

**NEGOTIATING ANGOLAN-NESS  
IN DIASPORA**

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partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Given the current drastic situation in war-torn Angola, a study of its people in exile is both timely and important. This thesis draws on thirteen in-depth interviews to explore the negotiation of Angolan identity in diaspora in Toronto and, to a much lesser extent, in London, U.K. Only persons who self-identified as Angolan were considered for this research. While the sample size is limited, participant responses demonstrate the extent to which Angolan identity is negotiated and contested in diaspora. Community politics, and the politics of language in particular, reveal a heated debate surrounding Angolan-ness -- a debate which is intricately bound up in a recent Angolan BaKongo return movement from the Democratic Republic of Congo. French-speaking BaKongo returnees of Angolan descent are laying both emotional and territorial claims to Angola. As a result, this group is challenging the very definition of the Angolan nation and of Angolan-ness. In response to this challenge, Portuguese-speaking Angolans or self-identified 'Real' Angolans, have drawn on a nationalist discourse which deliberately excludes these French-speakers, particularly those who exhibit strong ethno-nationalist tendencies. Ultimately, this research reveals how negotiating Angolan-ness in diaspora is a continuous and unpredictable process -- one which is symptomatic of our increasingly globalised world.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

“Peace? With those two parties there [the MPLA & UNITA]? No. There will never be a peace in Angola. Until those two guys are gonna die [Savimbi & Dos Santos], there ain’t gonna be a peace.... Those people made Angola as a business country... So basically, even inside of Angola, the [people’s] eyes are open but they can’t say nothing. We, outside of Angola, we have to build that confidence to those people.... I want Savimbi dead. I want Dos Santos dead. I really mean it. I want them dead those two people. The reason I want those two people dead is because they are the ones making war in Angola. They made it as a business” (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999).

“They are both so greedy [Savimbi & Dos Santos]... They are not doing it for the people. If it was for the people, they would never kill any person there in Angola. Because every victim in Angola is not in the military but civilians all the time. So they’re not doing anything for us... The country has so much money but they don’t do anything for the people. Not if you’re KiMbundu, UMbundu or BaKongo”. (Sofia March 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

“Mon épouse est née en 1970. Elle est née dans une situation de guerre. Elle a grandi dans une situation de guerre. Elle s’est mariée dans une situation de guerre. Elle a commencé à avoir ses enfants dans une situation de guerre, quelle histoire peut- elle donner à ses enfants parce qu’elle n’a jamais connue la paix?” (Tomás June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999).<sup>1</sup>

“Angolans like a good party and laugh. And even now, even the disaster and chaotic situation in which they live, you can’t believe the energy they put into having a good time” (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

#### 1.1 Angola’s Invisibility

1.2 million deaths have been directly attributed to Angola’s intensifying thirty year war (Angola Update March 1999). The official estimate of in-country amputees dismembered by land mines is 70,000 -- the world’s highest (Ibid.).<sup>2</sup> As of April 1999, it was estimated that 1.6 million Angolans were internally displaced, half of whom had been dispossessed

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<sup>1</sup>“My spouse was born in 1970. She was born in war. She grew up in war. She was married in war. She started having her children in war. So what kind of history can she pass on to her children when all she has known is war?” (June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999)

<sup>2</sup>Angolan Update reports that for every pair of Angolan legs, there is one land mine (March 1999).



as recently as April 1998 (Angola Update May 1999)<sup>3</sup>. Yet Angola has fallen off the international community's agenda altogether. There are countless expressions of "deep concern", "calls" and "urgent appeals" lodged by international officials and delegates for both political and financial commitment, yet response is minimal at best (IRIN 1999; Angola Peace Monitor 1999; Angola Update 1999)<sup>4</sup>.

Amidst complaints of 'donor fatigue' and physical threats to NGO staff, the international community has all but given up and pulled out of Angola.<sup>5</sup> Dimming prospects for peace,

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<sup>3</sup>In 1997, Angola's total population was estimated to be 11.6 million (Angola Update March 1999). Reports of displacement however, are conflicting. The Carter Institute, citing the 1995 World Refugee Survey, claimed that the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) exceeded 2,000,000 in December 1994 – long before the latest round of renewed fighting (triggered in December 1998). In addition to those internally displaced, 75,000 sought refuge in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and another 8,000 fled into Congo-Brazzaville between December 1998 and April 1999 alone. Zambia accommodated 1,200 refugees between June 1998 and December 1998. These recent migrants join the hundreds of thousands who preceded them: 220,000 in the DRC, 13,000 in Congo-Brazzaville, and 110,000 in Zambia according to December 1994 figures. (IRIN 1999; World Refugee Survey 1995 cited by the Carter Institute 1995). In spite of the magnitude of displacement suggested by these numbers, they are likely greatly under-representing the actual scale of migration and dispossession. Many refugees go uncounted, discreetly staying with friends or kin in-country or in neighbouring countries (Robson 1999; Hansen 1990). According to Paul Robson of the Montreal-based NGO Alternatives, those most easily identified tend to be those that are said to be most vulnerable and those living in camps.

<sup>4</sup>This is partly evidenced by the fact that of the 105 million dollars promised by the international community in 1999, only 45.15 million had been put forward by June of this year. This latter amount covers but 25% of anticipated needs in Angola. (Agence France-Presse June 7<sup>th</sup> 1999). The Africa Policy Information Center (APIC) based in Washington, D.C. confirms the international community's apathy. In July 1999, it circulated an article published by the Los Angeles Times (dated May 21<sup>st</sup> 1999) in which it was "noted that per capita spending on refugees in the Balkans averages more than 11 times that on refugees in Africa. The war which resumed in Angola in December last year attracts only a tiny fraction of the attention given to Kosovo, though the casualties in this and other African conflicts are many times more numerous"(APIC July 11<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>5</sup>Attacks on humanitarian aid workers, both domestic and international, have escalated in the past year. Two UN planes were shot down, one in December 1998 and the second in January 1999 (UNHCR 1999). Investigative visits to either crash sites were unsuccessfully negotiated and all passengers have been presumed dead. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1999, six Angolan aid workers from Save the Children Fund

coupled with the Angolan government's unwillingness to keep a UN military presence in-country, culminated in the withdrawal of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1999 (UNHCR June 1999).<sup>6</sup> Although "vital humanitarian operations" of the UN still exist in Angola -- particularly the World Food Programme (WFP) -- efforts have been greatly hampered. The WFP's operations, like those of remaining NGOs, are frustrated by the control of UNITA troops, gunmen, rebels and disaffected or AWOL combatants.<sup>7</sup> Underfunded and restricted from accessing those in greatest need, the humanitarian aid agencies have virtually ground to a halt. It now appears as though the world will stand by as Angolans bear their fourth wave of war<sup>8</sup> in

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were ambushed and killed (IRIN June 14<sup>th</sup> 1999). Likewise, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1999, IRIN reported that the vehicle of a Portuguese aid agency was ambushed. Two humanitarian workers were killed and two others were injured (Ibid.).

<sup>6</sup>MONUA's effectiveness is hotly contested. It has been particularly criticized for its inability or unwillingness to enforce the demobilisation of troops and UNITA's (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) disarmament in particular -- conditions which had been agreed to by all parties, signatories of the 1994 Lusaka peace accord. In direct contravention to the accord, not only did UNITA fail to disarm, but they increased their military capability. They did so with MONUA's knowledge and some say, blessing. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for a full-scale review of MONUA.

<sup>7</sup>This development has forced World Food Programme to resort to air travel to deliver desperately needed humanitarian supplies, particular food and medical supplies. Over the course of six months, the WFP reported that its reliance on air delivery increased from 20% to 80-90%. Air transport is risky, exorbitantly costly and also vulnerable to frequent airport closures.

<sup>8</sup>The *first war* (1961 to 1975) was a war of independence. Even prior to Portugal's sudden withdrawal from Angola (in 1975), three nationalist groups, the FNLA, the MPLA and UNITA began to vie for power. In 1975, independence was declared by the Marxist, Soviet-backed MPLA and a single-party government was formed, gaining widespread diplomatic recognition. Cold war politics began to play heavily into the conflict, as the U.S. and China backed the Maoist, but anti-Marxist, UNITA-FNLA. The *second war* (1975 to 1991), the war of the bush (*Guerro do mato*) involved particularly brutal sieges of isolated towns such as Cuito Cuanavele where thousands were killed in 1987-88. The 1988 New York agreement resulted in a peace treaty which ultimately collapsed the following year. A new round of intense fighting resumed up until the 1991 Bicesse Accords. These accords were the most promising yet, and Angolans finally sensed some relief and were clearly hopeful for the future. The Accords ushered in

less than three decades.

Despite the severity and tragic nature of these events, media and academic coverage of the country has been minimal. If, and when, literature does surface, it tends to have one of five foci: (1) Some deal with national-level politics, specifically, the might and strategy of the war's figureheads -- UNITA's Jonas Savimbi in particular (e.g. *The Economist* March 13<sup>th</sup> 1999); (2) Others engage in causal analyses of the war (e.g. Turner 1998). (3) There is considerably more literature with a political economic leaning focus on the financing of the war through the sale -- both legal and illegal -- of Angola's vast quantities of diamonds and oil (eg. *Africa Confidential* May 1999; *Jeune Afrique* 1998; *Globe and Mail* March 1<sup>st</sup> 1999; *Global Witness* December 1998); (4) Still other writings report on the country's worsening humanitarian situation (eg. *Angola Peace Monitor*; *Globe and Mail* July 27<sup>th</sup> 1999, March 26<sup>th</sup> 1999; *World News InterPress Service* June

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Angola's first democratic elections in October 1992. The MPLA won a narrow victory over Savimbi's UNITA party in a preliminary run-off election. Rejecting the vote, Savimbi opted for a third round of war. The *third war* (late 1992 to late 1994) was the *Guerra das cidades* (the war of the cities). Again, the war, fought in the central highlands, reached a new intensity with up to 182,000 people dying in a six month period in 1993. War continued unabated up until the Lusaka Protocol of November 1994. Angolans however, were pessimistic, referring to this uneasy post-1994 phase as "not war and not peace" (Robson 1999). Between 1994 and 1998, localised fighting continued as did breaches of the cease-fire. By December 1998, a full-scale *fourth war* was inevitable. As both sides are wealthy -- the MPLA controls vast oil reserves whereas UNITA has access to Angola's diamond mines -- and better armed than ever -- UNITA having recently acquired air power -- this fourth war promises to be particularly brutal. Angolan newcomers to Canada are now speaking of a nation of indescribable suffering and hopelessness (*Global Witness* December 1998).

17<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>9</sup> (5) Finally, a handful of texts, particularly in history and anthropology, have provided descriptive and/or ethnographic accounts of Angola's colonial experience, various ethnic groups or the role of the Catholic church (Hilton 1985; Thornton 1998 & 1983; Soret 1959; Macgaffey 1995; Schubert 1997). With the exception of Art Hansen (1990) and Julia Powles (1995)<sup>10</sup>, there has been to my knowledge, little recent academic attention to the lived experiences of every day Angolans – experiences inevitably and profoundly shaped by war and exile<sup>11</sup>. Anthropology, I believe, is particularly well-suited to such a timely exploration. Its commitment to the lives and livelihoods of everyday

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<sup>9</sup>Angola contains some of the richest deposits of gas, diamonds and minerals in Africa (Global Witness December 1998; IRIN 1999; Angola Update). Experts now believe that deep-water oil reserves off Angola's coast are the world's largest untapped reserves. Oil provides 90% of the government's revenue. In 1999 alone, it is expected that the MPLA-led government will raise up to US\$1.5 billion from the mortgage of future oil production and from signature bonuses derived from the allocation of off-shore drilling licenses to BP Amoco, Elf Aquitaine and Exxon (IRIN May 11<sup>th</sup> 1999). UNITA for its part, is almost entirely funded by its control, production and sale of diamonds. Estimates of amounts raised from sales range from \$500 million to \$3 billion per year (Angola Update June 1999). Amounts raised by both parties are then used to buy weapons. Human Rights Watch claims that "Bulgaria has supplied both the Angolan government and, in breach of UN sanctions, the rebel UNITA movement. The report noted that UNITA delegations travelled to Bulgaria in 1998 and in January 1999, 'purportedly for 'sightseeing' purposes but in all probability to arrange arms deals'" (Human Rights Watch cited by IRIN June 8<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>10</sup>Both Hansen and Powles researched the lives and livelihoods of Angolans exiled in Zambia's North-Western province.

<sup>11</sup>This absence may be conceived to be in keeping with anthropology's traditional avoidance of the lived details of socio-political conflict and violence. The discipline has in fact, a long tradition of interest in war; the cold war, terror and terrorism (Green 1995), peasant war (Wolf 1969 in Sluka 1992:30) and especially 'primitive war'(Malinowski 1941 in Sluka 1992:30). It is partly as a result of this history that conflict has come to be viewed as one of many forms of human interaction. Yet conflict and recourse to violence in particular, are still largely viewed as aberrational to normal and stable forms of social organization or then again, they are 'rationalized away' with reference to familiar (albeit important) historical, political and economic factors, social stressors or so called 'root causes'. A growing number of anthropologists however, such as Feldman (1994), Sluka (1992 & 1990), Nordstrom (1995 & 1992), Martin (1992) and Robben (1995) are challenging this tradition. In particular, they are advocating an approach with a view to expose the full, nonsensical detail of contested experiences of violence.

people can make a valuable contribution to understanding the workings of conflict and resistance and perhaps even strategies for peace. In other words, anthropology can lend itself to explorations of conflict from the bottom up, contrary to international relations' or political economy approaches, which have tended to devote themselves to the exclusionary arenas of macro politics and international trade.

Inevitably, the brutality and great hardship that have shaped the last three decades of Angolan life, the international community's dwindling commitment,<sup>12</sup> and academic disinterest have all contributed to the invisibility of Angola's 11.6 million people. Yet Angolans persevere with great energy, both in-country and abroad. In part it is this perseverance, as demonstrated by Angolans abroad, which is the focus of this thesis. Those who have physically escaped the conflict remain inexorably bound to and identified by it. It is this process of negotiating one's identity, particularly one's Angolan-ness as defined by exile, that constitutes the focus of this research. Specifically, how is this negotiation affected by and contested in relation to others who equally identify themselves, or a part of themselves, as Angolan?

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

One of this thesis' objectives is to draw attention to the Angolan conflict through an

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<sup>12</sup>As suggested by one research participant, one could also speculate that the world will continue to express disinterest in Angola, so long as access to its abundance of diamonds and oil continues unimpeded.

exploration of the experiences of those who have fled the country to settle abroad, particularly in Canada. The primary objective, however, is to examine, within a broader discussion of diaspora, how Angolan identity is negotiated in exile. Diaspora, a transnational phenomenon, provides a space in which notions of Angolan-ness can be reformulated and contested. In this thesis, this process is explored through the use of Angolan interview responses. These reveal how Angolans in Canada draw on a view of their past and homeland as a means to actively reinforce and perpetuate social consciousness and ideals. Moreover, the articulation of these views are particularly important in the diaspora as they actively link members to a homeland lost, thereby reinforcing an imagined bond. This bond is then used to legitimate, and shape identification with, and claims to, the homeland.

I argue that Angolans<sup>13</sup> living in Ontario (Canada) are a diaspora, albeit, perhaps, unintentionally. Angolans choose to not formally define themselves as a diaspora -- even 'community' is used with reservation -- and yet they meet the standard check-list criteria advanced by a number of diaspora theorists (Safran 1991; Cohen 1997). For example, they have a history of dispersal, and share myths and memories as well as a commitment to an idealized homeland. Most desire to return to Angola, and there is clearly a sense of collective identity or consciousness as Angolans (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991). This

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<sup>13</sup>Throughout this thesis, 'Angolans' will refer to all persons who self-identify as such -- irrespective of actual citizenship and / or length of residence in Angola.

consciousness exists in spite of tensions and different understandings as to what constitutes 'authentic' Angolan-ness.<sup>14</sup> They also maintain transnational ties with others exiled in countries other than Canada, particularly the U.S.A., Germany, France and Portugal, who self-identify as Angolan.

Of particular significance to diasporas, and equally central to this research, are the workings of "a multitiered minority" (Tölölyan 1996:18), which endeavours to maintain and further develop diasporic group consciousness and identity. This minority, according to Tölölyan (1996), is a "distinguishing diasporan feature consist[ing] of the committed, the activists, and sometimes a handful of radical activists or militants... constitut[ing] the 'leadership elites' or, in another parlance, an 'interest group,' whose members staff and fund organizations have specifically diasporan concerns". In other words, these 'elites' attempt to harness the resources, energies and emotions of fellow Angolans in an attempt to negotiate a public place for their particular interest group in a landscape which is, by its transnational nature, shifting, mobile and disjunctured (Appadurai 1996). These leaders are therefore responsible for shaping the nature of the group itself, in large part by determining its membership. They delineate the group's boundaries and both define and legitimate just who their fellow Angolans are or should be. However, in the experiences

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<sup>14</sup>This consciousness is evidenced by the web of informal (regional and transnational) networks which bind all who self-identify as Angolans. Although, differing conceptualisations of Angolan-ness make it difficult for people to work together in formal associations (particularly those officially recognised by various levels of host government), the flexibility and unpredictability of the informal network accommodates tensions more easily.

of Angolans in Canada, there is not one ‘multitiered minority’ but several, all of which are vying to promote competing visions of Angolan-ness. It is this contestation which provides this transnational community its shifting and fluid characteristic.

### **1.3 Site & Scope of Research**

My primary research site is Toronto, Ontario and its surrounding areas. Of the thirteen persons interviewed, nine now reside in Toronto. Two participants live in Ottawa, but have had important links to the Angolan community in Toronto. Another individual is a resident of a smaller city on the outskirts of Toronto. The thirteenth individual does not reside in Canada at all, but rather in Portugal. A cousin of one of the aforementioned participants, she volunteered to be interviewed. Her contribution proved invaluable, providing additional insight into both the Canadian case and the workings of Angolan transnational networks.

In addition to this Canadian geographic site, a second site, based in the United Kingdom, has informed this study, albeit to a much lesser degree.<sup>15</sup> Having spent a better part of 1994 and 1995 living and studying in England, I was afforded the opportunity to meet BaKongo<sup>16</sup> asylum-seekers originating from Angola. They had taken up temporary

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<sup>15</sup>This research is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>16</sup>The KiKongo-speaking BaKongo constitute Angola’s third largest ethnic group in Angola (after the OviMbundu and the Mbundu respectively). They are largely concentrated in the country’s Northern provinces of Uige, Zaire and Cabinda. They also populate Congo and make up the largest ethnic group in



residence, as many asylum claims were pending, in London's East End. What drew me to their group was both the degree to which they claimed and aspired to be highly organised and their underlying (trans)nationalist cause. On the one hand, a formal association offered a support network for those BaKongo asylum-seekers recently arrived in London. At the same time, a second formal organisation, more political in essence, advocated BaKongo self-determination. Its ultimate aim, fuelled by a highly idealised mythico-history, was the restoration of the Kingdom of Kongo to its perceived glorious pre-colonial existence. Territorially, this claim extended beyond Angola's contemporary northern border to include parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Congo and Gabon, where BaKongo still reside today. In spite of the transnational character of this movement for BaKongo self-determination, membership appeared to be restricted to those BaKongo who make a territorial and ancestral claim to Angola.<sup>17</sup>

Although my research is multi-sited, this project is not intended to be a comparative study. Rather, the emphasis of my research is on the experiences of Angolans living in Canada. UK- related information will be referenced in broader discussions of identity

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the Democratic Republic of Congo (United States Library of Congress February 1989).

<sup>17</sup>This restricted membership could be attributed to the fact that the BaKongo share a unique history of persecution specific to Angola. At one level, the Angolan BaKongo have been harshly repressed for their practice of Tocoism, an Angolan religion born in response to Portuguese-imposed Catholicism. Also, the BaKongo were amongst the first to instigate an anti-colonial movement in Angola. This too was brutally repressed. I suspect that this history of dual persecution (and idealized martyrdom) has fostered a specifically Angolan BaKongo identity – even though the label 'Angolan' is said to be fiercely rejected by the members of this London based BaKongo group.

formation in exile. The primary reason for this restriction is the limited depth and scope of my U.K. research. Although the number of interviews, conversations and meetings conducted is comparable to that set in Ontario (thirteen in Canada and fourteen in the U.K.), my interactions with BaKongo in the U.K. were not as substantial as in Canada. A further limitation to my U.K. research was that only Angolan BaKongo men were contacted<sup>18</sup> – men who were actively engaged in leadership positions within both the association and the movement.<sup>19</sup> As a result, I had access to few dissenting opinions, which could have potentially been expressed by non-BaKongo Angolans, by BaKongo from either the DRC or the Congo, or by less vocal members, particularly women. All things considered, attempting any comprehensive comparison of the two field sites would be largely speculative at this point.

A second cautionary note relates to the scope of this research. Having surveyed a small number of Angolans in Canada and in England, I do not wish to suggest that either sample represents a microcosm of views of Angolans, particularly with regards to politics and the ongoing armed conflict. Rather, I am drawing on interview responses to

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<sup>18</sup>No women were interviewed, primarily for lack of opportunity and time. Non-BaKongo Angolan women residing in Canada often berated BaKongo men for excluding ‘their’ women from political arenas.

<sup>19</sup>Membership in both the Association and the Movement for BaKongo Self-Determination was said (by those interviewed) to overlap substantially. This is something which could not be verified for lack of access at the time of research. Member names and numbers were only vaguely hinted at. It is likely that this secrecy and seemingly vague accounting were due to the sensitive nature of pending asylum cases and the political and semi-clandestine nature of activities.

understand the contested nature of visions of belonging both in the exiled community and in the homeland -- responses spun and filtered through a complex web of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

#### **1.4 “But Why Angola?” & Self-Reflections**

Given the general lack of interest in Angola, research participants in Canada were inevitably curious and sometimes apprehensive as to why I had chosen it as my field of study. Responses such as “Finally!” or “I’d be happy to help you in your research” were usually followed up by “But why Angola?”.

My interest in Angola as a site of research was primarily fostered through my work in Meheba Refugee Settlement in Zambia’s North West province. A one-year work contract with CARE International (1994-1995) afforded me the opportunity to work in Meheba with Angolan youth. Established in 1971, the settlement was, in 1994, home to approximately 30,000 asylum-seekers, the majority (70 to 75%) of whom were Angolan (J. Lebert 1996).<sup>20</sup> The experience simultaneously heightened my disillusionment with the ‘business of doing’ development / humanitarian work and peaked my interest in refugee issues. I, therefore, decided to pursue refugee studies in the United Kingdom. It was in England that my professor, Dr. Effy Voutira, encouraged me to further develop my

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<sup>20</sup>Other residents had originated from Zaire, Somalia, Burundi, Uganda and Rwanda. In 1994, Meheba was the continent’s largest agricultural settlement, extending over 700 km<sup>2</sup>.

interest in Angola. In particular, she facilitated my meeting with an acquaintance of hers who came to be one of the London-based BaKongo Angolans leaders described above. In Canada, my focus has shifted to Angolans residing in Ontario.

Another element of the 'But why Angola?' question is the element of apprehension.

Initial contact was occasionally cool, for what I perceive to be two reasons. The first of these is, as expected, a wariness of intrusive solicitation and/or a general suspicion of my motives. Subsequent face to face meetings, however, quickly warmed relations and opened the way for mutual respect and friendship. A second, more important, reason for initial participant reluctance relates to the sensitive nature of the topic, particularly as it relates to immigration status<sup>21</sup> and the current weakened state of community relations.

While people were initially hesitant to speak to either of these issues, with time most came to express their opinions and frustrations quite openly and even passionately -- especially with regards to matters of community relations. However the concern for some was that my writing would portray them as a disorganised and incapacitated group -- an accusation which had been levelled at Toronto Angolans by officials of the Angolan consulate in Ottawa. I have no intention of criticizing the group's work. I do not have the capacity to assess their 'effectiveness', nor do I intend to compare the group to other

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<sup>21</sup>This expressed concern reflects the degree of sensitivity and insecurity surrounding immigration-related issues. With the exception of my discussion of Angolan immigration trends in Chapter Three, all other reference to immigration in this thesis strictly reflects the opinions of Angolan research participants, unless otherwise indicated.

diasporas.<sup>22</sup> I am deeply appreciative to all who trusted me with such highly personal and sensitive information. I only hope that my exploration of competing understandings of Angolan-ness is as accurate as possible, and perhaps idealistically, that it will lend itself to greater community dialogue.

