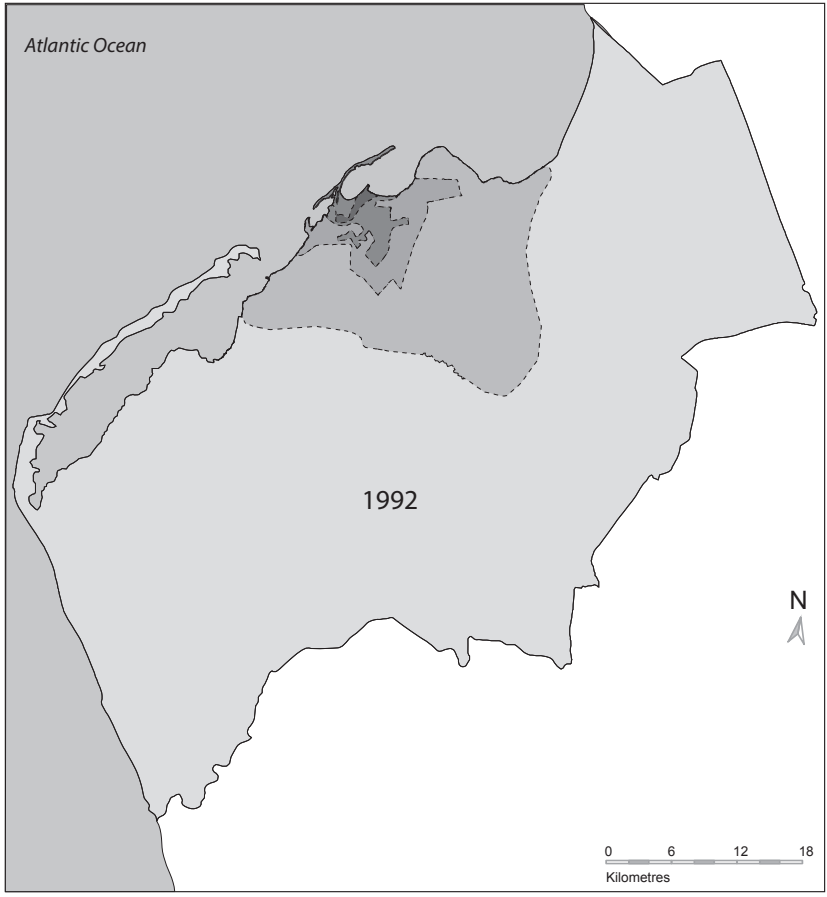
Part III. Fragmentation



Map 5.1. Luanda in 1992.

5. Reversing (Urban) Composition

Today's urban question is the land question.—Ananya Roy, "What Is Urban about Critical Urban Theory," 2015

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It might have started with the first step, when João Pedro rented an apartment in a ten-story apartment block in one of those old buildings in front of the Marginal, a dozen meters from the Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Nazaré, in Baixa de Luanda—one of the very first to be erected in the 1950s, only a few years after the construction of Port of Luanda. As was common practice in Luanda during the oil boom, in the early 2010s, he entered into an agreement with the owner of the apartment to pay a cheaper annual lease in exchange for the apartment's refurbishment. Aware of the government's intention to restore the Marginal de Luanda, and particularly the government's unrealistic and megalomanic desire to create three artificial islands in the Bay of Luanda, João Pedro launched himself into a quite daring business venture.[1] Convinced of the Marginal's value accrual over time and its potential to become a hub for

Luanda's burgeoning real estate market, he managed to convince some of his neighbors in the building to rent their apartments to him. The promise was that he would repair and, eventually, rent them to expatriate oil workers for a given amount of time. And one day down the line, the owner could move back into a brand-new apartment. Since the cheapest of these apartments would not cost less than US$3,000 per month, and as leases were paid in full for at least a year, João Pedro calculated that he could easily pay a part of these sums to the owners and still make a considerable profit. For prospective renters, it would cost obviously less than the thousands of dollars they paid daily in hotels such as Epic Sana—whose lobby João Pedro used to frequent to recruit tenants. Following a snowballing approach for such a scheme, he expected to be able to sublease as many apartments as he financially and logistically could, but by the time we met in Luanda, in 2013, he was managing only five apartments.[2] Most occupants he approached were reluctant to sign up for the deal, for fear they could lose possession of their apartment for good, since, for many occupants, it was impossible to demonstrate property ownership.

What surprised me the various times I visited this building and heard João Pedro's stories and learned of his projects were the discernible differences among the apartments. Whereas the apartments João Pedro had renovated were well resourced and well equipped with modern and imported appliances and could rely on a continuous and uninterrupted supply of water and electricity provided by state-of-the-art water pumps and generators, the others were worlds apart in terms of conservation and outfitting. There were tenants who could not afford to pay the exorbitant prices for electricity, and peering into their homes, one would see that they had regressed to using candles. There were also tenants, who, unable to install a water pump to service their apartments, provisioned their households with buckets of water that had to be brought up. Whereas most of the occupants used the stairs to move up and down, those in João Pedro's apartments could use the elevators that were made available to them through a key.

If one were to present this Marginal apartment block in cross-section, with the façade removed so as to reveal its interior (as Georges Perec famously did in his novel *Life: A User's Manual*), an interesting finding to contemplate would be how these apartments stood in relation to the city's infrastructure network—as some of them, by virtue of being equipped with generators and water pumps, were cut off from the grid, from the infrastructured urban fabric. As was the case throughout the city, such a metaphor would convey an image that is inimical to urban planning which, for the most part, strives for totality, or at least for the smoothness infrastructure can provide, which is on its own terms,

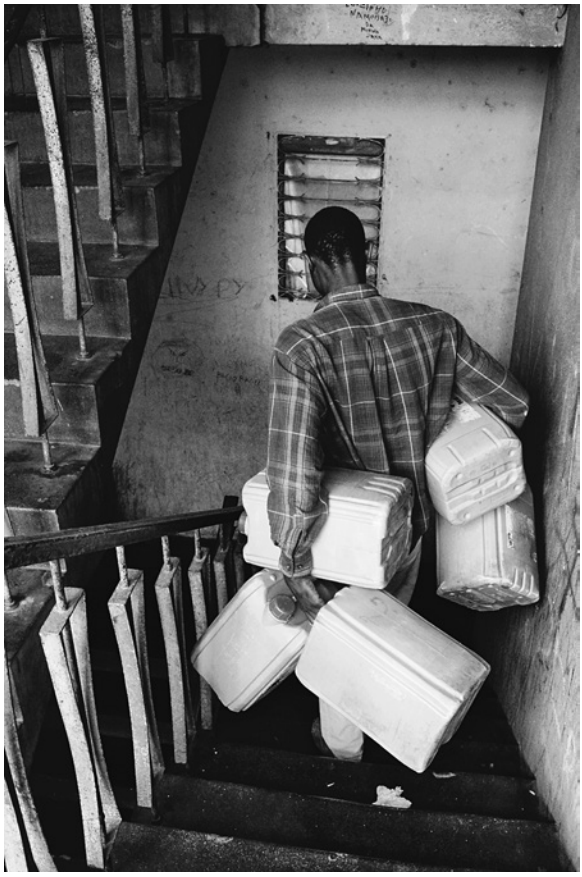

Figure 5.1. A man descending from his Luanda apartment to fetch water, 2018. Source: Rui Magalhães, @rui_magalhaes.

as Brian Larkin has put it, "the architecture of circulation."[3] Such was, at least historically, the cornerstone for the expansion of Luanda's urban grid, whose organizing principle, the *fronteira do asfalto*—the separation between the formal and the informal city—also set up the limits within which continuity of infrastructure provision could be attained. Accordingly, if one dubs such a process *urban composition*, or the way in which the urban can manifest through continuity or the fluidity of the architecture of circulation, the reverse should also be examined. As such, reverse urban composition, in the context of this chapter, will be evoked as the process through which the urban is fragmented, undone, and etiolated.

The holistic city that such a continuity implies, the horizon of modernist urban planning, has been in present-day urban situations cut through across variegated geographic locations, pierced and fragmented into a myriad of

zones, enclaves, or "fortified networks," a term evoked by Dennis Rodgers to make sense, for instance, of the ways in which affluent inhabitants in Managua shield themselves against crime and insecurity in a limited number of heavily protected locations.[4] With some local and specific variants, such a framework fits into the most recent urban development in Luanda, as I will show below in this chapter. However, contrary to many other geographic settings glossed in contemporary urban theory, where the emergence of these enclaves is linked to the withdrawal of the state from the public sphere, urban transformation in Luanda begs a different interpretation. In Luanda, the emergence of these sorts of residential and commercial hubs is a direct consequence of the liberalization of the economy, and particularly the privatization of the real estate market, which came under the guise of the fractioning of property. To put it differently, private property was not an urban vector before the liberalization of the economy. It came, in fact, with the liberalization of the economy.

Key to understanding the enclaving in Luanda is land, a topic that tends to be overlooked in various trends of contemporary urban theory. One of the rare and worthwhile exceptions is the position of Ananya Roy, who, taking issue with Lefebvre's injunction that "we live in the age of an urban revolution" and that therefore the urban amounts to almost everything, argues that it is the urban question that is subsumed in the land question and not the other way round.[5] This is partly because "this land question very much encompasses regulations, registers and rights that are not urban and that are not simply making the way for the urban."[6] Such a formulation provides the framework through which, in this chapter, I will be examining the unfolding of Luanda's urban fragmentation in whose background lies seismic shifts occurring within the Angolan political-economic system in the early 1990s. The property rights being reconfigured in these times in the wake of the demise of the socialist order do not simply pertain to urban expansion. Their scope was broader, touching on the reconfiguration of state-society relations, which came through recalibrations of access to urban land. How these recalibrations relate to larger processes, such as constitutional arrangements, will be the topic of the next chapter.

It is from the mid-1990 onward that the shape and form of Luanda started to change at an unprecedented pace. The Brazilian consultants who pushed for the Programa Luanda Sul, discussed in this chapter, were aware of the incompleteness of postcolonial Luanda, which was still for the most part divided into the center and periphery. By proposing Luanda Sul as the third city, through suburbanization, one that would break the duality of colonial urbanism, their intention was primarily to provide the city with social facilities to cater to a more sophisticated and demanding class of consumers, which was emerging

as a result of the shift to neoliberalism. So the economy took a major role in these transformations, but they were more strongly driven by politics. In the next chapter, I will discuss in more detail the political reconfiguration that allowed for urban expansion at an unprecedented scale, but now I will mention a crucial factor in this process, which I will call (for lack of a better term) the *perimetization* of Cidade Alta, the presidential precinct. By this, I mean the process through which the presidential palace and supporting services were progressively cut off from the rest of the city. More emphatically put, it was the possibility of these arrangements that allowed the presidential palace to move back and, in this way, play a central role in urban transformation. On the other, it created the condition for the Programa Luanda Sul, which was more than an experiment in the formation of a real estate market. It came also as an experiment in how to extract land from the public domain and build housing, infrastructure, and better services on this once public land, so as to produce these almost extraterritorial zones of privilege and comfort, free from the uncertainties of public services. In the case of Luanda, the enfolding of this process is at the core of the formation of the *condominium*, or gated community. These modes of extraction, of cutting pieces from the urban totality, is what goes in this chapter under the name of reversed urban composition.

From Public Ownership to Common *Dominium*

At a superficial glance, Luanda may come off as any other city in postcolonial Africa or in the Global South. All in all, its city center is still punctuated by the effects of the grandiloquent and totalizing intentions of modernist planning, which had strived for the seamless expansion of the urban grid but whose ultimate outcome was the enforcement of the distinction between *cidade* and *musseque*. Such a view of the city's "past futures" has obviously waned and, what has been going on now is the city's recomposition into a series of fragments. However, here, as well, the description of Luanda does not fit for the most part into the general picture that critical urban theorists have been putting forward on the forms of the contemporary urbanization process, in which the urban has become increasingly fragmented and punctuated by the emergence of enclaves, free zones, and enclosures. It is an undeniable fact now that Luanda boasts the existence of numerous, more or less exclusive gated residential communities, inside, or adjacent to, *centralidades* and *urbanizações*. However, the historical trajectory to be traced so as to explain the emergence of these urban outlets does not result from the withdrawal of the state from the public sphere, which is the obvious outcome for cities turned into hotspots

of crime and violence, producing the flight of the well-to-do into fortified residential communities. Fragmentation in Luanda is a by-product of the reconfigurations of property rights.

I showed earlier that, with the flight of settlers and property owners in the mid-1970s, the socialist government had moved to nationalize the property left behind, distributing it to the citizenry. This moment was part of a broader process of uprooting the fundamentals of the colonial economy by privileging collectivization of property rather than property rights. Consequently, the state became a sort of landowner, which through Junta de Habitação was expected to regulate access to property and collect rental payments. Crucial to make sense of the new role the state came to play was the tacit understanding that state, or the party, and society formed a single body, codified in the dictum "O MPLA é o povo e o povo é o MPLA." (The MPLA is the people and the people is the MPLA). As for the housing question, however, given that state and society (or state through society) were the owners of urban property, there was no clear-cut protocol on how the housing stock should be managed. The value of the rent fixed at the time of independence—and the formal-informal exchange currency market, which produced its own exchange rated and did not significantly impact the formal one—has been considered the culprit for the limited financial resources available for urban authorities to use to properly maintain these apartment blocks.

It only took a few years from independence for the cracks and the signs of dereliction to reveal themselves on the façades and structures of the city center's apartment buildings. The deficiencies that were showing up cannot simply be explained through use or, to be more specific, deleterious use. The municipality was of no help in providing basic services. Infrastructure could not respond to increasing pressure on services because of Luanda's population growth. Power blackouts became irritatingly frequent and were caused sometimes by technical problems, but in many other instances these power outages, which could linger for weeks or months, were provoked by UNITA's subversive military operations, targeting the high-voltage poles that transported electricity from Cambambe to Luanda. Water provision was even more irregular. There were cuts that could go on for weeks and, of more concern, there were sections of the city in which water had stopped running from the taps.[7] Sometimes those shortages had technical issues behind them as well, but not infrequently the main cause was that services could not provide an optimal quantity of water. It was not uncommon that occupants of the lowest floors of a building had water running in their taps, whereas those who lived on the upper floors did not. It was to circumvent these difficulties that most Luandans, particularly those with the means, were resorting to generators for

an alternative power supply and to water pumps that had to be refilled from time to time through cistern trucks, which, ironically, was a reminder of the problems of water distribution that the city had experienced in the early years of its foundation, as I mentioned in chapter 1.

To address these issues of conservation and maintenance, the Angolan government made the painful decision to start shedding property from its real estate portfolios. These measures of far-reaching consequence were coming in the wake of the peace agreement signed between the government and the armed opposition, in 1991, which brought to the table the imperative to start undoing the deleterious effects of the long internecine warfare. *Ordenamento do território* (land management) was then at the top of the governmental agenda, which included the resettlement of populations, particularly those that had languished in the recently formed informal settlements of Luanda. Furthermore, the fall of the socialist bloc was putting in disarray the macroeconomic doctrines that informed the centrally planned economy. As such, major steps started to be taken to recast the country's economy under the principles of neoliberalism. Privatization was central in the process, principally the privatization of property.

The question of the state-owned housing stock loomed large in these deliberations. The government's position on the previously nationalized property, and how to distribute the seized property among the citizenry, is addressed in the Lei Sobre a Venda do Património do Estado (Sale of State Property Act). The government itself recognized that "uma considerável parte dessa propriedade imobiliária encontra-se em acentuado estado de depreciação, não apenas por mau uso e fruição por parte dos seus inquilinos como também pelo decurso de muito tempo sem accções de manutenção e conservação pelas competentes autoridades públicas para isso vocacionadas" (a considerable part of the [government-controlled] real estate is in an advanced state of depreciation, due not only to the improper use by occupants but also to the amount of time that passed without any conservation action from the public authorities expected to provide it). The alienation of such property is then justified as a decision for, on the one hand, relievinging the state "das pesadas despesas com a manutenção dos imóveis" (of the onerous costs of upkeep for these buildings) and, on the other, allowing for the "participação de outros agentes na gestão mobiliária" (participation of other agents in the real estate management), which could constitute "uma substancial fonte de receitas necessárias ao atendimento de um agama enorme de solicitações financeiras e outras a que o Estado, na sua actividade normal, deve acudir" (a substantial source of needed revenue for servicing a whole array of financial and other demands that the

state, in its normal activity, ought to provide for). However, such a transfer of property would come with some important caveats: only Angolan nationals could apply for the acquisition of property (Art. 5.1); occupants would be given priority for acquisition (Art. 5.2); and, to prevent urban speculation, individuals could only bid for "um imóvel unifamiliar ou uma só fracção autónoma" (single-family property or detached fraction) (Art. 7). And, more important, perhaps, those benefiting from the purchases could not put their property on the market within ten years (Art. 15).[8]

In hindsight, one wonders the extent to which such a step was also aiming to narrow the gap between the socialist economy, in which the state played an active distributive role, and the enclave economy, which was expanding at the pace of the proportion of crude oil extraction in the overall gross domestic product. We know from recent scholarship on Luanda's urbanism the extent to which oil extraction has been crucial for the city's expansion beyond the boundaries of the city center established by colonial urban authorities. For Ricardo Cardoso, for instance, it is crude oil that has fueled the "government's prospect for the capital [Luanda]."[9] To put it in different terms, access to petrodollars has propelled urban transformation in an unconceivable way. But, conversely, it is no less correct to say that it is petroleum itself that has prevented the emergence of a full-fledged and functional real estate market. Of note is that the role the economy of oil has played in the urban setting in Luanda goes deeper than what has been established by scholars. I will come to the point in the next chapter.

