

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

Antonio Tomas

Chapter I:

The dialectics of transformation in Luanda: the making and unmaking of a modernist city

Writing on the city of Luanda, the capital of Angola, is not an easy task. Part of the difficulty stems from my aim to provide more than a descriptive account of the city. My primary intention in this book is to reflect on the spatial transformation of the city of Luanda over time. Or, to put it differently, I am interested in giving an account of the marks of time left upon the city. Luanda, founded in 1575, is in fact one of the oldest cities established by Europeans in the Southern Hemisphere. However, only later, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, did Luanda begin to have its contemporary and modernist shape. Important to note is that the modern core was not built by Africans or for Africans. Luanda's expanding urban fabric materialized Portugal's expanding empire, as the city was construed as a new home for Portuguese settlers. In this sense, Luanda came into being through this apparent contradiction: on the one hand, the concept orienting the expansion of the city was unabashedly colonial, but, on the other, the language in which this plan was executed was, to a great extent, modernist.

This order of things did not last long. In 1975, only a few decades after the generation of Portuguese architects arrived and decided to transform the city, Angola became independent. Consequently, a significant part of the settler population for whom the city had been built was forced to abandon it. In the process, the form of the city and the distribution of space were drastically altered. There was firstly, a period of decay and

collapse when what the Portuguese architects and urban planners left went almost untouched. This period also coincided with the long civil war that ravaged the country, from 1975 to 2002. With the end of the civil war, and soaring oil prices in international markets, the Angolan government, and, to a lesser extent, the private sector, lavished in expensive development projects that have dramatically changed the image of the city. This transformation of Luanda, in general, has primarily taken two forms. In the first place, the center of Luanda, pushed by an over-valuation of real estate, has experienced a developmental frenzy. Here, the rationale seems to turn Luanda into a hub for foreign investment, along the lines of what Vanessa Watson has recently called a “fantasy city.”¹ The second one is the expansion of the limits of the once colonial city, which has produced two phenomena: firstly, the exponential growth of the slums; secondly, the emergence of a third axis that cuts into the dialectics of city center-periphery, that touchstone of colonial urbanism so famously depicted by Frantz Fanon: the separation between the white city and the black city.²

The problem here is that such an account cannot be simply descriptive. It has been noted, fairly – and in fact it has become a staple in urban studies in Africa to recognize – that the theoretical tools we still use to understand cities in the world derive, to a great extent, from cities of the West. Cities in Africa have been almost constantly described as problematic, or the site of a “lack” as Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall have discussed in the context of Johannesburg.³ So the work of the postcolonial critic, or, in my case, the native anthropologist, cannot simply be descriptive, but it has also to

¹ Watson, “African urban fantasies: dreams or nightmares?” *Environment and Urbanization*.

² Fanon, *The Wretched of the earth*.

³ Mbembe and Nuttall, “Writing the world from an African Metropolis,” *Public Culture*, p. 354.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

consider which kinds of conceptual assumptions are valid in specific traditions of thought. My point is that for the postcolonial critique or the native anthropologist, it is not enough to describe the city, any city, but, more importantly, she has also to dwell on the ways in which the city being described fits in the canon of what a city is. To put it differently, such a description has to meet up two conditions: it has to be ontological, in the sense that it deals with describing the city, or what the city is, and, on the other, it has also to be epistemological, by inserting such a city in the debates on the topic.

My way of doing this, through a description of Luanda, is to put the city into theory. I am going to do this by capturing in this book a particular moment in the history of the city, which is the passage from a modernist to a postmodernist moment. Or, physically, the passage from a conglomerate of old palaces and shacks into a city designed to have a modernist grid deeply influenced by Le Corbusier's conception of architecture. However, more recently, Luanda has been through a deep process of profound transformations. Here, cautiously, my point is less to describe the city as postmodern, but rather to take *post*-modernism literally, as something that comes after the modernist impulse (although not chronologically), by taking post-modernism as a theoretical lense that allows me to unravel such transformations. Before discussing the substance of such a transformation, let me first of all spell out the form of theorizing that is behind my intention here.

Concrete theory

The subject of this book, as I have already hinted, is the question of spatial transformation, and how to theoretically account for this question. My objective is a thorough discussion not only of the city, and how it came into being, but of the dialectical relationship between people and the city. I am interested in people and city as agents of spatial transformation. This might appear to be quite a simple question, but, unfortunately, it has not been the subject of a lot of ethnographic work. Almost 20 years ago, Setha M. Low said something that still resonates today. In reviewing the most recent readings on urban anthropology, she noted that “anthropologists [...] have been concerned with everyday urban processes, so although the city is present in Anthropology, it has not had a major impact.⁴” Since then, notwithstanding a number of contributions, insufficient progress has been made. This lacuna is particularly visible in urban studies in Africa, in which there is a large literature on the relationship of urbanization and modernization in Africa. Anthropologists from the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, for instance, pioneered a number of ethnographies that reflected the ways in which groups of people were undergoing process of change in their everyday interaction with the urban. However, these analyses more often than not have taken up the question of the dissolution of rural communities, in a kind of nostalgia for their vanishing, as Bissell has recently discussed.⁵ More often than not, this literature tends to take African as non-agentive beings. Put differently, Africans are not taken as agents who change the space in which they live. Space here is taken in its Cartesian form, as something that is

⁴ Low, “Imaging and theorizing the city,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, p. 384.

⁵ Bissell, “Engaging Colonial Nostalgia,” *Cultural Anthropology*.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

pre-given, the point precisely that Henri Lefebvre has criticized in his path-breaking book *The Production of Space*.⁶ Even one of the most perceptive anthropologists working on contemporary Africa, James Ferguson, uses contemporary theoretical tools to critique the processes of urbanization and modernity in the Copperbelt, Zambia, but rarely puts space into a dynamic perspective. As Mbembe and Nuttal say, in a commentary that addresses the colonial past, but which is still applicable to a great deal of what has been done in the present, “most of the time, the task of scholarship has been to measure the processes of assimilation to the urban environment and to assess the various ways in which the relationship between the individual and the community is corrupted, reinvented, or maintained.”⁷

My point here is not merely to chastise anthropologists for not taking seriously the dialectics between the urban and humans. I concede that many anthropologists in their work are not after this problematic. My point is that this absence points to the schisms that exist among the various sciences that take space as their raw materials. It seems that architects and urban planners come first. They imagine space, and anticipate the kinds of relation they want to create in these spaces. To a great extent, anthropologists tend to arrive in the aftermath of the formation of these spaces. Anthropologists are also interested in change and transformation, but approach the question from a different vantage point. Here, more often than not, they are merely interested in critiquing the ways people's interactions have been changed by the urban. In other words, anthropologists, to a great extent, have been more concerned with people *in*

⁶ Lefebvre, *the Production of Space*.

