimarães, 1998; Marcum, 1969, 1978). For example, "it is estimated that in 1960 there were no fewer than 58 Angolan nationalist organisations active in Leopoldville/Kinshasa" (Newitt, 2015, p. 27). In Angola, the UPA (later FNLA) was essentially a movement among the BaKongo, while in Mozambique there were movements among Mozambican exiles in Rhodesia and Malawi, as well as Tanzania. The importance of these alternative political movements is now being actively reassessed, for they often presented a vision of the future which was markedly different from that of the parties that came to power in 1975 and were more in tune with the traditional values of the population. They help to explain the opposition to Frelimo and the MPLA that became apparent during the civil wars and which in Mozambique has survived as a strong current affecting the lives of ordinary people (Marcum, 2018; Morier-Genoud, 2012).

The departure of most of the Portuguese population in 1975 deprived Angola and Mozambique of the skills needed to run a modern state and a modern economy. This created a reliance in Angola on MPLA's Cuban allies and in Mozambique on "co-operantes" from eastern Europe, a reliance which increased the political influence of the eastern bloc countries on the new regimes (George, 2005; Isaacman, 1983; Saney, 2014).

Role of allies on the left

Both MPLA and Frelimo adopted a left-wing ideology. Many of the leaders were genuinely fascinated by Marxist-Leninist models, and these were used to attract international allies in their struggle against Portugal. These ideas also played to the interests of the urbanised elites who supported the national liberation movements. It was important for them to play down traditional ethnic loyalties and to adopt a non-racial ideology that would endow mestizos, Goans, and whites with the same authenticity as native-born Africans, not that the latter were unimportant, as the emergence of Agostinho Neto and Eduardo Mondlane as leaders demonstrates (Guimarães, 1998; Marcum, 2018).

Both Frelimo and MPLA asserted that their right to rule was based on the victories they claimed to have won in the independence wars. Theirs was a revolutionary, not a democratic mandate. There were no elections or referenda to establish the legitimacy of the ruling parties. This may have seemed an irrelevance in 1975, when Angola was faced with a South African invasion, and in Mozambique there appeared to be no organised opposition which could have contested power with Frelimo. However, this lack of any popular endorsement would undermine the legitimacy of the ruling parties and would deepen the divisions during the civil wars that followed (Macqueen, 1997; Rosas et al., 2015). Later, both countries held regular elections and, even though these were manipulated to secure the victory of the ruling parties, holding elections was seen as important for the regimes to maintain some degree of legitimacy and international credibility.

At first, both Angola and Mozambique adopted communist-inspired constitutions, Frelimo declaring itself in 1977 to be a vanguard party supported by organisations representing workers, women, and youth (Isaacman, 1983). These constitutions rapidly became little more than a way of concentrating power in the hands of a narrow party elite, though Frelimo did embark on an ambitious attempt to introduce a new socialist economic and social order during the first five years after independence (Cabrita, 2000; Isaacman, 1983; Munslow, 1985; Newitt, 1995).

The MPLA successfully claimed power in Angola, initially with the assistance of the departing Portuguese and then with the direct military aid of the Cubans (George, 2005). Little attempt was made to implement any leftist policies, and the party became wholly concerned with balancing the pressures of their rival international sponsors, the Soviet Union and the Cubans. This led in 1977 to the so-called Nito Alves conspiracy and the subsequent purges in which tens of thousands of Angolans, many of them originally supporters of MPLA, were massacred, and which was to leave an inheritance of fear and factional rivalry within the party (Chabal & Vidal, 2007, p. 128). Jon Schubert described the aftermath. The massacres,

> instilled a climate of arbitrary state violence and deep distrust. Before independence, the PIDE [...] had installed a system of [...] spies that pitted family members against each other; to the shock of many, this system was reproduced in the newly independent country. (Schubert, 2017, pp. 37-38)

In Mozambique there was no massacre on this scale, but soon after it took power, Frelimo rounded up large numbers of its opponents and held show trials. A year after independence, the leading figures who had been opposed to Frelimo

were all murdered – according to one account by being burned alive (Cahen, 2010; Darch & Israel, 2023; Marcum, 2018).

