

GREED, GRIEVANCE, LEADERSHIP AND EXTERNAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE INITIATION AND INTENSIFICATION OF THE CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA

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Abstract

Understanding the initiation of conflict is fundamental for the success of efforts in conflict prevention. The validity of the mechanisms of the "Greed and Grievance" model, alongside leadership and external interventions are tested in four periods of initiation and intensification of the conflict in Angola. All mechanisms are present but their relative relevance varies throughout the conflict. Among the mechanisms identified in each period the most relevant in the Cold War period are the international and regional interventions in 1961 and 1975 and in the post-Cold War period, the "greed" factors in 1992 (oil and diamonds, poverty and war capital) and the UNITA leadership of Jonas Savimbi in 1998. The case study provides evidence that "greed" and "grievance" can be interlinked (such as in 1992) and confirms the relevance of leadership and external interventions mechanisms.

Keywords

Africa, Angola, Conflict, Greed, Grievance, Leadership, External interventions

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Introduction

Several approaches have been developed to explain the initiation of Civil War. The “Greed and Grievance” model popularized by Paul Collier attracted intense scrutiny from researchers.

The model is based on a rational choice approach and contrasts the economic opportunities in which people are able to organize and finance a rebellion (“greed”), i.e. rebellion as a criminal enterprise, with social and political motives making people want to rebel (“grievances”), i.e. socio-economic injustices felt by a social group. The model is operationalized through a series of proxy variables. The opportunities of would be rebels are: a1) the funding possibilities available, which can be revenues from natural resources, remittances from diasporas or support from hostile governments; a2) the recruitment costs of rebels, determined by alternative income levels; 3) the accumulated war capital; a4) the capacity of the government to control the territory measured in terms of how the terrain is appropriate for rebels (forest and mountains) or how disperse the populations are, and; a5) the social cohesion in society and how ethnic and religious factors facilitate the establishment and maintenance of conflict groups. The grievances of would be rebels are: b1) religious and ethnic hatred between groups; b2) the level of political repression; b3) the political exclusion of groups, and; b4) the income inequality in the country (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

The application of this model to the Civil Wars between 1960 and 1999 concludes that the main mechanism in Civil War initiation is “greed”, in the desire to acquire economic benefits and therefore the perceived capacity to organise and maintain a rebellion. The main “greed” factors are the existence of natural resources (specifically oil), remittances from the diaspora, the low recruitment costs of fighters, military advantage in terms of dispersed populations, and the war capital existing in the country (in time since the last conflict) (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). The only significant grievance factor is political exclusion through ethnic dominance, at the same time that ethnic and religious diversity decreases chances of conflict if ethnic dominance is avoided. Finally, the size of the population is positively associated with conflict onset² (these results are summarized in the column “results” in table 1). Fearon and Laitin (2003) reached similar results regarding the relevance of “greed” factors in explaining the initiation of Civil Wars. But they consider that the low income variable is a proxy of lower state capacity to repress rebellion and consequently lower costs for the rebels to sustain a rebellion rather than a proxy of lower recruitment costs of fighters, as considered by Collier and Hoeffler (2004). For Fearon (2005), if oil predicts Civil Wars, it is not so much by being an entrepreneurial mechanism (as a tempting “prize” for those who control the state) but mostly because oil producers have low state capacities to repress

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² This is interpreted more as a greed factor by increasing the likelihood of having secession-seeking population sub-groups.



rebellion relative to their levels of income per capita. Oil rich countries have less incentive to develop the state apparatus required for revenue collection.

Following similar rationalist-positivist approaches, the validity of the model was tested with quantitative and qualitative assessment. Quantitative analysis by Hegre and Sambanis (2006) confirmed several of the model's results, including the entrepreneurial (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004) and state repression claims (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

The model was later reviewed to consider that it is the financial and military feasibility of conflict that increases the likelihood of Civil War initiation. Feasibility is mainly measured in terms of: the country being a former French colony and therefore under the security umbrella of France, making rebellion less likely to succeed; the proportion of young male in the country who are potential fighters, and; a mountainous terrain that makes rebel military action feasible (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009). Therefore, the issue is not so much if there is a "grievance" motive, or if there is a "greed" opportunity, instead if insurrection is feasible.

We test in this paper the original "greed" and "grievance" model for three reasons. One is that the feasibility factors are difficult to test within a single case study, as they don't vary significantly across time. A second reason is that the results of the feasibility model reconfirm the results of the original model in the sense that "greed" factors are still significant and "grievance" are not (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009). A third reason is that there is no agreement on the "greed" and "grievance" debate and this debate has not been replaced by a "feasibility" debate.

The current "greed" and "grievance" debate focuses on which of the mechanisms explains the initiation of Civil Wars, the epistemological foundations of the studies and the policy implications of the results.

The "grievance" argument can be traced back to the "relative deprivation" theory that proposed that psychological mechanisms associated with a frustration of not meeting material expectations are at the root of conflict initiation (Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970). Tilly (1978) contested this argument considering that grievance factors are widespread in society and conflict is not present in all societies. Instead, it is the capacity to mount a rebellion, determined by access to material and organisational resources, that differentiates societies where Civil War is initiated or not. With Gurr's work (1970, 2000) on ethnic conflict, group level grievances gain another capacity to explain the initiation of conflict.

In the tradition of the "grievance" argument, it has been suggested that rebellion occurs in cases of multidimensional horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2002). Horizontal inequalities occur when social exclusion and poverty and identity or regional boundaries take place simultaneously. Buhaug, Cederman and Gleditsch (2014) used horizontal inequalities as a proxy for inequality, instead of the GINI coefficient used by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Fearon and Laitin (2003), which reflects vertical inequalities - inequality among values of a frequency distribution of income, economic interpersonal inequality. They found that horizontal inequalities are an important factor in rebellions and a better predictor of rebellion than vertical inequalities.³

³ Similar results were found by Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch (2011) and Østby (2008).



The qualitative analysis of the model through a series of case studies (Collier and Sambanis, 2005) confirms its main results. Nevertheless, it also identifies a series of limitations and reflections, some of which this case study on Angola is particularly suited to investigate.

One limitation of the model is the absence of leadership as a factor. This is mainly due to the fact that leadership is hard to quantify. There are two theories on the role of leadership in mobilizing ethnic groups. One, from rationalist and constructivist accounts, suggest that there is a social construction of identity by political elites in order to mobilize and manipulate ethnic groups into fighting (Gurr 2000). These differ from the primordial perspectives, which consider that there is an innate conflict propensity in ethnic identity (Brubaker 1995).