⁷ Mbembe and Nuttal, “Writing the world from an African Metropolis,” p. 353.

the city than people *with* the city. But the city is a very particular object, which has to be analyzed in a dynamic way. The city is the place of self-fashioning where many Africans could invent themselves as modern beings. In the context of Angola, for instance, particularly the *musseques* (slums) in Luanda were sources of national consciousness, and ferment of nationalism.⁸ Furthermore, spatial transformation occurs not only because of the work of architects and planners, but also by the ways in which people bring about solutions to supplement urbanistic shortcomings (I will dwell with this question in further chapters).

Here, I am more interested in spatial than cultural transformation, or cultural change. My point is not only to deal with the manners in which 'the urban' changes people, but rather the ways in which new socialities are brought about, and how these new socialities bring about novel physical or urban forms. Furthermore, my intention is not only to write against the grain of much urban anthropology, especially that situated in the context of urban Africa, but I also envisage a form of writing that inscribes itself in the surface of the material with which I am dealing.

I am going to do this through what I am tentatively calling concrete theory. By this, I am interested in how ideas, concept, theoretical constructions, can impact on the materialization, or the making of things themselves. In other words, I am interested in looking at the genealogies of particular ideas to order to acquire a better grasp on the ways in which they were instrumental in bringing about certain kinds of spatial organization. I will develop this point later. Suffice it to say now that Luanda is a

⁸ Moorman, *Intonations*.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

very interesting location to see concrete theory at work in the way I intend to explore it. I will do this through a discussion of Luanda as a modernist city, and the subsequent transformation of the city into something that I call postmodernism. Modernism here is a set of ideas about how space ought to be organized. In this guise, modernism was translated into enduring and concrete forms. The materialization of such ideas had its expressions on the coming into being of what has been called, in the literature of the urbanization of Portuguese Africa, a “consolidated urban core.”⁹

Key to my understanding of the manner in which these processes have taken place is Paul Rabinow's insightful study *French Modern*. He shows the extent to which architects and urbanists in France and colonial France conceived of themselves as social reformers. The purpose of building cities and infrastructure was to a great degree motivated by their hope that by bringing about new physical forms, they were contributing to the improvement of society.¹⁰ Such a notion can also be extended to understanding the formation and transformation of many cities in the Western world, as well as a number of cities in the colonial world.¹¹ And modernist architecture in the context of colonial Angola performed such a role.

In my attempt to characterize Luanda, I am not interested in stating whether Luanda is today a modernist or a postmodernist city. I find it more productive to put Luanda in the schisms between the two. I do not conceive of postmodernity as an historical moment, or an époque. I rather see it as the symptom, as Frederic Jameson, has

⁹ Magalhães, *Moderno colonial*.

¹⁰ Rabinow, *French Modern*.

¹¹ See, for instance, Wright, G., 1991, *The politics of design in French colonial urbanism*, University of Chicago Press.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

argued, of the disappearance of grand narratives.¹² My point, which I clarify below, is that the disappearance of grand narratives, as a symptom, is itself inscribed in the urban fabric of Luanda. So concrete theory is a way to theorize the materiality of the city itself.

I take very seriously the way Luhmann has criticized social sciences in general, and anthropology in particular, for not being able to overcome the subject-object duality. Luhmann was pointing toward a direction in social sciences in which there is no longer the distinction between the subject and object, or at least a difference between the subject that observes and the subject that is observed. This point is fundamental in the work of Bruno Latour and Actor Network Theory literature, which challenges our conception of the human and non-human contradiction in terms of agency (or who propels action). Applying this to the city, the city appears as an organic body, going constantly through process of metabolism, in which the contradiction between human and non-human agents is overcome.¹³

One example of how this has been done in ethnography is Simone's piece *People-as-Infrastructure*. Here, first of all, Simone invites us to think beyond the ways we conceive of infrastructure, "as those reticuled system of cables and so on."¹⁴ The question of the agent goes beyond the subject-object, or human non-human dichotomies. His description of practices of everyday life enacted by subjects of inner Johannesburg is focused on how people come together to supplement or obviate the limitations of built environment.

¹² Jameson, *Post-modernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism*.

¹³ Swyngedouw, "Circulations and metabolisms: (hybrid) natures and (cyborg) cities."

¹⁴ Simone, *People as infrastructure: intersecting fragments in Johannesburg*, p. 407.

The discussion of my ethnographic material on Luanda will be buttressed by assumptions enunciated above. The point is that most of what was designed and built by colonial architects and urban planners was no longer adequate for the kinds of social relations that emerged with the political emancipation of the country. So the physical forms that came about to overcome these insufficiencies were to a greater extent put forward by the limitations of these same insufficiencies. But these transformation were not from the most part conceived of by any master planner equipped with a “bird’s eye,” as the Certeau would have it. Spatial transformation was de-centered, fragmented, it was a sort of collage. Understanding the process, I suggest, forces us to grapple with some of the precepts of postmodernism.

Modern colonial: the making of a modernist city

Portuguese colonial urban experiences in Africa, in places such as Luanda, or Maputo, had its own peculiarities. In these places, the target of modernist, or modern urbanization, was not Africans, as in many other places of Africa. Only too late did the Portuguese started to build houses for Africans, similar to what was being doing in other contexts, such as in Tema Mahean, Ghana, described by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew.¹⁵ But for the most part the target of infrastructure construction was the settler population. Put differently, the driving preoccupation that steered the process of urbanization of African cities was the creation of the material conditions for the accommodation of contingents of settlers from continental Portugal.

¹⁵ Jackson and Oppong, ‘The planning of late colonial village housing in the tropics: Tema Manhean, Ghana, *Planning Perspectives*.

Populating the Portuguese African colonies with continental Portuguese was always a preoccupation for colonial authorities. For many centuries, up to the nineteenth century, only the disgraced of Portuguese society, such as prisoners, would live in the colonies. There was a first attempt to change this state of affairs, by the beginning of the twentieth century, when, in the context of the Republic (proclaimed in 1910), Portugal toyed with the idea of granting autonomy to some of its territories, such as Angola and Mozambique. Norton de Matos was sent to Angola to become the first high commissioner and one of the most unrelenting and determined modernizers of this colony. Throughout two mandates, starting first in 1912, under the banner of “develop Angola, promote the Negro, and reinforce Portuguese sovereignty,”¹⁶ he helped lay the foundation for the colonial modern state in Angola. He ordered the construction of roads and bridges, and formalized the system of tax collection, whose main target was the indigenous population. He believed that the kind of colonization that was taking place in South Africa, through the transfer for the colonies of considerable contingents of Europeans, which had previously taken place in the Americas, would “seek hegemony in all the continent.”¹⁷ For that, the Portuguese had to “settle our race in the African soil that it belongs to us with the highest intensity, so that the qualities of endurance, resistance to distress and untamable courage [...] give it a Portuguese imprint.”¹⁸ This understanding of the novel role that the Portuguese ought to play in the African soil was translated into major interventions in the main city of Angola, Luanda.

¹⁶ Fonte, *Urbanismo e Arquitetura de Angola*.

