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Publication Date
2017

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

The War Needed Women: Gender and Militarization in Angola, 1961-2002

by

Selina Shieunda Makana

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the

degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

African American Studies

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Women, Gender, and Sexuality

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Ula Yvette Taylor, Chair
Professor Tianna Paschel
Professor Catherine Cole
Professor Paola Bacchetta

Summer 2017

Abstract of the Dissertation

The War Needed Women: Gender and Militarization in Angola, 1961-2002.

By Selina Shieunda Makana

Doctor of Philosophy in African American Studies

Designated Emphasis in Women, Gender, and Sexuality

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This dissertation reconceptualizes war and conflict by exploring Angolan women's complex and contradictory entanglement with war and peace. Given the gendered ways that Angolan women were mobilized to enter national war projects, this dissertation examines the experiences and pivotal roles women played in the "People's War" (1961-1975) and the civil war and conflict following the proclamation of independence (1976-2002). How Angolan women participated in national liberation struggles as well as how they respond to violence, gets at the intersection of theories of memory and embodiment and disrupts the popular narrative that all women are inclined toward peacemaking. Taking a feminist theoretical approach and utilizing feminist ethnography as a pertinent tool for making visible the experiences and voices of African women in wartime, this dissertation argues that women are often rendered invisible in the big narrative of nationalism because of the highly masculinist nature of national politics. Nevertheless, their presence as historical agents and patriots is made possible through the symbolic trope of women as mothers of the nation. Paying attention to the centrality of the Angolan female body in the politics of the nation also reveals that despite women's participation in national freedom struggles, peace and security for them remained elusive, limited, and always precarious. Lastly, this dissertation interrogates gender-specific forms of wartime violence against women in order to demonstrate how the Angolan female body functioned as a screen onto which both Portuguese colonialists and Angolan men could project their patriarchal desires and anxieties around power and masculinity.

Dedication

For
Melissa Akhwale Akwata and Sophia Wandollah Kufwafwa

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List of Acronyms

AU: African Union

DF: Destacamento Feminino/ Female Detachment Unit

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

FNLA: Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola/ National Front for the Liberation of Angola

FAA: Forças Armadas Angolanas/Angolan Armed Forces

FALA: Forças Armadas de Libertação de Angola/ Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola

FAPLA: Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola/ Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola

FRELIMO: Frente para a Libertação de Moçambique/ National Front for the Liberation of Mozambique

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

JMPLA: Juventude do MPLA/ Youths of the MPLA

JURA: Juventude Unida Revolucionária de Angola/ United Revolutionary Youths of Angola

LIMA: Liga da Mulher Angolana/ League of Angolan Women

MPLA: Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola/ Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola

OAU: Organization of African Unity

OMA :Organização da Mulher Angolana/ Organization of Angolan Women

OPA: Organização dos Pioneiros Angolanos/ Organization of Angolan Pioneers

PIDE: Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado/ International Police for the Defense of the State

SADF: South African Defense Forces

UNITA: União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola/ National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNCHR: United Nations Commission for Human Rights

A Note on the Use of Names

The past and its legacy on the present is politically contentious and a sensitive subject in Angola today. Therefore, research for this dissertation was impacted by the government's well-known distrust and aversion towards foreign researchers. For this reason, the interviews I conducted (and a large number of informal conversations over my six months fieldwork in Angola and Lisbon) from August 2015 and January 2016 were confidential. With the exception of a few interviews with key public figures of the political class who spoke in their official or professional capacity, all of my interviews were conducted on the understanding of anonymity in order to allow my research partners to speak freely and without fear of reprisal. I have assigned pseudonyms to each interviewee and removed all other potentially identifiable information so as to protect their identity.

Maps

Map 1: Map of Angola and neighboring countries
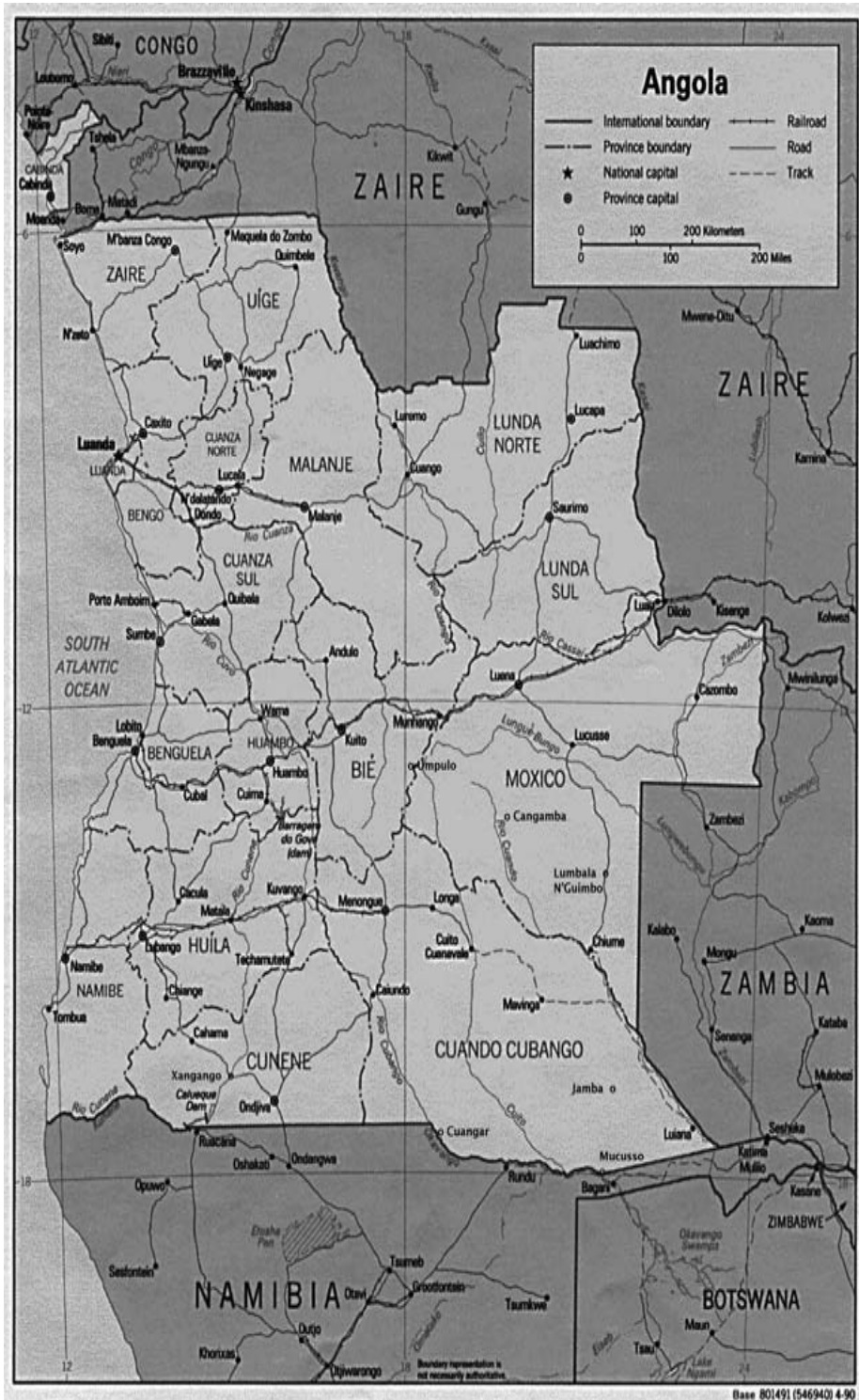
Map2: Map of the political military regions of the MPLA, 1962-1976

Source: CDIH, História do MPLA, Luanda, Centro de Documentação e Investigação Histórica do MPLA.

Middleton, Kenly Brown, Grace Gipson, John Mundell, Christina Bush, and Gloria Kendi Borona, who have listened to my ideas, encouraged me, and shared writing space with me.

I am forever grateful to my parents, Sophia and Fabiano, for teaching me to be courageous and to do things my way; my siblings for keeping me grounded; my partner, Nicholas Warner, for his love and unwavering support; and my dearest friend, Holly, for reminding me of the power that lies within me.

Agradecimentos

De fato, é verdade que os processos da pesquisa e da escrita podem ser isoladores. No entanto, quando essas pesquisas e a sua escrita são feministas, tratam-se de comunidade e uma coletânea de vozes. Ao longo deste trajeto, eu tenho levado a sério não apenas essas ideias, senão também as várias pessoas que me hão ensinado que a produção do conhecimento consta um esforço coletivo.

Pelo seu apoio generoso, sempre ficarei grata ao Departamento de Estudos Afro-americanos, ao Departamento de Estudos da Mulher e de Gênero e ao Centro de Estudos Africanos na Universidade da Califórnia em Berkeley. Ao meu comitê que me forneceu uma orientação inestimável que, sinceramente, me fez uma professora e estudiosa melhor. Devo uma enorme gratidão à minha orientadora principal, Ula Taylor, cujos conselhos, lições, feedback, compaixão e encorajamento se integram e se refletem na minha escrita; às outras orientadora no meu comitê, Tianna Paschel, Catherine Cole e Paola Bacchetta, quem sempre acreditaram em mim, acrescentaram à minha autoconfiança, impulsaram-me a levar mais longe a minha análise e ensinaram-me a escrever com bastante rigor. Ademais, agradeço a todos os professores com os quais tive o privilégio de estudar e consultar: Darieck Scott, Stephen Small, Leigh Raiford, Brandi Catanese, Chiyuma Elliot, Sam Mchombo, Jovan Scott Lewis e Kwame Nimako. E à pessoa mais amável, Lindsey Villarreal, por sempre me encorajar a cuidar-me e pelo conforto durante meus momentos financeiros mais difíceis sendo estudante internacional.

Estarei sempre em dívida a cada mulher em Angola e Portugal que me deu o benefício da dúvida e compartilhou comigo as suas experiências, e cujas histórias ajudaram a moldar esta tese. Em especial, quero dar agradecimentos às seguintes pessoas: a Margarida Teixeira que me abraçou como família e pela sua hospitalidade; aos professores Regina Santos, Nelson Pestana, Manuel Alves da Rocha, Ana Duarte, Eduardo Vundo Sassa, Precioso, Cláudio Tomás, Ana Leão e Luís Bernadino cujos discernimentos durante várias conversas me foram bastante valiosos. Os meus sinceros agradecimentos a Miraldinha Jamba, Luisa Gaspar, Paulo Lara, Wanda Lara, Florinda Ramos, Assunção Vaikeny, Ruth Adriano Mendes, Rodeth Makina Gil, Justino Pinto de Andrade, e Arlindo Barbeitos por gastarem o seu tempo conversando e compartilhando comigo as suas experiências de luta armada. Eu quero dar agradecimentos a Estudos Africanos Centro de Estudos Internacionais (CEI-IUL) pelo seu apoio durante a minha estadia em Lisbon.

Um agradecimento especial à estudiosa formidável Margarida Paredes, minha amiga, cujo trabalho animador abriu o caminho para que eu pudesse mergulhar nesse tema da guerra e das mulheres em Angola. Eu cito extensivamente o trabalho de Margarida nesta tese porque ela não somente me orientou desde longe, senão também foi tão bondosa em compartilhar comigo as suas experiências sendo uma ex-combatente tanto como etnógrafa de guerra. Conheci-a em

Introduction

Is there an antidote to the perennial seductiveness of war? And is this a question a woman is more likely to pose than a man? (Probably yes).[1]

"So, you want to know about more about Angolan women and the war?" my host in Luanda asks as she serves me a plate of *funje* and *galinha*.[2] Before I respond we hear loud sirens outside of her flat. I rush to the window to see what is going on. "Sit down, my dear," my host says looking at me reassuringly:

> Don't worry about the police. You will have to get used to the sirens and the military police everywhere on the streets. It is not that we are at war, but it always feels like we are at war. And, that is the history of Angola. We live in the present but we are so afraid that the past will repeat itself. We are afraid of the ghosts from the past. I think it is why we need the military police and the damn sirens every day…I think the sirens are a warning to us about the mistakes of our country's past.

I want to ask her who is the "we" she is talking about, but she quickly reads my mind. "That is all I have to say, the rest is for you to figure out. Now, eat quickly. Your g*alinha* is getting cold." It is unclear in her masked language if she used the "we" to mean the government, the civilians, or simply Angolan women as a collective; however, she is right about the Angolan past.

My host's concern for the nation echoes the sentiments expressed by the women I interviewed. They also reminded me of an article I had read just a few days prior to my arrival in Angola. On 28th August 2015, an online blog *Maka Angola* founded by the outspoken Angolan journalist and human rights defender, Rafael Marques de Morais published an article that asked, "Why does the president's birthday party have to mean the militarization of the streets? Does the militarization of the president's birthday bash mean the regime is fearful? Is it afraid of the women who dared to organize a protest on the president's birthday?"[3] On this particular day of President José Eduardo Dos Santos' 73rd birthday, heavily armed soldiers in camouflaged helmets, holding rocket-launchers, RPG-7s, and kalashnikovs AK-47S were seen in the streets of Luanda. As it turned out, a group of women had gathered outside the Independence Square to hold a public protest demanding justice and freedom for their loved ones. These women were mothers, wives, and sisters of the fifteen young political prisoners who were being held in detention for more than three months without a trial.[4] The point of this story is not only to shed light on the current political affairs of postcolonial Angola—in particular the paranoia on the part of the regime and the culture of fear that permeates the everyday lives of Angolans, but to also reveal the interplay between women and militarization.

Wars and conflicts are by no means the preserve of Africa, but this dissertation focuses primarily on the manifold ways that Angolan women are implicated in war and conflicts. I examine the experiences and pivotal roles women played in the "People's War" (1961-1975) and the civil war and conflict following the proclamation of independence (1976-2002). I explore women's complex and contradictory relationship with war and the process of militarization. The history of modern Angola is one that is marred with over two decades of protracted violence and bloody skirmishes. And, what stands out in the way this national history is told and written is the invisibility of women. Anthropologist Margarida Paredes clearly articulates this point in her path breaking work on women's role in the Angolan armed struggle in which she observes that the

highly masculinist space of the armed struggle contributed to the invisibility of women combatants.[5]

 This dissertation is not meant to be a comprehensive study of the social history of Angolan women nor is it about the study of military institutions in Angola. Instead, my aim is more specific: to pay attention to the centrality of the Angolan female body in the politics of the nation in order to show that despite women's participation in national freedom struggles, peace and security for them continues to be elusive, limited, and always precarious.

Why Gender and Why Women's Narratives?

Ideologies of nationhood across time and space have always been undeniably gendered,[6] and have led to representations of iconic forms of womanhood. Representations of women as symbolic bears of the nation and its culture, have rendered the materiality of women's lives and bodies all the more vulnerable to various forms of violence and violent exclusions. While scholarship on statecraft in Africa continues to gain momentum and address the pertinent issue of the gendering of the nation through popular notions including 'Mothers of the Revolution',[7] there is still an urgent need for scholarship on gendered and sexual politics of militarization.

 Throughout this dissertation I use gender as my tool of analysis because it was a crucial organizing principle in the militarization of the Angolan society during the armed struggle for national liberation and the subsequent civil war. Both the *Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola*/MPLA government (with its military apparatus) and the rebel movements relied on gender ideologies to mobilize women to support their military projects. Gender informed how war-related projects were organized, funded, marketed, consumed, and sustained.

 But, what is gender? While it is true that gender and sex are slippery terms and that gender is assumed to imply *all* genders, there is a tendency to perceive gender as being synonymous with women. This is especially true in Africa where the question of gender is posed as a woman problem, and therefore taken for granted because women's issues are rarely viewed as a priority in national agendas.[8] For some Western scholars, gender is closely linked to notions of the body thereby associating it to a type of bio-logic. This, however, does not imply that gender is a biological construction but rather it suggests that gender is a function of sexual difference.[9] Joan Scott, for example, notes that gender as a social construct does not implement "fixed or natural physical differences between women and men; rather gender is the knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences."[10]

 On the other hand, some African feminist scholars push against this idea of centering the body in the construction of gender. Scholars who work on gender in West Africa including Niara Sudarkasa and Obiama Nnaemeka suggest that a rigorous understanding of gender in Africa should delink it from biology or sex and take into account the cultural and social realities of the people.[11] In her insightful work on gender relations among the Yoruba, Oyèrónké Oyewùmí argues that gender binaries did not exist in pre-colonial times because social organization was based on seniority, which is a relational category, and not gendered bodies.[12] For Oyewùmí gender in most pre-colonial African societies did not follow a bio-logic, and it was the colonial patriarchal structures that altered the social and political realities of the continent.[13] Like other African feminists, especially Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, I critique Oyewùmí's work for it's generalization of how gender is conceptualized among the Yoruba onto the entire African continent, and for the assumption that the absence of bio-logic gender markers in a language implies that notions of gender hierarchies do not exist.[14] On her part, Ifi Amadiume similarly observes that among the Igbo, a person's sex did not determine their gender. She argues that

women could take on masculine gender roles in the same way that men could take on those roles that were deemed female.[15] However, while I concur with Amadiume's work on 'male daughters' and 'female husbands' and that this phenomenon was common in most African cultures, the gender performativity of women 'taking on' masculine roles did not imply that the 'female husbands' would escape their (biological) femaleness. In other words, gender fluidity still operated within the patriarchal structures that allowed women (and men) to occupy their masculine and feminine roles only up to a certain extent.

My working definition of gender in this dissertation moves beyond the bio-logic and ideas of sexual difference. I draw upon Stephan Miescher and Lisa Lindsay's work on *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, to view gender as a "cluster of norms, values, and behavioral patterns expressing explicitly and implicitly expectations of how men and women should act and represent themselves to others."[16] I find this definition to be a useful starting point in attempting to examine how gender as practice, discourse, and identity motivated women in wartime Angola to take on combat roles; and how their presence in the highly masculinist and militarized space of war and conflict transformed their gendered identities. Additionally, I rely on Judith Butler's concept of *gender performativity* to analyze how Angolan women, particularly those in military and refugee camps performed gender in creative and strategic ways to illuminate their agency, and also as a way to survive during the war. Gender as performativity opens up creative ways of examining how the bio-politics of body, gender, and sexuality are interwoven with ideologies of nationalism, war, and militarization to produce the "militant/revolutionary woman" who is capable of an act—of being an agent. The question of agency remains critical in feminist scholarship and activism as well as the theories of social development and transformation.[17] Agency, thus, constitutes a crucial part of my analysis throughout this study, especially in terms of looking at Angola women's embodiment of militarism.

How, then, do we understand women's face-to-face involvement with war and militarization? This question has been a concern for different scholars who in recent years have used gender as a crucial lens for theorizing war. In particular, works by Jean Elshtain, Cynthia Enloe, Carol Cohn, and Cynthia Cockburn, continue to be fundamental in this area of gender and militarization.[18] These scholars suggest that gender as a meta-concept opens up interesting questions regarding how the relation between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, shapes militarization.[19] Experiences of women in wartime are not only extremely diverse, but also contradictory depending on different societal expectations. For example, women both oppose wars and perpetrate wars. Many are abused and violated when wars break, disempowered by being abducted from their homes or forced to flee to refugee camps, and they are also widowed. Yet, women also support military institutions and armed opposition groups that commit these acts. Some women support militarization by staying home, diligently striving to sustain their families and communities while their husbands, sons, and brothers go to the battlefront. Others feel empowered by taking on new roles in wartime. And, when guns finally fall silent, women work to rebuild their communities. Feminist scholarship on militarization draws our attention to all these cases, which reflect the nuanced and contradictory ways that gender intersects with militarization.

Scholarship on militarization in Africa has been growing since the 1990s first with the pioneering work of South African scholar, Jacklyn Cock and recently with research by Amina Mama, Tanya Lyons, Cheryl Hendricks, and Alicia Decker.[20] These studies have shown that there exists a dialectical relationship between gender and war. In her extensive oeuvre on women's roles in the South African Defense Forces, Cock contends that militarization "uses and

maintains the ideological constructions of gender."[21] African feminist scholar, Amina Mama reaffirms this idea of the gendered nature of militarization by observing that war and militarism should be conceptualized as "an extreme variant of patriarchy, a gendered regime characterized by discourses and practices that subordinate and oppress women, as well as non-dominant men, reinforcing hierarchies of class, gender, and ethnicity."[22] Mama's analysis uses case studies of West African states to suggest that militarization as a gendered process relies on the unequal power relations between men and women and the constructions of militarized notions of masculinities and femininities to support various war efforts. Cynthia Cockburn speaks to this argument by stating that, "the power imbalance of gender relations in most (if not all) societies generates cultures of masculinity prone to violence."[23] Ideas of militarized masculinity, then, put emphasis on attributes such as discipline, aggression, courage, and strength whereby the need to protect, control, and defend are valorized as "masculine" ideals. These gendered constructions of men as warmongers and protectors of women are not just confined to the army barracks, they are also reproduced on the homefront because patriarchy informs militarism and militarism reinforces patriarchy.

In many ways, my dissertation is an expansion of Mama's concern. Using Angolan women's narratives of war and their experiences in wartime, I bring to light the ways that the militarization of women's lives is complex and disorderly. Angolan women whose narratives form the basis of this study found their involvement in war both a problematic and a liberating opportunity. As I will demonstrate in the empirical chapters, while the militarized space of the armed struggle reproduced stereotypical gender relations, the participation of women ex-combatants in these wars was thought to be in some sense liberatory. Despite the constraining patriarchal relations within various nationalist movements, the armed struggle offered women spaces to enact their agency as political subjects. In fact, some women saw military service as an avenue of socio-economic upward mobility.

Focusing on gender as the organizing factor of war pushes us to not only explore the nuanced experiences of women in militarized societies, but to also examine how nationalist projects and armed insurgent organizations utilize gender—in particular ideas of masculinities and femininities —to consolidate power and perpetuate violence. In the African context, a quick glance over the status of nations exposes the many ways in which women supported and continue to support different war efforts. From Black South African women in the *Umkhonto we Sizwe*/MK, to Zimbabwean women in the second Chimurenga War, to women in Kenya who were part of the Mau Mau movement, and to Mozambican women in FRELIMO, women across the continent internalized and utilized these gendered notions to contribute to the liberation struggles.[24] Nevertheless, women's presence in anti-colonial movements did not guarantee that they would be free from patriarchal ideologies embedded in many, if not all, national liberation movements across the continent. In fact, it can be argued that many liberation movements used women to support militarism and rally behind other national agenda only as far as these women did not threaten the patriarchal social order.

It can therefore be argued that in many postcolonial states in Africa, militarized organizations do not only exclude women or downplay their roles, but they also use women's bodies as sites for biopolitics of war. By this I mean the ways in which women's bodies and lives are targets and focal points of politics and war. Here again, we see several examples across the continent where various state organs and their military apparatuses use rape and other forms of violence to control the masses and humiliate women. For instance, historian Alicia Decker

informs us that during Idi Amin's regime in Uganda his soldiers terrorized women to bolster their own masculinity.[25]

Yet, women are not only victims of war and militarism. Women in conflict zones employ a myriad of strategies to resist and contest their militarization. I will demonstrate in the subsequent chapters, how Angolan women were able to utilize different strategies of survival even in cases of extreme disempowerment and lack of choice. Throughout this dissertation we see how women during the armed struggle and the civil war utilized gendered discourses and performances to negotiate and mediate their wartime identities. What testimonies of women's participation in the Angolan freedom struggles also reveals is that while it may be argued, and rightfully so, that women followed the ideologies of their male counterparts in the different nationalist movements, many of them (through their respective women's wings) produced a specific type of nationalist discourse—one that was uniquely feminine in nature. Like their contemporaries in other liberation struggles across the continent, Angolan women's conceptualization of the nation and their role in it was one that was both complementary and oppositional to the male leadership of the movements. Depending on one's political allegiance or ethno-spatial position, some women resisted, others collaborated, and many of them simply wanted to survive and to keep their families alive, even if it meant, "sleeping with the enemy."

In looking at women's participation in the wars of independence in Angola, my central argument is that the push for women to support the struggle as "patriotic mothers" and the militarized body of women combatants cannot be read outside the masculinist nature of national politics, even when this option of participating in freedom struggles as combatants is offered as a commitment by nationalist movements to guarantee the emancipation of women. In other words, despite the nationalist movements', the MPLA in particular, strong rhetoric of "women's emancipation" in post-colonial Angola, women remain in the shadows of politics and decision-making. Since 2008 when the Angolan government introduced new quotas which ensured that almost a third of candidates in Angola's parliamentary elections were women, some Angolan scholars and activists have remained skeptical. For instance, Angolan sociologist and founder of *Rede Mulher*/ Gender Network, Henda Lucia Ducados Pinto de Andrade contends that although women's involvement in the liberation struggle played a decisive role for women's emancipation during the post-independence period, today they have been relegated to the status of outcasts and victims as if their citizenship does not count.[26] Beneath this skepticism is the concern that the 30 percent rule which brought more women into national politics have them operating in the shadows of Angolan political power.[27]

In Angola, like elsewhere in Africa, the argument that raising the number of women in parliament poses the biggest challenge of matching quantity with quality is an on-going one. African feminists, for instance, have argued that while nationalist movements opened the doors for women to participate in the freedom struggles, the patriarchal and hierarchical nature of the movements did not provide enough leg room for many women-led organizations to shape women's experiences differently.[28] Furthermore, other scholars including Sheila Meintjes, Aili Mari Tripp, and Sylvia Tamale, for example, posit that while women were a formidable force in the anti-colonial struggles and have been used by political parties to win votes, once the parties come to power their commitment to the question of women's liberation leaves a lot to be desired.[29] As one prominent woman parliamentarian from the opposition party affirmed during my interview: "the few of us who got positions in the parliament to represent our constituents are at the mercy of our male counterparts. It is as though we are just there to be seen and not be heard. I think we should do more than just wear the beautiful colors of our political parties and

sing at campaign rallies. It is fight that we have to keep fighting. Even with women holding almost 40 % of the seats, it is still a man's world. You understand?"[30]

Some women parliamentarians I interviewed pointed out that many of their colleagues are rarely taken seriously and that they do not receive the credit they deserve. Such sentiments are therefore not surprising given that many Angolan women I conversed with both in Luanda and Benguela expressed disillusionment with their parliamentary representatives, who they felt did little to transform the daily lives of the citizens. My point here is that one of the reasons for women's powerlessness in electoral politics, might be that female parliamentarians find it harder to influence their party towards more gender friendly policies. And, since many of them depend on the party leadership for their position, the political parties may restrict women's ability to raise issues that are not (yet) part of the party policy.

The experiences of Angolan women in military contexts are similar to what scholars such as Tanya Lyons, Jacklyn Cock and Stephanie Urdang, for example, have found in other countries in Africa.[31] But, while experiences of Angolan women in wartime and their narratives of survival in the post-war moment can offer insights into how women on the continent continue to negotiate and redefine their womanhood, there is still a long way to go in terms of women's political representation. In the grand scheme of things, one can remain hopeful, although Anne McClintock reminds us that no nation has allowed a large proportion of its women equal access to the rights and resources of the nation despite the fact that women's struggle for liberation was seen as part of the overall struggles against colonialism and capitalism.[32]

Ethnographic Responsibility and The Question of Representation: A Transnational Feminist Practice

I was motivated to write this dissertation for two reasons: a) My desire to restore women in Africa to the history of nationalism and to show that Angolan women were also makers of history, b) My own discontent with the stereotypical representations of African women in narratives of war. Like other transnational feminist scholars such as Chandra Mohanty who advocate for the importance of not positioning all "Third World" women into a one cohesive and homogeneous category, I challenge the essentializing and preconceived notion that women on the continent, particularly women in conflict zones, are all passive and oppressed victims of war. I aim to push against the image of passive African women who are hapless victims of war and conflicts as well as to balance the male dominated war history.

Feminist thinkers including Gayatri Spivak, Aiwha Ong, Oyeronke Oyewumi, Amina Mama, Paola Bacchetta, Chela Sandoval, among many more, have argued against hegemonic modes of thinking that gloss over and take for granted structures of inequalities and women's differences within a nation-state vis-à-vis the global state.[33] These scholars, in their critiques, underscore how in the process of representing the oppressed, certain hegemonic discourses result in the silencing of the other.[34] In her incisive analysis of Eurocentricism and its telling of the history of the 'Third World', Chandra Mohanty posits that, "it is time to move beyond the Marx who found it possible to say: they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented."[35]Thus, the issue of representation has always been a concern for ethnographers, in particular feminist social scientists,[36] whose investment with polyvocality, reflexivity, and relationship between the researcher and her participants continues to gain traction. In this vein, some of the most difficult questions in feminist epistemology include: how do we know what we come to know? How do we document and represent this knowledge? Why does it matter?

Since the objective of this project is to tease out how women experience wars and the

roles they play, their lives can neither be contained by a single, linear story nor can the nuances and contradictions be substantiated with a single disciplinary approach or theoretical perspective. I rely on interweaving various theories of women, gender, political economy of war, post-coloniality and transnationality. As an African woman researching on women in Angola, I am personally invested in refusing the univocality, scholarly indifference, and totalizing frameworks that have characterized the ways in which women on the continent have been studied for decades.

Reductive representative practices can most certainly distort the multiple realities of women. Given the violent forces of globalization and how they impact women from the global South in very particular ways, it is important now more than ever for feminist researchers to pay close attention to the specific local conditions of women and craft ethnographic practices that go beyond the conventional insider/outsider dichotomy. In this regard, some scholars, such as Wendy Harcourt and Arturo Escobar, advocate for a theory of "women and the politics of place" and posit that "women's lived experience in a place" in all their diverse embodiments is essential in devising a practical feminist politics.[37] My representation of Angolan women takes into account these feminist critiques of representation.

I employ a feminist interdisciplinary methodology that utilizes various lenses involving discursive and qualitative analysis of the issues. I utilize feminist scholarship and perspectives on women, gender, political economy, postcolonial and transnational feminist critiques, African history, and research on Angola by sociologists and anthropologists, among other sources. My object of analysis privileges the category women as historical beings. What makes this project a truly feminist project is that I consider Angolan women's lived experiences and their own terms and articulations of these experiences to be valid primary sources. I focus on the category woman not because I am unaware of the analytics of the social constructions of gender, but because the lived experiences of women in local places have political and analytical significance in understanding the workings of the global within the local.

The politics of representation in feminist research have informed the way I framed, asked, and responded to questions as well as the kind of information I had access to during my fieldwork. As I will elucidate in my first chapter, this meant the multiple identities that I inhabit required constantly negotiating my insider status as an African, and my outsider status as a Kenyan researcher studying at a prestigious institution in the United States throughout my time in the field. On many occasions, I straddled between these two, as my being an African woman meant that the women I interviewed treated me as 'one of their own', so to speak. On the other hand, it was obvious that my identity as a young researcher from a foreign elite institution marked me as an outsider. Since I could not disaggregate these overlapping identities, I was able to gain access to interviews—even in cases where it would have been impossible to do so— to create friendships, and connect with Angolans from diverse backgrounds.

My dissertation, thus, pays attention to a transnational feminist methodology that calls for a shared listening and hearability, which as some U.S women of color feminists posit helps us "to know each other better and teach each other our ways, our views, if we're to remove the scales ("seeing radical differences where they don't exist and not seeing them when they are critical" – Quintanales) and get the work done."[38] Documenting women's voices through this process of shared listening, therefore, can be a useful feminist practice that enables ethnographic encounters in which the researcher relates to others without perpetuating what Spivak has referred to as epistemic violence.[39]

Women's Oral Histories as Primary Sources

One of the important reasons for doing historical research on women is that it requires going beyond traditional archival sources, in order to gain insights into their lives. Using oral history as a vehicle for women to speak for themselves and to document their place in history makes me aware of certain facts. It asks me to remain cognizant of the heart wrenching request for women to remember and retell their experiences of war which is messy, confusing, and disorienting. Indeed, no story of war can be told in a linear and coherent way, which is why historians critique the use of oral history as a reliable archive since oral testimony can never provide an unmediated account of the past.

Sources about women across many countries on the continent are often difficult to find, and this is even more the case for the history about Angolan women during the civil war where many of the archives do not simply exist. This means that finding reliable data on this subject is virtually impossible. And since Angolan women as historical actors in the wars remain absent in most popular and scholarly accounts—despite the abundance of literature on the Angolan war—I rely on the memories of Angolan women from all walks of life. The limited data on Angolan women in wartime pushed me to trawl through different scantily available sources concerning every aspect of daily life in order to find relevant references.

This dissertation is primarily based on ethnographic fieldwork, encompassing twenty-five oral interviews (both formal and informal) and participant observation carried out in Angola and Portugal between August 2015 and January 2016. Some of the interviews were highly confidential, as some feared the negative consequences of being identified in any way. My research also benefitted greatly from various archival documents found in the national archives of Torre do Tomb and the national library in Lisbon and other sources including United Nations reports, Angolan government reports, MPLA documents, NGO reports (mostly the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International), newspaper publications, propaganda leaflets used by the three movements, and a few memoirs by some Angolan ex-combatants. I have also made use of existing secondary sources that include literary and cultural productions, especially novels and films about the war. It is worth noting, however, that research for this dissertation suffered from the lack of credible statistical information on women combatants during the war as well as the data on the on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). For this reason, some sources used may contain an obligatory disclaimer as to the (at best) approximate knowledge about crucial dimensions of the war and the military: the exact number of women who were involved in direct combat, as an example, is a matter of speculation.

The data for this project would have been impossible to access if my interviewees were not willing to dig deeper into their memories and share with me their stories and experiences of the war. These memories enable me to unpack the intricacies of women's relationship to war and militarization. In this regard, memory works in different ways in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

I will reiterate that my research site is not singular but trans-local, multilingual, and multi-sited. As such, I take a cue from sociologist, Tianna Paschel, who refers to this type of multi-sited ethnographic work as "political ethnography."[40] Since I chose not to confine myself in a specific city, the multisited nature of my ethnographic experience enabled me to see how gender was being politicized and institutionalized within Angola. I traverse through different geographic spaces in the process of research and writing. I conducted all the interviews in a qualitative and semi-structured style in Portuguese, although some of the interviewees also spoke

some English. Each interview session lasted between one and half hours to three hours. In addition, I interviewed five women in Portugal and two over the phone in the process of this project. The women I interviewed in Luanda and Benguela include six current members of parliament who also served as guerrillas in both the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*/UNITA and the MPLA, academics from two universities in Angola, human rights activists in Benguela, a member of the Angolan diplomatic corps in Lisbon, social workers in Benguela, two former executive committee members of the Organization of Angolan Women/OMA, housewives, domestic workers, and two current officers of the Angolan Armed Forces, who spoke to me in their capacity as doctors at the military hospital in Luanda.

It is worthwhile to note that given the vastness of the Angola's geographical terrain, the ethnographic interviews I conducted in the provinces of Luanda and Benguela do not claim to represent the war politics of the entire nation. There exist stark differences in how various regions of the country experienced the war and conflict that cannot be captured in a single study. However, I chose Luanda and Benguela provinces for the following reasons: a) their significance during the armed struggle for independence partly due to centrality of the Benguela railway; b) as two provinces with major urban centers they received many refugees from rural areas during the twenty seven year long civil war; c) the influx of Angolans from other parts of the country made it easy for me to gain access to interviewees with varied recollections of the war due to their diverse ethnic, socio-economic, and political backgrounds.

On Memory and Embodiment

Embodiment and memory, which form part of my analysis throughout this project, intersect to allow us to explore women's participation in wartime violence and their response to it. Michael Rothberg's assertion that memory "captures simultaneously the individual, embodied, and lived side and the collective, social, and constructed side of our relations to the past"[41] hints at this interweaving of memory and embodiment. In this study I argue that Angolan women's bodies are the vessels of minds that hold memories in both the individual and collective sense. Also taking a cue from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus,[42] I suggest that narratives of women's wartime experiences helps us to understand how the history of Angola is not only inscribed in the body, but also how the female body is inscribed in this history.

My understanding of embodiment also draws from Elizabeth Grosz's work on the body in which she contends that "the body, or rather, bodies, cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, pre-cultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social construction of nature itself."[43] Analyzing the body through this framework allows me to examine bodies of Angolan women in wartime as both passive—affected and often controlled by outside forces and active—capable of (re) defining the individual's future.

Scholars Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith ask in their work on gender and cultural memory: "How does the role of the female witness or agent of transmission differ from that of her male counterpart?"[44] This question is what directs my analysis of Angolan women's wartime experiences. Angola has remembered and forgotten its history (both colonial and postcolonial present) in particular and gendered ways, and this collective memory and amnesia structures the ways in which Angolans tell the story of the war of independence and the civil war. The notion of personal and collective memory is central to this dissertation. I draw upon interdisciplinary approaches to memory as socially and culturally constructed. For example, Meike Bal's analysis that "memory can be understood as a cultural phenomenon as well as an individual or social

one"[45] is useful in my understanding of Angolan women's testimonies and their memories of war. I am particularly inspired by Michael Rothberg's notion of "multidirectional memory" in helping me think through the ways in which memories of colonial and post-colonial violence in Angola continue to shape the ways that Angolans remember the violent past of the country, and the efforts taken by both the MPLA and UNITA to ensure collective (and deliberate) amnesia around certain aspects of the Angolan history.[46]

Paying attention to women's wartime memories reveals the tension between personal memory and official history, and the role that national identity or the desire to forge a more peaceful and economically powerful Angola contributes to the remembering and forgetting the country's violent past. Or, as one high ranking officer at the Angolan embassy in Portugal stated, "if we want to move forward and be one of the most developed nation in Africa, sometimes our people need to forget in order to not repeat the mistakes of the past. If we focus on the progress we are making now, we must stay in the present and forget the war."[47]

The structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is bookended by two periods: 1961-1975, an era that was characterized by intense anti-colonial mobilization against Portuguese colonialism where both men and women joined various armed struggle movements to fight for independence; and 1976-2002 in which Angolans turned against each other as the government-led forces and UNITA rebel forces engaged in one of the longest bloody civil wars in Africa. While my analysis also considers moments before and after the armed struggle and the post-civil war era, the particular events that occurred in these two periods of Angolan war history bring to light the complex politics of gender, nationalism, and memory.