Responding to the provocative and seminal book by James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, James Ferguson has attempted to shift the attention from the state to the "global corporation that performs the same homogenizing operation at the 'global level.'"[10] Having in mind oil companies as the most prominent types of those global corporations, he delves into the Angola case to extract a couple of examples. He is right when he ascertains that the "clearest case of extractive economy (and no doubt the most attractive for the foreign investor) is provided by offshore oil extraction, as in Angola, where neither the oil nor most of the money it brings in ever touches the Angolan soil."[11] He then proceeds to shed light on the organization of the extractive infrastructures, in territories such as Cabinda, in northern Angola, where oil workers live in "gated compounds" that are isolated from most of the surrounding area. Such a description, however, is not applicable to Luanda, where up to the end of the socialist era the enclave economy of oil did not produce the extraterritoriality African scholars have observed in many other locations.[12] For, if there was, as there has been, a sector of the economy where oil companies have generously splurged, it was in real estate.

Aware that the circuit of oil money is unabashedly capitalist, and working on the edification of a "workers' homeland," the Angolan government had since independence attempted, as much as possible, to isolate the unavoidable effects of the oil economy from the national and centrally planned economy. For the Angolan economist José Cerqueira, the thinking of the socialist government was to work through a contradiction. Whereas the overall intention was to create "um socialismo" (a socialist system), the reality was that "no sector petrolífero funciona o capitalismo" (the oil sector is controlled by capitalism). A way out of this imbroglio was to create a barrier between, on the one hand, "the capitalism of the oil sector" and, on the other, the project for making of a socialist society in which there should not be any ownership of the means of production.[13] The direct consequence was that since oil production was inevitably bringing in dollars, the country's economy bifurcated into, on the one hand, an economy in dollars, mostly for the expatriate community and, on the other, an economy in the national currency, kwanza, for nationals. Putting it in different terms, whereas the dollar was the currency that circulated within the oil economy, the overall Angolan economy could only use kwanza for most of its operations. The enclave of dollars that such a duality produced not only had enduring consequences for the country's monetary policies, as Cerqueira argues, but also constituted, I wish to add, a major force in the reconfiguring of housing policies.

Not having in place any legal framework that would allow oil companies to build "gated compounds" for their expatriate labor force, these companies had to resort to the available housing that the crumbling historic center could provide.[14] In these years leading into independence, urban property could not be claimed, but nothing prevented apartments from being transitioned, meaning that in most cases apartments could not be capitalized, for they lacked any economic leverage for their occupants, who could move in, move out, trade off, and even "sell" their apartment without any transfer of ownership in the proper sense of the word, for property itself remained with the state. Whereas most Luandans who had secured housing in the city center were expected to pay only a modicum of rent for their premises, oil companies circulated in a different economic dimension.

By the time oil production picked up in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the international oil companies that operated in Angola were desperate to house their workers. Since the labor market in Angola could not provide the skilled manpower to operate the oil extraction plants, tens of thousands of expatriates were residing mostly in Luanda to support the sector.

When oil companies did not secure rental property directly for their workers, they were at least willing to pay salaries to meet the exceedingly expensive costs of rental housing in Luanda.

Since the cost of living (housing, food, and other commodities) for this international labor force was supported by the Angolan government, or paid indirectly by the government, the demand for accommodation in the city skyrocketed.[15] By the late 1990s, Luanda had become one of the most expensive cities in the world. The renting of an old, decrepit one-bedroom apartment in the city center could cost more than US$5,000 a month, and rents were paid annually.[16] In the early 1990s, dilapidated apartments in downtrodden buildings could cost millions of dollars. Many of those who were squatting in houses in the city center preferred to rent them to well-to-do newcomers and expatriates, moving back to the peripheries they had come from, or using the money to buy land and build houses outside the city center. Those who were lucky enough to occupy stand-alone houses in the city center had even better business prospects. Most of these houses were torn down, and in their place were erected a great number of the postmodernist architectural structures that have since come to define Luanda's skyline.

From the early 1990s onward, most apartment buildings in the city center were inhabited by a combination of occupants holding different relations to the property they occupied. While some of them belonged to the category of occupants who were the original squatters—in the process, or not, of legalizing ownership—many of them, such as João Pedro, were medium- or long-term renters. Whereas the act met its primary objective of allowing for private property, it fell short of living up to its second objective, which was to achieve the efficient maintenance of the buildings through private ownership. For even if the capitalization of the real estate allowed for the improvement of individual properties, the act is silent when it comes to the management and upkeep of the common areas.

The sudden revaluation of property taking place in the wake of this profound political-economic transformation from socialism to capitalism had a powerful impact on Luanda's real estate market. The sort of urban social fragmentation that I described in the previous chapter was becoming dramatically evident at this time. Those who had acquired their apartments at a symbolic price from the state could now resell them at staggering prices. Here, it is perhaps useful to compare colonial and postcolonial legal systems in their effects on real estate. Whereas for the colonial legislator, this law was an instrument for capital creation, since it allowed a potential investor to put down savings in the property market, the assumptions of the postcolonial legislator were rather

different. Those occupants, whose property relations the law was expected normalize, were for the most part squatters, and most of them did not have any other assets other than the property itself. So, whereas during colonial times the apartment became an entrée to the city, in the postindependence period it became for a number of people an exit from the city. As such, countless apartment occupants started renting out their accommodations at exorbitant prices, which then allowed them to rent houses in cheaper areas outside of the city center or even to buy property elsewhere, in Portugal or South Africa.

To address the idiosyncratic situation that the 1991 act had brought about, in which individual apartments could be privately owned even though the apartment buildings were still the property of the state (for the law prevented economic groups from purchasing entire buildings), the government issued the Law of Condominiums (Lei dos Condomínios) in 2004, or more specifically the law on the administration and maintenance of buildings. Behind its promulgation was perhaps the need to regulate the crumbling urban stock that had been passed to the hands of those who had squatted in it. This law aimed less at creating a legal framework for the construction of gated communities and more at regulating horizontal property, or the situation in which property was not a detached house but simply a fraction of an apartment building.[17] The precedent was the colonial law that permitted private investment in real estate, as I have shown earlier. The premise of the law was that owners of the sections of a particular building would come together as proprietors to deliberate on their share of responsibilities in terms of the cost of the upkeep of common areas, such as driveways, corridors, garages, and storage units, and the plumbing and electricity in the common areas. Assuming that all occupants of apartment buildings in Luanda were homeowners in their own right, the law attempted to convert squatters into associates. Article 1 of the new act stipulated, for example, that "em prédios com mais de um piso, constituídos e registados em propriedade horizontal e ou compropriedade, é obrigatória a constituição e reunião annual de Assembleia de Condóminos para a eleição das respectivas administrações das partes comuns" (in buildings with more than one floor, constituted and registered in horizontal ownership and/or co-ownership, it is mandatory to hold an annual meeting of the Co-owners Association to elect managers of the common areas).[18] However, private property can hardly be created by law, and the owners of the dilapidated sections of many buildings never felt that they had to contribute to their conservation. In most buildings, one could see on the walls notices, sometimes in very harsh language, reminding residents to pay their monthly condominium contributions. More often than not, the buildings continued to be afflicted by the same kinds of deficiencies as

before, in particular because residents did not tend to recognize the places they lived in as belonging to them. The solution to the maintenance problem that followed in this situation did not address this, since what was privatized was not the property per se but the management of the buildings; as regulated by the Lei dos Condomínios, tenants had to constitute themselves as a collective to oversee security, sanitation, and the management of the building.[19]

So, for oil companies operating in Angola, or other companies under million-dollar contracts with the Angolan government, such as Odebrecht, there were only two ways for navigating housing in Luanda. Either they carved out spaces of functionality in the crumbling historic city by purchasing apartments, apartments floors, or even buildings, or they could build their own complexes that were increasingly being called condominiums, which only later started to emerge. The gated residential communities, which in the context of Angolan urban scholarship have almost exclusively been examined from the point of view of urban typology, are in fact a result of the reconfigurations of property rights. Sónia Frias and Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues are right when they argue that, rather than "urban violence," as in South Africa or Latin America, it is "access to infrastructure" and "better living" that explain the proliferation of gated residential communities in Luanda.[20] However, I would like to suggest that such a proliferation is subsumed in a larger process related to the reconfiguration of land and property rights. In the end, the best image to capture how residential gated communities came into being is not the cutting off slices of the urban and the urban infrastructural network associated with it, but rather the fractioning, or fragmenting, of collective property (or, to put it differently, the separation between state and property).

Cidade Alta as a Powerscape

When the first Angolan president, Agostinho Neto, died unexpectedly in Moscow, on September 10, 1979, after being rushed to the Soviet Union's capital for medical treatment, the MPLA's Central Committee made a decision not to bury him, as is common practice in Angola, but instead to embalm and conserve the body in a "mausoleum para a eternidade" (mausoleum for eternity).[21] To fulfill this promise, the party unanimously decided on two lines of action. First, it enlisted Soviet specialists in the complex and delicate technique of body conservation from the moment Neto's remains returned to Luanda and were deposited in a room at the Comissariado Provincial de Luanda for public display. Second, it commissioned the Soviets to design an elaborate mausoleum to which the body of Neto would be transferred, after the location for

the monumental endeavor had been determined. The architectural projects that were soon made public reveal that the Angolan socialist government was not simply aiming at providing Neto's embalmed body with a tomb, however expensive it might be. The ruling party was envisioning capitalizing on Neto's body so as to turn it into a unifying symbol, the body of the nation itself. This was to be achieved by building around the mausoleum the country's political-administrative district, Centro Político Administrativo.

Bairro Praia do Bispo, a residential area behind the presidential palace, was the site chosen to receive the mausoleum, whose construction started in 1982 but was halted a few years later on account of the worsening of the politico-military situation. For more than two decades, the rocket-shaped, unfinished obelisk-like building was both a symbol of the grandiloquent aspirations of Angolan's first government and an experiment with socialism in Africa that had gone wrong. For a city that was experiencing massive migration from the countryside, not even the surroundings of the presidential palace were spared from squatting. As everywhere in Luanda, hundreds of thousands of squatters built their houses on every available plot of land that they could find. When there were no longer any plots of land available, in the informal settlement of Chicala—a few meters from the mausoleum construction site—squatters dumped refuse in the water, or used the rubbish the government failed to collect and built their houses on top of it.[22] Many of those who built in this manner were themselves members of the Guarda Presidencial (Presidential Guard). As people would say in Luanda, the presidency was itself one of the causes for urban informalization: whenever the presidential palace was moved, the members of the presidential guard would erect shacks so as to live close to work.

The resurfacing of the mausoleum project, as well as the commitment to the construction of the Centro, was at the top of the political agenda in the late 1990s. Angola was then shedding the effects of socialist orthodoxy in the national economy and embracing the market-driven approach to the national economy and its modes of governance. I have shown already the extent to which the alleviation of the state's role in housing through the selling of the property controlled by the state was part of this transformation. At a more structural level, there started to emerge among the ruling elite the notion that in order to carry out privatization, a stronger political center (and, necessarily, on physical or architectural terms) had to come about—one able to arbitrate among the competing interests that would certainly emerge as a consequence of private capital accumulation.[23] The overlap between privatization and political control has been examined by many African scholars, particularly Achille

Mbembe, who pointedly indicates that "in the African context, privatizations fundamentally alter the processes whereby wealth is allocated, income distributed, and ethno-regional balances regulated, as well as the narrowly political notions of public good and general interest."[24] In the Angolan case, such a construct came about in many ways, particularly under the guise of what, again, Mbembe has called the "privatization of this sovereignty."[25] More to the point, such a reconfiguration of sovereignty did not take place along the lines the literature on the topic has suggested: by insisting on the uses of concepts such as "shadow networks."[26] In Angola sovereignty was enlarged within the state itself through the ways in which the presidency of the republic, or more specifically the president, usurped the prerogative from other branches (the judiciary and the legislative).[27] I will discuss this point with further details in the next chapter. Here it is enough to say that if sovereignty, or centralization of power so as to arbitrate divergent economic interests, has taken on a physical form, this form can certainly be examined through the ways in which the mausoleum to Neto, the Centro Político Administrativo, and the Cidade Alta were merged into one single entity.

In the previous chapter, I used the geometric figure of the triangle to discuss in topographical terms the emergence of Roque Santeiro. My intention was to demonstrate the ways in which Roque Santeiro could be seen as a fraction detaching itself from the whole city and taking on a life of its own. For it was more than a mere marketplace; with time it had simultaneously become both a wholesale and a retail market; a logistics, distribution, and transportation center; a camp for the construction several informal settlements; and a major force in decentering the city center, so to speak. It can be seen as an enclosure, of an informal nature, but one that allows us to grapple with not only the rationales for the emergence of those enclosures but also the effects they bear on the city. Taking stock of Roque Santeiro's formation, I think it is perhaps theoretically productive to trace an association between the market and Cidade Alta. For, first of all, it was because of places such as Roque Santeiro, outlets for wealth creation and the interests that emerged out of the process, that the concentration of power, or privatization of political prerogatives, sovereignty, started to occur. As such, with time Cidade Alta entered into a topographical trajectory of detaching itself from the whole, becoming through this a sort of powerscape of its own.

As with Roque Santeiro, it is possible to present Cidade Alta as a triangle that cuts through and stretches from the embassy of the United Kingdom, on the Rua 17 de Setembro, to the Imprensa Nacional, on Rua P. Furtado, and the Memorial Dr. António Agostinho Neto, on Rua Nova Marginal. I discussed

Figure 5.2. Memorial Dr. António Agostinho Neto, under construction, as viewed from Bairro da Samba, 2015. Source: Ngoi Salucombo.

previously the resilience of topographical referentiality in Luanda. Here it is interesting to notice that it did not take much time for Luanda to start to refer to Cidade Alta, and no longer Futungo de Belas, as the seat of power in Angola.[28] Cidade Alta is not a *bairro*, or a district, in the administrative sense of the term, for it straddles various *bairros*, or districts, such as Maianga, Ingombota, and Bairro Azul. Like Roque Santeiro, from an albeit different point of view, Cidade Alta came to exert the same kind, in nature if not in intensity, of gravitational force on the rest of the city.

Historically, it had always been from the slopes of Cidade Alta that colonial governors controlled the whole country. Initially built in 1607–11 as the Câmara de Luanda, it was around 1621–30, during the administration of Governor Fernão de Sousa, that the original building was rebuilt as a palace for the governor and the colony's administration. It was demolished and reconstructed in 1761 according to the Pombalino style, since Marquês de Pombal was then the prime minister of Portugal.[29] Major refurbishments were carried out between 1912 and 1915, during the time of High Commissioner Norton de Matos, and later on, in 1946, the complex was subjected to "novas alterações de acordo com mudanças da vida social, o que implicou ampliação, modernização e também conservação" (new alterations, according to changes in social life, which implied

extension, modernization, and conservation). For instance, a tower built in 1855 was demolished, and the façade "was expanded in order to merge it to the adjoining buildings, namely the Paço Episcopal [Bishop's House]"[30] (e se unificou a fachada com os edifícios confinantes). The architect Fernando Batalha, whose work in Luanda I discussed in chapter 1, was commissioned to oversee the modernization of the palace, and it was at that time that the building was given that classic façade that it displays now.[31]

When Agostinho Neto, the first Angolan president, took office, he preferred to use the former colonial palace, in Cidade Alta, as the presidential office and to use the beach house of the colonial governor, in Futungo de Belas to the south of Luanda, as the official residence of the president of the republic. Later on, I was told, tired of the distance he had to travel, he started to transfer some of the presidential services to Futungo de Belas. By the time dos Santos became president, in September 1979, the transfer of the presidential office to Futungo de Belas was complete. Over the years, dos Santos would turn Futungo de Belas into the seat of Angolan politics.[32] Having his lodging outside the city certainly allowed dos Santos to refurbish and expand the Cidade Alta, particularly the presidential level. However, having less interference, and governing the country from Futungo de Belas—in a section controlled by his private army, the Guarda Presidencial—also explains how he managed to consolidate his power, as I will discuss in further detail in the next chapter.

During those years, the embalmed body of Agostinho Neto was put to rest in one of the rooms of the palace. The Soviets were occupied with its conservation and the construction of the definitive tomb for Neto's remains, the mausoleum. Foundations were laid in the early 1980s, and the construction of the brutalist structure in the shape of a spaceship, or inverted torch, was advancing in height at a steady pace. During this time, Soviet urbanists were also working on the plan for the surroundings of the mausoleum. They might have used the plans drawn up during the late colonial period for the development of that area, in Praia do Bispo.[33] But the closer architectural precedent the Soviets were using was Red Square in Moscow, which was apparent in the plans through the construction of a major square, the Praça das Manifestações (Manifestation Square), to host major public events, the ones common in socialist countries, such as well-rehearsed and prodigious military parades. Construction was permanently halted in the late 1980s because of the onerous burden it was having on the country's finances (Angola had to pay for all the construction costs, chief among them the thousands of Soviets workers who were involved in all aspects of the construction, from design, carpentry, foundation, and even decoration). The fact that the Soviet Union was collapsing by

the end of the 1980s might also have been a cause for the interruption of the involvement of the Soviets in this construction work.

