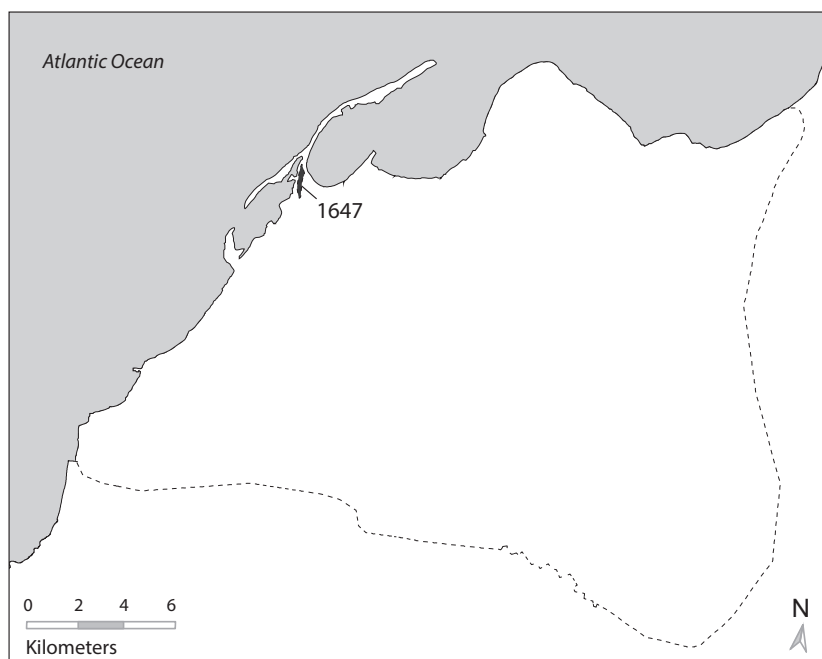**Part I.   Formation**

Map 1.1. Luanda circa 1647.

1. Un-building History to Build the Present

Os angolanos, tão orgulhosos de viverem numa das capitais mais antigas da
África negra, em breve deixarão de ter de que se vangloriar. Nada de antigo
restará na cidade.

Angolans, so proud of living in one of the oldest cities in Black Africa, will not
have anything to be proud of. Nothing of the old will be left in the city.—José Mena
Abrantes, quoted by Christophe Châtelot in "Morte de um teatro em Luanda," 2012

· · ·

In a city that has almost freed itself from the weight of history, one may find
it hard to comprehend, in present-day Luanda, the commotion caused by the
attempted destruction of the *sobrado* (townhouse) in downtown that has for a
couple of decades housed Elinga Teatro.[1] The building had been classified as
a national monument in 1981. However, in 2012, the same building was *declassi-
fied* to open the way for its demolition. Several concerned citizens launched a
campaign for its preservation, and Elinga Teatro was spared from destruction.

In reality, however, what saved the building from being torn down were not the various bouts of mobilization by those interested in saving it but the economic crashes of 2008 and 2014 that deprived public, and above all private, interests of the appetite to raze old buildings in order to erect postmodernist skyscrapers in their place. Despite this, it should be added, the success achieved in preventing Elinga from destruction is merely a half victory, since no document has been issued on the need for its preservation. Moreover, since plans for the razing of Elinga were still pending, as of December 2020, the theater company that uses its premises has been left with a dilapidated building and deprived of any means to raise funds for its renovation. In the end, Elinga may face the fate of most historical buildings in downtown Luanda: abandonment, followed by rapid deterioration to the extent that one day its demolition not only becomes necessary but is viewed as a favor to the building itself and to the city.

Although the destruction of Elinga has captured the public imagination, this *sobrado* is just one of several buildings in the entire block between Rua Major Kahangulo and the Praça Bressane Leite targeted for demolition. As of early 2020, some of the businesses in this quarter, such as a supermarket, had

Figure 1.1. Artist intervention along the façade of Elinga Teatro in 2014.
Source: Jika Kissassunda, @JikaKiss.

already relocated elsewhere, but others, a restaurant and a car rental agency, still remain there. At least three of the *sobrados* in this square are emblazoned with plaques that confer on them the distinction of national monuments. And while the final decision on the future of these structures is still pending, a couple of them, the most derelict, have become home to dozens of squatters. Some of these new occupants are simply youths whose main source of income is washing cars, but others are more seasoned, such as an artist who does his paintings on the walls and who has collected Angolan newspapers from the time of the country's independence. This occupation encapsulates an irony that is at the heart of Luanda's processes of historical transformation, for it is precisely these buildings in the city center that came into being through conjunctural social relations, on the basis of specific understandings of ownership and belonging throughout the history of the city, that are prey to squatting. Putting it differently, through occupation of these old mansions, squatters are living remainders of the city's cruel past, the one produced by slavery and the Atlantic slave trade. Elinga Teatro may stage the most compelling plays or the most abstract dance shows, attracting the most brilliant and sophisticated minds in the city alongside members of the government and the diplomatic body accredited in Angola, but for the duration of these performances the members of the audience on the second floor share the building with the squatters who inhabit the first floor. The virtual impossibility of telling apart groups of people who perceive themselves as different (in terms of either race or class) is central to understanding Luanda historically. As I will demonstrate, this feature not only reproduces perennial social relations in the city; it also speaks to the spatial organization in Luanda, or the impossibility of erecting borders, or limits, to separate social groups. As such, this *sobrado*, in particular, not only enacts the prototype of Casa Luandense (a hybrid of the Portuguese and the local), which I will address later in this chapter, but also reproduces the sorts of social relations that animated these structures in the past: the cohabitation of enslavers and the enslaved. It is as if the mere existence of the theater company in this building was enough to reproduce such perennial relations. This is of course a metaphor that speaks and refers to a past that the city would like to get rid of, that of slavery. But such a metaphor can also be amplified to comprehend modern-day forms of inhabiting. For when it comes to tearing down buildings in the city center, or even informal settlements, it is as if these places were endowed with an aura, a force, or what anthropologists would call mana, around which social forces coalesce, forcing the government to ponder the opportunity to raze the buildings.[2] Putting it differently, it is as if the mere presence of these structures, or the social forces that inhabit them, brings the government

into the calculation between the economic and other benefits of having these structures out of the city's way versus the uproar and mobilization it may elicit among concerned citizens or among those whose livelihoods are pulverized.

At stake here is a dialectic between destruction and preservation that is not specific to Luanda. Cities change, it goes without saying. But, as Ackbar Abbas has noted, "cities change at different rates, in response to different sets of circumstances, in different historically specific sites, acquiring in the end different urban physiognomies."[3] Building on this insight, my aim in this chapter is not to provide a historiography of urban change in Luanda but rather to introduce from the outset the question of Luanda's foundation. By foundation I am only very cursorily mentioning the chronological foundation of Luanda, which occurred in 1576. For taking this date in all its seriousness would amount to disallowing the precolonial occupation of that part of the Angolan territory that was then, after numerous iterations, called Luanda. Foundation here means mostly the setup, or the laying down, of several concepts, that will be expanded in the following chapters. By tracing Elinga's history against the history of the city itself, I intend to provide an account of the ways in which Luanda has freed itself from the weight of history or—to put it in different terms—from its original skin. This is an important step toward urban renewal in the city center, a process that has historically disregarded the city's past. Charges that modern-day Luandans attach little importance to matters of conservation are uncannily similar to the ones articulated by, for instance, the Portuguese architect Fernando Batalha in the 1950s. Batalha's attempt at theorizing about Casa Luandense as an architectural prototype of the past will be taken as the production of a signifier that will be allowed to play freely in the chapters that come. But, here, in this chapter, it will also be used as a metaphor to shed light on the many dichotomies, such as inside/outside and formal/informal, that Luanda is made of and the tensions they bring about. Squatting is then a case in point, for squatters have been, historically, allowed to inhabit the city; politically, if not sociologically (as those who can claim belonging), they are not a part of it. As such, they navigate the inside/outside dichotomy, or the skin of the city itself.

Enduring Entanglements

For most Luandans in positions of power, or those who are members of the elite, what renders the city's historical formation intractable and difficult to address is the role of slavery, and particularly the role played by the slave trade in this process. It has already been established, contrary to the mainstream of Africanist historiography, that Luanda was the main port of departure for the

millions of Africans taken from the continent during the three hundred years of the Atlantic slave trade, since the Portuguese controlled a great deal of that trade.[4] Even though other parts of the territory claimed by the Portuguese, such as Mbanza Congo or Benguela, were also important points of departure, the old Porto de Luanda (Port of Luanda)—located about 2000 meters (6561 feet) from Elinga Teatro, the Portas da Cidade (Gates to the City), and the Portas do Mar (Gates to the Sea)—was the nerve center linking labor and expenditure, the Americas and Europe, in an economic triangle of death.[5] Oral tradition tells us that Luanda's geography played a role here, for as most of the area where the city was located was swampy, the early settlement became propitious for the breeding of slaves. It was a natural prison.[6]

Admittedly, the slave trade might not have been on the minds of the Portuguese who arrived in this part of the African continent for the first time. Even though they were already active along Africa's west coast—with the "discoveries" of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau in the mid-fifteenth century—they sailed farther south, with a fleet led by Diogo Cão, in 1492, and established their presence in what became Angola after making first contact with the powerful Kingdom of Congo. In the following years, the Portuguese tried to expand their influence southward, under the pretense of spreading the gospel—religion always played a fundamental role in (Portuguese) imperial forays—but they were also busy searching for precious metals, especially silver. The navigator Paulo Dias de Novais, who had been dispatched to the coast of Angola by the Portuguese king Dom Sebastian in 1560, was the first to visit the Kingdom of Ndongo, south of the Kingdom of Congo, another important contender in the dispute for the possession of Luanda. Novais was captured and, upon his release in 1566, returned to Portugal, where he petitioned the king for the title of *conquistador* (conqueror) or *donatário* (land grantee), analogous to the titles given to Portuguese explorers in Brazil.[7] He returned to Angola in 1575 as a *conquistador*, settler, and the first governor of what would later be called the "Kingdom of Sebaste,"[8] a name given in homage to the Portuguese king Dom Sebastião, who died in an attempted invasion of Alcacer-Quibir, in present-day Morocco, in 1578.

On this trip, Novais arrived on the Luandan coast with a fleet of seven ships and about 700 men, among them soldiers and traders, masons, shoemakers, a doctor, and a barber. They settled on Ilha de Luanda (Luanda Island).[9] Only in 1576 did Novais venture onto the mainland and settle on the top of a hill that was baptized São Miguel (Saint Michael); the whole surrounding area was called Cidade de São Paulo da Assumpção de Loanda (Saint Paul's Assumption at Loanda), Loanda being an abbreviation of the Kimbundu term *axilu-anda* (those of the net), a clear allusion to the main occupation of its original

inhabitants: fishing.[10] Soon the Portuguese saw their expectation of finding precious metals dashed, but they found the territory full of another commodity in high demand: slaves. For the next 250 years or so, they would not only invest an overwhelming part of their energies in capturing and breeding slaves but also use slavery as the main driver for the economy of the incipient settlement. During this era in which the trade in slaves became the main social and economic activity of Luanda's *moradores* (residents), it also, understandingly, became the basis for the operation of the incipient colonial state itself. The administration acquired its main financial resources through taxation levied on slaves and on other trade items, such as weapons and alcohol, which were imported as means of payment for the slaves. The Angolan colonial government also profited from the slave trade in that many of its public works were built by the enslaved, sometimes working alongside, or under the command of, *degredados* (convicts) from Portugal, who made up an important number of the *moradores*.[11]

The establishment of Luanda's municipality in 1605 has been credited to Novais, as a response to the demands of the town's *moradores* that the newly founded settlement should have the same city status conferred on it as had been granted to Porto, whose inhabitants had fought to keep their town's autonomy vis-à-vis Lisbon.[12] Under this arrangement, *moradores* would be able to manage "os seus próprios assuntos da administração da cidade que não implicassem com a coesão nacional" (their own affairs concerning the administration of the city as long as they did not interfere with the national cohesion).[13] However, at various moments in the city's history, the Senado da Câmara (Chamber Senate), the legislative body of the municipality, was so strong that it took on executive power to govern its own affairs without any interference from the kingdom.[14]

Since slavery was the raison d'être for the existence of the settlement, it does not require a stretch of the imagination to conceive of the extent to which it lay behind the settlement's earliest layout. This urbanization allowed for the expansion of the original settlement beyond the perimeter of the Fortaleza de São Miguel (Fortress of Saint Michael), the earliest building in the city. The series of buildings that were erected subsequently, with the intention of rendering any attempt at attack from the sea difficult, occupied the top of the same slope, opposite the entrance of the bay. Since these early constructions were primarily military fortifications and religious structures, the tone of the early development of the settlement was set. In the following decades and centuries, the royal state, alongside the church, tended to occupy the upper side, Cidade Alta, whereas the merchants preferred to build their houses and tend to their

commercial activities in the lower section, Cidade Baixa, near the sea. More important, this layout spoke to a conception of power and commerce whose remnants are still part of the city's typology.[15] Cidade Baixa was strategically located close to the sea, allowing merchants to have direct access to the port, either to ship slaves or to receive their imported goods. As part of this political economy, then, the *sobrado* came to be the main housing style in Cidade Baixa, which allowed owners of these houses to live and store their goods in the same physical location. It is important to note that whereas today nobody refers to downtown Luanda as Cidade Baixa—even though the simplified version of this designation, Baixa, still stands, particularly for pre-independence residents— the site of the presidential palace, alongside the Paço Apóstolico (Archbishop's House), is still called Cidade Alta. This site is then the foundation of power in the city, such that even the postcolonial state has been able to avoid emulating it. Old Luanda, then, consciously or unconsciously reproduced, or tried to reproduce, the medieval dyad of political and religious order. Present-day Luanda is now left to refer to the colonial foundation, Cidade Alta, as the repository of perennial authority. I will come back to this point later in the book.

Even though, during the early days of Luanda, the *moradores* exercised an almost unrestrained control over the settlement's affairs, this situation did not exist without a reaction by a colonial government eager to mark its presence. The Angolan colonial government was behind the construction of several early buildings, mostly in Cidade Alta, including the residence of the governor during the tenure of Governor Manuel Pereira Forjaz (1607–11), which was built by transforming a jail and butchery into the Câmara de Luanda (Municipal Chamber of Luanda).[16] The governor's quarters did not undergo any particular change in their "modest form" until the administration of Governor Lourenço de Almada (1705–9).[17] The expansion of the governor's lodge, in the eighteenth century, signaled also the settlement's growth in line with expanding interests on the part of the military, which had the task of protecting Portuguese trade routes and interests, and of the Catholic Church, which besides working to spread the gospel and caring for the *moradores*' souls, also served as a fiduciary entity.[18] It was not surprising, then, that the military and religious establishments came to determine the original layout of the city in formation.

