DOI:10.1111/1468-2427.12854

– **URBAN STATES:** The Presidency and Planning in Luanda, Angola

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Abstract

While state institutions are involved in planning and governance in African cities, their relevance in shaping urban life is sometimes questioned given what residents often experience as the extreme incapacity of state agencies. In response, some scholars have sought to rethink the nature of institutions, while others have shifted their attention to the role of the everyday in the making of cities. This article builds on literature that seeks to better understand the links between quotidian actions and institutional constraints, in order to critically assess how state power is exercised in African cities. It does this by tracking the Presidency's role in shaping Angola's capital, Luanda, in the 1990s and 2000s. The Presidency consolidated power through the urban landscape even in moments when it seemed state presence had totally collapsed. The article therefore shows that a more nuanced understanding of the logics of power in African cities can reveal the ongoing significance of state institutions to their making, even in contexts where the everyday experience of state capacity is one of absence or negligence.

On 15 September 1981, guests gathered to witness Angola's President José Eduardo dos Santos unveil a model for a mausoleum to house the sarcophagus of Agostinho Neto, the country's first post-independence president. The 110-metre tower would loom over a 52-acre complex, dubbed 'Revolution Square', designed for the New Political Administration Centre (Novo Centro Político Administratívo, see Figure 1). Among other constructions, the square would include a Presidential Palace, a Palace of the Congress, the Ministry of Defence, state protocol, and security and judicial institutions (Eduardo, 1981: 1). The complex's construction was set to begin in early 1982, to be completed by September 1985. Revolution Square, however, never quite materialized. The mausoleum was only completed in August 2012. By then, most of the planned buildings were scattered in and around the *Cidade Alta*, the administrative heart of the colonial-era city, rather than in the envisioned square. Some, such as the Presidential Palace, had been renovated in the 1990s. Others, such as the Palace of Justice and the new National Assembly, were only constructed after 2002, following the end of the country's 27-year civil war (1975–2002).

Despite the original plan not being realized in its entirety, the completion of projects associated with it indicated a longue-durée logic emanating from within the state with regard to urban planning. This consistency might appear surprising given the experience of state incapacity that shapes much of everyday life in Angola. However, it is precisely this awkward coexistence between coherence and incapacity that this article takes as its starting point for a critical assessment of how the significance of official institutions can be understood in cities such as Luanda, where their ability to govern effectively has been heavily questioned.

I would like to thank the participants of the Wits Interdisciplinary Seminar in the Humanities at WiSER, the Sociology, Anthropology and Development Studies Seminar at the University of Johannesburg, and the conference on Urbanism in the Global South held at Cambridge University for their comments and feedback. I would also like to thank Camaren Peter for feedback and suggestions. The article was completed during a residency at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (Stias). The research underpinning this article was made possible by the generous support of a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (Grant Number 1023797), a Wenner-Gren Foundation Doctoral Fieldwork Grant, the Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship, with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and an American Council of Learned Societies, African Humanities Program Postdoctoral Fellowship.

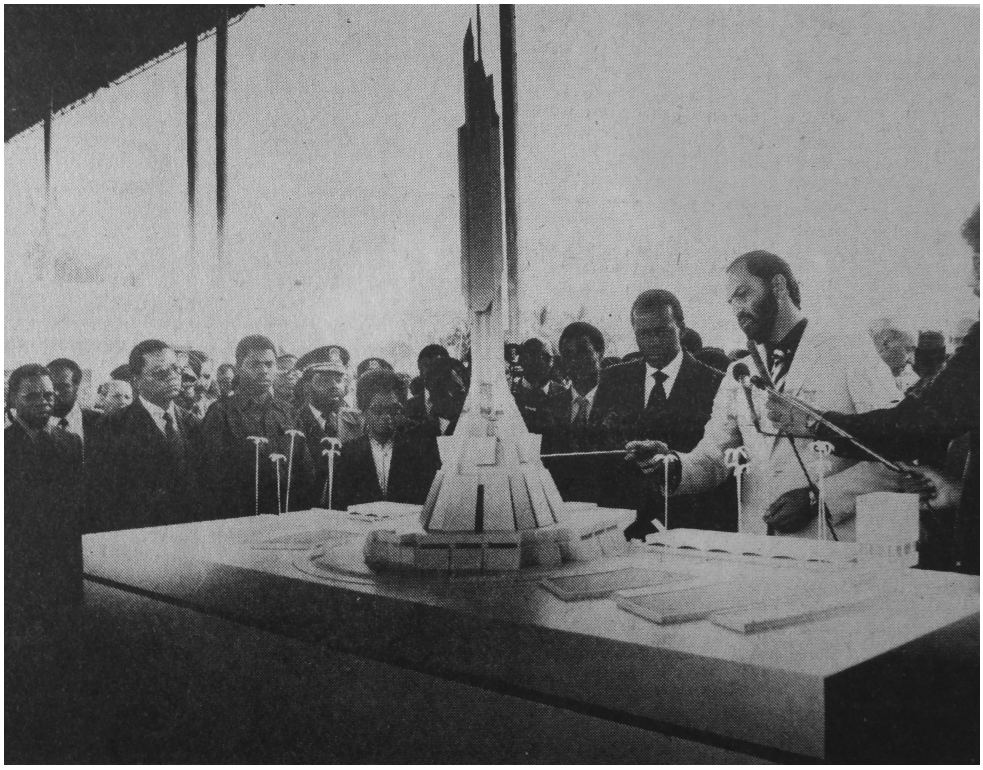

FIGURE 1 President Dos Santos (to the left of the man in the white suit) looking at the model of the mausoleum of Agostinho Neto following the symbolic laying of the first brick (*source*: *Jornal de Angola* 18 September 1982: 3)

The role of state institutions in the making of African cities has been the focus of much writing. While it is evident that these institutions are involved in planning, their seeming incapacity and the resulting poor implementation of policy has caused some scholars to question the relevance of 'the state' to understanding everyday life in African cities (Simone, 2001; De Boeck and Plissart, 2004). Where the significance of official institutions has been recognized, scholars have argued for the need to profoundly rethink what institutions are and how they work. Authority has been shown to be fractured across a variety of official and unofficial institutions, whose power and capacity are often unstable (Lund, 2006; Goodfellow, 2017). Consequently, the kinds of disciplinary practices that emerge from strong institutions and produce experiences of power, predictability and conformity are often simply absent. The result is that what Mitchell, (1991: 78) refers to as 'the state–society boundary', that emic distinction through which 'the state' is performatively delineated from a 'society' that is imagined to be qualitatively separate from it, is not only analytically difficult to support but often not experienced as relevant.