Another limitation is the absence of an account of the role of external interventions. The Collier and Hoeffler (2004) theory uses a Cold War dummy variable to proxy for this effect, finding no statistically significant relationship⁴. But this variable does not capture the nuanced effect of exogenous variables on Civil War. The Cold War had different periods of intensity, between the post-Second World War and 1991, when it ended with different levels of involvement of external actors. Also, it had different expressions at international and regional level. At the regional level, there can be diffusion and contagion effects. Diffusion occurs through demonstration, where political events in one country inspire political action in another. Contagion occurs through: common ethnic groups across borders; accumulation of war capital (for instances small arms) in specific regions; refugee movements, or external interventions (Sambanis, 2005). The effect of external interventions on Civil War is one of the understudied relationships in the literature (Sambanis, 2002). External interventions support the fighting parties, affecting their propensity to fight. Military interventions increase directly the military capacity to fight, and economic interventions decrease the coordinating costs of sustaining a rebellion by increasing the likelihood of success (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000). Diplomatic interventions are normally intended to find a non-violent solution to the conflict and through information sharing they can increase the chances of reaching a political solution. Generally speaking, evidence has been found of the escalatory effect of military interventions and de-escalatory effect of economic and diplomatic interventions in Civil Wars (Regan and Meachum 2014, Sousa, 2015).

These limitations can be contextualized in broader epistemological considerations. It has been argued that the rational choice approach and methodological individualism of these studies fail to take into account social, relational and historical aspects (Cramer, 2002). Furthermore, statistical inference is distinct from causality and positivism can fall into tautological explanations of the phenomenon, based on datasets detached from the meanings that events have on the ground (Korf, 2006).

A main reflection of Sambanis (2005) is that one should be looking at "greed" and "grievance" as alternative shades of the same phenomena, and not as competing explanations. A few mechanisms can be considered to illustrate this hypothesis. For instance, functional political institutions may decrease political grievances but at the same time good economic performance can promote the stability of institutions and, in

⁴ The other exogenous variable used is remittances from the diaspora, but, for data reasons, this is limited to remittances from the USA.



this way, affect grievances. Also state failure or government illegitimacy leads to domestic anarchy, in which case "greed" can be considered the pursuit of survival by groups in society.

Finally, the relevance of this debate can be apprehended on its policy implications on how to prevent Civil War. The "greed" explanation puts a focus on: economic growth and diversification; control and management of natural resources, and; state strength and external interventions to improve its capacity. "Grievance" explanations highlight: the indivisibility of some issues, such as identity, ethnicity or religion; the need for ethnic inclusion and fairer distribution of wealth in the country; mediated solutions among parties, and external interventions in order to secure the commitment to peace agreements.

Inspired on the qualitative work of Collier and Sambanis (2005), the main contribution of this paper is two-folded. One is to test the "greed" and "grievance" hypotheses as alternative but also complementary explanations of Civil War alongside the normally omitted variables of leadership and exogenous effects at international and regional level, in the form of external interventions (or processes of diffusion). Another is to apply the model to an historical case study on Angola, which has not been done before. The Angolan Civil War spanned from the war of independence through the Cold War and up to the post-Cold War era. It had more than 500,000 deaths, tens of thousands of persons mutilated by anti-personnel mines and the displacement of approximately 4.1 million people.

This study follows the definition of Civil War advanced by Gleditsch et al (2002), whereby it consists of a contested incompatibility regarding a government and/or territory with the use of force by parties, and where at least one of them is the state or government, resulting in at least 25 deaths in battle⁵.

The conceptualization of variables, in this case the dependent variable of Civil War, is one of the challenges in quantitative studies (Sambanis, 2004). Broadly speaking, in the case of Angola there were two types of war: the war of colonial independence initiated in 1961, also called extra-systemic war, and an internationalized Civil War since independence, between 1975 and 2002. The war of colonial independence has particularities that differentiate it from the subsequent war (the issues and parties involved) which could merit a separate analysis. But because the original analysis of Collier and Hoeffler (2004) includes these types of war, it will also be considered. The Civil War initiated after independence is internationalized because it had military involvement of external actors. The question here is to consider if relapses into conflict after periods of peace following a peace agreement should be considered a new Civil War or not. In Angola the relapses had the same conflict parties fighting over the same issue and therefore it does not fit completely into a classification of a new Civil War.

⁵ All the classifications used in the paper and dates of initiation/intensification of conflict are from this source, unless otherwise identified. The periods and sub-periods used in this paper significantly match those of Sambanis (2004) and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) with small differences of one year due to the level of violence considered: Sambanis (2004) and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) consider the second period to end in May 1991, the year of the Bicesse peace accords, even if technically both 1991 and 1992 are considered as conflict years in Gleditsch et al (2002); Sambanis (2004) considers the third period to end in 1994, and 1995 to be a year with very low violence not reaching the threshold to be considered in conflict, while for Collier and Hoeffler (2004) the conflict that started in 1992 only ends in 2002; Sambanis (2004) considers the fourth period to start in 1997, due to the escalation of violence in that year.



Also the model of the “initiation” of Civil Wars aims to identify the key mechanisms associated with a qualitative change on the political processes in a country, where actors decide to move from non-violent conflict to violent conflict. The mechanisms present in these cases are not necessarily the same as in situations of relapse. In relapses, the fighting group and war capital already exist and this can have a decisive effect on what factors explain Civil War initiation. This path-dependence is difficult to analyse and is also present in the transition from the war of independence to internationalized Civil War, where one can find some of the same fighting parties even if fighting against a different party (different dyads). For these reason the analysis will consider two initiations, the war of independence and the internationalized Civil War, and, in the latter war, two intensifications of the conflict

Four periods are identified in the Civil War in Angola between 1961 and 2002⁶. The first period begins in February 1961 with the initiation of the war of independence against Portugal and extends up to July 1974, when a ceasefire is signed between Portugal and the nationalist movements. The second period begins in November 1975, when the internationalized Civil War initiates and ends with the Bicesse accords in May 1991. The third period starts with the intensification of conflict after the September 1992 elections and ends in 1995 when the conflict intensity decreases significantly. The final period ranges from March 1998, when the conflict restarts, to April 2002, when it ends⁷.

Table 1 resumes the values of the proxy variables of the Collier and Hoeffler (2004) model for the years closest to conflict initiation in the period between 1960 and 1995. It compares the values for Angola with the averages for all countries, countries where a Civil War did not start and countries where a Civil War started. In Angola, the main “greed” indicators are propitious to conflict initiation: for funding, natural resources are above the average and the recruitment costs are below the average⁸ of the values for countries where a Civil War started; at the same time, the possibilities for state control are diminished as both geographical dispersion and population are higher than the average in countries where a Civil War started, and; the grievance indicators are less favourable to conflict initiation as the social fractionalization is high throughout but without ethnic dominance.

The historical analysis in this paper identifies both “greed” and “grievance” factors in moments of the initiation or intensification of Civil War in Angola⁹. It suggests that exogenous variables for international and regional dimensions and the endogenous variable of leadership improve the model’s explanatory power. The article follows a chronological order of the four moments of initiation or intensification of Civil War, with a description and analysis of the “greed”, “grievance” and exogenous dynamics. It then proceeds to analyse the leadership dynamics, which is better understood across periods.

⁶ This article does not analyse the Cabinda conflict, which occurs at the same time with similar but in many cases particular dynamics.

⁷ Collier and Hoeffler (2004) consider the Civil War in Angola to have started in 1961, 1975 and 1992 and ongoing in 1999, the last year of the dataset. Because 1996 and 1997 are years not classified in conflict by Gleditsch et al (2002), 1998 is added here as another intensification of the conflict.