As for my interest in identity issues, these stem partly from my own strong sense of home and belonging -- familiar ties which have had to be redefined by the challenges of both my personal experiences of growth and travel.<sup>23</sup> In this context, travel refers to both physical and metaphysical travel whereby experiences of multilocality have informed my own conceptualisations of the world (Clifford 1997). However, with regards to the experiences of Angolans in exile, this is where the parallels end. As an economically and educationally privileged white woman I do not pretend to completely understand the experiences of asylum seekers. I have not had direct experiences of war, persecution or exile, nor do I want to suggest that my work speaks either on behalf of asylum-seekers, or

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<sup>22</sup>In part, reluctance to discuss divisions in the community stems from Angola's history of foreign intervention. Portugal, South Africa, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and the United States among others, have all interfered in Angola, pitting one group against another for their own profit and motives, all with disastrous consequences. This may be the case with competing interest groups in exile. As Laura, an Angolan in Canada, articulated with regards to the BaKongos' movement for self-determination: "It doesn't take long before someone from the C.I.A. decides that it's a good idea and gives them some money and support them for a while" (June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>23</sup>I strongly self-identify as a French-Canadian from a francophone, agricultural community in South Western Ontario. Yet my own province territorially equates French Canadian with Quebec. Whereas, in Quebec, I am judged 'inauthentically' French Canadian both for my accent (always assumed to be Acadian) and the degree to which I have been 'Anglicized'. In Toronto I now struggle to maintain my own regionally specific dialect and culture.

for any one singular truth. Clearly, this thesis is my own product. However much I work to be objective, my personal experiences and views have ultimately informed its shape and content. I can, therefore, only offer empathy, sensitivity and a genuine commitment to those who are exiled from Angola. I further acknowledge the highly personal and emotive nature of identity issues particularly when shaped by histories of flight and exile. It is not my intention to trivialise these issues, but rather, to grant them and their narrators their most deserved and respectful appreciation.

So as to protect all research participants,<sup>24</sup> pseudonyms are consistently used throughout the paper<sup>25</sup>. Further still, due to the sensitive nature of the information gathered,

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<sup>24</sup>I have however, retained the actual names of all Canadian-based organisations and associations. The reason for this is that given the intimate size of the Angolan community in Canada, all Angolans are familiar with the organisations and the politics discussed here. In other words, there are no secrets. With regards to the UK group, Angolans in Canada are already well aware of the existence of such movements. In fact, groups such as the one in England, desire publicity. However, given the controversial nature of the UK group's activities, I have opted to refer to it as simply 'Self-Movement' or 'the Movement for BaKongo Self-Determination' and not by its real title so as not to risk jeopardising pending immigration and asylum claims in the UK

<sup>25</sup>Anonymity is intended to protect all participants from antagonistic responses to expressions of opinion. Perhaps more importantly, I am intent on ensuring the security of those participants whose families in Angola may be at risk of government reprisals. Although my own contact with the Angolan Embassy in Ottawa was amicable, albeit formal and brief, I have not included, nor will I circulate information which may even be conceived as a risk to any parties involved. On one particular occasion, a government official in Canada asked if I had been in contact with a particular Angolan over the course of my research. Having tried to minimize the extent of my contact with the person in question, he immediately proceeded to assure me that all accusations of abuses and persecutions allegedly executed by the MPLA-government had been drummed up. He was in fact, assuring me that anti-government sentiment was unfounded but also, that Angolans who held such views, were known to the Embassy. Yet participants themselves only take such threats half seriously. Rather than fear, participants express hostility towards the Ottawa-based Embassy. In particular, they resent the MPLA Embassy for having attempted to collect data on how they came to Canada, their whereabouts and those of their family members in Angola, and other personal details thought to reveal political leanings -- information believed to compromise family members back home in Angola. Participants also tend to take pride in "telling the

especially in light of the heightened conflict in Angola, the sharing of information between various groups and potential factions within the 'community' in Canada and the U.K. is restricted and / or has been conducted with the utmost discretion. In the fall of 1999 a summary of project findings will be distributed for comment. It is my hope that this summary will lend itself to constructive community debate. Likewise, a copy of the final product will be made available at participants' request.

### **1.5 Methodology**

In Canada all persons who claimed to be Angolan were considered for this research. Contact was made with participants through word of mouth. In the beginning, two unacquainted Canadian missionaries who had had long personal histories of involvement in Angola and ongoing contacts with Angolans in-country and in Canada provided me with contact names and background information. As I began to meet with Angolans my list of contacts grew longer. I then approached thirteen people who together represented as great a variety of Angolan backgrounds as possible. Happily, all thirteen agreed to participate in the research.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, the number of men slightly outnumbered the number of women (6 and 7, respectively). All three major ethnic groups: OviMbundu (2

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Embassy how it is" and "giving them a piece of (their) mind" (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999). One Angolan in particular confided that the Angolan community in Toronto is one which is renowned for being particularly troublesome, rebellious and vocal.

<sup>26</sup>The number thirteen is completely random. Lack of time did not allow for a greater number of participants.

persons), Mbundu (6 persons), and BaKongo (4 persons), as well as one White Portuguese Angolan were represented. All are, to some degree, attached to or from Angola's urban centres, Huambo, Benguela and Luanda. Ages and professional backgrounds also ranged greatly.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, all phases of Angolan immigration to Canada were represented: Two individuals first arrived over twenty years ago and the most recent participant has been in Canada for less than a year, his asylum claim still pending.

All research in the U.K. was derived from both unstructured conversations and formal interviews, both of which were facilitated in group settings. I also had an opportunity to engage in participant observation as an invited guest to a meeting of the Movement for BaKongo Self-Determination. In Ontario, a preliminary telephone conversation was followed up by a one-on-one and, on two occasions, a two-person interview or series of interviews. However, most 'interviews' were less than formal and consisted of lengthy, informal conversations over coffee or a meal.<sup>28</sup> The average length of these informal interviews was 3 ½ hours. The longest series of meetings with one person added up to 10

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<sup>27</sup>In Canada, the Angolans' professional backgrounds varied greatly; from social and community worker, to pastor, travel agent, nurse, student and diplomat. Three persons were either unemployed or underemployed. Ages ranged from 22 to 55 years.

<sup>28</sup>Most conversations retained this informality in spite of the use of both consent forms and a recording device (used in all but two meetings). No recording device was used in the UK setting and although there had been verbal consent granted at the time of interview, written consent forms were later forwarded by mail from Canada.



hours. Due to the unstructured nature of the interviews, what emerged were very often rich, yet largely unstructured, discussions.

With the exception of the one government official interviewed, all Canadian-based participants considered themselves to be, at one time or another, in exile. This does not mean that all Angolans interviewed came to Canada as refugees. On the contrary, most Angolans come to Canada as landed immigrants after having first resided, and / or claimed, asylum in another country -- usually in Europe. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, exile is not defined by any strict legal status. Rather, it is an experience which is self-ascribed by participants to describe a prolonged period of their lives, usually including the present. It is also important to note that all but one person<sup>29</sup> expressed a strong, sometimes overwhelming desire to return to their home country -- 'if only' the war would end. In other words, although participants' legal status differ from refugee, landed immigrant or Canadian citizen, the majority wants to return 'home', having perceived themselves at one point or other to have lived, or to be living, a life of exile.

Three languages were used throughout my fieldwork: French, English and Portuguese.

This provided me with windows of opportunities which may not have existed otherwise.

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<sup>29</sup>Laura has lived outside of Angola for over twenty years now. She left the country with her four-year old daughter and together, they have since resided in a number of European countries prior to coming to Canada. Today, they have no close family left in Angola. This lack of family ties to Angola and the intensifying war, makes return an unattractive prospect for Laura. Her daughter however, expresses a desire to return and to better acquaint herself with what she refers to as her country.

In England, the BaKongo who were most comfortable in KiKongo, Portuguese and French were, I sensed, relieved not to have to converse in English. Likewise, in Canada, three participants chose to converse in French as their language of ease and preference. Portuguese was used in two sets of conversations: one with a translator, the second without. All in all, language proved to be an important building block of trust in this particular research context -- a context influenced by language politics.

### **1.6 Organisation of Thesis**

My research is almost entirely qualitative. The notable exception is Chapter Two, where I map out the recent dispersal of Angolans around the globe and in Canada in particular. In this chapter I provide details as to the various phases and patterns of Angolan immigration and settlement to Canada, and then I contrast this information with Angolan asylum patterns in both Africa and Europe, where the attraction has been greatest. I also briefly explore what determines the ultimate choice of destination -- if and when, there is free choice.

Chapter Three sets these issues of Angolan identity and belonging within a broader theoretical discussion of globalization, transnationalism and diaspora. The practical and scholarly significance of both these broader, transecting themes to this study are also considered.

The fourth chapter outlines the developments and textured workings of the Angolan network in Toronto. The dynamics of both formal and informal associations<sup>30</sup>, as articulated by participants, is discussed -- including those which transcend international boundaries. Subsequent to this initial social mapping, I tease out the key interest groups (or leadership elites) and begin to discuss how Angolan-ness is construed.

Chapter Five focuses on one of the most contentious issues surrounding Angolan legitimacy. It is a determinant of Angolan-ness which is intricately bound to a recent BaKongo return movement to Angola from Zaire.<sup>31</sup> After having instigated one of Angola's first nationalist revolts in March of 1961, 400,000 BaKongo Angolans were pursued into Zaire by the Portuguese. Their children, raised and schooled in French in Zaire, were brought up on a proud diet of Angolan nationalism by their parents and felt themselves to be, above all else, Angolan. The return of these children to Angola beginning in the mid to late '70s, and their claims to what they perceive to be their ancestral land, are particular thorny issues both in Angola and in the diaspora. Specifically, I focus on how the question of 'Real' vs. 'Non-Real' Angolan expresses

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<sup>30</sup>Formal associations refer to those community groups which are officially recognised by one tier or other of the Canadian government. They have official titles such as the Angolan Community of Ontario (ACO). They also tend to have an elected board of directors or administrators and have some funds (occasionally, government grants) at their disposal. Informal associations on the other hand, consist of broadly based networks of social relations which are largely unpredictable and unbounded.

<sup>31</sup>Throughout this thesis, Zaire and the Democratic Republic of Congo or DRC are used interchangeably.

itself. In so doing, I also touch upon the constructions of the Angolan nation and the significance of the London-based BaKongo Movement for Self-Determination. I argue that this latter movement -- one which is both diasporic and ethno-nationalist -- may be conceived as existing in direct response to contestations of Angolan authenticity.

Chapter Six sums up the main points of this thesis. Ultimately, I reflect on the significance of both the dynamics of the Angolan community in exile in Canada, and on its workings in the transnational landscape. I stipulate that the effects of this BaKongo return movement to Angola are now being played out within a second, larger diasporic return movement based in countries such as Canada. Paradoxically, all members of this larger diaspora could themselves be labelled 'inauthentic' upon their desired return to Angola. Indeed, if and when there is peace in Angola, and a number of Angolans return to their home country from all corners of the globe, a new set of competing visions of Angolan-ness, as shaped by various transnational experiences, will need to be accommodated. In other words, a new Angolan state will then need to be 're-imagined'. Reconciliation will depend on meeting this challenge.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The International Migration of Angolans

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the dispersal of Angolans around the globe. In particular, I focus on the successive waves of Angolans to Canada and the demographic characteristics and motivations for flight, which distinguished each phase. The overall goal of this chapter is to provide a context in which to examine the negotiation of Angolan identity in exile.

#### 2.2. Angolans in Canada

Mais, on te dit les papiers qui sont disponibles aujourd'hui sont pour aller au Canada. Ou tu le prends ou tu ne le prends pas. Tu as l'argent? Oui, j'ai l'argent. Et tu donnes. Et puis, on te prépare pour le voyage et tu t'envols<sup>1</sup> (Tomás June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999).

J. So why [did you choose to come to] Canada?

S. Oh god. That's a good question. I knew that in the beginning, that it is the best place to go to start your life. It is an immigrant country. You can develop yourself. They are a very humane people. It is very cold. Canada is also a country that welcomes everyone. It's not like in New York or in America where there's so much criminality (Sofia March 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

When asked why Angolans chose Canada as a place of asylum and residence, most participants referred to the country's international reputation for humanitarianism, particularly with regard to immigration and specifically in comparison to Europe's

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<sup>1</sup>“But they tell you the documents that are available today are for Canada. Either you take them or you don't. You got the money? Yes, I've got the money. And you hand the money over. And then you get yourself ready and you're off” (June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999).

policies. A second reason pertains to opportunities for professional and educational advancement. For others, however, the element of choice never existed. In these cases, Canada had been chosen for them either by sponsors, or more frequently, by those who smuggled them out of Angola. In real terms, however, few Angolans actually make it to Canada's doorstep. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, a total of 412 persons born in Angola immigrated to Canada between 1991 and 1998 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1999). Of these 412 persons, 254 settled in Ontario, most in the Greater Toronto Area (G.T.A.).<sup>2</sup> Several research participants also noted that Angolans, particularly young Angolans, have been arriving in greater numbers since the beginning of 1999. Canadian immigration statistics are not yet available to prove or disprove this observation. However, the resumption of full scale war in Angola in December 1998 could potentially have increased the number of asylum claimants and Angolan immigrants to Canada.

This recent 1999 increase aside, the number of Angolans landing in Ontario peaked in 1989 with 83 persons. A similar trend is reported for Canada as a whole, with a steady annual decline over the last ten years. The North South Institute (1998) indicates that between 1994 and 1996 the average total of Angolan immigrants to Canada was 19, down from 42 in 1986 (a 7.63% drop). Although the average number of Africans immigrating

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<sup>2</sup>Montreal is also a preferred destination of Angolans, although less so than Toronto according to research participants.

to Canada per year increased by 10.87% between 1986 and 1996, the number of Angolans represented dropped by 7.63%. While Angolans constituted an average of 0.81% of all Africans immigrating to Canada in 1986, they averaged but 0.13% between 1994 and 1996.

Contrary to what one might expect, most Angolans who do come to Canada do so not as refugees, but as Independent applicants.<sup>3</sup> Between 1991 and 1998 an average of 51% of all Angolans immigrating to Canada were Independent applicants (Ibid.).<sup>4</sup> During this same period, Refugee and Family classes each averaged 19% of total Angolan immigration to Canada.<sup>5</sup>

My research seems to confirm the prevalence of the Independent class applicants. From

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<sup>3</sup>Independent applicants seek to apply to Canada as “workers based on skills, entrepreneurs, investors, self-employed, family business applications [or as] retire[es]” (Segal 1990). They are people who demonstrate both financial independence and usually, marketable skills. They are not sponsored by family members who themselves are immigrants to Canada – which would constitute a Family class application. Asylum-seekers and refugee applicants on the other hand, claim to be persecuted “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951).

<sup>4</sup>However, this average is somewhat skewed by the large number of Independent immigrants who arrived in 1991 and 1992. In 1991-1992, 84 and 38 (respectively) applied as Independents. By 1993 however, the number was only 5 as compared to 10 Refugee Class applicants and eight Family Class applicants for the same year.

<sup>5</sup>Compared to the U.S.A., Canada receives more Angolan asylum applicants but its rate of official status recognition is lesser. According to the UNHCR, Canada received 88 new Angolan applications for asylum and refugee status determination in 1998. It granted official status at a rate of 50.8%. Its neighbour to the South, the U.S.A., received but 23 asylum applications but accorded a favourable decision in 75% of cases.

what I have gathered from participants, the majority of Angolans have not come directly from Angola, but rather had proceeded to Canada only after having resided or having been granted asylum in a European country. For many, Canada and the United States act as a third, fourth, fifth and even sixth country of residence. However, Angolans in Canada say that 1999 has been characterised by a change in Angolan immigration trends, with more young, single males arriving directly from Angola to claim asylum. This is thought to be due to the intensifying war. As of yet, however, there is little statistical information available to confirm this observation.

Research participants identified three distinct phases of Angolan immigration to Canada.<sup>6</sup> An overview of these phases hints at the heterogeneous nature of the Angolan community. Further still, such description contextualises the debate regarding the authenticity of Angolan-ness as played out in exile.<sup>7</sup>

The first of these phases is comprised of Portuguese descendants born in Angola. With the war of independence in the mid-to-late 1970s, many were forced to flee quite

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<sup>6</sup>Details pertaining to the phases of Angolan immigration appear to be far more accurately sketched by the Angolans themselves than by any set of statistics provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (C.I.C.). Although C.I.C. provides the breakdown of application by classes (and by gender as well), it provides little other detail pertaining to immigrant group dynamics, particularly ethnic or racial backgrounds, for example. In fact, most C.I.C. data tends to simply lump all statistics pertaining to Angola as simply African or sometimes, South African.

<sup>7</sup>These phases represent but general tendencies. There is some overlap as persons from a great variety of backgrounds have been immigrating from Angola over the years.



suddenly, leaving most of their assets behind.<sup>8</sup> Many apparently went to Portugal first, where, according to Laura, a highly European-educated Mbundu Angolan participant, the Portuguese Angolans “were not tenderly received” upon their return to the metropole and so they came to Canada (February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1999). Most still strongly identify with Angola and are said to have worked to preserve certain Portuguese-influenced aspects of Angolan culture. Laura, for one, applauded their “successful cultural preservation” and referred to them as an “Angolan group in diaspora”. However, like many African Angolans, she was quick to chastise them for what she termed their “colonial mind set”. Believing themselves to have left Angola in a pristine and idyllic state, Portuguese Angolans allegedly blame African Angolans for the current state of the nation. In the eyes of many Portuguese – and not only Angolan Portuguese but European Portuguese as well – colonial rule afforded Angola peace and prosperity. Its rejection is felt to have led to the country’s downfall.

A second phase of Angolan immigration, which began in the ‘80s and continues to this day, is one which is said, by some Angolans, to be made up of a ‘controversial group’ or one for which it is “difficult to make an opinion” (Laura February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1999). As briefly touched upon in the preceding chapter, the members of this group are the descendants of

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<sup>8</sup>In 1975, a series of coups culminated in the transition to civilian rule in Portugal – the first such government since the 1920s. Having simultaneously fought three pro-independence guerilla movements in Guinea Bissau (then Portuguese Guinea), Angola and Mozambique for more than a decade and, under increasing public pressure from its expanding middle class, Portugal quite suddenly divested itself of all its colonies in 1975.

BaKongo Angolans who fled into Zaire in the 1960s following a Portuguese crack-down on instigators at the beginning of what was to become a full-fledged nationalist / anti-colonial movement. Raised and educated in Zaire, they continue to identify themselves as Angolans. However, with regards to the immigration, this controversy or tension plays itself out in two inter-related respects. The first of these is in terms of citizenship of origin and the second refers to language. These French-speaking Angolans<sup>9</sup> are accused of immigrating to Western countries under false pretenses, as Angolan and not as Zairean.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, some are said to never have set foot in Angola and yet declare themselves to be Angolan in order to legitimate asylum claims and immigrate more easily.<sup>11</sup> In Canada they are said to use their fluency in French to secure entrance to the country. French is also said to be a language which most 'Real' Angolans do not acquire so easily. Furthermore, many are said to speak little if any, Portuguese. They are therefore considered by some Angolans within the larger community to be opportunists

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<sup>9</sup>'French-speaking Angolans' is used herein to refer to those BaKongo raised in Zaire and born of Angolan parents. I chose this term 'Angolan' primarily because it is how these BaKongo here in Canada view themselves – at least, in my experience. I will also avoid referring to them as simply BaKongo for two reasons. The first is to avoid an ethnicity trap which is all too often used to explain away conflict and tension with ethnic difference. The second is that many BaKongo in Angola today never left Angola and have never had any connection whatsoever with what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

<sup>10</sup>In the DRC however, these BaKongo of Angolan descent are accused of being non-authentic Zaireans. They are, in the eyes of Zaireans, Angolan.

<sup>11</sup>Up until 1991 there were more landings in Ontario from Angola than from, what was then, the Republic of Zaire. However, as of 1992, far greater numbers were accepted from Zaire than from Angola. If this accusation is still made today with regards to those arrived in the 1990s, CIC numbers, at least, could not substantiate those claims. Further still, as one non-BaKongo research participant pointed out, so long as these persons claimed Angolan citizenship through all the proper, constitutionally-recognized (Angolan) channels whether or not they have actually lived in Angola is of little importance. They are, if only legally, Angolan.

and frauds -- albeit clearly not by all. This issue of French-speaking Angolans is also said by one participant who once “worked in immigration” in Canada, to be currently under investigation by the Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). Of further irritation to some community members is the perception that these same French-speaking Angolans reject the Angolan community once they have been granted Canadian residency. They are accused of abandoning their Angolan claim and declaring themselves to be originally of French nationality. However, all French-speaking persons I have met clearly consider themselves to be, above all else, Angolan and quite vehemently at that – with the possible exception of one person who may consider himself BaKongo first, and then Angolan. Finally, the members of this particular phase are quietly referred to in derogatory terms such as ‘retornados’ (‘returnees’) or Zaireans, or, simply as ‘those BaKongo’.

Clearly, however, I am not in a position to judge the validity of these immigration issues, particularly as I am not privy to the makeup of individual claims. Rather, this thorny issue is considered to be a manifestation of deeper contestations of Angolan-ness – contestations which are central to this research.

Finally, the latest and third phase of immigration is primarily composed of urbanized and relatively Westernized young men. They are thought to be more aware both of immigration procedures and of those countries that are immigrant-friendly -- such as

Canada. They also tend to be in pursuit of educational and professional opportunities.

However, whether or not they tend to apply as Independents or as Refugees is unclear.

### **2.3 Angolans in Exile in Neighbouring African and European Countries**

No doubt, Canada is inaccessible -- due to distance, cost of travel and immigration restrictions -- and even inconceivable to most Angolans. This is articulated by Sofia, who expresses the risks and one of the rewards involved in coming to Canada.

They come by themselves. It's crazy sometimes. You can't imagine. It's like 649. You lose it or you gain it. It's like, oh my God ... when you study [Canada] you just learn that it's like the North Pole. It's far away. It's far away. You just want to be far away from the place where you are coming from (Sofia March 20<sup>th</sup> 1999).

By and large however, the vast majority of Angolans are either internally displaced<sup>12</sup> or seek refuge primarily in neighbouring countries such as Zambia, the DRC, Namibia and South Africa.<sup>13</sup> Not only are distance and money factors in determining the country of exile, but the frequency with which asylum and refugee status are granted is also of significance. Refugee and asylum seekers in Zambia and South Africa, for example, have 69.2% and 63.4% success rate respectively as compared to 7.9% in Germany, 24.9% in

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<sup>12</sup>The Integrated Regional Information Network for Southern Africa (IRIN) reported 1.6 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in April 1999 (IRIN 1999).

<sup>13</sup>In December 1998, the UNHCR noted the following countries as primary countries of asylum for Angolan Convention-recognized refugees: Zambia (149,800); the DRC (137,000); Namibia (2,500); South Africa (2,500); Brazil (including asylum-seekers, 1,300); Ukraine (270); Botswana (150); Gabon (120); Congo (100); Swaziland (90) and Zimbabwe (90) (UNHCR April 1999). See Table 1 in Appendices.

the Netherlands and 40.6% in the UK<sup>14</sup> (UNHCR April 1999).

Nonetheless, for many, Europe remains a preferred destination. A total of 42,300 asylum applications<sup>15</sup> were lodged by Angolans in 19 European countries during 1990 – 1998.<sup>16</sup> France<sup>17</sup>, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have consistently had the highest number of applications. However, numbers in these countries have drastically declined.<sup>18</sup> The UK, for example, had a peak number of applicants in 1991 with 5,780. This dropped to 195 in 1997 and 150 in 1998. By 1998, Netherlands was receiving more applications (608) than France and Germany combined. This drop coincides with an equally drastic decrease in the recognition of Angolan nationals as Convention refugees. All 19 European countries combined granted status to 64 Angolans in 1998, down from 265 in 1990. The bulk of these were in Belgium, which recognized 36 refugees.