In Chapter One, "Doing Feminist Ethnography of War in Africa: Dilemmas and Insights", I present the theoretical and methodological framework adopted as well as the challenges faced during fieldwork. I draw upon my personal experiences in the field to highlight the utility of reflexivity in carrying out feminist research. I underscore how my race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and nationality affected the research process and my relationship with the women I encounter and interview. At the core of this chapter is the issue of representation. In other words, how do I represent the lives of the women I research given the multiple identities I inhabit as a transnational scholar? This chapter recognizes the concern about power relations between the researcher and the participants. Yet, rather than analyze my relationship with Angolan women in terms of the binaries of power relations, I consider this energy as an example of the ebb and flow of feminist research which allows the researcher to negotiate the relationship she cultivates during fieldwork in a respectful manner.

Chapter Two, "A Luta Precisou de Mães: The Politics of the Womb in the Angolan People's War, 1961-1975" interrogates the compelling trope of patriotic motherhood and the type of work that the maternal body does in studies of not just the Angolan War of Independence, but most freedom struggles transnationally. Representations of the female body as the maternal body and ultimately as a patriotic mother produces narratives fraught with complexities and contradictions. In the "Politics of the Womb", I am interested in the multiple models available for an Angolan woman—including her role as a revolutionary, a sustainer of the armed struggle through her nurturing abilities, and a grieving mother of the nation—at this particular moment in Angolan history. Through this trope of woman as mother of the nation, I recuperate the African woman from the way she has been traditional read as a victim of war,

proposing instead that the politics of the womb in national freedom struggles provide multivalent avenues of female agency and action.

If in the second chapter I demonstrate the myriad ways in which the Angolan female body was made visible in the body politic of the nation through the notion of patriotic motherhood, in Chapter Three, which is entitled "Soldiering the Nation: Women in Military Institutions," explores why some women took up arms and joined their male counterparts as soldiers. This chapter casts the spotlight on women as combatants and therefore inclined to violence, just like men, to disrupt conventional narratives that considers women as exclusively peace makers and not capable of perpetuating violence. I use the concept of militarized femininity to demonstrate how the image of woman as soldier highlights the tension between popular ideas of femininity and women's agency in violence.

In Chapter Four, "What the Body Remembers: Traumatic Narratives of War and the Wounded Female Body as Witness," I turn my analysis to the gender-specific psychological and bodily pain inflicted on Angolan women in wartime. The testimonies of survivors reveal deliberate silencing of this part Angolan history. I focus specifically on both the visible and invisible scars of sexual violence on women as well as memories of the victims of witchburning episodes, in what I call ghostly traumas. The crucial argument made in this chapter is that during the armed struggle against the Portuguese colonialists and the post-independent civil war, the Angolan female body served as a screen onto which Portuguese men and Angolan men could project their anxieties around power and masculinity

The final chapter, "Becoming Refugee: Narratives of Displacement and Dreams of Unknowable Futures," offers an analysis of the concepts of 'home' and 'homeland' and investigates to what extent these concepts are useful in understanding senses of belonging among Angolan women who were internally displaced during the civil war and the former refugees in the neighboring countries of the DRC, Zambia, Botswana, and Namibia. The concern here is with the issue of returning 'home' after decades of being displaced from one's original place, and the ways in which the potential dreams of return often times clash with realities upon return. I rely on testimonies of formerly displaced Angolan women that continue to challenge the current state of political and socio-economic affairs of post-war Angola and pose particular problems to the nation's memory of war.

In their different takes on the same life shattering events of the bloody civil war, both Chapter Four and Five underscore the subjective nature to memory, history, and truth. What the narratives of the survivors of rape in Chapter Four and the testimonies of displacement by the formerly displaced underscore is the complex ways in which remembering and forgetting continue to function for many Angolans today, who look toward an utopic future but whose memories of the violent past live on.

Thus, if as Marnia Lazreg posits in her work on the Algerian war that "a woman's body was another war 'terrain' in the counterrevolutionary war," then what is made clear in these chapters is that gender undoubtedly became a tool in both wars, with Angolan women being used by all the warring factions to serve more varied purposes.[48] An analysis of Angolan women's wartime narratives reveals how women and their bodies are repositories of colonial and postcolonial memories, resisting any efforts to (consciously or unconsciously) forget, on both a personal and collective level. Given debates around the nexus between gender, nationalism, and militarization across national borders, narratives of women wartime experiences in Angola certainly offers lessons in how we must understand the past in order to direct the future.

By addressing questions such as: how do gender dynamics shift when societies go to war? What pushes some women to join their male counterparts on the frontlines? What happens to women who stay behind in civilian camps when men go to war? What are the impacts of war on the female body? In my analysis of women's experiences in wartime and the various ways are implicated in wars, I contend that when we consider these narratives beyond the dualistic gendered constructions of war, we see that there is no fundamental difference between men and women in their motivations to support national freedom struggles and join military institutions, at least in the context of national liberation struggles. Therefore, it is my hope that while this dissertation does not claim to provide a definitive history of Angolan women during the war, centering their experiences helps to advance the current debates on the subject of women and militarization in Africa.

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[1] Susan Sontag. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2003:122.

[2] *Funje* is a staple food in Angola that is made of dried cassava flour and it is usually served with organic farm raised chicken, *galinha*.

[3] Rafael Marques is well known for his recent publication on human rights abuses in the diamond industry in Angola. See Rafael Marques de Morais. *Blood Diamonds: Corruption and Torture in Angola*. Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2015.

[4] Between 20 and 24 June Angolan security forces stormed into a book group in Luanda and arrested fifteen youths for allegedly plotting a rebellion and a coup against the President and his regime. Since their detention, there have been international campaigns calling for the government to release the detainees. For more on this see https://www.amnesty.org/.../AFR1228222015ENG; http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/30/angola-book-club-dos-santos-arrests.

[5] Margarida Isabel Botelho Falcão Paredes is one of the few scholars who have made immense contributions to the research on the visibility of Angolan women in the armed struggle for national liberation and the civil war. She herself also fought in the armed struggle as FAPLA's only white female commandant. See Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015:33

[6] Nira Yuval-Davis and Flora Anthias (eds.). *Woman-Nation-State*. London: Macmillan, 1989; Paola Bacchetta. *Gender in the Hindu Nation: RSS Women as Ideologists*. New Delhi: Unlimited, 2003; Anne McClintock. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995; Valentine Moghadam (ed.). *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*. London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994.

[7] Tanys Lyons. *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004; Shireen Hassim, "Nationalism, Feminism and Autonomy: The ANC in Exile and the Question of Women", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3, (2004): 433-455; Gisela Geisler. *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating Autonomy, Incorporation and Representation*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004; Gay Seidman, 1993. "'No Freedom without the Women': Mobilization and Gender in South Africa, 1970-1992", *Signs,* Vol. 18, No. (1993): 291-320.

[8] Catherine Cole, Takwiyaa Manuh, and Stephan Miescher (eds.). *Africa After Gender*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007; Kathleen Sheldon. *African Women: Early History to the 21st Century*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017; Gisela Geisler. *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating*

Autonomy, Incorporation, and Representation. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004; Maria Nzomo, 1993, " Engendering Democratization in Kenya: A Political Perspective." in *Democratic Change in Africa: Women's Perspective*, edited by Wanjiku Mukabi-Kabira, Jacqueline Adhaimbo-Oduol, and Maria Nzomo, Nairobi, Kenya: AAWORD; Sylvia Tamale. *When Hen Begin to Cry: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1999.

[9] Scott sees gender as "the social organization of sexual difference." Joan Wallach Scott, introduction to *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999: 2.

[10] Joan Wallach Scott, introduction to *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999: 2.

[11] Niara Sudarkasa. *The Strength of Our Mothers:African and African American Women and Families :Essays and Speeches*.Trenton and Asmara: Africa WorldPress, 1996; Obioma Nnaemeka. *The Politics of (M)Othering: Womanhood, Identity and Resistance in African Literature*. London: Routledge, 1997; Oyeronke Oyewumi. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Rochester: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

[12] Oyeronke Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

[13]Ibid.

[14] See for instance: Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, "Yorubas don't do Gender: A Critical Review of Oyeronke Oyewumi's The Invention of Woman…" *African Gender Scholarship*, (2004): 61-81.

[15] Ifi Amadiume. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender And Sex In An African Society*, Zed Press, London, 1987.

[16] Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, "Introduction: Men and Masculinities in Modern African History," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, ed. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003: 4.

[17] Sandra Lee Bartky, "Agency: What's the Problem?" In *Provoking Agents*, ed. Judith K. Gardiner, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995: 178-193.

[18] Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Women and War*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 198; Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pandora Press, 1988; Cynthia Enloe. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; Cynthia Cockburn. *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis*. London: Zed Books, 2007.

[19] See Miranda Alison. *Women and Political Violence: Female Combatants in Ethno-National Conflict*. New York: Routledge, 2010; Carol Cohn. *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures*. Wiley, 2013; Joshua Goldstein. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. London: Zed Books, 2007.

[20] Amina Mama, "Khaki in the Family: Gender Discourses and Militarism in Nigeria." *African Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (1998): 1-17; Jacklyn Cock. *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991; Alicia Decker. *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014; Meredeth Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya, eds. *What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa*. London: Zed Books, 1998; Mama, Amina. 1997. "Sheroes and Villains: Conceptualizing Colonial and Contemporary Violence Against Women in Africa." In *Feminist*

Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures, 46-62, eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra T. Mohanty. New York: Routledge; Tanya Lyons. *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 2004; Cheryl Hendricks, "Transformation of Gender Relations in the South African National Defence Force: Real or Presumed?" in Gender and Peacebuilding, FAHAMU Occasional Paper Series, Pambuzuka Press, 2012.

[21] Jacklyn Cock, "Women and the Military: Implications for Demilitarization in the 1990s in South Africa," *Gender & Society* (June 1994) *8: 152-169.*

[22] Amina Mama and Margo Okazawa-Rey, "Militarism, Conflict and Women's Activism in the Global Era: Challenges and Prospects for Women in Three West African Contexts," *Feminist Review* 101 (2001): 99.

[23] Cynthia Cockburn, "The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace" In *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*. Wenona Giles, Jennifer Hyndman, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004: 44.

[24] For more on the participation of African women in various armed struggle movements in the twentieth century, see: Ann Tristan Borer, "Gendered War and Gendered Peace: Truth Commissions and Postconflict Gender Violence: Lessons from South Africa,"*Violence Against Women*, Vol. 15, No. 10, 2009; Jacklyn Cock, "Women and the Military: Implications for Demilitarization in the 1990s in South Africa," *Gender and Society*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1994; Jacklyn Cock, *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991; Heike Becker. *Namibian Women's Movement 1980-1992: From Anti-Colonial Resistance to Reconstruction*. Frankfurt, Germany: IKO-Verlag for Interkulterelle Kommunikation, 1995; Tabitha Kanogo, 1987, "Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest: Mau Mau." In *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, (78-99), eds. Sharon MacDonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener. London: MacMillan; Marnia Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question*. New York: Routledge, 1994; Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle. Trenton, NJ: Africa World*, 2004; Amina Mama, 1997, "Sheroes and Villains: Conceptualizing Colonial and Contemporary Violence Against Women in Africa." In *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, 46-62, eds., M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra T. Mohanty. New York: Routledge; Stephanie Urdang, *Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau*. New York: Monthly Review, 1979.

[25] See for example: Alicia Decker. *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014.

[26] See Henda Ducados, "An All Men's Show? Angolan Women's Survival in the 30-Year War," *Agenda* 43 (2000): 11-22; Henda Lucia Ducados, *Women In War-Torn Societies: A Study Of Households In Luanda's Peri-Urban Areas*, (Mphil dissertation thesis, 2007).

[27] According to data by the Inter-Parliamentary Union group, Angola women hold thirty seven per cent of parliamentary seats. This is one of the highest in the southern African region. http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmn08-e.pdf

[28] Amina Mama and Margo Okazawa-Rey, "Militarism, Conflict and Women's Activism in the Global Era: Challenges and Prospects for Women in Three West African Contexts," *Feminist Review* 101 (2001): 99; Alicia Decker. *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda*. (Athens:Ohio University Press, 2014); Gisela Geisler. *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating Autonomy, Incorporation, and Representation*. Uppsala:

Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004; Muriel Tillinghast and Patricia McFadden, 1991, "Women and National Liberation Movements," Yale Journal of Law and Liberation: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 1.; Gisela Geisler, 1997, 'Sisters under the Skin: Women and the Women's League in Zambia', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 25, 1, 1987; Susan Geiger. *TANU Women. Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955– 1965*. Portsmouth, Oxford, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam: Heinemann, 1997.

[29] Aili Mari Tripp. *Women and Power in Postconflict Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Sylvia Tamale. *When Hens Begin to Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999; Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay, and Meredeth Turshen. *The Aftermath Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books, 2002.

[30] Phone interview with a UNITA representative in parliament on November 3, 2015. According to the 2015 data by the Inter-Parliamentary Union group, Angola women hold thirty seven per cent parliamentary seats. This is one of the highest in the southern African region. http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmn08-e.pdf.

[31] Tanya Lyons. *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 2004; Jacklyn Cock, "Women and the Military: Implications for Demilitarization in the 1990s in South Africa," *Gender & Society* (June 1994) *8: 152-169;* ; Stephanie Urdang, *Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau*. New York: Monthly Review, 1979.

[32] Anne McClintock. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, New York: Routledge, 1995:10.

[33] See for example: Chela Sandoval. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000; Amina Mama. *Beyond the Mask: Race, Gender and Subjectivity*. London: Routledge, 1995; Gayatri Spivak. *The postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. New York: Routledge, 1990; Anne McClintock. 1993. "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism, and the Family." *Feminist Review* 44 (2): 61– 80; Paola Bacchetta. *Gender in the Hindu Nation: RSS Women as Ideologues*. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004; Nira Yuval Davis. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage, 1997; Nira Yuval-Davis and Flora Anthias (eds). *Women-Nation-State*, London:MacMillan, 1981.

[34] Chandra Mohanty.1991. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and the Colonial Discourse," In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Also see Patricia Hill Collins. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990; Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, (Eds.). *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernities and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994; Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón and Minoo Moallem, (Eds.). *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminis*ms, *and the State*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999; Aiwha Ong, "Colonialism and Modernity: Feminist Representations of Women in Non-Western Societies." *Inscriptions*, 3–4 (1988): 79–93; Oyeronke Oyewumi, 2001, "Ties that (Un)bind: Feminism, Sisterhood and Other Foreign Relations." *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, 1(1); Oyeronke Oyewumi. 2002. "Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies. *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, 2(1).

[35] Chandra Mohanty. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003: 42.

[36] See for example: Kamala Viwsweswaran, 1994, "Defining Feminist Ethnography". In: Liz Stanley (ed.). *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press; Wairimu Njoya, "Polyvocality and the 'Conversation': Bringing Other Voices into Political Theory." 2009. Available online: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1450013; Patricia K. Connolly-Shaffer. "Staging Cross-Border (Reading) Alliances: Feminist Polyvocal Testimonials at Work." Ph.D. Dissertations, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2012. Available online: http://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/141437/ConnollyShaffer_umn_0130E_13269.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y; Lila Abu-Lughod, "Can There Be Feminist Ethnography?" *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*. Vol. 5, No. 25. (1990): 7-27.

[37] Arturo Escobar and Wendy Harcourt. *Women and the Politics of Place*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2005: 2-15.

[38] Toni Cade Bambara, "Foreword," in Cherie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color*. Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 2002: vii.

[39] Writing about the legitimization of Euro-American discourse over the colonized subject, Spivak notes that the immolated widow *cannot* speak and, therefore, is not heard because patriarchy and colonialism work within different grids of intelligibility. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988: 271-313.

[40] Tianna Paschel. *Becoming Political Subjects: Movements and Ethno-Racial Rights in Colombia and Brazil*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016: 245.

[41] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009: 4.

[42] Pierre Bourdieu. *Pascalian Meditations*. Trans. Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

[43] Elizabeth Grosz. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994: x.

[44] Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, "Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 1-19.

[45] Mieke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College, 1999: vii.

[46] To understand the particular ways that different groups in Angola forge specific narratives that highlight the amnesia around certain aspects of the Angolan past, see for example: Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola 1975-2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Lara Pawson. *In the Name of the People: Angola's Forgotten Massacre*. London & New York: I.B Tauris, 2014; Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015.

[47] Author's field log, January 25, 2016 in Lisbon.

[48] Marnia Lazreg. *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008:165.

Chapter One

Conducting Feminist Ethnography of War in Africa: Dilemmas and Insights

It is a sunny Friday morning in mid-September when three security guards usher me into the national assembly building in Luanda. I confidently greet them in Portuguese. Two of the three security guards smile and try to make small talk. The third asks for my identification, but before I pass it to him, the other two, almost in unison, say: "There is no problem. She is one of us." They then ask if I am from Bié.[1] I hesitate before I shake my head. "But where are you from, *a senhora*?" I respond in my poorly constructed Portuguese that I am from Kenya. "Kenya?" comes another unison reply. "But, what are you doing here?"

At this point, I hand them a copy of my passport including my consent form. Handing back the documents one of guards says, matter-of-factly, "You look like one of us. You could be Angolan." I look at my watch and as if reading my mind, the second guard quips, "I know you have to go but you could really become Angolan if you marry one of us. You look very young, too." I laugh and say that I am already taken. The joke—at least that is how I chose to see it—makes all of us at ease. They let me into the building. I am ushered into a boardroom for a meeting with former female guerrillas of UNITA.

As I wait for the president of the League of Angolan Women/LIMA, the woman's branch of the opposition party UNITA,[2] the receptionist introduces herself, "From the phone I thought you were American and white. But, you are black. I also thought you work for an NGO. So, who are you?" I smile and respond politely trying to hide my frustration because this was the fifth time since I arrived in Luanda in August that I was being confronted with this question: "I am a doctoral student and I am also Kenyan. I am here to conduct research about Angolan women and their involvement in the armed struggle and the civil war." I give her a copy of my bio as a proof of my identity. She glances over it and with a look of mistrust she retorts, "But you speak English? I still think you are American and a journalist. It is rare to see black people come to do research here. Are you really African or African American?" I smile again nodding and shaking my head at the same time.

The skeptical look on the receptionist's face makes me uncomfortable and agitated. I want to say I understand her suspicion, but I also want to tell her how disappointed I am. Disappointed that she believes that only Americans or whites from the West are capable of doing academic research. The fact that I am Kenyan, and indeed African, does not matter to her. In fact, she is bent on seeing me as an American. Why can she not take notice of my non-American accent? Why does she not see herself in me? After all, she appears to be of the same age as I am and we have the same dark skin tone. A disappointed voice in my head screams, "Look at me, *a senhora*, I am even wearing an 'African dress' isn't that African enough for you?" My frustration melts away when my research partners walk into the boardroom. "I hear you are Kenyan and American, just like Obama," says my interviewee shaking my hand. I respond that I am not American, but I don't think she hears me.[3]

I begin this chapter with the above reflection from my fieldwork to emphasize how fieldwork can be a messy process fraught with contradictions. The interactions I had with my interviewees made it clear that no researcher is guaranteed a seamless direct and comfortable relationship with her participants because the dynamics of the interviewing process are rife with complex formulations. As Josephine Beoku-Betts aptly concludes that even for black feminists researching within their own communities, there are moments "When Black Is Not Enough."[4] This statement alerts us to the issue of identity politics during fieldwork and why it is important

for researchers to pay attention to intragroup differences. My immediate interactions with the security guards and the receptionist help to demonstrate that notions of difference often complicate the experiences in the 'field'. Tanya Lyons in her research on Zimbabwean women ex-combatants speaks to the complexity of conducting research in Africa by observing that, "the dilemmas of doing feminist research in Zimbabwe are based on the politics of identity."[5]

My encounter above, thus, begs the question: How do multiple identities affect and transform fieldwork research? Since the 1980s feminist ethnographers have used reflexivity as a fieldwork methodological approach to position themselves within various cultural communities. The process of reflexivity in qualitative research refers to both the constant scrutiny of the purpose of one's research and the willingness of the researcher to learn about herself and her relationship to the social world in order to understand how "our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others."[6] The turn to reflexivity as a tool for conducting feminist research means that researchers have become aware that they are part and parcel of the social world they study, and that the representation of "Others" cannot be delinked from self-representation.

Within feminist ethnography, first-person narratives have continued to gain traction as a methodology for retelling and interpreting experience.[7] To this end, most researchers emphasize the centrality of positionality to interrogate the way that the politics of identity and difference shape the research process. For instance, Stuart Hall reminds us, "there is no enunciation without positionality. You have to position yourself somewhere in order to say something."[8] Enunciating one's positionality is even more crucial for feminist researchers in the field of gender and militarism because the latter is embedded in power hierarchies which privilege a certain kind of militarized masculinity and cast doubt over women's presence in the masculinist space of war. Given this gendered nature of war and militarization it is imperative for feminist ethnographers to be cognizant of the fact that, in many cases, women in conflict and post-conflict zones are inadequately interviewed about their involvement and experiences of war. What this means is that the process of formulating "good" research pushes any ethnographer to pay attention to those gaps that arise when their personal experiences, beliefs, and knowledge come in contact with existing scholarship. Starting from a point of curiosity in terms of what and who is not being studied can offer a window for researchers to reflect on the intricate relationship between the researcher as a situated knower and her research subjects. Or, as Nancy Naples argues "if researchers fail to explore how their personal, professional, and structural positions frame social scientific investigations, researchers inevitably reproduce dominant gender, race, and class biases."[9]

Researchers position themselves through various markers including race, gender, sexuality, age, class, ethnicity, nationality, language, and religion. In my case, the multiple identities I embody as a thirty-something years old, unmarried, English speaking Kenyan woman studying at an elite university in the United States inevitably influenced my fieldwork research in Angola. This chapter, therefore, contributes to the growing literature on methods and techniques for conducting qualitative research in Africa, as well as to feminist research methodologies, which emphasizes the impact that relations of power between researchers and their participants have on the rigor of the findings of qualitative research. As a methodological chapter, it draws upon examples and anecdotes from my own experiences whilst conducting twenty-five interviews with women ex-combatants and civilians in Angola to examine the ways that cross-cultural perceptions, interactions, and representations influenced both my fieldwork process and the outcome of data collection. I use my personal experiences because I believe that the 'field' as

a site of power reveals the dynamic way in which identities and their attendant power relations are created, contested, and transformed when a researcher encounters her research partners.

As my research project is deliberately feminist, I use concrete examples of how I navigated the fieldwork dilemmas in Angola, by employing reflexivity as a methodological strategy that helped me to move beyond the false dichotomy of insider/outsider position, and instead explore the complex negotiations of identity, power, and positionality. Throughout this chapter, I claim that acknowledging and naming the dilemmas that arise during fieldwork helps to establish rigor and expose the complexity in the research process. I demonstrate how my experience as an African woman from Kenya, studying in the west, and conducting research in a Lusophone African country of Angola, shaped my access to certain subjects and not others. This chapter, and indeed my entire dissertation project, makes the argument that the points of information that former women combatants and civilians shared with me, my access to them, the assumptions these women made about me, the uneasy interactions, and the context in which they shared their wartime experiences, were to a large extent mediated by my own multiple identities.

My research stemmed from the desire to document Angolan women's wartime narratives that have been traditionally marginalized in both academic and non-academic discourses. Since the assumption is that in some respects, women experience wars differently from men, I chose the topic of women in war and militarization because I was interested in understanding how Angolan women, and indeed women across Africa, are mobilized as resources of war. I collected oral histories of twenty five women from across ethnic, political, and socio-economic divide that were involved in the armed struggle for national liberation as well as the post-1975 civil war that lasted for almost thirty years. Angolan women's narratives are crucial to my study because they are fundamental to how women understand their lives. Or, as Powles posits, some issues "can only really be communicated through narrative since they are not readily amenable to generalization."[10] It is important to note that the story of women's wartime experiences in Angola is not a "single" story that can be told in a linear way. In fact, there are thousands of Angolan women whose stories are yet to be told. The interviews I conducted with women ex-combatants and civilians represent only a small portion of the wartime puzzle. For this reason, there can never be an authoritative history of all Angolan women's experiences. Nevertheless, the interviews provide us a lens through which we can begin to understand the relationship between women, war and militarization both in Angola and across the continent. First-person accounts, within feminist ethnography, have considerable appeal as a methodology for retelling and (re) interpreting experience.

When I embarked on a three-months fieldwork trip to Angola, I had deep-seated anxieties: Will the women I interview see me as someone who belongs to them on account of my Africanness? Will my status as a Kenyan scholar studying in a U.S academic institution override my already assumed solidarity with them as a black African? Will my limited linguistic competency in Portuguese get in the way of them confiding in me or get in the way of me understanding the nuances of their experiences? What expectations, if any, will the women whose wartime experiences I seek to understand have of me? These preoccupations were exacerbated by the volatile political context in Angola, and the many dangers related to doing this kind of research.[11]

The aim of this research was to document the experiences of these women, whose politico-military involvement originated from and took place in both the domestic and public sphere. My interviews went beyond interrogating what roles women played in armed struggle movements, and instead focused on the 'why' and the 'how' of women and militarization in

Angola. I wanted to uncover the complex experiences of women in war based on the following research questions: How do women experience wars differently from men? How does their engagement with war and conflict transform their lives during and after the wars? This chapter brings to light some the challenges and dilemmas I encountered during my fieldwork.

Positionality in feminist research recognizes the fact that there is no neutrality in fieldwork, "there's only greater or less awareness of one's biases."[12] It provides a space for a dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity in one's research. Because, regardless of whether the researcher situates herself as an insider or an outsider to the subculture shared by her research partners, her positionality always has a bearing on the level of trust and openness in the people being interviewed, as well as the expectations about how she collects, analyzes, and represents her data. Positionality, thus, plays a significant role for researchers in/on Africa since notions of difference and similarities on the continent are far from being monolithic; and they vary from region to region, from country to country, and from one ethno-linguistic community to another. Therefore, when conducting fieldwork in such a heterogeneous environment, an African researcher in particular, often carries on her shoulders on a huge burden of representation.

This weight can push her to ask pertinent questions: whose story is it that I am documenting and why does this story matter to the community and the outside world? Aijad Ahmad summarizes this burden of representation well by noting that, "the retribution visited on the head of an Asian, an African intellectual who is of any convenience and writes in English is that he or she is immediately elevated to the lonely splendor of a "representative"—of a race, a continent, a civilization, even the Third World."[13] Social responsibility and accountability becomes much greater for researchers traveling to cultural settings other than those of their own birth and upbringing. This burden of representation, as Amina Mama observes, nurtures a real and intimate engagement with the various manifestations of difference, power and privilege that characterize the particular contexts that researchers are engaging with.[14]

Oral history as a Reflexive Medium

The utility of reflexivity in feminist research lies in the fact that it gives primacy to the subjectivity of both the researcher and the participants, making both of them less omniscient and more human. For research participants, the process of reflexivity can be done through life histories or what some scholars refer to as the 'tellability' and 'hearability' of their accounts.[15] Throughout my research process, I encountered women who were eager to tell their stories lamenting that their accounts have been marginalized in the Angolan historical narratives, because they mobilized and supported the war efforts from their homes as opposed to the public sphere. "If you were not a guerrilla, then your contribution to the struggle does not matter. Our nation's history is obsessed with heroes," noted one ex-combatant.[16]

I believe that women's voices are key to both feminist and subaltern theories because as narratives of selfhood and self-reflection, they call attention to the socio-cultural dynamics through which women construct themselves as social actors. Since many women in Africa are marginalized in the historiography and their accounts often slip through the cracks of official discourses, the responsibility for African female researchers documenting women's experiences is magnified. Linking the past to their everyday struggles in the present in order to uncover how African women can be actors within particular historical and social contexts is an awesome undertaking. Some of the women I encountered had never had the chance to discuss their wartime experiences in a way that was recorded and captured for history. These were women

who were involved in the national liberation struggles and the civil war in a myriad of ways including fighting on the battlegrounds, giving birth on the frontlines, raising children as single mothers because their husbands were out in the bushes, providing sexual favors and being used as pawns during the civil war, challenging the masculinist militarized status quo, and fighting for the rights of Angolan women. For example, one of woman was grateful and relieved to tell her story noting, "This was hard for me. I have kept these memories inside me for thirty years. Some of them are good but most of them were bad. Many of Angolan women have learnt to forget. Forgetting is difficult."[17]

It is precisely because of such accounts and the lack of an archive that oral history continues to be a resourceful tool for restoring to the national historiography those marginalized social groups absent or excluded from the official archives of war, and thus from the master narratives of nationhood. And so, rather than use women's oral histories as "garnishes and condiments"—if I may borrow Lal's phrase—to the main historical archives,[18] I take these oral narratives as valid documents in their own right. I used unstructured interviews to collect oral narratives because this method enabled participants to remember, represent and narrate generational life experiences as I encouraged them to discuss key moments of their lives in-depth. The safe communicative space and flexibility for the women to recall their subjective experiences brought forth sensitive issues, which often included traumatic memories.

In the section that follows I briefly examine some of the contentions arising in the area of research on the continent from the point of view of postcolonial African feminists, and indeed from scholars across the so-called 'developing world' or the global south. Highlighting these postcolonial feminist discontents helps to illustrate why scholars from the global south are committed to pushing against the Euro-American feminist tendencies to ignore and simplify the lives of women in the developing world.

African Woman in the Field: Going Beyond the Outsider/Insider Divide

When I was confronted with questions such as: "Kenya, but what are you doing here?" and "Are you American? It is rare to see black people come to do research here," I quickly realized how unprepared I was to tackle what some may dismiss as "uninformed questions" of participants. Yet, these questions reminded me of what my driver had told me the when he came to pick me up from the airport upon my arrival in Luanda: "I saw you several times as I looked around the waiting area. I passed by you three times because I was expecting to see a white woman."[19] Indeed, these encounters and many others I experienced in the course of my fieldwork reveal the simple fact that the way in which many communities on the continent experience research is often associated with white-skinned westerners and their short-term visits. This fact puts pressure on African feminist researchers because we are not seen as legitimate scholars. Or, we have to demonstrate our intellectual prowess in ways that are not expected by white westerners. Historian Ula Taylor rightfully observes that black women across the diaspora are generally ignored as intellectual subjects because we are "too often categorized as individuals who lack critical thinking skills...dismissed as offering simple solutions to complex problems."[20] Ula Taylor's remarks underline the ways that black women's intellectual labor and knowledge production are so easily dismissed in academic spaces.

Prior to my arrival in Angola, the connections I made through academic networks and social media had proved useful in the selection of my participants and continued to facilitate my work once I was in the capital city of Luanda. Friends I made through the local universities in Angola and the church based NGOs kindly offered their expertise and helped me navigate the

highly politicized and militarized terrain in Angola. A new friend embraced me as "one of her own" and she led me to other intermediaries who became valued collaborators during the course of my fieldwork. I needed intermediaries not only because of the 'sensitive' nature of my research project, but also because of what Marissa Moorman calls the "political paranoia" in the country which meant that many participants were not willing to open up for fear of persecution.[21] I quickly embraced the "one of us"—very delightedly—because it accorded me the insider status every researcher yearns for. I appreciated my insider position because there were times when security clearances for conducting interviews with some high profile politicians were expedited, which is a rarity, through the connections I had made. I entertained the thought that the privilege sometimes accorded to me, as an insider by my participants was due to my blackness/Africanness and that I "looked like an Angolan"—or some unspoken solidarity among African women. Although this was not always the case, I believed that my participants eventually felt open with me because I was "one of them."

While the fluidity of my identity allowed me to move effortlessly through some social spaces, and despite the fact that I assumed I had the emic knowledge of insiders due to my Africanness; there certainly were countless moments where I bumped awkwardly into the unpredictable web of social entanglements. I was read, almost across the board, as American. One interviewee jokingly questioned my Africanness, "You are not African, you live in California. I am the African." Being acutely aware of the politics of location, identity, and representation forced me to constantly reexamine my location as a researcher in relation to my interviewees. This reexamination, as Caplan observes, requires that researchers interrogate their relationship with the participants by asking, "who are we to them? Who are they for us."[22] As a postcolonial African feminist studying in the west, I undeniably have an institutional privilege— a dubious privilege— that affiliates me with the academy in the west.

I have to admit that there were moments when I was comfortable with being mistaken for an American because of the convenience that came with an American identity. For instance, I appreciated the many doors of access that were opened as most of the women I spoke with felt that I was better positioned to represent their stories to the rest of the world. While I was grateful for the support my research partners provided me on account of my foreignness or being mistaken for an American, I could not help but feel disappointed in the sense that my American student visa gave me more access to the field than my Kenyan passport. For all the ways in which I appeared to be an insider, I was simultaneously an outsider.

If feminist research assumes a politics of solidarity by calling on researchers to actively engage with our participants, why did my Angolan participants choose sometimes not to see me as African? Reflecting on these interactions made me realize that while I was African to the degree that "I looked like an Angolan from the Bié province," I was also African American to the degree that I spoke English and did not have a high level proficiency of spoken Portuguese. In some of these moments, the category "African" was largely subsumed into the general national category of "the American." In all honesty, it was not my place to impose on my participants what and how they could 'read' me. That I was a black non-Portuguese speaking African, interested in the experiences and stories of Angolan women ex-combatants, must have been discombobulating to my interviewees. When I inquired from friends in the Angolan academia about this complexity, they were sympathetic and reassuring: "Don't worry too much about that. Remember that everyone is paranoid around here so we are careful whom we talk to. You just never know." I understood this point; yet, I still often wondered about what appeared to be the inability of my interviewees to fully embrace me as a scholar who was also African. If

some of my informants were inquisitive about my identity, I found it confusing when they treated me as an outsider despite a majority of them thinking I was "one of them."

It is here that I would like to suggest another way of naming this energy between my informants and me. In other words, is there a different way to name the encounters between black folks that enable us to move beyond or even defies binaries of power during the fieldwork process? This question underscores what April Few, Dionne Stephens, and Marlo Arnett have pointed out that, "Sharing certain identities is not enough to presume an insider status. Idiosyncrasies are embedded in our identities that inevitably create moments of intimacy and distance between the informant and researcher."[23] Who we want to be in the eyes of our participants *vis-á-vis* how they see us underlines one of the most complex challenges of conducting qualitative research. In my case, the delicate dance between my informants and me throughout my fieldwork in terms despite our shared racial membership as black Africans, which to a large extent determined how much my informants divulged their painful and traumatic memories of war, led me to understand this intricate relationship as one that is akin to waves of the sea. Rather than see my fieldwork encounters as shaped by rigid binaries of insider/outsider, I call this energy the *ebb and flow of fieldwork process*.

Ebb and Flow of the Fieldwork Process

The general consensus among ethnographers is that fieldwork research is laden with power imbalances and privilege, which are never static.[24] Feminist ethnographer Kim England, in particular, calls for sensitivity to these power relations and acknowledges that in face-to-face fieldwork research, the participants are never passive, but "they are knowledgeable agents accepted as 'experts' of their own experience."[25] This understanding of the fieldwork experience has its utility in that it enables the researcher to employ strategies that potentially minimize power hierarchies between them and the participants. Looking at the research participants as co-creators of knowledge helps the researcher to avoid exploiting her informants as mere sources of data.

The assumption I had that as an African female researcher, my Africanness would open most doors and make me feel at home completely underestimated the degree to which my subjectivity was negotiated in nuanced and contradictory ways. Because I went to Angola, naively and rigidly, locating myself as an insider—and a reluctant outsider—it soon became evident that this binary failed to fully articulate the complex and multilayered experience of my research process. I found myself neither as total insider nor outsider in relation to my informants because of the back and forth honorable engagement with my informants.

Sometimes, scholars talk about power relationships in binary terms: the researcher as either an outsider or an insider in relation to her research subjects.[26] Yet, let us consider those times my interviewees could only go part of the way with me in the sense that they knew I was a researcher because I carried a recorder with me to my interviewees. Or, those moments when the aesthetic dynamic of my physicality as an African woman, which made me look like a relative or just another Angolan from Bié, destabilized the traditional outsider/insider power relations between my informants and me. I argue that understanding these ethnographic moments of encounters through binaries of power relations, fails to take into account that during the fieldwork process some things are clearer than others.

In cases where I needed to use Teresita, my Angolan host and translator, this ebb and flow of fieldwork encounters became even more apparent.[27] Although we had only known corresponded via email while I was working on my visa application process, my translator and I

developed an instant rapport as soon as I got to Angola.[28] In our first meeting, Teresita, through teary yet distant eyes told me that I reminded her of "my long lost relative" and for that reason she wanted "to make sure that my time in Angola went smoothly." I was struck by how trusting she was of me to the point that she kindly offered me a place to stay in her cozy two-bedroom apartment. I had asked her why she did not treat me with suspicion and her response was swift: "You are not like others. You are like my daughter." In my interviews with subjects who only spoke Portuguese and/or other ethno-linguistic registers including Kimbundu and Umbundu, my epistemological position as a researcher in relation to my translator and interviewees uncovered the respectful tussle for truth. For example, in the presence of older and high-ranking government officials where I was treated with mistrust on account of my age, Teresita's presence proved to be somewhat magical in these moments. She had an uncanny ability to effortlessly switch between Portuguese and Kimbundu, which my interviewees found reassuring. Over the course of the interviews I realized that she would interject our conversations with the phrase "We Africans." The phrase was not only a reassuring strategy that I was "one of them" but it also served to remind everyone in the interview room of our shared history as Africans. The role of the translator and the act of translation does matter in ethnographic research because the translator is part of the knowledge production process.

I had initially gone into the field thinking about my identity in binary forms. I was not sure whether to highlight one aspect of my transnational identity in order to downplay my position as an outsider or to emphasize my 'privileged' position as a doctoral student in a U.S academy so as to make the most of my outsider status in a way that would potentially benefit both my respondents and I. The latter option, I argued, could get in the way of me accessing data from 'ordinary' women because it could lead to false impressions and possibly alienating them. But, as my research progressed, I realized that rather than downplay any one of the multiple identities I embodied, I would allow myself to be an observer and bring my whole self to each of my research partners.