⁸ Except for higher economic growth in 1965 (not shown in table) and 1998.

⁹ Because for Angola there is no data on GINI and the horizontal inequalities indicators are non-variant in the period, the evidence of the grievance is based on case studies.

Table 1: Greed and Grievance model factors 1960, 1975, 1990 and 1995

| Factor | Proxy (*3) | Results | 1960 (Initiation independence war 1961) | | | | 1975 (Initiation civil war 1975) | | | | 1990 (Intensification civil war 1992) | | | | 1995 (Intensification civil war 1998) | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|---|--------|---------|--------|----------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|
| | | | Angola | All | NoCW St | CW St | Angola | All | NoCW St | CW St | Angola | All | NoCW St | CW St | Angola | All | NoCW St | CW St |
| a1) Natural resources | Ratio of primary commodity exports to GDP | + SIG | 0,202 | 0,138 | 0,162 | 0,127 | 0,360 | 0,183 | 0,190 | 0,189 | 0,476 | 0,146 | 0,134 | 0,136 | 0,411 | 0,142 | 0,141 | 0,231 |
| | Ratio of oil exports to GDP | + SIG | 0,202 | 0,033 | 0,033 | 0,017 | 0,360 | 0,051 | 0,055 | 0,042 | 0,476 | 0,023 | 0,024 | 0,029 | 0,411 | 0,020 | 0,019 | 0,085 |
| a1) Remittances from diasporas | Emigrants living in the US over time since last conflict *1000 | + SIG | | 0,083 | 0,083 | | | 0,046 | 0,043 | 0,090 | 0,013 | 0,144 | 0,103 | 0,322 | | 0,088 | 0,084 | 0,183 |
| a1) Support from hostile government | Start of Civil War in Cold War or post-Cold War (dummy) | NS | 1,000 | 0,070 | | | 1,000 | 0,070 | | | 1,000 | 0,110 | | | 0,030 | | | |
| a2) Atypical low cost of recruitment | Mean income pc (lnGDPpc) | - SIG | 6,836 | 7,324 | 7,338 | 6,882 | 6,394 | 7,730 | 7,810 | 7,464 | 6,448 | 7,962 | 8,083 | 7,296 | 6,628 | 7,974 | 8,039 | 8,434 |
| | Male secondary school enrollment; | - SIG | 3,000 | 22,992 | 24,212 | 9,336 | 10,000 | 39,871 | 42,343 | 23,600 | 12,000 | 33,939 | 36,217 | 43,613 | | 61,362 | 62,398 | 60,300 |
| | Economic growth in n-1 | - SIG | | | | | -9,321 | 2,423 | 2,392 | 0,327 | -2,336 | 0,816 | 1,032 | -1,108 | 3,383 | 0,371 | 0,317 | -7,119 |
| a3) War capital | Months since last conflict | - SIG | 172 | 137 | 160 | 118 | 1 | 301 | 311 | 168 | 16 | 433 | 467 | 339 | | 469 | 481 | 134 |
| | Previous war (dummy) | NS | 0,00 | 0,14 | 0,12 | 0,43 | 1,00 | 0,22 | 0,19 | 0,70 | 1,00 | 0,24 | 0,22 | 0,44 | | 0,30 | 0,28 | 0,80 |
| a4) Mountains | Mountains index | + p=.164 | 9,7 | 17,2 | 15,8 | 20,1 | 9,7 | 17,2 | 14,8 | 29,2 | 9,7 | 17,2 | 14,1 | 37,3 | 9,7 | 17,2 | 15,7 | 6,7 |
| a4) Dispersed populations | Gini coefficient population dispersion | - SIG | 0,648 | 0,373 | 0,368 | 0,393 | 0,648 | 0,373 | 0,368 | 0,628 | 0,648 | 0,373 | 0,363 | 0,621 | 0,664 | 0,379 | 0,369 | 0,769 |
| | Population (ln) | + SIG | 13,39 | 0,16 | 0,16 | 0,13 | 13,63 | 0,18 | 0,19 | 0,19 | 16,04 | 0,13 | 0,13 | 0,14 | 16,19 | 0,14 | 0,14 | 0,23 |
| a5) Social cohesion | Social fractionalization (ethnic and religious) | - SIG (*1) | 4446 | 1778 | 1690 | 2682 | 4134 | 1783 | 1792 | 1394 | 3822 | 1788 | 1718 | 2608 | 3822 | 1788 | 1718 | 4447 |
| b1) Religious and ethnic hatred | Ethno-linguistic fractionalization | + SIG | 78 | 40 | 39 | 32 | 78 | 40 | 39 | 33 | 78 | 40 | 39 | 37 | 78 | 40 | 39 | 73 |
| | Religious fractionalization | NS | 36 | 36 | 33 | 44 | 32 | 36 | 37 | 28 | 48 | 36 | 36 | 38 | 48 | 36 | 37 | 38 |
| | Polarization measure | NS (*2) | 0,070 | 0,051 | 0,049 | 0,074 | 0,070 | 0,069 | 0,069 | 0,123 | 0,070 | 0,053 | 0,055 | 0,073 | 0,070 | 0,051 | 0,048 | 0,168 |
| b2) Political repression | Democracy/autocracy (10-0) | - SIG (*1) | | 3,8 | 4,0 | 0,7 | 0,0 | 3,0 | 3,3 | 0,7 | 0,0 | 4,8 | 3,4 | 1,7 | 1,0 | 3,3 | 3,6 | 2,1 |
| b3) Political exclusion | % largest ethnic group – ethnic dominance | + SIG (*1) | 0,000 | 0,473 | 0,474 | 0,343 | 0,000 | 0,473 | 0,446 | 0,300 | 0,000 | 0,473 | 0,467 | 0,364 | 0,000 | 0,473 | 0,473 | 0,400 |
| b4) Income disparities between groups | Gini coefficient | NS | | 41,178 | 41,339 | 38,733 | | 40,841 | 40,483 | 44,613 | | 40,789 | 40,390 | 33,300 | | 41,094 | 41,023 | 31,080 |
| | Gini coefficient of land ownership | NS | | 0,643 | 0,646 | 0,624 | | 0,636 | 0,639 | 0,720 | | 0,639 | 0,642 | 0,389 | | 0,639 | 0,641 | 0,392 |

Notes: Data is from Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and follows the 5-year interval of the dataset. Years reported are the closest to the initiation or intensification of conflict in 1961, 1975, 1991 and 1998. Empty cells are missing data and the column "Results" identifies if the proxy is statistically significant (SIG) (at either 1%, 5% or 10% level) and the direction of the effect: increasing (+) or decreasing (-) the likelihood of Civil War initiation. NS means No Significance and in one case the p value is reported. Definition of the variables can be found in the original paper. The main objective of the table is to compare Angola and other countries and not the individual values. For instance, population is reported as natural log as used in the original paper, the emigrant variable is here multiplied by 1000 in order to have a more readable value. "No CW St" means countries where no Civil War started in the period (five years subsequent to the year identified) and "CW St" means countries where a Civil War starts in the period. *1 - Results of most models tested, but not all; *2 - Significant in one combined model; and *3 - Variables identified are the ones reported in the independent models. Some model's variables were not reported in Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) tables due to lack of significance, these are: a4) proportion of forests, population density and population in urban areas; b2) political openness, and; b4) ratio of top-to-bottom quintiles of income.

