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Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues

Africa Today, Volume 54, Number 1, Fall 2007, pp. 91-105 (Article)

Published by Indiana University Press



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Survival and Social Reproduction Strategies in Angolan Cities

Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues

To survive and ensure social reproduction, families in urban Angola have developed strategies to meet the demands of daily life. The fundamental principles of these strategies are to concentrate and share resources among family members and their solidarity networks and, simultaneously, to disperse the sources and methods of generating and/or collecting these resources. Urban Angolans have proven that their efforts produce results beyond simple subsistence. The analysis of empirical data collected in Angolan cities has allowed a characterization of family strategies and an understanding of the wider motivations behind individuals' and families' efforts.

Introduction

Angola's socialist-oriented political and economic options of 1975, supported by weak human and institutional infrastructures and affected by a long-lasting and intense civil conflict, which started at independence, have failed the goals of development. The political and economic shift of the 1990s toward democracy and a market economy slowed when the civil war resumed and did not begin to revive until 2002, when Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA,¹ died. Angola is now a major African oil exporter and diamond producer, but war and economic difficulties have heavily conditioned development, leading to high levels of poverty, mass migration and displacement, reduction of employment opportunities, drastic insufficiency of infrastructure, and coverage of basic services. The enthusiasm caused by peace and substantial foreign investment has not reversed the socioeconomic conditions of the majority of the population.

About four million Angolans—one quarter of the national population—live in Luanda, the capital, which attracted migrants during the Angolan Civil war. Other cities, like Benguela and Lobito, also spared from the conflict recorded high growth rates, while weak growth occurred in cities like Ondjiva, where the war was most devastating.² The high growth rates that occurred in these urban centers, particularly since the late 1970s, have forced individuals and families to develop strategies to cope with social

change, overpopulation, and a scarcity of resources. With an already high urban and economic growth rate before independence (in 1975), Angolan urban expansion has become significant because of the war and the general degradation of economy. As elsewhere in Africa, Angolan rural people sought better opportunities in cities and fled the war. In Benguela and Lobito, even though population growth slowed in the years immediately following independence, the location and the lower exposure to the war have allowed significant growth since the late 1980s, especially because of migration from neighboring provinces in the south. Benguela and Lobito together currently have about one million inhabitants, and estimates indicate that the Benguela/Catumbela/Lobito metropolitan area has about 1.6 million.³

In Ondjiva, political and historical contexts have influenced population dynamics differently: the war with South Africa, which began after independence and lasted until Namibia gained independence, and the conflicts between UNITA and the Angolan government, caused the city to empty, and then did not allow reconstruction or the return of the displaced populace, who had settled in the province of Huíla.⁴ Only in 2000 did those people return to the province of Cunene and to the city of Ondjiva, and the city currently has about 28,000 inhabitants, still a low number compared with other Angolan cities, but regionally significant. Having recorded, in recent decades, a high rate of growth, Luanda is the largest Angolan city in population and area. With the arrival of millions of Angolans in the capital since 1975, the infrastructures and services, with a decrease in formal-economy employment and growing precariousness, are the main ingredients for complex reinventions of lifestyles and readaptations to new social and economic realities.

Individuals and families in these bigger cities find themselves forced into developing strategies to deal with survival and social reproduction. Social reproduction refers to the improvement of general social, economic, symbolic conditions, a more complex effort than survival. The practices and forms of managing these issues vary and have always varied, revealing their flexible and adaptable nature, and ensuring the survival and social reproduction of many urban people in extremely difficult economic and social conditions.

The strategies that have been and are able to guarantee a response to the risks inherent in difficult economic conditions and life in general are based on two fundamental assumptions. Families assume the role of fundamental groups, which organize and manage strategies based on intense solidarity, concentrating and redistributing resources among their members. Angolan families, like those in many African countries, consist not only of those affiliated by blood and marriage, but of these and other voluntarily built relationships, treated as familial, independently of their strict family character. The resources these groups manage comprise assets, services, credit, benefits, and economic and noneconomic assistance and protection—resources that have been decreasing since 2002.⁵ This form of solidarity and the consolidation of resources are fundamental premises for survival and social reproduction in

contexts in which urban integration, alteration of lifestyles, and uncertainty caused by a social and economic environment undergoing great change, are dominant factors. The majority of the present inhabitants of Angolan cities are migrants who fled war and sought better conditions and their large numbers have intensified the competition for resources.