It was only one year after the signature of the first peace agreement—between the central government and UNITA, in May 1991, which ended the civil war—that the Ministers' Council approved the creation of the Grupo Técnico de Apoio à Comissão Interministerial de Supervisão do Programa do Novo Centro Político Administrativo (Technical Group for Support of the Interministerial Commission for Oversight of the New Political Administrative Center). It was also around this time that the Presidential Office moved back to Cidade Alta.[34] Without the Soviets, the scope and ambition of the whole project was more modest, for the government was no longer aiming at the construction of an independent and detached Centro Político Administrativo but at an alternative one, as it was designated. This would simply involve the construction of a few buildings for the transfer of the presidential palace to Cidade Alta, and, more important, it would revolve around the renovation of various already-existing buildings to accommodate the ever expanding auxiliary services of the presidency. Resumption of the construction of the mausoleum was also contemplated in these plans.[35]

To open up space for the construction of these facilities—or simply to further the function of Cidade Alta, as the site of power—so as "instalar condignamente os orgãos de soberania" (to install with dignity the bodies of sovereignty), the government invited residents to find accommodations elsewhere in the city.[36] Some of those residents were financially compensated, and others accepted trading their houses for single-family detached houses in the new gated communities that were starting to sprout in the city. But a large majority of the residents in that part of the city, particularly those who had squatted in the houses they were living in and could not therefore produce title deeds, were removed by force. Residents of a section of Praia do Bispo called Saneamento, including, ironically, members of former president Agostinho Neto's entourage, were evicted and their houses were destroyed or rebuilt. The same fate was suffered by the inhabitants of the adjacent Chicala, whose land was then used either for the security perimeter of the president of the republic (defining how near to the presidential abode citizens were allowed to live) or for beautification projects.

The perimetization of Cidade Alta is of crucial importance for grappling with urban transformation, since it constituted an experiment in moving populations out of certain areas for political or aesthetics reasons, a practice that would later become normalized, as I show in the next chapter. For in order to do so, the nature of power itself needed to undergo profound changes. Rather

than allowing bodies of the state to do the work they were expected to perform, the presidency was invested in creating organs of government under the control of Cidade Alta. One such organ is the Gabinete de Obras Especiais (Office of Special Works; GOE). Created by Decreto no. 24/98, published on August 7, 1998, its legal scope was only made public three years later, in 2001, with the publication of its status in the national gazette. Since the GOE was under direct control of the president himself, to whom the GOE's director reported, and since the GOE was tasked with pursuing the necessary work for the implementation of the Centro—alongside the unspecified "desempenhar outras tarefas que lhe forem incumbidas pelo Presidente da República, ou determinadas por lei" (to carry out other tasks requested by the President of the Republic or determined by law),[37] including the resettlement of former residents—one can arguably infer from such an arrangement that the administration of Cidade Alta had been subtracted from the management portfolio of the Provincial Government of Luanda.

The GOE then was called to take an active role in the presidential oversight of the construction, renovation, or refurbishment of dozens of houses, parking lots, and streets and to produce a study on the feasibility of converting Bairro do Saneamento, adjacent to the palace, into a complex for the presidential services in charge of travel and ceremonial activities.[38] Alongside these interventions, the GOE was also expected to carry on some specified or unspecified operations, at the personal whim of the president, such as the construction of thirty single-family units in Luanda Sul and the Residência Protocolar no. 3 (a residence for visiting foreign dignitaries) in Morro da Luz, which was in fact the house of dos Santos's mother. Among the other tasks bestowed on the agency were the conceptualization of master plans and the participation in negotiations regarding the finances of the Centro Político Administrativo, particularly those that involved compensation for relocation.[39] In this context, the Departamento de Realojamento (Rehousing Department) is introduced as a service "promover a mobilização e organização de famílias e instituições a realojar no âmbito do Programa do Centro Político Administrativo" (to promote the mobilization of families and institutions within the scope of the Program of the Centro Político Administrativo).[40]

By imposing the vague and ill-conceived plan of the Centro Politico Administrativo onto the Cidade Alta/Praia do Bispo, to carve out a space of power in Luanda's urban landscape, the presidency was not simply moving back to the city center so as to govern the city and the country from a central position. It was, more importantly, reconfiguring Luanda's powerscape, or the relationship between power and the urban. Both the Portuguese, who were planning

to develop the section of the city adjacent to it, and the Soviets, who came to erect the mausoleum, agreed that Cidade Alta should preserve its architectural style, which was distinct from the rest of the city. The Lebanese firm Dar Al-Handasah, which had been involved in various projects of planning and construction in Cidade Alta, also pushed for a similar vision, by making a strong case for the preservation and restoration of the historical-political center, suggesting that the "nature and extent of the existing heritage establishes a strong physical character composed of lower rise buildings" and that "the strongly Portuguese style of many of the buildings with their pastel colouring, characteristic fenestration and unifying materials need[s] to be sympathetically addressed when new development is proposed." Since "each historical period established a strong empathy with its setting, a new development should abide by the same principles." The plan thus proposed that "the historical part of Luanda will be subject to specific building standards to ensure protection of its unique heritage assets. All new developments will have to comply with these standards."[41] Many of the new buildings, and particularly the renovations in these areas, followed this recommendation.

Dar Al-Handasah's vision is visible in the conceptual framework for the refurbishment and design of a couple of buildings in Cidade Alta, particularly the Angolan National Assembly, whose construction started in 2010 and which was dedicated on November 10, 2015. Although a new building for the parliament, or Assembleia do Povo (People's Assembly), had been part of the initial plan for the Centro Político Administrativo under the previous dispensation, the Angolan parliament had, since independence, occupied the building of the gigantic Cinema Restauração (Restoration Cinema), a multistory building that was a commercial cinema during colonial times, designed, in 1956, by the architect brothers João Garcia de Castilho and Luís Garcia de Castilho. The new National Assembly building was constructed by the Portuguese firm Teixeira Duarte Engenharia e Construções, and many Luandans were surprised to see that in terms of architectural style, it followed neither the style of most of the buildings in that area, the Pombalino and its derivatives, which had been destroyed, nor the architectural modernism of downtown Luanda; instead, it was a replica of the Banco Nacional de Angola (National Bank of Angola; BNA). Designed by the Portuguese architect Vasco Regaleira and built in 1956 as "the most significant monument of Portuguese architecture," the BNA emulated the iconic order of classical architecture, with façades, ionic columns, domes, a pediment, and arcades that stretched out in an L shape along the Avenida Marginal and Rua Serqueira Lukoki in downtown Luanda.[42] With its

adorning frescoes that depicted various historical moments, the building came to act as a monument to the history of Portugal.[43] For the Angolan architect Ângela Mingas, the similarities between the new Assembleia and the existing BNA represent a reenactment of the colonial style, Português Suave, which for her should not have had a place in contemporary Luanda.[44]

While the new building for the National Assembly clearly took its cue from the BNA, its scale was far more ambitious. The central part of the building consists of a circular structure with a metallic dome that houses the main hall used for plenary meetings. This is flanked by four six-story wings (each including two underground levels) that house the offices of the president of parliament, the administrative council, and various parliamentary groups, and that provide rooms for the press, meeting areas, and restaurants.[45] Journalistic accounts have not failed to describe the building as "majestic architecture" and to make reference to the scale of the resources and finances used to build it: in total, the state disbursed over US$320 million for a building with an area of 60,000 square meters (645,835 square feet) that used 75,000 cubic meters (2,648,600 cubic feet) of concrete and 10,500 tonnes of steel.[46]

With reconstructions, removals, and particularly the construction of buildings such as the National Assembly, Cidade Alta affirms itself as the gravitational center of the country's political life. It does so through the perimetization of power. Administratively, Cidade Alta is under the purview of the Provincial Government of Luanda, but it is in fact controlled by the auxiliary services of the presidency. The detachment of Cidade Alta from Luanda has taken place in two major ways, through architecture and through a physical separation from the rest of the city. Cidade Alta is the zone of the city with the highest number of old buildings, the kind of buildings that were destroyed in downtown Luanda, as I discussed in chapter 1. Premodernist building typologies have been enforced as much as possible, even if some of these buildings are not the original ones but replicas of *sobrados*, or even if they follow the Pombalino style and its derivatives, as the presidential palace does. The variants of pastel as the main coloration for these buildings dominate in Cidade Alta, ranging from a saturated brick color to a lighter color that is closer to pink. In terms of the physical separation, since Cidade Alta is the abode of one of the most well-guarded powers in Angola, it has become a no-go zone for most residents. Roads and accesses have been blocked, or even closed off, to prevent pedestrian and automotive circulation. Moreover, very few services have remained there after the removals. Some of the city's facilities, such as the rebaptized Jardim da Cidade Alta (Garden of Cidade Alta), have also been closed off from the public.

Figure 5.3. View from the Marginal de Luanda, with the domed Banco Nacional de Angola by the waterfront and the dome of the National Assembly in the background, 2016. Source: Ferreira de Almeida Arquitectos.

Expanding the Urban Southward

The experimentation with the urban refurbishment of Cidade Alta, as discussed earlier, revealed above all the penchant of the presidency—particularly that of the president himself—for urban renewal, which came to be subsumed in the Programme of National Reconstruction. In the next chapter, I will show the extent and scale of such a reconstruction, which came to affect directly hundreds and thousands of Luandans. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss one of the earliest urban developments and how it opened the way for things to come, furthering urban fragmentation in Luanda.

With the relocation of the office of the president of the republic to Cidade Alta, the vast and highly militarized area it occupied in Futungo de Belas was left vacant. The services of the presidency that had been left behind, the units of the Presidential Guard as well as the few generals close to the presidency who were allowed to build their houses there, made the area out of reach for potential squatters. This zone was then earmarked to receive the first public-private partnership in urban development, the Programa Luanda Sul, which would allow the city to expand only in its almost hinterland to the south. Programa Luanda Sul would allow the construction of dozens of condominiums, which would bring to the city a new way of living.

In the early 1990s, frustrated by the limited high-class accommodation in Luanda, oil companies started to consider other ways to shelter their highly paid labor force. Odebrecht was the first international conglomerate operating in Angola that saw saw in the construction of housing to shelter expatriates a way to decrease operational costs. Operating in Angola since the mid-1980s, Odebrecht had built up an impressive conglomerate whose portfolio ranged from oil and diamonds to the construction of infrastructure and real estate.[47] They were the ones who in 1986 had built the first gated residential condominium to house Brazilian expatriate workers involved in various construction projects, chief among them the Cambambe Dam in the province of Kwanza Norte. Brazilian construction companies took this as an impulse to involve themselves in the building of similar developments.

But what Odebrecht would then propose as the Programa Luanda Sul was not simply expansion of its business portfolio into the burgeoning sector of urban development. Odebrecht lobbied the government to undertake such a redevelopment program by making the case that since Luanda was formed by two cities, the city center and the *musseques*, it was time to add a third one, so as to break the dichotomy of colonial planning and jumpstart Luanda's housing market, and, most important, to reduce the demographic pressure on the city center. Conceived as an innovative urban strategy, "a foundational urbanization scheme," the program unapologetically intended to blend, as Ricardo Cardoso has put it, capitalism and democracy in urban planning.[48]

Its inception dates to 1992, the year in which the country held its first democratic elections, but it was only in 1994, after "lengthy negotiations,"[49] that Odebrecht's concessionaire, Odebrecht Serviços no Exterior (Odebrecht Services Abroad; OSEL), signed a contract with Luanda's provincial government to carry out urban development in the city. Resolution 30/94, which rendered the endeavor legal, in terms of the problem of the "ocupação desordenada do solo urbano" (disorderly occupation of urban land), cast it as a way to prevent such "disorderly occupation of urban land" and to provide a solution for the "lack of infrastructure."[50] The Provincial Government of Luanda, or GPL, in partnership with Odebrecht, was then tasked with initiating, "with urgency," a program to address the dire situation Luanda was falling in.[51]

Luanda Sul was conceived as a scheme and turned into urban policy to foster land development in Luanda, and thus enabled the Provincial Government of Luanda to raise funds to be eventually invested back in infrastructure. Since back then the country was shedding its ties with the socialist orthodoxy, and as there were no legal instruments available to provide a regulatory framework

for such an undertaking, colonial legislation was mobilized. During the time up to independence, the Lei dos Direitos de Superfície (Law of Surface Rights) was the legal framework that allowed the colonial government, municipalities, and legal persons of administrative public utilities "podem constituir o direito de superfície sobre terrenos de que sejam proprietários a favor de pessoas singulares e colectivas" (to constitute surface rights on land under their jurisdiction, in favor of individuals and legal persons).[52] In its postcolonial rendition—and according to the framework signed between the Provincial Government of Luanda and Odebrecht's subsidiary OSEL for the implementation of the Programa Piloto Luanda Sul—the granting of surface rights was conceived as a "definitive deed, for the terms of concession and transmissible to a third party," and it was intended to ameliorate land tenure in the city, for it would allow agents to acquire rights to the use of land.[53]

In practice, the project was implemented through the creation of a public-private partnership between Odebrecht and a recently constituted public company, Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano (Company for Urban Development; EDURB), which became the administrative vehicle of the program, representing the provincial government.[54] This land-concession scheme was supposed to work as follows: the government would make land available, at no cost, to public-private ventures for the purpose of developing it—which would involve the clearing of the area, the construction of access roads, the subdivision of the land into plots, and the installation of connections to municipal services. Once these tasks had been accomplished, EDURB would return the land to the provincial government. The company would be paid for its services at a rate "calculated as the cost of the installed infrastructure plus a social contribution."[55] In the next stage, the government would put these mixed-used developed plots on the market according to the legal terms of surface rights, which meant that the plots were transferable, and their leases could be renewed and mortgaged.[56] The land would be available to investors, or to the public in general, in two ways: either through cash sales, which would grant the purchasers immediate and full access to infrastructure (sewerage, electricity, and water), or by selling it first to developers, who would first pay for the land and only at a later stage pay for access to infrastructure in proportion to the payment already made. The aim of such a scheme, it was then announced, was to allow the government to levy taxes and tariffs on the municipal services provided on these plots, so as to raise funds to invest in social programs such as health and education and especially housing.[57]

Critics of the program were quick to point out that "while some land has been provided at no charge in the [first] category for re-located families, no

land has yet been made available in the second category."[58] For them, this was either because the regulation was unclear or because the whole procedure was impractical. As such, they concluded, it was clear that the state was more interested in providing resources to its clients than in addressing the dire situation of urban poverty.[59] The concerns of the critics were not misplaced, given the ways in which the program subsequently unfolded. The approximately 4,046 hectares (10,000 acres) under the direct control of the program in Luanda Sul were divided into three sectors. Talatona was for upper-class residents, Novos Bairros for the middle class, and Morar for low-income residents. As such, the type and the quality of infrastructure and social services available to residents varied accordingly. For the upper class, Talatona was to be fully developed, and clients received their plots with "complete infrastructure."[60] In Novos Bairros, clients would be allowed to pay in instalments, but infrastructure was only provided piecemeal, if and when the buyers were able to pay for it. In Morar, where the social component of the program was implemented, EDURB was expected to install "evolving and basic infrastructure," financed by the state.[61] In other words, in these last two places the provincial government would only install infrastructure services when financial resources were available or when there was a pressing need to do so.