Through my positionality as non-white/non-western and non- white/western educated researcher in a non-western research setting, I was able to closely examine the ebb and flow of the energy between my research partners and myself in the context of the multiplicity of our potential identities. Identities were continuously contested and negotiated on issues of nationality, ethnicity, age, religion, and marital status. It was evident that this energy resided both with me and with the women I interviewed. These women were no way inactive or passive recipients of the fieldwork process and thus they dismantled the common fieldwork praxis. By simultaneously locating me both as "one of them" and the "other" during the interviews, my encounters were molded by back and forth episodes of solidarity, trust, empathy, and suspicion.

The women were aware of the relational dimension of the research process and therefore, many of them demanded to know for whom my research was meant, why their wartime experiences mattered, and how I would represent their narratives. As one former MPLA militant asked me, "why are you interested in our stories?"[29] This is a valid question for many ex-combatants who still hope to have their political memories and neglected voices written into the national history and want to reclaim visibility in the history of the Angolan liberation struggles. We can perhaps surmise that my informants asked this question because they were simply suspicious and feared being exploited or misrepresented. As Margarida Paredes points out in her interviews with Angolan women guerrillas, many women want to be assured that in sharing their stories are viewed as "means of valorizing their life histories and memories in the public space," and that they need to see "this visibility as a tool for personal and social emancipation."[30]

For the sake of genuine collaboration between my research partners and me, I learned to let the fluidity of my multiple identities come into play depending on each interview situation. For instance a "gatekeeper "whispered during one interview, "Insist on the fact that you are studying in the U.S. She will trust you and open up. Don't say you are Kenyan."[31] In another interview in the province of Benguela, my translator informed me that a former high-ranking member of the MPLA was "reluctant to talk to you because Kenya did not support the MPLA during the armed struggle."[32] In another separate interview with three women members of the opposition, the fact that I am from Kenya and spoke Kiswahili was an asset as my interviewees insisted that I talk to them in Kiswahili: "I speak Swahili very well. I lived in Congo for fifteen years," one said.[33]

The ebb and flow of fieldwork does not guarantee a smooth sailing process for the researcher. For me, it meant being aware that there were situations where I would have to be vulnerable to my interviewees misreading me; for instance when I was mistaken for a media reporter. With advice from my colleagues who had done previous research in Angola, I had made a conscious decision not to use video recording for my interviews. Nonetheless, some of the women still felt suspicious of my tape recorder and even questioned my true intentions. With my tape recorder in hand, my identity was immediately shaped and constructed as a journalist, and rarely as a student researcher, which meant that some of my participants were willing to speak only in general terms. Other women lamented how "You people come here to interview us and when you go back to your countries you report bad things about us."[34] What is at the bottom of this comment is that not only did these women recognize the exploitative nature of fieldwork research, but they also held me accountable for my 'privileged' position as a researcher. Indeed, these exchanges reveal that since fieldwork is a human experience "subjects can resist and subvert the researcher's efforts, making some interviews difficult or even impossible."[35]

Age Matters and the Politics of Motherhood

As already mentioned earlier, how we are positioned by others and/or ourselves in the field always shapes our research because the fieldwork experience is a relational social process that is based on multilevel dynamics of power. While the dilemma of where or how we position ourselves as feminist researchers in the field has a lot to do with our race, socio-economic, status, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, and nationality; we cannot overlook the ways in which age and marital status complicate the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Despite the commonly held notion that being of the same gender as the participants allows both the interviewer and the participants to share their common experiences, thereby minimizing the social distance, interviewing women poses its own challenges.

The question of what and how much to reveal about my personal life to my informants was something I overlooked upon entering the 'field.' I was convinced that once I was seen as "one of us" on the basis of my race and gender, then, the issue of my age or my marital status would not matter. I did not bring up those aspects of my identity during my interviews for ethical reasons. However, my Angolan friends warned me during the first couple of weeks of my research that that my interviewees would insist on knowing my age and why I was not married: "Here, if you are a woman of a certain age and unmarried, you are like a pariah. What is even crazier is that you are better off having children with no husband than being single and childless." This statement was not surprising because in Angola, just like other countries on the continent, the proverb "mother is gold" holds true.[36] Motherhood is highly regarded across

various African cultures and for that reason it informs African women's social identity and shapes their political involvement.[37]

Although there is limited research on the gender and the politics of motherhood in postcolonial Angola, the scant scholarship on gender relations demonstrates that the three decades protracted civil war had a significant impact on gender and the family social structures in the country. In Angola "marriage is justified and consolidated by the woman's fertility," because her ability to bear children "adds to her social prestige."[38] When I finally disclosed my age to some of interviewees, the recurring question was, "But you look very young I did not expect you to be that old. So, why are you not married?" My response that I had other things to accomplish first seemed unsatisfactory to them. Even though there are no official government statistics on women's fertility rates, some sources estimate that on average women between the ages of twenty and twenty-five have at least two children.[39] It was, therefore, shocking to some of the women I talked to when I revealed that I did not have any children.

In the course of my research, I rationalized that carrying photographs of my partner might be helpful in allowing me to project the culturally valued image of a potential mother and wife. My host suggested that it could help and would not hurt to "lie": "Many of us want to connect with women who look like us. If you say you are a mother and show a picture of your niece or nephew that could do the trick. You have nephews and nieces, don't you?" She was right. Instead of "lying" I explained to my informants that as the first born in a large family, the responsibility of mothering my siblings was given to me. My interviewees, both men and women, could relate to this as many of them had large families; and this helped them to open up more and shared stories of their children.

By talking about my upbringing, I realized that the research space became more relaxed as the interviewees talked about what it meant to be a mother in the context of war. In this case womanhood via motherhood created an instant bond. Reflexively analyzing my identity during these encounters not only helped me understand the limitations of fieldwork relationships but it also provided insights into cultural meanings that were significant to women in Angola. The longer I stayed, the female dimension of my identity encouraged women's willingness to share their experiences more freely. Not only were they willing to share their wartime experiences, but they also readily engaged in other conversations regarding the current events in Angola and how their lives are impacted by the fall in oil prices. As pastor Ida concluded in one of our interviews, "Angolans just want peace, especially those of us in the provinces…we want to put food on the table, we want to educate our children, and to protect them."[40]

When We Regard the Pain of Others: Ethical Dilemmas

Compassion is the radicalism of our time (Dalai Lama XIV).[41]

Margarida Paredes observes that in the course of her fieldwork interviews with women veterans and guerrillas, what kept recurring in her interviews was "the word 'suffering.'"[42] Given that "*cada angolana teve o seu sofrimento*!/ Every Angolan had their suffering," Paredes was faced with the dilemma of how to interpret the emotions and suffering of her participants without repeating the violence.[43] Feminist researchers alert us to the need to manage the emotions of participants and not overwhelm them with painful encumbrance from the research experience.[44] Paredes' insights on her fieldwork experience highlight the significance of the being 'emotionally aware' and the need to protect participants and engage in debates around the ethics of talking people who have been through painful experiences. Paredes' reflection is crucial for

any researcher interested in exploring women's wartime narratives in that it raises the issue of empathy in feminist research. Researchers, G. Letherby and D. Zdrodowski, point out that:

> Our own experiences are both similar and different to those of our respondents. At times we feel empathy with our respondents, whereas at other times, we find that we cannot identify with the experience and/or feelings of those we research. We identify with the general theme of our projects, but each study has indicated that experience is much more complex...When reading letters and in undertaking interviews, we have found that we feel a strong sense of identification with some of our respondents, whereas at other times we have found it difficult, if not impossible, to relate to their own personal definitions.[45]

In my research, I experienced similar moments where I had difficulties identifying with the experiences of the women I encountered. Yet, can compassion, to use the above quote from Dalai Lama, help mitigate some of the dilemmas faced by feminist researchers in the field?

Oral historian Charles Morrissey uses the term "rapport" rather than empathy to define an ideal relationship between the researcher and the research subject.[46] While these two concepts are related, they are also distinct. Although empathy may result in a rapport, the latter aims at achieving a sense of harmony. Empathy, as I employ it here, refers to unconscious processes of introjection and projection that function as dynamic (inter) exchanges within all human relationships. This continual identification between self and other during fieldwork provides a psychosocial space for both the researcher and her participants to not only receive and process information, but it also allows room for understanding other our participants' experiences in the context of both similarities and differences. Identifying with our research subjects' "suffering" can be a useful mobilizing resource in feminist research.[47] Some feminist scholars posit that the experiential similarities between female interviewers and interviewees helps to foster mutual recognition and egalitarian interactions, and that this shared gender identity further provides the basis for empathy between researchers and participants.[48] It is worth noting that although empathy does not undo issues of differences or unequal power relations, it enables both the interviewer and the interviewees to engage in the work of communicating and understanding aspects of their experiences despite their differences.

Like Paredes, I entered the fieldwork process concerned about how to deal with the traumatic and painful memories of my informants. I felt that no amount of preparation in my methodology classes had equipped me with the enough tools to identify with and respond to the pain and "suffering" that came with the research process. While I was grateful that the women I interviewed had trusted me well enough to recount their painful memories of war, there were times when I felt completely inept to handle their emotions. Telling them to "stop whenever they wanted to" did not feel like an adequate and appropriate response. Listening empathically during an interview process is not an easy thing to do.

When an interviewer asks her participants to recount their memories of the war, there is anxiety over the distressful and angry emotions that these recollections may evoke. In such a case fieldwork ethics demand that the interviewer reacts to—rather then reflect on—the situation by requesting the interviewee to take a break or by swiftly changing the subject. In this circumstance, the researcher may be viewed as being detached from the sensitive nature of the subject. On the other hand, the same situation can also elicit a different reaction in that the interviewer may find herself unconsciously comforting the interviewee by hugging her or holding her hands.

While the dialectical relationship between empathy and detachment is generally accepted in ethnographic research, the intersubjectivity that empathy desires is often the most difficult to attain. I faced this difficulty when one of my informants responded with anger and bitterness the moment I asked her to describe the relationship between male and female combatants in the camps.

> You have probably been told all the 'good' things about the armed struggle. I could repeat those same lines to you if you want me to. But, I won't. I am old and may die very soon anyway, what can they do to me? The movement was not 'happy family'. How could it have been when some of us endured sexual assault? Some soldiers raped and abused their women because of the frustration with the war. How do you tell your two lovely sons that their father raped you? There are many women who endured the worst things because of the craziness of the war. The very comrades we supported to join the war raped us…[but] we still mourned when some of them died in war. I assure you that every Angolan woman bears both visible and invisible scars of the war. There, feel free to write that down and use it anyway you want because it is the truth. The truth you will never hear because of the shame. A history of heroes is not a history of shame but a history of bravery."[49]

To highlight the fact that not all their comrades behaved "badly," my interviewee often used the phrase "behave like monsters." Instead, it was the tough conditions of war that brought out the "monster" in even the good soldiers. This view is problematic since it dismisses the magnitude of wartime rape by framing it as an isolated event that involved only a few deviant "monsters" and absolves the non-monsters of responsibility. And so, when some of my informants told me, as they often did, how the anger in loss and the murkiness of the war could force their men into "behaving like monsters," I found myself dismissing their explanations as too simplistic and unsatisfying. My personal experience had not as yet provided me the tools to imagine and comprehend the anger and bitterness that comes with devastating loss. During these interviews, I became more aware of my own inability to conceive the power of anger in grief and suffering.

To venture into the field of war and militarization is to grapple with the issue of ethnography of violence, which is an inescapable part of life for many people across the world. For researchers, to document women's narratives of war and violence also entails coping with what Robben and Nordstrom call a state of "existential shock," which is disorientation about boundaries between life and death.[50] This was certainly my experience as I listened to some of my research partners' life histories. Up until then I had not critically reflected on how the trauma of war, apathy, death and dying, permeate the ordinary, mundane everydayness of lives of many Angolan women. And that there is scant research on this area no doubt had a direct bearing on my pragmatic ability to carry out feminist research, and produce anti-hegemonic knowledge.

The narratives of wartime rape and other forms of gender-based violence that shaped the recollections of many of my interviewees often left me feeling bewildered. Even though I let my interviewee talk without asking her "to stop whenever if she wanted to," my silence did not imply that I felt pity for her. I was concerned that by asking the women I interviewed to take break when the memories got too painful, I would be devaluing their experiences. As Butler cautions, sympathy rather than empathy, "involves a substitution of oneself for another that may well be a colonization of the other's position as one's own."[51] Thus, I chose to let them take over the reins of the interview process while I stood in solidarity with them as I allowed them to talk and I listened to them. Feminist researchers in the field of International Relations encourage

scholars undertaking the task of uncovering the impact of wars on women to embrace "empathetic cooperation," that is the process of respectful negotiation that heightens awareness of difference.[52]

Upon reflecting on the above experience, it also became clear to me that the comment, "There, feel free to write that down and use it anyway you want because it is the truth," was not only a request for compassion and collaboration, but also an empathic request by a woman to engage in the politics of truth. The work of Dwight Conquerhood on performance ethnography is especially useful in fleshing out the collaboration between Angolan women and me. Writing from a Performance Studies perspective, Conquerhood observes that performance ethnography can offer both the researcher and the participants strategies for strengthening their understanding of each other. By defining performance ethnography as "an ethnography of the ears and heart that reimagines participant observation as co-performative witnessing,"[53] Conquergood underscores the empathetic nature of the fieldwork process, in which research partners contribute to the construction of a shared experience.

In a politically charged and highly militarized environment such as Angola where voicing the "truth" or any form of political dissidence has dire consequences, truth is often contested in shushed tones—and my research partners were aware of this. Reflexively, I do not think that by narrating her lived experience and asking me to use her narrative "because it is the truth," my interviewee was invested in the 'absolute truth' and/or whether I believed her or not. What is to be highlighted here is that for many women located on the margins of history, there is something politically transformative in the pursuit of truth, especially when this truth is spoken to power. As Joan Scott aptly points out, "when the evidence offered is the evidence of 'experience', what could be truer, is after all than a subject's own account of what he or she has lived through?"[54] In fact, as a feminist researcher I do not have the intellectual or moral imperative to discount the credibility of my participants' experiences.

My obligation was to consider all the women I encountered and spoke with as co-producers of knowledge. I felt fortunate that many of them willingly retold their traumatic experiences of war and urged me "to feel free to write that down." It could be that my interviewees understood the power of both the spoken and written word as a way of carving themselves into the history of Angolan liberation struggles. It is here that *testimonio* and *autohistoria-teoría* within Chicana feminism become crucial epistemological tools for transnational feminist ethnographers. It enables us to analyze who is producing a truth and for whom, and the question of writing one's own story against the grain of history. Gloria Anzaldua, in particular, reminds us that Chicanas and women of color write (and speak) "not only about abstract ideas but also bring in their personal history as well as the history of their community."[55] I consider the testimonies of Angolan women as not simply stories, but they are counter-narratives that demonstrate women's agency and resilience as well as what they perceive to be their roles in the body politic of the nation.

Thus, within this empathetic cooperation I was confronted with the burden of representation. As protagonists and survivors of wartime violence, most of women shared their experiences with the hope that their memories and experiences of war would not remain on the margins of Angola's national history. My interviewees expressed gratitude for my listening and many were pleased that I was interested in writing about their wartime experiences.

Conclusion

I drew on some of my fieldwork experiences within the discussions concerning

reflexivity, representation, and identity in fieldwork research to demonstrate the challenges that someone like me—an African woman inhabiting multiple transnational spaces and identities–faces when conducting her research on the continent. Learning to embrace these challenges and not see them as detrimental to my research meant giving full legitimacy to the subjectivity of my participants and myself.[56] As we have seen, the feminist researcher, as a positioned subject, grasps certain human phenomena better than others because she inhabits a structural location and engages with her participants from a particular angle of vision. Critical as I am of the insider-outsider binary positioning, my fieldwork experience revealed that it is difficult for a researcher who occupies multiple identities to shake loose from the binary largely because of the way nationality operates, and the way a racialized and gendered body is read across different spaces. For a transnational subject researching in fieldwork spaces considered "home" there is a futility in imagining that the fluidity of your identity can enable you to avoid getting stuck in this binary. Because, what lies at the heart of the close mutual engagement between the researcher and the participants is the ability of your research participants to locate you—often times in unexpected positions that make you uncomfortable, but which can prove insightful in retrospect.

In this respect, reflexivity does not certainly guarantee a solution for dilemmas of critical feminist ethnography. Although we, as African female researchers, aim for an egalitarian non-hierarchical relationship with our research subjects, it does not mean that we can always achieve it. But since reflexivity provides us with strategies to deal with the inevitable power relations involved in representing other's experiences and voices, Lal argues for the need to understand that "reflexive and self-critical methodological stance can become meaningful only when it engages in the politics of reality and intervenes in it in some significant way."[57]

Thus, the challenge for African feminist researchers lies in the need to create knowledges which both emerge from the diverse and complex contests in which we live and work and speak to such contexts with sufficient resonance to sustain innovative and transformative action.[58] I believe that if African female scholars recognize some of the problems with the identities we prefer to use in representing ourselves, or those that are attributed to us by our participants, it can help us to become aware of the ways in which we approach our fieldwork research and relate to our participants. This may also enable us to appreciate the fact that names and positions in the research process are not static, but contingent and always shifting. Feminist research methodologies, therefore, must account for the experiences of those of us who are not able to perfectly fit in the insider-outsider box, but who must carve out alternative—and sometimes messy—ways of being in the field. For African and Afro-diasporic female researchers, this will hopefully lead to developing more intricate ways of understanding the implications of doing fieldwork in sites we consider 'home'.

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[1] Bié is one of the eighteen provinces in Angola located at the heart of the country. A mainly agricultural region, Bié was heavily impacted by the civil war.

[2] *União Nacional para Independencia Total de Angola*/National Union for Total Independence of Angola.

[3] Taken from author's field log, 18 September 2015.

[4] Josephine Beoku-Betts, "When black is not enough: Doing field research among Gullah women." *NWSA Journal*, 6 (1994): 413–433.

[5] Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggles*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2004: 4.

[6] Norman K. Denzin , *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century*. London: Sage, 1997: 7; Nancy A. Naples and Carolyn Sachs, "Standpoint Epistemology and the Uses of Self-Reflection in Feminist Ethnography: Lessons for Rural Sociology." *Rural Sociology* 65, 2(2000): 194–214

[7] Lila Abu Lughod, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women and Performance* 5, 1 (1990): 7-27.

[8] Stuart Hall,1990, "Cultural identity and diaspora," In J. Rutherford, ed., *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London, England: Lawrence & Wishart, 18; Rosalind Edwards, 1990, 'Connecting Method and Epistemology: A White Woman Interviewing Black Women', *Women's Studies International Forum* 13: 477–90; Pamela Cotterill, 1992, 'Interviewing Women: Issues of Friendship, Vulnerability, and Power', *Women's Studies International Forum* 15: 593–606; Janet Finch, 1984, '"It's Great to Have Someone to Talk to": The Ethics and Politics of Interviewing Women', in C. Bell and H. Roberts, eds., *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

[9] Nancy Naples. *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse, Analysis, and Activist Research*. New York: Routledge, 2003: 3.

[10] Julia Powles, 2004, "Life history and personal narrative: Theoretical and methodological issues relevant to research and evaluation in refugee contexts." New issues in refugee research: Working paper no. 106: 20. Geneva: UNHCR. www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/4147fe764.pdf

[11] During the time of my fieldwork in 2015 the political climate had many Angolans on edge because of a series of events including the looming economic crisis due to the increase in oil prices, the trial and detention of a civic activists study group on protest (seventeen members), and the imprisonment of another activist, Marcos Mavungo because of his crtitques of economic mismanagement and corruption.

[12] Phyllis Rose. *Writing on Women: Essays in a Renaissance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985: 77.

[13] Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the "National Allegory." *Social Text* 17 (1987): 3-25.

[14] Amina Mama, "What does it mean to do research in African contexts" *Feminist Africa* (2011): 8

[15] See Molly Andrews. *Shaping History: Narratives of Political Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007: 33.

[16] Interview with Maria "Tété", 26 October 2015, Luanda.

[17] Interview with Ruth, 11 September 2015, Luanda.

[18] Jayati Lal, 1996, 'Situating Locations: The Politics of Self, Identity, and "Other" in Living and Writing the Text', in Diane Wolf (ed.) *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, Oxford: Westview Press, 205.

[19] From author's field log, August 2015.

[20] Ula Y. Taylor, "Street Scholars: Grounding the Theory of Black Women Intellectuals" *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, vol. 30, no. 2 (July 2006): 153-171. Also see Ula Taylor, "Women in the Documents: Thoughts on Uncovering the Personal, Political, and Professional," *Journal of Women's History*, vol.20, no.1, (Spring 2008): 187-196; Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, and Mary Elizabeth Perry (eds.). *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois press, 2010.

[21] See Marissa Moorman. *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008. Also, recent scholarship coming out of Angola underlines the challenges of conducting fieldwork in Angola including intense government surveillance, the high cost of living, limited reliable data from government sources, among others. For more on the complexity of Angola as a fieldwork site see Margarida Paredes, *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015; Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, *Magnificent and Beggar land: Angola Since the Civil War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015; Justin Pearce, 2012, "Control, politics and identity in the Angolan civil war" *African Affairs*, 111 (444) 442-465;

[22] Pat Caplan, 1993. 'Learning from Gender: Fieldwork in a Tanzanian Coastal Village, 1965–1985', in Diane Bell, Pat Caplan and Wazir Jahan Karim (eds) *Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography*, pp. 168–81. (London: Routledge), pp.168-81.

[23] April Few, Dionne Stephens, and Marlo Rouse-Arnett, "Sister-to-sister talk: Transcending boundaries and challenges in qualitative research with black women," *Family Relations* 52, 3(2003): 207.

[24] Kum-Kum Bhavnani, 1994, "Tracing the Contours: Feminist Research and Feminist Objectivity" in Afshar, H. and Maynard, M. (eds.) *The Dynamics of 'Race' and Gender: Some Feminist Interventions*, London: Taylor and Francis Ltd; Nagar, Richa, 2002, "Footloose researchers, traveling theories and the politics of transnational feminist praxis", *Gender, Place and Culture* 9(2):179–86; a companion to social geography, 150.

[25] Kim England, 2002, "Interviewing elites: cautionary tales about researching women managers in Canada's banking industry," in P. Moss, ed., *Placing Autobiography in Geography*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 288.

[26] P. Adler & P. Adler. *Membership Roles in Field Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987.

[27] Of the twenty five interviews I conducted, ten of them were conducted with the help of a translator who spoke Portuguese, Kimbundu, Umbundu, and Kicongo.

[28] Teresita works as an administrator at one of universities in Angola.

[29] Interview with a former MPLA militant and executive member of the Organization of Angolan Women/OMA, 28 September 2015, Bairro Popular in Luanda.

[30] Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015: 46.

[31] Interview with a senior official of the Organization of Angolan Women/OMA, 29 September 2015, Luanda.

[32] Interview, 19 October 2015 in Lobito.

[33] Interview with a former UNITA guerilla, 18 September 2015 in Luanda.

[34] Interview with OMA official, 3 October 2015 in Luanda.

[35] Diane Wolf (ed.). *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1996: 22.

[36] This is a Yoruba proverb which implies the important value of women hold as mothers. Indeed, this proverb can be applied to different African cultures since motherhood is revered in almost all cultures.

[37] See Niara Sudarkasa, 2004, "Conceptions of motherhood in Nuclear and Extended Families, with special reference to comparative studies involving African societies." *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, 5; Oyeronke Oyewumi, 2001, "Ties that (Un)bind: Feminism, Sisterhood and Other Foreign Relations." *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, 1(1).

[38] Eugénio Alves da Silva, 2011, "Tradição e identidade de género em Angola: ser mulher no mundo rural", *Revista Angolana de Sociologia*, (8), 21-34.

[39] http://opais.co.ao/zungueiras-gravidas-e-batalhadoras.

[40] Interview with Pastor Ilda, 25 October 2015 in Benguela.

[41] Dalai Lama XIV

[42] Paredes, *Combater Duas Vezes*, 70.

[43] Ibid.

[44] See for example: J. Finch, 1984, "'It's Great to Have Someone to Talk to": The Ethics and Politics of Interviewing Women' in C. Bell and H. Roberts (eds) *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul); S. Cannon, 1989, 'Social research in stressful settings: difficulties for the sociologist studying the treatment of breast cancer', *Sociology of Health and Illness* 11, 2: 66–77.

[45] Gayle Letherby and D. Zdrodowski, 1995, '"Dear Researcher": the use of correspondence as a method with feminist qualitative research', *Gender and Society* 9, 5: 586

[46] Charles T. Morrissey, 2007, "Oral History Interviews: From Inception to Closure," in Charlton *et al.*, eds. *The History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield: 160-196.

[47] Keisha-Khan Perry, "State violence and the ethnographic encounter: feminist research and racial embodiment," *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* Vol. 5, No. 1, (2012): 135-154; Irma McClaurin. *Black Feminist Anthropology: Theory, Politics, Praxis, and Poetics*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

[48] Ann Oakley, 1981, "Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms," in Helen Roberts (ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Marjorie Devault, "Talking and listening from women's standpoint: feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis." *Social Problems* 37 (1990): 96-116.

[49] Interview with wife of a former FAPLA soldier, 11 October 2015 in Luanda.

[50] Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius Robben, *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995:13.

[51] Judith Butler. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* Psychology Press, 1993: 118.

[52] Laura Sjoberg. *Gender, Justice, and the Wars in Iraq*: *A Feminist Reformulation of Just War Theory*. Oxford and New York: Lexington Books, 2006: 212.

[53] Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research," *The Drama Review* 46, 2 (Summer 2002), 145-156.

[54] Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience", *Critical Enquiry*, Vol. 17, No. 4, (Summer 1991): 773- 797.

[55] Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987; Gloria Anzaldúa. *Interviews/ Entrevistas*. Ana Louise Keating, ed. New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2000; AnaLouise Keating. *EntreMundos/ Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa*. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2005. Also see *Chela Sandoval*. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

[56] M. Fonow and J. Cook, eds. *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991: 42.

[57] Jayati Lal, 1996, 'Situating Locations: The Politics of Self, Identity, and "Other" in Living and Writing the Text', in Diane Wolf (ed.) *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*,

Oxford: Westview Press, 207.

[58] J. Bennett, 'Exploration of a "Gap": Strategizing Gender Equity in African Universities', *Feminist Africa,* 1 (2002): 34-65; J. Bennett, ed., *Killing a Virus with Stones? Research on the Implementation of Policies Against Sexual Harassment in Southern African Higher Education*, African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town, 2005; J. Bennett and V. Reddy, '"Feeling the Disconnect": Teaching Sexualities and Gender in South African Higher Education', *Feminist Africa,* 8 (2007):43-62*;* R. Meena, ed, *Gender in Southern Africa: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues*. Harare: SAPES Books, 1992; T. Mkandawire and A. Olukoshi. *Between Liberalization and Oppression: The Politics of Structural Adjustment in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA Book Series, 1995.

Chapter Two

"A Luta Precisou de Mães": The Politics of the Womb and the Angolan People's War, 1961-1975

Rodeth Makina Gil was born in the province of Bié in 1947 [see map 1] to a fierce anti-colonial revolutionary and a protestant pastor, Kassange Makina. Even as a young girl, Rodeth says that she was always a troublemaker who would challenge her father's preaching about the role and position of women in society. For this reason, she credits the church for her intellectual development.[1] At the age of fifteen—the average age for many youths who became revolutionized—she decided to join the armed struggle as a member of one of the national liberation movements, the MPLA. Although she became politicized at home and in the church, Rodeth says she chose to join the armed struggle because her boyfriend, Henrique Leonardo Gama Gil, was a guerrilla on the eastern front. That same year in 1962, they were married and she went "in the bush."[2] She narrates one event several years later that altered her life as a revolutionary:

> My husband and I were separated when I was in the last trimester of my pregnancy because he was sent on an assignment to open the 4th political-military region. On this fateful day, we were on the border between the 3rd and the 4th region when the Portuguese soldiers ambushed our zone on the east [see map 2]. Our commandant was injured and he died in my hands as I was trying to protect him…[long pause and sigh]…I was alone. The colonial soldiers were relentless in their attacks. We were worried that if the colonial soldiers kept advancing, they would cross the river and reach the civilian masses in the camps. Our military base was located a kilometer and half away from the civilians. We had to find a way to lay ambushes and stop the Portuguese from reaching our bases and the civilians. I had with me a grenade, which I had kept exclusively for my own safety for two years. I had so much anger in me directed at the Portuguese colonialists for the many decades of domination and subjugation they had subjected our people to. I was determined to defend my comrades and my country from the colonialists. From where I was hiding, I could hear explosions and bombardments from the Portuguese tanks. I took the grenade and placed it at a strategic point on the bridge. I quickly ran for cover [...] and my water broke in the process. That was it. I had my baby, in the middle of combat as I heard the grenade blow up the bridge. I delivered my baby under a big tree in the bush. I covered him and left him there for a while. I retreated to the base to look for other guerrillas. When they saw me, they all looked sad thinking I had lost the baby. I commanded all of them to follow me to the tree where my baby was lying. I will never forget the shock on their faces. One guerrilla suggested that I take the baby to the civilian camp because his mother was an obstetrician. I showed up at the camp with my military pants all covered in blood. I was not ashamed and I did not care […]. I named him Gil, after his father. Later, I returned to the base without him. I am his mother, but he belonged to the masses. Today my son is all grown up with two degrees. I have always seen myself as a combatant, a mother, and a spouse and I do not allow one to take precedence over the other. I embody those three things at the same time. If I failed as a revolutionary, I would be failing my family, my children and my nation. My duty is to protect my children the same way I protect my nation.[3]

I begin this chapter with this long, yet powerful recollection from my interview with a former MPLA combatant not to analyze the veracity of each hard to imagine detail, but to consider the nuanced nexus between motherhood and armed revolutions as both involve giving birth and the cultivation of a new nation. Rodeth's account provides an interesting entry point for examining not only the diverse—and often times conflicting—roles women play in national freedom struggles as martyrs, soldiers, and propagandists; but also interrogating the significance of the notion of patriotic motherhood in wartime mobilization. Through an analysis of ethnographic interviews with Angolan women ex-combatants and civilians as well as archival documents on the armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism, this chapter will examine how when faced with the challenge of mobilizing the masses, Angolan nationalist movements deployed the trope of motherhood to appeal to women to join the struggle. In my analysis, I argue that patriotic motherhood in the context of the Angolan armed struggle is often portrayed as both: a) valuable productive labor aimed at sustaining war efforts, and b) women as vengeful and grieving mothers of the nation where women's collective emotions are a useful mobilizing strategy in national politics.

Patriotic motherhood is defined here as the complex interweaving of societal expectations around women's reproductive labor with the politics of nationalism. If as many feminist scholars contend that in the body politic of the nation the female body is constructed as the metaphoric bearer of the nation,[4] then a patriotic mother recognizes that the unconditional maternal nurturance for her family is an extension of her care for the nation. A patriotic mother, in this case, does not only give birth and nourish the nation, but she also shows her willingness and readiness to sacrifice her sons for the nation. Above all, a patriotic mother is assigned the task of grieving for the fallen heroes of the nation she birthed. This chapter sets out to explore these technologies of motherhood during the 1961-1975 Angolan armed struggle by asking the following two questions: When are women patriots? How does motherhood inform women's wartime activism? What makes Rodeth's narrative stand out is not only her militant attitude, but also the symbolic role her maternal body plays in discourses on nationalism. By asserting that "I am his mother, but he belonged to the masses," Rodeth epitomizes the ways in which patriotic motherhood is a crucial rubric in nationalistic projects. It is worth pointing out here that while many women such as Rodeth voluntarily joined the armed struggle, there are others who were coerced or forced into the nationalist movements.[5]

In retelling the armed struggle as a mother's struggle, I bring to the foreground the wartime experiences of women-as-mothers/as bearers of the nation. The trope of motherhood helps women to see themselves as political subjects and not mere bystanders in freedom struggles. The Angolan armed struggle, like many independence wars across the world, was a struggle waged in defense of the "motherland." In this gendering of the nation and war, the notion of patriotic motherhood was utilized to bring women on the national stage to support both the national liberation wars and their sons' patriotic duties as freedom fighters. Women's support for nationalist movements under the banner of patriotic motherhood can be seen in case studies of countries as South Africa during the anti-apartheid struggles, Northern Ireland where women actively supported both the Catholic and Protestant movements, and El Salvador, among others. Moreover, the linking of motherhood with the nation ensures that even single and childless women understand that they have to contribute to their country's liberation struggles by taking on the labor of caring for the soldiers.

In the same way that different nationalist movements used familial imagery such as "Father of the Nation" or "the Elder" to refer to male leaders as vanguards of liberation

struggles,[6] African women were mobilized to support this fight through specific articulations of motherhood. Therefore, if the "Father of the Nation" guides the country and safeguards its ideology, the imagery of a patriotic mother ensures that all women—even single and childless women—understand that they have to contribute to their country's liberation by taking on the labor of caring. Black feminist standpoint theory illuminates how practices of black mothering across the African diaspora give rise to a distinct black maternity, which has been referred to as community mothering/othermothering. Patricia Hill Collins has noted, "[m]othering [in West Africa] was not a privatized nurturing 'occupation' reserved for biological mothers, and the economic support of children was not the exclusive responsibility of men."[7] Instead, mothering manifested itself in complementary ways as both nurturance and work, and childcare was considered the responsibility of the larger community.[8]

This notion of sharing mothering responsibilities is central to understanding Angolan women who stayed behind in the civilian camps to take care of the children of guerrilla fighters. As one UNITA member put it, "I did not have any children of my own. But in our civilian bases, all the women had to take care of the children who were brought to the camps and raised them as our own. It was tough raising the boys, because we had to make them understand that once they were fifteen or even younger we would have to send them to the bushes to join other guerrillas. That is the toughest thing a mother can do, but it had to be done. The future of Angola depended on our sons fighting bravely to defeat the Portuguese."[9] This testimony sheds light on the paradox of wartime motherhood wherein the question of protecting the nation over one's children is not a matter of choice. The paramount goal of a patriotic mother protects her children by encouraging them to fight for the nation. In this regard, a patriotic mother fulfills "the duties of mother qua citizen."[10]

Patriotic motherhood is therefore not an exclusive practice for biological mothers. Sara Ruddick refers to this kind of labor as "attentive love", that is, a kind of work which involves protection and nurturance.[11] Charged with the labor of caring, Angolan women—regardless of their age, ethno-linguistic background, marital status, and class—imbibed the notion of patriotic motherhood and many of them performed various tasks that included cooking, feeding, and nursing the wounded soldiers. I attempt to tease out how for some women such as Rodeth, motherhood was a socio-political role that catalyzed women and provided them opportunities to participate in freedom struggles, rather than one that necessarily confined and oppressed them.

My analysis of mothering the nation draws heavily on black feminist discussions of motherhood,[12] which do not begin and end with an exclusively patriarchal analysis, as it has been theorized in the West. Mothering in the West, as Evelyn Nakano Glenn points out, "has been defined in terms of binary opposition between male-female, mind-body, nature-culture, reason-emotion, public-private, and labor-love."[13] This dualistic thinking led scholars such as Adrienne Rich and Anne Oakley to focus on how patriarchy confined women to their reproductive roles and relegated them to statuses of passivity and dependence.[14] Since motherhood occurs within specific social and cultural contexts, it is indeed imperative to pay attention to how patriarchal codes subject women to unequal relations of power. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to also emphasize that women experience patriarchal domination differently. In this regard, if we can flip the coin and trouble assumptions about motherhood, then we can analyze patriotic motherhood as a positive and affirming resistance to racial and colonial subjugation. This understanding of motherhood assumes that women are able to play multiple roles—albeit contradictory—and this can be significant in shaping political rhetoric aimed at bringing women into the politics of nationalism and freedom struggles. Motherhood as a discursive practice,

therefore, continues to influence women's relationship with endless cycle of violence and militarism.

Let me hasten to point out here that I do not mean to conflate womanhood with motherhood.[15] However, the notion of patriotic motherhood as I analyze in this chapter, which assumes an essentialist and monolithic representation of women, reflects the ways the female body is culturally read and represented in Angola—and indeed in most cultures in Africa—due to patriarchal constructions of women. Motherhood is, therefore, a socially constructed and historically situated role, wherein "mother" itself is both a highly contested and an ideologically loaded notion. Given this context, mother and woman will be used repeatedly and as interlaced terms throughout this chapter. In my deliberate use of both terms, I argue that the gendering of the nation and war utilizes the tropes of woman—as—mother and woman—as—nation/land to demonstrate a recurring paradox in the big narrative of freedom struggles. In other words, while women are often rendered invisible in national politics because of their relegation to the domestic realm, women's presence as historical agents and patriots in the body politic of the nation is made possible through the trope of motherhood.

