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The Ethics of Manhood in Post-war Huambo, Angola

John Arthur David Spall

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Anthropology

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

September 2015

[2]

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UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

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SUMMARY

This thesis considers the impact of a long civil war on the masculinities performed by war veterans in Huambo, Angola. In particular, it looks at how the social transformations of war, and the particular courses veterans took through them, affected how certain aspects of the performance of senior masculinities were ethically problematised. Based on a year's ethnographic fieldwork carried out in 2012, it traces the life histories of veterans of the MPLA government's *Forças Armadas pela Libertação de Angola* (FAPLA), from birth until the time of fieldwork, and explores how the gendered consequences of war played out in everyday life ten years after the civil war came to an end. Firstly, it explores the historical and biographical constitution of these men's ethical sensibilities, exploring the layered influences of social patterns of different historical periods, and the moral upbringing of particular veterans and their subsequent evolution through the war. Secondly, it turns to an examination of the principal ethical challenges facing these veterans in 2012, especially those related to wartime urbanisation and the changing social valuation of money, and their effects on veterans' status as elder men and husband-providers. Thirdly, it considers two influential styles of masculinity adopted in response to these challenges: the companionately-married churchgoing man, and the womanising drinker, discussing the different ways that these styles engaged with the social legacies of the war. Finally, it considers the main ethical influence on public respectability for these men, which constituted the main dividing line between these different styles – that of the churches, and accounts for their continuing moral authority. The thesis seeks to contribute to literatures on masculinities, war and military service in Africa, and to demonstrate the insights that the lenses of gender and ethics can bring to an understanding of Angola's post-war transition.

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Each time I have racked up a new debt I have thought about how I would go about writing these acknowledgements, which means I have thought about them an awful lot in the six years I have been working on this project. I thought about them most of all when I was with the men whose stories and lives I discuss in the thesis. Angola seemed a forbidding and bewildering country when I first arrived there, but despite the difficulties, the warmth and generosity of the men I worked with made the fieldwork a great pleasure. Their willingness to discuss their life histories with me, even when it meant revisiting experiences they would rather forget, and their patience in helping me to understand the ins and outs of their daily lives, Angolan politics, religion, family life and more, were invaluable to me and a service I am unable to repay. On a recent return visit to Huambo I found a city full of friends, and hope to return many times in the future. In a few minutes I will have to go through the text of the thesis and substitute my friends' real names for pseudonyms, a process which will pain me because they deserve to have their stories told with their names attached. It seemed to them and to me, however, that it would be prudent to make the lives recounted here anonymous, given the sometimes frank criticism of the MPLA party-state expressed and the possibility of reprisals.

A number of other people were vital to the success of my fieldwork. The difficult process of obtaining a study visa for Angola was made much easier by the advice of Jon Schubert and Claudia Gastrow, and the kind offer to write an invitation letter by Professor Manuel Alves da Rocha of the *Centro de Estudos e Investigação Científica*. My partner Maria's adoptive Angolan cousins, Flávio Armando António and Zé Paulo Abranches both provided practical support and a warm welcome at crucial moments. Carlos Figueiredo and Moises Festo of Development Workshop gave me excellent advice on doing research with veterans throughout my time in Huambo, and were very helpful in facilitating contacts with local government authorities. Particular thanks must also go to my Umbundu teacher, João Kambo Abel, who was very generous with his time in helping me to understand some of the intricacies of the Umbundu language (still

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thesis lifestyle can plunge one into: a demand that I stop working to, for example, gallop around the house like a horse with her gave me much needed perspective at times of stress. This thesis is dedicated to her, and to her soon-to-be-born brother.

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Chapter 1: Introduction – The ethics of manhood in post-war Huambo

In the winter of 2014, my father sent me and my sisters a scan of the attestation document of our grandfather, agreeing to join the British army for four years. It is dated 1914, and the details on the document are sparse: his name, Arthur Philip Spall, is printed and signed in several places, in the clerk's copperplate handwriting he had been learning since he was 14. These signatures served to certify his identity, swear allegiance to King George the Fifth and promise to serve in the armed forces for four years. At the age of 18 he was considered a minor under British law, and his mother forbade him from joining the army. As he liked to say, this only encouraged him, and when he saw many of his friends signing up he was determined to do the same. He left home one morning ostensibly to go to work, and went to sign up for the army as a volunteer. Arthur remained in the army in France and Belgium until 1919, in the artillery, fighting in some of the bloodiest battles in the war, including the Somme, albeit away from the frontline. After the war, having experienced the outdoor life for so long, Arthur was unwilling to return to his previous job in an office, choosing instead to work for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as a labourer, and later as an 'elder gardener'. He worked to plan the landscaping and planting of cemetery gardens as part of the public memorialisation of the Commonwealth soldiers killed during the war, seeking to reproduce the aesthetic of an English country garden on the continent, until 1933.

Seeing my grandfather's document in 2014 reminded me most immediately of the veterans I had met in Huambo in 2012, several of whom had shown me their military ID cards. These ID cards were more recently produced than Arthur's recruitment document, of course, and were mostly dated about 30 years before the conversations I was having with veterans. The painfully young faces on them were hard to reconcile with the middle-aged men who became my friends and guides over the course of my year in

Angola, and the cards hard to weigh against the history of suffering and tragedy that they often evoked. They were usually shown to me with a sense of pride, a scrap of official recognition of their service to their government, of hardships endured and dangers survived. They were often also accompanied by angry stories about the subsequent betrayal of veterans by the MPLA government, the widespread sense, often stated, that it was those who did not fight the war or suffer its privations who had profited from it; and a frustration that such a rich country could consistently refuse to pay military pensions to most of its veterans. The ages of these men when they were recruited were even younger than my Grandfather, and they generally served for much longer – the longest for 17 years. Soon after many of them left the army in 1992, the war would break out again, and the city they returned to was about to become one of the most viciously contested battlefields of the war, which this time they would have to navigate as civilians. The socioeconomic milieu was, in addition, strikingly changed from the one they had left, a fact that posed as many challenges for them as military service itself had.

My grandfather's generation of European veterans has been much better served by social science and humanities scholars than have African veterans of recent wars. When I embarked on this thesis project in 2009, a burgeoning literature had grown up criticising the explanations produced by high profile academics and policymakers for the proliferation of violent conflicts since the end of the Cold War. These explanations often seemed motivated by a fear in the West about potential 'overspills' from violent conflicts in the global South, and made particularly dire predictions about Africa's future. Many of them took the large number of civil conflicts in Africa as a starting point, and an implicit or explicit fear of Africans, and especially African men, was pronounced. The 'youth bulge thesis' was used by several authors and politicians in the 1990s, most influentially Robert Kaplan, to predict that large concentrations of unemployed African men was likely to bring widespread civil violence in Africa (see Sommers 2006 for a review). Later, a paper written by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2004) used cross-country quantitative data to compare 'greed' and 'grievance' as possible motives for young men in developing countries to go to war, concluding that

greed was the more likely motive. Both arguments posited a quasi-automatic association of large concentrations of young unemployed African men with outbreaks of violence, assuming that, as long as certain socioeconomic conditions such as poverty, unemployment and lootable natural resources are in place, that “where there’s a way ... there’s always a will” (Cramer 2006:176).

Critiques of such treatments of violence took a number of forms: Mass armed conflict was often seen as episodic, rather than as a social condition that could last for decades and shape life for generations of people (Lubkemann 2008). Relatedly, violence was often portrayed as exceptional or aberrant, and as somehow anti-social and lacking significance (Whitehead 2005) and/or as contrary to processes of capitalist development (Cramer 2006), rather than as an integral part of the history of these processes. In these large-scale quantitative accounts, and in much qualitative research too, there was often the notion, implicit or explicit, that violence was the only or overriding motivating factor in conflicts, somehow erasing history and culture,¹ as making culture anew (e.g. Nordstrom 1997), or as producing automatic responses oriented only towards survival.

It seemed to me that many of these critiques also applied to much work on African veterans, which had an overriding, if understandable, focus on violence. Even where it asked broader questions about the effects of violence, and the social genesis of violence, violence still seemed to be considered in its anti-social dimension: Which African men become violent and why? What negative effects does violence have on them? How can we stop them becoming violent again? (Annan and Blattman 2010; Beber and Blattman 2013; Humphreys and Weinstein 2007; Verwimp 2005). Much of this work was written in opposition to studies such as Collier and Hoeffler’s, used micro-level data, was much more sophisticated, and also addressed important questions about violence prevention, aiming to influence donor policies in Africa. Nevertheless, work on African veterans seemed to me to be dominated by accounts that considered them primarily as dangerous, damaged, or both, and to have a short term perspective oriented towards preventing new outbreaks of violence in the period immediately after the cessation of hostilities. Work

1 Such arguments are not new of course, see for example Sartre 1961.

on First World War veterans considers much broader questions about the impacts of mass military conscription, often taking gender as a key analytical category. Beyond a focus on violence and its effects, it touches on topics such as how soldierly models of masculinity began to permeate wider society through widespread conscription (Mosse 1996); the effects of camaraderie in the trenches on physical intimacy between men during and after the war (Das 2005); how some women's denigration of civilian masculinity affected British citizenship ideals and practices (Gullace 2002); and debates whether the war accelerated or interrupted processes of the gaining of voting rights for women and greater representation in the workforce (Grayzel 2002).

Work on the gendered effects of recent military service in Africa is much more limited, particularly where it concerns gender – even though it has often been a highly gendered phenomenon.² Although in several recent wars in Africa (such as in Sierra Leone and Uganda) there have been large numbers of female fighters, most wars have involved, overwhelmingly, male fighters – and even where many women have been involved, the social categorisation and social fortunes of male and female fighters have differed considerably. Much of the influential work on African veterans cited above is implicitly mainly (though not only) referring to men, but usually without using gender as an analytical category. This blind spot leads, at the very least by omission, to a picture of male African veterans primarily as a danger to society, and the overwhelming focus on violence gives a picture of veterans without a history, for whom violence is the only relevant biographical fact. Indeed, despite a growing literature on masculinity and violence in Africa (Dolan 2002; Sommers 2006; Everatt 2000; Cock 2001; Swart 2001; Parpart 2008; Barker and Ricardo 2005; Gibson 2010)³ over the past few decades, there is, to my knowledge, only one monograph-length study on the effects of military service on masculinity (Cock 1991), and very little work looking at the effects of military service over the long-term in Africa from any point of view.

In this thesis, then, I set out to consider in some detail the gendered impact of the

2 Such literature is more developed in other contemporary settings outside Africa (see, for example Ashe 2012; Karner 1996; Karner 1998; Persson 2012; Sasson-Levy 2003; Ben-Ari 1998; Altinay 2004; Frühstück 2007; Khan 2010; Gill 1997; Badaró 2014).

experience of military service on a group of Angolan men, through the analysis of ethnographic data gathered over the course of a year in 2012-13. Aiming to avoid some of the pitfalls mentioned above, of becoming preoccupied with violence or giving too much priority to military service to the exclusion of other aspects of veterans' personal and collective histories, I opted for an open, exploratory approach to the principal research question. This meant seeking to analyse their masculinities in the round: attending to the principal formative influences on these men's gender identities and their relation to the transformative "social condition" of war (Lubkemann 2008:12) and its after-effects, without an *a priori* focus on violence. The result has been an ethnographic social history of the masculinities of a group of men who were veterans, but for whom, in 2012, a history of military service often faded into the background as they sought to hold together gendered life-projects which grappled with the broader consequences of the social transformations of war.

The principle question that this thesis seeks to answer, then, is that of how the social transformations of war affected how a group of veterans had come to perform masculinities in Huambo in 2012. In particular, I will argue that these changes provoked a number of difficulties around the performance of senior masculinities, difficulties I will argue is best analysed in terms of ethics. These problems were especially related to the rising value of money and commodities as markers of social status in a context of extreme and politically-driven economic inequalities; changing relations between money, love and sex; and the continuing but evolving influence of Christianity on the performance of senior masculinities. The significance of military service, despite its ongoing impact, therefore needs to be considered in the context of these changes, which were often more important in forming veterans' masculinities.

The men I worked with had mostly demobilised twenty years before I met them, and the civil war in Angola had ended ten years before I arrived in Huambo. I thus consider the impact of military service within the context of these men's life courses as they advanced into their middle years, and within the broader set of social transformations that occurred in Angola from 1975 to 2012. In the rest of the chapter I will proceed as

follows: in the next section I theoretically define the key concept of the thesis – masculinity; in the following three sections I outline an approach to the ethics of masculinity, and what it can add to studies of masculinity in post-war situations; in the subsequent section I introduce my methodological approach and in the final section I explain the structure of the thesis.

1.1 A brief definition of masculinity: performance, ethical capability and flexibility

In order to ground and orient the discussions in the rest of this chapter and the rest of the thesis, I will now briefly outline how I define the key concept: masculinity. Since the study of masculinity in its current form first began to gather pace in the 1980s, an extensive global literature has been written in which the question of how to define masculinity has been exhaustively debated. I will not attempt to recapitulate all of these debates here, but will outline how I broadly position the discussions in this thesis within those debates, with many of the more specific discussions about particular aspects of masculinity taking place in the empirical chapters.

As a starting point, I find Raewynn Connell's abbreviated definition useful: "Masculinity, to the extent that the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (2005:71). This statement neatly emphasises the primacy of practice in constituting gendered identities and experiences (rather than being expressive of a pre-constituted identity), and hints at something of the processual nature of masculinities: that notions of masculinity are constantly created and transformed. The definition also expresses the important idea that masculinities are not located in men's bodies and inevitably engaged only by men, but are rather something beyond individuals that may be engaged by both men and women. However, I part ways with Connell on a number of points, and locate this study broadly in the post-structuralist strand of the masculinities literature. Thus, by 'a place in gender relations', I specifically mean a subject position within discourse(s).

The concept of subject positions is related to the decentring of the subject in post-structuralist theory, where the subject is not considered the origin of social relations, since the experience of subjectivity is only made possible by specific discursive conditions. Thus individuals become gendered subjects by taking up subject positions within discourses, and this 'taking up' is always provisional and unstable. Indeed the subject positions themselves are not closed and self-sufficient, because there is no ultimate grounds to which they refer. Rather, they are relational, taking on significance in relation to one other, in Laclau and Mouffe's words "articulated" with one another within discourses, "not like pieces of a clockwork mechanism, but because the presence of some in the others prevents any of their identities from being fixed" (2001:104). Henrietta Moore (1994) associates the concept of subject positions with what she calls a post-post-structuralist concept of the subject, one which challenges conventional anthropological ideas of a unitary subject. Individuals take up multiple positions in different discourses and are thus multiply constituted - traversed and fragmented by social difference, rather than wholly coherent and belonging to one category or another.

Such a conception requires an account of the process by which subjects take up, or invest in a subject position. I consider that subjects achieve this through embodied practice, and in particular use Judith Butler's idea of gender as performance. In Butler's view gender is an "effect" (1999:191) produced through bodily performances, which though constant repetition create the illusion of an enduring gendered self, an illusion believed in both by the "performer" and their audience. Gender is thus not the expression of an internal essence, but one that is constituted through time, via performances. If the term 'performance' suggests a degree of intentionality and artifice on the part of the performer in terms of the gender identity they adopt, Butler is at pains to refute this. She argues that performances of discrete gender identities constitute "strateg[ies] of survival under compulsory systems" (p.190), in the twin sense that those who do not do their gender 'right' are punished, and that the credibility of collective performative fictions impels us to believe in their naturalness and inevitability. Moreover, there is no possibility of escaping the discursive arena, since performances

are only intelligible within the terms of such an arena. Discourse is, therefore, something beyond individuals that both constitutes them and forecloses their possibilities for agency, but is in addition “the necessary scene of agency, the very terms in which agency is articulated and becomes culturally intelligible” (p.201).

A notable anthropological critique of Butler’s earlier work on performativity has focused on its inability to account for why people come to perform some styles rather than others. For example, James Ferguson (1999) follows Kath Weston’s critique of Butler’s concept of performativity as articulated in *Gender Trouble*, arguing that Butler’s concept does not add up to a theory because she does not explain what determines why individuals take up some performances rather than others. Ferguson looks to the analysis of the micro-political economy of performances to attempt to explain why some performances are selected rather than others, through an examination of the economic prerequisites for certain performances and the networks and alliances they enable and foreclose. He uses the idea of ‘cultural style’ to refer to ensembles of practices which signify difference between different social categories, and refers to the fact that the successful performance of different styles is partly dependent on economic resources: some styles are more expensive to “pull off” than others, as well as on social networks and allegiances. Moreover, styles are a “performative competence” (p.96) which require the investment not just of economic resources but of time and effort in order to successfully execute them. Styles are therefore not a simple matter of choice - they require the cultivation of internal capacities over time, meaning that one’s flexibility and repertoire are inevitably limited. This also implies that embodied practice is not only about signification, but also about the development of certain capacities, a theme I will return to below in relation to ethics.

As Ferguson makes clear, different choices of style can have pronounced ethical aspects, with the ‘cosmopolitan’ style adopted by some Zambian men in Copperbelt cities being considered as counter to ethics of “respect” and “regard” (1999:113) held by rural kin. Such “showing off” and being “pompous” (1999:113) was considered an insult to those to whom one was obligated. In the empirical chapters of the thesis, then, I

will refer to veterans' efforts to take up certain key 'subject positions', such as that of husband-provider, and the moral stakes involved in success or failure in taking up such positions (particularly in chapters 4 and 5); and will talk about contrasting 'cultural styles' of masculinity as the taking up of ensembles of subject positions in ways that constituted varied ethical responses to the results of the social transformations of war (especially in chapter 6).

Finally, arguments about limits to the flexibility of cultural styles and the need for investments over time need to be held in tension with influential strands of writing in anthropology and history which emphasise the fluidity and diversity of masculine performances. Such arguments have often been made in reaction to early work on masculinities, and in particular Raewyn Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005). This model of masculinity is famously defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy" (p.77). It is considered by Connell to exist in a relation of hierarchy with other models of masculinity, which are either complicit with, subordinated or marginalised by it. While this concept established the important idea that masculinity is not monolithic and singular, but diverse and infused by relations of power, it has also been criticised by several authors, including several working in Africa. Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher (2003a), for example, argue that it may not always be obvious which model of masculinity is dominant, and this may be something that is the subject of lively contestation, not least on ethical grounds. In addition, thinking of masculinities in terms of clear hierarchies of models of masculinity runs the danger, to put it in Laclau and Mouffe's terms, of replacing the "essentialism of the totality with essentialism of the elements" (2001:116); several authors have found that people often negotiate between different gender models in a fluid and improvisatory way, and that, given that styles are relationally constructed, there is a constant interaction and transformation between different styles (see, for example, Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994a; Miescher 2005), and there are usually points of commonality as well as tension between different styles. The theory of gender performativity summarised above has an emphasis on the fact that gender is not a once-and-for-all achievement, but

needs to be constantly reiterated through embodied social practice. As such, gendered difference and power relations are experienced through repeated interactions which are thus constantly prone to some negotiation.

Moreover, gendered subjectivities are not necessarily coherent but may involve the taking up of subject positions in different discourses which are contradictory and conflict with one another (Moore 1994), something which may be particularly true in settings with fractious recent histories, such as in Angola. Thus, while there are limits to the flexibility and range of gender performances by individuals, it is important to also bear in mind the countervailing points that performances are in constant need of reiteration through social interactions, and that as people move across different social spheres they often draw on combinations of gendered cultural referents, making the assumption of hierarchies of discrete models difficult to defend.

1.2 Ethics and masculinity

The lens that I bring to much of the analysis in this thesis is that of ethics. Most of the changes experienced by veterans during and after the war were expressed by those I worked with in terms redolent of morality, and debated the challenges and dangers related to the successful performance of certain masculinities: how to treat comrades with brotherly love and concern whilst under the pressures of military discipline; the moral chaos threatened by the decline of deference towards elder men; the rise of money as a marker of social status and authority; the shame and immorality of a man's wife earning more than him and disrespecting his authority; the deceptions, dangers and broken promises of formal politics; and the moral confusion and destructiveness threatened by the irreligious. In short, as Michael Lambek puts it, the men I encountered were frequently "trying to do what they consider[ed] right or good, [were] being evaluated according to criteria of what is right and good, or [were] in some debate about what constitutes the human good" (2010a:1).³ They were disturbed by the increasing

3 In this thesis I will not attach particular importance to the distinction between the terms 'morality' and 'ethics', using the terms interchangeably, though I will follow Foucault in making a distinction

transgression of moral codes that they held dear, and preoccupied by how to lead ethical lives.

In analysing such sentiments, it could be possible to bring alternative lenses to the analysis: that of politics and power, for example, or of the social consequences of socio-economic change, or they could be conceptualised as religious dilemmas, given the strong influence of the churches. Indeed, the major social changes of war on the *Planalto*: the destruction of agriculture and the subsistence economy; the flight to the cities; the turn for many people to informal trading; the greater entry of women into the cash economy; and the rise of the party-state as the prime arbiter of economic success and status, are mostly viewed in the Angolanist literature as economic and political changes.

Yet, for my informants, they were also experienced as crises that can productively conceived of as moral crises. These, of course, had aspects related to economics and power relations, yet the most salient aspects of veterans' concerns were with issues that have often been the subject matter of anthropologies of morality and ethics. For example, a key theme of this thesis is that the rising importance of money in people's livelihood strategies and as a marker of status and authority was accompanied by a decline in ethical values such as deference and respect for older men, and in the virtues of filial piety. This process had obvious economic and political aspects, which will be important parts of the analysis. However, many of the principal concerns they expressed and debated were related to morals: a neglect of what people *ought* to do, and the way that things *ought* to be, with an implication of moral obligation and predictions of the proliferation of evil and confusion should things continue on the wrong tracks. I argue that this was not an economic crisis 'misrecognised' as a moral one, or a case of relations of domination 'framed in an ideology'⁴ of morality: it was for these men a complex crisis with a pronounced ethical aspect. This is not to argue that these men's

between moral/ethical codes and the practices employed to make oneself a good subject of such codes.

4 For example, McKittrick sees relationships between young men and their fathers in Ovamboland as being "framed in an ideology of affection and deference that obscured the economic power men continued to wield over their sons" (2003:34).

views and experiences of ethical life are the definitive ones; as with any other type of performance, moral ideas and practices are viewed from different perspectives and the imposition of one view rather than another has a definite power dimension. However, I start from the position that it is no less ‘ideological’ to consider the crises these men experienced as fundamentally economic or political than it is to see them as moral, and that a pre-theoretical orientation of the analysis in favour of either of the former two categories to the exclusion of the latter would obscure important dynamics of veterans’ experiences and practices.

Anthropologists of gender in Africa have, of course, often tackled moments of the moral problematisation of gender relations. There is a rich literature on instances when women have pushed the boundaries of ‘appropriate’ or ‘respectable’ behaviour, or questioned the legitimacy of authority. Such challenges have often been answered in moralising terms, with accusations that such women are ‘wicked’ (the contributors to Hodgson and McCurdy 2001a give a number of examples of such labelling), attributions which are important social practices of power. Indeed, many of the important advances of feminist anthropology have been precisely in taking the analysis of such moments out of potentially naturalising frames such as that of morality and ethics, and examining the complex interplay of power relations, discourse, practice and political economy in the negotiation of gender identities.⁵ Thus, feminist analysis has examined moments of heightened gender contestation around processes such as the wide-ranging effects of colonialism or structural adjustment policies, exploring how some women have responded to such moments by trying to make the most of new opportunities and been morally stigmatised as a result, or alternatively have tried to protect themselves from new oppressions by reinforcing older moral claims and prerogatives. Such moments do not, of course, only lead to antagonism between men and women, but can lead to the ethical problematisation of relations between women or between men, along other axes of difference such as generation or class (e.g. Heald 2001; Suggs 2001).

5 More broadly, the genesis of the social sciences can be said to have been partly motivated by a desire to dissolve the influence of conventional moralities (Hirschman 1980, cited in Fassin 2012).

As Suzette Heald (1999) has remarked, however, the privileging of power as the prime explanatory concept in gender studies has been to crowd out discussions of moralities, particularly in literature about masculinity. The morally respectable man has been seen as immoral by analysts because of the power he often wields over women and other categories of man. The concept of morality is therefore treated as suspect, as a disguise for immoral relations of domination. A result has been that some gender scholars make statements to the effect that moral crises around changes in gender relations “are *really* about shifting power relations” (Hodgson and McCurdy 2001b:7 emphasis added). A move to collapse the ethical into the political, assuming that the former is “really” all about the latter, risks missing important aspects of the historical, embodied experience of gender relations.

To understand the moral passion that is often evoked on all sides by social transformations, particularly those of a gendered character, it seems to me that it is important to probe both the historical roots and evocations behind moral appeals. An *a priori* orientation in favour of power also means a distancing of the terms of academic debate from the terms by which lives are lived (Heald 1999) and, by obscuring the ethical concerns animating analyses of gendered power relations, of implying that “progressive formulations necessarily exhaust ways of living meaningfully and richly in this world” (Mahmood 2005:xi–xii). Viewing the ethical sensibilities of those with whom we work only through the lens of power, and treating ethical appeals as simple ruses or false consciousness therefore risks neglecting one of the special contributions that anthropology has to make to gender studies: that of maintaining the specificity of local concepts in tension with theoretical perspectives – reading them alongside one another to see the light they may shed on each other (what Michael Herzfeld calls the “militant middle ground” between post-modernism and positivism 2006:99). From this point of view there may be more insight to be gained from making a clearer distinction in our writing between a feminist academic project which is simultaneously both political and ethical, and the similar projects of those we study.

In this thesis I am attempting to bring together an analysis of ethics with that of

gendered power relations. I examine how the social changes of war were associated with various ethical problems about what it meant to be a senior man in post-war Huambo, whilst examining how this played into gendered power struggles. This means focussing on how particular moral arguments are viewed from different social positions, including my own, and how complementary, overlapping or contradictory sets of prerogatives and obligations are invoked by different people in the negotiation of gender identities and gendered life projects. To orient this analysis, I turn to the concept of problematisation.

1.2.1 The ethical problematisation of masculinity

There is a sense in which the ethical is an aspect of everyday social life everywhere. From the discipline's inception anthropologists have thought of all societies as having moral codes and systems of ethics (Burnett Tylor 2014; Durkheim 2014; Evens 1982). Anthropologists have often been influenced by a refracted Kantian conception of deontological ethics (Kant 2005) as formulated by Durkheim, wherein the 'moral' is identified closely with the social, and as a function of it (Laidlaw 2013). More recently, Michael Lambek and his contributors (Lambek 2010b) have argued, drawing on Wittgenstein and Austin's work on language, that ordinary speech and action establish criteria by which practice is both carried out and is judged from an ethical point of view. As such, they might be analysed through ethnography even if they are not the object of much explicit conversation. However, in this thesis I will be tracing the different areas of ethical life that had come to seem problematic for veterans during and after the civil war, particularly focusing on those related to practices of masculinity. As such, I am focused on the historicity of ethics and morals: how certain issues became problems for ethical reflection and action, and how men sought to constitute themselves as ethical subjects in response to such problems.

To approach this problem I will turn to Michel Foucault's concept of problematisation,

particularly as it relates to ethics. Foucault latterly referred to his intellectual project as an attempt to write a history of thought (Foucault 1997), which he distinguished from that of a history of representations and a history of mentalities. For a domain of practice to become an object of thought, he argued, something needed to have brought about some difficulties around it, and these might have been instigated by economic, social or political processes. Problematisation is what allows people to “step back” (Foucault 1991:388) from a domain of practice and to constitute it as an “object of thought” (1991:388), a set of discursive and non-discursive practices which make something “enter into the play of true or false” (Rabinow 2002:139). There will be multiple possible ways of responding to such difficulties, which are “diverse but not entirely disparate” (Rabinow 2002:139), which themselves come to make up part of the problematisation over time. Such solutions, are, for instance, the disciplinary model of punitive practices for the problem of criminal behaviour, or the practices of the self proposed as solutions for the difficulties of traditional sexual ethics in the Hellenistic period. He outlines this concept particularly in his work on the latter, making important distinctions between the moral code, the behaviour measured against that code, and the way that one behaves – which is to say the practices of the self through which one constitutes oneself as a good moral subject of the code.

Using such an approach for the ethnography of ethics has several advantages for the present study, which attends to the consequences of historical change for gendered practices and identities in everyday life. Foucault’s historicisation of ethical problematisations encourages an analysis which accounts for how ethical problems both arise and change, and importantly looks at how broader historical changes have consequences for the sort of quotidian practices which ethnographies are well equipped to analyse. Such an analysis also avoids determinism: whilst difficulties might arise because of certain historical conditions, problematisations have an important role in determining upon what tracks change will subsequently take, and diverse solutions will be proposed, thus opening up a “heterogeneous, if constrained, contingency” (Rabinow 2002:139).

There are two further aspects that it is important to specify. Firstly, in speaking of difficulties that arise, Foucault is not implying that ethical life must have been unproblematic before particular historical conditions provoked such difficulties. It is not, therefore, quite the same as, for instance, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the movement from *doxa* to *orthodoxy* or *heterodoxy*, where a crisis makes “the social world lose ... its character as a natural phenomenon” (1977:169), so that “the question of the natural or conventional character ... of social facts can be raised” (1977:169). By using the concept of problematisation I do not mean to imply that ethical life was unproblematic before the war – indeed, as I will suggest in chapter 2, gender relations had been far from stable in the colonial period on the *Planalto*, and ethical life had been rapidly transforming under the influence of colonial domination, rapid economic change and the influence of the missions.

One of the principal arguments of some anthropologists of the 'ethical turn' in anthropology has been that everyday ethical life is not unreflected-on or automatic (e.g. Faubion 2011; Laidlaw 2013), but that reflection and reasoning are a key aspect of ethical life which is therefore not simply 'caused' by social structures (Laidlaw 2013; Evens 1982). As James Laidlaw points out, in any period something will be problematised – will become an object of worry and reflection – and understanding the forms of that reflection is key to understanding a particular “form of life” (2013:118). In addition, the object of problematisation might remain constant over a long period, while the forms of concern and reflection around it might alter significantly.

The second, related point, is that ethical life is often made up of disparate elements, and does not tend towards equilibrium or coherence, as Jarrett Zigon has suggested (2007). Zigon has proposed a distinction between the terms 'morality' and 'ethics' whereby everyday moral life is unreflective and consists in the “comfort of the familiar” (2007:138). Periodically, however, events conspire to bring about moments of what he phrases, following Heidegger, “moral breakdown” (2007:137), which are ethical moments in which some sort of dilemma or problem is posed. The aim of ethics, he argues, is to move back into a familiar and unreflective mode of moral life. James

Faubion (2011) and James Laidlaw (2013) have both criticised Zigon on this point, with Laidlaw giving many examples of ethnographies that analyse cases of enduring discomfort and conflict between heterogeneous ethical demands. Indeed, the assumption should not be made in advance that equilibrium is what people seek: life, in many cases, “is not a puzzle to which there can be a solution” (Laidlaw 2013:127). Michael Lambek, in a similar vein, speculates that such disparateness might be a regular part of human life, and cites Austin in this regard:

We may cheerfully use, and with weight, terms which are not so much head-on incompatible as simply disparate, which just do not fit in or even on ... why must there be a conceivable amalgam, the Good Life for Man?
(Austin 1970: 203, n. 1, cited in Lambek 2008)

The concept of problematisation seems to me particularly well suited to the consideration of the perennial discomfort of ethical life in many settings, suggesting as it does, not the resolution of problems conceived of as atypical, but ongoing efforts to negotiate between divergent demands and navigate the uncertainties and imponderables of everyday ethical life.

Finally, Didier Fassin argues that recent anthropological work on ethics influenced by the latter part of Foucault’s work, ‘isolates’ morality and ethics as products of subjectivity (Fassin 2014:6), neglecting to historicise and politicise them. I would argue that this need not be the case, and that Foucault’s approach is thoroughly historical and certainly does not ignore power relations. The concept of problematisation, as we have seen, focuses partly on the historical situations that produce ethical difficulties. In addition, Foucault explicitly conceives ethical practices not as isolated, but as being connected to “a whole network of concrete relations” (Foucault 1997:34), and ethics as being “the deliberate practice of liberty” (Foucault 1987:5) in the context of those relations – whether they are “congealed” (1987:4) relations of domination, or those in which relations might be susceptible to alteration.⁶

⁶ Moreover, this part of Foucault’s work seems particularly well suited as a rebuttal to anthropologist critics who see the adoption of his work on disciplinary forms of power as a return to ideas of the individual as “the tool of culture, destined merely to express it” (Sahlins 1999:410). Foucault emphasises that whilst problematisations may become possible due to historical conditions, they are

1.2.2 The embodiment of ethics: ethical practices and moral personhood

The practices of the self that Foucault explores in the latter two volumes of his *History of Sexuality* include practices carried out on the body. Just as I have conceptualised bodily practice and dispositions as central to understanding cultural styles of masculinity, I also see it as key in the understanding ethical practice.

Butler's formulation of gendered performances in *Gender Trouble* argues for a concept of gender identity as an embodied signifying practice that needs to be constantly repeated to produce its effect. She locates the possibilities for 'agency' in the possibility of variations on repetition, or what she terms "subversive repetition" (p.199), resulting from the necessary failures of constant repetition. This emphasis in Butler's work has been criticised by the anthropologist Saba Mahmood. Mahmood argues that despite Butler's important insight that norms are not necessarily foisted on the subject, but may "constitute the very substance of her intimate, valorized interiority" (2005:23), she nevertheless implicitly creates a binary between signification and resignification, or resistance and subordination, and implies that only practices that attempt to undermine moral codes or normative gendered behaviour are worthy of scholarly attention. Mahmood points out that this and other formulations, despite questioning liberal ideas of the unified subject, still retain rather parochial, liberal assumptions about human nature being manifested in a natural resistance to authority. This forecloses an interest in the varied forms that agency may take which may not be categorisable as either resistance or subordination. The nature of agency ought not to be assumed in advance, Mahmood argues, but should be established through an investigation of particular discourses and the specific modes of gendered subjectivity they enable.

not determined by them, and set the tracks along which a variety of solutions may be posed to problems. In a late interview (1987) Foucault made clear that he saw power relations as existing throughout social fields, because he also saw freedom as existing throughout social fields, that power produced resistance, with possibilities for reversing power relations being variable in different contexts. Practices of the self allow the exercise of moral freedom for individuals, even though they are proposed and imposed by culture and society.

In order to expand Butler's insights into subjects' relations to norms in a more nuanced way, Mahmood draws on Michel Foucault's later work on the care of the self, in volumes two and three of his *History of Sexuality*. In these works Foucault advances a theory of the varying ways people might become the subjects of moral codes, arguing that people work on themselves to become good subjects of moral codes, and constitute and recognise themselves as subjects. Such a conception has the advantage of taking the discussion away from norms as impositions, establishing that subjects are not simply 'hailed' by discourses, but respond, a response which demonstrates "the capacity and apparatus of subjectivity" (Hall 1996:12). This view opens up a consideration of the variety of ways in which individuals might construct a relationship with norms, both in terms of the specific bodily practices undertaken, and the particular relationship between capacities of the self it establishes, such as "will, reason, desire, action and so on" (Mahmood 2005:29). It also allows for varying concepts of personhood, an analysis of which is considered by many anthropologists as an essential part of the analysis of gender identities (see for example Strathern 1988; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994a).

1.2.3 Ethics, masculinity and war: contribution of the thesis

Whilst the particular contribution of each of empirical chapter will be developed in each one, I will outline here the general contributions that the thesis as a whole seeks to make. First of all, the thesis constitutes, to my knowledge, one of the few monograph-length studies of the impact of military service on masculinities in Africa, ethnographic or otherwise (although a number of shorter pieces and one monograph have been produced, see Ellis 2003; Moran 1995; Richards 2006; Cock 1991; Everatt 2000; Xaba 2001; Mann 2003; Mama 1998). This is surprising, given the large number of men who have passed through armed organisations on the continent in the past 100 years, and the important role that wars have played in social change in Africa since the end of the Cold War. The thesis will analyse the long-term consequences of war and military service for a group of men, examining in comparative perspective what the gendered effects of military service were for their subsequent lives, and how these effects are best

contextualised with other effects of the war. In doing so it will start to fill some gaps in the literature on veterans in Africa, and in the ethnography of masculinities in Africa.

In addition, I seek to make a contribution to the literature on veterans in southern Africa. This literature has been dominated by a political lens, often looking at how veterans have engaged with the state: how they have organised politically, using their identities as national heroes to claim material assistance from the state (see for example Kriger 2003; Metsola 2010; Schafer 2007), the possible danger of political unrest posed by failed 'reintegration' (for example Mashike 2004), and how communities on the losing side have lobbied for memorialisation of fallen fighters (for example Alexander, McGregor, and Ranger 2000). By shifting the focus to ethics, I aim to look at veterans from a perspective which allows us to see both veterans' relations to the state, viewed in this case as an immoral force, and their disengagement from it. Crucially, the ethical lens allows us look at this withdrawal from politics (and, in this case, a turn to religion) not simply as an empty space where veterans' political agency ought to be (cf. Mahmood 2005), but as an important socio-cultural practice in its own right, and vital to understanding the nature of the social transformations of war in Angola.

Such a contribution is particularly important in the context of the literature on Angola, where very little work at all has been published on gender. Marissa Moorman, for example, noted in her thesis on *mussequ* music and national identity in the late colonial period (2004), that a complete lack of social historical work on Angola made it hard even to conceptualise project proposals on gender. Henda Ducados (2004) called for more work on the gendered consequences of the civil war, but very little has been forthcoming so far, besides some short articles written during the war or in its immediate aftermath (Campbell 1999; Campbell 1998; Chanhelela Chianeque n.d.; Ducados 2000; Fonseca et al. 2001; Nzatuzola 2005; Pehrsson et al. 2000). There are a handful of longer studies examining gender (Paredes 2015; Stavrou 2004; Afonso 2011), which principally focus on women. Equally, very little has been published on the social impacts of military service, despite it affecting almost entire generations of Angolan men. One major study has been completed on war veterans in Angola, focusing in

particular on UNITA veterans (Porto, Alden, and Parsons 2007); along with one doctoral thesis, which is concerned with the dynamics of UNITA's army during the war. The insights of all of these studies will be analysed in subsequent chapters, but suffice to say here that this thesis will make an important contribution to the scholarly literature on Angola in two areas where understanding is sorely lacking: masculinities and the long-term social trajectories of FAPLA war veterans.

As Stephen Lubkemann argues (2008), the most important social effects of war are often by-products of violence, rather than directly related to violence itself. War, he argues, changes the “conditions of sociation” (p.216), severing some relations, reinforcing others and allowing new connections to be made, changing both the possibilities and consequences of interactions. War is therefore a socially transformative condition, but one in which cultural forms and processes of long standing continue to play central roles in people's motivations and practices. Since social relations are often viewed in terms of moral virtue and obligations, I would argue that these changes are frequently experienced as moral crises, even though they are often principally analysed in terms of politics and social ties in the literature on post-conflict settings. Several aspects of the social transformations of war came to seem problematic for the veterans I worked with: changing norms of kinship and gendered authority related to urbanisation and the monetisation of subsistence; increasingly stark and visible social differentiation and the dangerous lust for money it was seen to unleash; and the impingement of dangerous and illegitimate political authority on the conduct of ethical life and the integrity of moral masculine selves.

In this light, this thesis seeks to contribute to existing literature through an understanding of how the experience of military service and a long civil war affected the cultural styles of masculinity performed by a group of Angolan war veterans over their life courses. In this process, it will analyse the ongoing influence of longstanding cultural forms and processes, and how they were altered by the social transformations of war. More specifically, and in accordance with the ethical character of these veterans' concerns in 2012, it will enquire into the sorts of ethical problematisations that arose

over the course of the war and in its wake, around the performance of masculinity. It will trace the historical roots of these problematisations, discuss how these histories were manifested in veterans' ethical sensibilities and look at how they played out in the everyday negotiation and practice of cultural styles of masculinity.

1.3 Some introductory notes on methodology: interlocutors, positionality and ethics

For the reasons I give below, I will discuss issues of methodology – and particularly of positioning, reflexivity and voice – throughout the thesis. Here I will frame those reflections with some remarks on the groups of veterans that I worked with, the settings in which I interacted with them, and how I consider the issues of positionality and ethics in connection with the theoretical framework enumerated above.

1.3.1 Interlocutors

I worked with four groups of veterans of the MPLA government's army, all of whom started their military service before the 1991 Bicesse peace accords, and most of whom ended their military service after the signing of these accords or before (from now on, "FAPLA veterans", referring to the *Forças Armadas Populares pela Libertação de Angola*, the name of the MPLA government's army before Bicesse). All of the men were working in informal commerce, although many of them combined this work with other occupations.

I selected this particular cohort of veterans for several reasons: firstly, because of the diverse wartime experiences of different cohorts of veterans. The type of warfare and military organisation were markedly different between the two principal movements involved in the civil war, and was very different again after the Bicesse accords than before them. Rather than trying to study the full range of experiences of all veterans, which seemed unfeasible for one year's ethnographic study, I decided to concentrate only on government veterans who had been recruited before 1991. This was partly also

because it proved more difficult to do participant observation with UNITA veterans, who in general were more guarded, and more wary of being publicly identified as having fought for UNITA - as my continual presence with them would have advertised. In addition, I was aware that another doctoral researcher was working with UNITA veterans, and the only major academic study on Angolan veterans (Porto, Alden, and Parsons 2007) was focused on UNITA veterans only. I therefore chose to work with MPLA government veterans, and only with those who were recruited before Bicesse. This was because so many of those who had been recruited after Bicesse were still serving in the army in 2012, having chosen to remain in the army after the end of the war, apparently due to the rare security of employment it offered. I did, however, carry out interviews with veterans of other cohorts in order to provide some comparative data that might shed light on the life courses of FAPLA veterans, in terms of the consequences of experiences of differing types of warfare, military organisation, and the effects of being a veteran of the winning, rather than the losing, side in the war.

I chose to work with male veterans for several reasons: firstly because the brief involvement of women in the FAPLA was almost completely ended by the purges conducted after the 27th May 1977 (Paredes 2015); secondly because it seemed difficult for a white man to spend significant amounts of time associating with Angolan women without raising suspicions, particularly given the tendency of 'respectable' men and women of that generation to socialise in same-sex groups in the settings in which I worked; and finally because Margarida Paredes was already carrying out doctoral research on female soldiers (2015).

The decision to focus on veterans working in informal commerce was taken because early contacts with veterans I came across in the course of my daily life in Huambo city suggested that most veterans made their living in that sector. I initially began working with veterans in a city market in Huambo, working at first with a group of stallholders inside the market, and then also with a group of motorbike taxi drivers and moneychangers working outside the market. I began here for simple reasons of convenience: I shopped in the market and had quickly struck up a rapport with some of

the veteran sellers there. However, once it became clear that the classification of urban space was very significant for people's identities (as I discuss in chapter 4), I also began working with two groups of sellers in *Alemanha* market in a peripheral *bairro* (neighbourhood) on the edge of the city. In total I was working with around forty men in the observation settings. From these starting points I gradually also began interacting with these veterans in other settings, in particular, accompanying them to church, and becoming involved with a neighbourhood football team organised by one group of men, taking photos at their matches and socialising with them before and after games. I also visited some of them in their homes, and some of them visited mine. Much of the analysis in this thesis is based on my observations of, and participation in, social life in these settings, and also on veterans' accounts of other settings that I did not witness - accounts that I see as performances in themselves, as well as providing information on their experience of life in other settings. I introduce the market settings in more detail in chapter 4, and describe in detail the veterans I came to know best in chapter 3.

To attempt to understand the course these veterans' lives had taken since childhood, and how the ethical problematisations they encountered had emerged and changed during and after the civil war, I also carried out recorded life history interviews with a subset of the veterans from the observation settings – although everyday conversations in the markets often focused on recent history anyway. As mentioned above, I also interviewed some UNITA veterans, and some younger veterans who had demobilised since Bicesse, in order to get contextual and comparative information. Beyond veterans, I also interviewed a few family members of veterans, and spoke to a number of people who had professional knowledge of veterans' lives: staff of the government organisations, the Institute for the Socio-economic Reinsertion of Ex-combatants (IRSEM); non-governmental organisations; a disabled people's solidarity movement that included many veterans; and lay and/or professional staff of the Congregationalist (IECA), Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic and Baptist churches.

Finally, a note on the limitations of the data I was able to generate. The thesis is mainly based on the subjective accounts of veterans of their own lives. I do include some

observations from the market and other settings, and the views of some non-veterans are heard, but the bulk of the material is based on my regular conversations with veterans and their market colleagues at their workplace (where most of them, working six days a week, spent the majority of their waking hours). The voices of UNITA veterans are heard much less, and little is heard from women, for the reasons stated above. As a result, veterans are viewed principally from their own perspective, rather than from a multiplicity of perspectives. In addition, several of the topics they discussed were about settings that I was not able to observe, either because they were in the past, or because it was not possible to gain access to them (for example it was not often possible to observe marital life, an issue I address in more detail in chapter 5, or veterans' interactions with their children). Conversely, the in-depth attention to veterans' accounts of their own lives did allow me to develop close relationships with them and a level of frankness which few foreign researchers on the *Planalto* have managed to gain, given the short periods of time they usually spend there. It also allowed me to probe in some detail the diversity amongst these senior men, and the conflicts and ambiguities around what masculine social and ethical prestige ought to look like.

1.3.2 Ethics and positions

Methodological choices are usually simultaneously ethical and political choices as well as 'analytic' or 'technical' ones. The theoretical framing of masculinity outlined above of course contains all of these elements. Perhaps most importantly, in terms of methodology, this framework suggests that there is no objective point from which to view gendered performances and their ethical and political entailments. The challenge, then, has been to understand the historical situated-ness of the competing perspectives articulated by the people I studied, and to make explicit in the writing of this ethnography the particularity of different perspectives, including my own. Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995) has implied that cultural relativism and moral relativism tend to go together, and that they ought to be balanced with some transcendental moral first principles. This argument seems to me to obscure the fact that the various forms of

relativism themselves have an ethical motivation.

In the case of the perspective developed here, I am aiming to outline the various ethical perspectives and practices of those I study, locating them in a particular historical setting, and, importantly, in a global political economy (cf. Bourgois 1991). In so doing I hope to make clear the gendered politics of veterans' everyday lives, both in terms of the gendered prerogatives they exercise over others, and the often dominated and marginalised position they find themselves in, particularly in relation to the party-state elite in their own country, and its global political and economic underpinnings. Thus, my own ethical-political position in this thesis is one that takes a feminist concern with gender equality, and a concern with more equal power relations more generally. More specifically I adopt a lens that does not simply employ a 'comparative' analytic approach with my own native social setting, but one that takes account of the fact that I and the veterans I worked with live within the same world system (cf. Connell 2005), in which our respective positions are linked in very concrete ways. Part of this approach means tackling the perennial issue of voice in how the ethnography is written, and how to articulate my own perspective without resorting to a monological mode which obscures the voices of the veterans I am writing about.

The political and ethical orientation of the thesis requires striking a difficult balance between a recounting of veterans' experiences, and providing an account of the power relations that constitute those experiences (Aretxaga 1997). I attempt this by, as James Clifford (1983) recommends, detailing the dialogic processes through which I came to the understandings I am reporting, whilst attempting to maintain the strangeness of the voices of veterans. Partly through citing them at some length, but also through being explicit about how my interpretations compare to those of veterans I hope to allow the reader the space to judge these accounts against one other.

The men I worked with were in no doubt as to the inescapably political nature of the work I was attempting in asking them to speak about their lives. Several of them told me that they were happy that I was amongst them, doing research on their lives, because

the country's leaders' version of the country's history was falsified, and the 'truth' of 'the people's' accounts was aggressively silenced by the party-state. A consequence of this, as João Faria (2013) has pointed out, is that doing social science research in Angola is an inherently political act, since one is asking people to speak the truth about their own lives. Faria conceptualises speaking the truth, following Foucault, as *parrhesia*, an explicitly ethical obligation that chimes well with the how several of the veterans I met saw their decision to speak to me, emphasising the elements of risk and what they saw as their moral duty:

In parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.
(Foucault 2001:19–20)

Two of the men I worked with were sufficiently worried by the potential for violent reprisal by the party-state if they did speak to me, that they declined to be interviewed about their life history.⁷ I hope this thesis, then, will present the reader with a collection of alternative voices about central but neglected aspects of Angola's complex history over the past 40 years, which can provide some counter-points to the dominant version of Angolan history promoted by the party-state and the sanitised versions of their foreign sponsors.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The rest of the thesis is structured according to the concept of problematisation discussed above. The next two chapters therefore seek to trace the historical conditions for the emergence of the areas of ethical problematisation in relation to masculinity that

⁷ As a precaution, therefore, all of the names of people in the thesis are pseudonyms, and I will not name some of the places I carried out research, where this would make it possible to identify those that I am talking about, nor will I refer, for example, to the particular goods that some of the men sold. This is not the case for professions in which very large numbers of people are engaged, such as money changing or motorbike taxi driving; nor for very large places like *Alemanha* market, which employs many thousands of people.

are tackled in the later chapters. Chapter 2 seeks to trace the broader, gendered historical context of my informants' lives through an examination of scholarly literature on the history of the *Planalto*. In particular, it traces the evolution of the institutions of Umbundu tradition, the influence of missionary Christianity, colonialism and its violent aftermath, and the post-war hegemony of the MPLA party-state – the most important historical layers of the ethical problematisations that veterans in Huambo articulated and faced. Chapter 3 will consider the biographies of three of the veterans I came to know best, examining their accounts of the formation of their ethical sensibilities, their evolution during the war, and the moral crises which they confronted. Following on from the previous chapter, it focuses on the varying influences of Umbundu tradition, Christianity and relations to state power and its attendant political economy. In this setting it looks at how the influence of the experience of military service on masculine performances shifted in different historical periods.