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<sup>14</sup>All European figures include both Refugee status and Humanitarian Status. Refer to Tables 2 to 6 in Appendices.

<sup>15</sup>These are asylum claims only. The number of Angolans who come to Europe as Independent applicants is not included.

<sup>16</sup>See Tables 1 to 6 in Appendices for a listing of countries and respective figures of applications lodged, frequency of Convention recognition, frequency of humanitarian status granted, the total recognition rate and further details pertaining to status determination.

<sup>17</sup>France was once a preferred country of asylum for the BaKongo, as many seeking asylum speak French, no English and occasionally, little Portuguese upon departure. However, unfavourable employment conditions in addition to ongoing amicable commercial relations with the government of Angola is said, by the UK-based BaKongo, to have tapered the flow of BaKongo to that country.

<sup>18</sup>Portugal figures on this list but as it tends to attract Angolans as Independent immigrants and not as refugee or asylum-seekers, its numbers are relatively insignificant as compared to those of the other 19 countries.

A growing trend, however, has been for countries to grant 'Humanitarian status', which holds them to less responsibility. Those granted such status live in conditions of temporary asylum and insecurity. In other words, their so-called 'protection' can be revoked at any moment with a forced return. They are allowed to stay in-country, but their rights are fewer than if they if they had been granted full refugee status. For example, those granted humanitarian status cannot bring over family members. Also, movement within Europe tends to be restricted. In 1998, the UK processed 160 asylum claims. 5 were granted refugee status, 60 were rejected outright, 35 were 'otherwise closed' and another 60 were judged to be 'humanitarian cases'. Britain was second only to the Netherlands with regards to the number of 'humanitarian status cases'. The Dutch granted humanitarian status 131 times out of 542 total decisions.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of these restrictions in Europe, Angolans in Britain were said to number at least 10,000 in that country in 1995. The majority live in Greater London (Minority Rights Group 1995 :4). It is also said by the BaKongo, that up to 90% of all Angolans in Britain belong to the BaKongo ethnic group although they comprise only 15% of Angola's total population (United States Library of Congress 1989).<sup>20</sup> In 1995, Minority Rights Groups (1995:4) contended that the introduction of the 1993 British Asylum and Immigration

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<sup>19</sup>Four were granted full refugee status, 231 were 'otherwise closed' and 176 were rejected.

<sup>20</sup>This 90% figure cannot be easily verified seeing as the Home Office classifies Angolan asylum seekers according to their citizenship and not according to their ethnic group.

(Appeals) Act made for the rejection of virtually all Angolan applications for asylum. Statistics provided by the UNHCR lend themselves to such a claim, but only up until 1994 and 1995 when recognition rates<sup>21</sup> fell to their lowest levels (0.8 and 0.9 % respectively). However, rates actually jumped to 9.6% in 1996 and 61.5% in 1997, dropping slightly in 1998 to 43.3%. When the number of Refugee status and Humanitarian status cases are divided by the number of total decisions the UK's 40.6% determination rate figures below Canada's by 10% (50.8%) (UNHCR April 1999).<sup>22</sup>

Except for Portugal, the migration of Angolans to the West is a recent phenomenon. Angola's official Portuguese language and its communist past are said to have isolated it from its neighbouring countries and from the West. From the mid-70s up until the early 1990s international relations were almost exclusively with members of the former Soviet bloc. Until Angola's opening up to the West and the adoption of Western-style democratic institutions and markets, immigration to countries of Western Europe was relatively rare. Today, other barriers remain. The cost of travel, access to transportation

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<sup>21</sup>Recognition rates are assessed by dividing the number of Convention and Humanitarian recognitions by the number of applications.

<sup>22</sup>However, in spite of the utility of statistics, they need to be considered with caution for sometimes they foreclose more than they reveal. For example, the BaKongo in the UK complained of having to live in insecurity, or as "free prisoners" as one person stated. Among other things, many were said to have waited up to eight years for their determination procedure (and that of their family's) to be finalised. In Canada, the process is much speedier. Although this extends far beyond the scope of this paper, it would be worthwhile to consider the degree to which lengthy procedures or Humanitarian status determination lend themselves to feelings of anxiety or insecurity in the community. Further still, how does insecurity in exile affect community organisation and even, the degree to which a community or diaspora is politicized?

over an interminable distance, linguistic differences and immigration restrictions all continue to make immigration to the West, particularly to Canada, relatively rare.

However small the numbers of Angolans in Canada, their experiences are no less significant than those of larger immigrant groups. If anything, the small size of the group facilitates both networking and the communication of ideas and ideals. Their size also makes them all the more aware of the tensions which both bind and divide them.

Although the group's size made initial contact challenging, once facilitated, the complex, tense yet intimate web of relations soon revealed itself. Chapter Four attempts to map the outline of this web as played out in Canada. First, however, Chapter Three sets out a theoretical backdrop for the discussion of Angolan-ness which is to follow – an Angolan identity which is largely shaped by the transnational landscape.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Theorising Transnationalism, Diasporas and Identity

#### 3.1 An Introduction to Transnationalism and Diasporas

“On parle de plus en plus de cette globalisation et avec cette globalisation qui s’amorce, on ne s’aura plus qui est qui donc il faut se préparer à affronter, à faire face à cette situation, parce que la machine est gigantesque et c’est en marche. Personne ne va l’arrêter” (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>1</sup>

Transnationalism, along with the broader phenomenon of globalisation, challenges long-standing, state-centric views of the world. It refers to social, economic and industrial relations and the communication of ideas facilitated across nation-state borders. This movement is propelled most significantly by an increasingly interdependent world economy, the rapid development of information technology, including the practice of “media imperialism” (Tölölyan 1991:5), the increased ease and frequency of travel and the growing significance of international migration. Specifically, transnationalism reflects the broadening of networks and relations across territorialized borders, the multiplicity of national solidarities and, more importantly, the increased loyalty to a territorially dispersed people. It is a process by which people extend, shape and sustain multi-sited social relations that “link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et al. 1994:7).

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<sup>1</sup>“There’s more and more talk of this globalisation and with this globalisation we will no longer know who is who and so we have to prepare to face it because the [globalisation] machine is enormous and it’s in motion. No one will stop it now.” (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

The recent explosion of literature dedicated to transnational phenomena has resulted in an entire vocabulary. “Immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exiled community, overseas community, ethnic community” are all interrelated examples of transnationalism (Tölölyan 1991:5). Diasporas, however, are the “communities of the transnational moment” par excellence (Ibid.). This is primarily due to the extent to which they are consciously mobilized, internationally engaged and often recognised by nation-states (specifically home and host countries). Indeed, the economic and political influence of diasporas in both national and international arenas is increasingly being acknowledged by academics and governments alike. This newfound importance is reflected in the attempts of transnational groups to vie for, or to aspire to, diaspora status. Angolans in Toronto for example, do not conceive of themselves as a diaspora. They do, however, aspire to be more ‘influential’ as a collective -- much like the Nigerians or the Ghanaians whom they consider to be African diaspora prototypes.

Angolans interviewed generally regarded diasporas as expatriate groups working together to influence home and host country governments. This view informs the popular understanding of diaspora -- one which reflects the conceptualization of diaspora in political science. It is a view which privileges the triadic relationship, be it conflictual or cooperative, that exists between members of the diaspora, the host country and the homeland (Scheffer 1986; Safran 1991). In other words, diasporas are defined by their

“transnational activity” and the degree to which this activity influences international political realms (Scheffer 1986:8).

However, Angolans in Canada have little influence in their relationships with either Canada or Angola. Many have all but given up on influencing governments. Eva, a nineteen year old Angolan currently attending a Canadian university, believes that she sums up the feelings of her co-nationals when she says that the war in Angola has taken on a life of its own, independent of the people’s will: “We need to be realistic. There’s not much you can do” (June 14<sup>th</sup> 1999). Yet an energetic minority still aspires to make its voice and those of their compatriots heard. Teresa for example says: “We can’t just stay away from Angola and not say anything!” (March 20<sup>th</sup> 1999). Overall, however, the impact of this minority is minimal.

In spite of a lack of either member solidarity or political or economic influence, I contend that Angolans are indeed a diaspora, and that this diaspora status is neither determined by degrees of group solidarity or power. The diaspora, which cannot be typified by any single collective or model, is a transnational phenomena, one which requires its members to adopt “multiple states of being” (Boyarin 1994). In other words, they must contend with multiple identities and commit to multiple sites. Contrary to the conceptualization of diaspora in political science, anthropology, by virtue of its commitment to and appreciation for, fluid social dynamics, better accounts for the Angolan process of

identity negotiation.

At the same time, identity negotiation also requires a link or commitment to the homeland. This commitment is often expressed in a desire, more 'metaphysical' than corporeal, to return (Malkki 1992). Tölölyan (1996:15) explains how return is "not necessarily [a] physical return but rather a re-turn, a repeated turning to the concept and / or the reality of the homeland and other diasporan kin through memory, written and visual texts, travel, gifts and assistance, et cetera" (Tölölyan 1996:15). Moreover, such a commitment may manifest itself in philanthropic, discursive, symbolic or representational forms or in the simple *desire* to influence developments in, or indirectly pertaining to, the homeland (Ibid.). Certainly not all diasporas have the capability, the resources or the opportunities to influence the goings-on in their home countries. Furthermore, extreme, drawn-out and violent home country conditions often make it difficult for a small diaspora to intervene in any way.

### **3.2 The Importance of Studying Diasporas**

By virtue of their flexibility across international boundaries, diasporas are uniquely positioned to play a pivotal role in the modern world. It is this very flexibility, propelled and maintained by loyalties and relations in multiple sites, which poses a significant challenge to the concepts of both the nation-state and territoriality (Basch et al 1994; Ong & Nonini 1997; Safran 1991; Cohen 1997). Whereas nation-states are instrumental in

rooting people and their identities to a single territory, history and political loyalty, diasporas are social units of an affective nature, with multiple attachments across arbitrarily drawn borders. Effectively, diasporas blur national boundaries -- boundaries which have long been 'naturalised' or taken for granted as simply peripheral, both analytically and politically. Boundaries, after all, were thought to serve a single purpose: to delineate "mutually exclusive units of 'world order'" (Smith 1986:5 in Malkki 1992:31) and so ward off anarchy.

In addition to deterritorialising the nation, diasporas challenge sedentary conceptualisations of the world. They highlight the fact that "people are chronically mobile and routinely displaced" (Malkki 1992:24). And yet history "has always been written from the sedentary point of view and in the name of unitary State apparatus" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:23). Further still, discourses of capitalist culture have narrowed our view of modern society, equating stability with prosperity (Benmayor & Skotnes 1994:4).

Consequently, transnationalism has brought about "particular theoretical shifts", which have "given [migratory] phenomena greater analytic visibility than perhaps ever before" (Malkki 1992:24). Scholars have long written about migratory movements. However, transnationalism, and diasporas in particular, have inspired a focus on "boundaries and borderlands" (Ibid.), "travelling cultures" (Clifford 1997) and on shifting identities. In

the absence of territorially bounded roots, members of diasporas invent and re-invent notions of home and identity “through memories of, and claims on, places that they can or will no longer corporeally inhabit” (Malkki 1992:24). In other words, diasporas, which imply simultaneous attachments to multiple sites, provide a transnational space for the negotiation of identity. The experiences of Angolans in Canada demonstrate, however, that this negotiation is often highly contested.

### **3.3 Diaspora ‘Check-lists’**

In spite of the acknowledged analytical importance of diasporas, they remain conceptually unsettling. An accurate definition of the phenomenon remains largely disputed (Safran,1991; Clifford, 1994 & 1997; Cohen 1997; Scheffer 1986). Both Cohen and Safran bemoan the increasingly loose application of the term ‘diaspora’. In order to remedy this problem they have each devised check-lists. Diasporas must then fit a set number of characteristics prior to being awarded the diaspora title.<sup>2</sup> These requirements include but are not limited to: a history of dispersal; myths and memories of, and commitment to an idealized homeland; alienation in the host country; desire for return; and a collective identity or consciousness (the latter of which is primarily defined by one’s ethnicity) (Safran 1991; Cohen 1997; Clifford 1997). Cohen (1997:180-187)

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<sup>2</sup>This is not to suggest, that diasporas are simply attributed positive characteristics by all. L. Basch et al. (1994:271) for example, speak of contradicting views with reference to the Haitian diaspora. Whereas Haiti’s national leaders grant high status to transmigrants, the Haitian Kreyol equivalent, ‘dyaspora’ is a pejorative term signifying ‘inauthentic opportunists’.

argues that a strict definition of diaspora also requires empathy or solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement as well as possibilities of an enriching life in the host country provided it tolerates pluralism.<sup>3</sup> However, in spite of the supposed rigour of Cohen's check-list definition, it is so broad as to accommodate expatriate, trading and colonizing communities without differentiating these from groups forcibly expelled from their home country.

The profile of the Angolan population presented here meets the major diaspora 'check-list' requirements provided they are applied with some flexibility. For example, with regards to the required 'collective identity or consciousness', an Angolan identity clearly exists. However, there is little 'collective' agreement as to its definition and limitations. In fact, Angolan-ness is one of the greatest sources of tension amongst self-identified Angolans in Canada. I maintain that this tension should be expected of heterogeneous groups who are trying to negotiate their identity in a transnational landscape.

This raises several questions: How does a group qualify *enough*? Who determines when and if a group qualifies and what purpose does this serve? Clearly, such an approach does little to avoid the difficulties inherent in categorizing such fluid, highly variable and multi-sited sets of relations. Also, virtually all diasporas, even those considered to be

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<sup>3</sup>Is this 'possibility of an enriching life' not mutually exclusive to 'alienation in the host country'?

prototypes (such as Jews and Armenians) cannot possibly fit all definitional requirements at all times. Depending on the circumstances, groups or even factions of the same group may move in and out of diaspora status. According to Boyarin, even the Jewish experience demonstrates “multiple experiences of *rediasporization*, which do not necessarily succeed each other in historical memory but echo back and forth” ( J. Boyarin in personal communication with J.Clifford in J.Clifford 1997:248 *my emphasis*). For example, some of the longer-term Angolan residents in Canada recall days of greater cooperation and mutual respect. Laura, for example, says, “If one day this [Angolan] community existed it was long, long, long ago when no one now remembers how it worked” (June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). Indeed, changing group demographics and dynamics have fostered division and so undermined collective visions of both Angolan-ness and home. If one is to operate with a check-list definition, it may be surmised that Angolans have lost, if only temporarily, their diasporic ‘edge’, having better met diaspora requirements in years past. Today, however contentious the issue of Angolan-ness and group membership, Angolans operate and define themselves within a broader transnational context.. The great majority aspire to return to Angola one day and most maintain links with the larger diaspora, which appears to have its strongest bases in Germany, France, Portugal and in the U.S.A..

Check-list approaches reveal themselves to be too static and linear to account for either temporal or geographic variations. They also do not consider the heterogeneity of the



immigrant experience (Clifford 1997:248). Thus, recognizing their analytical usefulness, I avoid check-list approaches. Rather, I believe the fluid understanding of diaspora to be most appropriate in my study of the Angolan experience in exile. A fluid approach is one which emphasizes a process of active negotiation for, and engagement with, the creation of a transnational space for collective consciousness and action. In a similar fashion, Clifford (1997:251) regards a diaspora as a group which successfully “articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes, to construct what Gilroy (1987) describes as alternate public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/ space in order to live inside, with a difference”. In other words, diasporas are understood to consist of a group of people who consciously share memories of home and travel and use these to renegotiate a transnational place or identity for themselves. This place making, which requires a negotiation of ideas and identity, is ultimately a key element of diasporas.

### **3.4 Negotiating (National) Identity**

While diasporas are characterised by their fluidity across territorial borders, they provide a delineated space for the negotiation of identities -- identities which are, in and of themselves, constructed, fluid and shifting (Anderson 1983; Hall 1990; Barth 1969). As Hall (1990:220) maintains, “identity [is] a production which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.” Diasporas provide a distinct and ‘supplementary space’ (Bhabha 1990), defined and maintained by both the

group's identity and its practice of membership and exclusion. This membership shares a common, yet shifting, understanding of the past, of homeland, of travel and of exile. As Barth (1969:15) explains with reference to ethnic groups -- which, incidentally, "are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories" -- group membership and identity "are maintained, not by a once-and-for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation". In other words, a group's identity is constantly negotiated. What binds the Angolan diaspora together, therefore, is the repeated expression and validation of 'social memory' (Connerton 1991; Malkki 1992; 1995). Angolans draw on a common imagined past as a means to actively reinforce and perpetuate social consciousness and ideals -- ideals which simultaneously influence the diaspora's identity and the Angolan 'national consciousness' (Malkki 1995:1). Although the Angolan diaspora, and diasporas generally, operate transnationally, they nonetheless articulate their being with reference to an idealised nation or nationalism. Ultimately, diaspora consciousness and the politics of identity in exile simultaneously operate outside, yet across or with reference to, the nation.

### **3.5 Positioning the Research**

Angolan diaspora solidarities and loyalties are, at least in the recent Canadian context, in a process of reformulation (or perhaps 'rediasporization') in response to two crucial developments. The first of these relates to heightened tensions in the home country, resulting from Angola's plunge into its darkest and most violent period of war to date.

The second important development is the recent, changing composition of the group. In light of these developments, group tensions have been exacerbated to the point that formal association is minimised in a conscious effort to avoid open confrontation.<sup>4</sup> However, informal gatherings, in the form of social events, are sanctioned and generally well received and well-attended. 'Diaspora consciousness', if defined as 'liv(ing) loss and hope as a defining tension' (Clifford 1997:257), remains alive and well, in spite of the current resistance to formal, political and collective action.

Framed and informed by the transnational landscape, Angolan identity is hotly contested in Canada. The most important determinant of belonging and Angolan-ness in exile is the recent Angolan BaKongo return movement from the Democratic Republic of Congo. By laying both emotional and territorial claim to Angola, returning French-speakers have clearly challenged Angolan national identity. In order to assert 'Real' Angolan-ness in the face of this challenge, the discourse of Angolan nationhood adopted by self-ascribed 'Real' Angolans, is deliberately exclusionary of the returnees. It is a national discourse which deliberately emphasizes difference with the French-speakers. 'Real' Angolans imagine their nation and people as: Portuguese-speaking and culturally distinct from its

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<sup>4</sup>This felt need to avoid 'open confrontation' and so minimise formal association, is not unlike Sorenson's observations of the Ethiopian community living in Canada (1991; 1992).

neighbours (particularly the DRC), profoundly moral, peace-loving<sup>5</sup> and festive, and unassuming and sedentary or stable. Repeatedly, a civic nationalism is accentuated by those who consider themselves to be 'Real' Angolans -- a nationalism which is deeply embedded in both the past and in aspirations for post-war Angola . Reference to ethno-nationalism on the other hand, is not only discouraged but suspect. Reflecting on Angola's 30 year war, one informant conceived of ethnicity as both constructed and irrelevant in real terms: "There is something in Angola where some want to create an ethnic war. Sometimes you hear that what is going on is an ethnic war. It's not ... not by any means" (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). Yet ethno-nationalist discourse is used by both a minority of French-speaking Angolans and by warring parties in Angola. The first group defines itself in primarily ethnic terms in direct response to the 'Real' Angolans' national discourse which simultaneously excludes and criminalizes them. On the other hand, ethnicity is considered to be a tool of the state, used to summarily identify opposing political groups. Given the fact that all Angolans spoken to consider the war to have taken on a life of its own -- that is, independent of its people, staged and controlled by the selfish interests of a handful of political elite -- organised ideological nationalism professed by UNITA and the MPLA is largely considered to be suspect.

Through a discussion of interview responses, this thesis sheds light on the complexities of

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<sup>5</sup>In spite of the war, all non-French-speaking Angolans interviewed considered their peers to be peace-loving. The war, is spoken of as something which is occurring independent, yet at the expense of Angolans.

just how Angolans construct, remember and lay claim to their homeland and nation (Malkki 1992), “salvag[ing] from their common loss and distance their identity and unity as ‘a people’ (Basch et al 1994:269). In so doing, this thesis addresses perceptions of Angolan national(ism) and the debate surrounding ‘authentic’ Angolan-ness as framed within a broader experience of diaspora and transnationalism.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **The Angolan Diaspora in Toronto:**

#### **Associations & Networks**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

The Angolan community<sup>1</sup> is relatively new to Canada. Since its inception with the arrival of Portuguese Angolans in the 1970s, the diaspora and its membership have changed dramatically. Changing Angolan immigrant demographics, the importation of highly varied understandings of Angolan-ness and the politics of war have all made for a growing, occasionally tenuous, ebb and flow dynamic of social relations. Personal attachments to, and investments in, rememberings of home have heightened these tensions to the point that fewer and fewer Angolans desire to be actively involved in formal associations of any kind. While a half dozen associations have been created in Toronto alone, only two are in existence today. To avoid open confrontation, most Angolans in Canada have turned away from formally recognised community associations, opting instead for informal networks of like-minded friends and acquaintances. Activities

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<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this research, 'community' is broadly defined as consisting of both formal, organised associations and informal networks, each of which have an attachment or commitment to Angola. For Angolans in Canada and for the purposes of this thesis, a 'formally recognised' association refers to those groups which have a title, statute, regular meetings as well as an official committee or assembly of elected individuals. Also, 'formally recognised' associations may refer to those which have been granted official status by either one of the municipal, provincial or federal tiers of the Canadian government. To the best of my knowledge, only the Angolan Community of Ontario and the Angolan Canadian League have been granted such status in Toronto. These two latter groups thereby qualify to receive small amounts of funding from various governmental and non-governmental sources.

celebrating Angolan-ness, settlement assistance as well as projects intended to benefit Angolans in the warring home country are largely carried out through these informal networks. For the most part, the activities are said to be open to all Angolans and networks may in fact be quite large at times -- occasionally reaching beyond and across formal associations. They also extend beyond Canada's borders to include Angolans in other countries such as Portugal or Germany.

This chapter seeks to uncover the dynamics of Angolan networks, as articulated by participants currently living in Canada. The developments and maintenance of both formal and informal associations are detailed, providing insight into key interest groups and ultimately, competing visions of Angolan-ness.

#### **4.2 Nostalgia for the Colonial Homeland**

In the 1970s, the Portuguese Angolans, having fled nationalist armed insurrections, were the first significant number of Angolans to settle in Canada. Poorly received by many of the 'native' Portuguese both in Portugal and in Canada, and nostalgic for their lost colonial homeland, a number of Portuguese Angolans sought to create a space for themselves. In the 1970s, fifty or so ex-African colonialists of Portuguese descent met in Toronto's Portuguese neighbourhood. The result was the formation of Bondeiro<sup>2</sup> -- a

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<sup>2</sup>Bondeiro is the name of a tree native to Angola.

community organisation for persons of Portuguese descent from Africa's then ex-Portuguese colonies. One research participant, Anabela, would have been no more than eighteen or so at the time. She remembers Bondeiro as consisting of about one hundred members of which the majority (80%) were Angolan. Activities were largely restricted to social events such as dances, get-togethers and dinners. Shortly thereafter, Bondeiro's members dispersed as they became more settled in Canada. This led to the organisation's collapse in less than three years. It would be ten years before Angolans would successfully establish a second formal association.

#### **4.3 The Angolan Community of Ontario (ACO) & Sanzala Nova**

In the 1980s, many of the newly arrived French-speaking Angolans, all of whom had landed either as individuals or as nuclear family units, began to network and meet with one another on a regular basis. In 1989, a small group decided to create an official Angolan body in Canada – the Angolan Community of Ontario (ACO). Its mandate was to lend assistance to Angolan newcomers and to promote Angolan culture. York University's Glendon College, a French language post-secondary institution, offered an ideal meeting location, as many French-speaking Angolans either were, or aspired to be, students at the school. Having discovered that many Portuguese Angolans had preceded them to Canada, an invitation was extended to the latter to join the newly-formed group. According to João, one of its founding members and a Canadian post-secondary graduate, the Portuguese Angolans came out in droves demonstrating a great deal of enthusiasm



and nostalgia.<sup>3</sup> Before long, however, this enthusiasm began to wane and a number of incidents, power struggles and issues came to the forefront, threatening this initial unity.

