Tundavala, Lubango
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Portuguese-Angola Cultural Orientation

The World Factbook

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Technology Integration Division

Portuguese-Angola Cultural Orientation
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CHAPTER 1

Profile

Introduction

Portuguese cultural influences run deep in Angola—a country that lies in a region colonized by Portugal in the 19th century. With the end of colonial rule in 1975, regional conflict ravaged the nation—conflict propelled by Cold War factionalism and control of natural resources.[1] Competition for control over an unregulated "blood diamond" trade led the United Nations to freeze all associated financial accounts.[2] Angola's last civil war formally ended in 2002, yet separatists fighting continues—from opposition groups demanding independence from Angola, such as FLEC (*Frente para a Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda*), to local conflicts, especially in oil-rich Cabinda.[3, 4, 5]

Near Lubango, Christo-Rei Tundavala
Flickr / jbdodane

Angola's official language is Portuguese, which is used in education, politics, and official documents, and by the ruling elite and urbanites as a first language.[6] Angolan Portuguese is similar to Brazilian Portuguese in that it consists of various Portuguese accents, as well as dialects influenced by local languages.[7, 8] Approximately 40% of the population speak one of the indigenous Bantu languages as their first language, such as Kimbundu, Umbundu, and Kikongo, in addition to speaking Angolan Portuguese.[9, 10, 11]

Important Elements of Geography

Area

This southern African coastal nation covers 1,246,700 sq km (481,353 sq mi) making it almost twice the size of Texas. The country has 18 provinces, with Luanda as the state capital.[12, 13] Namibia lies to Angola's south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) lies to the north and northeast. Angola shares its southeastern border with Zambia. A small discontinuous portion of Angola, known as Cabinda Province, is separated from the rest of the country by a strip of land belonging to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Oil-rich Cabinda Province lies slightly to the north of mainland Angola, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean.[14]

Climate

Angola has a tropical climate with two seasons. In the north, the rainy season lasts from September to May, while in the south the rains fall between December and

March.[15] Rainfall is heaviest in the north, especially in the Maiombe forest in Cabinda province, where nearly 120 cm (47 in) to 180 cm (71 in) of rain falls yearly.[16] Rain diminishes as one moves from north to south across the country. The capital of Luanda is situated along the dry coast and only receives about 36 cm (14 in) of annual rainfall, while as little as 5 cm (2 in) of rain falls along the country's southernmost coastal plain.[17] Droughts frequently affect

Rio-Cubal-De-Ganda Chicuma
Flickr / jbdodane

the nation, particularly in the southern regions. Temperatures throughout Angola are consistent, with average temperatures between 19°C-26°C (67°F-79°F). Moving away from the equator towards the coast, temperatures fall in the higher elevations.[18]

Geographical Divisions

The country has three distinct geographic divisions, including a low arid southern region, a coastal plain that merges into hills and mountains, and the eastern highlands. Much of Angola lies on a tropical plateau.[19]

Coopecunha, scenery around the coop nursery
Flickr / Malcolm Manners

Narrow lowlands stretch along the length of Angola's western coast. Its width varies from approximately 25 km (15 mi) around the city of Benguela, to over 150 km (93 mi) south of Luanda.[20] At its southern end (south of Benguela), the climate in the coastal strip becomes arid and the land turns into sand dunes. This dry region is the northern arm of the Namib Desert, which is a coastal extension of the larger Kalahari Desert.[21]

The strip parallel to the coast extends into steep hills and scattered mountain ranges along much of the west-central interior of the country. At 2,620 m (8,592 ft), Mt. Moco (also called Morro de Moco) is the country's highest point.[22] Most of Angola's population lives between the coastal lowlands near Benguela, and the higher eastward extension of hills and mountains around Lubango.[23]

Angola's high plains stretch east from the western central mountains. These form the flat and rolling plateaus that dominate the terrain. The elevation of the land in this region is 1,200–1,800 m (4,000–6,000 ft).[24] The largest of these high central-eastern plains is the Bié Plateau located east of Mt. Moco; it occupies approximately one tenth of the country's land surface.[25]

Rivers

The Cubango (Kubango) River stretches for 975 km (606 mi), making it Angola's longest river.[26] It originates in the central mountains and flows southeastward, eventually reaching the marshlands of northwestern Botswana.[27] The Cuanza River is another river flowing north into central Angola. It originates in the Bié Plateau, at an elevation of 1,500 m (5,000 ft). The Cuanza River flows north

Rio Cuanza, near Aldeia-Terra-Nova Cambambe Kixinge
Flickr / jbdodane

then curves west, before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean just south of Luanda. The Cuanza River is economically significant because it provides inland access from the Atlantic Ocean.[28, 29] The Cunene (Kunene) River flows to the southwest; it begins in the central mountains and passes through Namibia before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. The Cunene (Kunene) River forms the border between Angola and Namibia.[30] In eastern Angola, several rivers flow into the Congo and Zambezi systems, such as the Cuango (Kwango), Cassai, and Lungwebungu.[31]

Major Cities

Benguela

Benguela lies on the central west coast of Angola and has over two million residents. It was established around the *São Filipe* fortress in 1617, and became a major African political and economic base for Portugal.[32] Today, Benguela is a friendly coastal city renowned for its colonial architecture, and its beautiful beaches at Praias Morena, Baia Azul, Caotinha, and Santo Antonio.[33] The city is home to the municipal MPLA Headquarters (Palacio de Bolas); local industries include sugar milling and fish

processing, as well as soap, tools and pottery manufacturing.[34] Benguela stands out as a regional transportation and tourist hub, with rails linking it to Port Lobito—Angola's second largest port. The railway also links Benguela to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Agricultural products such as coffee, corn, tobacco, sugarcane, and sisal are brought into Benguela via rail.

Baia Azul (Blue Bay), Benguela
Flickr / filipe brandão

Cabinda

The modern city of Cabinda has a population of 688,285 (2014 census) and covers an area of 7,270 km^2 (2,810 sq mi). It was settled in 1855 by the Portuguese, who claimed the surrounding region for Angola in 1956 (Cabinda Province is separated from Angola by a narrow section of land belonging to the Democratic Republic of the

Cabinda City
Flickr / jbdodane

Congo). In 1975, Portugal gave up control following Angola's successful revolution for independence. The independence treaty between Portugal and Angola incorporated Cabinda into Angola as a geographically separate coastal territory.[35] This contributed to Cabinda's secessionist aspirations and fueled much of the low-level violence that plagued this region up to the end of Angola's 2002 civil war.[36] Most of Angola's oil wealth is derived from the surrounding Cabinda Province, where large multinational oil corporations own most of the land. This has produced sharp income disparities between oil interests and average citizens living in Cabinda.[37] Since the 1960s, Cabinda locals have been actively seeking independence. They have waged a resistance movement against both the oil companies and Angolan government forces.[38]

Huambo

Angola's third largest city, Huambo has an estimated population of 226,145.[39] Its elevation reaches 1,701 m (5,581 ft) in the west-central Bié Plateau, east of the coast. Portuguese settlers and railway workers founded Huambo in 1912. Residents renamed

it Nova Lisboa (New Lisbon) in 1928. After Angola won its independence in 1975, the name reverted to Huambo. The city's layout illustrates Portuguese urban organization, with such features as monumental rotundas surrounded by government buildings, a central garden, and a commercial district. The city became the headquarters of Jonas Savimbi's resistance group UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*) following Angola's 1975 independence.[40]

Huambo Peque
Flickr / memandabaami

Luanda

Luanda is the capital city of Angola, and it is Angola's largest city with an estimated population of 6.5 million. The Portuguese founded the city in 1576 and for almost three centuries, it served as Africa's primary slave-holding site for those headed to Portuguese-owned plantations in Brazil.[41] A major seaport, Luanda is now the industrial center of the country.[42] Luanda has been described as "oil rich and cash poor" with a lush, tropical setting contrasted by ramshackle makeshift dwellings filling the overflowing *bairros* (sprawling townships).[43] Since gaining independence, the capital city has expanded rapidly and the bairros have become permanent fixtures of the landscape. Considered the cultural heart of Angola, the city is replete with Portuguese influences, including excellent music and nightlife. As a capital city, Luanda is one of the world's most expensive because of it rich diamond trade and abundant oil production.[44]

Luanda city
Flickr / Carlos Reis

Important Elements of History

The west-central coast of Africa did not experience contact with Europeans until the Portuguese arrived about five centuries ago. Since that time, the people in that region have experienced colonial occupation, a virulent slave trade and dictatorial rule. Since separating from Portugal in the 1970s, the Angolan people have struggled to bring independence and stability to their country.[45]

King of Kongo giving audience to Portuguese and his subjects
Wikimedia Commons

The Early Kingdoms

Before the Portuguese arrived at Luanda Bay in the late 1400s, a number of tribal kingdoms existed in the land now known as Angola. The Kongo Kingdom was the most powerful of these, and was populated by the Bakongo people who spoke one of the Bantu languages.[46, 47] This kingdom extended through northern Angola and along the Congo River's northern bank. Trade, both inland and coastal, formed the bulk of the economy, with most of the raw materials provided by the farmers and hunters who inhabited the region. The Kongo Kingdom was a relatively well-developed civilization. Its royal court collected taxes and regulated the value of its currency. Accomplishments included metalworking and cloth weaving, as well as trading ivory and copper goods. The Bakongo people also kept slaves, both to extract forced labor and to trade with the coastal Europeans.[48, 49]

Queen Nzinga of Matamba (1582-1663)
Wikimedia / François Villain

The Ndongo Kingdom in northern Angola was far less advanced than the Kongo. At its height, it reached from the Atlantic to south of the Cuanza River. The country gets its name from the title given to Ndongo's kings, *ngola*.[50] Contact with the Portuguese was intermittent, until 1575 when Paulo Dias de Novais established a base in Ndongo territory. At first, the Portuguese were welcome, even serving as mercenaries in the Ndongo armies. Dias de Novais and his troops were eventually driven out, however, prompting a war with the Kongo who supported the Portuguese. It was during this conflict that the Portuguese established an important slave base, which they used to capture slaves bound for Brazil.[51] By the mid-17th century, the Portuguese had defeated both kingdoms.[52]

Portuguese Colonization (1700-1900)

The Portuguese economy was dominated by Angola's slave trade in the 18th century. The Portuguese originally operated their slave trade out of Luanda, but towards the

Church Our Lady of Populo
Flickr / David Stanley

beginning of the 1700s, they expanded their efforts inland seeking new sources of slaves. Eventually, Benguela became a serious rival to Luanda as a slave trade region. As many as two million Angolan slaves were shipped abroad before slavery was abolished in 1836.[53] About 50% of the slaves were sent to Brazil, while the rest were sent to either the Caribbean or South American colonies.[54]

The 19th century saw Portugal in crisis. Its court was forced into exile when Napoleon invaded in 1807, and in 1820 the regency was overthrown. This was the beginning of a civil conflict that lasted until 1834. The situation in Angola mirrored the European scene. There were a series of uprisings and armed mutinies, eventually leading to the local African governor's downfall. Immediately after the constitutionalists defeated the monarchists in Portugal, a provisional junta claimed power in Luanda.[55]

By 1860, Portugal's hefty military expenses, and the failure of Africans to pay imposed taxes, all but halted expansion into the interior. The following year, Portugal had renewed its expansion into the Angolan interior, which continued into the early 1890s. Following a series of complex border discussions, other more powerful European nations, with African colonial interests, drew Angola's borders.[56]

Angola in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Angola became an overseas province of Portugal in 1951 instead of a colony. The change, however, did not precipitate peace for the region. Prompted by Portuguese suppression of the popular movements toward independence, Angolan nationalist movements developed during this period, leading to guerrilla warfare.[57, 58]

Coastal view of Luanda
Flickr / mp3ief

After the 1974 Portuguese revolution, Portugal divested itself of its overseas empire and Angola gained its independence in 1975.[59] Immediately, a power struggle led to civil war between the Soviet and Cuban-backed MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola – Partido do Trabalho*) and the U.S.-backed FNLA (*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola*). Fidel Castro's government dispatched 30,000 Cubans to fight in Angola.[60] Also opposing MPLA forces was UNITA, backed by South Africa, and funded primarily by trade in diamonds from captured diamond mines. South

African government forces invaded Angola, but the MPLA prevailed and controlled the Angolan government by late 1976.[61, 62]

Civil war continued until 2002, when UNITA forces (the main opposition to MPLA by that time) signed a ceasefire agreement.[63] Hundreds of thousands of Angolans lost their lives to war in the 20th century. As the country moves further into the 21st century, the country is attempting to again rebuild its infrastructure, resettle refugees, and achieve stability.[64, 65]

Post-Civil War

At the end of the 27-year civil war in 2002, Angola began rebuilding its infrastructure and social institutions. Repeated outbreaks of disease, including cholera and hemorrhagic fever, further devastated the people. Separatist groups like FLEC (Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda) continued to demand independence from Angola, producing tension with the Angolan government.[66] FLEC signed a peace agreement with the government in 2006, restoring hopes that a lasting peace would allow the country to put the war behind them.[67]

Street market
Flickr / Norberto Amaral

In 2008, the country held their first parliamentary elections in 16 years, but in 2009 it postponed national elections under the guise that more voters need to register. This delay ensured that president Dos Santos would remain in power.[68] In 2010, a constitutional reform ended the direct election of the president and strengthened his position.[69] Elections were slated to take place in September 2012, but tensions resulted in street protests. The government responded violently, banning anti-government rallies and arresting protestors. Violence against the opposition has increased in recent years, suggesting continuing difficulties for the country.[70, 71]

Government

Angola became an independent republic in 1975. The new government officially established a one-party state headed by a president who would serve as the Chairman of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Angola is a country ruled by one party, the MPLA—the same party that has ruled since the country's independence in 1975.[72] The MPLA has effectively transformed itself from a socialist ideology into a purely capitalistic organization, with a diverse array of business and impressive market-savvy interests. This is due to the country's profitable oil industry.