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider the ferocious violence of these killings. During the wars of independence, the colonial forces had carried out massacres in Angola in order to suppress the 1961 uprisings, while in Mozambique the killing of 350 civilians in Wiriyamu had played a large part in destroying the legitimacy of the colonial regime (Dhada, 2016; Zeman, 2023). MPLA and Frelimo had benefited hugely by publicising these killings. However, the post-independence massacres carried out by independent African governments played differently in a context where widespread African-on-African violence was becoming a regular feature of African politics (Wilson, 1992), straining the sympathies of many who had supported the independence struggles. The way in which African elites instrumentalised this violence to serve their patrimonial politics was discussed by Chabal and Daloz. They pointed out how, in certain circumstances, "force becomes the major currency of social and political transactions" because it enables powerful men to feed their client base and becomes the means for achieving objectives rapidly. They pointed out that "armed violence all too easily leads to an instrumentally plausible re-traditionalization of society" (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, ch. 6, 82, 87) which explains why the westernised leadership of MPLA resorted to witchcraft beliefs and practices to purge its ranks of dissidents (Chabal & Vidal, 2007, pp. 83, 85).

This may have encouraged the idea that was beginning to emerge that Africans should be left to conduct their politics in their own way and that they should not be expected to conform to values and ideas that were alien to African culture.

Socialism in Mozambique

After 1975 Frelimo, unlike the MPLA, had a brief window of opportunity when it was able to pursue a raft of socialist policies. Among these were the establishment of collective farms and co-operatives in rural areas and the nationalisation of industries and services. These policies were in part lifted from a catalogue of eastern bloc socialist practices, but they were also inspired by an ideological hostility to traditional authorities and to traditional beliefs and customs, as well as by a desire to free the country from its colonial inheritance. As Michel Cahen expressed it, "peasant society must not just be 'freed', but 'modernised' and 'organised'" (Cahen, 2010, p. 207). However, attacks were not only levelled at traditional African culture, but the churches also came under fire with Christian marriage and Christmas celebrations abolished (Newitt, 2002). In many ways,

Samora Machel's advocacy of the ideal of the "new man" – the new scientifically minded, modern Mozambican – was a striking reinvention, in leftist clothing, of the colonial Portuguese idea of assimilation. The "new man" was the close cousin of the old *assimilado.*

A striking example of the colonial inheritance being reworked by a newly independent government determined to do away with the colonial past was the creation of *aldeias comunais*, which concentrated rural populations in large villages where they could be supervised and controlled by the government, and which adopted the methods, and in many cases the actual locations, of the colonial period *aldeamentos* (Coelho, 1998; Wiegink, 2022).

By 1980, however, the socialist experiment in Mozambique was being overtaken by the civil war and, in the 1980s, the civil war also returned to Angola.

Angola and Mozambique caught up in South African destabilisation

Between 1980 and 1990, both Angola and Mozambique became victims of the destabilisation policies of South Africa, which supplied arms to rebel and opposition movements and pursued subversion tactics to undermine the regimes in both countries. South Africa's strategy was not always clear or consistent. While the military commanders supported the armed insurrections of Renamo (Vines, 1991) and UNITA, there were others who advocated the creation of a "constellation" of African states which would be made economically dependent on South Africa.

The state of war enabled Frelimo and MPLA to consolidate their position as one-party states by delegitimising any opposition movement. In the case of Angola, this was accompanied by a shameless plundering of the country's resources and manipulation of its currency by elite party members (Chabal & Vidal, 2007; Oliveira, 2015; Schubert, 2017). Opponents of the regime could now be dismissed as subversives or clandestine allies of South Africa, and the South African aggression helped to hide the fact that the civil wars were in large part an expression of the hostility of the populations to the policies of the ruling elites. Both MPLA and Frelimo still cling to the idea that there was never any civil war as such, although this narrative was challenged at the time and has been increasingly challenged since by researchers (Schubert, 2017).

After the Peace Accord in Mozambique was signed, it was agreed that both sides would remain silent about what happened during the war (Igreja, 2008). Although there was nothing like South Africa's Peace and Reconciliation

Commission, neither were there investigations and prosecutions for crimes, particularly crimes against civilians, that had been committed during the years of warfare. The consequence of this was that Frelimo's narrative of the civil war period was not effectively challenged, except by foreign academics (Cabrita, 2000; Cahen, 2010). The Frelimo government adopted a similar attitude towards the insurgency in the North, which began in 2017 and is not considered to have any legitimate internal causes but to be solely the work of foreign religious extremists.

That UNITA was anything more than a front organisation for South African destabilisation, "apartheid stooges, *fantoches* [puppets], and lackeys of Western Imperialism" (Schubert, 2017, p. 39), is still not recognised in Angola. As Jon Schubert has shown, the official MPLA version of recent history is that real independence did not come with the departure of the Portuguese as the years of civil war were essentially a continuation of the independence struggle.