Fear that Luanda could be forcibly taken by another enslaving nation—the justification for the presence of the military apparatus—should not be interpreted simply as colonial paranoia: Angola's abundance of slaves made it the object of substantial interest and greed on the part of other imperial powers. The French launched an unsuccessful attempt to occupy the city in 1600. The Dutch succeeded in their attempt in 1641 and were able to hold on to the town

until 1648. The Dutch occupation was subsumed in the history of the European wars: with Portugal's loss of independence to Spain in 1580, it became an enemy of Holland. The Dutch, in turn, having conquered the northwestern part of Brazil in 1630, required a secure supply of slaves to run Brazil's sugar economy.[19] When the Dutch fleet under Captain Peter Houtbeen arrived at Luanda's bay, it faced almost no resistance, as most Portuguese citizens had abandoned the city together with their slaves. Led by Governor Pedro de Menezes, they found refuge in a little settlement called Massangano, allegedly founded by navigator Paulo Dias de Novais in 1582, to the southeast of Luanda.[20]

The withdrawal from the settlement allowed the residents to mount a resistance against the Dutch over the next few years in an effort to regain control of the city. They failed at least twice. In the first attempt, a troop of soldiers who were disembarking on their arrival from Brazil were attacked and annihilated by warring natives. In the second attempt, Portuguese reinforcements tried to join up with the local resistance but, going astray in the jungle, were surrounded by the Dutch and lost their combative spirit. In the month of August 1648, a messenger brought the news to Massangano that General Salvador Correia de Sá e Benevides, admiral of the southern seas and mayor of the city of São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, had arrived—commanding a fleet of twelve ships equipped with 1200 men—recaptured the city, and expelled the Dutch.[21]

The recapture of Luanda after seven years of Dutch control was a watershed moment in the expansion of the colonial state into the city's affairs. Correspondence from Luanda's residents to the king in Lisbon tended to condemn the Dutch and accuse them of raping women, killing several men, and destroying buildings and archives in the city. In these documents, the Dutch are portrayed as having burned down the Portuguese buildings that predated their occupation, which, according to various Portuguese historians, explains the lack of any architectural pre–Dutch occupation landmarks.[22] Arguably, these accusations were fodder for the argument, put forth by Luanda's residents, in favor of a larger degree of autonomy from the central government. Charles Boxer has suggested that the *moradores* could put their demands forward more easily after the proof of cunning and courage they had given during the occupation. As such, the Portuguese crown, represented by the governor, was more willing to accede to these demands. It was during this time that Luanda began to be transformed from a mere military and religious camp into a settlement resembling an inchoate city. Since the availability of manpower was never a concern, most of the transformation was driven by public works. In any event, the reoccupation of the city marks the beginning of a new era in which steady investments were made in improving life in Luanda's settlement.

In the following years, the city underwent several other improvements that laid the groundwork for a stronger presence by the colonial state. Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho (governor of Luanda from 1764 to 1772), described as one of the "mais lúcidos, mais entusiastas e mais dinâmicos a quem coube a missão de dirigir esta Província" (most lucid spirits, most enthusiastic and most dynamic among the many who governed this Province) has a particular role in the ways in which these transformations have been written about.[23] He has been credited with overseeing the construction of the *terreiro público* (public warehouse), with a tank holding 250 pipes through which water circulated and cooled the stored goods. This was a critical improvement for Luanda, since the settlement did not offer many opportunities for agricultural production because of its dry climate. Cashing in on these insufficiencies, previous owners of storehouses had sold their products at exorbitant prices for profit. To prevent speculation, the state urgently needed a public storehouse in which *moradores* could safely and hygienically store their own provisions. However, this measure was also meant to give the state unprecedented control over the commercialization of products by undermining the role that intermediary brokers could play.[24]

Other important constructions that are credited to Governor Sousa Coutinho are the settlement of Novo Redondo as a stopover for the trade between Benguela and Luanda—the two main commercial centers at the time—a hospital in Luanda, an iron factory in the village of Oeiras, the fortress of São Francisco do Penedo in Golungo, and other defensive buildings, as well as the court next to the navy's arsenal, from which slaves were dispatched, and the Casa das Contas (Customs House) to house the tax authority and the criminal court. Last but not least, Sousa Coutinho has also been credited with initiating oil prospecting in Dande and Sulphur in Golungo, starting a public education system in Luanda "com a criação de muitas escolas primárias e de uma aula de estudos superiores de geometria e fortificação" (with the establishment of a number of primary schools and another school for the study of geometry and military matters),[25] and paying particular attention to the formal expansion and early urbanizing work of the settlement by ordering the opening up of various arteries and the widening of the streets between the Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Nazaré (Church of Our Lady of Nazareth) and the fortress at Penedo to allow for circulation between those two sections of the city.

On account of these improvements, Sousa Coutinho has been hailed as the trailblazer of the modern colonization of Angola. Anticipating José Maria Norton de Matos (1867–1955), the governor-general of Angola in the first half of the twentieth century, Sousa Coutinho was perhaps the first Portuguese

political authority to view white colonization as crucial for the development of the colony. During his tenure, he not only encouraged soldiers to settle in Angola, which was not a particularly difficult task, but also worked relentlessly to bring married couples to Luanda from various parts of the Portuguese kingdom, such as Madeira, the Azores, and even Brazil. However, despite these efforts, two hundred years into the settlement's foundation, by the 1790s, most settlers still lived in the confines of the *Fortaleza*. For most of these earlier *moradores*, beyond the fort was the wilderness. The development of the early settlement gained momentum with the arrival of the first contingent of white females, "15 donzelas" (15 maidens), from Casa Pia de Lisboa, sent by the queen, Dona Leonor, in 1657, to "casarem com pessoas beneméritas" (marry decent people)—where for the most part *moradores*, and in particular the troops, were otherwise left to engage in unions with "prostitutas condenadas ou mulheres acusadas de bruxaria, enviadas à força de Lisboa para Luanda" (condemned prostitutes or women accused of witchcraft, sent by force from Lisbon to Luanda).[26] By the time of the census taken in 1781, the white population in Luanda comprised more than 400 souls.[27] This number is impressive, taking into account the life expectancy in Luanda. Epidemics were rife, and Luanda was known pejoratively as the white man's grave.[28]

With this effort to turn Luanda into something that was not only a fortification but also a place worth living in, the growth of the population was inevitable. To accommodate these newcomers, the city needed some basic infrastructure. It could live without a sewerage system as long as a great number of its inhabitants were servants, if not slaves, whose most important daily chore was taking human waste to the beach—with the result that for many years travelers would complain of the pestilent air in the city, which was the cause of the many epidemics that ravaged Luanda. Garbage could be seen at any time on the streets and was devoured by the crows, which, as a report ironically put it, were considered "funcionários municipais" (municipal clerks).[29] However, the city could not go without water.

Water provision was considered the real battle for the city. Lying in an area with a dry climate and insufficient agricultural production to feed its entire population, Luanda was since its early days afflicted by "many instances of famine."[30] What made life possible in the city was the availability of money, or other means of exchange, since most of the *moradores* made so much through the slave trade that it did not bother them to have to purchase everything they needed, including water. In the early days of the settlement, people in Luanda drank the "diminuto e insalubre líquido dos seus poços e cacimbas" (scarce and unhealthy liquid of its wells), while the better-off pumped water through

pipes from the Bengo River, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from downtown Luanda.[31] During their occupation, the Dutch had attempted to bring clean water into the city, starting, in 1645, to engineer works "grandiosa para o tempo" (ambitious for the time) in order to build a tunnel through which water could be piped in from the Kwanza River.[32] But when they left, the project was abandoned. Successive governors who took over from the Dutch were more modest in their plans and were content to use water from the *cacimbas* (wells). A century later, from 1753 to 1758, the Portuguese were still trying to find ways of pumping water into the city. No construction ever took place, however, as it was considered too costly and laborious to build the necessary infrastructure. Thus, Luanda would remain without access to water for many years to come. Yet the population did not stop growing. In 1800, Luanda had about 6,500 people, of whom 443 were Europeans (map 1.2). In 1887, the population had mushroomed to 14,500 people, of whom about 2,000 were Europeans. The city authorities reached such a state of despair that, in 1886, the Câmara weighed the possibility of building a rainwater retention system in Kinaxixe Lagoon, located to the north of the old city center and known for its stagnant water. The plan was to expand the lagoon so that the city would be able to store sufficient rainwater to last for a year. But, once again, this project was never implemented. Luanda's residents had to wait about one hundred years after its reoccupation by Salvador Correia for the Compagnie Generale des Conduites d'Éaux de Liège to figure out how to construct a hydro-engineered system to pump water to the city center from 50 kilometers (31 miles) away. The water pipes were finally dedicated on March 2, 1889.[33]

Since the slave trade was the motor of Luanda's early development, the abolition of this infamous commerce had a devastating impact on the city, particularly when it came to its population, which was for the most part transitory. Even though, during the three hundred years since its foundation, the limits of the city were for the most part unaltered—even if some *moradores* had economic ventures beyond such limits, in places such as Kinaxixe or Maianga— the population of Luanda did not stop growing despite the various outbreaks of pandemic diseases that periodically ravaged the territory and the trade in slaves that was coming to an end.

In March 1807, it was declared illegal for British subjects to hold slaves after May 1, 1808. This led British subjects in the New World to put pressure on nationals of other colonial powers to heed the same law so that they would not be placed in an economically disadvantageous position. This was not an easy task for the British to accomplish. When Brazil became an independent country, in 1822, by seceding from Portugal, Great Britain made the recognition of its independence
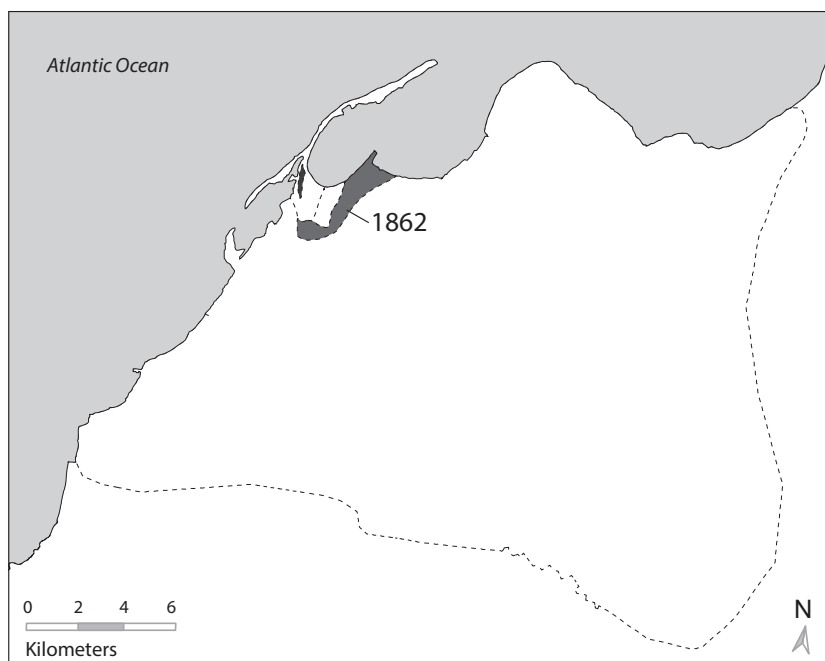
Map. I.2. Luanda circa 1862.

contingent upon the abolition of the slave trade in this South American territory. The terms of recognition and abolition would only be signed in November 1826. The Portuguese resisted this, for according to a historian of Luanda, José de Almeida Santos, "a estrutura económica portuguesa, como de resto a de outros povos coloniais, não estava preparada para uma abolição brusca do desumano tráfico" (the Portuguese economic structure, as of other colonial powers, was not ready for a sudden abolition of this inhuman trade).[34] He voices the sentiment of numerous slave traders for whom "havia a necessidade de uma mutação gradual, aliás reconhecida no tratado do Rio de Janeiro de 1810" (a gradual transition was required, as recognized by the Rio de Janeiro Treaty of 1810).[35] But, more important, he also acknowledges, implicitly, that the British's prohibition did not in fact end the transport of slaves to the New World, particularly to Brazil: "E essa mutação foi-se processando gradativamente, apesar das impaciências e das prepotências dos britânicos" (This transition did indeed take place gradually, despite the impatience and arrogance of the British).[36] From the signing of the Anglo-Brazilian abolition treaty to the moment when abolition became a local law in Brazil, about 150,000 enslaved

people were transported from Africa, mainly from below the equator.[37] One of the unintended consequences of this risky phase of the slave trade was that Africans, or Africa-based enslavers, had more control over the business, which, in the case of Angola and particularly Luanda, was epitomized by the increase of unions between Portuguese soldiers and local women, something that had already been reported by the first historian of the city, António de Oliveira Cardonega, in the late seventeenth century.[38]

Such a mix was then the ferment for the emergence of the so-called Creole society, whose most prominent members competed with the Portuguese and traders of other nationalities operating in Luanda. They were the offspring of interracial unions with Europeans; they called themselves Angolenses, harbored nationalistic feelings, and made strides into the social, political, military, and business life of the colony. Many of them, such as Ana Joaquina dos Santos Silva, made a fortune during the slave trade and left architectural marks on the city. Others had agricultural business ventures and organized the supply of foodstuffs.[39] Since colonial law prohibited white settlers from negotiating directly with the local populations in the hinterland, Creoles were critical intermediaries between colonizers and the colonized, and were also instrumental for Portugal in the so-called scramble for Africa. To prove that it was managing to control its African territories effectively under the obligations assumed at the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, Portugal lured in Creole individuals to fight on its side and expand its sovereignty throughout Angola. In return, these individuals were granted land in Luanda in the form of a *sesmarias* (land grant) allocation that the Portuguese king distributed to subjects who had provided crucial services in the consolidation of the Portuguese empire.[40] As a result of these allocations, Africans were in transit in the city, waiting for ships to take them to the New World, and also landlords, deriving a great deal of their income from renting out residences and commercial establishments, a situation that remained in place until the early twentieth century.

To return to the discussion earlier in this chapter, Luanda's historical architectural heritage is the legacy of this convoluted and traumatic past. These are the enduring entanglements that still linger in the city's imaginary. Even though it has not been possible to account for the owner of the *sobrado* that houses Elinga Teatro, it is not far-fetched to surmise that its original owner, or the owner of the building in its various incarnations, could have been one of the members of the Creole community. The active involvement of *filhos da terra* (Native children) constitutes the original sin of the city and has had powerful implications for debates about the conservation of these *sobrados*. It is not simply that Luanda was built and expanded by means of the exploitation of the bodies of millions of people. It is not even that Luandans themselves took

part in, and made fortunes out of, the suffering of the enslaved. The crux of the matter is that Luanda was formed through the separation of enslavers and the enslaved and, consequently, through the distinction between those who belonged and those who did not belong, even if the line between these groups was thin and not particularly well policed. And the fact that today several supposed descendants of enslavers of the past may use the history of the city as the basis for their claim to it as a place of belonging renders it unnecessary for those who cannot claim this belonging to protect and strive to preserve its main historical landmarks. Furthermore, it is also conceivable that the loathing for this era derives from the fact that a great many nationalists, who would later join the nationalist movement to claim independence from Portugal, or even members of the first generation of leaders, were descendants of these enslaving families of the past.[41] For many of them, then, the city's history is tainted by slavery.