The newly adopted 1992 constitution provided for a multiparty government in Angola. Under this system, the president—elected for a term of five years—would be head of state and appoint a prime minister.[73] In 2010, however, the country adopted another new constitution. Under the new constitutional provisions, the post of prime minister was abolished while the position of vice president

The National Assembly in Luanda
Flickr / David Stanley

was strengthened. As a result, the Angolan people no longer directly elect the president; instead, the position goes to the leader of the party receiving the largest share of votes in legislative elections.[74] The president can serve no more than two five-year terms. Legislative power is in the hands of the National Assembly whose elected members serve five-year terms.[75]

Angola does not have local, municipal, or provincial elections. Instead, the president appoints governors to each of the nation's 18 provinces.[76] The country's legal system is adapted from Portuguese civil law and customary law, but the court system is weak and operates in only a few municipalities.[77] Angola has a Supreme Court that also functions as a Tribunal Constitutional court. The President appoints Supreme Court judges for life. A new constitutional court was established in 2010. Since holding elections in 2012, opposition parties have renewed their fight against Angola's one-party system.[78]

The Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (*Frente para a Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda*, FLEC), is the only known local terrorist group. FLEC regularly mounts opposition against government troops protecting oil fields and multinational gas companies. FLEC's precise composition and size are unknown.[79]

Media

Angola's media operates in a restrictive environment. Censorship and self-censorship has become a symptom of Angola's broader authoritarian relapse.[80] Although Angola's constitution guarantees freedom of expression, the state controls the country's only daily newspaper, the national radio station, and main television stations. Angola estimated 3.7 million internet users are also subject to censorship. Over the years, President José

Eduardo Dos Santos and his party's military influence have grown.[81] State corruption and patronage is pervasive, while those critical of the government's ownership and control of media are subjected to legal and physical harassment by government troops.[82]

Set of Angolan 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'
Flickr / Chimpanz APe

Important Elements of Economy

Angola is a vast country rich in mineral wealth, including oil (the driving force behind the economy), diamonds, copper, and iron.[83] The country's economy was stifled by years of civil war (1975-2002) that destroyed infrastructure. Following the 2002 civil war, the country's economy was bleak. Further, at the end of the 2002 civil war, the government focused its efforts only on structural reconstruction, and not on rebuilding the economy.[84] This resulted in slow job market growth—when coupled with low crude oil production, a widening budget deficit, and a weakened currency, reconstruction projects became severely hampered.[85, 86]

Lower oil prices have diminished GDP growth, which fell to 3.8% in 2015 and 4.2% in 2016, down from 4.5% in 2014.[87] Further, reconstruction projects face increased opposition from youth activists, such as the Angolan Revolutionary Movement (MRA). Activists demonstrate for social reforms, including proper access to sanitation, education, healthcare and employment.

Angolan oil in Zaire province
Flickr / jbdodane

Mining and Other Industries

Industry accounts for approximately 66% of the country's GDP. The greatest portion of the industrial sector revolves around oil; along with support activities, these account for 85% of GDP.[88] Angola joined OPEC in 2007. As of 2015, it holds 9 billion barrels of proved crude oil reserves and is the second-largest petroleum producer, behind Nigeria, in sub-Saharan Africa.[89, 90, 91] Angola's other industrial efforts center on diamond mining. Many of these mines were operated illegally by small-scale prospectors who participated in the illegal "blood diamond" trade, which prompted the government to pass new laws regulating the sector in 2011.[92] Angola also has a significant ship repair industry, and it re-launched its textile industry in 2013 as part of its diversification efforts.[93, 94] Areas of manufacturing include textiles, sugar, tobacco products, and food processing.[95] Most industrial production is based in Luanda.[96]

The agricultural sector employs nearly 85% of Angolans, and has rebounded in recent years. It is now able to meet some of its domestic food needs, particularly cassava, potatoes, and bananas, but the country must still import half its food.[97, 98] Most farms still function at the subsistence level.[99, 100] The government has prioritized rehabilitating coffee plantations in recent years, aiming to recapture its role as one of the largest coffee producers in the world.[101]

Growth in agriculture and manufacturing has been strong in recent years, and agriculture continues to grow at a rate of 12%.[102] Improvements in the investment and financial regulatory sectors also contributed to foreign direct investments to boost productivity in agriculture.[103] Commercial agriculture employs more than two-thirds of the Angolan labor force, and it is increasingly mechanized.[104, 105]

The fishing subsector has attracted foreign investors in recent years. The government is thus attempting to liberalize the sector hoping to realize its huge potential. Angolan fishing grounds are some of the richest in Africa and include mackerel, catfish, mullet, and tuna in abundance.[106]

Zambia Kansanshi copper mine on the border with Angola
Flickr / mwmbwls

Employment

The country's current unemployment rate is 28.48%; it continues to climb for low-skilled workers.[107] This has resulted in a thriving black market economy. Many women barter fruits, vegetables, fish, and black market flip-flops, toys, and beer in exchange for other black market goods. Children also contribute to their family's income hawking black market phone chargers, CDs, and sunglasses.[108] As the price and output of crude oil continues to fall, employment gaps between skilled and non-skilled laborers will grow.[109]

Roadside market in Catete
Flickr / mp3ief

Ethnic Groups

The majority of people in Angola belong to three main ethnic groups, the Ovimbundu (37%), Kimbundu (25%), and Kongo (Bakongo) (13%). People of European descent constitute approximately 1% of the population. A small percentage of the population, (2%) is mixed native African and European (*mestico*). Approximately 22% of the remaining population belongs to several other ethnic groups.[110]

Mucuval people in Munhino, Namibe Province
Flickr / jbdodane

Ovimbundu

The Ovimbundu is the largest ethnolinguistic group in Angola and speak Umbundu, a Bantu language. A typical household usually consists of a male head of household, several wives, and their children. Kinship is based on double descent, in which lands are passed through the paternal line and movable property is passed through the maternal line. The Ovimbundu are predominantly rural agriculturalists, living mainly around the Bié Plateau in central Angola

Bean harvest
Flickr / mp3ief

where they grow corn and beans. Some families own cattle, which are a measure of wealth, though only a few have large herds. Many Ovimbundu live in Luanda, where they migrated from rural areas in the 20th century as they searched for jobs. This group was a major source of popular support for Jonas Savimbi and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola at the end of the 20th century.[111, 112, 113]

Kimbundu (Mbundu)

The Kimbundu (Mbundu) people are the second largest ethnic group, and constitute about one fourth of Angola's population.[114] They speak Kimbundu (part of the Bantu group), although many also speak Portuguese as their first language. They live in northwestern and north-central Angola, especially in Luanda and in towns along the coast. The Kimbundu are diverse and consist of several major subgroups, including the Ndongo and Ngbaka. The Kimbundu were the main ethnic source of support for the Marxist-oriented Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which assumed power in 1976.[115, 116]

Fruits of Carapa procera DC
Flickr / Scamperdale

Kongo (Bakongo)

The Kongo (Bakongo) group occupies northwestern and north-central Angola. They also live in Luanda and are spread through Angola's Cabinda Province, as well as the countries just north of Angola, including the Democratic Republic of Congo. They speak Kikongo, the language of the ancient Kongo kingdom that was located near the mouth of the Congo River.[117] They are largely farmers who grow cassava, bananas, corn, sweet potatoes, and peanuts. A significant number live and work in cities. Descent is determined through

Kids on the beach, Cabinda
Flickr / Jbodane

the mother, but kinship is more complex and is organized through various lineages. The social structure of this group is highly fragmented and each village is virtually independent of its neighbors. Their religion is based on ancestor worship and spirits.[118] The Kongo people have a reputation of being a shrewd and energetic people, no matter their endeavors.[119]

Other Ethnic Groups

Other ethnic groups are found in small numbers in other parts of Angola. The Ambo, Herero, and Haneca-Humbe (Nyaneka-Humbe or Nyaneka-Nkumbi) live in the southwestern region. They keep cattle and lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Other Bantu speakers, known as Chokwe (Lunda-Chokwe), are spread throughout the northeastern and central-eastern highlands. Xindonga live in the far southeastern corner, and Ganguela tribes occupy an adjoining region in southeastern Angola. The non-Bantu-speaking indigenous Khoisan group live in southeastern and southwestern Angola. The Khoisan group includes the nomadic San and Kwisi tribes. They are hunter-gatherers and traders.[120, 121]

Himba, tribal village
Flickr / James Whatley

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Overview

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. The Cuanza River is the longest in Angola.

   FALSE

   The Cubango (Kubango) River stretches for 975 km (606 mi), making it Angola's longest river. It originates in the central mountains and flows southeastward, eventually reaching the marshlands of northwestern Botswana.

2. Luanda is the capital city of Angola.

   TRUE

   Luanda is the capital city of Angola, and it is Angola's largest city with an estimated population of 6.5 million. The city was founded in 1576, and for almost three centuries, it served as Africa's primary slave-holding site for those headed to Portuguese-owned plantations in Brazil.

3. Almost all Angolans speak Portuguese as their first language.

   FALSE

   It is estimated that about 40% of the population speak an indigenous Bantu language as their first language and Portuguese as their secondary language.

4. Angola is a small landlocked central African nation.

   FALSE

   This southern African coastal nation covers 1,246,700 sq km (481,353 sq mi) making almost twice the size of Texas. The country has three distinct geographic divisions, including a low arid southern region, a coastal plain that merges into hills and mountains, and the eastern highlands. Much of Angola lies on a tropical plateau.

5. Before the Portuguese arrived at Luanda Bay, a number of tribal kingdoms existed.

   TRUE

   Before the Portuguese arrived at Luanda Bay in the late 1400s, a number of tribal kingdoms existed in the land now known as Angola. The Kongo Kingdom was the most powerful of these, and was populated by the Bakongo people who spoke one of the Bantu languages.

Old Portuguese church, Benguela
Flickr / F Mira

CHAPTER 2

Religion

Introduction

Angola is a secular nation with a constitution that generally protects religious freedom, yet actively restricts the legal status of minority religions.[1] Religious legal status can be obtained only through the approval of a petition to the Justice and Culture Ministries. The Angolan government reports that there were a total of 86 officially registered churches and sects in 2015—all Christian. Yet, in the same year, there were 1,200 non-Christian religious groups operating without legal status in Angola, including the small Islamic Community of Angola (CISA).[2] This has led to accusations that government requirements are too strict, discouraging minority religions from seeking recognition.

Violent confrontations have taken place between unregistered groups and the national police and armed forces.[3] Several international organizations and civil societies estimate that as of 2015, approximately 50% of Angola's population were Roman Catholic, while 40% were Protestant, including Baptist, Methodist, Adventist, Congregationalist, and evangelicals.[4, 5]

Overview of Major Religions

Christianity

Christianity arrived in the region with Portuguese explorers near the close of the 15th century. It was established by the mid-16th century, even though a large number of indigenous people rejected it. European Catholic missionaries proselytized intensively around Luanda and inland, initially supporting colonization and the slave trade. The Portuguese government actively supported its Catholic missionaries, including subsidizing their activities and assisting Catholic settlers.[6]

Church Our Lady of Nazareth (1664), Luanda
Flickr / David Stanley

Protestant missionaries arrived in the 19th century and converted many Catholics to Protestantism. They were especially successful in the west-central region in the Ovimbundu region.[7] Protestant denominations were generally associated with specific ethnic communities, resulting in varying religious structures. Often, entire communities, rather than single individuals, converted to the new religion. Generally, only one Protestant denomination was present in a given area, so individuals either became members of that denomination or retained their traditional religious beliefs.[8]

Today, traditional religious beliefs endure. They are frequently interwoven into Angolan Christian traditions. Many independent African churches interlace the "Holy Ghost" or charismatic ministries with informal worship and traditional African beliefs.[9, 10] Syncretic Tokenism is a large Angolan Christian movement with more than one million members. It represents a fusion of traditional indigenous beliefs and Christianity, with a strict code of conduct that includes monogamy and abstinence from alcohol.[11, 12]

Indigenous Religions

Before Christianity, people in the region held beliefs that connected them to the natural world, including ancestor worship and veneration of territorial deities who controlled the natural world. Faith in a "creator high god" was common.[13] Although different ethnic groups shared elements of religious philosophy, religious organization and practices varied. There was no monolithic religion shared by all.[14]

Ancestral spirit of divination, 19th C.
Flickr / rocor

Angola's indigenous religions do not subscribe to traditional Christian ideas of "heaven" and "hell." There is, however, a belief in the concept that life does not end with death. A strong relationship exists between the living and the deceased, and it is essential for the living to practice rituals to preserve the memories of those who have passed away. For example, when a family member passes away, the immediate family maintains the deceased's memory for three generations. Families also commemorate the deceased by building shrines and placing some bone fragments from the deceased inside. These rituals strengthen the bonds between the living, the ancestral spirit, and the land.[15]

Problems or illnesses are often attributed to an ancestor's unhappiness or discontent, and a "witch doctor" (*kimbanda*) will be called to uncover the source of the ancestor's discontent.[16, 17] *Kimbanda* are traditional healers and diviners who invoke special powers and conduct rituals to understand the spirit world and heal the afflicted person.[18] The ritual objects used by *kimbanda* include pieces of polished metal, figurines, carved pieces of bone, or the teeth and bones of animals placed in a basket, shaken, and poured on the ground. The *kimbanda* then interprets the pattern made when the objects fall to the ground, and incants special prayers offered to the ancestors. Many *kimbanda* diviners are also herbalists who practice traditional medicine.[19]

Fetishes, objects believed to have magical qualities, are also an important part of life in Angola. The Kongo people of northern Angola carry fetishes that are thought to absorb the misfortunes caused by evil spirits. Others will pierce their flesh with special wooden nails when they feel they are under the influence of evil spirits. *Kimbanda* will often use inanimate fetishes to store medicines that are believed to fight evil spirits.[20]

Civil and religious groups often criticize the ritual practices associated with the fear of evil spirits, especially exorcism, because it often harms those involved. Pope Benedict XVI spoke about this issue during his 2013 visit, encouraging Angolans to give up indigenous practices in favor of Catholicism.[21]

The Role of Religion in the Government

Palácio das Bolas in Benguela, provincial headquarters of Angola's ruling MPLA
Flickr / David Stanley

In the early days of independence, Angolan national leaders were often Protestant and actively opposed the Catholic Church's role in the country.[22] Yet, many MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) leaders were opposed to religion in general, denouncing religious organizations, especially the Catholic Church. Further, Protestantism as practiced and spread by some national leaders who were active in the MPLA was also strongly opposed.