Chapters 4 and 5 will look at the form that moral problematisations of manhood took in 2012, focussing in particular on the effects of wartime changes in political economy related to the rising value of money and commodities as markers of social status, the monetisation of subsistence and the increased participation of women in informal commerce. Chapter 4 looks at the ethical issues raised by the rising social value of money and the forms of social stratification it gave rise to. In particular it examines the challenge money posed to elder men's authority and communal ethics, and the sorts of dangerous evil it was said to give rise to. Chapter 5 tackles the implications of money's changing valuation for the ethics of sexual relationships between men and women.

Chapter 6 explores two influential styles of masculinity adopted by veterans in response to the problems discussed in the previous two chapters, that of the abstemious, companionately-married church-goer, and the womanising drinker. Whilst the range of styles adopted by veterans were more varied and nuanced than this bifurcation suggests, these two styles were influential in orienting men's moral judgements about their own and other's cultural styles of masculinity, in which the dominant standard of public morality in distinguishing different styles was that of Christianity. Chapter 7 will seek to

account for this continuing moral authority of the churches in 2012, comparing it particularly to the two other principle influences: 'traditional' Umbundu culture and the sphere of politics, the latter understood as both engagement with the party-state or its enemies, and entanglement in the networks of patronage and enrichment the party-state seemed to offer. Chapter 8 will conclude the thesis by broadening the discussion to consider what contribution the lenses of ethics and gender can bring to the understanding of Angola's postwar history, which is almost exclusively considered in scholarly literature in gender-blind terms of politics and economics.

Chapter 2: The historical context for ethical problematisations of masculinity

2.1 Introduction

When I first arrived in Huambo with my partner, it was by plane from Luanda. Luanda was therefore my immediate point of comparison: a huge, humid, stuffy city to me, bewildering and frenetic. Huambo had the scorching sun of Luanda, but, whereas in Luanda the air never seemed to cool, in Huambo the sun failed to completely warm the air at any time of the day, mainly due to its altitude of 1700 metres. It was the beginning of the *cacimbo* season - a cool, dry season, the more humid and sweaty rainy season having recently ended. Huambo was greener, and more spacious than Luanda, with much less traffic moving along roads that had been extensively renovated and extended since the end of the civil war.

My partner's adoptive cousin, Flávio, drove us down the airport road, past a thin belt of improvised suburban neighbourhoods and into the upper town of the old colonial centre. Huambo city was so-called when it was founded in 1912 because it was situated in the kingdom of Wambu, though the city itself was not built at the location of any historical settlement. Rather, its location was determined by the planned route of the Benguela railway, running from the Atlantic coast to the copper mines of Katanga. The place it was founded was known simply as *ombila yo ngombe* ('the oxen's grave'), as a resting place of Boer ox-wagons, where many oxen died of exhaustion (Neto 2012:126). The city was re-named Nova Lisboa - New Lisbon - in 1928, a name it held for only 47 years, until independence from Portugal arrived in 1975. The relative brevity of Portuguese dominance in this part of Angola has nevertheless had enormous consequences for its subsequent history, most physically obvious in Huambo's central *cidade* (city), with its handsome single story houses built by the Portuguese - some still shabby and some smartened up since the end of the war. We drove past streets and neat

squares of these houses, which lacked pavements, recently dug up by Chinese workers to install new power lines. Much of the enormous damage done to the city during the war had been repaired or painted over by the time we arrived in the city in 2012, and it was hard to tell that we were driving through what had been one of the most fiercely contested parts of the city. As UNITA fought to take control of the city in 1993, this road, running from the airport to the square occupied by the local administrative buildings, was the scene of bloody battles. A large, now ruined school had served as UNITA's command centre as they gained a foothold. It was being extensively repaired and updated by a Portuguese construction company when we arrived, to be completed in time for the national elections, and many corpses from the conflict were inadvertently discovered and discreetly disposed of as the project progressed. By the time we left the city in early 2013 the physical evidence of these particular deaths had been completely removed.

The renaming of the city in 1975, reverting to its original name of Huambo, might have been taken to mean the end of the domination of the *Planalto* (the central highlands region of Angola where Huambo is located) by outsiders, but of course post-independence history has been much more complicated than that. The choice of Huambo's sparse monuments suggests something of this: a statue of Angola's first President, Agostinho Neto, a northerner from Bengo province; a bust of Deolinda Rodrigues, an MPLA martyr also from Bengo province; a statue of the kimbundu Queen Nzinga, a 17th century anti-colonial icon. These choices were made despite a wealth of possible choices of heroes from the *Planalto's* own anti-colonial struggles, as several friends in the city pointed out to me, in order to glorify the MPLA party-state's version of Angolan history, seen as northern-centred and often hostile to the region of Jonas Savimbi's birth. In reality, Ovimbundu troops formed the backbone of the armies of both factions in the civil war, and automatic associations between ethnic identity and political affiliation were hotly resented by most of the people I met.

The wide diversity of names used colloquially to refer to different parts of the city suggest the complexity of identifications that its inhabitants make beyond that of being

'Umbundu': the Bairros de Fátima and São Pedro underline the importance of Christianity for many, and the dominance of the Catholic church; *Bairro Academico* evokes the pride people have of the reputation of Huambo as a centre of scholarship and the high value given to education; the group of neighbourhoods collectively known as Benfica are a nod to the ongoing influence of Portuguese culture and the colonial past; the large market on the edge of the city called Alemanha in honour of the Angolan national team's participation in the 2006 world cup in Germany. The fact that the main square is still known as the 'Praça do Governo', rather than by its official name, 'Praça Agostinho Neto' perhaps suggests the ambivalent attitude many have to state authority in general, and the reluctance many have to publicly take sides.

In this chapter I will briefly outline some aspects of this complex history over the past 100 years, through an examination of scholarly sources. The purpose of the chapter is to trace the evolution of ethical sensibilities on the *Planalto*, and the historical conditions under which difficulties arose around certain aspects of gender relations, and some of the influences on their ethical problematisation. As noted in the introduction, those living through wars and their aftermath are influenced by longstanding cultural forms and processes, as much as by the exigencies of wars themselves (Lubkemann 2008). As such, in this chapter I will look at the complex historical precedents of the ethical problems veterans were grappling with in Huambo in 2012, to aid the discussion in following chapters of how collective histories were narrated, contested and negotiated in everyday social practice during the period of my fieldwork.

Since I am attempting to cover such a long period of history in a single chapter, my focus will necessarily be very selective, focussing on writing about those aspects of the region's history that continued to resonate for the men I worked with in 2012. Once I reach the period in which they were born (from the mid-1960s onwards), I will focus principally on the written history of the social milieu that they were moving through. I will start from the period in which direct colonial control was established over the *Planalto*, focusing on three key aspects: the legacies of pre-conquest⁸ *Planalto* society,

8 I prefer 'pre-conquest' to 'pre-colonial', because the long Portuguese presence on the coast had very

the evolving influence of churches, and relations with colonial and post-colonial states, including their related political economies. In the first two sections I will look at the period up to 1961, first discussing the ethics of the gendered dynamics of *Planalto* society and its interaction with colonial political economy; and then at the influence of religion on gendered discourses and practices, and its interaction with the political sphere. In the subsequent sections I will trace the evolution of these themes through, respectively, the war for independence, the first and second phases of the civil war, and the post-war period up to 2012.

2.2 Colonial conquest: kinship, authority and the colonial economy to 1961

A principle theme of much of the literature on the period following the Portuguese conquest of the *Planalto* in the late 19th century, both contemporary and more recent, is the rapid disintegration of older Umbundu social and political structures, and the swift adaptation of people on the *Planalto* to the colonial system. There remained in 2012 a number of important vestiges of pre-colonial social forms, albeit much changed and existing in a complex relationship with the legacy of other social and cultural forces that buffeted the region during a turbulent twentieth century. The nineteenth century was also a time of rapid change, and in the decades immediately before and after the colonial conquest, the political economy of the *Planalto* underwent a series of rapid transformations. Beginning in earnest in around 1874, a caravan trade that had also traded in slaves, ivory and beeswax in the past, came to be dominated by rubber. This continued until after the colonial conquest, but collapsed in 1911 (Childs 1949). Intensive agriculture had begun on the *Planalto* with the beginning of the rubber trade, but at the time was seen as an activity appropriate for women and slaves, and as shameful for a free man. Free men and boys were expected to be dynamic, and enthusiastically engaged in the rigours of the long-distance caravan trade, from the age of around ten years old (Heywood 2000). However, coinciding with the collapse of the rubber trade was the demand for grain during World War One, and increasingly harsh

significant consequences for the hinterland in the centuries before direct colonial control was established (Miller 1996).

colonial taxes. This meant the entry of a large proportion of men into agriculture, and a model of mixed subsistence and market production.

Gladwyn Childs, a Columbia-trained anthropologist, worked as a missionary on the *Planalto* from 1924 until the 1960s, and wrote a description of “Umbundu kinship and character” (1949) based on fieldwork carried out in the 1930s. This book gives Childs’ view of how the gendered organisation of life on the *Planalto* had been affected by the changes described above, and some of the ethical norms that underpinned kinship relations. The principal differences between people were “due to the two factors of age and sex”, he argued (p.41), and the basis of the kinship structure was the household. This typically consisted of a man, his wife or wives (Childs estimated that no more than one in eight men was polygynous) and their children, together with their other related or unrelated dependents. Residence was patrilocal, with people settled in villages of up to 500 households, the male heads of which were related in the male line. Authority in the village, Childs claimed, was patriarchal, with a single head, called a *sekulu*, which literally meant ‘grandfather’ or ‘elder father’. Descent, however, was reckoned in two lines. The father’s line (*oluse*) was a localised group, and succession to political office was through the father’s line, as was inheritance of moveable property. The mother’s line (*oluina*) was dispersed, and land and houses were inherited through the mother’s line. The relative importance of the mother’s line and of mother’s brothers in the life of their nephews was decreasing at the time of Childs’ fieldwork, apparently because this dispersed network was no longer required for commercial purposes after the demise of the caravan trade, and the localised father’s line was coming to dominate.

Childs also gives an outline of the ideal life trajectory of boys and men in this period. From an early period of playing together with girls, boys would start to be educated by their elder brothers at the age of six or eight years old. Education in general social conduct and morals would be by example, and in the normal course of life. Some of this would take place in the men’s house (*ondjango*), which he described as “a dining room, living room, court, school, hotel, and club, all in one” (pg.26), where males would eat together in the evenings, and youth were educated by proverb and example about proper

behaviour and traditional history. This method of education in morals was much more effective than formalised Western models, Childs argued, and he also considered it superior to 'traditional' models in other African settings that used harsh discipline or ordeals in transitions to manhood. Marriage was, Childs argued, the real challenge that marked the transition to manhood for the Ovimbundu.

However, circumcision camps seemed to be growing in importance in this period, having apparently not existed in the 19th century, and involving hardship and cruelty - something he argued had been copied from neighbouring ethnic groups, and which sought to replicate the rigours of the old trading caravans. Wilfrid Hambly⁹ gave the most detailed account of the ceremony, the essential features of which were a period of seclusion away from the village for initiates; the rigorous exclusion of women and uninitiated men; hardship and harsh discipline imposed by older men; the teaching of dancing, making of masks and costumes, and 'tribal customs' (Hambly 1934:317). The ceremony constituted a symbolic death, and re-entry to the village at the end of the ceremony was a re-introduction to village life as a man with a new name, who was allowed to marry, and who must not reveal the secrets of the initiation camp on pain of death (Hambly 1935). This custom had survived and seemingly increased in prevalence by the time of the childhoods of the veterans I worked with in Huambo province, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Childs gives some indications as to what the prevailing morality might have been on the *Planalto* in the early colonial period, in his remarks on age hierarchies and 'witchcraft'. "The Ovimbundu," he claimed, "recognize very definitely the hierarchy of age and consider orderly society quite impossible without it" (1949:58). Implying that respect for elders was part of the general moral common sense and not reflected upon, he argued that the cruelty of circumcision camps was unnecessary, because it would never occur to anyone to dispute the authority of their elders in the first place. From Childs'

9 Hambly, contrary to Childs, also argued that the prevalence of initiation ceremonies was decreasing in the 1930s. I prefer Childs' account, since he points out that none of the 19th century sources mention circumcision, and also because Hambly spent less than a year in Angola, much of it outside the *Planalto*, and did not speak Umbundu.

point of view, age hierarchies were not ethically problematised, though the emergence of initiation rituals seems to suggest that Umbundu people themselves might have seen things differently. Despite the many transformations in kinship norms in the intervening decades the principle of respect for seniority seems to have survived as an important moral influence on the veterans I worked with, though one that was increasingly under pressure as I will discuss in chapters 4 and 5.

Childs saw more problems related to economic disparities, and particularly to individuals who enjoyed success without sharing its benefits widely. Such people could be accused of ‘sorcery’ (no Umbundu term is given) by kin. Sorcery could also be consciously taken up for economic advancement, and sorcerers protected by their kin if the proceeds of sorcery were shared. Hambly mentions two different types of “magical practices” (1932:11), social and anti-social, carried out by an *ocimbanda* and an *onganga* respectively. The former acted as intermediaries to secure the aid of spiritual forces, making use of divination and traditional medicine to discover the spiritual sources of misfortune and to bring healing. The latter would seek to do harm through inducing impotence, sterility, illness or death, to which Childs added spirit possession (1949). Sorcery was seen by missionaries and some *sekulus* to be rapidly increasing in the early twentieth century too (Heywood 2000). Thus, in the early twentieth century there was already an association between occult practices and beliefs¹⁰ and how the moral consequences of economic change were viewed (a trend that was still apparent, albeit in a different form, amongst veterans in Huambo in 2012, as I discuss in chapter 4). Accusations seem to have been used to discourage selfish enrichment and sorcery itself used to try to secure enrichment - and these different uses of sorcery themselves seem to have had differing moral connotations. The figures of the *onganga* and the *ocimbanda* and their practices were in turn the subject of moral censure by Christian missions, whilst also shaping how Christian messages were received and understood, as I will discuss in the next section.

A US American anthropologist called Adrian Edwards, “a studious Catholic”

¹⁰ One with a longer history from at least the 19th century (Edwards 1962).

(Henderson 2013:179), found an already significantly changed situation in the village he studied in 1955. He found that much of the system described by Childs had disappeared, with settlement now on a cognatic basis, with most villagers having some kinship relation to the senior man of the village, through either line. The dual descent system seemed to have almost completely disappeared due to the demise of the caravan trade, and if anything there was now a 'neo-matrilineal' (pg.110) pull in residence, and friendships between women and their brothers, and between men and brothers-in-law. This was made possible, Edwards argued, because the old tensions that marked matrilineal relations had been related to the organisation of commercial relations and loans through the matrikin, and had therefore abated.

Kinship nevertheless retained its central importance in socialisation and residence patterns, he argued, but the importance of particular relationships was established through their closeness in practice rather than being attributed according to particular categories. Central to maintaining strong kinship ties in particular locations was a system of preferential kinship marriage, which operated to multiply social ties within a village and neighbourhood, and to turn distant kin ties into affinal ties, and thus into close kinship ones in the next generation. Accompanying these changes was a breakdown of traditional political and power structures, partly because many of the old lineages and power holders such as *sekulus* had been impoverished by colonial economic policy and were on a similar economic level to everyone else, which eroded the respect accorded them; in addition *sekulus* were now nominated by colonial authorities, and often despised for their involvement in labour recruitment (Heywood 2000). Consequently, much judicial and moral authority was ceded to churches (Edwards 1962).

These rapid changes in kinship norms and political authority were accompanied by a progressive impoverishment of the Ovimbundu. Increasing immigration from Portugal and the granting of the best land to settlers made cash agriculture increasingly difficult (Heywood 2000), as African farmers were forced onto lower-quality land that was increasingly eroded through intensive cultivation. In addition, colonial requirements to

carry out labour contracts for colonial authorities meant that men were often absent, impacting on the labour power available (Messiant 2006a). This labour was carried out in very harsh, even dehumanising conditions (Ball 2005), and was very widespread, with four out of five Umbundu males carrying out work contracts by the late 1950s (Heywood 2000). Many turned to migrant labour instead, or went to cities in Angola or abroad. An indicator of the impact of this is that during Edwards period of fieldwork, a third of heads of families were absent in the village he studied (Edwards 1962). These changes imply a disjuncture between the kinship norms presenting men as authority figures in households, and the actual practice of life, in which they were often absent. The sheer speed of socio-economic change on the *Planalto* on this period, from the rapid adoption of agriculture (dubbed the “Ovimbundu miracle”, Messiant 2006), to the disintegration of traditional social structures is ascribed to “docility” by Edwards; Messiant argues that it can rather be viewed as evidence of a determination and capacity for adaptation, and for upward social mobility in the colonial system - something particularly achieved through participation in the missions, as I will now discuss.

2.3 The growing influence of the churches up to 1961

One of the central themes of this thesis will be the influence of the churches in how veterans performed masculinities, and particularly on the form of ethical problematisations of particular aspects of manhood, and responses to these problems. In this section I will outline the evolution of the moral influence of the churches, particularly focusing on the issues that were of continuing relevance for the men I worked with in 2012: upward social mobility and its entanglement with assessments of moral character, societal progress and development; ambivalent attitudes to the ongoing influence of older Umbundu occult practices; ideologies of monogamous marriage and the proper division of labour in the household; and the relation of churches to political authority.

The first Christian missions arrived on the *Planalto* in 1880, although, as Maria Neto notes, they had little influence before the end of the century (Neto 2012). There were marked differences between the Protestant and Roman Catholic missions, notably in their relations to the colonial state and their visions of Christian modernity, particularly as regards the role of urban life. I will discuss the Protestant missions first, before comparing them with the Catholic missions. The most important Protestant missions by far were operated in a partnership between the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the Canadian Congregational Foreign Missionary Society, from 1885 onwards.¹¹ These missions were based in rural regions away from urban centres, and largely distributed along the line of the Benguela railway. This positioning was partly due to a desire to be away from centres of Portuguese colonial authority, which was often suspicious and even hostile to the influence of the Protestants. Yet it was also due to a belief in the Protestant missions that colonial cities were centres of moral degradation, particularly in terms of prostitution and alcohol consumption, and a consequent desire to build a new Jerusalem in the countryside (Péclard 1999). The missions were thus seen as a “bastion” in the middle of “pagan” and colonial chaos (Péclard 1998:365). An insularity was encouraged, with efforts made to encourage converts to socialise with each other and to avoid associating too closely with their non-converted kin.

In the attempt to transform Umbundu society, it was not possible for missions to work at the level of either colonial institutions, which were hostile to their presence, or an Umbundu elite that was often resentful of their intrusions. Thus, they sought to work at the level of individuals and households, to create a new “type of man” (Péclard 1999:114) free of pagan influence. As Didier Péclard has described, this project meant an attempt to reshaping of the roles of husband and wife in a monogamous conjugal partnership. Wives were seen by missionaries as the “soul of the home” (p.120), and order and cleanliness in the home a concrete sign of the spiritual transformation of its inhabitants; the training of young women was oriented accordingly. Men, on the other

11 A small Seventh Day Adventist mission was established at Bongo, to the west of *Nova Lisboa* in 1926 (Henderson 2013), but seems to have had limited influence before the civil war.

hand, were exhorted to work hard at their agricultural tasks (in which they received training), with work portrayed as the glorification of God's word, and laziness as a sin. Playing an important part in conversion strategies were material symbols of Christian modernity, such as clothes, tools and European manners, which Péclard argues had two significations: as markers of a new identity, contrasted with 'pagans'; and of the spiritual and material development of converts. In this discourse, then, modernity, economic progress and moral rectitude were mutually imbricated.

Péclard gives fewer details on how such training was received, and how such symbols were appropriated and used by Umbundu men and women, but it is clear that membership of a Protestant church was an important vector of social advancement in colonial society, in which it could help one to achieve modestly privileged "assimilated" status. Linda Heywood describes the influence of Protestant missions as bringing about a "social revolution" (2000:56) amongst the Ovimbundu, in that it facilitated the upward social mobility of previously relatively low-status people, in a way reminiscent of the period of the trading caravans. Many Ovimbundu of prominent families had attached themselves to missions and entrusted them with their ancestral lands, and such people were targeted by Protestant missionaries as potential converts of influence within *Planalto* society (Neto 2012). However, slaves, porters and even *ovimbanda* joined them, too (Heywood 2000). Training was given to young farmers, and men also trained as pastors, teachers, healthcare workers and railway attendants.

By the 1950s, according to Gladwyn Childs (1958) and Adrian Edwards (1962) the catechetical school was the only place where people from different groups came together on a village-wide basis, with catechists often thought of as the unofficial representatives of their village. Traditional authority had broken down rapidly under the pressures of colonialism, particularly contract labour and heavy taxation, meaning that both Protestant and Catholic churches became increasingly important as moral arbiters, combining older local values with Christian and European referents. Catechists, deacons and pastors had taken on judicial functions, and the church had become a site for the pursuit of political power, given the dearth of opportunities for political advancement

elsewhere.

The great success of the Protestant missions in attracting converts alarmed colonial authorities, who felt that they were taking over functions that ought to belong to the colonial state, and several measures were taken to try to give Catholic missions the upper hand, and to combat the ‘subversive’ influence of the Protestants. In particular, the practice of teaching in Umbundu was outlawed, with all teaching having to be given in Portuguese, and the Missionary Statute signed in 1941 gave a number of advantages to the Catholic missions: generous material and financial support, permission to extend its education and health work, the granting of plots of land, free healthcare for missionaries and liberal use of state railways (Neto 2012). The Protestant version of Christian morality remained influential, however, and was one that eschewed contact with the urban world. This constituted a vision and practice of modernity and social progress which was not dependent on the urban world, even though a minority of converts left the missions to live in the city (Péclard 1998).

The Catholic missions were principally operated by the Holy Ghost Fathers (or Spiritans), most of whom were not Portuguese but French and South American. Initially these missions had less success than the Protestant missions, but quickly made up ground after 1940, and Catholics came to make up the large majority of Christians on the *Planalto* - itself the most Christianised zone of Angola - and the overwhelming majority of Christians in Nova Lisboa. Unlike the Protestant missions, the Catholic missions were supported by the colonial authorities and seen as having a key role in the ‘Portugalisation’ of Angolans, even if, as the missionaries often complained, this support was often not matched in material terms before 1941 (Neto 2012). The strategies of both sets of missions were tied up with each other, since they were often seeking to counter the other’s influence. As a result, Catholic missions were also spread along the line of the Benguela railway, but unlike the Protestants, a mission was established in Nova Lisboa, in a neighbourhood populated by railway workers.

This meant that Catholic missions had a strong position in the countryside, but also

dominated Nova Lisboa by 1960, with 84.4 per cent of the black population being Catholic, with only 13.7 per cent being Protestant (as against 23.5 per cent in the whole district of Huambo, including both rural and urban areas, Péclard 1998). The Catholic missions also had strong reservations about the corrupting influence of urban life on people from rural areas, and particularly tried to combat the dangers of alcohol abuse and what they saw as immoral dancing. However, their presence in the city meant that they had some influence over the great transformations that urbanisation was bringing to *Planalto* society. In addition, it allowed some exchange between rural and urban universes amongst Catholics to a much greater extent than amongst Protestants.

A familiarity with European, tools, food, bureaucracy or child-raising practices that came from a mission education were useful in gaining employment with or close to Europeans and a system of social stratification began to emerge that drew heavily on ideas of European lifestyles. In these new ideas and practices, familiarity with European ways was considered “esperto” (clever), as opposed to “matumbo”, a derogatory term for people from the countryside (Neto 2012:234ff), denoting ignorance and incompetence, that is still commonly used. Indeed, as Maria Neto argues in her history of Huambo city, both Catholic and Protestant elites associated ‘urbanisation’ with ‘modernisation’, and the latter with rising living standards and status. Again, it is important to note that the ideas of being *esperto* and higher status also had connotations of Christian moral habits and religious training.

As in the Protestant missions, the urban Catholic mission sought to reshape gender relations, promoting monogamy, the nuclear family over matrilineal kin and women's domestic role. Despite strenuous efforts by missionaries against polygamy and ‘free unions’ (even securing a state ban on polygamous men entering state employment or settling in urban areas), temporary unions were increasing by the end of the 1940s; in addition, patterns of preferential kinship marriage were eroded by marriages to the children of friends, workmates and neighbours, though this in time created new kinship links in town and the importance of kinship ties remained (Neto 2012).

Central to the ability of both sets of missions to gain the adherence of the majority of people on the *Planalto* was their provision of opportunities for black Angolans to achieve some measure of prestige associated with Europe, material prosperity and upward social mobility in a colonial system that considered them inferior, whilst also providing some autonomy from that system. In the case of Catholics in the mission in Nova Lisboa, Sunday services provided a space for socialising where ‘natives’ were in the large majority and did not feel out of place, and could meet relatives and friends, and make new ones (Neto 2012). Protestant missions seem to have provided even greater autonomy, since they allowed some possibility for the integration of Umbundu traditions and gave greater power to the ‘native church’, along with a path to status that avoided often humiliating interactions with colonial authorities (Heywood 2000).

Finally, the churches shared similar attitudes towards ‘sorcery’, ‘witchcraft’, and other elements of Ovimbundu spiritual beliefs and practices. Both sets of missions sought to eradicate such practices, seeing them both as evil, as competitors for the religious doctrines they were advocating, and as irremediably ‘backward’ (Ball 2010). This strong antipathy for ‘sorcery’ and ‘false gods’ was perhaps partly due to the difficulty of maintaining clear boundaries between one set of beliefs and another. This was partly, as Iracema Dulley (2008) has argued, a problem of translation, and the negotiations inevitably involved in trying to establish a “convention of meaning” (p.76) that could enable communication between missionaries and potential Umbundu converts (similar processes have been tackled by anthropologists in several other regions in Africa, see seminal works by Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Peel 2003). Just as a clean separation between Christian and ‘native’ concepts was not possible in evangelism strategies, it also seems to have proved impossible in terms of the practices of converts. Daniel Adolphus Hastings, an anthropologist connected with the Protestant missions, noted the saying, “Cimbamo te eci, ci kasi peka”, meaning, “what is in your hand you can throw away; from what is in your heart you may not free yourself” (Hastings 1933, cited in Neto 2012:192), and referred to the fact that many first-generation converts continued to consult *ovimbanda* for divination (which had come to employ items such as crosses and Portuguese flags) and the lifting of evil inflicted by kindred spirits (Childs 1958). In

other ways, Christianity provided new ways to make old accusations - the sins of envy and avarice carried some of the connotations of the sorcery accusations related to selfish enrichment or envy of other's enrichment (Neto 2012). The anxieties of missionaries at the persistent and troubling influence of what they saw as 'pagan' Umbundu influences undermining a 'true' Christianity were mirrored in 2012 by the concerns of both lay people and pastors and priests, as I will discuss in chapter 6.

2.4 Social change during the independence war 1961 – 1975

After the twin rebellions in Luanda and the north of Angola in 1961, there were important shifts in colonial policy. This meant that, despite almost no fighting taking place on the *Planalto*, it was nevertheless a period of great turbulence, that rapidly transformed the region's political economy, with consequences for gendered social structures, and affected the relations of black Angolans to the state. In reaction to the uprisings there were divisions in the colonial authorities between those who thought that the best response was to give Africans a greater stake in the colonial system, and those who thought that control and repression would be more effective (Bender 2004). In practice, both strategies were pursued. The legislative division between 'indigenous' and 'assimilated' Africans was abolished, and all Angolans were considered Portuguese citizens, although this did not have significant effects on their status in practice.

The period of the independence war was one of rapid economic growth, particularly in the agricultural sector. However, this did not have beneficent effects on 'traditional' Umbundu social structures. The German agronomist, Herman Pössinger (1973) described how the intensification of cultivation on the *Planalto* had necessitated cultivation on ever-larger plots of land. This in turn led to ever-increasing distances between homes, and villages became dispersed into loosely connected individual families. Pössinger also outlined some gendered effects of these changes, notably that the introduction of the ox-plough, which for unspecified reasons could "only be handled by men" (p.42), meant that women's tasks were reduced to weeding and harvesting,

with a consequent reduction in status to that of a labourer for their husbands. This pattern was still remembered by several of the veterans I worked with as a normative and desirable gendered division of labour that was undermined by the war. Adding to the continuation of the breakdown of village society was an increase in the absence of men in this period. Male labour migration increased in this period (Heywood 2000), as did conscription into the colonial army (Borges-Coelho 2002), half of which was made up of African troops (Newitt 2007).

Pössinger saw the consequences of the massive migration of men (up to a quarter of the male population each year) as leading to the breakdown of characteristically Umbundu social structures with what he considered lamentable moral consequences: women had little choice but to turn to sex work while husbands were away, he claimed, which some men tolerated, but which gave others an excuse for divorce when they returned. The number of female-headed households was increasing in this period, with many women supporting several children without help from men. Though he gave few details on this point, an intergenerational gap seemed to be growing between men: while older men tried not to leave their farms for more than a couple of years, younger men were more likely to return only sporadically, were not building up new landholdings and were “losing contact with Umbundu culture” (p.49). These changes perhaps suggest an erosion of control by older men over younger men, and of men over women. In Nova Lisboa, many Ovimbundu had become involved in wage labour by 1974: between 15,000 and 20,000 Africans were working in the city’s factories and the European farms surrounding the city, and many of the 300,000 Ovimbundu living in the improvised suburbs were working as menial labourers in European shops and restaurants (Heywood 2000).

A network of informers was set up by the Portuguese intelligence agency, the PIDE, sought to sow distrust in communities. In order to try to compromise as great a number of Africans in the eyes of the nationalist movements as possible, Africans were often forced to carry out the punishment of nationalist informers, and African militias were formed who were poorly armed and intended principally to be tarnished by association

with the colonial authorities (Bender 2004). At a national level, the military successes of Ovimbundu colonial troops were widely advertised, a tactic intended to cause antagonism between different regions of the country, and one that seems to have been successful in creating a stereotyped and pejorative association between Umbundu ethnicity and a particular political identity (Heywood 2000), a precursor, perhaps, of the association by many of Ovimbundu ethnicity with support for UNITA in the 21st century (Martins 2015). These tactics marked the beginning of the divisive political practices that were continued by competing factions in the civil war. As I will discuss in chapter 6, this had led many people to see the sphere of the political as deceptive, unpredictable and immoral, and to be avoided.

2.5 The first half of the civil war: 1975 – 1992

After the Portuguese hurriedly abandoned Angola in 1975, a short period of violent conflict ended with a victory for the MPLA, supported by Cuban forces. The FNLA's army was decimated in its advance on Luanda from the north, and the South African army's incursion from the south was halted with Cuban assistance before it could take Luanda. Shortly after the South African defeat, UNITA, who had occupied Huambo immediately after independence, fled to the far south east of the country to regroup. They were gradually to fight their way back onto the *Planalto*, starting in 1981. This section will focus particularly on the aspects of this period of history that were most relevant for the veterans I worked with, most of whom began and ended their service for the MPLA's army by the time of the Bicesse Accords in 1991. Therefore, I will focus on conscription to the FAPLA and conditions of service, as well as looking at the transformations in the gendered social structures of *Planalto* society and their relation to the changing political economy, and to the changing religious landscape.

2.5.1 Life in the FAPLA

Very little social science research has been published on life in the FAPLA. Two

military histories have been published (Weigert 2011; Junior 2015), but are principally concerned with issues of military strategy and organisation, rather than social dynamics within the military. Therefore, several of these issues will be addressed in the next chapter, from the point of view of the veterans I worked with, and here I will simply give a few contextualising details. After the end of the independence war and the defeat of UNITA, the FNLA and their foreign sponsors, the challenge facing the FAPLA was the conversion from a guerrilla army into a regular one. Reforms intended to support this were instituted in 1976, with conscription into the FAPLA being made compulsory for Angolan citizens by law 2/76 (Junior 2015). This was updated in 1982 by law 12/82, the Lei General do Serviço Militar, which specified that Angolan citizens of either sex were obliged to do military service (Paredes 2015). However, it seems that in practice hardly any women were recruited after 1977.

The FAPLA were, then, a male environment, which meant a mixing of men from all over Angola, thus constituting what David Birmingham calls one of the national institutions “*par excellence*” (1988:9), in terms of creating bonds through a shared, arduous experience, and a sense of a national community. The FAPLA had grown to 120,000 troops by 1987 (Weigert 2011), and several hundred thousand men had passed through its ranks by 1992 (Messiant 2008). Christine Messiant (1994) noted that Umbundu troops formed the backbone of this army, and seem to have played an even more important role in it than they did in the colonial army, and in the same period Ovimbundu (men and some women)¹² were becoming increasingly important in UNITA’s army (the FALA). This meant that the war often pitted people from the same families against each other, but despite the strong presence of Ovimbundu in the FAPLA, they were principally considered by northerners to be submissive to UNITA. Certain hierarchies developed in the FAPLA, with the higher ranks coming to be dominated by Northerners. As fighting became fiercer, supplies often became scarcer, and even essential supplies diverted from the front line by corruption. Disillusionment consequently grew during the 1980s, and desertions increased (Messiant 1994).

12 UNITA had both a women’s battalion, and used girls and young women as porters, cooks and servants, who were not classified as soldiers in UNITA’s guerrilla army, but who would be classified as such in a regular army (Stavrou 2004).

FAPLA soldiers often had an antagonistic relationship with civilians, over whom they were often able to wield considerable power. While relations between civilians and soldiers varied according to region, civilians were targeted by both armed movements in this period with hundreds of thousands being killed and, in particular, large numbers of women subjected to sexual violence by soldiers. MPLA and UNITA soldiers both took predatory attitudes to women in conquered areas in the 1980s in a period when HIV/AIDS began to spread rapidly. Families are said to have responded to this threat by encouraging their daughters to marry younger and extending the breastfeeding period of their children in the hope of discouraging sexual assault by soldiers (Pehrsson et al. 2000). As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, the moral crises that violence against civilians provoked for both victims and perpetrators had important consequences for how veterans narrated their experiences of war and tried to navigate its dangers (chapter 3), for perceptions of the breakdown of sexual morality (chapter 5), and for how politics was viewed as a sphere of moral agency in post-war Huambo (chapter 7).

2.5.2 The wartime transformation of *Planalto* society 1975 – 1991

Christine Messiant (1994) describes how independence had at first been greeted with delight and a sense of togetherness by the wider Angolan population, who had tended to rally to the independence movements in general rather than choosing one in particular. Even those who had chosen ‘their’ movement for whatever reason probably did not suspect that they were going to be on either side of a bloody conflict in which they would be forced to take sides, or be considered to have taken sides. An initial period of opportunities for expression and association came to an end after the attempted coup in 1977 and its aftermath, and the growing threat of a resurgent UNITA. At the same time, the MPLA’s post-independence programme to create an ideological vanguard party meant a withering of popular political mobilisation (Neto 2001).

As the war intensified and the booming colonial economy began to collapse, living

conditions worsened considerably. The war gradually intensified in the countryside, and more and more people either chose to migrate to the city, or were ordered to by the FAPLA (Pearce 2011), with Huambo becoming a particular refuge for many, while others lived in rural areas controlled by UNITA. As Justin Pearce notes (2011), the MPLA was uniquely an urban party on the *Planalto*, with UNITA having its bases solely in the countryside, aside from some undercover cells in cities. People from particular villages did not usually migrate en-masse, but as individuals or nuclear families. New arrivals would move into their own rented houses as soon as they could, wherever it was cheapest to rent or build a new house, rather than settling near kin. This meant the fragmenting of village and kinship communities, and older rural institutions such as the *evamba* circumcision ritual and the *ondjango* faded away due to the former's requirement for safe, secluded urban spaces to send boys, and the latter's need for space and united village communities (Robson and Roque 2001).

Agriculture was decimated by the war and travel in the countryside became extremely dangerous, meaning that food had to be grown in areas such as old playgrounds and the central reservations of highways, and brought into the cities either by air (Birmingham 1988) or by armoured road convoys (Pearce 2011). The absence of many men for long periods through conscription, death and flight from military service meant that there were many families supported only by women. The economy was tightly controlled by the MPLA government, meaning that all goods were supposed to be sold to the state and distributed through state shops. However, a parallel economy sprang up, and many people eked out a living by trading between the official economy and the unofficial economy. The rate of the Kwanza was fixed at a certain rate to the dollar, so that government shops over-valued the Kwanza by as much as 50 times its value in the unofficial market. So many people bought regulation goods with dollars or escudos in government shops, and then resold the surplus in the unofficial market at 50 times the price (Birmingham 1988).

The economic crisis became so severe that the only way to survive for many was through various forms of illegality, such as trafficking, sex work and theft. The MPLA

government largely abandoned the population to its fate, relying on oil receipts to fund itself and having no need for a large workforce or tax base. This contributed to a disengagement from politics, which people came to feel did not concern them, and could not meet their needs or aspirations (Messiant 1994), an enduring theme that I will return to in chapter 6.

2.5.3 Churches and the one-party system

The literature on the churches in Angola tackles quite different subjects after the coming of independence, with the most notable work - the thesis written by Benedict Schubert (2000) - focusing on the evolving relationship between the churches and the state. Schubert relates how the MPLA initially adopted a hostile approach to all churches, which were considered to be inherently reactionary and promoters of obscurantist views, and the educational and health institutions of the missions were nationalised. Enduring divisions from the colonial period prevented churches uniting ecumenically to speak out about the suffering of the Angolan population: tense rivalry between the Catholic church and the Protestant churches, and the support of the main Protestant mission churches for competing independence movements led to distant relations between all of them. Several important figures in the MPLA elite, including Domingos Neto, had been educated in Methodist missions, which thus had a privileged link to the party-state, and came to openly support it. Other churches' hierarchies were divided by political factions, and the lack of unity was aggravated by the MPLA's strategy, of selectively co-opting the leaders of some churches by including them on the Conselho da Republica or even as deputies in parliament. As the decade wore on, the Catholic church took up a role as a rare voice criticising the party-state and complaining about the plight of the population, and also came to have the greatest moral authority in this role, since it was present across the country, was organisationally united, and carried out important caring work for those in need.

It seems likely that, despite a sometimes complicated relationship with the two factions

of the civil war, a contrast between the perception of the churches' moral legitimacy, and the corruption, indifference and violence of both political factions began to grow in this period. This perception was particularly due to their provision of some of the few spaces for collective action and spiritual and physical relief from the suffering of war. However, as Christine Messiant notes in her introduction to Schubert's book, research on this period has focussed principally on the church hierarchies, and not on believers, so it is difficult to do more than speculate (I will relate the experiences of the veterans I worked with on this point in chapter 6). A measure of the churches' credit in this period is that towards the end of the 1980s, on realising that it lacked popular support in the country, the MPLA sought to recover support through the churches by beginning to allow them political influence, and party members to return to practicing religion.

2.6. The second half of the civil war: 1992-2002

The war reached a stalemate after an intense battle at Cuito Cuanavale, and an agreement was signed agreeing the withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops from Angola in December 1988. The MPLA and UNITA continued to fight each other, still hoping to break the military deadlock until they reluctantly signed the Bicesse Accords under international pressure in 1991. At this point the formation of one national body of armed forces comprising 50,000 personnel, the FAA (Forças Armadas de Angola), was agreed, which implied the demobilisation of large numbers of troops on both sides. Many of the veterans I worked with took this opportunity to leave the army, and all of the others except one had already deserted, been invalided out, or had been officially discharged before 1991. Consequently, in this section, I will not detail the evolution of life in the army, and concentrate instead on the gendered effects of the war for civilians, paying particular attention to Huambo city, where most of them were living during the 1990s.

2.6.1 Life in Huambo in the 1990s

Jonas Savimbi lost the first round of the 1992 presidential elections, and UNITA lost the

parliamentary elections. The party refused to accept the result. Before the second round of the presidential election could take place fighting began again, and UNITA's intransigence in the demobilisation of its army gave them the military initiative. They made rapid territorial gains, and, after a brutal 55-day siege that caused many civilian casualties, they captured Huambo city from the MPLA government, whose forces retreated to the coast. Violence in this phase of the war was much more intense than in the 1980s, and many more civilians were killed and injured, often massacred as enemy collaborators, by the forces taking control of cities (Messiant 1994).

UNITA remained in control of Huambo from 8th March 1993 to November 1994, and there were numerous MPLA veterans and suspected supporters were imprisoned, tortured and executed. The support that UNITA had enjoyed in the city quickly subsided once people experienced the harsh totalitarian style of their government and the acute shortages of basic supplies that characterised their occupation. UNITA withdrew from the city in 1994 in the face of a FAA counter-offensive, and in that year the Lusaka peace accords were signed. A period of no-war no-peace reigned until renewed fighting broke out again in 1998 after the stalling of UNITA's demobilisation process. In December 1998 serious battles began on the *Planalto*, and Huambo was once again surrounded and shelled (Neto 2001).

The 1990s were thus a time of great danger and deprivation for the civilian population of Huambo. Most could only make a living through informal commerce and sporadic agriculture in open spaces in the city, and goods could only be brought in through armed convoys from the coast, or sometimes from Namibia (Maier 2007). The city was a refuge for many during this period, but its population also fluctuated according to how it was affected by the fighting, with many fleeing to the coast at moments of danger and returning when it seemed safer (Neto 2001). According to a report by the NGO Development Workshop (Robson and Roque 2001), the extreme deprivation of the war years meant that people were unable to provide support to those outside their families in times of need. This, combined with the geographical fragmentation of home communities and mutual suspicion within neighbourhoods, meant that urban society

came to be made up of atomised family networks. However, churches constituted one focal point for socialisation and collective action outside the family. Churches such as the IECA churches set up by missionaries in rural areas relocated to urban areas as their adherents relocated there. Whilst there was not much cooperation and some mutual stereotyping between different Christian denominations, they were valued for teaching ‘civilisation’ and how to live with others, and providing cordial social spaces which were all too rare in Huambo. A common saying heard in interviews for the report was that in the city “it’s everyone for himself and God for everyone”, perhaps suggesting something of how the churches were seen as providing a moral antidote to the abandonment and victimisation of subject populations by the warring factions, a theme I return to in chapter 6.

Some short reports by international organisations give some clues as to gender dynamics in Angola in this period. Men dominated the public sector: figures quoted in a Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency report (Pehrsson et al. 2000) show that although 40 per cent of state employees were women, 75 per cent of these were employed as cleaners. The same report also claimed that the sex ratio of the population was 86 men to 100 women, the authors speculating that this was because many men had fled abroad to avoid military conscription. Another cause could have been the high male mortality rate during the war – in the over 30s there were ten times as many widows as there were widowers. There were many female-headed households who, according to the report, were stigmatised because their independence from the strictures of marriage was perceived as a threat by both other women and men. There seem to have been several gendered consequences of men being absent from families for long periods due to military service and displacement. Most importantly, women took on a more active role in providing financially for their families, leading to conflicts within families. During the war men spoke to one researcher of feeling humiliated and facing ‘existential crises’ due to the undermining of their role as ‘pater familia’ (Fonseca et al. 2001), a theme I will tackle in more detail in chapter 5.

2.6.2 The consolidation of Presidential authority and the role of the churches

The MPLA had a clear advantage over UNITA through its ability to monopolise the country's oil revenues, due to the offshore nature of its oil operations, making them virtually invulnerable to attack by UNITA (aside from attacks on the Soyo oil facility). This meant greater funding for the FAA, and the ability to employ private military contractors in return for oil and mining concessions (Ferguson 2006). In addition, it gave the President the ability to bolster his own power at home after the elections, through a variety of mechanisms that distributed wealth to his supporters and bought off potential opponents.

The liberalisation of the formerly state-controlled, socialist-style economy, starting in 1987 and gathering pace after 1990 (Hodges 2007) allowed the privatisation of many state assets and their distribution to supporters and family members of the President, starting even before the 1992 elections (Birmingham 2002), along with the control of oil revenues through the national oil company, Sonangol. The Jose Eduardo dos Santos foundation (FESA) was established to manage part of this distribution, which allowed the President to control civil society by the distribution of oil money for their activities, while taking the credit for social, health and educational initiatives undertaken by NGOs (Messiant 2006b). These and other strategies of cooptation and embezzlement were partly pursued through off-budget operations, and a measure of their extent is that the IMF estimates that 36% of government expenditure was off-budget between 1998 and 2002 (Hodges 2007).

The President also appointed his supporters to many of the key posts in government, and sponsored extravagant celebrations for his own birthday in 1998. Ostentatious public admiration of the President became essential for those seeking power in the bureaucratic establishment (Birmingham 2002), while most of the population was struggling for survival with very little assistance from the party-state. This strategy was combined with coercion through the jailing of journalists, and making every effort to silence those calling for a negotiated peace, as it became increasingly clear that the

president was seeking not just to win the war but to dictate the transition to peace.

After 1991, accelerating liberalisation also meant the liberalisation of religion, and hundreds of new churches were founded across the country. Didier Peclard (Péclard 2012) describes this as being advantageous for the MPLA, since it diluted the power of the established churches, and he explains the proliferation partly as a response to the social misery of the 'no-war, no-peace' period following the Lusaka accords. Churches in this period had to concentrate on relieving the suffering of their congregations and on increased inter-denominational competition rather than on political advocacy. This changed, however, with the renewed government offensive after 1998, and in 2000 an inter-ecclesial committee for peace (COIEPA) was established, the first time the churches had united in the cause of peace. This angered the regime, since it was the first real challenge posed to the hegemony of the warring factions, and threatened to undermine its international support by underlining the suffering of the population. In addition, a negotiated peace would have meant the sharing of power and resources, something the MPLA was keen to avoid. It was ultimately successful in this, since it managed to end the war with the killing of Jonas Savimbi in 2002, before the churches' campaign could be successful or even gain much momentum at all (Soares de Oliveira 2015). This victory has allowed the MPLA to continue to largely dictate the political agenda in the post-war period, and forced the churches to retreat from the political arena once again.

2.7 Post war dynamics: 2002 – 2012

The decade following the end of the civil war was one of extraordinary transformation. The facts of where Angola found itself in 2002 are well rehearsed: around four million people were displaced from their homes, and half a million had been killed. The country's infrastructure had been extensively destroyed, and many towns and cities virtually razed to the ground. The booming economy of the early 1970s, based quite broadly on agricultural products and manufacturing as well as oil and diamonds, was

now almost completely reliant on the latter two. All goods needed to be imported, even food. Much remains to be understood about this period, but the dominant trends, at least at a national level, are clear: firstly the extension and consolidation of the party-state's domination of the country; and secondly, the very rapid economic growth, largely financed by the oil sector, which has been accompanied by an extraordinary reconstruction of infrastructure and stark economic inequalities. Both of these trends have had important consequences for the living conditions, prospects for social advancement, and social imaginaries of most Angolans – as well as posing important challenges to the moral aspirations of the veterans that I worked with.

The defeat of UNITA marked the first time that independent Angola was truly unified under one government. As Ricardo Soares de Oliveira (2015) points out, for most of the preceding fifty years, competing groups were seeking to impose their vision of the Angolan nation, and in 2002, there was finally one victor: the MPLA. However, the imposition of this vision, and of the authority of the party-state across the country was not a given, with its authority having not extended much beyond cities isolated in a dangerous countryside.

In the quest to extend control, conventional distinctions between the state, party and administration continued to be so blurred as to be redundant. Christine Messiant (Messiant 2006b) gave a succinct summary of many of the mechanisms that the party-state used in the first post-war years to cement its power. Economically, little changed: huge black holes in government accounts continued, with oil rents controlled by the President through the state oil company, Sonangol; rents from the diamond industry went to the President's clients; businesses were created and partnerships established without transparency, as a way of allocating benefits to the clique around the president, and their clients. Control of the state apparatus was consolidated at every level, with an impressive array of strategies. The continuing dominance of the National Assembly by the MPLA meant that the government could pass bills without scrutiny or opposition, since there was little tolerance for dissent within the MPLA, thus legislation could be passed that curtailed political rights and furthered expropriation. The judiciary was

staffed at its highest levels by Presidential clients, and the rest of the structure starved of funds, effectively neutering its check on presidential power. The armed forces and police were increasingly politicised, and increasingly linked to the presidency. Securing and keeping work in the administration, at any level and in all parts of the country, was very difficult without being a member of the party.

Beyond the state, strategies to control civil society were expanded, as direct party control was re-established over the party's mass organisations, the OMA (the Organisation of Angolan Women) and the JMPLA (the youth MPLA). New organisations were set up to supplement the FESA, to attempt to control civil society through the disbursement of funds. These organisations also have the function of publicising the President's supposed largesse and legitimacy as national leader, and providing a national network of people to participate in demonstrations or to act against perceived enemies (Soares de Oliveira 2015). This strategy is a continuation of the party's accommodation with the demands of appearing to be a liberal democracy whilst ensuring that the party-state continues to exercise control over political activity, and even using the rhetoric of liberal democracy to extend that control. Thus, as Christine Messiant concludes, Angola is not a fledgling democracy on the path to a Western-style political settlement, but rather the party-state constitutes an "authoritarian hegemonic dispensation adapted to multiparty electoral politics" (2006b:121).