The beginning of the independence war in 1961

In the early sixties, the socio-economic structure of Angola was typically colonial with industrial output representing only a low proportion of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There was a small white minority living mainly in the capital which controlled the local political sphere but dependent on the metropolis¹⁰. Another minority were the *creoles* and assimilated blacks with citizenship rights, who worked mostly in the public and trade sectors¹¹. The remaining population of four million and seven hundred thousand were all of Bantu origin and belonged mostly to one of the three dominant ethno-linguistic groups, the Mbundu, the Ovimbundu and Bakongo.

The Mbundu, predominantly from the centre and north region¹² would, together with the urban *creoles*, become the main support base of the MPLA – the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. The group is associated with the Methodist religion and the urban economy of state employment. The Ovimbundu, mainly from the central plateau¹³, are associated with the UNITA – the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola – and are mainly of the Congregational church, linked to the trade associated with the rail road. Finally, the Bakongo¹⁴ from the northern region are also present in the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The group is associated with the FNLA – the National Front for the Liberation of Angola –, belongs mainly to the Baptist church and is connected to the coffee production (Birmingham, 2006). The main and sometimes sole common political denominator of these three groups was Angola's independence.

Although there had been rebellions in the history of Angola, no new social and economic grievances or economic opportunities developed in this period that could explain the initiation of conflict. Instead, what is specific to this period are changes occurring in the international context of the Cold War, mainly: the early pro-nationalism of the Kennedy administration in the United States of America (USA)¹⁵, and, in the regional environment, the year of African independence in 1960, in particular the independence of the Congo (later called the DRC)¹⁶.

In this propitious international and regional environment, in the beginning of 1961 a sequence of events led to the initiation of the conflict. The first event in January occurred when the Mbundu attacked mainly the representatives and buildings of the cotton industry, capitalizing on the complains over forced labour and the cotton production policies, which involved forced production of cotton, state control of the market and appropriation of land (Birmingham, 2006)¹⁷.

¹⁰ 173.000 in 1960.

¹¹ About 54,000 in 1960 and 30,000 in 1950 respectively.

¹² About 24 percent of population.

¹³ About 32 percent of population.

¹⁴ About 32 percent of the population.

¹⁵ Up to 1962 when the pro-European thesis wins over an Africanist position in the White House (Rodrigues, 2004)

¹⁶ Some of the contemporary events are: Egypt's independence in 1951, Bandung conference for self-determination and autonomous government of colonized people in 1955, the All-Africa Peoples Conference with delegates from the independence movements held in Accra in 1958 and in Tunis in 1960, but significantly the independence of 17 countries in Africa in 1960.

¹⁷ These complaints had already been associated with revolts in 1915 and 1945, although at the time the Portuguese regime had the capacity to control them. The only other period with revolts occurred in the



In the following month of February, in the capital of Luanda, a group failed an attempt to free nationalist political prisoners, where some of the group's members would belong to the MPLA in the future. In its aftermath there was severe repression in the city by police and armed civilians. This revolt can be linked to the grievances of *creoles* and mixed race urban population, especially regarding the discriminatory public sector policies implemented since the 1950s due to the increased influx of Portuguese settlers¹⁸ (Hodges, 2001, Birmingham, 2006).

The third event occurred in March 1961 in the coffee areas of Bakongo North (Uige), from where the rebellion would spread violently. In this case, not only were white farmers and their families attacked but also *mestiços* and migrant black workers - Ovimbundu originating from the south (Spikes, 1993). These were seen both as collaborating with the colonizers (Birmingham, 1999) and the reason for the low wages prevailing in the region (Cramer, 2006), where significant frustration existed over the expropriation of northern Angolan coffee farmers (Cramer, 2002). Holden Roberto, leader of the then UPA – the Union of the People of Angola¹⁹, claimed responsibility for the rural insurrection, which occurred at the same time he was travelling to New York to discuss the self-determination of Angola at the United Nations (Spikes, 1993).

In contrast both to the Belgians (the colonisers of the neighbouring country from where the insurgents of UPA came and which had its own independence just months before) and to the political landscape of the time, the Portuguese administration did not negotiate and, despite the dictatorship facing one of its most challenging periods, the regime reinforced its colonial policy and increased its repressive capacities in the colony. At the same time, a policy was started to “win the hearts” of the peoples governed and internationally the Lajes “card” (strategic important military bases for the USA located in the Azores islands) was played in order to ease international pressure for decolonization.

The model and the initiation of conflict in 1961

Most of the economic opportunity factors were not present in 1961 when the war of independence started. Unprocessed resources were significant in the volume of exports, although oil was not the main resource. Coffee was the main export with 36 percent, which, together with other unprocessed agricultural goods, amounted to 56 percent of the total export value in 1961, while oil exports represented 20 percent of exports (Ferreira, 2006). In any of the four periods under analysis, there is no data on diaspora in the USA. Nevertheless, the qualitative literature rarely refers to the role of the Angola's diaspora in funding the rebellion, making single references to the political exiles in Lisbon, Brazzaville and Conakry in the 1960s. At the same time, Angola had no war capital and there was not a large ethnic group dominating the country. Instead, there was a minority of settlers' dominance, therefore a case of political grievance of the Bantu population.

beginning of the century in the period of Portuguese consolidation of control over the territory and were associated with the Ovimbundu (1902 and 1904) and Bakongo (1913 and 1916) kingdoms' resistance. (Spikes, 1993).

¹⁸ From 80.000 in 1950, the settler population increased to 170.000 in 1960 and about 300.000 at independence in 1975 (Pereira, 1994).

¹⁹ Which would later become the FNLA.



The first attempt of insurrection in Luanda was not successful, mainly due to the state's capacity in controlling an area with high concentration of population, resulting in the insurgents' refuge in the dense Dembo forest in the Northeast of Luanda (George, 2005). The conflict was mainly initiated in a rural setting of a vast region with a dispersed population by a group who share the Bakongo identity. Also, the insurgents had similar economic grievances regarding agricultural and labour policies in the coffee sector, which translated into low income per capita and low male secondary school enrolment. Due to the economic structure, the prize associated with taking over the state was small because it was directly dependent on the same low wages in the agriculture sector, compared to a situation where income would come mainly from offshore oil. Therefore, the financial incentive for rebellion can be found abroad.

The fact that the leadership of UPA was based in Leopoldville and that the DRC had recently become independent, significantly contributes to a diffusion and contagion thesis. Diffusion related to the demonstration effect of DRC independence. Contagion related to the origins of the insurgents and agitators, most likely Bakongo living in the North of Angola as well as in the neighbouring country. The nationalist political awareness of an emigrated elite was supported by the regional and international landscape, favourable to independence movements with both the DRC and the USA supporting the UPA.²⁰

In sum, the colonial context with political grievances of the population, ethnic-based grievances over economic inequalities, dispersed population making it more difficult for the state to control insurgencies, and the cohesion of insurgent groups, which decreased the coordination costs of a rebellion, were all important factors to explain conflict initiation. But these factors had been present for some time and therefore are not capable of explaining events in 1961. Instead, the favourable Cold War period and regional context with the independence of the DRC could have been the deciding factors that led to the initiation of the conflict in 1961.