In the end, all of this led to the confiscation of property, threats to those associated with churches, and the murder of church clerics, priests, and nuns.[23, 24] The state took over many institutions operated by churches. After the government abandoned Marxism, it began to extend tolerance toward religious groups, and freedom of religion is now written into the constitution.[25]

Freedom to Practice Religion

Angola's 2010 constitution guarantees freedom of religion and defines the state as secular, with a separation of Church and State. Yet, the government retains broad authority over religious organizations and, in practice, it restricts religious freedom by requiring all religious groups to petition for legal standing as a religion. Only after the government legally recognizes a group is it allowed to build places of worship and schools. Legal standing as a religion is based on several factors. First, a religious group has to demonstrate they have over 100,000 members living in 12 of the country's 18 provinces.[26, 27] Further, the government has to approve the group's organizational structure and its religious doctrine or philosophy.[28]

Monument commemorating the arrival of more than 2000 Afrikaners in the late 1920's
Flickr / jbdodane

There are currently a number of contradictory reports about the number of Muslims living in Angola. Many are illegal West African immigrants, so their numbers cannot be counted towards the legal minimum.[29] According to the Angolan government, there are an estimated 80,000 to 90,000 Angolan Muslims in the country, below the threshold for legal status.[30] The Pew Research Center estimates that there were at least 195,000 Muslims in Angola in 2010, and that this number has increased.[31, 32, 33, 34, 35] Muslims in Angola are mostly immigrants from Lebanon and West Africa—mainly Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal.[36]

In November 2013, the government denied applications for legal recognition to 194 different religious organizations, while more than 1,000 applications have been denied since 1991. No new organizations have been recognized in Angola since 2004. The government has not granted legal status to any Muslim groups.[37]

Influence of Religion on Daily Life

The state constitution recognizes and respects the right of religious groups to organize and carry out their religious activities, as long as they abide by the Angolan constitution and laws. While social divisions based on race and culture mark life in Angola, daily religious life is usually not affected.[38] In recent years, a number of people involved in religious practices considered violent (involving exorcisms, poisonings, and beatings), have been prosecuted by the government.[39]

Angolan Christians regularly attend church and other religious services.

Church Our Lady of Muxima and the Cuanza River
Flickr / mp3ief

Exchange 1: When do you attend church?

Visitor:	When do you attend church service?	quaandoo e keh você vaay aa meesa
Local:	The next time is at noon.	oo prawseemoo serveeso e aw meyodeheya

Religious Conventions and Gender Roles

Historically, Christian churches have respected and adapted to African customs. This approach was embraced as means to fully integrate local communities into Christianity.

Church in Manssagano
Flickr / mp3ief

Their blending of indigenous and European Christian traditions was made easier because of the dominant indigenous belief in the "Creator God," who is present everywhere.[40] Local naming ceremonies, celebrations, and healing rituals were also emphasized as way to interweave the sacredness of life in both pre-Christian and Christian times. Thus, today there is a very strong emphasis on the community in most African churches. This is largely an expression of indigenous beliefs mixed with formal Christian practices.[41]

Syncretic Christianity is a blend of indigenous and Christian practices that include communication with the divine through ancestral worship, rather than through Christian prayer alone. Dialog with the ancestors is part of daily life for most indigenous Angolans. In many villages, people participate in ceremonies in which they offer gifts to their ancestors and pray to them for good harvests. People seeking solace may also offer Christian prayers.[42]

The Catholic Church has continued to address questions of effective enculturation. This has been achieved through church leaders who were directed to be aware of and sensitive to local cultural practices. As a result, the Church has been quite effective in acquiring local converts who support the Church and participate in its activities and rites.[43]

Gender Roles

In all churches, men and women can enter and worship together. However, in Catholic churches, women are not allowed to walk into the altar space behind the wall that holds religious icons and paintings.[44, 45]

Ladies entering the church
Flickr / mp3ief

Religious Events and Holidays

Holidays in Angola usually follow the Christian Holiday calendar. People all over the country participate in religious events and holidays, which includes local ceremonies and Christian religious events. Church-sponsored ceremonies often incorporate a blend of Christian and indigenous spiritual beliefs.[46] Good Friday (25 March 2016)

Carnival of Lubango
Flickr / jbodane

is a national holiday, and falls on the Friday before Easter. Christian churches conduct masses and sing hymns to convey their belief in life over death. Many people refrain from eating meat during the month of Lent—the month leading up to Good Friday and Easter.[47]

All Souls' Day (*Dia de Finados*) is a public holiday celebrated on 2 November. This is a day for the living to say mass and prayers for the souls in purgatory.[48, 49] Many families also go to the cemetery to clean the area around the grave of a deceased relative, and to place wreaths and candles around the tomb.[50]

Christmas falls on 25 December and is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Christ. It is also a national holiday and the largest celebration of the year. Christmas celebrations include gift exchanges, family visits, large family meals, and church attendance.[51, 52, 53]

Exchange 2: Do you celebrate Christmas?

Visitor:	Do you celebrate Christmas?	você selebra oo nataaw
Local:	Yes.	sing

Buildings of Worship

Several colonial Catholic churches are located in Luanda, the largest and most populous city in the nation. Some are quite old, such as the *Igreja da Nossa Senhora da Nazaré* (Church of Our Lady of Nazareth), founded in 1664.[54] This beautiful church has an open alter with Christian relics and a figurine of a breastfeeding Mary, replete with mosaic tiles. Another notable colonial church is the double-domed *Igreja da Nossa Senhora dos Remedios* (Church of Our Lady of Remedies), which was constructed in 1655 and restored in the late 20th century.[55] The Cathedral of Luanda, also known as the Cathedral of the Holy Savior, is also an impressive landmark. This church was built in 1628 and is the seat of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Luanda.[56] Other colonial-era Catholic churches are situated in the far northern part of the country where they once served as missionary bases in the old Kongo kingdom.[57]

Cathedral of Lubango
Flickr / jbodane

Indigenous churches, such as the *Kimbangui* church, are located throughout the country. These churches arose in response to the Catholic Church's opposition to traditional African practices, such as polygamy and puberty rites. Other independent African churches are also found in different regions of the country.[58]

Rural churches are among those buildings destroyed during Angola's long civil war. For example, the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola, had a highly developed infrastructure that included schools and medical facilities that were mostly destroyed. Rebuilding these structures continues throughout the country and a number of these rural structures have been rebuilt. Many are once again operating in the country's provinces.[59]

Behavior in Places of Worship

Angolan Catholics observe many of the same protocols as other Catholics throughout the world. Statues and frescoes, as well as images of Christ and other figures are sacred to Angolans and visitors should approach quietly and respectfully. Churches are deeply meaningful to Angolans, and are closely associated with political and cultural identities.[60]

Exchange 3: May I enter the church?

Visitor:	May I enter the church?	pawsoo etraar naa eegreyzha
Local:	Yes, of course.	sing, kong serteza

Visitors to Angolan churches should dress modestly and avoid wearing clothing that is revealing or unclean. Shorts and mini-skirts are not appropriate. Appropriate dress includes clean shirts and long pants for men, and skirts or pants along with blouses or sweaters for women. Visitors should remove hats before entering, and once inside the church, refrain from touching paintings or statues.[61, 62]

Visitors to any church or building of worship should follow the protocol notices posted in writing, or the protocols they are personally instructed to follow. Visitors should not bring food or drinks into a church, and they should not take photographs inside or outside the building without permission.[63]

Forteleza de Muxima
Flickr / mp3ief

Endnotes

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Overview
Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Angola's indigenous religions do not subscribe to traditional Christian ideas of "heaven" and "hell."

   TRUE

   Angola's indigenous religions do not subscribe to traditional Christian ideas of "heaven" and "hell." There is, however, a strong relationship between the living and the deceased, and it is essential for the living to practice rituals to preserve the memories of those who have passed away.

2. The Angolan government actively supports Catholicism, including subsidizing the Church's activities.

   FALSE

   Angola is a secular nation with a constitution that generally protects religious freedom.

3. Indigenous African religions have no higher deity.

   FALSE

   Most indigenous religions believe in the existence of a "Creator God." Although different ethnic groups share elements of indigenous religious philosophy, religious organization and practices vary.

4. Many Christian churches reflect elements of traditional indigenous religions.

   TRUE

   Traditional religious beliefs endure, frequently interwoven into Angolans' Christian traditions. Many of the independent African churches incorporate "Holy Ghost" or charismatic ministries into informal worship and traditional African beliefs.

5. Due to religious tolerance in the country, Muslims have been welcomed.

   FALSE

   Angolan Christian and political leaders often criticize Muslim beliefs and practices because they associate it with illegal West African immigrants. They argue that Islam is irreconcilable with Angolan values and way of life.

Mucuval people in Munhino, Angola
Flickr / jbdodane

C H A P T E R 3

Traditions

Introduction

Traditional Angolan culture is primarily native Bantu with Portuguese influences. Rural residents are more conservative than their more outspoken urban counterparts, yet throughout Angola, loyalty to family is important. This extends from their collectivist Bantu culture in which people are devoted to establishing close long-term relationships with immediate and extended family members.[1] Thus, Angolans tend to identify with the tribe of their ancestors, rather than their country. The Angolan experience with famine, wars, and hardship has created a tendency for many to live in the present rather than plan for an uncertain future.[2] Despite these hardships, most Angolans remain easygoing, hospitable, and social.[3]

Honor and Values

Honor among Angolans is based on community, its members often connected through regional ties or ethnicity. Loyalty to family is critical, including deceased ancestors whom Angolan's believe influence the living. Ancestors are believed to cause long-term grief, or even destruction to those within a community, if not properly honored and placated through ceremonies.[4, 5]

Angola African Cup Soccer
Flickr / me_Studios

Although these ethnic and family connections are central to people's lives and their values, they are sometimes weakened by other influences. For instance, strong divisions may exist between different ethnic groups or clans based on political affiliations, especially after the long civil war that fractured the country. Identification with the different warring groups (i.e., UNITA, FNLA, and MPLA) became more important than ethnic background, even though each political group was associated with a primary ethnicity.[6] Sometimes distrust between Angolans stems from association with rival agents competing to control the nation's rich resources. This is a result of the country's recent political history, in which ethnic and tribal groups were manipulated for political gain.

Last, national independence became a source of pride for the people. Angola's colonial past had been extremely repressive, marked by slavery, forced labor, and second-class citizenship for the country's indigenous inhabitants. The people united to oppose colonialism, and after a long struggle, gained independence, only to immediately descend into decades of civil war. Still recovering, they are mindful of the long fight for national stability and its toll in terms of their lives, their political landscape, and their environment.[7]

Codes of Politeness

Greetings

Expressing oneself politely is important when meeting or interacting with Angolans. They place great importance on the ways in which greetings are carried out. The degree of formality in greeting someone is situation-dependent, but respect must always be conveyed. Greetings also are a way to establish friendly relations, to display proper manners, and to convey ones educational level.[8, 9]

Exchange 4: Good morning!

Visitor:	Good morning!	bong deeya
Local:	Good morning to you!	bong deeya

Female friends and friends of the opposite sex usually greet one another with a kiss on both cheeks. Close male friends frequently greet each other with a hug, followed by a couple of slaps on the back. In most other situations, a handshake is the common form of greeting, followed by a verbal greeting that is often in Portuguese. A common greeting among the Umbundu is *Walale* ("How did you pass the night?") followed by the response *Ndalale* ("I passed the night well.").[10, 11, 12]

A respectful greeting
Flickr / Dom Bosco Angola

Women shake hands, but will often smile and nod their heads as a preferred greeting with strangers. Visitors should note that the customary handshake in Angola might be soft, rather than firm and energetic, as would be expected in a western setting.[13, 14]

Angolan women typically look away rather than making direct eye contact, although this is more likely in rural areas. Direct eye contact among people of similar status is a sign of sincerity. Indirect eye contact when speaking to a person of higher status signals respect.[15, 16] In the capital of Luanda, and among younger people, eye contact is more common.[17]

Angolans use very animated speech and gestures. At the same time, they require less personal space for social interaction than Americans. Thus, moving away from a person with whom you are speaking is rude and offensive.[18]

Angolans converse easily with strangers, but they often speak indirectly and say what they think others want to hear. Thus, it may be difficult to elicit actual opinions or specific details. They may show positive indications of "yes" when they actually mean "no" because they do not want to offend a visitor. They do not interrupt when people are speaking and expect the same consideration. Interrupting an elder or prestigious person who is speaking is a serious violation of etiquette.[19, 20]

Exchange 5: Hi, Mr.Ricardo!