As Soares de Oliveira argues (2015), this strategy of domination is not a simple imposition, since it is often matched by the aspirations of many Angolans for social mobility within the party-state. Party membership has increased exponentially since the end of the war. The vanguard party structure had already been abandoned ahead of the 1992 elections, with membership rising to two million members, and since the end of the war this number has risen to five million members – an estimated quarter of the population. Membership of the party might not mean access to riches, but is perceived as being necessary for finding work, bank credit, university places and more. Beyond these more utilitarian motives for joining, the party-state offers a vision of progress and aspiration that has been influential across the country. In colonial times, it was necessary

to adopt “European manners” and standards of “civilisation” in order to access limited social mobility through the *indigenato* system; in post-war Angola, similarly, it is necessary to adhere to the vision of respectable, urban, cosmopolitan modernity that the party-state advocates, to achieve advancement. The MPLA has consistently portrayed UNITA as the party of rural barbarism, and itself as the party of order and progress, a predominantly urban party, Portuguese-speaking and focussed on an Angolan identity rather than an African one. Those who are seen to be more rural and ‘African’, to speak indigenous languages and to lack proficiency in Portuguese or to speak with the wrong accent, are seen as backward and less important in this vision. This vision of modernity intersects with the version of modernity promoted by missions in earlier periods, but diverges from it in important ways, often linked to questions of morality for the men I worked with in 2012, as I will discuss in chapters 4 and 6. Importantly, the party-state has sought to cosset and co-opt the educated classes, while largely ignoring the majority of the population, who live in improvised suburban neighbourhoods, and who are addressed in terms of the need to control them without offering them a stake in the party-state’s dominance and wealth.

Studies on Huambo in the postwar period are harder to come by, and little reliable information is available on the city’s population. From the accounts gathered from the men I worked with, however, it is clear that there has been a rapid transformation. The road network has been largely renewed, and a city which is said to have had no civilian cars at all in 2002 now has busy and relatively well-maintained roads, though these often become bumpy beaten-earth tracks in the suburbs. School buildings had been rehabilitated and new ones constructed; government buildings have been repaired and renovated, most bullet holes in residential buildings have been filled in and painted over. Much of the state’s work has been in rehabilitating old colonial infrastructure rather than constructing new facilities: the electricity network has been renewed, and the hydroelectric dam, built but unfinished in colonial times at Gove, has been repaired and began operation in late 2012. Even the Benguela railway has begun sporadic operations, having been renewed by Chinese contractors. The city has also become easily accessible by road once again, and the commercial sector has been growing quickly, with more and

more formal businesses opening, and many more goods now available in the town's markets.

The following empirical chapters will give further information about living conditions and gendered social dynamics in Huambo in 2012, but a disparate set of studies provide some indications as to the characteristics of Huambo's population after the war, and the war's enduring legacies. According to the 2014 census, the city has 665,574 inhabitants, with a "masculinity index" of 91.6 per cent (meaning that there are approximately 9 men for every ten women). This disparity seems to be much greater in the age-group that includes many FAPLA veterans; a nationwide well-being study conducted in 2010 mentions the finding that the masculinity index for men in the 50-54 age group is 80 in urban areas (Instituto Nacional de Estatística 2010; most of the veterans I worked with were in their late 40s and early 50s), this perhaps partly reflects the higher mortality rate of conscripted men during the war (though other factors must also affect this, and the study suggests migration, the fact that men returned less to their areas of origin than women after the war, and that women tended to report lower than real ages and men higher than real ages). This also means that there continue to be many female-headed households in the city. The majority of the city's population works in the informal sector or in agriculture, and according to the municipal administration, in 2009, of an active population of around 480,000, 211,466 were considered 'unemployed' (figure cited in Lopes 2011:130).

2.8 Conclusion

As Christopher Cramer has noted, "the history of war in Angola is a kind of palimpsest of violence and civilisations: layer upon layer of mingled local violence and international, imperialist violence, of violence and social change" (2006:22). For the men that I worked with, the layers of history I have narrated above were still very much relevant for them in 2012. The three principal, evolving influences of pre-conquest Umbundu social structures, the churches, and state power and its attendant political

economy, constituted the principle historical, economic and political conditions under which difficulties arose around particular aspects of masculine performances, and which were the principle influences upon the form of their ethical problematisation. In particular, ideals of senior masculinities conceived by FAPLA veterans in terms of the norms they were brought up with, were confronted with a markedly different political economy and new ideas of masculine status based principally on earning power, ideas of urbanity and the consumption of certain commodities. The cultural styles of masculinity that veterans adopted in this context had an ambivalent relation to the ideas of civilisation and status that were dominant in the party-state-dominated post-war political economy, partly accepting their narratives, but contesting them in moral terms that drew both on 'Umbundu tradition' and Christian norms promoted by the churches.

In the next chapter I will pursue these themes by shifting historical scale to examine the biographies of three of the veterans that I came to know best. In doing so I aim to explicate how veterans living in the historical context sketched above navigated the ethical challenges of war, in particular examining the changing relevance of military service for veterans in different periods of their lives; and how the legacy of both individual and collective histories shaped gendered ethical life up to the time of my fieldwork.

Chapter 3. “My Life is not a Secure Life”: Manhood, ethics and survival in the midst of the social transformations of war

3.1 Introduction

One afternoon in June, José, a 49 year-old veteran and market seller, was telling me about his experiences of two key institutions in the upbringing of boys in rural areas in the late colonial period. A committed Seventh-Day Adventist, he spoke of the circumcision ritual, *evamba*, with some distaste, given its association with demonic spirits and harsh physical punishment, but spoke warmly of the men's house, the *ondjango*. The *ondjango*, he said, was a place where orphaned boys would go to get fed, and ensured that no child in the village would ever go hungry. The elders would talk with each other and the boys would listen as a way of gaining an education. “The education worked,” he said, “in that time there was no delinquency”. “And when the war started, everything changed?” I ventured. “And suddenly everything changed. There were no more rules, it was just everyone for themselves”. This experience of the outbreak of the civil war as a rupture in mens' social and moral worlds was common, and viewed positively by no-one. As discussed in the previous chapter, the colonial period was far from stable for the population of the *Planalto*, but the start of the war brought about much more rapid and wide-ranging change than previously. People began to migrate to the cities in large numbers, rural society and its economy practically collapsed, large numbers of young men were conscripted by both armies and the civilian population found itself subjected to the competing state-building projects of the warring factions.

This chapter will trace the life histories of three veterans through these convulsions, from their birth until the time of my field research in 2012. The subsequent empirical chapters of the thesis will be about how historically-constituted gendered ethical

problematizations played out in everyday life in 2012; the previous chapter sought to contextualise these problematizations within the broader history of the *Planalto* over the past century. This chapter seeks to contextualise those problematizations within the personal histories of veterans, with two main objectives. Firstly it aims to help the reader understand how and why particular aspects of the social transformations of war came to have enduring importance for veterans while others faded with time. Secondly, it will explicate how veterans' ethical sensibilities were formed in their early lives and were transformed by the moral challenges of war, to aid the understanding of the different styles of masculinity and moral stances they performed in 2012.

In keeping with the broader concern of the thesis on the ethical problematisation of masculinities in post-war Huambo, I have chosen three men to focus on, whose narratives exemplify some of the main ethical problems that veterans navigated during and after the civil war, and some of the principal responses. An additional reason I have chosen to focus on a small number of people is to avoid an over-hasty recourse to generalisation that can lead analysts to obscure much of the intended import and layers of meaning in speakers' accounts (Willemse 2014), and to avoid 'other-ing' them by presenting them as overly coherent and simplified cultural 'types', and thus more different from the reader than they really are (Abu-Lughod 1993).

The analysis that follows focuses largely on the recorded life histories carried out with the three men in the markets where they worked, in the final month of my fieldwork. However, these conversations were to some extent condensations and summaries of earlier conversations in the market, which had often turned to their personal histories. I will also consider these former conversations, and, where relevant, how the varying patterns of presence and absence of certain details of life history were affected by the context of different conversations, including the physically and notionally present audiences for each of them. By considering these conversations, I hope to gain some insight into the actually lived life courses of veterans, whilst also acknowledging that each conversation inevitably presents "an ordered past imposed by a present personality upon a dis-ordered life," (Titan 1980, cited in Behar 1990:225) and thus presents a

refracted picture at best. However, by considering how these men created these ordered pasts in interaction with me, I hope to gain some sense of how their pasts weighed on them in the situations in which they found themselves in 2012, and the sort of gender identities they sought to perform in their recounting (Willemse 2014). Thus I will be retelling the stories told to me (cf Behar 1990), with my own particular aim of unpicking the moral consequences of their experiences of war and war-induced social change for their gender identities in 2012, and how these identities have changed over time.

In the rest of the chapter I will move chronologically through the accounts that these three men gave me of their lives. Section 4 discusses how each man dealt with the ethical challenges thrown up by military life, and section 5 discusses the challenges of the transition to civilian life in war-affected contexts. Sections 6 and 7 recount the course of these men's post-military lives until the end of the war, and from the end of the war until 2012. I will conclude by discussing the nature of the varied moral challenges that each veteran faced during the war and in its wake, and their reactions to them, as well as the aspects of senior manhood that had become ethically problematic for all of them by 2012.

3.2 Three veterans

I was introduced to João on my first visit to the *cidade* market to talk to the men of his section, in the hope that there were veterans amongst them. João was one of the first two veterans I found, and he came right over to me, apparently pleased that the monotony of market work and the dearth of customers was being broken up by a rare visit from a white person. João's pitch was half of a concrete bench, the other half taken by his nephew, and was covered with meticulously arranged stacks of produce. On being told the purpose of my visit, he spoke to me animatedly, restlessly shifting his weight from foot to foot, laughing and emphatically denouncing the government's failure to support veterans. He was short and broad, with close cropped hair, dressed simply in a t-shirt and suit trousers. Speaking quickly through a broad smile that took over his whole face,

he traded jokes with another seller called Vicente, the two of them apparently the unofficial representatives of their market section. João, unusually amongst the men I worked with, had remained in the army for most of the war, from 1985 until 2002, and so had come to work in informal commerce later than the others. Perhaps as a result, he seemed particularly preoccupied by the morality of the war and of the conduct of politics in general. In particular he would talk at length about the moral degeneracy that the war had brought on, and about people's hypocritical attempts to disguise the moral compromises that they had made, to be euphemistic or politically correct. João eschewed an explicitly religious lifestyle and self-presentation. His efforts to perform a respectable senior masculinity whilst pursuing a lifestyle that was deemed incompatible with Christianity in important respects, illustrate some of the tensions, exacerbated by wartime social change, between ideas of 'traditional' Umbundu masculine values, and the public morality of Christianity and associated ideas of urbanity and developed-ness. He thus experienced a tension between what he saw as the values of his upbringing as a *soba's* (traditional village headman's) son, with which he continued to identify, and the post-war context in which he found himself in 2012.

Vicente, the veteran that I was introduced along with João, was taller and more elegantly dressed, often in a leather jacket or big coat, a rotating selection of hats, and a toothpick in the corner of his mouth. He had spent less time in the army, joining in 1980 and leaving in 1992, and had been selling in the market the longest of any in the section, beginning in 1994. He was gregarious and tactile, and proud of being known and liked by most people in the market and beyond, and of treating them with respect and brotherly love in keeping with his lifelong Roman Catholic faith. His religious outlook strongly shaped his life narrative and how he confronted the challenges of war and its aftermath, and remained a more or less constant moral grounding for him throughout his life course. Faith played a similar role for several of the veterans I worked with of Catholic or Congregationalist denominations, who were usually born into those denominations and followed them throughout their lives. Vicente's friendly smile when greeting me would sometimes be slightly tense, since he combined his work on a double pitch with his duties as a Catechist, and often did not have time for long conversations

or small talk, yet did not want to appear rude. However, he was forthcoming when he did have time, setting great store by the idea that friends ought to be open with one another about their lives, and to avoid suspicious gossip and secrecy. This love of candour brought him into conflict with the more secretive João, whose frequent, unexplained disappearances from the market would anger Vicente, and whose flouting of Christian morality made him a disreputable figure in the gossip of his market colleagues. Most of my conversations with João and Vicente happened beside their stalls, seated in plastic picnic chairs, as a mixture of one-to-one conversations and conversations with groups of their colleagues. I became friends with both of them, coming to know members of their families, and visiting them in contexts outside the market, such as Vicente's church and home, and João's home village.

I was introduced to the third veteran, Jamba, when I first went to Alemanha market on the outskirts of Huambo, looking for veterans to talk to. He was recommended to me by another market seller not just because he was a veteran, but because he was a veteran “who knew how to talk about it” - about the experiences of veterans. A short and slightly portly man, his completely bald head was usually covered with a cap, and he dressed in football shirts, jeans and trainers. These signalled his great love of football as a coach and fan, rivalled only by his commitment to the Seventh Day Adventist faith. He was a prominent figure in the market and in his neighbourhood, known jokingly by some as ‘the President’, an eloquent man given to impromptu, often declamatory speeches for usually appreciative audiences of colleagues, friends and relatives. He considered his ‘work’ to extend beyond the market to his engagement in his church and his work as a neighbourhood football coach and, during my time in Huambo, to helping me to understand the twists and turns of his life, and the situation of civil war veterans in post-war Angolan society in general. He had demobilised earlier than most of the other men I worked with, having been recruited in 1977 and demobilised in 1983 when he lost the lower part of one of his legs to a land mine. The conversations we had about his past life were sometimes conducted in an ad-hoc way at his market pitch, where there were often others involved as audience and/or as interlocutors, though several of our more in-depth conversations took place in a mostly deserted café shack behind his

stall. Jamba was born into a non-religious, 'pagan' family, as he put it, and one invested in the supernatural beliefs and practices of what he termed 'traditional Umbundu' culture. However, when confronted with a confluence of moral crises shortly after his demobilisation, he made a radical conversion to Seventh Day Adventism, meaning that, as with many of the other converts amongst these veterans, his struggles to avoid moral collapse and pursue a senior masculinity were largely conducted through an ongoing and conscious project of self re-making that constituted a break with the morality of his upbringing.

To summarise, each of these men is intended to represent both some of the complexity of individuals' paths through the challenges of war, military service and their aftermath, and a broader 'type' of masculine moral sensibility and navigation of the moral challenges of war. João represents the problems some veterans faced in trying to reconcile the demands of Umbundu 'tradition' with the moral demands of life in post-war Huambo, Vicente the path of the lifelong believer in one of the two main mission churches, and Jamba the path of the religious convert to one of the smaller denominations.

3.3 Pre-army life

João was born in 1969, in a village in Huambo province far from the closest town. His uncle was the *soba* of the village, and his parents were both farmers. His family was forced to flee to the nearest town "at the side of the road", when UNITA attacks on his village began in 1978, and this is the main incident that he focused on in his relating of pre-army life, and the hardship and loss of identity that it entailed. In this part of his life he narrated as part of a collective 'we' - seeming to refer to his extended family, a major locus of his identity - and he emphasised that "people called us 'refugees' - there was no 'who are you and who are you?' The phrase was 'you are refugees'". The situation improved with time, however, and after three or four years he said that "our elders gained strength, and then some freedom came [for us] in that town", and João managed to complete some schooling.

Although not mentioned spontaneously in João's account of his early life, when I raise the subject of circumcision he speaks at length on the subject - as indeed he had in several previous conversations. He was circumcised traditionally, 'in cold blood' (without anaesthetic), when he was around six years old, and the experience was narrated as an ambivalent one, in that it entailed considerable hardship, but had an important and positive educative function. The 'education' of circumcision, seemed to have three main functions for João. One was an education in how to "live with others", emphasising respect and obedience to elders, but also respect for fellow initiates and the proper treatment of non-initiates. He compared this education to other forms of education - religious education, military training and formal state schooling, calling it a 'seminary' and an 'academy', and saying that "you forget the things that you learned at school, but you never forget the things you learned in the bush". Secondly, he described how it promoted solidarity between initiates, who would be killed if they betrayed the secret knowledge to non-initiates, and who had special terms of address for their age-mates, who would be considered intimate friends for the rest of their lives. Finally, he spoke of circumcision's significance as part of the transition to (male) adult status: "Every person that passed through the bush changed their knowledge, changed their behaviour: that person is already a mature person".

When speaking approvingly of traditional circumcision, João was aware that it is a ritual long disapproved of by churches, including during his youth. In postwar Huambo the ritual is considered outmoded and un-Christian by most, and is not practiced by most families in Huambo. This is largely said to be due to its association with the masked dancers (called *palhaços* ('clowns') in Portuguese and *ovinganji* in Umbundu) who represent demons and spirits of the ancestors, and were known for using *feitiço* (charms, spells or witchcraft). In his account, then, João outlines the 'traditional Umbundu' upbringing he had, aware of its moral denigration by many at the time of the narration, but defiantly emphasising its positive influence. He still identifies with his *Quimbo* (home village) origins against the denigration of practices and identities associated with the rural and 'traditional' by many in Huambo in 2012, and his narrative thus presents

continuity between the values orienting his early life and his adult life up to the present day.

Vicente was born in a peri-urban *bairro* (neighbourhood) of Huambo city in the mid-1960s. His father was a government functionary, his mother was a farmer, and his whole family are lifelong practicing Roman Catholics. Like João, he also emphasised the hardship of his upbringing, saying that “we only ate once a day, if you ate dinner then the next day you wouldn’t eat breakfast nor lunch”. However, it seems to have been a much more stable time than for João. He spends much less time speaking of his childhood than João does, and describes his youth as austere, simple and hardworking, as befitting a good Christian: “just studying hard, sport, and going to church”. In this statement there seems to be an implicit contrast with the more comfortable and, according to Vicente, less hard-working lifestyles of his children in post-war Huambo, which had been the cause of conflict between him and his children.

He says he was circumcised in hospital, since the Catholic church forbade traditional circumcision, but he did attend the *ondjango* in his neighbourhood with his father and speaks approvingly of it: “you learnt how to conduct yourself in life, how to respect the elders”. Another form of education from the party-state, along with school education, was that of the MPLA children's movement, the Organização de Pioneiros Angolanos (OPA), which each of these three men attended. Vicente described this organisation as existing to “sensibilise young people politically ... how you should live”. Thus Vicente, as most of these veterans, underwent education in four different institutions in his youth: in state school and the OPA, in church, and in the *ondjango*. Vicente, like João, narrated the moral values orienting his upbringing as being largely continuous with those orienting his adulthood. In his case this meant a focus on Catholic morality and an ethic of hard work, deference to male elders and respect for others. Of the four institutions providing his education outside the family, then, only the church and the *ondjango* have continuing relevance for him in the narration of his life story.

Jamba was born in 1963, also in a peri-urban neighbourhood of Huambo, one of seven

siblings. When summarising his origins, he said he was from what he called a ‘lower order’ of society, and that his father was a worker in a colonial state enterprise. He spoke of his childhood principally in terms of his deep disappointment at missed opportunities and wasted potential, and in particular of the recurring theme of his thwarted desire to become ‘a big man in society’:

[O]ne thing [my father] didn't do was to project me into school, or at least some profession. My father, as a [government] functionary ... had white friends and he was trusted. Maybe he could have found me a white godfather, and I could have lived in a white family and gone to a white school, where there wasn't that disparity ... Some of [my friends] were of the Protestant religion, their parents already had the vision, and the majority of them are big men in society. They are in the big institutions when I, my friend, it won't do for me to show you my house because I don't have that quality, I'm not worthy to put you up in my house. Why? Because, deep down, I'm ashamed.

Acutely aware of the ‘disparity’ between white society and black society during his youth, he feels his father should have made the most of his connections to potentially powerful patrons to promote his son’s education and future prospects. This disparity was, of course, mirrored in my friendship with Jamba: he feels ashamed to invite me, a white man, to his home, and I am perhaps a reminder of a disparity that he feels could have been bridged in his life if his father had facilitated a connection to a powerful white patron. This experience has emphasised to Jamba the importance of being a ‘responsible father’ and securing a better future for one’s children. He said that his parents were “pagans”, who “didn’t have anything in their heads”, but in an earlier conversation about previous generations of his family, he said that the “light of knowledge” brought by Congregationalist and Adventist missionaries to the Planalto meant that his parents had more knowledge than his grandparents, who had only ever lived in the countryside and did not know any other life, that he had more knowledge than his parents, and that his children will have more knowledge than him. Thus, in Jamba's narrative, social mobility, progress, knowledge and religious morality were all bound up together.

Like João, Jamba had been traditionally circumcised, but he himself became an

ocinganji, a dancing representative of a demonic ancestral spirit, indicating the extent of his investment in Umbundu spiritual beliefs. Similarly to both Vicente and João, he saw the education of the *ondjango* as a positive influence on his young life, along with the circumcision ritual (aside from its supernatural aspects), in teaching young men how to conduct themselves in society with deference to elders and the appropriate respect for other categories of people. However, he was also moving in the immoral “world of drinking, smoking and marijuana. And women, because those who drink need women”. Jamba, then, grew up in a similarly ‘traditional’ environment to João, but he grew up in the suburbs of Huambo city and his narrative included the elements of drinking, smoking, drugs and sexual relations with women – the archetypal corruptions of the city in the narratives of Protestant missionaries (Péclard 1999). Unlike both João and Vicente, Jamba narrated his young life with an air of disapproval, and as an illustration of the extent of his sinful, pagan life and emphasising from the outset his current state as an enlightened, modern and morally upstanding Christian man. In the youth of all of these men, then, we can see the important impact of the three important moral influences traced in the previous chapter, though their impact varied for each man: the institutions of ‘traditional’ Umbundu life, the churches, and the state.

3.4 Army life

João spoke more about his military service than most of the other men I worked with. His particular preoccupation seemed to be explained by the fact that he remained in the army until 2002. This meant that the experience was closer in time for him; that it made up a greater proportion of his life; and also that he experienced military life after 1992, which was quite different from military life in the 1980s due to the changes in the character of the fighting, and more morally troubling. João was recruited into the FAPLA at the age of 13, and describes his recruitment as “not voluntary”, since both the government and UNITA would be trying to abduct adolescent boys and the only choice was which army to join. After recruitment, he was eventually enrolled in training to be a paramedic. Unusually, João was posted in his home province of Huambo, whereas the

general policy of the FAPLA was to send new recruits away from their home province, in order to discourage desertion. This, he claimed, was something that he had intentionally engineered, in order to comply with his father's request not to travel too far away from his family.

João emphasised some key topics when speaking of his time in the military, including the harsh and often lethal discipline meted out by senior officers, the danger and fear experienced in combat, and the key tactics to surviving in battle. However, the major theme of his narration that he returned to several times and dwelt on at length, was that of the general immorality of soldiers' conduct during the war, and his efforts to avoid committing certain moral transgressions that he considered particularly serious. In his account, these risked a moral disintegration from which he could not recover, and they were also still the subject of particular moral censure in 2012. Part of the habitual immorality of soldiers' conduct, he said, stemmed from the power they could exercise over civilians, which allowed them to steal with relative impunity. Food supplies in the FAPLA in the 1980s were quite adequate compared to civilian shortages, and many soldiers used this food as leverage over women, with whom it was exchanged for sex. João's first child was born to a woman that he had a relationship with on these terms, when he was 19 years of age, a fact that he only recounted to me once we had known each other for almost a year. He committed other acts that he considered morally dubious, but as being part and parcel of life as a soldier, including the often violent forced recruitment of young men.

In spite of being a paramedic, he also sometimes participated in front line fighting, and spoke of the killing of enemy soldiers, and of coming to 'hate' them.

You could have three or four friends, but after two or three battles, sometimes only you are left ... So, when you go into combat, and you see them [the enemy]: 'those are the ones that killed my friends' ... Anyone who says that he felt pity is a liar.

Thus, João felt that being a soldier inevitably led one to commit certain moral

transgressions. However, he also struggled to avoid transgressions that he thought would take him beyond the pale. He occasionally mentioned that one such transgression was violent rape, but another that he addressed in more detail was that of killing civilians. He spoke of one occasion when he was ordered to kill four civilians, but seeing that they were “just peasants”, and were “innocent”, he took them away from his unit, fired four shots into the ground, and told them to hide until his unit had left the area.

You can not do it but ... [t]here was no way to say “I’m not going to do that”, because if you say that, then it is you who will die. The others will be there waiting for you, to see how you did it ... You have to show that you’re ready to do everything.

In this passage João speaks of exercising a similar kind of ‘tactical agency’ that Honwana reports in the case of UNITA child soldiers (2007), tacitly resisting orders from superiors whilst giving the appearance of compliance, to avoid committing acts that he found inexcusable and that would change him irrevocably. Another set of deeds that he found to be both morally reprehensible and morally hazardous, are those related to *feitiço*. Overall, he was of the opinion that “*feitiço* is only for killing”, and demanded the regular committing of acts of murder to maintain its effects, with disastrous consequences for those who practiced it once they left the army, as I discuss below.

Vicente, like João, was also concerned with the harshness of military discipline and the morality of killing, but his narrative was strikingly different. When he was 16 he was walking home from school, and was grabbed off the street by a FAPLA recruiting team and sent for military training. After basic training he was selected for the rank of Sergeant-Major, a higher rank than most of the veterans I worked with, and was sent for extra training to work in logistics. He seemed to take pride in his rank and at being selected for a specialisation that required superior ‘capacity’ and ‘level of literacy’. He emphasised the difficulty of reconciling the competing demands of obeying military discipline, and treating his comrades well:

Working in logistics was very complex. I passed into a very dangerous situation. [Soldiers] would eat and not be full, and they would come to me and say, "Sergeant Major, give me something at least", and I would give it to them without monitoring how quickly things would finish. One day I did the balance and saw that the food was finishing and there were still a lot of days to go [before resupply]. Like this you have a serious problem in your life ... I gave out of the feeling [for others] that a man, a person has ... So I had to grab my money and go and replace what was gone - otherwise they would put me in prison or even kill me. ... Until today people see me and say, 'he was a Sergeant Major but he was a very good, peaceful man'.

He repeatedly emphasises his uncommon achievement in managing the feat of being 'very nice' to his comrades, whilst respecting military discipline and pleasing his superiors. More importantly however, he expressed his relief at never having been sent to the front, or to ever fire a weapon or kill an enemy soldier. He was often nominated to go, but his 'boss' would never allow it.

That's why I can't ever say that God was very distant. I really can't. It's better for me [now] to spend less time in the market and more time in church [a habit his colleagues had criticised him for].

In Vicente's narrative, then, he is concerned with the struggle to stay true to his moral code, but his story is a proud one, one of managing to successfully negotiate the pressures of military life through his own capacities and the 'goodness' he felt towards his comrades; and through the protection of God, who prevented him from being sent to the front.

Jamba spoke less about his time in the army than the other two men, and only mentioned it when I asked specifically about it. He was the only one of the men I worked with who spoke of having been an active MPLA supporter in his youth. He spoke of the story of Augusto Ngangula, mentioned by several veterans, an apparently mythical figure whose biography was often cited in MPLA youth organisations in the late 1970s to encourage young men to sign up to the FAPLA. Ngangula was said to have been a young MPLA supporter during the colonial period who refused to disclose the location of an MPLA guerrilla base to the Portuguese, and was murdered as a result.

Jamba said that this had convinced him to “adhere to the military life”, and he voluntarily signed up to the FAPLA as part of the motorised infantry:

I swore loyalty to the flag. You had to swear to the flag when you were recruited. I swore for my fatherland, for the defence of my country and the integrity of Angolan territory, you had to swear ... Even in that time, if you had fourth or fifth grade [of schooling]: driver; third or fourth grade: mechanic. And the others, who, with writing, can't even sign their own name, go to the infantry ... The others, in the artillery, are behind, the command is behind, the heavy weapons are behind. The tanks, they stay in a barrier with you, the infantry, it was called motorised infantry. You advance with the tanks. The first tanks of the enemy, it's you who go against them first, so if they pass over, then it's you that are passed over and who die first.

In this passage he stressed another consequence of his lack of education: the low status of illiterate recruits. His tone of voice made clear that he thought such men were treated inhumanly: dumped in the infantry where they faced a high risk of injury or death. As he spoke of the danger of death he was laughing mirthlessly and grimacing at the memory: emphasising both the fear of battles and a sort of dour pride that higher status recruits had a much easier time of it, while those considered lower status by the military were the ones taking the most risks and doing the most fighting. After some time he became accustomed to the demands of battle and began to orient new recruits in the same process. He was being considered for promotion when “this happened”, he said, rapping his knuckle on his prosthetic ankle. In earlier conversations he had not spent much time speaking of his military service, preferring to dwell on its consequences, or speaking of the war and the army in general, rather than personal, terms. He did, however, speak of how he had sold marijuana to his fellow soldiers, again emphasising the sinfulness of his life at that time - in spite of the patriotism and courage that he also highlighted.

3.5 Demobilisation and adjusting to civilian life after Bicesse

João continued to serve in Huambo province until the Bicesse accords were signed in 1991. In 1990 he got married to his first wife, an event that he does not mention unless

prompted, in spite of it being a key part of the transition to full adult male status. Unlike Vicente and Jamba, João talks about his relations with women without mentioning love or other emotions. He also does not seem to spend much time socialising with his first wife in 2012, having already taken a second wife and apparently having a girlfriend in the market, and his taking of a second wife has had consequences for his reputation that I will discuss below. When speaking of his choice of spouse, he speaks of it as his family's choice:

When I was going from my unit to see my family, my family indicated that if I wanted to live with a woman, the woman is that one ... She's a cousin, [meaning] we're from adjacent neighbourhoods ... we know each other, I know her grandparents, she also knows my grandparents.

As with many of these men the importance of knowing a spouse's family, that they are generally of good, hard-working character and in particular do not have a tradition of *feitiço* was particularly important. He also had his first child shortly after getting married, because "us, as Africans ... if you don't have a child it means that marriage is no good". Thus, both his marriage and the birth of his first child with this wife are framed in terms of customary institutions of marriage, obedience to elder kin and links between broader kin groups. It thus seems to constitute an almost default part of the adult masculinity he narrates, rather than a source of pride or a relationship invested with great emotional significance.

When I asked him about his 'demobilisation', this word seemed to evoke for him the state assistance that he expected to receive, and which he clearly considered inadequate: "They just gave you a pair of shoes, a shirt and a bag and that's it, 'go away'". Fighting broke out again in Huambo province after the elections in 1992, and João was captured in his home town as a known government soldier. He was put to work by UNITA in a medical post in his home town, and he emphasises the hard work of this period, and that his work in the hospital went uncompensated. He argued that this experience meant that he knew what both UNITA and the MPLA were like: "no-one lies to me," he said. This is a theme that ran throughout all of our conversations: the puncturing of hypocrisy and

the pretence of moral uprightness to reveal the often cynical, self-seeking behaviour that people and institutions would rather keep hidden. In this case, he spoke particularly of the re-routing of civilian drugs to the military, continuing the theme of the war and military-political organisations as immoral, self-seeking and abusive of the civilian population on whose behalf they were supposedly fighting. Again, he represents his own role as trying to do his best to survive physically and morally under the dangerous and iniquitous conditions of war. As soon as UNITA were forced to flee the area in 1994, he re-enlisted in the government's army (now called the *Forças Armadas de Angola* or FAA).

Vicente, like João, married shortly before the signing of the Bicesse accords. After ten years away from his home province, in 1990 he received a special dispensation to go and get married. He had met his wife before military service:

We met in 78/79. We were just friends, just messing about, but then I realised I really liked her and ought to do something. But no-one foresaw that I would be a soldier. But she waited for me ... my family took care of her, and her family took care of her.

Unlike João, he emphasised both his own role in choosing his wife, and the affection that he felt for her, in keeping with the more companionate idea of marriage that he and several other more religious men advocated, and opposed to a more distant and sometimes conflictive idea of marriage that less religious men spoke of (discussed in chapter 5). In 1992 Vicente was demobilised and went to live with his wife in Huambo city. In 1993, UNITA began a violent occupation of the city, which made earning an income particularly hazardous for FAPLA veterans:

So, I demobilised. I was at home ... In the end our brothers in UNITA retook the province of Huambo. We had quite some time with them here. But the situation started to get complicated. Especially concerning food. Only our wives could do business, us men couldn't, they [UNITA] wouldn't accept us walking around. But after a while I saw that the situation was really terrible. Always waiting for your woman won't do.

In this passage cited from the recorded life history interview, he speaks of UNITA as ‘our brothers’ and refrains from criticising them. Perhaps considering a recorded an interview as more of a formal, quasi-public statement, Vicente seemed to be respecting church policies of reconciliation, discretion and forgiveness for sins committed during wartime. In less formal statements, in contrast, he was harshly critical of them. “Everyone had to be humiliated,” he said, and people were forced to walk without wearing shoes or even cleaning themselves. Soldiers would cut ‘pockets’ in people’s lower abdomens as a punishment, many FAPLA veterans were executed and children were abducted. This was a common theme in the discussion of the morality of the war by all three men: although abuses were carried out by both sides, in their view UNITA was much more brutal and abusive than the MPLA. Thus, although the war is represented as futile and pointlessly destructive, they saw themselves as at least fighting for the better faction, and preventing a sadistic UNITA from taking control.

In spite of the danger from UNITA, Vicente felt it was worth going out to earn money, since he found it intolerable to be relying on his wife for economic support – reflecting the importance of breadwinning to senior male status in this context. As in the narration of his period in the military, his successful negotiation of the period of adjusting to civilian life in informal commerce is narrated in terms of God’s protection and guidance, and his own virtues:

I asked God, and God gave me a path, how I should make my living. Then I went to sleep, and in the morning I went to church. He had given me that heart ... which was to help people. If they had something that they needed carrying, I would carry it.

After making some money as a porter, he bought some goods that he began selling in a square in Huambo city, eventually moving to the *cidade* market where he was still selling in 2012.

Jamba left the army earlier than the other two men, after stepping on a mine in 1983. He spent two years in a military hospital, and it was during his time there that he first heard

the Seventh Day Adventist message:

What really convinced me [was that] my family entered into a tragedy. My brother that followed me died ... So, then our youngest sibling died, my sister died. I even thought that I could die, because every year in the family there was a funeral. So when [my brother-in-law] brought me this message of hope, and showed me Christ, and that to follow him you have to renounce or abandon certain vices that a person carries in their life, because these vices are prejudicial to health and to the spiritual life. It gave me hope that even though the family today is dying, if you have faith in Jesus and accept him as your Saviour, there will be a morning of resurrection, and in Heaven we will be together.

He cited his motivations for converting as being variously his fear of death, apparently motivated by the death of his family members, and exacerbated by what he came to see as the deleterious physical and spiritual effects of his ‘vices’; and his grief at the death of his relatives and desire to see them again. This was a key turning point in his narrative and its moral tone: he stopped emphasising the sinfulness of his conduct, and began speaking of himself in terms of his struggle to build a family, to conduct his life as a faithful Christian, and to be someone with a positive influence on “society”.

The loss of his leg was another deep shock that he had recently suffered before his conversion, and he dwelt at length on how this had shattered his dreams of sporting success and generally made the conduct of his life more difficult:

I would have had a name in football because I could play with two feet ... Football was a friend from birth, I almost started playing football in my mother's belly. I was born a footballer ... I'd score lots of goals! I had great vision!

Jamba was in little doubt that he would have “been a name” in professional football. Another effect of his disability, combined with four years of strenuous physical work in construction, was medical problems which made long days of work inadvisable for him, according to a doctor he consulted. He said that he was in constant pain, and that “you have to learn to control yourself, because if you let the pain agitate you, you will end up stressed”. Jamba saw these problems as the result of an immoral war, fought because of

the Satanic lust of politicians for power and money (a theme discussed in more detail in chapter 7). He bemoaned the failure of the MPLA government to compensate him for the losses he had suffered, likening the party-state's moral obligation to veterans to the duty of a father towards his son:

I was ruined, I lost a leg. It's true I didn't have a good level of education, but I was born fine, with two legs. I would have been able to live more comfortably, better, compared to how I live today as a disabled person. So if I'm limited, who is it that brought me to these limitations? It's the government, who demanded that I go into the army to defend the interests of the country, and I lost my leg. This government, as a father, should look after me.

In this period, he went to live in the coastal city of Benguela with his wife and nephew, because it was less subject to the disruptions of war than Huambo. In 1985 he married his first wife and they had their first child, a boy, who died shortly after being born, and a second, a girl, who also died. Finally in 1992, they had a son, who was still alive in 2012. Most of the men I worked with had lost one or more children to illness, and many of them spoke of both the powerful grief these losses occasioned, and the ongoing fear that they would lose more children to the ever-present threat of death to illnesses, given Huambo's poor health services.

3.6 Life in wartime after Bicesse up to the end of the war

As mentioned above, when UNITA was driven out of Huambo in 1994, João enlisted in the FAA. The nature of warfare in the 1990s was markedly different to that in the 1980s, because more fighting happened in the cities, and the number of civilian casualties was much higher. João described the war as 'hard', and as usual was keen to puncture the official line of both factions that the war was fought in the interests of 'the people': "Any soldier who says that he was protecting the population is lying. The war didn't protect anyone, or bring anything good to the people." João described what he saw as the gradual moral breakdown of the waging of the war, especially in terms of the treatment of the civilian population: at first, in the early 1980s, the FAPLA would

station troops in each commune to protect them from UNITA, he said. However, towards the end of that decade they stopped doing so – they would only protect economic interests: oil, diamonds, dams, municipal centres, and leave ‘the people’ unprotected. So after this, “villages would be empty – there would just be flies there, loads of flies.” Then, towards the end of the war, around 2000 and onwards, the FAA pursued a scorched earth policy, with harsh consequences for many civilians, who were often forced into government-organised villages. João never directly explained why he returned to the army in this period, but was clear that being a soldier during the war was preferable in his view to being a civilian. Food was scarcer in the FAA than it had been under the FAPLA, but since many civilians were starving, it was better than the alternative. Food shortages in the FAA were one of many causes of tension between comrades in the army, and João spoke of the sometimes violent animosities that developed between soldiers. Thus, life in the FAA was presented as a space of scarcity and conflict that led to moral degradation, through an absence of the ethics of communality and respect for one's peers espoused in João's home village and the brotherly love preached by churches.

When the war finally came to an end in 2002, João was preoccupied with a sorcery attack that he suffered in that year. Two new colleagues had come to work with him, a pharmacist and a statistician, and they had concocted a plan to steal the most expensive drugs from the dispensary and sell them in Luanda. Fearing that João might try to scupper their plan, they put a ‘*feitiço* mine’ on João's chair. This gave him a fever and caused his legs to burn, paralysing him. Fearing another *feitiço* attack, João left the military hospital and went to his sister's house in Huambo city. One day, when he was lying down in the courtyard of his sister's house, a crab crawled out from under his legs. He called his sister, who came outside and on seeing the crab, started shaking and told him he was going to die. He replied that he was not, and killed the crab. After a week he could walk again, and he deserted the army permanently to avoid further attacks. As he told me this, he rolled up his trouser legs to show that one of his legs was thinner than the other.

João told me this story several times, and the sense of fear was pronounced. It was implicit in these conversations that many people in his context would not tell a white person such a story. A Baptist pastor had told me early in my fieldwork that many people would want to show their ‘modern’ side to me, a white foreigner, and not speak to me of subjects such as *feitiço*, in order not to appear superstitious or backward. In relating his experience of a *feitiço* attack, João seemed to be following through on his determination to avoid hypocritically masking uncomfortable truths. In speaking of sorcery, his principal concern seemed to be the depravity and danger of sorcery, rather than a perceived ‘backwardness’ (although the two were linked in religious condemnations of sorcery). This depravity was related to the ruthless self-seeking of people under conditions of war that would lead soldiers to kill innocent people; the abrogation of duties to serve civilians and comrades; and the dangerous malevolence that was both given expression through *feitiço*, and fuelled by its corrupting influence. Again, in narrating his own stance in this environment he did not speak of his own strategies or decisive action, but of his struggle to avoid unforgivable moral transgressions, and, most importantly, simply to stay alive.

Vicente’s account of this period is fairly short, and as one of steady, hard-working progress for himself and his family once the initial crisis of demobilisation and establishing a livelihood under UNITA occupation had been negotiated. Key landmarks in this period are the building of his own houses. At the end of 1993 he bought some land and had a house built, and then in 1994, after UNITA had left the city, he bought more land for \$3,000 and built another, bigger house. The building of one’s own house was a key achievement in the stories of all of the men I worked with, escaping rented housing apparently a key achievement in the establishment of adult male independence and social progress for oneself and one’s family, and houses being a key indicator of status and wealth (discussed in greater length in chapter 4). Vicente, again unlike João, mentions this period as one of hard work “with my wife”, emphasising the joint nature of their achievements in spite of the harsh conditions of wartime.

Jamba had returned briefly to Huambo in 1993 when the city was still relatively

peaceful, but went back to Benguela when the fighting started, along with his wife, son and his nephew. He spent much of the 1990s trading between the coastal city of Lobito and Huambo, and thus was away from his wife for long periods. Implicit in his narrative is that during this time he was attempting, like Vicente, to build a life as a respected, Christian head of his family, meaning specifically one who successfully performed the triple role of a companionate husband, a good father and the family breadwinner. However this project received a shock when he was away working in Lobito at the end of the war in 2002. Word came to him that his wife was having an affair with another man, an incident which I cover in more detail in chapter 5. The episode eventually led to divorce, when Jamba's wife, despite his entreaties and offers of forgiveness, refused to return to him, preferring to stay with the other man. While he could understand that she could have a 'biological' need for another man when her husband was away for long periods, he could not understand why she would refuse his forgiveness and break up the family unit. Her motivation, he believed, was his struggle to earn enough money to satisfy her expectations.

This seems to have represented a serious blow to his efforts to attain respectability as a senior man and head of his family: he was seen to fail in his responsibilities as a breadwinner, and thus as a husband, and his role as a father was also under threat. In addition, having a divorce was clearly frowned upon in the Adventist church, and Jamba describes the incident as having 'destroyed' his spiritual life, apparently meaning that the respect with which he was viewed in the church was eroded, and he was unable to continue as a church elder. He spoke several times of his divorce, sometimes with bitter, gesticulating anger - anger at both his wife's betrayal and shallow money motivation, but also at the enduring damage that it had done to his moral reputation and efforts to build and support a family. It also brought his role as a 'good father' under threat, and although he seemed proud of managing to support his children, he expressed some regret at not being able to give them better lives:

Since my wife left me with the children, they could have ended up as street kids, but as I'm a responsible father they haven't. I don't manage to give them 100% of what they need, but I manage to satisfy their needs. They might come to me

with something that they need, and I don't manage to get it for them straight away, but within two or three days I can.

Thus we can see that in both Vicente and Jamba's accounts, in spite of the danger, violence and material shortages of wartime, their principal concerns in their narrations of this period were trying to hold their life projects together as senior, respected Christian men. In Vicente's case this consisted in expressing pride and gratefulness to God for his success; for Jamba this meant expressing the difficulties of providing for a family, and his frustration and sadness at his failure and the circumstances and people that brought him to it. The circumstances that made the building of such life projects and moral masculine selves more difficult were not violence per se, but the difficulty of trading under conditions of war. Upon leaving the army, given the destruction of both the agricultural economy and most industry (outside the oil industry), both men had had to tackle the steep learning curve of becoming traders, a profession that neither they nor their parents had ever pursued. The inherent unpredictability and instability of informal trading (discussed in chapter 4) made the achievement of being seen as a successful breadwinner difficult (even with their wives' help). This was exacerbated by the restrictions on mobility that the war imposed, the difficulty of importing goods to the interior of the country, and the impossibility of using subsistence agriculture as a safety net in times of reduced profits. Failure to earn adequate amounts of money to satisfy one's family could undermine a senior man's status from several directions, imperilling their roles as husbands, fathers and respected religious men, as Jamba's case illustrates, and as discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

3.7 Life after the war

João told me that he struggled with life as a civilian at first:

It was difficult, because my ideal life was the military life. Because since I was a child I'd been a soldier, and so for us to join the people was really difficult ... Because you just think that you're a soldier.

This challenge was perhaps greater than for Vicente and Jamba, since he had spent a greater proportion of his life in the army, and left it when he was older. He dwelt at length on the fact that life in the army was ‘easy’, because the army provided everything that soldiers needed, “even if it wasn’t much ... but now life gives you problems because everything depends on your work”. Shortly after demobilisation a friend who was selling in the *cidade* market invited him to go and sell in the section where he was still selling in 2012. He, like Vicente, mentioned having his own house built as a landmark achievement. He appreciated the autonomy that being a trader “on your own account” provided him: “If I see that there is enough food and I don’t want to go to the market [to work] then I don’t go.” He added: “I think it’s better, I’m already 43 years old”, apparently thinking it undignified for a man to still be taking orders at such an age.

He also, like Vicente and Jamba, saw this success as a moral success, and expressed pride in his ability to support his children and parents, as the respected male head of a family was expected to. Yet, for João, there was an additional aspect to this pride, in that he saw individual veterans’ success in adapting to ‘social life’ (in this context meaning earning a living) was part of their duty to the nation:

For you to live well with others, and to form a free country, a person has to start from zero and go to one. And so it’s really hard, going from the military life to the civilian life, it’s really very, very hard.

Thus, in João’s narrative, this transition was a difficult and fundamental one: going back to ‘zero’ and starting again, as part of a man’s duty to his country and the maintenance of peace, and part of his duty to his family. He underlined the potential consequences of failure for those soldiers who did not manage to successfully make this transition:

It’s really those elders who were soldiers who are now good for nothing. They lost their minds, because there it was easy, now in civilian life it’s difficult. They even failed their kids, abandoned their wives, they live in the streets.

He attributes this not just to the difficulty of the transition, but to the power soldiers had over civilians and the immoral tendency of soldiers to steal, and of some to use *feitiço*:

In the military life everything was easy because if you say I'm going to take that, you take it, as long as your superior doesn't notice ... Killing, robbing doing lots of bad things to others ... Living the military life, those who sought feitiço, sought it only to do evil. And so his heart today only thinks of evil, and so to conform [to civilian life], he doesn't have the heart for this any more. And so this person doesn't grow.

João said of those who had resorted to sorcery that, “the consequences of the times of war are being paid in the times of peace”. In his narrative, the use of *feitiço* corrupted men's hearts and made them unable to survive in an environment in which they no longer had the power to do evil with impunity, as did more mundane acts of evil such as stealing and killing. He linked his successful avoidance of serious moral corruption during his time in the army – his labour in wartime to stay in touch with the ethical values he had been brought up with – to his ability to handle the many ethical and practical challenges of adapting to civilian life. This transition, he suggests in the quote above, would have been impossible for him if he had not fought to stop his 'heart thinking only of evil'.

Again, however, this success is not told with a great degree of pride, rather as a fatal pitfall successfully avoided. He describes his life in peacetime as ‘a bit normal’, meaning a relatively stable life without the imminent dangers of war, but still a life of ‘suffering’ due to the family's low income. He describes his main challenges for the future as trying to prevent his children “suffering like we're suffering now”, aware, as all three of these men were, that his profession, housing and lifestyle marked him and his family out as belonging to a ‘lower order’ of society and as belonging to the *bairro*, a place of lack of development, rather than the *cidade*, the old colonial part of the city, often said to denote development and civilisation (themes I expand on in the next chapter). Part of this meant paying for his children to go to school, and to push them to study, so that they can find stable formal employment. “But for me, no, there's no better future coming for me”, he said, with an air of resignation rather than bitterness.

In João's narration of this part of his life, there remained an important silence. I came to

know, through João's colleagues and a family member, that João had taken a second wife after the end of the war, with whom he had several children. João had never mentioned this to me, despite once telling me that he would like to take a second wife in the future if he could earn enough money. This meant that João was not welcome in any church congregation, since all denominations in Huambo condemn polygamy. He said he was a Congregationalist, though he did not claim to attend church regularly. He would often rail against the churches, accusing them of hypocrisy and lies, claiming in particular that they were motivated by money, and expected payment from even the poorest of their congregants, who they 'humiliated' by refusing gifts of maize, and demanding contributions in cash. In spite of this cynicism of church institutions, however, he regularly studied the Bible as a source of 'truth' and antidote to the 'lies' of churches.

While it is difficult to speculate on subjects about which João declined to speak, it seems likely to me that part of his anger at church institutions was due to his exclusion from them and the consequences this had for the respect people had for him. Indeed, João was accused of excessive secrecy about his family life by some of his colleagues, and criticised for the 'sin' he committed through having two wives. It seems clear that his desire for another wife, however motivated, came into conflict with his desires for respectability and the avoidance of moral transgressions which would take him beyond the pale of public morality. He apparently continued to find this contradiction uncomfortable in 2012 and tried to resolve it through the search for the moral high ground, conducted through individual Bible study. This seemed to constitute both a form of Christian religious practice from which church institutions could not exclude him, and provided him with scriptural ammunition with which to discredit those institutions as moral arbiters - particularly as he continued to contest the denigration of practices, knowledge and gendered age hierarchies associated with the 'rural'. The rural, in turn, he associated with his family, with whom he so strongly identified, and with his upbringing. As I will discuss in chapter 7, in post-war Huambo moral codes espoused by the churches had come to dominate in the definition of public morality in the spaces where I worked, and incompatible aspects of Umbundu traditions, such as polygamy,

were a particular source of shame and condemnation.