The other basic assumption underlying family strategies has to do with the accumulation of resources. Urban Angolans' dominant logic of the last few decades has been to collect the greatest possible number and variety of resources. The dispersion of sources of income, the assignment of family members to various activities, the scattering of solidarity and reciprocity networks, all work in the opposite direction: to consolidate resources within the family group. Through diversification and dispersion, family members seek the complementarities of products and resources, and the flexibility to face variations in income. Angolan cities usually provide access only to informal, precarious, low-income economic activities, but family-based strategies allow family members to better themselves. This fact is important to the design of policies aiming to fight poverty and foster socioeconomic development: designers of social programs should understand that individual and family strategies cannot be fully understood without accurate contextualization and a global perspective, and they should accordingly focus on families, not individuals. Solidarity—this cooperation and pooling of resources—is the basic socioeconomic structure, one that cannot be disregarded in designing and implementing projects and programs that affect urban sociodynamics in Angola.

The purpose of this paper is to systematize data collected in Angolan cities⁶ and analyze the strategies people use to improve their lives. This paper draws from studies that were conducted at different times. The research in Luanda was conducted within a comparative research project of Luanda and Maputo (Costa and Rodrigues 2003). It included interviews and questionnaires both to periurban families in Rocha Pinto, Cazenga and Kikolo (mainly in the informal economy) and to wage workers in the formal economy. The research in Lobito and Benguela (Benguela, Baía Farta and Lobito) was part of a broader research about local entrepreneurs and their strategies. The Ondjiva data was partially obtained in the scope of a statistically representative survey (Rodrigues 2005) and through a qualitative research based on interviews and life stories, collected in all districts in Ondjiva. Although the studies occurred at different times, it was possible to establish the common issues that arose from the combined analysis, as well as analyze a few transformations and trends in the last few years.

Beyond Simple Survival

The rationality underlying urban dwellers' strategies cannot be considered as merely survival-oriented. Aiming beyond mere survival, these people cope with conditions to "become someone" (Anonymous F, 2004/5) and "make

life move forward" (Anonymous C, 2001): "it's an exercise we have to do to improve our situation" (Anonymous M, 2005). Their efforts involve the accumulation of different types of capital, especially social capital, the basis of their attempts to improve their lives.

To think otherwise would be to remove from individuals and families the capacity to aspire to a life beyond mere survival, beyond daily subsistence, so it is impossible completely to determine the probable income of, for example, a street vendor, and to say whether the purpose of his efforts is mere survival. Urban Angolans believe that urban life offers more opportunities than rural life. In the investigated cities and probably in others, adults again and again say that here they can have access to education and expect their children to attain higher levels of education, which will bring them better employment opportunities: "If one works hard enough, his effort might be recognized by others, and he may progress in life" (Anonymous P, 2001).

A closer look at economic activities reveals how individuals engaged in a given income-generating activity are not limited to the resources obtained through that activity. There are multi-activity combinations as well as complementarities generated through the combination of the incomes and resources of all members of the family. One member's contribution, though small, may be crucial to the group, as it may cushion the variations in other members' earnings. Many people interviewed believed that keeping one family member working in lower-paid activities—like selling water, washing cars, transporting goods, and so on—is extremely important in case other family members' activities prove unfruitful, as when sickness prevents them from working, or when their goods or property are lost. The profits from one activity may be (and are) used to finance better-paid activities and/or provide for subsistence.

Urban activities often involve the use of existing assets and the continuous investment in them, as with small-scale domestic activities such as house rentals—a common urban strategy in African towns and cities (Bryceson and Potts 2006:58)—and small businesses, like bakeries, restaurants, video clubs, and photo studios. These activities are described in several African urban contexts (for Zambia, see Kazimbaya-Senkwe 2004; for Harare, see Kamete 2004), where they generate different results. Only by analyzing them within family contexts can we see how they work together.