True independence only came in 2002, which he describes as Angola's Year Zero. "The post-war master narrative thus selectively conceals the conflict's post-independence period" (Schubert, 2017, p. 30). This also meant that the victorious MPLA and its president did not have to make any moves towards reconciliation which might have exposed the savage violence which the party had unleashed in 1977 against dissident members of the party and in 1992 in an orgy of ethnic cleansing in the capital. The bulldozing of the old *bairros,* the merging of Luanda's old municipalities, and the renaming of streets are all part of a deliberate policy to erase memories of the past which could come back to haunt Angola's rulers.

However, this can also be seen as an attempt by Santos and the MPLA not to become prisoners of Angola's history. The "weight of history" may loom large for academics as an inheritance that Angolans cannot escape, but for the country's rulers, there may be good psychological and political reasons to try to make the past disappear.

Controlling the historical narrative is not, of course, a practice confined to African dictatorships. From one perspective this is another colonial legacy as, through the lens of "*lusotropicalismo*", the ideologues of the Salazar regime had tried to control the narrative of Portugal's imperial past.

UNITA and Renamo told a rather different story. Both were led by charismatic leaders (Savimbi in particular), and had been able to articulate a strong cultural narrative which cast the MPLA as an urban, mestizo elite with no roots among the Angolan people (Oliveira, 2015, p. 13). Dhlakama, like Savimbi, was able to exploit traditional culture, traditional beliefs, and rural attachments to the land (Cahen, 2002; Vines, 1991). For example, it was widely believed that

Dhlakama had magical powers which would allow him to shrink himself (like Alice in Wonderland) to escape capture by government forces.

Both UNITA and Renamo were adopted by right-wing organisations in the West which urged them to adopt an anti-Communist political platform, but it is not necessary to look for a coherent ideology or political programme in either movement, as their position was defined simply by their opposition to the ruling parties and, it must be admitted, by a desire to place in power a rival patrimonial leadership. However, this enabled them to sweep up and articulate a whole range of grievances and resentments. UNITA was able to exploit ethnic hostilities and pose as an Ovimbundu party opposed to the Mbundu and creole-dominated MPLA, while in Mozambique ethnicity played less of a role than regional issues and the opposition of large parts of the population, particularly in the centre and north, to the modernising agenda of Frelimo.

From its beginnings in 1962, Frelimo had been beset by continual splits and faction rivalries which its president, Eduardo Mondlane, had not been able to control. When in 1971 the leadership of Frelimo was secured by Machel and his associates, the party appeared to be controlled by people from the south, and the public perception that Frelimo is a "southern party" has continued even when Felipe Nyusi, who came from the north, was elected president in 2016 (Marcum, 2018).

The position of Maputo, the capital, in the extreme south of the country, almost an enclave in South Africa, had isolated it from the rest of the country. As Michel Cahen expressed it, after independence, "the decision to keep Lourenço Marques as the capital of the country was a spectacular illustration of the decision not to change the disequilibriums created by colonial capitalism" (Cahen, 2016, p. 198). Meanwhile, the region north of the Zambezi was almost completely cut off from the south. There were neither roads, railways, nor bridges that effectively linked the two halves of the country. The railway bridge across the Zambezi, which had been constructed in the 1930s, only provided a link to the railway system in Malawi, not northern Mozambique, while the first road bridge across the river at Tete, built in the final days of the colonial regime, was also joined to the Malawi road system (Newitt, 2022).

Regional isolation was also a factor in Angola, with regions like Lunda, Cuando-Cubango and Moxico, where UNITA was the dominant influence, being remote and almost unknown to the elites of the coastal cities.

1990s and the Washington Consensus

The end of the Soviet Union and of the apartheid regime in South Africa at the end of the 1980s coincided with major readjustments to the aid policies of the US, the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions, and other aid donors. There was a renewed attempt to promote a neo-liberal agenda, both politically with the demand for free elections and multiparty democracy, and economically with the adoption of the ideas of the so-called Washington Consensus. Major changes took place in many African countries, which were now encouraged to drop the one-party state model and to reform their state-controlled economies. These changes were the focus of *Africa Works*, which pointed out that the new era of democratic elections, even in countries like Zambia, where there was a change of regime, did not alter the essentially patrimonial nature of African politics.