One of the results of this lack of a clear delineation of 'state effects' (Mitchell, 1991) has been a growing focus on what scholars refer to as the 'everyday'. Everyday approaches[1] see urban transformations as the product of residents' quotidian, often unconscious, actions. 'The everyday' is both an object of analysis and a methodological approach, positioning itself in contrast to fixed systems. By focusing on emergent

1 For an excellent overview of work on 'the everyday' see Cirolia and Scheba (2019).

practices, everyday approaches try to think past normative models of the urban, seeing actions and forms being constituted from the ground up. In contexts where state presence is extremely fractured, the everyday is then often presented as the primary shaper of the urban. Such approaches have been powerful in explaining the processual and incremental making of cities, and especially the significance of informality. However, they have been criticized for failing to adequately take account of the significance of structural constraints in the production of the everyday (Cirolia and Scheba, 2019). Even those who have embraced such approaches, have argued that they tend to simplify the workings of official institutions, often implicitly positioning 'the everyday' as qualitatively separate and in opposition to them. The result is, Quayson (2014: 6) argues, an obfuscation of the relationships between official institutional apparatuses and the 'ephemera' of everyday life. As a result, literature mobilizing 'the everyday' often fails to deal adequately with how power is distributed across scale, and largely elides micro-practices' imbrications with official institutions

This article uses a study of the broader effects of the Political Administration Centre Project (PACP) as a springboard to make a case for the importance of state institutions in the shaping of African cities and, more broadly, to contribute to a growing literature which seeks to track the relationship between 'everyday practices and structural logics' (Cirolia and Scheba, 2019: 607). It does this by showing how, even in a context where state institutions at first glance appeared to have largely ceased to manage urban growth and form, they continued to have a significant influence over planning and partially contributed to growing urban informalization. The article does this by tracking how state institutions shaped Luanda over two decades through the PACP. It thereby shows that the distribution of power between state institutions was vital in producing incapacity at the provincial and municipal level, contributing to the rise of informality in the city. Informality and the experience of state incapacity, often analysed through the lens of the everyday, were partially (although not solely) generated by state institutions. Equally, while the local state was incapacitated, the institutions of the central state, especially the Presidency, grew stronger. The article therefore more broadly suggests the need to reassess how state efficacy, presence, absence and weakness are described and understood in studies of African cities, given that the lack of normative 'state effects' (Mitchell, 1991) is not enough to enable one to assume the weakness of state institutions. It is through tracking these disparate institutions that it is possible to bridge the seeming divide between the everyday experience of 'state absence' and the nevertheless inexplicable strength of certain official institutions. Only in this way is it really possible to understand how cities have been remade and in whose interests.

While multiple sources, including interviews, legislation, and newspapers, were drawn upon, the article leans extensively on information published in the *Jornal de Angola*, the state newspaper and the country's only daily, copies of which are housed at the Luanda Municipal Library, bound together by month and year. I read through three decades of newspapers to piece together the timeline of events and projects described in this article. While the liberal use of state newspapers slants analysis towards state institutions' versions of history, and therefore, in the case of Angola, the ruling MPLA's (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) version, the need to rely on them is largely due to the difficulty in accessing other sources for Angola's post-independence period. This is not simply because of a lack of record keeping, but because significant levels of suspicion are often directed towards researchers. Published work on Luanda during the 1990s remains scarce and is generally limited to broader overviews of the city or policy-oriented publications. The *Jornal de Angola*, therefore, provided the most reliable record currently available to track the creation of projects and government offices, and their relationships to each other. This information has been supplemented, when possible, with interviews, records from NGOs, and the excellent work produced by

a new generation of scholars working on Luanda (see especially Croese, 2013; Cardoso, 2015; and Morreira, 2018).[2]

The state and African cities

The question of the roles of state institutions in the making of African cities has implicitly lain at the centre of many theorizations of African urbanisms over the last two decades. Much contemporary literature hinges on a historical argument which suggests that a fundamental shift in urban governance and policies occurred in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis and subsequent structural adjustment policies. The resulting explosion of the informal economy and withdrawal of education and health services have been read as indicators of the collapse of a meaningful state presence across most African cities. In the state's stead, new forms of regulation and popular culture emerged to cope with the sudden vacuum of authority. These processes, scholars argue, reconfigured the very bases of sociality across Africa. The unofficial, ephemeral and provisional came to be the realms through which life was experienced (Mbembe and Roitman, 1995; Diouf, 2008).

The result of this rise of the informal and seeming collapse of official capacity has generally been interpreted in two ways. The first perspective is what Freund (2007: 154) has referred to as the 'catastrophist view', or Diouf (2008: 346) as 'the pessimists'. In this vision, the effects of economic crisis are reduced to descriptions of chaos, leading to representations of African cities as 'dysfunctional and dangerous' (Freund, 2007: 142). In contrast, and partially in response to the pessimists, the work of the 'optimists' arose (Diouf, 2008: 346).

The optimists' work is optimistic not because the scholars involved view all developments in African cities as positive, but rather because, by attempting to move the debate away from what African cities lack to how they work, they reject the pessimists' framing of the African city as pathological (Robinson, 2002; Mbembe and Nuttall, 2008). This has involved a rethinking of the very historical trajectories within which African cities are framed. Rejecting teleological accounts of 'urbanization' that idealized the Euro-American city as the end point of history (Ferguson, 1999), the optimists have focused on what Jean-Baptiste (2014: 6) drawing on Simone (2004) describes as 'urban becoming', that is, 'the multiplicities of processes through which individuals created and gave meaning to urban life'. The 'everyday' stands at the centre of this approach, as scholars turn away from accounts of abjection to focus on how Africans as agentive subjects fashion cities. They assert the existence of a vibrant African urbanism constantly in the making whose end point is uncertain.

The result of the optimists' work has been the emergence of a nuanced literature that investigates how urban residents produce cities through provisional arrangements and unofficial practices (Simone and Pieterse, 2017; De Boeck and Baloji, 2016). The everyday stands at the centre of this literature, shedding light on the vital role of activities that had long been demonized as indications of urban entropy or marginalized as irrelevant. In doing so, they show how, 'everyday practices evident in particular places have significant scalar reverberations and theoretical significance' (Ciroli and Scheba, 2019: 596). Nevertheless, in focusing on everyday actions as the primary driver of African cities, the significance of formal institutions—and especially state institutions––has often been marginalized. This is partially due to an aversion to political economy approaches by some scholars, who see these as responsible for the very teleological framings which enabled the pessimists' analyses (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2008). However, others more generally draw on the experiences and actions of their interlocutors who actively feel what is perceived as the lack of state presence in quotidian life.

2 The article centres on state institutions, paying relatively little attention to everyday resistances. This is not to suggest that these did not exist, nor that the existence of an institution implied that it smoothly implemented the plans associated with it. I would direct readers to work by Buire (2017) and Schubert (2017) for information on everyday experiences of Luanda.