¹⁷ De Matos, *A Província de Angola*, p. 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

He understood, for instance, that the settlement of white population in Africa should be done in such a way that prevented miscegenation. Policing the racial line was then to become a major preoccupation for urbanists. In a way, de Matos was simply voicing the ideas of the champion of separatism in Africa, the general governor of Nigeria Lord Luggard,¹⁹ when he argued that whites and blacks, although sharing the same physical space, should evolve in different political and cultural schemes.²⁰ Not surprisingly, it was during the administration of Angola by de Matos that the first rules on separation of races came about. The justification was the epidemics that ravaged Luanda in the beginning of twentieth century. From these times date the first massive demolitions of shacks in the center of Luanda, which by then was only divided between the *Cidade Alta* (High City) and *Cidade Baixa* (Low City). As in many other places in Africa, Europeans that inhabited Luanda showed a deep concern with the quality of air, which was deemed the cause of contracting tropical diseases. This was the rationale for planning cities and other urban agglomerates under the principles put forward by Ebenezer Howard, known as Garden City. Or to put it more correctly, these plans pushed the design of Luanda, a city that existed many centuries before, to resemble a Garden City. The French Etienne de Groer and the Portuguese D. Moreira da Silva executed the redesigning of the city, in 1942. Both planners had previously worked in Lisbon, and other Portuguese cities, and their idea was to foresee the growth of the city through the precepts of the Garden City. This allowed them to see the expansion of the city based on a city center with a number of satellite cities (of which only two came into being, Viana and Cacuaco).

¹⁹ Luggard, *Dual Mandate*.

²⁰ In the context of the Portuguese colonies that was the basis for the Indigenato system. See, for instance, Moreira, *Administração da Justiça aos Indígenas*.

De Matos was, then, instrumental in bringing about the underpinnings for the development of Angola. By modernizing colonial administration, and instituting laws of labor and taxation for the natives, he was also laying the ground for the development of colonial agricultural production. The end of WWII brought about the rise in prices of primary commodities. This attracted a number of people from continental Portugal, who settled not only in the provinces that produced these commodities, such coffee, in the northern provinces of Uíge and Zaire, and it also contributed for the urbanization of Angola. For part of the infusion of capital was applied in infrastructural development. To give an idea of what it meant in terms of migration of settlers to Angola it suffices to look at demographic charts concerning this process. The white population in Luanda was approximately 9,404 people in 1940. This number grew to 21,018 in 1950, then 55,567 in 1960 and finally 123,226 in 1960, which means that a growth rate of 56.52%, 123.5%, 164.3% and 127.1% retrospectively took place in three decades.²¹

It is also important to note that a great part of urban development in colonies such as Angola and Mozambique took place against the backdrop of a very particular moment in the history of the African continent: self-determination. Most countries in Africa became independent in early 1960. Contestation for independence started in Angola in February of 1961. However, the Portuguese *Estado Novo* dictatorship not only refused to admit that there was colonial contestation in those territories, but also devised a plan in which the way out of the crisis of legitimacy posed by anticolonial movements was the reinforcement of colonial presence. So urbanism was then conceived as a way for

²¹ Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 83.

detering nationalist impulses. The expansion of urban life in Africa, particularly in Angola, where the Portuguese built the largest cities, was part of a rhetoric that building multiracial societies in Angola would contribute to the perception that continental Portugal and its colonies were a “nation divided into different continents.”²² However, for attracting settlers to Angola, the colonies had to offer living conditions comparable to those in the cities of Portugal. And after 1961, when the national liberation struggle began, the formation of white cities in Africa became an important asset for Portugal against the claims of nationalist movements.

At the institutional level, the urban development of the colonies was given to the Gabinete de Urbanização Colonial (which would change later to Gabinete de Urbanização Ultramarina). As late as 1944, the Ministry of Colonies created the office of Colonial Urbanization, based in Lisbon, with the mission of managing “the execution and urban design of the colonies.”²³ One of the ideas of the Office was to give a “Portuguese” brand to the development of African cities, by relying on architects and urbanists trained in Portuguese schools. Among the many detractors of the office were those, such as the writer and colonial official Henrique Galvão, who derided the project as being “unrealistic on account of the distance between Lisbon and the colonies.”²⁴ This may partly explain the astounding number of projects commissioned by this Office that were

²² For a discussion on the colonial rhetoric of *Estado Novo*, see, for instance, Castelo,

²³ Milheiro 2009, p. 80.

²⁴ The Office for Colonial Urbanization would change its name to Office of Overseas Urbanization, after the Constitutional Revision of 1955, which changed the legal status of the African territories, after which were no longer designated as colonies, but overseas territories. Magalhães and Gonçalves, *Moderno Tropical*, p. 30. Founded in 1944, and operating through 1974, the Office, with different designations would always have its headquarters in Lisbon. See Milheiro and Dias, “Arquitectura em Bissau e os Gabinetes de Urbanização Colonial”, p. 84.

deficiently implemented or not implemented at all.²⁵ It was not until the end of the 1950s, and particularly after the beginning of the nationalist struggle, that the Office was decentralized through the creation of different branches in the Portuguese territories of Africa. Difficulties in implementing some projects pertained to the interests of the mother country, which, as we have seen, intended to conflate the development of Angola with the survival of *Estado Novo*, and clashed with the interests of the colonists in Angola themselves. There was a small group of colonizers who were born in Angola and who felt a stronger emotional link to Angola than Portugal. As colonial laws discriminated against the Portuguese born in Africa, many of them became the most ardent supporters of a progressive autonomy of Angola from the mother country.²⁶

But the construction of Luanda would only gain an impetus with the arrival of a group of Portuguese architects and urban planners also called the “African generation.”²⁷ Trained in schools of architecture of Lisbon and Porto, they were demanded work in the colonies, especially Angola and Mozambique, since they found less and less space in continental Portugal to develop their own understandings of the city, which was for the most part based on Le Corbusian modernist architecture, also called International Style. One of the lessons they took from their master was that architects should be part of the decisions process. Consequently, although many of them worked for private ateliers, they

²⁵ For a chart of the projects for Guinea-Bissau that were not implemented, see Milheiro and Dias, “Arquitectura em Bissau e os gabinetes de urbanização Colonial”, p. 86.

²⁶ Portuguese laws discriminated between the whites born in Africa and those born in Europe. Until 1940, Portuguese born in Africa were legally classified as ‘second-class.’ This explains why, for instance, settlers born in Africa sought at least economic autonomy. Industrialization was one of the areas in which the interests of Angolan settlers and Portugal clashed. Lisbon’s official position even during the last decades of colonialism was to halt Angola’s industrial development, so that Portugal could act as re-exporter of raw material produced in Africa. Colonists in Angola diverged on this matter, and by the early 1960s colonialist lobbies had successfully overturned legal sanctions on industrial growth. For a brief discussion on industrialization of Angola, see Oliveira, *Memórias de África*.