Visitor:	Hi, Mr. Ricardo!	ola senyor Reekardoo
Local:	Hello!	ola
Visitor:	Are you doing well?	toodoo beng kongseego
Local:	Yes.	sing

When you first meet an Angolan, take your time. Show special respect for elders, acknowledging them first, bowing slightly as you greet them.[21] Titles are commonly used as a sign of respect, especially with elders. A common title used by older males is *Kota* (elder) or *Tio* (uncle). Similar titles for women are *Mãe* (mother) or *Tia* (aunt). In more formal situations the titles *Senhor* (Mr.) or *Senhora* (Mrs.) are typically placed before the last name.[22] It is appropriate to greet government officials with "Excellency" or *Excelencia*, without adding their last name.[23]

Families are uniquely important within Angolan culture.[24, 25, 26] It is thus necessary to inquire about the well-being of someone's family during an informal conversation. This will help establish the basis for a relationship, while at the very least, it will create a degree of cooperation. Social negotiations should be slow and relationship-oriented, never rushed.[27]

Exchange 6: How are you?

Visitor:	How are you?	komoo eeshtaa
Local:	Fine, very well.	eshto beng, obreegaadoo

Exchange 7: Good night!

Visitor:	Good night!	bowa noyt
Local:	Good night to you!	bowa noyt

Male/Female Interaction

There has been little research into the role of women vs. men in Angolan society, yet there are some conclusions that can be made. Throughout much of their history, rural Bantu families relied on subsistence farming, with women performing most of this labor while raising a family. Marriage was and continues to be a means to strengthen family relationships, as well as political and economic interests. In this context, several generations of women and men will work together to ensure their family's needs are met. Because of their notable role within the family, women in Angola share relatively equal status with men.[28, 29]

Men and women
Flickr / RTP

Hospitality and Gift-Giving

Angolans are known for their friendliness, and hosts will always try to make guests feel comfortable. Guests should arrive on time, but be aware that Angolans have a relatively relaxed view of time. Dress somewhat formally, usually business casual attire, to convey respect to the hosts.[30]

Exchange 8: Thank you for your hospitality.

Guest:	Thank you for your hospitality.	obreegaadoo peylaa soowaa awshpaaleedaad
Host:	You are welcome.	deh naada

In urban areas, it is a good idea to take a gift such as chocolates, fruit, or flowers when invited into a local person's home. If there are children in the home, a child's book or toy is a nice gift. Do not expect the hosts to open the gift right away, as they might put it away to open later.[31, 32]

As a whole, Angolans are very hospitable and generous. Despite extreme poverty across the country, entertaining family and friends is a priority. Angolans will offer soft drinks, alcoholic drinks, coffee, or tea to their guests, regardless of the time of day. If offered the

Hospitality and cooperation
Flickr / US Army Africa

last serving, guests should initially refuse. The host might then make a second offer of food that the guest may accept, if desired.[33]

Exchange 9: The food tastes so good.

Guest:	The food tastes so good.	aa komeeda eh saaborawza
Host:	I'm glad you like it.	feeko kontent por gooshtaar daa komeeda

Exchange 10: What is the name of this dish?

Guest:	What is the name of this dish?	quaal eh nomey dehshtaa praatoo
Host:	It is Muamba de Galinha.	eh muwaamba deh gaaleenya

Eating Habits/Types of Food

The cuisine of Angola is rich and varied with strong Portuguese influences, as well as Indian, European, and Malayan. There are many regional variations, but a common feature is the spiciness of Angolan food.[34] Staples in the diet include flour, beans, rice, fish, and chicken often cooked in flavorful sauces. Along the coast, ginger, tomatoes, and cayenne are common ingredients combined in a marinade for fish dishes cooked in peanut or coconut oil. Okra, black-eyed peas, yams, onions, and chilies are common ingredients in many Angolan dishes. Deserts can include dried fruit, coconut or peanut candy, and coconut pudding.[35]

Typical Angolan cuisine
Flickr / Laura Hadden

For the majority of Angolans, finding food is a daily struggle. If possible, Angolans eat three meals a day, including a mid-day main meal. The poor rarely eat meat, except on special occasions when they might kill a chicken or other fowl.[36, 37] A good breakfast may include eggs, bread, and tea or coffee. Other breakfasts, particularly in the north, consist of peanuts and boiled or fried cassava. In the south, a common breakfast food is a drink made from water, ground cornmeal, and sugar called *tchisangua*.[38] Lunch in a northern area is likely to consist of a cassava flour ball served with fish, chicken, or meat, if affordable. Lunch in a southern area is similar, but served with a cornmeal dough ball known as *funge* or *pirão*.[39, 40, 41]

Food in Angola is often served in a communal bowl. Proper protocol demands that the eldest person take the first serving. In rural areas, it is common to eat with one's hands, although spoons are used to scoop the food from the communal bowl onto individual dishes. People in the cities are more likely to use utensils.[42, 43]

A favorite specialty dish is *muamba de galinha* made from chicken cooked in a palm-nut paste sauce, peanut butter, and spices. Fish dishes, especially along the coast, are popular and include *kalulu*, which resembles a gumbo made with eggplant.[44]

Exchange 11: What ingredients do you use to make Muamba de Galinha?

Guest:	What ingredients do you use to make Muamba de Galinha?	keh eengredeeyengtesh saaoo ooteeleezaadosh paara prepaarer aa muwaamba deh gaaleenya
Host:	Chicken, palm oil, onions, tomatoes, squash, and spices.	gaaleenya, awlyoo deh paalmaa, sebolash, toomaatesh, aaboboreenya ee espesyaareeyash

Dress Codes

Angolans who live in cities usually wear Western-style clothing. Older men often wear a two-piece suit for formal occasions while younger men prefer three-piece suits and ties. Younger women often wear jeans or casual western clothing. Dressing well is important, even when going out for routine daily tasks. Individuality in clothing is also important.

The market at Caála
Flickr / Malcolm Manners

Whenever possible, Angolans try to avoid wearing clothes that are too similar to others. Ones best clothes are reserved for important events, such as weddings.[45, 46]

Visitors should wear clean, loose-fitting apparel that is comfortable in a warm climate, and avoid tight-fitting clothes. Foreign visitors should not wear expensive jewelry because it is an affront to the very poor. In cities, male visitors may wear dark colored suits with a shirt and tie, and women may wear business suits or conservative dresses.[47]

Exchange 12: Is this acceptable to wear?

Visitor:	Is this acceptable to wear?	pawsoo oozaar eeshtoo
Local:	Yes.	sing

In rural areas, many Angolans wear loose-fitting, colorful, traditional clothing. Women often wear a head wrap and long skirts or dresses that cover their entire bodies and men wear pants. Some will also wear traditional jewelry representative of their ethnic affiliation. For example, *Mumuilas* women in the south often wear elaborate beadwork and bracelets.[48]

Non-Religious Celebrations

New Year's Day, 1 January, is a public holiday in Angola. Many people celebrate this day by attending parties and other festivities.[49, 50] Many other non-religious holidays are held to celebrate Angola's independence or the end of war. These include Start of Liberation War (*Dia do Início da Luta Armada de Libertação Nacional*), which is also known as Day of the Armed Struggle This holiday is held on 4 February and commemorates

Lubango Carnaval
Flickr / jbdodane

the *Biaxa de Cassanje* revolt (1961), in which cotton plant workers revolted for better working conditions. Other patriotic holidays are Day of the Fallen (4 January), also known as Colonial Repression Martyr's Day, which honors those who died fighting against Portuguese colonialism. Peace Day (*Dia da Paz*), also known as Ceasefire Day, is celebrated on 4 April. It marks the end of the Angolan Civil War. National Heroes Day (*Fundador da Nação e Dia dos Heróis Nacionais*) takes place on 17 September, and Angola's Independence Day (*Dia da Independência*) is celebrated on 11 November.[51]

A few other events are also national holidays. International Women's Day is on 18 March, and Labor Day falls on 1 May. Carnival falls on 17 February in 2016.[52] Each province has its own local holiday known as *tolerância da ponto*, which commemorates the founding of the provincial capital. In Luanda, this holiday falls on 25 January. Many Angolans ignore the community festivities that accompany these holidays.[53]

Dos and Don'ts

Do be aware of all official regulations and follow them.

Do be respectful to elders and equally so to their family members.

Do shake hands with the Angolan people you meet.

Do make eye contact when meeting and greeting Angolan people.

Don't criticize or show any disrespect to Angolan officials, citizens or the country.

Don't engage in public displays of affection with the opposite sex.

Don't enter into political discussions about ethnic differences or wartime subjects.

Don't discuss business while attending social functions.

Don't take pictures of government buildings or around borders or military areas.

Don't point to anybody with a finger. Use the entire *right* hand instead.

Don't snap your fingers at someone to get their attention.

Don't point upward with the middle finger. It is obscene in the U.S. and equally so in Angola.

Don't use obscene or indecent language within earshot of Angolan citizens. Many are familiar with American slang.

An Angolan greeting
Flickr / RTP

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Overview
Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Loyalty to family is critical, including deceased ancestors.

   TRUE

   Loyalty to family is critical, including deceased ancestors whom Angolan's believe influence the living. Ancestors are believed to cause long-term grief, or even destruction to those within a community, if not properly honored and placated through ceremonies.

2. Angolans are relaxed and easygoing and do not place emphasis on formal greetings.

   FALSE

   Angolans place great importance on the ways in which greetings are carried out. The degree of formality in greeting someone is situation-dependent, but respect must always be conveyed.

3. Angolans converse easily with strangers and will often speak directly and say what they think.

   FALSE

   Angolans converse easily with strangers, but they often speak indirectly and say what they think others want to hear. Thus, it may be difficult to elicit actual opinions or specific details. They may show positive indications of "yes" when they actually mean "no" because they do not want to offend a visitor.

4. Titles are commonly used by Angolans as a sign of respect, especially with elders.

   TRUE

   When you first meet an Angolan, take your time. Show special respect for elders, acknowledging them first, bowing slightly as you greet them. Titles are commonly used as a sign of respect, especially with elders.

5. As a whole, Angolans are very hospitable and generous.

   TRUE

   For the majority of Angolans finding food is a daily struggle. Nevertheless, Angolans are very hospitable and generous, and entertaining family and friends is a priority. Angolans will offer soft drinks, alcoholic drinks, coffee, or tea to their guests, regardless of the time of day.

CHAPTER 4

Urban Life

Introduction

Angola's urbanization patterns are a complex matrix representing the country's unique history. When Portuguese colonialism ended in 1975, over 80% of Angolans lived in rural areas.[1, 2] By 2002, however, the countryside had been devastated by civil war and people began moving into urban areas to escape the widespread destruction.[3] Some of those who fled to urban areas after the civil war have since left to return to their homes. Others have moved outside the city to the less expensive peri-urban areas, which are largely squatter camps and shantytowns. Currently, it is estimated that nearly 75% of Angola's urban population lives in informal settlements known as *musseques*, built

on hardened waste.[4, 5, 6] Many Angolans are forced to settle wherever they can, which weakens kinship networks and produces heterogeneous neighborhoods.[7] Life in urban Angola is difficult, and the lack of development and infrastructure has left many in squalid conditions struggling to survive.[8]

Urban Issues

Many Angolan cities increased in size following independence. Luanda's population exploded as millions fled to the capital to escape fighting during Angola's civil war.

Large slums developed, and public infrastructure was overwhelmed. Growth was slow, however, in three of the four major urban areas: Benguela, Huambo, and Namibe. After 27 years of civil war, virtually all urban infrastructure was destroyed, leaving challenges that included housing shortages, poor access to safe water, basic services, and sanitation, as well as poverty and soaring crime rates.[9]
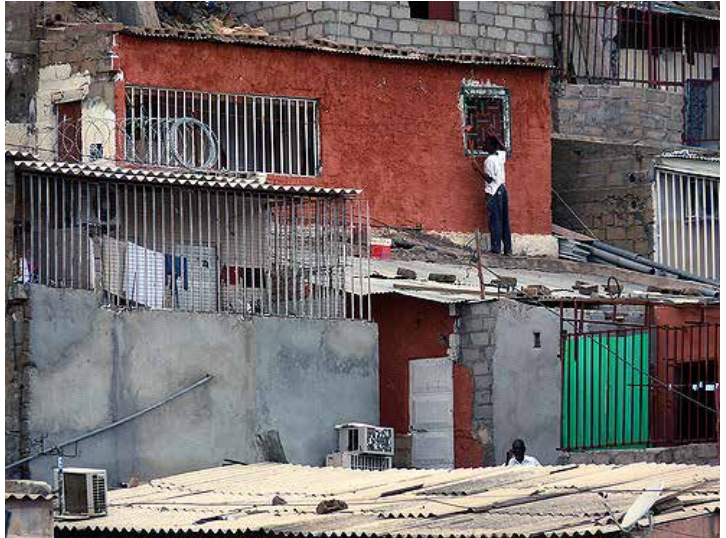
Home repair in Luanda
Flickr / Pedro Sousa

One of the country's greatest challenges has been adequate housing. Nearly 79% of urban Angolans live in substandard housing, and only 40% have access to electricity.[10] Many urban residents lack access to safe water (35%) and sanitation (31%).[11] Problems with sanitation and waste disposal earned Luanda 22nd place on the list of the 25 dirtiest cities in the world on the Mercer Health and Sanitation Index.[12] There are virtually no waste services in the country, and nearly 75% of the urban population does not have access to clean water.[13] Water-borne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, and malaria are a fact of everyday life.[14, 15, 16] Nearly 68% live in poverty, with 15% living in extreme poverty making less than USD 2 per day.[17, 18] Urban air pollution is very high (91.67%) on the pollution index.[19]

Although many think of land tenure as a rural issue, most of the country's land disputes are in urban areas. Some argue that urban land rights are the most pressing problem facing the nation.[20] The underlying cause is that most Angolan land is held under customary title, and people do not have actual legal documents proving ownership. Angolan law does not recognize customary law, thus leaving most people living on land without formal ownership rights. One result has been the forced eviction of thousands of Angolans living in informal settlements.[21, 22, 23]