Nonetheless, a growing literature on African states provides fertile grounds for enriching both the optimists' and pessimists' work. Scholarship on African states has historically investigated the complex interplay of official institutions and unofficial networks in the exercise of power (Bayart, 1993; Reno, 1995; Mbembe, 2001). Accounts of local-level institutions have emphasized the incoherence and pragmatic nature of administrative decisions and governance, as well as the state's dependence on 'non-state regulators' (Roitman, 2005) and private 'intermediary figures' (Blundo, 2006: 804). This work recognizes that 'the state' cannot be easily separated from the workings of the everyday. It looks both at the ways in which formal institutions and practices are constantly in a process of formation (Lund, 2006), and how cities are shaped through negotiations between multiple governance structures and networks of power. That institutions are 'polysemous' does not mean that they have been overcome, but rather that they have found ways to accommodate their purposes within existing conditions (Blundo, 2006).

A notable recent development in this literature has been work on urban 'political settlements' (Goodfellow, 2014; 2017). This approach rejects any stark divide between formal and informal institutions, arguing that urban form and projects are products of the distribution of power between competing interests. It therefore analyses both how the allocation of opportunities to both formal and informal institutions shapes cities, as well as how these projects might reproduce specific intersections of power relations. Scholars have traced these relationships by tracking actual projects and policies to understand how the city itself is both a reflection of and a mechanism for the production of a specific institutional 'political settlement'.

This article takes inspiration from the political settlements approach in order to understand how the distribution of power between state institutions influenced urban development in Luanda over approximately two decades. In doing this it seeks to show how power struggles between offices and branches of the state generated institutional incapacity and the experiences of crisis that have characterized everyday life. In doing this, it hopes to bridge the duality of the 'everyday' and 'the official' by showing how the two were mutually constituted. I draw on insights from the political settlements literature to the effect that the built environment is a reflection of power, as well as its recognition that power, and with it capacity, are differentially distributed. I do this to show how it is possible that one area of the state, in this case, the Presidency, could have continuity in its planning and accumulation practices over a significant period of time, even as the local state's capacity was steadily eroded. I thereby blend the political settlements approach with anthropological approaches to the state, which argue against the reification of 'the state' as an ontological object (Abrams, 1988; Gupta, 2012), instead revealing a complex set of institutions, actors and agendas. This enables the possibility of tracing the links between everyday practices and the reconfiguration of institutions and actors within 'the state'.

Recognizing the state as a bundle of actors and institutions is especially important given the rapid growth of scholarly interest in new urban investments in Africa (Watson, 2013; Murray, 2015). Luanda has been the focus of a number of recent studies concentrated on post-conflict urban redevelopment projects (Power, 2012; Pitcher, 2017; Croese, 2018). The existing scholarship argues that the ruling MPLA has used these projects to assert a visible state presence on the landscape as a means of building post-conflict legitimacy (Soares de Oliveira, 2015; Croese and Pitcher, 2019). These projects represent a notable shift, following the war, in public investment and the observable state presence on Luanda's landscape. However, they are often implicitly equated with a 'return of state'—erroneously. Post-conflict planning did not emerge from a vacuum, however, but from 'a mode of city making that had been in formation in Luanda since the mid-1990s' (Cardoso, 2015: 12). This article builds upon Cardoso's insight to show how official institutions, especially the Presidency, were central in

shaping Luanda, even during moments in which the everyday experience of 'the state' was one of collapse.

The political production of the everyday: Luanda in the 1990s

During Angola's civil war (1975–2002), Luanda became a haven for those fleeing the conflict. Between 1970 and 1990, the city's population increased from 480,000 to 2 million (Robson, 2001). By 2000, the National Institute for Statistics estimated Luanda's population to be just above 3 million (Cain, 2003). The head of an Angolan NGO described Luanda at the time as 'a refugee city'.[3] The rapid influx of internally displaced people put extreme demographic strain on the city, especially when combined with a notable housing shortage. Luandans began to subdivide properties and build wherever possible, transforming balconies and rooftops into residences, and expanding the city outwards as informally planned areas rapidly grew. For those experiencing the process, it felt as if the state had abandoned its planning duties. As an employee of the administration of Cazenga, one of Luanda's municipalities explained to me when trying to account for the city's condition in the post-war period:

> Because the government didn't do anything, people began to occupy free spaces and build in their own way: without norms, without rules, without any orientation. The government let them build. So disorderly neighbourhoods grew … anarchic construction because the government didn't orientate them.[4]

Luandans generally accounted for wartime informality as a product of state incapacity. This section argues, however, that the perceived 'anarchy' that reigned in the city cannot be adequately explained by assuming state absence. Rather, in addition to war and demographic factors, the political settlement catalysed by the introduction of market reforms and multi-party democracy in the 1990s, in combination with a growing centralization of power, generated informality. Efforts to improve urban services and create clarity regarding ownership and management came into conflict with the emerging institutional distribution of power. In particular, the provincial government, which was administratively responsible for the city, came into conflict with the powerful financial and political interests of the central government and the Presidency. The 'weakness' of the local state was a product of this confrontation, which undermined municipal and provincial institutions. The result was the further generation of informal practices within the state and amongst urban residents, showing a direct link between the distribution of political power among official institutions and the production of openings for specific kinds of everyday actions.

Under the auspices of a brief negotiated peace, the MPLA abandoned Marxist-Leninism as its governing ideology in the early 1990s, allowing for the introduction of limited free market reforms and multi-party democracy. In a context where rapid demographic growth had not been matched by formal housing construction, the critical housing shortage meant that it was in the realm of real estate that the effects of these new policies were notably evident. Under stress from partially implemented market reforms and a collapsing formal economy, inflation skyrocketed. In 1996, it reached an annual 12,035% (Hodges, 2004). The rapid inflation even drove up the costs of construction materials thereby making self-building expensive (UNDP, 1999: 63). Real estate speculation exploded as housing became a key means of accessing foreign exchange. In order to gain access to valuable US dollars, people moved in with friends or family and rented out their apartments in the city centre. With the money earned, a family could often feed itself, pay school fees, and build a house somewhere else in

3 Interview with Carlos (Maculusso, Luanda, 9 May 2012).
4 Interview with employee of municipal administration of Cazenga (Cazenga, Luanda, 7 July 2011).

the city (Pereira, 1995: 6). Economic reforms thereby contributed to the rise of urban informality.

New opportunities for accumulation generated conflicts. The desperation to access profits that flowed from housing led to a number of instances of forceful evictions, corruption, and intrigues. One of the major pre-election reforms had involved the privatization of state-owned housing. Those who had managed to successfully purchase their properties now had leeway to rent them out. Given that a large amount of urban property was still owned or managed by state institutions however, these offices became the centre of schemes to access housing with the hope of finding not simply shelter, but profit. Urban institutions rapidly began to be involved in the privatized and polysemic forms of governance often glossed as unofficial or corrupt (Dubresson and Jaglin, 2005; Blundo, 2006). One example was the case of Mr João Baptista, who was imprisoned and his family evicted after he was accused of having illegally sold his state property to a foreigner for US $25,000. Baptista, who had rented the house since 1978, denied the charges claiming that they had been concocted by the new occupant of the house in collusion with employees of the State Housing Secretariat (Baptista, 1993: 2). Another headline-catching case involved a dispute over an apartment in the central neighbourhood of Maianga. Three people, all with contracts signed with different state offices, claimed ownership of the residence (Carima, 1994a; 1994b).