Casa Luandense

In the early 1900s, Luanda was visibly a poor city, as was any other colonial African city back then. But it was endowed with sumptuous houses from the previous era of the slave trade, the *sobrados*. They consisted, typically, of two floors built on a site of considerable size. The second floor was normally reserved for residence, and the first floor was used for business activities. The basement could be used either to store slaves or to pursue economic activities, such as the sale of alcohol. By the late 1800s, a number of these basements had been converted into taverns.[42] They were built through the application of elaborate construction techniques. The first floor and the walls were made of wood, and the walls were covered with *taipa* (rammed earth) that had to be thick enough to support the upper floor, which was, properly speaking, the *sobrado*. Some buildings in the city had an additional, smaller floor that the locals called *sobradinho*. The tiles for the *sobrado* were imported from Lisbon, whereas the wood used in these structures came from Brazil in the very ships that had transported enslaved people from Luanda to the New World.[43] A local addition to this type of housing, the hybrid element, according to Batalha, was the Indigenous coating on the walls, which was produced by locals and created by mixing mortar and a lime that came from the burning of sea shells. In 2010, at the height of a wave of demolitions, the city could still boast eighteen of these *sobrado*s, whereas by 2018 only twelve of them remained.[44]

The neglect to which Luanda had been left prevailed until the 1920s, for reasons that I will discuss in the next chapter. Here, it is enough to point out that the turn to the twentieth century came with a fresh interest for the colo-

nies, particularly those well-endowed with natural resources such as Angola. Timidly in the beginning, the Portuguese started to invest in infrastructure to allow the production of commodities in high demand internationally, such as cotton and coffee.[45] Demand for these products became even higher in the 1940s, when an unprecedented speculative financial frenzy accompanied urban renewal. For new buildings, tracts of vacant land were used. But countless architectural remnants from the past were also destroyed for the same purpose. It is interesting to note that it was precisely during the city's modernization, in the early 1940s, and the rapid urbanization that was taking place, epitomized by the rising up of new buildings where the old ones stood, that reflections on the history of the city and its architectural past were being articulated by a number of colonial public servants, journalists, and writers. Overall, these authors seem to be torn between, on the one hand, extolling the Portuguese presence or civilizing mission in Angola—and glorifying the history of such a presence, encapsulated in four centuries of material culture—and, on the other, celebrating modernization as the beacon of the Portuguese presence in Africa. This precisely required the demolition of the old.

So, by the 1940s, entire blocks of old buildings were being torn down, and even churches were being destroyed to make space for the squares and other open and public spaces that could still be found in the late 1970s. At the same time, voices arguing for the preservation of historical artifacts were also starting to make themselves heard. The champion of this movement was certainly the architect Fernando Batalha, who for many years worked in various government departments concerned with the city's conservation, such as the Comissão Provincial dos Monumentos Nacionais de Angola (Provincial Commission for National Monuments of Angola). In the various contributions to the issues of preservation penned by him, he complained of the alarmingly impossible task of protecting monuments: whenever a building was considered a monument, its owners would leave it to rot until nothing else could be done but tear it down. It is not that hard to assume, then, that Batalha must have felt relieved and vindicated when the Companhia de Diamantes de Angola (Angolan Diamond Company, CDA) purchased a *sobrado* in the city center and, instead of tearing it down to build something else, decided to turn it into offices.

The discussion of such an act of preservation was presented in a slim book, published in 1966, *Uma casa setecentista de Luanda* (An eighteenth-century house in Luanda), in which Batalha tries also to put forward the concept of Casa Luandense that characterizes the city's architecture, defining it as the architectural, or vernacular, hybrid between Portuguese technique and local materials. Elaborating on this, he describes Casa Luandense as a mixture of Portuguese civilization and

African culture that resulted in a vernacular architecture consisting of "casas térreas e grande número de casas de sobrado, bem proporcionadas para as ruas desse tempo" (one-story houses and a large number of manors, well-proportioned for the streets of the times) and forming "um conjunto urbanístico coerente e com unidade de estilo e criavam um ambiente cativante e harmórico que, pela sua arquitectura, constituíam uma feliz e rara fusão do corpo físico africano com o espírito europeu—e, mais diferenciadamente, português" (a coherent urban set, with unity of style, creating a captivating and harmonic ambience that, by its architecture, constituted a rare fusion of the physical African-style body with an European spirit—and, more pronouncedly, a Portuguese one).[46]

It is obvious that the main point of reference for Batalha is Lusotropicalism, the theory concocted by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre that was increasingly being appropriated by the Estado Novo to justify the "sociedades multirraciais" (multiracial societies) that the Portuguese were supposedly building in their settler colonies, particularly in Angola and Mozambique.[47] Paying particular attention to material culture, Freyre famously discusses, in *Casa-grande e sanzala: Formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarchal* (*The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*), the extent to which this complex connection between the mansion, for enslavers, and the shantytown, for the enslaved, has been formative of Brazilian culture.[48] Freyre tested his theory on the built environment that was the outcome of Portuguese colonialism. In his view, the propensity of the Portuguese to mix with the Native women was extended into a general predisposition to sustain hybridity, which could also be seen in the cultivation of a particular form of architecture that fused Portuguese-style houses with elements of Amerindian dwellings. Freyre thus suggested that the Casa-Grande e Sanzala complex, a mansion and shantytown, was not only a particular form of dwelling created in the tropics but also an apparatus that illustrated the microcosm of Brazilian society and was thus an explanation for the formation of the Brazilian people itself. For Batalha, such an example had purchase in Luanda, and he staunchly defended the preservation of the colonial structures built by the Portuguese, mostly churches. Or, at least, Batalha might have thought that creating an architectural prototype of a particular form of relations would contribute historical character to Luanda and, thus, help preserve such remnants of the past. However, he also realized that even if the measures he was advocating were put in place, it would already be too late, since a number of iconic buildings that constituted "um padrão real da nossa acção civilizadora . . . um modelo da nossa arquitectura e da nossa integração no meio local" (a real mark of the Portuguese civilizing action . . . a mode of our architecture and our integration in the local environment) were already

gone.[49] What happened, in fact, was precisely the opposite of what Batalha was advocating: old structures were being systematically destroyed as their owners resisted all pressure to conserve them or respect their classification as heritage buildings.[50] He would attempt to do so, theoretically, by proposing a disembodiment of these buildings, so to speak, by tearing apart form and function.

The *sobrado* he discusses in the book was derelict and abandoned when it was purchased by the CDA, restored, and dedicated on December 28, 1961, as the headquarters of the company.[51] Situated at the crossroads of Rua Direita and Rua da Nobreza (Friedrich Engels and Cerveira Pereira Streets today), this building was just one of many in that part of the city sharing the same characteristics: "tipicamente local, cujo modelo predominava expressivamente na Cidade, tinha como composição especificadora uma frontaria simétrica, geralmente de cinco vão em cada andar, com a porta ao centro e duas janelas de casa lado, muito frequentemente enquadradas por pilastras" (typically local, in a style that was predominant in the city and is characterized by a symmetric façade with five beams on each floor, a door in the center and two windows on each side, frequently framed by pillars).[52] The interior of this house did not differ from other old manors in Luanda in which "no piso inferior situava-se o estabelecimento e o armazém de mercadorias, e o andar superior destinava-se à habitação do proprietário" (in the basement were the emporium and the storeroom, and on the upper floor was the owner's residence).[53] Aesthetically, Batalha saw the archetypal Casa Luandense as one of two or three remaining buildings that best demonstrated this vernacular(ized) style.

The building was renovated using "materiais e processos modernos" (modern materials and processes); the renovation included the restoration of the façades "para dar destaque à harmonia da sua composição e das suas proporções" (to preserve the harmony of its composition and proportions).[54] In the interior of the building, its "espontânea singeleza primitiva" (spontaneous primitive simplicity) was retained, and in only a few cases were elements of the structure reinforced with modern materials.[55] In terms of reconstruction, Batalha also notes that several features were added—namely, two large interior arcs as supports for the upper floor, a clay tile floor, split roofs for each section, and a roof and a floor consisting of round beams and large old wooden beams, and so on. The house was used for a couple of years as the offices of the CDA and was then turned into the Casa-Museu Ernesto Vilhena (Ernesto Vilhena Museum),[56] which was intended to be turned into a museum of African art, as a branch of the Museu do Dundo (Dundo Museum) that the company had set up in the diamond-rich Lunda province. Furthermore, the CDA considered buying the whole block where this *sobrado* was situated,

to turn it into a cultural center that would accommodate ten rooms for permanent exhibitions; space for temporary exhibitions; an auditorium; storage space for archeological collections; a laboratory; a restoration workshop; offices for cartography, iconography, and photography; as well as a public library, work and study offices for researchers, and offices for services and administration.[57] However, the owners of the surrounding buildings refused to sell their properties to the company, which was thus left with the original plan of the Casa-Museu. By the time Angola became independent, in 1975, the Casa-Museu Ernesto Vilhena had been taken over by the state, which turned it into the Museu Nacional de Antropologia (National Museum of Anthropology), whose repository came from the Museu do Dundo.[58]

What Batalha leaves out of the shifting of Lusotropicalismo to the formulation of the Casa Luandense are the more sociological aspects of Freyre's elaboration on the formation of Brazilian society. One then has to push such an analogy even further so as to make sense of the Luandan society confined in the Casa Luandense. As such, Casa Luandense is not just an architectural hybrid but a social phenomenon, too, for it allowed cohabitation of enslavers and the enslaved under the same roof. From this initial arrangement, then, the Luanda emerging therefrom was sociologically an expansion of the Casa Luandense complex. For instance, toward the end of the slave trade, the number of enslaved people coming to Luanda was so high that their enslavers could not fit all of them into the storage areas of their *sobrados*. So, they built *quintais* (backyards) throughout the city, where enslaved people lived in transit to the New World.[59] A number of these *quintais* subsequently became full-blown *bairros*, such as Coqueiros, Ingombotas, or Maianga, and were partially or entirely razed later on when the colonial authorities became increasingly more concerned with hygiene and sanitation. Here, one can also use this metaphor and extrapolate it to explain the social evolution of the colonial society. Casa Luandense, or the original epitome of the skin of the city, was then expanding, without necessarily altering the structural differences between the haves and the haves-not. I will evoke such a concept in further chapters, for it also evokes a certain, so to speak, sociology of inhabitation, or a hybrid between architectural form and the particular sociopolitical regime in place.

Building History

One may certainly argue here that the CDA, later Museu de Antropologia, was saved from destruction by the function it was called to perform in times of urban renewal and not for the particular history that it embodied, reversing

the principle so cherished by architectural modernists that form follows function. At play here was that an old form had been given a new function, that of culture. To put it differently, it was as if the building were given a new soul. The CDA's *sobrado* was no longer an old building that does not speak back to a city in transformation but a renovated building embodying the history of the city. Money is not the only factor to take into account in this transfiguration. What is important to highlight here is the discursive component in this campaign, or how the case was made to preserve a building on historical and cultural grounds. This was, however, a case that more problematically could be made during colonialism. Even though the Portuguese colonial intelligentsia disavowed the country's involvement in the slave trade, they also uncritically extolled the benefits of their colonization. Africa was, and still is, for many historians, architectural historians, and Portuguese architects who took part in this process, as Ana Vaz Milheiro has put it, "um território disponível para a experimentação construtiva" (a territory available for constructive experimentation).[60] This experimentation took place at the expense of the destruction of old Luanda. Emulating such a mindset, postcolonial authorities have never been able to convince themselves of the importance of preserving history in the form of material culture. This explains part of the neglect that followed independence, and the activism to counter it.

Even though the first Angolan president, Agostinho Neto, was a published poet and a man of culture, and even though one of his first public acts as president of independent Angola was the proclamation of the União de Escritores Angolanos (Union of Angolan Writers), on December 10, 1975, it was only after his death that the politics of recognition started to encompass historical buildings.[61] Under the law of nationalization (to be discussed in detail in later chapters), the state had become the owner and, in some cases, the landlord of these buildings, but it did not take steps to promote their conservation or renovation, except for those buildings to which particular functions were ascribed—such as the headquarters of the CDA. It was only in 1981, six years into independence, that forty-two of these buildings became protected under a law that regulated historical monuments.[62] Such was the case of the famous palace of Dona Ana Joaquina. The palace was named after its owner, Dona Ana Joaquina dos Santos Silva, an Angolan slave trader who was one of the richest and most prominent residents in the city in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Certified as a national monument after independence, by the 1980s, this *sobrado* was in an advanced stage of dereliction and had become an eyesore in the city. Dozens, possibly hundreds, of squatters had moved into it. The talk of the town was that these

newcomers to the city, mostly refugees and homeless kids—people who were for the most part being displaced because of the civil war—were responsible for the levels of criminality in that part of the town. The fact is that the area around this old mansion had become the downtown red-light district: early in the evening one would see dozens of teenage girls with heavy makeup stopping cars to offer their services. When the city authorities decided to act, there was too little to save. The building was demolished without any resistance or reaction from Luanda's residents. That was perhaps because the state promised, and fulfilled its promise, to reconstruct the building in a more radical way than it had done with the Museu Nacional building. In this reconstruction, the beams of wood, which are the most distinctive feature of *sobrados*, were replaced with beams of steel and concrete.[63] What is today the palace of Dona Ana Joaquina is in fact a modernized version of it, a replica, with little resemblance to the original.

A similar tactic was used to bring down another building of a different, but no less important, epoch. The building in this case was the emblematic Quinaxixe Marketplace (hereafter spelled Kinaxixe, according to the current custom), designed by one of Luanda's leading architects and urbanists, Vasco Vieira da Costa, an "absolutely extraordinary [example] of the epoch of modernism," according to the Angolan architect Ângela Mingas.[64] The marketplace was deactivated in the late 1980s, and the decision to tear it down came thereafter. However, this time, the government did not intend to renovate it or build a replica in place of the old one. The Ordem dos Arquitectos de Angola (Order of Angolan Architects), the official regulator of the profession, was against the destruction of this modernist building, which was being considered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for classification as a world heritage site for humanity.[65] When the government announced that the Kinaxixe Marketplace would be razed so as to make way for a six-story shopping mall with two gigantic towers, one at either end, various groups of concerned citizens filed a complaint in the provincial court. For about ten years, the ruined building subsisted under a covering of corrugated iron. In the end, however, the intention of the economic group behind the planned construction of the shopping mall prevailed, and the iconic Kinaxixe Marketplace came down. For Mingas, the destruction of Kinaxixe was a wake-up call for Luandans, and "not because of the demolition itself, but because with these demolitions people were losing urban references in the city."[66]

Mingas also believes that from then on, Luanda's residents became more receptive to the notion that the city's architectural heritage should be pre-

Figure I.2. Palácio Dona Ana Maria Joaquina, prior to reconstruction in 1992. Source: John Liebenberg.

served. She was herself the director of the Centro de Estudos e Investigação Científica de Arquitectura (Center for the Study and Scientific Research of Architecture; CEICA), linked to Lusíada University, which conducted the most exhaustive report on colonial architecture in Luanda to date.[67] Later on, the center teamed up with the Associação Kalú, an association of friends and residents for the conservation of historic Luanda, and developed a campaign, according to Mingas, aimed to foster an awareness of the importance of "social space" among Luanda's residents.[68] For Mingas, it was the absence of such an awareness among Luandans that prevented them from conceiving of these relics as historic buildings and not mere blots on the landscape. Arguments for the preservation of these buildings, Mingas and many other people believed, should not be based on historical reasons alone but also on the fact that they

have become a sort of mnemonic for people to remember the history of their city and, consequently, to orient themselves in the city.