Vicente said of the end of the war in 2002 that “peace is something modernised, something good ... In peace people live tranquilly ... and now we ask God that we’ll be able to make something, and no-one will take it from us.” Peace, for Vicente, meant an end to the backward “confusion” of wartime, and making possible the progress of Angolan society. For him personally, the main advantage was that in peacetime it was harder for political movements or soldiers to simply steal one's property, bringing greater stability to his efforts to prosper and to live the life of a good, hardworking Christian: “So my wife and I carried on working, half here, half there, but always, never forgetting God, always praying, always in a Church, in a church always.” He spoke of his situation in 2012 principally in terms of achievements, summarising: “I’m married, I’m 49 years old, I have nine children and four grandchildren and that’s it, for the moment”.

However, he also spoke of the continuing uncertainty of life even in peacetime given the lack of salaried employment, and the threat that this posed to his family:

We all have our own business, which is very difficult because it’s not like when you have a salary and you always know how much you’re going to get ... [O]ur children’s work never stops and our work never stops, but we still have a lot of difficulty, up to today.

In 2012 he was working hard, seven days a week, both in the market and in his duties as a Catechist in his church. He saw this work as a natural reaction to the protection and help God afforded him during the war. He is also proud that both occupations mean that ‘everyone knows me around here’ - in and around the market, and around his neighbourhood.

As with most of these men, the first time I asked Vicente about his experience as a veteran, with João standing beside him, the first subject he mentioned was that the government had not provided the compensation veterans thought they were owed for

their service. This was seen by all of the veterans I worked with as a factor negatively affecting their life projects. The hope that the government might one day provide this compensation, gave Vicente what he saw as his only ‘prospect’ for a better future:

If God gives good thinking to the government, in which they recognise the effort of those who were soldiers, my prospect is to have something ... I really don't have anything else.

Jamba does not dwell on the advantages of peace when speaking of his life after 2002, instead returning to the topic of wasted potential with which he narrated his childhood. By 2012 he should have been planning for his old age, he said, and thinking about how he could “die in peace, without suffering”. Instead he would have to keep working – and if he had managed to get an education it would not be that way. His own wasted potential seemed to be mirrored in his view of the consequences of the civil war. The war was driven by political leaders’ satanically inspired desire for riches, and those who fought in it had been duped. In spite of the ‘development’ he said was happening since the end of the war, new things were not really being built – the government had not even managed to restore all of the old colonial infrastructure that was destroyed during the war – particularly the factories. A botched decolonisation and a pointless and evil war, for Jamba, explained much of the predicament of veterans like him. This had been exacerbated by the government’s failure to provide pensions or employment to veterans, and in his case a good-quality and durable prosthesis. Unlike João, however, his reaction was not one of relative resignation. Rather, he continued his efforts to try to ‘be a big man in society’ through his efforts after the end of the war in organising football teams.

Jamba saw football training as not just a way to prove his football knowledge and expertise in spite of not being able to play, but also of doing morally beneficial work in his neighbourhood. One team he organised, called the *Velha Guarda*, was a team intended for players over 35 years of age. In Jamba’s view, the purpose of this team was to convince older men (mainly veterans) that they should not cease valuing their bodies as they aged, and ruin themselves spiritually and bodily through drinking and smoking. Instead they should keep training and prove their ongoing physical prowess by beating

teams of, often hungover, younger men. He also organised a team of younger men in the MPLA-organised ‘Girabairro’ tournament, an effort that was partly intended to encourage ‘social and political development’ of the neighbourhood, and to ‘encourage’ young people so that they would not fall into drug use.

He was effusive about the positive moral potential of football:

If the church was like football, Christ would already have returned because football unites people. It helped me to get to know people and for people to know me. The world of football is different. It has helped me to know people.

Football in Jamba’s view was an antidote to the *confusão* of destructive conflict (epitomised by the war but seen as a more diffuse moral threat to society, a concept discussed in more depth in chapter 7), a way of contending with one another but avoiding confrontation. It had also helped him to ‘know’ people and be known by them: he had managed to develop relationships with relatively powerful people in local party-state structures, who often sponsored football tournaments, as well as being widely known in his neighbourhood. This mingling of upright moral values with desired upward social mobility was common in religious veterans’ narratives, as indeed it had been a feature of churches’ rhetoric in the colonial period.

3.8 Discussion: the moral challenges of war and their gendered consequences

Stephen Lubkemann, in his book on the “social condition in war”, discusses four influential theories of social agency during conflicts, finding each of them wanting: Robert Kaplan’s “loose molecules”, the concepts of tactical agency and navigation advocated respectively by Alcinda Honwana and Henrik Vigh, Carolyn Nordstrom’s “sheer creativity” (p.219) and Scudder and Colson’s cultural conservatism (Lubkemann 2008:218–222). He criticises each of these theories for underplaying either the ongoing influence of longstanding cultural forms and processes in face of even great danger, or the creativity with which people bring historically-constituted cultural forms to bear on

the struggles of wartime.

Whilst I agree with much of this argument, it is also true that people's experience of war affects their measure of autonomy in varying ways depending on how they are affected by it in different times and places. Moments of danger present them with particularly limited scope in trying to act according to their own moral convictions. As Suzette Heald argues (1999:6), the question of agency is linked to that of moral responsibility, implying that people ought to be held responsible for their actions only in as far as they had autonomy to avoid them. This certainly seems to be Honwana's (2007) contention when she uses the concept of tactical agency to replace facile distinctions such as that between victim and perpetrator when discussing young soldiers forced to fight and kill against their will. The issue of moral responsibility and reduced scope for autonomous moral action certainly preoccupied João and Vicente in their accounts of their actions during certain parts of the war. Under the pressures of military discipline, and the corrupting influence of the military environment and the power it gave him over civilians, João's narrative was one of moral compromise and cynicism. In his account, the best he could do was to avoid complete moral breakdown that would undo him as a person worthy of moral respect, and that would corrupt him to the point that he would be unable to stop doing evil or to survive without it, becoming a 'useless elder' in peacetime. By resisting unethical orders where he could, and resisting the temptation to habitually predate upon civilians or resort to sorcery he was able to survive the military experience as a moral person and to become an elder man who could earn a living, support his family and raise his children well. Thus, the frequent moments of danger that he faced as soldier were central to his interpretation of his role during the war, even if tactical agency was not the only type of agency he was able to exercise throughout the whole length of the conflict – with many more peaceful interludes.

As Suzette Heald also argues, the key concept in morality is not necessarily that of agency and moral responsibility, but may be that of danger (1999:6). For João the two concepts were linked, with the need to avoid transgression linked not simply to guilt, but more prominently to the dangers of corruption to his ability to be perform a moral

elder masculine style in peacetime, or even to survive at all.

Vicente's narrative also emphasised the issue of moral responsibility under military discipline which reduced his autonomy. Perhaps because he was given a role away from the imminent dangers of the frontline, he is able to present his time in the army as a moral triumph. He was never sent to the front and forced to kill enemy soldiers, and through his resourcefulness was able to live up to his ideal of brotherly love towards his comrades – an ideal he clearly links to his Catholic faith. He faced a similar kind of pressure upon demobilisation – though this time related to dignity and shame rather than virtue and transgression. Faced with the shame of having to rely on his wife to earn him a living, he decided to go out and begin a life in informal commerce, in spite of the danger of imprisonment and execution that he faced at the hands of UNITA occupiers. Once again, he narrates this incident with pride as one of triumph, and in both of these cases his pride is both in his own conduct, and in the faithfulness of God, who he said must have been protecting him and helping him to act morally despite the risks.

This pact he had with God continued into 2012, as he continued to express his gratefulness through working for the church in the afternoons and at weekends. Like João, then, the way he faced moments of acute moral crisis during the war continued to shape his self-perception and moral outlook in 2012, one that was bound up with his identity as both a breadwinner and a Catholic catechist – both normatively the preserve of morally respectable men. Unlike João, his narrative emphasised triumph rather than compromise, and in this, a determination to fulfil his moral duties as a husband, even under the risk of death – an account that chimes well with Lubkemann's own argument that people in wartime are not simply driven by a desire to minimise the risk of being attacked, but often expose themselves to risk in order to pursue “culturally scripted life projects” (2008:218) – in this case that of being a respected husband, father and breadwinner.

The two main moral crises that Jamba recounted had a different character to those of João and Vicente. The first crisis, shortly after he had been demobilised and lost his leg,

seems to have been related to a newfound sense of vulnerability and the grief he experienced following the deaths of close relatives, and perhaps, though he did not explicitly make this connection, his recent wounding. He came to understand this vulnerability in moral-spiritual terms: that his immoral habits of drinking and smoking posed both physical and spiritual dangers for him, and had to be forsaken if he was to survive physically and to be saved spiritually. Being saved spiritually also offered him the prospect of seeing his lost family members again in the afterlife. Thus his crisis was not presented as being related to the limited scope he had for moral decision-making and maintaining moral integrity, but to the immorality of his conduct and, as in João's case, the mortal dangers that transgression and corruption posed for him. The new moral orientation that this experience gave him was, in his narrative, shaken by his wife's betrayal and a sense of his own failure as a breadwinner, but he acted as a 'good father' and maintained his Adventist faith, eventually managing to remarry and continuing to perform the masculinity of a senior Adventist man without his family disintegrating.

These three men's life stories, then, present a variegated set of moral challenges and responses. The type of challenge that they faced depended on the particular courses their lives took during the war, and their responses were conditioned by the sort of moral upbringing that they had had, or in Jamba's case, on the desire to find a moral grounding that his upbringing lacked, in order to survive and make sense of the tragedies and challenges of war. Certain ethical problems arose that were common to all three of these men, however, once the imminent dangers of war had been successfully negotiated. These were related to two central aspects of senior manhood and masculine status. Firstly, all of the men grappled in one way or another with the dilemmas of how to make a living and achieve desired upward social mobility through informal commerce. They found themselves in an environment where opportunities for formal employment were limited, both during and after the war, and for which, as low-ranking veterans who had missed most of their education, they were particularly ill-equipped to compete for. All of their life narratives were framed in terms of their disappointment at their situations of unpredictable economic struggle and low-status professions. This sense of

disappointment was accompanied by a sense of betrayal, that the MPLA party-state had forced them to fight at great personal cost, and had subsequently failed to fulfil their obligation to reward them for their sacrifice by providing decent military pensions or stable employment. The fact that the party-state elite was enriching itself through oil rents and making no concerted attempts to develop other sectors of the economy was the implicit background to these criticisms. In chapter 4 I will discuss how the issues of enrichment, social mobility and economic inequality had come to be ethically problematised in Huambo in 2012, as the rising value of money as a marker of social status and the immoral urges said to be unleashed by increasingly visible inequalities threatened veterans' ethical masculine life projects.

The second ethical problem arising around senior masculinity was the linking of the status and authority of senior men with the need to be one's household's principal breadwinner. As Jamba's crisis of divorce, João's post-war preoccupations with avoiding becoming a 'useless elder', and Vicente's crisis upon demobilisation all attest, the equation made between men's earning capacity and the status, authority and respect accorded to them, represented one of their greatest challenges and vulnerabilities in successfully performing a senior manhood. This vulnerability was, again, linked to the rising value of money as a marker of social status, and the immoral urges related to post-war urban inequalities, but also to the entry of women into informal commerce during the war, and their potential to out-earn their husbands. I discuss this area of ethical problematisation in chapter 5.

Two more commonalities from these men's accounts continued to be particularly important for them into 2012. On the one hand was their view of politics and the state. Their experiences at the hands of the state had taught them that involvement in politics was treacherous, unpredictable and potentially fatal. The values embraced by the state elite continued, as they had been in colonial times, to be both influential and contested in people's visions of social status, civilisation and progress. The moral failures of the state, however, meant that politics was meticulously avoided by the men I worked with as a way of gaining official positions of respect or as a way of claiming rights or

patronage. On the other hand, the pre-eminent moral influence of the churches is plain in all three men's narratives. Of the three main influences of the state, Umbundu gendered norms and institutions, and the churches, the latter set the dominant moral standards for these men's lives, being central in the form that moral problematisations took, and particularly in the solutions that men sought to bring to these problems. Even for João, who sought to keep some distance from religion, the major moral dilemma of his post-war life and the way he sought to combat criticisms, drew on religious texts and ideas. Therefore, in chapter 6 I look at some of the alternative cultural styles of masculinity that veterans drew on when seeking solutions to the ethical problems discussed in chapters 4 and 5, where the principal differentiating factor between styles was their stance towards religion. In chapter 7, I will seek to account for the predominant influence of the churches in 2012 in defining the standards of public morality for these men, through a comparison with denigrated aspects of Umbundu traditions, and, especially, the sphere of politics.

Chapter 4 - “These things are going to ruin the country”: The ethical problematisation of social mobility and enrichment

4.1 Introduction

At Jamba’s stall in Alemanha market, the male sellers often played draughts to pass the time, with a homemade board, and beer bottle tops for pieces. At a certain point the board was repainted by some of the younger men at the stall, who signed their names on it, and wrote the motto, “Win with Merit, Lose with Dignity”. In the same period, the elder men in Jamba’s neighbourhood were setting up the football team for the national *Girabairro* tournament: a tournament for amateur neighbourhood teams sponsored by the *Movimento Espontâneo*. I was asked to attend the planning meetings for this team, as the team’s photographer.

The early meetings were optimistic, speaking of the need for “social and political development” in the neighbourhood, and a need to “encourage” the young people and to give them a constructive activity to do, so that they would not fall into drug and alcohol abuse. However, tensions were also obvious from the start. “We all know,” the chair of the first meeting said in his opening statement, “that there are traitors and treacherous people in our neighbourhood,” who had gone to play for other neighbourhoods because they were being paid. These tensions grew, as some players and members of the club failed to make their regular donations to the team’s running costs. They were denounced as selfish, and as endangering the collective effort to create something positive in the neighbourhood, forcing the coaches to put up their own money to compensate. At the sidelines of one of the games, I heard some young players making a loud counter-accusation to the older men running the team: coaches would pick players on the basis of the money they were able to contribute, and not solely on ability. They said that it was tough to ask people to contribute money every week, because sometimes you might fall on hard times and not be able to pay.

The potentially corrupting power that money introduced into social relations was a frequent theme of conversation amongst the men I worked with in Huambo. The disturbing idea that the love of money threatened communal values and common enterprises, that people could not be counted on for their loyalty and that bonds of solidarity threatened to break apart at any time, was common. Equally, the idea was common that money had introduced corruption into society, so that you might not ‘win with merit’ but by exploiting others’ love of money to get an unfair advantage. The tensions around the organisation of the *Girabairro* team seemed to illustrate some of these tensions, as well as the feelings of uncertainty that they produced: had people really been selected because of their ability or because of money? These discussions also illustrated the double-edged nature of many of the concepts used to discuss these issues: whereas for the elder men managing the team, some players were selfishly keeping money for themselves and endangering the team’s future, for the young men they were being unfairly excluded on the grounds of poverty, in a way that suggested an immoral discrimination on the grounds of wealth. The motto, “win with merit and lose with dignity” was striking because it seemed to express a longing for a situation of clarity where those who prospered did so because they deserved to, and those who did less well had done so due to their inferior abilities, and accepted this calmly. This made for a distinct contrast with the feelings of uncertainty and deep unease with which most of the veterans I worked with viewed the world of money and people’s differential economic fortunes.

This chapter will examine how enrichment, social mobility and inequalities in wealth and status had come to be ethically problematised in Huambo in 2012, and how this impinged on veterans’ masculine life projects. We saw in chapter two that wealth and status inequalities had, since the era of the rubber trade at least, been problematised on the *Planalto*. Several authors have noted that individual enrichment and a refusal to share wealth broadly had often not been tolerated in the 19th century, and attacks by *olonganga* had been used to eliminate such individuals and steal their wealth – a reaction that in turn was also seen as immoral. Accusations of being an *onganga* were

used for similar ends (see, for example Childs 1949; Heywood 2000). Over the course of the 20th century, these concepts and practices had endured and mutated, and their significance been reinterpreted and overlaid by the discourses of the churches. Churches' condemnation of 'witchcraft' as backward and pagan, and espousal of the virtues of hard work, organisation and civilisation (and condemnation of their opposites) seem to have been particularly influential.

These conceptions took on a particular salience in post-war Huambo. Politically-driven economic inequalities became increasingly visible through the consumption of commodities that were newly available since the end of the war had made the transport of goods possible again. These inequalities were particularly visible in urban areas such as Huambo, and were widely seen as immoral, particularly due to the idea of the state long promoted by competing political movements, as an entity that ought to provide for and protect its 'people' (Pearce 2012). In this context, the rising value of money and commodities as markers of social status was seen by the men I worked with as eliciting dangerous urges that were often interpreted through concepts that were associated with *olonganga* and their malevolent practices.

The love of money was considered threatening by the men I worked with for the additional reason that it seemed to supplant respect for elder men based on their possession of wisdom and good judgement, and the generalised virtue of respect (*esumbilo*) for people in general. They experienced this as both a threat to their own masculine status and to social order and 'Umbundu' identity more generally, and as threatening the proliferation of evil. In this chapter I will analyse this process, seeking to make a contribution to the literature on social stratification in post-war Angola, looking at the insights that the twin lenses of gender and ethics can contribute. I also hope to contribute to the broader literature on masculinities in Africa, and particularly to considerations of how to interpret relations between different 'models' of masculinity.

I use the phrase 'social mobility' to denote these men's aspirations and efforts to 'evolve', 'progress' and 'rise up' through the earning of money, access to a more

preferable occupation and the acquisition of certain commodities. Social mobility was often constructed as having a morally progressive character, in several senses. The qualities that demonstrated spiritual transformation for Christians were also those that could help one 'rise up': hard work and organisation. Equally, becoming more generally 'actualizado' (up-to-date) was part of moving away from the *confusão* of the past associated with rurality and backwardness, and was considered progress for both individuals and 'Angolan society'. Social mobility and the progress it entailed also, to a large extent, meant and required material progress, and, accordingly, differential social progress was judged in terms of material inequalities at both national and international scales (cf. Ferguson 2002).

In what follows, I avoid using the opposition between 'tradition' and 'modernity', partly because these oppositions are products of the "colonising imagination" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:5) and the self-image of the West constructed with Africa as its 'other', and thus may serve to hamper attempts to understand how social progress and social status were constructed in a particular African context. Whilst colonial imaginings have clearly had a strong influence on the *Planalto*, what was considered progress and development had a particular character in this context, and how it was constructed and experienced ought to be attended to (Gable 2002) and not simply viewed through pre-formed categories; further, there were competing visions of what true "development" might look like, and this contestation and its moral underpinnings was one of the key preoccupations of these veterans and a central component in how their masculinities were constructed and performed.

The rest of the chapter will proceed as follows. Section two will briefly describe the practicalities of the different income-earning activities of the men I worked with. Section three will look at veterans' views of their place in broader socio-economic strata in terms of these occupations. It will then discuss the role of housing and urban space in social differentiation as an example of the role of commodities in this process. The fourth section will discuss the two concepts of avarice (*ocipulũlũ*) and envious hatred (*onyã*) and their role as a 'moral diagnostics' of enrichment: part of a flexible

conceptual apparatus that ethically problematised people's differential social trajectories, and reactions to these. I will argue that, rather than respect for senior men being simply dependent on material considerations of success, moral interpretations were vital both in assessing others' successes and in guiding how one pursued one's own success. In addition, the concepts used to interpret other's social fortunes were adapted to the situation of uncertainty and vulnerability in which these veterans found themselves, in a way that questions the utility of the idea of hierarchies of 'models' in explaining the dynamics of masculine performances.

4.2 Making a living in the *praça*¹³

My research involved four different groups of veterans in the city of Huambo, pursuing different occupations in informal commerce, as did most veterans in Huambo. These groups were principally chosen to reflect some of the main occupations pursued by veterans in the informal sector. However I also chose them according to location: two groups working in the *cidade* - the old colonial centre of Huambo - and the other two in a peripheral, peri-urban *bairro* (literally, neighbourhood), since this was a key classification of urban space with important status connotations that I will discuss below.

The indoor market in the *cidade* was the first setting I started working in. João and Vicente both worked in this market, a squat concrete building with a corrugated iron roof, at the side of a busy road. Most of the sellers were women, and all sections were staffed almost uniquely by either men or women - as with all of the settings I worked in. João and Vicente worked in a section selling non-food goods,¹⁴ along with eleven other men and one woman. They got their products principally from three sources: shops in the city centre, Alemanha market, or from shops and warehouses in Luanda, and the goods were almost all manufactured in China. This section was increasingly in

13 'Square', often used as a shorthand for 'market square'.

14 I will not be more specific about the goods they sold, since it would make the group too easily identifiable.

competition with larger shops in the city centre who were able to sell at a lower price, and more and more of these shops had opened since the end of the war. Consequently, there had been a long-term reduction in the number of clients for this section.

The ownership of the market was contested in the period I was in Angola. It had been owned by a well-known businessman called Valentim Amões, who died in a plane crash in 2008. His patrimony was still being contested by his children in 2012. The stallholders paid a daily fee of 50kz to use their pitches, the fee being collected by uniformed market staff. The market also employed cleaners and security guards, and some stallholders paid porters to transport their produce from storage to their pitches. When I first arrived in the market, the men complained to me about the influence of the economic police, who prohibited the sale of certain of their goods, and one of the stallholders had spent a night in prison because of this. However, throughout my time there I never saw the police enter the market, except when chasing some drug dealers who had fled there.

There were various routes in to this section. Vicente was one of the ‘pioneers’ of the school materials trade in Huambo, and came to sell in the city market in 1994 having been moved on from an outdoor location by the UNITA authorities. His cousin, Alexandre, followed him soon after. Other sellers in the section were family of one of the other ‘pioneers’ of this trade, and others had come in due to friendship links with other sellers. Many of the sellers found the income insufficient, and especially the younger members had other occupations at the same time, variously as a security guard in a shop, a bank teller, a motorbike taxi driver, and one worked simultaneously as a seller in another market while colleagues minded his pitch for him. Two younger members in their early twenties, including João’s cousin, Eduardo, were using the trade to help pay for their high school studies, hoping to move on to more stable, salaried employment in the future. Several sellers had left the section in recent years due to declining profits – one found a job as a security guard and supplemented this with money changing, and another went to sell a variety of products in Alemanha market.

Outside the market, people worked at a number of slightly less formal professions, and here I worked with a group of motorbike taxi drivers. There were also boys shining shoes and adults begging, moneychangers, sellers of car seats and of marijuana, as well as passing street hawkers. Motorbike taxi drivers are often referred to as *kupapatas*, which means ‘hold me close’ (Lopes 2011), referring to the passenger in theory having to hold on to the driver as they travel, although most passengers seemed to travel with their arms nonchalantly crossed. There are two different types of *kupapata*: Those driving a standard two-wheeled motorbike, and those driving a three-wheeled motorbike with a trailer. The latter was known more colloquially as a *kaleluyah* – reputedly because people were so happy when an affordable vehicle arrived in Huambo that was capable of carrying heavy loads, they shouted, ‘hallelujah!’ All *kupapatas* in Huambo seemed to be men. There were various kinship and friendship links between these taxi drivers and a group of moneychangers who occupied a nearby patch. Customers were people passing the market or coming out of the market, or were people who hailed the drivers as they were driving back to their patch from dropping off another passenger. Although the work of *kupapatas* was legal, they sometimes had trouble with the police. It was compulsory for both passengers and drivers to wear helmets, but this law was enforced through periodic clampdowns rather than consistent enforcement. Offenders would have their motorbikes impounded, and they could only be returned after payment of a fee. These men also feared the rumoured imminent enactment of a law obliging all motorbike drivers to have driving licences, something that only one of these men had.

Four of the five *kupapatas* with whom I worked were middle-aged veterans. However, I found that most *kupapatas* that I took as I travelled around the city were younger, and veterans often complained that many younger men were choosing to become *kupapatas* as they came onto the labour market, making the profession less profitable than in the past. All of the *kupapatas* I worked with had taken up the trade during the war by buying one of the scarce bikes manufactured in the city from a friend or relative when one became available second-hand, usually using money saved from informal trading.¹⁵ All had bought new, Indian-manufactured bikes since the end of the war. Several of

¹⁵ For more information on the growth of this trade in Huambo, see Lopes 2011.

these men supplemented their *kupapata* incomes with subsistence agriculture in their home villages, most of them being of rural origin, and one also supplemented his income with work as a security guard at the airport. In terms of ‘routes out’ of this profession, two had died, one in a traffic accident, and one of an illness while I was there, and some others had ‘upgraded’ from a normal motorbike to a *kalehuyah*, which was not necessarily more profitable, but those who had taken it up preferred to make money from fewer, and longer, jobs. One was spending time at a mechanic’s workshop in an, ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to start a new business of his own; when I visited in 2015, he had bought a secondhand car and was struggling to find work as a taxi-driver.

Alemanha market, where Jamba worked, is a large outdoor market occupying around 2.5km² on the suburbs of Huambo city. It is a busy workplace for many thousands of sellers. At first glance it seemed rather chaotic, with each stall made by its owner out of tree trunks, corrugated iron and wooden boards, stretching in meandering rows for hundreds of metres. A huge variety of goods are sold there, including all of the goods that the city market sells, along with motorbikes and motorbike parts, car parts, furniture, cloth, livestock, electrical equipment, pharmaceuticals and agricultural equipment, to name but a few. Like the city market, Alemanha was privately owned, and had a system of daily fees collected by uniformed staff, cleaners, and a system of porters and warehouses. The police were even more absent in this market than the city market, seemingly only ever present to direct traffic during the frequent snarl-ups at the market entrance. Perhaps as a consequence, products such as pirated DVDs and CDs were openly sold here, unlike in the city.

Jamba ran a stall with his 40 year-old nephew, Flávio, who is also a FAPLA veteran. They began selling these goods in the early 2000s after Jamba was forced to abandon construction work. Flávio’s younger brother, in his mid-twenties, also worked with them, along with a number of school-age male relatives who contributed from time to time. The stall was positioned between two other stalls selling the same kind of goods, one of which was staffed by around ten men with whom Jamba has kinship and/or

friendship links. The other was staffed by men who were ‘with UNITA’ during the war. Jamba sourced his goods from suppliers in Luanda, Lobito and nearby Caála through contacts he had built up over several years. His stall was located far away from the main road that serves the market meaning that there was little through traffic of clients. Clients therefore had to make the trip there intentionally, and they found him in a number of ways, most of which depended on his ability to build up a reputation and networks of contacts.

I also worked with sellers at another stall around the corner from Jamba, headed by a 49 year-old veteran called José, who was, like Jamba, a Seventh Day Adventist. José had a distant kinship link with Jamba through marriage. He ran the stall with his wife, two of his teenage sons and a nephew in his thirties, though José was clearly in charge and the others his assistants. They sold mechanical goods in a crowded section with many competitors, though José specialised in new goods, unlike most of his competitors who sold second-hand goods. He ordered his goods from importers in Luanda who bought the products from Europe. José seemed to have a reputation as an expert in his field, with his many clients greeting him by name. He started his trade in the 1990s, with a loan from a relative working in the civil service. Later, after the war finished, he managed to get a series of loans from a government-backed loan scheme to build up his business.

Despite the differences between these occupations, all of these men also relied on the contributions of other household members, particularly their wives, all of whom also worked in informal commerce; and also income from older children and other adults living in their household, usually also working in informal commerce – a strategy common to many urban settings in Angola (Udelmann Rodrigues 2007a). Several of these traders also supplemented their income with subsistence agriculture in plots in their home villages. This combination of livelihood activities was usually sufficient to feed and clothe household members and educate children, and the diverse set of incomes provided some protection against fluctuations in profits, and some flexibility in adapting to unforeseen problems.

On the other hand, all of the men I worked with complained about the unreliability of income, due to their inability to reliably predict how many customers they would have in even the near future. When describing their professions and their struggles to make a living, they used words such as ‘suffering’, ‘struggling’, ‘fighting’, and described trading as their ‘last resort’, all suggesting desperation and a sense of the precarity of their position. Not only could they not guarantee that there would be clients in the future, but a crisis could endanger their ability to meet even basic needs. Another word that these traders used to describe how they lived was the verb ‘desenrascar’. Honwana notes that her young Mozambican interviewees use ‘desenrascar a vida’ in a way that translates as ‘eke out a living’ in English (Honwana 2012:3), and these veterans used it in a similar way. For them, it represented a way of making a living that was unstable, where they were left to depend on their own wits and to improvise as best they could to survive in the short-term. Such improvising could involve resorting to acts which were less than legal. As Nando, a 38 year-old *kupapata* put it: “a thief robs to fill his pockets, but the one who robs to *desenrascar* is doing it to fill his stomach”. The instability of such livelihoods could put these men’s life projects in jeopardy in terms of being seen as capable breadwinners and authoritative heads of family, as discussed in the next chapter. Yet the occupations themselves were seen as undignified compared to other more dignified, modern and organised occupations, and to have corresponding effects for one’s identity, as I will now discuss.

4.3 Organisation, education, evolution: socio-economic stratification and its meanings

4.3.1 “A man shouldn’t limit himself in the area of work”: Occupation, morality and masculinity in the markets and beyond

Occupation was a key aspect of men’s identity, and the subject of much discussion. The men I worked with had a keen sense of who was better and worse off than they were.

When speaking of the fates of veterans upon leaving the army, sorrow was often expressed for those who had failed to establish a stable household and occupation, men who had to resort to begging and scavenging in rubbish, and were often said to be alcoholics. A less drastic instance of failure, but a failure nevertheless, were those who had not managed to make a stable living in the city, and so had returned to their home village to live off subsistence agriculture. Those who were scraping meagre existences through professions said to yield less income than market trading, such as the porters and cleaners working in the market, and sellers who hawked their products rather than having their own stall, were viewed with pity: “those ex-combatants who work as porters, their lives are really a drama. They don’t have anything in their life”, said José.

Stallholders took pride in their achievements in establishing their own businesses, and avoiding these less-preferable occupations. For most of these men, the story of how they established their stalls was a key point in their life histories, and a point of pride. It emphasised a number of virtues they possessed: they contrasted their achievements with those who did not manage to ‘organise’ themselves, and those who ‘do not have a plan’. ‘Organisation’, as I will discuss in more detail in chapter 7, was used in many senses, but generally represented a cluster of values applicable to both people and society, designating a ‘developed’ and ‘evolved’ person, and a society that was not ridden by ‘confusion’. Confusion was opposed to organisation and generally designated socially destructive conflict, disorganisation and material shortages, and was also considered contrary to the principles of a Christian society, and the concept was also mobilised politically to stigmatise opponents (see Pearce 2005; Schubert 2015b; Kapuściński 2001). ‘Organisation’ was also generally associated with urban living and development, and contrasted with the confusion and ‘backwardness’ of rural living.

The importance of ‘having a plan’ was related to the idea that these men were hard-working, which was also often mentioned as an important virtue. As João’s cousin, Eduardo, put it,

I was always taught that a man shouldn’t limit himself in the area of work. A

man should never be ashamed. What he can do, he should do. He can't say, 'I don't like doing this'.

Relatedly, the quality of 'dynamism' was sometimes mentioned as an attractive one, contrasted with 'apathy'. This message was reinforced in the churches I attended: In a Congregationalist service, my willingness to go to Angola to carry out a 'mission' was held up by a preacher as an example of the 'pro-activeness' that young people ought to exhibit (indeed, the ethic of hard work had been promoted by the Congregationalist church on the Planalto for many decades, as discussed in chapter 2). Idleness was spoken of as something that could corrupt one's morals and lead one astray. One of the benefits of going to church, Nando, a *kupapata* in his late 30s told me, was that,

It keeps you occupied [on a Sunday, most people's only day off] – you have something in the morning at church, and then a church activity in the afternoon. It stops you from going to the picnic and doing something stupid.

Laziness was said to be a quality of backward people without the 'capacity' to rise up, and who could easily spread 'confusion' in the form of conflicts or *feitiço* (witchcraft or sorcery) due to their sense of entitlement to a living without working. This was something particularly attributed to those who lived with UNITA during the war, by those who had lived in the city and spent most time in areas under MPLA government control.

Hard work was considered particularly important for men, for whom self-sufficiency seemed to be essential to a successful masculinity: as we saw in the previous chapter, for example, Vicente was willing to risk his life to avoid relying on his wife, by going out to work during UNITA's occupation of Huambo. Beyond self-sufficiency, it was also considered important for a man to be seen to be the main breadwinner for his household, something I will discuss more in the following chapter. Thus, stallholders saw their occupations as marking them out as possessing a number of desirable masculine qualities related to developed-ness, urbanity and moral integrity and respectability. Importantly, the manner in which these men thought their occupations ought to be conducted was not only about prospering for oneself or one's family, but emphasised the

importance of mutual assistance between colleagues. In the *cidade* market for example, they spoke of the “market family”, and of the importance of helping one another out: Looking after others' pitches if they could not attend the market on a particular day, telling each other where they were going if they left, contributing to funeral costs of colleagues' family members. Those deemed to be acting selfishly or deceptively were the subjects of disapproving gossip.

In spite of the pride that these men took in the successful and proper conduct of their work, none of these men were satisfied with their occupation. There was a common perception amongst them that the unpredictability of their income meant that life was ‘not organised’, despite their achievements in establishing a business. As Nando put it, “each one lives within his own somersault”, in a sometimes chaotic struggle together with his family to make ends meet. The lack of dignity this implied was often mentioned, as was the associated need for people to overcome their pride to engage in market trading. All of these veterans, as noted in the previous chapter, had left the army with the expectation that the state would provide a better profession than the one they were currently in: “After being in the army our hope wouldn’t have been this: selling here. After we finished a military career we were hoping we’d have a job, or at least good houses,” Geraldo, a 49 year-old seller in the city market said.

Stallholders’ common self-description as ‘unemployed’ implicitly and unfavourably compared their occupations with formal, salaried employment. Other options were sometimes mentioned, including the idea of developing their businesses to open a shop. Indeed, varying degrees of success and income were available through informal commerce, with one moneychanger in Alemanha market, called Abel, making enough money to be able to buy a brand new, expensive pickup truck. However, the most commonly expressed aspiration of the stallholders I worked with was to salaried employment. One veteran I interviewed, called Lionel, had formerly worked in the *cidade* market, but had left as profits declined after the end of the war. In 2012 he was working as a security guard. His complaints about his work were typical of those who had found some private sector employment:

For the slightest thing a security guard can be fired – they forget all the good things you've done, and just think about the one time that you got confused, and they fire you. It's not like in the public sector, where you have a guaranteed job, in the private sector they can fire you whenever they feel like it.

When these men spoke of their frustrated aspirations for employment, then, it was usually for state employment, which was considered more stable (although this sector was also known to be less than punctual in paying salaries) and thus to provide a more stable and 'organised' life (cf. Udelsmann Rodrigues 2007a who also suggests that a stable salary may be re-invested in informal commerce by other family members to “double” or “treble” the income). It was also seen as indicating a greater degree of urban integration, education and developed-ness, as well as a connection to the power and prestige of the state. Entering public sector employment was, however, now impossible for most Bicesse veterans, who were too old to enter the annual public sector recruitment round, and who had not, in any case, completed secondary education, which was necessary to stand any chance of success. Despite, or perhaps because of this, these men's failure to access such employment continued to rankle with them, and to inform their sense of their own status.

4.3.2 Urban space and housing

Occupation, then, was a central factor in determining one's identity in terms of socio-economic strata in Huambo, but was not in itself determining. A number of other elements could signify one's status, including one's housing and its position in urban space, one's means of transport, access to technology, wearable commodities and type of leisure activities - and all of these need to be taken into account to understand people's status (cf. Udelsmann Rodrigues 2007b).

For these veterans, moving out of the rented accommodation that most of them found after arriving in Huambo and having a house built was a vital step in demonstrating autonomy and economic stability and success, as well as bringing security and comfort

to themselves and their families. José took particular pride in a house he was building from concrete breeze blocks, and spoke of it at the end of his life story as a summation of his and his family's successful work, and of God's faithfulness in allowing them to avoid any disasters that could derail their economic progress:

We never had a job that could guarantee our economic life ... All of us are surviving from these small business deals, from which we get school fees, some small amounts for medication, and our family subsistence. And also, because God is very powerful, with those small amounts we also managed to buy some land ... in 2005, and then we gathered a small fund, and we started to buy some stones and some sand, and we are now in a phase of paving our house, of finishing it ... And for this we thank our Creator, who has provided life and health.

José spoke to me often of his work to build a house, and took me to see it. His pride seemed to come largely from its size and the fact that it was made from concrete blocks, what was known as a 'definitive house'. This was in contrast to a houses made from adobe blocks, which were often less robust and liable to develop structural problems – and in which most of these veterans lived. The standard of housing was something these men took pride in, or, more often, were ashamed of (as mentioned in the previous chapter, Jamba told me that he was too ashamed to show me his listing, adobe house). The amenities the house possessed were also important, in making everyday life easier and more comfortable, but also as indexes of a successful and dignified life. In particular, electricity and running water were lacking in the *bairros* of Huambo.

The *bairros*, where all of these veterans' houses were located, were considered in contrast to the centre of Huambo, the *cidade*. This division of urban space was loaded with meanings and whether one lived in the *bairro* or the *cidade* said a lot about the sort of person one was. Although, as Sandra Roque notes (2011), urban space in Angola is much more diverse than this binary classification suggests, these ideas powerfully shape conceptions of urban space. Huambo was constructed along lines of racial segregation, considered an exemplar of a European city by colonial authorities, with black people confined to the peripheral neighbourhoods of the city. Although this racial segregation was not strictly maintained in practice, with many poorer Portuguese people also living

in the outskirts (Neto 2012), the *cidade* has long been considered a signifier of social status and has been where political power in the city is concentrated. In these areas infrastructure was much better than the *bairros*: the roads were all paved, and there was running water and electricity from the city grid, albeit with intermittent failures. The police were said to be more present in the *cidade*, whereas in the *bairros* you were more likely to be a victim of robbery. For Jamba, the *cidade* was where “os bosses” lived, by which he meant bosses of lucrative businesses and powerful civil servants, who were also usually well-connected MPLA party members. Thus, the *cidade* had a political significance: it was associated with the MPLA, whereas I was often told that if I wanted to talk to people from UNITA, I would have to go to the *bairros*.

The *bairros*, by contrast, had a more rural air about them. They were often interspersed with small plots of crops, settlements were often reached by winding dirt paths, and you were more likely to encounter chickens and goats around people’s houses. The marked difference in embodied experience of being in the *bairro* rather than the *cidade* was often remarked on: the dust of the *bairros* in the dry season, and the mud in the rainy season; the frequent problems of subsiding houses and collapsing dirt roads and paths; the confusion of traffic and people moving along these roads, especially in *bairro* markets. When moving from the *bairro* to the *cidade* one would bring these markers along, for example with shoes and trousers powdered beige with dust. This dust would need to be cleaned off before entering a place associated with formality and developed life, such as a government building or a church. In the *bairro*, the vestiges of rural institutions were more likely to have survived: there were, for example, some *ovinganji*, the masked dancers discussed in the previous chapter, who still danced in some neighbourhoods, even though they were only considered “de recordação” - souvenirs. Similarly to Sandra Roque’s findings in the case of Benguela, the *bairro* represented an incomplete transition from the rural world, and was thought of as a place of relative non-development, lack of education and backwardness – and so not simply designating a space, but also associated objects, practices and types of people. The symbolic weight of this bifurcation was heavy, with one’s place of residence saying much about one’s degree of urban-ness, education, connected-ness with the outside world and one’s

developed-ness and organisation.

Nevertheless, as with profession, one's place of residence in the *bairro* or *cidade* was not determining for one's identity, and there were gradations of 'urban-ness' in the *bairro*: living at the side of main roads, which were paved, was considered preferable to living down a winding path further into the *bairro*. In addition, the pejorative representations of the *bairro* and the rural were both accepted and contested, often by the same people. Nando, for example, considered the life of the *bairros* to be the 'real' life of Umbundu people, something that those "working in offices in the *cidade*" could never understand. *Bairros* were considered important loci of identity and solidarity, with some having committees to improve the condition of the neighbourhood, and great pride being taken, at least by men, in the fortunes of a *bairro's* football team. Some, particularly middle-aged men, spoke of the need to maintain a 'balance' between their rural home villages and their city life, and thought that city life threatened moral degradation and dangerous regressions in 'civilisation', as well as bringing 'development'.

Modes of transport and other portable commodities could be used to demonstrate one's developed-ness, and one's familiarity with cosmopolitan references: mobile phones, tablets, computers, watches, clothing and sunglasses could all play a role. Of course, it is important to note that it was not simply the possession of commodities that indicated one's status: it was also about how objects were employed. In chapter six I will discuss two distinctive cultural styles of masculinity, in which I will discuss the use of commodities and the different gendered and ethical stances to the results of the social changes of war that they represented. However, for the purposes of this chapter I have outlined some of the broader, and broadly accepted, symbols of status in social stratification, and thus of social mobility. I will now move on to discuss some of the key concepts used in the problematisation of social mobility, how veterans responded to the ethical implications of the growing value of money as an indicator of social status, and the threats it posed for the successful execution of their own life projects.

4.4. The moral diagnostics of social mobility

4.4.1 Ocipulúlū: the love of money

These veterans often spoke of their life projects in progressive terms: speaking of their efforts to achieve “social evolution”, to “rise up”, to “develop”, to “organise” lives, and to “be someone”; and, conversely, to avoid lives that were “confused”, “go nowhere”, or that “head downwards”. Such efforts were broadly conceived according to the criteria of social stratification described above. Although, as noted in the previous chapter, most of these men spoke of their own social progress in the past tense and did not expect any drastic changes, they did expect further incremental progress for their families through the gradual accumulation of wealth from their businesses. Such wealth could be used to build a new house (as in José’s case), invest in one’s children’s education and professional future or the purchase of commodities.

Cristina Udelsman Rodrigues (2007b) argues that in the early independence period in Angola there was a ‘bipolar’ society, with membership of the politico-military elite largely determining opportunities for accumulation and social status. Since the emergence of the parallel, informal market during the one-party period and the shift to market economics in the 1990s, opportunities for accumulation are less restricted, and although political and racial criteria are still important, “agora o dinheiro é que está a mandar”: now, money rules (p.249). Similar phrases were also used by the veterans I worked with: “money speaks loudest”, and “money has most weight” were others. They also, often approvingly, spoke of the end of the one-party period and its economic restrictions as having made earning money easier. This, combined with the end of the war in 2002 had made rapid ‘development’ possible in Huambo since 2002, yet this development and the central role of money within it was viewed with pronounced ambivalence and anxiety.

Various explanations were given by these men for money's rising importance in people's motivations and aspirations. Since the end of the war in Huambo, there has been rapid rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, and growing business activity as it has become much easier to import goods into Angola's hinterland. Inequalities have consequently become much more visible in everyday life than they were during wartime, through the differential possession of commodities. According to these veterans, this has helped to produce a dangerous avarice in many people in the city, and in Angola more generally, and particularly in rural migrants arriving in the city. As Simao, a moneychanger, told me, people had come to the city to make more money than they could in the countryside, but when they got there they saw that some people made "really huge" amounts of money. They then want the same for themselves, but also realise that they are incapable of achieving this legally, "so they steal things at night", he said. Seeing extreme wealth was also made possible by the explosion of satellite TV in Huambo since the end of the war: people were witnessing opulent fantasy lifestyles in other parts of the world on television, and their desire for money and dissatisfaction with their own situation was said to be further stoked.

Another explanation for the rise of money's social importance was related to the state, as João outlined:

People just want to make money. This is partly to do with corruption: if you get accused of a crime and you are innocent, you will still be found guilty unless you pay – whereas the guilty man will get off because he pays. So people realised that you need money to do everything.

Beyond encounters with justice institutions, state 'corruption' was said to also extend to more commonplace functions of the state, with ubiquitous demands for a *gasosa* by civil servants, literally a fizzy drink but also a common euphemism for a bribe.

Needing money "to do everything" also had a more everyday sense, due to the decline of agriculture during the war and rapid urbanisation, discussed in the previous chapter. This change was particularly striking for those veterans who had grown up in rural areas

in families working in agriculture. Even though subsistence agriculture in many of these men's home villages had become possible again since the end of the war, most of their income came from commerce, a fact which was still striking for them. As Nando said,

It's not like in the countryside. Funje (maize meal) is in your pocket, water is in your pocket, your telephone [credit] is in your pocket.

Furthermore, beyond basic survival, one's position in socio-economic stratification, whilst also relying on aspects such as education, relied principally on monetary income and an occupation that would provide such income.

Last but not least, a spiritual explanation was given for the growing importance of money, and the decline of "brotherly love": people's lust for money was motivated by the devil. This argument was particularly emphasised by the Adventist men I worked with, such as Jamba:

Soldiers who were fighting were tricked – it was a war between brothers, pushed by people with a great ambition to be rich ... the Devil brings this ambition for money and power that the leaders strive for, and they tricked people into fighting and make them suffer because of it.

This argument was not only made by Adventists, however, and the more general idea that the civil war had been a "war of ambition" was widespread. The continuing and growing inequality between the party-state elite and the mass of the Angolan people, along with the oil-funded party-state's abrogation of its responsibilities to provide veterans with better lives were also attributed to an evil greed for money and power.

Veterans described the growing love of money, sometimes referred to as in Umbundu as *ocipulũlũ*,¹⁶ with deep unease, and a sense that money had become more important to people than their fellow humans. In one of many conversations with João about the high rent that my partner and I were paying on our rented annex, he railed against our

16 Childs (1949) translated *ocipulũlũ* as 'covetousness'; Bell (1922) defined it as 'greed' in his translations of 'Umbundu tales', in which the greedy often experience misfortune: these are cautionary tales warning against selfish avarice.

landlady and what he saw as the inflated rent she charged us, “She’s a bandit ... With Angolans it’s just money, money, money. They don’t see people, they just see money.” José, similarly, when one day I commented that Angola had developed quickly since the end of the war, replied, “yes, but there is no brotherly love here, people care about getting rich, but they don’t care about others”. A particularly visceral example of people’s lust for money was explained to me when the son of António, a 54 year-old veteran and *kupapata*, fell from his motorbike and required a blood transfusion. The city hospital was said to be paying blood donors just \$60 per litre for donations, but then charging desperate patients \$200 a litre when they required a transfusion. This appalled these men for two main reasons: firstly because hospitals were willing to let people die if they were unable to pay enough to give the hospital a large profit; and secondly because of the commoditisation of people’s bodily fluids by a supposedly caring institution.

Other threatening, embodied manifestations of *ocipulũlũ* suggested the sense of the existential threat that it posed to persons and bodies. Jamba often complained that farmers had forgotten that their vocation was primarily to feed their fellow men, and not to make a profit. This led them to use crops treated with chemicals to double their yields, even if the resulting food gave people ‘stomach pains’, and made children’s intestines ‘burst open’. As a result, he said, he would only eat ‘natural’ food produced in the *Quimbo* (a rural home village), and this caution extended to imported tinned food and frozen chickens. His concerns were partly related to his Seventh Day Adventist faith, where a strong link is made between bodily and spiritual health: Adventists follow similar dietary restrictions to practicing Jews, and the Adventist prophet Ellen White’s book, “A Ciência do Bom Viver” (“The Science of the Good Life” (White 1977)) was a big seller in Huambo, focussing on the “science of God” and living in “harmony with nature”. However, the food one ate was also related to one’s ethnic and regional identity. As João told me when discussing ‘tribalism’ during the war: you could tell that someone is not your ‘brother’, he said, if they looked at your food but did not join you in and eating it. “If they join in and eat with you, then they would not be asked for their identification, because you already knew that they are your brother”. Each region has its

different food, he said, the Umbundu eat *funje de milho* (maize meal) and the Kimbundu eat *funje de bombo* (cassava porridge). Thus the undermining of diet by a desire for profit did not just seem to pose threats to social order and peace, but also bodily threats, and threats to practices of commensality underpinning identities and solidarities.

If greed seemed to threaten to undermine the consumption of food considered traditionally Umbundu, it could also manifest itself through a practice associated with the negative side of tradition: *feitiço*, meaning witchcraft, or sorcery. *Feitiço* might be used, for instance, to steal money from someone without them noticing, or to murder a rival. Both instances were considered morally repugnant, lamentably backward and ultimately futile. As Vicente told me, *feitiço*'s effects only last a limited amount of time, and would ultimately end in ruin: it was much better to rely on the “*feitiço do trabalho*” - the sorcery of work - if you want to prosper, he said. Those resorting to sorcery were considered to lack the virtues of hard work, as well as being associated with evil spiritual forces and malignant actions, as I discuss further in section 4.2.

4.4.1.1 *The undermining of gendered age hierarchies*

A particular cause of worry amongst these men was the undermining of respect for elder men. All of these veterans were raised to believe that elder men were owed deference and respect, and in their own life projects strove to achieve the status of respected elder men. This was not simply related to physical age, but was a social achievement involving getting married, establishing a household with several children, and being seen to be the main breadwinner and authoritative head of this household. Beyond these achievements, this idealised gendered age hierarchy was legitimised by ‘the disparate possession of certain virtues’ (cf. Abu-Lughod 2014:175), in this case that of wisdom. Age was said to bestow ‘judgement’ (*juízo*) and ‘wisdom’ (*sabedoria*) on men, which characterised elders and morally justified their dominance of women and younger men. The twin institutions of the *ondjango* (men’s house) and the *evamba* (circumcision ceremony), described in the previous chapter, had the transmission of this knowledge from older to younger men as one of their central purposes. Yet despite their generally

successful struggles to perform this gender identity, many of these veterans felt that they were not being given the respect they deserved. As Lionel, a veteran a moneychanger, said:

Now, young people don't respect the elders. When an elder comes, they don't offer them a chair to sit on, and some even beat them. These things are going to ruin the country.