The initiation of the international Civil War in 1975

Despite the economic uplifting of the local population in the 1960s²¹ and political grievances being answered through the independence of Angola, the Cold War setting did not allow an independent peaceful solution to be found. Also war capital (in the form of fighting groups and military equipment) resulting from the previous war of independence were a disincentive for the national groups to find a political compromise. This Civil War that started in 1975 would last until April 2002, with a brief pause in the conflict in 1991/1992 and in 1996/1997.

Two processes are important to understand the initiation of the Civil War: the socio-economic configuration in Angola before independence, and; the process of transition to independence, in particular the period from the Portuguese revolution on 25th of April 1974, up to the first trimester of 1976.

²⁰ Since 1961 the US National Security Council (NSC) officially supported UPA (Wright, 2001).

²¹ Between 1962 and 1973 the average real GDP growth is 5% (Ferreira, 2006).



In the pre-independence period, economic growth and colonial policies met the grievances of the local populations, at the same time that a series of military tactics proved paramount in successfully controlling the rebellion. A certain degree of industrialization and the emergence of oil as the main export product were the most significant socio-economic developments in the period (Ferreira, 2006).

The three main nationalist movements developed differently, each with specific international support. The FNLA was led by Holden Roberto with the support of Mobutu Sese Seko and was part of the anti-Soviet groups, supported by the USA, the DRC and the People's Republic of China. Nevertheless, the support provided was symbolic and never sufficient for the FNLA to mount an independent process capable of decisively challenging the colonial government. The MPLA was at this stage plagued by fragmentation, with the "Eastern Revolt" led by Daniel Chipenda and the "Active Revolt" headed by the Andrade brothers challenging the leadership. Agostinho Neto would eventually secure his position during 1974 alongside Soviet and Cuban support to the MPLA. In UNITA, the leadership of Jonas Savimbi was secure and the movement's presence was mainly in the southern regions. UNITA was the movement with least foreign support at this stage. Apparently, all the independence movements were taken by surprise when on 25th April 1974 there was a military coup in Portugal overthrowing the "Estado Novo" and with a key objective of ending the colonial wars.

During this period, the internationalized Civil War begins to display two main characteristics: on the one hand, the apparent inevitability that each nationalist movement seeks to acquire exclusive power in Angola and, on the other hand, not only the lack of cooperation and coordination of each external actor in containing the conflictual impetus but also the gradual increment of their involvement in a competitive process.

Initially, Portugal took on a leading role in the decolonization process, managing to secure a ceasefire agreement and the signature of the Alvor Accords by the three movements in January 1975. The accord stipulated a transition plan with a date for the independence on 11th November 1975. In practice, Portugal did not have the capacity or availability to manage the process and from August 1975 onwards handed over the transition process to the fortunes of parties on the ground.

Initially, all three movements received limited support from their Cold War external supporters. But in the months leading up to independence day both the MPLA in Luanda as well as the FNLA in the North of Angola (supported by the DRC) progressively stepped up the intensity of the conflict. This would take on a decisive international dimension in October/November when South Africa decided to launch an invasion force in support of UNITA, and Cuba increased its support for the MPLA (Operations Savana and Carlota respectively).

Holden Roberto attempted to conquer Luanda with a final showdown in the decisive Quifangondo battle, which ended on 10th November 1975. This battle opposed the MPLA supported by the Cubans to the FNLA supported by DRC. The South African troops were not involved as they were stopped in Lobito (a town in the south of Angola) on their way to the capital. By winning this battle and holding the capital, the MPLA declared the independence of Angola on 11th November 1975 and claimed the right to govern its sovereignty.



This date marks the initiation of the internationalized Civil War in Angola, opposing the MPLA to the UNITA and FNLA. After the Angolan independence, the American Congress decided, through the Clark amendment, to end direct American involvement in Angola, which would contribute, a few months later, to the withdrawal of the South African military forces from southern Angola. The Clark amendment was in effect between 1976 and 1985, significantly limiting American support to the FNLA and UNITA.

The model and the initiation of conflict in 1975

The initiation of the Civil War was the result of the building up of opportunities. The MPLA and the FNLA intended to claim the government by holding the capital, Luanda, on the day of independence and UNITA intended to dominate the South, with all groups respecting the territorial integrity of the Angolan state.

The opportunities of the payback from conflict are related to the natural resources and international support. Oil had become the main export, constituting an important "award" for the group controlling the government²². At the same time, although the economic conditions had improved since 1961, the recruitment costs of potential rebels continued to be low compared to other countries²³.

The specific period of the Cold War was relevant in determining the superpowers' lack of interest – or incapacity – to agree on a low intensity solution for the conflict. The specific phase of the Cold War, after the Israel/Arab war, where the Soviets had lost ground in the Middle East and Americans were losing in Vietnam, was conducive to the Soviets testing American determination in the case of Angola. This decision was facilitated by the availability and "idealism" of the Cubans, who provided the most complicated resource to secure - troops. Also relevant was the availability of South Africa to play a counterweight regional role, controlling the African nationalist fervour and its Soviet tendencies, in line with its own need to maintain the apartheid system.

Additionally, the war capital²⁴ gave the groups the organizational capability to wage war but also the international recognition consubstantiated in the three groups being a party to the Alvor Accords. In this case, the war capital was not linked to the accumulation of hatreds between the groups because the main common enemy had been the Portuguese²⁵.

Another factor was the power vacuum in national governance. At symbolic level, none of the challenging parties managed to win over the colonial power. Rather, it was the established power that proclaimed its own extinction. There was no legitimate force to hold onto power and hence requiring a transition process prone to competition. At the same time, as Portugal was unable to secure the role of mediator throughout the transition process, the monopoly of power was in practice abandoned to the players that jockeyed for position, with some advantage to the MPLA as it was based in Luanda.

²² It represented 36 percent of GDP by 1975.

²³ Income per capita and secondary school enrolment is lower than in the average of countries where Civil War started between 1975 and 1980.

²⁴ Resulting from the 14 years of insurrection.

²⁵ Even if the three groups were rarely involved in joint operations.



Finally and inversely to the model's prediction²⁶, the high social fractionalization in the country²⁷ and the lack of ethnic domination may have contributed to conflict initiation. In Angola there were three political parties formed along ethnic-lines with similar importance and none had a hegemonic presence. Alongside other factors, it may have been precisely the lack of hegemony of any of the three groups that led to the political conditions explaining the groups' hegemonic ambitions to power in a process of regime transition.

In sum, the potential oil revenues from controlling the state (and low recruitment costs of fighters) were important in this period, together with the war capital, but need to be analysed in conjunction with the international and regional Cold War dynamics that contributed to the escalation of the conflict. International and regional external interventions explain significantly the escalatory process of the conflict. At the same time, the social fractionalization without hegemony was the condition that led to a conflictive competitive bid to occupy the power vacuum left by the Portuguese, who were not defeated but withdrew from the conflict.