The most significant of these early incidents involved an African Angolan MPLA supporter who aspired to make ACO a partner agency to Luanda's government. In particular, he wanted ACO to facilitate the repatriation of Angolans from Canada to Angola. It is said that this project was supported by a minority of Portuguese Angolans, primarily those who believed that a working relationship with the current government could facilitate the reclamation of their lost property in Angola. Yet ACO refused to condone any form of organised repatriation as conditions of return could not be ensured.<sup>4</sup> The individual in question and his supporters then set out to create their own organisation, Sanzala Nova (New Village). The split and the inter-group hostility which ensued was, according to João, the community's first significant set-back.<sup>5</sup> After Sanzala Nova's leader unexpectedly returned to Angola, the organisation became exclusively Portuguese Angolan. Despite this exclusivity, the majority of Portuguese Angolans remained loyal to ACO as they had done throughout the dispute.

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<sup>3</sup>“Ils [les portugais angolais] sont venus en masse... Ils montraient qu'ils avaient encore la nostalgie du pays” (July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>4</sup>“Nous ne sommes pas là pour repatrier les angolais surtout comme nous ne savions pas s'ils seront bien accueillis ou non” (João commenting on ACO's role regarding the repatriation of Angolans from Canada to Angola, July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>5</sup>“Alors, ça c'était le premier dérapage de la communauté” (July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Ultimately, Sanzala Nova did little, if anything, to facilitate either repatriation or the reappropriation of material goods. Yet its primary focus remained on the home country -- and on fundraising in particular. One project involved the shipment of 2,000 kilos of clothes to Angola; another raised funds for an Angolan to receive medical treatment outside of Angola. However, João, one of ACO's founding members, claims that Sanzala Nova failed to gain official status from the Canadian or municipal government. On the other hand, Anabela, a Portuguese Angolan, says that Sanzala Nova had equal status to ACO, since it had been receiving funds simultaneously (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999). Funding aside, Sanzala Nova's incumbent leaders eventually left for Portugal and Angola<sup>6</sup> in the mid-1990s, ushering the collapse of the organisation. ACO, on the other hand, remained, but not without its share of problems -- problems which are not unrelated to the aforementioned issues of funding and official status.

#### **4.4 The Politics of Language**

J. Et les réunions, elles étaient facilitées en quelle langue?

J. En portugais, mais le statut dit que s'il y a quelqu'un qui a du mal à s'exprimer en portugais, il a droit de parler la langue dans laquelle il se sent plus à l'aise. C'est à dire que le statut prévoyait trois langues; anglais, français et portugais (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>It is believed that the leader who returned to Angola has started up a second Sanzala Nova in-country.

<sup>7</sup>"And (ACO's) meetings, they were conducted in which language?" "In Portuguese, but the statute says that if someone has difficulty expressing himself in Portuguese, he has the right to speak the language which is most comfortable for him. In other words, the statute had three languages in mind;

The issue of language is a particularly contentious one both for ACO and the Angolan diaspora in general. João explains that ACO was started up by a group of Angolans -- himself included -- all of whom were French-speakers. Although meetings were conducted in Portuguese, its statute recognised -- and continues to recognise -- three languages: English, French and Portuguese. This provision is intended to accommodate both Toronto's working language and those Angolans who spoke French most comfortably. Yet João admits that although ACO's first language is Portuguese, the 'languages of contact' ("langues de contact") are French and English. He stresses, however, that ACO is for all races, all languages and all political stripes -- all Angolans.

Mais ceux qui ne parlaient pas français étaient les bienvenus parce que nous étions quand même conscients de la situation angolaise. Parce qu' imaginez la Communauté [ACO] est ouverte pour tout le monde -- sans restrictions. Peu importe si vous êtes MPLA ou de l'UNITA, la Communauté, c'est pour tous les angolais.<sup>8</sup>

On a more practical level, João argues that the French-language component of ACO's statute has facilitated both the attainment of official recognition from the Canadian and municipal governments, and subsequently the acquisition of funds. ACO's language policy has served it particularly well in Toronto, where French, one of Canada's official

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English, French and Portuguese" (João, July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>8</sup>"But those who don't speak French, they were welcome because we were conscious of the Angolan situation. Because, think about it, the Community [ACO] is open to everyone -- without restrictions. It doesn't matter if you are MPLA or from UNITA, the Community, is for all Angolans." (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999)

languages, is rarely spoken or understood. In fact, João attributes the group's success (or perhaps, survival) to its official recognition and use of French.

Nous avons réussi à oeuvrer ici grâce à notre connaissance de la langue officielle [avec référence au français]. Puisqu'ici à Toronto, la francophonie est chancelante, on accepte avec facilité une communauté nouvelle francophone pour donner un certain plan du côté francophonie. C'est pourquoi nous avons eu avec facilité, notre lettre patente. [J. Est-ce que cela a aidé avec les subventions aussi?] Oui, dans d'autres ministères, pas municipales. City Hall, c'est anglais. Et puis là, français comme anglais, ça ne fait pas de problème... mais au niveau fédéral, il y a une section francophone. D'ailleurs, il y a un Bureau des affaires francophones sur Bay et Wellesley... (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>9</sup>

João goes on to point out that its official French language status has helped ACO gain use of a call messaging service at a large French community centre in the downtown area.

As he says: "le français c'est quand même avantageux".<sup>10</sup>

Many Angolans, however, are not so quick to see French as such an asset to the community. Language, in this case reveals deeper debates surrounding Angolan-ness.

Anabela, a Portuguese Angolan, recalls her last ACO meeting.

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<sup>9</sup>"We (ACO) have succeeded to accomplish things thanks to our knowledge of the official language (with reference to French). Because here in Toronto the francophone culture is shaky, a new francophone community is particularly easily accepted so as to give an edge to that francophone culture. That's why we got our patent so easily. ('And did that help with funding too?' I ask). Yes, with certain ministries, but not municipal ones. City Hall, that's English. So there, French or English, it doesn't really matter... but at the federal level, there's a francophone section And on top of that, there's a Francophone Affairs Bureau at Bay & Wellesley." (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999)

<sup>10</sup>"French has its advantages" (July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

So I get there, the meeting starts and it's all in French. Sometimes I can be patient but that day I woke up on the wrong side of the bed or something. So I asked if the official language of Angola had changed lately and that I wasn't made aware... because the last time I checked it was Portuguese and in Toronto, the official language is English. So why is this meeting being conducted in French? The person who started to respond – to this day I don't understand – it didn't make sense. It had something to do with some funds – I don't know... I said "Listen. This meeting is being conducted for the so-called Angolans in the name of the so-called Angola but you know who are the beneficiaries of this meeting? It's the people from Zaire. And that's unfortunate because they are not from Angola. They were never from Angola. They do not have any ties to Angola. Why should they be the ones who benefit in this case and the name of Angola being used?" (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999)

Anabela's telling is clearly emotional. It also hints at the lack of communication which exists in the community. It seems as though Anabela is not the only one to be confused or simply unaware of the linguistic component of ACO's statute. No other person, other than João, a founding member of ACO, even mentioned the statute, much less the rationale behind it. It is equally obvious that the issue of language is one which is loaded. As Anabela argues, language authenticates one's Angolan-ness. Angolans are for her, and for many, Portuguese-speakers first and foremost. Clearly, Anabela believes French-speaking Angolans -- although she would contest the label 'Angolan' -- have hijacked both the Angolan diaspora's formal institutions and Angolan identity itself.

Laura, an Mbundu from Luanda, has a different account of ACO's development, one which is equally rooted in language and accusations of identity appropriation. In particular, she speaks of tensions between French-speaking BaKongo who have returned

from years of exile in Zaire<sup>11</sup> and African Angolans from Luanda who are considered to have 'given in' or deliberately sought to liken themselves to the Portuguese. This latter group is occasionally referred to as 'assimilados', a derogatory term intended to convey a purported desire to be more white.

The organisation, the Angolan community [referring to ACO] that exists today has a very interesting story behind. It was begun like almost ten years ago and really brought together a number of individuals that have legitimate concerns and, good aspirations to do some good. And there were Angolans from different race groups, ethnies that really were doing some good work together. Then came the BaKongo. Those guys... began questioning the legitimacy of the Whites to be there. Questioning the Mbundus calling them sell outs to the Whites (assimilados). Discussing that the meetings could not be in Portuguese but in French or Lingala. And everyone was quite upset. So, a group that was working pretty well, in few meetings they destroyed it completely. This was around 1992. They destroyed. They divided. They put one against the other. And then, when everyone was so pissed off, they came and took over the organisation and this was like in '93. And since then, they have *reigned*. (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999, my emphasis)

Sofia, an Angolan-trained teacher by profession, appears to be more sympathetic to the territorial claims of French-speaking Angolans. However, she urges them to make a greater effort to be 'more Angolan'. She tells them that if they can't communicate in

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<sup>11</sup>The plethora of names assigned to this particular group of French-speaking Angolans is perhaps indicative of the lack of consensus with regards to their identity. They may be referred to as 'retornados' (Portuguese for returnees – although considered to be a derogative term by most), Angolan Zaireans or Zairean Angolans, BaKongo, Zairean BaKongo, simply Zaireans or then again, Langa Langas which is slang for a music group popular in Zaire in the 1970s and 1980s. At the time, these French-speakers found Angolans in Luanda listening to a music called Shungura (music produced in Tanzania, Nigeria and Kenya). In turn therefore, those labelled 'Langa Langa' referred to Angolans from Luanda as 'Shunguras' and worst yet, called them 'assimilados' -- or 'wannabe Portuguese'. After all, these French-speaking BaKongo considered themselves to have initiated Angola's armed struggle for independence and so, considered themselves to be proudly African.

Portuguese they should learn to, at the very least, speak their Angolan ancestral Bantu language (BaKongo) as opposed to Lingala, which is native to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Addressing the French-speakers in absentia, she advises,

At least speak your language! I mean BaKongo and not Lingala. And their children. Their kids don't speak English, just French. They go to French schools here in Toronto. I can't talk to your kids! I never heard one word in Portuguese. Is French an African language? They will have problems in Angola because of that... because of their French accents (Sofia May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999 ).<sup>12</sup>

She goes on, reminding the French-speakers that all Angolans are “buying time” to go back to Angola and so they had best be prepared. “Is Canada your country?” Sofia asks. “No. Just a place that’s helping you that’s all but you’re not from here!” (Sofia May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999).

For the most part, French-speaking research participants expressed the desire to return to Angola permanently. Nonetheless, they viewed the acquisition of the French language and culture in an entirely positive light. What was clearly stressed were the benefits of multilingualism. In particular, it was thought that the acquisition of several languages enhanced both cross-cultural communication skills and work opportunities. However,

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<sup>12</sup>I am not aware of French-speaking Angolans sending their children to French language schools. Those I interviewed informed me that their children had been attending English language schools in Toronto. I was also under the impression that fluent knowledge of English was considered to be an essential component of their children’s education. Also, the fact that Sofia questions the place and authenticity of the French language in Africa – and yet does not question her own first language, Portuguese – suggests the extent to which Portugal’s five hundred years of colonialism have become internalized and naturalized in Angola.

language was clearly secondary to, or at least considered a component of, a greater knowledge of and appreciation for, one's history. Tomás, an Evangelical minister educated in Europe, makes this clear:

Mes enfants parlent portugais. À l'église aussi. Ils parlent le français et l'anglais. À l'école c'est anglais. Mais à la maison c'est le français. Donc ils sont trilingues -- ils grandissent comme ça -- et le lingala aussi. Et ils savent, aujourd'hui que nous sommes d'une part, de l'Angola. Et ils vont choisir. Ce qu'est le plus important c'est que mes enfants connaissent l'histoire de mon pays... Mon grand-père a passé cette histoire à mon père -- et c'est l'histoire de mon grand-père qui m'a motivé (à retourner en Angola). Et si je vois mon petit fils ce sera la même chose. Chacun fait son choix mais chacun doit connaître son histoire (Tomás June 3rd 1999).<sup>13</sup>

Further still, French-speakers believed that the identity of Angola as a nation had been usurped by five centuries of colonialism and decades of war and neo-colonialism. For this very reason, João repeatedly referred to Angolans as: a "bizarre people", a lost and confused people, a people without identity easily 'taken in', and playing into the hands of those who continue to pillage the country.

C'est pourquoi que je vous disais que l'angolais est bizarre. On ne sait pas ce qu'on veut... L'angolais, c'est un être étrange -- étrange mais je pense que c'est dû à notre passé spirituel. C'est à dire que nous ne savons pas ce que nous voulons. Nous ne sommes même pas capable d'établir notre histoire et nous continuons à

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<sup>13</sup>"My children speak Portuguese. At Church too. They speak French and English. They go to an English school and speak French at home. So, they're trilingual -- they've been growing up that way -- and Lingala too. And they know today, that we are, in part, Angolan. But it is for them to choose. What is most important is for my children to know the history of my country... My grandfather passed on this history to my father -- and it's this history of my grandfather's that motivated me (to go back to Angola). And if I see my grandson one day, it will be the same thing. Every individual makes his choice, but everyone must know his history" (Tomás June 3rd 1999).



nous confondre dans ces disputes de ceux qui profitent de l'Angola. Pourtant, on est là. (João July 16th 1999).<sup>14</sup>

This is not to say, however, that Angolans fall into two clear camps with regards to either language or authenticity / membership.<sup>15</sup> Some non French-speaking Angolans were sympathetic to those who returned from Zaire to Angola. Joaquim, a young newcomer to Canada, Angolan-educated and urbanised and an active ACO member, advocated for a greater degree of communication between all Angolans in exile. In his opinion, a person born in Zaire of Angolan parents, who retained or adopted Angolan citizenship, was legally Angolan, and should be treated as such. Most importantly, he sought to convey to Angolans in Canada that they all now shared a common experience of exile. Consequently, all risked facing similar forms of persecution, linguistic or otherwise upon their return to Angola (Joaquim July 21<sup>st</sup> 1999). In other words, he believed that all Angolans in Canada could be judged 'inauthentic' upon their return, and so argued for greater mutual respect. Other Portuguese-speaking Angolans who claimed never to have lived in Zaire were occasionally deemed guilty either for their association with French-

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<sup>14</sup>“That’s why I told you that the Angolan is bizarre. We don’t know what we want... The Angolan is a strange being – strange but I think it’s because of our spiritual past. In other words, we don’t know what we want. We are not capable of agreeing upon a common history and we continue to get muddled up in these games orchestrated by those who profit from Angola. Nonetheless, we are there.” (João July 16th 1999).

<sup>15</sup>It is also interesting to note that Montreal’s Angolan community – la Communauté angolaise de Montréal (CAM) – is judged by Torontonians to be working comparatively smoothly. Officials at Ottawa’s Embassy equally praised Montreal’s organisation and work. It is said that Montreal’s group makeup is similar to that of Toronto’s. However, because ACM’s official Canadian or Québécois language is French, tensions are said to have been relatively avoided.

speaking Angolans or for their knowledge of French or Lingala.<sup>16</sup> Occasionally, when certain names and community figures came up in conversations some participants would quickly interject: “He’s not even Angolan!!” Even among French-speaking Angolans, there was much disagreement over this issue of authenticity, as judged or performed through language. Whereas some advocated an open dialogue and working relationship with all Angolans, others were said to isolate themselves and to seek out BaKongo ethnic identification. Those who chose to isolate themselves as BaKongo have never been tolerated by ACO’s active membership.

All in all, Torontonians Angolans believed the issue of authenticity to be the greatest hindrance to formal community organisation and solidarity.<sup>17</sup> Most also said that this tension prevented them from being a diaspora. Furthermore, ACO is now believed to embody, or to have provided a forum for, the exacerbation of this tension. Consequently, active membership has declined from well over a hundred members in the early 1990s to

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<sup>16</sup>Vicente complained of such accusations. Having grown up on the outskirts of Luanda he claims never to have set foot in Zaire until 1994 on his way to Congo where he visited with his brother who was working there at the time. His father on the other hand, owned houses in Zaire and had lived there for an indefinite period of time. He admitted that he had learned Lingala from his father but had never himself lived in Zaire.

<sup>17</sup>Within this larger problem of authenticity, all expressed frustration over the members’ or the elected leaders’ lack of commitment to the greater community. Most also complained of elected figures who allegedly used ACO as a means to network – both with officials in Ottawa and with Angolans in the home country – and to boost their personal power. ACO has had three presidents and elected committees since its inception. The first president was a young entrepreneur, the second was considered to be a ‘soba’ (a traditional chief or big man) and the current leader is young and controversial for both his brusque leadership style and lack of experience. All leaders have been trilingual (French, English and Portuguese) having had some connection or other to Zaire and all have been men.

a mere fifteen or twenty in 1999. This is something which doesn't seem to put off one of ACO's most active members in the least: "I don't care if the community has fifteen or twenty members. I know that they are committed and that we'll stick together no matter what"(Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999). A young man in his late twenties, Vicente obtained his secondary schooling in Angola and expects to relocate within Canada in the next couple of months to pursue a college education.

#### **4.5 Formal Community Associations & the Angolan 'Nature'**

Ultimately, when asked about community formation, most Angolans in Toronto today recall their experiences of ACO with a sense of fatigue and frustration. Many articulate a preference for viewing developments from a safe distance, unwilling to risk personal involvement.<sup>18</sup> Community has become, in many respects, synonymous with suspicion. This suspicion is explained by the participants, in two ways, the first of which is the Angolan 'nature'. Angolans view themselves -- and are stereotyped by neighbouring countries<sup>19</sup> -- as a quiet, unassuming, contented people. Angolans themselves contend that this has been a quality exaggerated by the experiences of having been controlled by

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<sup>18</sup>Vicente commented about those Angolans that stepped back and the freedom with which they openly criticized ACO, thereby deterring newcomers to Canada from contacting or participating in the organisation.

<sup>19</sup>My experience in Zambia confirmed this view of Angolans. Zambians and Zaireans who worked and lived in Meheba Refugee Settlement thought of Angolans as a quiet people, farmers for the most part, who tended to do as they were told by camp administrators. Consequently, this view, internalised by staff and Angolan refugees alike, affirmed the notion that refugees were dependent, child-like and consequently, in need of care. An important but tangential item, this issue extends beyond the scope of this paper.

both five centuries of colonialism and years of communism and warfare.<sup>20</sup> Of late, however, a second explanation for this scepticism has emerged in Toronto. Embittered by their experience with ACO and espousing a view of the 'Real' Angolan as one which is naturally undesiring of formal organisation, many Angolans have come to associate formal community organisations with 'Non-Real' Angolans. In other words, those who desire both formal association and officially recognised leaders are those BaKongo Angolans who are French-speaking. Laura elaborates and sums up this scepticism:

Not even in Portugal, where there are so many Angolans, they have tried to go through the exercise of community. You have to really know the Angolans. It's not a people that like community, and... they, the Angolans don't even want to talk about community. No one wants that, and I think that's in the Angolan nature. It's a people that don't like much to be labelled in some ways.... The ones pushing for the community are those guys [referring to BaKongo French-speaking Angolans]... so, every time, there's an idea about community, people would look at you like 'why do you need a community?'. Like 'what is your agenda?' I think it also comes with the heritage from the cold war times. The communist system was so strong that you had to associate with community groups and people have really gone away from that. [J. Do you mean you always have to be sceptical of who you are talking to...?] Exactly. And anytime anyone wanted you to be part of a structured group, they had a hidden agenda so you would really be scared. And I think that subconsciously, people still react to that (Laura June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999).

Indeed, 'Real' Portuguese-speaking Angolans want to avoid formality, opting instead for an informal network of communication and association.

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<sup>20</sup>This same explanation is often times used to make sense of the war. Three decades of armed conflict, is thought to have gone unabated with little organised resistance from the country's citizens. Although these same citizens bear the brunt of the war, Angolans in Canada often believe their fellow compatriots to lack both the education -- including the experience of democratic and civil society -- and of late, the hope, to stand up for themselves.

And to tell you the truth, I even think that the exercise of trying to build a community, it can backfire in terms that every time they come together, only the differences emerge. That makes it a lot more difficult to work together next time and it will really alienate people. So if there's an initiative, you call people here and there and try to do something, not bring them as a community but... This is what I think (Laura June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999).

Consequently, there is a great deal of ambiguity as to what to call themselves. The term 'community' is used, but only with reservation. It avoids confusion with the Angolan *Community of Ontario (ACO)*, while also avoiding conflict and suspicion. Yet all Angolans acknowledge that people come together informally, either to further develop or preserve Angolan culture, to assist fellow Angolans -- in Canada or the home country -- or simply for parties and social occasions.<sup>21</sup> Orchestrated by a handful of self-selected and committed individuals, this less structured or less official web of coming together, is, in fact, a more inclusive community than ACO. This is evidenced by the fact that the informal network often stretches to involve individuals representing a variety of Angolan perspectives and backgrounds, including many of the current members of ACO.

#### **4.6 The Angolan Canadian League (ACL) & Informal Networks**

The Angolan Canadian League, the only other officially recognised Toronto-based Angolan association, reflects this uneasy relationship Angolans have with a formal and bounded conceptualisation of community. For Teresa, its founder and an ongoing ACO

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<sup>21</sup>Although this tendency is said to have waned somewhat since the recent decline of ACO.

member, the creation of the ACL was a necessary evil. Since her arrival to Canada in 1992, she had organised a number of activities and social events for Angolans in Toronto, from field trips to Christmas parties and dinners, and often times at her own expense and while attending night school.<sup>22</sup> However, it was only in 1995 when she was promised financial support from the provincial Lottery Corporation -- funds intended for the delivery of a container of goods for street kids in Luanda -- that she was obliged to seek official recognition from the municipal government. One requirement was that she create a title for her coordinating efforts. Hence, the Angolan Canadian League. Today, however, she continues to plan Angolan activities and events but rarely, if ever, uses the title ACL. She does so begrudgingly and for legal or financial purposes only. She maintains that the use of the ACL title, or any official community title which purports to represent Angolans in Toronto or Ontario, risks conflict.

T. Never say the League is doing it [an activity]. Or it's better to say the name of the person than the organisation because then, more people will likely come to your event.

J. So why bother calling it anything at all?

T. I don't know. This is the name. I just wanted something to be legal.

J. But say if I'm an non-governmental organisation or was wanting to invest my money in your group to support your work?

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<sup>22</sup>Although Teresa has the equivalent of a university degree, her Angolan professional accreditation was not recognised by the Canadian government. Hence, upon her arrival in Canada, she went back to secondary school in order to obtain the required credits so as to pursue a college degree. She will be initiating the latter degree over the course of the next year (1999 -2000).

T. That I would give to the League because it's legal. But not in my name, in the League's name... Like at the Christmas party, when I get the toys, I put the League's name because I'm not registered. So I put the League's name. But for them [those from ACO], they're thinking it's too much credit for the League and I don't want that. So, ok. Here, I just give them [the toys] and that's it (Teresa March 20<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Laura, familiar with Teresa's work, speaks of how her subtle use of the ACL allows her to reach across factions and to sidestep tensions with greater ease. Comparing Teresa's work to that of ACO's, she says,

Now, if you tell me what work they [ACO] have done. Never. Not an annual meeting. Not a financial report. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing.<sup>23</sup> All the initiative taken by Angolans living here was [Teresa]. She's a good community mobilizer because she can reach across ethnic groups and class and whatever...<sup>24</sup> I see someone with a lot of energy and willingness to do things— Teresa. Yes, she's the person who will initiate things (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

However, as Teresa and her family have become more settled in Canada, she would like, on a personal level, to focus her energies on her family and career, with a view to improve her skills in anticipation of her and her family's return to Angola. She wishes to focus the ACL exclusively on those people she considers to be most desperate – Angolans, particularly children, bearing the brunt of a fourth wave of war in the home country. This shift in focus to the home country would also avoid a confrontation with

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<sup>23</sup>ACO's executive members are quick to disagree with these types of statements. It is said that meetings are regularly held every two months and that Assemblies are held every six months. At one time, ACO had a soccer team and it has held a series of workshops including a job finding seminar.

<sup>24</sup>Indeed many of the Angolans I met had been referred to me by Teresa -- Angolans who represented a broad, and often contradicting spectrum of opinion and background.

ACO, which itself claims to attend to the needs of Angolans in the Canadian context. Consequently, Teresa is wanting both ACO and members of the informal community to take on some of the routine events she has organised over the years. These include the Angolan Christmas party, the annual summer picnic, a traditional dance group, the soccer team and various ad hoc get-togethers and parties. Although she expresses doubts about ACO's ability to successfully organise such events, she believes that the network, as led by a handful of committed individuals, will manage and perhaps even flourish.