These two demolitions contributed to the fostering of a consciousness of, and resistance to, the destruction of old buildings, particularly because of the intentions that lay behind these actions. The acclaimed Angolan writer Pepetela, for instance, maintains that the Angolan elite suffer from a "horror ao vazio" (horror of emptiness), which accounts for the inclination to replace parks and squares with skyscrapers.[69] For them, Pepetela would certainly add, old buildings amount to emptiness. So by the time the government announced the plan to demolish Elinga Teatro, a group of people had already organized themselves and were ready to push back. Times had changed: the demolition of Elinga was part of the most ambitious overhaul of the city since the construction frenzy of the 1950s and 1960s. If these *sobrados* had for the most part been abandoned since independence, 2002 was a turning point for a drastic transformation of the city. On the one hand, the civil war ended that year, with the killing of the rebel leader Jonas Malheiros Savimbi. As a result, financial resources that had been siphoned off to sustain the war effort started very slowly to be diverted into other channels of expenditure. On the other hand, the years that followed, particularly from 2008 onward, coincided with an unprecedented increase in oil prices in international markets and oil production in Angola. Consequently, oil production, as Ricardo Cardoso so succinctly put it, became the "reconfiguring element of the urban form."[70] Construction and demolition activities in Angola could be tracked by reading the average annual Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) crude oil prices. Prices started to rise in 2003, with the average annual price reaching US$28.10 per barrel, and continued rising until 2008, when the price reached US$94.10. In the two following years, prices plummeted but then began to rise again in 2011, until by 2015 the annual average was above US$96. To have an idea of the impact of the price rises on Angola's economy, in 2003, Angolan's gross domestic product reached US$124.20 billion, most of it derived from oil exports.[71]

Urban transformation and infrastructure revamping took place in two major ways. The central government used a great deal of these new resources to fix and modernize most of the infrastructure destroyed by the war and to provide the country with many other new infrastructural resources such as airports, ports, dams, and so on. But most of the urban investment in the city was driven by private interests even if, as we will see shortly, the central government was explicitly or implicitly behind most of them.

Elinga Teatro received its eviction order on April 1, 2014, as the last move in a standoff that had pitted the government against artists and many other concerned citizens interested in the preservation of the building.[72] The rationale for the demolition of Elinga was, primarily, that the building was old and did not comply with the legally required safety measures. Nowhere in the rationale was there any mention of the fact that the building belonged to the state, which, thus, would have been the entity responsible for its lack of maintenance. Those who were fighting for the preservation of the building based their argument on its historical value, attested to by its classification as a national monument after independence and confirmed in 1995.[73] However, only three years after this confirmation, the then minister of culture, the historian Rosa Cruz e Silva, signed the executive decree number 134/12 of April 30, 2012, to declassify the building as a national monument.[74] She justified her decision with the argument in that "as razões de natureza histórica que determinaram a classificação do referido edifício já não subsistem" (the reason of historical nature that determined the classification no longer prevailed).[75] The laconic document did not specify, however, which historical value she was referring to and why the building had lost it. One cannot fail to recognize here the irony of history in relation to the same kind of processes that Batalha was writing about fifty years earlier.

The larger picture here was that downtown Luanda, in the vicinity of Elinga Teatro, was at the heart of the city's overhaul, the epicenter of public-private investments, alongside the new satellite city of Kilamba, a new urban development that I will discuss in chapter 6. A bit of background is required here. When the Portuguese moved the port from Portas do Mar to the entrance of the Bay of Luanda in 1942, a move whose implications will be discussed in the next chapter, they turned the now-vacant area into a recreational space, originally called (appropriately) Avenida Paulo Dias de Novais, also known as Avenida Marginal. Residents could walk or run along a wide sidewalk stretching from the entrance of the bay, past the new port, to the fort, or even farther up to Ilha de Luanda. The bay as such was transformed into a fishing area and a site where nautical sports also took place. The uses of the Marginal, rebaptized Avenida 4 de Fevereiro after independence, did not change much in the years that followed, even though dereliction could not be prevented. At the height of the period of urban land speculation, post-2002, a private group, Luanda Waterfront Corporation, led by the Portuguese citizen José Récio and his Angolan partner António Mosquito, approached the government and proposed the refurbishment of the Marginal through a set of interventions. The first

would involve the cleaning up of the bay, since during the Portuguese era, the
city's sewage had flowed into it. The second phase would include the renewal
of the bay, which would consist of the enlargement of Avenida 4 de Fever-
eiro, through land reclamation, and an accompanying sidewalk to allow for the
construction of sports and leisure facilities. Through this, the city would win
about 100 meters (about 300 feet) from the sea. In exchange, the group would
be allowed to build two artificial islands, to be developed with residential and
office space, so as to increase the city's urban stock.[76] However, soon after the
first phase of the project was concluded, the group filed for bankruptcy, forc-
ing the government to buy back the project through public debt to the value
of US$379,000,000.[77]

Since that area of the city had become the fulcrum of urban speculation,
several other commercial groups started to buy property for development in
the expectation that prices would go up. Elinga Teatro was located 200 meters
(658 feet) from Mutamba, the core of Baixa, and 150 meters (492 feet) from
the Marginal; more specifically, it was situated in one of the most physically

uneven and morphologically diverse parts of town, only two blocks up from the Bay of Luanda—today referred to as the Nova Marginal de Luanda (New Marginal de Luanda)[78]—and halfway between the Fortaleza de São Miguel and the Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Nazaré (Church of Our Lady of Nazareth), on what a couple of centuries ago constituted the main artery of the city. The area in which the building stood was, thus, one of the most coveted locations in the whole country in terms of urban redevelopment and, concomitantly, urban speculation. In the government's vision, through the aforementioned development plans, this part of the city would boast a Dubai-like waterfront.[79] The developers of Empreendimento Elipark acquired the right to raze the whole block and to erect in its place a building of about 4,600 square meters (15,091 square feet), comprising a cultural center, commercial spaces, and a large parking area fourteen floors above ground, alongside apartments and offices. The promoters of the project provided a guarantee that the theater company would be allocated a space in the new urban complex, consisting of a single large room, that would have better amenities than those available in the old building.

Even if Elinga was not the only classified building on that block, it had made a name for itself on account of the theater, or put differently, the function that it housed. As I have said earlier, the Elinga Teatro *sobrado* was built in the nineteenth century, and its original owner is still unknown. Over time, the building has been used for many different purposes. Originally possibly the residence of a well-to-do family, by the 1950s it served as a school. After independence, as urban structures were nationalized, the building was allocated to the Universidade Agostinho Neto (Agostinho Neto University), which used it primarily as a social center, providing offices for, among others, the Brigada Jovem da Literatura (Young Literature Brigade). Later on, it housed the theater company of the university's medical school, and even later Elinga Teatro, the name by which the building is currently known.

Over the ensuing years, the history of the Elinga theater company became inseparable from the history of the building itself. Elinga Teatro became one of the most acclaimed theater companies in the whole country, in a context where there were no professional companies nor even formal training courses available for actors.[80] It became part of a wider network of theaters in Portuguese-speaking African countries, and its troupes performed in many other African countries, while it frequently invited companies from elsewhere to perform in Luanda. In this manner, the building came to constitute the cornerstone of Luanda's cultural life. By the time of the eviction notice, the building

housed not only the theater but also the studios of the artist António Ole—with whose work I began the introduction to this book—and of the fashion designer Mwamby Wassaky. It also served as the home to Kussanguluka, a traditional dance company. Finally, it operated as an art gallery, where international artists exhibited their work and where local artists first became known to a wider Angolan public.[81]

The selling point of Elinga was that it mixed the old with the new, not only in terms of architecture but also in social terms. In a city that, in recent years, had been losing its young people to the outskirts of town, as this was the only place where affordable housing was available, the Elinga Teatro became the meeting point for artists, tourists, nongovernmental organization (NGO) activists, and expatriates who worked for oil and other international companies and organizations. A bar, and parties with resident or invited DJs, kept the establishment financially afloat. The theater was one of those vibrant places that blended things that were otherwise conceived of as different and separate. It was a place of music and art that often showed creative work that was at the cutting edge of Luanda's cultural production. The area around the Elinga Teatro became a magnet for homeless children who helped visitors park their cars in a desperate attempt to make some money.

By the time members of the Associação Kalú and other groups launched a campaign to save the building, they could count on a well-known and well-connected group of people whose interests gravitated toward Elinga and who could advocate against its destruction—unlike the situation with other buildings that were destroyed, or scheduled for destruction, which did not evoke the same type of outcry. The director of the Elinga Teatro, José Mena Abrantes, was himself a speechwriter for the president of the republic and warned publicly that the demolition would mean that Angolans, "tão orgulhosos de viverem numa das capitais mais antiga da África negra, em breve deixarão de ter de que vangloriar. Nada de antigo restará na cidade" (so proud of living in one of the oldest cities in Black Africa, will not have anything to be proud of. Nothing of the old will be left in the city).[82] This was a feeling widely shared among the people who put their weight behind the campaign. At the same time, the Elinga Teatro itself increased the number of its productions, to emphasize its importance as the city's cultural heartbeat. Moreover, it also became a common point of reference among people whose politics could not be more divergent. A handful of members of the so-called Movimento Revolucionário de Angola (Revolutionary Movement of Angola), a group of youth who staged a number of protests to oust the long-serving president José Edu-

ardo dos Santos), also converged in Elinga; they included Luaty Beirão and Nito Alves, who took part in various awareness campaigns around the preservation of Elinga. In the end, then, the case for the Elinga Teatro was easy to articulate from the point of view of civil society. It set the interests of the people, and history, against the greed of individuals whose only concern was to make money, even if in order to do so historical buildings had to be razed. To date there has been no decision yet about the future of Elinga; the show still goes on.

The controversies surrounding the Elinga Teatro show not only the extent to which Luanda is still entangled in its past but also the ways in which history is never settled; it is always dynamic or dialectical. It reveals how history has been used, or appropriated, to justify contending agendas that put emphasis either on the preservation of relics or on the modernization of the city that inevitably implies the destruction of the buildings from previous eras. On the one hand, the argument about the historicity of these buildings may be deemed fraught with inaccuracies and melt in the air, as Marx would say. Unlike the Dona Ana Joaquina Palace, Elinga Teatro is more like a ghost in the city, for almost nothing is known of who the original owners were and how it was occupied. On the other hand, the push for the clearing of old buildings from the city center can also be depicted as insensitive, to say the least. But these two seemingly contrasting views meet in the overdetermination of the function. Those who supported the destruction of Elinga Teatro have based their position on the argument that the city center would be better served with more office space, parking lots, and a shopping mall. Similarly, behind the survival of the Elinga Teatro is the successful disjunction of form, or the rationale that presided over its construction and function. Putting it differently, the Elinga Teatro has survived not because of its history, and not even because of its status as a national monument, but because of its function, or the life it came to host as the home of a theater company—not very different from the reasons for the survival of the CDA building, later on transformed into the Museum of Anthropology. In the end, *sobrados* such as the Elinga Teatro, which are the very few remnants of a time the country does not want to be reminded of, are the last shackles to be thrown off before the city frees itself completely from history. As such, destroying landmarks in the city does not simply involve getting rid of them physically; there is also something more profound at work here, which I have tried to encapsulate in the term "un-building history." It is as if there is a belief that, once the enduring entanglements are discursively put to rest, by insisting for instance that it is better to

forget than to remember Luanda's traumatic past, we can remove everything else far more easily.

Furthermore, the fate of Elinga Teatro speaks to something deeper about Luanda that is also at the core of this book. I have tried to articulate this idea by borrowing, without of course its ideological frame, the concept of Casa Luandense as proposed by the architect Fernando Batalha. For Casa Luandense does not only bring the mix of people from different social standings (in terms of race and class) to the fore, it also allows us to see the relationship between these houses and the rest of the city, or between architecture and urban form. As such, these sumptuous houses were like fortresses, or enclosures for the well-to-do, in a city that was overwhelmingly inhabited by the destitute, many of them enslaved. The fact that these buildings have been, after independence, taken over by squatters accounts for more than a simple historical irony. I would like to construe it as the condition for inhabitation in Luanda itself. Or to put it differently, the building that Elinga Teatro occupies is also a theater itself for a sociology of inhabitation in present-day Luanda. It shows, primarily, the extent to which life in Luanda has always been about separation and enclosure—about those who are within or beyond the limits of that which is considered interior or exterior. The ways in which these modes of separation come about are always relational, or dialectical, for these lines of separation—the house, the *bairro*, or the city itself—may recede or expand. As such, the squatters in present-day Luanda are not, in any way, different from the enslaved people who inhabited the first floors of these buildings. This is not so in relation to labor patterns, obviously, but in relation to an understanding of slavery as conceptualized by early philosophers such as Plato, for whom slaves were those who did not have a public presence and were subsumed in the domus, or domestic sphere.

In saying this, my aim is to counter the assertion that, through appropriation, the urban poor or the squatters lay claim to the city, as a burgeoning literature has been arguing under the rubric of the right to the city, and as I have discussed in the introduction. My intention lies elsewhere. I would like to argue that in present-day Luanda no one can claim the right to the city because of the ways in which belonging, ownership, and appropriation are mediated by legal redefinition of the relationship between the state and the land. Or, to put it differently, the state here is not a metaphysical category but one that forces us to engage with the contingent ways in which it relates to the citizenry. I will come back to this point in further chapters. Here, it suffices to say that the Angolan postcolonial state has conceived of itself as the sole owner, or originator, of the land. As such tenancy is always unstable,

and the law can always change so as to render sections of the city in contra-vention. For law is the foundation itself that renders senseless any reference to metaphysics, or the notion that a concept such as right to the city may have any purchase so as to understand law making in Angola. The outcome is the always-latent production of the condition of squatting, after the fact. In the chapters that follow, I will seek to magnify this vision.
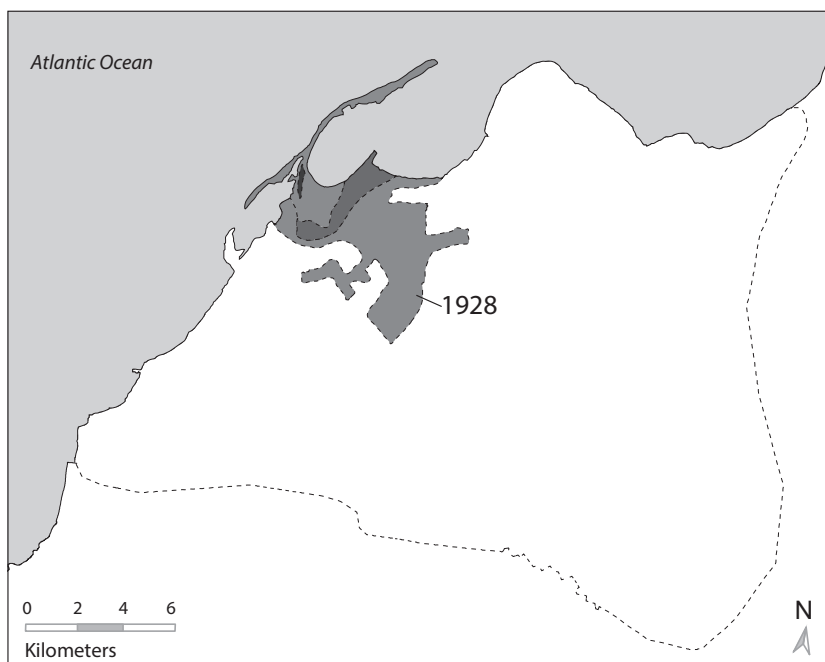
Map 2.1. Luanda circa 1928.