Thus, I draw from twenty-five oral interviews conducted with former women combatants and civilians, to posit that despite the exclusion of many women from direct combat action, women were included symbolically into the politics of national liberation through the act of mothering. It is important to note from the outset that while some of the women I interviewed self-identified as being mothers by the time the nationalist movements turned to armed struggle in the 1960s, many of them did not have children of their own. Nonetheless, these women took on the responsibilities of providing and nurturing for their loved ones and the nation. These women were therefore charged with the task of birthing both the revolution and the nation, and more importantly their responsibility of mothering the nation remained a patriotic one. An ideology that Barbara Steinson calls, "nurturant motherhood" because it assumes that "women's maternal and reproductive roles made them sexually distinct from males not only physically, but also temperamentally, psychologically and intellectually."[16] Thus, I follow the words from my interview with one former combatant, "*a luta precisou de mães*/the struggle needed mothers," to posit that given the idealized representations of mothering practices, motherhood during the Angolan People's War served a socio-political purpose. Narratives of Angolan women and their recollections of the armed struggle highlight the point that as patriotic mothers, many of them made the tough choices to give up something of value (their loved ones) in order to get something of greater value (the freedom of their country from the yoke of colonialism). As feminist historian, Alicia Decker points out that centering women's narratives in wartime serve as a reminder that "women are dynamic historical actors."[17]

Throughout this chapter—and my entire dissertation project—I am inspired by Charles Payne's idea that the "Men led, but women organized," in which he suggests that within the civil rights movement in the Mississippi Delta women showed greater willingness to join movements and participate as grassroots organizers. Although operating in a vastly different geopolitical context, women in Angola also mobilized and organized from the fringes.[18] I use Payne's insightful approach to women's activism as a framework to better understand how Angolan women contributed to the freedom struggle within highly masculinist and patriarchal spaces.[19] Undoubtedly, black freedom struggles of the late 1950s to the 1980s across the African diaspora were marked by masculinity with black men considered the vanguards of these struggles while "black women as agents, disappear altogether."[20] It is for this reason that Payne's concept is useful beyond the U.S.A national borders as an analytical corrective to the history of the national

liberation struggles, which continues to be over determined by male experiences.[21]

An exciting plethora of scholarship has emerged in the past few decades to interrogate the complexities of gender in relation to nationalism and citizenship in Africa.[22] These studies underscore the complexities of the process in which nationalism is constructed in the context of gender politics even as nationalist movements and national institutions define gender and regulate gender relations. Grounded in this link between gender, war, and nationalism, my analysis in this chapter centers on what is usually considered to be the "depoliticized" space of the homefront and the archetype of the mother to posit that in wartime, the home is never quite separate from the battlefield and neither is it separate from the agricultural fields in which Angolan women worked throughout the war. It is indeed true that in the masculinist sphere of national politics the homefront is usually associated both with women's invisibility from the public sphere and their victimhood due to patriarchal domination. This phenomenon is echoed by McClintock who notes that "women are typically construed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relation to national agency."[23] However, the home is also first and most a crucial unit of mobilization in wartime. The home, as a microcosm of the nation, is often based on the systematic utilization of women's reproductive labor as well as their agricultural labor. And so in wartime, the homefront becomes the first place where women's labor is mobilized in support of war efforts.

In what follows, I will revisit this history to highlight the obscurity of Angolan women in the master narrative of the country's independence struggles. My intention in this section is not to provide the history of the Angolan armed struggle because this history is long and complex, and one whose comprehensive analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, I provide a broad overview of this highly masculinist history because its crucial details help us to read between the lines and critique the silencing and the erasure of Angolan women as makers of history.

Setting the Scene: Brief Overview of the Angolan People's War

Throughout the fifteenth century to the early twentieth century when the Portuguese government had total domination over Angola, the colonial regime suppressed local resistance and consolidated its colonial domination over the country. Historian Linda Heywood states that in the 1950s when Angola's official status changed from colony to Portuguese overseas province, the regime did not allow any room for independent political activity that could possibly challenge its power, whose *modus operandi* included intense state repression, arbitrary imprisonment, and physical abuse.[24]

In the late 1950s and the early 1960s, as the decolonization process intensified across the continent, some countries turned to guerilla warfare as a strategic instrument to free their masses from colonial subjugation. In the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea Bissau, armed struggle became prevalent from 1961 as a reaction to the Portuguese system of settler colonialism, whose effects included intense political repression, alienation of Africans from their lands, forced labor, and centuries of impoverishment.[25] It is important to analyze Angola's turn to armed struggle as a primary anti-colonial instrument. Discussions in the Lusophone colonies about guerrilla warfare as an effective anti-colonial strategy were very much influenced by prominent examples of liberation struggles happening elsewhere on the continent, especially in Algeria, the Congo, Kenya, and South Africa. Obviously, inspired by Marxist-Leninist idea of class struggle and Maoist ideology of peasant revolutions as well as the

willingness of Cuba and Eastern European countries to aid armed nationalist movements, nationalist leaders in the Lusophone colonies saw guerrilla warfare as a logical move.[26]

Within Angola, recent studies reveal that it was precisely the events in the northern part of the country that unfolded on 4th January 1961 in the cotton growing area of Baixa de Kasanje (present day province of Malange)—and not 4th February as many history books report—that made 1961 a decisive year in the history of Angola [Map 1].[27] On this day, farmers organized a protest against many decades of repression, suffering and the dehumanizing conditions that existed under the Portuguese colonial rule. The "planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project" against Angolan resisters, to borrow Gayatri Spivak's phrase, was carried out through institutional apparatus of the Portuguese military and secret police (PIDE),[28] law courts, prisons and concentration camps in other Portuguese colonies.[29] The Portuguese colonial regime reacted to these anti-colonial insurrections by further repressions, detentions, and execution of many of the protestors.

And so in the 1960s, nationalist movements in all the Portuguese colonies embraced the image of the guerilla fighter as a political advocate in the People's war, a member of an organized revolutionary force, who used the armed struggle for mobilization.[30] By the mid-1960s the Angolan armed struggle was in its full swing as three strands of competing nationalisms emerged in the form of the *Movimento Popular para Libertação de Angola* (MPLA), the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA), and the *Frente Nacional para Libertação de Angola* (FNLA). Although fighting a common enemy, these movements differed in terms of their membership and ideologies. Angola's ethno-linguistic and racial complexity helps explain some of the deep antagonisms among the three nationalist movements. Even though the internal dynamics of each of the movements were much more nuanced, historians have noted that ethnic and regional differences, which predated Portuguese colonialism and that were promoted by the colonial regime, played a central role in how these movements mobilized their masses as each movement was comprised of one of the three major ethnolinguitsic groups.[31] For instance, the MPLA enjoyed massive support from the Mbundu, the FNLA was popular in the northwest region, which is dominated by the Bakongo, and UNITA's strongest base was among the Ovimbundu in the southern eastern region.[32] In terms of the movements' leadership structure, studies on Angolan nationalism reveals that the leadership of the each of the three movements was authoritarian and very hierarchical.[33]

The organizational structure of these movements' top leadership is quite telling of the gender politics embedded within each movement. For instance, no woman was assigned a position in UNITA's twelve-member political bureau (Politubro), an inner circle of the top leadership. In fact, when a new central committee was elected during the second congress of the UNITA on 24 August 1969, only one woman, Maria Augusta da Graca Chitunda was assigned a position as the Secretary of the Women's Brigade.[34] Men held all the thirty positions. The MPLA was no different in that during its first national conference held in 1962, only one woman was elected to be a member of the Central Committee. The fierce militant, Deolinda Rodrigues was responsible for the Social services section.[35] That these two women, who were elected to be part of the decision-making nucleus of the movements, were assigned positions more reflective of their supposed "caring and nurturing" roles in society reveals how women's participation in liberation struggles were largely based on dictates set by men.[36]

Led by president Agostinho Neto and its members consisting of mainly Mbundu intellectuals and students recruited from *mestiços*, and a*ssimilados*,[37] as well as several white members, the MPLA saw itself as a pan-Angolan and a transracial movement. However, the

other two rival movements viewed the MPLA with suspicion and doubted the movement's commitment to the African cause branding it as "non-Angolan " because of its urban outfit and its multi-racial membership. Analysts have argued that although the MPLA espoused a Marxist-Leninist and anti-imperialist rhetoric, its ideology was not rooted in the socio-cultural reality of Angola.[38]Throughout the armed struggle against the Portuguese, the MPLA had established its main base and military headquarters in the neighboring Congo-Brazzaville to avoid the intense surveillance and repression from the colonial police. But by 1968, the movement had set up its guerrilla clandestine activities in different political military regions within Angola itself for effective mobilization of the masses, especially in the rural areas where its rivals enjoyed massive support from the peasants [Map 2].[39]

The second liberation movement the FNLA, which also operated from exile in the neighboring Congo-Kinshasa, emerged from the Bakongo elites in the northern part of Angola and it had strong support of the rural farming community. Before adopting the name FNLA in 1962, this movement had begun in 1957 as the regional movement uniting the people of Northern Angola. Its leader Holden Roberto was a relative by marriage of Zaire's President Mobutu. Unlike MPLA, which saw itself as 'humanist,' 'nationalist,' and 'anti-racist' thereby transcending ethnic and racial boundaries, the FNLA, on its part was unapologetically purist and ethnocentric in its ideology with its insistence on an African identity distinct from the white population.

UNITA, the third movement emerged in March 1966 by a former FNLA member, Jonas Savimbi. Distinguishing itself from the other two movements, UNITA made deliberate efforts to mobilize the masses and launch the armed struggle within Angola. Rather than have its headquarters in exile, Savimbi established UNITA's bases in the province of Moxico and across the southern eastern region of Angola including the central highlands [Map 1]. Vilified by many but admired by most for his charismatic leadership skills,[40] Savimbi embraced a Maoist guerrilla warfare model with the promise to restore the land back to the people from the colonialists. Scholars point out that UNITA's strength lay in its ability to understand the psychology of the disgruntled and marginalized rural populations living in the east and the southern-central highlands of Angola [Map 1], who felt sidelined by the northern based FNLA and the elitist MPLA.[41]

The decolonization process in Angola took a dramatic turn in 1974 when a coup broke out in Lisbon. Organized by a group of progressive military and left-wing politicians, many of who had served in the colonies and were tired of the economic impact of the colonial wars to Portugal, the 25 April 1974 Carnation Revolution managed to overthrow Caetano's regime. The revolution in Portugal brought a quick end to the colonial wars with the leaders of the coup demanding independence for the colonies Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique. The internal divisions and rivalries among the three Angolan movements, however, made it highly unlikely that independence would have been achieved earlier than 1975. The new regime was forced to hastily begin the process of granting independence to the Portuguese colonies in Africa with Angola's independence scheduled for 11 November 1975.[42] Each of the movements, with their respective leaders, positioned themselves as militarily and politically powerful to legitimately lead Angola.

Still holding onto Angola as its Jewel, Portugal took measures to at least ensure a smooth transition, which entailed the three movements signing of the Alvor Accord in January 1975 to make provisions for a coalition and transitional government. However, more fighting broke out in Luanda in March between the three movements and by July 1975, the armed violence was

rapidly escalating into what came to be called the 'Second War of national liberation. The MPLA strengthened its military might by receiving weaponry and military aid from Cuba, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union. UNITA, on its part, sought help from the South African regime to boost its military power. South Africa argued that its involvement in Angola was to flush out the anti-apartheid insurgents from Namibia and the South Africa. UNITA also got the backing of the U.S.A. following Henry Kissinger's fall out with the FNLA. To clarify, the United States and South Africa were not pursuing identical ends when they decided to get involved in the Angola conflict, but both of them wanted to get rid of the MPLA.

This conflict, which had, began in June 1975 and came to an end in March 1976, marked the beginning of back and forth protracted violence that lasted for another two decades. The civil war in Angola did not come to an end via peaceful agreements and shaking of hands by the fighting parties,[43] but through the humiliating defeat of Jonas Savimbi after he was shot in ambush by government forces on 22 February 2002 in the bushes of Moxico province.[44] One of Angola's leading scholars, Assis Malaquis observes that what sustained the post-independence conflict and motivated the main political-military forces to keep fighting were "greed and grievance" factors. Malaquis argues that the civil war conflict was "a consequence of the inability of three nationalist groups—divided by ideology, ethnicity, region, social class, and race—to find a workable agreement on how best to share power and wealth after independence."[45] And so, just like the struggle for independence had been achieved through the bearing of arms – it was in the very same way that after twenty-seven long years of war and chaos that peace finally came to Angola, through bloodshed. This violent history of Angola resonates with the words of McClintock that "All nationalisms are gendered, all are invented and all are dangerous…but in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to the technologies of violence."[46]

That this history of modern nationalism and war in Angola is one that has been told from a masculinist perspective is, therefore, hardly surprising if put in the context of the mid-twentieth century politics of black nationalism across the African diaspora. A period which the U.S historian Paula Giddings perfectly calls "the masculine decade"[47]because of women's marginalization from nationalist discourse, despite their mass mobilization and organization. So, if as I have argued Angolan men were the vanguards of the armed revolution, when and where did Angolan women enter this sphere of freedom struggles and politics? This question is the concern for the remaining part of this chapter.

When and Where Women Enter:[48]Mobilizing Motherhood

All armed revolutions face the challenge of how to appeal to the citizenry and galvanize the masses to support nationalistic projects. Many historians of Angolan nationalism have studied the role of women in the Angolan armed struggle but not the role of gender as an organizing principle.[49] During the Angolan armed struggle, all the national liberation movements made attempts to appeal directly to both the elite and working class women in the urban centers and the peasants in the agricultural areas of the country, particularly in the central highlands, southern eastern and northern regions [Map 1]. One effective strategy the movements used to facilitate women's entry into the wartime machinery was through the establishment of special women's branches of the main nationalist movements. The Organization of Angolan Women/OMA, the Association of Angolan Women/AMA, and the League of Angolan Women/LIMA were created as appendages of the MPLA, the FNLA, and UNITA respectively. All the nationalist movements considered these women's wings to be spaces for women to work

amongst women and also bring them to the body politic of the liberation struggles.

With the exception of a few auto/biographical works by former women combatants—especially letters by the MPLA guerrilla Deolinda Rodrigues who was the only woman of the central committee of the MPLA[50]—which shed light on how these women joined the armed struggle through the women's movements, there is a scarcity of sources on the processes involved in the recruitment of women to join the women's wing. Nonetheless, from my oral interviews with Angolan women as well as existing auto/biographical sketches, we can deduce that many who supported OMA, LIMA or AMA did so because they had family members who were active in the larger movements, and not necessarily out of a particular feminist consciousness. For instance, one interviewee made it clear that "I joined OMA after both my sons were captured by the MPLA guerrillas. I did that to keep my family safe. Before then I had been an active supporter of LIMA since my husband was in UNITA."[51]

It is worthwhile to note here some key distinctions between the two women's organizations: OMA and LIMA in terms of how these two organizations viewed themselves as distinct groups, even though they were both given the task of mobilizing women. One key difference is evident in the organizations' logos [Images 1 and 2], which show a nuance in the positions the larger movements took on women's roles in the armed struggle. In both logos we see a profile of a woman, which perhaps makes it easier for other women to see themselves molded into all-sacrificing mothers, recruited into the war effort as a sustainers of the war and protectors of the home front. However, there is a marked difference in how women—as—mothers are mobilized in LIMA [Image 2].

Image 1: Logo of the Organization of Angolan Women (OMA).

Image 2: Logo of the League of Angolan Women (LIMA).

For UNITA, the patriotic mother carries a baby on her back (as opposed to a rifle), a hoe in her hand, with a book beside her. She is also cast against the backdrop of the colors of UNITA (red, black, and green) to highlight the movement's idea that women in UNITA supported the struggle through their roles as mothers, producers (hence the hoe instead of the rifle), and as educators who transmit a new culture to later generations. As branch of a movement with a strong Africanist stance, LIMA members defended the larger movement's position on gender equality. During my fieldwork, it was apparent that unlike the MPLA, UNITA did not propagate the idea of equating national liberation to women's emancipation. In fact, the movement's leader Jonas Savimbi never addressed women's subordinate status.[52] In my interview with LIMA officials, my research partners told me that Savimbi always reiterated that LIMA was created not as a favor to women by the leadership, but out of the respect of their rights as women. Asked if they agreed with this position, some of my interviewees insisted that they believed that women "were equal to men [and] there was no need to make special accommodations for us."[53] Given

this stance it is unclear why LIMA was created in 1972, six years after the founding of UNITA. Moreover, if equality was at the core why create LIMA?

The possible implication of Savimbi's attitude is that since nationalist movements opened doors for women to officially join and participate in liberation struggles, and therefore their own freedom, the greatest obstacle to women's liberation was women themselves. The retrogressive gender politics, sexism, and patriarchal ideologies present in the movement were not to blame. Thus, women's wartime participation was largely limited to supportive roles because of the culture and the nature of the armed struggle. For example, women in the UNITA camps in Moxico, Huambo, or Andulo [Map 1] did not venture out of "their sphere" and their wartime mobilizing and organizing projects were restricted to hospitals, literacy programs, and vegetable gardens. Nonetheless, this is not to say that majority of women in UNITA agreed with the movement's official position on women. As a matter of fact, there are many women who voiced their disagreement and some even tried to escape from the camps. For instance, a former UNITA member who "served the struggle with pride" commented that the movement's gender ideologies constituted a barrier to women sharing power with the male leadership: "It was the duty of our men to fight for the nation….[but] some of us wondered why we as women were grouped together with the children and the elderly. We were there to produce and to be protected. We were very good mothers to our guerrillas, we fed our guerrillas and also nursed those who were wounded. But, we just did not have a space at the table with the men."[54] Unfortunately, the many women who challenged the male leadership of the movement faced punitive measures, which in most cases included the horrid witch-burning ceremony and other forms of gender based violence [see chapter four].[55]

While both OMA and LIMA encouraged activities that were geared toward mobilizing women to fulfill "*as responsibilidades das mulheres na casa e ao patria* /women's responsibility in the home and to the country,"[56] OMA's activism targeted a specific class of women. A patriotic mother within the MPLA was a revolutionary mother, one who was ready to fight for the revolution with her baby on her back and a rifle on her shoulder [Image 1]. Many women in the urban centers of Luanda and Benguela [Map 1], in particular, joined the MPLA because the movement had a strong Marxist-socialist ideology.[57] OMA distinguished itself from LIMA because it viewed itself as a women's wing of a progressive movement that denounced forms of discrimination against women and one that stood for gender equality.[58] These women believed in the humanism that was to be born with the creation of the new Angolan nation. If the male nationalist leaders in the MPLA considered themselves "*O Homem Novo*/The New Man" charged with the task of leading the new nation that was yet to be born,[59] then women in OMA were "The New Woman" whose duty was to champion ideas of gender progressiveness. Women who joined the armed struggle saw themselves as belonging to the "*da grande família MPLA*/the big MPLA family,"[60] a "family" grounded in the unity of all Angolans and one that prided itself in promoting the rights of women. Throughout my interviews with both members of OMA and LIMA, my informants from OMA reiterated how their rivals were "ethnocentric, rural, and backward." This view ultimately led to divisive rather unifying politics among Angolan women years after the end of the civil war.

It is perhaps difficult to consider Angolan women's entry to the armed struggle through the trope of motherhood as agentic. Primarily because an analysis of the notion of patriotic motherhood demonstrates that war is not necessarily an opportunity for women to take on roles and identities that contradict traditional notions of femininity. Nonetheless, it would be fallacious to argue that the mobilization of women as mothers in national liberation struggles is a

disempowering experience. On the contrary, the twenty-five women I interviewed for this research were insistent that they had grown in their feelings of self-worth and empowerment through participating in the armed struggle because they saw themselves as sacrificing for a higher cause, the liberation of their country. And if, as Horace Campbell accurately points out that while "Angolan women of all races and classes have suffered from the oppression inflicted by colonialism, war and destabilization. African women have suffered disproportionately from the dislocation of rural society,"[61] then we can see why against this backdrop of centuries of racial and economic subjugation Angolan women bought into the notion of a patriotic mother as means to fight against colonialism.

The issue on whether the construct of patriotic motherhood can indeed offer women an emancipatory political identity is an ongoing debate among scholars who work in the area of militarism. For instance, African feminist scholars, Amina Mama and Margo Okazawa-Rey approach this question of women's emancipation in the context of war with skepticism by arguing that war should be conceptualized as "an extreme variant of patriarchy, a gendered regime characterized by discourses and practices that subordinate and oppress women, as well as non-dominant men, reinforcing hierarchies of class, gender, and ethnicity."[62] This assertion holds true for many women on the continent who have been mobilized through the trope of motherhood to form a formidable force in the anti-colonial struggles, and who have been used by political parties to win votes, but once the parties come to power their commitment to the question of women's liberation leaves a lot to be desired.[63]

Agency, as I use it here, is broadly understood to be more than just as a synonym for resistance or the capacity to fulfill one's own or collective interests despite the weight of socio-cultural norms. But it is also, in the words of anthropologist Saba Mahmood, "a capacity for action that specific relations of subordination create and enable."[64] Mahmood's definition is useful for thinking about how Angolan women envisioned their future and desires for personal liberation from the yoke of European colonialism based on their lived realities as members of specific ethno-linguistic, class, and cultural communities. Here, I am also reminded of feminist scholars such as Obioma Nnaemeka who posit that motherhood can be a coping strategy because "victims are also agents who can change their lives and affect other lives in radical ways."[65]

In her work on nationalism in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, Stephanie Urdang points out that women were the easiest to mobilize in anti-colonial struggles because many women hoped that national liberation "was a great opportunity for their liberation. They knew the attitudes of the party, and understood that for the first time in the history of our country, they would be able to count on political institutions to safeguard their interests."[66] But, was the MPLA, or any other nationalist movement in Angola, truly committed to the liberation of the women despite their active participation in the armed struggle as patriotic mothers?

It did not matter what movement women belonged to because in all three, the trope of motherhood was a central mobilizing tool to help bring women into the body politic of the armed struggle. Moreover, all three women's branches that were established to facilitate the mobilization of the masses operated within the patriarchal codes of the male led movements. These movements opened the doors for women to participate in the freedom struggles through the act of mothering, but the patriarchal and hierarchical nature of the movements did not provide enough leg room for the women-led movements to shape Angolan women's experiences differently or in any remarkable way. A prominent woman parliamentarian from the opposition party confirms this statement: "the few of us who got positions in the parliament to represent our constituents are at the mercy of out male counterparts. It is as though we are just there to be seen

and not be heard. I think we should do more than just wear the beautiful colors of our political parties and sing at campaign rallies. It is fight that we have to keep fighting."[67] Such sentiments are therefore not surprising given that many Angolan women I conversed with both in Luanda and Benguela expressed disillusionment with their parliamentary representatives, who they felt did little to transform the daily lives of the citizens.[68]

However, this phenomenon is not unique to Angola because a quick glance over the way most nationalist movements on the continent handled the "women question" reveals a familiar narrative of women being pushed to the back burners of freedom struggles once independence is won. African women's sense of frustration with postcolonial regimes is palpable even when left unspoken. "I know there is room for change. But it does look like the more things change the more women's lives remain the same, doesn't it?" one of the current MPLA parliamentarians quipped in an interview.[69] My interviewees' disillusionment with the state of Angolan national politics speaks to McClintock's assertion that no nation has allowed a large proportion of its women equal access to the rights and resources of the nation despite the fact that women's struggle for liberation was seen as part of the overall struggles against colonialism and capitalism.[70]

Wartime Motherhood as Productive Labor

Despite the fact that there is a paucity of sources on the subject of the experiences of Angolan forced laborers, under colonialism exclusively, working in plantations, it is undeniable that labor has always been part of the Angolan socio-political tapestry since the fifteenth century. Under the Portuguese colonial rule, the policy of land expropriation and labor extraction via forced labor was organized to satisfy the needs of the metropole and sustain the privilege of Portuguese settlers, but never to fulfill the needs of Africans. The massive influx of the Portuguese to Angola in the 1930s, whose adverse effects included economic and racial segregation, meant that a big percentage of adult African males were forced away from their homes and thus, they were separated from participating in the subsistence agricultural production.[71]

As more men were forced to work under oppressive conditions in cotton and coffee plantations for fixed lower wages, family agriculture became an exclusively women's task. In the central highlands of Angola [Map 1], in particular, women found themselves doing additional agricultural labor that had been earlier done by men. Forced labor migrancy coupled with mandatory tax payments, meager wages and forced cultivation of cash crops led to increased levels of poverty, especially among the rural population.[72]This super exploitative economic structure had a lasting impact on the family structure. For instance, one woman noted: "I never saw my father. My mother who was a domestic worker told us that my father worked on the coffee farms in the north. Sometimes we would be informed that he was in Mozambique."[73]The brutality of forced labor recruitment as a tool for labor extraction continued until the early 1960s with the onset of anti-colonial revolts. It is therefore fair to argue that in the twentieth century Angola, motherhood remained a valuable form of productive labor as women bore the cost of both social reproduction and unpaid farm work. As laboring mothers they produced and sustained the country throughout the armed struggle period.

Feminist critic bell hooks contends that the social and political history of colonial and racist subjugation of black people affects the meaning of motherhood by noting that: "Historically, black women have identified work in the context of family as humanizing labor, work that affirms their identity as women, as human beings showing love and care, the very

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gestures of humanity white supremacist ideology claimed black people were incapable of expressing."[74] Motherhood is inscribed, here, with affirmative meaning based on the historically specific context of racism and colonialism. Rather than reading it as a categorically oppressive status, motherhood becomes for women a contingent space of positive care and enacting political agency. For this reason, I contend that while all three armed struggle movements in Angola were steeply embedded in patriarchal ideologies—and there may have been obvious cases of separate spheres—there was not a "cult of domesticity" in the Euro-American sense where women were viewed as incapable and helpless. In the political economy of Angola, like elsewhere on the continent, both men and women worked long hard hours in the fields. As the war intensified, many women took on multiple duties of working the farmlands as the sole breadwinners of their families, fending for their families and the guerrilla fighters, and protecting their homes in the absence of their husbands.

Although both under colonialism and the period of anti-colonialism women labored in the fields, there is a difference in the mind-set of how they approached their agricultural labor during the armed struggle. Many women saw their wartime labor as a patriotic duty and a political act— one that called on them to support and sustain the revolution by cultivating enough food to feed the guerrillas with the hope of ending years of Portuguese colonial rule. Most women I interviewed were clear in their interviews that the forced and cheap labor under Portuguese colonialism was exploitative because this work was geared toward the production of cash crops such coffee and cotton meant to be consumed by the white Portuguese settlers in Angola and the metropole. This forced labor denied them an opportunity to engage in subsistence farming. And so, for some of them, their agricultural labor during the armed struggle was a political act of resistance against a repressive colonial agricultural policy. They affirmed that their agricultural labor enabled to provide for themselves and their brave soldiers fighting for the country's freedom.

Across the continent, there are examples of how most women embraced this idea of patriotic motherhood with zeal. For instance, in the 1960s peasant women in Eritrea took their own initiative to not only provide food and shelter to freedom fighters, but those who worked in factories also decided to pull their resources together to contribute a percentage of their monthly wages to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front/EPLF.[75] The notion of wartime motherhood as productive and political labor becomes most evident in the visual images produced by both the MPLA and UNITA during the fifteen years of the armed struggle. These images are powerful primary sources for inquiry in that they show firsthand how nationalist movements used women as working mothers to mobilize wartime efforts. Consider the images below, for example, which help highlight the significance of the women's social reproductive labor.

Image 3: UNITA women in agricultural production, circa 1973. *Source: Liga da Mulher Angolana*
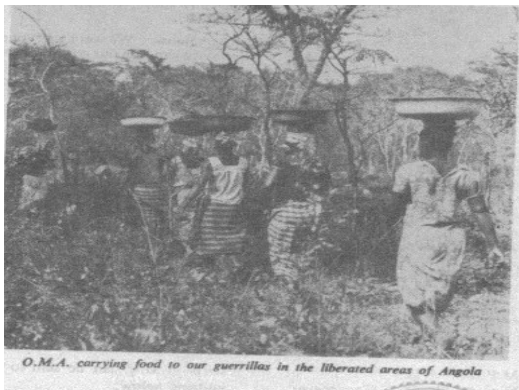
Image 4: O.M.A postcard showing women supplying food to guerrillas in the MPLA's liberated zones, circa 1970. *Source: Archives of Mario Pinto de Andrade*.

Taken in the early 1970s, image 3 depicts women in one of UNITA camps tilling the land—one of them has her baby on her back—while the three soldiers look on. According to manifesto of the women's branch of UNITA, women supported the movement in three ways: "*produzir, aprender, e combater*"/to produce, to educate, and to fight." In other words, the success of UNITA in fighting against colonialism needed educated and hardworking masses that were also able to sustain the nation through agricultural production. Therefore, women in UNITA zones were encouraged to support this revolutionary endeavor by performing well in the fields and in learning centers as teachers to the children of guerrilla soldiers in the camps.[76] The domestic realm that also included the agricultural fields was transformed into a "new" public sphere; making it the microcosm of the nation within which UNITA women participated through their reproductive and regenerative roles. Taking care of their family affairs meant producing enough food to feed their children and the guerrilla soldiers, and nursing the wounded soldiers. These women living in UNITA bases were expected to be attentive to these rear military tasks so that their husbands and sons would go to the front.

One ex-combatant noted how women in the camps were urged to devote their efforts to agricultural production as much as possible: "we were constantly working in the fields. We would organize ourselves so that while some women and girls were in the fields, others would be left in the camps to prepare food, and others would be teaching the children about the ills of colonialism. The next day we would rotate. We worked constantly. We fed our children and the

nation."[77] Even those who did not see themselves as having any allegiance to the movement, or those who were too young, could not escape the act of mothering the nation. There exists enough evidence that shows how young girls were forcefully recruited in the central highlands to help with provision of food and transportation of firewood.[78] Still too young to understand the politics of national liberation, these girls would undergo indoctrination in the learning centers where they were taught that "to win the armed struggle everyone had to participate."[79] In this case, women appropriated notions of patriotic motherhood as a refusal to the violence enacted on the bodies of their children and their country by the colonizers. In the cases of forced recruits, getting on board—rather than resisting—the idea of wartime mothering was a survival strategy: "some girls did what everybody else did because they did not want to see my mothers abused or killed," says one informant.[80]

Image 4 was taken from a 1973 newsletter issue of the Organization of Angolan Women shows women being mobilized to support the armed struggle by producing and supplying food to MPLA guerrilla fighters in the military camps. In my interviews, I encountered many women who recalled walking long distances from their homes into the bushes to supply food to soldiers. In this image women are cast as all nurturing mothers who provide nourishment to the brave sons who are on the frontlines of war. Both these images reveal that if good citizenship meant giving oneself to the struggle, then motherhood had to be taken as a kind of productive labor that entailed taking care of the soldiers.

In my other interviews with former UNITA militants, who were based in the rural and agricultural areas of the central highlands and south eastern Angola [See map 1], I realized that some of women did not have to wait for the movements to mobilize them on account of their status as mothers. In fact, I encountered women who were motivated to support the guerrilla movement because of their maternal instincts to nurture and feed "our sons." As rural women, they "were used to agricultural labor" and they therefore did not see their involvement in the fields as restrictive. According to one informant, "our movement encouraged women and children to work in the fields. But I knew this way before any of these movements were established. Somebody had to feed our children and our guerrillas. Isn't that what every mother does? That is what we would normally do, with or without war. I was a mother to my children and to the soldiers."[81] For many of these women, their participation in the armed struggle—albeit out of force or coercion—certainly did not preclude them from having children, and so their motherhood was both productive and political labor.

At least ten out of the twenty-five women I interviewed who self-identified as being active supporters of UNITA during the armed struggle, viewed their "traditional" and rural upbringing as a source of pride. These women distinguished themselves from women in the MPLA who they chided as having very little "appreciation of real African cultures and values."[82] Listening to these accounts, one may be tempted to dismiss women in the UNITA camps as reproducing the pervasive retrogressive gender ideologies advocated for by the movement's leaders. However, these accounts reveal an important aspect of how rural women living under a repressive colonial regime considered motherhood as a key area of their self-realization and recognition. For instance, asked if she was concerned that only men went to the frontlines while women were left in the camps to cook, one interviewee responded like a true UNITA combatant, "*não, nunca*! I am a mother and I fight with my baby on my back and hoe in my hand. I would rather break my back producing food to feed our guerrillas than working for the white man."[83] Another former member of the MPLA explained that the movement gave her an opportunity to grow in her self-worth as a mother and a citizen: "I am glad I got a chance to contribute to the

struggle, I may not have been a guerrilla, but I was happy taking care of our soldiers, and teaching the children who were sent to the bases in Huambo [Map 1] about the evils of colonialism."[84]

Did these women understand or were they even bothered by the fact that motherhood is often presumed so parochial that there is no place for it in national politics? Although this question is loaded with western assumptions, it also gets at the complexity of their oppression. What is clear is that given the simple fact that these women were tired of living under dehumanizing conditions as a result of the yoke of colonialism, many of them welcomed with enthusiasm the proposal by their nationalist leaders that mothering was productive and a political activity. The accounts above by my interviewees confirm that these women felt validated as political subjects because their act of mothering was considered a vital contribution to the country's freedom struggle.

"Our tears have never dried up": Women and the Politics of (National) Bereavement

While narratives of women militants demonstrate how the motivation to join the armed struggle differed depending on an individual's personal experiences, more so, evidence suggests that many women supported the war efforts out of their desire to protect their loved ones and to defend their country. This positionality may also have meant the need to avenge the humiliation and the death of their loved ones. Writing about the history of freedom struggles in Angola means acknowledging the history of Angolan women as a long study in mourning. It means coming to terms with the fact that since the late 1500s,[85] the condition of life in Angola has always been one of suffering.

The fifteen years of the armed struggle is part of the country's long history dominated by women's collective emotions of rage and grief. While many Angolan women mourned the losses of their husbands, fathers, and sons to the repressive colonial regime, others waited in vain for their loved ones to return from various concentration camps. Veena Das in her work on the "anthropology of pain," tackles the question of "whether pain may be seen as providing the possibility of a new relationship, the beginning of a language game rather than its end, or whether it destroys the sense of community with the Other by destroying the capacity to communicate?"[86]Taking a cue from Das, I argue that there is both a personal and political utility to the sharing of pain and rage. A decade of colonial violence and racialized subjugation is an avenue for activating a collective memory of Angolans as a people.

A collective remembrance that ensures the masses do not forget the atrocities of the Portuguese colonizers, and in turn take up arms and fight for a new future. And so for Angolan women who had faced multiple levels of oppression under colonialism, their pain was not an end in itself because it fuelled their activism. Their grief and anger was as personal as it was political in the sense that they felt compelled to join the anti-colonial struggle as a response to many centuries of sexual violence endured by generations of Angolan women under the Portuguese colonial policy of lustropicalism which included rape. One informant expressed her anger toward the Portuguese police stating that, "we were objects to the colonizers. We worked as domestics in their homes…[we] broke our backs laboring in the plantations. But even worse many of us were raped. At the age of seventeen, I was raped by one PIDE officer. Why... I refused to disclose where my father was hiding. At that point I was filled with anger and ready to die for this country in every way I could. I wanted to see these animals out of my country."[87] Many women tapped into their rage and grief as useful anti-colonial tools, using their collective emotions and vulnerabilities as a call to action. In this vein, rather than analyze loss, grief and

rage as a negative qualities, we should instead as some theorists suggest view these emotions "as productive rather than pathological, abundant rather than lacking, social rather than solipsistic, militant rather than reactionary."[88] Moreover, when Sara Ahmed, in her work on *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, poses: "How does pain enter politics?"[89] she is gesturing toward the idea that emotions are windows into not just the social and material world, but they are sites of political work and potential sites of activism. In the case of Angolan women, their grief during the armed struggle had a politics that shaped the armed struggle.

Rage, loss, and grief have been powerful tools for women's individual and collective activism throughout history and across many nations. From the 1900s Abba women's war staged by market women in Nigeria to protest against the British colonialists imposition of taxes, to Mamie Till's mourning and her choice to publicly display the mutilated body of her son Emmet Till in 1955, to the 1990 Women in Black in Israel who harnessed their rage to protest against the state's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the 2002 Liberian women's peace movement denouncing the dictatorial regime that caused the massive deaths of their loved ones, the cycle of violence has produced a particular "gendered" form of activism. In all these examples, women set loose their suppressed pain and rage, and used their emotions to speak against oppressive, racist, and colonizing powers; demonstrating that mourning and activism are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, the image of the grieving mother and the role they play in mobilization of masses around social justice issues strikes a cord even to this day. For instance, the July 2016 U.S National Democratic Convention when nine African American mothers, who lost their children at the hands of trigger happy police took to the podium wearing black dresses with red roses to show their support for their presidential candidate, serves to remind us of the connection between women, (national) bereavement, and activism.[90] In her novel work, "The Uses of Anger," Audre Lorde reminds us that "every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change."[91]

Lorde's remarks speak to the heart of most Angolan women such Rodeth Gil, whose narrative was cited in the introduction of this chapter. In her interview Rodeth did not shy away for noting that "I had so much anger in me directed at the Portuguese colonialists for the many decades of domination and subjugation they had subjected our people to. The death of my comrades at the hands of the PIDE gave me a stronger determination to defend my people and my country from the colonialists." I am cautious not to read Rodeth's rage and desire for revenge toward her oppressors as a characterization of women who, having lost their loved ones, have lost their raison d'être and are therefore willing to risk their lives for the defense of their country. Instead of conceiving Angolan women's anger as a response to a negatively perceived experience, I see the utility in such narratives to highlight the embodiment of rage and national grief is a political act. This idea of rage and mourning as activism is made clear in another account by an MPLA ex-combatant who explained to me that she participated because she was angry about the treatment of her father and brother in the detention camps. She recalls:

> my mother and I joined other revolutionaries to distribute pamphlets in the bairros here in Luanda. She was pregnant at the time, and I was only fifteen years old. My mother told the PIDE that she would rather die than lose another son at the hands of the Portuguese. Unfortunately, my brother died at childbirth…sadly the same day my older brother was shot by the PIDE after his release from prison. We were so angry. My mother lost it. She

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left one day promising to go kill "those Portuguese animals" but she never returned. We looked for her in various prisons but we never found her. The anger I felt toward the Portuguese drove me to join other guerrillas in Congo-Brazzaville. This was around 1971/2. My mother never returned because the police killed her after she was accused of strangling an officer she suspected shot my brother. War makes you do crazy things.[92]

 Even though I did not encounter substantial poignant accounts as the one above during my fieldwork, narratives of rage and bereavement were a recurring feature during my fieldwork. Committed to the fight to end colonial domination, vengeful mothers are characterized as living a contradictory life. On the one hand, their lives are seen to be meaningless after losing their loved ones at the hands of the colonial regime, and on the other, the very loss of their loved ones sparks in them a revolutionary spirit allowing them to risk it all for the absolute freedom of their country. A mother's grief over her loved ones is an extension of her mourning for the nation. As some scholars have pointed out, these women "use their motherhood to kill after their motherhood has been killed."[93] To this end, I choose to read the grief and rage of my informants as an impetus for their political action and a tool that enabled them to pursue anti-colonial resistance.