So, I'll leave all this for now. Maybe, once in a while, I'll do it. To do all this stuff, I spend my own money. If I have to do it, I would rather do it in Angola because these people need it more. And I think there will always be someone who says, 'O.K. Why don't we do a picnic? I already told people, that if they find someone who wants to do it, send them to me and I will give them all the information. (Teresa March 20<sup>th</sup> 1999)

And so, while individuals such as Teresa may experience fatigue and may want to retire or shift focus, they continue to want to give of themselves to Angola and Angolans in some form or other.

My husband complains a lot. He says, 'You want to be everybody's mom', but... it's not being everybody's mom. I want them [Angolans] to be closer together and do other stuff and forget about other things [such as immigration concerns]. But we have to have people that have initiative, people that have time.... I just want... because we are so far away from our country. I'm a very traditional person and I like for other people to know my culture (Teresa March 20<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Although Teresa is well known among Torontonians Angolans for her efforts, she is



clearly not the sole person to work and develop the growing Angolan network. She attests to that fact.

Once the Spring is coming... it's like everyone comes out. You see people [Angolans] all over. We do so many things together. Although we have our differences. But there are people that are very strong on community issues so they stick together and they make a difference (Teresa March 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

#### **4.7 Issues that Bind**

Specific issues and interests have tended to be more successful at bringing Angolans together than others. Three issues appear to be most successful: (1) immigration, particularly the threat of deportation; (2) grief, when there is either a death in the diaspora or a gross violation carried out in the home country; (3) and sports and recreation, especially parties, dances and soccer matches. The latter of these continues to bring people together on a fairly regular basis, across backgrounds and opinion. One person hints as to why light hearted events have become the focal point for Angolans in Toronto, "We still have good parties. We still organise nice things but just for fun, not for serious things because they would just destroy you" (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). In 1994, basketball became the focus of the Angolan community's attention when Toronto hosted the World Championship and the Angolan national team.<sup>25</sup>

Like in 1994... when there was the Basketball World Cup. Oh my god. There

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<sup>25</sup>Most recalled the event with great nostalgia. However, as one participant pointed out, even this great event did not escape scandal. Money raised from ticket sales disappeared. Intended to benefit the needy in Angola, it was never recovered.

was everybody here... We organised so many things... parties... so many people came from the U.S.A., Ottawa and Montreal... all over. It was great. It was great to see everyone together. (Teresa March 16<sup>th</sup> 1999)

All spoke of immigration as being of primary concern to the diaspora and to newcomers in particular.

Immigration is a big issue within the community. Let's say that one Angolan is in jail to be deported and there is a need for \$3000.00 to be collected to release this person. Yes, the community will come together if someone takes the lead and organises a meeting. And we will say 'Oh yeah, it's a brother or a sister, we should help. O.K. I will give \$10.' It works because in some ways everyone says 'I was there once or almost there. I can be there.' So there is this commitment. There is this informal network. People helping each other. There is this informal network of people helping each other. Yes. Now this never comes from the Community (ACO). Never from the president of the Community (ACO). You know what I mean (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Another person echoed the importance of the informal network of Angolans in matters pertaining to immigration, "If it wasn't for the group, working together, acting here, acting there, he would have been deported back to Angola" (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Grief or outrage also tends to bind Torontonians Angolans together. The death of a fellow Angolan often results in a coordinated effort to offer assistance and comfort to grieving family and friends. However, prior to the decline of ACO, grief and anger over the war occasionally spilled over in the form of protests. Over the course of various conversations, these times of solidarity were recalled with nostalgia. In particular, the events of 1992-93 are representative of issues which simultaneously divide and unite the

diaspora. Angolans from all backgrounds and political inclinations were targets of violence in the early 1990s. Yet the BaKongo were particularly singled out. In fact, Minority Rights Group (1995:4) reported that violence specifically targeting (French-speaking)<sup>26</sup> BaKongo had intensified in the 1990s. Many of these French-speaking BaKongo, having returned from Zaire,<sup>27</sup> settled together in Luanda forming ghettos of potential opponents to the government, or so it was believed by the MPLA government. The ghettos also strained Luanda's already overburdened infrastructure.<sup>28</sup> One French-speaker in Toronto blames both the government and his fellow BaKongo for this ghettoization -- the former for not having attempted to better integrate with local Angolans especially by failing to learn Portuguese. The latter he blames for refusing to offer settlement assistance to returnees, particularly opportunities for gainful employment<sup>29</sup> and language learning. Ultimately, the government believed it to be in its best interest to target the BaKongo for Luanda's problems, thereby divorcing itself from

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<sup>26</sup>Minority Rights Group did not distinguish between French-speaking and non-French-speaking Angolan BaKongo. Yet all Angolan participants, French and Portuguese speakers alike, were quick to point out that the BaKongo who had never lived in Zaire were not targeted in this campaign and are generally not as deliberately discriminated against.

<sup>27</sup>Ironically, the Angolan BaKongo who had been living in Zaire, had been *invited* by the MPLA communist government to return to Angola -- in the late '70s under Agostinho Neto's direction. One of the reasons behind the invitation was to foster government support in the North of the country so as to better secure the border with U.S.-backed Zaire.

<sup>28</sup>Luanda, which is said to have been planned to accommodate less than half a million people, is today overwhelmed by an estimated 4 million inhabitants -- equalling more than a third of all Angolans -- displaced by fighting in the high plains and countryside (Globe and Mail March 26<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>29</sup>Several participants commented on how the communist regime was not flexible enough to accommodate the influx of persons onto the job market. Many others complained that those returning from Zaire were blatantly discriminated against and refused any opportunity to better their living conditions.

responsibility for the city's ruin.<sup>30</sup> A series of propaganda campaigns ensued -- campaigns engineered to incite hatred and contempt for the recently returned BaKongo. All Angolans interviewed in Toronto were in agreement that the government had taken steps to incite resentment against the French-speakers. The state-controlled media portrayed the French-speaking BaKongo as the source of the city's problems and, above all else, as cannibals.<sup>31</sup>

Following the election campaign of 1992, UNITA, having lost to the MPLA, denounced the election result and renewed its offensive. In response, the government began a crack down on potential UNITA supporters. In October 1992, it distributed arms to MPLA supporters based in Luanda (Minority Rights Group 1995:6). House to house searches were conducted, in which members of the OviMbundu ethnic group, from which UNITA draws most of its support, representatives of OviMbundu church congregations, and the French-speaking BaKongo were singled out and summarily executed.<sup>32</sup> Several thousand

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<sup>30</sup>One participant suggested that the returning BaKongo were thought to be particularly threatening for having been amongst the few Angolans to have completed their education without interruption. In Angola on the other hand, Torontonians estimate that up to 90% of Angolans are illiterate -- due directly to the war or indirectly to the divestment of funds from educational programmes to arms acquisition. Official tallies are vague. In 1995, Minority Rights Group (1995:5), reported that 12% of Angolans received secondary school education and that around 90% received "some primary education".

<sup>31</sup>Participants reported that rigged film footage had been used to provide 'evidence' of the French-speakers unacceptable behaviour. For example, partly cannibalised or desecrated corpses were shown widely on television broadcasts -- acts attributed to the returnees from Zaire.

<sup>32</sup>Similar incidents were reported in Benguela and Lubango to the South of Luanda (Minority Rights Group 1995:6).

people are said to have been killed (Ibid.). By January 1993, the focus turned to the French-speaking BaKongo. Singled out by their French accent, their inability to speak Portuguese altogether, or by their Zairean-style dress, armed civilians beat and raped several hundred, reportedly killing dozens (Ibid.). The London-based BaKongo have labelled this January incident 'the Massacre'. They also claim that those murdered were denied proper burials. Rather, one shallow communal grave served as a temporary burial site. After six weeks, the bodies were exhumed and burned.

In Toronto, all Angolans were outraged as news of these developments -- particularly the fall 1992 killings -- spread throughout the diaspora through both formal and informal networks. This anger culminated in a protest staged on Angola's Independence Day, November 11<sup>th</sup> 1992, before Toronto's Queen's Park, the seat of provincial government.

All Angolans in attendance that day recall this protest with nostalgia:

We organised a protest in Queen's Park for hours. There was no discrimination. Some people came late because of work but they showed up. That was the spirit of Angolans coming together, but today that spirit is gone (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Today, the lessening of this spirit of solidarity is much regretted by all participants interviewed. However, the diaspora still considers itself to be particularly critical of the government's activities or lack of responsible action. In fact, most Angolans in Toronto express pride at having given the Ottawa-based Angolan Embassy "a piece of their

mind” (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup>1999). Generally, they proudly state that as a group and as individuals, they are renowned for being particularly rebellious and vocal.

Our ACO community, since it was built, it is known as a rebellious community – the most rebellious of all communities outside of Angola. It’s known by the Angolan government. And when they came here, when they opened the Embassy (in 1996), we thought -- ‘We’ll give them a piece of our minds’ and I’m one of the most hated guys in the Embassy (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999).

That’s why people at the Embassy know me, because I tell them as it is!... Their staff, especially like the secretaries, they’re not even Angolan! They’re Brazilian, Ethiopian... There isn’t one person from the Angolan community because then we would know what is really going on in there (Teresa May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999).<sup>33</sup>

Occasionally, Angolans protest and openly criticise Angolan officials and their government’s policies. Angolans clearly want the Ottawa-based embassy to know they exist and that they will “tell them as it is!”. By and large, however, Angolans quietly nurture their ties with the home country. Engaged in an Angolan return, the diaspora repeatedly visits the homeland “through memory... travel, gifts and assistance, et cetera” (Tölölyan 1996:15), all of which serve to reinforce Angolan-ness.

#### **4.8 Torontonians Angolans & the Transnationalism Community**

Transnationalism, broadly defined as consisting of multi-sited social relations or attachments that “link together societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et al. 1994:7),

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<sup>33</sup>It was made clear to me throughout the course of my interview at the Angolan Embassy in Ottawa, that officials were indeed aware of just who was most vocal in the Toronto-based Angolan community – individuals such as Teresa, for example. The nationality of the Embassy’s staff however, could be verified.

applies to Toronto Angolans. The knowledge that many Angolans enter Canada as Independent applicants, having first been granted asylum in (primarily) countries of Europe, is partly testament to this fact. Indeed, many research participants speak of having moved around looking for optimum conditions, or for conditions which most closely resemble memories of Angola.

I went to Portugal first. I was getting paid very good but something wasn't good so I went to Spain where it was the same. So then I went to France and by the time I got there, my two brothers were there already. The one who's now in Australia, and the one that doesn't work in the government. I lived with them in Paris for one year and then, I moved to Strasbourg. .. But then I came to Canada for the education (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999).

I left in 1981 [for work] and here I am. When I returned, they wanted to jail me so I fled forever.. I went to France first. I went to Spain accidentally. I went to Spain to visit on my way to Canada, but ended up staying four years. I had packed everything and said 'ok. I'm travelling to Canada' (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999)

Je suis venu au Canada en 1989... Quand j'étais en Angola, j'ai eu l'occasion de visiter l'Europe, à deux reprises. Au Portugal d'abord et en Belgique et de retour en Angola. Une autre fois, encore au Portugal, en Italie, en Hollande, Bruxelles, et à Paris. De retour en Angola, j'ai eu des problèmes (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

It's going to be twenty years [that I've been in Canada] next month. I never adjusted. I'm here out of convenience because my parents are here and being the only child... I never allowed myself to adjust to Canada (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999).

The 1970s were good in the case of Angola. And talk to anyone who was there and they will say that that was such a nice period. I have run across friends in Europe, we had been together in school [in Angola] and then they had gone from Switzerland, Sweden, Brazil. One of the things you find sometimes with Angolans, Angolans that had left the country in the second half of the 70s, were people that were a lot in search. They would try several countries in the hope to get back what they had left... [One friend said to me] the more she looked around, the more she couldn't believe that we were so happy to be living in such a country

(Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Further still, Angolans continue to nourish their Angolan ties fostered both in the home country and in various countries abroad, especially in Europe. Family, in particular, tends to be one of the main reasons people maintain strong ties transnationally. Many have family members scattered around the world; others left their family in Angola.<sup>34</sup> In spite of the heavy costs involved, most maintain contact with members, and visits, particularly to Europe, are relatively frequent. Eva, a twenty-two year old, flies to Portugal annually to meet with Angolans her own age and to party. She also spoke of plans currently underway to coordinate a mass return to Luanda for New Year's Eve 2000. It's expected that Angolans from around the globe will fly home for the event. Others spare no expense and travel to Angola fairly regularly -- usually annually or every two years -- in spite of the danger. They tend to go to set up businesses or to visit with family and friends.

Others, however, have deliberately opted to stay away from Angola. Laura was particularly concerned for her daughter's memories of Angola. Having left Angola when she was only four years old, most of her daughter's memories of Angola consisted of idealized longings passed down to her from family and fellow nationals in exile. Laura is

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<sup>34</sup>Family members weren't always left behind knowingly. One individual fled the country immediately upon his release from prison. He was told that his wife and children were in Canada. Upon his arrival in Toronto, immigration officials assisted him in locating her. She had indeed travelled safely to Canada but with all but one child. Although, this child was with his aunt in Cabinda -- an enclave of Angola -- at the time of his mother's flight, she hadn't had the ability, the means, nor the time to retrieve him. Today, his whereabouts are unknown.



afraid that if her daughter were to witness the actual decrepit state of her idealised country, she will want to reject her Angolan identity altogether.

I wanted to send my daughter to visit [Angola] and my sister was saying to me 'Look. You tell her stories and she has ideals. Don't send this child to Angola because what she will see will upset her so much that maybe she will erase completely her identity as an Angolan and there is a need to preserve that. At this point, that's by keeping her away from Angola. (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999)

All who spoke of the desire for return equally expressed some degree of reservation.

Reports from those who had recently travelled to the country, were harrowing. Luanda, which had managed to live relatively sheltered from the war for the first two decades, has literally collapsed in the 1990s. Today, war is inescapable in Angola.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

Whether it be through informal or formal associations, all Angolans express a commitment to their home country and to Angolans abroad. In effect, all re-turn repeatedly, if only in the metaphysical sense, and most Angolans aspire to do so in the physical sense as well. Yet the fact that people identify themselves as Angolan in often contradictory forms – some preferring formal channels such as ACO and others berating such formal associations as both unnecessary and not authentically Angolan -- suggests a deeper, tense negotiation of Angolan-ness in diaspora. In other words, there is an important debate surrounding the authenticity of membership: just who is considered to be a 'Real' Angolan and who is not. Ultimately, the consequences of this debate are far-

reaching. When, and if, peace is achieved in Angola, the hundreds of thousands of returnees who are expected to descend on the country, having spent most of their lives abroad, will need to engage in a similar process of identity negotiation. The following chapter, Chapter Five, further explores this issue of national Angolan membership.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Angolan Diaspora in Toronto:

#### Constructions & Idioms of (National) Belonging

##### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter maps out the complex and tense, yet intimate, web of Angolan relations in Toronto. These relations, both formal and informal, are shaped by views of Angolan-ness, reconstituted and contested in diaspora. These views are equally informed by visions of the Angolan nation itself. Although Angolan identity negotiation operates within a transnational space, thereby challenging fixed notions of the nation-state and territoriality, Angolan-ness is nonetheless articulated *through* the nation and not independently of it. In fact, it is the process of articulating the 'Angolan being' through the nation that results in the emergence of what Bhabha (cited in Clifford 1997:264) calls "new imaginings and the politics of community". In other words, diasporas and "contemporary diasporic practices cannot be reduced to epiphenomena of the nation-state or of global capitalism"(Op. cit.:244), nor are they necessarily anti-nationalistic. Diasporas remain, to some extent, inexorably "defined and constrained by structures of [the nation-state even though] they also exceed and criticize them..." (Ibid.). The process of identity formation in diaspora therefore *requires* reference to the nation.

Although the nation-state may be conceived of as static, the nation itself is, above all else,

an imagined “system of cultural significance” (Bhabha 1990). Moreover, nationalism “has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being” (Anderson 1983:19). For this reason, Malkki (1992) prefers “the national order of things” to the loaded and overused concept of nationalism -- so as to make clear its cultural significance on both local and transnational levels. Of course, Angolan nationalism -- this “national [Angolan] order of things” -- is now contested by the returning French-speaking BaKongo.

In this chapter, I explore the challenge that the French-speaking returnees pose to both Angolan-ness and Angolan nationalism. I first discuss the hotly debated territorial and metaphysical claims to Angola posited by the French-speakers. Following my exploration of their experience of exile, I will address the issue of religious identification. In particular, I examine the Tocoist religion. Born in response to Portuguese-imposed Catholicism, Tocoism is practised exclusively in Angola, and its adherents are predominantly BaKongo. I then turn specifically to the debate surrounding Angolan authenticity, which further reveals elements of Angolan nationalist discourse. In particular, the French-speakers are construed by the ‘Real’ Angolans to have undermined what the latter group remembers to have been an ideal nation. Informed by interview responses and conversations with Angolans both in Canada and the UK, I then turn to a discussion of the BaKongo ethno-nationalist movement for self-determination and

discuss both Angolan reactions to it and its implications for Angolan nationalism.

## **5.2 Exile & Marginality**

There is no doubt that abandoning one's home and livelihood takes a psychological toll on forced migrants (Ager 1993; Muecke 1992). All Angolans interviewed spoke of the tremendous difficulties associated with living in exile; the challenges of adjusting to resettlement; the pain of distance from family, friends and home; and the insecurity and anxiety felt with regard to the future. As Fátima, a Canadian-trained nurse and thirty-year resident of Canada, explains, "I arrived [in Canada] in October. It was all like a nightmare, like maybe I'm dead already" (July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1999). Indeed, for most in exile, there is an expressed sense of liminality (Turner 1969), as though their existence is one which is between worlds -- between departure and return.<sup>1</sup> However, for the French-speaking Angolans there is an added dimension to this shared experience of exile -- its repetition. In my conversations with French-speaking BaKongo, they strongly articulated the sense that their lives had been entirely and repeatedly lived on the margins, without either space

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<sup>1</sup>In 1994-95, I was contracted to work in Meheba Refugee Settlement, Zambia. There, I became acquainted with Julia Powles, an Anthropology PhD candidate (Oxford). She was completing her fieldwork among Angolan refugees in the Settlement. These refugees were predominantly from the Lunda and Luvale ethnic group. She conveyed to me how Angolan Mehebians viewed their existence in the Settlement as a state of liminality. In fact, many equated their 'pending' life to the Luvale and Lunda rite of passage to adulthood. To many, Meheba represented the pubescent state of this rite of passage -- not quite child, not quite fully formed adult. It was thought that full adulthood and the resumption of one's life could only occur upon return to Angola. Ultimately, this internalisation of exile, had important implications for the Angolans' commitment to settlement, including self-sufficiency in food production particularly when one considers that many thousands of Angolans had been in Meheba for 25 years or more (J. Powles, personal communication, 1994-95).

or place. Tomás speaks of this marginality, the lack of acceptance and the shock of having to constantly be 'starting over'. He says:

Au Zaire on m'appelait angolais. En Angola on m'appelle un zairois. Donc, je n'ai pas un pays. Vous comprenez? Un dit 'tu es un étranger'. L'autre dit 'tu es un étranger'. Va chez toi!.. [Mais] je suis angolais. Je n'ai pas fait la demande pour une nationalité zairoise. J'ai tous les papiers [angolais]. Je rentre chez moi alors on me dit, 'tu es zairois'. Alors, confusion!.. Tu quittes tes parents, tes amis. Il faut toujours quitter. Il faut toujours quitter. Moi, j'avais une maison. Une grande maison. J'ai quitté mon église. Le fait de quitter, psychologiquement... Je suis arrivé au pays et j'ai dû commencer à zéro -- commencer à acheter la fourchette. C'est pas facile. Le moindre de petites choses, pour rebâtir sa maison mais psychologiquement cela a des effets... C'est pas facile de toujours quitter. On a quitté pour combien de temps? Maintenant, les enfants grandissent. Il faut repartir encore une fois. C'est cela. Mais, d'une part, on peut créer des activités qui peuvent nous lier à la fois ici et à la fois là-bas (Tomás June 3rd 1999).<sup>2</sup>

Tomás reveals how demoralizing it is to lack a place of one's own, living in-between countries and having to start over with the most menial of details and tasks such as buying kitchen utensils. Yet he maintains that some link with Angola – the land most desired and considered 'home' -- can be nurtured in waiting.

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<sup>2</sup>"In Zaire they called me Angolan. In Angola they call me a Zairean. So, I have no country. You understand? One says 'you're a foreigner / a stranger'. The other says 'you're a foreigner / a stranger'. 'Go home!'... But I'm Angolan. I never filed for a Zairean nationality. I have all my [Angolan] papers. And so I returned home and once there they tell me, 'you are a Zairean'. So, confusion!... You leave your parents, your friends. You always have to start over. You always have to start over. I had a house, a big house. I had to leave my church. To leave, psychologically... Then I came here and I had to start at nothing -- start by buying a fork... the simplest of things to rebuild our home but psychologically, it takes its toll... It's not easy to always be leaving. We have left but for how long this time? And the kids are growing up. And then we may have to leave again... That's what it is. But on the one hand we can create activities which link us both here and there... " (Tomás, June 3rd 1999).

All Angolans in exile, whether they are recognised as 'Real' or not, suffer a certain degree of "terminal loss": what Said (1994) has also dubbed "the mind of winter", reflecting the loneliness of sorrow experienced in the physical inaccessibility of home. Yet what is equally shared in the immediacy of displacement is the need to "construct a national past" (Malkki 1995:1) or a "historical-national consciousness" (Op. cit.:242). In the case of the Angolan diaspora, both groups have similar experiences of exile, similar needs subsequent to their migration and, most importantly, a similar need to reassert their Angolan identity so as to avoid finding themselves in a "territory of not belonging" (Said 1994:51).

### **5.3 Contesting Claims to Angola**

Although most Angolans do not deny that the BaKongo who returned from Zaire have been victimized at some level or other -- if only in the 1960s -- it is the latter group's claim to Angola which is highly contested. For French-speaking Angolans, however, there is no doubt as to the legitimacy of their claims. With the exception of one person,<sup>3</sup> all said to most strongly identify with Angola, and referred to themselves as Angolan. Tomás, for one, conveys how he grew up in exile in Zaire, profoundly influenced by his grandfather who wept for his native Angolan homeland and desired nothing other than to return. He explains that, "Moi, je suis né au Zaire mais le jour que j'ai parlé avec mon

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<sup>3</sup>The dissenting voice was that of a person who identified himself by his ethnicity – BaKongo – first and foremost. He was singled out and rebuked by other Angolans, BaKongo and non-BaKongo alike, for having ethno-nationalist tendencies.

grand-père, il m'a expliqué mon pays, et j'ai dis, 'Je pars!' J'ai parti en Angola" (Tomás June 3rd 1999).

Anabela, a Portuguese Angolan, fled Angola twenty years ago and came to Canada at the age of 15. Her parents had moved to Angola when she was but four years old. Today, she still identifies herself as Angolan and speaks fondly of her country. With regards to Tomás' claims, however, she refers to her own family history to prove just how unsubstantiated she thinks they are.

But listen, my great grandmother is descendant from the Queen of England. That does not make me the Queen of England. I understand their point. They are descendants from Angola but that does not make them [Angolan]. Because my ancestors are from England, that doesn't give me the right to citizenship... Now [these days], any person because their great, great, great grandfather was born in Angola, they can be Angolan? Big deal!! I told them! That doesn't make you an Angolan (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>4</sup>

When the French-speaking Angolans would rebuke Anabela for not being Angolan herself, she answers, "I said, 'Listen, I never lied. I never said I was born in that country but you know what? I feel more and I can do more for that country than any of you! I told them!'" (Ibid.). Her words clearly accuse the group in question of having faked their citizenship and of not having the capability to either act or feel as she herself does for Angola.

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<sup>4</sup>Anabela, a Portuguese Angolan, claims to have British ancestry. I could not verify these claims nor did Anabela elaborate any further.