The failure of the 1992 elections

The signature of the New York Accords in 1988 marked the end of the Cold War dimension of the Civil War in Angola. The accords implemented the United Nations Security Council's resolution 435 granting independence to Namibia, agreeing on the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and, indirectly, the end of South African incursions in the south of Angola. Three years after, in May 1991, the Bicesse accords were signed between the MPLA and UNITA with a plan to hold elections. The Bicesse accords brought a period of relative peace in Angola up to the elections in September 1992, when the conflict resumed after the announcement of the elections' results.

The failure to secure peace in this process was partly related to the specific organizational, economic and political characteristics of the two contending parties.

The MPLA party went through a significant reorganization after the presidency of Agostinho Neto was challenged from within the party in a failed *coup d'état* by Nito Alves in 1977²⁸. With the death of Agostinho Neto in 1979, José Eduardo dos Santos assumed the presidency of the party and the state. The MPLA is a Marxist-Leninist inspired state project for most of the later 1970s and 1980s. But reforms had to be initiated in the 1990s as a result of a series of structural constraints, namely: the over dependence of the economy on oil makes it susceptible to oil price fluctuations; an economic system discredited and in debt; the end of support from its resourceful strategic partners²⁹; the collapse of state services in terms of education, health, water, sewerage, garbage, electricity and transport (Pereira, 1994), and; a military dead-lock in the conflict³⁰.

²⁶ According to the model, when there is a higher social fractionalization and hegemony is avoided, the likelihood of conflict initiation decreases significantly.

²⁷ Almost double the levels identified for countries when Civil Wars started.

²⁸ According to Hodges (2001, p.46), the initiatives taken in the post-coup attempt period resulted in a culture characterized by "fear, conformism, state dependence, lack of initiative and submission" in a process he refers to as the "loss of innocence" in Angola (ibid, p.161).

²⁹ Politically and economically the Soviet Union, and militarily Cuba.

³⁰ Incapable of defeating the UNITA militarily even after the end of direct South African support.



In this context, the MPLA party initiated a process of political-economic reforms: opened the state to the multi-party system; further opened the economy; promoted civil society participation, and; introduced freedom of the press. These changes were inspired on models proposed by the international community and were in line with the demands of UNITA (Hodges, 2001). Economically, the reform was partial, in the impossible mission of merging market mechanisms regulated by a plan in a centralized and planned economy (Ferreira, 2002). Politically, the constitution underwent modification in 1991 and 1992 with a series of laws passed within the spirit of the Bicesse accords. The failure to implement decentralization and local government provisions of the constitution, together with the reinforcement of a presidential system meant the establishment of a formal pyramid system under the president. It also meant an “all or nothing” setting for the elections.

The ideology of UNITA, the other main party, was a mixture of Maoism with Ovimbundu nationalism³¹ and regionalism³². Throughout the 1970s, UNITA transformed itself into a structured, hierarchical organization within the requirements of a nationalist movement, exercising a monopoly of violence within controlled areas and operating an administrative apparatus, which included the provision of social services (Bakonyi and Stuvøy, 2005). During the 1980s, UNITA broadened territorial control³³, developed a diamond economy and improved the governance structure³⁴. UNITA’s internal organisational cohesion was the merit of its leadership and of an effective patrimonial system, even if dependent on funding from the CIA and on military support from South Africa (Stuvøy, 2002).

In contrast to the MPLA, UNITA was intimately linked to the local traditional power structures. At the end of the 1980s, an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 people lived under UNITA rule in Jamba, about 80,000 to 100,000 in its surroundings and it had around 30,000 troops in 1984 (George, 2005). UNITA considered that an electoral solution would give them a victory over its main competitor of the time, the MPLA, and was united around the leadership of Jonas Savimbi.

Regarding the overall well-being of the population, from 1987 onwards Angola was classified as in a state of calamity and in 1991 it received 6 million USD for assistance, part of a 40 million USD package for humanitarian assistance channelled to Non-Governmental Organizations. Additionally, the United Nations (UN) provided 165 million USD for refugees and droughts.

Angolans had to choose one of these two parties and their leaders on the 29th and 30th of September 1992 first free and fair elections in Angola. A total of 4,8 million Angolans voted, with a participation rate of 92 per cent of registered voters³⁵ (Pereira, 1994). The result for the presidency did not grant the required majority to any of the contestants, but José Eduardo dos Santos, with 49,7 per cent, had achieved more votes than Jonas Savimbi with 40 per cent. The second round of elections would never take place as the conflict resumed³⁶.

³¹ Different from FNLA or MPLA nationalism.

³² In opposition to the then prevailing Marxist, Pan-Africanism and socialist perspectives.

³³ The territory controlled by UNITA was the central plateau, its main stronghold.

³⁴ Some analysts considered it a quasi-state.

³⁵ 90 per cent of adult population was registered.

³⁶ The parliament was won by the MPLA with 54 per cent of votes against the 34 per cent of UNITA, with other small parties winning 12 per cent of the votes.



The electoral defeat of UNITA reflected the ethnic character of the party. Of the four provinces it won³⁷, only in one the Ovimbundu were not in a majority – in Kuando Kubango, where UNITA had operated since the 1970s. In contrast, the MPLA was able to attract groups beyond the Mbundu (Hodges, 2001). This electoral pattern reflects what Pereira (1994) identifies as the clashing vision of the parties: besides being both patriotic and state-centric, the MPLA ascribed to an inclusive nationalism while the UNITA had a particularistic ethnic nationalist vision. Although the observers considered the elections to be fair, UNITA did not accept the results announced on the 17th of October 1992 and intensified the conflict. This time the conflict took place not only in the countryside but also in the cities, including Luanda (Wright, 2001), and targeted the state system itself. In December 1992, the Angolan government launched a military counter-offensive (Wright, 2001) and the Civil War resumed.

The model and the intensification of the Civil War in 1992

Although the 1990s began with a series of factors favourable to peace, like the end of the Cold War with international and regional commitment to peace and the population's eagerness for peace (as attested by voter turn-out), the re-initiation of conflict in 1992 was related mainly to the country's economic opportunities regarding resources (diamonds and oil) combined with the political grievances generated by a governance model where the "winner takes all".

The opportunities for funding through oil for the MPLA and diamonds for UNITA³⁸ substantially determined the predisposition for conflict, mainly on the part of UNITA but also indirectly for the MPLA. For UNITA, this predisposition was more direct in the sense that it had lost the elections and therefore was about to lose control over both its territory³⁹ and source of revenue (diamonds). For the MPLA, there is no counterfactual for its possible reaction in case it had lost the elections. Nevertheless, the fact that there was an "all or nothing" presidential model makes it reasonable to assume the MPLA did not intend to share or abandon the state executive power which controlled oil revenues. Natural resources was a key factor at this stage and the best comparison for its role is the case of Mozambique, which had a similar Civil War history but, without natural resources, was able to reach peace in 1992.