Conflicts between state actors worsened the situation as the central government blocked the provincial government's attempts at urban planning. In 1993, the governor of Luanda Province, Rui Oscar de Carvalho, developed a plan to combat the 'degradation of the city' known as *Vamos Salvar Luanda* (Let's Save Luanda).[5] The plan included suggestions for restructuring the provincial government and tackling water and housing problems.[6] Despite the National Bank of Angola initially indicating a willingness to support the project, the central government appeared reluctant to release the necessary funds.[7] An opinion piece in the *Jornal de Angola*, suggested that the reason for this was that the plan came into conflict with the central government's financial interests:

> It has been said that the plans for the current provincial executive are not to the liking of high-up people. And the reasons? For many people, Luanda was, and continues to be, a perfect channel to fertilize their already flourishing financial crops. We were told a few days ago that with the decentralization proposed by the Government of Luanda, what now passes through the Ministries and Secretaries of State, would henceforth be the responsibility of the Provincial Government. This would mean, taking into consideration that the Plan for the Salvation of the city involves the allocation of large sums of money (in cash) and consequently the import of materials and technical skills, the loss of the 'cake' in their hands (Gonçalves, 1993a: 4).

The central government appears to have intervened several times to prevent the provincial government from implementing its plans. In August 1993, following a July meeting with members of the national assembly, the provincial government ceased the housing demolitions linked to the *Vamos Salvar Luanda* project.[8] The state newspaper hinted that the national assembly had instructed the provincial government

5 *Jornal de Angola*, 28 April 1993, p. 1.

6 A.T. Comissões técnicas apresentam conclusões na quinta-feira [Technical commissions present conclusions on Thursday]. *Jornal de Angola*, 8 June 1993, p. 5 and Governo provincial realiza sábado assembleias munícipes [Provincial government holds municipal assemblies on Saturday] *Jornal de Angola*, 1 June 1993, p. 5.

7 BNA tem dinheiro para 'Salvação de Luanda' [The BNA has money for 'Luanda's salvation'] *Jornal de Angola*, 24 June 1993, p. 5 and Plano de salvação da capital vai a apreciação superior [Plan for the salvation of the capital to be considered by higher-ups] *Jornal de Angola,* 12 July 1993, p. 4.

8 Governo provincial suspende processo de demolição de casas [Provincial government suspends house demolition process] *Jornal de Angola*, 7 August 1993, p. 7.

to halt its plans. The Council of Ministers also openly denied reports that it had ever approved *Vamos Salvar Luanda*. Similarly, the Ministry of Justice and the State Housing Secretariat jointly annulled a public request from the Provincial Housing Board for all property owners to appear before it within 60 days to confirm their ownership so that the provincial government's records could be updated (Gonçalves, 1993b). In December 1993, Carvalho wrote a letter to President Dos Santos requesting the transfer of all state property in Luanda to the provincial government in order to bring an end to the confusion surrounding ownership and rentals.[9] In May 1994, President Dos Santos relieved Carvalho of his position and replaced him with a close acquaintance, Justinho Fernandes, who quickly announced the end of *Vamos Salvar Luanda*. The sources suggest that tussles between state institutions to control Luanda were directly involved in producing Luandans' experiences of informality and urban decline, as the provincial government's authority and capacity were consistently undermined. Urban policy in Luanda was at a standstill because of the state rather than because of its absence.

Centralizing power through the urban: the Presidency and the new political administration centre

The undermining of provincial autonomy reflected the more general centralization of power, especially into the Presidency, in which Luanda played an important role. While the formal institutions of the provincial and local state were increasingly hollowed out during the 1990s,[10] the power that 'occupie[d]' the state, namely the Presidency and its allies, was strengthened through privatization and the patronage politics that accompanied it (Messiant, 2004: 289). The Presidency's enhanced power was a product of the introduction of multi-party democracy and privatization reforms. With the one-party system abandoned, the president was no longer under as much pressure to consult party structures regarding appointments to key positions within the state apparatus (Hodges, 2004: 56). The Presidency also played a central role in the country's privatization processes. The award of contracts became key to exercising control over Angola's elites. This built on a trend that had accelerated since the mid-1980s, when the Presidency and its allies began to develop a parallel financial system based on access to oil flows. The state oil company, Sonangol, negotiated oil-backed loans with international creditors that often bypassed official institutions such as the Ministry of Finance. As the country's economy collapsed in the midst of ongoing civil war, this parallel financial system became the heart of patronage (Soares de Oliveira, 2015). It was through this combination of official and unofficial powers that presidential power was enhanced. Urban policy lay at the core of this process, integral to which was the Political Administration Centre Project (PACP).

The PACP became a vehicle for the centralization of power, as it moved from party and ministerial control to the Presidency. The MPLA's Politburo initially approved the project and delegated it to the Ministry of Construction. A special construction company, EMPROE (Empresa de Obras Especiais) was created to manage the construction, supported by Soviet experts. However, the PACP experienced constant delays due, state sources claimed, to the war situation as well as financial, material and human resource constraints (GoA, 2001a; Angola Press News Agency, 1982: 1), causing it to lose momentum. In 1992, the project was resuscitated. While the construction

9 The ownership of state-owned properties was split between various ministries and institutions, leaving it unclear who held jurisdiction over what. This made processes of maintenance, privatization, and management of property difficult. See Governo de Luanda quer gerir sectores da habitação e águas [Government of Luanda wants to manage housing and water sectors] *Jornal de Angola*, 13 Jan 1994, p. 1 and Governador pede ao Presidente mexidas na habitação e águas [Governor requests the President to move into housing and water] *Jornal de Angola*, 13 January 1994, p. 5.

10 In Angola, local government refers to municipalities and communes. There is no elected local government. The President directly appoints the Provincial Governor, who appoints the heads of municipalities, who then appoint the heads of communes.

of the mausoleum continued, the decision was made to renovate the *Cidade Alta* (the administrative seat of power during the colonial period that bordered the official area of the PACP), rather than construct the new offices (GoA, 2001a).[11] In 1994 a special Technical Support Group for the inter-ministerial supervision of the new Political Administration Centre was appointed to oversee the process (Paixão, 1993; GoA, 2001a).[12] Just four years later, however, control of the project shifted from the interministerial grouping to the Presidency.