²⁷ Fernandes, *A Geração Africana*.

were also clerks at the Municipal services that approved the projects whose authorization some of them were seeking in a personal capacity. This, according to many sources, accounts for some of the problems of infrastructure in contemporary Luanda deals with. One of these problems touches on the modes in which the city center-periphery divide came about.

City center-periphery divide

Portuguese colonial urban engagement in Africa has been largely presented as a merely technical procedure intended to find the best ways to rationally distribute space, around the lines of what Timothy Mitchell has dubbed techno-politics.²⁸ Luanda appears in many descriptions as a modernist city, in which the most advanced techniques of design and construction were applied, as if architecture and urban planning were neutral techniques, merely aesthetics intervention on space.²⁹ What these explanations do not take into account is the social problems that these technical interventions overlooked, such as the question of the slums (henceforth I will use the local term, from the Angolan national language Kimbundu *musseque*, which means sandy area) or the modes in which the city came to be divided into city center and periphery.

In the growing field of contemporary reassessments of colonial past produced by Portuguese scholars, especially architects, there is the question whether *musseques* are

²⁸ Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts*.

²⁹ By many people who have written on this subject, namely Portuguese architects, such as Fernandes, *Geração Africana*.

part of the city.³⁰ Those who argue that *musseques* are not buttress their argument with ethnographic evidence. Dwellers of *musseques*, as Sandra Roque has ethnographically shown, tend to distinguish the places they live, in this case the *bairro* (neighborhood, although it means *musseques* in the context the author uses it) from the *cidade*, or cement city.³¹ I think these descriptions are important for understanding how people represent places they live in, and how they articulate their dreams and desires on what is decent life, and decent living conditions. But they do not give us any purchase in terms of the historical constitution of these categories themselves. *Musseques* is no less part of the urban fabric as the city itself. For *musseques* were dialectically built in relation to the city.

A reading of the orientation of the various colonial city plans shows that Luanda was conceived in the guise of a planned center, called a “consolidated urban nucleus.”³² This nucleus was surrounded by unplanned shantytowns, the locally called *musseques*, that were “real midden, without sewage, water, or electricity, [and] without paved roads.”³³ For Fernando Mourão, who has written extensively on the history of the city, this is the moment, by the enforcement of the city center-periphery dialectic that Luanda became a white city: “not only for the growth of the white population, but also in terms of their occupation of the city’s physical space.” The ‘cement city’ becomes predominantly white comparable to the ‘*musseques* city’.³⁴ Furthermore, what Mbembe writes in

³⁰ This question was thoroughly discussed in the Q & A section of a presentation I recently made in Lisbon, in April 4 2014, at Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

³¹ Roque, “Cidade and bairro: classification, constitution and experience of urban space in Angola,” *Social Dynamics*.

³² Magalhães and Gonçalves, *Moderno Tropical*, p. 31.

³³ Amaral, *Ensaio de um Estudo Geográfico da Rede Urbana de Angola*, p. 59.

³⁴ Mourão, *Continuidades e Descontinuidades de um Processo Colonial através de uma Leitura de Luanda*, p. 309.

the context of the urbanization of Johannesburg may also be applied to Luanda: the “rationalization of relations of production (...) and rationalization of the social sphere” would become part of the master plan itself.³⁵

In other words, colonial urbanites conceived of the expansion of the city radiocentrically, which means that the rest of the city should expand from a city center that was called the “consolidated urban core.”³⁶ Such a military term says volumes of the aspirations and dreams of colonial urbanites. The utopia that underlies this city design was that the expansion of the city from the urban core to the periphery would abolish *musseques*, by progressively formalizing them, and pushing their occupants further and further out of the core.

The modernist urban core in Luanda only started to acquire its contemporary shape from 1950 onwards, by precisely eliminating slums from the urban core. Before these years, there were slums in many parts of what later on became the city center, such as Ingombotas, which is now one of the most central neighborhoods. However, modernist architects, in their work to give Luanda a modern outlook, planned the eradication of *musseques* in the city center and their relocation elsewhere. In this sense, the *musseque* was conceived of as temporary problem, not to be dealt with but to be postponed.

Furthermore, although the rhetoric of Portuguese colonialism was based on the inexistence of racial discrimination, the part of the city that people occupied followed the color line. Whites and only few blacks inhabited the urban core, while the *musseques* were predominantly inhabited by blacks and a few whites also called *fubeiros* – those

³⁵ Mbembe, “Aesthetics of Superfluity”, p. 37.

³⁶ Magalhães, *Moderno Tropical*.

who were owners of the little stores in *musseques*. Against the backdrop of the vast majority of studies conducted in Portuguese Africa – paid for by colonial institutions, and policed by censorship –, the Portuguese geographer Ilídio do Amaral lamented that, contrary to the propaganda of *Estado Novo*, Portuguese cities in Africa were missing the opportunity to become “laboratories for the fusion of races, where whites and blacks could harmoniously integrate themselves, around the same ideal: humanity.”³⁷

The unmaking of a modernist city: Luanda, a postmodernist city in its own

The city-form left by the Portuguese was basically designed through the city center-periphery dichotomy, as I have already discussed. This form has prevailed until the late 1990s. One of the most important events in the domain of postcolonial urbanism was probably the emergence of another axis, the suburbs, that cuts through the ways in which colonial city was organized. In a way, Le Corbusian modernist city design was countered by a postcolonial transformation, which, to a greater extent, contrary to the former, has not been foreseen or planned. The first one, I will discuss soon was the emergence of *Luanda Sul* that goes hand and with the formation of new social classes in Angola; the second one, which I will discuss in further chapter, is the mode in which people came up with solutions to supplement the deficiencies and shortcomings of a colonial urban design unable to respond to the demands of postcolonial spatial distribution. The urban forms that came into being, as I will argue later, made Luanda a postmodernist city.

³⁷ Amaral, *Ensaio de um Estudo Geográfico da Rede Urbana de Angola*, p. 85.

On the relationship between colonial and postcolonial urban design, Bissell has contributed a great deal in understanding the ways in which postcolonial cities deal with the legacy of colonial urban planning. He has stressed the fact that beyond the idea of the order that colonial urbanites tried to impose, a number of those plans were awkwardly implemented, or not implemented at all.³⁸ This is true for many colonial cities, such as Luanda, where only a very small fraction of the plans proposed to organize it were implemented. However those parts that were transformed, cleared, and organized, were subjected to a particular vision of culture and politics, which ordered the city by conjoining a space to disorder and colonized spaces. This is why Bissell recognizes that a number of African cities deal with the legacy of a culture of colonial city planning by reflecting more and not less colonial order: “in cruel irony, many Zanzibarians now look to the British and admire their alleged designs, when it was precisely colonialism that laid the uncertainties and disorderly foundations of the present.”³⁹

These “disorderly foundations,” in the case of Luanda, are particularly clear when it comes to *musseques*. I am not affirming, let me emphasize, that *musseques* would not exist otherwise. I follow Mike Davis when he argues that the formations of gigantic informal settlements in many parts of the Third World is the result of rapid urbanization without industrialization, contrary to the case of many cities in the West.⁴⁰ Epstein's argument, in his book on the construction of Brazil's capital, Brasília, goes more to the

³⁸ Bissell, *Engaging colonial Nostalgia*.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 252.