In combination with the natural resources, the governance system in place at the time of the elections, a non-decentralized presidential model, contributed towards an essential factor: grievance by political exclusion of a group⁴⁰, at both central and local levels of governance. This grievance would be unacceptable to a war-hardened authoritarian UNITA, which, together with the historical low level of national unity and limitations of the Bicesse accords, contributed decisively to the peace plan failure⁴¹ (Pereira, 1994). Generally speaking, the responsibility of the leadership in the conflict can be attributed to both parties (Anstee, 1996), even if at this stage particularly the

³⁷ Benguela, Bié, Huambo and Kuando Kubango.

³⁸ The ratio of primary commodity exports to GDP was 47% in 1990.

³⁹ Because the decentralization legislation had not been passed.

⁴⁰ Considering the resource base of the economy, one could argue that political exclusion also meant economic exclusion.

⁴¹ The limitation of the Bicesse accords were the limited resources of the UN for the mandate, the short time span of the process, the execution of the elections without full compliance of the stipulations in the accord (mainly regarding the military component), and the inexistence of a power sharing solution (Hodges, 2001).



UNITA and president Jonas Savimbi had been identified as a “greedy spoiler” in the peace process (Stedman, 1997).

In addition to the above key dynamics, a series of other factors both contributed to the conflict or were favourable to peace. On the one hand, contributing to conflict were opportunity factors such as: the atypical low costs of recruitment, with thousands of people who knew of no other work apart from fighting or living in a war economy; the destruction of the economy and generalized poverty, which did not provide great income alternatives for unemployed youths or demobilized soldiers, and; the accumulation of war equipment from where one can extract quick and easy returns. On the other hand, contributing to peace were: the international and regional dynamics with active support through the UN and a decision by the superpowers to ban military support to the conflicting parties; the concentration of the population in urban areas as a result of the war, and; the national legitimization of government by holding elections.

The intensification of Civil War in 1998

After the relapse into Civil War in 1992, the conflict would de-escalate in 1996 and 1997, two years of almost peace in the country. But the Civil War broke out again in 1998 and lasted until 2002.

Between 1992 and 1998, significant advancements were made in the implementation of a multi-party model with a more inclusive governance system, at the same time that the Angolan government acquired legitimacy with the 1992 elections and USA recognition in 1993. UNITA returned to the negotiation table in 1993 as a result of territorial losses to the MPLA⁴² and of the 1993 United Nations sanctions targeting its leadership. In the following year, on 20th November 1994, Jonas Savimbi signed the Lusaka protocol.

The protocol was based on the Bicesse one, but had significant provisions for additional executive power sharing between the parties and the delay of elections until the end of military activities. It further stipulated UNITA’s respect for national law, the assumption of seats in parliament by the elected representatives of UNITA, the return of all belongings to UNITA members and the granting of lodging to UNITA leaders (Wright, 2001). The responsibility to monitor the agreement was granted to the UN and a significant peace force was deployed in February 1995.

Economically, the 1990s were characterised by the government’s incapacity to implement a coherent economic programme. For Ferreira (2006), the war certainly conditioned the Angolan economy but the main obstacles were the inappropriate policies and the political system that promoted a rentier elite. As Oliveira (2007) points out, it is the oil revenue in petro-states that allows an unsustainable system to last long beyond its normal life span and, together with it, the elite that manages it.

For UNITA, this decade was marked by the unsuccessful process of being transformed from a guerrilla force into a political party with both parliamentary representation and executive responsibilities. A double process of disintegration occurs: one of the established “social system” of the “quasi-state”, and; another of the party leadership

⁴² In 1992, UNITA controlled about 60 to 70 per cent of the territory, while in 1994 it controlled 40 per cent, and in November 1994 it lost the key areas of Huambo and Uige.



with the emergence of breakaway factions⁴³. The difficulties in making UNITA comply with the Lusaka protocol led the international community to continue a sanctions policy. In 1997 and 1998, the United Nations sanctions targeted the UNITA leadership, UNITA party and in particular the diamond business. It is estimated that UNITA diamond revenues were somewhere in the region of 2 to 3,5 million USD from 1992 to 1998 (Cramer, 2006).

Due to the incapacity to make UNITA implement the Lusaka protocols, in December 1998, at the fourth MPLA Congress, President José Eduardo dos Santos declared that the only route to peace was war. He requested both an end to the Lusaka peace process and for the UN mission to leave⁴⁴ (Hodges, 2001). In January 1999, José Eduardo dos Santos convened a war cabinet to achieve total victory (James, 2004) and in July of that year the Angola government, through its Department of Criminal Research, issued a warrant in the name of Jonas Malheiro Sidónio Savimbi for crimes of "armed rebellion, sabotage and slaughter" (James, 2004, p.xxxv). The war had re-initiated and this time it would only finish after the death in combat of Jonas Savimbi on 12th March 2002.

The model and the intensification of conflict in 1998

The context of a continued lack of compliance with the accords' stipulations by the UNITA led the MPLA to decide for a belligerent solution to the conflict, within a specific social-economic context.

On one hand, UNITA seemed to never accept any peace solution. The failure to attract a full cooperation from UNITA by broadening the power-sharing formula of peace led to more pressure of the international community, which intensified the ongoing party disintegration. Although some UNITA members assumed parliamentary and executive functions, Jonas Savimbi's faction did not accept the process, continuing to defy the constitutionality of the state.

On the other hand, the MPLA was pressured internationally and domestically. It could not close economic reform deals at a stage when the economy was extremely debilitated. Although oil revenues were critical and sufficient for the maintenance of the patrimonial system surrounding the president, successive initiatives of populist inspiration and restrictions on civil liberties revealed concerns over the economic crisis and popular grievances (MRP, 2005)⁴⁵. At a time when the MPLA could be more accountable for its governance record, the international community had spent the 1990s criticising and pressuring the MPLA for increased transparency, more respect for human rights and justice. The MPLA military involvement in the conflicts on the Republic of Congo in 1997 and in the DRC in 1998 allowed it to close down the foreign bases of UNITA.

In this way and specifically for the MPLA, the factors identified for conflict initiation in 1992 continue to hold. In particular, the opportunities for funding from oil, the low level of alternative sources of income for would be soldiers, the high level of accumulated

⁴³ Among them UNITA Renovada in 1998.

⁴⁴ Which left in February 1999.

⁴⁵ The grievances were also a result of the war strategy of "social implosion" adopted by UNITA from 1992 onwards, with attacks in urban areas, to the administrative systems and forcing the exodus of the population to the cities, along with committing human atrocities.



war capital together with a certain Ovimbundu targeted hatred that had developed (of which the post-election ethnic violence is an example). Nevertheless, in this phase there may also have been other factors contributing to Civil War initiation related to the political survival of the MPLA elite and a perspective that the debility of UNITA⁴⁶, together with the international backing for the MPLA, might permit a military victory by the MPLA.

UNITA, in turn, tried to maintain the state within the state up to the last moment, with its own specific economic and social characteristics. The fact that UNITA was funded by diamonds and the MPLA by oil from an enclave was important to the extent that it progressively increased the resources available to the MPLA (with a safe source) and diminished those of UNITA (with an uncertain source) with possible repercussions on military capabilities. Consequently, the maintenance of resource areas and their revenues were important to military capacity but they do not seem to have been the main motivation. Instead, they enabled the conflict to drag on and then re-start, reinforcing the perspective that resources are a means as well as an end in the conflict. For instance, it is highly probable that in this phase of the conflict the UNITA leadership would have more to gain financially in moving to Luanda and integrate the state neo-patrimonial system rather than to keep on fighting. This is corroborated by the fragmentation and emergence of *UNITA-Renovada*.