> Oppositions in Africa seldom have a different political programme but just want their own chance to benefit in a patrimonial way [...] or to challenge their exclusion from the state in the hope that their agitation will earn them co-optation. (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p. 26)

It was in this context that the United Nations became involved in ending the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique.

The UN in Angola and Mozambique

Internationally sponsored negotiations, beginning in 1988 and culminating in the agreement reached in 1991 at Bicesse in Portugal, were linked with parallel negotiations that brought an end to Cuban intervention in Angola and the withdrawal of South Africans from Namibia (Saney, 2014). In Angola, a ceasefire presented an opportunity for elections to be held in 1992 – the first elections since independence – but these took place in a country where the two rival armies had not been disbanded and where the elections were perceived as being a zero-sum game with the winner taking all – a formula ill-suited to ending a civil war. In addition, the UN monitoring operation was under-resourced. The results of the voting were rejected by UNITA, and the civil war, kept alive by Angola's diamond and oil wealth, continued until brought to a sudden end by the death of Savimbi in 2002.

Savimbi's death led to an immediate ceasefire and enabled the MPLA to claim a decisive victory, which had not been achieved by foreign arms and was not the result of any internationally negotiated peace agreement. As this coincided with

a boom in oil revenues, it gave the MPLA a unique opportunity to embark on post-war reconstruction and a nation-building project without any dependence on foreign aid or any international conditionality (Chabal & Vidal, 2007; Oliveira, 2015; Schubert, 2017).

The UN intervention in Mozambique was better resourced, and much more attention was given to demobilisation and resettlement before any elections were held. The civil war had reached a stalemate before the Peace Accord was signed in 1992, and there was effective international mediation by neighbouring African countries, the churches and the international community, notably by Italy. The role of the Italian St. Egidio community in providing a forum in which representatives of the two sides could come together to discuss a range of issues was notable in this respect (Morozzo & Riccardi, 2003). The ceasefire was followed by two years when the UN effectively ruled the country under the energetic supervision of the UN Special Representative, the Italian Aldo Ajello. Arrangements were made for the repatriation of refugees, the demobilisation of armies and a restructuring of the economy. The UN made sure that Renamo had a stake in the peace by giving the party a $16 million fund to help it convert to a peacetime political movement – in effect enabling Dhlakama to fund his own patrimonial politics (Hall & Young, 1997; Synge, 1997).

Eventually, elections were held in 1994, and Mozambique began a period of uneasy peace under its first democratically elected Frelimo government.

Mozambique after the civil war

At the end of the civil war, Mozambique's situation was very different from that of Angola. There had been no decisive military victory; indeed, Frelimo's military response during the war had been weak and chaotic. Mozambique had no oil revenues and, at that time, few marketable resources, which made it totally dependent on foreign aid for at least the next two decades. However, although the UN had invested a great deal of resource and effort in trying to create a viable political structure for Mozambique, complete with a liberal constitution and civil society institutions, the Peace Accord turned out to be seriously flawed.

Frelimo had jettisoned its socialist constitution and adopted a liberal, free market ideology at its party conference in 1988, but it was still dominated by the elite that had taken power after the departure of the Portuguese, and its politics followed the logic of African patrimonialism, rewarding the party's clients rather than rebuilding the nation. It adapted to the new international order, but with the determination, which had remained unshaken since 1975, that it and it alone would wield power in the country. Significantly, there was little attempt to

co-opt influential Renamo figures or to bring opposition elements into the government – and here it differed from the approach taken by dos Santos in Angola. Moreover, the resettlement of former Renamo fighters and the failure to pay pensions remained an unresolved grievance.

In spite of the influence of outside aid givers, Frelimo was determined to act as far as possible like the MPLA, as though it had been victorious in the civil war. The UN brokered constitution had not made any provision for power sharing either at a national or local level and, as a result, over a period of thirty years Frelimo was able to pursue a patrimonial politics which excluded large parts of the population (Manning, 2002).

There were other ways in which Mozambique suffered a democratic deficit. Local government elections took place in the municipalities but, at first, only in 33 out of a planned total of 128 municipalities. The part of the population that lived in rural areas, perhaps 75 per cent of the population, was deemed to live in "traditional" communities under traditional authorities – in many ways a reimagining of the colonial *indigenato*, even to the extent of conferring authority on local *régulos* who received government salaries, as had happened in colonial times. The colonial term *regulado* was even employed to describe rural communities (Tornimbeni, 2013). These measures were also aimed at undermining Renamo support in rural areas.