⁴⁰ Davis, *Planet of Slums*.

point. He shows the extent to which the formation of large slums in Brasília, during and after the construction of the city, from mid 1950s, is part of the process of urbanization itself.⁴¹ So *musseques*, in the case of Luanda, are remnant of late colonialism, of the rapid urbanization of Luanda. This was not produced by the ways they came about. *Musseques* were also formed by the discourse that tend to encapsulate them: that residency in the *musseques* was temporary; that these sections of the city should not undergo any kind of intervention; and that *musseques*' dwellers were criminal for illegally building their shacks and houses on plots of public land. What a *musseque* is, and how it should be dealt with, did not change much since the heydays of late colonialism.

Nowadays, for instance, Angolan central government is more concerned with, what has been called, "requalification" (or upgrading) of certain sections of the city, such as the populous municipalities of Sambizanga and Cazenga, by removing their current inhabitants for rebuilding infrastructures, than improving the actual living conditions of people who, legally or illegally, have been in those parts of the cities for decades. This rationale is also apparent in one of the boldest government programmes, the construction of 1,000,000 houses. The initiative was announced in 2008, by the incumbent president José Eduardo dos Santos, during the electoral campaign, and confirmed in January 2010 when, Angola hosted the World Habitat day. In the presence of the under-secretary-general of the United Nations and the executive director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Anna Tibaijuka, dos Santos made a speech in which he outlined the intentions of his government in terms of urban development. For him, the challenge that the country was facing in that domain was

⁴¹ Epstein, *Brasília, plan and reality: a study of planned and spontaneous urban development*.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

elimination of slums as a pre-requisite for turning Luanda into a “harmonious city.”⁴² He announced as well the creation of a government agency, the Program for Management and Projects, to oversee these projects. In the division of labor between the public and the private, the government is only responsible for the construction of 115,000 houses, whereas the private sector for 120,000, and the cooperatives (for example for Veterans), about 80,000. The lion's share, 685,000 would fall in the murky and unspecified category of “direct auto-construction.”⁴³

It is hard to know how many houses have been built since this electoral announcement. The point that interests me is not to criticize the central government for falling short on this promise. For thousands of houses have been built in Luanda since 2008. However, as many have pointed out, a number of the new houses recently built have occupied the space left vacant by the other thousands of houses cleared away. In my view, this constitutes one of those continuities between colonial and postcolonial urbanisms, in which informal housing is more of a problem that has to be totally eradicated.

This problem is apparent in one of the debates among Portuguese postcolonial architects preoccupied with the legacy of modernist architecture in Africa, about whether or not Luanda is effectively a modernist city. More often than not, the response to this question has been in the negative, in that modernist architects did not succeed in imposing their vision over the totality of space, by the utopian eradication of slums,

⁴² dos Santos, http://www.portalangop.co.ao/angola/pt_pt/portal/discursos-do-presidente/discursos/2013/7/34/Discurso-reuniao-Comissao-Nacional-Habitacao,123385d1-5c6f-4879-83c5-052400ae623c.html

⁴³ Ministério do Urbanismo e Habitação, *Relatório Anual de Actividades 2009*.

through expanding the urban core.⁴⁴ Modernist architecture, as it has been abundantly documented, conceived of space as a *tabula rasa*, a city that had first to be destroyed so that a new one reflecting the planners' idea of social order could come into being. In terms of postcolonial urbanism, this permanence of colonial forms provides two kinds of readings. On the one hand, there is the repetition of the solutions that the colonial urbanists contrived to deal with the question of the *musseques*. Postcolonial decision-makers are as convinced as colonial architects and urban planners were that *musseques* are a temporary problem, which become solved the moment their inhabitants can be moved elsewhere.

However, the history of postcolonial urbanism is not only one of repetition and imitation of its colonial counterpart. Whereas the discourse on *musseques* did not change considerably, the postcolonial government had to confront new problems, posed by a challenging demography, for instance. The population growth of the city led the government to look elsewhere for territorially expanding the city. So, since independence, and particularly since the end of the war, in 2008, the central government has been less preoccupied with the conservation of the urban forms left by colonialism, and more with the creation of new forms. In a way, postcolonial urbanism moved further, by eliding the city center-*musseque* dichotomy, through the addition of one more layer of complexity in the city, the suburbs, or *Luanda Sul*.

Part of what has taken place in Luanda is that the clear demarcation between city center and periphery was not longer applicable after independence. To some extent,

⁴⁴ This question was hotly debated in a recent presentation in Lisbon, at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

some *musseques* have been upgraded by the effort of their own occupants to the point that in some their sections, in places such as Kwanzas or Palanca, they are not dissimilar from many parts of the city center. Conversely, sections of the urban core have degraded to such an extent that it has become common to hear there are sections of Luanda that have been turned “vertical *musseques*.” Explanations for this state of affairs abound. Important to note here is that the colonial state, in Angola, particularly in Luanda, had its particular ways to keep intact the artificiality of the divide between the city center and the *musseque*. There were social privileges that hid racial inequalities, which were spatially translated into the division of the city between those parts in which the one and the others could occupy, live in, and even circulate. In Luanda of the 1960s, for instance, there were informal curfews, time for blacks to leave the city center, the obligation to carry passes, and even lookout stations strategically positioned throughout the “cement city” to monitor the circulation of people in the city.

However, this order of things only worked until 1975, when the country became independent and the socialist regime led by the late president Agostinho Neto took over power. A significant part of the settler population (and some Angolans too) for whom these modern urban amenities had been built, left the country, in a hurry, and those Angolans who had before occupied the slums, gradually occupied the apartment buildings of the city center. In a few years, the city center entered into a process of virtual collapse. Many reasons may account for this. Suffice it to say here that the out flux of population from Angola to Portugal had deprived the new republic from a great deal of skilled workers. To understand this, we have to bear in mind that during late colonialism in Angola a number of jobs, such as driving a taxi, were reserved for settlers, who

came to occupy this middle strata between colonial rulers and colonized subjects. With independence, consequently, the people whose work was to oversee the conservation of the city - such as carpenters, electricians, civil engineers, and even the architects that had planned the city - had left the country.