2. Ordering Urban Expansion

Luanda é um porto que trabalha para toda a colónia

Luanda is a port that works for the entire colony.
—Vasco Vieira da Costa, "Cidade Satélite no. 3," 1948

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By the time the competition over available land was becoming fiercer in down-town Luanda, for the reasons I discussed earlier, Portuguese urban authorities were considering the expansion of the city's borders. The hilltop of Kinaxixe was deemed an apt and natural section of the town for such a scheme. Adjacent to downtown Luanda, it consisted for the most part of unused land until the late 1930s. The area was occupied by a few public buildings, some private estates, and mushrooming settlements, in which poor whites lived to-gether with members of Luanda's traditional families. The urban expansion that colonial authorities had in mind was enabled by a number of interlinked factors—namely, the appreciation of prices for commodities such as coffee

and cotton in the international market, which provided colonial governments across the continent the confidence to embrace developmentalist policies. In the context of Portuguese colonialism, particularly for the case of Portugal's most precious colony, Angola, such a mindset was bolstered by two interlaced beliefs: first, that colonial development could be channeled into addressing the high indices of poverty in continental Portugal by encouraging migration to the colonies, and second, that massive investment could be used to provide transportation infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, the railway, and particularly on the industrial-port complex. The modern Luanda that starts to emerge in 1945, over the ashes of the lingering effects of the slave trade, is a by-product of the application of these principles.

The construction of the Port of Luanda played such a pivotal role for the further expansion of the urban grid that Vasco Vieira da Costa, one of the city's chief architects, equated the whole city with the port itself. Luanda, for him, was a "porto que trabalha para toda colónia" (port that works for entire colony).[1] By this, Vieira da Costa was making the case for viewing the port as an instrument for economic growth in that it made possible the increased shipment of commodities out of the country and vice-versa. But the port was also a potential anchor for urban growth. The construction of Porto de Luanda was not imagined by modernist architects, but modernist architecture provided a lexicon for envisaging and planning Luanda's expansion in a more holistic manner. Taking advantage of a clear-cut, almost cohesive historical center—albeit with historically diverse housing types—most urban designers in Luanda at that time considered natural the radiocentric expansion of the city. Such a scheme was the blueprint followed until the mid-1970s when the colonial order came to a halt.

At a more sociological level, what comes to the fore by reading the city's plans from the 1940s onward, and the discourses attached to them, is the intention at purifying the city center by removing those groups whose lifestyles contravened the image of a modern city in the tropics that Portuguese modernizers wished to emulate. This desideratum was attained through, on the one hand, conceiving of what was then called the consolidated urban core, or the concrete city, which was progressively achieved by removing informal and precarious housing and settling the occupants on the outskirts of the formal city, beyond the frontier—that is, when the occupants or owners of such precarious housing had not already decided by themselves to relocate beyond the border of the formal city on account of the fact that urban modernization was making their lives untenable financially.[2] On the other hand, however, there were not, for the most part, major buffers separating the *cidade* from the *musseques*. In some sections of the city, there were obviously major pieces of infrastructure,

such as the port, cutting through two *bairros* whose inhabitants held opposite economic standings in the colonial city. But generally, separating most of these *bairros* was a simple road. It was as if the Portuguese were willing to sustain the tension between *cidade* and *musseque* through these thin lines that the Angolan writer Luandino Vieira has called the *fronteira do asfalto*.

It will be my contention in this chapter that inscribing race, and to lesser extent class, as the main descriptor for the ascription of residents to their respective and secluding *bairros* is part of the reason Luanda kept its status as the colony's capital. In the early 1900s, Huambo came close to dislodging Luanda from this position, because it offered the opportunity to envision city building from a clean slate. However, the higher agricultural production in the northern provinces made Luanda the more logical and economically wise point for export, through the construction of the Port of Luanda alongside other auxiliary pieces of infrastructure such as the railway and the road infrastructure network. What one reads in the various planning initiatives since the early 1940s is how the various social groups were meant to be clustered in the interstices of infrastructure (without abolishing for the most part the thin lines that constituted the *fronteira do asfalto*). Modernist Luanda worked at superimposing an urban order made of clear-cut streets, wider avenues, public spaces, a long promenade by the bay, and towering buildings, onto the architecturally hybrid, messy, and racially mixed city Luanda.

The city's modernization through the idiom provided by modernist architecture is then the most elaborated attempt at enforcing the skin of the city on the urban, which was accomplished, on the one hand, by making starker the difference between city and *musseque* and, on the other, by successfully demarcating the differences among the various *bairros* in the city. With this, a whole system was recast, particularly through recalibrations of whom the right to the city belonged, which, ultimately turned most Natives into potential squatters.

The Colony, the City, and the Port

The Atlantic slave trade was certainly the main reason Luanda became the principal settlement for the Portuguese in Angola. Luanda's poor arable land was compensated for by optimal conditions for breeding slaves. The coast was endowed with a sizable hill, on top of which a fort with heavy artillery was installed. Overtaking such a settlement, as the Dutch did in 1641, would never be any easy task. Furthermore, the bay itself constituted a natural harbor, which made it possible for the Portuguese to become the largest purveyors

of slaves in the modern world, without having to invest in permanent port infrastructure.

However, with the end of the Atlantic slave trade, in 1836, the position Luanda occupied in relation to the rest of the country, most of which was still to be brought under colonial authority, was being severely challenged.[3] The commodities that still arrived on its shores (besides enslaved people who were illicitly abducted and transported to Brazil)—such as rubber, wax, manganese, and agricultural produce—were not enough to keep the economy afloat and prevent the most affluent members of the population from leaving the city with the fortunes they had amassed. Those who stayed, and those who came after, were then turning their attention to other economic opportunities. Luanda's hinterland was endowed with arable land, where there were better conditions for the mass-production of agricultural goods. Accordingly, traders in Luanda were cogitating on and plotting ways to transport produce more quickly, efficiently, and in greater quantities to Luanda. Feeding Luanda's population was what they had in mind, but they were also aware of profits to be made on exports.

Aware of the potential of an emergent technology, the railroad, a few traders, Silvano Pereira, Arsénio Pompílio de Carpo, A. Y. R. Shut, and Eduardo Possolo, set off on a venture to bring it to Luanda. In 1848, they distributed a pamphlet on a project to "para o melhoramento do comércio, agricultura e industria" (improve commerce, agriculture, and industry) through transport, with the aim of finding potential investors to finance their plan to build a railway linking Luanda and Calumbo, northeast of Luanda.[4] They promised all those who joined the proposed society a profit of 10 percent at the end of the first year of operation of the railway. British investors were the main target of the campaign, for their interest in expanding railway technology throughout the world, their acumen in investing overseas, and particularly their effort to suppress slavery, which, given the weight it occupied in the Angolan economy, was, for the promoters, the main cause of the colony's decline. As such, they expected the British to be sensitive to and support their search for alternative economic ventures beyond the slave trade.

Such a consortium, when formed, would be expected to realize two goals: first, they were interested in transporting produce to Luanda; second, they also aimed at acquiring the rights to the extraction of timber and all the minerals found in the course of the construction of the railway. From the colonial state they expected to receive tax exemptions for all the materials they imported, as well as support in the recruitment of *degredados* to perform mostly skilled labor and assistance in facilitating the recruitment of the Native labor force.[5]

This undertaking failed, but it inspired many other groups to ask the colonial government to financially support them in the construction of the railway. A tender advertised in 1896 by the Portuguese state was won by the Companhia Real dos Caminhos de Ferro Através de África (Royal Company for Railways across Africa), which formed a subsidiary firm, the Sociedade Constructora do Caminho de Ferro the Ambaca (Society for the Construction of the Ambaca Railway). This group delivered the 364 kilometers (226.17 miles) of rail linking Luanda to the hinterland at Ambaca, a project officially inaugurated on September 7, 1899.[6] A few years later, the colonial government carried out a plan to merge all the rail routes that existed and were being privately exploited, linking Luanda to several other localities under the designation Caminhos de Ferro de Luanda (Luanda Railway; CFL). The line that started in Ambaca, with stops in dozens of localities, traversed Luanda and had its final railhead at a station near Cidade Alta.[7] Despite the intentions of their promoters, this service was primarily designed to transport passengers. In just its first year of operation, 462,071 individuals were transported.[8] In the next few years, with the improvement of the infrastructure and the use of more powerful locomotives, transportation of commodities increased. This movement of people and goods would have a profound impact on the modernization of Luanda.

While privately owned businesses were busy attempting to revitalize the city's moribund economy, the colonial state was trying to find alternatives for raising revenues. The prohibition of slavery had left Portugal devoid of concrete ideas for how to turn the colonies into profitable ventures. At the famous Berlin Conference that took place in 1884–85, England imposed on Portugal what has been referred to in the literature as an ultimatum, in which the Portuguese were bound to either effectively occupy the territories they claimed to possess or transfer them to any other colonial power better equipped to administer them. In the debates that raged in the Portuguese press, well-established members of the intelligentsia argued that Portugal would be better off without the colonies and should simply sell them.[9] Clarity about Portugal's colonial mission only started to emerge by the early 1900s, particularly after the republican revolution in 1910 that put an end to the ineffectual Portuguese monarchy. Fresher ideas flowed into the public debate, particularly on the applicability of colonial polices being experimented with across the continent by the British and the French. From these discussions emerged the mindset that African colonies could better serve the empire if they enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. The largest colonies, Angola and Mozambique, were thus granted a semiautonomous status.[10]

To help manifest the potential of the Portuguese-dominated territories in Africa, General Norton de Matos was dispatched to Angola with powers that no other colonial leader in that territory had previously held and that none would hold again in the years to come. First, as governor-general of Angola between 1912 and 1915, and then in a second mandate as high commissioner from 1921 to 1923, Norton de Matos encapsulated his ambitions for Angola's modernization under the banner "desenvolver Angola, promover o negro e reforçar a soberania Portuguesa" (develop Angola, promote the Negro, and strengthen Portuguese sovereignty).[11] He has been hailed as a trailblazer for setting the foundations for the country's modern state by promulgating countless colonial policies, founding new settlements, such as Huambo—as I will show later in this chapter—and opening up commerce with the Natives through the construction of infrastructure such as bridges, roads, and the expansion of the railway. More important, Norton de Matos decisively acted to put an end to slavery.[12] With the oath he took as a Freemason before his first stint in Angola, Norton de Matos pledged to fight slavery not because he particularly abhorred the abduction of human beings but because he was inclined to believe that slavery could be replaced by another no less compulsory but inevitably more efficient system of work.[13] He then took decisive steps toward the institutionalization of the infamous *indigenato* (from *indígena:* Natives), which consisted mainly of the colonial state's creation through law of a category of human beings who could be deprived of the rights to be members of civil society.[14]

Part of the rationale for Native people to be outside civil society was cultural, in that they were deemed not to possess civilizational attributes and thus should be governed by their traditional authorities, according to their own cultural structures.[15] A number of Africanist scholars have shown the extent to which the *indigenato* legislation was also used as a tool to prevent Africans from leaving the countryside and migrating to major cities.[16] This was also the case for Angola, and yet the *indigenato* also had a powerful impact on the ways in which Luanda came to be planned from the early twentieth century onward.

Given Norton de Matos's views on the place of the Black population in the whole architecture of the empire, it may not require a stretch of the imagination to conjure up the extent to which Luanda may have appeared an oddity to him. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that the slave trade, particularly in its dying phase, allowed for the emergence of a Black elite who called themselves Angolenses and who enjoyed considerable economic, political, and cultural standing, especially after the abolition of the slave trade. By the time Norton de Matos arrived in Luanda, descendants of this privileged group owned

property in various sections of the city, particularly in Ingombotas. Having spent time in Asia, particularly in India, Matos was aware of the British distrust of in-between categories, such as these civilized subjects, and geared his administration toward the separation, as much as possible, of whites and Blacks. He emulated the model of the New World, in particular North America, as a way to impose Western "hegemonia em todo o continente" (hegemony on the whole continent).[17] For such an order to come into being, the Portuguese would have to "fixar nas terras de África que nos pertencem, a nossa raça, com a maior intensidade, para que as suas qualidades de perseverança, de resistência ao desânimo e de coragem indomável [. . .] lhes deem um cunho bem português" (settle our race on that part of the African soil that belongs to us with greatest intensity, so that the [Portuguese] qualities of endurance, resistance, as well as untamable courage [. . .] give it [Angola] a Portuguese imprint).[18]

Suffused with ideologies of social Darwinism and eugenics, Norton de Matos conceded that he was not against the uplifting of Black people, as he so candidly expounded, but that he favored the view that races should develop in different directions. He was thus reiterating the conclusions of a number of his contemporaries, particularly Lord Lugard, the governor of Nigeria, for whom colonization had two objectives: to benefit the colonial power and to uplift the Native, the latter through the preservation of African institutions.[19] Norton de Matos argued that a crucial way to implement Portuguese hegemony was to separate the races as much as possible by actively preventing any form of miscegenation. Alarmed by the potential consequences of the migration of single men as the main cause of interracial relationships, he posited the need to transplant not only Portuguese men to Angola but also entire families.[20] Norton de Matos was also inclined to believe that if one wanted to improve colonization, urbanization, "uma das mais nítidas características da civilização" (the most distinctive characteristic of civilization) had to emerge on African soil.[21] Formal and European-style cities and settlements would attract more whites and would thus endow these places with "uma imagem portuguesa" (a Portuguese image) through the construction of houses resembling those in traditional Portuguese villages.[22]

Luanda was not a viable candidate for Matos's scheme, owing to the widespread presence of what he considered miscegenation and other forms of promiscuity, such as interracial marriages. In the previous chapter, I left implicit the fact that old Luanda was characterized by a promiscuous cohabitation between enslavers and the enslaved, for shacks, or *cubatas*, could be found everywhere in the city. Repulsed by this state of things, Matos turned to the countryside. His vision, which he wrote about prolifically, was to build Angolan

Figure 2.1. Settlers on board the ship *João Belo* departing Portugal for Angola in 1936. Source: Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo.

pastoral villages for industrious Portuguese who would work the land in a self-sufficient manner, dispensing with all Black manpower. The Colonato da Cela (Cela Settlement), for instance, which was only built later on, showcases how the Portuguese tried to concretize this vision.[23] But Norton de Matos's dream pointed toward a far-reaching goal—namely, the very production of a new colonial center where the criteria of race, hygienic purity, and economic organization could be integrated from the outset.