In 1998, bemoaning the 'ineffectiveness' of the institutions managing the project, new legislation created the Office for Special Works (Gabinete de Obras Especiais, hereafter GOE) allocating it exclusive control over the PACP (GoA, 1998). The legislation disbanded the Technical Support Group and created an Installation Commission of the Office for Special Works 'to revitalize' the project (GoA, 1999) The GOE answered only to the Presidency and had complete administrative and financial independence from the central and provincial government. Its projects therefore fell directly under the control of the Presidency. The GOE's reach, however, grew beyond the PACP as a logic of project expansion set in. By 2001 its projects included the rehabilitation of the Largo do Baleizão, the construction of a Museum of Science and Technology, the renovation of Luanda's colonial era fort, and the reconstruction of the Palace of Dona Ana Joaquina (GoA, 1999; 2001b).

The multiplication of projects enabled the expansion of a parallel system of territorial and institutional jurisdiction that bypassed official administrative divisions, a process notable in low-cost housing initiatives (see Figure 2 for a representation of Luanda's municipal divisions). The PACP had originally foreseen the removal of residents from the mausoleum area. This stalled due to political concerns about undertaking demolitions during wartime, a concern which contributed to the decision to restore the Cidade Alta rather than demolish areas bordering the mausoleum.[13] By 1999, however, these concerns appeared to have lessened, with the GOE creating a rehousing post, responsible for investigating the management of the Viana II Pilot Project (GoA, 1999). In 2001, the office morphed into a 'Rehousing Department' charged with removing people who resided in areas destined for GOE projects (GoA, 2001b). The areas identified for low-cost housing, however, already fell within the ambit of other institutions. The State Housing Secretariat had identified Viana II as an area for the construction of low-income housing in the early 1990s,[14] long before the creation of the GOE (Santana, 1994). The area now fell under the auspices of the Luanda Sul Project, the first major urbanization initiative of the post-independence era. Launched in 1994, it consisted of a public–private partnership between the Luanda provincial government and two Brazilian companies, Prado Valladores and Odebrecht. In addition to areas earmarked for high- and middle-income earners, the project envisioned the construction of two rehousing areas, Projecto Morar located in Viana II, and the Social Rehousing Zone (*Zona de Realojamento Social*). In March 1997, however, even prior to the establishment of the GOE, the Prime Minister, França Van-Dunem, explained that priority for rehousing was being given to people living in Praia do Bispo, Morro da Luz, Chicala and the Cidade Alta.[15] These were all areas located in the city centre not in Luanda Sul, most of them threatened by projects attached to the PACP. Jenkins *et al.* (2002) in fact suggest that one of the primary reasons for constructing rehousing zones in the Luanda Sul project was to rehouse those who would be removed to make

11 This involved the creation of the Technical Group for the Program for the New Political Administration Centre, through Dispatch 2/92 of 10 November 1992. This office is mentioned in Resolution 12/01, but I was unable to locate the actual dispatch.

12 The Technical Group was created by Internal Dispatch 10/94 of 28 October 1994.

13 Interview with former employee of EMPROE (Ingombota, Luanda, 30 November 2015).

14 Viana: novas moradias em fase de conclusão [Viana: new houses in conclusion phase] *Jornal de Angola*, 26 May 1994, p. 5.

15 PM manifesta satisfação [PM exhibits satisfaction] *Jornal de Angola,* 23 March 1997, p. 12.

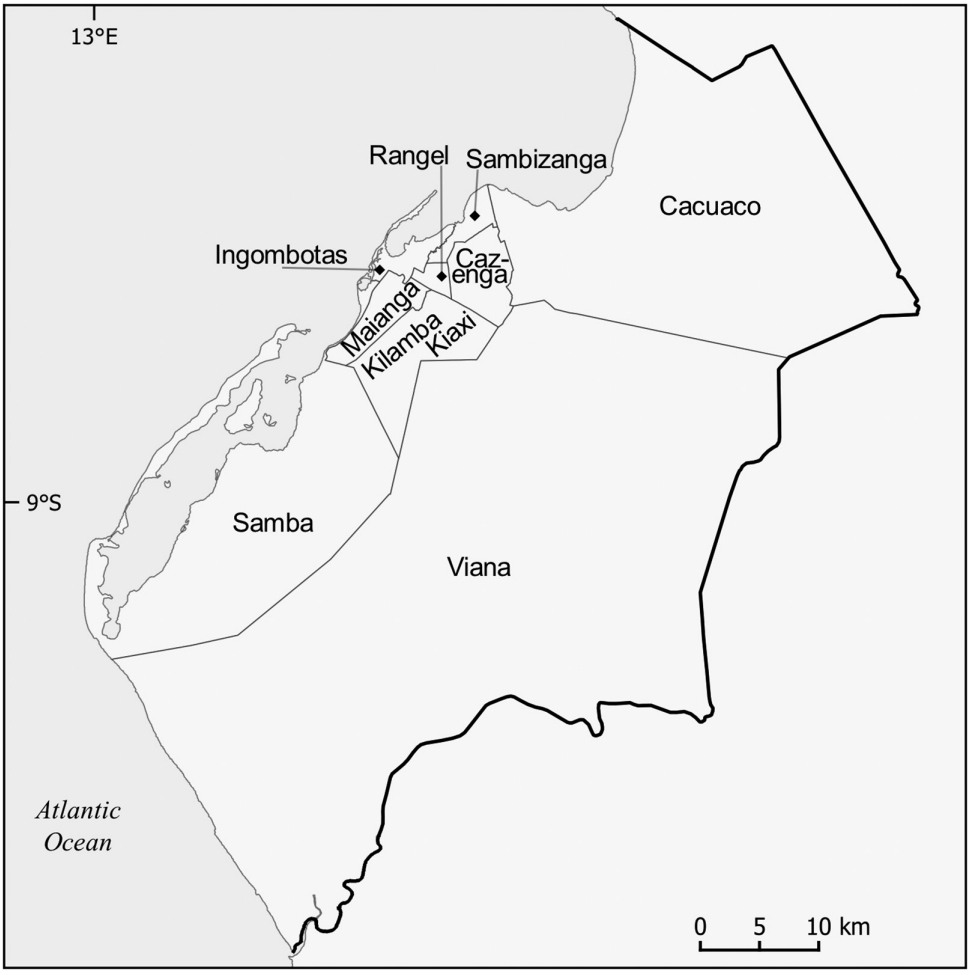

FIGURE 2 Luanda Province, pre-2012 municipal boundaries (map produced by the author)

way for the PACP. In a 2001 publication, EDURB, the company in charge of managing the Luanda Sul plan, explicitly stated that one of its initial foci had been assisting in the clearing of space for the PACP (Cardoso, 2015).