The intensification of civil war, in early 1980s, only worsened the urban crisis in the sense that it brought to the shores of Luanda thousands and thousands of people. It is true that a number of those internally displaced people built their informal settlements in places where none had lived before, in municipalities such as Cacuaco and Viana, in abandoned railroad stations, and even on waste dumps. But it is also true that many of these internally displaced people were sheltered by relatives who were living in the city center, and who allowed them to build shacks in terraces, or carve up rooms inside their apartments and mansions. Added to the natural demographic growth, in a country that has the highest in Africa, Luanda, from a city that was built for over a half million inhabitants, it has now about six million.⁴⁵

It has been considered an almost miracle that the city center of Luanda has not collapsed yet, despite the fact that some buildings no longer are in a condition to be inhabited. A general sense of urgency only came about among Luandans when the DNIC building – the headquarters of the criminal police – collapsed in 2009. Hundred of people, especially women detained for petty crimes – such as street vending – died. The eminent collapse of a number of sections of the city brought about a very curious response. It provoked a sort of anxiety, on the side of investors, real state dealers, and

⁴⁵ <http://www.citypopulation.de/Angola.html> (last accessed April 30 2014).

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

members of the government (in a country where corruption is rampant these categories tend to conflate) that once these derelict buildings are vacated, there will be more space for erecting glass-box towers that are coming to be part of the new Luanda's skyline. (This is important because it shows, as I have argued earlier, a constant in terms of the ways urban restructuring has been viewed during and after colonialism. Worn-out buildings and houses are not to upkeep, but to raze and in their place bring about other forms.⁴⁶)

It is important to notice that the collapse of the city center, or the consolidated urban core, that is now called the historical center of the city, did not prompt a serious effort to stop this tide, but, it has led the central government to transfer the construction effort to another part of the city, called *Luanda Sul*. This has been, in my view, one of the most important aspects of postcolonial urbanism, in that it has broken the city center-periphery dichotomy. We have seen the extent to which colonial urbanism has built the city around these lines. So what has changed in contemporary Luanda is the creation of one more axis, suburban Luanda, in the southern part of the city, then called *Luanda Sul*. Although the Portuguese had already planned to expand the city to this direction, this part of the town only started to be inhabited when the Presidential Palace was moved to the city center, in the central nerve of colonial power, *Cidade Alta*, and Futungo de Belas, once the presidential complex, was open for development projects.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Abbas, "Building on disappearance."

⁴⁷ *Cidade Alta* was the official residence of colonial governors. But that also the place where the first president of Angola, Agostinho Neto, lived. Dos Santos, however, who replaced Agostinho Neto as the head of the state in 1979, moved the location of his presidency to Futungo de Belas, to the summer residency of the colonial governor. So in 1996, the president of the republic decided to move his palace to the center of the city, and that area of the city was open to construction.

To make this discussion more substantial, one has also to add that this development has not taken place on a simply urbanistic perspective. It has been economic too, since it has coincided, and overlapped, with the formation of a bourgeois and a middle class. This process began to take shape in late 1980s, during the crises of socialism in Angola, when oil prices plummeted to levels that threaten national sovereignty,⁴⁸ and when voices inside the state apparatus defended that the country should change course. Capitalism, instead of socialism, ought to be embraced. It was also recognized that Angolan would never become a full-fledged capitalism economy without a proper bourgeoisie and a middle class. The problem was that there were no such classes in Angola, for the Portuguese did not only prevent Angolans from accumulating wealth, but they also conceived of colonialism as that process in which settlers would form the middle strata. For many people in the government, then, the state should foster and support the emergence of bourgeois and middle classes. Moving from socialism to capitalism in Angola meant to a great extent the elimination of the barriers for personal wealth accumulation. Housing, as will become apparent, was instrumental in this process.

The process of class formation is itself inscribed in the design of the houses in *Luanda Sul*. The architectural forms that predominate in many of the projects of *Luanda Sul* signal the recent transformations of forms of Angolan's habitation. Whereas during late colonialism, and the first decade of independence, the city's predominant architectural forms were either the housing block and the single family residence, in the cement city, or the shack in *musseques*, *Luanda Sul* brought about a radical innovation:

⁴⁸ Oil account for more than 90% of Angolan GDP. For such a discussion, see, for instance, Hodges, *Angola: From Afro-Stalinism to petro-diamond capitalism*, Indiana University Press.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

the gated community, or condominium, protected by barbed wire and private security firms. Inside these walls dwellers can enjoy some urban amenities that the city could no longer offer, such as gardens, parks, and sometimes, as in the case for the most affluent ones, swimming pools and tennis courts. This urban model had been imported primarily by South African construction firms, in their first experiences of internationalization after the end of the Apartheid era and the normalization of economic relations with neighboring countries that ensued.

The first clients for these firms were a number of Angolans, linked in various ways to the government who had the opportunity to travel to South Africa, on official trips, for business, or holidays.⁴⁹ There, they contacted South African firms and purchased the houses, which were later assembled in Luanda. The first houses were assembled on the site where the Presidential Palace formerly stood, in *Futungo de Belas*, and, they are still there, owned by retired generals. Then, the Construction Brigade of the Presidential *Casa Militar* (Military Branch) started to build a number of condominiums, namely the *Projecto Nova Vida* (New Life Project). And only later did oil companies enter the business. Sonangol (the state owned oil company) and Chevron, for instance, along with state-owned banks, built condominiums for their own workers: the motivation for doing this was to seek ways to find cheaper accommodations for their personnel, particularly for the foreign labor force, other than the prohibitively priced housing of Luanda's cement city.

⁴⁹ Angolans and South Africans were contenders in the cold war. South Africa invaded Angola in 1975, Cuba sent to Angola hundreds of thousands soldiers to defend Angolan sovereignty. In the late 1990s, an agreement between South Africa and Cuba stipulated the pulling out of Cuban forces, and accelerated Namibia's independence. During those years, South Africa was a county in which Angolan citizens could not set foot, since their passport had a note saying: "valid to all countries, except South Africa". For the involvement of Cuba, and South Africa in Angola in the context of cold war, see Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

Luanda Sul, in the beginning, looked like a viable solution to tackle the problem of speculation, since the increase of housing supply, as it was anticipated, would bring down the prices. But *Luanda Sul* only worked in the first years when the number of its inhabitants was relatively low. And Luanda Sul, above all, was conceived as a residential area, with limited commercial services. Those who moved to that part of the city had faced a daily commute to town for work and to take their children to school, since the business area was still located in downtown Luanda. Planners thought that expanding the network of freeways that link Luanda to *Luanda Sul* would solve the problem. However, the problem was not only an issue of access to the city. Even if the ride from both points is short, most Luanda's roads are narrow, and get congested quickly. So *Luanda Sul* had to be totally re-planned, not only to accommodate roads, and freeways, but, more importantly, to accommodate a number of services so as to prevent their inhabitants from having to go to Luanda on an everyday basis.