Norton de Matos also has been credited for contributing to the groundwork for the establishment of Huambo, a city the Portuguese attempted to build as a replacement for Luanda as Angola's capital city. And the creation of Huambo provides important clues to what would later on feature in Luanda's transformation from the 1940s onward. For this transformation was only made possible through the implementation of several principles that had been experimented with and tested in the construction of Huambo. This settlement stemmed directly from the railway and emerged from the concession the Portuguese had given to Robert Williams, one of Cecil John Rhodes's close friends, to the right to build a railway line that crossed the entire Angolan territory from east to west, from the coastal town of Benguela, about 500 kilometers (340 miles) to the south of Luanda, to Zambia. Williams became the director of the company

called Companhia do Caminho de Ferro de Benguela (Benguela Railway Company; CCFB).[24] In the early 1900s, the railhead was in Cuma, where a small settlement had been set up 317 kilometers (196.97 miles) from the coast. In extending this line, the Portuguese were first of all eyeing the copper mines of Catanga and, secondarily, the construction of a new city, Huambo.

As Huambo's existence was due to the expansion of the railway to the hinterland, the CCFB requested an area of 404.68 hectares (1,000 acres) on which to build infrastructure and services for the railway, such as headquarters for the company, workshops, storage, housing for personnel, and a sanatorium. It occupied a considerable area of the city's initial plan, with its repair shops and other workshops and facilities for the operation of the railway. From there, the city grew, designed in the shape of a polygon, with the sides being formed by the road grid, the railway, buildings, and water lines. Huambo was designed to be linked by five arterial routes, springing from a circle with nine roads that constituted the civic center, with a roundabout around which public buildings, commercial concerns such as banks, and recreational facilities such as cinemas would be erected. Long avenues, wide boulevards, public spaces, and green areas were also part of the city's design. The garden city principle that was transplanted to Huambo was the zoning, through which residential areas were separated from industrial ones, with the civic center at a considerable distance from the train station and other railway facilities. In the residential areas, the larger houses were to face the main roads, whereas the smaller ones for the natives, alongside the sewerage lines, would be at the back. Even though the designation "garden city" never appeared in the justification and rationale for Huambo, produced by its putative father, Carlos Roma Machado, its town plan was nonetheless called "English," because of its "specific guidelines for the development of this town."[25] The garden city model had proved to be very effective at eliminating slums and unemployment in other cities in Africa through its use as an effective mechanism to preside over organized "migratory movements of populations for the purpose of settling land, either in overseas territories or within the metropole."[26] So it was obvious that the model of the garden city could be deemed adequate to the foundation of Huambo.[27]

Although Huambo was conceptualized during the governorship of José Augusto Alves Roçadas (1909–10), the final project for the settlement was only later on approved by Norton de Matos, who was also given the honor of inaugurating it on September 12, 1912. It would certainly be the capital of Angola had it not been for the recalibrations of the global economy I mentioned earlier in this chapter. However the reversal of fortune that prevented Huambo from becoming Angola's capital city came with the steady progress in the construc-

tion of the Port of Luanda. This project had become a priority for the colonial government, since investments had been made in the north of the country and the production of cotton and coffee was starting to yield returns. Economically, it made more sense to have these commodities shipped out from Luanda. However, even though Luanda had been one of the most important exit points for slaves on the African continent, the city did not have a proper port in the modern sense of the word. Wharves may have been used, but for the most part slaves and goods were rowed on smaller boats to the large vessels anchored farther out in the deep natural bay of Luanda.[28] This makeshift port was situated in the Pedro Alexandrino Square, at the center of what is now the Marginal de Luanda, and was also known as Portas do Mar.[29] Only after the abolition of slavery did the construction of a new port become a pressing issue for the Portuguese. The need to provide the city with a port was driven less by the pressure to modernize the city than by drastic changes in methods of transportation and technology, as well as in the organization of worldwide logistics systems that required particular conditions for ships to anchor.[30] Without such an infrastructure, Luanda would be on the margins of worldwide maritime navigation. Even though construction of the new port began in 1888, there was no significant progress for decades. Not even the overenthusiastic Norton de Matos managed to accelerate the completion of this vital infrastructure during the time of his governorship. In fact, only in 1942, fifty-four years after the end of slavery, was Porto de Luanda finally inaugurated.

For Luanda, the construction of the port constitutes a sort of Haussmann moment. Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann's conviction that public works could pull France out of an economic crisis by creating jobs and increasing public and private consumption has been enacted many other times and in many other contexts in the world since then.[31] In the case of Angola, while the colonial government was not particularly geared toward tackling any economic crisis, it was clear to many colonial officials that the construction of such an infrastructure would have important ripple effects that would reverberate through the entire economy.

The intimation that the construction of a permanent port of such magnitude could usher in urban expansion and renewal of the whole city was already present in the writings of one of its main engineers, Afonso Mello Cid Perestrelo.[32] In the various articles, reports, and at least one book he authored, it is clear that the proposal to construct Porto de Luanda was more than a way to provide the city with this vital facility; the thinking behind it was also that such a construction could, and should, be geared toward promoting the city's growth. The city, then, was perceived as an extension and consolidation of

the port, or, more specifically, the structures that would allow bigger ships to berth, together with all the other associated buildings and infrastructure. The plan proposed the construction of the Praça do Porto (Port Square)—which in the terminology of the colonial city's design was known as Praça do Império (Imperial Square)—as a nodal point in the network of axes to satellite cities outside the city's center and the point of convergence of the transport system. In the end, though, this square did not represent the empire (in terms of making room for the construction of representative elements of the empire), for the economic interest once more prevailed. Whereas the main building in the square is still the customs building, following the Estado Novo architectural model adopted by the state for the colonized territories, the square is filled with many other buildings of modernist inspiration. These buildings, commissioned by various companies operating in Angola, represent a growing private-sector interest at the time in the fabric of the city.[33]

Since the area originally was a beach, intensive land reclamation work needed to be done for the construction of the port and its adjoining avenue, the Avenida Marginal. It was this reclaimed land, reinforced with concrete, that provided the ground for the construction of the first generation, so to speak, of Luanda skyscrapers, which came to adorn a significant extent of the bay from Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Nazaré (Church of Our Lady of Nazareth) to Praça Pedro Alexandrino (Pedro Alexandrino Square). This set of buildings, which extends along the Marginal de Luanda, creating its distinctive skyline, replaced the old *sobrado* mansions and other commercial establishments that were being purchased and torn down at a rate that alarmed the conservationists. In the next few decades the consolidation of the coast continued, with further land reclamation, particularly through the construction of a bridge that linked Luanda's mainland to Ilha de Luanda. With these interventions, Ilha de Luanda was being transformed into the main recreational zone of the city, with manicured beaches, nautical clubs, and restaurants, interspersed with fishermen's villages along the coastline.[34]

The role the port would play in ushering in Luanda's urban expansion is clear in the first city plan—the Plano de Urbanização de Luanda (Plan for the Urbanization of Luanda)—submitted to the city's authorities in 1944.[35] This plan likely was drawn up by the same team that had also submitted to the authorities, in 1943, the Plano de Urbanização da Parte Marginal de Luanda (Plan for the Urbanization of Marginal Luanda). These included the Portuguese David Moreira da Silva, trained at the prestigious Institut d'Urbanisme de l'Université de Paris (Urbanism Institute of Paris University; IUUP), and Étienne de Gröer, a Russian-born French citizen, resident in Portugal, who

had taught at the IUUP. They were coming of age professionally in Portugal when Duarte Pacheco, Salazar's minister of public works, made it mandatory for every city in Portugal to have a master plan.[36] As a team, they worked on a couple of master plans for cities in Portugal, such as Coimbra. Moreira da Silva tried for many years to expand Duarte Pacheco's requirement into the colonies, traveling to Angola many times to convince municipal authorities in Angola to buy into this creed. He eventually managed to sell his proposals to Luanda and Gabela, a little town in the province of Kwanza Sul.

Like many other professionals who came from the IUUP, Moreira da Silva and de Gröer's professional practice was situated between the garden city model and French urbanism.[37] Unsurprisingly, the garden city model was what they proposed for the expansion of Luanda. Persuaded by Howard Ebenezer's recipes for improving urban life, they highlighted the need to impose the zoning principle on Luanda in their plan so that activities such as housing, commerce, industry, and recreation would be allocated to different sectors of the city. Marginal de Luanda is, to a great extent, a good example of the emulation of such an urban philosophy, in that it was built to accommodate discrete activities—namely housing, banking, and other commercial activities—from Porto de Luanda to Igreja dos Remédios (Church of our Lady of Remedies), and then mostly recreational activities and housing from the church to the end of Ilha de Luanda.

Despite the fact that this master plan was unexecuted, it nonetheless presents a trove of information regarding the role the port was expected to play in the expansion of the city and how the growth of Luanda was perceived and anticipated.[38] In Moreira da Silva's and de Gröer's view, central to the future of Luanda was the imperative to prevent the expansion of the urban center through, among other measures, the construction of five satellite cities, each removed about 6 kilometers (3.72 miles) from the center. Conceived essentially to absorb Luanda's natural population growth, they would connect to the main center through seven axes, with the other two providing direct linkages to Funda and Foz do Kwanza. Those five centers would be vast enough to accommodate a population of 400,000, in which, as Maria do Carmo Pires writes, "os quarteirões destinados à população indígena, localizados nas zonas nascente e sul, são provisórios e serão transformados em quarteirões normais *à medida da civilização dos negros*" (the quarters for the Native population, located in the eastern and southern zones, are provisional and will be transformed into normal quarters *at the pace of the civilization of the negroes*).[39] Aiming as much as possible to isolate historic Luanda from the rest of the province, the plan envisioned the establishment of green belts that were expected to perform several tasks, including providing fresh and clean air to each city's inhabitants but

also restricting the physical expansion of the cities' limits. In the end, only two of the five satellite cities proposed in the Moreira da Silva and de Gröer plan were built, namely Cacuaco and Viana. However, the intention to, as much as possible, insulate the white population from the Black population was never abandoned, and it would crop up in every planning initiative until the end of the colonial order.

Gröer and Moreira's city plan might have been too ambitious for the time, particularly because the city could not claim enough land to execute it. However, beyond land ownership, there was also the disjunction at the core of the planning process between the technicalities of the plan that were intended to conform to garden city principles on the one hand and, on the other, the reality of land values in Luanda at the time. De Gröer writes, in his *Introduction to Urbanism*, that he was against vertical construction for several reasons—namely, that tall buildings rely on the proper functioning of elevators, that they become dangerous in case of fire, that the cost of construction would be onerous, and that the buildings would not provide privacy for their occupants.[40] In fact, Moreira da Silva and de Gröer were putting forward a new concept of a city that would be less dense and be served by a more efficient system of transport—which was not a priority for those with vested interests in Luanda. More important, they also "edificação espaçada de casas"[41] (spaced building of houses) in relatively small volumes, which contrasted with the notion, more and more prevailing, that high-rise construction was more profitable, since it allowed for the highest concentration of both people and economic value per square meter.

In hindsight, these early planning interventions in Luanda can be read as an attempt to impose the garden city model on a city that, up to that point, had grown quite spontaneously. The founding of Huambo may have provided lessons for Luanda since, among other things, modern Luanda was the product of infrastructural encroachment into the hinterland, through the expansion of the railway and its linkage to the port. The fundamental difference between the planning and development of the two cities, however, is that whereas in Huambo planners and builders had a clean slate as their starting point, in so far as land disputes were almost nonexistent as a direct consequence of the pacification wars, in Luanda that was not the case. In Luanda, most of the land had been privately owned for centuries, and planning had to take this reality into consideration. Whereas the city had to be engaged in negotiations and confiscation of land so that infrastructure and public facilities could be built, the expansion of such infrastructure and facilities ended up giving even more power to landowners, in the sense that they were then able to benefit from

serviced land, or the land that held the infrastructural network set up by the state. As such, the state's intervention for ordering urban growth made possible for these landowners to accrue even more land in the city.

Reading Moreira da Silva's and de Gröer's plan retrospectively yields important insights into how the city evolved from the late 1940s onward. The plan is still a fundamental repository of insights into how the formal urban center would expand, and it would be consulted by future generations of planners, as I will shortly show. However, the city would expand in precisely the opposite direction from the garden city principles, particularly because that expansion was driven by speculation. Or, to put it in slightly different terms, this speculation-driven expansion exerted dramatic effects on the city's form itself. The pace of such transformation became even more pronounced with the entrance on the scene of a newer generation of architects and urban planners. They were moving to Luanda equipped with the determination to turn Luanda into a modernist city.

The Modernist Skin

When, in the early 1940s, a student of architecture at the Escola Superior de Belas Artes do Porto (Porto School of Fine Arts), Vasco Vieira da Costa—born in Aveiro, Portugal, and raised in Luanda—was looking for a topic for his design project, the final requirement for his bachelor's degree in architecture, he turned to Moreira da Silva's and de Gröer's city plan and used it as a canvas to design Satellite City No. 3—one of the satellite cities they had proposed for Luanda. In the end, then, he could trace an association between the city's previous planning intervention and the future he anticipated for it. In this project, Vieira da Costa went further than just reproducing the content of the initial city plan. He added a modernist sensibility developed through the influence of the masters of the movement, such as Le Corbusier, particularly their attempts to take into consideration climatic (specifically aeolian) and geographic conditions, such as slopes and inclinations, in their projects. In this plan, he specifically tried to reconcile several things: the still-accepted precepts of the garden city movement as they had been proposed by Machado and, more particularly, by Moreira da Silva and de Gröer; the more aesthetic aspirations proposed by tropical modernist architecture; and the political demands of the Portuguese presence in Africa.

By the time Vieira da Costa was musing over the expansion of European culture on African soil, certainly echoing Norton de Matos, Portugal's position toward the settlement of Portuguese in Africa had changed. During the

time of the slave trade, the Portuguese used Angola mainly as a place to deposit *degredados*. After slavery, Portugal did not encourage migration to the colony because of the suspicion that massive migration could increase white poverty, which could have a negative impact on the supposedly Portuguese mission in Africa.[42] Things changed drastically from the 1940s onward. Cashing in on the favorable prices of primary commodities in international markets, the colonial government, like elsewhere in Africa, started pushing a more developmentalist agenda by investing surpluses in many areas of socioeconomic life, such as infrastructure, health, and education. In countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana, millions of African farmers were entering the economy not just as producers but also as consumers.[43] However, in Angola that was not the case, as the Portuguese attempted to benefit from these global changes in a different way. Rather than taking Africans out of poverty by giving them the means to become members of the middle class, the Portuguese used this opportunity to take, first and foremost, Portugal itself out of poverty by sending hundreds of thousands of poor Portuguese to the colonies, particularly Angola. The initial plan followed the dream of Norton de Matos: that these Portuguese would embrace agriculture and form the white rural communities like those in South Africa, Namibia, or Rhodesia. Some of them did.[44] However, most Portuguese found economic opportunities in urban settings such as Luanda.