Although local, national and presidential elections were held at regular intervals under close international supervision, Frelimo had little difficulty in securing electoral victories, partly by transparent fraud in vote counting but also indirectly through controlling every stage of the electoral process. After Frelimo came close to losing control in the 1999 election (when less than 5 per cent of the votes separated Frelimo's Joaquim Chissano from Afonso Dhlakama), it stepped up its manipulation of the elections, effectively excluding any possibility of future electoral defeats. Even so, opposition parties were able to secure control of some areas of local government, notably Beira and Nampula, the second and third cities in the country, which were controlled for a time by the MDM, a party founded in 2009 as a breakaway from Renamo. MDM also polled strongly in Maputo, in the Frelimo heartland.

After the 1999 elections there was a considerable violent reaction, and from that time Renamo increasingly turned to low-level political violence in order to achieve some leverage in national politics. Violence recurred after the 2010 and 2014 elections, by which time belief in the efficacy of the liberal democratic model had largely disappeared. Renamo was able to do this because, unlike Angola, Mozambique had no effective army or security services.

Statistics from the UNDP Human Development Index (which measures life expectancy, education and per capita income) show that Mozambique remains one of the lowest-rated countries in the world – 185 out of 191 in 2021, a decline from 2014, when it ranked 180 (Human Development Index). Although Frelimo had abandoned its socialisation of the countryside, relatively little effort had been devoted to promoting peasant agriculture, although peasant farmers were estimated to constitute 85 per cent of the population. This was the main thrust of a number of publications by Joseph Hanlon and Merle Bowen (Bowen, 2000; Hanlon, 1996; Hanlon & Smart, 2008). The indebtedness of Mozambique to the IMF and World Bank, which year on year provided 50 per cent or more of support to the national budget, meant that structural adjustment policies had to be followed. These were widely held to be responsible for systemic failures to address poverty in the population. However, these policies, with their encouragement of privatisation, foreign investment and the removal of subsidies, played well with the patrimonial politics of the Frelimo elite, who were able to enrich themselves with directorships of newly privatised companies and spin-offs from the large-scale foreign investments that began to be made (Pitcher, 2002).

The ruling elite of Frelimo also saw China as a partner and collaborator in their rent-seeking politics. China became more and more active in its investments and loans, and engaged in extracting resources from Mozambique on a large scale. Deforestation, illegal fishing, and ambitious schemes to grow rice for export were undertaken with the collusion of Frelimo's leading figures and led to growing protests from civil society voices that China was establishing a new colonial relationship with Mozambique (Chichava, 2008).

Frelimo willingly supported the large capital projects which were supposed to achieve modernisation and economic development. As with the restructuring that was taking place in Angola, the government sought international partners for large-scale developments, including the extraction of coal and natural gas, mining, transport and infrastructure projects. Brazil and India invested heavily in coal mining in the Tete district, and French Total Energies began to exploit natural gas deposits in the north. The mining of rubies by a foreign company also began. These investments were all carried out by a skilled foreign workforce, and their contribution to the development of Mozambique's own skills base was minimal (Chatham House, 2015; Chichava, 2008).

Moreover, Frelimo adopted the policies of the former colonial government towards dams on the Zambezi, planning to build a third dam at Mphanda Nkuwa, a giant hydro-electric scheme which would sell electricity to South Africa, ignoring the widespread damage to the environment and the lives of riverain popu-

lations (Isaacman, 2013; Newitt, 2022). All these capital projects have resulted in extensive removals and resettlement of the rural population, with forced relocations reminiscent of the later colonial period and the immediate post-independence socialist experiments (Wiegink, 2022). These major capital projects enable Frelimo to represent itself as a modernising party, reflecting very much the modernity of the late colonial period, which had also been built on major capital projects and the influx of skilled workers from outside the country to service these developments.

For twenty or so years after the Peace Accord, Mozambique had to respond to the demands of the institutions that kept the country's economy afloat, and during this period it was one of the largest recipients of aid in the world.

Chabal and Daloz explain how aid and the involvement of development NGOs benefit the ruling elites.