Work Problems in Urban Areas

The oil industry is vital to the nation's economy, and major oil terminals (storage facilities) are located in two of Angola's major cities, Luanda and Cabinda. Angola recently exceeded Nigeria as one of the largest producer of crude oil in sub-Saharan Africa.[24] This formidable source of wealth, however, does not translate into widespread employment. Jobs in the oil industry are difficult to secure for the average person, and oil wealth remains concentrated in the hands of foreigners or upper class Angolans.[25, 26] Angola's oil industry was originally developed in the 1960s by foreign oil companies (including Shell, ExxonMobil, BP Amoco,

Construction
Flickr / S Martin

and Chevron Texaco), which still control most production. The state-owned Sonangol (Sociedade Nacional de Combustiveis de Angola) currently administers it.[27]

The oil industry has indirectly provided a limited number of jobs in Angola's cities by funding reconstruction of the country's infrastructure. Competition for construction jobs is fierce, however, due to the large influx of people in search of work. Thus, jobs in general remain scarce and people work in the informal sector to survive. Such temporary, short-term self-employment is neither taxed nor monitored by the government. Wages are low and benefits or job security are non-existent. Child labor is common in the informal sector, and many women work there as well. Only a few alternatives for women exist in the private and public sector, but these are mostly low-level positions.[28]

Workers can legally join unions to strike, but the government does not uphold these as a constitutional right. In particular, government forces are likely to intervene in strikes that affect the oil sector or other areas in which turmoil could threaten national security. The government outlawed strikes by nurses in Benguela and teachers in Luanda in 2007, threatening to fire the teachers if they did not return to work.[29, 30]

Additionally, business regulations are outdated and poorly enforced across the country, and working conditions are difficult throughout all sectors of the economy. Monitoring agencies note that corruption and patronage are rampant throughout the government, and bribery is commonplace in business.[31]

Healthcare and Health Issues

Health conditions in Angola are precarious. Estimates of life expectancy range from a low of 38 years to a high of 54 years. The nation has the second highest mortality rate for children under the age of five (220 per 1,000).[32, 33] The population is at high risk of contracting infectious diseases, including typhoid fever, diarrhea, malaria, sleeping sickness, schistosomiasis, tuberculosis, leprosy, and respiratory diseases.[34, 35] Maternal mortality rates are extremely high; about 70% of births occur outside of medical facilities.[36]

Healthcare
Flickr / USAID in Africa

Most health care services collapsed in Angola due to the civil war because the country's doctors and medical personnel fled to other countries.[37] Estimates suggest that there are only about 1.7 doctors for every 10,000 people in the country.[38, 39, 40] Although there are 25 hospitals in Luanda, care is unreliable and substandard, and access is limited. Travelers can expect shortages of trained specialists, safe blood supplies, and pharmaceuticals. Payment in cash is usually expected before treatment, which can be very expensive. Local people who cannot afford the cost of services may be turned away.[41, 42]

Exchange 13: Is there a hospital nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a hospital nearby?	aa ung awshpeetaaw por pertoo
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	sing, no sengtro daa seedaad

The best medical treatment is found at private clinics, which are open 24 hours and have on-call specialists. Some are run by expatriate organizations. Doctors here perform routine surgeries, emergency treatments, and general health care. Most Angolans, however, cannot use these clinics because fees are high and they must pay in advance.[43, 44]

Exchange 14: Is Doctor Silva in, sir?

Visitor:	Is Doctor Silva in, sir?	oo dotor seelva eeshtaa no kongsootawreeyo
Local:	Yes.	sing

Reliable medications are difficult to find, although pharmacies in Luanda carry a limited number of over-the-counter medicines and prescription drugs.[45, 46] Buyers should be aware that unregulated counterfeit drugs are sold throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Such drugs are marketed in pharmacies, or at more affordable roadside stalls.[47, 48]

Education and Schools in Cities

Primary education in Angola is free and compulsory for four years.[49] Primary school lasts four years and secondary education consists of seven years and is not free. Angola's only state-run university is Agostinho Neto University.[50] Several private universities were founded in the late 1990s and include Catholic University of Angola and Jean Piaget University of Angola.

Attendance rates are low, accounting for the relatively low literacy rates throughout the nation (71%).[51] Angola has one of the highest dropout rates and grade repetition rates in Africa. The indicators for success in primary education are household wealth and physical location.[52] About 54% of enrolled children actually complete their primary education.[53] The situation in secondary schools is even starker. Approximately 15% of students are enrolled in the nation's 70 secondary schools, while less than 1% of students attend post-secondary institutions. The situation is improving and by 2015, nearly 6 million students were enrolled in primary and secondary education.[54]
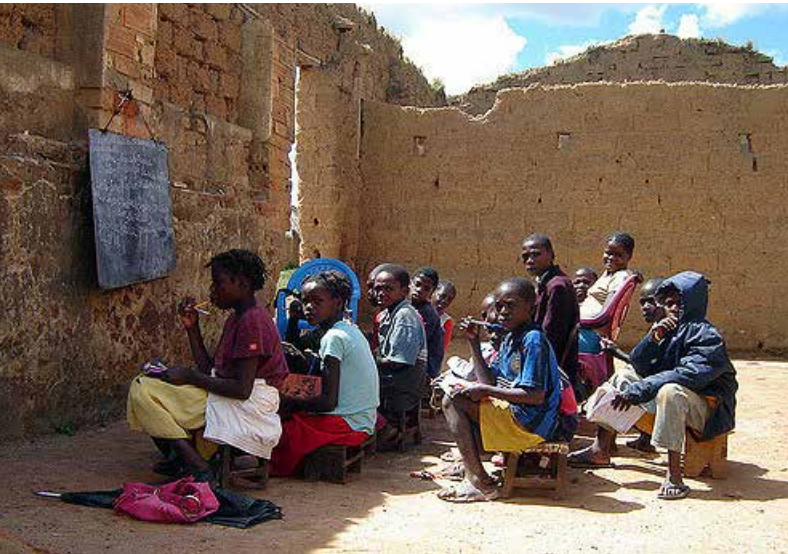
School in Kuito
Flickr / Living in Kuito

Many factors conspire to keep children home from school. Among the more serious are poor water, sanitation, and fees. Overcrowded schools, multi-age classrooms, teacher shortages, and a lack of supplies compound the problem.[55]

Restaurants

There are a variety of restaurants in cities such as Luanda, offering a range of cuisines, yet most restaurants are well outside the budget of ordinary Angolans. Within the capital city of Luanda, some wealthier Angolans might choose to entertain guests in restaurants or cafes.

Angolan cuisine contains robust Portuguese influences, especially in seafood dishes. Angolan cooking also shares similarities with Brazilian cuisine. Palm oil, beans, and cassava are common staples. Many desserts, such as the well-known *cocada amarela*, are flavored with cinnamon and coconut.[56]

Cafe Cuanza
Flickr / Valentina Buj

Exchange 15: Do you have dessert?

Customer:	Do you have dessert?	a senyora teng sobremeyza
Waiter:	Yes, we have cocada amarela.	sing, teymosh kokaada aamarela

If curious about any ingredients in a menu item or in a meal, just ask the waiter.

Exchange 16: What type of meat is this?

Guest:	What type of meat is this?	keh karney ey eshtaa
Host:	Chicken.	gaaleenya

It is necessary to avoid drinking tap water or using ice in drinks because the water is likely to cause illness. Bottled water is an alternative during your stay.[57]

If diners wish to have everything put on one bill, they should notify the waiter before ordering.

Exchange 17: Put this all on one bill, okay?

Customer:	Put this all on one bill, okay?	kolawkey eeshtoo toodoo noomaa so kongta, eeshtaa beng
Waiter:	Sure.	klaaroo

Some restaurants may add service charges on the final bill. In such cases, individual tipping might not be necessary. If no charge is added, diners should leave a minimum 10% tip as a way to acknowledge the service provided.[58]

Marketplace and Street Vendors

Markets

Many Angolans survive on small trade, thus bargaining is a customary part of business in the markets of Luanda and other Angolan cities.[59] Since haggling is the norm, buyers should examine items closely to be sure that the quality matches the price.[60]

Exchange 18: May I examine this close up?

Buyer:	May I examine this close up?	pawsoo eyzaameenaar eeshtoo deh maaysh pertoo
Seller:	Sure.	klaaroo

Ladies at a roadside market Flickr / mp3ief

One of the largest and best-known crafts market in Angola is the *Futungo* Crafts Market in the southern part of Luanda. It is only open on Sunday. Many ethnic and linguistic groups are represented there, but most of the traders are Kikongo. About 10 km (6 mi)

south of Luanda is the city's first shopping mall, Belas, with over 100 stores specializing in a variety of goods. The mall is open from 9 am to 10 pm daily but can accommodate no more than 1,000 people at a time.[61, 62]

Street Vendors

Angola has a thriving black market and street vendors (*kandongueiros*) are nearly everywhere. For many, it is the only way they can make enough money to support themselves and their families.[63] The government is trying to get many of the black-market vendors to transfer into the regulated formal markets, but most have resisted. Many of the vendors are children. It is illegal to sell products on the streets, but the practice remains pervasive.[64]

Exchange 19: Do you sell silver jewelry?

Buyer:	Do you sell silver jewelry?	oo senyor vende zhoyash de praata
Seller:	Yes.	sing

Street food in Damba
Flickr / Paolo Pescio

Food is also sold at numerous stands along the streets of Luanda and other Angolan cities. Most local people cannot afford to eat in restaurants so they patronize roadside food stalls instead.[65] In addition, selling food at street stalls is a primary source of income for people in Luanda. Often women hold these jobs because it is a way for them to earn money while caring for their children.[66]

The proprietors of small food operations often use charcoal stoves to grill a variety of meats. To avoid food poisoning, buyers should be cautious about the food they buy from street vendors, and limit purchases to hot, well-cooked food.[67] In general, travelers should avoid eating food purchased from street vendors to avoid risk from food borne illnesses.[68, 69]

Exchange 20: I'd like some hot soup.

Customer:	I'd like some hot soup.	goostaareeya deh sopa kyent
Waiter:	Okay.	eeshtaa beng

Money and ATMs

The official unit of currency in Angola is the *Kwanza* (Kz) and in November 2015 the exchange rate was approximately USD 1= Kz 135.222.[70] Angola's economy is cash-based and U.S. dollars are accepted in cities as payment (Luanda and the provincial capitals), but old series dollar bills (with small heads) are not accepted.[71] Only undamaged new-series bills are accepted. In Luanda, buyers can sometimes use credit cards, mainly in large hotels and restaurants, but travelers' checks are rarely accepted. Some ATMs are present in Luanda, but customers should be aware that robberies sometimes take place at ATMs.[72, 73]

Angola Central Bank, Benguela
Flickr / F Mira

Exchange 21: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Buyer:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	oo senyor aaseyta mo-eyda aamer-eekaana
Seller:	No, we only accept *Kwanza*.	naaoo, so aaseytaamoos quaaza

A buyer holding a currency denomination that is higher than the price of an item should ask whether the seller can make change before showing the currency. It is unwise to carry large sums of money, or show it in public due to the risk of robbery.[74, 75]

Exchange 22: Can you give me change for this?

Buyer:	Can you give me change for this?	oo senyor poodehreeya meh dish-trookaar eeshtoo
Seller:	No.	naaoo

Urban Traffic and Transportation

Driving is risky in Angola. In Luanda and throughout the country, roads are dilapidated and the quality of gasoline is unreliable. Intersections mostly lack traffic signals; even if a signal is present, few drivers obey them. Driving habits are erratic, streets are overcrowded, and pedestrians clog the roadways. Roads frequently wash out during Angola's rainy season (April-November). Further, mines might be displaced by rain and floods, thus increasing the danger to drivers.[76]

Public transportation infrastructure has not been developed in Angola. For this reason, it is not advisable for visitors to use public transportation. Services, including conventional buses, minibuses, and trucks used as buses are unreliable, overcrowded, and unsafe.[77] In big cities, like Luanda, public transportation known as *candongueiros* or *taxistas*, should be avoided.

Traffic in Luanda
Flickr / Bernardo Ramirez

These multi-passenger vans are largely unregulated and often dangerous. Visitors are encouraged to arrange for taxis through companies that have been reviewed and approved by the U.S. Embassy in Luanda. Some of these are the Morvic Taxi Company, Transcoop SA Taxi Company, Taxi Divisao, and the Universal Goods Taxi Company. Taxi service is available at airports and through hotels, but fares are likely high so it is best to establish the destination and rate in advance.[78, 79]

Exchange 23: Can you take me there?

Visitor:	Can you take me there?	oo senyor poda levaar-meh atey laa
Local:	Yes, I can.	sing, pawsoo

The Angolan national air carrier, TAAG, is the only carrier regulated by the civil aviation authority. Only nine of the nation's aircraft are currently authorized to fly to the EU.[80] There are safety concerns about aircraft maintenance, as it is not known if conventions for maintenance and safety procedures are followed.[81, 82]

Street Crime and Solicitation

Street crime is common in Luanda because of deteriorating economic conditions. It may take the form of vehicle theft, purse snatching or pick-pocketing, and break-ins. Sometimes the perpetrators operate out of slow-moving cars or from motorcycles.[83] Robberies occur both day and night, particularly in places frequented by foreigners.[84] Travel at night is more dangerous than during the day, especially in Luanda.[85] Incidences of rape are becoming increasingly common. Travelers are advised to avoid traveling alone at night. Avoid walking around Luanda at night and don't wear jewelry or watches in public places. Visitors should also avoid walking between the popular bars and restaurants on the *Ilha do Cabo* (Cape Island), a low sandy peninsula off the shore of Luanda.[86]

Travel in and around Cabinda province is discouraged due to reports of violence, including rape, murder, and kidnappings. Travel to the provinces of *Lunda Norte* and *Lunda Sul* is discouraged due to increased reports of violent incidents against foreigners. Authorities are wary of foreign nationals in diamond mining regions, and travelers are subject to restricted movement and even detention by Angolan security forces. Armed robberies sometimes occur along the roads leading to diamond facilities.[87, 88]

Begging is widespread in Angolan cities. Locals are often desperate to obtain money for food, and see foreigners as possible sources of income. Many of the beggars are children. Begging by older children or adults is more likely to be accompanied by street crime. Many of the beggars are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, raising the probability of erratic behavior that can escalate. In spite of dire conditions, it is best to ignore beggars if others are around. Giving money to someone might attract others to gather, especially if they see someone distributing money.[89]

Exchange 24: Please, buy something from me.

| **Seller:** | Please, buy something from me. | kongprey-meh aalgoomaa koysa, por faavor |
| **Buyer:** | Sorry, I have no money left. | zheh naaoo teynyoo maaysh dehenyeroo, singtoo moo eetoo |

Luanda street scene
Flickr / Bryn Pinzgauer

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Overview

Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Many Angolan cities decreased in size following independence as people moved to the countryside.