Others, however, are slightly more sympathetic to the loss and displacement endured by the French-speaking Angolans. Laura, for example, expresses sympathy but accuses the group of having overrun and taken over her country.

I'm one of those people that thinks that it's not their fault that they were born in Zaire and that Angola should make amends for that. But I don't accept that a minority who come and run the show... How do you expect that someone comes to Angola and exiges [expects] that you speak French?

Others still, are clearly angered by the debate itself. Vicente, an Mbundu and proud Luandan, has long been acquainted with both Zaireans and Luanda-based French-speaking Zaireans. He violently attacks *both* sides of the authenticity debate for what he calls their lack of "social education" and, in particular, for having ushered in what he thinks has been the downfall of ACO (June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999).

...They're the ones we call 'assimilados' – the ones who live like the Portuguese; my life is my wife, me and my kids... They're not Canadian. They're not Portuguese. They're nothing. They're just a small potato trying to grow in a farm that doesn't rain. Basically, that's what I think... They call them [the French-speaking Angolans] 'regressados' [returnees] but a guy from Portugal is just called an Angolan. A guy from Brazil returning is called an Angolan. It applies strictly to people who have come from Zaire...But people call me that [a Langa or a Zairean] as a joke but if you say something that I am not, I will beat you up. I will beat you... as an Angolan because we [in ACO] are trying to erase what was contaminated but people are not getting that message... [And] I'm not part of the Lingala group anymore. They put me out. They said, I'm too Shungura [Luandan and Portuguese-speaking Angolan] (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Vicente goes on to say that the freedom of speech granted in Canada is partly to blame for this tension. He believes it to have allowed Angolan immigrants to speak without

reservation, which, paradoxically, has heightened tensions unnecessarily and so paralysed the work of ACO.

Joaquim, an OviMbundu and newcomer to Canada, is the most moderate in his view of this mutual labelling which divides the Torontonion community and the BaKongo claims to Angola. Above all else, he advocates unity and dialogue. He also relies heavily on a legal definition of Angolan. In his opinion, those who were born in Zaire who have either maintained or applied for Angolan citizenship are Angolan citizens and should be recognized as such. Further still, he acknowledges that all Torontonion Angolans may themselves be returnees one day and labelled inauthentic by those Angolans left behind to bear the brunt of escalating warfare.<sup>5</sup> Joaquim, however, is one of few to espouse such moderate views. As a young, Angolan-educated and urbanised male newcomer to Canada, Joaquim is representative of the most recent phase of Angolan immigration. Angolans feel that this latest phase is only beginning to have its effects on the diaspora. Joaquim's attitude, therefore, may reflect a changing, more conciliatory attitude vis-a-vis the French-speaking Angolans and their claims.

However, for the moment, the tension across this 'Real' and 'Non-Real' Angolan divide is intense, with most non-BaKongo attitudes falling in line with Anabela or Laura's

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<sup>5</sup>The impact of repatriation, particularly the fostering of antagonistic relationships between locals and returnees, may be well known but remains poorly documented (Dolan 1997; Van Hear 1992).

position. Yet as alluded to in Anabela's comments earlier, the French-speakers' claim to Angola is one which is contested not simply at a territorial level, but at the level of sentimental attachment as well. On the one hand, the French-speaking Angolans are berated by 'Real' Angolans for ostracising themselves, operating in exclusively French language circles. Vicente is one of many who is aggravated by such 'anti-Angolan' behaviour. He says, "I told them [the French-speaking Angolans] right away, 'Why are you not settling things?' 'You are creating the problem... Of course we have a problem but don't try to separate [yourselves] and make it worse'" (Vicente June 12<sup>th</sup> 1999). At another level, the French-speaking Angolans were accused by 'Real' Angolans of 'dropping' their Angolan identity once immigration procedures had been completed. In other words, the BaKongo ceased to refer to themselves as Angolan, but rather as French or Zairean or otherwise, once their adopted Angolan identity had fulfilled its function and eased immigration to Canada. Such comments, however, were adamantly denied and even met with rage when reiterated to the French-speakers. João makes it absolutely clear that he is in no way anything other than Angolan. He states:

**Non! Non! Je ne suis pas Zairois! Je ne suis pas Zairois! Il y avait un certain moment ou ça m'irritait quand on me disait cela. Mais il faut savoir la différence. Au Zaire, nous étions considérés des réfugiés. Bon, il n'y avait pas de restrictions. Nous allions à l'école. Si vous aviez des papiers commerciales vous pouviez pratiquer votre commerce, envoyer vos enfants à l'école, au même titre que les Zairois. Mais, on n'est pas Zairois. Nous sommes toujours attachés à notre terre. Nous sommes restés Angolais! (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup>"No! No! I am not Zairean! I am not Zairean! There was a time when that really irritated me. But one has to recognise the difference. In Zaire, we were considered refugees. Fine, there were no

Paradoxically, these words are not all that different from those of the so-called 'Real' Angolans who now reside in Canada. Anabela, who has yet to return to Angola since her departure twenty years ago, still considers herself Angolan first and foremost. "I usually say that I'm a Canadian out of convenience... I spent most of my life in Canada, but I still consider myself Angolan" (June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999). Laura, who nineteen years ago left Angola with her four-year old daughter, says, "I will always be Angolan... There's a part of me that is so connected. It's unthinkable that my identity would be anything other than Angolan" (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). Likewise, Sofia's six-year-old son was born in Canada and speaks little Portuguese, although he understands some. Of her son, Sofia explains, "If you ask him he says, 'I'm from Angola.' Oh my God, he's from Angola. He's not from here. 'Cause sometimes we talk and he says, 'No! I'm from Angola'" (Sofia March 16<sup>th</sup> 1999). Ultimately, all Angolans in exile, whether they be deemed authentic by their peers or not, use a similar language of longing. Most are desiring to return home, pending the war's end -- an end which all Angolans interviewed consider unlikely, at least in the near future.

#### **5.4 Tocoism & Belonging**

It is said by the BaKongo and by many non-BaKongo Angolans alike, that the French-

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restrictions. We went to school. If you had your commercial licence you could practice your trade, send your kids to school, just like the Zaireans. But, we are not Zairean. We are always attached to our land. We remained Angolan" (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

speaking group had been, and continues to be, persecuted at two levels. Clearly, they were first targeted for their political convictions by the colonialists in the 1950s and '60s. Since independence, and particularly in the 1990s,<sup>7</sup> the BaKongo were then treated by the government, as suspect. However, the French-speaking BaKongo have also been targeted by the state for their adherence to Tocoism -- a religion born in response to colonial-imposed Catholicism. Clearly, however, not all Angolans believe the Tocos to be persecuted. Laura clearly believes that Tocoism was never a source of tension or discrimination.

The Tocos are well accepted. I grew up with the Tocos and they were never a source of tension... Religion was never a huge preoccupation for the government because the faith groups never challenged the government's power... So they dressed all in white and they pray and they worship under a tree, etc. They are anti-war but the government doesn't persecute even them. So people that come here and make refugee claims and say that 'I'm BaKongo and that the government

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<sup>7</sup>In 1975, the FNLA (the National Front for the Liberation of Angola), was virtually exclusively BaKongo-based. Founded as UPNA (the Union of Peoples of Northern Angola) in 1954, it first sought to advance the interests of the BaKongo. In fact, in 1957, it worked closely with the BaKongo in Zaire to petition the UN for the restoration of the Kongo Kingdom. UPNA however, soon acknowledged the futility of this project and became UPA (the Union of Angolan Peoples). It began to advocate an independence for all of Angola. By 1962, UPA joined with another small Kongo nationalist group, the Democratic Party of Angola (PDA) to become the FNLA. The FNLA was one of three parties to make up the transitional government set up by the Portuguese, the other two parties consisting of the MPLA (Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). This shaky tri-party agreement collapsed before Angola's set date of Independence (November 11<sup>th</sup> 1975). Ultimately, war broke out pitching the MPLA against a UNITA-FNLA alliance. The FNLA eventually waned as UNITA, and its figurehead, Savimbi gained centre stage. Generally, the BaKongo, who may never have been particularly fond of Savimbi, became most strongly anti-government after the 1992 elections, which they allege, were manipulated by the MPLA. After UNITA denounced the elections and launched a new offensive, government forces detained, arrested and killed those they assumed to be UNITA supporters including members of the BaKongo ethnic group (Minority Rights Group 1995:4). However, it was only in January 1993 that a deliberate campaign of violence targeting members of the BaKongo was orchestrated. Although armed civilians reportedly killed people judged to be BaKongo -- based on a Zairean accent and/or a Zairean-style clothing -- it is largely believed that weapons used had been distributed by government forces (Minority Rights Group 1995:4).

persecutes me' ... ok. You want to get here, whatever. But don't tell me [that you're persecuted because of your Toco religion], because the government doesn't target them as such. They [the Tocos] also don't make political statements, as long as you don't mix your religion with politics, they [the government] don't care" (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Although this statement is not necessarily a comment on the degree to which the Tocos were persecuted in the 1960s and '70s, what is clearly revealed is the animosity which is felt towards those persons who make asylum claims based on grounds of religious persecution. What is also implied is that the BaKongo have been guilty of such acts. I, however, know of no one in Canada who has made such a claim based on religious-based persecution.

Most strongly rooted in Angola's North, the Tocos are largely comprised of BaKongo, although a minority of non-BaKongo Angolans adhere to the religion and its strong anti-war / anti-government stance. Sofia, a Mbundu Angolan, converted to Tocoism as a child. Alternating between the use of 'they' and 'we', she speaks of the treatment of the Tocos in Angola.

Even in 1986... the government put so many Tocos in prison. My husband also went to prison. So what they did, they [the Tocos] protested and held demonstrations. They dressed all in white and all that. They wanted a fair trial. And do you know many people died? They shot them [the protestors] and my husband was taken to prison and he stayed there for a while.. And then there was 1992, after the elections, they [the government] were thinking that these people [the Tocos], they vote for Savimbi. So they went and killed a lot of people... These people [the Tocos] are very persecuted in Angola, because they don't

believe in the government, in war, ... We don't want to send our kids to the army. We are not part of the government. And we are very persecuted in Angola. In 1993, a lot of BaKongo people were killed and most were from this religion... BaKongo is their ethnic background... When they talk about the Tocoist, they talk about BaKongo... But I'm not BaKongo. We [the Tocos] are very different [from the Catholics]... We believe in Jesus Christ [and Mary] but not in other things. But you know that the Portuguese used the[ir] religion to make people slaves and that's what we are against. We have different things that we do; the way the priest preaches, the way we sing, and the way we dress when we go to Church... We have an area in Luanda where most of them live. We call it 'Congolense' (Sofia March 20<sup>th</sup> 1999).

In some respects, Tocoism is used to both strengthen and weaken the divide existing between 'Real' Angolans and French-speaking returning BaKongo. On the one hand, Tocoism and its adherents are ostracised. Perceived to be anti-colonial and anti-government, the Tocos have allegedly been targeted by both the Catholic Portuguese and the current MPLA government. They are viewed with mild annoyance and/ or disdain by other non-adhering Angolans. As Sofia explains,

It's something that other Angolans don't believe in. They make fun of you because they grow up in that government mind set -- shaping [them]. There was a lot of propaganda. Like sometimes, people will say 'oh, you're from *that* Church!' Because there's so many things you can't do. Like you can't smoke. And they think it's a crazy religion (Ibid.).

Yet the fact that the Tocos are not exclusively BaKongo -- a small minority of Mbundu are also devout Tocos -- has important implications for the bridging of so-called Angolan - Zairean distinctions. These latter distinctions appear, at times, to have been lessened or blurred by a common, religiously-based experience of victimization across both linguistic

and ethnic groups. Sofia, a Toco Mbundu, clearly identifies with all Tocos who have suffered for their beliefs, including those Toco BaKongo who have returned from the DRC. She also expresses sympathy for the displacement and loss suffered by these Tocos. Nonetheless, she tends to distinguish those Tocos who are thought to be more authentically Angolan from the latter Tocos and returnees to Angola. In other words, she clearly identifies with fellow Tocos, but withdraws from identifying too strongly with those who constitute the French-speaking returnees from Zaire. She discloses this simultaneous bond and divide in her conversations.

They [the Tocos] came from the North. My brother is also from North. So it's in my blood... Because most people in this religion they dress like a Zairean costume, all these traditional things, because the majority are BaKongo... Myself, I love to dress like that. I feel myself more African (Sofia March 20<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>8</sup>

In a follow-up conversation, however, Sofia is quick to refer to the French-speaking Angolans as opportunistic fakes, as not 'Real' Angolans or even as inauthentic BaKongo. Referring to those BaKongo who never left Angola, she states, "[Those are the] real BaKongo, I have lived with them. I know them. I know they are from there [Angola]" (May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999). Even her style of telling could possibly be conceived as reflecting this contradiction or tension. She tends to alternate between using 'us' and 'them' when

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<sup>8</sup>This statement is particularly intriguing when one considers that Angola is perceived by Angolans (at least those from Luanda) as being the most European of all African countries, largely accounted for by their five centuries of Portuguese rule. It also begs the question, who then is 'Real' African? – those considered to be 'inauthentic' Angolans?



referring to the Tocos, perhaps to distance herself from those considered non-real.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, she may also choose to distance herself from Tocoism so as to avoid criticism from fellow Angolans who generally disapprove of the religion altogether. Finally, in spite of this common experience of persecution and faith shared by all Tocos regardless of language and ethnicity, the religion does not appear to have been carried over into exile, not in any formal or organised sense and at the very least, not in Canada.<sup>10</sup> As well-informed as Sofia is of the Angolan community in Canada, she knew of no one who practised in Toronto. She suspected, however, that some of the French-speakers were likely followers. When asked whether or not she still considered herself an adherent, she said that she practised and prayed alone. Ultimately, Tocoism and the Tocos' experience of persecution appears to have been unsuccessful at bridging the persistent 'Real / Non-Real' divide, at the very least in the Canadian context.

### **5.5 Authenticating Angolan-ness**

In interview responses and conversations with Angolans there is an explicit and repeated articulation of an (idealised) vision of, and link to, the homeland. This vision tends to draw on a common imagined past as a means to actively reinforce and perpetuate social

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<sup>9</sup>See Sofia's quote above which begins with 'Even in 1986...'

<sup>10</sup>With the exception of one Angolan research participant who is currently a pastor of an Evangelical Church in Canada, few alluded to religion as being an important signifier in their lives. Most suggested that Angolans in Canada thought religion to be an individual choice. Sofia accounted for this attitude by explaining how organised religion was viewed by her co-nationals as having being closely associated with slavery and colonialism.

consciousness and ideals. This section centres on Angolan debates of authenticity. Drawing heavily on largely idealised memories of Angola, interview responses disclose the outlines of the Angolan nationalist discourse -- one which is largely civic. The responses discussed below have been organised around a theme which reoccurred most frequently throughout my research: the depiction of French-speaking Angolans as opportunists. Specifically, the latter were characterised as: traders and travellers engaged in 'débrouillardise'; black marketeers undermining the economy and profiting from the adoption, sale and purchase of the Angolan identity; poorly integrated immigrants; and as immigration frauds and / or criminals.

### **5.5 i. Traders, Travellers & 'Débrouillardise'**

"The stranger everywhere appears as the trader, or the trader as stranger... This position of the stranger stands out more sharply if he settles down in the place of his activity instead of leaving it again..."  
(Simmel cited in Fallers 1967:7)

George Simmel's words, written in 1950, convey sentiments articulated by many Angolans living in exile. French-speaking Angolans are perceived by the latter as both strangers and traders. Further still, they are accused of appropriating and tarnishing the Angolan identity. Returning from Zaire, they settled in Luanda, forming French language ghettos and calling Angola home. Their return is said, by self-labelled 'Real' Angolans,

to have heralded an era of unprecedented self-interest and ‘débrouillardise’<sup>11</sup> undermining the local economy and Luanda’s amicable atmosphere. Ultimately, Angola’s glory days of independence are said to have been tainted and lost by this group from Zaire. Laura, like many Angolans in exile, reminisces, “It was really a sweet life. Very sweet. You pick up the comfort of a normal European city and you put it in tropical weather...” (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). Sofia directly associates Angola’s decline with the ‘Zairean influence’.

When Angola became independent, it was beautiful. Not like Zaire. Zaire is nothing compared to Angola. Another style. Very different. Different lifestyle. Zaireans are known as merchants and traders... They sell on street corners even and are travellers. Angolans don’t like to travel that much. That’s why there’s so much reservations about people from Zaire – they even keep animals in their apartments... something we never did. They start learning our language and are conniving. I’m not lying! I went to Kinshasa in 1989. I found things from Angola in the market, even cars – Ladas – Russian cars only available in Angola... There’s so much feeling about this (Sofia May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999).

These feelings of Sofia’s were echoed throughout my fieldwork. Angolans view the ‘Zaireans’, or the French-speaking Angolans, as traders that have sustained themselves in unorthodox and culturally unacceptable forms such as in ‘keep[ing] animals in their

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<sup>11</sup>‘Débrouillardise’ is French for ‘fending for oneself’. It is a form of livelihood associated specifically with Zaire by Angolans, and based on my personal experience, by Zambians as well. It usually refers to black market trading. Angolans and Zambians tend to equate it with treachery, cheating and theft. They also tend to believe that ‘débrouillardise’ was born in response to Mobuto’s authoritarian regime in Zaire which concentrated wealth and power in the uppermost echelons of power, leaving the rest of the population to fend for itself.

apartments' for instance, or then again, by 'sell[ing] on street corners'.<sup>12</sup> Also, some disdain is expressed for the 'Zaireans' as 'travellers'. As suggested by Sofia's comments, 'travellers' cannot be trusted, as migration is thought to be an aberration. This is, of course, ironic given the fact that the 'Real' Angolans are themselves migrants to Canada. However, there is an articulated distinction between the two sets of experiences. The 'Real' Angolans believe themselves to have been *forced* to leave their homeland, whereas the Zaireans are thought to *choose* to travel. It is this perceived desire to travel which is equated with opportunistic, suspicious or criminal behaviour.<sup>13</sup>

However, for the French-speaking Angolans who had returned from exile, travel to and from Zaire, its border, or to and from the North of the country, afforded a means of surviving which could not be had otherwise. In other words, they too see themselves as having been forced to travel. João, for one, explains how he failed to be employed upon his return to Angola. Of course, he says, his Portuguese was mediocre at the time but he claims that he and other 'returnees' were deliberately barred from attaining gainful employment. So as to be considered for work, one needed to prove one's professional and academic qualifications. To do so required the signature of both the Zairean Embassy and the Ministry of Education -- inevitably a slow and drawn out process. More

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<sup>12</sup>The Angolan BaKongo – those who never fled into Zaire – had never been involved in such trading, at least not prior to the return of their co-ethnics.

<sup>13</sup>There exists a substantial literature on the 'stranger status' – a status which applies to migrants and nomads, travellers and traders.

importantly, the procedure required payment in American dollars. In order to acquire the needed dollars, João and others like him began to travel to the Northern border with Zaire to buy rare goods for resale in Angola's capital. However, when employment opportunities failed to avail themselves, the French-speaking Angolans continued their trade with the North, particularly as it proved to be quite profitable. Of course, travel to and from the North or virtually anywhere in country, required a special permit or 'guia'. Reflecting on this and on his own commercial ventures, João alleges that it was all part of surviving and that he, and others in his position, had to learn to work their way around such barriers.<sup>14</sup>

### **5.5 ii. Controlling the Angolan Market and Identity**

Yet resentment runs deeper than trade. By the late 1970s, the Angolan head of state, Agostinho Neto, reeling from the effects of the Nitista coup attempt (1977), sought to balance out both personalities and schools of thought within his leftist government. He reorganised the government, abolishing the offices of the prime minister and deputy prime minister so as to have direct rule over his ministers. More importantly, however, he worked to dilute the mestiço<sup>15</sup> and Mbundu control of government, and to broaden its

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<sup>14</sup>"On s'est habitué. On a développé des méthodes et on a quand même survécu" (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>15</sup>Mestiços refer to those Angolans who are either direct or indirect descendants of an African / White couple. In the 1960s, a little more than 1% of Angola's total population were mestiços. In 1988, they figured but 2%. There has been little change since. However, this estimate does not include Angolans born of Cuban and African ancestry. In the late 1970s, an average of 50,000 Cuban troops and civilian technical personnel were stationed in Angola. It is believed that a number of Angolans today are of mixed

ethnic representation. He also desired to increase his popular support base in the North, where U.S.-backed Zaire posed a threat to communist Angola. He began to appoint BaKongo and Cabindan officials to his Political Bureau and granted partial amnesty to a number of dissidents. Neto even put out a welcome mat for FNLA supporters, thereby opening the door for the return of BaKongo Angolans who had been in exile in what was then Zaire (United States Library of Congress 1989). Laura explains:

So [there was this] pressure on the MPLA government to secure some support from those people on the border [and so Neto] launched this statement... and said 'I give you power and you will act as a barrier against Mobutu'. So what happened? They came to Angola. The Zairean economy was already a kind of 'Débrouille-toi or Débrouillardise'. So, what happened? When they arrived in Angola they introduced themselves in very strategic points (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Indeed, several returning BaKongo were given, or had succeeded in securing, key government positions, much to the dismay of the local populace. Laura alleges that a BaKongo returned from exile to assume the post of Minister of Education. Another, she says, was given responsibility for the Ministry of Internal Security. Today, the effects of this ascendancy to power of a handful of returning BaKongo -- some of whom allegedly spoke little or not Portuguese -- continues to sharply divide the community in exile in Toronto. Laura explains further,

Then, he [Neto] put all the civil servants as people from there [Zaire] that spoke French, that didn't have any connection with the Angolan reality. So, it created

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Africo-Cuban descent. However, no official label has been affixed to this group and no figures exist to indicate just how many Angolans fall into this latter category (United States Library of Congress February 1989).

enormous antagonism within the population. And then, they began to commercialise everything. If you want a scholarship, you pay me. They were controlling all the houses. To get a passport, to get a scholarship, you pay me. To travel outside of the country. Everything you had to negotiate with a Zairean. Angolans called them Zaireans. So, this created extreme animosity against this group because suddenly the Angolans felt that they were being colonised by the Zaireans. Angolans said, 'Who said that you were Angolan? You don't even speak Portuguese!'. Those were the statements (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Other participants express similar views, resenting having had their country taken over, yet again, by foreigners. They also feel as though they themselves had lived and abided by communist rule, respecting the use of ration cards for example, whereas the returning Angolans deliberately created a black market, ushering in both chaos and moral decline. The returning BaKongo, posted throughout the government and civil service, allegedly engendered this corruption, using their discretionary powers to favour their fellow 'returnees'. Laura recalls:

You had a [ration] card. Let's say, they would sell fridges and ovens twice a year. So you had to prepare your papers and make your justifications as to why you need that fridge. And then you would get the card and line up one day to get your fridge.... So, they [the Angolans from Zaire] came... Someone in the office that would give out the cards to begin with. They would put five members of their family in line with the cards, get the five fridges / ovens, and then come to black market and sell it for five or six times [the price]... What I think what people resent the most is the way that the Zaireans really appropriate[d] the lifestyle. You know,... for instance now in Angola, you have to pay for everything. You have to bribe (June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Laura, and other participants, argue that these conditions had never existed prior to the 'Zairean' takeover. This is explained by virtue of the fact that the hosting Angolan

population had 'not been prone to this type of behaviour' (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). Delfina, an Angolan bank teller in her mid-20s currently living in Portugal, agrees. "They [the returning Angolans] created a lot of habits that we didn't have: trading, counterfeiting, etc. And because of that the fabric of our society has really changed" (Delfina June 14<sup>th</sup> 1999).

Perhaps, above all else, Angolans resent what they feel to be the appropriation of the Angolan identity by non-Portuguese-speaking foreigners, for sale and abuse. As Laura says even passports were controlled, bought and sold by Zaireans. Sofia echoes this. With reference to those French-speakers who immigrate to Canada as Angolans, she states, "Even people who speak Lingala and don't speak Portuguese or any local [Angolan] language are here! You can just buy an [Angolan] identity!" (Sofia May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999). This sentiment is also felt in the Angolan community in Portugal, as attested to by Delfina, a resident of Lisbon. Speaking through an interpreter she voices her disdain. "We don't really get along with them [the Zaireans] because in many ways a lot of them usurped our identity and they project an image of us that doesn't reflect Angola, even in Europe they do that" (Delfina June 14<sup>th</sup> 1999). In other words, the French-speaking Angolans, having returned from exile in Zaire, are thought to control both the distribution of the most basic of domestic goods, but, more importantly, are viewed by Angolans as having appropriated, traded and tarnished their national identity.