The analysis of what income and resources each individual produces or obtains leaves out family-based interdependencies and reciprocities. The widely discussed term *strategy* reflects not only the proactivity—and not merely the reactivity—of individuals' actions in certain socioeconomic contexts, but also the underlying social reproductive logic. Social reproduction implies a more elaborate effort, with wider and less immediate objectives. In contrast, it implies a need to find a way of dealing with the restrictions inherent in the time and environment where the practices that ensure survival and reproduction take place. A strategy presupposes individuals' assessment of available means, clarifying their ends and adapting them (Lautier 1995), even if this process is not rationally intentional, or it is not immediately

possible to identify intentionality or a strategic sense. In other words, people may not be able to define their actions as strategies but when analyzing the results of their actions and their coordination, a strategic sense becomes more evident.

The analysis of mechanisms used in strategies, can shed some light on why, in the Angolan urban contexts, certain negative effects related to social and economic change have sometimes been mitigated. Social reproduction strategies rest on the *habitus* (as defined by Bourdieu 1972, meaning inherited social frameworks) and on the unprecedented, requiring therefore constant reinterpretation and arrangement. *Habitus* is the principal generator of practices, and its combination with new restrictions and with socioeconomic transformation produces new ways of dealing with reproduction. Survival and reproduction strategies are a set of logics and practices interconnecting the traditional and modern, a result of the transformations and readaptations of societies to new context. In Angola, as a result of sociocultural mechanisms and transformations, strategies focus on the enlarged⁷ family as the pertinent and salient group that organizes and manages them, and they imply a dispersion of resources, activities and relationship networks while at the same time maintaining the importance of solidarity networks and the rejection of impersonality in social relations. The sense of family solidarities based on intense social relationships and the complementation of resources and roles are central elements readapted from the traditional and put into practice in line with new economic activities, new ways of life in an urban context, new social structuring (Locoh 1993). In Angola, as in other African contexts, the family's responsibility regarding strategies has a tendency to be revived (Adepoju 1999:21).

Family members in developing countries work together for joint survival and social mobility (Roberts 1994:6), and their strategies emanate from normative assertions over family members' obligations and shared principles and priorities. This does not mean that there are not different interests concerning each individual, based on family status, gender, or generation,⁸ but family members may derive individual benefits from the increase in the collective wellbeing.

Family Strategies in Angola

Individuals and families adapt collectively to situations. It is impossible to identify precisely the practices they predominantly use at a given time, but certain trends characterize various periods in Angola and are described in the literature and by interviewed urban dwellers. The period immediately following independence was dominated by institutional exchange, individual exchange, parallel markets supplied by small-scale private production, auto-consumption, foreign companies, and massive product diversion. These practices were accompanied by family support, individual solidarity, and "informal arrangements" (*esquemas*) (Rela 1992). The 1980s and 1990s witnessed an expansion

of the informal economy, the intensification of urban food cultures, the expansion of services, the diversification of economic activities within families, solidarities, migrations, and the proliferation of activities considered illegal (ADRA 1993). Also during this period, practices and strategies were markedly diverse, as was the maintenance of social networks. More recently, practices relating to survival and reproduction have continued to be based above all on informal economic activities. With industries that have been in decline for decades—since independence—and which do not absorb a significant amount of laborers, with agriculture increasingly impractical in the larger cities and their peripheral areas, trades and services recorded the most significant growth and have attracted the majority of Angolan urban workers.

Studies carried out in Angolan cities reveal several characteristics with respect to the economic activities that generate and/or attract resources (Rodrigues 2003, 2005, 2006; Rodrigues and Salvador 2000). The activities of the tertiary sector and informal economy stand out, and resorting to multiactivity is one of the main strategies. The commercial activity of reselling in the informal sector—the most widespread (Lopes 2003; Sousa 1997)—includes market trading, selling at the doors of houses and establishments, street trading, and medium and long-distance trading. Similarly, service provision includes setting up establishments, providing housing facilities, and offering freelance services. Transportation-connected activities have been increasing over recent years, largely because of the scarcity of formal transport and unplanned rapid urban expansion. In Luanda, this type of service has grown significantly, especially transportation using nine-seat vans (and bigger), the *candongueiros*, while in Benguela and Lobito, transportation using motorcycles (*kupapata*) has become a business for many people (Lopes 2006).