   FALSE

   Many Angolan cities increased in size following independence. Luanda's population exploded as millions fled to the capital to escape fighting during Angola's civil war.

2. Most Angolans live in deep poverty and in substandard housing.

   TRUE

   Currently, it is estimated that nearly 75% of Angola's urban population lives in informal settlements known as *musseques*, built on hardened waste.

3. The oil industry has provided many jobs in Angola's cities.

   FALSE

   The oil industry has indirectly provided a limited number of jobs in Angola's cities by funding reconstruction of the country's infrastructure. Competition for construction jobs is fierce, however, due to the large influx of people in search of work.

4. Angola's rural and urban crime rates are similar.

   FALSE

   Street crime is far more common in the nation's cities because of deteriorating economic conditions. It may take the form of vehicle theft, purse snatching or pick-pocketing, and break-ins. Robberies occur both day and night, particularly in places frequented by foreigners.

5. Angola has a highly active informal employment sector.

   TRUE

   Although construction jobs are available in the cities, jobs in general are scarce. Thus, people work in the informal sector to survive. Such temporary, short-term self-employment is neither taxed nor monitored by the government.

C H A P T E R 5

Rural Life

Introduction

Today, about 57% Angolans live in rural communities. Most depend on subsistence farming, fishing, and cattle for their livelihood.[1] One of the great difficulties facing rural farmers is related to landmines in agricultural fields. During the country's civil war, landmines were buried in fields and farming activities virtually stopped. This left the nation without enough food to meet its needs and the country became dependent on food imports from donor nations and agencies. In recent years, small-scale agriculture has increased, but food production remains well below pre-independence levels, despite the clear potential of the agricultural sector.[2]

Life in rural Angola is extremely difficult. More than 90% of the people live in extreme poverty on less than USD 2 per day. Most live in substandard housing and few have access to electricity. Approximately 16% have adequate sanitation. Many have to walk at least a km (.6 mi) each way to get water from streams or wells, and only about 49% of households have access to safe water.[3, 4]

Although major roads connect rural communities to each other and to urban centers, nearly a third of central highland communities remain isolated five months out of the year. Public transportation options are limited, especially during the rainy seasons. Access to healthcare facilities and doctors is poor, contributing to the poor health of people in the region.[5, 6]

Tribal Distribution

Angola has a great diversity of people and cultures. The largest ethnic group is the Ovimbundu tribe (37%), who live mainly on the Bié Plateau and speak Umbundu, a Bantu language. Many Ovimbundu live in the cities of Lobito and Benguela as well as the capital of Luanda. Formerly traders, today most Ovimbundu are farmers.[7, 8, 9]

Lobito woman
Flickr / Hugo Nobre

The Kimbundu (Mbundu) tribe is the second largest group (25%) who speak a Bantu language known as Kimbundu.[10] This group lives mainly in the north-central regions of the nation, extending from Luanda east to an area between the Dande and Cuanza rivers.[11, 12] The Kimbundu are the largest group living in Luanda.[13]

The Bakongo tribe is the third largest group (13%). The Bakongo speak Kikongo, another Bantu language, and live mainly along the coast in the extreme northwest and in the province of Cabinda.[14, 15, 16] The Kongo are traditionally farmers and grow cassava, bananas, corn, and peanuts among other crops. Many have moved to the urban areas, however, where they trade or work. The people maintain a strong hold on their tradition of ancestor and spirit worship.[17]

Other smaller Bantu tribes are scatter throughout the country, including the Ambo, Herero, Xindonga, and Chokwe. A relatively small population of Khoisan speakers are widely scattered throughout the southern sections of Angola.[18, 19, 20]

Land Distribution and Ownership

Following independence, all land ownership rights were transferred to the state. The state currently owns most of the land in the country, including oil fields and mineral rights. The next largest landowners are tribal groups who hold land communally, according to tribal custom. Most property deeds are for land in urban areas.[21, 22]

Exchange 25: Do you own this land?

Official:	Do you own this land?	oo senyor eh donoo dehshta teRa
Local:	Yes.	sing

There is no process in place for administering land rights in Angola. The new constitution stipulates that it will protect the diversity of property ownership, including public, private, mixed, cooperative, and family ownership.[23] A land law enacted in 2004 required that those who occupy land must have a legal right to do so, yet this requirement has not resolved competing claims. Small, rural village leaders have been able to mediate some conflicts, but there is no right of appeal or formal adjudication process. Disputes occur regularly between current tenants and refugees who have returned to claim land they were forced to abandon in the civil war.[24]

Issues of land tenure are further complicated by competing legal systems. Most Angolans hold land ownership under customary law that is not formally recognized by the Angolan legal system. Customary law is largely focused on the property rights of men and male dominated kinship groups.[25] Thus, women are extremely limited in their ability to claim or inherit land, even though they perform most of the agricultural labor. While statutory law may be gender neutral, customary law prevails, and customary law is based on patriarchal values.[26] An estimated 90 percent of farms in Angola are small to medium in size and are used mainly for communal subsistence farming.[27] The government lacks the capacity to institute formalization procedures that would allow Angolans to seek formal title to their lands.[28, 29] The government's inability to regulate the rules of ownership, and its failure to recognize customary legal rights, has the potential to lead to future unrest and conflicts over land.[30]

Chicuma Caluquembe Vatuco
Flickr / jbdodane

Rural Economy/Typical Source of Income in Rural Areas

Agriculture

Angola was once a major exporter of coffee and other agricultural products, but the war destroyed farming infrastructure, forcing many to abandon their farms. Land mines planted during the protracted civil war have stifled cultivation in many areas. The industry has not recovered and Angola must import half of its food. Most farms function at the subsistence level making it nearly impossible for farmers to meet their economic needs.[31,] [32] Crops include vegetables, cassava (also called manioc or tapioca), millet, and bananas. Cotton, coffee, and sugar are among the major cash crops.[33] Agriculture contributes only a small percentage to the national GDP, but it remains the main source of employment for as many as 85% of the rural population.[34]

Examining the corn
Flickr / International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center

Exchange 26: What crops do you grow?

Official:	What crops do you grow?	oo kyeh eh kyeh oo senyor koolteeva
Local:	I grow sugarcane and bananas.	eyoo koolteeva kaana deh aasookaar ee baanaanash

Angola's agricultural potential is tremendous. The country has over 35 million hectares (86.5 million acres) of arable land and an abundant water supply. The government has renewed its interest in returning the nation to prewar productivity levels, and is preparing to invest significant sums into rural areas to boost agriculture. Foreign investors seem willing to become partners in these efforts and numerous projects are underway.[35, 36]

Diamond Mining

Angola is the world's fifth-largest diamond producer. It has large diamond reserves located primarily in the rural areas of *Lunda Norte* and *Lunda Sul*.[37] The diamond industry accounts for about 5% of GDP and provides one of the few employment alternatives outside of farming for rural Angolans.[38, 39] Some of the mines are informally

operated (unregulated), and working conditions are dire. In the past, "conflict diamonds" (also known as "blood diamonds") were used to fund civil war factions, including the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).[40, 41] Although the civil war concluded in 2002, it appears that many abuses associated with diamond mining persist.[42] Children are often used to work in unregulated diamond mines without safety equipment, while receiving very low wages, if any. A recent study found that 46% of miners are younger than 16 years of age, often forced to work due to the economic hardships facing their families.[43, 44]

Line of trucks near Viana
Flickr / jlrsousa

There are few economic opportunities outside of mining and agriculture for ordinary Angolans. Typical alternatives include transporting mud for construction, collecting and selling firewood, and selling charcoal. Many involved in such endeavors are children and derived income is quite low.[45]

Rural Transportation Issues

Throughout Angola, roads are marked by erosion, potholes, and land mines that become exposed following heavy rains.[46] During extended rains (between October and March), rural roads are impassable. Like most of the country's infrastructure, roads were destroyed during the civil war and few paved roads now exist.[47] Public transportation, such as bus or taxi service, is mostly confined to urban areas. Existing public transportation is considered unreliable and unsafe, whether urban or rural.[48]

There are three operating railway lines in Angola covering approximately 2,852 km (1,772 mi). Reconstruction of the 424 km (264 mi) *Caminhos de Ferro de Luanda* (CFL) line was completed and opened to passenger traffic in 2011.[49, 50]

Rural road in Angola
Flickr / mp3ief

The main rail line is the Benguela Railway (CFB), which took almost 30 years to construct. It extended east 1,609 km (1,000 mi) from the Angolan coast into southern Congo.[51] It too, was ruined in the civil war, but the Chinese government helped to rebuild it.[52, 53] A reconstructed portion of the CFB was opened in December 2013, linking Angola with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia.[54, 55] Reconstruction of the rest of the line is ongoing, with approximately 400 km (249 mi) completed in 2013.[56] The first official test of the line conveyed government officials 560 km (348 mi), from Lobito to Bié. Another 1,000 km (621 mi) of track has been restored between Benguela and the city of Luena, which lies to the east of Benguela.[57]

The third major railway operates in the south, liking the port city of Namibe to Angola's border with Namibia. The 756 km (470 mi) *Caminhos de Ferro Namibe* (CFN), formerly the *Moçamedes* Railway, also underwent rehabilitation and modernization. It now links Angola's southern border region to the neighboring country of the Republic of Namibia.[58]

Health Issues

Health care
Flickr / USAID in Africa

Medical services are scarce throughout Angola. Only about 30%-40% of Angolans have access to healthcare; many must walk at least one hour to reach clinics and hospitals. Most doctors in Angolan medical facilities are from either from Cuba or other foreign countries, and are concentrated mainly in government controlled urban hospitals.[59, 60, 61] People in rural Benguela and Huila provinces suffer high levels of food insecurity, malnutrition, and disease yet they are especially underserved by state medical personnel.[62] People must travel to Luanda for medical care, including emergency services.[63]

Exchange 27: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Official:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	aa ooma kleeneeka medeheka pertoo
Local:	Yes, over there.	sing, aalee

Many seek the aid of a *kimbanda* (witch doctor) to receive traditional medicine and care for physical and psychological ailments.[64, 65, 66] *Kimbanda* use herbal medicines, ritual objects, and special prayers to heal the sick, calling upon ancestral spirits to intervene and ease the hardships and sufferings of the living.[67]

Rural Education

Due to the shortage of schools and teachers, many rural children grow up without attending school.[68] A 2012 UNICEF program reported that only 66.8% of rural children between the ages of 5 and 18 are enrolled in primary schools. That number drops

Adult literacy students
Flickr / USAID in Africa

dramatically for secondary school attendance, where only 5% of rural children between the ages of 10 and 18 are enrolled in secondary schools. One reason for such low rates of attendance is poor access to schools. Many communities do not have a school and children must walk up to five km (3 mi) a day each way. Those children who do go to school are unlikely to obtain a quality education as there are few trained teachers, no learning materials, and classes are held irregularly.[69]

Historically, Angolan girls have had less access to formal education than boys, resulting in far lower literacy rates for women. Thus, while Angola's overall national literacy rate is approximately 71.1%, almost 73.6 % of rural women cannot read or write compared to 34.6% of men.[70, 71, 72] Some of the most impoverished households in Angola are headed by women, especially in the central highlands, yet with little education they struggle to provide for their children.[73] International organizations have stepped in to provide literacy training for women, and efforts are underway to expand the network of rural schools to make them more accessible.[74]

Exchange 28: Is there a school nearby?

Official:	Is there a school nearby?	aa ooma eshkola pertoo
Local:	Yes.	sing

Even though schools are free in Angola, very poor families cannot afford to send their children far from home to attend school. Most Angolans feel that education is an important basic need, so if families are lucky enough to have relatives living in a provincial capital, they will send their children to live with them to attend urban school.[75]

Exchange 29: Do your children go to school?

Official:	Do your children go to school?	oosh seyoosh feelyosh vaaoo aa eshkola
Local:	Yes.	sing

Exchange 30: How many people live in this house?

Official:	How many people live in this house?	quaantaash pesowash veeveng neshta kaaza
Local:	Five.	singko

Village Life

Angola has no local, municipal, or provincial elections and the central government remains fragmented and unstable. Bribery and pressure from various forces, such as police or rival militias, are commonplace. Such groups often use violence to control, influence, or subvert local political

A Soba and his people
Flickr / mp3ief

processes. It is not unusual for police, security forces, rival political groups, or warlords to seek retribution for political activities. In addition, few courts function outside large, centrally controlled areas.[76]

Exchange 31: Will you take me to your village elder?

Official:	Will you take me to your village elder?	oo senyor poodehreeya levaar-meh aatey aa aaldaya dooz eedawzoosh
Local:	Yes.	sing

Aside from state-sanctioned authorities, villages have their own leaders. Traditional village leaders, or *sobas*, are symbolically important within Angola's traditional authority structures. Many Angolans regard the *soba* as the most important person in the community. Many NGOs rely upon village *sobas* to communicate with local populations and channel in supplies and aid.[77, 78]

Exchange 32: Respected village elder, we need your help.