It is no coincidence that the oil companies were the first to jump on this bandwagon, attracted by the possibility of not having to pay high rents for the accommodation of their employees (particularly expatriates) in the city center through short- and medium-term leases. Their involvement was not only as renters or purchasers of housing but, more important, as developers. The state-owned oil company, Sonangol, formed a real estate firm, Sonangol Imobiliária e Propriedades (Sonangol Estate Company; SONIP), to work exclusively on housing projects for its employees, which ended up subcontracting the construction of dozens of condominiums in Talatona. In 1995, SONIP and the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company (CABGOC), an international oil consortium, pledged US$30 million for the construction of condominiums for their workers. Many of these buildings were built by OSEL, through the Brazilian engineer Prado Valladares, who was already attached to EDURB. The services company not only installed the infrastructure but also built the condominiums on land acquired for free from the government. It was on this basis, for instance, that Chevron commissioned OSEL and the local firm Sakus Empreendimentos e Participações (Sakus Ventures and Participations) to build the Monte Belo apartment building for its employees, at a total cost of US$250 million.[62]

The emergence of the Luanda Sul program had a staggering impact on Luanda's urban transformation. It was for the most part sequestered and used as

a device for personal enrichment since it benefited Odebrecht as well as the companies it was associated with, particularly those controlled by people in the central government and those who had close business relationships with them. According to Odebrecht, the company invested about US$800 million in the construction of fourteen commercial and residential ventures, including shopping malls, such as the Belas Shopping Mall (2007), Angola's first ever shopping center, as well as later ones such as Brisas (2007) and Conchas (2010); business parks, such as Belas Business Park (2009); and condominiums, such as Arte Yetu (2009), Mirantes, Vereda das Flores (2003), Brisas (2005), Luar (2008), Atlântico Sul (2008), Pérolas (2009), Conchas (2009), and Diamantes (2012).[63] Once finished, these units in upscale housing developments were put on the real estate market, at prices ranging from US$600,000 for a three-bedroom apartment to US$900,000 for a four-bedroom apartment.[64] Needless to say, the state was the main client involved in the purchase of these residences. In fact, the state, the very institution that had made the serviced land available, also became the principal client in these schemes by purchasing a great many of the apartment buildings put on the market in order to distribute them as rental property to members of the burgeoning middle class.[65]

Whereas Luanda Sul allowed the many privileged inhabitants of Luanda to move to their mansions in the suburbs while renting out their accommodations in the city, it failed to do anything significant to house the poor. One reason for this, perhaps, was that the company involved in this program, EDURB, did not have a mandate to provide housing as such; it only serviced land. Moreover, the Luanda Sul program was also caught up in the administrative riddle that marred city planning in general.[66] The central government, the presidency, and the provincial government were all vying with each other to further their own interests. Each state agency proposed different plans with wide-ranging and sometimes contradictory aims, even if they failed to be implemented. For instance, the oversight of the whole development project was first given to Odebrecht, but the presidency of the republic took over the control of Luanda Sul through the GOE, before eventually the Governo Provincial de Luanda was given the same task.[67]

Moreover, Luanda Sul, as the city center, was not immune to *construções anárquicas* (unplanned construction) and encroachment. The urban development company did not have ways to prevent land from being occupied by squatters who did not pay for the services offered. Some of these squatters could not be considered part of the urban poor; they were well-established professionals or members of the Angolan army who did not have the means to join, or who refused to take part in, the payment schemes. Most of these

people built their own infrastructure. Overall, then, whereas Talatona has indeed been developed, to the extent that nowadays Luandans identify the entire Luanda Sul area with it, the implementation of Novos Bairros and Morar is a far cry from the 17,000 plots envisioned. The program failed because the availability of serviced land was not matched by the formation of a sophisticated real estate market.

The appeal of Luanda Sul as a development project was initially the possibility that this sector of the city could provide a way out of the collapse of the city center. In terms of urban typology, it has succeeded. Luanda Sul is still by all accounts a distinctive form of urbanization compared with both the city center and the *musseques*. Conceived above all as a residential area, it offered limited commercial services, and residents had to commute to central Luanda for work and school. Planners expected that expanding the network of freeways linking Luanda to Luanda Sul would solve the problem, but it later became clear that access was not the only problem besetting the scheme. Luanda's roads were too narrow and quickly congested, so traffic jams became endemic. This led to a complete reconceptualization of Luanda Sul's layout, to make space for better road and freeway access and to expand its commercial and educational services so that residents did not have to go to Luanda every day. In Talatona, a great deal of effort went into the construction of roads, hotels, sport and leisure facilities, shopping malls, and convention centers. Yet no public spaces were included. The only open spaces are wide, often one-way, avenues that are uncomfortable and alienating for pedestrians. The housing type introduced in Talatona was inspired neither by the apartment blocks and single-family residences in the concrete city of the colonial period and early independence years nor by the shacks in the *musseques*; rather, it introduced the radical innovation of the gated community, or the condominium, protected from the outside by barbed wire and private security firms, in a more dramatic way than one would see in the city center. Inside, residents could enjoy urban amenities that the city center no longer offered, such as gardens and parks, and sometimes even swimming pools, tennis courts, fully equipped gyms, and even spas.

With Luanda Sul, the formal city of Luanda started to expand southward. Whereas Luanda Sul may have constituted a pole for urban development out of the historical city in the early beginning, successive waves of internal migration encroached in the space in between. In the emergence of Luanda Sul, one can see the coming together of the forces that have driven the southern expansion of the urban grid and the unbinding of infrastructure. We will see in the

next chapter how the postwar reconstruction government has approached the question of redevelopment.

It is undisputable that the proliferation of gated communities in Luanda does not diverge, at least physically, from the patterns identified by scholars in other locations such as Latin America and other African countries. But in Luanda more specifically the emergence of the gated community as urban typology was predicated on the confluence of several factors—namely, the economy, particularly the oil economy, for whose operations the country depended on expatriate workers; the collapse of public services such as water, electricity, and sanitation; and particularly the shift in the property law.

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Colonial urban authorities and designers may have conceived of Luanda as a whole so as to maintain the tension between the city and the *musseques*, through the coming to terms with a notion of *fronteira do asfalto* that was malleable and flexible, and in constant expansion by integrating more land into the city. With independence, this model for urban expansion was no longer workable. Whereas the city was being informally decentered, the city center was also being informalized to such an extent that in more recent times the putative separation of city center and *musseques* no longer made sense. Central to understanding the obliteration of this category is the preoccupation with Luanda's fate that urban authorities started to show from the mid-1990 onward. The expansion of the urban core to the south of the city center, whose principal aim was to provide more housing, ended up creating the conditions for urban fragmentation, or the reversal of urban composition.

From the standpoint of property and homeownership, the city of Luanda by the 1980s was an immense totality in which the state was almost the absolute owner of all built property. As such, the alienation of this property through what later came to be known as condominiums is important, for this removed housing from state control. To put it in slightly different terms, the condominium, then, being an apartment building or a section of detached single-family homes, was conceived as an excision, or a separation of property out of what was considered to be common (controlled by the state). The vignettes with which I started this chapter illustrate these acts of separation through the formal and informal ways in which apartment dwellers started to close off their premises by erecting walls and installing gates. The collapse of public services that pushed dwellers into finding ways to provide water and electricity for their houses further fractured the city's wholeness.

Whereas the Sale of State Property Act of 1991 intended to transfer the burden of conservation to the users, the Condominium Act of 2004 was drafted so as to force these users into association. This blueprint, through which neighbors come together to solve a common challenge, was transferred onto the condominiums as an urban housing typology. The condominium that in Luanda is for the most part understood in its physical component, as an independent complex of buildings, was also being deployed by the government as a legal tool intended to cut off sets of housing units, buildings, or even floors within the building as a means by which to deal with the disorderly occupation of housing in the city and beyond—a far cry from what the Portuguese had in mind when they sketched the condominium principle in the 1950s, as described earlier. For this time, without the anchor of market forces, the government could only enforce the condominium principle on the housing units that were being built as such.

The perimeterization of Cidade Alta and the parceling out of the land that came under the jurisdiction of Luanda Sul, such as Talatona, will become the major focus of Luanda's future expansion, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Practices that were taking place at a more modest scale, such as the relocation of residents in the zones adjacent to the presidential palace, later became the tools through which the city procured land for expansion. Central in this process is not simply the brute force that goes hand in hand with the removals but the reconfiguration of the political that reinforces the figure of the president of the republic as the main conveyor of urban transformation. In a nutshell, the approach followed for the renewal and beautification of the presidential premises are taken up at a broader scale in order to usher in transformation. However, for this process to unfold, larger questions about land, and not just urban land, had to reassessed. Reservas, then, became the tool at the government's disposal for circumventing the bureaucratic and legal hindrances to the removal of populations.

6. The Urban Yet to Come

Far from being marginal to contemporary processes of scalar recomposition and the reimagination of political communities, African cities can be seen as a frontier for a wide range of diffuse experimentation with the reconfiguration of bodies, territories, and social arrangements necessary to recalibrate technologies of control.—AbdouMaliq Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, 2004

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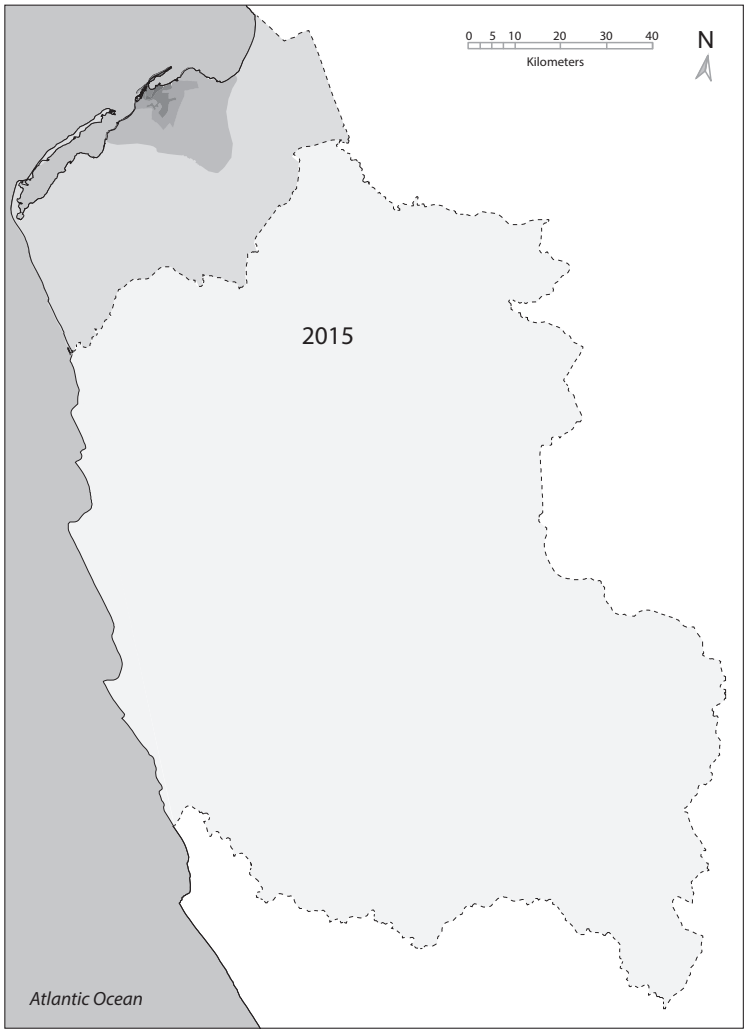
Luanda, so to speak, started with Ilha de Luanda. It was there that the Portuguese founders of the city established themselves in 1576, before moving inland. As almost everywhere in the Portuguese empire, the act of possession was sealed through the construction of a church, in homage to Nossa Senhora do Cabo. Most Luandans would like to believe that the election of such a patron for the first Catholic temple in the colonial settlement was internally motivated, but, in fact, the Portuguese were extending to the African soil the manifestations of popular religiosity that the saint had inspired in medieval Portugal. Throughout the few centuries of Portuguese presence, the natives, the Ilhéus,



Map 6.1. Luanda in 2015.

were able to create their own refined systems of faith and worship, a syncretism between Catholicism and animism. Portuguese religious authorities might have believed that the natives praying in their church were devotees of Nossa Senhora do Cabo when they were, possibly, worshipping their own divinity, Kianda, the spirit of the water. From the 1950s onward, with the exponential growth of the settlers' population, Ilha de Luanda was turned into a recreational zone, without major disturbance to the Native population. Colonial authorities managed to build a few fishermen's villages alongside the houses built by the natives themselves using their own materials and techniques of construction. The success of such a coexistence was partially due to the Estado Novo's protection of folklore as cultural manifestations (in continental Portugal and in the colonies), and in Ilha de Luanda, the Portuguese attempted as much as possible to integrate the locals' cosmogony into everyday practices. For instance, violent tides, called *calemas*, have always been a common event, and the Portuguese, despite the work of land reclamation that was being carried out, did not actively oppose the gift-giving celebrations in which fishermen rowed out into the bay to throw food into the water to, it was believed, feed the Kianda.

With independence, in 1975, the attitude toward popular religious practices changed drastically. The self-proclaimed socialist government led by Agostinho Neto started to crack down on most forms of religion because they promoted superstition, which was then considered a hindrance to the construction of the new (socialist) man. The Kianda celebrations did not disappear, but their organizers and practitioners were forced into finding a secular language for these ceremonies, calling them Festas da Ilha de Luanda, or Festas da Ilha do Cabo (Feasts of Ilha de Luanda, or Feasts of Ilha do Cabo).[1] With the renouncing of the socialist orthodoxy, religion was reinstated and the Festas da Nossa Senhora do Cabo came back onto the city's official calendar. However, when the *calemas* violently swept across Ilha de Luanda in 2009, destroying hundreds of houses, the Provincial Government of Luanda did not contemplate the integrity of these communities and their practices but saw in the tragedy an opportunity to justify the evacuation of residents living on the Avenida Murtala Mohammed, the main road running the length of the island. To soothe the popular uproar, the authorities insisted that those moved out of Ilha were not part of the original community and had come to Luanda as refugees to squat on the state's land.

According to *Novo Jornal*'s reporter Sebastião Vemba, in less than twenty-four hours the Provincial Government organized a convoy of trucks from the Casa Militar (the military office in the presidency) and forced everyone on board. A woman whose baby had just died was forced to embark on one of the trucks with her baby's corpse. Alongside her were thousands of adults and

children with all the belongings they were able to salvage not only from the destruction of the tides but also from the destruction of their homes by the brigades of the Casa Militar. The island's inhabitants were moved to Zango, a drive of about two hours to the southeast of the city, and placed in a camp with tents, in the rain, with no schools for the children and far removed from their places of work.[2] A few months after the relocation, the then governor of Luanda, Francisca do Espírito Santo, announced that the cleared area on Ilha de Luanda would form part of a larger project to create a variety of leisure facilities for the city. Since then, a vast sidewalk has been built to accommodate restaurants, bars, and other ventures catering to Luanda's nightlife. Part of the area cleared was later claimed by the redevelopment of the Bay of Luanda, discussed in chapter 1. In total, 700 families were moved out of the area. Only in 2016 did a group of around 100 families "receive plots of land for self-help building in an area that is managed by the Provincial Government, referred to by locals as *Ilha Seca* ('dry island')," [3] while the vast majority remained in tents, a provisional situation that has now become permanent. In this manner, the response to a "natural disaster" became an alibi for forced relocation.[4]

I have shown since the beginning of this book that there has never been anything extraordinary about forced removals, and that those traumatic events have been conceived, before and after independence, as a mundane technique for *ordenamento do território* (land management). But those that started around 2005 were of a different nature. It was not simply a matter of removing squatters, or residents who in the eyes of urban authorities were illegally occupying land. Nor was it a way to consolidate the urban grid as during the height of the modernist interventions. Those removals were part of a major urban upheaval through which a reconstruction-oriented government was attempting to undo the marks of the civil war and poor management of the city. But to do so, urban solutions such as the implementation of master plans as a mechanism and tools for urban management would not be enough. Politics would have to come in; and it did, taking the form of a total reconfiguration of state-society relations.

In 1992, Angola shed ties with the communist orthodoxy and embraced neoliberalism. In 2010, a new constitution that anointed absolute presidentialism was approved. The two decades between these landmark events are crucial in understanding not only the overcoming of colonial urbanization, caught up in the divide between the center and the periphery, but also the coming into being of a new form of urbanism. Urban theorists have come up with several concepts to make sense of similar formations, such as "bypass-implant urbanism," "splintering urbanism," or the "urbanism of exception,"[5] but

Figure 6.1. Aerial view of Luanda, 1992. Source: John Liebenberg.

none of them provides a theoretical framework that encompasses those urban transformations occurring in Luanda.

Urban transformation in Luanda was of an eminent political nature because it went hand in hand with the increasing interference of the presidency of the republic, and the president himself, in the city's matters, through the creation of numerous organs to compete with the provincial urban authorities. A significant part of the urban upheaval, more specifically the construction of housing and infrastructure, was put under the Programa de Reconstrução Nacional, which was controlled by entities under the direct supervision of the president of the republic. The formation and insertion of those organs into the fabric of the state is the by-product of sweeping reconfigurations of political power, particularly the role of the president of the republic in relation to other branches of the government and the administration. This was achieved through the reconfirmation of formal and informal presidentialism, which allowed the president of the republic to claim prerogatives that should have been distributed among other bodies of the state, such as the Ministry of Finance and the Provincial Government of Luanda.

The Luanda that emerged out of these interventions is now a far cry from the one with the center-periphery divide of the 1970s. The construction of

centralidades and *urbanizações*—such as Nova Vida, Zango, and Kilamba—changed Luanda's geometry dramatically. Luanda is no longer a city encircled by *musseques* but a historic center encircled by other centers, which are still encircled by informal settlements. These transformations came about with a major corollary. One the one hand, there has been the emergence of a sort of bifurcated urbanism, in which the well-to do and the middle class partake and engage in market-based relations (they can buy and sell land, for instance), which, as I showed earlier, was the motivation for the emergence of Luanda Sul. On the other, places such as Zango came about, with houses—mostly devoid of formal market value—given to removed populations. My argument is not that these two categories are frozen, or even interchangeable. The point is rather that these societal arrangements, the bifurcation of the urban, are the by-product of the inscription of power on space: the more the urban expanded, through the emergence of *centralidades* and *urbanizações*, the more power tended to gravitate around the central government. This is for the most part how the urban has been unraveling in present-day Luanda.

Figure 6.2. A Chinese worker taking a break during the construction of Kilamba, 1992. Source: Michael MacGarry.