Formal economic activities are mainly carried out by men, and informal economic activities are mainly carried out by women. The informal activities are characterized by uncertainty, low income and lack of social protection. An investment in social solidarities and reciprocities is therefore necessary and characterizes the gender-related aspects of family dynamics. Reciprocities based on personalizing social relations and social proximity represent the basis for managing family strategies and tend to be the foundation for establishing other solidarity networks, which are reformulated and reinforced in cities. Though the most important ties are those of kin and family, there are other important forms of solidarity, such as religions and churches, neighboring relationships, and associations of different types.

Solidarity is an essential traditional characteristic that has been retained from rural society and the extended family system (Monteiro 1973:162). During the last years of the colonial period, the growth of individualism could be observed in Luanda: "Individualism, which is now appearing here and there, is a result of the market economy and the consequent alterations in social stratification" (Monteiro 1973:163). Individualistic trends have receded in Angola as families have (re)assumed their fundamental role in all environments of social, economic, and political uncertainty.

Extra-family solidarity networks become more precarious and problematic as the spread and deepening of capitalism leaves unprotected the neediest, who in response maintain community solidarities (Marie 1998:81), adapted to new contexts, before forging collective instruments of militant solidarity.⁹ Churches, as a means of contact and establishment of relationships and a resource of material and spiritual security, may allow members access to goods and provide them with social support.¹⁰ Neighborhood networks sometimes facilitate the resolution of problems at a *bairro* (district) level (especially in security and sometimes mutual assistance or financial support), but the reciprocities and support among church members and the institution itself covers a range of issues. There is now in Angolan cities a vast variety and diversity of religious groups, all acting and developing solidarities of different kinds, providing for diverse services and counting on different levels of participation of their members.

Other forms of reciprocities involve joining professional groups, developing the same type of business, or belonging to a common economic organization. These type of reciprocities are generated and developed, above all, through preferential recruitment and cooperation based on activities, means, or customers. In the case of salaried employees in the formal and informal economies, people who belong to an organization, in addition to the reciprocities that may take place among individuals, numerous negotiations occur between employers, who wish to attract and uphold a reliable workforce, and employees, who need to provide for their families, and these negotiations often result in the establishment of reciprocities beyond the relationship based on wages (Rodrigues 2006).

However, participation in other associations is not very important in most cases. Whereas there is a significant replacement of traditional solidarity networks by active participation in associations in some African cities (Dorier-Apprill 1998:277), in Angola, this is not the case—a fact emphasized in information collected in the field and corroborated in other recent studies (Robson and Roque 2002), though associations did take on some importance in the capital during the late colonial period (Monteiro 1973:166). Initiatives are currently under way with respect to cooperatives or microcredit systems (Ducados and Ferreira 1998; Lopes et al. 2003), but they do not show evidence of consistent vitality in the creation of relevant group dynamics outside the family or outside other solidarity networks (see Robson and Roque 2002).

Dispersion and Combination of Sources, Resources, and Capital

Dispersion involves various activities, various family members, and a more or less broad spatial range. It depends, essentially, on the strategy conceived and put into practice by the family and similarly, the redistribution of resources obtained is defined by the group. Income obtained through diversification and combination of economic activities is concentrated and managed by the head of each family, or by family members responsible for

its redistribution, normally older persons with high status. The dispersion of members and activities allows households to deal with change, while the concentration of income, goods, and services allows all the family members to have access to a greater variety of resources.