Official:	Respected village elder, we need your help.	eekselentees seeseemoos eedsaw-sosh daa aaldaya, prezeezaamoosh da vawsoo aazhooda
Local:	Okay.	eeshtaa beng

Border Crossings and Checkpoints

Angola's Cabinda province is separated from the rest of Angola by a strip of land belonging to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The province also shares borders with the Republic of the Congo. Civil unrest frequently occurs in this region and visitors often come across checkpoints. Some parts of diamond-producing areas

in North and South Lunda Provinces lie along the eastern border of Angola. These border areas are dangerous, and security forces often set up roadblocks to search vehicles or detain people. Gunmen and armed robbers are also present in these areas.[79]

Angola-Namibia border in Ruacana
Flickr / jbdodane

Exchange 33: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Official:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	ondeh feeka o pontoo deh eeng-spesaaoo maaysh prawseemoo
Local:	Two kilometers from here.	a doysh keelomeetroosh daakee

If stopped, drivers or pedestrians going through the checkpoint should follow orders. Police may solicit bribes for minor traffic violations, but drivers should ask for a written ticket and pay the fine at the designated location. Try not to pay the fine directly to the officer. If the officer asks for a bribe, drivers should politely ask for the officer's identification, including name and badge number.[80]

Exchange 34: Please get out of the car.

Guard:	Please get out of the car.	saaya doo kaaRoo, por favor
Driver:	Okay.	eshtaa beng

When local police ask for information or official papers, drivers need to immediately and politely produce the requested documents, which will likely include vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and driver's license.[81, 82]

Exchange 35: Show us the car registration.

Guard:	Show us the car registration.	moshtrey-nosh oo Rezheestroo doo kaaRoo
Driver:	Okay.	eeshtaa beng

Landmines

Every Angolan province has been heavily contaminated with landmines; only Afghanistan and Cambodia rival these contamination levels.[83] Landmines remain widely scattered throughout the countryside affecting about 1,400 communities.[84, 85]

Exchange 36: Is this area mined?

Visitor:	Is this area mined?	estaa aareeya eeshtaa meenaada
Local:	Yes.	sing

At the end of the civil war, Angola still contained about 20 million landmines.[86] Their locations are not mapped, making their removal slow and dangerous. The Angolan government continues to work with international NGOs to remove landmines and educate people about the danger.[87] It is believed that about half of the country remains contaminated with landmines. Since all major roads have been cleared of ordinance and paved with asphalt, the government now intends to focus on clearing secondary roads. Nearly 5,000 km (3,107 mi) of road in and around Benguela, Huambo, Kuando Kubango, and Kuito are verified to be clear of landmines.[88] Other cleared areas are the Menongue airport, near Luanda, and the railway line running from the interior to the western port of Lobito, near the nation's second oil refinery.[89]

Removing a landmine
Public Domain / Tim Grant

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Overview

Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Angola grows enough food to feed its population.

   FALSE

   During the country's civil war, landmines were buried in fields and farming activities virtually stopped. This left the nation without enough food to meet its needs and the country became dependent on food imports from donor nations and agencies.

2. Nearly half of all Angolan diamond miners are under the age of 16.

   TRUE

   Children are often used to work in unregulated diamond mines without safety equipment, while receiving very low wages, if any. A recent study found that 46% of miners are younger than 16 years of age, often forced to work due to the economic hardships facing their families.

3. Nearly 9 in 10 rural Angolans live on less than USD 2 per day.

   TRUE

   More than 90% of the people live in extreme poverty on less than USD 2 per day. Most live in substandard housing and few have access to electricity. Approximately 16% have adequate sanitation. Many have to walk at least a km (.6 mi) each way to get water from streams or wells, and only about 49% of households have access to safe water.

4. Public transportation, including bus and taxi service, is safe and reliable.

   FALSE

   Public transportation, such as bus or taxi service, is mostly confined to urban areas. Existing public transportation is considered unreliable and unsafe, whether urban or rural.

5. Most doctors and medical personnel in Angola are native.

   FALSE

   Most doctors in Angolan medical facilities are from either from Cuba or other foreign countries, and are concentrated mainly in government controlled urban hospitals.

Mbombo Atome Chila family
Flickr / jbdodane

C H A P T E R   6

Family Life

Introduction

Families play a key role in Angola, especially in terms of maintaining and transmitting values across generations. Each ethnic group has a unique culture and family structure, but most are simultaneously matrilineal and patriarchal. For example, the Ovimbundu are matrilineal because household economic authority passes from mother to daughter and patrilineal because family and political authority passes from father to son.[1] Polygamy, while not officially recognized, is fairly common among both urban and rural populations. Many factors have helped to shape the modern Angolan family, including urban pressures, the presence of HIV/AIDS, and Angola's 27-year civil war, which

severely disrupted family units. Women, children, the elderly, and extended kin have had to shoulder more family burdens because of the casualties of war.[2, 3, 4] Women have carried the greatest burden, however, often being solely responsible for raising children, taking care of sick and elderly family members, generating family income, providing food, and ensuring the continued survival of their families.[5]

Male / Female Interactions in the Family

Both males and females are expected to contribute to the upkeep of the home and family, in both urban and rural settings.[6] The typical urban family home is nuclear, consisting of parents and children. Traditional rural family units are larger, consisting of parents, grandparents, children, and other family members living in one house. Up to three generations often live together, even when a family's house or apartment is very small. Extended families consist of aunts, uncles, and cousins who interact closely.[7, 8, 9] In rural areas, when sons reach maturity they select parcels of family land and build huts for themselves, their wives, and their future children.[10] The oldest male of the family is the family head, called *o mais velho* ("the oldest"). This pattern has given way to the pressures of modern life, to some extent, but it still occurs in rural areas.[11] Economic constraints have caused many adult children, both male and female, to remain with their parents until affordable housing is found.

Julio and his extended family
Flickr / mp3ief

Exchange 37: Are these children part of your family?

Official:	Are these children part of your family?	eshtaash kreeyaasash faazeng part daa soowa faameeleeya
Local:	Yes.	sing

Angola's constitution guarantees equal rights for women. Yet, their legal protections are relatively weak.[12] Husbands and wives are granted equality with respect to the family, but men continue to hold more power and authority in accordance with traditional practices. Women remain disadvantaged with respect to Angola's inheritance laws,

which gives women only 50% of a husband's estate.[13] However, many of Angola's ethnic groups are matrilineal; in some regions both males and females inherit land and couples hold joint property rights.[14]

Status of Elders, Adolescents, and Children

Elders

Elders are a fundamental part of kinship group hierarchy, and they are respected as people of wisdom and authority. Showing deference to them is important as illustrated by a law passed in 2011. It is designed to guarantee the elderly social protections and pensions, and it established a National Elderly day.[15, 16] However, families still sometimes mistreat older family members, prompting them to leave their homes. This has increased the number of elderly beggars living on the streets.[17]

Tikita Bocoio elder of the family
Flickr / jbdodane

Life expectancy for the total population is 55.63 years of age.[18, 19, 20] Women are expected to live slightly longer than men according to a 2015 estimate. The Angolan government estimates that nearly 3% of the Angolan population is over the age of 65.[21]

Adolescence

A survey found that almost half of Angolan adolescents are sexually active before the age of 15, with about 70% of young women giving birth in their teens—with or without

a husband.[22] Unlike other countries, having a child out of wedlock is not an issue in Angola.[23] Females in the extended family typically help raise the child of an unwed mother. Further, both the young mother and child or children will continue to live with her family until she gets married.[24]

Young Angolan males reach adulthood when they earn enough to support themselves, while for females this

Academy Football Angola
Flickr / Academia Futebol Angola

typically happens when they get married. In rural areas, male and female adulthood typically occurs around the age of 15. Urban male adulthood generally occurs later due to the higher costs of living. Urban female adulthood also occurs later because young women typically work a few extra years before getting married.[25]

The identities of rural adolescent youth are tied to lineage, family, community, ethnic group, language group, and region. Whereas the anonymity of large urban areas offers young people a realm of opportunities to reinvent themselves. Male adolescents in particular participate in the possibilities this affords.[26] For example, adolescent males might join a football club, which gives them a chance to see themselves at the center of the world. It becomes a way for them to re-image the urban landscape and take possession of symbols of power and success. Adopting a nickname, especially for adolescent males, is an important part of identity reinvention. They often adopt western style nicknames including, 'Eddy Muffy' (for the American comedian and actor, Eddie Murphy), and 'Maiko' (for the American pop star, Michael Jackson). Nicknames often change as soon as the namesake loses popularity or if the adolescent chooses a different identity. Currently, hip-hop and international football superstars are common nicknames for urban youth.[27]

Children

Children are welcomed into families, and most households will celebrate new arrivals with special food, drinks, and visits from neighbors.[28] Young children are cared for by their mothers, who customarily strap them to their backs with a cloth as they work in the fields or around the house. If the parents are deceased, children typically live with other family members, including uncles and aunts. Childcare is generally the responsibility of older siblings and grandparents. Through the extended family, young children interact with relatives on both sides of the family.[29, 30]

Kwanza River Family
Flickr / Shay Haas

Traditionally, older children are expected to contribute to the family by cooking meals and looking after younger children. In rural areas, children are also expected to herd livestock, and carry water and firewood.[31] Due to the dire economic circumstances in Angola, however, children are now expected to contribute to their family's income.[32, 33]

During Angola's civil war young boys and girls were commonly recruited into rebel armies.[34] Children were forced to kill people, sometimes their own family, as part of their training. Girls were also kidnapped by militias, but usually forced to stay in the camps to provide domestic work.[35] Further, relatives were often

killed in front of a kidnapped child. This was done to prevent the child from trying to escape and rejoin his or her family.[36] Children were severely traumatized during the Angolan civil war, and today many continue to endure deplorable social and economic conditions. Progress for children since the end of the war has been unequal and slow; childhood physical abuse and severe malnutrition remain rampant social problems.[37, 38]

Currently, about 14% of Angola's children fail to attend school. Despite government attempts to increase enrollment, poor children in the more remote regions of the country have received little benefit from these efforts.[39] Nearly 26% of children between the age of 5 and 14 are working in Angola, and another 22% combine work with school. Many are victimized by appalling child labor practices. Many are exposed to dangerous work conditions in agriculture and the diamond mines, while street children in urban areas not only beg, but engage in prostitution.[40] Other children work as domestic servants in Luanda, or are recruited by criminal gangs to sell and transport drugs. Angola has been identified as a market for human traffickers seeking child laborers and children for sexual exploitation. Some of these children are kidnapped and sent to Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, South Africa, and Portugal.[41]

Married Life, Divorce, and Birth

Married Life

Traditionally, men hold the most family authority and are responsible for family security. Women, on the other hand, are traditionally responsible for household tasks. These tasks include the daily care of children, growing food or adding to family income by selling fruit or other goods, and making family economic decisions.[42]

A young mother and her family
Flickr / jbdodane

The number of men in rural Angola has dropped significantly due to successive wars. Thus, women are now a majority in rural areas.[43] This has strengthened trends toward polygamous marriages in rural Angola, where women make significant contributions in the agricultural sector. Although such marriages are not recognized by Angolan law, they are commonly accepted.[44, 45] Women in polygamous marriages generally maintain their own households rather than live in a single house with other wives.[46, 47]

In their frequent role as heads of families, women assume responsibility for all household work and childcare. This is true even when a husband is present. When the husband is not present, women are in charge of the family's livelihood, to which children and other family members contribute.[48, 49]

To earn money women will participate in small trade, often selling or trading food, produce, firewood, or other goods at the local markets. Both men and women are active in agricultural production, but women are responsible for carrying food crops to market and selling them.[50, 51, 52] Women are also responsible for taking care of small livestock, such as goats and chicken. Men are generally more active than women in the community and politics. Women are legally protected against discrimination and violence yet these commonly occur, especially in rural areas.[53] Women earn less than men, and they are more likely than men to be involved in the informal economic sector. Most of the poorest households in Angola are headed by women.[54]

Divorce

Traditionally, married women move to their husband's village. If the couple divorces, the husband and / or his relatives often force women from the land. Women may return to their birth families where they are sometimes unwelcome. Many women are unaware of their legal protections, due in part to high rates of illiteracy. In some cases, property is not allocated according to the law, but according to the local tradition. This can deprive women of their rightful property.[55]

Maintaining a household
Flickr / mp3ief

A married couple might find themselves separated or divorced because of the country's dire economic conditions. This can happen when a couple is forced to live apart while working in separate regions of the country.[56] The impact of migration on families is devastating. For example, urban males often abandon their wives in poor rural villages with no means of support so they can seek job opportunities in cities. While the durability of marriages in traditional structures is strengthened by kinship ties, new migration patterns have weakened those ties and increased the prospects of divorce, separation, and multiple partners.[57]

When couples divorce, the court is obliged to consider the life conditions of the man, the woman, and their children, as well as the reasons for the divorce. These factors help determine how marital property will be allocated after the divorce. The law stipulates that the father must pay support for any children in the mother's custody. In the case of common-law marriages, the couple and their families decide how to allocate property. If the parties cannot agree, disputes are settled by elder family members or elder community members.[58]

Birth

The birth of a child is a welcome event in Angola.[59] Childbirth usually takes place in the home, without the help of doctors or nurses. Traditional healers or birth attendants (such as midwives) might be called in if the family is able to secure their help. In some rural tribes male babies are circumcised one week after birth by a traditional doctor called a *vamba*.[60] In urban areas circumcision usually takes place at birth and is performed by a doctor.[61] Angolans do not practice female circumcision, but it is a common practice among some migrant communities.[62] Angola's general lack of healthcare and professional assistance at birth has resulted in high infant mortality rates, with approximately 78.26 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.[63] Maternal mortality rates are also high, with about 477 women per 100,000 dying in childbirth.[64, 65]