Bifurcating the Urban

During the electoral campaign for the first elections since the end of the civil war, in 2008, the then president of the Republic of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, pledged the construction of one million houses in Luanda.[6] The ruling party won these elections in a landslide, and dos Santos reiterated the promise at various other events, particularly in October 2008, during the visit to Luanda of Anna Kamujulo Tibaijuka, who at the time was the undersecretary-general and executive director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). In a speech prepared for the occasion, dos Santos added some more detail on the government's urban renewal and housing strategy, whose scope and shape were up to that point unknown to the general public. For dos Santos, such a critical overhaul of Luanda's urban landscape would be delivered in the form of the implementation of policies, relying on the contribution of "capitais públicos e privados" (public and private capital), whose ultimate objective was the production of "espaços públicos de qualidade, na requalificação e revitalização dos centros urbanos: com inclusão social" (public spaces of quality, in the requalification and renewal of urban centers with social inclusion), through the elaboration of master and municipal plans, that "compreendendo e definindo uma estratégia deste territórios e da rede urbana, não só nas suas vertentes social e económica, mas também na sua interacção com os sectores agrícola, industrial, de logística, turismo e infraestruturas aeroportuárias, ferroviárias, e outras" (comprehend and define a strategy of these territories and the urban network, not only on this social and economic aspect, but also in its interaction with the agricultural, industrial, logistic, touristic and infrastructural sectors). These sets of interventions were, among others, buttressed by "da maximização da utilização do transporte públicos e serão incentivas politica que diminuam a circulação automóvel nos centros dos aglomerados urbanos, em especial nas áreas notáveis do ponto de vista histórico-cultural ou ambiental" (the maximization of the utilization of public transport so as to diminish automobile use in the urban centers, especially in those areas of historic-cultural and environmental interest).[7] For the materialization of such a vision, dos Santos offered the calculation that his government was willing to disburse US$50 million at the average of US$50,000 per house, in the next four years, until 2012. In the following years, the government embarked on a construction frenzy to reach its objectives.

It was with the purpose of making room for the construction of housing, partly to fulfill this electoral promise, that the government was undertaking the massive clearings, an example of which I discussed earlier in this chapter. Of

note in this spate of evictions was that informal settlements were being cleared to allow for the construction not simply of high-end condominiums but also of social housing, whose beneficiaries were in similar economic circumstances as those who were being moved out. I call this process the bifurcation of the urban. To understand the impact of this process on urban transformation, one needs to engage with the reconfiguration of the political system. This system is, in part, reminiscent of what Partha Chatterjee has called "the politics of the governed" to make sense of the surplus society that capitalism in India has produced, a society whose members struggle to find their place in the market-driven economy and who are for the most part administered through governmental agencies.[8]

One of the most important axioms of the socialist regime was the interchangeability of the state and the citizenry. Ownership of housing during these years was buttressed by these principles in the sense that what belonged to the state belonged to the people, and the state properly speaking, with its apparatus and resources, was merely a custodian of the people's property. Squatters who had moved to the city center in the 1970s were not conscious of the fact that they were tenants of the state, but the larger mindset was that they were simply occupying houses left behind by the *colonos* (colonizers). This order of things started to change with the shift to neoliberalism, particularly when it came to the land question. The neoliberal, market-driven constitution approved in 1992 introduced the conceptual split between the state and the people by stating strongly that land belongs to the state (Art. 12). The Lei dos Direitos de Superfície (Law of Surface Rights), discussed in the previous chapter, which created the legal and regulatory framework for the emergence of Luanda Sul, was a translation of this constitutional principle in that it formalized the conditions by which citizens, and particularly investors, could have access to land. They could only benefit from land for a given amount of time stipulated by the state, which could repossess it if those users failed to render it profitable.

However, at the end of the civil war, in 2002, there was a shift into authoritarianism with strong implications for the ways in which land was accessed and how people had access to it. Angola held the first multiparty elections, in 1992, as a semipresidential regime in which the president of the republic was the head of the state, while the prime minister was the head of the government. These elections did not produce a winner, and the country was soon immersed in a more destructive cycle of civil war. To more effectively and expeditiously end to the war, the president of the republic, dos Santos, abolished the office of the prime minister in 1998 and became both head of the state and head of the government. With the end of the civil war, the political system did not enter into a process of democratic normalization, but dos Santos would use his

accrued powers to formalize a state of emergency as a way to put the country onto the path of progress.

It was under this framework that the murky and constitutionally questionable Programa de Reconstrução Nacional (Program for National Reconstruction) was devised. Devasted by the long civil war, the Angolan government approached international donors for funding to rebuild infrastructure that had been destroyed by the conflict. International donors conditioned the loans on the democratization of the country. The government then turned to China, which was at that point upping the sophistication of its model of loaning money for infrastructure rehabilitation.[9] In 2004, Angola and China signed the framework agreement for a strategic public-private partnership, which became law under the Resolução 31/04. Under this partnership, Angola supplied oil to China, and the oil was converted into lines of credit to finance the operations of Chinese companies in Angola involved in the voluminous dossier on reconstruction.[10]

But there is far more to it. Whereas this oil-backed loan was facilitated by the Export-Import Bank of China and managed in Angola by the Ministry of Finance, the Angolan government, more specifically the presidency of the republic, opened another credit line of over US$10 billion through the China International Fund (CIF), which was directly managed by the Gabinete de Reconstrução Nacional (Office for National Reconstruction, GRN), under the direct oversight of the president of the republic.[11] The head of the GRN was General Hélder Vieira Dias, also known as Kopelipa, who was a member of dos Santos's inner circle, minister of state, and head of the Casa Civil da Presidência. The GRN has never publicly shared any information on the funds it received and used, but it has been calculated that at the height of program activity the GRN could have been managing a portfolio of around US$15 billion.[12]

Having this shadow war chest at his disposal allowed dos Santos to insulate himself from the government and implement his own semiprivate political agenda. It is worth noting, in this regard, that the same year that the framework agreement was signed with China and that the GRN was constituted, 2004, is also the year the Lei de Terras de Angola was approved. One cannot overstate how these three legal arrangements are imbricated and related to each other. For the implementation of the Programa de Reconstrução Nacional was buttressed by the existence of not only an authoritarian mindset to drive it but also one that could produce its legal and regulatory conditions. The Lei de Terras de Angola was received with enormous excitement on the part of the civil society and NGOs working on land issues because of the expectation that it would finally clarify the various blind spots, not only across different legal regimes (the constitutional law and the Civil Code) but also in the

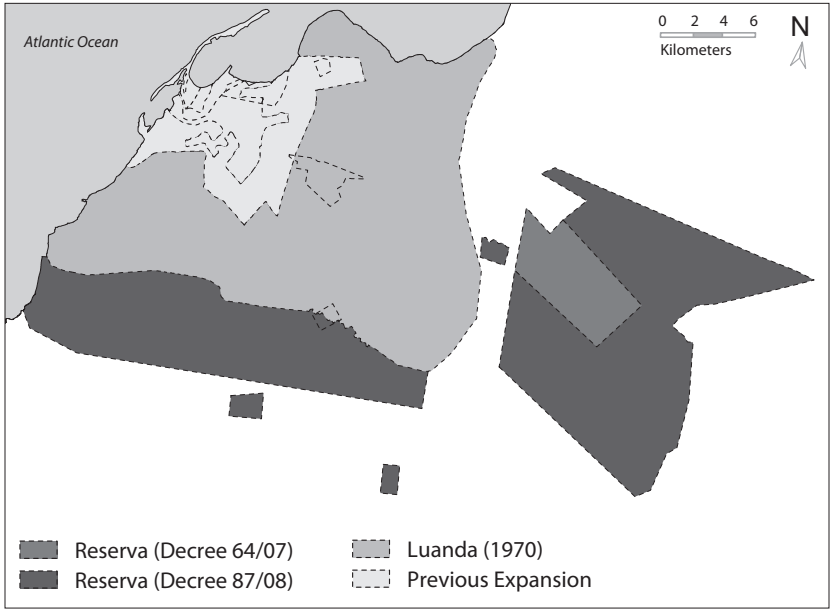
gap between the letter of the law and the practice of urban authorities. Unlike previous acts, either colonial or postcolonial, it was the first land act to specifically address urban land. But, this legal formulation, which crystalizes various other documents, procedures, and intentions and painstakingly defines land ownership, would soon became a matter of concern for civic organizations involved with the land question.

On the one hand, the Lei de Terras de Angola reaffirmed the primordial right of the state over land and establishes and formalizes the conditions under which private individuals and investors can access land. On the other hand, and more important, it created a sort of bifurcation of the land structure. Parallel to the domain of marketable land, there was another domain of land being extricated from market relations, which took the name Reservas Fundiárias do Estado. Article 27, on land reserves, establishes that "são havidos como terrenos reservados ou reservas os terrenos excluídos do regime geral de ocupação, uso ou fruição por pessoas singulares singulares ou colectivas, em função da sua afectação, total or parcial, à realização de fins especiais que determinam a sua constituição" (reserved land or reserves are those tracts of land excluded from the general regime of occupation, use or fruition, by individuals or legal persons, by virtue of its affectation, total or partial, to the realization of the ends that their constitution determines).[13] Included in this regime are stretches of maritime land; the protection of land for dams; the land in the vicinity of infrastructure, such as railways, roads, and bridges, as well as airports; and land confined within military bases and other structures for the protection of the state.[14]

As the juridical system in Angola is aligned with Roman jurisprudence, it is the Anglo-Saxon juridical figure of eminent domain—which allows authorities to transfer private land to the public domain, subject to compensation—that bears closer resemblance to the Reservas, although with notable caveats. With land already being public, by virtue of the constitution, Reservas were conceived as the legal instrument that allowed for the transfer of land from the public domain of the state to the private domain of the state, which came with two fundamental corollaries. On the one hand, the government was free to pursue removals and relocations of those using the state's private land and, on the other, the government could cut off land, divert it from public use, to realize projects of national interest, such as the construction of housing and infrastructure. These political-legal transformations allowed the government to claim an unprecedented hold on urban land, and they were at the heart of the state-led transformation reviewed below.

None of the above-mentioned legal articulations seem outrageous, or even specific, and one would find parts of it, in various iterations, in most legal systems in the world. The particularity of the scope of this disposition of

the law is that most Reservas have been determined after the fact so as to justify clearing the land from informal housing and subsistence farms. Through the decree 87/08 by which the government has decided to "implementar um conjunto de investimentos públicos e estruturantes" (implement an array of strategic and structuring public investment), it transferred "do domínio público para o domínio do Estado" (from the public to the private domain of the state) various urban plots, for the purpose of building housing projects. Those tracts of land comprised areas from urban districts such as Sambizanga, Cazenga, Benfica, Bairro Operário, and Boavista. It is difficult to determine the exact amount of land transferred to the private domain of the state in Luanda, more so as the area and limits of the city have changed over time and the city has been absorbing land from its surrounding semiurban and rural areas since independence. However, by 2009–10 the overall area of Luanda was about 116 square kilometers, with the metropolitan area comprising a territory of about 18,000 square kilometers. From this it is safe to infer that whereas from the Cidade de Luanda only a small fraction was added to the Reservas—namely, the section of Bairro Operário Boavista, in Sambizanga—the overall area of the Reservas combined, most of which lies outside Cidade de Luanda, occupies an area three times larger than Luanda's historic center (map. 6.2).[15]



Map 6.2. The Reservas in relation to the area of Luanda in 1970.

Since the Reservas are an instrument that allows the state to transfer plots of land from its public to its private domain, or to withdraw land from circulation, they have contributed to the bifurcation of the urban. For instance, whereas Article 7 puts an emphasis on the "não exércicio ou pela inobservância dos indíces the aproveitamento útil e efectivo (lack of use and disregard for the utilitarian and effective use of the land), whose lack of observation is considered a reason for dispossession to the benefit of the state, other sections of the law seem to allow the state to demonetize land.[16] However, this land bifurcation does not necessarily produce a bifurcation of citizenship, or a sort of citizen-subject split as famously theorized by Mahmood Mamdani.[17] For social regimes and repertoires that preside over the transfer and circulation of land are too complex to be cast under these categories. I have met Luandans who have been given houses in Zango, who then sold them so as to purchase shacks in Boavista, precisely the place they had been removed from, so as to be given another house in Zango.[18] The rationale for this architecture of power, as Sylvia Croese has persuasively argued, is the reliance of the ruling power on the poor, not for "tax collection or labor" but for "political legitimacy and social stability."[19] This produces a system in which the ruling party expects the loyalty of the population in exchange for the houses and other amenities directly given to the population.

Centering through Decentering

By the end of the civil war, in 2002, around the time Angola started to negotiate the terms and conditions for a possible loan with China, as mentioned above, Luanda was in a critical condition. The clashes that followed the failure of the peace agreement between the Angolan government and the armed opposition, in 1992, were more destructive than any other moment of the long civil war. As was the case since independence, Luanda was spared from the military destruction, beyond the few days of military confrontation in late October and early November. However, the consequences of the war were profoundly felt in Luanda, as the capital became the country's main shelter for hundreds of thousands of people fleeing from zones ravaged by the war. On account of that, and coupled with the city's high natural population growth, from the resumption of the war, in 1992, to the turn of the millennium, the population had mushroomed from 1,698,000 to 2,829,000.[20] Under these circumstances, housing the population or at least allowing the population to house itself, so as to deconcentrate Luanda, became a crucial political endeavor. With the advent of peace, which came with the possibility of diverting funds that otherwise would be spent in the war effort, the *ordenamento do território* became a priority

among urban authorities. Since early on, there was the firm conviction among urban authorities that the most deleterious effects of land management could be addressed through the elaboration of a master plan to tackle pressing issues such as infrastructure, improving electricity distribution and circulation, and housing. None of the planning initiatives I discuss below have ever been even partially implemented as I have demonstrated earlier. But the way they have come to be conceived, the agencies they involve, the rifts among agencies they stir, says much about the messiness of planning that has been addressed in African urban scholarship. Vanessa Watson and Richard Satgé, for instance, have used the term "conflicting rationalities" to make the case for the "divergence between state and community positions" in regard to planning implementation.[21] For the case of Luanda, it reveals the depth of political reconfiguration and the instruments that were deemed necessary for the implementation of the Programa de Reconstrução Nacional. Ultimately, it shows the increasing grip on the city from which dos Santos's entourage came to benefit.

In the mid-1990s, the Lebanese firm Dar Al-Handasah, also registered in Angola as the Dar Group, was approached to produce a study on urban growth. The team of consultants that Dar assembled for the task was asked to establish the ground rules and procedures to control, discipline, and manage the expansion of the city. In the various documents and reports they produced, they paid particular attention to the urban land question, for they seemed to be convinced that land ownership was the main culprit for the failure of the various planning initiatives the city had entertained. It was common that land targeted for development was progressively occupied by emerging *musseques*, an issue that could only be solved with the improvement of land regulatory regimes.[22] Taking further urban population growth as inevitable, the consultants proposed an approach that would consist of, on the one hand, the reordering of the city center and, on the other, the upgrading of the *musseques*.

To accommodate Luanda's growing population, Dar's consultants suggested the creation of a zone of urban expansion in the hinterland to the north of the city, integrating parts of the neighboring province of Bengo into Luanda's metropolitan area. While the central government was promoting the expansion of the city to the south, as seen in the previous chapter, Dar was making an alternative case for the opening of the northern sectors of Luanda to urbanization, and Dar even pushed for the construction of three satellite cities there: Sassa Bengo for 1,800,000 inhabitants, and Coastal City and Catete for 100,000 people each. Yet, taking up another tip from the French OTAM (Ominium Technique d'Aménagement [Technical Consortium for Planning]) plan prepared for the colonial authorities in 1973, Dar's *Integrated Plans* suggested

limiting the expansion of the city to 17 million hectares (about 42 million acres, or a density of one hundred persons per hectare for a population of 1.7 million) and proposed to accommodate the growth of the city in three new cities, Viana, Cacuaco, and Camama.[23] Undeveloped land for agricultural and leisure purposes should enclose the city, so as to improve its environment and protect it against the mushrooming of informal settlements. Having this expansion as a guiding principle, Dar's planners analyzed three major scenarios, or alternatives, that would be better suited to address urban growth. The first one was called "Concentrated New Development Independent of the Existing Urban Center of Luanda" and was based on the plan for the new city of Kilamba, which was already being designed through the planning firm Shanghai Tongji Planning and Design Institute. The objective of this scenario was to allow for the emergence of other central nodes that would not only deconcentrate Luanda's historical center but also provide more services to the population, particularly those who lived outside the center. This was also the scenario that the firm was more sympathetic toward, for the area concerned was confined between two major rivers, the Kwanza and the Bengo, which created physical limits for expansion. The second scenario analyzed, "Concentric Peripheral Growth Pattern," was meant to take advantage of the circular highway, the Via Expressa, opened in 2008, which was about 60 kilometers (37 miles) long. One of the merits of this scenario was that it put brakes on the growth of the city center by restricting physical growth to the outskirts of town, "by limiting the outward physical spread."[24] The third scenario, called "Outward Growth and Optimization of Land Occupation," emphasized the reordering of the city through the construction of key connections and an integrated transportation system that would better link the peripheries to the center.