The income-generating activities that individuals and families pursue varies according to circumstances, especially economic ones. "Minor occupations vary infinitely depending on opportunities, clientele and supplies" (Hugon 1999:90). Strategies represent specific practices and imply the circulation of resources made by the family in different ways, including increase in the supply of work to the economy, autonomous production or income transfer, and efforts made by the group to improve the efficiency of existing resources (Creighton and Omari 1995:8). There seems to be an agreement among specialists to include in the survival strategies of African families practices such as the increase in informal economy activities, small-scale agricultural production, the creation of new means of access to services or adaptation to their absence, and the strengthening and adaptation of rural-urban relationships (Potts 1997). In specific contexts, variations analyzed in detail enable us to define sectors that particularly influence group strategies. Measures taken to increase the efficiency of existing resources—for example, by reducing the quality and quantity of food consumed, the sharing of accommodation, or the use of cheaper fuel—and recourse to extended family networks and migration, including exchange of products and services with the rural milieu and migrations (Roberts 1994:9), appear to be more pertinent in African contexts than elsewhere in the world. In Angolan cities, the increase of the number and variety of family members engaged in economic activities is predominant, and resources from rural-urban networks have greater significance in smaller urban centers.

The capacity to adapt to change reveals a will to maintain a certain level of resources and efforts made to exploit opportunities. Individuals and families resort to multiactivity and the complementarity and combination of resources. Multiactivity roughly implies the aggregation of opportunities and possibilities for the generation and/or collection of resources at an individual level. Individuals may abandon some activities in response to market and economic conditions. If, traditionally, small-scale agricultural production is an area in which some complementary income may be derived (and in Africa it usually is), urban land in Luanda and other cities is increasingly rare, mainly because of the reduction of available or sufficiently close cultivatable spaces, caused by housing densification and the scarcity of water; in fact, this trend has been evident ever since the colonial period (Monteiro 1973:213). Even in areas that a few years ago were pockets of cultivation for supplying the city (for example, the Kikolo, Futungo, and Viana suburbs of Luanda), an increase in construction has been obliterating farms and allotments. These common processes in urban development and dynamics are well described in other African contexts (Jenkins 2003; Sheldon 1991), shaping and conditioning urban income-generating possibilities; however, the keeping of domestic animals in backyards is still of some importance and may complement

household income or allow small-scale trading. Agriculture in the Cavaco Valley allowed a significant percentage of the population of Benguela and Lobito to engage in small-scale production for self-consumption and local trading, and sometimes for trading between provinces. Also in these cities, fishing still has importance, whereas in Luanda, it attracts a smaller percentage of the population, the fishing communities traditionally engaged in it. In Ondjiva, families' resources depend on primary activities, especially rearing cattle and cultivating cereal. Similarly, small-scale border trade has taken on local significance again, and commercial activities have led to the expansion of commercial routes to other provinces in the country. Families follow a "group logic" in combining and managing these activities.

Another important activity, especially in peripheral *bairros* in Luanda, is building water-storage tanks in homes and investing in the purchase of water for resale by the bucket. Exploiting the lack of a central water supply in periurban *bairros*, people who have some investment capacity apply their money toward building tanks and purchasing water in large volumes, the investment being made all at once or as capital is accumulated, and can then resell water to their neighbors and make important profits from the sales. Maintaining this activity depends on the possibility of keeping a level of capital that allows the continuous purchase of more water to continue the business.

Investment in housing is carried out through the building of annexes and rooms to be rented out. The renting out of annexes, parts of a house, or rooms has become commonplace in periurban *bairros* in most Angolan cities, and whether built from scratch with that end in mind or converted after being used to house family members, this activity is an important source of income. In fact, it is a favorite means of generating income: many families sell or rent out houses located in more central areas of *bairros*, and move to others farther away from the centers. A series of other income-generating activities may be developed using the space or buildings that are a family's property: small-scale production and handicrafts; trading by setting up stalls, small stores, bars, or *janelas abertas* ("open windows"); building small cultivated plots and places for rearing animals; and renting out space for various ends (video clubs,¹¹ places of worship or churches, and schools). These and other activities can be engaged in just about everywhere, on a larger or smaller scale, and have shown themselves to be an important source of income for many people.