Finally, this UNITA belligerence, which splits apart to continue fighting, reinforces the importance of leadership, in this case Jonas Savimbi, and the role that this plays in the achievement or not of political solutions. In the 1998 re-initiation of the conflict, it began to become obvious that the conflict was dependant on the military capacity and leadership of Jonas Savimbi.

Leadership

Several elements contribute to a rationalist and constructivist explanation of the role of leadership in Angola, instead of primordial perspectives.

In the description set out above, the leaderships are presented as individualized but in fact the four main leaders are the top of a structure of political, economic and military power, in these cases, mostly autocratic and centralized but dependent on an elite and power network. Agostinho Neto needed to redefine the party as a means of consolidating his leadership of the MPLA; José Eduardo dos Santos fostered an economic-military *nomenklatura* based on oil; Jonas Savimbi based his structure on the traditional leaders, patrimonial system of diamonds along with a military wing; and Holden Roberto related significantly to the elite of Mobutu Sese Seko.

Already with recognized leadership capabilities when a FNLA member and having negotiated with the MPLA in the 1960s, it would seem it was a messianic determination or ambition that led Jonas Savimbi to opt to start a process from scratch and create UNITA without significant international support during the 1960s. With only a small, unrepresentative nationalist group in 1975, it was after independence that Jonas Savimbi managed to mount a "quasi-state" socio-economic structure in the south. These origins and developments of UNITA as a coherent ethnic group were the product

⁴⁶ Both politically as well as militarily as a result of the choking off of revenue sources.



of a social construction by the political elite and less the result of primordial factors. After the end of the Cold War and the 1992 elections, its survival outside the state was due mainly to UNITA's existing capacity. Also at this time, it was an inability to accept a secondary role in the state structure that drove Jonas Savimbi to re-engage in conflict. Even periods of peace, or of almost peace, resemble more phases of reorganization and management of the status quo, as Jonas Savimbi never took up his place in the capital – Luanda. The disintegration of UNITA in this period also attests against a primordial account, wherein some elements of the UNITA leadership were able to become incorporated into the MPLA system.

We can identify the importance of Jonas Savimbi given the fact that the conflict only ended after his death in 2002. Having the benefit of hindsight, it seems the only moment when a deal might have been possible with Jonas Savimbi would have been in 1975, if a federalist solution had been established before UNITA set up the “quasi-state”, and eventually in 1992, if a decentralized solution had been implemented, although at that time it seemed virtually impossible to position Jonas Savimbi under some other authority.

The other leader, Holden Roberto, depicts an external factor, representative of the first nationalist impetus on the continent, connected after 1970 to Mobutu Sese Seko. Since the beginning of the DRC independence process, the liberation of the Bakongo people had been on the agenda of nationalist leaders and Holden Roberto arose as the leader of a movement that quickly changed its regionalist focus to a nationalist and Pan-Africanist focus, in accordance with the prevailing political orientations. Closely associated with the political movements emerging out of Leopoldville, Holden Roberto lacked the determination, capacity or possibility of having an independent movement and this might have led to his earlier appropriation by Mobutu Sese Seko, who ended up ordering him out of the country in 1987 (Spikes, 1993). The lack of funding would not have been the main factor in this gradual process of disappearance of the FNLA, as the US only switched from supporting the FNLA to backing the UNITA after independence.

Also in the FNLA case, it was the leadership construction of identity with external support that fuelled the rebellion. The fact that the FNLA and its leadership virtually disappeared in the post-independence period while the conflict between the MPLA and UNITA endured attests to a rejection of primordial perspectives.

Finally, in the MPLA case, the initial leadership of Agostinho Neto was critical in the sense that it transformed a heterogeneous party into a cohesive political group, leaving a clear path for José Eduardo dos Santos. Part of the escalation of the conflict in Luanda in 1975 can be attributed to Agostinho Neto as the leader of the MPLA (possibly aided by the Portuguese), even if there was an inevitability of the FNLA attempting to take the city. José Eduardo dos Santos took over an homogeneous party in 1980 but has the merit of maintaining it and governing the party without violent open challenges to his leadership.

Formed by *mestiços* and Mbundu, the MPLA had a more inclusive and multi-ethnic platform, which in its origins was more ideologically grounded. Even if there is no evidence of constructivist accounts, it points to a rejection of the primordial perspective. Significant examples of it was the adoption of Portuguese as the national



language or running the campaign to the 1992 election on an inclusive multi-ethnic discourse, in contrast to UNITA, which explicitly had an exclusivist ethnic agenda.

Conclusion

The case study validates the importance of leadership and external interventions as explanatory variables in the initiation or intensification of Civil War. Overall, all factors - "greed", "grievance", leadership and external interventions - were operative in Angola. The challenge is to distinguish among the mechanisms (factors) present in each initiation or intensification of the conflict the one(s) that most decisively contributed to that outcome, even if limited by the difficulty to isolate the path dependence processes.

The 1961 initiation of the independence war is the least well explained by the "greed" versus "grievance" model. It was based on the combination of economic and political grievances along ethnic lines that the conflict against the colonial domination emerged. But this decolonization motive would not have found form and expression without external influence. Regional and international diffusion of the idea of independence alongside political and (limited) military support were the required mechanisms for the conflict to start.

The initiation of conflict in 1975 is mainly explained by the Cold War and economic "greed" factors. An initial setting was the power vacuum resulting from independence which, combined with a fractionalization without hegemony, led to an intense competition with no party able to claim legitimacy for the government. The economic aspects emerge mainly through the existence of resources, which were an important award to the winners, but these "greed" factors become operative mainly through the external support operating within the geo-political context of the Cold War. The support provided internationally and regionally to the parties in the conflict was an essential mechanism for the conflict to start.

In the intensification of the conflict in 1992, one can find "greed" factors in the importance of resources (oil and diamonds), in the poverty and in the years of conflict, and "grievance" factors in the governance system that gave hegemonic power to the winner of the elections and political grievances to the loser. But at this stage, natural resources had become the means and ends of the conflict for both MPLA and UNITA, explaining the "winner takes all" constitutional solution adopted in the elections. Therefore, "greed" economic factors seem to be the essential mechanism for the conflict intensification in this phase. It is important to highlight that at this stage there was an international and regional context conducive to a peaceful solution. From this phase onwards, the leadership of Jonas Savimbi assumes an important role in the impossibility to end the conflict.

Finally, in the intensification of the conflict in 1998, one can find the same economic "greed" factors as in 1992. The political grievance in the governance system existing in 1992 had been dealt with through increased power sharing solutions capable of attracting some UNITA members. The leadership of Jonas Savimbi constitutes the essential mechanism to explain the intensification of conflict in this phase. The end of the conflict after Jonas Savimbi's death highlights the importance of eliminating "grievance" factors in order to prevent conflict.



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