> The use of NGO resources can today serve the strategic interests of the classical entrepreneurial Big Men as well as access to state coffers did in the past [...] There is an international "aid market" which Africans know how to play with great skill. (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, pp. 23, 24)

And they go on:

> some African politicians cynically exploit the image of Africa as a helpless and miserable continent in order to prompt the involvement of NGOs from which funding and assistance are expected. (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, pp. 23, 24)

This was cruelly borne out the year after their book was published, when southern Mozambique was hit by a devastating flood. Donor aid poured in and a headline in *The London Times* grandly stated, "Mozambique must not be allowed to sink" (Christie & Hanlon, 2001; Newitt, 2002, pp. 234-235).

The changing world order in the 1990s had renewed the objective of aligning Africa with the values and practices of western economics, this time rooted in the ideas and programmes of the Washington Consensus. Mozambique's deep indebtedness required some concessions to transparent governance, and it became necessary for Frelimo to appear to meet the conditions required by the aid givers. Consultations took place with various civil society organisations and poverty reduction programmes were officially adopted but, in practice, Frelimo was able to resist many of these demands, which were rejected out of hand in Angola. After it turned out that Mozambique had major rentable resources in the form of natural gas, Frelimo was largely able to ignore the developmental strategies and the associated compliance which were wished for by the international community.

When it became known in 2016 that members of Mozambique's political elite had secretly negotiated huge loans, bypassing all official parliamentary controls, the extent of Mozambique's alignment with the financial practices of Santos in Angola became fully apparent.

As Frelimo tightened its grip on the country and its resources, a worrying trend became apparent: the high incidence of political assassinations. Some of these were aimed at leading Renamo figures or at overzealous journalists. There was also an increase in kidnappings for ransom, with a strong suggestion that the police and leading political figures were benefiting from this form of rent (Chatham House, 2015, pp. 32-33).

Frelimo did not devote much effort to co-opting opposition elements or to reintegrating former Renamo soldiers. Instead, its policy was to exclude Renamo from enjoying any of the dividends of peace. Starved of resources to reward its followers, Renamo could not operate an effective patrimonial politics. As a result, large parts of the population, especially in the centre and the north, were deprived of the benefits of reconstruction. This was only too obvious to anyone comparing the two largest cities. Maputo, which was the centre of the Frelimo government, saw modern buildings and lavish infrastructure expenditure, including the refurbishment of old colonial buildings, while Beira, which Frelimo did not control, remained a backwater of decaying public buildings, poverty and vast slums erected in low lying waterlogged terrain around the city.

Renamo's response was to stage a return to rural violence, though not on the scale of the 1980s. This eventually had the effect of forcing the government to negotiate a change in the constitution to allow the direct election of provincial governors (Chatham House, 2015). Renamo had assumed that this would allow it to gain influence in the areas of the country where it had always polled strongly. However, again no formal power-sharing agreement was negotiated, and Frelimo was able to control an electoral process where the winner takes all. The failure of this renegotiation and the death of Afonso Dhlakama in 2018 led to the partial disintegration and collapse of Renamo as a political movement.

Northern insurrection

As Renamo's threat to Frelimo's dominance weakened, a more serious challenge appeared with the emergence after 2017 of radical Islamic extremism in the north of the country, with episodes of extreme violence towards civilians reminiscent of Renamo's tactics in the 1980s. The ruling Frelimo elite of Mozambique had sought economic development through collaboration with foreign capital,

with the result that it had felt able to ignore any pressure for change emanating from civil society. In particular, it had paid little attention to the needs of the remoter regions – the classic *Afrique Inutile*. However, the sectors of the population ignored by the patrimonial elite of Maputo, particularly the rapidly growing younger generation, were not ignored by Islam, which was able to exploit the sense of neglect and a wide range of grievances. The insurrection in the north was also fed by internal and trans-frontier migrations and by illegal mining operations which highlighted the weakness of the patrimonial state over which Frelimo presided (Forquilha & Pereira, 2022).

The Government's initial response to the growing insurrection in the north was wholly inadequate. Security measures were ineffective, and there was no centrally directed response to the challenges posed by the Islamists. Instead, the Frelimo government took refuge in the claim that the northern insurrection was simply a manifestation of global Islamic extremism and had no internal causes. Colina Darch wrote in 2022, "President Nyusi rejected out of hand any idea that local grievances were a causal factor, attributing the conflict instead to 'pure banditry driven by others' greed'" (Darch, 2022). This was a bid for the support of international opinion and echoed the tactics that had been pursued with some success during the civil war period. Meanwhile in 2021, the security situation was off-loaded onto SADCC countries and Rwanda, whose motives for involving itself remained obscure. These could now be conveniently blamed for any future security failures.