João linked this disrespect partly to the rising love of money:

P: People just want to make money ... it wasn't like that when I was a kid, but it's like that now.

JS: Do you think there's any hope for the future, for your children's generation?

P: No, because the elders fell into error during the war [in becoming corrupt and stealing money], and they won't be able to get out again now. The younger generation won't be able to change because they learn from their brothers.

Rather than waiting for age to give them status and respect, or applying themselves to their studies, young people were 'in a hurry' to gain the symbols of status and respect, he said, and might turn to 'delinquency' for that reason:

P: [U]s, as Africans, not all children like studying. Because they don't see what they gain ... [A teenager] thinks that this life of studying, this won't give me a better life ... 'maybe I won't manage to get that thing that I want, this is ruining my life'. Because they are in a hurry to have everything and they are in a hurry to do everything.

JS: Why do you think their generation is in a hurry and yours wasn't?

P: My generation, we grew up in a world where there wasn't what we're seeing now.

JS: Wealth?

P: Wealth, principally wealth. Since the peace there are many things, and so it's just money [that they want], but the father, the mother and the family aren't capable [of providing it]. I'd say it like this: I'm from a generation that never had cars, now all children want a car; they think, 'how am I going to manage to get this car?'

Thus, although these veterans were certainly influenced by the concepts of socio-economic stratification mentioned above when thinking of their own social progress, they also wanted the ideal gendered age hierarchies they learnt about in their youth to operate: they wanted to be respected because they were married elder men with relatively stable households. Not all young people were considered problematic for their parents. Many – including, for example, João's nephew Eduardo – were more invested in church life and the cultivation of a faithful Christian self, which often meant being more deferential to elders, and working hard at one's studies in order to achieve a steady job in the future. There was not, of course, a simple bifurcation between religious young people and delinquent young people, and many young people seemed to successfully combine being '*actualizado*' in the eyes of their peers with carrying out their filial role to the satisfaction of their parents. However, the problem of 'delinquency' and insubordinate children was often cited by these men as something that disturbed them. In post-war Huambo it increasingly seemed to them that 'money rules', and respect was aspired to by many according to the criteria of monetary wealth and the commodities and lifestyle that it could purchase. This seemed to threaten the social order, to "ruin the country", and to go against the discipline and deference that these men saw as vital to masculine personhood. Nando, when speaking of the *ondjango*, said,

They taught that each thing has its danger. You have to teach them these things early ... the 'jango helped with social conduct. A person has to be afraid of the future. If you're not scared of the future, you're not a person.

Indeed, several of these men harked back to the days of the *ondjango*, where respect for elders was taught, elders' wisdom transmitted to the younger generation, and food comunally shared so that no-one went hungry; and to the rigid and violent discipline of the *evamba*. They saw the disappearance of these institutions as having had a role to play in the disrespect of young people in the post-war period. This decline was enforced by wartime urbanisation: pressure on urban space and fractured rural communities meant the waning of the *ondjango*, and the danger of sending boys out to isolated rural areas for long periods to carry out the *evamba* was too great.

As Eric Gable has argued, ideas of modernity always implicitly evoke a past, and this past can be viewed with nostalgia and a desire for return, or denigrated and rejected. Modernity is usually viewed as a “vertiginous mix” (2002:576) of both progress towards a better future, and a return to a longed-for past. In the case of these veterans, the development that urbanisation has brought ‘social evolution’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘education’, a way of living and forms of knowledge that are considered more connected to a developed world ‘out there’. Yet at the same time it had resulted in some important moral regressions, including the growing lack of respect for elder men, which seemed to threaten a return to a denigrated, animalistic past. As João, when speaking of a fashionable embodied style for young men he called 'kudurista' – associated with the *kuduro style of music* – commented:

They're fools! I won't let my children have tattoos or weird haircuts, or have their belt hanging below their arses. This is inhuman, they're behaving like animals if they do this, if they show their arses. You have to study, and afterwards you have to get a job. None of the dirigentes [the country's leaders] have their trousers down below their arse. And if this generation starts wearing their trousers below their arse, what will happen in the generations that follow them? Their children will react against this style in more extreme ways, and in one or two generations, people will be walking around naked! When you grow up to be an elder, you can't have your trousers hanging around your arse – that's not the way to get respect, through superficial things. You have to show that you have wisdom.

Rather than trying to gain respect through certain embodied styles and the acquisition and display of certain commodities, these men felt that one should earn respect by gradually accumulating wisdom and adopting a more sober embodied style.¹⁷ These competing visions of masculine developed-ness and status were thrown into particularly sharp relief in conflicts between fathers and their children. As José said in despair,

There is a lot of change. We were born before the war and already had that as

¹⁷ Just as not all children were delinquent or insubordinate, not all middle-aged men adhered to the model of senior masculinity described here, based on soberness and wisdom – though the large majority of men I worked with did. Some were also more invested in a money-oriented, consumerist style of masculinity: these men are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

normality, and our elders taught us rules. But nowadays young people want all of the things that they see from outside, they want to experience them. So there's a lot of difference. Traditional institutions helped a lot in discipline – when you said in those days that something's bad, or that you shouldn't pass in that place, they would put it in their conscience. But now they say, 'that guy just talks rubbish, that guy is crazy, can't you see that this is outmoded?'

Thus, while these men accepted the factors underlying the broad status hierarchy outlined in section 3, including that money was an essential part of upward social mobility, they also feared the love money. It seemed to undermine fundamental moral principles such as respect for elders' wisdom and a willingness to work hard over a long period to gain a similar status, and they believed that chaos and social breakdown was threatened. The competing vision of modernity and status of their children seemed to jettison considerations for age and elders' wisdom in favour of the acquisition of money, the acquisition of commodities and the cultivation of 'uncivilised' embodied styles. When the love of money trumped solidarity and respect for age hierarchies, they also felt that the positions and the life-projects that they had invested in were under threat, and feared what the future might hold for them personally and for 'society' more generally.

Having examined in this section the condemnation of dangerous urges for monetary enrichment and attendant upward social mobility, in the next section I will outline the second main cluster of concepts that made up the social diagnostics of social mobility: the condemnation of those who would illegitimately seek to sabotage others' legitimate social progress.

4.4.2 Onyã: envious hatred

One evening, after watching one of Jamba's teams play in a football match in the local championship in their home *bairro*, I was chatting to two of the players when a disturbance erupted at one edge of the neighbourhood square. We walked over to the crowd of people that had gathered to watch two men, still yelling at each other, being dragged apart, and we asked one of the spectators what had happened. He explained to

us that one man had threatened to smash the windows of his neighbour's father's 'Hiace', the Toyota model of minibus that provides much of Angola's public transport, and which marks a step up in earning capacity from a market trader or *kupapata*. The man complained that the Hiace was causing 'confusion' in the neighbourhood. On hearing this story, my companions looked at each other and both said, 'inveja', meaning 'jealousy' or 'envy' in Portuguese. When I related this story to veterans in the markets, who were always keen for some neighbourhood gossip, most of them interrupted me before I could finish, shaking their heads and starting to complain about *inveja*.

People would often pair the word *inveja* with the word *ódio*, meaning hatred, seemingly because, when using the word *inveja* they were translating the Umbundu word *onyã*, which signifies a hatred for someone that one envies and a desire to destroy them, but not necessarily to take possession of what is theirs, as the term *inveja* might suggest. As outlined above, these veterans considered that the social progress they had achieved was down to their virtues of hard work, productiveness and organisation, and that others who had not made as much progress did not possess such qualities. Frustration and an unjustified sense of entitlement was said to lead such people to feel *onyã* towards those doing better than them. As Vicente put it,

There's always inveja, if you're in a good place, and the other feels like he's not in a good place, then he feels inveja towards you, because he'd like to be in your place, even though he doesn't have the capacity for it.

Such people were spoken of darkly, as being lazy, disorganised and apathetic, and of harbouring a dangerous malevolence which could express itself in "intrigue", malicious gossip and the sabotaging of one's social progress. A milder, everyday form of *onyã* was described by Eduardo, João's 24 year old nephew and fellow (non-veteran) market seller:

There are lots of people with inveja, even in the family. They don't manage to see someone rising up. Some families want a person to always be begging for a little potato ... The elders here [in the market], they say, 'this guy's single, he doesn't need the money, it's just for his girlfriends' but it's not. I'm young and I don't have a wife yet, but I need to organise my life while it's still early. Sometimes these elders, their words don't please me. Sometimes people will come and ask if

we have something, and they'll say 'no, we don't have it', even though I have it. It's because of inveja, they don't want the person to evolve, to rise up, it's really difficult.

However, *onyã* could take other, more dangerous forms. It might involve violence, as in the Hiace incident above, or worse, *feitiço*. As Nando told me,

At times the inveja that is more frightening, is that which kills you, or disgraces you. The one who just speaks, you discover that he has hatred but doesn't do anything to you, it's normal. Above all the person who doesn't like to see the other evolve. That one always has hatred.

JS: So the more frightening one practices feitiço?

Nando: Yes, because that one disgraces you. You get a disgrace that sets back your social evolution.

Such attacks, always anonymous, did not necessarily target individuals, but could target a family group. Nando explained about a *feitiço* attack he suffered, which resulted in a 'lack of blood', weakness and weight loss. It left him unable to work for over a year, wiping out his savings, requiring him to sell his motorbike, and only coming to an end when he consulted a diviner (*kimbandeiro*). Particularly because his mother was a widow, he believed, others resented that she might rise above them:

They didn't like to see me evolving, above all because if I evolve then my mother would also be doing well, she would be saved.

Such attacks were not often openly discussed, and those who did mention them to me were clear that they were only doing so because we had become friends. Nevertheless, the extent of the threat of *feitiço* was clear from the statements they made to me; indeed in the POEMA household survey of veterans in Huambo province (carried out in 2013 as part of the same project that funded this thesis project), of FAPLA veterans living in Huambo city, 10.6 per cent reported that someone in their household had been subject of a sorcery attack in the past year, and 11 per cent reported that someone in their household had been the subject of a sorcery accusation.

The concept of *onyã* has a longer history on the *Planalto*, and as discussed in chapter 2, sorcery and sorcery accusations have often been linked with jealousy and envy by social scientists working in the region. Childs (1949) noted four different terms associated with envy, two specifically for sexual jealousy, *esepa*, woman's jealousy; and *ukuelume*, jealousy on the part of a man (also noted by Hambly (1934)). *Onyã* he defines as jealousy and envy. While he does not link 'sorcery' accusations specifically with *onyã*, he mentions that accusations of sorcery (rather than sorcery attacks, as in these men's accounts) were often made against wealthier members of the community, and that there was a consequent fear of success. In the past, increases in social worries around 'sorcery' on the *Planalto* had been seen to express tensions associated with rapid social change in former periods - Edwards argued that Childs' (1949) findings about the problem of problem of envy and witchcraft was a phase associated with the tensions around the disintegration of old kinship groups (Edwards 1962). Pössinger (1973) noted that in agricultural clubs established in the late 1960s and early 1970s, accusations of witchcraft were made against more successful farmers by old chiefs and clan leaders disgruntled by their success (see also Heywood 2000). In 2012 such sorcery, as in many other places in Africa in recent years (Moore and Sanders 2001), was said to be becoming more common, in this case because of the *onyã* inspired by the rapid economic change and increasingly visible economic inequalities of post-war Huambo.

Feitiço and those who practiced it were considered as irredeemably backward by everyone who spoke of them and as always negative, no matter the type of *feitiço* employed - unlike, for example, on the Mueda plateau in Mozambique, where some sorcery was considered 'constructive' (West 2001). This perception of sorcery seems to have much to do with how it has been engaged by churches on the *Planalto*. The pernicious actions of 'witchdoctors' were strongly associated with a benighted and ignorant past by the influential Congregational missions (Ball 2010; Scott 1959) in the colonial period, and contrasted with the cleanliness and order of modern medicine. In church services of several denominations that I attended in Huambo, there were regular statements and sermons warning of the sinfulness and futility of *feitiço*. An implicit assumption in these sermons, and an explicit one in the narratives of these veterans, was

that church congregations included many closet *feiticeiros*, and the worry was expressed that this might be ineradicable, since it was a fundamental part of being 'African'. The construction of *feitiço* also contrasted sharply with the churches' vision of modernity and progress. In the past, as in 2012, churches on the *Planalto* emphasised the importance of order and organisation in society (Péclard 1999), and in individual believers' and their families' lives. In contrast, *feitiço* was associated with *confusão*, with *feiticeiros* being considered the archetypal *confusionistas* - those who bring confusion. This desire for order seemed to be particularly acute since the end of the war, with the war being considered a particularly destructive period of confusion, often considered to be literally Satanic.

The dangers of arousing people's *onyã* meant that some were nervous about others finding out how much money they had. Conversely, many of these men also had an intense curiosity about how rich others were and how they might have come by their wealth. On my return visit to Huambo in 2015, I met up with Flávio, who picked me up in a second-hand 4x4 car that he had bought shortly after I left in 2013. He told me that it had cost \$14,500. Surprised that he could have afforded such a car in that period, I indiscreetly speculated to him that his business must be going well. He looked uncomfortable and smiled tightly: "No, Johnny! I'm still dragging myself along". I raised the case with the men in *cidade* market to see if they could help me with the puzzle: how can a man with two wives in two different houses, with two sets of children, afford an expensive car when he runs a market stall for a living and complains constantly that he is barely surviving? João and his cousin Eduardo were initially helpless with laughter, so there was a delay in their response. João's brother Mario replied first: "just because he's only got a market stall, doesn't mean that he can't be an *empresario*". "Yes," I replied, "but why is he always saying how poor he is?" João had recovered, "maybe he's a thief," he joked, "or maybe he's an *onganga*". He went on:

It's like magic. African men get this money, and no-one knows where it comes from. It's not like in Europe, where you get a salary and you can see where the money comes from. They have money and no-one knows where they got it from ... People don't want others to know they've got money, because then they'll start

wondering how they got it. They might also start asking them for things.

Their response seems to be telling: first of all, the possible role of contributions from other family members to Flávio's respective households seems to be disregarded in advance – an issue I will discuss in the next chapter. Secondly, and more importantly here, Flávio seems to be caught in a tension between investing in a very public indicator of his wealth and success, and the need to deflect unwanted speculations about the extent of his wealth, and where he might have got it from. The acquiring of certain commodities could indicate success and certain personal characteristics and so was desirable; at the same time, however, the threat of *onyã* and its manifestations in intrigues, gossip or *feitiço* made conspicuous consumption dangerous, perhaps particularly if one had employed some of the shadier aspects of strategies to *desenrascar*.

4.5 Conclusion: Ethical problematisation and the moral diagnostics of social mobility

Anthropologists have long studied the varying ways in which the increasing importance of money has impacted social relations in different cultural settings in Africa (for example Bohannan 1959; Hutchinson 1996). The nature of this impact has usually been mediated by pre-existing, context-specific forms of exchange. As Bloch and Parry point out (1989), a common feature across contexts is the moral tension between the legitimacy of short-term, individualistic and acquisitive exchanges, and a cycle of long-term exchanges oriented to reproducing the social and cosmic order. While commoditisation and the use of money was already in full swing long before I arrived in the city, in post-war Huambo, practices of monetary enrichment and social mobility had come to seem, during the war and its aftermath, ethically problematic for the men I worked with, threatening both the gendered age hierarchies that they saw as the proper order of things, and presenting threats to their individual life projects. This simultaneously diffuse and personal threat of the love of money was compounded both by the threat of others' envious hatred, and the vexed play of display and secrecy that

this threat necessitated. The two concepts of *ocipulũlũ* and *onyã*, the former used to express the legitimate resentment of illegitimate and destructive lust for money; and the latter designating the illegitimate resentment of legitimate and constructive social mobility, made up a central part of the conceptual apparatus these veterans used for interpreting people's differential social trajectories. In this sense these concepts operated in a similar way to what Harry West describes as a 'social diagnostics of power' (2001:123), but acting in this case as a moral diagnostics of social mobility, a flexible idiom for probing the import of one's own and others' social fortunes, and whether they constituted socially constructive prosperity, or selfish and destructive prosperity, likely to bring ruin and divisiveness. *Feitiço* played a role in these diagnostics, and similarly to Todd Sanders' (2001) case in Tanzania, discussions of *feitiço* were about the morality of economic life: the anti-social extremes to which some were willing to go to get rich, undermining solidarities and what these veterans considered 'proper' hierarchies; and the dangerous hatreds that inequalities might provoke (Graeber 1996 makes a similar argument about love magic and interpretations of the morality of the exercise of power in Imerina, Madagascar). As is noted by both Sanders and West, the power of sorcery as a conceptual schema is its ambiguity and flexibility. When people spoke about *feitiço*, they were partly speculating on the hidden causes of others' prosperity, and the moral implications of these causes: did they suggest a malevolent anti-social hunger for money and status, or the result of honest hard work and 'capacity'? Was the precipitous drop in a family's economic fortunes the result of laziness and a lack of capacity to manoeuvre in the city, or the result of the envious hatred of a lazy, backward person full of hatred? In addition, in a context where the morality of social mobility was both hotly contested and in which the terms of this morality seemed to be under threat, these concepts were adapted to be used not only to interpret others' actions, but also to defend one's own. Thus, an accusation of being selfish and only motivated by money could be countered with an accusation of *onyã* against one's accuser, or vice versa.

The hierarchies sketched out in section 3 were broadly similar to hierarchies that Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues and Sandra Roque have posited for other Angolan contexts. For these men, though, who had lived most of their lives in a situation of rapid

and unsettling change, the concept of a hierarchy of status does not capture the dynamism and uncertainty of their experiences of economic life in 2012. Nor does it capture the contestation of just how monetary enrichment ought to translate into masculine prestige and respect, and in particular the ethical aspect of how economic lives were both practiced and assessed.

These two themes, of uncertainty and ethics, are important in two senses. Firstly, because status was not just assessed in terms of the practicing of certain occupations, the possession of certain commodities and where one lived. How one earned one's money, whether one shared the proceeds, and whether one treated one's colleagues with respect and in a spirit of mutual help, also had important consequences for how respect was gained. Secondly, because these men did not interpret social mobility and enrichment principally in terms of static hierarchies, but rather, as I have argued, by using concepts that were suited both to making sense of a situation of danger and uncertainty, and to defending their own moral standing as senior men. Lisa Lindsay and Stefan Miescher (Lindsay and Miescher 2003b; Miescher 2005) have questioned the applicability of Raewynn Connell's (2005) concept of a singular 'hegemonic masculinity' in Africa. They argue that it has often not been obvious which model of masculinity is dominant, and that we ought to be sceptical of attempts to put masculinities in hierarchies of importance. Rather, men often seem to negotiate between different models in a more fluid way than Connell suggests (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994b make a similar argument, though not limiting it to Africa).

Whilst the identification of 'models' or 'styles' is useful and revealing, and indeed was undertaken by veterans themselves, it is an aspect of the negotiation of gendered life that seems particularly suited to the classifying bent of academic observers. It leaves out the dynamic practice through which such attributions are made to particular people in the course of everyday life – what I have called, in this case, the moral diagnostics of social mobility, in an attempt to capture some of the fluidity that Lindsay and Miescher allude to. It might be argued that the men I was working with were facing a situation of particular uncertainty. Cherished moral criteria for judging economic behaviour and

masculine status were under threat and seemed to be dying out, leading to a particularly anxious contestation of the morality of economic life and the unknowable motivations of one's peers. This uncertainty was compounded by an older culture of secrecy and the occult around inequalities of wealth and status, which made desired displays of wealth dangerous, and people's life trajectories difficult to interpret. Nevertheless I would argue that for any context, the language of 'models' privileges an aspect of gendered life that is suited to an observer's perspective, and tends to neglect the inherent uncertainties of social life as it unfolds, and the concepts that participants use to negotiate it.

It is for similar reasons that I find the concept of ethical problematisation fruitful for analysing how particular domains of practice come to be viewed ethically. It emphasises not the identification of rigid codes or prohibitions, but the tracing of the contours of thought around a subject: how particular practices become “the object of worry, an element for reflection, material for stylisation” (Foucault 1997:35), and under what historical circumstances. Again, this is a perspective more suited to reflecting on the ambiguities and fluidity of social life as it is practiced, and that also, crucially, gives due weight to consideration of the historical conditions under which particular problematisations arise.

Having discussed in this chapter the ethically troubling role of money and how it impinged on veterans' efforts to perform senior masculinity, I will now move on in the next chapter to discuss the ethical problematisation of a related domain of practice: how money's changing valuation played into veterans' sexual relationships with women.

Chapter 5: “At the bottom of everything, it was a lack of economic means”: Love, money and masculine dignity

5.1 Introduction

Late one morning in the middle of July 2012, I was sitting with João in the *cidade* market. I had just arrived and we were both sitting on plastic garden chairs next to Eduardo, who was slumped in his seat, his head hanging back, uncomfortably asleep. As we were catching up on each other's news, a woman trader in the row next to us started laughing, and beckoned João over to tell him something. She was pointing out a woman going from stall to stall in the women's sections, offering them small bundles of sticks. João smiled and turned to me, asking whether we had 'paus' (sticks or twigs) in England too. I asked him what he meant, and he explained that the woman was selling twigs from a particular plant, to be crushed up by women and put in their husbands' food. This was said to make men obedient to their wives. The woman was causing a minor scandal in the usually tranquil market, with more and more heads turning towards her with shocked laughter. Perhaps noticing that she was becoming the centre of attention, the woman moved swiftly from stall to stall to make her offer, before leaving through the market's rear exit.

Raising this incident with other men, in that market and others, opened a rich seam of discussion around the lamentable backwardness and immorality of this type of *feitiço*. It was mostly greeted with the same mixture of disapproval and amusement that greeted the woman seller in the city market, and *feitiço* was pronounced by all of the men I worked with to be 'backward' (*atrasado*), and to belong properly in a primitive past. It was called 'shameful', and 'the mark of the African', with 'African' used in a pejorative sense to denote a primitive and savage past, tied up with one's fundamental 'African-ness', and thus perhaps ineradicable. One man described it as 'the accumulated rubbish of history' - belonging in the past, but built up over time, piling up in the present and

undermining attempts to ‘develop’, and to leave an unwanted past where it belonged.

Such *feitiço* was used because Angolan women were ‘backward’, and had a ‘very low culture’. The women who did this were not Christians, and had ‘manias’; this was the opposite of love. Some said that such women wanted to have affairs with lots of men and get away with it, that a man could never be sure who his children really were. Others said that these women were afraid that their husbands would abandon them, leaving them with large numbers of children that they would be unable to support. Or perhaps husbands kept beating their wives, or were having affairs. In any case, instead of being ‘nice’ to their husbands to improve the situation, they resorted to *feitiço*. Veterans spoke with frustration and some fear about the side-effects that these twigs could have: a man would become stupid, soporific, and good-for-nothing, they said. It would ruin his mind and his body, he would become thin, with a large protruding belly. And he would become humiliatingly pliable to his wife’s demands: “he would even wash underwear!” one man exclaimed, aghast.

The type of *feitiço* associated with *onyã* that I discussed in the previous chapter was not clearly gendered, perhaps because the perpetrators always acted anonymously. The type of love magic described here, though, was only used by women, specifically within marriage, and was only spoken of as being used to combat men's supposed dominance within marriages. The generic form of this use of *feitiço* and men's reactions to it were suggestive of views of how the conduct of marital relations were seen as potentially problematic. The normative expectation that men were or ought to be dominant was there, as well as the fact that this dominance was often abused by husbands, and contested by wives. The implied sense of insecurity felt by both husbands and wives is pronounced, and something of the venom that husbands directed towards wives that threatened their dominance. The accusations men made express several ideas about women, and about marriage: the idea that women of their generation were more likely to be backward than men, particularly those who would seek to deviously use hidden powers to undermine men's power, and the integrity of marriage. They lacked love for their husbands and acted from other motives, in a way that was incompatible with

Christianity (which was certainly not backward). As so often, then, accusations of being 'backward' were also accusations of being morally deficient – in Christian terms, but also in terms of older views of the malevolent use of hidden powers.

Most of all, though, all of these accusations, and the passion with which they were often made, point to one thing: that men, in spite and because of their supposed dominance in the household, were actually acutely vulnerable to their wives' actions, who could disobey and so publicly shame them. The vision of a man washing underwear, or of a stupid, passive, good-for-nothing man, contrasted markedly with their idea of an authoritative senior man, and what they thought a loss of authority in the household could do to his dignity. And what was implicit in these conversations was that the way a man was most likely to lose authority was through a failure to earn enough to provide for his family.

This chapter takes on from the last one, and examines how the precarious economic situation of veterans shaped their relationships with their wives, and the threats posed to veterans' efforts to perform senior masculinities. I will focus on how the conduct of conjugal relations was ethically problematised in this context. This problematisation was related to that discussed in the previous chapter – in particular regarding the rising social value of money, and how desires for money were seen to be undermining people's ethical duties to others. In this chapter I will particularly focus on views of the proper role of money in the household and in mediating relations between senior men and their wives. These views involved assertions about the duties of husbands and wives, and what transgressions might suggest about the character of the transgressor.

The moral categories discussed by men as they discussed their marriages, however, were not only those of duties, virtues and transgressions, but also ones that I gloss as dignity and shame. In these moral categories morality and power relations were tightly intertwined. Anita Jacobson-Widding follows Piers and Singer (1971:23, cited in Jacobson-Widding 1997) in defining shame “as arising out of a tension between the ego and the ego-ideal” (1997:50), as distinct from guilt, which they define as “a tension

between the ego and the super-ego” (1997:50). Jacobson-Widding takes this to mean that guilt is related to conscience, an inner state of a person constructed as an ethically autonomous individual; whilst dignity and shame are related to one's success or failure in living up to the expectations of one's social position. I follow her in these definitions, though not in an assumption “the person” in Huambo is considered to be “*just* a representative of a particular social category” (1997:53, my emphasis) as she considers to be true for the Fulani. Rather, I would argue that marriage, as an archetypal illocutionary ethical act (Lambek 2010b), marks the passage of boys to a new type of moral personhood with new moral duties: that of the husband-father-provider. As I will also argue, however, this was not the sum of these men's moral personhood, nor the capacity in which they always acted. It was however a vital part of their identity as male elders, in that its loss could affect several aspects of their identity and reputation. Similar to Bourgois' crack dealers in New York (Bourgois 2003), there was a powerful inherited idea of a potent *pater familias*, whose dignity is defined around the respect given him by his wife and abundant children. This was in turn linked to his ability to provide economically for them, in precarious contemporary conditions where the difficulty of earning a stable income made his dignity correspondingly insecure.

Jacobson-Widding's argument about dignity can be related to a similar argument that Michael Herzfeld (1980) makes about the comparison of nuanced local moral categories frequently glossed as “honour” and “shame” in so-called Mediterranean societies: that what such categories broadly have in common is not that they relate directly to wealth, but are about social evaluation, and the ability to live up to people's expectations. Such expectations will vary in different communities, he argues, according to perceptions of wealth, by gender, according to the particular political economic context in which judgements are being made, and prevailing kinship norms. In the case of the veterans I worked with in Huambo, being respected as a senior man involved being able to cultivate a reputation as an authoritative head of one's household, and to be able to at least secure the cooperation of one's wife in this regard. Veterans did not have an overarching term for the sentiments evoked by the prospect of failing to maintain such a reputation, but it was plain that they viewed it as a humiliating failure to live up to what

was expected of them. I therefore speak of these sentiments in terms of dignity and shame.

In conceptualising how veterans attempted to maintain their masculine dignity through the conduct of their marriages, I will also turn to Henrietta Moore (1994), and her argument about the relationship between gender identity and power. People have “fantasies of identity” (1994:63) – of the type of person they would like to be, and to be perceived as being, with the term “fantasy” denoting the subconscious and affective dimensions that lead people to invest – practically and in terms of cathexis – in certain gender identities. These fantasies of identity are also fantasies of power, however, for two main reasons. Firstly, because taking up particular gendered cultural styles is not simply about self-identity, but also about intersubjectivity: subject positions are understood in relation to one another. Therefore, successfully occupying a particular subject position may rely on other people taking up complementary subject positions, who may by changing their subject position imperil one's own identity and reputation. Secondly, because taking up a particular gendered subject position may offer one social advantages that come with gaining a particular reputation. Thus for the men I worked with, maintaining their masculine dignity meant successfully securing the cooperation of their wives in maintaining men's reputation as heads of their household. In turn, failures in this respect could mean both feelings of shame, as well as concrete losses of respect and deference in their everyday lives¹⁸.

Although the sexual relationships that these men engaged in hardly began and ended with marriage, almost all of the men I worked with considered marriage an indispensable requirement for being considered a respected adult man. Some accounts see marriage as a key signal and practice of the ‘reintegration’ of African veterans into civilian communities (cf Schafer 2007), and getting married was indeed one of the most urgent priorities for most veterans upon demobilisation, essential for building their new

18 My conceptualisation of dignity is thus different from Steffen Jensen's (2008). Jensen sees dignity as something that only becomes an issue when “domination produces humiliation” (p.10) - and not something of which one is conscious in the everyday. For the men I worked with, dignity was not only related to domination by powerful others, but also to progression through an idealised gendered life course, and thus a constant work in progress.

civilian life and making up for what they saw as lost time in the army (as discussed in chapter 3). Being a husband for these veterans crucially entailed being the authoritative head of their household, and as they aged, the respected authority in their broader family, too. This authority was tightly bound up with a provider identity – being seen as the main earner of income in a household was crucial to their predominance. Upon demobilisation, veterans found that their ability to take up this position was threatened by the fact that women who had stayed behind had already learnt how to trade and begun to provide for their families, while veterans were left trying to catch up. Despite all of them since establishing businesses of their own, the instability and paucity of their income created great anxiety for many around their ability to continue to perform the role of primary provider. This role could come under threat from a number of directions: a man could fail to fulfil his wife's lifestyle expectations or desire for consumer goods and comfort, he could fail to meet basic needs due to fluctuations in income, his wife could mismanage household income, or she could start out-earning him, thus undermining his authority in the household and how he was viewed beyond the household.

In this context I will look at the problems encountered, or at least feared, by most of the men I worked with in this regard (the following chapter will consider the adoption of different cultural styles of masculinity in reaction to these problems). In the next section I will tackle some methodological and conceptual problems with analysing conjugal relations. I will then briefly outline the various ways marriage might be defined in Huambo, how men choose partners, the stages of the marriage process, and the process of divorce. I will then outline the main features of the 'vernacular' of marriage that was shared by all of the men I worked with despite the diversity between them, before discussing the various threats posed to their ability to maintain the role of husband-provider in an uncertain and unequal economy, including the moral categories that were used to problematise them.

5.2 ‘Everybody knows’: the play of privacy, secrecy and display in the anthropological study of marriage

In Philip Roth’s novel *The Human Stain*, the narrator takes to task a Judith Butler-touting literature professor, Delphine Roux, who has sent an anonymous note to a disgraced professor, claiming that ‘everyone knows’ that his relationship with a much younger, illiterate university cleaner is grossly exploitative. The narrator responds as follows:

[W]e don’t know, do we? Everyone knows... How what happens the way it does? What underlies the anarchy of the train of events, the uncertainties, the mishaps, the disunity, the shocking irregularities that define human affairs? Nobody knows, Professor Roux. “Everyone knows” is the invocation of the cliché and the beginning of the banalisation of experience.

(Roth 2001:208–9)

This passage struck me as I was attempting to interpret the data in my fieldnotes and interviews about veterans’ marriages, and as I recalled my attempts in the field to get as rounded a picture of marital relationships as I could. This was partly because, as a Judith Butler-touting academic myself, its attack on gender studies and identity politics seemed to be a bogus defence of powerful, older white men’s privilege. At the same time, however, it encapsulated the difficulty I was having in writing about marriage. In any context there are scenes that an anthropologist can observe, and others that remain hidden and inaccessible. This is perhaps a particular problem with the analysis of marriage and sexual relations despite variations in what is kept hidden and what is made public, and the emotional charge and import of sexual relations. In many contexts they involve, as Hunter puts it, “moments of deep intimacy and pleasure” (Hunter 2009), moments which are key to understanding conjugal relations, and which happen ‘off-stage’.

In the past 20 years or so, a large and rich literature has emerged on the theme of love and money in Africa, but not much of it refers to the fiendish difficulty of making claims to knowledge about how informants’ sexual relationships are actually conducted.

One set of difficulties involves the setting in which narratives about sexual relations are related, and how the anthropologist is perceived as an interlocutor. Much of the material I am relating in this chapter was related to me in market settings in conversations between men, either in the course of the day-to-day interactions I had with men, as well in more formal life history interviews – usually also carried out in markets. How I was perceived, of course, clearly shaped the accounts I was given by veterans. Many assumed that, being white and married, I was religious and respectable, as well as a representative of a more ‘equal’ and ‘organised’ European society – where housework, income generation and household expenditure are more equally distributed. This seemed to lead some of the men I worked with, especially in the early stages of my fieldwork, to give me politically correct versions of their relations with their spouses – focussing on presenting a respectable vision of themselves, seemingly oriented by Church teachings – based on what they thought my expectations were of them. Some others were more forthright, having a similar vision of me as respectable, but happy to contradict what they thought were my expectations, thinking European sexual mores and apparent aspirations for gender equality to be ridiculous. Still others projected a different vision of a European male on to me: I must be there to make money, and I must be keen to take advantage of the assumption of wealth that went along with whiteness in order to sleep with lots of Angolan women. They would therefore proudly and loudly relate stories of their sexual adventures and misadventures, apparently hoping to shock and impress me.

It is common practice in Anthropology to say that such expectations of the anthropologist, which shift over the course of periods of fieldwork, provide interesting insights into informants’ views of, in this case, white people and the world ‘out there’ (Masquelier 2009), as well as their visions of respectability. However, they also make the interpretation of their narratives difficult if the objective is to discuss men’s actually practiced relationships with their wives and lovers. While in one sense they are statements about their wives and lovers, in another sense they are oral performances of masculinity related between men, and often to an audience of several men in the case of my fieldwork. As in the case of a US American man who, in the act of having sex with a woman could only think of telling his male friends about the experience (Kimmel 2008,

cited in Karioris 2014) such narratives often tell us as much or more about social connections between men as they do about heterosexual relations (Karioris 2014).

This is further complicated by the fact that in the conduct of sexual relations themselves, the strategic use of secrecy and display, discretion and indiscretion were crucial to veterans' conduct of their relationships, and the conditions of uncertainty and ignorance that conditioned how they navigated them. The inability to know what their wives were doing behind their backs, who the biological fathers of their children might be, and their efforts to keep affairs secret or make sure they were seen, were for these men all part of trying to successfully 'bring off' their performances of particular identities (Ferguson 1999) to maintain the dignity and authority of senior men and thus were also part of power struggles between lovers. They might also, as Harriet Lyons suggests, be readable in terms of how experience is shaped by culture (Lyons 2014). However, since reputation and dignity was so important to the men I worked with, close attention is needed to the immediate context in which statements were made and the ongoing social relationships between interlocutors that they fed into. For these reasons, I will focus predominantly on the styles of masculinity that veterans were performing as they made statements about their relationships with women, and will largely leave open the question of how these relationships were actually conducted.

With this in mind, in this chapter I will analyse the narratives that men recounted in various settings about their relationships with their wives and other women, and it should be borne in mind that the perspective offered here is a male-centric one. Nevertheless, I will contextualise such narratives in a number of ways. Firstly, I will frame them in the situations in which they were recounted as well as in the flow of ongoing relationships they formed a part of, with me and other interlocutors. I will also contextualise them in the broader styles of masculinity that individual veterans performed, in order to demonstrate how they articulated with their overall self-presentation in the settings in which I socialised with them.

5.3 ‘Marriage’ and ‘living maritally’ – how marriage is achieved in Huambo

On one of my early visits to see José it was my 33rd birthday, and he mentioned, as many people did, that this was the ‘age of Christ’ and also mentioned that it was at this age that he had got married. I asked him how old he was, and he said he would be 50 that year. When I complimented him by saying that he looked younger, he went to get a laminated copy of his ID card out of his jacket to prove I was wrong. On the card, his date of birth was as he said, but his marital status was marked as ‘single’. He laughed when I questioned this, and said that even men of 80 had ‘single’ printed on their ID cards, because no-one could afford the fee required to have their marriage registered with the state. This was true of all of the men I worked with, meaning that in practice, neither getting married nor getting divorced had much to do with the state, although state legislation on inheritance and child maintenance payments was considered relevant, as I will discuss below. Economic barriers also prevented many veterans from getting married in church, mainly because of the cost of the party they would need to pay for after the ceremony. José, Vicente and few of the other more religious men had been married in church. Most of the men I worked with had not married their current spouses in church, though some had this as a vague future objective.

A wedding ceremony and the following celebration was considered the final stage of a three-stage process. The first stage was the *apresentação* – the presentation – where the man would present himself and his family to his prospective bride’s family. Most of the men I worked with had either married someone from a nearby village or neighbourhood, a distant relative or cousin, with their parents having had an important influence on their choice (though many now spoke of cousin marriage as outdated and especially unsuited to city life). ‘Cousin’-marriage was generally explained as a way of ensuring that the bride was not from a bad family (especially a family of *bruxas* – witches – a tendency said to run in families), and to make the restitution of property easier in the case of divorce. The second stage was the *alambamento*, which was the proposal of marriage, in which the groom’s family would have to bring a number of gifts and cash to the bride’s family, in fulfillment of a list of requests from the latter. This was said by the men I

worked with to include items such as a suit and pair of shoes for the father, cloth, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks and cash.

Many also mentioned, however, that the demands that people made for the *alambamento* had grown in recent years, so that people might demand, for example, a truck full of sand to build a house, or a generator. Many expressed unease with this perceived trend – my landlady, an Angolan businesswoman in her 50s, called it an “invented tradition”, saying that the *alambamento* gifts used to only have symbolic value. Several others claimed it was a tradition “from the north” of Angola, particularly from Bakongo areas, that had gradually gained influence in the south. The exchange of large amounts of money and consumer goods seemed to some to have commoditised the exchange. One widowed mother of a 21 year old woman went so far as to say that she would refuse *alambamento* gifts for her daughter, since she thought that with the gifts now being so large, it would be like “selling” her daughter, who might then be mistreated.¹⁹

Nevertheless, this was the stage of the marriage ‘process’ that most of the men I worked with had got to, regardless of how religious they were. Whilst they considered the process to be in some sense incomplete, they still considered themselves to be definitively married, though some would term this arrangement as ‘a viver maritalmente’ – ‘living maritally’. In spite of this slight equivocation, such an arrangement was taken to imply cohabitation, the raising of children and sexual fidelity, with the marriage agreement witnessed by the two families involved, without direct intervention or registration by an outside authority. Polygamy was practiced by few men, but was perhaps the most heavily stigmatised aspect of all associated with ‘traditional’ Umbundu culture, and was condemned by all churches (and had been outlawed by the colonial authorities Neto 2012).

Several of the men I worked with lamented perceived high rates of divorce in Angola,

19 A statement that seems to be both a criticism of the commoditisation of the *alambamento*, as well as being perhaps a religious criticism of the institution in its traditional form, the woman being a devout Jehovah’s witness (see Valente 1985 for a similar critique from a Catholic point of view).

and the extent of marital discord in general. A sure sign that a marriage was in trouble was taken to be when a wife left the marital home to go and stay with her matrilineal kin for a while. In such cases it was often considered that a meeting of the broader family should be held, for each spouse to give their version of events, and the elders of the family to seek to provide a solution. In addition, many churches had nominated members who provided counselling to couples who were considering divorce, to try to resolve disagreements and promote forgiveness and reconciliation between spouses. Failing this, couples could separate, and the number of divorces seemed to most of the men I worked with to be increasing. One of the principle questions to be resolved upon divorce was custody of children, and the most common outcome was said to be that children would remain with their mother. This arrangement could become particularly problematic in the case of remarriage, when it was often said that the new spouse (of either gender) might be unwilling to have the other's children living with them, and even that the children might not except their stepfather's authority and physically abuse him.

5.4 Marriage and the achievement of senior manhood

Despite the diversity of attitudes and practices related to marriage amongst the men I worked with, there were several ideas about marriage that were common to almost all of them. Perhaps the most prominent idea was that being married was an essential achievement for all of them, and essential for being considered a respected adult male. This is, of course, an idea with a long history on the *Planalto*, and an idea which is common to many African settings, whether amongst veterans or not. Much writing on soldiers and veterans in Africa has taken up the subject of marriage, and in some areas barriers to marriage, and thus to adult manhood, seem to be key motivators for young men to join armed groups in the first place (Vigh 2006; Richards 2006; Humphreys and Weinstein 2007) and in some armed movements wives were 'offered' to fighters as a form of patronage by commanders, whilst wives also used marriage with commanders as a tactic to gain relative protection (in the case of UNITA see Stavrou 2004; in the

case of Uganda, see Annan et al. 2010). In other settings there is a sense amongst veterans that their lives have been put on hold by military service (e.g. Mann 2003) and marriage is a key challenge for them to establish a civilian life as a respected adult man – with veterans struggling to raise the money to pay bride-price and to support a household by themselves, as Schafer describes in Mozambique (Schafer 2007; and as has been found in several other contexts amongst veterans and non-veterans Sommers and Uvin 2011; Honwana 2012). Schafer also argues that marriage was a key practice of ‘reintegration’, since veterans had to negotiate with communities to accept them as husbands, approve the marriage and accept the children as belonging to the father’s lineage rather than the mother’s.

Similarly, in the case of the veterans I worked with in Huambo, most of them had marriage as a key priority when they left the army, and some, including Vicente and João, managed to get special dispensation to visit home and get married before the end of their service. The extent of contact that soldiers had with civilian women varied by area of service and the period in which they were serving, but many FAPLA soldiers were isolated from civilians in the 1980s since much of the fighting happened in the countryside, away from large population centres. This was an experience some found very difficult, with António (a 54 year-old *kupapata* and veteran), for example, describing not seeing any women as a ‘crisis’, and the major reason he did not return to the army after treatment on his injured knee. In contrast to many other contexts, none of these veterans reported any difficulties in finding a spouse. This may have been because, as mentioned above, passing through the *alambamento* stage was considered enough to be definitively married. Also, as António told me, people were willing to lower expectations for the *alambamento* during wartime, with his first wife’s family accepting just two large bottles of home-made banana wine as bride-price. In addition, many veterans noted that there was a relative scarcity of men in their generation compared to women, since so many were killed in the war (as mentioned in the thesis introduction, a nationwide well-being study conducted in 2010 found that in the 50-54 age group in urban areas across Angola there are 80 men for every 100 women Instituto Nacional de Estatística 2010).

The status of being a husband implied also being a father. A marriage that did not produce children was not considered a valid one, and could be annulled. A husband was expected by all of the men I spoke to, to be the head of his immediate family, and to be obeyed by his wife and children – and failures of children and wives to obey their husbands were, accordingly, frequently deplored. As a man aged, they expected also to become an authority figure in the broader family, especially if they were the oldest male sibling. As Jamba put it:

My mother depends on me – she's not living in an old people's home, she's living in the house I built for her. And I have brothers and sisters who see me as a father – even my older sister. When they have problems, it's me that has to deal with them. That's why I'm the government in the bosom of my family.

This authority however, was seen to be crucially tied up with a man's ability to be the main provider for his family. Any suggestion that he was failing to provide adequately or that he was depending on his wife was seen to imperil this authority, and his dignity as a senior man. Some veterans had to struggle to catch up with their wives after they left the army, since women had already managed to learn the skills of commerce in the wartime urban setting. As Vicente recounted (and discussed in chapter 3), he was even willing to risk capture and execution by UNITA to avoid being dependent on his wife, and to establish his position as the household's main breadwinner. The need to be a provider was not merely about dignity, though, it was also in another sense seemed to be a moral duty that a husband ought to carry out – and one that partly demonstrated some of the qualities alluded to in the previous chapter, of hard work, organisation and an ability to survive in the city – but also the qualities of wisdom and good judgement that were considered essential for *mais velhos* – male elders.

Performing the role of an authoritative husband, then, had three crucial components: living maritally with a woman, producing children with her, and being seen to be the main provider for the household. As Andrea Cornwall notes (2002) it is important in the analysis of marriage to examine the elisions and dissonances between 'man' and

‘husband’, and ‘woman’ and ‘wife’ in order to examine how gender discourses may, for example, associate women overwhelmingly with marriage and sexual relations, thus masking other aspects of their identities. In this case, there was an elision between the identities of husband, father and provider, each implying the others, and all being indispensable to being respected as a male elder.

The dignity of husbands also relied on a particular division of labour within the household. When I asked veterans what their wives’ role was in the home, they all replied that she would cook, clean, wash clothes, fetch water and look after the children, usually with the assistance of older children, and especially girls after the age of about ten (whether children of the couple, or young cousins and nephews). They were aware that these roles are not so clear cut in Europe, and some guffawed at the idea that men in Europe might do some of these tasks. If a man were to wash clothes in Huambo, one *kupapata* told me, people in the neighbourhood would be talking about him, and even his wife would not like it – presumably because of what an effeminate husband might imply about them as wives. When asked what the man’s role was, most were again quite straightforward in replying, ‘buscar comida’ – literally, ‘fetching food’, but also mentioned the need to teach children, and especially boys, discipline. All of these men’s wives also earned money, however, and most of them also worked in markets. Most veterans reported a degree of economic cooperation between husbands and wives which seemed to work well – they might lend each other money to help with business investments, seen by some as a rare way to borrow money from someone without having to pay a high rate of interest – a service that market colleagues, for example, were unwilling to grant each other. Most of these men seemed to think that it was more usual for the husband to earn more, however, and that the loans would therefore mainly be from husbands to wives. There was not a clear pattern in terms of how purchasing responsibilities were reported with it often said that each partner contributed as need arose, though in general men claimed that they were more responsible for saving for larger purchases such as land, house building and vehicles.

Finally, although the extent to which these men emphasised ‘love’ as a primary aspect of

marriage varied, all of them thought that a couple ought to get married out of sentiment, rather than out of a desire for money. Unlike in many other contexts in Africa, where money is seen to varying extents and in various ways to be expressive of love (Cole and Thomas 2009; Hunter 2009; Masquelier 2009; Cornwall 2002), none of the men I spoke to expressed such an opinion in their narratives about marriage. These veterans considered it common for women to marry for money, and for money to be involved in sexual exchanges with women outside marriage, without these women being stigmatised with labels such as 'prostitute' (as love has been seen in many contexts in Africa to fall somewhere between sentiment and interest Vaughan 2009). However, having money as a primary motivation in marriage and affairs was seen by veterans as improper, and a moral defect in the women who were so motivated. There was thus something of a double standard in their narratives: the respect men expected and the authority they hoped to wield in the household was justified by their ability to provide for the members of that household. However, if the ability of men to provide economically appeared to be a woman's overriding motivation, she was considered in some way devious or deceptive: marriage was not considered by these men as a morally legitimate way of accessing wealth, and wives ought to have affection for their husbands and be open with them.

5.5 Precarious providers and backwards wives

The men I spoke to generally gave me the impression that their marriages were working satisfactorily for them, and claimed that their wives were also happy with them. Certainly, levels of hostility and discord did not seem to be as pronounced as they have been reported in some other African contexts (Silberschmidt 1999; Ferguson 1999). All the same, when conversation turned to the management of money in the household, many expressed worry and frustration about struggles with their wives around money, and the potential economic and reputational damage that could result from them. Indeed, what was made plain by these accounts, and what is masked by the short time frame of many studies on veterans in Africa, is that marriage is not a once-and-for-all achievement but a site of constant struggle and negotiation, and an arrangement that can

be “undone” as well as “done”, particularly in contexts where economic means are limited and unpredictable.

The relentless, precarious struggle to *desenrascar a vida*, detailed in the previous chapter, meant that economic shortfalls were never far away, and could be provoked by a decline in clients, an unexpected expense or by wives’ irresponsible management of household resources. Economic problems could thus result *from* a husband’s failure to exert authority over his wife, but men also feared that they could result *in* a loss of authority over their wife and over their children, which could in turn become public knowledge and lead to a loss of respect and authority in other areas of their lives. In short, their ability to progress economically, their authority over their families, and their identity as respectable senior men were bound up together. This picture is further complicated by the earning power of wives. Since authority in the family was so tied up with the ability to be the main provider, men feared women’s ‘disobedience’ if they were to start earning more than their husbands, as well as a public loss of face at being displaced as the main authority figure in their families. As in many other African contexts (Mills and Ssewakiryanga 2005; Hunter 2009; Masquelier 2009), as well as further afield (see Hossain and Kelbert 2014 for a study covering a range of developing countries) the idea of the male breadwinner was strong, even though men’s ability to live up to it was increasingly eroded by the vicissitudes of informal trading livelihoods that were increasingly being undermined by the growth in formal businesses, and the entry of women into trading. As has been noted by other researchers in Africa (Cornwall 2003; Lindsay 2007) while a breadwinner model of masculinity gives men the potential to dominate their wives, it also makes them vulnerable and gives their wives significant bargaining power.