The gendered politics of bereavement are evident in the Angolan national iconography, which has the ability to arouse and appeal to the hearts of the people. In these visuals, we see women enter this national imaginary as symbolic bearers of the nation's grief and people to be protected. Such iconographic representations of public mourning reveal the relationship between women, public memory, and grief. That is to say that when women are called upon to grieve over the sons they sacrificed to war efforts, this becomes a political act. The image of the mourning mother becomes the language of grief and the voice of mothers who too, yearn to share in the collective grief and belong to the nation's public memory. Images of women mourning and remembering their national heroes in war or post wartime remind us what Elizabeth Wood rightfully notes that "the values of remembering the war are embedded in the actions of remembering it," and that these images are useful "for the top leadership to deploy because their mythic qualities tend to foster cohesion, a quality that is crucial in a society that has been tremendously fragmented..."[94] Take for instance the portrait below:

Image 5: Mourning the death of President Neto in September 1979. *Source: Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto Memorial, Luanda.*

This image shows the portrait of the founding president, Dr. Agostinho António Neto

who passed away in September 1979. When you redirect your gaze from the larger than life portrait of President Neto hovering over his people, you are struck by the grief stricken faces of two women on the foreground. These faces of women—in—pain, of the weeping subaltern subject underscore the crucial role women play as chief mourners in the narratives of war and nation.[95] In the First Congress of the Organization of Angolan Women held in March 1983 in Luanda, the members commemorated and described the "irreparable loss of their Immortal Guide, the Founder of the Nation" as a "shattering event for Angolan women." The portrait of the woman mourner highlights a gender dynamic to the experience of (national) bereavement in wartime. Angolan women's shared experience of loss publicly positions them as heroic mothers of martyrs and wholeheartedly supported their sons' sacrifices. In the public mourning of fallen state heroes, such as in the funeral of president Neto, we are reminded of the performance of mourning. Public mourning in the image above situates mourning as a "type of performative that not only exposes mechanisms of state regulation but also reveals the ways in which state control of bodies."[96]

Additionally, the centrality of Angolan women—as—grieving mothers in the politics of (national) bereavement and wartime mobilization is best epitomized in the 1960s poetry of Angolan nationalists. Consider these words from the poem "*Adeus hora da largada*" ("*Farewell at the hour of parting*") written by President Neto:

> My Mother
> (all black mothers whose sons have gone)
> you taught me to wait and hope
> as you hoped in difficult hours
> but life
> killed in me that mystic hope
> I do not wait now
> I am he who is awaited
> It is I my Mother
> hope is us
> Your children
> Gone for a faith that sustains life.[97]

Motherhood in this poem serves as a symbol of national grief, resistance, persistence, protection, hope, solace, and strength. As the founding president of the nation, Neto in this poem keeps intact the gender roles of women as mothers who sacrifice their sons and still mourn their loss to the cause of freedom struggles. In his reference to "My mother", the assumption is that Neto's "mother"—if we understand her in the spirit of post World War II Pan-Africanism on the continent— is a cosmic "all black Mother" who is Angolan, African and diasporic. This "all black mother" personifies the black continent that has had to endure "in difficult hours" the ills of colonialism including rape, plunder, and dispossession. Yet, her sons still look upon her for strength and hope. Literary scholar Inocência Matta observes that the salient feature in the nationalist poetry of Neto and other Lusophone African poets during the revolutionary era is the trope of Africa "as spiritual, material, and cultural mother whose children/land have been taken away from her."[98] Neto's mother is, therefore, a mother who embodies the constant state of widowhood and childlessness as her husband and children are always gone for the sake of the armed struggle. But, amidst this despair she always has to remain hopeful for the sake of her departed children and the nation. Without hope her humanity is chipped away.

Following intensified repressive acts by the secret police during the late 1960s, Angolans from all walks of life were arrested for their anti-colonial activism, and some would be tortured and die in detention camps. This repression evoked fear and anger in many Angolan mothers prompting them to take action. Rather than sit back and wait for their loved ones to be released, many mothers frequented the jails and penitentiary offices, demanding the release of their children and husbands. For example, Justino Pinto de Andrade, a well known former MPLA militant says that he was only able to survive the torture in the detention camps because of his mother:

> She never failed to come visit my brother and I in prison. Not even once! She came to the prison every single day and when the police refused to let her see us she would return the next day. She would weep in front of the prisons. Sometimes she would call the police names. That is how militant she was. The tears in her eyes every time she saw us were tears of sadness, anger, and hope. She never stopped crying for us because she knew the colonizer's days were numbered.[99]

To reiterate, it is important that we do not analyze grieving mothers as women only driven by maternal emotions and familial love. Such an analysis presents a lopsided view which considers women as exclusively sentimental—and therefore apolitical.

This is central because as Butler aptly states, "Many people think that grief is privatizing, that it returns us to a solitary situation and is, in that sense, depoliticizing. But I think it furnishes a sense of political community."[100] The depoliticization of grief is a perspective that denies the fact that in the context of liberation struggles, these mothers have legitimate political grievances and they have the capacity for political action motivated by an ideological belief in a larger cause. In the words of one of my informants, "There is no Angolan mother who has not shed tears for this country, for our departed children and husbands. Some of us are still mourning for this country. Our tears have never dried up. You can't see our tears, because we cry in our hearts. We laugh, but if you pay attention to our laughter, you can feel our pain…our grief."[101] In this testimony, the repetition of the pronoun "our" especially the phrase "our grief" demonstrates the extent to which grief gives the impetus to public remembrance. If we view narratives of grief as subversive acts, then there is a possibility that testimonies such as those of my interviewees are capable of propelling political changes because as Butler frames it, "We are undone by each other. And if we're not, we are missing something."[102] In this case, mourning becomes integral to coping with loss as well as making social transformation possible after violence.

Therefore, to say that Angolan women's narratives are laced with memories of grief would be an understatement. Most of the women who I interviewed remembered the revolutionary period with a great sense of loss. I argue that the anger that Angolan women felt at the height of the armed struggle directed at the Portuguese colonizers, the grief over their lost loved ones, and the rage many of them continue to feel to this day as they voice their frustrations and discontent with the postcolonial state; is a way of transforming grief into grievance. Or, as Ann Cheng states that this kind of grief pushes an individual from "suffering injury to speaking out against it."[103] With the fifteen years of the armed struggle against Portuguese rule and the twenty-seven years of the bloody civil war between the MPLA regime and the UNITA rebel group, Angolan women became the country's chief mourners as their bodies continued to express agony over their dead nationalist leaders, soldiers, and disappeared loved ones. As Elshtain observes in her work on the gendered politics of bereavement, "Men fight as avatars of a nation's sanctioned violence. Women work and weep and sometimes protest within the frame

of discursive practices that turn one out, militant mother and pacifist protestor alike, as the collective "other" to the male warrior."[104]

Conclusion

The long and complex history of the Angolan armed struggle offers an enriching field of inquiry for feminist researchers because the nuanced nature of the national liberation struggles, which involved three competing nationalist movements, makes it quite difficult to simply gloss over Angolan women's wartime roles. There was no one way that women in Angola contributed to the People's War since their experiences and levels of involvement varied depending on various factors including what movement one belonged to and an individual's ethno-linguistic background. This chapter was concerned with the question that since Angolan men were charged with the responsibility of defending the nation as soldiers, how were women mobilized to support the freedom struggles? To address to this question, I have demonstrated that despite the fact that the MPLA, the FNLA, and UNITA viewed themselves as three distinct movements fighting a common enemy, all the movements were faced with the challenge of mobilizing the masses, in particular appealing to women to join the struggle.

I focused primarily on the trope of motherhood as a mobilization strategy in the armed struggle in which women's visibility in the armed struggle facilitated through their re/productive labor roles and their assigned role as chief mourners of the nation. Angolan women were mobilized to enter the body politic of the armed struggle in very gendered ways through their quintessential and less "political" roles as mothers of the nation. I shed light on how the women-led movements, that were created to mobilize women, may not have unified all Angolan women because each organization was established to be a mouthpiece of the larger movements. However, through these organizations many Angolan women viewed themselves as historical actors in the freedom struggles. Although the patriarchal and masculinist space of the armed struggle did not allow women to take the same place at the table of national politics as their male counterparts, these women appropriated the trope of motherhood to actively support and shape the liberation struggle.

The primary goal of this chapter was to showcase how the trope of motherhood allowed women to view themselves as vital contributors to the freedom struggles, thereby becoming political subjects. This is an analysis that has been overlooked as recent research on war and militarization has heavily focused on women's role as combatants in the male-centered sphere of war: the subject of chapter three.

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[1] The rise of anti-colonial resistance also witnessed an increased level of involvement of different protestant churches (most notably, the Baptist, the Methodists, and the Evangelicals) in challenging the Portuguese colonial regime. Besides providing scholarships to many young Angolans to pursue education abroad, these churches also played a huge role in the spreading revolutionary consciousness of the youth such as Rodeth Gil who used the church as a place to engage different ideas. Some scholars point out that for many young revolutionaries who felt "silenced" by the regime, the churches offered a space for them to understand and to articulate their social conditions under the repressive colonial regime. Although acutely aware of the masculinist nature of the church and its leadership, Rodeth saw these churches as sites for spiritual nourishment, educational progress, and anti-colonial mobilization of the masses. See Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa:

Verso da História, 2015; Ruy Llera Blanes, (2011), "Unstable Biographies, The Ethnography of Memory and Historicity in an Angolan Prophetic Movement", in *History and Anthropology*, 22 (1): 93-119; Paulo Faria, *The Post-War Angola: Public Sphere, Political Regime, and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.

[2] Although concrete data on the average age for girls who got married at a young age during the armed struggle is hard to come by, we can estimate that many girls, like Rodeth, got married at a tender age of fifteen. Some scholars refer to these girls who married early in the context of war to follow their husbands in the guerrilla camps as "camp followers." See Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana, *Where Are the Girls? Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their Lives During and After War*, Montreal: International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2004; Harry West, "Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of FRELIMO's 'Female Detachment,'" in *Children and Youth on the Front Line: Ethnography, Armed Conflict and Displacement*, ed. Jo Boyden and Joanna de Berry. New York: Berghahn, 2004; Vivi Stavrou. *Breaking the Silence: Girls Forcibly Involved in the Armed Struggle in Angola*. Montreal: International Centre for Human Rights and Development, 2005.

[3] Interview with Rodeth Makina Gil, October 16, 2015 in Avalade, Luanda. Rodeth was the only woman politico-military instructor at Center for Revolutionary Instruction (C.I.R) center in her zone on the eastern front. The movement established centers in different regions dedicated to the political and military training of guerrillas. Rodeth is currently the chair of the women's parliamentary group and she holds a senior rank as a commissioner in the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA).

[4] Nira Yuval-Davis and Flora Anthias (eds). *Women-Nation-State*. London: Macmillan, 1989; K. Jayawardena. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. London: Zed Press, 1986; Chandra Mohanty, A. Russo, and L. Tobes (eds). *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indiana: Bloomington, 1991.

[5] Given the deep-seated ethno-linguistic and regional divisions that characterized the formation of anti-colonial movements, some Angolans expressed their allegiance to one nationalist movement over the other for fear of being viewed as traitors. For most Angolans, particularly those living in the Central highlands of the country, joining one movement over the other was a strategy of survival. See Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola 1975-2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

[6] During both the independence and the post-colonial periods, paternal metaphors were used to refer to a cross-section of nationalist leaders such as Kwame Nkurumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Leopold Senghor, Agostinho Neto, among others. In Angola, Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA was commonly referred to as "*O Mais Velho*/The Elder." For more on patriotic fatherhood as a conceptual framework see Michael G. Schatzberg. *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family, Food*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

[7] Patricia Hill Collins, "The Meaning of Motherhood in Black Culture and Black Mother-Daughter Relationships." *Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women* 4, 2 (1987): 2-10; Patricia Hill Collins. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 1991; Stanlie M. James. 1993. "Mothering: A Possible Black Feminist Link to Social Transformation." in *Theorizing Black Feminisms: The Visionary Pragmatism of Back Women*. Stanlie M. James and Abena Busia. New York: Routledge. 32-44.

[8] ibid.

[9] Interview with Karla on September 20, 2015 in Maianga.

[10] K. Slattery and A. Garner. "Mother as mother and mother as citizen: Mothers of combat soldiers on national network news," *Journalism Studies*, 13, (2011): 88.

[11] Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon, 1995):119-23). Also see Nancy Chodorow. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; Mary O'Brien. *The Politics of Reproduction*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. Andrea O'Reilly. (ed). *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Rich's 'Of Woman Born'*. New York: SUNY, 2004; Adrienne Rich. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London: Virago, 1986 [1976]).

[12] Stanlie M. James and Abena Busia, Abena. (eds.) *Theorizing Black Feminisms: The Visionary Pragmatism of Black Women*. London & New York: Routledge, 1993; Obiama Nnaemeka, *The Politics of (M)Othering: Womanhood, Identity, and Resistance in African Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2005; Iina Soiri. *The Radical Motherhood: Namibian Women's Independence Struggle*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 1996; Patricia Hill Collins, "The Meaning of motherhood in Black Culture and Black Mother-Daughter Relationships,"in *Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers & Daughters*. (eds. Bell-Scott, Patricia, Guy-Sheftall, Beverly, et al., Boston: Beacon Press, 1991: 42-60.

[13] Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (eds.). *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*. New York:Routledge, 1994:13.

[14] Adrienne Rich. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Norton, 1976; Anne Oakley, 'Feminism, Motherhood and Medicine – Who Cares?', in J. Mitchell & A. Oakley, *What is Feminism?* (1986), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 127-150.

[15] For decades feminist scholars and activists across nations have noted the centrality of motherhood in defining women, and many have continued to critique how this conflation of motherhood with womanhood ultimately leads to various exclusionary practices such as limited access to economic resources, participation in public roles, and overall devaluing women's status. See Margo Milleret. *Latin American Women On/In Stages* (SUNNY Press, 2012); Ifi Amadiume. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed Press, 1987; Oyeronke Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

[16] Barbara Steinson, "The Mother Half of Humanity: American Women in the Peace and Preparedness Movements in World War I." In *Women, War, and Revolutions*, Berkin, Carol and Lovett, Clara eds. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980: 259.

[17] Alicia Decker. *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014.

18 Charles Payne, 2009, "Men Led, but Women Organized: Movement Participation of Women in the Mississippi Delta," in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers*, ed. Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson.

[19] The point here is not to draw direct parallels or essentialize black women's lives and their activism in civil rights movements with the experiences of Angolan women fighting Portuguese colonialism.

[20] Michelle Wright. *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004: 124.

[21] There are several scholars who point out the androcentric nature of black freedom struggles across the diaspora. Paying closer attention to black women's voices during the twentieth century, these scholars highlight the creative strategies women deployed in male-centric movements. See Taylor, Ula. "Intellectual Pan-African Feminists: Amy Ashwood-Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey," in *Time Longer than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850-1950, eds*. Charles M. Payne and Green, Adam (NYU Press, 2003); Carole Davies. *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*. London: Duke University Press, 2008; Stephanie Urdang. *Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau*. New York, 1979; Erik S McDuffie. *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011; Cheryl Higashida. *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black left, 1945-1995*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

[22] Gisela Geisler. *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating Autonomy, Incorporation, and Representation*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika Institute, 2004; Tetrault, Mary Ann. *Women and Revolution in Africa, Asia, and the New World*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994; Aili Mari Tripp. *Women in Politics in Uganda*. Oxford, Kampala, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000a; Margot Badran. *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*. Oneworld, 2009.

[23] Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family." *Feminist Review*, No.44, (Summer 1993): 62.

[24] Linda Heywood, "Angola and the Violent Years 1975– 2008: Civilian Casualties." *Portuguese Studies Review* 19.1– 2 (2011): 311– 32.

[25] Rather than view the armed struggle in the Portuguese colonies from a solely African perspective, the peasant uprisings and turn to arms should be analyzed in the context of the broader nationalist revolution projects that were going on in Asia and Latin America during the twentieth century.

[26] Patrick Chabal et al. *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*. London: Hurst, 2002; Edward George. *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991 - From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale*. New York: Frank Cass, 2005; Piero Gleijeses. *Conflicting Missions – Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959 – 1976*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

[27] See Associação Tchiweka de Documentação, *1961: Memória de um Ano Decisivo*. Luanda: Edições de Angola, June 2015: 13. Historian Basil Davidson notes that there were series of events that catalyzed the armed struggle including: the killing of thirty activists who were protesting the arrest of Agostinho Neto, as well as the brutal suppression of the uncoordinated "Maria" insurrection in Luanda led by a militant Christian sect in 1960. Basil Davidson. *In the Eye of the Storm*. New Jersey: Doubleday, 1972; Marcum, John, *The Angolan Revolution: Anatomy of an Explosion (1950-1962)*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978a.

[28] The Portuguese secret police force known as the International Police for the Defense of the State/ PIDE had been established in Angola in the late 1950s by the Salazar regime to monitor the subversive activities among Portuguese settlers. But once the national liberation movements turned to armed insurrections to challenge the colonialists, the secret police shifted its attention from the settlers to the liberation movements forcing many Angolans fled to exile in Congo to avoid detentions.

[29] The famous concentration camp where many "hardcore" Angolan nationalists were detained and tortured was the Tarafal camp in the Island of Cape Verde. Others were sent to São Nicolau prison that is situated in Moçamedes, a harsh region in the southern part of Angola.

[30] The term "guerrilla" is used in this dissertation to refer to any member of an organized non-state group (in this case UNITA and the MPLA) who received military training and used clandestine methods to challenge the colonial regime's control of political, economic, geographical, and human resources. Guerrillas did not necessarily have to fight on the frontlines because guerrilla warfare, unlike modern/conventional warfare, relies on clandestine activities and often times there are no clear boundaries between the frontlines and the rear.

[31] See for example, Assis Malaquis. *Rebels and Robbers: Violence in Postcolonial Angola,* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika Institute, 2007; John Marcum. *The Angolan Revolution: Anatomy of an Explosion 1950-1962*. Cambridge*:* MIT Press, 1978a; Linda Heywood. *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present*. Boydell and Brewer, 2000; Inge Brinkman, "War and Identity in Angola: Two Case Studies," *Lusotopie*, pp. 195 - 221, 2003.

[32] Angola has four main ethno-linguistic groups namely the Ovimbundu (the largest group) speak Umbundu, followed by Mbundu who speak Kimbundu. The Mbundu although widely spoken by many Angola is largely concentrated around Luanda. The third group is the Bakongo who speak Kikongo and they are mostly restricted to the northern province that borders the Congo. The other group is the Tchokwe. During the revolution period there were: 2 million strong Ovimbundu in the central highlands; the 1.3 million Mbundu in the north-central region; and the 400,000 Bakongo in the northwest. See John Marcum. *The Angolan Revolution: Anatomy of an Explosion (1950-1962)*. Cambridge*:* MIT Press, 1978a.

[33] Ricardo Soares de Oliveira. *Magnificent and Beggarland: Angola Since the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015; Edward George. *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991 - From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale*. New York: Frank Cass, 2005; Piero Gleijeses. *Conflicting Missions – Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959 –1976*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

[34] From the Digital Archives of Mario Pinto de Andrade, (1969), "UNITA - II Congress (Freeland of Angola - Central Base), August 24th-30th 1969", CasaComum.org, Disponível HTTP: http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_83925 (2016-10-2)

[35] See CDIH, eds. *História do MPLA*, (Luanda: Centro de Documentação e Investigação Histórica do MLPA, 2008). Vols. 1&2.

[36] Assigning women subordinate roles in nationalist movements was commonplace across the continent. See for example: Iina Soiri. *The Radical Motherhood. Namibian Women's Independence Struggle*. Uppsala, 1996; Muriel Tillinghast and Patricia McFadden, "Women And National Liberation Movements," *Yale Journal of Law and Liberation*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 1 ((1991); Frene Ginwala, 'ANC Women. Their Strength in the Struggle', *Work in Progress*, 45, (1986); Sheila Meintjes, 'Gender, Nationalism and Transformation: Differences and Communality in South Africa's Past and Present' in Wilford, Rick and Robert L. Miller (eds), *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism. The Politics of Transition*. London and New York 1998; Stephanie Urdang. *And They Still Dance: Women, War, and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique*. London: Earthscan, 1989.

[37] Divisions over race, ethnicity, and class were a defining feature of the Portuguese colonial administration for decades. These divisions, however, continued to be salient throughout the decolonization period in Angola. The officia racial hierarchies included *branco/a* (white

Portuguese), *mestiço/a* (a person of mixed heritage), *assimilados*, and the rest of the indigeneous population. The distinction between the indigenous population and the *assimilados* was arbitrary, However, unlike the "other black Africans," the *assimilados* were Angolans who earned the right to Portuguese citizenship after fulfilling certatin conditions including fluency in Portuguese, acceptance of Christianity, ability to use exude certain etiquette such as eating with a knife and fork.

[38] Interview with Barbeitos in Luanda on 9 September 2015. Also see Christine Hatzky. *Cubans in Angola: South-South Cooperation and Transfer of Knowledge, 1976-1991*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.

[39] The MPLA in 1968 opened four military regions across the country, which included the 1st region (in the districts of Zaire, Uíge, Luanda, and Cuanza-Norte), the 2nd region (in Cabinda), 3rd region (in the districts of Moxico and Cuando-Cubango), 4th region (in Malanje and Lunda), the 5th region (in Cuanza-Sul, Benguela, Huambo and Bié), and 6th(in Huíla, Moçâmedes and Cunene).

[40] As the Cold War proxy wars intensified in Angola in the late 1970s and the 1980s, many pro-Western leaning politicians, especially the political class in Washington admired and praised Savimbi for his brilliance and charismatic leadership. On the hand, he was equally demonized at home by the MPLA as well as Cuba and the Soviet Union for being an opportunistic and colluding with the Portuguese and the South African apartheid regime. More so, he was seen as barbaric when it was reported that he ordered the executions of any members of his party who publicly disagreed with him. See Fred Bridgland. *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*. London: Coronet, 1988; Stephen Weigert. *Angola: A Modern Military History, 1961-2002*. Springer, 2011.

[41] David Birmingham. *A Short History of Modern Angola*. Oxford University Press, Feb 1, 2016; Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola 1975-2002*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Justin Pearce," Contesting the past in Angolan politics" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41 (1): 103-119, January 2015; Justin Pearce, "Control, politics and identity in the Angolan civil war" *African Affairs*, 111 (444) pp 442-465, July 2012; Eric Morier-Genoud. *Sure Road? Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 2012.

[42] No single factor can be used to explain why Portugal took longer than the British and the French to grant independence to its colonies. Nonetheless, many scholars note that Salazar's dictatorial regime and its economic policies made it impossible for Portugal to set free its colonies because the colonial regime conceived the colonies as provinces of the metropole. See Frederick Cooper. 2014. *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto eds. 2015. *The Ends of European Colonial Empires: Cases and Comparisons*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan Publishers.

[43] Fred Bridgland. *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*. London: Coronet, 1988; Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola 1975-2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

[44] UN reports estimate that this civil war culminated in 350,000 deaths and 60, 000 refugees and internally displaced persons. See Margaret Anstee. *Orphan of the Cold war: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process, 1992-93*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996: 9.

[45] See Assis Malaquis. *Rebels and Robbers: Violence in Postcolonial Angola*. Uppsala: Nordiska afrika Institute, 2007: 11.

[46] Anne McClintock, 'No Longer in a Future Heaven: Nationalism, Gender and Race,' *Transitions,* No. 51, (1991): 104-123

[47] See Paula Giddings. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984.

[48] This subtitle is inspired by the above-cited work of U.S historian, Paula Giddings.

[49] Some recent insightful and comprehensive studies done on the role of Angolan women in the armed struggle include Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015; Marissa Moorman. *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008.

[50] Deolinda Rodrigues. *Cartas da Langidila e Outros Documentos*. Luanda: Nzila, 2004; D. Rodrigues. *Diário de um Exílio Sem Regresso*. Luanda: Nzila, 2003.

[51] Interview with Sofia 9 January 2016, in Lisbon.

[52] Savimbi himself is reported to have had at least four wives with several children. His fighters were encouraged, if not forced, to marry and have children. The movement's traditionalist approach to family values ensured that family became one of the most central social units in the UNITA camps. See Fred Bridgland. *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*. London: Coronet, 1988; Inge Brinkman "War, Witches and Traitors: Cases from the MPLA's Eastern Front in Angola (1966– 1975)", *Journal of African History* 44, 2, (2003): 303– 25; Margarida Paredes, *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015; Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola 1975-2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

[53] Interview with executive member of LIMA on December 15, 2016 in Lisbon.

[54] Interview with Valeria on October 23, 2015 in Benguela.

[55] Fred Bridgland. *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*. London: Coronet, 1988.

[56] Interview with OMA executive member.

[57] The gendered history of the Angolan armed struggle shows that many of the women who joined the struggle as members of the MPLA –or who were active in its women's wing, were part of the new generation of urban African populations—mostly the *assimilados* and *mestiços*— who had developed lifestyles that were neither strictly "traditional" nor westernized enough. See Renowned historian of Angola, Christine Messaint makes a distinction between the "new *assimilados*" Angolans who emerged in the period after WWII and the earlier 1900 "ancient *assimilados*." The former unlike the latter, she argues were more connected with their African roots and culture than they were about the Portuguese culture. Messiant, Christine, 1994, "Angola, les voies de l'ethnisation et de la décomposition. I. De la guerre à la paix (1975– 1991): le conflit armé, les interventions internationales et le peuple angolais", Lusotopie, 155– 210. Also see Dias, Jill R., 1984, "Uma Questão de Identidade: Respostas Intelectuais às Transformações Económicas no Seio da Elite Criola de Angola Portuguesa entre 1870 e 1930", Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos I, 61– 94.

[58] Because of its ideology of equating women's liberation to national liberation, the MPLA also encouraged women to join men in the "bushes" as guerrilla combatants. Although not all women who joined the guerrillas in the "bushes" fought on the frontlines, those who joined had been members of the citizens-militia group, People's Defense Organization/ *Organização de Defesa*

Popular (ODP). The number of women combatants increased in 1974 following the coup in Portugal. While there is no evidence that reveals how women were recruited as combatants, my informants explained that anybody could join as long as they could prove that they were "above fifteen years of age." Many of those that joined the bases as combatants did so for patriotic reasons while others wanted to prove, as Margarida Paredes notes, that they could do what a man could do. Also see Organization of Angolan Women (OMA). *Angolan Women Building the Future: From National Liberation to Women's Emancipation*. London and Luanda: Zed Books, 1984; Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015.

[59] This notion of "newness" resonates with Black folks across the diaspora. From Marcus Garvey to Frantz Fanon, black intellectuals and nationalists in the twentieth century black freedom struggles were always seeking to become "new."

[60] On "da família MPLA," also see Paredes, Margarida, "Deolinda Rodrgigues, da Família Metodista á Família MPLA, o papel da Cultura na Política", *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, (2011) 20.

[61] Horace Campbell, "Angolan Woman and the Electoral Process in Angola, 1992," *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1993): 23-63

[62] Amina Mama and Margo Okazawa-Rey, "Militarism, Conflict and Women's Activism in the Global Era: Challenges and Prospects for Women in Three West African Contexts," *Feminist Review* 101 (2001): 99. Also see Alicia Decker. *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014; Tanya Lyons. *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*. Trenton: New York University Press, 2004.

[63] Gisela Geisler. *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating Autonomy, Incorporation, and Representation*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika Institute, 2004; Muriel Tillinghast and Patricia McFadden, 1991, "Women and National Liberation Movements," Yale Journal of Law and Liberation: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 1.; Gisela Geisler, 1997, 'Sisters under the Skin: Women and the Women's League in Zambia', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 25, 1, 1987; Susan Geiger. *TANU Women. Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955– 1965*. Portsmouth, Oxford, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam: Heinemann, 1997.

[64] Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival," *Cultural Anthropology*, 6 (2001): 210.

[65] Obiama Nnaemeka. *The Politics of (M)Othering: Womanhood, Identity, and Resistance in African Literature*. New York: Routledge, 1997:3.

[66]Stephanie Urdang. *Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979: 124.

[67] Interview with a UNITA representative in parliament on November 3, 2015.

[68] According to data by the Inter-Parliamentary Union group, Angola women hold thirty seven per cent parliamentary seats. This is one of the highest in the southern African region. http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmn08-e.pdf

[69] Interview with Ilaria on November 15, 2015.

[70] Anne McClintock. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995:10.

[71] A. Isaacman. *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961*. David Philip Publishers, 1996; Anne Pitcher, "From Coercion To

Incentive: The Portuguese Colonial Cotton Regime in Angola and Mozambique, 1946-1974" In *The Social History of Cotton in Colonial Africa*, Isaacman and Roberts, Eds. Portsmouth 1994; Christine Messiant, "Angola, the Challenge of Statehood" in Birmingham & Martin eds. *History of Central Africa*. Longman, 1998; Frederick Cooper. "Conditions analogous to slavery: Imperialism and free labor ideology in Africa" in *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Post-Emancipation Societies*, ed. F. Cooper, T. C. Holt and R. J. Scott. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

[72] Linda Heywood. *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present*. Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2000; J.C Miller. *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988; M. Moutinho. *Indígena no Pensamento Colonial Português*. Lisboa: Edições Universitários Lusófonas, 2000; R. Pélissier, *Les Guerres Crises: Résistance et Révoltes en Angola, 1845–1941*. Orgeval, Pélissier, 1977.

[73] Interview with Maria, 10 September 2015 in Luanda.

[74] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center,* Boston: South End Press, 2000: 133.

[75] Tekle Woldemikael, "Political Mobilization and Nationalist Movements: The Case of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front," *Africa Today* 38, no. 2 (1991): 31–42; Victoria Bernal, "Equality to Die For? Women Guerilla Fighters and Eritrea's Cultural Revolution," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 23, no. 2 (2000): 61–76; Eritrea Women's Association, Women and Revolution in Eritrea [pamphlet] (Rome: Eritrea Women's Association, 1979).

[76] Since guerrilla warfare during the armed struggle called for engaging in clandestine methods, different spaces—especially people's homes, agricultural fields, and churches—were used for political mobilization. Many women noted that they used their homes to hide and take care of guerrilla soldiers who were hiding away from the Portuguese police.

[77] Interview Teixeira on September 24, 2015, Luanda.

[78] Fred Bridgland. *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*. London: Coronet, 1988; Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015; Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola, 1975-2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

[79] Interview with Pastor Ilda on October 21, 2015 in Lobito.

[80] Interview with Pastor Ilda who works with orphans and widows of the civil war. This interview was carried out in Lobito on 21 October, 2015.

[81] Interview with former UNITA combatant, 20 October 2015 in Benguela.

[82] Interview with Sofia, 20 October 2015 in Lobito.

[83] A common distinction drawn between UNITA and the MPLA is that while the latter encouraged women to join men in combat, UNITA's political leadership did not allow women to go to the frontlines. In my interview with some top officials of the LIMA it was confirmed that UNITA only started allowing women to join the rank and file of its military units in the 1980s. Up until then, women in the camps would be given basic military training but they were never allowed to go to the frontlines.

[84] Interview with Salomé, 24 September 2015 in Luanda. While she was not sure of how many children came to the learning centers, Salomé estimated that based on the intensity of the war, there were times she would have close to forty children. After a month of training, the boys would leave join other guerrilla fighters while the girls would remain in the centers.

[85] Since the establishment of the Luanda and Benguela as major slave trading ports by the Portuguese in 1570s, it has been estimated that almost five million enslaved Africans were transported to Brazil. See Eltis, David, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment", William and Mary Quarterly, LVIII, 2001, 17-42; David Eltis, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment based on the Second Edition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Dataset". Unpublished paper; Linda Heywood. *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[86] Veena Das. *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995: 176.

[87] Interview with Tininha in Avalade, Luanda. Tininha's mother was raped in front of her husband and children in 1968. Tininha was 16 years old at the time.

[88] David Eng and David Kazanjian, eds. *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003: ix.

[89] Sara Ahmed. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004: 20.

[90] See Mothers of the Movement, http://time.com/4423920/dnc-mothers-movement-speakers/; http://www.democracynow.org/2016/7/27/watch_the_full_dnc_speeches_of

[91] Audre Lorde. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Crossing Press [January 4, 2012]), 127.

[92] Interview with former MPLA militant 29 September 2015 in Luanda.

[93] Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*. London: Zed Books, 2013: 102.

[94] Elizabeth Wood. "Performing Memory: Vladimir Putin and World War II in Russia," *The Soviet and Post- Soviet Review* 38, 2 (2011): 172-200

[95] As a take from Gayatri Spivak's famous quote "Can the subaltern speak?" the idea of the weeping subaltern subject here refers to the image of subaltern as woman who enters the nation's imaginary through her role as a mourner of the nation because of the pain she experiences giving birth to the nation.

[96] David Eng and David Kazanjian (eds.). *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003:11.

[97] Words from the poem "Farewell at the hour of parting," (40). See Agostinho Neto, 1974, *Sacred Hope*. Trans. Marga Holness. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House.

[98] Inocência Matta, 2007, "Under the Sign of a Projective Nostalgia: Agostinho Neto and Angolan Postcolonial Poetry," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 38, No. 1

[99] Interview with Justino Pinto de Andrade on September 3, 2015 in Luanda. Justino, a well-known nationalist was one of the revolutionaries who was detained and tortured at the infamous Tarrafal prison in Cape Verde between 1969-1974.

[100] Judith Butler. *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. London & New York: Verso, 2004: 22.

[101] Interview with Eugenia, September 18, 2015 in Luanda.

[102] Judith Butler. *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. London & New York: Verso, 2004: 23.

[103] Ann Cheng. *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001: 3.

[104] Jean B. Elshtain. *Women and War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987: 3.

<center>**Chapter Three**</center>

Soldiering the Nation: Women's Participation in Military Institutions

    "Because women are exterior to war, men are interior, men have long been the great war-story tellers, legitimated in the role because they have 'been there' or because they have greater entrée into what it 'must be like,'" asserts Jean Elshtain in her work on women and war.[1] Elshtain's concern is spot on, especially when it comes to narratives of war in Africa where waging war has often been perceived as the purview of men; a view which ignores the active participation of women and girls in these wars. This is my concern in this chapter, and indeed in my broader research. Angolan women are "great war story-tellers" because like their male counterparts, many of them "were there" and it is only through their narratives that we can begin to understand what it "must be like" for women to participate in military institutions.

In the mid-1975, a few months before the proclamation of Angola's independence, two young women, Elvira Maria da Conceição "Virinha" and Fernanda Digrinha Delfino "Nandi" who had been fighting for the MPLA on the Eastern Front [See Map 2] went to the military instruction headquarters to present a case to commandant Gilberto Teixeira da Silva "Gika", one of the top military officers.[2] Well aware that their request could be dismissed by most of the top leadership—who resisted the idea of the "feminization" of the military—these young women convinced commandant Gika to accompany them to make a strong case to the Central Committee of the MPLA, "to finally give women an opportunity to join the armed forces and fight for the liberation of the country."[3] These female soldiers had demanded inclusion and proved their mettle during the intense training where few men thought they could complete.

    It was the bravery of these women, and the insightful leadership of Gika, that ultimately led to the formation of the first female military unit of the MPLA's armed forces, which came to be known as *O Destacamento Feminino*/DF.[4] According to anthropologist Margarida Paredes, who was also a former combatant of the FAPLA, this all female military unit "opened the doors for many Angolan women in the MPLA to be part of the military history of the country."[5]

Image 6: *Destacamento Feminino*, C.I.R Hoji-Ya-Henda, circa 1975.
Source: Image courtesy of Margarida Paredes, *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*, p. 310.

    Almost a decade later in 1989 after the creation of the *Destacamento Feminino* (to be abbreviated as DF hitherto) the rebel movement UNITA took the same cue and established its first women's battalion, called *Batalhão* '89.[6] This all female battalion signified a great shift in

the gender politics of UNITA from two decades earlier when women were restricted from joining their male comrades on the frontlines [as I discussed in Chapter two]. In my interview with the president of UNITA's women's branch, she noted that the creation of the women's battalion was a result of Jonas Savimbi's affirmation that " an Angolan woman is not just an instrument for ploughing, she has to fight for her dignity and value. Women can also be leaders."[7]

Image 7: UNITA's all female battalion, *Batalhão '89*.
Source: The League of Angolan Women/ LIMA.

While both the DF and batalhão '89 are remembered and heralded as momentous achievements for women's emancipation and their contribution to the fight for Angola's independence, the enlisting of women in armed forces and the fear of the "feminization" of state and non-state military institutions continue to spark debates in Angola, and across the globe. As one of interviewee, a male officer, made it clear during my fieldwork, "having women in the military is a very good thing for the promotion of gender equality. But they [women] serve best if they are in the rear not on the frontlines. Even strong women deserve to be protected and defended. This is not just true for the Angolan army, but for many militaries around the world."[8] My informant's comments underscore the complicated relationship between women and military service.

The idea that "Even strong women deserve to be protected and defended," speaks to how the gendered nature of war and the militaries constructs, relies on, and uses notions of masculinity and femininity to obscure women's presence in these institutions. It also points to the inherent contradictions between women as protecting the nation and as needing of protection. Indeed, in the rare cases where women's presence is acknowledged—as my informant's case suggests—women are often depicted not only as tokens, but as "beautiful souls" to be defended by the courageous male soldiers.[9] Although women in various countries have served in armed units for many years, the debate about the feminization of the military still persists even in places such as South Africa, Canada, the U.S, Norway, and Israel.[10] Questions about how and where women should serve and train, has contributed to the treatment of women combatants as highly visible "tokens", rather than as fully contributing army personnel.

Thus, if in the previous chapter I examined how women were mobilized to enter the body politic of the nation through the trope of patriotic motherhood, a space that is often considered "depoliticized" and "feminized", then in this chapter I move to a more "politicized" and "masculinized" space of the military.[11] As some narratives of women ex-combatants will show, motherhood can also serve as both a collective identity and a collective action frame for women to join military forces as soldiers. And, if the previous chapter focused on how women—as—mothers are called upon to be chief mourners of the nation and its heroes, this chapter will highlight the participation of Angolan women in wars as citizen—soldiers, as guardians, and

defenders of the nation. My analysis of the female soldier, therefore, will be guided by the following questions: What happens when women join the rank and file of their male comrades in uniform? How do notions of femininity and masculinity shape women's daily experiences in the military camps?