Families may combine these activities. Some arrangements are necessary to generate complementarities between the formal and informal activities. Much reduced in Luanda¹² and in Angola in general, the formal economy includes workers in the mining and manufacturing industries, crane operators, carpenters, electricians, mechanics, car drivers, taxi drivers, and bus drivers, and so on (51.1%); personnel from scientific, technical, artistic, or similar professions (28.6%); administrative personnel and similar workers (6.1%); and commercial personnel and salespeople (4.7%) (INE 2001). The great majority of formal wage workers consider that the salaries they earn

are insufficient, and for them too, multiactivity is a widespread modality (Rodrigues 2006). Salaried employees engage in informal trading, business, odd jobs, and providing services. Most available statistics estimate that about 60 percent of the total active population works as self-employed or nonremunerated family workers (i.e., in the informal economy), but the statistics do not take into account the percentage of workers who combine a formal job with informal work. The accumulation of individual capacities and qualifications is a decisive factor, which may imply keeping various activities going at the same time without necessarily opting for one or another; for example, one individual (interviewed in Luanda) was at the same time a teacher, a mechanic, and a trader.

More important than the analysis of individual multiactivity is the analysis of complementarities and combination of income and resources within families. Formal economy work allows access to regular salaries, benefits (healthcare, transportation, credit, and others), and work-based networks. Fixed and regular income allows for satisfying a certain level of each family's needs, and for investing capital in activities that can generate income, normally commercial and informal. Constantly in interviews, this practice was commonly called "doubling" or "trebling" a salary, and it is normally put into practice by the wives and other female relatives of salaried workers through trading in markets, at stalls in the streets, at the door of the family house, and so on. It points to the distinction between male and female activities, as employment in the formal sector is held mainly by men (despite usually generating less income), but the preponderance of the male role in families is generally not affected by the men's wage-earning capabilities. The guarantee that the fixed income provides—especially with respect to the possibility of investment—allows men to maintain their prestige in the family, as elsewhere in Africa, where the underestimation and undervaluation of female economic activities are also predominant (Dorier-Apprill et al. 1998:266), even though the resources are higher (Thorsen 2002).

Through this combination of male and female income, it is possible to understand that, rather than individual activities, strategies presuppose the interconnection of all the activities and/or generation of income of a family's members. When one family member is engaged in the resale of water while another has employment in the formal economy and others sell products in the market, others on the streets of the cities, and others at the door of the house, the members involved contribute to the resources available to the family, thus benefiting the group. Complementarities are present in the capacity to alternate formal and informal income, depending on the overall economic situation or the situation of the family: at any given time, business in the informal economy may represent the greater source of families' income; at other times, the salaried activity may guarantee the family's sustenance.

Flexibility and adaptability

Apart from the variety and diversity of possibilities for generating or collecting income, family strategies reveal a second characteristic, one that has to do with substitution and reconversion of activities. With regard to individual choices *vis-à-vis* the economic activity carried out, they differ in time, are radically or partially transformed, sometimes fit into the informal economy, and sometimes fit into the formal one, depending on opportunities and possibilities. Some individuals' activity begins in the formal sector and remains there, though it may lead to other activities. Other individuals move from the formal to the informal economy if certain conditions change. Some activities were once expanding but now are subject to lower demand, or are less lucrative and therefore more easily abandoned. These are virtues of strategies of dispersion: minimizing the dependence on a single source of income, compensating particular failures of an activity with the successes obtained from others, and switching from one activity to other.

Diversification may not always be a key factor. To make its members' efforts lucrative, a family may involve a majority in a certain line of business, for example a whole family engaged in the sale of clothes: one of the members will trade clothes outside the city, in other provinces; another will sell clothes from a stall in front of the house; others will sell in markets or in the streets. Dependence on a single or main line of business in which the family is engaged may therefore not always represent a risk, but may imply a strategic option for the combined development of a line of business, provided that it means an increase in income and/or benefits. It all depends on particular cases and the specific possibilities evaluated and managed by the family, and flexibility in this sense plays a fundamental role.

The multiplicity of these examples shows that individual and family strategies are flexible and adapted to changing socioeconomic conditions (Dei 1992). The demographic pressure that causes the oversupply of goods and services in certain sectors of activity is so strong that in Angolan urban centers, people tend to engage in increasingly original income-generating activities, especially informal ones. New migrants cannot always gain entry in firmly established commercial or service-provision networks. Their solution is often to engage in activities that do not yet exist in the market and that demonstrate some potential, such as the itinerant sale of water in small bags, or taking advantage of specific know-how and/or rural networks to engage in commercial activities between the city and other provinces and rural areas. Trips for reselling products in other provinces, and between a city and other African capitals—for example, the Republic of South Africa or Namibia¹³—are important commercial activities for many interviewed individuals, as is resorting to illegal or riskier activities, such as clandestine prospecting for diamonds.