Looking closely into Dar's massive document, one easily glimpses the difficulty of its application. The consultants' work was being done under the auspices of the Provincial Government, but the scope of planning transcended the limits of the province itself. They were pushing for the reorganization of the entire province by recommending the superseding of the then current administrative division, one in which the city was divided up into *bairros*, for one in which Luanda was composed of nine districts. They were perhaps trying to come to terms with a representation of Luanda in which all the new and informal settlements would be comprised within the scope of a formal urban plan. The key for the functioning of the order they were proposing was decentering the city center through the emergence of other centers that would strive for autonomy. They correctly diagnosed that the poor implementation of planning in Luanda was caused by an ineffective municipal structure, which was

broken up into six municipal areas rather than a single citywide government body with the power to make strategic citywide decisions," insofar as "it is clear that the scale of growth has outpaced the development of related infrastructure, and with growth set to continue at 6% per annum, [it] will continue to require infrastructure, with related services and facilities."[25] To overcome the capacity insufficiency, Dar Al-Handasah consultants recommended the establishment of an Urban Development Commission by the GPL, with the participation of central government ministries and consultant partners. Referred to as the Luanda Urban Development Commission (CUDL) this body would have responsibility for policy, planning, administration, infrastructure rehabilitation/maintenance, and service delivery.[26] For this to happen, Dar recognized that the scale of the interventions it was proposing went beyond the capacity of Luanda's Provincial Government, and one of the recommendations of the plans was the "creation of [an] Institutional Framework capable of managing an Urban Sector Development Strategy [USDS]," through "the establishment of an Urban Development Renewal Board (UDRB) or equivalent, provided with the powers to implement the USDS and the development of urban development and renewal regulations."[27] The UDRB should be a "Central Government Body responsible for the coordination and execution of construction projects within Luanda," and only directly accountable to the Council of Ministers. Furthermore, the *Integrated Plans* considered that the head of this body should have ministerial status, and that the UDRB's budget should be independent from both the Ministry of Public Works and the Provincial Government.[28] In other words, Dar was suggesting a more centralized process, preferably out of the hands of the city's regulatory body, to control the city's administration.

Presented in the form of a thousand-odd-page document, *Integrated Plans of Urban and Infrastructure Expansion of Luanda/Bengo* was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2011.[29] However, this plan was sidelined, and the main reason was not simply the rift between the Provincial and the National Government, or which institution should conduct the process, as Ricardo Cardoso seems to argue.[30] Such a stance is not incorrect, but it needs to be put in a larger context that takes into account the transformations of the fabric of the state itself. Some of them have been already discussed earlier in this chapter, particularly the ones that refer to the land question and how it relates to the institutional reforms of 2004, with the approval of the China loan and the GRN. But others are of a deeply political nature and speak to the ways in which the president of the republic, dos Santos, came to have such a command over the city's transformation. Here again one needs to backtrack so as to grasp the political configurations from 1998 onward that I mentioned before.

The presidentialism that was coming into being was sanctified by the constitution of 2010, a document produced by dos Santos's entourage and approved by the National Assembly, rubberstamped by the majority MPLA National Assembly members. Even though the new constitution enshrined fundamental civic rights, such as the right to protest, it formalized the prerogatives that since 1998 dos Santos had been taking over from other institutions of the state apparatus. It also drastically changed the voting system, creating a system in which elected presidents governed like medieval monarchs but were not directly elected by voters. Rather, they automatically became the president of the republic by virtue of having their name on top of the list of the winning political party. What the Angolan constitutionalists had in mind was the South African model, where the president of the republic is elected along the same lines. The particularity of the Angolan case, as many critics have voiced, is the lack of a system of checks and balances.[31] Even though presidents govern almost single-handedly, they are not accountable and cannot be brought to justice or demoted. More alarmingly is that not having a system of local power in place (Angola has never held local elections), and with provincial and local authorities being appointed by the president of the republic—or appointed by those appointed by the president—deprives the provincial and local administrations from constituting a counterweight to central power. In this context, the rift that may pit the central against the Provincial Government does not have any significance. Major government portfolios, in the iteration of the 2010 constitution, are approved by the presidency of the republic as presidential decrees. Of importance is this regard is the frequent use of the term *Executivo* (Executive) to make sense of the separation between the central government and the presidency of the republic.

In this context, building the one million houses was conceived as a task that only the Executivo could perform, as it required the simplification of the tender system and the protection of an opacity that was deemed necessary for the implementation of the Programa de Reconstrução Nacional. It was, simply put, the institutionalization of the state of emergency, the one that came into being so as to put an end to the civil war. In this regard, Dar Group had accomplished a major task, which was an invitation to imagine what a decentralized expansion of urban Luanda could look like. But even if the legal framework the consultants proposed as the managerial apparatus of the master plan followed the lines of the neoliberal doctrine—in which public prerogatives are transferred to private institutions—they still conceived the Provincial Government of Luanda as the epicenter of the operations. However, as in many other aspects of Angolan political life in which vital administrative portfolios were

being transferred to the presidency of the republic, Cidade Alta became the purveyor of urban transformation.

None of these events unfolded overnight and all were part of dos Santos's strategy to encompass power, which, as I have sketched in the previous chapter, consisted, first of all, of the creation of parallel organizations to duplicate the work that the formal ones were performing and, eventually, replace the formal ones by the parallel ones. For even though the Ministry of Territorial Administration had published an executive decree in 2004 (Executive Decree 102/04) giving the provincial government "the responsibility for ensuring and controlling the development of Luanda in all sectors,"[32] in the same year the central government once again demoted a provincial governor and appointed an administrative commission as replacement. Moreover, in the following year, the central government created two parallel organisms, namely the Comissão para o Desenvolvimento de Luanda (Luanda Urban Development Commission) and, later, the Grupo Técnico (GATEC), which took over some of the responsibilities of the GPL, such as the "rehousing of the communities living in the areas scheduled for projects of social impact."[33]

It is under these all-encompassing political reconfigurations that one may more positively grasp the scope and dimensions of the urban transformation ushered in from the first decade of the twenty-first century onward. With changes in the electoral system and the redistribution of power and prerogatives among the various branches of the government, dos Santos and his Executive were then free to approve the most outrageous pieces of legislation and conduct the most criminal evictions with no concern that such moves would hinder dos Santos's prospect of being reelected. Furthermore, dos Santos was also given free rein to do things the way it pleased him. He deemed the GPL unsuited and incapable of managing the city's urban planning process, and, bringing this task to the Executive, he appointed his own daughter, Isabel dos Santos, as the head of the master planning consortium. Dubbed the richest woman in Africa, Isabel dos Santos assembled, through her real estate company, Urbinvest, a conglomerate of firms and entities to produce the Plano Director Geral Metropolitano de Luanda (Metropolitan Plan for Luanda; PDGML). These entities included the British architectural firm Broadway Malyan and the South African consulting engineering company Aurecon, and for data collection, the planning effort relied on researchers affiliated with the Portuguese Universidade Nova de Lisboa (New University of Lisbon).

Any doubt about who was in control of Luanda's urban overhaul was dispelled by the official presentation of the master plan, which, in itself, was an enactment of the theater of power behind the new constitutional order. The venue

for the launch, on December 15, 2015, was not the headquarters of the Council of Ministers or any venue in the presidential palace, nor a convention center, but the noble room of the Provincial Government of Luanda itself. This gesture is of more significance as it occurred by the time another governor of Luanda had been sacked by dos Santos and replaced by an administrative commission led by a lawyer, Graciano Domingos, whose presence in the act was not as a representative of Luandans but as a facilitator of the transfer of planning oversight to Urbinvest and its associates. The ceremony, part of a two-day meeting, was chaired by the president of the republic himself and attended by all his staff members. In a city where the governor had just been dismissed, it was an indication that the central government was in charge. The new rules of articulation between the national and the Provincial Government were unsurprisingly introduced by Carlos Feijó, an advisor to the president, who has been credited not only as the main architect of the "atypical" constitution of 2010 but also as a broker of the expansion of presidential power in the city.[34] Feijó is also behind the formation of several technical groups and commissions that came to usurp the powers of the Provincial Government. On this occasion, Feijó said once again that it was the position of the national government that the province of Luanda did not have the capacity to solve the innumerable technical problems it faced and that the city should rather be governed by a technical commission. This view was consistent with the positions taken in the plans of both Dar and dos Santos, which argued for a model of governance outside the purview of the local government. The way was thus paved for Isabel dos Santos to introduce her own program for saving Luanda. Unsurprisingly, the vision of Luanda Isabel dos Santos expounded in front of her father's cabinet was strikingly similar to the broad strokes of Luanda's transformation that President dos Santos had elaborated in the meeting with the UN-Habitat representative Anna Tibaijuka. It was not simply that Isabel dos Santos was voicing her father's vision of Luanda's future. It was also that "fantasy urbanism" was an ubiquitous resource that any authoritarian regime could appropriate.[35] Giving substance to these fantasies, Isabel dos Santos spelled out that Luanda's urban transformation would be anchored in three pillars. The first one, "Livable Luanda," pertained to the provision of the services and facilities that the city needed. Accordingly, a habitable city should include neighborhoods that enabled people to live close to their workplaces so that they could get there on foot or by using public transport. The second pillar was called "Beautiful Luanda," and here the priority lay with "protecting and enhancing the city's natural resources."[36] This was also explained as a way of linking the past with the future, for Luanda was once considered "one of the most beautiful cities in the world." The third pillar,

called "Strategic Luanda," was concerned with promoting economic growth and diversification of the economy. Here, the point was to turn Luanda into a dynamic city, a city for the youth, located in the center of Africa and the world.[37]

The PDGML acknowledged the importance of the *Integrated Plans* proposed by Dar and used it as an "initial base standard" but chastised it for its lack of ambition and "reserve[d] the right to elevate this (at times) modest target to something more appropriate to a key world capital city."[38] To drive this urban agenda of uncompromising scope, the organigram behind the planning initiative was substantially altered. Master planning managers would no longer report to the Provincial Government of Luanda but to the presidency of the republic. In that sense, Dar's consultants were right when they suggested that the Provincial Government of Luanda did not have technical capacity to meet the challenges of implementing a master plan on the scale of the province of Luanda. Whereas the *Integrated Plans* introduced for the first time the notion of Luanda's metropolitan area, which consisted of the province of Luanda and a few municipalities of the neighboring province, Bengo, the PDGML practically fused the provinces of Luanda and Bengo, which together occupied an area of about 522.1 hectares (1290.13 acres). Planning at such a scale also meant that details would be subsumed into the larger vision that the master plan strived to achieve.

But the presidency of republic did not have the technical capacity to implement a plan on such a scale. The upshot of the master plan was that by the time the PDGML was introduced to Luandans, the presidency of the republic was already in control of the technical instruments for assembling structures for the refurbishment of Cidade Alta, which could be easily amplified so as to transform Luanda. Whereas for Dar's consultants, the core of planning inaction was fundamentally the land question, which signals that Dar's intervention was still limited to the realm of the urban, the PDGML made a different assessment, less urban and more fundamentally political, in tandem with the political reconfigurations discussed above. In reviewing the institutional framework of the province of Luanda, the PDGML's consultants came to the conclusion that the reason for inaction was the "number of competing entities . . . charged with implementing different elements of the presidential decree 59/11, although no single government body was implicitly empowered to command and manage the process," which, "given the scope and scale of the task at hand," needed to change.[39] The PDGML's consultants also recommended the creation of an independent institution to manage the implementation of the master plan, the Regeneration and Urban Authority of Luanda.[40] However, contrary to Dar's position, in the PDGML, this institution reported directly to

the presidency of the republic, more specifically the Casa Civil, rather than the Provincial Government of Luanda.

Further arguments for the similarities of José Eduardo dos Santos's vision and Isabel dos Santos's plan were the political scope of the intervention they each proposed. Nepotism does not single-handedly explain such a communion of interests, but it explains the channels of communication between José Eduardo's philosophy of power and Isabel's acumen for turning an abstract vision into business opportunities or, in this case, practical realizations. For at stake here was no longer planning for land use or infrastructure provision. Instead, the PDGML was attempting to plan society itself. Isabel dos Santos may have often insisted that the PDGML was the outcome of a thorough process of public consultation, but it relies heavily on the availability of previous documentation that supersedes the technical domain of planning itself and takes stock of the discussions among political strategists on how to assemble society in a way that consolidates the undisputed rule of the ruling party for at least the next four decades.[41] Not surprisingly, the document states that the plan "covers all matters relating to housing, transport, education, health and environment. It delivers centrally managed and funded initiatives undertaken in liaison with the National Government institutions for each discipline."[42] It does this in many ways, particularly by integrating suggestions and recommendations from previous planning interventions and by drawing on reports commissioned by the government on how to bring about social change, in particular the voluminous *Angola Strategy 2025* report (also known as Angola Horizon 2025).[43] The plan admits that these documents, and many others, such as the Angolan Development Plan 2013–2017 and the Provincial Development Plan 2013–2017, "were integrated into a unique vision for the local development of the province until 2030."[44]

It is through the lenses of these political and social arrangements that the land question, under the formulation proposed through the reserves, should be revisited. Dar's plans carefully mention the possibility of "expropriation by a public utility."[45] Conversely, by the time Isabel dos Santos presented her vision on the urban yet to come, the political terrain in which institutions operated had already shifted. For by December 2015, all the shenanigans regarding land use that could require negotiation had already been superseded. If, prior to 2010, the Angolan government was concerned with removing squatters and illegals from the city under the constraints of the land-related legal regime that allowed those with tenure to claim compensation, after 2010 this was for the most part not the case. For the plan unceremoniously contemplated the "removal of unlicensed developments from open land,"[46] and it stated that

"displaced households will be subsumed into areas licensed for new residential centralities, established with appropriate service provision."[47] Planning could then take place after the fact: "Where future roads and utility infrastructure is planned existing residents will need to be relocated and rehoused."[48] This only furthered the bifurcation of the urban, in that it created the conditions for more removal and more groups of the population under the whim of the government in order to access habitation.

Urban Intentions: The Conditions for Things to Come

The critique of grandiloquent planning initiatives in the Global South has been undertaken by a number of scholars who have located such gestures in an urban theorization in which local democratic process, or the idea of the state as the purveyor of the common good, is superseded, and the process of urban transformation is taken over by international coalitions—for instance, by global consultancy firms.[49] More specifically, the vision that President dos Santos was intimating for Luanda's geographic expansion on that day of October 2008, and that was corroborated more assertively in Isabel dos Santos's master plan, could easily have been plucked from the modernist master plans Watson has derogatorily called, "African urban fantasies."[50] Tailored for the tastes of an emerging middle and upper class in Africa, these fantasy plans are, according to Watson, dreams that offer "environments that are (hyper) modern, high status, clean and well-serviced."[51] Furthermore, even though many of these anticipations of urban futures "may or may not materialize or may be implemented in part,"[52] as Watson suggests, the result is the unevenness they produce on the urban, epitomized by urban fragmentation and urban discontinuity, in the form of enclaves, fortifications, and enclosures. The urban formations that have been extensively examined in the urban literature and given concepts such as "splintered urbanism" or "urbanism of exception" may effortlessly be deployed to describe Luanda's fragmentation through the emergence of *urbanizações* and *centralidades* such as Talatona. However, to fully grasp the unfolding of these sorts of fragmentation in the context of Luanda, precepts of a critical urban theory unable to grapple with local contingencies may not be of use. More than the urban properly speaking per se, urban transformation in Luanda is anchored in political transformation, and particularly in shifts in state-society relations.

Even though the planning initiatives discussed above have not been implemented, they nonetheless have left enduring effects. On a more practical and expedient level, both the Dar Group and Isabel dos Santos's conglomerates were

awarded tenders to construction of infrastructure or housing in the plans they were elaborating.[53] As such, I would like to suggest that the accuracy in reading the expansion of present-day Luanda, from the first decade of the twenty-first century onward, can only be understood through that which was proposed and not concretized, the same way I have earlier in this book made the case that one can only understand Luanda's modernization, in the early 1940s, through that which was proposed by de Gröer and Moreira da Silva. But what may be of even greater importance is engaging with the process that accompanied these planning initiatives, for they speak of mechanisms of power, the functioning of the institutions they mobilize, and the necessary shifting in regulatory frameworks. In sum, despite the lack of technical capacity to implement the proposed initiatives, they nonetheless are shaped by and create the conditions for things to come.