The purpose of this chapter is to showcase how the gender dynamics or the social hierarchy of the Angolan military forces since the decolonization era to the present day constitute and sustain the taken-for-granted role of women combatants as auxiliary soldiers to their male comrades. Through my analysis of the soldiering experiences of Angolan women, I hope to reveal that the masculinist power structure of the military reifies gender binaries, and in turn, uses these gendered notions both as a justification for sustaining the gender imbalance in the armed forces and for ensuring that women remain the invisible combatants in the country's war history. The narratives of women ex-combatants confirm, but also challenge the apt observation made by Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry that:

> women are not supposed to be violent. This is one tenet on which various understandings of gender seen to converge. A conservative interpretation of gender sees women as peaceful and apolitical, a liberal view understands women as a pacifying influence on politics, and feminists who study global politics often critique the masculine violence of interstate relations. Women's violence falls outside of these ideal-typical understandings of what it means to be a woman.[12]

The logic that only men are prone to violence and are perpetrators of war has for a long time been used to justify imperial wars of conquest, which are cast as a matter of men defending the nation and protecting women.[13] That is what makes warfare seductive, this association of heroism to manliness.

What I hope to demonstrate throughout this chapter is that the presence of the female soldier—in as much as her body is rendered unfit for combat due to the gender norms of the military—offers the possibility of disrupting these gender binaries and rigid boundaries of soldiering. In this vein, I use the concept of militarized femininity, an inversion of what different scholars call militarized masculinities,[14] as a lens for studying the soldiering experiences for women combatants. Militarized femininity as I use it here, is a framework in which feminine identities both exist and challenge the hyper-masculine identities of the "real soldier," and destabilize the social order of the military apparatus.

As I will illustrate later in this chapter, militarized femininity can help us think through the crucial and difficult questions posed by sociologist Joane Nagel: "But why don't women who participate in masculine organizations or situations 'feminize' those institutions and settings, rather than becoming, however momentarily, masculinized themselves? Do women who join the military become 'men'? Or, if enough women join the military, will they 'feminize' it? Is there a critical mass, a point at which women cease to become masculinized in masculine institutions and begin to transform the institutions according to the feminine interests and culture they bring with them to that setting?"[15] Writing about the U.S Army, Cynthia Enloe observes that servicewomen were allowed to "serve in the military, but can never be permitted to be the military" and as such to be a soldier meant to be able to fight, and this realm was reserved for men, while the Army controlled and exploited women to justify men's status.[16]

A note on some of the terms I use in this chapter. I use the terms "armed opposition groups" or "guerrilla/rebel forces" to refer to organized non-state groups that have taken up arms

to challenge the state over control of political, economic, geographical, and human resources. This means that when referring to the decolonization period (1961-1975), these non-state groups imply both the MPLA and UNITA; but when referencing the post-independence period (1976-2002) my use of rebel forces implies the army units of UNITA and their challenge to the MPLA regime. To this end, it is worth noting that my analysis of women's military participation is restricted to women's involvement in The Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FALA), the military forces of the MPLA and UNITA respectively. However, there are a few cases where I use narratives of women who currently serve in the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) in various capacities.[17]

Additionally, I deliberately and specifically refer to both women and girls, a pertinent distinction because armed opposition groups or guerrilla movements often recruit and use girls differently than they do women. For example, when Jonas Savimbi and his group abducted females during the civil war, it was girls, not women, who were the main target.[18] Studies show that girls are targeted in wartime partly due "to their younger age and mental and physical development, which often enables the insurgents to more easily influence their thinking and behavior …and use them to provide support functions to the group, girls are also preferred over adult women, due to their hoped-for virginity."[19] I will also quickly point out here that in my analysis of Angolan's women's involvement in the military, I am cognizant of the fact that state militaries differ from each other, and women's relationships with militaries vary depending on the nature of the military institution.

"Every boys club needs women": Making the Feminist Link

The participation of Angolan women in the liberation struggles did not, of course, begin with the establishment of the DF or Batalhão '89. The history of the female MPLA's guerrillas such as Deolinda Rodrigues de Almeida, Teresa Afonso, Lucrécia Paim, Irene Cohen, Limbânia Jimenez, Engrácia dos Santos, Josefa Gualdino is well documented in Angola.[20] These women who joined the MPLA in the bushes in the early 1960s were part of an army unit that waged fierce guerrilla warfare against the Portuguese colonial regime. Sadly, on March 2, 1968, Deolinda and four of her female comrades were captured and killed by the FNLA soldiers, but their bodies have never been found.[21] These women continue to hold a special place in the national memory of many Angolans, in particular for the MPLA. Through their bravery, they inspired other women within the MPLA including Luzia Inglês, the current Secretary General of OMA [Image 8], and Rodeth Makina Gil [Image 9] to join the struggle in the 1960s.

Image 8: Luzia Inglês "Inga" during military training in the MPLA's II military region. Source: CDIH, *História do MPLA*, vol. 1.

Image 9: Rodeth Makina Gil narrating her experiences to the author.
Source: Photo taken by author October 16, 2015.

That the war efforts needed the masses to contribute in different roles was something that the nationalist movements insisted upon, especially in the late 1960s as the armed struggle intensified following repression from the colonial regime. Women who desired to enter and participate in the liberation struggles as combatants had to find some quasi-military roles such as transporting guns, engaging in espionage, and working in other clandestine activities. Their roles were, therefore, multidimensional and often contradictory as many were involved in various aspects of armed struggle as perpetrators, actors, porters, spies, bodyguards, and human shields. For many of these women and girls, as some scholars argue, their participation in the armed struggle provided them with greater ideological and practical space to participate in war as active agents.[22] For example, Rodeth Gil, whose story I analyzed in the previous chapter, reiterated in her interview that in the 1960s and 1970s, all Angolans from all walks of life were ready to risk their lives for the freedom of their country: "There was no way I was going to let my pregnancy get in the way of fighting for this country. I gave birth to my baby in the middle of combat. And I continued to fight after that." Like her contemporary Luzia Inglês, bearing arms was one way for Rodeth to pursue freedom for all Angolans.

But why are the DF and *Batalhão* '89 significant? I contend that these all-female army units are crucial in the analysis of citizenship as it relates to the gendering of the nation. Military enlistment and conscription are specific examples of the relationship between men and the state in that a man's place in the nation is defined, more often than not, by his readiness to be the defender of the nation and its borders. In this configuration, women are constructed as "other" and different. Thus, the creation of women's army units shows the struggle and desire for women to participate in the nation as full citizens understood in masculine terms. Throughout the fight for national liberation in Angola, being a patriotic citizen for men was predicated upon serving in the military forces of the nationalist movements. Fighting in the wars of independence was accorded a great prestige, and both men and women wanted to get involved.[23] Unlike their male comrades whose male-ness guaranteed them a spot in the armed forces, women had to volunteer and some of them would often be turned away for a variety of reasons. Thus, most women and girls who joined the rank and file of the military apparatus had to negotiate the prevailing notions that women could only perform non-combatant roles. Although many of them questioned the

hackneyed gender constructions that associated men with aggression and women as pacifists, their presence as combatants was still seen as auxiliary, a view that emphasized their inferior status within the military forces. The following excerpt of my interview with Mena[24], a former combatant of the MPLA, sheds more light on this nexus between women and military forces.

Mena: I believe women bring so much value to any army.

Author: How so?

Mena: I was a guerrilla for the MPLA as early as 1966. And I have been part of the military since formation of the Angolan armed forces. In different camps, there were machistas who thought they were better than women. That is why it was clear to me that our army units needed to recruit more women to challenge the machismo. On the battleground I saw some of my male comrades show signs of weakness. I also saw women who showed so much bravery and unmatched courage.

Author: You said women bring value to the military. Could you say more?

Mena: Well, they do. In terms of basic human qualities…sacrifice, compassion, strength, discipline, love, and care. These are the values that women bring. Defending the nation requires a combination of all these qualities not just muscle power. You can have all the muscle power, but if your people do not have these basic human qualities, your army is a weak one. You understand?

Author: I do. But, what can you say to those who believe that women lack the stamina and the aggressiveness needed in combat?

Mena: My response is clear, aggressiveness and stamina are not qualities that God specially ordained to men. I know women who are aggressive and who killed. That is not strange. Anybody who believes that is projecting their own weaknesses. Maybe they are afraid of women who can outplay them in those areas. Like I said, I fought with men who many people would consider weak. But they were there on the battleground, anyway. The tendency was to have women in rear, but many of us argued that women could do more than just be in the bases preparing meals for the soldiers. They, too, were capable of combat.

Author: What I am hearing you say is that women's presence in the military is not detrimental, is that it?

Mena: Absolutely. The military is one big boys club. But, every boys club needs women. The armed forces are there not just to wage and win wars for the sake of it. On the contrary, the fundamental reason for waging wars should be for the sake of social justice. This is not usually the case, but that should be the ultimate reason.

Author: What about the creation of separate female combat units, for example FAPLA's Destacamento Feminino in the late 1974, and UNITA's Batalhão '89?

Mena: I knew you would ask that. The DF was created at a special moment in our country's history. The country needed to mobilize the masses effectively to ensure that all men and women contributed to the independence of Angola. In that case, there was a need to create special units for women. It was a step in the right direction, because it gave people a chance to see that women can engage in combat. That women could also contribute to the nation and fight as soldiers. But times have changed now. Everybody knows that what a man can do, a woman can

do. There is no need to prove anything anymore. Sometimes, women do a better job than men.

Author: Do you think it is still necessary to have all-female combat units?

Mena: No. Absolutely not.

Author: Why not?

Mena: Because creating separate units along the lines of gender justifies the backward thinking that men are superior, and different from women. It is as if, the military is doing a special favor to women. That I refuse…[it]…is a ridiculous argument. The enemy does not care whether a country's army is all male or female. War is war, and it can only be won if both men and women fight alongside each other. As citizens and patriots of this country, Angolan women have every right to enlist in the army and serve the armed forces as best as they can. Like I said, every boys club needs women…not to cook for them but share a space at the table.

Mena believes that women can serve in combat as much as men do, yet her justification falls back to the gender norms which view women through their nurturant roles and caring abilities, and men through their "muscle power." In a sense, the value women bring to the "one big boys club" and their challenge to the hegemonic masculinity inherent in the military is through what is often construed as feminine—sacrifice, compassion, love, and care. Moreover, the point that she "fought with men who many people would consider weak. But they were there on the battleground, anyway," underscores the fact that unlike women combatants, men in combat do not have to negotiate the contradictions that arise between their masculinity and their act of soldiering because being a soldier enhances even masculinity.

In a separate interview, Caetano, an officer of FAA admitted that: "yes, we had women in our bases. But I would not call them combatants as such. They trained with us, but they were there to help, to serve like guards on the rear. To me there is a difference."[25] What is striking in Caetano's account is the inferiorization and the discounting of women's contribution to the military forces. While Caetano, for example, recognizes the presence of women in the army units, he downplays their contributions by stating that "they were there to help." This view of Angolan women combatants as "helpers" to the male soldiers reifies what Miriam Cooke sees as dividing "the world between the *politikon*, where men play 'political' roles, and the *oikon*, where women are lovers or mothers…passive."[26] Of course, fighting wars involves a wide range of duties—not all of which involve killing—that include behind the scenes operations such as communications and other logistical operations.

Most Angolan women played an integral part in executing these logistical operations. But, this marginalization of women who serve in the rear in order to emphasize the difference between combatants (such as tank operators, pilots, weapon operators, infantry) and non-combatants (military nurses, clerks, cooks) reveal the deeply embedded gender stereotypes undergirding many militaries. This distinction between combat and non-combat roles is problematic, particularly in guerrilla warfare, because as Jacklyn Cock points out guerrilla fighters engage in "a revolutionary war that does not involve direct confrontation with the enemy and where the boundaries between "front" and "rear" cannot be sharply demarcated."[27] Moreover, this view of women soldiers as non-combatants impacts women veterans when it comes to claiming compensation. In my fieldwork, I interviewed some former guerrillas of both

the MPLA and UNITA who expressed discontent and anger with the nation's leaders because many of them languish in destitution after being ignored by the government when the war ended.

The issue of wartime compensation was a hot topic during my fieldwork with some informants pointing out that "getting the state to accord you the status of an ex-combatant is a struggle and having them recognize your efforts and compensate you is a war. We lose all the time because many of us have been dismissed and told that we do not have any right to demand compensation. They even question whether we fought or not."[28] Unfortunately, the sensitivity of this issue also meant that my informants were not willing to discuss in detail their grievances as ex-combatants.

Scholars of militarism note that women's integration into spheres of power, including the military, threatens the patriarchal norms of these institutions, "Until those women are dehumanized through sexualization.[29] Maria and Zizi, who joined the MPLA forces in the Congo in 1974, confirm this: "We were told that real soldiers do not cry. Our male comrades would make fun of us if we showed any emotions. They would say that we were better off in the kitchen washing dishes and preparing *mandioca*.[30] And, that we were not strong enough to fight the enemy because of our menstruations. Of course, they were only joking, but we had to prove that we were real soldiers, not just girls with menstrual periods. There was no room for crying."[31] It is, indeed, the potential to kill that determines "real soldiering" duties, or as Joanna Bourke simply frames it that wars are about killing, which has been sanctioned by both the state and the population.[32] To be taken seriously, Maria and her comrades often presented an even tougher front; they had to become men, so to speak.

These comments shine a spotlight on the ongoing debates regarding women in combat roles. From a feminist perspective, it can be argued that the concern over the "feminization" of the armed forces, as seen in the creation of the DF, highlights three assumptions about the female soldier, as an analytical category. The first one has to do with the cult of the female body, which assumes that most women cannot fight due to their psychological and physiological characteristics. Secondly, the false idea of homogeneity, which is based on the presumption that the presence of women among male soldiers disrupts group cohesion, male bonding, and lowers group morale. Could this concern over the disruption of the male homosocial space of the military be the underlying reasons for why male soldiers of in FAPLA and FALA resisted having women serve amidst them, hence the creation of separate army units for women? As an institution that privileges hegemonic masculinity, the army—as some scholars argue—often taps into homosociality as a way to foster male comradeship through masculine rituals that end up systematically excluding women and other sexual minorities from serving in direct combat.[33] Finally, that the maternal body, which reduces women to their fertility as reproductive vessels, is better equipped for nurturance and caring roles rather than combat duties.

Image 10: Maria and Zizi with their comrades in Congo, circa late 1974. *Source: Personal archives of interviewee.*

Military institutions are gendered in that they privilege masculinity and rely on the treatment of women as different from men for the purpose of supporting and sustaining war efforts.[34] They are institutions whose core operational values and practices are associated with hypermasculinity and heterosexuality. Cynthia Enloe notes that in order for a military to preserve its exalted position, this privileging of the masculine over the feminine must also be reproduced in the civilian society. The interdependence between masculinity and the military is evident when every male of a certain age is required to serve in the military unless he is deemed unfit. As Cruz, a former top military official of FAPLA affirmed during my interview with him, that men had direct entry to the military forces on account of just being men:

> It did not matter how old you were as long as you looked old enough. If you were very tall like me but you were only thirteen, you would still be enlisted. Every mother knew that their boys were bound to end up going to the bushes to fight. There was no escaping it because the freedom of our country depended on men standing up and fighting for this freedom. For women it was different.[35]

This complex relationship between women and war, particularly women's invisibility in war as combatants, has led some scholars and activists to advocate for more women to enter the world of combat as an avenue for equal respect. Moreover, the push for more women to enter the military stems from the awareness that as products of a patriarchal society, militaries not only depoliticize the female subject, but they also systematically exclude women, and relegate them to supposedly passive roles. Kathleen Sheldon reminds us of this exclusion by noting that despite Mozambican women guerillas fighting side by side with their male comrades "many male members of FRELIMO systematically exclude women….and limit them to executing tasks."[36] Women's entrance into these spaces can perhaps be seen as a strategy to disrupt and challenge the hyper-masculinist notions that form the basis of the military. On the other hand, anti-militarist scholars view women's military service as a reproduction of militaristic citizenship and cooperation with a hierarchical and sexist institution.

These debates notwithstanding, I argue that narratives of Angolan women ex-combatants can offer a nuanced view of women in wars, which may help us see that women (and men) can be actors, resisters, victims, and perpetrators of violence. To reiterate what I stated in my introduction, I suggest that we examine the narratives of women ex-combatants beyond the dualistic gendered constructions of war so that we are able to see that there is no fundamental

difference between men and women in their motivations to join military institutions, at least in the context of national liberation struggles. In her work on guerilla women in Latin America, for instance, Karen Kampwirth posits that the repressive mechanisms of the State in times of insurgency and people's individual experiences of the war can spur both men and women, who would otherwise be neutral, to take up arms.[37]

Not Just a 'Beautiful Soul': The Paradox of the Female Soldier

Let us consider the image below of Carlotta.

Image 11: Photo of Carlotta taken by Kapuscinki Ryszard.
Source: Mais Um Dia de Vida – Angola 1975

"Carlotta came with an automatic on her shoulder. Even though she was wearing a commando uniform that was too big for her, you could tell she was attractive....Only twenty years old, Carlotta was already a legend. Two months earlier, during the uprising in Huambo, she had led a small MPLA detachment that was surrounded by a thousand-strong UNITA force. She managed to break the encirclement and lead her people out."[38] This is how Ryszard Kapuscinski, the renowned Polish journalist introduces us to his then designated soldier, Carlotta. He goes on to explain "Girls generally make excellent soldiers—better than boys, who sometimes behave hysterically and irresponsibly at the front. Our girl was a mulatto with an elusive charm and, as it seemed to us then, great beauty." In the few pages of the biography, Another Day of Life in which Kapuscinski chronicles his travels from Luanda to the frontlines of war in Benguela between the MPLA and UNITA rebel forces, the reader largely comes to know of Carlotta through her physical attributes.

The captivating image tells very little about Carlotta's skills as a brave soldier, and a lot about her feminine beauty. In fact, her beauty is posed almost antithetical to her role as a soldier. What expectations did Kapuscinki and her male comrades have of a female soldier? Would it have made a difference if the designated escort had been a male soldier and not Carlotta? These are some the questions we are confronted with from the moment we encounter Carlotta. In fact, when Kapuscinki notes that Carlotta was assigned to them by Commandant Monti "to make it nice for us"[my own emphasis] on their journey to Benguela, there is little left to the reader's imagination as to what role Carlotta was expected to play. In the same vein, Jacklyn Cock's work on women of the South African military during apartheid reveals that women were largely in supportive roles, and their exclusion from combat was based primarily on prevailing gender stereotypes. South African women's incorporation into the military did "not eliminate the subordination of women or even erode patriarchal authority relations ... it does not breach the ideology of gender roles."[39]

While she may have been a respected soldier with great leadership skills, and her camouflage uniform and the automatic rifle on her shoulder may have shaped her "masculine potency", all these did not make her a soldier—at least not in the eyes of her male audience. To Kapuscinki and his three male friends, Carlotta is just a "pretty girl" and an escort. Carlotta's soldiering attributes are glossed over until later when Kapuscinki learns that she was killed in a battle. "Would we have risked our lives to protect her, as she had risked hers to protect us in Balombo? Maybe she had died covering us as we drove away," Kapuscinki laments. The irony here is that even though Kapuscinki is a journalist and Carlotta a soldier, it is the former who wishes he had protected the latter. It is, therefore, unsurprising that Carlotta's militarized body is read through a one-dimensional lens: a beautiful soul in need of protection even when she as the solider did her best to protect her companions. Up until the point when Carlotta is killed in combat, it is clear that Kapuscinki and his friends perceive her femininity as incompatible with being a soldier. This image of Carlotta and the one-dimensional way her body is read by the male journalists she is designated to protect is quite telling of the paradox of the female soldier in military institutions.

Cynthia Cockburn observes that "war as an institution is made up of, refreshed by and adaptively reproduced by violence as banal practice in the everyday life of the boot camp and battlefield. Masculinity in its various cultural forms is an important content of that cycle ... masculinity shapes war and war shapes masculinity."[40] This assertion serves as a useful reminder that military institutions rely on the reproduction of a particular kind of violent masculinity, hence it is commonplace to hear essentialist statements ranging from "real men do not cry," to "real men don't run, they fight," to "women make love and peace, not war." Goldstein points out that "the military provides the main remnant of traditional manhood making rituals, especially in boot camp and military academies where young men endure tests of psychological or physical endurance."[41]The linking of militarized masculinity to heroism is predicated upon the construction of the body to notions of physical strength and the ability to suppress one's emotions. In fact, for some of my informants it was the fear of being deemed physically unfit and too emotional to fight that drove some of them "to prove that we were real soldiers, not just girls with menstrual periods."

Indeed, the dual oppositional categories of masculine and feminine have always been salient aspects of our socio-cultural reality, a lens through which we perceive differences between women and men. However, a cross section of feminist scholars have challenged this duality by arguing that not only are these dominant notions of femininity and masculinity based on hierarchical and oppositional categories, but such fixed categories are also essentialist and do not take into account the complexity and contradictory nature of gender as a social construction.[42] Theorist Judith Butler, in particular, argues against the construction of gender as an essence, but instead posits that it is "a performance which often follows established gender norms: there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all."[43] Of course, before Butler, there were other feminist scholars who had argued that gender has no essence, or in the famous words of Simone de Beauvoir: "one is not born, but rather becomes, woman."[44] Nonetheless, Butler's analysis of gender as "performativity" is helpful in the study of the ethnography of war, particularly women's participation as soldiers. Taking a lead from Butler, I see the body of Carlotta and that of other Angolan women military forces "as a corporeal style, as an 'act' as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where performative suggests a dramatic and

contingent construction of meaning."[45] To be seen as true warriors worthy of serving in combat side by side with their male comrades, my informants' soldiering skills, to a large extent, called for a "gender performativity", especially since most of them women wanted to challenge the gendered constructions that positioned them as delicate beautiful souls to be defended.

Analyzing the soldiering experiences and skills of Angolan women through performativity helps us see the possibility that both men and women can be victims and perpetrators of violence. More importantly, it offers an interesting avenue to examine the tactics used by women soldiers to navigate the overtly masculine terrain of the military, and the nuanced ways these soldiers assert their femininity when the society renders them masculine by the mere fact of them wearing camouflage uniform and bearing arms. I, therefore, draw from Butler's idea of "gender performativity" to propose the concept of militarized femininity as a lens for analyzing the experiences of the female soldier. If militarized masculinity produces a "real soldier" who has muscle power, is aggressive, heterosexual, and does not show emotions, militarized femininity contradict this one-dimensional approach to soldiering. Militarized femininity, as opposed to militarized masculinities, which debilitates the male soldier, allows room for failure and for an embrace of the self as a whole, rather than a turning away from what makes us most vulnerable.[46] It is true that the privileging of masculinity in the armed forces ensures that militarized femininity exists at the bottom of the pyramid in war narratives. For example, in popular culture representations, female soldier characters in war movies straddle between a feminine incarnation of the "Beautiful Soul" to be protected and some version of female masculinity. These characters are cast to embody female masculinity. In other words, rather than emphasize the femininity of the female soldier, what is underlined is her "butch-like" body or her becoming manly.

In my analysis of narratives of Angolan women ex-combatants, I reiterate that the bodies of female soldiers should be read as an embodiment of a militarized femininity, one that transgresses and subvert the borders that define her. In her enactment of her agency a militarized female body ruptures the excluding and dividing lines that define militarized masculinity. As such, the female soldier, despite being contained in a space that demands a denial of that which is sensitive, being seen as a 'wimp' can be resource. For example one informant affirmed that "there were moments I cried when the training got tough. People expect women to be weak, but I think weakness can be a source of strength. Those tears I cried during training made me stronger because they reminded me why I was fighting for a larger cause….fighting for your nation is not an easy task."[47] These comments emphasize that in soldiering, any sign of weakness or failure is associated with girls, women, and femininity, and is therefore to be eliminated if the female soldier is to successfully carry out her combat duties. Nevertheless, militarized femininity provides an opportunity for many soldiers to perform their soldiering roles, without suppressing those aspects of her appearance and behavior that mark her as female. In fact, Judith Halberstam work on female masculinity offers useful insights by aptly arguing that rather than rendering female masculinity as shameful, we should affirm it as a lively and dramatic staging of hybrid and minority genders.[48]

Thus, militarized femininity can be helpful in understanding why many women ex-combatants such as Ruth Adriano Mendes, assert that "Yes, as woman I give of life and protect it because I am a mother. But, as a soldier I am always ready to defend that life with will my heart and soul even if it means killing the enemy to protect my loved ones. I don't see any contradictions there. Why should there be any contradictions? Why?"[49] Although, Ruth made it clear that she did not experience any discrimination from her comrades when she took leave to

have her first child, she admitted that it was tough balancing her three roles as a mother, wife, and soldier: "I think what got me through the tough times was the discipline I received during my military training. There was not conflict in my roles, but it was certainly tougher. You need strict discipline to be all those three things. I also think it helped because my husband was also a military man."

In the images below for example, we see Ruth clad in fatigues while holding her son (Image 12) and what looks like a fancy purse, although we do not know what is in her bag (Image 13). Both images are feminine markers and they striking evidence of militarized femininity.

Image 12: One the left: Ruth holding her second born son.
Image 13: Right: Ruth with her comrades on a mission in São Tome.
Source: Personal archives of interviewee.

Even as I emphasize the importance of militarized femininity as a lens through which to analyze contributions of the female soldier, I remain cognizant of the concerns put forth by other feminist scholars on the continent that the presence of the female soldier in these institutions "does not eliminate the subordination of women or even erode patriarchal authority relations."[50] Moreover, Amina Mama is particularly skeptical by insisting "it takes more than one or two, or even a 30% change in personnel to transform the gendered culture and functioning of our more enduring organizational forms."[51]

In what follows, I use the well known example of an Angolan and Afro-diasporic hero, Queen Nzinga Mbandi, to further demonstrate the utility of militarized femininity as a conceptual framework for grappling with the image of a female soldier who is gender-non-conforming, loyal, and whose strength to fight is grounded in emotions of vulnerability.

Queen Nzinga Mbandi and Angolan Women's Militancy

The history of women's militancy in Angola is not new and it did not begin with the 1960s turn to armed struggle against Portuguese colonialists. Angolan women's militancy can be seen as trans-historical, one that began with the bravery and rebelliousness of the female ruler and warrior, Queen Nzinga Mbandi (1582-1663). Nzinga Mbandi continues to hold a special and almost mythical place in the Angolan national imaginary as an intelligent and gender-bending

ruler who came to power by subverting and trumping the highly patriarchal order of the Ndongo people.

When Ngola Mbandi Kilwanji, who was the King of Ndongo, died in 1617, his son took over the reigns as the new king. However, even as a king, he lacked the charismatic leadership of his father and the intelligence of his sister Nzinga Mbandi. Facing persistent harassment by the Portuguese in 1622, he decided to send Nzinga Mbandi on a diplomatic mission to Luanda to negotiate for peace with Dom João Correia de Sousa, the Portuguese Governor. Queen Nzinga's outstanding negotiation and diplomatic skills catapulted her to power and in 1624 she became the Regent to her nephew, following the death of her brother. Since she was the ruler only in name, the Portuguese made it clear that they would only deal with a male ruler.

The attitude of the Portuguese disappointed her and she began to gather loyal followers and soon she declared herself the rightful ruler of the Kingdom of Ndongo and Matamba in 1626. She not only distinguished herself as an excellent ruler, but her war strategies and tactics in espionage enable her to forge crucial alliances. As a powerful ruler who managed to command a large army against her enemies, Queen Nzinga came to be known for her gender- bending abilities. "If the experience of the military is supposed to make 'men from the boys,' womanhood cannot be easily incorporated within such imagery," Nira Yuval-Davis contends.[52] It is within this patriarchal and gendered dimension to war that Queen Nzinga operated. Nonetheless, I suggest that we examine Nzinga's soldiering abilities as a feminist enterprise, rather than a masculinist one, in order to see what new insights her enactment of militarized femininity provides us in understanding the image of a female soldier. Nzinga's militarized female body is an important site for analyzing the contested and unstable workings of militarization and gender in the society.

Image 14: An illustration of Queen Nzinga Mbandi by Pat Masioni for UNESCO's series on women in African history.
Source: UNESCO

The visual depiction of Nzinga on her horse is no doubt a powerful image, and quite a popular one in wartime across the long durée from Roman military generals in the second century to soldiers in medieval England. Conscious of the inferiority associated with femininity and the superiority of masculinized military among her people, and in her quest to maintain her power, Nzinga used her gender performance to navigate and challenge the social order. Nzinga relied on the same rules to legitimize her leadership by insisting she be referred to as the 'ngola'/king, and not 'queen.' Nzinga's image and her leadership skills disrupt the idea of associating military endeavors with the public power of kings and male lords; and queens and female lords with the more private aspects of royalty and ruling. Historians note that Nzinga appointed her sisters as war leaders and she would often cross-dress in masculine clothing and surround herself with dozens of brave soldiers all dressed in feminine clothes, as if they were her concubines.[53] By dressing as a man and "forcing" her soldiers to dress as women, Nzinga

Mbandi appropriated a common Mbundu cultural practice of polygyny, which enabled her to surround herself with sobas/chiefs who saw the Portuguese as enemies because of the imposition of taxes, and courageous soldiers from neighboring communities as her "wives." Nzinga became a successful ruler because of her ability to disrupt gendered notions of masculinity and femininity. Scholars such as Paredes suggest that Nzinga was able to perform many "masculine qualities" such as commanding a disciplined army, securing plenty of weaponry for her army, as well as exercising multiple forms of violence against her people in her quest to maintain power.
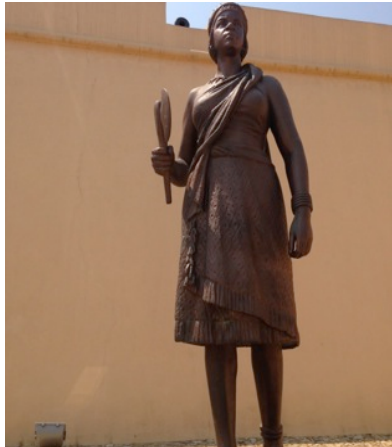
Image 15: The statue of Nzinga Mbandi at the Museum of Military History in Luanda.

The image of Nzinga Mbandi offers the possibility of recognizing that women can be culpable in perpetuating and maintaining systems of domination and violence without making them the exception rather than the norm. The militarized feminine body of Nzinga presented an overt threat to the traditional conception of military masculinity, at least in the eyes of her Portuguese enemies. However, rather that reject her femininity all-together, Nzinga was able to perform her gender, and that of her loyal soldiers, in such a way that her female body was still rendered "intelligible"—to use Foucault's term—to her enemies. Militarized femininity helps us to read Nzinga as both woman and soldier, and her ability to transgress the prevailing gender norms places her—and other female militants who have come after her—in spaces and roles typically reserved for males and identified with masculinized valor. Her political and military prowess as evidenced by forging alliances with Dutch officials to counter residual Portuguese forces from making additional forays into the interior, laid the foundation for a larger national identity.[54]

In this regard, her militarized female body became an artifact of paradoxical configurations of power. Militarized femininity and the power of the image of Queen Nzinga as an epitome of female militancy allow for new discourses that liberate the female soldier, rather than silence or marginalize her. I contend that her militarized body offers us a possibility to celebrate and memorialize the female soldier as a hero without measuring her soldiering skills using a hyper masculine yardstick. It challenges the master narratives of war, which according to Cynthia Enloe presume "that what men did must have been more important than what women did in determining how the war was fought and how it ended."[55]

Rather than provide a series of narratives from my interviews with ex-combatants, in the section below, I will use the specific narrative of Maria Teresa, a former combatant to further reveal how and why women and girls join military institutions, their roles and experiences inside those forces, and how "performing soldiering" enabled many of them to view their military

service both as a form of empowerment (in a personal sense) and a national duty they were ready to die for. Maria Teresa's narrative and that of many other Angolan women ex-combatants, who found their inspiration in the heroic figure of Queen Nzinga, shed light on how in their soldiering duties, these women functioned as the guardians and protectors of memories of war, memories that counter and/or fill in "official history." Because they "were there" and they know "what it must be like", their memories, as Michael Rothberg puts it, "captures simultaneously the individual, embodied, and lived side and the collective, social, and constructed side of our relations to the past."[56] Maria Teresa told me much of her own story, which I present in translation but otherwise as unfiltered as possible.

Maria Teresa's Story of Becoming a Soldier[57]

I was born here in Benguela in 1959. Both my parents were revolutionaries. I guess that is why I got inspired to join the MPLA. Because of my mixed heritage, I witnessed a lot of racism and class distinctions around me. Sometimes, my mother would tell us about the unjust and discriminatory colonial laws that imposed rigid restrictions on mixing of races and classes. But, she was also honest and told us 'you need to know that because your skin is lighter than some of your friends, some people will treat you in a special way.' Those were her words. I decided to join the armed struggle when I was 15. That must have been around April of 1974 during the revolution in Portugal.

I do not remember exactly what date it was, but I thought to myself that this would be a chance for me to join my countrymen to fight against the colonialists. I was young and filled with revolutionary ideologies. Looking back now, I think I romanticized the whole struggle. Although I was not fully aware of the politics at the time, I understood very clearly the movement's ideas and I believed in them. So, three of my friends and I got on a train from Lobito to Moxico. We knew that there was a military base in Moxico that is why we chose to go there. It took us almost 24 hours to get there. You know, I did not tell my parents. I just ran away because I knew that even though they were revolutionaries, my mother would never allow me to put my life in danger. When we got to Moxico, we found many Angolans who wanted to join the military. Commandant Matos looked at me and said, 'you cannot be here. You are too young.' I cried when I heard him say that. I knew I wanted to fight and I knew I was ready to fight for my country. I did not care how young or old I was. But, the commandant was adamant. Then amidst tears I said, 'I fought so hard to get here. I even ran away from home without informing my parents. I want to fight. Let me fight.' After hours of negotiations, the commandant relented but he had to first let my parents know where I was. We left in a big truck and headed for the camp in Cazange. There were many of those Centro de Instrução Revoluçionario in different places.

In this camp, we were divided by our genders. There was a section for boys, one for girls, and the other section was for commissioners. But, we all trained together and the military training did not distinguish between girls and boys. There were times when the male comrades made jokes about us. I think they did that to toughen us. The camp was in dense forest and it was very swampy, full of mosquitoes, and other bugs. After two months, I was put in the "commando

squad." I felt I belonged there. And when I finally got my military uniform, I knew there and then that my moment had arrived. I have never felt so proud in my life as I did that day when I put on my camouflage. I felt powerful. Note that we were not given guns right away. We trained through stages. The first few weeks involved us training with a firm stick. I learnt all the military protocols with that stick.

We were taught how to match, to plant grenades in strategic places, how to climb trees and crawl on our stomachs with minimal detection. We then learnt about infantry and then how to take care of weapons. You know, many of us were dying to put our hands on the weapons! The most exciting lessons for me at the time were about the different types of weapons in our armory. Most of the arms we had at the time were Russian. All our instructors were Angolan men, although we had women commandants, not many.

Besides the military training, we were also given political lessons. It was important that we understood the politics of the country and the movement's revolutionary ideology. We were taught to think and fight collectively for our nation, and not as individuals. I was proud because I was there to represent Angolan women. I would be lying if I said I did not feel anxious sometimes. I did, just during the first month because I was concerned about the safety of my parents. But, when I finally swore by the MPLA flag after five months of training I knew there was no going back. I was officially a soldier. During one of our training sessions, I also remember having the feeling that I had let my comrades down. On this particular day, a whole battalion of us had to cross a muddy swamp that had a river flowing underneath. I had mid-length boots on and I was carrying a very heavy weapon and other military gear. Crossing that swamp was difficult because you had to jump from one stone to another carefully but with fast speed. If you missed one step you would land straight in the mud and getting out of it was a nightmare. I remember jumping and in the process the boot in my left foot got stuck in the mud. I could not stop because if I stopped I would derail those who were behind me. When I finally got to the end of the swamp, the commandant ordered me to go back and get the other boot. There was no way I was going to return to that swamp with the weight on my shoulder to look for a boot. I felt ashamed. I think I even shed a tear or two.

It was the first time I felt afraid and it was here that I thought that maybe if I were a man I would have more courage and strength to go back to the dangerous muddy waters and get the boot. For me that was both a moment of courage and of fear. After going through the training successfully, I was given my first real weapon and I was stationed in Lobito. When the conflict broke out in November of 1975, I was sent to Saurimo, which is Lunda North. When I arrived to this military camp, there were about 20 or 30 UNITA guerrillas who had arrested been caught by the MPLA. I think I did not understand why Angolans were fighting amongst each other. Instead of celebrating our independence, we were again fighting a different enemy; we were fighting our own people. I was only sixteen years old and idealistic. I did not understand the reason behind this second war. I felt sad and thought the struggle that country had been through was only a deception. Seeing the way they [prisoners] were being mistreated really made me

sick. I asked for permission to be released and go back home. The commandant was very understanding and he let me go to the base in Lobito. I had with me my Kalashnikov. On arrival to Lobito, I was immediately sent to another front in Bokoyo. In our battalion, there were definitely more men than women. And I was once again on the frontline of the bases. I had to protect the boundaries from UNITA.

It was not easy being on the frontline. I remember losing one of my female friends. Her name was Tininha. She was the one responsible for the bazooka. Do you know how heavy that thing is? But my friend had to carry it around and she died while launching a missile against the UNITA forces. This base was really tough because we were surrounded by UNITA army and they would send missiles our way all day.

One morning were taken by surprise to see a large battalion advancing toward us. We were taken by surprise because we did not know that the soldiers were both from UNITA and the South African Defense Forces. We felt nervous. We had not received any communication from the Information center about the SADF. I cannot fully describe what happened next and how long it took but I recall seeing a huge ball of fire coming toward us as grenades and bullets rained from all sorts of directions. I was in an open track loading bullets when the ball of fire passed brushed the side of my face and it landed on the ground a few meters away from our truck, and exploded. In the confusion, I noticed that my hair had caught fire. The heat from the rocket was so strong that the heels of my boots melted. We were on fire, literally and symbolically. We did not have any cover. I jumped from the truck and ran to the next truck to help my comrade who was badly wounded. I also broke my ribs when I jumped from the truck, but there was not time to feel the pain or worry about my injuries. You can see here on my chin, I still have a serious shrapnel injury due to the bullet magazine that got stuck in my leg. As I grabbed my comrade from the truck, I saw the three cannons from the SADF pointed at me. I was completely disarmed, yet I knew I had two options, to either surrender and die in cowardice, or run. But, there was no way I was going to leave my comrade. I lifted him from the truck. In the process, it dawned on me that I was having my period. My pants were all covered in blood. And for strange reasons, I suddenly felt embarrassed. In that specific moment, that moment of life and death it occurred to me that I was a woman. I was concerned about my hygiene because I felt exposed in front of the South African military, but then again I knew my friend needed help. So, I took him by my shoulders and we leapt away into oblivion. Our battalion was dispersed in all sorts of directions. Our group headed to Casa Branca to take cover. We lost that battle and UNITA won.