Moreover, these same persons, felt to have set out to re-colonise Angola, are also accused of having run away from the struggles for independence and the hardships which ensued. Laura articulates this most clearly. “People were very upset and were saying ‘Who fought for this independence? We here, that stayed here, were the ones that created, fought, suffered and now you are coming and colonizing us again!’” (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). There is no doubt in all participants’ minds that this profound sentiment of betrayal is that which fuelled the January 1993 killings – referred to as ‘revenge killings’ by some participants.

João admits that the French-speaking Angolans quickly began to dominate the urban economy upon their return. Yet he protests that the latter, including himself, did not do so maliciously. Rather, he contends that the returning BaKongo had no other choice but to subvert the system for, on a day-to-day basis, discriminatory treatment impeded not only advancement, but survival. Other than those French-speaking Angolans who had been given government positions, few succeeded in attaining gainful employment without which a ration card could not be had. João argues that this discriminatory treatment, encouraged by the government, was a form of controlling the returning group – a group who had been, up until that point, strongly anti-MPLA and never really welcome in the first place.

**On était pas mal bien à comparer à ceux qui travaillaient parce que vous savez que c’était communiste et il fallait des cartes de ration. Donc, si vous ne travaillez**

pas, il est impossible d'acheter des biens des magasins. Là les choses coûtaient presque rien. Mais comme on avait des dollars, à force de faire le commerce, ceux qui achetaient des magasins vendaient à prix élevé dehors sur le marché noir... Nous n'avions pas de choix. Pourquoi pensez-vous qu'ici [au Canada] vous aviez l'habitude de mettre des fourrures? Parce qu'il fait froid. L'homme a une capacité de s'adapter à son environnement et c'est ce qui c'est passé chez nous... Mais si vous voulez contrôler quelque chose, vous allez empêcher que ceux qui peuvent s'intéresser par la chose que j'ai n'ai pas les outils ou la possibilité de s'en acquérir. À cette époque là, le gouvernement avait de l'argent. L'Angola était bien à l'époque... Nous n'étions pas le bienvenue (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>16</sup>

### 5.5 iii. Integration

“Those who trade, like any group of persons sharing a common system of social relations, have a common understanding of the significance of their interaction’ but lack a complete ‘fit’ ‘between the deeper cultural commitments and the more superficial set of common understandings”  
(Simmel cited in Fallers 1967:7).

Although Simmel may be overly deterministic, his comments are worthy of consideration. If anything, Angolan participants tend to agree on one point. Tensions between those who considered themselves ‘Real’ Angolans and those who were French-speaking are said to stem from the poor integration of the latter group into Angolan society -- a society which, up until the moment of return, had simply been imagined and/or remembered by those in exile. Many Angolans came to see integration as a key

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<sup>16</sup>“We were doing pretty well compared to those who worked because you know, it was communist and there were ration cards. So, if you weren't working, it was impossible to buy goods from the stores. There [in the stores] things were really cheap. But seeing as we had accumulated dollars from trading,, those who did buy from the stores sold the items at inflated prices on the black market. But we really didn't have any choice. Why do you think that people here [in Canada] have had the habit of putting on furs? Because it's cold. Man has a capacity to adapt to his environment and this is what happened to us... But if you want to control something, you're going to prevent those interested in something from obtaining it, prevent me from obtaining the tools or the possibility of acquiring these tools. At that time, the government had money. Angola was comfortable and well at that time... But we were never welcome” (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

factor, having reflected on their own personal experience of exile in Canada. Whereas some blame the Angolan government in power, others blame the French-speakers themselves for this perceived lack of integration. João holds both responsible. Like many Angolans, he draws on language as a key indicator of successful integration.

**Il n'existait pas d'infrastructure pour nous intégrer. Au contraire, ils ont intensifié les propagandes, que nous [ceux qui sont venus du Zaire] étions les ennemis, qu'il faut être vigilant... Regarde, je suis arrivé au Canada et automatiquement, on m'a montré le chemin de l'école pour apprendre l'anglais parce que l'intégration passe par la langue.... . Mais on nous blâme a nous – qu'on ne fait pas d'effort – moi, j'ai appris le portugais, pas comme ceux de là bas... Les autres, ils habitent dans un quartier constitué seulement de gens comme eux. Alors là, des quartiers comme ça, il y en a plusieurs. Eux ils n'ont pas la chance. Pourquoi? Parce que il n'y a pas de programme sociales [pour les intégrer] (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>17</sup>**

Eva supports this latter view. However, she attributes the lack of an integration policy to the war. “Without integration”, she argues, “you create ghettos and that just encourages conflict, especially in situations of hardship” (Eva June 14<sup>th</sup> 1999). Her mother, Laura, draws on other cultural differences such a dress and music to show how the newcomers' integration was non-existent and problematic. “They didn't make an effort to assimilate. The music was a strong factor, because Angolan music and Zairean music [are] very different, the way of dancing, all of these things. They [returning and host Angolans]

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<sup>17</sup>“There was no infrastructure to integrate us. On the contrary, they intensified their propaganda. We [those who returned form Zaire] were the enemy, and that one had to be vigilant... Look. I arrived in Canada and automatically, I was shown the path to school to learn English because integration occurs via language.. But instead, we are blamed for not making an effort. Myself, I learned Portuguese, not like those people back there... Those [French-speakers] live in ghettos made up entirely people like themselves. And ghettos like those, there are many. Those people don't have any opportunities. Why? Because there are no social programmes [to integrate them]” (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

didn't have a podium where they could find similarities" (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999). Although the return has been articulated by participants as a 'culture shock' for both the displaced Angolans and the host population, the latter are said, by non-French Angolans in Toronto, to have been particularly affected. After all, they are 'by nature' a tentative people.

There was a lot of culture shock. It [the return movement] was in huge numbers. It wasn't progressive and because they had a lot of *tentacles* in certain areas of society they changed the way of living in a lot of ways and Angolans don't like change all that much. They [the Angolans] are flexible but not when it comes to their own land... In communities outside of Angola, we are different cultures, different types of Africans, and its palpable wherever you go. And the Zairean Angolans are more Zairean than anything. They have difficulty seeing our side (Eva June 14<sup>th</sup> 1999, my emphasis).

#### **5.5 iv. Immigration & Image**

Immigration is a particularly relevant issue for Angolans in Toronto. Contesting views of Angolan-ness and belonging carried over from Angola into exile are often framed within the discourse of immigration. In fact, immigration's inference to citizenship, nationality and identity, easily lends itself to a debate over legitimacy and illegitimacy. Indeed, the French-speaking Angolans, are accused of not only having undermined a society's economy and moral standards, but of having appropriated the Angolan identity so as to migrate to the West as refugees.

Within this context of immigration, what has repeatedly been expressed as most irritating to Angolans is the fact that descendants of Angolans or simply Zairean, Congolese, and

Guinean nationals, are all immigrating as Angolan refugees directly from Zaire or from Congo without having ever set foot in Angola. As Sofia explains, Angolans can easily verify the physical ties of people who claim to be citizens of the country.

‘Oh you’re from so and so? Do you know this person or that?’ And it becomes clear that they have never even been there! There’s a lot of that. If Canadians only knew ... If one day Canada has to do revisions, [they will find] even people who speak Lingala, don’t speak Portuguese or any local language are here [posing as Angolans]. You can just buy an identity! But we know each other! (Sofia May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999)

Clearly, some of these claimants are persons who have not been directly persecuted in Angola nor have they borne direct witness to the war. As difficult as it is to know whether or not these latter claimants hold or have ever held Angolan citizenship, what is clear is that there is great contempt for all who take advantage of Angola’s destitute state for personal gain -- and rightly so. Moreover, what is equally clear, is that all claimants thought to be unjustified -- i.e.: those without any personal connection whatsoever to Angola -- are lumped in together with those who are French-speaking returnees or those who hold Angolan citizenship abroad, whether it be in the DRC or elsewhere. Anabela for example, lumps together all ‘fake Angolans’, both those who (may) have a legal claim and those that do not. For her, there is no distinction between the French-speakers of the Angolan Community of Ontario (ACO), its members here in Canada – whom she refers to as the ‘so-called Angolans’ – and a Guinean man she met who admitted to faking an Angolan refugee claim so as to get into Canada. For her, all non-Portuguese speakers

who claim to be Angolan are fakes and 'sneaky'. Still, "the worst are the people from Zaire"(Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999). Likewise, only one person mentioned the fact that when Neto extended his formal welcome to Angolans exiled in Zaire, many Zairean nationals poured over the border. Yet there is little, if any, distinction between those who may have a legitimate claim and those who do not. Ultimately, they are all perceived to be inauthentic or fake. This blurring of degrees of illegitimacy, particularly with regards to all things and persons connected with Zaire or the DRC, may hint at an underlying contempt for 'débrouillardise' or may simply be indicative of Luanda's long-standing hostile relationship with Kinshasa. This latter relationship, whose details extend beyond the boundaries of this paper, hints at the textured, flexible yet guarded notions and projections of Angolan-ness. Laura hints at the significance of Angola's relationship to Zaire as important to understanding the 'Real vs. Returning Angolan' divide. "The ones [BaKongo] that we're speaking about are the ones that created all these [problems] and even the other BaKongos [those who never fled Angola] will go after them." "So," Laura reasons, "it's not an Angolan – BaKongo thing but, it's an Angolan – Zairean thing" (June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

When asked why an alleged Zairean would assume an Angolan identity, the response was always considered to be obvious: "Because Zaireans are not getting refugee status" (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999). Angolans are thought to get refugee status comparatively easily and so have greater access to the West. In Anabela's opinion, Zaireans do not fit

the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee.

It's convenient, yes, because if they try to get in as from Zaire, they will not get into here. First of all, the country is not under war. Second of all, there has been a lot of disease and the latest one was ebola, if you remember... And to claim refugee status you need to prove persecution. But they definitely don't fall into any of these categories. In the meantime, they commit crimes and the Angolan name is tarnished. And that's what I'm against (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999).

However, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) figures don't lend much support to the argument that more Angolans than Zaireans are accepted as refugees. Although the number of landed immigrants from Angola was higher than from Zaire prior to 1991, the great majority of Angolan applicants tended to file as Independents (67% in 1991). More importantly, between 1994 and 1996 there were twenty-one times more Zaireans than Angolans recognised as refugees in Canada -- an average of 361 per year from the DRC and 17 from Angola (CIC cited in North-South Institute 1998:173). This figure is all the more striking when one considers that the DRC has only four and a half times more people than Angola.<sup>18</sup> It is also clear that the DRC is considered to be an area of armed conflict and humanitarian crisis by the international community.<sup>19</sup> Status-Convention refugee movements in, out and throughout the DRC have been significant throughout the

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<sup>18</sup>In 1998, it was estimated that the DRC had 50 million people whereas Angola had 11 million (CIA World Fact Book 1999).

<sup>19</sup>The DRC, considered to be crucial to Africa's regional stability, has been officially and unofficially engaged in civil war and cross-border conflict for most of the 1990s, particularly since the Great Lake crisis of 1994. In July 1999, the Lusaka peace agreement was intended to ensure peace in the area. However, this latest attempt at peace was thwarted when rebel areas were reported to have come under heavy air bombardment on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1999. It is estimated that more than 500 civilians may have been killed in the raid (Radio Netherlands cited by Oxfam's One World Online 1999).

1990s, particularly since 1994.<sup>20</sup> There is therefore no evidence to suggest that a Zairean would have any better chance of gaining entry into Canada posing as an Angolan refugee. Therefore, one can safely say that easy immigration to the West cannot explain why a Zairean or an alleged Zairean would assume an Angolan identity.

However, more than just appropriating the Angolan identity, the French-speaking returnees from Zaire are said to have tarnished the image of Angola. Delfina says that the French-speaking Angolans have adopted an Angolan identity only because Zaireans have a “bad reputation around the world” (Defina June 14<sup>th</sup> 1999). Many of the self-identified “Real” Angolans view all Zaireans -- again, lumping together those of Angolan descent and citizenship with Zairean citizens -- as having a predisposition towards criminal behaviour. Anabela is most vocal on this point believing that criminals posing as Angolans are both stealing the legitimate opportunities of young, promising, ‘Real’ Angolans and tarnishing the Angolan image.

I never liked them [the French-speaking Angolans] because they’re sneaky. They use the name of Angola to get in this country. One of them here... he was even arrested. And I thought, ‘he’s using the papers from Angola. He’s using the name of Angola.’ They don’t even speak Portuguese. So why should the real Angolans be suffering for their [behaviour]? You know, he was in prison... He assaulted someone. And he has a criminal record in Canada. Yet young men would come out of Angola with Angolan documentation, who speak the Portuguese language,

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<sup>20</sup>In July 1999 alone, 50,000 refugees fled fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with 600 refugees a day crossing into Tanzania. Two refugee sites in Tanzania now hold 100,000 Congolese. The Central African Republic and Gabon have also received thousands of Congolese refugees (Agence France-Presse August 7 1999).



and know everything about Angola, and someone who was in prison [persecuted in Angola] the whole time. And if it wasn't for the group, working together, acting here, acting there, he would have been deported back to Angola. It's not fair (Anabela June 11<sup>th</sup> 1999).

All in all, most of the self-identified Angolans appear to have a tendency to blur the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate claimants from the DRC. In other words, all Zaireans are conceived as fraudulent and 'sneaky'. Insofar as all are lumped in together, community tensions are believed to stem from a 'Zairean – Angolan thing', as Laura cites above. However, immigration trends and my conversations with French-speaking Angolans suggest that there is more to the latter's claims than is acknowledged by this nationalist explanation. After all, if there is no practical reason to fake Angolan-ness (i.e. it doesn't facilitate one's travel to the West) why bother to do so? After all, Zaireans are free to travel in and out of Angola. Why bother making a claim which one knows is rebuked by the host community? My conversations with French-speaking Angolans suggest that there is more to their claim to Angola and an Angolan identity than citizenship. Most articulated a personal identification and sense of ownership which had been nurtured by 'social memory' (Connerton 1994; Boyarin 1994) in exile in Zaire. There clearly was a sentiment of 'going home' -- a much anticipated return not unlike that expressed by most Angolans in exile in Canada.

*Je suis allé en Angola au mois d'avril. Pourquoi je ne suis pas allé au Zaire? Parce que c'est chez moi l'Angola. Et l'Angola c'est la guerre. Si j'étais zairois, pourquoi irai-je à l'Angola? Mais moi je ne porte pas tellement attention à ça*

[aux accusations des autres par rapport à cette question de l'immigration] parce que c'est un manque d'esprit. C'est un manque d'argument (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>21</sup>

## 5.6 Ethno-nationalism

There is yet another level at which the French-speaking Angolans are considered to be 'un-Angolan'. A minority is ethno-nationalist. This group is resented by the 'Real' Angolans for openly identifying themselves by their BaKongo ethnicity first, and by their nationality second, that is if their nationality is considered relevant at all. Of all the participants interviewed, only Pedro, a Canadian post-secondary graduate and ten year resident,<sup>22</sup> considered himself first and foremost to be BaKongo. Having lived in several different countries in his life, he articulates his nationality as being fluid. Although he recognises Angola to be the "land of his ancestors", his ethnicity is that which remains his constant point of self-reference.

Alors, il y a des gens qui ont vécu au Zaïre comme dans mon cas par exemple. J'ai fait toute mon histoire au Zaïre, plus qu'en Angola, donc j'arrive en Angola, la terre de mes ancêtres, mais je me considère avant tout, un BaKongo parce que c'est là – C'est ma source. Donc, moi, l'Angola ou le Zaïre, ce n'est pas mon affaire mais je considère que je suis un BaKongo... Quelqu'un qui m'appelle angolais ou non, pour moi, ce n'est pas un problème pour moi parce que j'ai toujours été errant... Zaïre, Angola, Europe, Canada et demain, je ne sais pas. Alors, partout où je suis, c'est ma terre. Partout où je m'installe, c'est ma terre à

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<sup>21</sup>I went to Angola in April. Why would I have not gone to Zaïre? Because Angola is my home. And Angola is war. If I were Zaïrean, why would I go to Angola? But you know, I don't waste my time on that [on accusations regarding faking Angolan identity so as to facilitate immigration to the West] because it reflects a lack of consideration. It's a lack of argument (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>22</sup>Although Pedro says that he has lived in Canada for ten years, he did not elaborate as to the precise nature of his immigration status, ie; whether or not he is a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant.

moi. Je respecte les lois. Ça ne me gêne pas. Ça ne me choque pas (Pedro June 3rd 1999).<sup>23</sup>

Angolans interviewed expressed how few actually supported Pedro's views in Canada. Many singled him out, chastising him for prioritising his ethnicity above his nationality. Paradoxically, some of these same people who accused him of lacking nationalistic zeal accuse him of being a 'Non-Real' Angolan.

Although few Angolans in Canada may adhere to Pedro's views, a BaKongo ethno-nationalist discourse is not a recent phenomenon. The FNLA (the National Front for the Liberation of Angola) was a predominantly BaKongo party in the 1970s. It was born of a movement for BaKongo self-determination. At its inception in 1954, it was called UPNA (the Union of Peoples of Northern Angola) and its primary mandate had been to advance the interests of the BaKongo. In fact, in 1957, it worked closely with the Zairean BaKongo to lobby the UN for the restoration of the Kongo Kingdom. UPNA, however, soon realised the futility of the project and gave it up. Instead, it began to advocate

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<sup>23</sup>“So there are people that have lived in Zaire, like in my case for example. My personal history has been lived in Zaire, more so than in Angola, and so I arrive in Angola, the land of my ancestors, but I consider myself, first and foremost, BaKongo because, that is my source / my beginning. So for me, Angola or Zaire, it's not really any of my concern but I do consider myself to be BaKongo. If someone calls me Angolan or not, that for me, is not a problem because I have always been on the move.... Zaire, Angola, Europe, Canada, and tomorrow, who knows? So everywhere I am, it's my land. Everywhere I settle, the land is my own. I respect the laws. It doesn't embarrass me. It doesn't anger me” (Pedro June 3rd 1999).

Angola's independence.<sup>24</sup> In the 1990s, several BaKongo living in exile have taken up UPNA's abandoned cause. Angolans in Canada and in the U.K. indicated that this movement was currently most organised in Germany, but that it had ongoing communications and smaller sister-associations the world over: in the United Kingdom, the U.S.A., Brazil, France, Belgium and even China, or so the U.K. BaKongo claim. Whereas a handful of individuals in Canada are said by participants to have taken up the cause for BaKongo self-determination in the early 1990s, there is little evidence to suggest that any such movement still exists in Canada -- at least in any organised form. Laura estimates that at least twelve people, perhaps even fifty BaKongo Angolans in Canada, adhere to such ethno-nationalist views. This is a number she considers relatively insignificant and insists that "they talk about it only" (i.e. that they are not an organised group or movement). In the U.K., however, all participants interviewed were BaKongo members of one such movement. Still in its formative stages, the leader -- a recent immigrant to England from Germany -- and his followers aspired to greater transnational solidarity -- including with BaKongo residing in Canada. However, at the time of research in 1998, they had little information about potential supporters in Canada.

The London-based 'Movement for BaKongo Self-Determination' specifically aspired to restore the Kingdom of Kongo to its pre-colonial territorial form. At its height of glory,

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<sup>24</sup>It became the FNLA in 1962. In the mid-70s however, it was more or less been absorbed by UNITA

the latter kingdom extended beyond Northern Angola to include parts of Gabon, Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This vision of self-determination was justified by their narrations of both a glorified, yet cheated, past and a profound lived experience of victimization. Having been one of Africa's strongest and most resilient kingdoms in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the BaKongo resisted colonialism long after its neighbours had conceded to it.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, in spite of slavery's destructive effects, the BaKongo flourished both in Africa, and in the Americas, particularly in Haiti, Brazil and the United States.<sup>26</sup> The BaKongo advocating self-determination also consider themselves to have brought about the "beginning of the true armed struggle for liberation of Angola from the claws of Portuguese colonialism" (Movement for BaKongo Self-Determination Press Release 1998). Yet their deserved glory has been undermined by persecution at the hands of both colonialists and the MPLA government -- persecution for both their political

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<sup>25</sup>They were however, quick to adopt Catholicism. It became the kingdom's official religion in 1491 when its King Nzinga a Nkuwu was baptized and renamed João I. The kingdom quickly opened up relations with Europe and the Vatican. "As a result of its early conversion [to Christianity], Kongo enjoyed friendly diplomatic relations with several European countries... Kongo kings corresponded with members of the French court, and in 1617, working through channels in Rome, tried to establish diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, the other Christian country of the African continent" (Thornton 1983:xiv). This paints a very untypical image of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Africa. It is also a history that is told and retold by the BaKongo as a means to reaffirm both ethnic pride and territorial claims.

<sup>26</sup>West Africa is still considered to have been the only source of African Americans. However, recent research has demonstrated that "as many as one-quarter of all African Americans ultimately derive from central African (and mostly Kongolesse roots)" (Thornton 1998:1). An interesting aside, Thornton goes on to attribute this lack of recognition to the BaKongo's 16<sup>th</sup> century adherence to Catholicism. He believes that most Americans are more 'comfortable with the idea of Muslim Africans in the slave trade period' than with Christian Africans. The BaKongo of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, he explains had almost too much in common with the Europeans. He describes them as having consisted of " 'a literate elite, dressing partially in European clothes, bearing Portuguese names, and professing Catholicism [which] seems somehow out of place in the popular image of precolonial Africa" (Op. Cit. 1998:2).

ideals and religious practices. Tölölyan (1996:19) recognises the importance of common grievances. With reference to the activities and ideals of leadership elites in diaspora, he says that such activities or ideals are maintained by a common experience or history of victimisation, particularly when “the borders of the ethnodiasporan enclave are maintained by the majority’s discriminatory behaviour.”

Pedro clearly identifies himself as a BaKongo. However, the extent to which he espouses BaKongo self-determination is less clear. Like many Angolans in Canada, he is aware of the movement’s existence in Germany. His active support for the latter, however, is articulated only in the vaguest of terms. He believes the members’ claims to be justified. He feels that his people are restless and fatigued from having had to live on the margins – caught between two nations. They are always being pushed from one side to the other of the border and back again, lacking a space or place for themselves.

**Je n’ai jamais été en contact avec eux... je ne les connais pas. Ils ont une philosophie que moi, je ne peux être contre. Si c’est une bonne chose tant mieux. Parce que tout le monde cherche le bonheur. Qu’est-ce ces gens là revendiquent? En revenant en Angola-- une vie au Zaire qu’ils veulent mais ne peuvent pas garder et ils sont rejeté en Angola -- cette histoire de partir -- toujours partir -- ensuite ils doivent toujours recommencer à zero -- toujours des ambiguïtés et des incertitudes (June 3rd 1999).<sup>27</sup>**

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<sup>27</sup>“I have never been in contact with them [in the UK]... I don’t know them. They have a philosophy that speaking for myself, I can’t be against. If it’s a good thing, great. Because everyone is looking for happiness. What are these people [in London] claiming? Having returned to Angola -- a life in Zaire that they wanted but can’t keep and they’re rejected in Angola... This story of leaving – always leaving -- then they have to start at zero... always ambiguities and uncertainty.” (June 3rd 1999).

With the exception of Pedro, all other BaKongo interviewed in Canada were far more apprehensive. The movement was something they feel they 'couldn't discourage' but, at the same time, they believed it to be completely unrealistic particularly given Africa's dependence on Europe and the Americas.