Even if these plans did not directly anticipate the emergence of some of the most famous *centralidades* and *urbanizações*, such Nova Vida, Kilamba, and Zango, the ideas and concepts they represented, and the institutions and resources they mobilized, certainly created the conditions for the expansion of the city far beyond the historic center. Their coming into being is caught up with, intersected by, and produced by the interplay of the institutions and the repertoires I have discussed in this chapter

When the construction of the development project Projecto Nova Vida (New Life Project) started in 1999, it was announced as the implementation of a new philosophy of urbanization. Nova Vida took the form of a gigantic gated community located about 18 kilometers (11 miles) to the south of the city center and between two major roads, the Estrada do Camama-Talatona and Comandante Loy. Covering an area of about 182 hectares (450 acres), the whole project involved the construction of 10,000 units, in various phases. In the first phase, which took place from 2001 to 2005, 2,000 units—single-family dwellings and apartment buildings—were built. In the second phase, up to 2007, 1,862 units were added to Nova Vida.[54] But the agreement with China was not yet on the government agenda, and the focus was the implementation of an urban development project along the lines of neoliberal precepts. For whereas the project was initially intended to accommodate civil servants and war veterans, it was the first time the government was coming to terms with a rent-to-purchase scheme, which would allow renters to claim property ownership after twenty years of regular rental payments.[55] However, signs of presidential interference into urban issues were already creeping in. The construction of this *urbanização* was managed by the Brigada de Construções e Obras Militares (Brigade for Construction of Military Works), directly controlled by the presidency of the republic.

Figure: 6.3. A street in Kilamba, 2004. Source: Sylvia Croese.

The construction of Zango shows more emphatically not only the planning anxiety that was permeating the city's expansion but also, because of the time it spans, the shift in urban policies from autoconstruction to forced accommodation. It shows more forcefully what I have earlier called the bifurcation of the urban. Whereas Nova Vida was driven by the forces of the market, Zango was initially conceived as a zone of relocation, where those taken forcefully from various parts of Luanda, such as Ilha de Luanda, as I mentioned at the start of this chapter, were sent to. By the time three children died in Boavista, after heavy rains produced landslides, in September 2000, authorities started to resettle Boavista's residents to Zango, which was later declared a Reserva. Zango, which covers an area of 90 square kilometers (about 60 square miles), is situated 30 kilometers (18 miles) southeast of Luanda.[56] In the following

months, a few thousand more of Luanda's residents would be forcefully relocated to Zango.

By the time the first relocated residents arrived in Zango, in early 2003, there were several hundred recently built houses. During these early phases, urban authorities were hopeful that Zango could become a full-fledged *centralidade*, by the sheer effort of its newly relocated residents, according to the urban upgrading policies. The role of the government consisted in dividing up the plots and installing infrastructure, and the locals were expected to build their own houses.[57] Accordingly, the initial plan was to distribute plots of land to those relocated from the city and to allow them to build their own houses. However, because of the slow pace of the construction and the climate of popular insubordination these relocations were generating, the government commissioned Dar Al-Handasah to produce a master plan for the new *urbanização*, which would consist of four clusters of houses, referred to as Zango 1, 2, 3, and 4, "including all infrastructure and services necessary to turn Zango into a small city."[58] A Brazilian construction firm was also asked to build and install infrastructure for 10,000 residents.[59] Once developed, these areas passed to the control of the Provincial Government of Luanda, under the auspices of the Programa de Habitação Social (Program of Social Housing).[60]

Contrary to the intentions behind the inception of Talatona and to a lesser degree Nova Vida, Zango came into being as a scheme to relocate and provide housing for Luanda's poor residents, who were prevented by law from using these houses as an economic asset in that they could not sell or transfer them.[61] This interdiction did not obviously prevent the emergence of an active and robust informal housing market in Zango. But the success of the Zango experiment—that a considerable number of those relocated managed to rebuild their lives in the relocation zones—may have encouraged the government to use Zango as a sort of repository for those removed from the city center. It was in Zango, for instance, that houses were offered to those residents in the buildings in the city center at risk of collapse, such as the Cuca building.[62]

If the construction of Nova Vida was market-oriented, and if Zango can be considered a social housing project, it is the construction of Kilamba that bears more strongly the mark of the new political and urban order inaugurated with the constitution of 2010—particularly because Kilamba was only possible through the China financing scheme. In this regard, Kilamba is unapologetically an offspring, or the material rendition, of the formalization of the state of emergency. Kilamba was built outside the framework of any city's master plan or outside the control and oversight of any locally based institution. The

implementation of such a *centralidade* was a surprise even for those working on taming the city's disorderly urban growth, such as Dar's consultants. For they did not pass up the opportunity to address the construction of Kilamba toward the end of their study on Luanda's predicaments, which they deemed, "unrealistic, inadequate, unsustainable and possibly anti-constitutional."[63]

The intentions behind the conception of Kilamba and the role it was expected to play in Luanda's expansion are discernable in the choice of the name. The name Cidade do Kilamba (and not Cidade *de* Kilamba: in English Kilamba's City instead of City of Kilamba or Kilamba City) was given in homage to the first Angolan president, Agostinho Neto, who, by virtue of being a medical doctor, was given the nom de guerre Kilamba, which means "doctor" in the Angolan language Kimbundu. Perhaps in homage to his predecessor, himself a president, Kilamba became the urban project dos Santos and his Executive were more seriously involved with. With Kilamba, dos Santos intended not only to showcase the urban philosophy his government espoused but also to set the terms of his legacy, or how he wanted his intervention in the city to be remembered.[64]

Showcased as the epitome of the one million houses promised by the president, Kilamba was a central project in the immense portfolio of the construction of infrastructure and housing managed by the GRN, and it was by far the most complex and ambitious urban project built under the framework signed by Angola and China in 2004. The entire residential project was meant to house a population of 200,000, covering an area of 52 square kilometers (32 square miles), amounting to 900 hectares (2,223 acres), which, according to Viegas, was the area of Luanda's city center in the 1980s.[65] Constituting the largest urban project ever built from scratch, it was expected to add 20,000 residential apartments and 246 business units to Luanda's urban stock. The first cornerstone of the new city was laid in April 2008, and the first phase of the project was inaugurated by President dos Santos himself on July 11, 2011. Once completed, Kilamba was intended to be a fully-fledged district with twenty-four preschools, numerous primary schools, and eight high schools. It was also to be equipped with two electrical substations, seventy-seven transformer stations, water supply stations, a sewage treatment plant, and infrastructure for drainage.

A further proof of the personal investment of dos Santos in the construction and management of Kilamba is the controversy surrounding its occupation. Soon after the city's inauguration, the government tasked Delta Imobiliária, a private company, with administering the sale of the housing stock that was being made available in the real estate market. Delta Imobiliária then announced that the prices of the two- to four-bedroom apartments

would range from US$150,000 to US$200,000. Initially, Kilamba failed to elicit the interest of potential buyers, to the extent that by June 2013, only 300 of the more than 3,000 available apartments had been sold. In the international press, Kilamba was being described as a ghost town and was compared with many others, particularly in China, that were scantly inhabited. This prompted a visit by President dos Santos himself, who ordered the decrease of prices for the units with immediate effect.[66] According to an executive decree published subsequently, the prices of the three-bedroom apartments were reduced to about US$70,000. Building on the Nova Vida Project, the government also announced a state-backed mortgage scheme, called at the time Renda Resolúvel (the possibility given to occupants to turn the payment of their rents into contributions toward acquiring the units), to be administered by the Fundo de Fomento Habitacional (Housing Development Fund), which allowed residents to pay for their apartments over a thirty-year period at a 3 percent fixed interest rate.[67] In practice, a family occupying a three-bedroom apartment would have to pay about US$300 a month, which was affordable for most middle-class families in Luanda.[68] To obtain units, prospective buyers would have to apply to SONIP's offices—the firm that took over the management of commercialization of property in Kilamba from GNR in 2013—to have their names placed on waiting lists that were published from time to time. Since thousands of people had spent days in the long queue to find that their names were not on the lists, accusations of lack of transparency and favoritism soon emerged.[69] Nonetheless, by September 2013, SONIP had concluded the selling process and announced that all the units had been sold. Yet thousands of people who had applied did not receive any units, even though they had met all the requirements. For many days, protesters gathered in front of the SONIP office, but to no avail.[70]

Nova Vida, Zango, and Kilamba are presented in this chapter as instantiations of the ways in which the urban, and particularly the housing question, has been dealt with. They show the gap between dream and reality in the sense that these urban developments were not part of any of the plans analyzed in this chapter. And yet it is undeniable that they have emerged and gained a life of their own. As I have mentioned earlier, despite the lack of technical capacity to implement the proposed plans, the plans were nonetheless shaped by, and created the conditions for, things to come. And vice versa: these specific housing projects did not result from overall master plans but were only possible and shaped by the same conditions that resulted in those plans. But they also show the extent to which the urban, particularly in relation to ownership, has been bifurcated. There are, on the one hand, those who have access to

property through their own investments and savings, particularly those who can afford to buy land and acquire their title deeds. On the other hand, there are those for whom the only prospect for formal housing is social, through the various schemes fashioned by the government. These ways of living in the city are not static, as I have shown. But the social, or the social access to housing, is not simply reserved for the urban poor, for a considerable amount of housing in places such as Kilamba was distributed under various state-supported schemes.

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At the height of the construction frenzy, which for obvious reasons coincided with the boom in the production of oil, with ups and downs from 2002 to 2014, Angolan urban authorities used to say that Luanda was a construction site. The Programa de Reconstrução Nacional was on the news regularly, and President dos Santos was always seen groundbreaking or dedicating infrastructure or facilities such hospitals and schools. For his preoccupation with overhauling the urban transformation, and, consequently, leaving his mark on the process, dos Santos has become known as as the Arquitecto da Paz (Architect of Peace). This descriptor points to two important features of dos Santos's legacy: as the one who ended the long civil war by pursuing Jonas Savimbi until his death, and as the one who played a critical role in urban transformation. For he certainly used the war machine he built over the years for the sake of the infrastructure and housing overhaul. It was not only his gigantic compound, the Futungo de Belas, that was given over for urban development (see chapter 5); it was also units of the military that were remobilized to build housing, or more expediently, to remove urban dwellers from areas targeted for renovation.

For populist and electoral reasons, these public ceremonies did not have to wait until the completion of construction, for construction projects were inaugurated in phases to allow the president to dedicate the same project on multiple occasions. For several major construction projects, such as Kilamba, only the first phase was dedicated, as there was no serious commitment to conclude the other phases. Furthermore, on account of the rashness and carelessness with which several projected constructions were implemented, and the lack of independent oversight, the quality of these projects has been called into question and has alarmed countless workers and residents. For instance, the Chinese-built Central Hospital of Luanda had to be evacuated when an imminent collapse was suspected, forcing the building's demolition in 2010.[71] A day does not pass without Kilamba residents complaining about the advancing degradation of their apartments because of leaks, fissures in the walls, and

other structural problems. Just as there are several unfinished buildings in the city center, whose construction halted with the depreciation of oil prices, in the mid-2010s, a no less important and worrying number of urban projects will not be completed until an indeterminate date. Overall, Luanda as a construction site, which was meant to be transitory and a phase leading to a better urban future, has become for residents a permanent condition for inhabiting the city.

However, the incompleteness of infrastructure and construction projects does not hide the completeness of the overhaul of the urban form. Luanda today is postcolonial in the sense that urban categories such as city and periphery, which corresponded to the social categories of colonizer and colonized, no longer capture the breadth and the depth of what Luanda has become. The scale and the dimension of the urban expansion is such that colonial administrative categories such *bairros* are no longer of use for making sense of the city's geography and are superseded by *centralidades* and *urbanizações*, some of them, such as Zango and Kilamba, housing hundreds of thousands of residents.

It does not mean that the city has decentralized around the lines proposed by the planning interventions discussed in this chapter. Both master plans have made the case that job opportunity had to be created outside the city center so that residents of the *centralidades* and *urbanizações* did not have to constantly commute. There is a great deal of economic activity occurring in the new places, but the major hindrance to decentralization is not the economy but the political system, as I have shown in this chapter. Whereas the city has been geographically decentralized, decision-making processes have been centralized. The position of the president for the administrative council of *centralidades* such as Kilamba is deliberated and appointed by the presidency and the ruling party.

All in all, with its urban interventions, particularly the legal and regulatory reforms, the government has accomplished something worthy of the most insensitive colonial regime: the split between citizenship and land. Millions of Luandans now have access to social housing, either in the city center or in new *centralidades* and *urbanizações*. But this does not mean they own the land their houses are built on. There is an informal real estate market through which houses in the *urbanizações* and *centralidades* are bought and sold. The problem here is not only that these pieces of property do not constitute a permanent economic asset, as Hernando de Soto has famously made the case for, but that this property is seen as ephemeral.[72] For there is the expectation that the state eventually will give them houses. This work may still be incomplete, but it creates a particular condition of citizenship, one deprived of effective politi-

cal rights and at the mercy of the ruling party. It is a whole nation that has been reduced to a quasi-squatter condition, which, in times of authoritarian rule, provides new meaning to Casa Luandense. In the end, for the average Luandan, things are not so different from colonial times, as discussed earlier in this book, particularly in chapters 1 and 2. The right to residence is for the most part not accompanied by the right to own land, which can be formally transferred or purchased. This renders the condition of inhabiting ephemeral, and in many cases fraught with dangers (e.g., the potential for removal), which is exactly what life on the skin of a city looks like.

Coda: *Is Luanda Not Paris?*

Still not dark until ten-thirty or a quarter to eleven at night, and the pleasure of simply wandering through the streets, of being lost and yet never fully lost, as in the streets of the Village in New York, but now an entire city was like the Village, with no grid and few right angles in the neighborhood they went to as one sinuous, cobbled path wound around and flowed into another. . . .—Paul Auster, *4321*, 2017

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In late 2016, I was visiting Paris to attend an international conference. One evening, after the conclusion of the proceedings for the day, I went out for a stroll. I have been consistent in my habit of exploring cities through walking and have tried doing so in many cities I have visited, whether Paris, New York, Kampala, or Barcelona. Lacking a reliable sense of orientation, I often struggle to find my way back if I take convoluted routes. I thus tend to walk in straight lines. That late afternoon in Paris, I set out from my accommodation in the Boulevard Raspail and headed towards the Rue de Fleurus. Turning right into the Rue de Sèvres, I continued onto the Rue du Four until I reached the Boulevard Saint-Germain. Here I stopped for a while to appreciate the quintessential Parisian street life: people walking or running as if rushing to catch the train out of town, others peering into store windows, and many crowding into cafés on both sides of the boulevard. I continued in the direction of the Boulevard Saint-Michel, turning into the Rue Racine and the Rue Rotrou to reach the Rue de Vaugirard, which took me up to the Musée du Luxembourg. Here I made a stop to observe the scene and sort through my notes. What impressed me, and still impresses me, about Paris is the sense of continuity from one place to the other. If one walks there mindlessly, one hardly feels the changes from one street to another, from one neighborhood to the next. Parisians, I believe, would ascribe particular identities to particular parts of the

city, such as the Marais or the Oberkampf. Those more interested in their city would be able to account for these differences and particularities by addressing issues of architectural style, zoning laws, regulations, materials, and ornamentation. Yet despite these local shifts and historicities, there is continuity across them reflected in the sidewalks: it is possible to walk from the Marais to the Oberkampf without encountering any major obstacles.

It was not the first time I had visited or walked in Paris. However, in this particular late afternoon and early evening I was doing so when my memories of walking in Luanda as a method of inquiry were still fresh. Like a flâneur, I had drifted through Luanda, sometimes mindlessly and at other times more purposefully. I was then following, or at least trying to find a practical use for, the growing body of literature that experiments with walking as a methodology, a means of acquiring knowledge of the urban.[1] The method is, as Christopher Prendergast writes, "based on that characteristic denizen of the literature of nineteenth-century Paris, the *Flaneur*, and the corresponding notion of the city as a special kind of visual field, peculiarly open to the mobile gaze and unforeseen encounter."[2] However, since Luanda is not as walkable as Paris—as the various discussions in this book have shown—I only use this approach with caution. Nonetheless, two techniques emerged from these exercises. First, wandering through Luanda exposed me to countless uncoordinated encounters that provided me with a number of fortuitous experiences and episodes that fill this book. Putting it differently, a number of situations described in the previous chapters are less the product of deliberate attempts to know the city than the outcome of my wanderings in it. My fragmented analysis is apt for approaching Luanda's urban fragmentation. Second, these drifting walks allowed me to come to terms with the analytics of tracing associations, as I discussed in the introduction. For instance, as I was conducting fieldwork in Roque Santeiro market one day in 2008, I heard that the Direcção Nacional de Investigação Criminal (National Directorate for Criminal Investigation; DNIC) prison had just collapsed, killing dozens of people. Walking there not only drew my attention to the conditions of naked deprivation in which most Angolans live (Roque Santeiro was the means through which most Luandans fended off poverty, while the DNIC incarcerated people who had committed petty crimes) but also allowed me to understand the economy of expenditure in Angola, particularly in Luanda. In this economy, the value ascribed to human life was inversely proportional to the value of oil in international markets.