When I first asked Jamba about spending patterns in his household, it was the end of the day in the market, and he and his nephew Flávio had packed up their stall and were waiting for the stevedore to come and pick up their goods to take back to the warehouse. Jamba at first looked bored and tired, and gave me a calm and diplomatic answer, staring off into the middle distance. He painted a picture of organised and peaceful

arrangements between spouses, even claiming that a wife earning more than her husband is not necessarily a problem, perhaps mindful that gender relations are more 'equal' in Europe (as many of these men presumed), and not wanting to offend my sensibilities. However, after he had finished his explanation I told him that I had heard some people say that a wife will sometimes spend money on 'her' family – which was generally intended to mean her matrilineal relatives, especially her brothers and uncles. The tone of the conversation suddenly shifted, and Jamba began to raise his voice, looking me in the eye, animated and angry. He asked how the household ('a casa') is supposed to get to the end of the month if the wife is spending money outside the house, on 'her' relatives. He quickly got onto the topic of his ex-wife, saying that he would give her money for her to hold onto until they needed it, for some specific household purchase, or for investment in business for example. "But when you give your wife money, they think 'oh, my husband's given me money' and they go and spend it on something pretty!" The family would suffer privations as a result, and his wife would then go around telling the neighbours that her husband was "no good". "Now," he said, "if a woman goes around saying that a man is no good because he doesn't look after his family, and you see his family without food, won't you believe her?" Later, he said, she might go off with another man, "who she thinks is richer".

Jamba's account distils many of the fears and frustrations that others expressed: women's irresponsibility with household income that could put the welfare of the household in jeopardy; the public shame of being seen to fail to provide; and the danger that struggles over money could lead their wife to leave them for a richer man. In some of these men's eyes, such dangers gave wives a certain leverage over their husbands. João claimed that women of his generation would spend their income outside the home, on their brothers and uncles. He explained that this was because they still had the expectation from their pre-war childhood that it was the husband's responsibility to earn money to support the household, whereas women's role was to work in the fields, grind maize, look after the children and clean the house – and so they would not spend their income from trading on household upkeep. This would leave their husbands to struggle alone to provide for the household, since the blame would fall on them if the household

was seen to be struggling: “the tendency is to enslave the man,” João said. Men “live in the fire,” and “have a rope around their throats”. While this account does not coincide with the picture that all veterans gave of cooperation in their own marriages, it suggests something of the pressure that men felt of being expected to be the principal breadwinner – and how precarious their position would be if they were left without their wives’ help or cooperation.

Actually failing to provide could bring hardship to the family, and being seen to fail to provide was also feared. Jamba gave an example of what he saw as his ex-wife unfairly telling his neighbours that he was falling short as a breadwinner, but I heard other men complaining about women’s more everyday indiscretions. It seemed to be accepted as inevitable that from time to time there would be a period of scarcity when families were not managing to meet basic needs. Women would want to talk about their troubles with others, some said, whereas men would want to keep the family’s troubles secret, considering it shameful for others to know that the family was struggling – seemingly because their success as a provider was essential to their identity as respected adult men.

The starkest demonstration of a man’s failure as a provider was perhaps when their wife left them for a richer man. A few weeks after our conversation in the market about marriage, Jamba elaborated on the circumstances of his divorce from his first wife during a life history interview, also carried out in the market, but this time we were sitting alone. As recounted in chapter 3, during the 1990s he was sometimes away working in the coastal city of Lobito, and while he was there someone told him that his wife was having an affair with another man. Since divorce is frowned upon in the Seventh Day Adventist Church, he sought the advice of a church elder who advised him to offer her forgiveness and ask her to come home. She refused his offer, however, and stayed with her new partner, and later divorced Jamba. He partly attributed the affair to ‘biological’ motives, implying that because he was far away, she needed to find sexual satisfaction with someone else. “But at the bottom, really at the bottom of everything was a lack of economic means”, he said – suggesting something worse than simple lust: a desire for money that trumped her duties to, and affection for, her husband. He

claimed that now he had more money, and his ex-wife had since sought to return to him.

It was obviously difficult for Jamba to speak to me about the separation, and he spoke unusually quietly with his chin on his chest. He was perhaps worried that his market colleagues would hear the details of how he had publicly lost out to another man, being shown, fairly or not, to have failed to satisfy his wife's economic expectations. Falling short as a husband and provider often also led to the loss of a position as a father, too. Several men told me that there was a tendency for children to live with their mother after a divorce, and eventually to consider their father as merely a 'pai biológico' – a biological father. Jamba had managed to avoid this particular loss, though, proudly speaking of himself as a 'pai responsável' – a responsible father who would not let his children end up on the street. On top of these potential public and private losses of respect, authority and relatedness, divorce seemed to threaten men's religious standing. Jamba considered that the separation had led to a loss of standing in his church, being considered a moral failure of his responsibilities as a husband according to Adventism. "It destroyed my spiritual life," he said, attributing his failure to be elected as a church elder to his divorce. Although he was still a devout and practicing congregation member, the lost opportunity to take up an official and respected position as a church elder was obviously a great frustration for him.

Three main explanations were given for what men saw as some women's unacceptable and immoral behaviour related to money in marriage. One was that it was due to women's lack of education and backwardness: Jamba said that although lots of women have been able to educate themselves since the end of the war, his generation of men married illiterate women, who "really didn't have anything", and that this leads to all kinds of problems – including an inability to manage money, or to plan ahead in business. Men often accused women of being less educated, developed and more 'rural' than men – seemingly a way of expressing ideas about gendered hierarchies using the concepts of the broader social hierarchies analysed in the previous chapter.

Jamba also clearly thought his first wife had left him out of a desire for more money, a

second common explanation for women's behaviour, even if he also says that she "thought" the other man had more money, suggesting that she was naively mistaken in that belief. João was often more forthright in alleging an economic motivation, saying that Angolan women are "no good", "scoundrels" and "bandits", who were only interested in money. At other times he was more sympathetic, saying that life was difficult in the city, that women got tired of suffering and wanted someone who could give them a good life. Both types of argument were repeated by others, but the claim was still essentially that many women were motivated by money more than by sentiment or loyalty to their husbands.

The third explanation related specifically to women spending money on their brothers and uncles rather than 'in the house'. Some women were said to have divided loyalties, and to consider that their primary allegiance was, improperly, to their matrilineal relatives. This is in part related to the criticism of women as 'uneducated', since loyalty to matrilineal relatives was often spoken of as being a particularly 'African' form of backwardness and as a sign of lack of development and sinfulness. Matrilineal inheritance is condemned by the churches, who have long preached against the sinfulness of broader kin loyalties that trump the conjugal one and the nuclear family (for a discussion of Congregationalist missions see Péclard 1999; and Valente 1985 for the case of Catholic missions; it was also condemned by Adventists I spoke to) and inheritance law legislates against inheritance from one's maternal uncle. The 'matrilineal pull' was also said to be based on the perceived sexual unreliability and deceitfulness of women, because men could not be sure whether the children their wife bears are biologically his, making them reluctant to reckon their lineage through her line and to leave their possessions to her offspring. Part of the 'backwardness' of these divided loyalties is therefore seen to come from the lack of trust between spouses, and is thus contrary to the conjugal model of marriage promoted by the churches (see below).

In spite of some men criticising the divided loyalties of their wives, in other circumstances they were happy to take advantage of matrilineal loyalties. João told me that even if a woman earns more, the husband's income "has more weight in the house",

because women are more likely to spend it on ‘their’ family, on their brothers and uncles. “That’s why African men are so poor”, he said in disgust. Since this was clearly contradictory – if wives are spending the money on brothers and uncles then men are receiving the money anyway – I asked him whether his sister bought him anything. “Ah yes,” he replied, “if she marries a rich man then I’m saved!” Indeed, Nando explained to me that many sons also still have a special relationship with their mother’s family, even if they do not usually inherit from them any more. So if a son steals from his maternal family, it is not as bad as if they steal from their father, because he will take what he’s stolen “to his mother’s house”, meaning that it remains in the same family and is easy to recover. However, if he steals from his father, his father cannot recover the stolen goods since they are in the house of “another family”. In both João’s and Nando’s accounts, they refer to matrilineal kin as the family that a person belongs to – it is ‘their’ family. Some men, then, saw the father’s kin as being somehow separate from his son’s ‘real’ family. Thus it seems that some men felt the responsibility to be seen to provide for their wife and children as a husband-father-provider and complain about the matrilineal allegiance of their wives when it undermines their efforts as husbands and providers; on the other hand, they might be happy to take advantage of their sisters’ wealth when considering their position as brothers or uncles.

This situation demonstrates the importance, mentioned above, of not eliding categories such as ‘husband’ and ‘man’, since men will be differently positioned relative to different gendered categories of person (Cornwall 2002). Marilyn Strathern (1996) makes a similar argument, but focusing specifically on morality: that it is not enough to speak of double moral standards for men and women, since moral reasoning might differ depending on whether someone is acting in, for example, same-sex rather than cross-sex relations. For the men I was working with, the relation between money, authority and masculine dignity only became vexed within the household, and wealthy women relatives who were not their wives did not pose such a threat to them. Indeed, when sisters diverted household income to their matrilineal relatives it was considered part of sisterly loyalty. When wives did it, it was roundly condemned.

5.6 Authority, earning power and class

A different kind of threat to men's ability to 'bring off' the performance of a provider was the possibility of women out-earning their husbands. Most of the men I worked with agreed that women's income was outstripping that of their husbands more often, and most of them spoke about it as self-evidently a problem, striking at both the respect and authority for husbands in the family, as well as their reputation beyond the household. In this case, the problem was not attributed to backward, disloyal or greedy women, rather the sheer ridiculousness of a man being displaced as the household's main earner was emphasised, and the impossibility of maintaining authority in such a situation.

As Nando told me, when a woman is richer than her husband,

If she's got a nice big car, and her husband, the poor little thing, only has a motorbike, and he sees her go past in the car on the way home with a couple of men inside, then the husband will start to get jealous. Now these men might just be her colleagues, but he doesn't know that, and he'll start to worry.

The sense that Nando gives, of this being an absurd and even humorous situation, reducing the husband to a "poor little thing" ("coitadinho"), was common amongst the men I worked with. That a marked difference in income between spouses should be publicly demonstrated for all to see, by the wife driving a car and the husband only a motorbike, was seen as an affront to a man's dignity. Also, as Nando implies, the husband will think that this is an unsustainable situation, and that the wife will want to find a new man. This idea was echoed by Vicente, who thought that some women in this situation had relationships with two men: one with more money, along with their original husband.

The most commonly mentioned problem with women's earning power, however, was usually cited as being a man's loss of power over their wives. Vicente told me that the man would "lose the power" in the house, and the wife would be in charge if she earned

more. The word ‘disobedient’ was used by several men to describe what would happen, suggesting an upsetting of what they saw as proper authority in the family. In my informants’ accounts, men’s authority seemed to be so tied up with their role as the principal provider in the family, that when the provider role was usurped, it was very difficult to also sustain their authority as the head of the family. Paulo, a moneychanger in his mid-30s, made a comment that was typical; he told me that when women earn more, wives become “disobedient”, “money has more weight than the man,” and they start to see things “backwards” (“ao inverso”).

A similar anxiety about the valuation of money relative to categories of moral person as that analysed in the previous chapter seems to be expressed here, but here the concern is how it impinges on the moral conduct of conjugal relations – and particularly on men's dignity as *mais velhos*. When I asked Jamba whether women sometimes earned more money, he told me the story of a civil servant friend of his, who was married to his boss who earned more than him. Jamba claimed that they managed this situation by making a ‘separation’ between work and the home, with the woman being the boss at work, but being extra obedient at home to avoid any suggestion that professional power relations and the earning differential spilled over into life outside the workplace. Jamba’s account suggests the delicacy and peculiarity of such a situation, that a wife would have to overcompensate at home, and most men implied that such an arrangement was not feasible. However, as with the comment cited above about wives potentially being unhappy if their husbands did the laundry, it suggests that some women might be keen to preserve the image of a marriage that operated according to a model where the husband was dominant, to preserve their own dignity as adult women.

The undermining of a husband’s authority was also seen to apply to men marrying into a richer family. One day in the market I showed João and one of his colleagues a book of songs entitled ‘Cantares dos Ovimbundu’ (Tchikale 2011) and he stopped at a song of lament imploring a young person not to marry someone from a rich family, emphasising the peril of such a marriage. The main verse of the song is as follows:

Sipiti k'oponde kuti omosi, maye!
Sikwela omolã ohwasi, vakandipenya.

Don't cross the bridge of only one log, oh my mother!
Don't marry the son/daughter of a rich man, so as not to be mocked.
 (p. 41)

Leaving aside the claim of the songbook that such songs represent a return to 'Umbundu' origins, it clearly struck a chord with João, who told the story of one of his friends, a Congregationalist pastor from a nearby town who had married a woman from a richer family. He brought two of his brothers to live with them in the house of his wife's family, but when these brothers committed a faux pas, by taking some plates that had been thrown away out of the dustbin, they were ejected from the house by the wife's family. As a result, João said, the pastor was left in the hypocritical position of preaching love for one's brothers in Church on a Sunday, but had been forced to throw his own brothers out of the house. The point João seemed to be making was that a man living with his wife's richer family would lose the power to control who lived with him, and might thus be unable to fulfill his familial and Christian duties, and suffer a public loss of integrity.

In addition to this loss of power, though, this account also suggests a difference in norms of acceptable behaviour and etiquette between two families of different social strata. Indeed, such marriages were seen by several men to bring together people who were quite comprehensively incompatible. In a conversation I had with three of the *kupapatas*, Nando put it like this, as his colleagues nodded in agreement:

A teacher won't marry someone like me, who works in the market square. A woman from the cidade won't marry someone from the bairro and go and live with them ... a woman from the cidade, from the asphalt, won't go and live in the bairro where you have dust all the time [mimes beating dust off his feet], in the market square you have dust all the time ... After all, what will someone like me talk to her about? They'll want to talk about books, but I don't know anything about books, so how can that work? Us, here, me, Isaias, Jonas – we all see each other every day, we do the same work, so our children could marry each other, because they're from the same background.

In this account, the discrepancy covers the physical, embodied conditions of everyday existence, levels of education, the habits and professions of everyday life, and family background. In addition, a primary marker of social stratification in Huambo is invoked: the difference between the *cidade* and the *bairro*, and it is represented in a visceral way that strongly suggests embodied and dispositional aspects of class identity, and that people from different positions in social strata are very different sorts of people – as discussed in the previous chapter – and therefore incompatible marriage partners.

This incompatibility, however, did not seem to rule out the idea that people might move from one position to another, and such mobility could lead one spouse to become increasingly out of kilter with the other, as they ‘develop’ economically, and particularly as they become more educated. Vicente told me, when talking about the ‘problem’ of women earning more than their husbands, that this was a particular problem when the ‘academic level’ was also different. José, when talking about his work as a marriage counsellor in his Seventh Day Adventist church, spoke of a common problem in marriages that led to divorce as being when the husband began to “develop economically”. He starts becoming more educated, and thinks that his wife “is not worthy of him”, and wants to get someone “better”, perhaps he “meets them at school”. Indeed, Susana, the only female seller in the school materials section of the municipal market, had had a child with a man who had subsequently left her for another woman, she thought, because the other woman was more educated than her.

Thus the perceived problem of women earning more was not simply about the association of income earning with authority in the household, but also about how earning power coupled with education could imply upward social mobility in broader society, with corresponding changing dispositions and aspirations that made spouses incompatible. Struggles over money in the household were not simply gendered struggles between men and women, then, but also intersected with class relations so that women’s increased earning power struck at men’s self perception not only because earning power gave women ascendancy within the house and the family; but also because it gave their wives ascendancy in broader society; they were gaining entry to a

class considered as superior to those who, as discussed in the previous chapter, are ‘unemployed’ and left to their ‘last resort’, to *desenrascar a vida*. The idea of such a woman remaining with a man from an inferior class seemed to be ridiculous because the man becomes indisputably a “poor little thing” (an image suggesting the pronounced indignity of such a situation) not even belonging in the same class as his wife, when the normative expectation was for men to be senior partners in a marriage.

The tone adopted when discussing such situations had lost much (though not all) of the moralising tone used in other complaints, perhaps because many of the accusations made about women – that they were backward and uneducated and less able to manoeuvre in the city – had been so clearly disproved in such cases. Another way to put it might be that when women were out-earning their husbands but remained in similar professions, they risk usurping the subject position of the husband-father-provider, a move that men reacted to with vitriol and bitter moral accusations (an argument that Andrea Cornwall 2002 makes for a similar situation in Nigeria). However, when wives earned enough to become more educated, buy a car or work in salaried employment, they took up the subject position of a woman from a social strata that these men considered superior, and to have become a distinctly different and incompatible kinds of person. Whilst this was humiliating for the husbands concerned it did not usurp a position that they thought ought to be reserved only for men and that made up part of the naturalised gender order in the household that they defended so fiercely.

5.7 Domestic violence and control

Faced with such frustrations and threats to their efforts to take up certain masculine subject positions, it seems likely that some veterans resort to violence in an effort to control their wives’ behaviour. Veterans rarely raised the issue of domestic violence, and when questioned rarely elaborated much. All, though, agreed that it was widespread, and all expressed the opinion to me, at least, that it was to be disapproved of, and especially emphatically by more religious men, with churches often running

programmes of counselling to try to prevent such violence. This marks a contrast with attitudes to violence against children, for instance, which seemed to be much more widely tolerated. An indication of how widespread violence against women is, and of how normal it seemed to veterans was given to me when both Vicente and José announced to me with beaming smiles and apparently great pride that they had never beaten their wives, “not even a little spanking,” as José put it – clearly thinking that this was exceptional.

A variety of motives were suggested for domestic violence: João thought that men beat their wives when they have affairs, which he believed Angolan women often did with several men at once. José, speaking from his experience as a marriage counsellor, thought that men beat their wives for more mundane reasons – they became fixated on what they perceived as their wives’ faults and mistakes, or they thought that marriage should be a bed of roses and lacked the patience to discuss disagreements, became ‘nervous’ and forgot their ‘affection’. An encounter in the market illustrated how conflicts around spending priorities were expected to motivate such violence. I was talking to Eduardo, João’s nephew, one day in the market, when Susana, a young married woman in her early 20s and the only woman working in the school materials section, came over to show us a pair of shoes she had just bought for 200 kwanza (around US\$2), that she was obviously very pleased with. “Your husband’s going to beat you,” was Eduardo’s immediate response.

Some authors also associate high rates of alcoholism and domestic violence with veterans “channelling” their frustration at the lack of gainful employment for veterans in Angola and women’s “economic leadership” (Moura et al. 2009:116). In interviews I carried out with social workers at the Aldeia Nova reintegration project in Waco Kungu, the problem of domestic violence committed by veterans was often cited, and associated principally with alcoholism and those veterans who did not make their farms work.

5.8 Conclusion

For veterans, then, getting married after leaving the army was an important priority but did not present such a difficult challenge as it seems to have done in other contexts. This was principally because families in Huambo were more willing to compromise over the amount of bridewealth to be paid in wartime, as well as accepting couples as ‘married’ even without passing all the way through the notional marriage process. However, this was far from the end of the story, since marriage was not a stable achievement, but part of an ongoing struggle to ‘bring off’ a performance that required attaining a regular and sufficient income, and successfully exercising control over one’s spouse. There was thus a very real threat of veterans becoming ‘dis’-integrated again if they failed to successfully maintain a reputation as a competent provider, or were usurped by a higher-earning wife. I have sought to describe in this chapter how the dangers of failure in this key part of the performance of a *mais velho* identity were accentuated during the war by the economic changes discussed in the previous chapter, particularly the shift of most people, both men and women, to work in informal commerce, and the rising social value of money.

The ethical problematisation of conjugal relations that arose in this context revolved around views of the proper role of money in marriage, its proper relation to gendered power, the moral duties of husbands and wives, and the dignity of senior men. For the men I worked with, the proper place of money in marriage was that of being provided principally by men as part of their moral duty as husbands, and as part of the justification for their dominance in the household, which in turn gave them dignity and respect beyond the household as a *mais velho*. As we have seen, this ethical vision of marriage had come to seem increasingly perilous, and men seemed to feel particularly vulnerable in this key part of the performance of masculinity. Threats came from a number of directions, including what they portrayed as backwards wives failing to pull their weight or to manage money properly, faithless wives being indiscreet about economic shortfalls, or worse, leaving their husband for a richer man. Moral accusations slipped into the background somewhat when wives significantly out-earned their

husbands, with the focus shifting more fully onto the loss of dignity such husbands could expect to face.

This chapter and the previous one have examined some of the main ethical problems that were thrown up for FAPLA veterans by the social transformations of war, as they impinged on the performance of senior masculinities. I have focused in these chapters on problems that were common to the majority of the men I worked with, but in the next chapter I will shift focus to look at some of the diversity of different masculine cultural styles that these men took up in relation to the ethical problems I have described. I will particularly focus on two influential styles that were emblematic of some of the main ethical dividing lines between men, and the particular kind of response they constituted to the gendered consequences of the social transformations of war.

Chapter 6: Two cultural styles of masculinity

6.1 Introduction

One afternoon in Alemanha market, I was leaning on the edge of Jamba and Flávio's stall listening to some of the younger male sellers chatting as they played draughts. Wilson, a young UNITA veteran in his late 20s, was boasting about his relationships with women. He had two women at once living in his house, he claimed, and was not married to either, an arrangement he said he had no reservations about, playing to the gallery as ever. This brought scandalised laughter from his two interlocutors, who, despite being active Christians, found this open defiance of respectability funny. They repeated what Wilson had said, looking to me for a reaction. I was not sure what to say so I just grinned. Wilson turned the subject to religion, "I don't want to go to church," he said, "because I don't want to be tied down". At this the conversation turned more serious: Flávio's younger brother said that Christians ought not to be fanatics, that they did not understand church doctrine if they were, and that different denominations ought to get on with each other, a statement with which everyone agreed. The third young man, Domingos, said that religion wasn't about being tied down, but rather that he saw all the church as his family, meaning that being part of a loving fellowship was not constraining to him. At this point a young man walked past in low-slung trousers that showed his underpants, and Wilson shouted over to him, "how are you doing Pastor?" "I'm fine thanks Papa," he replied. Not immediately getting the joke, I asked a stupid question: "is he really a pastor?" Everyone collapsed in laughter, "yeah right, a pastor with an ear-ring!"

Such conversations were regular occurrences amongst the men I worked with, touching on different views of what it meant to be a good Christian man, and the contrast between these styles and those which defied Christian propriety. The key differences included how sexual relationships were conducted, the consumption or not of alcohol,

and also took in aspects of embodied style and particular ways of employing commodities in these styles. In the previous two chapters I have outlined two key and related areas of ethical problematisation as they impinged on attempts to perform senior masculinities: social mobility and the rising social value of money, and the role of money in conjugal relationships. In this chapter I will analyse some of the diversity of cultural styles performed by the veterans I worked with, their different moral underpinnings, and the different sorts of responses they constituted to the social transformations of war. Rather than trying to capture the full diversity of styles, I will focus on two distinctive styles: the companionately-married churchgoing man, and the self-professed *mulherengo* (womaniser) and drinker. Several of my informants fitted one or the other of these archetypes quite closely, and all were influenced to varying degrees by elements of one or both of them – and, indeed, some elements of masculinity were shared by both of these styles. So by distinguishing these two styles I do not mean to suggest that they had nothing in common, nor that all the men I worked with adopted one style or the other. Rather, I make this distinction because these two styles were emblematic of the main poles used to interpret different styles, which focused principally on to what extent they adhered to the standards of public decency thought of as Christian.

In this chapter I will turn particularly to the concept of cultural styles as formulated by James Ferguson (1999), to discuss the different ways that performances of masculinities were patterned and came to signify differences between recognisably distinct categories of man. As discussed in the thesis introduction, Ferguson sees cultural styles as “performative competences” (1999:96) that require an investment of time and money in order to successfully execute them. He cautions against seeing them only in terms of inculcation, but emphasises that they are also actively cultivated and give room for improvisation. In these styles, objects are not simply possessed, but actively used to make sense as part of particular styles, which need to be understood in particular “political economic context[s]” (1999:102). By this Ferguson does not mean that the choice of different styles can be indexed to levels of income or status, rather that the men he was working with on the Zambian Copperbelt adopted certain styles in order to

break or maintain certain social connections – especially with rural kin, who could aid them in their retirements. Rural kin also subjected urban male workers to pressures that compelled them to share wealth and demonstrate deference and respect to them, according to the terms of rural morality. He describes two main styles: the localist men, who maintain similar embodied and linguistic styles to their rural kin, in the hope of maintaining allegiances with them for their retirement, and cosmopolitan men, who self-consciously adopt other styles, in a way explicitly designed to break away from a style and social pressures associated with rurality.

In analysing cultural styles of masculinity I am particularly interested in how war changed what Stephen Lubkemann calls the “conditions of sociation” (2008:217): to probe which social connections have been weakened or strengthened by the social transformations of war, and what the sources were of the “social problematics” (2008:217) that help people plot out their everyday existence – whether these come from war itself or from social processes that predate it. The emphasis of my analysis will diverge slightly from Ferguson and Lubkemann's, however, since I am primarily interested in the ethics of different styles, rather than political economy, and ethical problematics rather than social problematics. Ferguson states that “localism is not a set of opinions; it is a capability, a performative competence” (1999:104). Even in the case he is analysing, though, this does not seem to hold. What he describes as a “political economic” relation with rural kin, seems like it would be better captured by the term “moral economy”, given that what is at stake is the moral duty to provide gifts to rural kin members as a sign of respect – respect that is not just about provision of gifts, but about abiding by ethics that emphasise humility and respect for kin which are manifested in certain acquired comportments and ways of speaking. Certainly this sounds like more than a simple question of performance – rather, in Ferguson's case, there are well-understood moral opinions and a deeply-felt moral sense that is liable to be offended by city-based kin who have not cultivated appropriate styles of deference.

In this chapter I am interested, then, in both the performances and the ethical outlooks that inform them – including the historicity of these ethical outlooks. To integrate Ferguson's concern with the cultivation of particular performative competences with

ethics, I turn to Foucault's concept of “practices of the self” (1997:40), in which subjects are not simply interested in signification. They are also preoccupied with the development and protection of certain moral capacities and attributes of their moral selves. As we saw in the life histories chapter, veterans were concerned with avoiding certain types of moral corruption during military service which would undo their moral capacities and lead to spiritual and physical deterioration. In this chapter I will discuss religious veterans' attempts in 2012 not just to avoid transgression or to protect their reputations, but to avoid corrupting influences that could undo their moral capacities, and to cultivate capacities and relationships that would help them to be better Christians, better subjects of particular moral codes.

In the rest of this chapter I will describe the two cultural styles of masculinity amongst veterans in post-war Huambo, starting with the committed religious style, before comparing that style with the *mulherengos*. I will especially focus on the different ways these men spoke about and conducted their sexual relationships with women, and their stances on the consumption of alcohol. I will argue that the two styles constituted quite distinct responses to the results of the social transformations of war, and the areas of ethical problematisation analysed in the previous two chapters. One of these styles sought to maintain continuity with the ethical values of an idealised masculine life-course that many veterans had been brought up with; the other treated their post-war situation as an opportunity to claim new kinds of masculine status based on the display of wealth through commodities and a self-conscious break with the sober masculine styles valorised by more religious men.

6.2 Committed religious men

About half of the men that I worked with in Huambo regularly went to church, and most others could name a church which they nominally belonged to, even if they did not themselves attend. Of those who did attend, there were nine men who I will refer to here as committed religious men. By this I mean that they not only attended church, but all worked hard for churches in their spare time, and most held official lay positions in

churches. These men tended to speak often about their faith, or to give religious views on various topics at length, and Christianity played a central role in the narration of their life histories. These men were of various denominations: Roman Catholic, Congregationalist (IECA), Seventh Day Adventist, Apostolic and from IESA (Igreja Evangélica Sinodal de Angola). They made up less than a quarter of the men that I worked with, yet they seemed to be particularly respected by their peers, and were often the unofficial spokesmen for their market section or group. Their styles of masculinity appeared to be representative of standards of Christian propriety in public conduct, and to be a style, if not to aspire to for all, then at least one that embodied a truly Christian way of life, relatively free of compromise or transgression.

It is important to note, though, that in choosing to focus on this group of men, I am not discussing other churchgoing men who would, for example, drink in moderation, or who might have clandestine or not-so-clandestine affairs. Moreover, there were important inter-denominational dynamics, with many men looking down on those of other churches as somehow not authentically Christian, or as making too many worldly compromises. However, to understand the broader dynamics of different cultural styles of masculinity amongst the men I worked with, the most important distinction to understand was that between those who were religious and those who were not. Of the former group, committed religious men were the most eloquent example in terms of the moral qualities that Christianity was said to comprise, and that most churchgoers considered a standard of public morality to measure others' performances by.

As we shall see below, masculine styles were often distinguished from one another according to whether or not they transgressed certain aspects of morality, and the most prominent of these were monogamy and teetotalism. Thus committed religious styles of masculinity were partly defined in terms of what they did not include – such as having affairs or being polygamous – but they also included distinctive ways of, for instance, conducting conjugal relations, just as not drinking implied certain masculine qualities. I will turn first to the conduct of conjugal relations.

6.2.1 Companionate marriage

A central part of a committed religious man's style that was related to masculinity was that of what I will term 'companionate marriage'. This was a style of marriage that was explicitly contrasted with the more conflictual representations of marriage that many veterans articulated (discussed in the previous chapter), as well as with those who had affairs or were polygamous. The most enthusiastic advocates of this type of marriage were Vicente and José, although others were also fond of speaking of their adherence to it. This concept of marriage owed a lot to church teachings on marriage,²⁰ and emphasised love and affection between spouses, sexual fidelity and trust, economic pooling of resources and the husband as an authoritative senior partner. Advocates of this model presented it to me as an antidote to the perceived dysfunction of many marriages in Huambo, as well as a moral standard against which sexual relations between adults were judged.

Nyamnjoh notes that in Senegal some young people, rather than embracing consumerism, have instead adopted what he calls “fundamental religious identities” (2005, p.304) that emphasise moral uprightness in sexuality and have an ambivalent attitude to ostentatious consumption. In the case of my informants who advocated the companionate model of marriage, they also seemed to be responding to what they saw as the confusion, immorality and improper motives of sexual relations that were not guided by Christian principles – and where the display of wealth and the role of money were foregrounded. Yet this was not a retreat from modernity, ‘development’ or global values, rather it also laid claim to a cosmopolitan modern status, but in this case as a sign of education, civilisation and Christian propriety, and as part of a global community of believers envisioned as numerous, powerful, organised and righteous.

In discussions about the role of money in marriage, José and Vicente both had striking

20 It is important to note that although polygamy was tolerated amongst non-Christians on the *Planalto* in the 20th century, adultery was not. Edwards noted that Spouses had “mystically sanctioned obligations to one another” (1962:126) adultery was subject to “mystical sanctions” (1962:122), d even though it was not uncommon it was often the cause of conflicts between men. Thus an antipathy to infidelity and marital breakdown does not only have roots in churches' teachings.

and passionately expressed ideas about how a couple ought to manage their money. When I was conducting a life history in my flat with Vicente, my partner came in and asked me for some cash for a motorbike taxi, so I handed her my wallet. Vicente commented,

I, for example, am not like other people, in distrusting my wife a lot. My wife, she knows where my money is, she's my wife! Like you did, when Maria needs something you give her your wallet, I'm like that too. I can't really distrust my wife!

José expressed a similar idea one day when I and my partner were talking to him in the market, lamenting that a lot of couples thought it was too complicated to have a shared 'wallet', but that couples ought to pool resources. "There is a special Biblical arithmetic to marriage," he said, "which says that $1 + 1 = 1$ ".

This idea of spouses being united as one was also reflected in the importance Vicente and José both put on harmony in marriage. As we saw in the previous chapter, they were both proud of never having hit their wives, and both disapproved of people who did. José claimed that he had never had an argument with his wife that was serious enough for her to leave the house and go and stay with her natal kin for a while – a common occurrence in his view. Of course they sometimes got angry with each other, he said, but they always made up after a few minutes. Part of this more harmonious model emphasised being trusting and open with one's spouse, who one ought to trust not to commit adultery. Eduardo, a young, devout and practicing Catholic, when speaking of his plans for marriage made a comment that summed up a common attitude of those embracing the companionate idea of marriage,

There has to be absolute trust. Like if you go to the WC and you tell Maria not to answer the phone if it rings, then there's already suspicion – maybe it's because you have another girlfriend. There are men who, even when they go to the bathroom, don't leave their mobile phones. This demeans him, this brings lots of problems.

The idea of trust and openness seemed to be particularly important for committed

religious men, and some of the more negative sentiments of other men towards women was based on the idea that they cannot be trusted. As we have seen, the most common explanation for the (apparently now marginal) tradition of matrilineal inheritance (from one's mother's brother), was that women could not be trusted, and a husband could never be sure whether his wife's children were 'really' his or not. For José this seemed to represent one of the main attractions of Seventh Day Adventism. When speaking of his reasons for conversion he explained his extreme aversion to the perceived untrustworthy sexual behaviour of women:

And because when I looked at others, I saw that they were leading a really bad life. It was a life of drinking, they smoked, they committed adultery, they would go out with each other casually. When they took lovers, some girls wouldn't get married. That's when I concluded that no... I, really, would do stupid things a lot and not consider it a sin, but this life of going out with people, really wasn't for me, women weren't for me, I really hated women, I didn't like them at all.

As he went on to explain, through Seventh Day Adventism he had found a different, safer, more caring and affectionate model of marriage based on trust, and a wife that could provide care for him in the absence of his natal family, many of whom had been killed and the rest scattered across the country during the war:

It was then that I saw that the Bible says that it is not good for man to live alone. As I was living alone, this, too, was a risk. It was a risk how? Me, every time I was alone, I shut myself in the house. What if I wasn't feeling good? And the neighbours said, "this guy's gone out, he must be travelling", but actually I'm not travelling, I'm there, ill? I can't manage to open the door, this could victimise me. If I have a partner, she can help me. If I'm sick she can take me to hospital. If I'm worried and I'm feeling hungry, she can give me food.

While his wife performed such care work for him, he would speak proudly of how he tried to make his wife's life easier. For example during my time in Huambo he spent a long time digging a well in their compound, so that she would no longer have to walk long distances and navigate a dangerous ravine on the outskirts of Huambo, to fetch water. This assistance in helping one's wife fulfil her wifely tasks was fundamental for José: when a wife did not know how to do something, her husband ought to "educate"

her. If there are any disagreements, then the husband should discuss them with her, with “affection”. This idea of marriage as an affectionate cooperation based on trust was, then, plainly hierarchical, with the man cast as benevolent patriarch. Although, as Tiago, a devout Adventist, put it, a man ought not to “enslave” his wife: “a man loves his wife, and the wife loves her man and obeys him”. The same men who espoused this model, had the same reaction of most of my other informants to the idea of a wife earning more than her husband, their fear of her ‘disobedience’ indicating their view of how power ought to be exercised in a marriage.

Tied up with the idea of such marriages as more Christian and less conflictive was the idea that they were more modern. Most of my informants rarely mentioned their wives unless prompted, but the veterans who promoted this form of marriage would talk unprompted about their wives, the healthy state of their marriage and the sharing of income. It seemed to me that they assumed that as a European and therefore ‘developed’ and ‘educated’, I must surely appreciate such a marriage, and agree with their ideas about how a marriage ought to work. When Jamba inquired how my partner and I manage household income, I replied that we pool some of it, but that we use some for personal expenses. He nodded, impressed, “ah! It’s good that way, this is education!” – education being clearly associated with concepts of developed-ness and civilisation in my informants’ accounts, and churches themselves running training courses on how married couples should live together. The principles taught in these courses and espoused by these men emphasised the importance of intimacy and affection between spouses, as part of a godly and Biblical way of conducting marriage.

When speaking of such marriages, committed religious men were making an implicit contrast with those men who did not spend much time associating with their wives, a way of conducting marriage that had long been associated with Umbundu ‘tradition’, at least by observers. Adrian Edwards, who did fieldwork on the *Planalto* in the 1950s, noted that husbands and wives had come to enjoy “mutual affection and close companionship” (1962:120), which he claimed was “unquestionably a modern development” (1962:119), and not typical of the “traditional pattern of social life”

(1962:120). He associated this with the “part-peasant part-proletarian condition of the Ovimbundu” (1962:127), in that the nuclear family was becoming more important, though matrilineal relations still had some weight.

The veterans I got to know in 2012 rarely spoke of their spouses at all, however, and not in terms of affection, and nor did they introduce me to their wives - with the exception of those who espoused the companionate model of marriage. This model therefore seemed to be more related to religious practice than to particular economic occupations – at least in what men told me about their marriages. These accounts of companionate marriage did, of course, have a noticeably performative aspect – they partly acted as statements that these men were making about themselves and their families, about their Christian values and their modern-ness, and about how they thought sexual relations between adults ought to be conducted. However, they also seemed to address many of the ethical worries that others of my informants expressed about their potential loss of provider status and authority in the home, and associated loss of dignity and respect outside the home. It was based on a cultivation of open-ness, trust and affection with one another, and working together to solve any economic challenges the household might face.

This emphasis was a conscious counter to, for example, money motivations in choosing and remaining with partners, and conflicts between more distant spouses that resulted in the break up of households and a public loss of dignity and moral respectability for both husband and wife. It was, in a sense then, a “voluntary and reflected-upon practice” (Foucault 1997:18) through which men responded, along with their wives, to the ethical problems that had emerged around marriage and its relation to money and masculine dignity in the wake of the social transformations of war. It was not oriented primarily to obeying a certain moral code or avoid transgression, even though the avoidance of divorce was part of it. Rather, they sought to cultivate virtuous qualities in themselves, in order to be better Christians, and more civilised, enlightened and developed people who could avoid the marital breakdowns caused by immoral tendencies that were also backward, and bringers of *confusão* and suffering.

Clearly, this sounds too neat to be a picture of how marriages actually worked – the existence of church marriage counsellors, the admission that many couples in church congregations had problems, and that many separated, are testament to this. Indeed, Jamba clearly aspired to this model of marriage, the failure of which had caused him particular bitterness since it represented both shattered hopes for his marriage, and had consequences for his seniority within his church. Yet it constituted a distinct and well-understood model of marriage, advocated by churches and representing a broader standard of public moral respectability, civilisation and modern-ness. As such, those men who appeared to be bringing off such a performance seemed to take particular pride and satisfaction from it.

6.2.2 “Those who don't have religion, drink”

Another key part of the committed religious cultural style of masculinity was abstention from drinking alcohol. A common phrase I heard when asking about alcohol consumption was, “those who don't have religion, drink”, or that, “those who drink don't have religion”. In practice, this was not true, and several of the churchgoing men I knew drank alcohol – all but one of these men being Catholics. However, Catholics were often criticised for this by men of other denominations, and the committed Catholics did not drink and considered alcohol to be incompatible with a truly Christian life.

The consumption and production of alcoholic drinks has long been a vexed topic amongst both Angola observers and within the public realm in Angola. Gladwyn Childs, a missionary anthropologist who wrote a seminal ethnography of the Ovimbundu (1949), claimed that the trading of slaves for Brazilian rum “did much to corrupt the Ovimbundu” (p.206) during the 19th century. Although homemade beer (*ocimbombo*) had important social functions on the *Planalto*: as a reward for assistance in agricultural labour in the 1950s (Edwards 1962), and as libations to bless hunting implements and the embalmed heads of chiefs in the early decades of the twentieth century (Hambly 1934), rum was viewed differently, at least by Childs. He asserted that in the period of

his fieldwork (in the 1930s), “[i]t is the widespread use of [rum], with its concomitant evils, which is to-day the greatest enemy of the social life” (1949:33) of the Ovimbundu. Missions shared this view of the moral dangers of alcohol consumption: Didier Péclard notes that Congregationalist missionaries sought to establish missions far away from urban centres, since they wanted to establish a 'New Jerusalem' in Africa, free from the corruptions of urban society, including alcohol consumption (1999). In the decades after the establishment of Nova Lisboa (today's Huambo city), Catholic missionaries reported the material and spiritual dangers of alcohol consumption, sought to use football and other sports to divert people from it, and noted the problem of young priests being tempted into its use when leaving the seminary (Neto 2012). Alcohol consumption has thus long been the object of moral censure by churches on the *Planalto* as a spiritual and physical threat, and also, to anthropologists, strong alcohol posed a threat to the 'purity' of Ovimbundu culture.²¹

Some of the intensity of debates about alcohol in 2012 seemed to stem from the recent changes in the availability of alcohol. During the war, according to the men I worked with, when imports were generally difficult to come by, commercially produced alcohol was also difficult to find.²² Home-brewing of beer, rum and banana wine was thus the main way that many could consume alcohol, and even then it was said not to be consumed in very large quantities. Since the end of the war, however, both nationally- and internationally-produced alcohol had become available at low prices across Angola. Many of the men I worked with bemoaned this development: people were now drinking

21 The prohibition of alcohol consumption in the colonial period also had an underpinning in political economy. After the Portuguese conquest of the *Planalto* was completed in 1904, alcohol production and trade was seen by the colonial authorities to be preventing a transition to a capitalist economy in Angola. Cotton production was abandoned in some areas at the height of the alcohol trade, and it also functioned as currency, delaying the transition to a monetary economy, and rum production was thus banned in 1911. One of the first large colonial companies subsequently established in Huambo city was responsible for the production of sugar and alcohol on a plantation basis (de Conceição Neto 2012). Adrian Edwards reported that, in the 1950s, laws prohibiting beer- and rum-brewing were not enforced, because the government headmen (*sekulus*) themselves were often involved in brewing, and also lacked the power to enforce the regulations, and because the authorities preferred to levy fines than suppress such activities. Nevertheless accusations of illegal brewing were made in disputes in the village where Edwards carried out his fieldwork, and on one occasion such brewing caused a violent confrontation (1962).

22 Steven van Wolputte and Mattia Fumanti (2010) note that such was the scarcity that young Angolan herders in the south of the country kept a lucrative trade through smuggling crates of beer over the Namibian border, and Gregor Dobler (2010) describes how the alcohol trade contributed to turning some border settlements into boom towns in the late 1990s.

'stupidly', they said, and alcohol was too cheap – the government did not care about the problem, many said, and ought to do something to increase the price.

For many of the men I worked with, these themes – the moral-religious worry around the spiritual and physical effects of alcohol consumption, and its link to political economy – continued to be important. The consumption of alcohol was consequently loaded with great moral significance. Alcohol was said to be a “problem” in Angola, and particularly incompatible with religion. When I mentioned to Jamba that people said his home *bairro* was known as the *bairro* of *palhaços* (the masked dancers representing ancestral spirits), he replied,

Not any more. These days young people are interested in three things: alcohol, parties and the church. If someone isn't of alcohol, then they are of the church; if they aren't of parties, then they are of the church.

Alcohol consumption was said to have several effects which were seen by the religious as inimical to proper Christian conduct. When religious men were explaining why they did not drink, they generally stated that drink led to a loss of self-control. Vicente explained that he had tried alcohol once when he was young, but that he lost his “*consciência*” when he drank: *consciência* can mean both “consciousness” and “conscience” in English, and the implication was clear: he was not in control of himself when he drank and this could lead him to do something sinful. The dangers of sinning and bringing shame on oneself during such a loss of *consciência* were often commented upon. When Nando was explaining that he only drank sometimes, at parties, he said,

I drink in social gatherings, but you have to remember your responsibilities, and what you have to do tomorrow. If you don't do that you might lose consciousness of who your wife is, who your children are and so on, you have to know your limit. Even if it's free you have to drink according to your mental capacity.

The implication was that one might forget the various moral duties one had according to different categories of relatedness: whether as a good husband to one's wife, a good father to one's children, and so on. The idea that womanising and drinking went hand in hand seemed to be especially common. When Jamba found out that I had drunk beer

with Flávio, his shocked response was, “next you'll be finding him a woman, and he'll forget that other one in England”, referring to my partner. Indeed, in Jamba's view, alcohol drinking brought with it many dissolute habits. When speaking of the contrasting 'worlds' of his pre-army life, he spoke of the world of the Portuguese household where he was a servant; the world of *palhaços*, of which he was one; and the world of drinking, smoking and *liamba* (marijuana). This last world, he said, was also the world of women, since men who drink, 'need' women, and they also gamble. Linked to the concern for self-control was the idea that drinking and the behaviour it led to was incompatible with the wisdom that respected older men were supposed to possess (as discussed in chapter 4). This wisdom was particularly important for the eldest man in the extended family, who might have to call family meetings and adjudicate in quarrels and help to solve problems. However, if this man was “a drunk” who drank alcohol as soon as he got out of bed in the morning, he could not possibly fulfil the role of the head of the family.

Paulo, a non-veteran moneychanger in his late 30s, feared that drinking and the loss of *consciência* could lead him to generally foolish acts and a lack of discretion that could allow people to take advantage of him, a fear shared by veterans:

No, I've never drunk. I don't like that environment. I don't see any benefit for me. First, the taste when I put it in my mouth, is bitter. Second, when I drink it I will become irresponsible. I'll start to talk a lot or do stupid things. For me, that environment has no importance. From January to January, amigo João, I am as you see me here.

When people referred to the 'stupid' things they might do, a prominent one was that of causing *confusão*, in the form of drunken confrontations – which was often a key worry of those organising social gatherings.

Alcohol was also widely thought by churchgoing men to be addictive and to easily develop into a 'vice', and was thus connected with suffering for oneself and one's family. The idea that Angolans had particular problems drinking in moderation was often expressed to me. I would sometimes express surprise that so many Christians were teetotal, and would point out that this was not the case in Europe, where it seemed to me that drunkenness rather than alcohol consumption in itself tended to be considered sinful

for Christians. I would point out that Jesus himself had turned water into wine at the marriage in Cana, so surely drinking could not be sinful. The most common response I received to this was that Angolans were not capable of controlling themselves when they drank, and ended up drinking to excess and becoming addicted – hence, complete abstinence was a common response. This supposed inability of Angolans to drink in moderation was sometimes said to be because of a “lack of development” - a link being made, again, between civilisation and moral uprightness – and adding to the disgrace of one who lost self-control and became addicted to alcohol.

This danger was said to be particularly high for war veterans. A UNITA veteran that I interviewed, called Domingos, had lived through a period of heavy alcohol use of the sort often described as a danger for veterans by the FAPLA veterans I worked with. Domingos demobilised in 2002, and many of the challenges that UNITA veterans faced in attempting to build a civilian life after military service were different and often more difficult than those of FAPLA veterans - particularly in terms of the multifaceted stigma of having been with UNITA during the war (as discussed by Pearce 2008; Martins 2015). Nevertheless he considered the predicament of veterans of both factions to be similar in important respects:

On the politico-military question, the hardest thing is the helplessness. Because certain veterans, whether from the FAPLA or the FALA, in the past we fought for the liberation of Angola and the wellbeing of society, and while we were fighting a war between brothers, those left here were enriching themselves, benefiting from the sacrifice of others, and today they are the people they are. And today we're not well seen in society, we're seen as drunks, frustrated people. Some go into containers looking for rubbish, some are in associations such as peasant associations, some who are lucky to have relatives in high places now have key places in society. Others wait in warehouses with a bicycle for someone to buy something, and they take it to its destination for about 50kz [...]

[W]hen we arrived in the city and were suffering, and you saw the other going in a car or a motorbike, and you're always going everywhere on foot. That situation arises, you don't have, the other has, even your wife will fall in love with the one who has, [even though] you were walking with her in suffering; all of this suffering fills up your head, and so we touched on alcoholism.

Domingos, then, saw various sources of suffering that drove veterans to drink, that have been mentioned in previous chapters: the injustice of having fought for one's country

and yet receiving no reward, while some who did not fight enriched themselves; the unbearable lack of dignity he experienced when faced with socio-economic inequalities, and particularly when his wife left him for a richer man; and the hardship of daily struggles for survival. Yet he had since come to see drinking to attempt to escape suffering as futile, and his accounts of alcoholism contrast sharply with his descriptions of his turn to religion in the Congregationalist church:

I came to understand alcoholism. When you haven't got any money, you've got nothing to give the kids. To forget: there, drink, fall over there, forget everything that's happening. But I came to the conclusion that this really doesn't do anything, it just makes the children suffer, they become even more helpless, they go running around the streets begging, stealing, and this is no good ... I realised that it [alcoholism], also, destroys, it destroys because, I began to see that my metabolic system doesn't correspond with alcohol, I get really weak, I lose the thread of work, I have little ability to work. All of these actions of alcohol made me realise that it's not worth drinking, it's worth leaving alcohol, and to keep struggling to see if smoking can also stay behind. Now I don't drink at all, even when I'm next to alcohol I get irritated, I prefer not to [...]

[The churches] played a very preponderant role. In the city we had a militaristic role, all the men that come from the army have a negative soul. They raised our consciousness, that's to say that everything that's bad can stay behind, and everything that's good can stay in front. So there in the churches we started to read the Bible, to understand how God is good, to understand that with God anything is possible, and from there it became really difficult to leave this career. It's really good sharing with brothers, without any distinction of race, it's really good, it's really good.

Finally, it is important to note that the 'problem' of alcohol consumption was thought of by many as a particularly male problem (rather than being seen as a universally desirable masculine, if contested, practice as in some other southern African contexts. See Suggs 2001 on Botswana; and Fumanti 2010 on Namibia). Whilst it was noted by veterans that women also got drunk, they tended to speak about this with exasperation, as a lamentable aberration. When discussing the problem of youth delinquency with Nando, I asked whether there were girl delinquents too, and he replied, “no way, then we'd really be in trouble!” The same attitude seemed to hold for drunkenness. “Do women get drunk in England too?” João asked me once, his tone of voice suggesting he doubted whether such an unseemly thing could exist elsewhere. As suggested by the

themes I have outlined above, when alcohol was referred to as a problem, it was mainly spoken of in terms of what it meant to be a morally upstanding man, who could support a family and show the wisdom to exert authority as the family's head, and how alcohol might come to threaten his standing.