Very recently, in an interview given to a private newspaper, a leading Angolan economist, Alves da Rocha, made the case that the expansion of Luanda southwards (*Luanda Sul*) has been the main device for siphoning off financial resources from the state to a handful of private entities. The modalities of those transfers have been various, from the simpler to the more elaborated. Bornito de Sousa, high-ranking member of MPLA and currently the acting Minister of Territorial Affairs, has explained in a journal column how he became wealthy: by moving to the new house given to him on account of the job he holds, and renting his old house, in one of the most expensive neighborhood of Luanda, Alvalade, probably to an oil company for a price that can reach \$200,000

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

a year.⁵⁰ Angolan laws concerning foreign investment are very permissive, and allow holders of public office to do business with foreigner investors.⁵¹ Most Brazilian or Portuguese firms investing in Angola have, among their board members, various Angolan politicians. Furthermore, Angola does not produce much construction material locally, and every item (including cement) is imported. The technique for accumulation here is to overprice construction materials, for instance, and transfer the difference to private accounts in western banks.⁵²

One of the consequences of corruption and the traffic of influence in the construction sector is that it is only the state, through state owned companies, and oil companies that can invest in this sector. As such, housing in these new projects is so expensive that very few Angolans can afford it, thus reinforcing distribution as an important political tool. For instance, the market price for housing for the middle class is around \$200,000, for *Condomínio Nosso Lar* (Our Home Condominium), and \$400,000 for *Condomínio Bem Morar* (Good Living Condominium). Those houses are out of reach for the Angolan middle class, unless the prospective buyers have access to a bank loan. But access to loans from banks is very restricted. Besides the fact that interest rates can reach up to 25 percent, only 0,5 percent of the monetary mass that circulates through the

⁵⁰ “Look: there are many politicians, members of the cabinet and party leaders, who rented their houses and move to state-owned condominiums and received a rent of \$25,000 or \$30,000 a month from the oil sector”. Alves da Rocha, Interview to *Semanário Angolense*, Jun 05 2010, p. 14.

⁵¹ It was not for the law per se. But for the interpretation of the law, by creating two regimes of investments, in which foreigner investors would pay less money to open a business in Angola if they could have an Angolan partner.

⁵² According to a recent report published by Global Financial Integrity, this scheme accounts for one of the main devices by which financial recourses are siphoned off the country. Only in 2010, 4,6 billion dollars were unaccounted for. See <http://www.zwelangola.com/index-lr.php?id=5582>.

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

Angolan bank system is in the form of loans.⁵³ So as a member of the middle class, the only way to access a house is through a working relation to one of the state companies, such as Sonangol. But this is political. MPLA forces workers of state owned oil companies to become MPLA members. Furthermore, not even the urban poor, those who apparently have nothing to trade, are out of reach from this political juggernaut. For instance, last year, after several months of indecision, the government finally announced the official price at which the social housing will be sold: \$40,000. And this in a country where the beneficiaries are unemployed, even underemployed, or, if they are employed likely make around \$100/month, the official minimum wage.⁵⁴

In a recent development, Sonangol was given control over a housing construction project, through a newly created subsidiary called Sonangol-Imobiliária (Sonangol-Real Estate). This political decision shows that the Angolan government intends to develop the housing sector along the same lines that oil production has been developed. Oil is produced offshore, by foreign companies, and the vast majority of the population is ignorant of the legal niceties that preside over its production, and the money that it brings to the country.⁵⁵ Technology and a specialized labor force are imported. It is likely the same will hold true for construction projects which will be given (as has been the case so far) to Portuguese, Brazilian and Chinese construction firms.

The best example to illustrate this assumption is the construction of the housing project Kilamba City. The Angolan government, through Sonangol, contracted the China

⁵³ With "15 commercial banks operating on the Angolan market, bank credit in 2006 accounted for just 0,5 per cent of the country's GDP" "Angolan financial system in the service of development", *Banking in Review*, Deloitte Angola, 2007, p. 9

⁵⁴ See, for instance, http://www.angonoticias.com/full_headlines.php?id=27266.

⁵⁵ Ferguson, "Seeing like an Oil Company."

Draft: Do not circulate without author's permission

International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC), and together they launched the \$3.5bn construction of a residential project to house 200,000 inhabitants. One of the most ambitious projects developed by the Chinese in Angola, it involves 10,000 workers, of which only 4,000 are Angolans.⁵⁶ The first phase of the project was inaugurated in July 11, 2010, by the president of the republic, José Eduardo dos Santos. Kilamba, located twenty kilometers south of Luanda's center, stretches through an area of 52 square kilometers and it is expected to add 20,000 residential apartments and 246 business units to Luanda's urban stock. After its completion, this new district will include 24 pre-schools, nine primary schools and eight high schools. It will also be equipped with two electrical substations, 77 transformer stations, water supply stations a sewage treatment plant and infrastructure for drainage.⁵⁷

It is not only from the point of view of infrastructure that Kilamba will be self-sufficient - and cut off from the rest of the country. The management of Kilamba will be rooted in an idea that has gained currency in the Global South, pertaining to the formation of Charter Cities. This, for instance, will be the case of Cité du Fleuve city that is being built near Kinshasa. According to Filip de Boeck, "if all goes according to plan, the latter will probably be accorded the administrative status of a new "commune," and will be subject to their own special bylaws,"⁵⁸ for it "echoes many of the ideas behind concepts such as the "charter city," that is, a special urban reform zone that would allow governments of developing countries to adopt new systems of rules and establish cities that can drive economic progress in the rest of the country." Only part of this holds true for Kilamba.

⁵⁶ Power, "Angola 2025."

⁵⁷ CCCS, *Evaluating China's FOFAC commitment in Africa and mapping the way ahead*, p. 28

⁵⁸ Boeck, "Inhabiting the ocular ground", p. 227.

If profit (by speculation) is the innermost nature of Charter Cities, Kilamba may be different in this regard. Ultimately, Sonangol, the state-owned Angolan company that is overseeing the production of Angolan oil, is not particularly interested in making profit out of real estate. But the government, through Sonangol, may exploit the distribution of housing and space for economic ventures, and for political gain. According to Bornito de Sousa, the Minister of Territorial Administration, it will be the first rehearsal in the government's attempt to decentralize the state administration, through the formation of autarchies. Those autarchies will have financial autonomy, elect their own management bodies and produce by-laws. When Joaquim Marques, was appointed, by the president of the republic, as "President" of the administration of Kilamba a position that does not exist in Angolan administrative law, as cities are administered by governors –the political contours over Kilamba became more visible. The political party Bloco Democrático issued a communiqué denouncing the usurpation by the presidency of the republic of legislative power, insofar as it is for the parliament to legislate on matters concerning local powers. Furthermore, the Bloco Democrático also accused the Executive of forcing in a "non-elected administrative commission to use housing in the new city for electoral purposes, giving access to houses to members of the ruling party who know already how to get access to them."⁵⁹

On postmodernist urbanism

⁵⁹ http://club-k.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8245:bloco-democratico-critica-mpla-por-pretender-fazer-autarquicas-apanas-no-kilamba&catid=23:politica&Itemid=600