With the transfer of the PACP to the GOE, the institutional creep of the project into Luanda Sul became official. Decree 57/01 of September 2001 made the GOE responsible for 1000 'economic houses' in Projecto Morar, 1000 houses in Sapú (also within Luanda Sul's perimeter) and the creation of 10,000 site-and-service lots in Novos Loteamentos, an area that was meant to be under the purview of the Luanda Sul project as 'Novos Bairros' (GoA, 2001b).[16] In 1999, the area of Futungo was detached from the Luanda Sul project in order to enable the GOE to develop it into a tourism zone. Futungo and Viana II were several kilometres away from the city centre where the PACP project was in theory located. The GOE's claim over those areas thus involved an institutional and geographic extension of its interests.[17]

16 Both Croese (2013) and Cardoso (2015) suggest that 'Novos Loteamentos' and 'Novos Bairros' are the same project.

17 The interests of the GOE in Luanda Sul seem to have even predated the explicit claims on territory. Cardoso (2015) notes that the Technical Support Group for the Interministerial Supervision of the new Political Administration Centre, which, as mentioned previously, had been created in the early 1990s to assist in the restoration of the *Cidade Alta*, worked closely with the Luanda Sul project during its creation.

The GOE's infiltration of Luanda Sul, indicated the Presidency's growing power and the siphoning of resources towards it at the expense of other institutions. In 2001, for instance, a major urban strategic plan proposed by Luanda's governor, Ánibal Rocha, was rejected because it came into conflict with the GOE's projects (Raposo, 2007). While at one scale the city appeared beyond the state's control, the Presidency and offices attached to it were carefully mapping out claims to intervention, with the city becoming both an expression of these distributions of power and the medium through which power was reinforced. The centralized nature of Angola's national political settlement was causing the destabilization of provincial and municipal institutions. The impact of these processes on urban form was not at that point directly noticeable by the average Luandan, except for the deterioration in urban conditions, but would become more apparent in the 2000s.[18]

– Boavista: presidential power revealed

In April 2001, heavy rains wreaked havoc in Luanda. In the neighbourhood of Boavista, an informally planned area perched precariously between the cliffs of the elite neighbourhood of Miramar and Luanda's port, eight people died as a result of landslides linked to the rains. President Dos Santos hastily convened a meeting that included representatives of the GOE and the Ministry of Public Works. Those present defined the tragedy as a product of poor urban planning.[19] Dos Santos gave a working group 2 years to develop a 'Master Plan for the Development of Luanda'. He also stated that to improve urban planning, the Law for Territorial Organization, the Land Law, the Law of Building Taxation, and the Law of Economic Planning would all need to be reformulated. Finally, provisional steps would have to be taken to, 'eliminate the current anarchy that reigns in the domain of urban planning and management'.[20] The key to future success lay, it appeared, in reordering the city's institutional and physical landscape.

In late April 2001, the Council of Ministers approved the transfer of six thousand families from Boa Vista to the municipality of Viana as part of an 'emergency program'. In Viana, they were to receive assistance in building houses (de Melo, 2001).[21] Despite Boa Vista's inhabitants' resistance to removals, demolitions accompanied by high levels of securitization and violence began in in early July (Amnesty International, 2003). By 29 September 2001, approximately 4,000 families had been removed to two tented camp areas in Viana named Zango and Terra Nova II (see Figure 3), approximately 40 kilometres from Luanda's city centre. Those now living there were forced to build their own houses, risking having their right to a new residence revoked if they failed to report (Pearce, 2005).

Boavista's demolition and the creation of Zango illustrated the power of Angola's centralized political settlement. The Presidency, already positioned through the GOE to play a key role in rehousing, became heavily involved in Zango, once again cutting through provincial and municipal jurisdictions. In October 2001 the President promised that houses in Zango would be more swiftly constructed. A working group that included FESA (the Eduardo dos Santos Foundation), the GOE, the GPL, MINARS (The Ministry of Social Reinsertion and Assistance), and private companies, was requested to collaborate on a plan to accelerate construction to 20 houses a day (Croese, 2013).

18 I am not suggesting that the Presidency was solely accountable for Luanda's wartime deterioration, merely that the political settlement which enabled ever growing centralization of power substantively contributed to the situation by starving more localized institutions and actors of resources and authority.

19 PR convoca reunião de emergência [PR convenes an emergency meeting] *Jornal de Angola*, 17 April 2001, p. 1.

20 PR aponta soluções para acudir sinistrados [PR identifies solutions to assist disaster victims] *Jornal de Angola*, 17 April 2001, p. 3.

21 The publicly announced numbers of people to be removed fluctuated. For conflicting accounts see Desordeiros provocam tumultos na Boavista [Troublemakers provoke riots in Boavista], *Jornal de Angola*, 2 July 2001, p. 1 and Governo prepara terreno para sinistrados [Government prepares land for disaster victims] *Jornal de Angola*, 30 April 2001, p. 9.

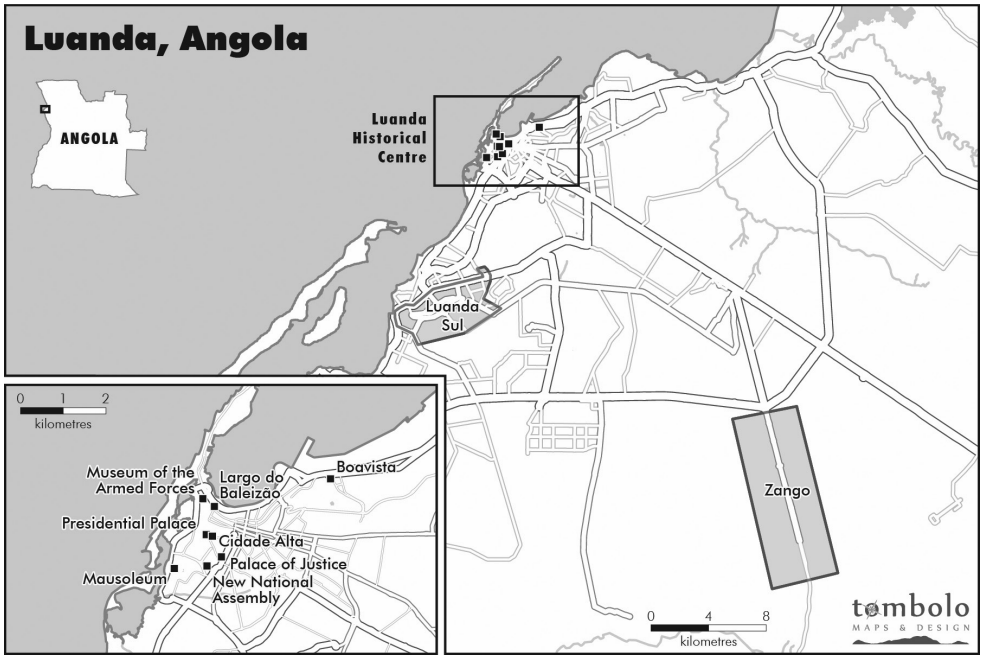

FIGURE 3 Projects associated with the Presidency (map produced by the author)

FESA, a private organization which had President José Eduardo dos Santos as its patron, was to act as an intermediary between the Presidency and companies during the contracting process and would assist in supervising until the completed houses could be turned over to MINARS (*ibid.*). The president also called for the Ministries of Public Works and Urbanism to develop an urbanization plan for Zango (Andre, 2001a). The number of people to be moved to Zango and other rehousing zones that were now being envisaged increased. A new Emergency Housing Plan, approved on the 7 November 2001, commissioned 7,500 houses to be built in Zango, Terra Nova II, Bitá and Sapú, all on the far edges of the existing city with few services and transit connections. Those to be moved included people from around the Cidade Alta, falling within the area of the projects being managed by the GOE (Andre, 2001b).

