



## INTRODUCTION: RETHINKING LOCALITIES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ANGOLA

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Prolonged colonialisation and conflicts have left significant marks on contemporary rural Southern Africa. In particular, Angola has experienced rapid economic growth after the civil war ended in 2002; however, it also faces many challenges of development related to mobility and settlement.

In the late colonial era, Angola was one of the largest exporters of agricultural products in Africa when oil and diamonds were discovered. Oil and diamond production eventually had a major impact on foreign and military policies (Hodges 2001). Internal migration was initiated and carried out in accordance with state and private plans, relying, in particular, on both recruitment and forced resettlement to mines, plantations, and other agricultural activities (Tvedten 1997). In the aftermath of the independence, emphasis was placed on the development of resources, such as oil and diamonds, and later on, after the end of the civil war, in physical infrastructure by the government, without sufficient coordination with international development assistance and humanitarian aid. In this respect, Angola is notable, compared to other sub-Saharan African countries, for the intersection of both public and private dynamics, which are exogenous and endogenous to the characteristics of migration and settlement and are increasingly active under government initiatives.

In Angola, rural communities have been recurrently disrupted and reconstructed by these encounters and movements, external and national development projects, endeavours of government and international agencies, and through local dynamics (Ngongo 2012). As local communities lead different types of lives, marked by multiple dynamic strategies, it is not possible to categorise a single shared experience of colonialisation or war in Angola; nor can one say that developmental projects affect the rural population equally. However, previous studies have not focused on the various localities of rural development in Angola from multi-disciplinary perspectives through both field research and reference-based research.

This special issue focuses on not only the features of a variety of mobilities in rural contexts but also on the practices and strategies adopted by the diverse populations to reconstruct their relationships locally, with the state, and with the global sectors. It also examines the local realities and dynamics of rural development in Angola from the colonial era to the present.

This issue includes the work of anthropologists, historians, and political scientists, and focuses on new urban areas, reconstructed colonial rural settlements, and rural villages in post-war Angola. The aim is to understand national and international strategies for rural development, complementary relationships among multiple actors, and the socio-political aspects of mobile people in Angola from various perspectives. Each of the authors will



describe a variety of local features and discuss policy implications at levels varying from macro to local, as well as the dynamics of interaction among local populations, the state, and global actors.

In her paper, Akiyo Aminaka analyses the post-civil-war rebuilding of large-scale agricultural development projects originally introduced under Portuguese colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique. From the 1950s onwards, large-scale agricultural development with settlement occurred in Portuguese colonies in contrast to the successive achievement of independence by colonies in Africa, where large-scale rural development was also initiated as part of post-independence modernisation. Despite being different, the development actors had one thing in common: they referred to agricultural development in Israel, which was the then most recently established country. The revival of *Colonato de Cela* in Angola in the 2000s helped the reintegration and resettlement of civil war ex-combatants. However, most of the properties were transferred from ex-combatants to civilians during the project. The paper details how states negotiate the challenges faced by them immediately after regime change and points out the commonalities in the states' policies in various phases.

Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues's paper draws attention to the fact that large-scale privately led rural and urban development is not motivated by constructive planning for sustainable local development but is frequently fed by disposal and extraction concentrated in the enclaves of resource extraction. The paper shows that state-led planning and practical improvements in urban infrastructure and services can catalyse individual and family investments that can be mobilised for local development, directly influencing the perspectives of urban residents. Recognising the dangers of insecurity, and the impact of the 2014 economic downturn, it illustrates the importance of understanding and relativising the role of large-scale private investment in the production and management of urbanism, and of the state in the production as has happened in Angola and other sub-Saharan African cities.

Rumiko Murao's paper focuses on the post-conflict restructuring of Mbunda people's societies, particularly in eastern rural areas where development projects rarely reached. Since their return in 2002, the Mbunda have been in *limbo*, hosted by their kin, chiefs, and strangers who settled in rural villages, seeking help from humanitarian aid and the national development program while relying heavily on the chief, who was educated in Portuguese, and an MPLA soldier. In particular, it was new for strangers of the Mbunda community to live in the same limbo after repatriation. Furthermore, returners coexist with migrants and former soldiers with disabilities. Thus, this study clarifies that Mbunda reintegration is characterised by diversified social relationships among people from various backgrounds. It further explains through field research the process of achieving socioeconomic stability for the returned farmers as an endogenous reintegration of the Mbunda people after their repatriation to post-war Angola.

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