The more the city grew, the more people it attracted. Demographics, particularly white migration to the colony, are key to an understanding of this urban expansion. In 1940, Luanda's population included about 9,404 whites, but within ten years this number had increased by 123 percent, reaching 21,081 in 1950. In 1960, the white population of the city had risen to 55,667, an increase of about 164 percent; and finally, in 1970, the decade of independence, whites in Luanda constituted a staggering 123,226, an increase of 127 percent from the previous decade.[45] This evolving demographic makeup not only placed housing policy at the core of the colonial endeavor but also put the racial question at the heart of the urban project. Whereas poor whites and Blacks whose economic status was rising could mix and live together in the *musseques*, central Luanda, or the consolidated core as it came to be known, was becoming an exclusive zone for white residence. Modernist Luanda is, then, the moment in the history of the city when the idea of the separation between races achieved its highest concretization by providing the technical and internationally recognized vocabulary for the enforcement of the *fronteira do asfalto*.

The principles of modernist architecture started to circulate in Portugal in the early 1940s. During these years, the *Revista de arquitectura* (Architectural review) published several articles on modernism, including Le Corbusier's

Athens Charter.[46] In 1948, Estado Novo sponsored the first Congresso de Arquitectos Modernistas (Congress of Modernist Architects), where architects had the opportunity to share ideas about modernism. The movement then split into two organizations: the Iniciativas Culturais Arte e Técnica (Cultural, Artistic and Technical Initiatives), with Keil do Amaral, Francisco Castro Rodrigues, and João Simões, among others, as members; and the Organização dos Arquitectos Modernos (Organization of Modern Architects). It was the former that developed its activities in Africa.[47]

The first attempt to produce modernist architecture took place on Portuguese soil itself. Members of both architectural associations developed several modernist projects, including the Bairro das Estacas, a neighborhood in Lisbon located between Avenida Brazil and Avenida Estados Unidos da América, and the Bairro Rumelde, a suburb in Porto.[48] However, modernist architecture never gained traction in Portugal for many reasons, particularly because it failed to dislodge the building style derogatorily called Português Suave (Soft Portuguese) that the Estado Novo regime favored.[49] In addition, it came to Portugal already stigmatized, since much of the application of modernist architecture was taking place in Brazil, and to a lesser extent in Europe, and the style was therefore scorned by mainstream European architects and urbanists.[50]

Eager to find well-paid job opportunities in a growing and demanding environment, and anxious to leave their own mark, architects of modernist persuasion turned to African cities such as Luanda.[51] In Luanda, not only could they experiment with a form of architecture that was experimentalist at its very core, but they also faced lower levels of regulation. Besides, these professionals could count on the complacency of regulators, such as Vieira da Costa, who professed themselves in favor of the same kinds of influences.

The Portuguese architectural historian José Manuel Fernandes conceives of them as a single group, which he called the African generation, because of the undeniable imprint they left on Luanda's cityscape.[52] Part of the reason for the apparent uniformity of architectural style in Luanda at this time was the fact that they had been trained in the same places, under the same instructors, and were exposed to the same kinds of references. Vieira da Costa was probably one of the first architects of this generation to arrive in Luanda after his graduation, in 1946, and a stint as an intern at one of Le Corbusier's ateliers, where he had been given the opportunity to develop his dogma on modernist architecture. In 1949, he moved back to Luanda, where he was given a job as a technician at the Câmara Municipal de Luanda (Municipal Chamber of Luanda). During most of the time that da Costa held an official position in the Câmara, being responsible in this capacity for the approval of construction

projects, he also, like many other architects of his time, kept a private atelier in what is now Avenida Rainha Ginga. Through his practice, he not only constructed several buildings in the city but also groomed several other architects who would themselves propose urban interventions. In his regulatory position, he proposed a new plan, in 1957, for the growth of Luanda called the Plano Regulador (Regulatory Plan), which built on some of the proposals presented by Moreira da Silva and de Gröer, adapting them to the new situation the city was experiencing. In this plan, geared like the previous one toward the need to control the city's growth, da Costa proposed the enforcement of zoning, in which downtown Luanda, including the Marginal de Luanda, would be devoted to commercial and administrative activities, on account of the infrastructure and facilities installed there (the port, the railway, storage sites, banks, commercial establishments, and so on), whereas Cidade Alta would accommodate government and residential activities with the construction of new neighborhoods. An industrial park was also proposed, particularly to respond to the increasing demand for construction materials.[53]

Vieira da Costa can be credited, then, as one of the urbanists of his time who most forcefully pushed for the expansion of the city beyond the *barrocas* (escarpments), if we consider that the construction of the new port and then the Marginal de Luanda had turned these cliffs into prime land. The geographic pattern of Luanda, in which cliffs and slopes rise abruptly hundreds of meters into the mainland, had long been a concern for engineers. In a study conducted in the early 1950s, it was noted that these escarpments posed two serious problems for the city—namely, that they were constantly moving toward already-consolidated sections of the urban area and that, during the rainy season, water flows produced erosion.[54] Additional recommendations detailed in the study included consolidation of these encampments, which could be done through the creation of greenbelts, the remnants of which can still be found in Miramar. The study also encouraged construction of roads such as the one that links Porto de Luanda to Praça Lusíadas (Lusíadas Square) and, at, a later stage, the construction of concrete terraces and plateaus.[55] Only through these series of engineering interventions could the Praça Lusíadas, which in the early 1950s became the first showcase of modernist architecture in the city, be prepared to receive construction in concrete. Vieira da Costa commissioned his friend Manolo Poitier to prepare the design for the square, from which four arteries depart to other points of the city—namely, the one that descends to Porto de Luanda, a second one that connects to downtown Luanda, a third one that extends to the north of the city, and the fourth, the famous Avenida Brito Godinho, which not only linked Kinaxixe to another important center

of modernist architecture, Maianga Square, but was at the time also known as the asphalt frontier. Below the avenue, in the direction of Cidade Alta, this frontier separated the consolidated urban core from the *musseques* and the zone above, to be overthrown by modernist architecture.

In front of the square, Vieira da Costa himself designed what has been referred to as the masterpiece of modernist architecture in Luanda, the Kinaxixe Marketplace. Opened to the public in 1952, Fernando Mourão has called the marketplace "um manifesto da arquitectura moderna" (a manifesto of modernist architecture).[56] The influence of Le Corbusier was discernible in the voluminous building, which resembled a box and occupied a whole block of one hundred meters (328 feet) in length and sixty meters (197 feet) in width. It was supported by *pilotis* (pillars), in Le Corbusier's jargon, along the entire outer edge of the galleries. The exterior arcades were punctuated by built-in stores, at a considerable distance from the edge, which gave the impression that the building was suspended. The market itself was made up of open-air galleries, enclosed by concrete slabs of ten meters (thirty-three feet) in height "que recorrem a componentes construtivos de sombreamento e ventilação" (that use architectural elements to provide shade and ventilation),[57] creating the almost poetic impression that the market was devoid of walls.

From there, the stage was set for the expansion of modernist architectural structures in the city, particularly residential buildings. In the next few decades, thousands of other modernist buildings were erected. The pace of this urban development became even more dramatic, ironically, after February 1961, when a group of nationalists attacked colonial prisons to free other nationalists, an action that launched the anticolonial struggle.[58] Following the colonial regime's cry "Para Angola em força" (To Angola, in force), military units, alongside settlers, moved to Luanda, an event that produced another wave of urban expansion. To explain this seemingly contradictory development, António Campino, one of the members of the African generation, has been quoted as confiding to a friend, the architect Fernão Simões de Carvalho, that he had been given the task of designing a monument to Luanda's urban transformation in modernist architectural style. He would propose erecting a machete in the middle of Kinaxixe Square in Luanda—for which he allegedly designed a model that adorned his office. According to him, the machete, which symbolized the uprisings in northern Angola, was also the symbol of the unprecedented construction frenzy in Luanda.[59] Campino was certainly being ironic, but this irony captures the entanglements between anticolonial struggle, colonial economic growth, and massive migration of continental Portuguese to Angola, particularly Luanda.

Figure 2.2. Portuguese troops marching along the Marginal de Luanda in 1961.
Source: Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino.

Key to an understanding of Luanda's process of urban transformation is the division of labor that I have been discussing, in which the state occupied itself with providing infrastructure, whereas the private sector reaped the benefits of the developed land given back to the city. This explains the shape of the urban form that, from this time on, came to characterize Luanda. Mass construction work, particularly of buildings, not only permitted the standardization and the optimal use of construction resources but also made it possible, from an economic point of view, for a greater number of dwelling units to be built on smaller plots of land, which contributed to the densification of the city. Involved in this process of providing housing to settlers and, to a lesser extent, the Native population, were not only numerous Portuguese companies that owned land in Luanda but also individuals who saw the construction of buildings as a good way to invest their money. The promulgation of the law on horizontal property, in 1956, opened the way for the formation of cooperatives that allowed even middle-class Portuguese settlers in Angola to invest in and buy their own apartments.[60] Private appetites such as these fueled the expansion of the city and the progressive encroachment of the urban consolidated core into the *musseques*. Modernist architecture was then the chief instrument for arbitrating the separation of bodies in the city.

Clustering the Social

In the previous chapter, I showed that inhabitation in Luanda during the slave trade was predicated on the Casa Luandense, a concept borrowed from Fernando Batalha. I reworked this concept to mean something else, as I sought to understand the social scaffolding that allowed enslavers and the enslaved to share the same premises. I did so because I am taking this concept as a zero, an empty signifier, an empty vessel, so as to allow for engaging with the various moments of Luanda's sociology of inhabitation. If in the previous moments in the history of the city inhabitation was anchored on *sobrados* for the few, as Batalha discussed, or shacks for the majority, the apartment building became, from the 1950s onward, the dominant way of living in the city. This was not because more people were living in apartment buildings than in the *musseques* that encircled these apartment buildings. It was simply that various *musseques* during this time were being cleared from the city center to create space for apartment buildings. At the core of such a demographic rearrangement was colonial social engineering.

The *indigenato* only became law in 1926, after the tenure of Norton de Matos in Angola, but he, nonetheless, can be credited as the governor who took the most decisive steps in institutionalizing it. Its central question was labor: how to channel the African manpower that otherwise, and not long ago, was being commercialized by using slaves as productive labor.[61] As such, the *indigenato* was the instrument used to create a category of humans deprived of civil rights, which came with two corollaries. First, the *indígenas* were subject to labor conscription, for it was only through labor that the *indígenas* could redeem themselves from their condition; and, second, the *indígenas* were to be governed according to their own cultural structures.[62] These regimes of "decentralized despotism," as Mahmood Mamdani has dubbed them, were easier to enforce in rural areas.[63] Cities, such as Luanda, with a long history of racial intermingling, were difficult grounds for the implementation of separatist policies. For there already existed in Luanda a local bourgeoisie who, in many cases, could not be differentiated by race, on account of miscegenation. However, from the early 1920s onward, the expansion of Luanda would go hand in hand with race and class separation. The greater the white population became, the higher the concern for clustering the various groups in their own residential zones.

By then, most of the informal settlements had been offshoots of the vast *quintais*, or backyards, on the premises of the residences of slavers, later taking the form of clusters of huts in neighborhoods such as Coqueiros, Maianga,

Ingombotas, and Bungo, inhabited by the enslaved and recently freed people. A novel preoccupation with hygiene prompted the colonial authorities to remove entire neighborhoods from the vicinity of the town center. Hygienic conditions were appalling, and epidemics of smallpox in 1856 and 1864 killed thousands of people, warranting the first demolitions of settlements and relocations of the African population. The demolition of 227 huts in the neighborhood of Coqueiros in the early twentieth century, for example, was justified by invoking the concern that winds would spread diseases from the informal settlements to the zones occupied by the most affluent population.[64] These concerns were at the heart of several proposals by urbanists for how to prevent whites from contracting tropical diseases.[65] In the case of Luanda, the most basic measure for creating such a separation was simply to move the natives from the center to the outskirts of the city, without compensation, and to legitimize this procedure with the argument that the land they occupied did not belong to them, on account of their political status as *indígenas*. There were also situations where members of the local bourgeoisie could not make the case that they were civilized and were simply reduced to the condition of *indigenato*. Even before the modernist intervention, entire neighborhoods were cleared on these grounds.

So even though the Estatuto do Indígena (Native Statute) was meant to address the political status of the rural population, it gave Norton de Matos an opportunity to address other pertinent urban issues.[66] Luanda was characterized at the time as a sort of mixture, in which a number of Blacks, including those who called themselves Angolenses, owned land and even buildings in the city. They were partly the beneficiaries of the assimilationist policies of the 1800s and formed part of the Creole society that had emerged in Angola as in many other places in Africa.[67] However, they became a problem for the colonial authorities when colonial policy shifted from assimilation to nativism.[68] In his attempt to turn Angolenses into natives, Norton de Matos implemented measures that eroded their rights, and particularly their positions, in the city. By confiscating urban land claimed by Africans, and by preventing them from owning land in the city, he and those colonial administrators who came after him were able to remove thousands of people and cluster them in the outskirts of the formal city, in what then problematically came to be called Bairros Indígenas.

Luandans today are known for their attachment to their *bairros* of origin, particularly those who were born before independence. This includes me, for instance. Even though I grew up in the Baixa (downtown Luanda), I tend to emphasize that I was born in Sambizanga. However, neither Baixa nor Sambizanga is a neighborhood in the proper sense of the word. They do not refer to

limited and clearly demarcated geographic areas. In most cases, a *bairro* refers to a particular typology or to the main characteristics of inhabitants that occupy a given section of the city. Most of present-day Luanda, for instance, would associate Bairro Palanca with Angolans who have returned from Congo and with Congolese nationals—populations whose impact on the city will be discussed later. Bairro Popular, in contrast, is associated with social housing for single families built in the years of late colonialism. Incidentally, when the Angolan government announced, in July 2019, the project of erecting dozens of buildings in Cidade Alta to lodge the ministries of the central government, it called this project Bairro dos Ministérios. The origin of such a relationship between place and belonging is certainly colonial. A *bairro* was considered a critical juncture not only as a method to provide residents with a sense of belonging, particularly for newcomers migrating from Europe, but also as a device through which urbanists could devise ways in which the dialectical relationship between inside and outside could be approached. The main descriptors were city center and *musseques*. In this guise, the *bairro* was conceived as a tool that could allow for the creation of a sense of order and normality to set against the disorder of most of the city, as the *bairro* also allowed for the ascription of whole categories of people to the same geographic location.[69] More important, *bairros* would also allow for better control and surveillance of their residents, as they came into being alongside the early iterations of the pass laws that defined the zones of the city where Blacks could reside and circulate. Behind the formation of these urban conglomerates were then two objectives. On the one hand, they were meant to help the Portuguese purge the city of Blacks. On the other hand, the colonial state would also attempt to confine Blacks to their own *bairros* so that they did not have to visit the city center for any other reason but work.