We left Casa Branca after the SADF ambushed us again. It was demoralizing because we were losing our territory to the enemy. After that second loss, we headed toward Rio Keve and it was here that we met the real military. By real military I mean the Cuban army. They had superior artillery and armory. This was in November 1975. The Cuban army was the real deal. They took over the territory and I left for Luanda after that I was a soldier but I stopped participating in direct combat in December 1975.

Life after the military was not an easy transition but because I left combat when I was young, I quickly adapted to the civilian life. Most former combatants hope to get political positions or benefits from the government, but not me. I left that part of my life and did not want anything to do with politics or government jobs. I am happy as a civilian working on my own business here. I believe that I did my part in serving this country and I have no regrets whatsoever.

If I were called again to defend my country, I would do it in a heartbeat. My life in the military shaped the way I live my life now. I like order, discipline, firm principles, authoritarian leadership not autocracy. Even though I said I am ready to defend my country, I hate the idea of war. I think that there are other ways to solve and avoid conflicts that do not have to be through violence. I do not like abuse of power, which unfortunately is characteristic of most military organizations. It sounds contradictory, but I feel absolutely relieved that I did not kill anybody, despite the fact that I was trained and I was completely prepared to kill. I like what the military as an institution symbolizes, that is defense and protection. I like the uniform and the discipline. I understand why they use violence and force, but I do not like it. It is an idealistic worldview, I know. We all want peace, but sometimes force is necessary. This is the dilemma.

I also believe that women should not abandon their femininity when they join the military, which is full of machismo. I think the military needs women. My personal opinion is that as women we tend to be more respectful of human dignity. Not all women, but most women are, because that is how the society has shaped us. And men are expected to be brutal. These differences, although not generalizable imply that with more women in the military, there is a chance that the institution could be more humane. Men use violence and brutality to cover up the weaknesses. For me, I joined the military not because I wanted to be like a man, to prove my strength or to prove that I could do what a man could do. I joined because I believed in patriotism and in the MPLA ideology and principles.

Although Maria Teresa's story is not a blanket representation of all women who joined the MPLA and UNITA as soldiers, and how they got initiated into the armed struggle, looking at research by other scholars on women ex-combatants in southern Africa,[58] one finds lots of similarities in the stories women ex-combatants tell. Women's narratives of the liberation struggle are more conflicted, pointing to some of the personal struggles that they underwent. For most women that I spoke with, their integration into the MPLA's military structure was both a matter of female empowerment and a question of patriotism. The euphoria that came with the April 25, 1974 revolution in Portugal and the possibility of Angola's independence motivated Maria Teresa to join the war. Most of the female recruits were young girls in their early teens and many of them ran away without informing their parents or they "had to lie" to their parents when they decided to join the armed struggle.

In my interviews, only some of the older girls and young women spoke of joining voluntarily. For instance, ex-combatants of the older generation, such as Rodeth Makina Gil, insist that they were aware that the freedom of the country was inevitably linked to their emancipation as women. These women joined the armed struggle because they firmly believed in the MPLA's ideology of ensuring gender equality for all Angolan men and women. But, as Ruth Mendes made it clear, "it did not matter how we got there…if you lied, ran away or volunteered

to join the military with the blessings of your parents. Once we got there in the bases, it was the same. We all received the same training."[59] Through the political education Maria Teresa received on a daily basis in the camps, she and others were made politically conscious of the objective of the struggle and women's role in it. Providing political education, whose curriculum emphasized the evils of colonialism, alongside military training was a great strategy used by the three nationalist movements to indoctrinate many young recruits and volunteers to consider their participation in the armed struggle as a patriotic duty. Thus, with the formation of all female battalions just before the declaration of independence, many women were able to join the military forces and take a leading role in defending their country. Whether they joined voluntarily or out of coercion, there is no doubt for some of them, being a part of the armed forces provided them an opportunity to expand gender norms that had initially restricted them to non-combative roles in the sphere of national politics. Thus, for Maria Teresa, and indeed many of the volunteers, her military duty was linked to political activism.

Scholars of women's wartime mobilizations observe that women and girls join rebel armies when they are already active in organizations with similar goals and ideologies, or have family members active in the revolutionary movement. For example, like Maria Teresa, most of my informants made it clear that their inspiration to join the armed struggle was a result of their parents or relatives being part of the armed forces. From social movement's perspective, we can also argue that Maria Teresa's reason for joining the military forces was a result from political grievances based on the many decades of colonial subjugation. This rationale, indeed, can be applied to all women combatants—regardless of their ethnolinguistic, geographic, and economic backgrounds—who participated in Angola's national liberation struggles, despite what nationalist movement they belonged to. Some scholars have demonstrated how ethnic, racial, and national identity can be used to mobilize indivduals in the wake of oppression.[60] Yet, from Maria Teresa's narrative we can also see how the idea of using violence as a response to oppression eventually posed a dilemma to some female soldiers.

Can one be a female soldier and still be an anti-war advocate? This is an important question that comes to light in Maria Teresa's final reflections of her soldering experiences. Maria Teresa's confession that "Even though I said I am ready to defend my country, I hate the idea of war. I think that there are other ways to solve and avoid conflicts that do not have to be through violence," by all means sounds contradictory. This dialectical relationship between war and peace[61] is one that has been used by some to advance the idea, as we have already discussed, that war mongering is a preserve for men, while women are inclined to pacifism.[62] Maria Teresa conflicting and uncomfortable relationship with the idea war/violence is an example as to why the association of women with peace is problematic because it is not always about the binary of war and peace; and it reminds us of Sara Ruddick assertion that:

> Women's peacefulness is at least as mythical as men's violence. Women have never absented themselves from war. Wherever battles are fought and justified, whether in the vilest or noblest of causes, women on both sides of the battle lines support the military engagements of their sons, lovers, friends, and mates…. Nonetheless, women usually justify their militarism as men do, in terms of loyalty, patriotism and the right. Even peace-loving women … support organized violence, at least in "emergencies.[63]

Maria Teresa's story raises feminist contentions over pacifism and non-violence as a means of resolving conflicts in the context of national war projects. Her reflections offers a productive way to resist the allure of violence as a political response to the threats.

I chose Maria Teresa's story because it also provides us a glimpse to the question of what happens to ex-combatants when wars come to an end, and/or if their wartime activism spills over to other spheres of national politics. Maria Teresa is just one of the many women ex-combatants who found alternative routes to rebuild their lives in postwar periods. While some of her comrades such as Rodeth Gil, Ruth Mendes, and many others used their wartime participation in the military to further politicize themselves and transform their own lives by taking positions in parliament and other public offices, many ex-combatants decided to live quiet lives away from the limelight of national politics. Of course, not all ex-combatants had the resources to successfully rebuild their lives the way Maria Teresa did. As a former guerrilla of UNITA confirmed: "The success or failures of demobilization depends on who you talk to. I know many women in UNITA who languish in poverty because they are not members of OMA. If you go to the rural areas our people live in poverty. Women in UNITA, MPLA, and FNLA fought for this country's independence in different ways, but the fruits of that struggle are enjoyed by only a few of us."[64] Henda Ducados, an Angolan feminist scholar and the founder of *Rede Mulher*/Gender Network, affirms the above sentiment by arguing that while women's participation in the liberation movements played a crucial role in their liberation during the post-independence period "today they have been relegated to the status of outcasts and victims as if their citizenship does not count."[65] Angolans have since moved on from the wounds caused by decades of the civil war, yet the political divide in the country and grievances over equitable distribution of national resources continue to be thorny issues. Unfortunately, poor and rural women are the ones who have been impacted the most by this divide.

This point notwithstanding, it would be fallacious to argue that participation in the military during and after the armed struggle resulted in few positive consequences for women ex-combatants in both the MPLA and UNITA. Paredes observes that the participation of women in the liberation struggles as soldiers opened channels for many of them, both in UNITA and the MPLA to "resist and challenge traditional gender roles that were often confining."[66] Through my fieldwork as well as the extensive research on Angolan women ex-combatants conducted by Margarida Paredes, the findings reveal women's involvement in the armed struggle opened avenues for many of them to take up positions both in the public and private sectors as politicians, army and police officer, as well as community activists. Indeed, the DF and Batalhão '89 were opportunities for many young Angolan women to perform their patriotic duties as defenders of the nation, and for others like Maria Teresa their military participation was also a form of empowerment, even though she professed not to "want anything to do with politics or government jobs." In her case, she felt disillusioned especially when independence was achieved and the nationalist movements turned against each other. This is despite her enthusiasm about fighting for her country.

Conclusion

Traditional gender roles have been so normalized in the making and waging of wars across centuries to the extent that accounts of wars where people have followed them tends to leave out women, and those women who disrupt those gender roles are more often than not written out of these histories of wars. Although the history of women's soldiering abilities in the popular imaginary can be, for example, traced to women such as Helen of Troy and Jeanne d'Arc, who

both transgressed the gender norms of their times, there are many women across the globe in contemporary times whose war histories remain unknown and untold. This chapter began with a quotation from Jean Elshtain, in which she posits that in the gendering war, men have been the great war-story tellers. Elshtain's assertion confirms what many feminist scholars have agreed upon that the masculinist nature of military institutions tends to dismiss, ignore, or minimize women's presence in combat "real" soldiers. Taking a cue from Elshtain's quotation, this chapter evidenced Angolan women's active and enthusiastic participation in military warfare. I argued that while the motivations of women for joining militaries were varied, Angolan women ex-combatants joined different military institutions because they felt a strong sense of patriotism and loyalty to their country and wish to defend it against Portuguese colonialism.

Through an analysis of narratives of women ex-combatants, I have attempted to push back against the ongoing debate about whether or not women are indeed capable of fighting at all. I used militarized femininity as a lens through which we can grapple with the disconnect between the widely held theoretical belief that women are incapable mentally or physically of fighting and the reality that they are not only required by circumstance, but once they are enlisted they are expected to participate in warfare in the same way their male counterparts. I have argued that it is possible to shake loose of the binary thinking that considers combat duty through the rigid dichotomy of the masculine vs the feminine, by analyzing the soldiering skills of female combatants as performative. For this reason, the militarized female body remains a useful site for disrupting the social norms and gendered hierarchies prevalent in the armed forces.

Narratives of women ex-combatants about why and how they served in warfare are important for unravelling the myriad ways that the masses are mobilized to support war efforts. However, as I will elucidate in Chapter 4, even women combatants cannot escape the violence of war on their bodies. It is a well known fact that some of the most powerful and effective barriers which women face in armed groups are the ones that are invisible. Women's participation in war either as soldiers or civilians does not cushion them from gender based and sexual violence, an inevitable consequence of war.

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[1] Jean B. Elshtain. *Women and War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987: 212.

[2] Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola/Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola. In the early 1960s, the MPLA created centers around the country to provide military and political training to guerrillas. These centers, which were called *Centro de Instrução Revolucionário* (C.I.R), were where different guerrillas of the MPLA received training. Many women who went through this training ended up joining the FAPLA, when it was officially established in August 1974.

[3] Interview with Ruth Mendes September 22, 2015 in Luanda.

[4] Mozambique, unlike Angola, created its all female military unit as early as 1966 with the onset of the armed struggle. Other notable women who participated in the DF include Engrácia Francisco Cabenha, Betty Rank Frank, an ex-commisioner of the National Police in Luanda.

[5] From conversation with Margarida Paredes, December 15, 2015 in Lisbon. Margarida, a former combatant of the MPLA in Congo in 1974, was not part of the DF because she was in the C.I.R where she was charged with the duties of providing political training to the soldiers.

[6] According to LIMA, Batalhão '89 was led by commandant Dulce Chingufo Firmino. Other notable soldiers who are celebrated as being part of this army unit include Manuela dos Prazeres de Kazoto, Helena Essanju Moreira, Odete Sorte, Dorina Epandi Kanguaya, Domingas Pedro,

and Francisca Vieira (Xica). For more on these women, also see Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015.

[7] Interview with Miraldinha Jamba in September 2015.

[8] Interview with a commissioner of FAA, December 20, 2015.

[9] Jean Elshtain suggests that the myths of Man as "Just Warrior" and Woman as "Beautiful Soul" serve to reproduce women's social position as noncombatants and men's identity as warriors. See Jean B. Elshtain. *Women and War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

[10] A quick glance at military forces in the West gives us a more vivid picture of how women's entry into military forces continues to pose a challenge to armed forces operations and management. For example, in theory, all combat positions are open to women in the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Spanish, and the French militaries. But, in practice there are restrictions when it comes to women's access to certain combat and occupational specialties service including service in the marines and other combat specialties

[11] I use the term "military" to refer to the institutions and manpower within those institutions that are authorized by state, paramilitary, and non-state organizations to exercise coercive force and have monopoly over the use of violence.

[12] Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. London and New York: Zed Books, 2007: 2.

[13] Jean B. Elshtain. *Women and War*. University of Chicago Press, 1987; Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2000.

[14] Militarized masculinity has been broadly defined as the ways that traits associated with masculinity can be acquired and utilized to justify military service or action, especially military combat. Differnt scholars of war argue that states generally rely on and reproduce militarized masculinity through the recruitment of male citizens as an appeal to their masculine identity. See for example Sandra Whitworth. *Men, Militarism and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004; Cynthia Enloe. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

[15] Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Volume 21 Number 2 March 1998): 260.

[16] Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. Boston: South End Press, 1983: 138-140.

[17] Established in 1991/2 after the signing of the Bicesse Accord by the MPLA government and UNITA insurgent forces, the Angolan Armed Forces/FAA was the country's first joint unified army. Its creation was seen as the first step toward the demobilization process and an effort by both warring groups to find resolution to the intense war. For more on the history of the FAA see Margaret Joan Anstee, *Orphan of the Cold War: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process, 1992–1993*, London: Macmillan, 1996; Luís Bernardino, *A posição de Angola na Arquitectura de Paz e Segurança Africana. Análise da Função Estratégica das Forças Armadas Angolanas*, (Almedina, 2013); Christine Messiant, (2005), 'Why did Bicesse and Lusaka fail? A critical analysis' in *From Military Peace to Social Justice? The Angolan Peace Process,* Conciliation Resources, ACCORD, an International Review of Peace Initiatives, London; Stephen L. Weigert, *Angola: a modern military history, 1961-2002*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

[18] Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola 1975-2002*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

[19] Carol Cohn, ed. *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures*. Wiley, Kindle Edition, 2013: 147. Also see Mazurana, Dyan and Susan McKay. *Where are the Girls?: Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their Lives During and After War*. Rights & Democracy, 2004; Jocelyn Viterna, *Women in War: The Micro-processes of Mobilization in El Salvador* (Oxford University Press, 2013); Dyan Mazurana, Susan McKay et al. 2002. "Girls in fighting forces and groups: Recruitment, participation, demobilization, and reintegration." Peace and Conflict: *Journal of Peace Psychology* 8, no. 2: 97-123.

[20] For a detailed history of these brave women see CDIH, eds., História do MPLA, (Luanda: Centro de Documentação e Investigação Histórica do MLPA, 2008) 2 vols; Paulina Chizane. *O Livro da Paz da Mulher Angolana– As Heroínas sem Nome*. Luanda: Editorial Nzila, 2008. (Coleção Memórias, 6); Margarida Paredes, *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*, Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015.

[21] To this day, it is still contested as to the exact date that Deolinda and her comrades were assassinated.

[22] Miranda Alison. *Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security*, University of Warwick, UK: Department of Politics and International Studies, 2002.

[23] While the mobilization of the Angolan masses was extensive, I have not been able to find any concrete data on how many women were conscripted or volunteered for the armed forces. However, from my interviews with ex-combatants of the MPLA, we can approximate that at least 20 percent of women volunteered to fight for FAPLA between 1974-1976.

[24] Not her actual name. As one of the few Angolan women ex-combatants who received military patents in May 2014, Mena currently holds the rank of Colonel in the Angolan Armed Forces.

[25] Interview with Caetano, a current military official of FAA who was also a combatant for UNITA. This interview was conducted in Luanda on September 30, 2015.

[26] Miriam Cooke. *Women and the War Story*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996: 15-16.

[27] Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan (eds). *Society at War. The Militarisation of South Africa*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1989.

[28] Interview with Zazi on October 30, 2015.

[29] Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. London & New York: Zed Books, 2013: 45.

[30] A staple food made from cassava.

[31] Interview with Maria and Zazi recorded on September 18, 2015 in Maianga.

[32] Joanna Bourke. *Wounding the World: How the Military and War-Play Invade our Lives* London: Virago, 2014.

[33] G.L Siebold (1999), "The evolution of the measurement of cohesion," *Military Psychology*, 11(1), 5–26.

[34] Cynthia Enloe. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. Boston: South End Press, 1983; Jacklyn Cock, *Colonels and Cadres. War and Gender in South Africa*. Cape Town and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991; Jacklyn Cock, 1994, "Women and the Military: Implications for Demilitarization in the

1990s in South Africa," *Gender & Society 8: 152-169;* Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand. War, Women's Activism, and Feminist Analysis*, London: Zed Books, 2007.

[35] Interview with a former top military official of FAPLA on October 8, 2016 in Luanda.

[36] Kathleen Sheldon. *Pounders of Grain: History of Women, Work and Politics in Mozambique*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002: 124; Also, Stephanie Urdang. *And Still They Dance: Women, War and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989.

[37] Karen Kampwirth. *Women and Guerilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.

[38] Ryszard Kapuscinski. *Another Day of Life*. Translated by William Bland and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand. New York: Vintage International, 2001: 49.

[39] Jacklyn Cock, 1994, "Women in and the Military: Implications for Demilitarization in the 1990's in South Africa," *Gender and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2: 154.

[40] Cynthia Cockburn. *From Where We Stand. War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis*. London: Zed Books, 2007: 248.

[41] Joshua Goldstein. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001: 265.

[42] Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 1990; Cynthia Enloe. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2000.

[43] Ibid; 190.

[44] Simone de Beauvoir. *The Second Sex*. trans. Constance Borde and Sheila MalovanyChevallier. New York: Vintage Books, 2010 [1949]: 283. Monique Wittig also took up this question of non-essence and elaborated it in her work on "A Lesbian is Not a Woman" and in "The Straight Mind." See Monique Wittig, "One Is Not Born a Woman". *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch. NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010: 104-9. Print. Monique Wittig, "The Straight Mind". *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. NY: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1980. Print

[45] Ibid.

[46] For more on how (patriarchal) masculinity encourages a denial of the self, see Horrocks, Roger. *Masculinity in Crisis: Myths, Fantasies, and Realities*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1994; Cynthia Enloe. *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of Inter- national Politics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990.

[47] Interview with Claudia on September 13, 2015 in Viana.

[48] Judith Halberstam. *Female Masculinity*. Duke University Press, 1998.

[49] Interview with Ruth Adriano Mendes September 22, 2015.

[50] Jacklyn Cock "Women in and the Military: Implications for Demilitarization in the 1990's in South Africa," *Gender and Society,* Vol. 1, No. 2, (1994): 154; Also: M. Baaz and M. Stern, " Why do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the DRC," I*nternational Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 53, (2009): 495–518.

[51] Amina Mama, "Gender in Action: Militarism and War," African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town, Newsletter, June 2001.

[52] Nira Yuval-Davis. *Gender and Nation*, Sage Publications, 1997: 101.

[53] Joseph Miller, "Nzinga of Matamba in a New Perspecive," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 16, n. 2, (1975): 201-216; Donald Burness, "'Nzinga Mbandi' and the Angolan

Independence," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Winter, 1977):225-229; John Thornton, 'Legitimacy and political power in Central Africa: The case of Queen Njinga (1624–1663)', *Journal of African History*, 32 (1991): 25–40.; Cathy Jean Skidmore-Hess, *Queen Njinga, 1582-1663: Ritual, Power and Gender in the Life of a Precolonial African Ruler*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1995.

[54] Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch. *African Women: A Modern History*, trans. Beth Gillian Rops, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997:40–42; David Birmingham. *Frontline Nationalism in Angola and Mozambique* (London: James Currey, 1992); Joseph C. Miller, "Nzinga of Matamba in a New Perspective," *Journal of African History* 16, no. 2 (1975); John K. Thornton, "Legitimacy and Political Power: Queen Njinga, 1624–1663," *Journal of African History*, 32, 1991, 25–40; John Marcum. *The Angolan Revolution, Volume 2: Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare (1962–1976)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972.

[55] Cynthia Enloe. *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. University of California Press, 2004: 196.

[56] Michael Rothberg. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009: 4.

[57] The narrative presented here is from my audio-recorded interview with Maria Teresa. The interview was conducted on October 22, 2015, in the province of Benguela. Here I present the interview in more or less the way it took place that day. The interview was conducted in Portuguese in the presence of Maria's friend. The recent path-breaking work Margarida Paredes (2015) also provides comprehensive narratives of Angolan women who participated in the armed struggle for national liberation. My interview with Maria is presented in a format that may read like a linear narrative, but it was not. There were breaks, pauses, and interjections since the interview was conducted in her home. Although I asked most of the questions, her friend also interjected and asked her to clarify some of her own questions.

[58] For example: Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola;* Jacklyn Cock, *Colonels and Cadres. War and Gender in South Africa*, Cape Town and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991; Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*, Trenton, New York University Press, 2004; Stephanie Urdang, *And They Still Dance: Women, War, and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique*. London: Monthly Press, 1989.

[59] Interview with Ruth Adriano Mendes September 22, 2015.

[60] Jocelyn Viterna. *Women in War: The Micro-Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*, Oxford; New York*: Oxford University Press, 2013; Cohn Carol, ed., *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

[61] Daniel Dombrowski. *Christian Pacifism*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991; Nigel Dower. *The Ethics of War and Peace*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009; Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*. New York: WW Norton and Co, 1997.

[62] See for example: Francis Fukuyama, "Women and the evolution of world politics," *Foreign Affairs* 77:5, (1998) 24–40.

[63] Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking Towards a Politics of Peace*. Boston: Beacon Press,1989: 154.

[64] Interview with Tina in Lobito on October 14, 2015.

[65] Henda Ducados. "An All Men's Show? Angolan Women's Survival in the 30-Year War." *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, no. 43 (2000): 11-2.

[66] Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015: 298.

Chapter Four

What the Body Remembers: Traumatic Narratives of War and the Wounded Female Body as Witness

The main purpose and outcome of war is injuring.[1]

Pastor Ilda ushers me into her office. A tiny room that is located a few hundred yards from the pulpit of the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola in Benguela. Before she offers me a seat, she holds my hand and asks that we close our eyes for a prayer. I oblige as I listen to her lyrical voice chant the prayer in Portuguese and then in Umbundu. Toward the end of the prayer, she pauses and mumbles "I pray that [you] give me the words and the strength to tell my story. Because I don't have the words to express myself, neither do I have the strength to remember the past. But, I don't want to forget."

In our two and half hours interview, Pastor Ilda, who was born in 1947 in Andulo in the province of Bié, narrates her contribution to the armed struggle in the mid-1960s as a pastor in a church in Uige. She proudly recalls how she provided refuge to many guerrillas who were evading persecution from the Portuguese military police. But, when she gets to the period after independence, her once assured voice starts to quiver. Her radiant face now has a shadow of sadness. She evades my eyes. I ask if she would like us to stop. "No!" she retorts. "My girl, you travelled all the way here to interview me. There is a reason why God brought you here. So, turn on your recorder and let's continue with the interview." In her recollections, she mentions her friend, Eunice Sapassa, who was hacked to death during the horrific "witch-burning" event that came to be known as *Septembro Vermelho*/Red September. Pastor Ilda also tells me the stories of many girls and women who came to her church for help when the war ended. These women "are broken in every way you can imagine. That's why we do not like to talk about the past. There are lots of painful stories in our silence," she says without elaborating. "They carry scars on their bodies because of the rapes, the murders, the landmines, the abuse. You cannot see some of the scars because I can tell you that many Angolan women carry them in their hearts and in their minds." With misty eyes and a heavy sigh, she directs her gaze at a woman cleaning the pew benches. I nod at the woman, who is introduced to me only as Ana, and she smiles back shyly. I suddenly notice that Ana is an amputee. As if reading my mind, Pastor Ilda remarks, "sometimes it is enough to just let the body speak for itself. For Ana, she will never forget 1987."[2] I try to engage her, but she mumbles, almost stammering: "Eu…não nunca falar sobre isso. Nunca!/I never talk about it. Never!"

Before we conclude our interview, I ask Pastor Ilda what role her church plays in the lives of the women and girls in post-conflict Angola. Her response is long and laced with grief and sadness:

> in my church we work with many women who were directly affected by the war. Many of them are still coming to terms with the effects of the war….they were abandoned, they raised their kids as single women…we also have cases where their husbands abandoned them after they learnt that their women were victims of rape during the war. Our work is to encourage them and help them. Some of them took on other husbands and when the war ended their first husbands showed up. This creates confusion in the family and these women end up being battered by their men because they are accused of being unfaithful.

They are confused. Most them are traumatized. The work we keep doing has helped some of them to recover. We help them spiritually because the war had lasting effects on their psyche. They need motivation. My work as a pastor is to encourage them. I tell them that they cannot give up on themselves and their children. We mostly try to provide many of them a place they can call home. Because many of them have no homes...I don't mean the physical structure. For those whom the society has deemed outcasts and even called them crazy, we take them in and try the best we can to support them. The memory of the war drives many of them to insanity. Many of us don't want to remember, but we also do not want to forget.

Let us consider this account from my fieldwork interview with Pastor Ilda, which lays the groundwork of my analysis in this chapter, as a fragment to specifically think through narratives of trauma and the various forms of violence inscribed on women's bodies in wartime. The maimed body of Ana, the raping of women and girls, the execution of women (and men) under the pretext of witchcraft (I will expound on this further in the chapter), and Pastor Ilda's own struggle to find words to tell her story; all these are fragments of trauma that force us to grapple with the question of how we interpret such narratives. What exactly do we make of statements such as these: "we are broken in every way you can imagine. That's why we do not like to talk about the past…You cannot see some of the scars because I can tell you that many Angolan women carry them in their hearts and in their minds. Many of us don't want to remember, but we also do not want to forget." As listeners, these narratives of trauma certainly call on us to know more about what survivors remember even when many of them prefer to keep their stories private. In the presence of Ana's disabled body, we are dared to engage in the project of reopening wounds (both visible and invisible), of recovering painful and traumatic pasts, and of discerning "what is not spoken and what is not seen."[3] Narratives of the women I encountered are stories of physical and psychological pain, and these narratives alert us to the suffering individual that inherits and directly lives through traumatic events. Through the very encounter with their physical and psychological wounding, some of the women survivors of the war not only individually come to know their traumas, but they also transmit their stories to another. In retelling their pain, destruction and survival collide and begin to resolve the consequent tension between life and death.

While we are more likely to be drawn to notice the physical aspects of violence on the corporeal such as wounding and maiming, torture, and murder, it is important that we pay attention to the forms of violence in moments of peace in order to understand the routinization of violence in the everyday lives of women such as Ana and Pastor Ilda. As Veena Das aptly puts it, "one can see suffering not only in the ordinary events such as those of police firing on crowds of young children, but also in the routine of everyday life."[4] To this end, what pastor Ilda is saying to us in her recollections is that since trauma as a quotidian form of violence by its very nature resists articulation, many survivors' trauma stories of the everyday are difficult to tell when the society does not want to listen and would rather have these stories forgotten.

Indeed, the history of twentieth century is one that is strewn with traumatic accounts and the inscription of violence on women's bodies. From the public raping incidences of Muslim women in the name of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, to the spectacles of the raped and mutilated women's bodies during the Rwandan genocide;[5] global militarism in the twentieth century was marked by public terror as a way of maintaining social and political order. But, what underlies these spectacles of terror is the body, the female body. This is what interests me in this

chapter, that is, the relationship between narratives of trauma, the female body, witnessing, and (re) writing history. In this regard, I view the (female) body to be political and a space for inscription of culture, violence, past traumatic experiences, and history. Elizabeth Grosz asserts that "the body, or rather, bodies, cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, pre-cultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social construction of nature itself."[6] Indeed, the violent history of modern nationalism in Angola, acknowledged or unacknowledged, denied or downplayed, remembered or forgotten, returns: through the wounded bodies of Angolan women and their narratives of trauma.

My desire is not in providing detailed descriptions of moments of torture on women's bodies or what Lynn Hunt calls the "the pageantry of pain."[7] Rather, I weave testimonies from my interviews with published historical accounts of wartime violence in order to address these questions: What is at stake in assimilating trauma into narrative? What are the limits and possibilities of trauma narratives? Can women's accounts of trauma and hidden memories be seen as cautionary gestures for us to be aware of the glorious renderings of nationalism? And, how do we rigorously represent or confront these wounded bodies to open up possibilities for hearing, remembering, and historicizing the experiences of women in wartime?

My understanding of trauma and the wounded body as witness draws on a cross-section of disciplines including trauma studies, feminist sociology, psychoanalysis, and post-colonial studies. I, especially, rely on a plethora of multidisciplinary trauma theorists including Cathy Caruth, Dori Laub, Shoshana Felman, Dominick LaCapra, Elaine Scarry, and Geoffrey Hartman, to establish the theoretical approaches to and representations of trauma, memory, testimony, and witnessing. I argue that women's memories of their traumatic past illuminate their desire to break the silences inherent to wartime violence, silences accentuated by their marginalized position as women within the broader project of nationalism. Because as Diana Taylor aptly notes that silence as a strategy of resistance for women "has generally been a sign of public and political invisibility."[8] I suggest that we consider the individual and collective memories of women as a strategy for these women to write themselves into existence by rejecting the silencing of the past. They call our attention to the erasures present in the dominant modes of historicizing the wars of national liberation across the continent.

Since violence pervades the history of Angola— from the barabarism of the transatlantic slave trade, the racial violence that characterized Portuguese colonialism, to the over two-decade long wars that marked the country's modern nationalism; it is therefore not farfetched to argue that everyday lives of women have been characterized by histories of violence—both symbolic and physical. Postocolonial theorist, Achille Mbembe makes the argument that in writing about a collective subject in Africa, "The first question that should be identified concerns the status of suffering in history— the various ways in which historical forces inflict psychic harm on collective bodies and the ways in which violence shapes subjectivity."[9] Mbembe, in this assertion, uses trauma theory to remind us that the construction of collective identity is linked to the process of memory making and recovery of memory that constructs one's role in it as an agentic subject rather than victim. Therefore, by remembering that which they would rather forget, women's trauma narratives, I argue, lead to the possibility of constructing what we may call African women's archives of the everydayness. To view these narratives of trauma as constituting an archive of the everydayness is to come to terms with the fact that for many women, trauma is an everyday, systematic, and perharps even ordinary experience (for instance, in an on going experience of domestic violence and sexual abuse). Borrowing from Henri

Lefebvre's concept of the "everyday and everydayness" in which he poists that the "everyday is therefore the most universal and the most unique condition, the most social and the most individuated, the most obvious and the best hidden. A condition stipulated for the legibility of forms, ordained by means of functions, inscribed within structures,"[10] I contend that African women's archive of the everydayness is an attempt to probe the many forms of banalized and normalized violence apparent in women's lives in Africa as well as women's quotidian strategies of resistance and survival in conflict and post-conflict periods. African women's archives of everydayness expose our eyes to the hard truth that women's bodies remain fundamental, rather than incidental, to wartime violence. To this end, I consider this chapter to be an ethnography of the present that is primarily built on the work of traumatic memory, a memory of the wounded female body.

To provide some structure to my analysis of trauma narratives, since there are many forms of violence experienced by women that are beyond the scope of this chapter, I will focus on the valences of trauma that fall into two main categories. I will first delineate the wounding of the female body via sexual violence. In using narratives of survivors of wartime sexual violence, I will argue that the invisible trauma inscribed on the bodies of those who were violated bear witness to the unspeakable, make visible, and give voice to the suffering of women in Angola and across Africa. It is important to note that I use sexual violence, not rape, as a broader category that includes rape, enforced prostitution, and forced pregnancy. The second category of trauma narratives will rely on a few published accounts on the burning and execution of "witches" to interrogate what I call ghostly traumas. Unlike the first form of trauma where we have survivors narrate their experiences, this second category recalls the tortured bodies of the dead. With no marked graves or monuments to memorialize these women, we turn to the memories of the events that led to their deaths in order to let this haunting bear witness to aspects of Angola's history that continue to be repressed and denied. Ghostly traumas, as I will argue later, serve to remind us that the recording of history is never complete until every story is told.

It is already clear, thus far, that my analysis of women's trauma narratives does not include the perpetrator's trauma. I have deliberately steered away from the trauma of the perpetrator because I believe that including such narratives not only flatten the experiences of survivors whose stories have been silenced and obfuscated in the history of the nation, but they also remind them [survivors] of their victimhood.

Image 16: Pastor Ilda during an interview with the author in Benguela on October 19, 2015.

Before I delve deeper into narratives of trauma and the multiple ways they are represented on women's bodies, I want, for the present, to draw attention to the question of narrating trauma and its relationship to memory, enunciation of pain, and witnessing history.

Understanding Trauma and Embodied Witness

The term trauma, which has a Greek origin, is generally understood to be an injury to the body. But, Cathy Caruth notes that in the twentieth century psychoanalysis, trauma came to be understood as psychological injury that leaves long lasting marks on the psyche, "a wound inflicted not on the body but upon the mind."[11] Since trauma itself is not fully consciously processed at the time of the its happening, it often calls for a return, a recollection of some fragments of the traumatic event by way of flashbacks, thus trauma and memory are inextricably linked. In this vein, what is not remembered is as crucial in its contents as what is remembered. Indeed, pastor Ilda's statement that "the memory of the war drives many of them to insanity. Many of us don't want to remember," demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between a traumatic event and its witness. The "insanity" which characterizes the lives of some the women in post-war Angola leads us to surmise that while Angolans from all walks of life were impacted by violence in a myriad of ways, for some of them it is the "mental experiencing of it, the affective and ideational processing of the event, that constitutes the psychological trauma."[12] Different trauma theories point out that trauma has the potential of severely debilitating a survivor's psyche; yet, this wounding of the mind does not necessarily interfere with one's ability to recall the past experience. Hence survivors are called upon to play the crucial role of authentic witnesses to the atrocities of war through their testimonies. For instance, in various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions/TRC—the South African and the Rwandan hearings for example— it has been observed that although broken and traumatized, survivors' narratives functioned as powerful acts of witness.[13] These hearings underscored the power of the traumatized body as witness to the exercise of truth.

So, whether it is pastor Ilda who prays for strength and words to tell her story or Ana who never wants to talk about her traumatic past, we are confronted with the question: What is at stake in assimilating trauma into narrative? For many women I interviewed the process of naming the violence bestowed on their bodies presented a challenge, not only because language fails in the face of violence, but also because such naming has great political stakes given the present day politics of the country. During my interviews, I found it difficult to bring up the topic of violence out of my fear of retraumatizing my informants. There were moments, I was forced to cancel some of the interviews because for some women, the memory of the past was way too painful for them to retell. There were other cases when one of my interviewees would break down in tears, but quickly insist that those were tears of gratitude because my interview gave her a chance to finally talk about her two "disappeared" sons. On other occasions, my interviewees and I had to sit through half an hour of the interview process in silence because as one of my informants told me "I can't find the words." In those moments of silence where words could not be found, I had to learn to listen and read from the silence. In these voices and silences there was a tension between reliving the past in the present and regaining a certain sense of control over the memories. In *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Elaine Scarry delineates the complex ways that extreme violence ruptures the mind and voice of the survivor from her body. She notes:

What the process of torture does is to split the human being into two, to make emphatic

the ever present but ... only latent distinction between a self and a body, between a "me" and "my body" ... The goal of the torturer is to make the one, the body, emphatically and crushingly present by destroying it, and to make the other, the voice, absent by destroying it.[14]

Women's difficulty in retelling the past lies at the heart of what trauma theorist Dominick LaCapra has called 'a limit event.' LaCapra defines 'limit event' or life-shattering moments as violent historical events, which transgress social and moral limits and fall outside the understanding of any ordinary experience.[15] Throughout my fieldwork, I came across many women who seemed to be entrapped in cycles of grief and many who found it difficult to put their life shattering moments into words. Women such as Ana, who "never want to talk about it" reveal a form of "paralysis" many survivors experience when it comes to (re) telling of the past, or what Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub have referred to as "the crisis of witnessing."[16] It took me awhile after my fieldwork to realize that what the traumatized resists, often times, is assimilation into narrative.

With only fourteen years of peace since the end of the civil war, for many of the women I had conversations with this process of assimilating the trauma of war into their life narrative is not easy. In their comprehensive work on *Narrating Our Healing*, South African psychologists Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and Chris Van der Merwe aptly state that trauma defies language and it resists being communicated.[17] But, they also argue that healing demands us to listen with empathy to the "crying voice" of the oppressed because personal and national healing is everyone's responsibility.[18]

Ana, like the many women that Pastor Ilda works with, prefers to let her silence and her wounded body tell the story which she has the inability to share—maybe unwillingly. For Ana, it is her amputated leg that visually tells her story. In her presence I, as a researcher, have to decipher what her injured body is communicating about her traumatic past and the violent history of her country. At the same time, I am moved to respect the fact that her not wanting to share her story is a way for her to make sense of her present world. While Ana's ability to express the pain inscribed on her injured body is erased, her wounded body becomes a means for telling a different kind of history, one that does not carry with it any trappings of heroic nationalism. Ana's disabled body is a perfect example both of how history is inscribed in the body and how the body is inscribed in history. This brings me to another question posed earlier in the introduction: what are the possibilities of trauma narratives?