The rehousing zones revealed the growth of presidential control over the city, through the mobilization of legislation, contracts, and institutions, accompanied by the decline of local institutions. Even contracting indexed presidential interests. The private organizations involved in new projects had strong links to José Eduardo dos Santos. FESA, for instance, was not an innocent philanthropic organization, but was actively used by the president to promote his personality cult and, it appeared, access finances (Messiant, 2004). FESA approached the Angolan branch of a Lebanese firm, Dar-Al-Handasah, to create a master plan for Zango (Croese, 2013). Dar-Al-Handasah was already the financial consultant for a luxury housing project to be built on the ruins of Boavista (Pearce, 2001).[22] The president of its Angolan branch, Ramzi Klink, headed FESA's finance committee. The Presidency asserted its control over the city through these tangled relationships between state projects, personal relations, and financial opportunities, determining what would be destroyed, which populations would be moved, and who would be contracted to design and build in the identified areas. Benefits

22 It appears that this project at least temporarily stalled as there was not a luxury housing project built there at the time of writing.

flowed to its allies. While the local state was being starved of resources and Luandans were battling to access even very basic services, the Presidency was strengthening its reach through urban projects. Official and unofficial institutions linked to the Presidency were shaping the city, contributing to the parallel processes of urban formalization and informalization that emerged from Luanda's specific political settlement.

Post-conflict Luanda and the mausoleum's spectres

Emerging from the war in 2002, Angola was shattered. There was no sector that was not in need of urgent attention. In response, the Angolan government launched 'one of the world's most capital-intensive and spectacular reconstruction processes of recent decades' (Soares de Oliveria, 2015: 3). Made possible by the serendipitous intersection of peace with a spike in the international price of oil, Angola's primary source of revenue, 'national reconstruction' became the state's primary focus for the next decade. Although in theory addressing social issues such as poverty alleviation, national reconstruction largely involved the investment of oil profits in infrastructure and housing.

Luanda quickly became the public face of efforts to rebrand the country as a post-conflict success. Oil-funded development projects transformed the city into an enormous construction site. This was not without contestation. The new 2004 Land Law retroactively rendered void claims to adverse possession and good faith occupation for much urban land. A significant portion of Luandans became 'illegal occupiers' at the stroke of a pen. At least 200,000 people have been forcibly removed since the end of the war to make way for both private and state projects (Gastrow, 2014). Victims have largely been ignored, despite attempts to oppose removal, including the creation of civil society organizations to defend demolition victims, as well as protests and legal challenges.

The Presidency coordinated many of the major post-conflict projects, becoming the primary actor in Luanda's urban development. In addition to its links to the GOE, Boa Vista, the PRP, and Zango,[23] it was directly responsible for the largest slum upgrading project in the city, the plan for the Reconversion of Sambizanga, Cazenga, and Rangel, run by an office named GTRUCS (Technical Office for the Reconversion of Cazenga and Sambizanga) (GoA, 2010b). It also supervised the creation of the Luanda Metropolitan Plan, a master plan for the city launched in December 2015 and managed by Urbinveste a company linked to President Dos Santos's oldest daughter, Isabel dos Santos (Marques de Morais, 2018).

The GOE, through its coordination of the PACP, remained the lynchpin of official control over urban planning. This was notable in the realization of many projects that it had originally conceived of during the war. A new National Assembly and Palace of Justice were completed, as was the mausoleum. The office's reach was also extended. In 2010, the PACP's geographical ambit expanded to include the whole of the Cidade Alta, the Mausoleum area, and parts of the city centre (*Angonotícias*, 2010). The GOE's rehousing department transformed into its own special office, the Program for the Rehousing of the Population (PRP) (GoA, 2007). The PRP managed the rehousing of people who lived in areas earmarked for central government redevelopment projects, moving them to rehousing zones such as Zango. The PRP reported to the GOE and therefore ultimately to the Presidency.[24] The GOE also managed other projects such as the rehabilitation of the Museum of the Armed Forces (which legislation removed from

23 The Presidency's link to Zango became increasingly complex over the years as construction was outsourced to various companies and ministries, and rehousing was eventually taken over by the provincial government. Nevertheless, the presence of Dar-al-Handasah and Odebrecht in the planning and construction of Zango indicates strong unofficial linkages to the Presidency.

24 In 2012 the PRP merged with the Program for Social Housing (PHS), to form the Provincial Program for Social Housing (PPHS). The PPHS falls under the auspices of the provincial government. The institutions involved in rehousing in Luanda shift every few years.

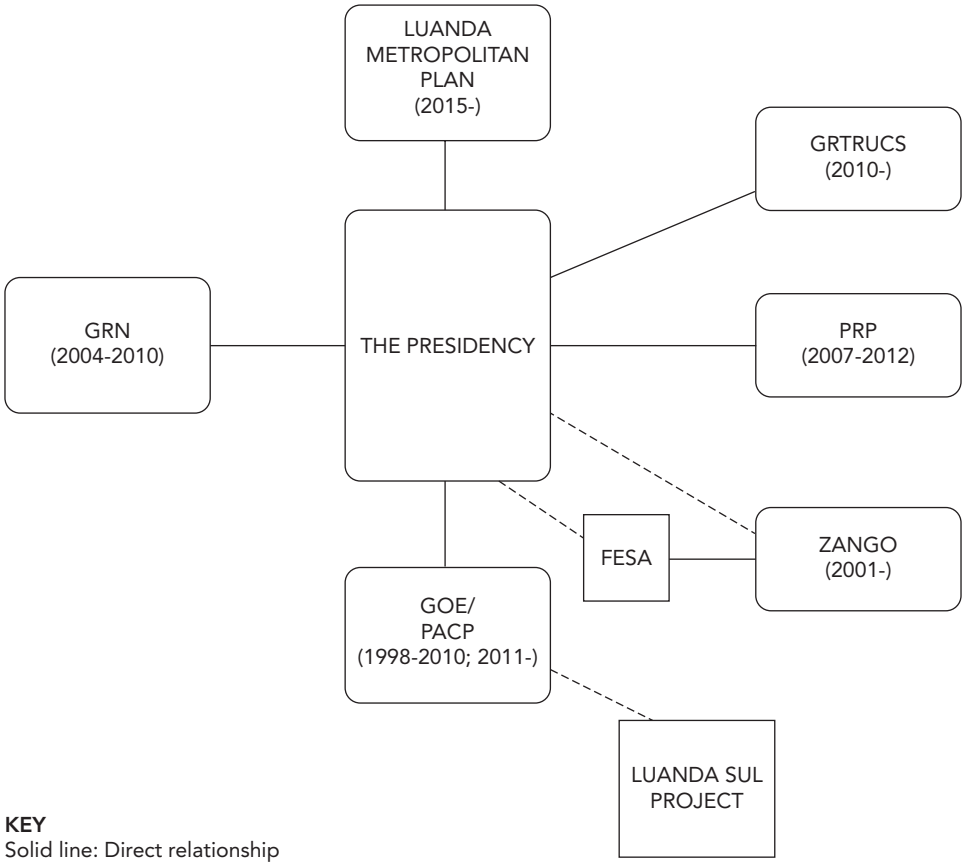

FIGURE 4 The Presidency's projects

the control of the Ministry of Public Works), and the planning of an aquarium and a Museum of Independence.[25]