Angola

Since the end of the civil war in 2002 Angola was ruled, virtually unchallenged, by the victorious MPLA, though in practice all the levers of power were held by the president José Eduardo dos Santos. As in Mozambique, there was no formal process of reconciliation, but the ruling party took possession of the historical narrative of the independence struggle and the civil war in such a way that it could smooth over and even deny the issues that had been so controversial during the previous thirty years (Schubert, 2015). During the civil war the party and the state had effectively become one. However, the situation differed in many important respects from that in Mozambique. In Angola UNITA had been decisively defeated and for twenty years there was no serious electoral challenge to the MPLA, although elections were still held in order to maintain some internal and international legitimacy. Although MPLA appeared to be dominant, the party did not exert any real control over the president, who was able to use the oil revenues to create a parallel administration under his own control. While

diverting the country's wealth for his private purposes, Santos nevertheless took the trouble to bring important elements of the party, civil society and even of the opposition onto his patrimonial payroll. This served to dilute somewhat the creole element in the inner elite circle. Santos's regime was described as one of "shrewd co-optation and modulate authoritarianism". (Chabal & Vidal, 2007, p. 5). And among the beneficiaries of the regime can be numbered the generals. "These multimillionaires are thought to have hidden stakes in a huge portfolio of companies in energy, media, construction, transport" (Metcalfe, 2013, p. 110).

The patrimonial networks which bound together the political elites of Angola and their clients in the party and among the middle classes have been described in detail (Chabal & Vidal, 2007; Oliveira, 2015), but clientelism of a different kind exists among the mass of the population and among the immigrants from the DRC and from West Africa who have been attracted to Luanda by the pickings to be obtained from the economic boom in the city. Here the Angolan police operate a complex protection system. The large numbers of undocumented immigrants survive only by developing close relations with the police, often at the highest level – a system by which the draconian laws against immigrants can be used by the police to earn rich rewards. Here the law exists not to secure an orderly state where citizens can enjoy their rights but to be instrumentalised and turned into an income stream for the security hierarchy. One successful West African trader, named Yussuf, explained how the system worked and how it linked up with the patrimonial networks of the elite. He told Paolo Gaibazzi that,

> he had to connect with army generals, state officials, and other influential Angolans who controlled the port, customs, licenses, and other strategic assets. A small elite controls virtually every lucrative resource in Angola, including its vast oil wealth. They then redistribute to family members, MPLA party members, and strategic partners, including West African importers and diamond traders, among other foreign investors. Yussuf's high-profile contacts in the police had been vital in securing his business. (Gaibazzi, 2018, p. 473)

However, it was not just undocumented immigrants who have to try to survive in this way. The vast majority of Angolan nationals have to live by adopting similar strategies. According to Vasco Martins, even documented nationals do not enjoy the full status of citizens and the protection of the law. "Full citizenship is frequently described as a socio-political privilege, not a universal right"; the protection of some patron and loyalty to the MPLA is the means to escape marginalisation and enjoy full rights as citizens (Martins, 2016, p. 11). Citizen rights are as limited in twenty-first century Angola as they were in the colonial period.

Although elements of the UNITA leadership were co-opted to the president's network, the ordinary rank and file of the UNITA army were, like their counterparts in Renamo, largely ignored. Moreover, there was almost total neglect of public services for the rest of the population. The majority, the *Afrique Inutile*, was excluded from Santos's modernising project, although the regime remained alert to possible trouble emanating from the vast urban slums of the coastal cities. The oil revenues of Angola, and the fact that a military victory had been won decisively, meant that Santos could proceed to the reconstruction of the country and the reinvention of Angolan nationality without any significant outside intervention or moderating influence. As in Mozambique, modernisation took the form of contracts with outsiders to carry out large capital projects, some of them, like the main road system, of great value to the country, but others becoming useless white elephants with no serious long-term developmental value (Oliveira, 2015). According to one commentator, as Angola's post-war economy grew, there have been only "a few thousand direct beneficiaries surrounding an inner circle of only several hundred insiders" which include the "professionals of violence" – the leaders of the army, the police and the intelligence services.

Unlike Mozambique, Angola has not had to respond to conditions set by aid givers. Through its oil wealth it has been able to avoid the conditionality attached to IMF and World Bank loans and instead deal directly with China and other bilateral partners. However, indebtedness to China and to outside private contractors always threatened to become a problem when oil price fluctuations threatened to limit the wealth Santos was able to deploy.