My intention here is not to compare Paris with Luanda, even if I give plenty of credit to the comparative framework and to how this has been useful for putting the conditions that exist in particular cities in perspective. In fact,

comparative analyses have become a mainstay in urban studies, even if the question of what specific units and categories to compare, and on which rationale to base the comparison, is far from settled.[3] To be precise, then, I am not evoking Paris here to determine what it has in common with Luanda, or the extent to which the two cities diverge. I am, rather, mentioning Paris for how it "invites reflection" or serves as a device that is useful for thinking through cities elsewhere, as Jennifer Robinson has put it.[4]

The aspect of the comparatist framework I am more wary about is the one that significantly pervades urban theory. Southern urbanism theorists, as discussed in the introduction, have positioned themselves against this by asserting that the tenets of the theories that produced knowledge of cities in the North, such as Paris, New York, or London, are not applicable to cities of the South. Cities in the South are radically different from these Northern cities, and the processes that have brought them into existence and that sustain life there are likewise radically different. One wonders whether such an articulation of theory by difference does not share conceptual fundamentals with some precepts of the social sciences such as anthropology. Bronisław Malinowski set the parameters for this way of thinking in his famous *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, in which, from the outset, he conceives of the reader as alien from the reality he is describing: "Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight."[5] In this manner Malinowski not only invites his reader to imagine what happens when civilization sails away, out of sight, but also offers a functionalist portrayal of culture, which for the most part is still ingrained in the ways in which we deal with, and try to make sense of, life in the rest of the world. Participant observation was, in a way, an invitation to the methodological othering of the uncivilized: of finding new ways to comprehend it, as if the traditional methods of Western social sciences, such as political science and sociology, were not applicable.

Southern urbanism, a brainchild of development studies, proceeds from the same predicament. Cities in the South are too bustling and too precarious, it is argued, and life there is always too contingent, to be understood in these conventional ways. Part of the problem is the functionalism that is ingrained in these approaches, which expects cities to behave in particular ways so that they may be explicable in certain ways.[6] Such renditions, however, denounce an old school of critical urban studies, characterized by a certain ecumenism championed by writers such as Lewis Mumford.[7] More contemporary efforts in this direction attempt to distill the main characteristics of urban life by providing a general discussion of discrete topics applicable across the board, such

as the "dynamic of agglomeration and polarization" and the "unfolding of an associated nexus of location, land use and human interactions."[8]

Countering this tendency is the growing body of literature that strives to assert particularity, singularity, or uniqueness—a topic discussed in the introduction of this book. Such a gesture invites us to think in terms not of sameness but of difference. Filip de Boeck, who has given the most poignant descriptions of life in African cities, has done so in ways that emphasize the surreal to such an extent that most of the experiences he describes are hardly reproducible in other African locales.[9] Ato Quayson has provided a timely corrective to this, urging Africanist scholars to separate the ephemeral from processes and structures. In criticizing Jean Comaroff, John Comaroff, Rem Koolhaas, and others, he is less concerned with the ways in which "their models are afflicted by a measure of romanticism regarding the inventiveness of African urban dwellers" than with their conclusions that do not "derive from an understanding of the relationship between ephemera, process and structure in the formation of the African Urban."[10] In other words, he concludes, the analysis of ephemerality and provisionality should go hand in hand with the historicization of the conditions that make these ephemeral engagements operational.

The specter of comparativism that haunts urban studies can be aptly described by an illustration provided by Italo Calvino, in his famous novel *Invisible Cities*. There is a moment in his story when the monarch, Kublai Khan, becomes suspicious of the stories he is being told by Marco Polo and asks the explorer the reason for the striking similarities between all the fantastic cities he is describing. Apologetically, Polo explains that because Venice was the first city he saw, he describes all other cities he sees in comparison to it; in this manner all other cities bear the original mark of Venice: "Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice."[11] The implication of Marco Polo's observation is that certain cities come to be taken as palimpsests through which to understand the contemporary urban.

The point I am attempting to make here is not that an engagement with Paris is irrelevant to an understanding of Luanda's formation but the contrary. In fact, Paris, dubbed by Walter Benjamin as the capital of the nineteenth century, comes to condense a great part of urban theory. And because of this overrepresentation in theory, Paris gets to be referred to when we are not explicitly referring to it. It is now an incontestable fact that cities learn from each other through practices of transmission, contamination, and diffusion that are at the heart of the planning endeavor, as several scholars have shown.[12] In the case of Paris, there is a robust body of literature that shows how Haussmann's renewal served as a blueprint for similar processes in other cities around the

world. David Pinkney has written of the ways in which Northern cities such as Barcelona and Brussels, or even Washington, Chicago, and Philadelphia, but also cities such as Cairo or Buenos Aires in the colonial world or the New World, emulated what was then considered the cutting-edge plan for Paris.[13] In the case of Luanda, there were several reasons why the city's plan emulated Paris's solutions. In fact, as discussed in chapter 2, one of the authors of the first plan for Luanda, Étienne de Gröer, was French. The radial solution that he suggested to ease circulation outward from the city center was not very different from proposals put forward in later plans for Paris, particularly in terms of how to connect the city's center to its burgeoning peripheries. Subsequent colonial architects and planners of Luanda, such as Vasco Vieira da Costa, were enamored of Le Corbusier's architectural experiments and propositions; many completed internships in his Paris atelier. The solutions they developed for Luanda were very close to the ones they saw or heard of in Paris. And just like Paris, Luanda was not a blank slate when modernist architecture arrived; by that time it had already existed for more than three hundred years. To build the vertical and symmetrical architecture of modernism in the city meant the destruction of several landmarks, for the most part of religious and military nature.

The point I have been trying to make throughout this book concerns the understanding of borders and frontiers implicit in the process of city making. I have done so by using the metaphor of the skin to speak not only of separation but also more forcefully of the interstices, or lines of demarcation, which are the symbolic place where I situate the squatter as a pivotal element for grasping the city's transformation. Here, specifically, I am trying to make a case that concerns urban theory in general. My argument is that the flâneur is not only a device to unmask capitalism, and particularly consumption, as Benjamin would have it. The flâneur is also a yardstick for measuring the level of cityness itself. The more the city is walkable for a flâneur, as Paris is, the more the urban process is accomplished.

But before moving on to discuss such a theoretical leap, the production of the continuity of Paris set against the fragmentation of most cities in the Global South deserves some further explanation. Paris's resilience and permanence has become a major trope in journalism, literature, and film. For instance, commenting for the *New York Times* in the aftermath of the deadly terrorist attacks on Paris on November 13, 2015, Alex Toledano describes a postcard of Rue Bichat during the Belle Époque to assert that Paris has not changed much since then. For this he gives credit to Louis Napoleon and his "efficient prefect," Haussmann, as well as to "conscious urban preservation and respectful wartime enemies."[14] However, it was not by accident that Paris achieved this

celebrated resilience, permanence, and continuity. Pinkney, who was already writing on the urban in the 1950s, seems to concur, arguing that the city of Paris has not changed much over the past hundred years: "[The] boundaries, [the] wards and [the] names have remained exactly the same. Even [the] streets and houses are little different from a century ago. Their appearance is an astonishing survival from the past that is unique among the centers of the cities of northern Europe."[15]

Reading present-day Luanda against the historical Paris, one is tempted to agree with Mike Davis and many others who find present-day African cities plagued by the same kinds of ills that characterized urban life in most Northern cities by the time of the industrial revolution.[16] Streets were irregular and ill lit, discouraging mobility. Misery, hunger, and, above all, unemployment loomed large over Paris, as David Harvey has described, for "class quarters did exist in Paris at mid-century, and the poorest of them were dismal slums. In the crowded center of the city eastward from the Church of Sainte-Eustache and the Rue Montmartre rose a mass of ancient and decaying tenements, ordinarily five or more stories high, without courtyards, and with frontages of only twenty feet. The streets were narrow and winding. Many had no sidewalks, and they were usually wet from the open sewers that ran in the gutters."[17]

Transformation in Paris, as many authors have argued, was complex and protracted. Thoughts, ideas, and plans for how the city should change were already circulating, and even being implemented on a piecemeal basis, by the time Emperor Napoleon III appointed Haussmann as prefect of the Seine on June 29, 1853. The emperor had such a passion for urban questions that he personally handed the maps and plans for the transformation of Paris to his prefect. Obsessed with detail, Haussmann added to the wishes of the emperor his own intentions for the width of streets and the location of bridges and even urinals. To bring order and symmetry to Paris, Haussmann envisaged the construction of the most important avenues and streets, such as the Rue de Saint Antoine, as well as the enlargement and broadening of many others. Vacant spaces that were opened up through the destruction of buildings, and sometimes of entire blocks, were given to developers for the construction of five-story apartment buildings. This led to increased speculation in the city and pushed the urban poor farther from the city center. To achieve his vision of rectilinear organization and symmetry, Haussmann ordered the demolition of everything that stood in the way. His goal was to make Paris not just the representation of imperial power but also the capital of modernity, as Harvey argues in his book on Paris.[18] To realize such a vision, Haussmann spared not even monuments and churches.

Several commentators, including Benjamin, have reasoned that Napoleon and Haussmann were motivated by a desire to prevent popular uprisings from taking place in the city by making the building of barricades more difficult. The redesigned streets not only gave the army easier access to any section of the city but also allowed it to maneuver more freely and thus outflank any resisting group. However, Paris's enduring legacy is perhaps the way in which capital was enshrined in the fabric of the city itself. I agree with Harvey when he writes that "it was, however, a storm he [Haussmann] neither created nor tamed, but a deep turbulence in the evolution of French economy, politics and culture, that in the end threw him as mercilessly to the dogs as he threw medieval Paris to the *demolisseurs* (demolishers). In the process the city achieved an aura of capitalist modernity, in both its physical and its administrative infrastructures, that has lasted to this day."[19]

When Haussmann was demoted from his position in January 1870, and even by the time the emperor surrendered nine months later, their work was still unfinished. The Avenue de l'Opéra, the Avenue de la République, the Boulevard Saint-Germain, and the Boulevard Raspail were only completed at a later stage.[20] Remarkably, the city's overhaul continued even after the withdrawal of its main instigators from the public scene; this can be attributed to the fact that the ideas and rationale for the city's transformation were already there by the time these two individuals intervened. However, their intervention set in motion very specific historical dynamics. It was not that Haussmann disliked Paris's past architectural forms, such as churches and medieval buildings, but rather that he was convinced that the past should not stand in the way of the future, or of modernity. To memorialize the past, Haussmann championed the creation of a number of institutions, such as museums, whose practical benefit, as Pinkney writes, was to make the demolitions of ancient houses more tolerable.[21] However, all of this backfired: "The museums, the historical works, the engravings and the maps whose production Haussmann did so much to encourage were to help in slowly turning public opinion against him."[22] For while these gestures encouraged people to think of the benefits of the demolitions, they ended up creating the conditions for the emergence of a nostalgic or revivalist movement. While what had been destroyed could not be brought back to life, these movements could at least prevent the destruction of other landmarks. Ironically, what was produced during the Second Empire as the new and the modern has prevailed in today's city fabric as the old and historical.

In Luanda, these lessons from Paris on how to modernize and still preserve old architecture were not taken seriously, as I discussed in chapter 1. Colonial architects were more interested in the proposals made by Le Corbusier, which

they drew on to argue for the demolition of complete city blocks (many of them containing architectural landmarks) to make space for rectilinear avenues and tall buildings, for the sake of symmetry. Then, in the postindependence period, and particularly after 2008, a new layer of edifices was imposed on the city. When postmodern skyscrapers were erected in Luanda, most residents marveled that they could be seen from all over town. Most Luandans were happy that the sections of the city they lived in could be compared with neighborhoods in other highly advanced cities in the world. This is reminiscent of Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe's contention, in their study of Johannesburg, that the dichotomy between Northern and Southern cities is irrelevant, since some of the latter contain infrastructure and forms of fragmentation that resemble spaces in the Global North.[23] They argue against their critics, in particular Michael Watts, that the notion that slums mark urbanization in the South is misleading, as there are places in the North, such as parts of Los Angeles or even of Paris, that are marred by the same dysfunctionality as places in the South.[24]

It is almost inevitable, then, that those whose awareness of the formation of Paris and other cities in the North has been shaped by urban theory do not approach cities in the South, such as Luanda, using the same theoretical lens. But if they do so, they are simply focusing on that which in the South does not conform to the formation of cities in the North. This is part of the reason why, throughout this book, I have invited the reader to see Luanda through the perspective of the squatter. For while the presence of the flâneur is about continuity and permanence in the city, that of the squatter is about its discontinuity and fragmentation.

In this book I have presented this insight in many ways, particularly through the ways in which one navigates the city. To say that Luanda is not a walkable city amounts to an understatement. This was the case in the past, particularly in certain sections of downtown Luanda, as the previous chapters have shown. During the heyday of modernist architecture, the city center had well-kept and intact sidewalks, with most buildings in Luiz de Camões Street, Avenida Serpa Pinto, and Avenida dos Antigos Combatentes equipped with built-in areas of shade to protect walkers from the burning tropical sun. But independence brought drastic changes to the walkability of Luanda. New buildings have taken over the space of the sidewalks. It is nearly impossible to find an intact sidewalk; heavy rains have destroyed those sections that still exist. Maintenance teams fixing water pipes and electricity wires do not backfill their excavations along the sides of the roads. Even if there has been a concerted effort lately to change this, with some of the city's famous potholes being filled, there

are still many more that need to be closed up, with the garbage decomposing in them indicating the length of time they have been adorning the city. The walker in Luanda does not have, or cannot have, the same kind of mindlessness one finds in the illustrations and descriptions of the flâneur in Paris.

It is, rather, the contrary. In Luanda, a walker's senses have to be actively mobilized. Care needs to be taken not to step in animal and even human feces. The walker needs to show readiness to jump over potholes or weave between cars whenever sidewalks end abruptly or cars use them for parking. New neighborhoods eliminate sidewalks altogether: walking in these parts of the town is beyond contemplation for most city dwellers. It is as if roads and sidewalks were made for the purpose of discouraging walking. Coffee shops and other locations of interest are placed at such long distances from each other that people are discouraged from walking.

As such, the city has had to be repurposed so as to fit in with the ways in which it is used by the squatter, the one who uses it as a tool for survival, in most cases against the law. Sidewalks, for instance, have become less places to walk, or paths of transition from one place to another, than places in which to be and to stay put. For a great number of Luandans, sidewalks offer the opportunity to cut a deal. First-time visitors to Luanda will notice the thousands of people who spend most of their time on the street. These are not homeless people, but people who sell goods, keep and protect property, cook, sleep, converse, or haul things to the upper stories in the adjacent buildings. Incredibly, they demonstrate loyalty to the places where they work. The shoe shiner who works in the entrance lobby of the building in which I grew up, and where I spend most of my time when in Luanda, has been there for about eight years. He knows me; he knows my family; he knows when I am in the country and when I am traveling. The woman who pretends to sell recharged cards for cellular phones, but who actually exchanges currencies, has also occupied the same position for more than five years. Both are part of the eyes of the city, the ones who keep the streets safer, as Jane Jacobs would have it.[25]

My interest in Paris might perhaps have been sparked by my training in cultural anthropology at Columbia University, with an approach that placed more emphasis on a critique of capitalism than on urban studies. Benjamin's writings on the codification of commodity fetishism in the Parisian arcades of the nineteenth century were central to the debates held there.[26] In hindsight I can see that when I moved back to Luanda to begin my fieldwork, my gaze upon the city was significantly shaped by these conceptualizations. Paris was in my mind when I approached Luanda ethnographically, and Benjamin's arcades formed a sort of palimpsest for me. My naïve engagement with Roque

Santeiro, for instance, was motivated by an effort to find in Luanda the correspondence, or lack thereof, that spoke to the relationship between the physical form and the political-economic conditions in Luanda. However, the removal of Roque Santeiro, one of whose most enduring consequences was the increase in informal trade, pushed me to engage with the city from a different perspective. As such, this book has been an attempt to rewrite urban theory from the perspective of the squatter, or the one who uses the city, and to focus on how the squatter's position in relation to the city, on its margins, incites the authorities to come up with ways in which borders, social or physical, can be reinforced.

Throughout this book I have used the image of the skin to shed some light on cities that are not like Paris, in this case Luanda. For skin, as a thin membrane, helps us to conceive of separations that do not effectively separate. My use of the metaphor of the skin, then, is akin to what the Angolan novelist Ondjaki has evoked in his novel *Os transparentes* to allude to a city that is made up of visible and invisible lines of circulation and intersection, lines that sometimes divide and fragment.[27] Pier Vittorio Aureli traces such a genealogy in the architecture of the urban, which he calls absolute architecture, through the use of a number of components such as the villa and the skyscraper as envelopes to protect the inside and insiders against disorder and to create a boundary against the world.[28] In her attempt to make sense of the contemporary penchant for enclosure, in the form of the gated community, for instance, Teresa Caldeira dubs São Paulo the "city of walls."[29] In Luanda, Kilamba and many other urban developments touched on in this book could be taken to provide fodder for this theory.

In this book, I have tried to place the emphasis elsewhere. I am less interested in the divide between interior and exterior than in the line, or edge, that creates this divide. Furthermore, a division such as center and periphery, morphologically or historically speaking, is something that obscures more than it illuminates the urban process in Luanda. Roque Santeiro, for instance, was at the periphery of the city for much of the period of modernist intervention. It then enjoyed a central position in relation to the city at the time of the severe economic crisis in the country, during which a number of vital economic operations such as wholesale trade and transportation moved to the periphery and were mostly organized by agents without a place in the central economy. As such, the idea of the city that I have pursued is less about that which stands inside or outside—through the various dichotomies that urban studies has offered to us, such as formal/informal, or city/slum—and more about the modalities that make up such exclusions. The city lies, then, in this thin membrane, the skin, that is constantly growing and expanding, or contracting, receding.

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