The GOE's importance was most clearly shown in its wresting control of Luanda's redevelopment away from another prominent special office, the Office for National Reconstruction (Gabinete de Reconstrução Nacional, hereafter GRN). Established in 2004 and led by Manuel Helder Vieira Dias Junior, aka 'Kopelipa', head of the Casa Militar, the military affairs office of the Presidency, the GRN answered directly to the Presidency (GoA, 2004). It oversaw many of the projects linked to Chinese credit lines such as the satellite city of Kilamba and the new international airport in Bom Jesus (*Africa Confidential*, 2004). Like the GOE, its creation was justified by claims that existing state institutions lacked the capacity to manage these large financial flows (Weimer and Vines, 2012). Eventually, amid rumours that the president was concerned about Kopelipa's growing power and financial maladministration, the GRN fell victim to the GOE. At first this did not appear to be the case. A 2010 presidential decree initially mentioned that the GOE had been formally dissolved and its contracts transferred to the GRN (GoA, 2010). However, the GRN was dissolved later that same year (*Voice of America*, 2011). In August 2011, legislation created a 'new' GOE, describing it as an office to support, 'the President of the Republic in the conception and implementation

25 The latter two were not constructed.

of the program for the Political Administration Centre and other works determined by the Head of Executive Power' (GoA, 2011a; 2011b). The GRN's housing projects were transferred to SONIP, Sonangol's real estate branch, with much of the remainder of its projects seemingly transferred to the GOE.[26]

These actions reiterated what had been evident since the since the 1990s—Luanda's urban planning was shaped by presidential concerns, and the Presidency constituted its power through urban projects (see Figure 4). This pattern, by siphoning funds and resources into the Presidency and away from more local institutions, produced a situation where the everyday experience of state institutions was one of weakness and inefficiency. This even affected the very reconstruction projects that the government was promoting. In Zango, an employee linked to the then Programme for Social Housing (PHS), which was in charge of managing the area, complained bitterly that the office was being starved of funding and therefore unable to execute its duties, precisely because it fell under the provincial government's auspices and not those of the central government.[27] To manage the shortfall, it was selling off land to private companies. Equally, the PRP acknowledged the incapacity of provincial institutions to coordinate responsibilities for rehousing. Due to 'financial problems' in the provincial government, the PRP had taken over the rehousing duties that should have been undertaken by the PHS.[28] As had happened in the past, central government institutions cut through provincial ones. The power of those at the centre enabled the manipulation of law and offices to systematically extend presidential control over large swathes of territory. Simultaneously, this centralization weakened local administrations and other branches of the state, causing an increased informalization of governance practices and a rise in practices of urban informality. Even the construction of 'formal' areas generated informality and new kinds of everyday practices as Luandans moved to build on the edges of new official settlements to illegally access water and electricity connections. The official and the everyday were inextricably linked rather than opposed, with the former playing a central role in the production of urbanscapes as well as the structural logics that shaped everyday practices.

Conclusion

The mausoleum was finally completed in August 2012, almost 30 years later than originally planned (see Figure 5). During this period, plans and offices affiliated to the project had significantly enhanced the financial and political power of the Presidency, but also contributed to the undermining of administrative capacity and control in other institutions. This extension of power at one scale, therefore, should not be confused with control over every aspect of urban life. Municipal and provincial institutions were often starved of resources. Equally, the robustness of institutions cannot be taken for granted. As Angola's oil profits dipped near the end of 2014, so the Presidency's projects also began to falter. Large swathes of Luanda remain characterized by *musseques*, areas in which most housing is self-built and there is little access to reliable water or electricity. Life in these areas is akin to that described by many of the current accounts of African cities which focus on making do, the building of provisional social networks, and unpredictability as key characteristics of urban experience and practice. It begs the question of what relevance official institutions have in shaping everyday life in such areas.

Even in the contexts described above, however, this article argues that urban form and materiality should be understood as not only a product of the everyday but also

26 Kilamba dispõe de condições para um vida condigna [Kilamba has the conditions for a decent life] *O Independente*, 16 July 2011.
27 Interview with employee of the Programme for Social Housing (Zango, Luanda, 8 November 2011).
28 Interview with employee of the Programme for the Rehousing of the Population (Praia do Bispo, Luanda, 3 November 2011).

FIGURE 5 The mausoleum of Agostinho Neto in Luanda (photo by Erik Cleves Kristensen, CC-BY-2.0)

of the ways in which power is distributed between state institutions, of the city's political settlement. Even if projects falter, or services go undelivered, this does not mean that institutions and projects did not fulfil a vital role in shoring up power between actors in the state. If the PACP was mostly only implemented after the war, the institutions that underpinned it had already been set up in the 1990s and had systematically worked to place the Presidency in a prime position to intervene in planning. This calls for a rethinking of what it means to talk about state 'presence', 'absence' or even the relation of the 'everyday' to the state, as institutional power and flexibility can differ wildly between different branches and scales of the state.

Ultimately, perhaps what is needed is a fundamental reconceptualization of how official power, and especially state power, is analytically framed and understood in cities. If, as multiple theorists have demanded, African cities need to be taken on their own terms rather than studied through the lenses of normative models, then the political contexts and especially the state logics that operate in these cities also need to be taken on their own terms. Only in this way can scholars really begin to grapple with how existing conditions in cities are linked to multiple scales and levels of political and economic life. This is relevant for policy and activism. Acknowledging the role of state institutions in the making of urban life is important for holding these actors accountable, rather than eliding responsibility. By showing how, at the level of the Presidency, initially through the conduit of the Political Administration Centre Project, state institutions were used to entrench power and centralize wealth, this article has broken 'the state' into parts. 'It' is no longer reified as an object but revealed as constituted by multiple competing interests and struggles. Angola's political settlement, one in which power and wealth are siphoned to the centre at the expense of the local, shaped the emergence of

the urban, including the production of informality. Even when the state appeared absent, it was also, incrementally, shaping the city.

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