The extremes of wealth and poverty have become one of the most visible impressions that people have of twenty-first century Angola. Although the wealthy elite cultivated by dos Santos' patrimonialism aspire to all the luxuries of a western lifestyle, this has not led to a well organised and efficiently running state. Here there seems to be a contrast with Mozambique, where the capital has become an attractive and functioning city. No such concession to modernity is apparent in Luanda, where electricity and water services are patchy, the administration is chaotic and traffic jams can lead to a three-hour journey to reach the city centre (Metcalfe, 2013). Why an elite that aspires to be considered progressive and modern should so obviously not care about the efficient functioning of the capital remains a mystery. In some way it must serve the political purposes of the rulers, for an efficient administration and a functioning urban environment would no doubt increase the economic opportunities for all the urban classes and hence lessen their dependence on the clientelism which keeps the president in power.

One of the most striking policies of the government has been the systematic destruction of the *musseques*, the shanty towns or *bairros* near the city centre. The poor who lived there and their street trading activities have been moved 30 kilometres or more from the city – where of course the poverty will not be visible to foreign visitors and where any political violence can be easily contained. As Jon Schubert describes it, rebuilding Luanda is "better understood as the practice of 'spacial cleansing'" (Schubert, 2017, p. 32). The new towns built outside Luanda were "intended to boost the government's legitimacy amongst a core group of loyal supporters", but the failure to provide services like water, electricity and health clinics endangered the whole patrimonial strategy of the housing policy and has even become counterproductive as "dissatisfaction with the shortage or unreliability of services, negative evaluations of government policy performance and a lack of institutional capacity are administrative weaknesses that have further undercut the state's ability to 'order power'" (Croese & Pitcher, 2017, pp. 14-15).

The poverty in which much of the Angolan population live, and the almost total neglect of public services like health and education, contrast with the wealth enjoyed by regime insiders and expatriate technical and professional personnel. However, as in many other African countries, including Mozambique, the poverty of the majority of the population is not accidental. "Poverty is a condition that structures the public sphere in Angola." It is a device for making the population dependent – "a way of keeping the masses occupied with daily survival, thus uninformed and unable to make claims on their rights" (Martins, 2016, p. 8) – a strategy which had undoubtedly underpinned the colonial policy of the Portuguese before 1975 as well.

Chabal, Africa and the international order

Patrick Chabal always pointed out that Africa is not poor. It is extremely rich in resources and the story of the continent since independence has been largely determined not by its poverty or the legacy of colonial underdevelopment, but by what African elites have chosen to do with their resource riches – what their social and political priorities have been. Norway began to exploit its oil reserves at approximately the same time as Angola, and since then Norway has always ranked first or second in the world rankings of the Human Development Index. There is no reason, apart from a difference in political culture, why Angola should not also rank among the first nations in the world in terms of human welfare. But in Angola and in Mozambique, policy has been determined by a rent-seeking

elite which, since independence, has established political structures based on a scarcely disguised neo-patrimonialism. Although regular elections are held, both Mozambique and Angola have established what is in effect a one-party system, but it is one in which the parties exert minimal supervision over the narrow circle of elite families who control the country's resources (including the aid packages negotiated with outsiders and NGOs) and who distribute these resources in order to maintain dominance over all the country's institutions, including the civil society institutions, and hence over the political future of the country.

Major new partners like India and China have largely rejected the idea that outsiders should try to influence the internal politics of Angola or Mozambique and this is also increasingly called into question by the large capital conglomerates that exploit Africa's resources. That western nations should continue to try to bring Africa into line with the ideas and ideals of western political culture is no longer universally accepted and the reasons for it are no longer clear. After all, as Chabal and Daloz pointed out in their book, the liberal westernising and modernising projects of the last 150 years have so far signally failed. Moreover, the shift in western policy from an unquestioned acceptance of the sovereignty of states to a prioritisation of human rights has been criticised as yet another way in which the West can impose conditions on the conduct of politics in the non-western "third" world (Chabal, 2012, pp. 227-230).

However, single countries, let alone whole sub-continents, cannot be isolated in this way. In the nineteenth century it appeared self-evident that international intervention was needed to put an end to the evils of the slave trade and in the twenty-first century the threats posed by climate change, population growth, money laundering, drug smuggling, pandemics and intercontinental migrations are of global significance and require a global response. Concern over the way that countries like Mozambique and Angola conduct their affairs and the need to make their rulers accountable now seem more urgent than ever.

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