The destructive fury with which the Portuguese tore down *musseques* in the city center was later, from the 1950 onward, deployed far beyond the city center and *musseques* such as Bananeiras, Burity, Cayete, Cabeça, Pedrosa, and Terra Nova. Other *musseques*—such as Catambor, Prenda, Cassequel, Calemba, Marçal, Rangel, and Caputo, Sambizanga, Mota, Lixeira, outside the urban perimeter—had been absorbed by other *bairros*, some of them partially constructed, such as Saiote or Caputo. By the 1960s, the cordon sanitaire had been pushed farther from the center, and settlements such as Bungo, Braga, Maculusso, and Viúva Leal had been destroyed and their populations moved farther beyond downtown Luanda, to newly formed *musseques*. Luanda's original population, composed mainly of descendants of the enslaved and enslavers, started to coalesce in the Bairros Indígenas, or the *bairros* that were later built to lodge workers, the so-called *bairros operários*.[70] Over time, these *bairros* were

also constituting their own skin, for they were surrounded by shacks built by newcomers to the city, sometimes with the connivance of colonial administrators who turned a blind eye to these practices, convinced that the lower the cost of housing for unskilled laborers, the lower the salaries the laborers could expect to be paid.[71] From property owners, Blacks in the city by the late 1960s had become squatters.

Regarding the clustering of the social, Bairro Prenda is certainly a case in point. It was designed by the architect and urbanist Fernão Simões de Carvalho, born in Luanda in 1929. He studied architecture in Portugal, obtaining his bachelor's degree in 1955, before moving to Paris in mid-1955 to ply his craft by taking classes with Robert Auzelle at the Sorbonne and working, like Vieira da Costa before him, as an intern at one of Le Corbusier's ateliers.[72] Returning to Lisbon in the late 1950s, he found work at the Gabinete de Urbanização do Ultramar (Office for Overseas Urbanization) but resigned soon after under the pretext that the work he was involved in had more to do with design than architecture.[73] In Luanda, he founded a unit of the Gabinete de Urbanização Colonial (Office for Colonial Urbanization) at the Câmara Municipal de Luanda. As in the case of Vieira da Costa, Carvalho also worked for the public and the private sectors, for while he was involved in the preparation of a master plan for the city, he also worked as an architect on public and private buildings.[74]

Carvalho arrived on the urban scene in Luanda when the effects of the grandiloquent planning schemes of practitioners such as Vieira da Costa had started to become visible. The main consequences of these interventions were not only that racial segregation had found its way into the planning itself but also that land speculation had distorted or prevented the implementation of any city plan. He was educated in a school with a different sensibility compared with the one Le Corbusier's supporters were promoting, one which was coming to terms with the consequences of the strict zoning regulations that had been celebrated in the city's previous plans. In his understanding, the best way to tackle the disorderly growth of Luanda was to avoid approaching and planning it as a totality. He was convinced that the city should be broken down and divided up into manageable units, the so-called *unités d'habitation* (residential units). Part of the vision of Luanda's city making that he embraced is succinctly discussed in a short newspaper article suggestively called "Luanda do futuro" (Luanda of the future). In this short piece, he begins by declaring that Luanda would boast a population of about half a million people by 1980 and that the authorities should be prepared for this unavoidable outcome. In this future scenario, access to land would become a major problem, owing to the tendency of the city authorities to annex more and more land. The consequences, Carvalho

predicted, citing Le Corbusier, would be "a apoplexia do centro e a paralisia nas extremidades" (collapse of the center and the paralysis of the extremities). To avoid this prospect, future master plans for the city should take the relationship between land use and population density more seriously, an issue that, according to Carvalho, had for the most part remained unexamined in previous city plans. In the future he was imagining for the city, Luanda's inhabitants would live in neighborhood units of 3,000 to 10,000 people, each provided with facilities such as primary schools, crèches, primary health care facilities, cinemas, churches, commercial infrastructure, and, particularly, sports facilities, all at "distâncias calculadas" (calculated distances) from where people lived. Each of these units would also provide access to open green spaces to help individuals retain their "equilíbrio psíquico" (psychic balance). More important, these proposed neighborhoods would be transected by thoroughfares.[75]

To showcase the city yet to come, Carvalho designed the Bairro Prenda as a prototype—as the first one of about a dozen that could be built—beyond the *fronteira do asfalto*, in the *musseque* of Prenda. The *bairro* he designed there would include self-built, single-family houses and semiduplex buildings for the white middle class. In the end, however, only six of the twenty-eight twelve-story apartment buildings he envisioned were actually built. None of the social amenities Carvalho had suggested were put in place, let alone the green spaces and sports facilities.

More important, Prenda was conceived not only as a solution to the housing issue but also as a way to address racial integration. From the mid-1950s onward, there was a debate on how to integrate Africans into the newly built residential areas. With Prenda, Carvalho proposed to build this Unité de Voisinage (Neighbourhood Unit) without removing the original population and by integrating Africans into it—but not on the same footing. Whereas whites could purchase their apartments and houses by applying to the various finance schemes available, Blacks were expected to build their own houses. To appease those who might not be interested in living in such proximity to Blacks, Carvalho also added that the purpose of this proximity was pedagogical, in so far as these *bairros* were conceived as schools where Africans would learn how to live in the city.[76]

Bairro Prenda was a failure in the sense that none of the facilities it anticipated were constructed, and it did not stir up a great deal of interest among the settler population. Part of the reason for failure was that Luanda was not industrialized enough for zoning to work. Factories could have been constructed in satellite cities such as Viana and Cacuaco, and workers could thus have lived in their vicinity without having to commute daily to the city center. However,

Luanda was for the most part a tertiary city, in which most of the economic activity was commercial. Ever since the era of slavery, most Africans had to provide labor to the white minority as a source of sustenance. And conversely, this meant that the whites who lived in predominantly white neighborhoods could not go without the labor provided by the Africans who lived in the *musseques*. This had an incredible influence on the layout of the city, which had to accommodate the long distances workers needed to cover to reach their places of work. Modernist planners such as Vieira da Costa had this in mind when they worked out how to separate the city's population according to class (and obviously race), without depriving the wealthy of access to cheap labor:

> Compete, pois, ao europeu criar no indígena necessidades de conforto e de uma vida mais elevada, impelindo-o assim ao trabalho que o levará a fixar-se, e que facilitará a mão-de-obra mais estável. A orientação das habitações e a localização dos bairros indígenas são os dois grandes elementos que devem reger a composição do plano de uma cidade colonial. . . . Assim, preferimos situar os bairros indígenas envolvendo o núcleo central, tenho todo o cuidado de localizá-los sempre a sotavento das zonas das habitações europeias, que mesmo assim serão sempre isoladas por um écrã de verdura, suficientemente largo para que o mosquito possa transpô-lo. Como parece ser indispensável, sob o ponto de vista higiénico e social, as populações indígenas formarão vários grupos dispersos, que como pequenos satélites abraçarão o núcleo europeu, ficando assim cada sector deste núcleo servido por um grupo indígena. Deste modo, encurtaremos a distância a percorrrer entre o local de trabalho e a residencia.

> (It is the work of the European to induce in the Native the need for comfort and a more elevated life, in this way compelling him to the work that will force him to settle down, and that will ease the availability of a more stable pool of labor. The spatial orientation of the housing and the location of Native neighborhoods are the two major elements that should dictate the composition of the colonial city. . . . In this way, we have preferred to situate the Native settlements around the central nucleus, trying carefully to locate them leeward of the European housing but separated by a green corridor, wide enough to prevent mosquitoes from crossing it. From a hygienic and social point of view it is imperative that the Native population form various dispersed groups that, as small satellite settlements, will encircle the European nucleus, in such a way that each nucleus will be served by an indigenous group. In this way, we shorten the distance from work to the residence).[77]

Vieira da Costa and others had the opportunity to realize such a vision in the ways they approached the planning of several neighborhoods in Luanda. Although the city was never fragmented according to the principle of the garden city, some of these solutions were nonetheless implemented. A case in point was the design of Alvalade and its relation to the surrounding neighborhoods whose inhabitants were supposed to provide domestic labor. Alvalade was partially encircled by a greenbelt, which protected it as an upper-end residential neighborhood from encroachment by the rest of the city—its class status was marked, for example, by the absence of sidewalks, signaling that the suburb was not intended for plebeian pedestrian traffic. But the greenbelt was crossed by pedestrian paths that gave workers access to their places of work in the suburbs. This design detail has eluded the most perceptive readers of Luanda's planning history, such as Mourão, who hails this solution as revolutionary since it allowed people to reach the center of the city by walking.[78]

The reshaping of Luanda according to modernist principles turned the city into material proof that the Estado Novo was civilizing Africa. Postcards produced for tourism and propaganda purposes could then depict the new buildings, manicured green spaces, and views of the Marginal de Luanda. But all of this posed new issues. White migration increased segregation and furthered social fragmentation. The problem went beyond Africans' being pitted against settlers: the settlers who considered themselves Angolans (some from families settled in Angola for generations) resented the newcomers and Portugal's administration of colonial matters.

In the 1960s, as a direct consequence of the anticolonial uprisings, the Portuguese initiated several reforms whose goal was to better integrate the colonies with the mother country. The abolition of the legal category of *indigenato* came with measures that rendered every native of Angola a Portuguese citizen. However, when it came to questions of housing and the right to inhabit the city, very few things had changed. At this moment, the squatter, the cognitive category I have been using, was not yet a citizen and was no longer the enslaved person who inhabited the city center but represented the indigenous Angolan, the Native. Although the question of the Native had been discussed for the most part in the context of rural Africa, the urban Native created a whole range of conceptual problems for the colonial legislator, as we will see.[79] Modernist Luanda operated through the expulsion of the indigenous from its core, as if the city had to immunize itself against the presence of the indigenous element.[80]

The frontier between the formal and the informal, or the city and the *musseque*, which had been porous and malleable for most of Luanda's history, became more rigid during these years. It was as if modernist architecture

was forcing the city to thicken its skin, intensifying the separation between its two dichotomous poles. For the same railway network that allowed workers to arrive on time at their workplaces would also allow urbanists to plan the workers' residential areas farther and farther from the city center. This thinking was already intimated in a number of the city's plans and became more refined in the 1950s when, in his Plano Regulador, Vieira da Costa suggested the discontinuation of railway lines linking the peripheries to the center, at Cidade Alta Station, forcing those coming from outside the city to disembark at Estação do Bungo (Bungo Train Station) and continue their journey using other means of transportation, such as buses, or on foot.[81] Luanda, then, owed to these planning interventions the feature that predominated during the last decades of colonization and the early years of independence, and which the city has only recently been able to change: the formation of a radiocentric grid, in which the center, the consolidated urban core, was increasingly occupied by the well-to-do, and the *bairros*, surrounded by *musseques*, designed for the poor, were moved farther and farther from the center at the pace of the expansion of concrete buildings.

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The decades in the history of Luanda covered in this chapter mark its most significant physical expansion. From a modest 320 hectares (741,316 acres) in 1926, Luanda burst forth into a city covering 6,714 hectares (16,591 acres) in 1975, when the country became independent. At the heart of these urban developments were a series of internal and external factors—namely, the appreciation of primary commodities in the global economy, the implementation of colonial development projects, and the sudden attractiveness of Luanda, which triggered migration from continental Portugal.

Colonial decision making structures in Lisbon certainly traced the broad strokes of the policies that permitted such developments to occur but not without the participation of Luanda's private interests. In a territory that was mostly controlled by private interests during the era of slavery—even the officials representing the colonial state conducted business privately—the weight of the colonial state only grew, particularly after the republican revolution in 1910. The private sector could certainly drive the colony's economy but would always fail to amass the resources to set up vital infrastructure for the circulation of commodities. By the time the colonial state was revitalized, particularly during the tenure of Norton de Matos, the lion's share of land was controlled by a handful of individuals and companies. For the expansion of infrastructure, the state was then forced to negotiate with these interests and, later on, create

a legal mechanism for dispossession—with or without compensation. This is a feature of the colonial state that the postcolonial state would inherit and reinforce, as I will show later in this book.

The transformation of Luanda according to the Athens Charter principles was produced, then, by a conjuncture of circumstances, one political and the other technical. Politically, modernist Luanda emerged out of the conflict between, on the one hand, the interests of the empire, which wanted Luanda to be nothing more than a provider of unfinished raw materials and, on the other, the interests of an emergent white bourgeoisie, which was modeling its approach to the colonial endeavor on South Africa during apartheid. Such was a reading of the global situation when self-determination was gaining traction in Asia and Africa. On the technical level, one needs to evoke Le Corbusier, who was very aware of the unsavoriness of many of his proposals and knew that they needed to be backed by a strong regime.[82] For its dissemination in the colonized territories, modernist architecture relied on the Estado Novo, which had a strong grip on all forms of political expression and tightly restricted the space for dissent. Since most urban land and buildings were privately owned, the colonial state could not prevent, as shown in the previous chapter, older buildings in Luanda from being destroyed, even if they held heritage value. Luanda's inhabitants, in turn, consisted mostly of newcomers who had no attachment to its history and no interest in its preservation. Africa did not have a history, as it were. Even though the Portuguese authorities were reluctant to allow modernist buildings to be erected in Lisbon, they were also conscious of the benefits of doing so—namely, the creation of the modern image they wanted to give of Africa and the fact that such urban forms could dispel the negative images many Portuguese had of the continent and could therefore be used to attract metropolitan Portuguese to Angola, particularly Luanda.

Much of what has been discussed in this chapter entails the not always rosy relations between the colonial state and private interests. Whereas the construction of infrastructure was performed by the colonial state, under, for instance, the rubric of the various *planos de fomento* (development plans), the private sector certainly reaped the benefits of such improvements. For it was in the interstices of these improvements that they consolidated their own interests. Whereas urban planners and architects were instrumental for the expansion of the urban grid, or the *fronteira do asfalto*, they were also instrumental in the creation of the subdivisions that came about within the urban as a whole. Conjoining their oversight capacity with private practice, their involvement accounted for the construction of thousands of buildings under the modernist rubric. In this process, the social mix of Casa Luandense, and its correspond-

ing urban makeup, was being replaced by outright segregation, in which the consolidating urban core was progressively expunging the poor.

The more perennial consequences of these urban and sociological arrangements were that toward the end of colonial rule, settlers controlled a staggering proportion of property in Luanda. Such control went beyond the city center, as most shacks in the *musseques* were owned by whites and rented to Africans. Those who could afford to rent houses in the *musseques* had the option to build their own shacks on informal land. Consequently, the expansion of the urban grid under the premises of modernist architecture was not only enforcing segregation by enclosing Luanda's residents in their own *bairros* but also creating a staggering class of squatters. This colonialism-induced squatting is what the postcolonial dispensation would address—in a revolutionary manner.

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