Enfin, je ne les blâme pas [les membres de ce mouvement]. Au contraire, je veux les encourager... Mais, soyons réaliste... il existe un mécanisme sur l'échelle internationale. Les leaders africanistes travaillent à 100% pour l'appui des Occidentaux. Donc qui va leur permettre d'aller restaurer... ce n'est pas facile (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).<sup>28</sup>

Only one of the non-BaKongo research participants believed attempts to restore the Kingdom of Kongo to be a good thing. Sofia, an Mbundu who converted to Tocoism as a child, describes herself as a "traditionalist" -- as holding Angolan culture and history in high esteem. Like many Angolans, she had been aware of a BaKongo movement based in Germany. Upon news of the U.K. group she says: "That would be great -- a going back to our roots" (February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1999). She is especially pleased when she discovers that the U.K. group identifies itself as strongly Tocoista.<sup>29</sup>

Yet by and large, most non-BaKongo Angolans interviewed regard the movement with

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<sup>28</sup>All in all, I can't blame them [the members of this movement]. On the contrary, I want to encourage them. But let's be realistic... there's a mechanism that operates at an international level. African leaders are working 100% for the support of the Westerners. And so who is going to allow a restoration... it's not easy" (João July 16<sup>th</sup> 1999).

<sup>29</sup>It is unknown whether or not all organisations advocating BaKongo self-determination strongly identify with Tocoism as does the UK-based group.

annoyance or simply as ridiculous. They don't believe it will amount to much and so don't feel threatened by it. What annoys many is how Angolan descendants have isolated themselves and broken off from the greater ideal of the Angolan nation. Laura expresses her frustration with a BaKongo ethno-nationalist movement.

It [the movement] existed here [in Canada] but about four years ago and I haven't heard about it since. Those people [the adherents to the movement], most of them left the country [Angola] and from the outside are launching [this campaign] because they can. And there are all these community things [politics], there's the outsider/ the in; the out crowd etc, and they felt that since they are not accepted... [they say] 'let's go back to the roots and reclaim what used to be the Kongo kingdom and claim it to us'. The Kongo Kingdom was in 15<sup>th</sup> century so what's the point? It's a very opportunistic way of we want some land which is ... and, regarding history, because if you make a survey of BaKongo people living in Angola today, they will not tell you that [they will not agree with the movement]. They do not even have any connection with this... I heard about them. It seems that they travel to Congress [in the U.S.A.]. Such a stupid story! I'm not for ethnicity. I tend to believe that we arrived at one point that we should have a broader image/ vision so these things really upset me. So if we be dividing the world, up until where will we divide? We can reconstruct the world if we go back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there would be nothing that would stand; Europe, North America, etc. (Laura June 9<sup>th</sup> 1999).

By and large, the self-identified 'Real' Angolans support Laura's views. They see the BaKongo claims as opportunistic and harmful to the unity of all Angolans. Moreover, what may be particularly frustrating for the non-adherents of this movement is the knowledge that any discussion of separatism and ethnic distinction threatens the post-colonial, stable Angolan nation, which has yet to emerge. In other words, non-adherents interviewed say that they are wanting to get beyond ethnic determinants of identity. Rather, what they aspire to is a civic nationalism, broadly defined as an "imagined



political community” (Anderson 1983) operating, at least in theory, independently of the state or ethnicity, and whose members share an interest in maintaining and promoting “places, practices, personages, memories, signs and symbols” (Hobsbawm 1990). This civic nationalism is a form of nationalism shaped and controlled by members of society. National political and cultural symbols are defined by society, and ultimately determine the nation’s course.

Ethnicity has long been a tool used by the warring factions to further their own interests at the expense of the Angolan population -- manipulated to divide the country politically and, ultimately, to justify war. All Mbundu are labelled MPLA supporters by UNITA. The OviMbundu and BaKongo have been accused by the government of being UNITA supporters. Angolans interviewed, however, accuse all parties and their leaders for playing ethnic groups one against the other in the interest of a handful of elites. Not one person clearly or strongly supported one party over another. Organised ideological nationalism or ethnic based nationalism are ultimately considered to be suspect. In a dominant, civic Angolan nationalist discourse, there is, therefore, no place or tolerance for an ethno-nationalist BaKongo sentiment, particularly one which was nurtured in the DRC.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

**Angolan identity is actively contested in Canada in spite of common experiences of exile**

and persecution, and, in some cases, religious faith. The self-ascribed 'Real' Angolans have adopted a nationalist discourse -- one which excludes the French-speakers by virtue of: their experiences of trade, travel and 'débrouillardise'; their alleged destruction of the Angolan ideal and image; their purchase and sale of the Angolan identity and citizenship; their general lack of integration; and in some cases, their support for BaKongo ethno-nationalism. In effect, both the 'Real' Angolans and the French-speakers have identified themselves not by their own characteristics but by their deliberate exclusion of one another (Barth 1969; Armstrong 1992). In so doing, they continue to renegotiate their own personal identities within a broader debate of home, nation and diaspora.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Conclusion**

In light of Angola's current desperate state – one which has received little academic and /or international attention – a study of the lives of its people is both timely and important. This thesis draws on thirteen interviews to explore the negotiation of Angolan diaspora identity in Toronto. The participants in this research are limited to a small number of largely urbanised and educated Angolans. I am not suggesting that their experiences represent the lives of their peers, either in the diaspora or in the home country. However, these individual experiences are, in and of themselves, worthy of discussion, particularly for their valuable insights into transnationalism and diaspora.

In spite of this group's small size – 412 Angolans migrated to Canada between 1991 and 1998 (Citizenship & Immigration Canada 1999) – and in spite of the fact that it does not fit the strict diaspora 'check-list' criteria set up by a number of social scientists (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991), I argue that Angolans are nevertheless a diaspora. Diasporas are an example of transnationalism, par excellence, largely due to the degree to which they link together societies – multiplying solidarities and networks across borders. Scheffer (1996) and Safran (1991) both contend that these links empower diasporas to influence both home

and host country nation-states. Although this may be the case for some groups, I maintain that this influence isn't a necessary precondition for diaspora status. In spite of a lack of either member solidarity or political or economic influence, diasporas are not defined by degrees of group solidarity or power, nor can they be typified by a single, universal model. Rather, diasporas are fluid by nature, exhibiting the interplay of multiple identities across multiple sites. Implicit in this never-ending process of negotiation is a commitment by Angolans to return to the homeland, be it physical or metaphysical (Malkki 1992; Tölölyan 1996). Whereas a physical return may be permanent, a metaphysical return can include philanthropic, discursive, symbolic and/ or representational forms of attachment -- attachments which ultimately unbind or deterritorialise states. These attachments also draw on a shared imagined past or social memory (Connerton 1991) to actively perpetuate and reinforce a 'national consciousness' (Malkki 1992; 1995).

However, because Angolans in Canada choose to not refer themselves as a diaspora, I maintain that they are a diaspora in spite of themselves (Markowitz 1993). This behaviour underscores a larger debate surrounding conceptualisations of both the Angolan nation and Angolan-ness. Specifically, the most contentious and important determinant of belonging and Angolan-ness in exile is intricately bound up with the recent Angolan BaKongo return movement from the Democratic Republic of Congo. This tension is most clearly seen in the politics

of Angolan community organisation in Canada, particularly with regards to issues of language. Increasingly, both the self-identified, Portuguese-speaking “Real” Angolans and the French-speaking Angolan returnees are reluctant to support or participate in any form of formal Angolan association, so as to avoid confrontation. Even issues which could potentially bind the French and Portuguese-speaking groups, such as the fear of deportation, the death of a diaspora member, the cost of escalating warfare in the home country, shared religious beliefs or experiences of persecution, and football or the love of social parties, rarely, if ever, succeed in bridging the perceived ‘Real’ / ‘Non-Real’ Angolan gap. While both groups share the uncertainties of exile, they fail to share a common Angolan identity in diaspora. The French-speaking returnees are caught between Zaire and Angola and are rejected by both. They have laid both emotional and territorial claims to Angola. By vying to assert its identity as Angolan, this group is contesting the very definition of the Angolan nation. Portuguese-speaking Angolans, on the other hand, accuse the French-speakers of being both opportunistic and divisive. Lacking a structured re-integration into Angolan society, these so-called opportunists have allegedly brought about a system of ‘*débrouillardise*’ – controlling and undermining both the Angolan market and the ‘Real’ Angolan identity. In so doing, they have purportedly cheated immigration systems and tarnished the Angolan name. Both groups, therefore, are actively vying both for recognised legitimacy as Angolans and for

the right to define the Angolan nation. While the Angolan diaspora may challenge territorially bounded notions of the nation-state, it does so with reference to, and through, the nation. In other words, like identity, the Angolan nation itself is imagined and contested in diaspora.

In the face of challenges posed by French-speaking Angolans from the DRC, the self-ascribed 'Real' Angolans deliberately articulate the Angolan nation as one which excludes returnees. Angola, as a nation and as a people, is strictly imagined to be Portuguese-speaking and culturally distinct from Zaire. It is imagined to be profoundly moral, with reference to the country's existence prior to the 'introduction' of the black market economy by the returnees, and comprised of an unassuming, sedentary or stable people. These characteristics are thought, primarily by the Portuguese-speakers, to differentiate the two groups. Moreover, the 'Real' Angolans draw on their imagined past and aspirations for post-war Angola to advocate a civic nationalism. Again, this sets them apart from a minority of the French-speaking returnees who support a BaKongo ethno-nationalism and identify themselves, first and foremost, as BaKongo. In a country where ethnicity has been used by all warring factions to advance political agendas, ethno-nationalist discourse is not only discouraged, but suspect.

Based on the information provided by research participants it can be surmised that

Angola's anticipated post-war returnee movements will challenge the identity of Angolans and the construction of their nation. What is clear is that competing visions of Angolan-ness, as shaped by various transnational experiences, will then need to be negotiated, much as they are in diaspora today.

## APPENDICES

"Table 1. Angolan refugee population in major asylum countries, 1998"

Zambia	147,200	800	30	2,000	5,100	-	4,800	149,800
DRC	87,700	33,000	-	31,500	15,000	10	410	137,000
Nigeria	1,900	-	-	660	-	-	-60	2,500
South Africa	2,300	-	200	-	-	-	0	2,500
Brazil (1)	1,300	-	300	-	-	-	-300	1,300
Ukraine	240	-	30	-	-	-	0	270
Botswana	210	-	-	-	-	-	-60	150
Ghana	110	-	30	-	-	-	0	120
Congo	100	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000	100
Swaziland	120	10	-	-	-	30	-10	90
Zimbabwe	50	-	30	30	-	-	0	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>241,230</b>	<b>33,900</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>24,190</b>	<b>21,700</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6,750</b>	<b>293,920</b>

(1) Including asylum-seekers  
 Voluntary repatriation based on figures provided by country of origin.

Source: UNHCR April 1999



"Table 2. Asylum applications lodged by Angolan nationals in Europe, 1990-1998"

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Austria	36	44	4	22	14	25	-	6	37	188
Belgium	291	341	273	671	349	179	111	93	224	2,532
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	11	1	21
Czech Rep.	-	69	-	16	23	30	6	2	-	146
Denmark	-	-	2	8	7	6	4	2	3	32
Finland	-	-	12	44	12	11	16	5	8	108
France	2,808	1,638	307	592	606	372	232	269	263	7,087
Germany(1)	2,817	1,875	1,081	1,054	594	648	764	653	288	9,774
Greece	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Hungary	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	6	8
Italy	15	36	6	42	31	39	24	19	5	217
Netherlands	258	159	119	541	1,373	741	422	373	608	4,594
Norway	4	2	-	2	6	1	-	2	3	20
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	2	-	8
Portugal	20	10	120	461	56	7	6	7	9	696
Spain	561	497	-	224	207	62	31	22	20	1,624
Sweden	95	56	-	16	-	5	15	1	1	189
Switzerland	1,134	796	96	482	1,059	493	468	251	392	5,171
United Kingdom(2)	1,685	5,790	245	320	605	555	365	195	150	9,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,721</b>	<b>11,082</b>	<b>1,668</b>	<b>5,282</b>	<b>5,927</b>	<b>3,100</b>	<b>2,778</b>	<b>1,111</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>41,104</b>

Notes  
A dash ("") indicates that the value is zero, rounded off to zero or not available.  
(1) Refers to "new" and "re-opened" applications for 1990-1997, and to "new" applications for 1998.  
(2) cases only.

Source: UNHCR April 1999.

During 1998, approximately 3,900 Angolans applied for asylum in 43 countries world-wide. Countries receiving 5 Angolan asylum applications or more are listed in Table 2 (Ibid.).

"Table 3. Convention recognition of Angolan asylum-seekers in Europe, 1990 - 1998"

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Austria	1	4	3	-	-	1	-	5	1	15
Belgium	30	7	19	31	52	25	47	46	36	293
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Rep.	-	21	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	31
Denmark	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Finland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
France	189	305	183	142	68	77	84	75	-	1,123
Germany	18	61	26	8	32	24	17	23	11	220
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hungary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	2	5	4	3	4	8	4	6	-	36
Netherlands	1	2	2	-	37	19	52	19	4	136
Norway	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	19	-	-	-	2	3	-	4	-	28
Spain	-	-	-	40	51	32	-	-	2	125
Sweden	-	8	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	9
Switzerland	-	1	1	-	2	3	3	7	4	21
United Kingdom(1)	5	5	10	10	5	-	10	10	5	60

Notes  
 A dash (" - ") indicates that the value is zero, rounded off to zero or not available.  
 (1) cases only.

Source: UNHCR April 1999

"Table 4. Humanitarian status granted to Angolan asylum-seekers in Europe, 1990-1998"  
(Source: UNHCR April 1999)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Denmark	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Finland	-	-	3	5	34	9	4	3	12	70
Germany	-	-	-	-	-	62	28	7	34	131
Netherlands	4	11	39	-	366	334	202	181	131	1,268
Norway	-	4	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	6
Portugal	-	-	-	-	27	2	-	-	-	29
Spain	-	-	-	-	-	9	1	-	-	10
Sweden	13	40	15	6	19	7	5	3	4	112
Switzerland	-	-	-	-	-	-	319	249	-	568
United Kingdom(1)	10	10	5	5	-	5	25	110	60	230
Total	27	61	52	17	421	745	558	453	231	2,284

Notes  
A dash (" - ") indicates that the value is zero, rounded off to zero or not available.  
(1) cases only.

"Table 5. Total recognition rate of Angolan asylum-seekers in Europe, 1990-1998(1)(%)"  
(Source: UNHCR April 1999)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Austria	2.8	9.1	75.0	-	-	4.0	-	83.3	2.7	8.0
Belgium	10.3	2.1	7.0	4.6	14.9	14.0	42.3	49.5	16.1	11.6
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Rep.	-	30.4	-	18.8	-	-	-	-	-	21.2
Denmark	-	-	-	-	-	-	50.0	50.0	33.3	12.5
Finland	-	-	25.0	11.4	283.3	81.8	25.0	60.0	130.0	64.8
France	6.7	18.6	39.6	24.0	11.2	20.7	36.2	27.9	-	15.8
Germany	0.6	3.3	2.4	0.8	5.4	13.3	5.9	4.6	15.6	3.6
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hungary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	13.3	13.9	66.7	7.1	12.9	20.5	16.7	31.6	-	16.6
Netherlands	1.9	8.2	34.5	-	29.4	47.6	60.2	53.6	22.2	30.6
Norway	-	200.0	-	50.0	-	100.0	-	-	-	30.0
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	95.0	-	-	-	51.8	71.4	-	37.1	-	8.2
Spain	-	-	-	17.9	24.6	66.1	3.2	-	10.0	8.3
Sweden	13.7	85.7	-	43.8	-	140.0	33.3	300.0	400.0	64.0
Switzerland	-	0.1	1.0	-	0.2	0.6	68.8	102.0	1.0	11.4
United Kingdom(2)	0.9	0.3	6.1	4.7	0.8	0.9	9.6	61.5	43.3	2.9
Total	9.1	21.1	37.1	24.1	141.1	199.1	179.1	283.1	161.1	161.1

Notes  
A dash (" - ") indicates that the value is zero, rounded off to zero or not available.  
(1) Total recognition rate: number of Convention and humanitarian recognitions divided by applications.  
(2) cases only.

"Table 6. Angolan asylum-seekers and refugee status determination, 1998"

South Africa	772	1,159	199	-	113	2	314	1,617	63.4%
Netherlands	-	608	4	131	176	231	522	-	24.9%
Switzerland	-	302	4	-	205	58	267	-	1.5%
Brazil	11	308	-	-	300	11	311	8	0.0%
Germany	-	288	11	34	206	19	270	120	7.9%
France	-	263	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Belgium	-	224	36	-	116	6	158	-	22.8%
UK	-	150	5	60	60	35	160	-	40.8%
Ireland	-	104	7	-	3	-	10	-	70.0%
Canada	-	88	31	-	25	-	61	57	50.8%
Austria	-	37	1	-	6	13	20	-	5.0%
Ukraine	-	36	32	-	4	-	36	-	88.9%
Russian Fed.	7	28	-	-	25	-	25	10	0.0%
Zimbabwe	1	27	5	-	-	7	12	16	41.7%
Zambia	6	25	9	-	4	-	13	18	69.2%
United States	15	23	12	-	-	4	16	16	75.0%
Spain	-	20	2	-	20	-	22	-	9.1%
Mozambique	18	11	-	-	7	9	16	13	0.0%
Portugal	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Finland	-	8	-	12	1	1	14	13	85.7%
Cuba	13	8	5	-	3	-	8	13	62.5%
Denmark	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	6	n/a
Italy	-	5	-	-	7	-	7	-	0.0%
Moldova	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	n/a
Total	843	3832	363	287	1,981	401	2,982	1,912	23.2%

(1) Refugee status and ERM admission status divided by total decisions.  
All figures are provisional, subject to change.

Source: UNHCR April 1999

**Table 7**  
**Immigrants born in Angola who immigrated to Canada and Ontario**

Destinat'n	Class	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Grand Total
ON										
	Family	14	20	8	13	3	6	7		71
	Indep	50	23	4	6	5	6	8	10	112
	Other Indep	34	15	1	3	4	6	7	8	78
	Skilled Workers	16	8	3	3	1		1	2	34
	Refugees & Des.	12	13	10	2	8	11	9	6	71
	Other classes					3		1	5	9
	Total ON	76	56	22	21	16	23	24	16	254
CDN		105	78	38	28	43	40	34	46	412

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
Prepared by: Research and Data Group, Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

**Table 8.**  
**Movement of Peoples: "Immigration to Canada from Developing Countries by**  
**Immigration Class and Gender" (Average of last three yrs available 1994-1996)**

<b>FAMILY</b>			<b>REFUGEE</b>			<b>BUSINESS</b>		
<b>Angola</b>								
<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	1	1	12	5	17	0	0	0
<b>Total Africa</b>								
2500	3190	5690	1951	1540	3491	373	330	703
<b>Total Develop'g Countries</b>								
34803	41957	76760	14264	11469	25733	2906	2632	5538
<b>Total World</b>								
47749	60296	108045	14837	12060	26897	11772	11282	23054

<b>INDEPEN.</b>			<b>AVERAGE TOTAL IMMIGRAT'N</b>			<b>TOTAL IMMIGRAT'N 1986</b>	<b>% CHANGE PER YR 1986 TO 1994-96</b>
<b>Angola</b>							
<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>		
0	0	1	13	6	19	42	-7.63
<b>Total Africa</b>							
2577	2043	4621	7402	7103	14505	5169	10.87
<b>Total Developing Countries</b>							
18304	18596	36900	70277	74654	144931	67775	7.9
<b>Total World</b>							
31147	30962	62109	105505	114600	220105	99938	8.22

The North-South Institute's Canadian Development Report 1998 (p.173-175)  
 Source: Canada, Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM 1(a)**  
**Experiences of Angolan Asylum-Seekers Residing in Canada**

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, YORK UNIVERSITY, CANADA  
Telephone number: (416) 736-5700  
Fax number: (416) 736-5768

My name is Joanne M. Lebert. The research that I am conducting for my Masters Thesis involves exploring the experiences of Angolan asylum-seekers currently residing in Canada. In particular, I am interested in the formation and role of leadership in exile.

The Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Anthropology, York University has approved the study. All information derived from the study will be kept strictly confidential. In particular, participant names will not be used in any parts of the thesis or in any publications relating to this topic of study. Upon completion of my project, I will make a summary of my research findings available to all participants.

**Participant Consent**

I have been informed about the nature and procedures of the study, and understand it in full. I know that my participation is entirely voluntary. I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time in which case all my contributions will be destroyed. I know that any concerns or comments regarding my participation in the study can be addressed, anonymously if I wish, to Ms. Lebert's supervisor, Professor Judith Nagata or to the Department's Graduate Director at (416) 736-5700 or correspondence mailed to:

Department of Anthropology  
York University  
4700 Keele St., North York, ON  
Canada M3J 1P3

I fully understand the above statement and I agree to serve as a participant in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM 2 (a)**  
**Experiences of Angolan Asylum-Seekers Residing in the United Kingdom & in  
Canada**

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, YORK UNIVERSITY, CANADA  
Telephone number: (416) 736-5700  
Fax number: (416) 736-5768

My name is Joanne M. Lebert. The research that I am conducting for my Masters Thesis involves an exploration of the experiences of Angolan asylum-seekers in the U.K. and in Canada. In particular, I am interested in the formation and role of leadership in exile.

The Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Anthropology, York University has approved the study. All information derived from the study will be kept strictly confidential. In particular, participant names will not be used in any parts of the thesis or in any publications relating to this topic of study. Upon completion of my project, I will make a summary of my research findings available to participants.

**Participant Consent**

I have been informed about the nature and procedures of the study, and understand it in full. I know that my participation is entirely voluntary. I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time in which case all my contributions will be destroyed. I know that any concerns or comments regarding my participation in the study can be addressed, anonymously if I wish, to Ms. Lebert's supervisor, Professor Judith Nagata or to the Department's Graduate Director at (416) 736-5700 or correspondence mailed to:

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Canada M3J 1P3

I fully understand the above statement and I agree to serve as a participant in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Formule de consentement 1(b)**  
**Une étude des expériences de vie telles que vécues par les angolais(es) exilés au**  
**Canada**

DÉPARTEMENT D'ANTHROPOLOGIE SOCIALE, UNIVERSITÉ YORK, CANADA  
N° de téléphone: (416) 736-5700  
N° de fax: (416) 736-5768

Mon nom est Joanne M. Lebert et je suis candidate à la maîtrise en anthropologie sociale à l'Université York à Toronto. Je m'intéresse surtout à l'Angola et aux expériences de vie de réfugiés en provenance de ce pays. Tout particulièrement, mon étude est centrée sur la formation et le rôle des leaders angolais et angolaises en exil au Canada.

Le Comité de recherches éthiques du Département d'anthropologie sociale de l'Université York a approuvé mon étude. Toutes informations dégagées seront traitées avec la plus stricte confidentialité. En particulier, les noms de participants ne seront guère dévoilés ni dans la thèse même, ni dans aucuns articles ou publications subséquents. Une fois achevé, les résultats de recherche seront distribués à tous ceux et celles qui y ont participé.

**Consentement du participant ou de la participante**

J'ai été informé de la nature et des procédures de l'étude, et j'y comprends entièrement. Je sais que ma participation est entièrement volontaire. De plus, comme participant(e) j'ai le droit de me retirer du projet à n'importe quel stage de son développement. Il est également entendu que toutes mes contributions à la recherche seront détruites si je décide de terminer ma participation. D'ailleurs, j'ai été avisé que je peux adresser tout commentaires ou questions, de façon anonyme si désiré, soit auprès de la professeure Judith Nagata ou de la Directrice de département au (416) 736-5700. Ou encore je peux m'adresser par écrit au :

Département d'anthropologie  
Université York  
4700 Keele St., North York, (Ontario)  
Canada M3J 1P3

Je comprend entièrement la déclaration ci-haut et j'accepte de participer à l'étude.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature du(de la) participant(e)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature du témoin

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Formule de consentement 2(b)**  
**Une étude des expériences de vie telles que vécues par les angolais(es) exilés  
au Canada et en Angleterre**

DÉPARTEMENT D'ANTHROPOLOGIE SOCIALE, UNIVERSITÉ YORK, CANADA  
N° de téléphone: (416) 736-5700  
N° de fax: (416) 736-5768

Mon nom est Joanne M. Lebert et je suis candidate à la maîtrise en anthropologie sociale à l'Université York à Toronto. Je m'intéresse surtout à l'Angola et aux expériences de vie de réfugiés en provenance de ce pays. Tout particulièrement, mon étude est centrée sur la formation et le rôle des leaders angolais et angolaises en exil au Canada et en Angleterre.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature du(de la) participant(e)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature du témoin

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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