Infant healthcare
Flickr / President's Malaria Initiative

Family Social Events

Weddings

Angolans generally maintain the tradition of the *alambamento*, a series of rituals associated with asking for a woman's hand in marriage. These rituals include a letter asking for the woman's hand in marriage, an offer of a bride price (*lobola*), and negotiations. *Lobola* can be anything from money to goats or other foodstuffs. By tradition, if the woman's family approves of the marriage, the bride's aunt

Angolan wedding
Flickr / Dom Bosco Angola

and uncle give the groom a list of things he must acquire before the wedding can take place. Once he has completed acquiring these items, the aunt and uncle set or confirm the wedding date. *Alambamento* is fading, but it is still important, especially among traditional or conservative families.[66, 67]

The wedding itself can be either formal or informal. Angola's Family Code requires that formal marriages are registered, but it also recognizes informal common-law marriages.[68] Formal marriages take place in churches, while informal marriages are often just simple blessings from parents. Depending on their circumstances, a couple might live with the husband's parents after marriage, but traditions vary by ethnic group and region.[69, 70]

Funeral Rites

Funerals constitute an important family rite in Angola. People often follow Christian burial traditions in urban areas. This includes a funeral mass held a week after death. The mass is considered a way to bring peace to the soul of the deceased.[71]

Funeral procession
Flickr / S Martin

Further, Angolans hold a deep belief that the living will be jeopardized if they do not worship and respect the souls of the dead. It is thought that the deceased can bring famine, plague, disease, personal loss, and other catastrophes. Worship and ritual is thus a way to appease the souls of deceased family members and safeguard the living. It is generally thought that Angola's social fabric would weaken even further if people ignored the practices associated with this belief.[72, 73]

Birthdays

A child's first birthday is a large celebration in Angola. The first year of a child's life is the most dangerous because infant deaths are common across the country. Thus, reaching one year of age is a milestone to be celebrated by both adults and children, family and friends. Festivities include food, drinks, a birthday cake, and music. The party will often continue for most of the day and into the evening.[74]

Birthdays in general can be anything from an informal gathering to a formal celebratory meal or party. Celebratory meals, called *contribuição*, are similar to potluck dinners in which guests bring food, drinks, or money to help defray costs. Arriving guests will usually ring the doorbell, but if the home does not have a doorbell guests will clap their hands three or four times. Angolan hosts will go out of their way to make visitors feel comfortable and will offer guests soft drinks and alcoholic beverages upon arrival.[75]

Rites of Passage

In some rural tribes, circumcision marks the transition into manhood. In these tribes, groups of boys between the ages of 9 and 15 will be taken into the bush to be circumcised by a traditional doctor called a *vamba*. The newly circumcised boys will remain there until they heal.[76]

Celebrations are held for adolescents once they have reached adulthood. These celebrations include a *palhaço* (literally, fool or clown) who wears a knitted straw suit and mask while

Kids on the beach, Cabinda
Flickr / jbdodane

dancing through the streets to the beat of drums. A special alcoholic beverage is served called *kissangwa*, which is made from fermented cornmeal.[77]

Naming Conventions

Naming newborns is a community activity because names assign a place in the family, the community, and the cosmos. A name represents a person´s identity, it is connected with a person's family history, and it is integral to their personality throughout life.[78] Before the baby is born, parents draw up a list of possible names and share it with grandparents, extended family members, and family friends. The names on the list are typically related to events surrounding the child's conception and the parents expectations for the child. Yet names might also be related to specific places, landmarks, or people who are national or international heroes.[79]

After the birth, a naming ceremony is held and the baby is given at least three names: one from the parents and two from the maternal and paternal grandparents. Throughout their children's lives, parents take every opportunity to reinforce the messages behind their names. This practice enables the parents to influence the lives of their children in a positive way.[80] Angolans will often change or add to their names when they reach certain milestones in life, such as reaching adulthood.[81]

Rio-Cubal-De-Ganda Chicuma
Flickr / jbdodane

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Overview

Chapter 6 Assessment

1. Families play a key role in everyday life.

    TRUE

    Families play a key role in Angola, especially in terms of maintaining and transmitting values across generations. Up to three generations often live together, even when a family's house or apartment is very small.

2. Elders are no longer an important part of kinship hierarchy.

    FALSE

    Elders are a fundamental part of kinship group hierarchy, and they are respected as people of wisdom and authority. Showing deference to them is important as illustrated by a law passed in 2011that grants them social protections and pensions.

3. Children are welcomed into families and interact frequently with their extended family.

    TRUE

    Children are welcomed into families, and young children frequently interact with uncles, aunts, cousins, and grandparents.

4. Angola has been identified as a market for human traffickers seeking child laborers and children for sexual exploitation.

    TRUE

    Angola has been identified as a market for human traffickers seeking child laborers and children for sexual exploitation. Some of these children are kidnapped and sent to Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, South Africa, and Portugal.

5. The circumcision ritual no longer marks the transition into manhood, and is a practice that has largely been abandoned.

    FALSE

    In some rural tribes, circumcision marks the transition into manhood. In these tribes, groups of boys between the ages of 9 and 15 will be taken into the bush to be circumcised by a traditional doctor called a *vamba*. The newly circumcised boys will remain there until they heal.

Portuguese-Angola Cultural Orientation
Final Assessment

1. The west-central coast of Africa was in contact with Europeans before the Portuguese arrived about two centuries ago.

   FALSE

   The west-central coast of Africa did not experience contact with Europeans until the Portuguese arrived about five centuries ago. Since that time, the people in that region have experienced colonial occupation, dictatorial rule, and a virulent slave trade.

2. The Portuguese economy was dominated by Angola's slave trade in the 18th century.

   TRUE

   The Portuguese economy was dominated by Angola's slave trade in the 18th century. The Portuguese originally operated their slave trade out of Luanda, but towards the beginning of the 1700s, they expanded their efforts inland seeking new sources of slaves.

3. Angola's 27-year civil war ended in 2012 when Portugal intervened and drew up a ceasefire.

   FALSE

   Civil war continued until 2002, when UNITA forces (the main opposition to MPLA by that time) signed a ceasefire agreement. Hundreds of thousands of Angolans lost their lives to war in the 20th century.

4. Angola became an independent nation in 1975.

   TRUE

   Angola became an independent republic in 1975. The new government officially established a one-party state headed by a president who would serve as the Chairman of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Angola is a country ruled by one party, the MPLA—the same party that has ruled since the country's independence in 1975.

5. Angola has few natural resources, which adversely affects the economy.

   FALSE

   Angola is a vast country rich in mineral wealth, including oil (the driving force behind the economy), diamonds, copper, and iron. The country's economy was stifled by years of civil war (1975-2002) that destroyed infrastructure.

6. The majority of people in Angola belong to three main ethnic groups.

   TRUE

   The majority of people in Angola belong to three main ethnic groups, the Ovimbundu (37%), Kimbundu (25%), and Kongo (Bakongo) (13%). People of European descent constitute approximately 1% of the population. A small percentage of the population, (2%) is mixed native African and European (*mestico*).

7. Angola recently approved 65 applications submitted by religious groups for legal recognition.

   FALSE

   In November 2013, the government denied applications for legal recognition to 194 different religious organizations, while more than 1,000 applications have been denied since 1991. No new organizations have been recognized in Angola since 2004.

8. Angolan Christian religious practices often include communication with the divine through ancestral worship, rather than through Christian prayer alone.

   TRUE

   Angolan Christian religious practices often include communication with the divine through ancestral worship, rather than through Christian prayer alone. Dialog with the ancestors is part of daily life for most indigenous Angolans.

9. Holidays in Angola usually follow an Indigenous Holiday calendar.

   FALSE

   Holidays in Angola usually follow the Christian Holiday calendar. People all over the country participate in religious events and holidays, which includes local ceremonies and Christian religious events.

10. Problems or illnesses are often attributed to an ancestor's unhappiness or discontent. A "witch doctor" (*kimbanda*) will be called in to uncover the source of the ancestor's discontent.

    TRUE

    Kimbanda are traditional healers and diviners who invoke special powers and conduct rituals to understand the spirit world and heal someone. Many kimbanda diviners are also herbalists who practice traditional medicine.

11. Angolan Christian and political leaders often criticize Muslim beliefs and practices.

> **TRUE**
>
> Angolan Christian and political leaders often criticize Muslim beliefs and practices. They argue that Islam is irreconcilable with the Angolan way of life. This makes it increasingly difficult for Muslims to practice their faith in Angola, causing tensions to build between Christians and Muslims.

12. Angolans tend to identify with their country first and the tribe of their ancestors second.

> **FALSE**
>
> Angolans tend to identify with the tribe of their ancestors, rather than their country. This extends from their collectivist Bantu culture in which people are devoted to establishing close long-term relationships with immediate and extended family members.

13. Female friends and friends of the opposite sex usually greet one another with a kiss on both cheeks.

> **TRUE**
>
> Female friends and friends of the opposite sex usually greet one another with a kiss on both cheeks. A common greeting among the Umbundu is *Walale* ("How did you pass the night?") followed by the response, *Ndalale* ("I passed the night well.").

14. Due to Portuguese influences, Angolans typically sit at a large dining table with individual place settings.

> **FALSE**
>
> Food in Angola is often served in a communal bowl. Proper protocol demands that the eldest person take the first serving. In rural areas, it is common to eat with one's hands, although spoons are used to scoop the food from the communal bowl onto individual dishes.

15. Direct eye contact among people of similar social status is considered rude.

> **FALSE**
>
> Direct eye contact among people of similar status is a sign of sincerity. Indirect eye contact when speaking to a person of higher status signals respect. In the capital of Luanda, and among younger people, eye contact is more common.

16. Angola's national independence is a source of pride for the people.

TRUE

National independence is a source of pride. Angola's colonial past was extremely repressive, marked by slavery, forced labor, and second-class citizenship for the country's indigenous inhabitants. The people united to oppose colonialism, and after a long struggle, gained independence.

17. Most of the country's land disputes are in rural areas.

FALSE

Most of the country's land disputes are in urban areas. Some argue that urban land rights are the most pressing problem facing the nation. The underlying cause is that most Angolan land is held under customary title, and people do not have actual legal documents proving ownership.

18. Primary education in Angola is compulsory and free.

TRUE

Primary education in Angola is free and compulsory for four years. Primary school lasts four years and secondary education consists of seven years and is not free.

19. Driving conditions in cities like Luanda are risky.

TRUE

Driving is risky in Angola. In Luanda and throughout the country, roads are dilapidated and the quality of gasoline is unreliable. Intersections mostly lack traffic signals or signs, and even if a signal or sign is present, few drivers obey them.

20. Ordinary Angolans enjoy going to a variety of restaurants where they regularly meet with friends over a hearty meal.

FALSE

There are a variety of restaurants in cities such as Luanda, offering an range of cuisines, yet most restaurants are well outside the budget of ordinary Angolans. Within the capital city of Luanda, some wealthier Angolans might choose to entertain guests in restaurants or cafes.

21. Healthcare facilities have improved in recent years, and medical facilities with trained staff are available throughout the country.

FALSE

Most health care services collapsed in Angola due to the civil war because the country's doctors and medical personnel fled to other countries. Estimates suggest that there are only about 1.7 doctors for every 10,000 people in the country.

22. Angola is a major exporter of coffee and other agricultural products.

FALSE

Angola was once a major exporter of coffee and other agricultural products, but the war destroyed farming infrastructure, forcing many to abandon their farms.

23. Angola has millions of acres of arable land and an abundant supply of water.

TRUE

Angola's agricultural potential is tremendous. The country has over 35 million hectares (86.5 million acres) of arable land and an abundant water supply. The government has renewed its interest in returning the nation to prewar productivity levels, and is preparing to invest significant sums into rural areas to boost agriculture.

24. There is a governmental process in place for administering land rights in Angola.

FALSE

There is no process in place for administering land rights in Angola. The new constitution stipulates that it will protect the diversity of property ownership, including public, private, mixed, cooperative, and family ownership.

25. The diamond industry accounts for about 5% of Angola's GDP.

TRUE

The diamond industry accounts for about 5% of GDP and provides one of the few employment alternatives outside of farming for rural Angolans. Some of the mines are informally operated (unregulated), and working conditions are dire. In the past, "conflict diamonds" (also known as "blood diamonds") were used to fund civil war factions.

26. Many rural schools in Angola are comparable to urban schools.

FALSE

Many rural communities do not have a school and children must walk up to five km (3 mi) a day each way. Those children who do go to school are unlikely to obtain a quality education as there are few trained teachers, no learning materials, and classes are held irregularly.

27. Polygamy is legally recognized in Angola.

FALSE

Polygamy is not recognized by Angolan law, but it is commonly accepted. Women in polygamous marriages generally maintain their own households rather than live in a single house with other wives.

28. Most familial lines in Angola are patrilineal.

FALSE

Each ethnic group has a unique culture and family structure, but most are simultaneously matrilineal and patriarchal. For example, the Ovimbundu are matrilineal because household economic authority passes from mother to daughter and patrilineal because family and political authority passes from father to son.

29. Angolan weddings can be as simple as a blessing from the parents of the bride and groom.

TRUE

The wedding itself can be either formal or informal. Angola's Family Code requires that formal marriages are registered, but it also recognizes informal common-law marriages. Formal marriages take place in churches, while informal marriages are often just simple blessings from parents.

30. Naming newborns is a community activity.

TRUE

Naming newborns is a community activity because names assign a place in the family, the community, and the cosmos. A name represents a person´s identity, it is connected with a person's family history, and it is integral to their personality throughout life.

31. The bride price or *lobola* is no longer practiced in urban areas.

FALSE

Angolans in both rural and urban areas follow a series of rituals associated with asking for a woman's hand in marriage. These rituals include the bride price (*lobola*), which is distributed to the woman's family. *Lobola* can be anything from money to goats or other foodstuffs.

Further Reading and Resources

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