To sum up, then, committed religious men defined their attitudes to alcohol principally in negative terms. Alcohol was dangerous, it could lead one to lose self-control, forget one's moral duties and bring shame on oneself and one's family; and was prejudicial to the exercise of wisdom. It was also dangerous in that it was addictive, and could bring a complete breakdown of a household and suffering for all concerned. It demonstrated one's backwardness, and was conducive to *confusão*. Yet *not* drinking was a public choice, viewed almost as a statement of allegiance. It was a key signal of one's religiosity and moral outlook on the world, and so was a badge of pride for those men who were teetotal. It demonstrated key elder masculine virtues that were seen as the contrary qualities to those of a 'drunk'. Self-control was particularly important, and was perhaps an important counterpart to the autonomy and lack of dependence that men showed in being seen as their household's breadwinners. Not drinking also demonstrated commitment to a certain dignified reserve, and un-demonstrativeness, associated by several of these men with the internal quality of wisdom that a *mais velho* ought to demonstrate.

This they contrasted with a reliance on superficial markers such as tattoos or earrings to gain respect, as several of these fathers thought their children did, or horsing around drunkenly, as they thought some men of their own generation did (see below). This style made a claim on developed-ness, civilisation and cosmopolitanism from a different direction: they were not giving in to the backwards tendency of Angolans to become addicted to alcohol, and were making sure that alcohol was not allowed to disorganise their lives and send them into confusion. There are again, then, two sides to this aspect of the committed religious style: an attention to certain ethical capacities needed to live an upright life as a Christian *mais velho*, and the element of style: the public choice not to drink that demonstrated a commitment to certain moral values, and which ought to be

understood in the conscious contrast it struck with other styles. This, of course, all gives a very one-sided view of those who did drink alcohol and who were proud of themselves as womanisers. I will now move on to discuss what such a style consisted in, and how such men viewed their own styles of masculinity.

6.3 Mulherengos

Amongst the men I worked with, there was a tight-knit group of male friends of which Flávio was a member, whose masculine styles explicitly went against some of the central tenets of what was considered respectable in this context. There were two veterans in this group of seven men, and two veterans who were still serving soldiers in the reserve. The veterans of the group were in their early forties, though the group also included three younger, non-veteran men in their late 20s and 30s. They all worked in Alemanha market and lived in the same neighbourhood; two of them were more successful sellers who had several employees, the others generally sold from stalls of which they were the owners in partnership with another man. I socialised with these men occasionally in the market, but most often saw them all together at football games in their neighbourhood once or twice a week: these were not the men I was closest to. They made up a minority of the men I worked with, and a smaller minority of men who were 40 and over. Nevertheless what I am aiming to show in this section is the relevance of this style in the “full house” (Ferguson 1999:78) of masculine cultural styles, and its relevance to the men I worked with as an orienting point in the interpretation of masculine styles more broadly. Their styles were often understood in contrast to the committed religious men I have just discussed, and particularly in the two areas of their sexual relationships with women, and their consumption of alcohol.

6.3.1 Money and affairs

My partner was with me for most of my time in Huambo, but after eight months she

went back to the UK for a few months. João was sure that I would find an Angolan woman, or rather that an Angolan woman would find me. “You don’t go and choose an Angolan woman,” he said, “they choose you, they are the ones looking for men.” When my partner came back from the UK, he asked me if I had “had” an Angolan woman in the meantime – I told him I had not. “Wow!” He exclaimed, “You must be really religious!” He had been convinced that I was going to leave “little brown babies” in Angola, since “Angolan women” would be keen to get pregnant so that I would have to keep sending money to support the child after I went back home – as well as their supposed perception that a *mestiço* child would be given more chances to prosper. Most of my informants rarely spoke about having extra-marital affairs, but as time went on it became clear to me that affairs were far from uncommon, though they were usually discreetly pursued. Alongside the expectation that men would have affairs unless they were “really religious”, was a disapproval of women having affairs, and an idea that they did so for illegitimate motives: principally motivated by money, rather than love or desire.

Men who were more actively religious, would publicly express disapproval for affairs, and were less expected to engage in them. Jamba, while discussing that Flávio had extra-marital affairs, commented that it was dangerous because he might “die in that state” meaning that Flávio, a lapsed Seventh Day Adventist, ought to repent or face damnation. This association of religion with monogamy complicated my efforts to find out about extra-marital relationships. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many of my informants seemed to associate my whiteness with being “developed”, “advanced” and religiously respectable – religion being seen by many as more developed than atheism or a lack of faith, which they often associated with a now defunct socialist ideology considered as ‘backward’. This was just one way of classifying white people, since white men also had a reputation of having affairs with Angolan women, but it seemed that my frequent questions about religion, my willingness to attend my informants’ churches and my married state marked me out as a religious white person. My efforts to dispel this impression were partially successful over time, for example by talking non-judgementally about people I knew in England who were involved in avowedly non-

religious activities, or by drinking alcohol with the men I worked with or letting them know that I did so, an activity seen by many as incompatible with strict religious observance.

Nevertheless, there seemed to be a division amongst less-religious informants in how they spoke about affairs, with some being more discreet, and others openly embracing a womanising identity. Some men who either attended church or at least claimed some religious standing but were having affairs, did not speak of their affairs to me directly but since they were conducted in or near the markets where they worked, they could not keep them secret from their market colleagues nor, eventually, from me. João, for example, spoke bleakly of women who find lovers in the markets where they work while keeping their husbands, usually working in other locations, in the dark. Yet at the same time it was an open secret that he was having an affair with a woman in the neighbouring section: “if you’re looking for one of them,” Eduardo said to me with a knowing smile, “call the other one and you’ll find them”. When I sat down to interview Nando I had bought us both a soft drink to consume during the interview, and a woman selling car upholstery nearby came over and angrily grabbed the drink out of Nando’s hand. She stalked off back to her pitch without saying anything. Responding to my look of puzzlement, a nearby moneychanger laughed and said, “she’s his woman!” Nando looked sheepish and protested to me, “it’s not true”, apparently convincing no-one and only managing to provoke disbelieving laughter from his colleagues.

The group of *mulherengos*, however, were much more open about their affairs. The most notorious *mulherengo* of the group was a successful trader working in Alemanha market, a veteran and soldier in the FAA reserves, whose name was Benjamin and who was 40 and married. When I had first started going to Alemanha and to football matches in Jamba’s *bairro*, I was clearly identified primarily as Jamba’s friend, and people seemed to associate me with him and his devout religious principles. However, when I started to drink beer with Flávio and his friends at football matches, this perception shifted – Jamba seemed slightly shocked, and became more distant for a period, whereas Flávio and his friends took me under their wing and insisted I sit with them during

football matches. One day Benjamin came over to talk to Flávio and me in Alemanha, and at a certain point he saw a woman behind the stall, and said that she was “really good”, meaning sexually attractive. There are lots of really good women around here, he said, and I ought to get myself a girlfriend while I was there. But not a woman who is asking for money all the time, saying things like, “Oh! Give me fifty thousand [kwanzas, around US\$500]!” “Fifty thousand!” I exclaimed, and Flávio laughed. I should get a nice woman, Benjamin said, but a cheap one. I ought to be careful though, because “there is a lot of illness”, including AIDS.

Being with a woman can be really expensive, he said. They keep asking for money. Once he spent 100,000kz on a woman in one night. They stayed in a luxury hotel that cost \$300 for one night. Then you go to an expensive boutique and they pick up a piece of clothing. “You don’t know how much it costs, but you take it to the checkout, and what can you do? Can you say no?” he asked, and waited for me to confirm that you cannot. “And then they want their nails done, they want to drink champagne”. He says he woke up the next morning, after all the drinking, and looked in his wallet and there was nothing there; he theatrically slapped his hand to his forehead and screwed his eyes shut to show how he had reacted, “aieeee!” He asked me whether I had “been on the rounds” with Flávio and his friends, and I said no. He meant going on rounds in a car at night to pick up women, and said that Flávio and his friends “*really* go on the rounds”. He said that I should go with them, “especially with your skin...”

In the case of both the *mulherengos* and the more discreet men, there was an emphasis put on the fact that women are “expensive”, that affairs generally involve some kind of economic transaction. There were varying views of this, but most men speaking of this aspect perceived women as somehow exploitative and deceitful in their dealings with men, an attitude that has been reported in many other African contexts (e.g. Cole and Thomas 2009; Cornwall 2002; Ferguson 1999). My informants spoke about such women with varying degrees of severity. Benjamin seemed to take it more philosophically as all part of the fun of looking for sex – and even seemed perversely proud of the expense. Some reactions were openly hostile: as we saw in the previous

chapter, João thought that Angolan women were “no good”, and “bandits”, due to their money motivation. Wilson, a UNITA veteran in his late 20s who worked in Alemanha market thought that “nothing good ever came from being with a woman. People say that women are so great but it’s not true” – despite his frequent boasts of how many women he slept with.

The amount that a man seemed to need to spend on a woman he was having an affair with would depend on her desirability. I heard Jamba commenting to a friend on a woman, who lived in his neighbourhood:

She must be one of the most pretty women in Huambo. She’s short, strong, and veeery pretty. She only goes out with the bosses from the cidade.

Desirability seemed to depend greatly on their age, with younger women plainly seen as more desirable. As Eduardo told me:

I used to have a neighbour who lived nearby. The mother and father had separated some time ago, and the mother died. And that first daughter, the eldest daughter looked after all those children ... Today she’ll go out with me, tomorrow she’ll go out with you, the day after tomorrow she’ll go out with that other guy, and when you leave her house you leave some money there, and she says ‘let’s go and buy some food’. But now she’s older and men don’t pay attention to her, they just make fun of her.

Race was also an important factor. One day in the market I asked João why I often saw white men with Angolan girlfriends, but never saw Angolan men with white girlfriends. He replied that an Angolan man could not ‘afford’ a white woman – the assumption being that such women would “cost” more – both due to their desirability and the fact that they were assumed to be richer themselves. The same seemed to be true for mestiço women. Beyond desirability, sexual relationships with such women were seen by many as a demonstration of wealth and status by rich and powerful men through their sexuality – João, for instance, thought that the country’s ‘leaders’ took white and mestiço girlfriends or wives not just for their desirability, but as a way of showing off. So, whilst there were some complaints about the ‘expense’ of women, being seen with a

more expensive woman was also a way of demonstrating wealth and status, with women of different ages, appearances and races in one sense almost ‘indexing’ different levels of a certain style of masculine success. Hence Benjamin’s pained boasting about how much money he had spent on a particular woman: pain at the expense, and pride at the conquest and what it demonstrated about him – both commercial success and sexual potency.

It certainly seemed that beyond men seeking women for affairs, some women also sought out men they perceived as rich for relationships. As Abel, a successful moneychanger in his 40s, was giving me a lift home from a football match in his expensive 4x4 car, he pointed out a group of young adolescent girls, and said, “they came looking for my money, but they aren’t even mature, the *filhas da puta*” (literally ‘daughters of whores’). Similarly, I would also, rarely, experience advances from women. Such advances, veterans’ views, were inevitably linked to the perception of white men as rich, and such perceptions could be difficult to escape. A white male European friend of mine was engaged to a black Angolan woman, and they both frequently complained about comments that Angolans would make implying that their relationship was only about money. My friend told me that there was a joke that people liked to tell about Angolan women having three different boyfriends: one for money, one they liked to have sex with, and one that they were really in love with²³. He would often hear the comment that he could only be the ‘money boyfriend’.

The *mulherengo* style, then, seemed to consist in demonstrating one’s wealth, success and sexual potency through sexual relationships with particular kinds of women. What these men foregrounded in their accounts of relationships with women was not a lamentable love of money in women, but the expense of being with particular women, and the humourous glee that seemed to come with going against prevailing ideas of respectable masculinity. This seemed to put them beyond the pale of public decency for many. Affairs in general, although seen as widespread, were seen as disreputable, and

23 Similar ideas about women’s multiple boyfriends are noted elsewhere in Africa, such as the ‘three ministers’ in South Africa (Hunter 2009), and the ‘three Cs’ in Francophone Africa, amongst others (Nyamnjoh 2005).

known *mulherengos* therefore potentially dangerous for women's reputation. On one occasion in *Alemanha*, Benjamin started talking to a woman seller called Betty nearby. He asked her whether she had missed him, and she replied, "I only miss my husband". "What, only your husband?" he said, "Don't you have children, brothers, cousins? You only miss your husband?" The flirtatious implication was clear – that one's husband need not be the only man one has feelings for. Betty did not end the conversation, but responded by walking over to him, and he repeated the same line. At this point two other women sellers came and took Betty by either arm and led her away, to Benjamin's annoyance. Indeed, it was not just women who would seek to 'protect' other women from *mulherengos*, or at least try to prevent them getting involved. When I was sitting with Wilson and some other sellers in *Alemanha* one day, he shouted at a young woman walking past, "oh girl!" and beckoned her over. She stopped and turned, and asked him, "what do you want?". He did not reply, but repeated, "oh girl!" and beckoned her again. She seemed unsure of what to do, and tentatively began to approach, but one of the other sellers twirled one of his fingers around his temple, signalling the common belief that Wilson was "crazy", and motioned her to move away with the other hand.

Accordingly it seems that while the *mulherengo* style of masculinity demonstrated a sexually potent masculinity and was a display of wealth and independence that was admired by some, it was also disapproved of since it went against the dominant moral standard against which sexual relationships between adults were judged – a monogamous marriage – and seemed to emphasise and exploit a deplorable monetary motivation in some women. In a sense, then, these men were capitalising on precisely the features of the social transformations of war that most of the other men I worked with tended to deplore: the love of money trumping sentiment, masculine status being (indirectly) measured through money rather than wisdom, and an apparent erosion of the institution of monogamous marriage. While the price they seemed to pay for this was a certain disreputability, this also seemed to be part of the attraction. This last point is particularly well illustrated by these men's attitude to the consumption of alcohol, which I will now discuss.

6.3.2 Irreligious views of alcohol: cosmopolitanism and freedom

Apart from womanising, one of the main aspects that marked these men out as irreligious was their drinking of alcohol to the point of being obviously drunk. Drinking, for these men, was a key practice through which they publicly negotiated masculinities that were intersected by various axes of difference (Fumanti 2010), particularly their relation to Christian respectability, generation, and distinction in terms of socio-economic stratification and cosmopolitan developed-ness. As we have seen, for many religious men drinking marked a clear moral boundary between religiosity and irreligiosity. This boundary was also important for *mulherengos*, and informed how they understood and performed their masculine styles, but there was much more to drinking for these men than morality. There were different ways of drinking, ways of behaving when drunk and many different drinks that could be consumed, all of which suggested different things about the drinker or group of drinkers. This group of men seemed to have ideas about masculine prestige that differed markedly from those of more religious men.

Part of the performance of this style in market spaces was the narrating of stories about recent drunken exploits for the entertainment of others (including me). The first time I asked Flávio whether he was an Adventist like his uncle, Jamba, he said “Yes, but I *chupa* [drink, literally “suck”]”. By saying “but”, he seemed to mean that I should not think of him as a sober, devout Adventist like his uncle, but as someone who likes to get drunk and have fun, and who does not regularly attend church. Flávio went on to tell me that he had spent the last weekend at a party on the shore of Cuando lake near Huambo city, thrown by someone who had just graduated from university. The party had lasted through Saturday and Sunday, and, “a lot of drinking and dancing was done”, he said with a sly chuckle. I told him that I'd been to a party too that weekend, and he asked if there had been drinking. I said that there had been a fair bit, and we both chuckled together. Such moments of complicity and humour were common amongst drinkers, and stories of drunken misadventures were particularly popular: falling off motorbikes, or getting picked up by the police for public drunkenness provoked much laughter.

Witnessed (as well as narrated) drunken behaviour could be seen, similarly, in a humorously indulgent way. One day in Alemanha, Wilson was playing draughts on a homemade board with a young university law student. A group of men were gathered around to watch the match. Wilson, who had little education and no pretensions to intellectual prowess, was winning, and kept taunting his rival, delivering each move with a flourish and calling him 'cabrito' (little goat), much to the student's annoyance. "Although you find me in a state of inebriation," Wilson said with mock formality, "I'm going to beat you". The group of men guffawed, and repeated the phrase to each other, another anecdote about Wilson to add to a long list.

While most of the FAPLA veterans I worked with, who were all at least ten years older than Wilson, were never publicly drunk at work, Flávio and his friends (that included former and current government soldiers) would get drunk in non-work settings, including at *Velha Guarda* football matches. Their antics, such as playing for the team while drunk, or driving a quad bike at speed around the pitch, would draw laughter from many younger men, and head-shaking delight at how 'crazy' they were. To fellow drinkers participating in these conversations or witnessing these acts, alcohol was not seen as a dangerous social ill, or as prone to drive people to addiction and acts of woeful depravity that would end in damnation. It seemed to be a way of cutting loose and having fun, of not behaving as one ought to. It seemed clear to those participating that such behaviour was, for many observers, disreputable, immoral and dangerous, but this seemed to add to its attraction. Some younger men who drank would also talk about their desire for freedom from moral constraints: Nuno, a seller in the city market told me that he had not been baptised because he wanted to be able to "do what he wanted"; Wilson would often say that he would not go to church (or get married) because he wanted to be "free". While FAPLA veterans, who were older, did not use such explicit language, such 'freedom' seemed nevertheless to be part of the attraction for them – hence their celebration of the 'craziness' of their colleagues.

Even some religious men seemed to appreciate the comic and transgressive aspect of these men's misadventures, despite their simultaneous disapproval of them, especially when talking about younger drinkers. This partly seemed to be an appreciation of

youthful abandon (for example of Wilson and Nuno's antics). This humorous indulgence was not accorded to Flávio by Jamba. Flávio, being in his early 40s, was markedly older, and Jamba seemed to have different expectations of him. Flávio and his friends seemed happy to defy such expectations in terms of drinking, but would fulfil other expectations of them as older men. They would contribute financially and practically to joint neighbourhood ventures such as organising football teams, where many failed; they were responsible and sober in their work; they would avoid getting involved in fighting and *confusão*, and they were all married with children, and seemed to be supporting them economically. There were, therefore, clear boundaries to the 'freedom' that they sought to lay claim to, and to maintain some public respect as senior men, they needed to show that their drinking did not prevent them from holding together their livelihoods and households, even if they were happy to adopt a more playful style of masculinity when drinking, and to defy the prevailing standards of sexual morality. This made for a contrast with a younger man like Wilson, who seemed to be happy to defy all sorts of social conventions, including providing for children or getting married, and who was seen as unreliable in his work and even as a 'traitor' by some, and so lacked the respect and authority accorded to men like Flávio.

Drinking alcohol partly seemed to be a practice of solidarity and membership for this group of friends, *vis-à-vis* those outside the group. I discussed above how my drinking and not drinking marked me out as being closer or more distant from different groups of *Velha Guarda* men at different times. Drinking seemed to mark quite clear divisions in social groups within the broader group of men involved in the *Velha Guarda* team. Early on in my friendship with Jamba and Flávio, Jamba invited me to a "wedding" party that he was throwing with his second wife, where socialisation patterns very clearly illustrated this. The party took place in the courtyard of Jamba's uncle's house, and food and drinks were provided by the hosts. Since Jamba and his wife were both devout and practicing Adventists, none of these drinks were alcoholic, and drinking alcohol was obviously frowned upon at the event. As a result those men and women who drank all sat on, in and around cars parked outside the courtyard, drinking beer and whisky, while teetotal religious people remained within the courtyard. The same pattern prevailed at

Velha Guarda matches, where the older men who drank and those who did not drink sat in separate groups. Flávio would sometimes express his happiness that I would drink beer with him and his friends, and obviously took some satisfaction in shocking Jamba with the news that I had been drinking with them, and was now an honorary member of their group.

The type of alcohol one consumed was also important to these men, and seemed to express an aspirational style of masculinity that was modern and cosmopolitan and in which conspicuous consumption played an important role (cf. Newell 2012). Some men mentioned to me that they had once tried the most common Angolan beer, Cuca, but that it had made them “ill for a week”, or that it was too “weak”. They claimed that imported beers did not have this effect on them, or were stronger, and Flávio and his friends always drank, either Super Bock or Sagres – Portuguese beers. Choice of alcohol seemed to be intended as a deliberate statement of personal style, group belonging and aspiration. There would often be conversations amongst drinkers about each man's drink of choice, and in such discussions these men would often assume that, since I was European, I must drink a lot of wine. Scotch whiskey was seen as particularly desirable, and a “Passport” - a bottle of Passport brand scotch – was often said to be a default requirement as part of bridewealth payments, and thus a gift denoting both respect and uncommon luxury. “Champagne” - usually meaning a sweet, cheap sparkling white wine – was also considered sophisticated. Even two men who did not drink, Eduardo (a devout Catholic who never drank), and a youth pastor in the Reformed Evangelical church who also never drank, said that they would break their abstemiousness to drink some champagne with me.

The conspicuous consumption of alcohol seemed to be popular in other settings, too – in the living rooms of the houses of middle-class state employees that I would sometimes visit, there would often be bottles of expensive alcohol prominently displayed. In these displays of drinking, the locally-produced seemed to be devalued relative to the perceived quality, purity and refined-ness of foreign products, which is why I term their consumption 'cosmopolitan'. I term it 'conspicuous consumption' because drinks such as champagne and whiskey, particularly their more expensive variants, were particularly

valued and ostentatiously consumed, and seemed to denote monetary wealth, professional success and a cosmopolitan modernity for those who drank them.²⁴

Conversely, some types of alcohol seemed to be less desirable or even stigmatised. Cuca, as we have seen, was considered less desirable for these men than imported beers, and was also cheaper. Other types of alcohol seemed to be particularly associated with lower incomes, downward mobility, and tainted with associations with alcoholism. On sale in many convenience stores and in markets were plastic pouches of what purported to be scotch whiskey, for only 50kz (about 50 US cents), whose foul taste was legendary. These pouches were particularly associated with alcoholism because of their low price and high alcohol content, but also because they were easy to conceal, and once they were opened they could not be closed again and so needed to be finished in one go.

The cosmopolitan consumerist aspect signified by different types of alcohol consumption is worth considering against the background of drinking habits during the war. As mentioned above, homemade alcohol was often consumed during the war in Huambo city. Such drinks were mainly now mentioned by older veterans (in their late 40s and 50s) in accounts of the past or of current rural life, but none of the men I knew drank these products any more. Since the end of the war, many of them had managed to start growing crops again on plots in their home villages, and still used these products to make traditional Umbundu foodstuffs such as *quissangua*, a sweet, non-alcoholic drink made with partially fermented maize, as well as *funje* (maize meal) and a variety of vegetables. However, traditional alcoholic drinks were no longer produced by any of the men I knew, and the consumption of mass-produced alcohol, though the motive for its consumption must have also been its convenience and low cost, was also stylistically distinct from local associations with the rural 'past' and the lifestyle of hand-to-mouth struggle that had characterised the war years. Homemade alcohol certainly did not have the associations it has had in some other African contexts, of making one strong whereas foreign beer made one weak (see for example Brown, Sorrell, and Raffaelli 2005 on Namibia), though this assertion was sometimes made for food. Where alcohol

²⁴ That is, I do not intend to imply any moral stance by using this term, as some users of the term have (Miller 2006).

consumption played into relations between different groups of men, it related to different ideas about morality, religion, developed-ness and cosmopolitanism.

6.4 Discussion: freedom and ethical self cultivation

These contrasting ways of conducting sexual relationships with women and different conceptions and practices related to alcohol constitute quite distinct stances on standards of Christian propriety, and more broadly on the model of the wise, sober male elder. But how do these different styles relate to the consequences of the social transformations of war, and the areas of ethical problematisation outlined in the previous two chapters?

Central to understanding how these masculine styles relate to the post-war political economy is understanding the different consumption patterns of the two groups of men, rather than the demands of making a living. The *mulherengos* made quite different uses of commodities compared to the committed religious men. They put more of an emphasis on buying and displaying consumer goods: they all tended to dress in sportswear and trainers, and often spent money on new clothes; most of them had touchscreen smartphones (either Chinese-manufactured copies of major brands, or 'originals' – an important distinction). Most of them also had cars which, as we saw in chapter 4, were significant and sought-after markers of status and success.

Despite this consumerist preference of the *mulherengos*, differences between the two styles of masculinity cannot be explained by differences in income or occupation, but seemed rather to reflect expenditure priorities. The fact that Flávio and Jamba were equal business partners but pursued contrasting styles illustrates this, and the *mulherengos* all had comparable professions to the committed religious men. By the time I visited them in 2015, Flávio had spent US\$14,500 on a four wheel drive car, whereas Jamba had bought a plot of land near the airport, and was preparing to build a 'definitive' house there from concrete blocks, with a large courtyard. It seemed that such different spending priorities reflected materialisations of different ethical life projects. José, who had nearly completed his 'definitive' house in 2012, spoke proudly of the

comfort he was providing for his family, and most of all of the well which meant his wife and daughters no longer had to walk to collect water. The house was thus a public statement of his commitment to his family and to a companionate style of marriage, as well as a tool in realising that commitment. It was thus a key part of his performance of a senior masculinity, one which showed that he was a responsible husband-father-provider, and who pursued this responsibility in a particularly Christian way. Similarly, the *mulherengos* often prioritised spending on cars, which seemed to be a way of displaying wealth and status in their more ostentatious way: they were portable and so a more insistent status symbol than a house. They were also vital tools when they went “on the rounds” to try to pick up women. In this way they made a claim for masculine status and respect that embraced the idea, lamented by many other men, that masculine status and economic success could be demonstrated through the display of certain objects implying monetary wealth.

The adult masculinities that all of these men performed shared some key elements, the most important being those discussed in the previous chapter. Being married, having children and being seen to be a reliable breadwinner for them were elements that all of these men spoke of proudly, and were indispensable elements of being seen as a man. It was also important for all of them to show that they were able to earn stable incomes, to show themselves to be reliable business partners and dependable in their commitments to football teams and other neighbourhood initiatives they involved themselves in.

The *mulherengos*, however, took a quite different stance to the elements of the social transformations of war that most of the men I worked with saw as ethically problematic. As we have seen, they embraced the demonstration of masculine status through ostentatious displays of monetary wealth, as a way of demonstrating their economic success and masculine potency – rather than deploring the increased importance of money as dangerous or immoral. Indeed, rather than seeing prevailing morality as helping them to avoid danger and corruption, and as a route to become wiser and more holy, they seemed to see it as a constraint that stopped them from enjoying themselves. So, in their relationships with women they foregrounded the expense as a badge of pride, and seemed to put displays of wealth to use as they tried to pick up women –

whose conquests (as these men would view them) were in turn indications of both wealth and masculine potency. Their drinking was, again, part of their displays of consumption and a certain cosmopolitan lifestyle, but also seemed intended to demonstrate a lack of decorum, a “craziness” rather than a reserved wisdom or Christian piety. Part of the attraction of this style of masculinity seemed to be the open transgression of the idea of the wise, sober and pious elder man, and the juxtaposition of 'crazy' antics, celebrations of 'freedom' and a certain rebellious flamboyance. Contrary to Ferguson's case, discussed in this chapter's introduction, this was not a case of breaking off social ties with particular categories of people – rather that they had come to see the ethical style of the sober, wise and Christian elder man as constraining, and found enjoyment and notoriety in casting it off. Such a style showed a stable mastery of city life, and made claims on developed-ness and cosmopolitanism in ways that contrasted markedly with that of most of the men I worked with.

For the majority of men I worked with, and particularly committed religious men, the consequences of the social transformations of war presented ethical problems, which they sought to overcome. How they conceived of problems, and how they sought to respond to them was shaped overwhelmingly by the influence of church teachings. They sought to abide by norms of monogamy, but more than that, they sought to cultivate good, harmonious relations with their wives, working with them to conduct a happy Christian marriage based on harmony and affection, and to be good husbands themselves whilst maintaining authority in the household. They also aimed to avoid indulging in dangerous activities that could corrupt their ethical characters: by avoiding drinking alcohol they were guarding their self-control – their capacity to act according to the moral code they believed in, much influenced by Christianity, but also by ideas of Umbundu tradition and the qualities a *mais velho* ought to exhibit. Undoubtedly signification was important here: these men were demonstratively undemonstrative compared to some of the *mulherengos*' antics, adopting more reserved comportments as part of what they saw as older men's dignity. On the other hand they were voluble in their good-natured criticism of their colleagues and relatives who behaved as the *mulherengos* did, and more seriously exercised by the broader, immoral social

tendencies they thought such behaviour indicated. They were also, on attending church, impeccably turned out, and in their official lay positions in the church, regularly on display as trusted, educated and righteous men.

Be that as it may, it was by no means only about signification. It involved intentionally cultivating certain competences, as Ferguson argues it did for the men that he worked with in Zambia (1999), competences that needed to be worked at and invested in over time. Their concern with such capacities had an explicitly moral bent, as they sought to avoid moral dangers and intentionally worked on themselves to cultivate certain ethical capacities. Influences such as alcohol, which could lead both to transgressions whilst drunk and a more enduring corruption if it became a vice that vanquished one's ability and motivation to continue to develop moral capacities. In the area of marriage, working at a successful companionate marriage was, again, an ethical project, this time pursued in partnership with a wife. Not only did this promise a harmonious solution to a potentially conflictive and ruinous failure in a key aspect of the performance of a successful adult masculinity – marital breakdown – but also to offer satisfaction through love and affection, as well as a modern, righteous and widely respected way of conducting relationships with women.

The main distinction between these important masculine cultural styles was, then, their stance towards Christianity and its conceptions of monogamous marriage and teetotalism. The large majority of men that I worked with adopted masculine styles that made some sort of claim on Christian respectability. Christianity was regarded by most of them as the only sphere that was relatively uncorrupted by the moral taints that had spread during the war, a perception which seemed to account for the great moral authority of the churches for these men in 2012. In the next and final empirical chapter I will examine in more detail why Christianity had come to be the pre-eminent moral authority for these men, and its projects of self-formation more attractive than incompatible claims from 'Umbundu tradition' and the competing claims of the formal political sphere.

Chapter 7: The appeal of church life

7.1 Introduction

During my time in Huambo I spent some time at the offices of a disabled people's solidarity association, interviewing veteran members about how their experiences of military service had affected them. One veteran, Francisco, had wanted to come to the interview but was not mobile enough, so I headed out with two of the association's staff and met him in the courtyard of the small one-room hut that doubled as his home and workplace. A thin man in his fifties, dressed in old and dirty clothes, he stood there on his one leg and a crutch with his adolescent son at his side, and briefly recounted his life story to me. He described with a pained expression how he was recruited by the MPLA in 1974, and fought on the eastern front in Moxico province, continuing to fight after independence until he stepped on a mine and lost his leg in 1982. "Since the army had no use for disabled people," he said, he was pensioned off, apparently shocked at how quickly the party-state abandoned him. He was not given any training, equipment or work, and lost all of his family during the war except one brother, and is now separated from his wife.

After he had finished speaking, I asked him if he had a church, and he said he was a Jehovah's Witness, and that they had a church nearby (technically a 'salão' or meeting room). I asked if the church ever helped him, and he explained that what the church does is to help people to find their spiritual path in life, and to follow it – so that they can be saved. As he was talking about salvation the frustration seemed to pass out of him, his face relaxed, he seemed calmer and happier. I told him that there are Jehovah's Witnesses in the UK, too, and that they go to people's houses to talk to them about their faith and give them literature to read. A broad smile spread across his face, and he reached out and shook my hand. "You just have to read the literature," he said, "and decide what path you want to take".

Time and again during my fieldwork I saw this swift transition on veterans' faces, from the furrowed brows and pinched expressions they adopted when speaking of their life histories and everyday struggles, to the expansive joy with which they often spoke of their spiritual lives. This joy seemed to have a number of sources: it reflected both the hope of future salvation that their faith gave them, and the supernatural help that they felt God had provided them throughout their lives as Christians. It also seemed to express the pride they felt in being part of modern global fellowships representing a righteous, disciplined and organised way of life informed by Biblical truths. This made for a striking contrast with what they saw as the confusion, deception and malevolence that characterised several other spheres of their lives. Responding to “the literature” and choosing the correct path was an ethical practice that was the subject of much commentary and debate in the markets, and which suffused the debates on many areas of veterans' lives. Thus, following the correct path meant taking up of moral positions in, and postures towards, social issues that had emerged as objects of ethical problematisation. These issues shared several common characteristics: they belonged properly in a primitive past, though they refused to stay there; they involved conflictive, socially destructive contention; they were deceitful; their promised rewards were unreliable and would ultimately prove futile and pointlessly destructive; and they sometimes involved consorting with evil spiritual forces.

In previous chapters I have addressed the ethical influence of Christianity in various ways. I have examined the biographical role of religion in veterans' life courses (chapter 3), and how it informs moral conceptions of work and social mobility (chapter 4). I have discussed religious attitudes towards marriage and the role of money in sexual relations and towards alcohol consumption, tracing how Christianity had become the most powerful influence informing these men's styles of masculinity, and how they were judged by others (chapters 5 and 6). In this chapter I will return to the three formative influences on veterans' ethical outlooks that I identified through the examination of their life histories, in chapter 3: Umbundu 'tradition'; the state and the sphere of politics; and the churches. By doing so I will try to account for the great moral authority that Christianity and church teachings had for the FAPLA veterans I worked with in 2012,

through comparing them with the other two influences. I have already discussed the historical growth and diversification of churches on the *Planalto* and their continuing strength as institutions, placing them within the broader historical context of the civil war and its aftermath in the region (chapter 2). In this chapter I will focus on the ethical concepts, aspirations and practices of veterans themselves to examine how, in their everyday lives, Christianity was seen as providing an antidote to the corruptions of post-war Huambo.

7.2 'Religion' and boundaries

Since the turn of the new century there has been a surge of new anthropological and other social science writing on Christianity (Robbins 2014). A key argument of this work, following Talal Asad's pioneering work (1993), has been that the idea that religion is separate from other spheres of the social is a particularly Euro-American one that should not be assumed in other settings. Asad argues that the conception that anthropologists have had of the role of religion, as largely being a private matter, providing symbols that help people to come to terms with the pain of the human condition, is a product of the space that Christianity has been confined to in post-Enlightenment European society. More recently, Harri Englund (2011) has related the idea of religion's separateness to the influence of the secularisation thesis of Durkheimian sociology, which predicted that as society became more functionally differentiated and more rational, religion would recede as a public force – a prediction that could be said to have failed as much in Europe and North America as it has in other settings.

Derek Peterson and Darren Walhof (2002) argue that the idea that religion is “*sui generis*” (2002:1) has often been part of power plays and contestations linked to the political realm, with modernising elites seeking to standardise social practices as a strategy of control. Peterson (2002), for example, examines how Presbyterian missionaries in Kenya in the early twentieth century tried to redefine Gikuyu social

thought as religion, by which they meant systematic and organised authority. This was refused by Gikuyus, who also refused to see Christianity as a set of abstract, disembodied beliefs, but rather dwelt on the practices and techniques of missionary evangelism. Englund, similarly, points out that African Christians have actively constituted barriers, for example, between religions, or between religion and the secular. These divisions should not, therefore, be assumed in advance, but should be the object of empirical investigation (2011). Asad conceptualises this project particularly in relation to power, urging us to pay attention to the authorising processes that create the conditions for the experience of religious truth.

Taking up the issues of power, politics and religion from a different direction, anthropologists of the 'ethical turn' take social scientists in general to task for their preoccupation with autonomy and with forms of agency which challenge social norms, rather than those that seek to conform to and support norms (Mahmood 2005; Laidlaw 2013; Zigon 2008). This conception has led to a neglect of the study of many religious practices as somehow uninteresting, or not worthy of attention. Agency does not, however, necessarily have anything to do with either resistance or oppression, but may in some settings be related to attempts to "inhabit" norms (Mahmood 2005:15). Such agency, she points out, constitutes "ways of living meaningfully and richly in the world" (2005:xii) just as much as the progressive secularism animating many Euro-American academics. Moreover, it is wrong to characterise the piety movements she studies as abandoning politics, since the form of piety the movement seeks to cultivate is transformative of so many areas of social life.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine why religion constituted such an important grounds of identity for the veterans I worked with, and was so central in informing their ethical vision of the social world and their ethical conduct. These men proposed that Christianity – embodied in life in church communities and Christian conduct in the world beyond such communities, provided a salutary contrast with other spheres of life, particularly those of formal politics and the making of money, and that barriers ought to be maintained between these spheres and Christianity to avoid its moral pollution. There were also clear ideas expressed about the sort of practices that marked out who did and

did not ‘have religion’ (as we saw in the previous chapter), which were vital to how these men performed masculine identities and assessed the conduct of others. Thus, in addressing religion separately, I am partly following these men’s constructions of Christianity and proper Christian living. However, the ways in which veterans attempted to construct such barriers in their representations of the religious realm will form a central part of the analysis rather than taking Christianity or religion for granted as natural categories. The social contexts I will principally consider are mostly the same as in the other chapters: mainly market spaces, i.e. non-religious spaces, although I will sometimes also mention masculine performances in church spaces. Thus I am mainly examining Christianity as “an aspect of life” (Englund 2011:3) amongst other aspects of life, rather than focusing on worship and ritual. Since there is such a huge diversity of different Christian denominations in Huambo and in Angola more generally, in this chapter I will principally focus on the three largest denominations in Huambo: Roman Catholicism, Congregationalists (from the Igreja Evangelica Congregacional de Angola or IECA) and Seventh Day Adventists.²⁵

In the following section I will examine the appeal of religious practice for veterans, focussing particularly on the salutary contrast it provided with disavowed aspects of 'Umbundu tradition', and the support that it provided for other aspects of tradition that these men continued to value. In the fourth section I explore how the religious sphere was constructed in opposition to the dangerous deceptions of the political sphere, and how the two spheres inevitably impinged on one another.

7.3 “So you still have your tail!” Christian knowledge, modernity and personhood

Each of the men I worked with, of course, had their own religious biography, and expressed their own, idiosyncratic motivations for their religious practices. In particular there were marked differences between those who had converted from the denomination they were brought up in (usually Catholicism or Congregationalism) to another

²⁵ In the POEMA survey of veterans, 67.7 percent of government veterans in Huambo said they were Roman Catholics, 21.9 percent Congregationalists and 5.5 percent Adventists.

denomination, and those who had remained in the same church all their lives. However, there were some motivations cited that were common to almost all of the religious men I knew, and the idea that Christianity was developed, civilised and educated was prominent for all of them. At the most fundamental level, religion was seen by most of the men I worked with to be a prerequisite for being a civilised person, and even for being fully human. Such civilisation was partly defined in contrast to particular aspects of what was considered as Umbundu tradition.

One day in the municipal market I was chatting with Vicente, Eduardo and a non-veteran market seller in his twenties called Nuno. Discussing what he had been doing at the weekend, Nuno mentioned that he had been to church on Sunday. At this Vicente said, with a quizzically teasing expression, ‘ah! So you finally did something for a change!’ Nuno laughed and I asked him which church he had been to. He proceeded to explain that his father had been a Congregationalist and so when he was younger they all attended that church, but that since his father died they had been attending the Catholic church, which his mother attended before her marriage – a pattern of denominational adherence in families that was common. “I haven’t been baptised, though,” he added. Vicente and Eduardo looked surprised and said so, and Nuno, fond of drinking and getting into scrapes, said in an affectedly casual way, “yeah, I prefer to do whatever I want”. Vicente and Eduardo, both devout Catholics, replied in unison, “Ah! So you still have your tail!” All three laughed uproariously, and Nuno turned around and lifted up the back of his t-shirt to prove that he did not.

The insult that Africans might have tails has a longer history, and in the colonial period, according to some of these men, the identity cards of Angolans classified as ‘indígena’ (indigenous, rather than ‘assimilado’ or assimilated) had a picture of a black person, which the Portuguese would sometimes draw a tail on. The jibe in this case was half-ironically couched in the racist language of Portuguese colonisers, and associated Nuno’s irreligiosity with a past considered not only uncivilised, but almost animal or inhuman.²⁶ As indicated in chapter 2, the religious aspect of this idea is indicated in the perception of the un-baptised Angolan as non-human or animal, evident in the vision of

26 This insult was also politicised, with more venom, and levelled at UNITA veterans – associating UNITA’s bush society with a rural backwardness.

Congregationalists on the *Planalto* before independence. IECA members interviewed by Didier Péclard in the 1990s claimed that parents sent children to mission schools in the colonial period “with the aim of their becoming men” (Péclard 1999:114), “men” in this context standing for “human”.

The civilising, modernising force of churches was seen to operate to a great extent through the knowledge and moral education they brought. As António, a lifelong Catholic, put it,

The church helps me in my life because it is a means of education. The person who goes to church is really educated, he's unlikely to be a thief or a bandit. It helps in the mentality of a person. Without the church people would turn into animals.

Such a sentiment was often expressed by people of all denominations. Jamba spoke of how missionaries had brought a “light of knowledge” to people on the Planalto, saying that people’s minds are now broader, and implicitly contrasting this with the darkness of traditional knowledge: “So my father had more knowledge than my grandfather, I have more knowledge than my father, and my children will have more knowledge than me”. This illuminating knowledge was seen as bringing moral education, as António’s quote suggests. Such narratives seem partially to have their roots in the strikingly similar evolutionist representations of dark Umbundu tradition and the light brought by Christianity, which were propagated by Congregationalist missions²⁷ on the Planalto during the colonial period. As Jeremy Ball reports, these missions portrayed Umbundu traditions as backward and equated Christianity with education, modernity and progress – to such an extent that the Umbundu word meaning “I am from the school” - *ndukuasikola* – came to mean “I am a Christian” (Ball 2010:349). Such constructions were bound up with social status in the colonial system, with a mission education allowing access to ‘assimilated’ status, whether official or unofficial (Heywood 2000), and often, given the lack of avenues to political power, providing a rare avenue to influence at the village level (Edwards 1962).

In 2012, these men's narratives depicted religious knowledge as promoting a way of life

²⁷ I focus particularly on Congregationalist missions here, because there is significantly more written about them than the Catholics, whilst scholarly research on the history of Seventh-Day Adventism in the region is virtually non-existent.

that is morally upright and beneficent: it leads people away from acts that are both morally evil and that bring destructive consequences, to behaviour which is both morally good and brings positive consequences.²⁸ Yet the enlightenment that religious knowledge could bring was not just about moral conduct. In some religious men's accounts religious knowledge also constituted information about the actual state of the world. This knowledge was depicted as having an ambivalent relationship with scientific knowledge. For some, religious knowledge was closely associated with 'scientific' knowledge taught through formal education, in that it brought people out of an ignorant and dark past into an enlightened modern present and future. As Paulo, a Catholic, put it:

Religion is for educating man. Without science, man is always in darkness. Now, religion is for educating man. When a man is in religion, he is educated, and everything he does is positive. It's difficult that he sometimes follows a bad path.

On the other hand, rhetorics of science that were used to reject religion as unscientific were rejected by these men. They would sometimes comment on the socialist period, and "that science" the state promoted, which claimed that man was not created by God, but "came from the monkey". Such forms of science were seen as backward compared to the knowledge brought by the churches: in Paulo's words, the theory of evolution is "a backward theory, an old theory that has been superseded". This theory was associated with the socialist "system and beliefs", considered by some as Russian and not Angolan. Thus the knowledge that the churches have brought to the Planalto was seen to have led Christians to an educated state of religious modernity, away from a recent period of one-party socialist government and its attendant foreign beliefs; and also away from an ignorant, benighted 'African' past.

In this discourse quite specific aspects of the 'traditional', 'African' past are considered to constitute the darkness of the past, and they are aspects which have been discussed in previous chapters. Particular emphasis is put on the rejection of the spiritual and

²⁸ In the narratives of several Catholics this was a simple matter of education: since evil acts can only bring negative consequences to all concerned, people only need to receive this knowledge to change their needlessly destructive behaviour. Conversely, those from more evangelical denominations, as with Francisco in the introduction to this chapter, emphasised the importance of each individual's choice once they have received knowledge of the gospel – though for them too the appropriate response to hearing the gospel seemed to be obvious.

supernatural aspects of traditional Umbundu beliefs. *Feitiço*, in particular, came in for frequent criticism from all veterans, of all denominations, as the epitome of sinful, backward and futile behaviour that can only bring short-term benefits, followed inevitably by disaster, as discussed in chapter 4. They were also considered particularly 'African', with 'African' used in a derogatory way to denote a backwardness contrasted with the good that Christianity brings (see Van Klinken 2012 for a similar observation about Zambian Pentecostal men; Ricardo Soares de Oliveira 2015 makes a similar point about the MPLA's vision of Angolan identity being partly constructed in pejorative contrast with the "African"). Similarly, as discussed in chapter 3, another spiritual aspect of traditional Umbundu beliefs was also rejected by religious men: the *ovinganji*, the masked dancers representing demons and spirits of the ancestors. Finally, a practice that came in for particular condemnation, and that was spoken of to me with particular embarrassment was polygamy. The idea that polygamy was shameful, and that polygamists could not be true Christians and should not attend church was widespread amongst all of these men (with the exception, presumably, of the three polygamous men, who were all reluctant to discuss the subject).

Polygamy and traditional Umbundu supernatural beliefs and practices were, in fact considered by some to be so deeply rooted that they could not be erased. These sinful and menacing aspects of collective history were seen to be lingering, hidden presences – “accumulated rubbish” from the past and properly belonging in the past, undermining the full, developed and civilised Christian-ness of congregations. In a discussion about the comparatively small and shrinking sizes of Christian congregations in Europe, João Alexandre, an Adventist *kupapata* and veteran, commented that at least Europeans convert ‘fully’. In Angola, he said, congregations included many polygamists and sorcerers. Similar anxieties were expressed by other veterans and in sermons in Adventist and Catholic churches (and was noted in an Episcopal Conference of the Angolan and São Tomense Catholic churches in 2012 (Rocha 2012))²⁹. Despite this uneasiness about the hidden presence of traditionalists in the midst of congregations, Churches were still seen as institutions that had the power to deliver Angolans from

²⁹ It seems possible that part of the attraction of the churches was the emphasis on rejecting *feitiço*, allowing it to remain part of people's experience and providing a vocabulary and set of concepts for talking about it (rather than dismissing it out of hand, cf. Meyer 1999).

their dark past through the light of knowledge.

7.4.1 Organisation versus confusion

A key pair of concepts used for judging the ethical character of social phenomena, as well as their progressive or regressive potential in terms of developed-ness, were *confusão* and *organização*. As we have seen in previous chapters, various sources of *confusão* troubled the men I worked with: the consumption of alcohol, and increasing economic inequalities were prominent ones. As I will discuss below, politics and ambition were seen as other potential causes.

Confusão was a term used broadly to mean many things – as Ryszard Kapuściński put it, it is “a synthesis word, an everything word. In Angola it has its own specific sense and is literally untranslatable” (2001:118). At its most basic, it means just what it seems to mean: confusion and disorder, something that is difficult to understand and difficult to control. It had a broad range of application, however, from fairly benign, everyday mix-ups, to a grim understatement used to summarise all of the suffering caused by the civil war. It often had a particular association with destructive discord and conflict between people, especially where this resulted in malevolent acts. Thus part of the darkness and *confusão* of the past was based on the hidden forces unleashed by envious hatred (*ōnya*), seen to be exacerbated by post-war economic inequalities. It was also associated with what some referred to as ‘tribal’ hatreds or ‘tribalism’, which many felt could not be erased, and certainly not without God’s help. The danger of politics (discussed below) was seen to be the *confusão* it had brought to Angola through the civil war (even though the concepts of *confusão* and *organização* were also instrumentalised politically).³⁰ Another, related aspect of *confusão* was its association with a lack of transparency, and of disguised actions and deception: politicians duping brothers into fighting each other in a war of ambition that only served politicians’ personal ambitions; the corruption of state bodies; and the camouflaged attacks of

30 Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, for example, points out that the MPLA and UNITA have both had obsessions with order, and the MPLA has mocked UNITA as a party of *confusão* since the end of the war (2015)

sorcery, amongst others.

One of the main appeals of religion seemed to be that it offers a way of life that is more *organizado* – both in terms of ways of coming together as a community and of one's personal conduct. “Africa is *confusão*,” João told me, referring to “tribal” hatreds, “[but] if people pray to God, maybe things can change”. Jamba, commenting on the sometimes violent rivalry between two football clubs, said,

Sport is all about contention, but it's also a way for people to be friends with each other – it's actually precisely about not fighting – that's the whole point, it's peaceful, it's a game. But some people only think about the contention and it is this that brings the confusão – and anything that brings confusão is not from God.

Churches were seen as particularly organised and constructive communities, proactively doing God's work together. All of the churches I went to emphasised the importance of punctuality each week; all of them would have a structured set of groups to carry out the churches' work – whether this meant constructing a new church building, evangelisation, or bringing communion to those in need. Social events would be arranged in a well-drilled fashion, funds would be raised for evangelisation drives or for new buildings. A great emphasis was put on working together constructively, and on the organised, transnational structures of church authorities – something religious men clearly took pride in. These principles of organisation were said by some to apply to one's personal life outside church contexts, too. As Isaias told me, when he converted to Adventism, his life became more ‘organised’, because he stopped engaging in the ‘liberties’ that the Catholic church allows, such as drinking and smoking. As we saw in chapter 4, these men often spoke of the need to ‘organise’ one's life in order to be successful in commerce and make a steady income to support one's family. Churches therefore seemed to offer a path to becoming a modern and enlightened man: living a constructive, positive organised life guided by Christian knowledge that entailed both moral behaviour and educated enlightenment that was considered appropriate for a developed society and person.