To some extent, a number of postcolonial cities are formed by problematic aspects left by colonial urbanisms on to which layers of postcolonial solutions have also been added. In this sense, one of the principal features of cities such as Luanda is the extreme fragmentation. So the question here becomes: how to make sense of this through an ethnographic description? In my estimation, as I have said before, this begs for a kind of explanation that is simultaneously ontological and epistemological. And here is precisely the point at which postmodernism may be of help. Postmodernism, in my usage, does not refer to any *époque* or age that comes after modernism. But this provides the tools for a critique of the totalizing projects of modernity, in the ways in which Jameson has suggested. This is particularly interesting when it comes to the subject that I am partially dealing with here in this chapter: architecture. Frederic Jameson has written that he only become conscious of the particular question raised by postmodernism through the critique of modernist architecture. Diane Ghirardo, in his assessment of architecture after the modernist movement, says that the problem with what has been called “postmodernist architecture” is that, unlike its predecessor, this kind of architecture has not created any theory. For her postmodernist architecture is to a great extent a critique of modernism, or Le Corbusier.⁶⁰ It has for the most part built on the legacy of modernist architecture, as a way to disavow it. More interestingly, she also says that the tool for such a critique come not from architecture, but from social sciences especially through the continental philosophy of Derrida also known as deconstruction. In other words, a great deal of the architecture after modernism has imposed itself as a critique of the grandiloquent plans of Le Corbusier and the likes.

⁶⁰ Ghirardo, *Architecture after modernism*.

In this sense, postmodernism constitutes a theoretical device that allows a material critique of the modernist project in Luanda, as, at the same time, it opens the way for a critical engagement with the “residual traces” of Luanda’s modernism. For many authors, one of the problems posed by postmodernism, is that it is no longer a theory.⁶¹ However, this is what makes this “theory” interesting. The question that is important here is that after modernism it is no longer possible to write grand narratives, or theories that explain everything.⁶²

Modernist architecture is modern in the sense of the ways that it takes the question of the subject, or more specifically, the creator. The architect is here taken as a god-like creature. He is the social reformer, or the form-giver.⁶³ The second thing is that modernist architecture was only possible at a particular conjuncture. Colonialism, in the case of Angola, and the expansion of capitalism, obviated the fact that cities could be created in this way, through the materialization of such a vision. This was the context in which the city could be thought of through the perspective of a Master Planner, to whom the removal of entire groups of people from certain sections of the city is simply a matter of aesthetics.

One of my intentions in this chapter was then to look at contemporary Luanda through the schisms between modernism and postmodernism. Luanda constitutes a very interesting locale to undertake such a project. If postmodernism is about fragmentation and collage, Luanda is such an important place to see these processes at work. Luanda is today a city far more fragmented than before, where there is no longer a center from

⁶¹ Girardo, *Architecture after modernism*.

⁶² Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism*.

⁶³ Ghirardo, *Architecture After Modernism*.

which the totality of the urban can be experienced. In splintering urbanism, Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin discuss the extent to which it is no longer possible to think of space as a totality as in the times of the master plan (their example of such a practice is the vision New Yorker Robert Moses).⁶⁴ They relate this issue with changes in the structure of the global economy, in which Keynesianism has lost its appeal. Splintering urbanism in their understanding speaks to the fragmentation of the urban in which what is going on now is a process of unbundling of infrastructures. Once centralized networked infrastructures, are now being unbundled for privileging certain sections of the urban whole. This process has been used to explain new trends in southern cities, especially the emergence of the culture of the gated communities.

⁶⁴ Graham and Marvin, *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*.

Bibliography

- Amaral, I., 1962, *Ensaio de um estudo geográfico da rede urbana de Angola*, Junta de inverstigações do ultramar.
- Abbas, A., 1994, Building on disappearance: Hong Kong architecture and the city, *Public Culture*, 6(3), pp. 441-64.
- Bissell, W.C., 2005, Engaging colonial nostalgia, *Cultural Anthropology*, 20(2), pp. 215-48.
- Bissell, W.C., 2011, *Urban design, chaos, and colonial power in Zanzibar*, Indiana University Press.
- de Boeck, F., 2011, Inhabiting ocular ground: Kinshasa's future in the light of Congo's spectral urban politics, *Cultural Anthropology*, 26(2), pp. 263-86.
- Buck-Morss, S., 1991, *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, Mit Press.
- Castelo, C., 2012, *O modo português de estar no mundo. O luso-tropicalismo ea ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961)*, Lisboa, CITCEM-Publicações.
- Davis, 2006, *Planet of Slums*, New York, Verso.
- De Matos, de Matos, N. & de Matos, J.M.R.N., 1926, *A província de Angola*, Maranus,.
- Fanon, F., 2004, *The wretched of the earth*, Grove Press.
- Epstein, D.G., 1973, *Brasilia, plan and reality: a study of planned and spontaneous urban development*, University of California Press.
- Fernandes, J.M., 2002, *Geração africana: arquitectura e cidades em Angola e Moçambique, 1925-1975*, Lisboa, Livros Horizonte.
- Ferguson, J., 2005, "Seeing like an oil company: space, security, and global capital in neoliberal Africa," *American Anthropologist*, 107(3), pp. 377-82.
- Girhardo, D., 1999, *Architecture after modernism*, Ghirardo, D. & Motak.
- Gleijeses, P., 2002, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*, Univ of North Carolina Press.
- Hodges, T., 2001, *Angola: From Afro-Stalinism to petro-diamond capitalism*, Indiana University Press.
- Jackson and Oppong, Jackson, I. & Assasie Oppong, R., 2014, The planning of late colonial village housing in the tropics: Tema Manhean, Ghana, *Planning Perspectives* (ahead-of-print), pp. 1-25.
- Lefebvre, H., 1991, *Production of Space*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Luggard, *The dual mandate in Africa*.
- Luhmann, N., 1995, *Social systems*, Stanford University Press.
- Graham, S. & Marvin, S., 2001, *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures*,

technological mobilities and the urban condition, Routledge.

Mbembé, J.-A. & Nuttall, S., 2004, Writing the world from an African metropolis, *Public culture*, 16(3), pp. 347-72.

Moorman, M.J., 2008, *Intonations: a social history of music and nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to recent times*, Ohio University Press.

Moreira, A., 1955, *Administração da justiça aos indígenas*, Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca.

Power, M., 2012, Angola 2025: The Future of the “World's Richest Poor Country” as Seen through a Chinese Rear-View Mirror, *Antipode*, 44(3), pp. 993-1014.

Roque, S., 2012, Cidade and bairro: classification, constitution and experience of urban space in Angola, *Social Dynamics*, 37(3), pp. 332-48.

Setha M. Law, Imaging and theorizing the city, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1996, 25: 383: 409, p. 384.

Swyngedouw, E., 2006, Circulations and metabolisms:(hybrid) natures and (cyborg) cities, *Science as Culture*, 15(2), pp. 105-21.

Watson, V., 2013, African urban fantasies: dreams or nightmares? *Environment and Urbanization*.

Wright, G., 1991, *The politics of design in French colonial urbanism*, University of Chicago Press.