Conclusions

Income-generating activities are multiple, varied, and variable over time and in response to opportunities. The flexibility that these variations and this variety imply is a prerequisite of family strategies and has been reinforced in recent years as a result of rapid economic transformations and uncertainties. Common strategies reflect the principles of concentrating resources, and aggregating and sharing among family members. At the same time, strategies exploit the dispersal and diversification of resources, the combination and variety of forms of collecting resources, the attribution of diversified responsibilities to members, and the combination of resources of various types. Families exploit economic resources and establish solidarity and reciprocity networks, which, in urban milieus, extend to neighborhood relationships, church groups, and individuals linked by common economic activities. The prevalence of the enlarged family model and the development and implementation of common strategies reveal the vitality of and preference for collective forms of social organization, based on values anchored in solidarity and on the traditional framework. Social relations are neither perceived nor lived through individualism; proximities and personalities constitute the foundation of solidarity and reciprocity networks.

The underlying logics of family strategies are those of social reproduction. Economic opportunities, access to resources, basic infrastructure, and social services among urban families have been decreasing, causing higher levels of impoverishment and imposing obstacles in the possibilities to attain resources beyond those necessary to simple survival, but people's aspirations go beyond simple survival. The efforts placed in developmental economic activities, investments, combinations, and flexibility should be perceived as part of broader and more ambitious projects, which may not always be fully accomplished; however, the development of structures and mechanisms that do not depend on individuals' and families' wills and attitudes can contribute enormously to the improvement of urban Angolan life. This perception and attitude is without doubt a principal strength, and potential development policies can work and should invest with Angolan families.

Many questions remain, however. How do unequal competition for resources and these reproduction strategies reinforce and reproduce social differentiation? How can we reach those whose resources do not allow moving beyond survival level? How can we determine families' achievements and perception of socioeconomic attainment? Those are issues still to be studied and better known in post-war Angola.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper has the financial support of the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, Portugal

NOTES

1. União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).
2. Cities like Huambo were almost abandoned for long periods of time (on this subject, see the work of the historian Maria da Conceição Neto). The empirical data on which this paper is based stem from research conducted in Angolan cities, including Benguela and Lobito in 2005; Luanda in 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2004; and Ondjiva in 2004 and 2005. See Government of the Province of Benguela, Robson and Roque, Rodrigues, Jenkins in the references.
3. According to the estimates by the Government of the Province of Benguela (2003a), the Benguela municipal region had 548,496 inhabitants, Lobito 875,000, and Catumbela 170,000.
4. Especially in Castanheira de Pêra, a small village near Lubango.
5. On the decrease of resources in circulation in solidarity and reciprocity networks, see Robson and Roque (2002).
6. In the above-mentioned periods when the research took place, the collection of data was qualitatively oriented. The interviews were directed to families and individuals, focusing on their life strategies, the processes of their urban integration, and the effect migration had in their lives.
7. The enlarged family, predominant in African cities, generally results from a compromise between the traditional extended family and the nuclear family.
8. On urban gender and generation transformations and negotiations, see Hansen (2005), and generally Bissiliat (1996) and Creighton and Omari (1995).
9. Solidarity funds, mutual assistance societies, unions, political parties (Marie 1998).
10. In observed churches, and according to information from individuals belonging to a religious group, this assistance may involve attending church schools and using the churches' clinics and medical services, or having access to the water or electricity that churches may supply to certain of their members.
11. A more or less improvised space for the exhibition of films, with an entrance fee.
12. The IDR data from 2001 are clear as to global employment in Angola: the provisional results indicate that only 27.2 percent of individuals surveyed in Luanda have a profession or position (in the formal sector)—which shows that in formal sector employment, chances are very low.
13. Cross-border trading between Ondjiva and Namibia through the land border has increased, while trading with South Africa has been supported by air routes.

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