7.4.2 Church elders and gendered age hierarchies

Not all features of what was glossed as 'Umbundu tradition' were repudiated, however. As we have seen in previous chapters, the decline of the institutions of the *ondjango* and *evamba* was viewed with some regret. This was particularly related to the ethical values they instilled, in particular respect for male elders and the importance of accumulating wisdom over time. The gendered hierarchies of churches and the existence of official posts for lay people to take up seemed to provide valued avenues for gaining such respect. Official positions in the churches I attended were exclusively occupied by men, with the exception of work in the “área feminina”, or work with children. These positions were a source of great pride for those who filled them. Hosi spoke proudly of how he had managed not only to get elected deacon for a two-year term, but then to be re-elected, something he said that was only achievable by those who do “well or very well”. He was subsequently elected as a church elder, and asked me to come to his church on the Saturday he was presented, to take photos of him. When I showed him the photos he stared at them in silence for a long time, grinning with pride.

While the men who held such positions complained about the extra work it involved, they also spoke proudly about how many people knew who they were because of their positions. Vicente talked of how his position as a catechist meant that he knew everyone in the Catholic church in Huambo. After mass when my partner and I visited him at his church on Palm Sunday, we walked through his neighbourhood to his house, and almost everyone we passed greeted him by name. He was well known in contexts beyond his church and neighbourhood, too, including amongst the traders on the streets around the market, as 'catequista Vicente'. These positions, then, yielded respect that gave them valuable networks in both church and non-church settings.

In this sense, then, part of the appeal of being part of church congregations seems to be that they were organisations whose hierarchies and organisation were dominated by older men. There were some exceptions to this: in all of the churches I went to, women featured prominently in choirs, and women might speak for short periods (such as the 'five minutes of health' in the Adventist services). In a IECA service organised by a

church women's association the master of ceremonies (giving the announcements, leading prayers and introducing speakers) was a woman, and a woman gave the main sermon. Such occasions could be disruptive of gendered age hierarchies: One service I attended at Hosi's (Adventist) church was led by children and young people, even the preaching. The boy preacher, who was around ten years old, took the opportunity to rail against the corporal punishment of children. He called upon adults in the congregation to come to the front and publicly repent from beating their children, which despite some laughter from adults, around ten did. When no more came, the boy angrily berated the rest of the congregation, undeterred by further laughter, asking, "Do you agree with children being beaten? Are you going to carry on beating your children? Why didn't you come out to the front, then?"

Despite such moments, the overall pattern was of men taking almost all of the public roles and the authority roles within the churches. The exclusion of women from more public roles seems to have a longer history within IECA, where missions sought to domesticate women's roles so that they would become the "soul" of their homes, where order and cleanliness was seen to be the mirror of the spiritual transformation of the homes' occupants (Péclard 1999). While there are no studies of the history of the Seventh Day Adventist church in Angola, in the global Adventist church in general women have been largely excluded from positions of authority, in contrast to the early years of the church when Ellen White was a dominant figure and women were able to occupy senior positions (Hörschele 2007; Vance 1999). In the Catholic church, of course, only men can be priests, and in the churches I visited, all of the lay people involved in running the services were also men.

More broadly, these churches seemed to offer some respite from the perceived lack of respect for elder men that veterans felt had arisen from the decline of the *ondjango* and circumcision ritual and their associated hierarchies, and the rise of the value of money as a marker of social status and authority (Harris (2012) makes a similar argument about the appeal of religion for men in Kaduna, Nigeria; conversely Peterson (2001) details conversion to the East African Revival as a way that men and women contested elders' strategies for dealing with the gendered effects of socio-economic change). Lay

positions denoted an upstanding moral character, but also a superior knowledge of scripture and church doctrine, with elder men often employed as counsellors or instructors of one kind or another. There was thus an assumption that these men possessed valued knowledge and wisdom, and part of their authority stemmed from this knowledge – a similar ethical justification for gendered hierarchy that these men had grown up with in the prewar period. It also meant a similar embodied style: a sober one, emphasising the possession of interior qualities rather than any sort of flamboyance that could denote a more 'superficial' outlook.

It should be noted, too that lay positions had other important resonances for these men: they were official positions that had been denied these men in their economic occupations, where they considered themselves 'unemployed' and left to *desenrascar*, as we have seen. They were also, in many Protestant churches, elected positions. Some spoke proudly of the democracy of their church institutions, which made a sharp contrast with the common complaints about the party-state's subterfuge, which was often said to undermine national elections and block access to employment in the state sector and other forms of advancement to non-party members. I will now move on to discuss the salutary contrasts drawn between the churches and the political sphere.

7.5 “I say ‘thanks be to God,’ and I carry on”: churches as havens from the deceit and danger of politics

One day in August, in the run-up to Angola's second national elections, I went into the usually tranquil city market to find a television crew from the state broadcaster, TPA, interviewing some women sellers in the vegetable section. Most of these women were wearing new MPLA caps and t-shirts, which had obviously just been distributed to great excitement, and there was a large campaigning banner hung on one of the walls showing a giant picture of the President's face. Vicente and João were talking to each other agitatedly, and, unusually, only peremptorily greeted me and continued their conversation.

In the past few weeks there had been violent protests by Bicesse veterans in various parts of the country about the failure of the government to pay veterans' pensions. The non-payment of pensions had been a long-standing source of discontent amongst veterans, and was usually the first thing veterans mentioned when I told them my research topic. Whilst disabled veterans received a small pension of around \$100 per month, most other FAPLA veterans I met (with the exception of one white, officer veteran) were not paid anything. An MPLA-linked organisation called ASCOFA (Associação de Apoio aos Combatentes das ex-FAPLA) had been set up for the payment of pensions, which had charged FAPLA veterans members' fees and required them to open bank accounts. However, promised payments never arrived, and all veterans I spoke to about this assumed that the membership fees had been embezzled. Periodically this had led to angry protests: for example in 2011 a meeting of *kupapatas* had been called outside the MPLA's headquarters, on the understanding that they would be addressed by a member of the MPLA about unpaid veterans' pensions. However, when it emerged that the speaker was only a member of the transport union, AMOTRANG, the gathering turned nasty and led to running battles in the street with police. The government responded to protests in 2012, an election year, with a mixture of violence at the protests, and the granting to veterans of a one-off payment of \$400, which was, supposedly, to be followed by regular payments in the future (when I returned to Huambo in 2015, no further payments had been received, to nobody's surprise).

These developments, combined with the very visible presence of party politics in the market, seemed to have spooked Vicente and João, and they were stony-faced and obviously worried. They discussed rumours that political parties were trying to make political capital out of the veterans' protests, trying to provoke veterans into causing trouble so that the police would kill some of them – thus stoking discontent against the MPLA government. Political parties were recruiting foreigners, João said, because foreigners would have no qualms in starting a new war, since foreigners did not care about Angolan lives. “Violence is not the way,” Vicente kept saying.

The prospect of elections obviously still raised the spectre of renewed fighting for many, given the very intense fighting that broke out, particularly on the *Planalto*, after the

failed elections in 1992. Vicente turned aside from his conversation with João to say to me, unprompted, “I *like* the MPLA”, as if someone had suggested the opposite. A few minutes later he ended his conversation with João, and turned to me and muttered: “they should just hurry up and have the elections and stop this agitation. If the government stays I say, ‘thanks be to God’, and I carry on; if the government changes, I say, ‘thanks be to God’, and I carry on”.

Vicente, like most of the men I worked with, often spoke of the sphere of the political and the sphere of the churches as ideally distinct, and almost mutually exclusive of each other. This has certainly not been the case in terms of how church institutions have related to state power and political movements in Angolan history, with different churches siding with or resisting the colonial and post-colonial states or different political parties in different historical periods, as I discussed in chapter 2. However, many of these veterans saw loyalty to churches and loyalty to a political movement as incompatible. “When I was young I was interested in politics, and I supported the MPLA against the other parties,” Jamba told me, “but in the end I changed my allegiance to religion. Now I am of Christ, and you can only serve one master”. Such sentiments were expressed by veterans of all denominations, often using the Bible verse, “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, render unto God what is God’s”, which they took to mean a resignation towards the dominance of the government, and a primary allegiance to God and their church.

The opposition between these two spheres had much to do with how formal politics was perceived by most of these men. High level politicians seemed to be trusted by no-one. That is not to say that people did not have preferences between different parties, but there was little confidence in the good faith of politicians. In every case, the first time I met each of these veterans they complained bitterly about the lack of support they had received as veterans from the government. Each listed the times over the years that politicians had promised to provide them with pensions or employment and then failed to deliver – with the suspicion often being that the funds had been embezzled. It was a commonplace for all of my Angolan friends to complain that Angola was a rich country due to its oil wealth, and that it was a scandal that most Angolan people were so poor.

Politics was seen to be another realm of conflictive striving and *confusão*, which compared unfavourably with religion: “there is no brotherly love in politics”, Hosi complained. Jamba, as we have seen, argued that politicians were filled with an insatiable ambition for money and power, an ambition that came from the devil and had driven politicians to deceive the Angolan people and to trick them into fighting each other.

Such deceit was not just limited to the highest level of politics, either, but had reached into people’s everyday lives during the civil war and after. As several men mentioned, during the war both sides sent secret agents into their rivals’ communities to gain intelligence for preparing attacks; an atmosphere of suspicion was said to have reigned, in which not having your ID card with you would result in arrest or worse, and the question of who people ‘really’ were and whose side they were on became vexed. João suggested that some people would take advantage of this situation to make false political accusations in order to be rid of rivals in their communities. This atmosphere of distrust had lingered in peacetime, and seemed to make non-partisan political action extremely difficult. The disabled people’s association I worked with in Huambo was a non-affiliated solidarity organisation between civilians and veterans, and between veterans of both sides, lobbying the state and other institutions for increased support and inclusion of disabled people. Its leaders often complained that state security agents and others would not believe in their non-partisan status, assuming that they must have taken one side or another in Angola’s largely polarised political scene, in this case assuming they must secretly be acting for UNITA.

The deceit of politics was not just seen to be limited to the promises of politicians, either, but to the possibility of knowing and telling the truth about Angolan society and history at all. Alexandre, Vicente’s cousin who sold school materials on the stall next to his, and who was also a veteran, called me over one day to look at a free newspaper he had been given. “There’s a guy who’s talking a lot of truth about the history of Angola,” he said. He pointed to an article by a white Angolan journalist called Ermídio Fernando, that praised a recent book written by some Cuban veterans, frankly reporting their time in captivity with UNITA (Rojas García 2012). He lamented that no senior members of

the government would tell their own stories about the civil war period, meaning that Angolans were unable to understand their own history. João often mentioned that he was glad to help me with my research, because it was good that the Angolan 'people' should have a chance to say what has really happened in the country in the past 40 years. "The country's leaders want to be the only ones to tell the history of the country, but the people know that they lie", he said. A prime example of the distortion of history by the country's leaders was said by veterans to be that of Augusto Ngangula, used in government propaganda to encourage the enlistment of young men in the 1970s into the FAPLA. Ngangula was said to have been a young boy who gave his life rather than give up the position of an MPLA camp to the Portuguese, saving thousands of lives in the process. Adolescent Angolan men were exhorted at school to follow this example of self-sacrifice in defence of their fatherland, by enlisting in the FAPLA. After some time in the army Alexandre began to doubt this story:

I came to the conclusion that he was a political term [i.e. he only existed in political rhetoric]. They say that he died in Moxico. Moxico is where I was doing my army service, and I got to see the very gravestone of Hoji-ya-Henda [a famous MPLA independence fighter]. And I did some research on Augusto Ngangula, I asked around, and no-one had heard of him. It's just politics ... it's propaganda.

Such cynicism about Ngangula was widespread amongst these veterans (and has also been noted by Pearce 2011; and Pawson 2014): official versions of Angolan history were seen by most to be largely distorted according to the party-state's interests (cf. Messiant 1998).

Coupled with this impression of deceit and distortion was the idea that politics could be lethally dangerous. As I discussed in chapter 2, the independence movements seemed to many, in the mid-1970s, to herald a new and more hopeful era of Angolan history (Messiant 2008). As the civil war began to intensify and become more destructive, however, the violence of political divides reached into communities and families through forced conscription, and violence and repression targeting civilians. The violent elimination of presumed political enemies during the civil war period was assumed to still continue by many of the veterans I spoke to and was spoken of with palpable fear. João was fond of saying, with a grisly relish, that the government would "tear off the

head” of people who spoke out. Vicente said, in a more serious tone, that there was no point in getting involved in Angola’s confrontational party politics, asking, “Is it worth getting killed for a cap and a t-shirt? People should leave politics to politicians” – meaning those who are placed high enough to be able to gain significant benefits from it. “I’m happy to just go from my home, to the market, to the church, and not to get involved with parties”. Veterans’ fear of speaking the ‘truth’ about their experiences at the hands of the state also affected my research, with even some of the veterans I had become closest to refusing to be interviewed by me, the word ‘interview’ apparently conjuring up media appearances for many and reprisals from the MPLA, despite my insistence that the interview would be anonymous and not broadcast.

7.5.1 “Live with the certainty that everything will end well”

In this context, the sphere of the churches was constructed almost in express opposition to a sphere of politics that was considered deceitful, dangerous, unpredictable and unjust. Towards the end of my year in Huambo, the Seventh Day Adventist church was pursuing a global campaign of evangelisation, based on the distribution of a pamphlet written by the Adventist prophet Ellen White, entitled *A Grande Esperança* – the Great Hope. The subtitle for this pamphlet was “Vive com a certeza que tudo vai acabar bem” - “live with the certainty that everything will end well”. Flávio gave me a copy of the pamphlet, and I saw it accompanying Bibles in several people’s hands in subsequent week, even in those of other denominations such as IECA and Baptists. When religious men made a contrast between faith in God and the use of sorcery or involvement in politics, the message for people of all denominations was the same: God is the only thing you can rely on. This statement was often made in contrast to the political: as we have seen above, Vicente was happy to have a simple life in the market, his church and his home, and often spoke of how God had protected him throughout his life from the dangerous political upheavals that he had lived through. Hosi’s cousin, who one day dropped into Alemanha to visit him while I was there, recounted his military service to me, including that he deserted rather than go to fight at Cuito Cuanavale, the largest and

bloodiest battle of the 1980s. I suggested that it was not worth dying for the MPLA, and he replied, “exactly, that's why we rely on God. He's the only thing that matters”. This contrast was also repeatedly made with the deceptive promises of sorcery, as we have seen above.

This faithfulness was not seen just to apply to the physical world, but also to the promise of eternal life for the faithful – and again, this seemed to be common to all denominations. Alexandre, when speaking of the difficulty of dealing with people's reactions to the facial injury he suffered during the war, explained one of the reasons why he no longer worried about discrimination, “When a man dies he isn't disabled, he's resuscitated whole, right? This is the doctrine of the church.” For newcomers to Adventist churches in the city, there was an introductory talk given when regular congregation members went into Bible study groups – this talk emphasised the fact that death could come at any time, and that you ought to be prepared by being faithful to God. A pamphlet was handed to each of us describing the delights of Heaven, and inviting us to think of all the good things of life that we appreciated most, and to imagine how much better they would be in Heaven. Adventists constantly emphasised the promise of salvation, and the fearful consequences for those who refused to accept the Christian message.

For Adventists, the certainties their faith gave them were particularly related to prophecies of Christ's return and the positive meaning they could give to tribulations which announced that return. Jamba often cited recent historical events that proved that the return of Christ was near, such as conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the AIDS epidemic, global warming, and “wars between brothers”, which he claimed were happening in every part of the world. “The Bible is a compass, that allows me to see the past, present and future”, he said, - an image that was common amongst Adventists, and one I will discuss more in the next section. Accordingly, Jamba's favourite hymn was one that enjoined believers not to crave peace, since conflict was a sign that Jesus was coming back,

Don't count, then, on enjoyment and peace;

*Because struggles will follow;
But at the return of the Saviour,
They will have an eternal end.*

It was easy to see why such a message might have appeal to veterans, given the intense violent conflicts they had witnessed in the past decades, as well as the unforgiving political and economic climate in which they currently found themselves.

7.5.2 Biblical knowledge and longings for clarity

Given the certainty accorded to God's promises, Biblical fidelity seemed to take on a particular importance. The Bible was, of course, important to religious veterans of all denominations, including Catholics. Vicente, when speaking of how he kept his faith going during his time in the army, called the Bible, “the weapon of God”.³¹ However, the emphasis put on Bible study by Adventists³² was stronger, and to some extent was seen by converts as marking Adventism out as distinct and more authentically Christian than Roman Catholicism. Part of the appeal of Adventism for several of the converts I spoke to was not just greater Biblical fidelity in itself, but that church members could read the Bible for themselves and assess against a source of absolute truth whether the claims were true or not, rather than simply having the meaning handed down to them by a priest without consulting the passage for themselves, in spite of Biblical interpretations being oriented at a global level for Adventists by the *Trimestral* – a three-monthly publication of daily Bible studies. Eva Keller argues that the joy of Bible study itself is what appealed to Malagasy Adventists about their religious practice, and that even if this intellectual activity took place within a pre-determined paradigm, discovering how to get to the final result of 'clarity' by oneself provided purpose and

31 Mirrored by a motto in the FAPLA encouraging people to put their religious beliefs aside: “Deus é arma” - God is your weapon – meaning that a gun is what gives you power and will save you. Vicente's motto also suggests the appeal of Biblical texts in the struggle for interpretive power at an uncertain moment when meanings and moral values seemed to be in flux. As Crapanzano (2001) points out, discovering the original divine meaning of scripture allows believers to reject the influence of changing historical circumstances on the interpretation of truth, instead viewing historical circumstances through the prism of God's unchanging word.

32 The importance of Bible study and Biblical fidelity was also emphasised by other less-established denominations in Huambo, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, members of the Reformed Church, the Baptists and members of the Bom Deus church.

excitement (2005). This process may have had intrinsic excitement for veterans in Huambo, but also seemed to be particularly exciting because they saw their faith partly in contrast to Catholicism. This meant that the process of studying involved the learning of prestigious knowledge in a more direct way than they had been used to, according to a doctrine that appeared more truly Biblical and thus to give them moral and spiritual superiority over the powerful Catholic church and the Catholic majority. Bible study was also thought to help believers see through the Satanic deceptions of the world, and find the true significance of the historical events that had marked these men's lives so deeply.

The idea of the Biblical truth as a rare source of clarity did not seem to be limited to churchgoing men however. Even two men who were not regular church-goers and were considered quite disreputable by many regularly studied the Bible: João, and a non-veteran market seller in the municipal market in his 30s, called Ernesto. Ernesto looked doubtful about the prospect of regularly attending church, but would sit at his stall reading his tattered Umbundu copy of the Bible, and told me, “the main thing is, you need to read scripture to know what it says, then you don't need to have any uncertainties” - meaning that, for him, Bible study made attending a church rather superfluous since what was important was the acquisition of Biblical knowledge. João would discreetly disappear to a nearby park each lunchtime to read the Bible. He seemed to want to keep this fact a secret from me, but when his nephew Eduardo told me about this, I asked João why he, an arch sceptic of most of Angola's establishments and sacred cows, would spend time on such a pursuit. He replied, “I read it to know what is truth and what is lies, and every day at midday I go to the park to read the Bible, and then again when I get home”. He made this statement during a conversation about religious hypocrisy, and for João, the Bible seemed to be a source of reliable truth by which he could judge the conduct of the people and institutions that presented themselves as righteous.

These views also reveal a clear contrast with how knowledge is seen to be deployed in the sphere of politics, and that of Biblical knowledge. Whereas in the political sphere, knowledge is restricted and produced in such a way that Angolans cannot trust the

statements of politicians and where, as Messiant puts it, “even the past is unpredictable” (Messiant 1998:157), the Bible provided a grounds of reliable truth. Of course, this truth is open to many different interpretations, and Biblical truth was often the terrain upon which the struggle for the moral high ground took place between men of different denominations. Yet this foundation was crucially missing in the area of politics, in which the unreliability of even basic information contributed to what has been termed by Jon Schubert, following Didier Fassin, the “paranoid disposition” of Angolan political culture (Schubert 2015a). In this sense then, the Bible provided a unique source of reliable knowledge about the world and about moral truths, a rare source of stability and clarity for interpreting events and institutions that was so lacking in other parts of veterans' lives.

7.5.3 “It's really good sharing with brothers, without any distinction of race”

Angola's civil war brought many painful divisions to Angolan society, and the churches were certainly not immune to them, as discussed in chapter 2. From colonial times Catholics and Protestant denominations had a mutual antipathy due to the colonial power's support of the former, and suspicion of the latter (Schubert 1999). After independence the support of part of the Baptist church for the FNLA, the periodic support of IECA for UNITA, and the wholehearted support of Methodist leaders for the MPLA's socialist project, created divisions between and within these churches (Schubert 1999). This situation did not improve during the 1990s when the MPLA began to co-opt some churches and church factions through political inclusion and material support, whilst distancing itself from others, intentionally sowing division between them in a successful attempt to prevent them from uniting in opposition to the party-state (Messiant 2008) . Attempts to co-opt influential churches have continued in the post-war period. In spite of these divisions, however, the idea that Churches are spaces where the painful divisions of the past ought not to apply was strong for many. When I asked the men I worked with whether the presence of both 'city' people, (who had lived and sometimes fought for the MPLA government during the war), and 'bush'

people (who were associated with UNITA) caused problems in congregations, most of them denied it. This denial accorded with the official teachings of each of their churches, most of whom had preached peace and the healing of divisions during the war, and continue to preach reconciliation after the war. A senior Adventist pastor's comments were typical of the stance of most denominations:

It's based in the principle of love – which has a basis in God's love. Based on this principle it's been easy. First of all, people need to understand, “What has God done for me?” This has made it easy to reconcile people ... It's all a family, even though divided, it's all the family of Angola.

The claim that “it's been easy” seems hard to believe. Certainly, from time to time, even the most religious men would slip out of the political correctness of their churches' official position, and criticise people who had been with UNITA during the war. Even Hosi, a devout Adventist who constantly praised the speeches of Isaias Samakuva, the current leader of UNITA, during the election campaign, said of UNITA veterans, “those people are bad, they're not like us, they still have that mentality from the bush”. He immediately checked himself and looked uncomfortable, and refused to elaborate. A Baptist pastor I interviewed was more open about how politics could divide churches, recounting the story of a female congregation member of a IECA church, who came to his church instead because of prejudice against her as a 'proveniente' – a pejorative term for those who came to the city from the bush at the end of the war. I heard similar claims about the exclusion of those who were unable to contribute to weekly collections, something that disabled people particularly struggled to do according to the association of disabled people I worked with.

Such divisions and exclusions were seen as not being compatible with the mission of churches, though, and several of the men I worked with seemed to believe in the sincerity of the official policies of churches not to discriminate on political or other grounds. When I mentioned to Domingos, a Catholic, non-veteran seller in the municipal market in his 50s, that two of the market's stevedores were UNITA veterans, he replied,

It's possible they were, I don't know. It's best not to ask these things, because unity is important, and if you start discussing which party people were in, these

divisions will open up again ... it will take a long time for these divisions to fade.

This attitude of inclusiveness and of a certain censorious political correctness thus seemed to be felt by many to be a way to try to overcome the violent political divisions of the past and to build cohesion and peace. Such an attitude was also approvingly cited by some men who felt discriminated against in other areas of their lives. Alexandre, when speaking of why he no longer worried about whether people discriminated against him or not because of his facial injury, explained,

Why? Because I belong to a church. I don't pay any attention. It could happen, but I don't pay any attention. Because everyone in church is the same, right?

A UNITA veteran I interviewed, called Domingos, complained bitterly about the prejudice and insults he had suffered when he first came to Huambo at the end of the war. When he spoke of his conversion to Congregationalism, however, he said of the church's influence on veterans of both factions,

[T]hey played a very preponderant role. In the city we had a militaristic role, all the men that come from the army have a negative soul. They raised our consciousness, that's to say that everything that's bad can stay behind, and everything that's good can stay in front ... it's really good sharing with brothers, without any distinction of race, it's really good, it's really good ... the church itself is really educative, very constructive, associative, it helps, and this does me a lot of good.

The word 'raça' was not always used by these men to speak about 'race' as understood in English. It could also refer to someone's family lineage, or to someone's ethnicity or regional identity, which were sometimes conflated, with 'sulanos' – 'southerners' – standing in for 'Umbundu' (Martins 2015). In this case it seems Domingos is referring to this regional-ethnic identity, one that was often presumed by 'northerners' to be an indicator of support for UNITA, and said to cause discrimination against the Ovimbundu. This was a particular cause of resentment amongst FAPLA veterans. We can see, then, that churches' policies of inclusiveness and non-discrimination were seen by many to provide welcome relief both from the confusão of political divisiveness, and from ongoing forms of discrimination and exclusion based on political categories and/or their conflation with regional and ethnic criteria.

7.5.4 Power and the limits of Christian exceptionalism

Religious veterans' stance towards formal politics, then, was double-edged. The recognition of the party-state and other political organisations as deceitful, self-seeking and dangerous led them to advocate a complete withdrawal from any kind of involvement in the formal political sphere. Yet this withdrawal was not simply apathy or passivity, but an explicit and self-conscious ethical choice to reject the corruption, violence and false promises of the political sphere in favour of God's faithfulness and protection now and in the future, and participation in communities founded on ethics of brotherly love, non-discrimination, the transparent and universally available truths of the Bible – and in some cases democracy. Thus, Didier Péclard is right in one sense to call the churches in Angola the 'depoliticizing machine' (2012:139), in that church institutions failed to advocate successfully for peace during the war, and have rarely openly criticised the party-state in peacetime (with some exceptions, particularly around the Pope's visit in 2009, see Faria 2013). However, for individual veteran believers, opting out of politics was both a political disengagement and an assertive choice to live by different moral values and to not involve themselves in a contention they considered immoral, deceptive and socially destructive.

This construction of a barrier between formal politics and the religious was clearly easier to achieve at the level of rhetoric than it was in practice – and this was particularly difficult for veterans in wartime. In Angola the two realms are clearly entwined, as the lingering antagonism between 'UNITA people' and 'MPLA people' in church congregations suggests. Beyond that, however, it seems clear that the strong moral condemnation that churchgoing men expressed about the political sphere in Angola was not assertively politically articulated because it was considered too dangerous – particularly given the political violence that most of these veterans had witnessed, been the victim of, or perpetrated, or all three. Indeed, a radical disengagement from politics during the war could have posed a potent challenge to the politically powerful, since both sides depended on large numbers of young men to fight in their armies. Yet none of the religious veterans I worked with thought that fighting in

the army was a moral failing on their part, despite their common view that the war was a pointless and immoral war amongst brothers.

This is best illustrated by the fact that almost all of these veterans viewed conscientious objectors negatively. Two FAPLA veterans I knew who had been involved in forced recruitment mentioned what they referred to as the 'courage' of Jehovah's Witnesses that they had tried to recruit. They had refused to put on a military uniform, preferring to remain naked, and refused to touch any weapon with their hands. These men were often beaten, tortured or killed, and yet they would not consent to fight, to the point that FAPLA recruiters in Huambo were said to have given up and let the surviving ones go home. Criticisms of such men were various: that it was foolish not to fight, since 'the other side' (UNITA) would not spare them, and would have killed all of them for refusing to fight rather than letting them go. Another was that Jehovah's Witnesses would refuse to take the risky journey in armed columns to the coast to bring food back to the city, but were happy to eat the food when it arrived. These criticisms claim that the situation of violent political contention made fighting and other involvement with state military organisations a matter of basic individual and collective survival, both in terms of self defence and keeping the city supplied with basic goods. Jonas, a veteran and *kupapata* in his 50s, gave a biblical justification for military involvement, saying,

What about the Jews? God sent the Jews to fight wars, why can't Christians fight now? If you don't have an army, the others will invade and enslave you, so you need an army as a deterrent. It says in the Bible that you shouldn't kill, but it also says that you ought to be free.

An Adventist pastor that I interviewed gave an alternative explanation, suggesting the need for flexibility when trying to match the demands of scripture with the dilemmas presented in difficult situations:

It all depends from individual to individual, and religion is much more of a factor of conscience, particularly in the most difficult moments. Each person knows what his conscience says, according to what he has been taught, and in each circumstance the person will know how to act.

This point of view, in fact, reflects the official position of the global Seventh-Day Adventist church, which was arrived at in 1972 to settle divisions at the highest levels of

the church in the US about conscientious objection to the Vietnam war. It also reflected the long trajectory of Seventh-Day Adventism in the US from a radical and marginal sect that espoused pacifism, to a larger and more mainstream sect that increasingly required to come to accommodations with state authorities (Hörschele 2007). However, an alternative Biblical argument could have cited verses forbidding killing or exhorting believers to 'turn the other cheek', and argued that military service was un-Christian. The fact that those who did conscientiously object were disapproved of and considered beyond the pale, seems to indicate how Angola's situation of violent political division set limits to what was believable and practicable for most Christians, and to the sorts of Biblical interpretations that were considered legitimate and authoritative by most believers.

This seems to underline Talal Asad's argument that religious meanings cannot be understood independently of non-religious meanings and the authorising processes of power (1993). Thus, despite Christians' deliberate efforts to avoid the political sphere on moral and religious grounds and seek a purer space in the churches, the power of churches to provide an alternative ethical space could not, for most people, extend to open defiance of the party-state's demands. Rather than such political pressures acting simply as a threat that tested one's resolve, they seemed to shape Biblical interpretations and Christian moral norms, with those that encouraged such defiance considered illegitimate.³³ These arguments also, of course, had the effect of justifying and excusing veterans' past actions – very often taken due to state coercion rather than conviction – and aiding the construction of senior masculinities that were considered respectable and righteous despite the past practice of violence.

33 The dangers of such defiance were tragically illustrated in early 2015, when police attempted to arrest Júlio Kalupeteca, leader of a break-away sect from the Seventh-Day Adventist church, called the "Church of Seventh-Day Adventists, Light of the World". Thousands of members of the sect were gathered on Mount Sumi, to the south of Huambo city. Although the exact sequence of events is not clear, sect members apparently killed eight of the police officers who had attempted the arrest. Armed police were sent to the area, and several hundred unarmed civilians seemed to have been killed. The area has now been declared a military zone and no independent investigations have been permitted. See: <http://www.cmi.no/news/?1549-massacre>. While the rumoured massacres were deplored by some of the men I worked with when I visited them in 2015, most of them focused on the police officers killed by the sect followers, and the sect's foolishness in disobeying the government. Jamba's critical comment was typical: "No church is more powerful than the government, the government is father. Churches are for religious matters, when people take the wrong path and get involved in politics, that isn't real faith".

The withdrawal of believers from the political sphere, whilst also refraining from radical disengagement from politics, has its corollary in how church institutions have withdrawn from political engagement to concentrate on the spiritual life of, and material assistance for, their congregations. As Péclard (2012) outlines, the first truly ecumenical political campaign by churches was a campaign for peace begun shortly after the resumption of fighting in 1999 after a period of 'no war no peace' during which a cooptation strategy pursued by the MPLA had been effective in heading off dissent from the churches. In the new offensive the MPLA pursued a policy of securing peace through a military victory (see also Messiant 2008), the urgency of which was increased by the potentially potent peace campaign, which had emerged shortly after the campaign began. The success of this campaign would have meant the MPLA losing control over the transition to peace, and perhaps having to share power with UNITA. This strategy was successful when UNITA was defeated in 2002, and allowed the MPLA party-state virtually unchallenged control over the transition to peace, and has allowed them to largely set the political agenda in peacetime (despite an uptick in over political protests since the 'Arab Spring'). Meanwhile, churches have once again withdrawn from political action to concentrate on spiritual and humanitarian issues, except where church leaders express support for the MPLA.

The party-state's attempt to limit the activities of churches to ministering to their congregations has therefore mostly been successful, but while this was generally mirrored in these veterans' lives, the appeal of religion and their religious practice can only be fully understood in terms of the moral stance it entailed towards the corruptions of the political sphere. Churches provided these men spaces and ways of coming together that gave respite and some autonomy from the party-state's suffocating influence on social life in Angola; on the other hand these were also spaces that were limited to addressing private belief, limited social work amongst the congregation, and the moral conduct of one's day to day life, rather than a locus for resistance against the political *status quo*.

7.6 The appeal of churches: summing up

Derek Peterson (2001) argues that historical scholarship on the East African Revival has focused principally on conversion as a matter of personal crisis and private conviction, and had thus neglected its “politically creative” (p.471) nature and the fact that conversion was never a private matter. Similarly, for veterans in Huambo, religious practice was never simply a private matter, but meant taking a stance towards the consequences of the social transformations of war, and was a way of seeking to assert and live ethical alternatives to the degeneracy said to be occasioned by the war: the unwanted return of backward and destructive striving properly belonging in the past; the undermining of gendered age hierarchies; and the dangers and deceit of politics. In spite of the multi-dimensional implications of religious conversion, these men sought, ironically, to maintain barriers between Christianity and other spheres that were considered dangerous and morally polluting, though as we have seen these attempts were not completely successful. Some of the darker features of the 'African' past appeared to be ineradicable. The demands of the political sphere and dominance of the party-state seemed to shape and limit the sort of Biblical interpretations that veterans could make, and their ability to escape the corruptions and dangers of politics.

The churches had come to be the pre-eminent moral authorities for these men for a number of reasons. Some of these are historical and were discussed in chapter 2, but they do of course intersect with the personal histories of veterans. The churches were the one set of institutions that had managed to maintain its strength over the course of the war, and to avoid becoming ethically discredited, often providing material assistance as well as a space for collective action and spiritual relief. They thus both provided familiar and esteemed moral-religious teaching, while also providing a social space that brought people together that was particularly important after the fragmenting of village communities during the disorderly flight to the city in wartime. The Umbundu institutions – some of which, such as the *evamba* and the *palhaços* – were already under pressure from churches in the late colonial period, rapidly disappeared from people's lives once the war started (even if they are still practiced in some rural areas), as did the

remnants of the *ondjangos*. The absence of these institutions from young people's lives coupled with the move to informal trading and the rising social value of money seemed to these men to threaten gendered age hierarchies and a model of senior masculinity based on respect for wise male elders. The churches provided spaces where elder men continued to be respected and accorded positions of authority, while also providing a vision of developed-ness that promised a step away from immoral aspects of the traditional past, and an educated, organised way of leading one's life and working on one's moral character.

Finally, given the deceptions and sense of radical uncertainty and insecurity engendered by an immoral political sphere, churches provided a space of certainty in this world and the next, a source of reliable knowledge available to all upon which ethical living and moral debates could be based, and one which sought to leave the painful divisions of the war in the past. Anthropologists have recently studied a range of different future orientations that engage uncertainty in various ways, such as doubt (Pelkmans 2013), luck and fortune (da Col 2012) and hope (Crapanzano 2003). David Pratten and Elizabeth Cooper (2014) point out that uncertainty should not only be viewed negatively as a lack of information about the future, but also positively, as firing imaginations and encouraging new social connections. In the case of the religious veterans that I worked with, this was certainly true: previously non-religious men turned to religion as a reaction to the dangerous uncertainties of the war and its political aftermath, and those who had been religious since childhood often redoubled their commitment to their churches. They sometimes did so as a way of accounting for people's differential fortunes during the war, and as a way of giving thanks to God, who they assumed must have chosen them to survive. Others turned to faith out of fear of the potential unravelling of their ethical selves, and linked fears of death, and most were also influenced by the moral and existential certainties represented by scriptural truths.

In the conclusion to the thesis, I will expand this discussion by exploring what the twin foci of this thesis: masculinities and ethics, can reveal about the nature of the social transformation effected by the civil war on the *Planalto*, and in Angola more generally.

Chapter 8: Concluding reflections

Ricardo Soares de Oliveira has recently published a bold, agenda-setting book about Angola since the end of the civil war, focusing particularly on the post-war consolidation of the power of the party-state and the accumulation of vast wealth by the party-state elite. In a section on the relation between the party-state elite's attitude to the morality of enrichment and broader Angolan culture, he makes a striking statement:

One cannot begin to understand the societal impact of Angola's oil-fuelled capitalism if one insists on framing it as a morality tale of evil elites and suffering masses. In fact the ethos of easy oil money and its separation of wealth from productive endeavour has come to suffuse Angolan society. (2015:154)

Since the end of the war, television has transformed from being reminiscent of the socialist era, to prominently displaying wealthy lifestyles from Angola and abroad, in soap operas and lifestyle programmes. The extreme wealth of the elite, that before the end of the war was only visible in the centre of Luanda, is now visible in cities across the country. Rather than the 'masses' being pious victims, Soares de Oliveira argues, there is a curious mixing of angry criticism of the elite with a desire to emulate them through the possession of similar signifiers of wealth and status. Protests are often not oriented to changing the system, but rather aim at claiming a slice of the pie. Most Angolans, he contends, including the elite, do not have an imagined moral community beyond their own family, due to a history of state violence and a lack of a civic project. This has led to a “supercharged sense of flux and moral uncertainty; rules are renegotiated daily; often, they are simply abandoned” (2015:160).

This is an important argument to make, particularly given developments in Angola since the end of the war. Christine Messiant for example, writing just over halfway through the war, wrote of a great alienation between the politico-military elites waging the war, and the large majority of the population who by and large did not strongly identify with either party, were excluded from the benefits of membership of the elite, and suffered greatly during the war (1994). As Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues has noted (2007b),

since liberalisation began in the 1990s, social status in Angolan cities has gradually ceased to be based so completely on membership of the politico-military elite or being a direct client of the elite, and money has come to denote status in a more diffuse way, and clearly shapes aspirations. However, much remains to be explained about how this process is playing out across Angola, and Soares de Oliveira makes two brief but telling caveats to his argument. Firstly, he emphasises that his book, while being about Angola as a whole, is written from the vantage point of Luanda (as, indeed, is the majority of research on Angola). In an endnote he acknowledges the argument that part of the elite's culture of accumulation and consumption might be related to a pre-existing “money culture” in Luanda, which contrasts with the “hard working tradition of the highlands and Lubango” (Soares de Oliveira 2015:248). Secondly, he notes that some people reject the moral economy of the elite, often on religious grounds.

It is difficult to locate the contribution of this thesis in a literature as sparse as that on the social dynamics of the *Planalto* in the post-war era,³⁴ particularly if one is interested in gendered dynamics, on which almost nothing is written. I will conclude this thesis instead by framing it within Soares de Oliveira's argument, as a way of illustrating the particular contributions that my regional study can add to our understanding of the processes he describes, and particularly what a gendered lens can contribute.

His first caveat refers to the 'traditions' of the highlands, which he particularly associates with 'hard work'. As we have seen throughout this thesis, what veterans referred to 'Umbundu tradition' had a great influence on how they ethically problematised the situation in which they found themselves in 2012. Of course, what was considered 'traditional' could often overlap with religious concepts, and the idea of 'hard work' as a virtue was certainly one promoted by churches in the colonial period (and may have had its origin there), and was still promoted in the churches I visited in 2012. As such, it is difficult to point to clear historical 'sources' of particular ideas of manhood, but the men I worked with made a clear equation between 'our culture', and a certain style of senior masculinity. How the post-war 'money culture' was received by these men was very much influenced by the idea that there ought to be general respect for elder men who

34 Though the recently-published historical literature is much richer, for example Peclard 2015; Ball 2010; Dulley 2010; de Conceição Neto 2012; Pearce 2015.

had managed to raise families of their own, maintain moral respectability and gain the wisdom of a lifetime. Indeed, this was how respect ought to be accorded to men, and they were suspicious of, and felt threatened by, new social logics that seemed to threaten this moral code, which would both undermine their status and threaten social chaos.

We should not necessarily view these men as pious or pure: they did not rule out engaging in illegality. As I noted in chapter 4, to *desenrascar* could imply resorting to illegal practices in order to survive. Nevertheless, these men believed that rather than brashly demonstrating status through the display of superficial signs, a man ought to carry himself with humility and demonstrate his wisdom – and the emphasis should be on such interior qualities. As I noted in chapter 6, the ethics of a particular cultural style of masculinity shaped consumption preferences and uses in important ways – for example through the prioritisation of housing over cars and other portable commodities.

It is also important to note the importance of generation here: these men were born on the cusp of a huge historical shift on the *Planalto* – they were the last generation of men to have been born early enough to have been brought up in the late-colonial period. This meant that they were significantly influenced by the gender hierarchies of that period and the attendant prevailing morality – particularly given the influence of the *evamba* and *ondjango* in that period. Their children, and even in some cases their younger siblings, had no memory of this society. They seemed much more receptive to an idea of status and respect that made money and the display of commodities a central priority,³⁵ causing considerable tension between veterans and their children (a dynamic I analyse in more detail in Spall forthcoming). The term broad 'immediatism' that is often disapprovingly used to describe 'money-culture' across Angola takes on a specific meaning when used by middle-aged men in Huambo. It is not only referring, as Soares de Oliveira implies, to a reluctance to work one's way through educational institutions, to become properly qualified and earn a salary through hard work – it is also understood to refer to a temporal model of masculinity whereby children are not willing to wait

35 Assuming that we are to accept, as Soares de Oliveira does, that the importance of this culture is primarily down to a simple 'emulation' of those in power. It seems, however, that more research needs to be done on how this trope has spread and is spreading, what the relative weights of a number of different factors ought to be assessed, for example: actually witnessed consumption and inequalities, the role of money in making the state work for people, and domestic versus international media.

until they are old to gain respect and deference from others. As we can see then, how 'money-culture' is received and contested is vitally dependent on both gender and generation. How these categories play out in different regions of the country is likely to vary according to local histories – the Angolan 'masses' need to be disaggregated to really understand the nature of the social transition effected in Angola by the civil war. As Lindsay and Miescher argue, the analysis of heterogeneous masculinities can be particularly revealing in analysing the nature of such social shifts (2003b).

Soares de Oliveira's description of the “supercharged sense of flux and moral uncertainty” vividly captures the sense of near-bewilderment that most of the men I worked with expressed when speaking of the increasingly visible economic inequalities of post-war Angola. As we have seen, the sense of vulnerability that they expressed was certainly pronounced, but whilst men were willing to use the shadier aspects of strategies to *desenrascar*, they certainly did not view inequalities with sanguinity, nor did they have respect for those who enriched themselves in ways that breached ethics of respect for one's fellow men. As I discussed in chapter 4, the recent problem of very visible inequalities was viewed through the prism of the older concepts of *onyã* and *ocipulũlũ*, a legacy of a long-standing culture of the occult in relation to economic life that was adapted to the uncertainties of life in 2012. The moral uncertainty related to everyday economic life was not, then, translated into a laxity with relation to economic behaviour – on the contrary it made the moral judgement of economic life, and the question of how and whether monetary wealth should translate into social prestige, particularly vexed and uncomfortable.

Soares de Oliveira's second caveat, on the role of religion, is not a minor one in a country with such huge church attendance as Angola, and it is this fact that undermines his claim that most Angolans do not have an imagined community beyond their families and are often comfortable with the moral values of the party-state elite. In the case of the veterans I have discussed in this thesis, the fact that their churches are both national and international organisations gives them the prestige that comes with a valued vision of modernity which has great legitimacy in the country. For these men, their churches are envisioned, crucially, as global, and as providing a sense of connected-ness as well

as approval from around the world. Vicente, for instance, would constantly emphasise that I should not call his church the 'Catholic' church, but rather the 'Roman' church, because many churches are technically catholic, but none have the global clout of the church of Rome. Believers of other denominations made comparable statements about their own churches.

This vision of cosmopolitan modernity is not tainted by the moral failures of the spheres of politics and money, and so, even if they do not provide the same material rewards, these men found much to value in church life.³⁶ Indeed, as I have argued, these men turned to religion in large part precisely because they sought an ethical space that was not corrupted by politics and money: this was one space where the knowledge that matters was freely available to everyone, and communities were based on overcoming prejudice and divisions of the war, even if old wounds did not always prove so easy to transcend. Churches also provided a sense of existential certainty and safety that public life markedly lack.

That is not to say that we should take churches and churchgoing men at their word, and view them as pure moral alternatives to the evils of the party-state. As Soares Oliveira rightly points out, important members of the hierarchies of all of the largest Christian denominations in Angola have been co-opted by the party state. In addition, as I argued in the previous chapter, men's attempts to carve out a pure sphere of religion foundered against the logic of political power and their own implication in Angola's violent history. Moreover, one of the principal attractions for some of these men of religious practice – the respect they could gain in official positions in churches, and the (for them) reassuring gendered hierarchies – might not be viewed as morally progressive by many foreign academic observers of Angola. Nevertheless, the churches provided important spaces of moral aspiration, where it was plain that people's life projects were oriented in important ways by efforts to work on themselves to become better Christians. These projects had important gendered dimensions: for example, becoming better husbands

³⁶ The unease of the MPLA elite at the potential mobilising power of churches seems to be growing. The proliferation of new churches and other religious groups has been a cause for concern in recent years, with orders given in 2014 for the shutting down of all non-registered religious groups – which in effect meant the complete banning of Islam, given that the religion is not registered with the state. Since the Kalupeteca massacre, unease has greatly increased, with a new bill on religious regulation is in the offing that promises to be even more draconian than the existing one.

(and wives), which means simultaneously more righteous, more developed and more worthy of social prestige³⁷ - though such projects are far from innocent of power relations, as we saw in chapter 5.

What such projects of self-making seem to demonstrate is perhaps a more general point that is often obscured by the particular emphasis of much of the literature on Angola on the sphere of formal politics. Soares Oliveira's book is an excellent argument for why this emphasis is justified: it chronicles the extraordinary success of the MPLA party-state in consolidating its power after the war, extending its domination across the national territory and into almost all sectors of society. As ubiquitous as politics is, though, there is much more to life in Angola than just politics. Even given the economic and political dominance of the party-state and the great struggle the men I worked with had at times to make ends meet, and even given the decline of many of the institutions and moral norms which they cherished during the civil war, these factors were conditioning rather than determining for them. The central question of ethics still remained for them, the question of how they ought to exercise the freedom that they did have (Foucault 1987). This was, of course, not an absolute freedom, but meant each man choosing between “models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group” (Foucault 2000:291, cited in Laidlaw 2002), and I have dwelt at length on the historical processes that conditioned the choices these men were making. Nevertheless, to borrow Saba Mahmood's phrase, these men did not regard emulating

models of behavior as an external social imposition that constrained individual freedom. Rather, they treated socially authorized forms of performance as the potentialities – the ground if you will – through which the self is realized (2005:31).

Thus, they strove to avoid dangerous forms of moral pollution, and to make themselves into respectable and morally upright elder men, despite the tragedies they had endured in their lives and the adversities, uncertainties and insecurities they faced in 2012.

³⁷ Angola is, fortunately, better served in terms of studies of religion in the post war period than it is on many other topics, even though many privilege the topic of how religion relates to the political, rather than the role of religion in everyday life. See for example, (Péclard 2012; Sarró, Blanes, and Nando 2008; Blanes 2014).

I have mentioned Vicente's cousin, Alexandre, a handful of times during the thesis. He was also a FAPLA veteran, and had lost one of his eyes and some of the bones in his face in an attack on a motorised convoy in which he was a driver, in the late 1980s. In 2012 he was a man who, in a sense, confounded some of the typologies that I have sketched above. He was a Catholic who, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, found great comfort in the fact that he would not be discriminated against in the church because of his injury, and could expect to be resurrected whole after death. He also liked a drink, though, and was therefore the sort of Catholic that gave Catholicism a bad name in the view of many Protestants, in view of its toleration of 'liberties'.

Alexandre was particularly bitter about how men of his generation had been used by the government, and I only managed to really break the ice with him towards the end of my stay in Huambo, in late 2012, when he decided to give me a frank life history interview, in a serendipitous fit of pique at attempts by the MPLA state to only allow authorised versions of Angolan history to be told. When I returned to Huambo in 2015, he came into the market late one afternoon while I was talking to João, drunker than I'd ever seen him, and more indiscreet. After some joking, he asked to look at photos of my house in England; I had some on my phone, and I showed them to him. He went silent for a moment, suddenly serious, and then asked me, "Johnny, you live better than the Angolan, don't you?" Knowing that by 'the Angolan' he didn't mean all Angolans, but the 'people', I sheepishly admitted that I did, and he replied,

We like it that you come here to visit us, you're humble. We come here to work, even though the government won't help us. Even though the government kidnapped us, and they never did anything for us. But what can we do? We don't get involved in politics. And we have to carry on, we have to make a living, so we come here. I have a motto: live life, until death comes to find you.

In spite of the many hardships that they face, these men had no choice but to make the best of their lives, and often chose to live them in a spirit of fierce moral indignation at the behaviour of the party-state elite – but also at a range of other moral menaces which were not directly connected to the party-state. These are lives that, as Stephen Lubkemann put it, "insist on being lived in their full complexity" (2008:245), and their analysis requires an appreciation of how personal, local and national histories are

intertwined, how they are marked by various axes of social difference, and how they are transformed by war. This thesis has aimed to make a contribution through such an analysis, but as I have mentioned, much remains to be done in this regard for the study of Angola's post-war transition.

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