LaCapra proposes the idea of "working through" trauma as an important step for survivors to regain a sense of agency over their lives, as well as regain a sense of stability. Here, I wholly embrace Michael Rothberg's assertion that "being traumatized does not necessarily imply victim status."[19]When a survivor sees herself beyond the lens of victimhood, she realizes that she lived through a life shattering event that altered who she was, but she has the ability to "work through" these traumatic experiences. However, "working through" does not necessarily imply bringing closure for the survivor, but rather it consists of a grieving process and a reengagement with life.

Working through is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma ... one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future.[20]

Since trauma is re-experienced in various forms, what LaCapra is suggesting here is that this "articulatory practice" (be it through silence or words) is a way for trauma survivors to construct a narrative that rewrites the past and paves a journey toward healing. By working through trauma the survivor's story "can be told, the person can look back at what happened; he has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography."[21] Retelling the story as a strategy for "working through" trauma thus becomes a process, for survivors, to invite her listener to participate in the power of witnessing the terror of the violent past. More importantly, it opens up a space for women to showcase their courage, resilience, their repertoires of survival, and begin reconstructing a different history that includes, rather than, exclude their experiences. Thus, women's ability to tap into their wounded selves, their courage to turn to memory—however painful, and to narrate their traumas demonstrates the relationship between memory, life story, and history.

I now turn my analysis to the two categories of trauma I delineated earlier. In writing the section that follows on the invisible trauma of wartime sexual violence, I carry with me a specific load. This burden comes from my own positionality as an African woman writing about Angolan women's experiences of war. In my quest to push women's trauma narratives from the footnotes of historical archives to the center page, I ask myself: how do we, as African women, listen to and represent stories of our sisters (wherever they are on the continent)—whose bodies continue to be violated in periods of war and conflict—beyond narratives that are didactic and one-dimensional? Narratives that turn African women into "passive victims" through an unsubstantiated process of naturalization of gender oppression on their bodies, unfortunately, such narratives continue to be more germane to western feminists' modes of theorizing the non-Western Other.[22] This challenge notwithstanding, I remain cognizant of the fact that while there exists enough data,[23] which reveals the prevalence of sexual violence during the Angolan war and conflict, the subject of rape in particular still bears the stigma of the taboo, of that about which we do not speak or write because rape is an unsafe subject for many women across the globe.

"I felt powerless then and I feel vulnerable today": The Invisible Trauma of Sexual Violence

Eleven years ago, the night after I had survived a nearly fatal sexual assault in the dark streets of Nairobi, I sat down on my bed in my tiny studio apartment to begin to process the actions that might have put me in that situation. Nothing made sense and I thought it was quite possible my perpetrators had drugged me. Rather than tell my younger sister, who was staying with me at the time, that I had been sexually assaulted by four men I told her that I had been "mugged." She had listened empathetically and offered some sort of consolation. "You survived it and that is a wonderful thing. They may have shamed you by ripping off your blouse, but you survived," she had said examining the scratches around my neck and chest left by my perpetrators in their attempt to strip my clothes off. With those words, I made a deliberate effort to not revisit the events of that night. I never told her the full story but told her what I wanted her to hear, in fact I never mentioned it to the rest of my family. Silence became my strategy for dealing with the events of that fateful night. But, the more I heard other women who were victims of sexual assault say how "lucky" they were to be alive, the more my sister's empathetic words became concretized. Of course, at the time I did not have the awareness of how the trauma of sexual violence operates. Had I known that trauma not only disturbs the psyche, but it also

remains in the body ready to resurface whenever something triggers a reliving of the painful event, would I have been more vocal about the assault?

I chose silence then and when Ilara Domingas posed these questions to me during our interview in Lisbon in January 2016, I was speechless just the same way I was eleven years ago:

> Do you know what it feels to look in the eyes of two men who rape you in the presence of your parents, and when they are done with you they rape your mother? Would you have the power to fight back? Would you ever have the courage to tell your children that they were brought into this world not out of love but because their mother was raped? If say you do, then I beg you to pass on your magical powers. Over the years I have forced myself not to think about that day [sigh] because the past makes me numb. I felt powerless then, and I feel vulnerable today. I still do not know how to talk about it. You know what, I don't have to talk about it because my two children speak for me.

I did not give Ilara any answers to her questions, maybe because I took them to be rhetorical, but I mentioned that I understood the difficulty in telling her story. "Would you rather forget?" I asked, and her response mirrored what Ana had said when she noticed I was looking at her leg. But unlike Ana, Ilara's response was swift and almost cynical, if not admonishing: "Well, would you? I dare you to go back to Angola and ask those survivors who were sexually abused in the camps if they would rather forget. I dare you! One never forgets, you understand? The wounds are there…permanent."

Of course, what happened to me eleven years ago does not even compare to what Ilara and many women Angolan women went through during the war. Nonetheless, listening to Ilara I flashbacked to the events of that night and realized the challenge of finding language that is true to the invisible trauma of sexual violence. According to psychoanalyst Dori Laub, "the absence of an empathetic listener or more radically, the absence of an addressable other, an other who can hear the anguish of one's memories and thus affirm and cognize their realness annihilates the story."[24] Ilara's response alerts us to the silencing of certain kinds of histories and her words amplify the narratives of other women whose histories, as Tanya Lyon notes only get to be told " through 'silences' and 'lies.'"[25]

One of the reasons why sexual violence is taken for granted in many societies is that it happens so frequently. And, in periods of war and conflicts, rape and other forms of male violence are seen as a normal and natural. In her influential book, *Against Our Will*, Susan Brownmiller provides an excellent explanation for the everydayness of rape in wartime. She notes: "It has been argued that when killing is viewed as not only permissible but heroic behavior sanctioned by one's government or cause, the distinction between taking a human life and other forms of impermissible violence gets lost, and rape becomes an unfortunate but inevitable by-product of the necessary game called war."[26] Brownmiller's work may have been written more than three decades ago; nonetheless, the above statement rings true even today. There is a general consensus among feminist scholars that when the tensions of war increase, sexual violence also increases because more often than not sexual violence as a repertoire of violence— to borrow Elizabeth Wood's term, is used as a strategy of war.[27] Or as Brownmiller posits "[Rape] is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear."[28]

The point of using sexual violence as a tactic in wartime is because it is an effective strategy for causing massive destruction and control of the population not only at the time of

assault but also for many years that follow. In her earliest work on *Women, Race, and Class*, Angela Davis makes an insightful assertion about the centrality of rape to the experience of enslaved black women: "It would be a mistake to regard the institutionalized pattern of rape during slavery as an expression of white men's sexual urges...*Rape was a weapon of domination, a weapon of repression, whose covert goal was to extinguish slave women's will to resist, and in the process, to demoralize their men* [my own emphasis]."[29] When put in the context of sexual violence in wartime Angola, this argument provides a useful feminist intervention in the discourse about sexual violence that looks at wartime rape as an act of violence rather than sex. That rape is always about domination and power is an undeniable fact. Rape, as particular type of sexual violence has debilitating effects on the psyches and bodies of survivors. The sexual humiliation and pain renders the bodies powerless. Given that we live in an era wherein different gendered bodies are politicized and targeted in the struggle for power, it goes without saying that mass "production" of raped bodies is often used as a deliberate strategy for those in power to achieve political goals, and both control and destroy the masses. Because of this normalization of such violence in wartime and the systemic wounding of female bodies, in particular, Margot Wallström posits that "wartime rape is not a side effect, but it is actually a new frontline" and "is not a crime that the world can dismiss as collateral damage or inevitable or cultural as it is often called."[30]

Indeed, Ilara's response to my question during my fieldwork is an example of how women are extremely vulnerable to male power in times of war and their vulnerability continues even in post-conflict situations. It also shines a spotlight on the ways in which gendered sexual violence serves not only to humiliate women (and the men who are unable to protect women), but also to punish and control the masses through fear. For instance, Joshua Goldstein argues that the practices of militarized masculinity account for the sexual violence against enemy civilians (and combatants).[31]

The armed struggle period between 1961-1975 witnessed a few reported cases—there exists no data that shows the actual magnitude during this time— of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence within the three nationalist movements.[32] However, in the post-independence civil war conflict these incidences became widely reported by different human rights organizations. From the musseques[33] in Luanda to the various refugee camps there were reports of civilians being targeted by both the UNITA rebel forces and the MPLA's counterinsurgency units. Huíla was one of the regions that witnessed some of the violations as the government forces sought to capture the territory from UNITA forces in the 1993/4 period following UNITA's refusal to accept the results of the 1992 elections. It was here that Ilara's father, a UNITA sympathizer, was shot as he tried to defend his daughter from being raped by the governement soldiers. There are no official accounts of the number of people who died during this period, but Ilara and her mother joined the few people who fled the region.[34] In the refugee camps where many civilians fled to, the killings and sexual violations followed them. For instance, historian Inge Brinkman's research showcases the various forms of torture endured by Angolan women and girls in the refugee camps in Namibia. Through her extesnive interviews, she observes that:

> Pregnant women would have their wombs cut open and the foetus would be thrown away. Although a number of such accounts focused on MPLA's violent activities, again most related war crimes committed by UNITA troops. A husband might be forced to deny his wife…while watching soldiers rape her. Close relatives might be forced to have

sex in front of the entire village. The accounts contained many references to perverted sexuality. Apart from obvious examples such as rape, forced marriage and incest…[35]

We may want to ask, what do accounts such as the ones Brinkman observes above do to survivors? I argue that these narratives of trauma emphasize the way in which torture and the invisible trauma it causes can lead to a lack of agency on the part of the survivor. They reveal the vulnerabilities within the survivor as she is forced to reckon with the structures of power and domination, which underlie her painful experiences. Elaine Scarry posits that torture works to remove consciousness from the human body. Hence, the experiences Ilara survived at the hands of the government soldiers fractures her memory and she tries as much as she can to un/consciously separate herself from those events by trying to not think about it because "the past makes me numb." But, while her own body (or that of her mother) does not bear any visible scars of the violence, she is confronted with the trauma through her children. Ilara's pain is reflected in narratives of other Angolan women. For example, in her extensive interviews with women ex-combatants, Margarida Paredes observes how some of the survivors did not want to remember their trauma, for this reason many of them responded to her questions with "expressions such as 'I don't remember', I don't know."[36] Ilara, like many Angolan women, withhold the painful details of their past because for them those traumatic events lie sealed in the invisible scars within their bodies. In some of my interviews, I noticed that when attempting to narrate their experiences, some of retelling was emotionless and repetitious. Cathy Caruth notes that:

> What is enigmatically suggested, that is, is that the trauma consists not only in having confronted death but having survived, precisely, without knowing it. What one returns to in the flashback is not the incomprehensibility of one's near death, but the very incomprehensibility of one's own survival. Repetition, in other words, is not simply the attempt to grasp that one has almost died but, more fundamentally and enigmatically, the very attempt to claim one's own survival. If history is to be understood as the history of trauma, it is a history that is experienced as the endless attempt to assume one's survival as one's own.[37]

As I posed in my introduction, how do we rigorously represent or confront these wounded bodies to open up possibilities for hearing, remembering, and historicizing the experiences of women in wartime? It is, perhaps, useful to look to the devastating effects of the long history of racial and sexual violence on other black women's bodies in the African diaspora for insights. In particular, black women's experiences of slavery in Brazil and the U.S, for example, reveal the ways in which their sexuality was reduced to either their private parts (as prostitutes for white men) or their wombs. The sexual commodification of the black female body, as evidenced in a plethora of black women's literature,[38] and the state sanctioned practice of sexual violence had intergenerational impacts on black women's lives.

Black women's literature offers us a framework for understanding how despite the trauma of racial/sexual violence on women's bodies and the erasures of their experiences in official archives, black women found alternative means to evidence their lives and (re) write themselves into existence. Black women's literature demonstrates the importance of the oral tradition of remembering and testifying, as well as helps us to understand how the testimonies of the wounded help validate their experiences, heal wounds and often times bring justice to past crimes. Thus, it is within this larger tradition of black women's memory-work that the trauma

narratives of the violated Angolan women need to be understood, because like other women across the diaspora, the invisible trauma of sexual violence has been inherent in the lives of Angolans.

In confronting their traumatized bodies and having the courage to remember and retell the past—albeit in different ways—women survivors of sexual violence open up possibilities for historicizing their own experiences. Painful as recounting her past had been, Ilara concluded our interview with a heavy sigh saying: "do with my story whatever you want to do with it, but thank you for letting me talk about it. Not everything but some of it. I also did it for my mother because she died without telling anybody what happened to her." Ilara's remarks offer no simple way to confront abuse and to heal from it especially when silence and denial cloud the violations committed. Her words remind me of the testimony of another Angolan survivor recorded in the book *As Heroinas sem Nome*/ The Unnamed Heroes, a collection of testimonies by Angolan women who survived the war. In this interview the survivor recounts the pain she endured when she left her children behind after she was abducted: "One day I was abducted and taken to the forest, I was involved with another man and had another son. I suffered thinking about my children that had been left on the other side. Because of this pain, I would sing and my grief would disappear and I would feel better for some time."[39] Perhaps for this survivor, singing was a way to drown out her unconscious thinking that haunts all victims. Thus, singing as a coping strategy can be seen here as a way for survivors to create another narrative in their minds. Survivors often use their imaginations to bury the pain of the violent past and as a way to find relief from the realities of the present. Whether it is through singing or their sense of humor, the women I interviewed found creative attempts to express and alleviate the psychic and physical pain.

I read the testimonies in both cases as examples of how remembering and (re) telling "the truth about events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims."[40] Even though trauma narratives of survivors and their wounded bodies as witness, as Geoffrey Hartman aptly observes may " not excel in providing verités de fait or positivist history. … Their real strength lies in recording the psychological and emotional milieu of the struggle for survival, not only then, but also now."[41]

More importantly, I consider these testimonies, and many others, as constructing the subjectivity of Angolan women, a specific type subjectivity which is based on narratives of women-as-survivors of sexual violence. What these narratives help to illuminate is that Angolan women's own formation of their subject positions, though embroiled in destructive power of male violence, are not completely determined by them. By tapping into their fears and vulnerabilities, and remembering their pain, Angolan women are able to voice and to show the injury done to them and also to provide witness to damage done to the social fabric of the nation. Women may recount their unique experiences differently, but in the end their individuated experiences become a collective experience demonstrating what Veena Das views as communal rituals and re-telling.[42] And by doing so, their narratives of invisible trauma have the potential power to impact national memory because their testimonies intervene into historical events and provide not only alternative histories to the officially sanctioned master narratives, but also silenced stories about the past.

In what follows, I end my analysis on trauma narratives and the wounded female body as witness with a brief discussion of the second category of trauma that I call ghostly traumas. In my analysis, I focus on women who were humiliated, tortured, burnt alive, and executed in public spectacles of terror after being accused of "witchcraft." This horrific aspect of Angolan

history is one that continues to elicit finger pointing accusations and denials from both the MPLA regime and UNITA. I will hastily point out here that because of the very sensitive nature of this issue and the silence that enshrouds it, many of my informants were reluctant to divulge much on the subject during my fieldwork. One official from UNITA, for example, told me "those events will continue to be bring shame to our party. But we are trying to move on and focus on the positive contribution of our movement to the liberation of this country." However, my purpose is not revisit this "shameful" history nor is it to confirm whether these events were prevalent or not. Rather, I argue that these ghostly traumas underscore the relationship between violent masculinity and the control/violation of women's bodies. In other words, by recalling the wounded dead bodies of the so-called "witches" we are compelled to recognize the ways in which the female body is deemed vulnerable and serves as a battleground for violent masculinity in wartime.

Ghostly Traumas: Recalling the Wounded and the Dead Bodies

Let us think about the following two frgaments:

The first: We never stayed for a long time with the UNITA. With the MPLA we stayed for a long time, so we saw all the bad things they did. They are the ones who made us go to Zambia. If you are married, they would call all the women and gather them, and they would stay together, and they would dance. They would capture this person and say [starts singing]: 'We do not want the traitor, we will meet him/her at the graveyard. [his wife joins in] The one from town we do not want, we will meet him/her at the graveyard. Yes my, oh yes, MPLA we thank you [the man alone again]'. If they saw somebody from town, they'd say: 'This is a traitor'. They would take the person and kill him/her. Then if they saw a very old person, they'd say: 'This is a witch'. They would kill them, saying: 'They are traitors.'[43]

The second: "On 7 September 1983 he [Savimbi] summoned everybody to a "very important rally" on the central parade ground at Jamba. Commandos were ordered to ensure that no one missed the event. Savimbi arrived with his senior generals, all wearing scarlet bandanas. Savimbi rose to speak on a day that would be remembered as *Septembro Vermelho* (Red September). He said witches had been plaguing the movement. Some witches would this day breathe their last and would no longer be able to retard the war effort. An armed detachment marched towards the blindfolded men. The troops lined up, fired and the men slumped dead, still held by their ropes to the trees. Savimbi had only just begun. He ordered every person in the crowd, children also, to gather a twig each and cast it on the woodpile. The giant bonfire was lit…called names of women and asked them to step forward: they, he said, were witches whom he had condemned to death. Some had children: they would die with their mothers because "a snake's offspring is also a snake." A halt was called after 13 victims had been consumed by the fire. A remaining group of condemned women, who had been scheduled for burning, had their heads shaved in public before they were led away to underground cells where a witch doctor searched their vaginas for magic charms…the other women who survived the burnings of *Septembro vermelho* were later brought back to the parade ground and charged again with witchcraft. They were led barefoot and made to kneel while an old chief smeared their heads, arms and legs with ashes from the pyre on which the other women died. They were pronounced guilty of plotting to overthrow Savimbi

and of casting spells which caused setbacks at the front and made soldiers' wounds unhealable. They were executed over a period of months. Eunice Sapassa was hacked to death with machetes."[44]

The above fragments may sound sensationalized or even hyperbolized, but they are not that at all. In fact, such public spectacles of terror in the name of witch-hunting and witch burning are not new to human history and neither are they unique to Angolan history.[45] Witches were hunted and burned long before the development of the modern world. From the medieval ages in the so-called 'primitive' cultures of the 'Dark continent' where a majority of them were seen as trusted healers serving the peasantry, to the renaissance, to the seventeenth century Europe; the obsession with "witches" took different forms across time and place. Over the centuries, incidents of witch hunting have always been about power and control wherein those with/in power keep a tight rein on the rest, particularly the female peasant population.

Some scholars observe that during the renaissance period in Europe, for instance, witches represented a political, religious, and sexual threat to both the Church and the state; and to control the power of witches, the ruling class chraged them with a wide array of crimes including blasphemy and political subversion.[46] A closer look a the Salem Witch Trials (1692-1693), to provide another example, shows that some of the women accused of witchcraft were charged with the crime of contravening land inheritance rules of the time.[47] These women retained the land of their deceased husband, rather than passing it on to her eldest sons. Thus, in so far as studies on witchcraft goes, historians have noted that witches have been understood as threats to patriarchal forms of power, although Matteo Duni argues that witch-hunts in northern Europe also targeted men albeit in smaller numbers compared to women.[48]

In Africa, cases of witchcraft and the punishing of witches have been widely recorded across cultures. Those accused of witchcraft are often unmarried or older widowed women, and who, according to African feminist scholar Dzodzi Shikata, " become a target because they are no longer useful to the society."[49] Whether it is in Mozambique where widows living alone are accused of witchcraft, in my own hometown in western Kenya where economically independent and successful single women are targets of witch hunts, or in Ghana where those targeted as witches are forced to live in "witch villages"; the anxieties and fears surrounding witches throughout history and across cultural spaces speak to one underlying idea. That is the patriarchal power and control exercised on the masses, in particular on women's bodies, to keep women under sbordination. Gender is clearly fundamental in some way to these witch-hunts, although both men and women are accused of being witches; a majority of the accused are women. Explicitly or implicitly we can, therefore, assume that sexist and misogynistic attitudes within and across societies provides an explanation as to why the collective image of the "witch" is that of a woman—who is defiant, widowed, ill-tempered, and/or elderly.

Of course, the history of how Savimbi mercilessly punished anyone in his camp who went against his orders is well documented.[50] However, the events of the Red September are what continue to haunt and taint the image of this once charismatic nationalist leader and his movement. While we cannot speculate what pushed Savimbi to sanction the burnings, what cannot be denied is the gendered nature of this horrific event. I make the argument that the singling out of women, especially those who disobeyed his orders (or whose husbands went against Savimbi's wishes), to be burnt alive in such a public spectacle while their children watched highlights, as I mentioned earlier, the fragility and vulnerability of the female body to masculine power in wartime. Although this gender dynamic was blurred within the reported

cases of MPLA's witch hunts, Inge Brinkman in her insightful research notes that "guerrillas reintroduced the execution of witches, in most cases by firing-squad. This form of punishment was regarded as extreme and witnessing the executions filled the spectators with terror and fear [my own emphasis]."[51]

During one of my off-the record interviews with one of the top military officials of the MPLA, he noted that "some of our guerrillas would go around the civilian bases picking young girls to be their wives…it did it not matter whether these soldiers were married or not. And when these girls or their parents resisted, they would be accused of witchcraft and you can guess what their punishment would be….yes…death."[52] Indeed, the thread that weaves through all these accounts of the killing of "witches" is the ways in which masculinity and violence interact to discipline women into submission and by extension maintain/reaffirm social order. In his essay "Necropolitics," Achille Mbembe explores the connection between death, war, and the political system. He contends that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die."[53] By arguing that death drives politics, Mbembe's assertion helps us to see how both the MPLA regime and the UNITA rebel forces used their power to kill to threaten or mark certain people for killing.

Memories are hauntings, but what is the point in recalling the memories of the dead, the wounded bodies of the "witches"? Since these women are not alive to (re) tell their experiences the way that Ilara and my other research partners did, can we consider their ghostly traumas as a form of witnessing? I, therefore, propose we view the dead victims through the image of a ghost, a specter whose memory refuses to be buried or repressed, and therefore keeps returning.[54] I suggest that we consider this returning of the immolated bodies as a form of mourning, haunting, and witnessing. In other words, when the dead cannot speak, we conjure their spirits to speak to us, to inform us what their tortured bodies remember or what they do not want to forget.

It is perhaps impossible for us, as readers, to identify with those moments of torture or to even recognize the smell of the bodies of the victims as they burnt to death. Nonetheless, I want to argue, by stretching our imagination a little further, that in the process of the recalling the bodies of dead through our rereading of the above accounts over and over again, we begin to identify with the deceased women—at least on a psychological level. The simple act of rereading the narratives of torture brings the "dead back to life", so to speak. And in that process, we begin to imagine their screams as their bodies get engulfed in the fire. We can even feel our bodies cringe. But, why do these accounts make us cringe? We cringe because as we begin to identify with the traumatic incidents that led to the deaths, the deceased's pain becomes our pain. Moreover, in the recalling process we realize that we too are vulnerable and we could be burned, our vaginas could be dismembered, and extinguished. In the recalling process, the ghostly traumas of the deceased tortured bodies become our traumas as we relive the traumatic experience in the presence. Whether we believe in ghosts or not, as we reread these narratives we are confronted with the fear and the inevitability of death. And, in doing so the trauma narratives of the dead, just like the invisible traumas of the survivors of sexual violence, force us to question what is at stake in remembering certain memories and burying others.

I am stretching our imaginations by "bringing the dead back to life" not evoke a moral outrage, but rather to capture the lingering vexation of the unspeakable grief that haunts many Angolan women who lost their loved in bloody wars. With no marked graves or monuments to memorialize them, their ghosts invite us to engage in the project of witnessing the traumatic stories of their pain, humiliation, and loss. If we take this notion of ghostly traumas as an analytic for grappling with the question of the role and place of women in wartime, then ghosts of the

victims of witch-burnings and executions cannot be seen only as metaphors to embody the past. As metaphors, they also give body to uneasiness about Angolan history and illustrate how women's experiences matter in the (re) construction of history. These haunting memories compel us—"us" being vicarious witnesses—to write the experiences of the dead into history so that at the end they too can say, without a trace of irony, that the process of writing their country's history is never done until every story of both victims and survivors is told and heard. As such, accounts of the wounded dead bodies help articulate "historicity" —to borrow Frederic Jameson's term.[55] Historicity, according to Jameson, resists the disingenuous and sentimental idealization of the past by taking into account the unsettling truths of the past.[56] In this case, ghostly traumas resist repression by insisting that we engage with the "shameful", painful and uncomfortable aspects of the Angolan national history.

Thus, the two categories of women's trauma narratives I have analyzed in this chapter: the invisible trauma of sexual violence and the ghostly traumas of the wounded bodies of victims of "witch-burnings" serve as gestures for socio-political critique, speaking in the voices of both the survivors and the dead to call for recognition in the national memory.

Conclusion

The paucity of sources on the subject matter of this chapter coupled with the silencing of this part of Angolan history, and the burden I carried of representing stories of women survivors of wartime violence, no doubt, made the writing of this chapter so ambitious a project. While writing about women's narratives of trauma was akin to entering unchartered waters, I wanted to offer an introductory road map for writing on the issue of women's post-war trauma in a way that tries to amplify their overlooked and silenced voices.

I titled this chapter, "What the Body Remembers" to highlight a crucial and haunting question when it comes to the subject of wartime violence: what does it mean to survive trauma and retell it? In chapters two and three, I examined the myriad ways that Angolan women participated in the national liberation struggles by highlighting their roles as patriotic mothers and as citizen-soldiers. Read alone, these chapters provided a window into the militancy and patriotism of Angolan women, thus leading the reader into understanding the contributions of Angolan women within the larger narrative arc of glorious renderings of Angolan nationalism. However, this chapter aimed at providing the reader with glimpses of the violence bestowed on women's bodies, despite their contributions to the liberation struggles. For me, Angolan women's memories of war and their reterlling of the violence inscribed on their bodies constitute what I have referred to as African women's archive of the everydayness, which helps to offers the possibilties of understanding the fact that for many women, the trauma of sexual and gender based violence on their bodies (visible or otherwise) is an everyday, systematic, and perharps even ordinary experience. To this end, I focused on the trauma narratives of survivors and the wounded bodies of the victims to the so-called witch burning incidents to delineate the ways in which women's bodies are instrumentalized in wartime and the difficulty involved when survivors try to remember traumatic historical events. The traumas narratives of women and their wounded bodies reveal the intricate relationship between personal memories, traumatic historical events, witnessing and reconstruction of history.

Through the narratives such as those of pastor Ilda and Ilara, I interrogated how for survivors of wartime violence, the process of psychological healing demands a confrontation with painful past and finding ways to (re) tell the trauma, even in cases when survivors lack the words to express themselves. Thus, I have argued that what the traumatized female body

remembers serves as a form of witnessing, which means that trauma narratives of survivors have the power to effect national memory because as some scholars observe "they chronicle experience that has yet to be incorporated into the popular imagination."[57] Generally speaking, it is therefore not enough to highlight the contributions of women to their national histories by ignoring the traumas bestowed on their bodies, because this historicizing the past reproduces a collective memory that is based on erasures and silences. In this vein, incorporating the trauma narratives of survivors should be seen as a corrective measure to this history as it has the power to write back into existence those who have been silenced, hurt, forgotten, and erased by traumatic historical events.

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[1] Elaine Scarry. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985:63.

[2] Ana mentioned that her right leg "was blown off" sometime in November 1987. She recalled that she was coming from the fields in her village in Huambo with two of her sons when she stepped on a landmine. Her boys were killed when the landmines exploded. There are varied accounts as to which side was responsible for the landmines in the central highlands region of Angola. At the time, UNITA forces blamed the MPLA and the Cuban forces for the casualties while the MPLA military officers laid the blame solely on Savimbi's rebel forces. For more on the landmines see: Human Rights Watch Arms Project. *Angola Between War and Peace Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses Since the Lusaka Protocol*. Human Rights Watch, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1996.

[3] Angelita Reyes, "Reading a Nineteenth-Century Fugitive Slave Incident," *Annals of Scholarship: Studies of the Humanities and Social Sciences 7* (1990): 465 as quoted in Darieck Scott. *Extravagant Abjection*, New York: New York University Press, 2010.

[4] Veena Das, "Sufferings, Theodicies, Disciplinary Practices, Appropriations." *International Social Science Journal* 49 (154): 563–572.

[5] For instance, studies show that during the Bosnian War from 1992 to 1995, an estimate of 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped; in the DRC it has been estimated that over 400,000 women were raped between 2006 and 2007; and during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, approximately 250,000 and 500,000 Tutsi women and girls were raped and mutilated in Rwanda. See Anne-Marie de Brouwer. *Supranational Criminal Prosecution of Sexual Violence: The ICC and the Practice of the ICTY and the ICTR*. (Antwerp, Belgium: Insentia, 2005); Anne-Marie de Brouwer and Sandra Ka Hon Chu, eds. *The Men Who Killed Me: Rwandan Survivors of Sexual Violence*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2009; Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern. *The Complexity of Violence: A Critical Analysis of Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. Working paper. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), 2010.

[6] Elizabeth Grosz. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994: x.

[7] Lynn Hunt. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition, 2008.

[8] Diana Taylor. *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War."* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997: 7.

[9] Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self-writing," *Public Culture: Special Issue on New Imaginaries* 14, no. 2 (2002): 239– 75.

[10] Henri Lefebvre (translated by Christine Levich), "The Everyday and Everydayness," *Yale French Studies*. No. 73, Everyday Life (1987): 7-11.

[11] Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996: 3.

[12] Mark Micale. *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and its Interpretations*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995: 7.

[13] Some of the recent works that have engaged with the subject of survivor's testimonies as tools for witnessing in the TRCs include Catherine Cole. *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission*: *Stages of Transition*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010; Claire Moon. *Narrating Political Reconciliation*: *South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Lexington Books, 2008; Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon (eds.). *Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Alison Jeffers, *Refugees, Theatre, and Crisis: Performing Global Identities*, New York:Palgrave, 2012.

[14] Elaine Scarry. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985: 49.

[15] Dominick LaCapra. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998: 45-54.

[16] Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. London & New York: Routledge, 1992.

[17] Chris Van der Merwe and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. *Narrating Our Healing: Perspectives on Working through Trauma*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Michael Rothberg. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009: 90.

[20] Dominick LaCapra. *Writing Trauma, Writing History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001: 22.

[21] B. Van der Kolk and Onno Van der Hart, "The intrusive past: The flexibility of memory and the engraving of trauma" in *Trauma: Exploratiosn in Memory* edited by Cathy Caruth, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995*: 176.

[22] I obviously stand the risk of being criticized for over-generalization in making this claim. However, it is important that we recognize that scholarship from the West about the impact of war on Women in Africa and/or the Middle East the West often times falls back to the colonial tropes. These narratives of the use sexual violence as a weapon of war reify the images that view Africa as a place of barbarity where African (and Arab) men are cast as beastly violent who rape their women in wartime.

[23] This data, which is mostly available in reports of human rights and other non-governmental organizations, makes it difficult to infer the frequency of sexual violence due to a number of factors including the (un) willingness of victims to talk, the availability of financial resources to carry out comprehensive research, and often times the geopolitical bias of the organizations. In the Angolan case, the Human Rights Watch is one of the very few sources with data on the sexual violence during the Angolan civil war.

[24] Dori Laub. "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening" in Shoshana Felman & Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and Lodnon: Routledge, 1992:68

[25] Tanya Lyons. *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*. Trenton: New York University Press, 2004: 240.

[26] Susan Brownmiller. *Against Our Will: Man, Women, and Rape*. Simon and Schuster, 1975: 24. Carolyn Nordstrum also echoes Brownmiller's argument by noting that the "atrocious acts of rape" has been a military strategy for centuries but it did not constitute a war crime until the 1996 UN Security Council Resolution. See Carolyn Nordstrum, "Rape: Politics and Theory in War and Peace," *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol. 11, No.23, (1995): 147.

[27] See for example Elizabeth Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare? *Politics Society* Vol. 37 No. 1, (2009): 131-162; Carol Cohn. *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); Miranda Alison. "Wartime Sexual Violence: Women's Human Rights and Questions of Masculinity." *Review of International Studies* 33 (2007): 75– 90; Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern (2009) "Why do Soldiers Rape? Gender, Violence and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC)." International Studies Quarterly 53(2): 495– 518; Paola Bacchetta and Margaret Power (eds.). *Right-Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists around the World*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Erin Baines. *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004; Bhattacharyya, Gargi. *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the War on Terror*. London: Zed Books, 2008; Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (eds.). *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004; Cynthia Cockburn. *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis*. London: Zed Books, 2007.

[28] Susan Brownmiller. *Against Our Will: Man, Women, and Rape*. Simon and Schuster, 1975.

[29] Angela Y. Davis. *Women, Race and Class*. New York: Vintage, 1981: 23–24.

[30] United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary- General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. See http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35555#.WQo9zyMrIy4

[31] Joshua A. Goldstein. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[32] For more on the violence within the MPLA, UNITA, and the FNLA during this period, see Inge Brinkman, "War and Identity in Angola: Two Case Studies." *Lusotopie 2003 :* 195-221; Justin Pearce. *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola 1975-2002*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Assis Malaquias. *Rebels and Robbers: Violence in Postcolonial Angola*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika Institute, 2007.

[33] Urban settlements in the capital city of Luanda whose residents are mostly the urban poor.

[34] For more information on the violence in post-independent Angola see Human Rights Watch Arms Project. *Angola Between War and Peace Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses Since the Lusaka Protocol*,(Human Rights Watch, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1996); Margaret Anstee. *Orphan of the Cold War, the Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process, 1992-93*. Basingstoke, London: Macmillan Press Ltd. and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

[35] Inge Brinkman, "Many ways of Death: Accounts of Terror from Angolan Refugees in Namibia." *Africa* 70 (1), 2000: 13-14.

[36] Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres na Luta Armada em Angola*. Verso História, 2015: 331.

[37] Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996: 64.

[38] In particular, Toni Morrison. *Beloved*. New York: Penguin, 1987; Gayl Jones. *Corregidora*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975; Sherley Anne Williams. *Dessa Rose*. New York: Quill, 1986;

[39] As quoted in Dya Kassembe and Paulina Chiziane. *O Livro da Paz da Mulher Angolana, As Heroínas sem Nome*. Luanda Editorial Nzila, 2008.

[40] Judith Lewis Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*, New York: Basic Books, 1992: 1.

[41] Geoffrey Hartman. *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996:142, 138

[42] Veena Das. "The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity." *Violence and Subjectivity*. Ed. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000: 205-25.

[43] As quoted in Brinkman, Inge, "War, Witches And Traitors: Cases From The MPLA's Eastern Front In Angola (1966–1975)." *Journal of African History*, 44 (2003): 323.

[44] In this detailed accounts of this horrific event, renowned journalist Fred Bridgland, who covered Savimbi and his rebel forces extensively in the 1970s and 1980s, provides the names of the victims. They included M'Bimbi Katalayo, who lost her mother in the same manner; Navimbi Matos, sister of Tito's wife Raquel; Eunice Sapassa, one of Savimbi's former lovers; Tita Malaquias, from one of UNITA's leading families; and Francisca Chingunji Domingos. See Fred Bridgland. *Death In Africa*. ColdType, 2004: 14-15; Fred Bridgland, *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*, London: Coronet, 1988.

[45] Matteo Duni. *Under the Devil's Spell: Witches, Sorcerers, and the Inquisition in Renaissance Italy*. Syracuse University Press, 2007; P. Boyer and S. Nissenbaum. *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993;

[46] Matteo Duni. *Under the Devil's Spell: Witches, Sorcerers, and the Inquisition in Renaissance Italy*. Syracuse University Press, 2007; Mary Douglas. "Witchcraft and Leprosy: Two Strategies of Exclusion." *Man*, New Series, Vol. 26, No. 4. (1991):723-736.

[47] P. Boyer and S. Nissenbaum. *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993; K. D. Goss, *The Salem Witch Trials: A Reference Guide*. Greenwood Press, 2008; John Demos. *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft And The Culture Of Early New England*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

[48] Ibid, p. 4.

[49] Kati Whitaker, (2012). "Ghana Witch Camps: Widows' Lives in Exile." *BBC News Magazine*. http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-19437130

[50] Fred Bridgland. *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*, London: Coronet, 1988; Inge Brinkman, "War, Witches And Traitors: Cases From The MPLA's Eastern Front In Angola (1966–1975)." *Journal of African History*, 44 (2003): 323; Stephen Weigert. *Angola: A Modern Military History, 1961-2002*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011; Piero Gleijeses. *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976– 1991*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013; Justin Pearce, "Control, politics and identity in the Angolan civil war" *African Affairs*, 111 (2012):442-465;

[51] Inge Brinkman, "War, Witches And Traitors: Cases From The MPLA's Eastern Front In Angola (1966–1975)." *Journal of African History*, 44 (2003): 323

[52] Interview with Mario on October 18, 2015 in Luanda.

[53] Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics." Trans. Libby Meintjes. Public Culture 15.1 (2003): 11-40.

[54] Kathleen Brogan. *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts in Recent American Literature*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1998; Jacques Derrida. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.

[55] Frederic Jameson. "Marx's Purloined Letter." *New Left Review* 209 (1995): 75-109.

[56] Frederic Jameson. *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* Duke University Press, 1991:18-19.

[57] Fiona Mills, (ed.). *After the Pain: Critical Essays on Gayl Jones*. New York: Peter Lang, 2006: 19.

Chapter Five

Becoming Refugee: Narratives of Displacement and Dreams of Unknowable Futures

Then home: a familiar place, that when you left, kept changing behind our backs...[1]

Our understanding of the gendering of war and militarization in Angola is broadened by the ways that people grapple with the meaning of home and belonging from the perspective of women who were displaced during its civil war. In this final chapter, my primary focus is on the impact of the post-1976 civil war conflict on women who were internally displaced or who fled to other countries as a result of war. This chapter considers women's refugee experiences to be central to any analysis of war and views forced displacement as an aspect of wartime violence. In the previous chapter, I posited that the history of war in Angola cannot be considered complete if it ignores narratives of Angolan women who survived the trauma of wartime violence.

In this chapter, I extend that argument by stating that failing to take into account narratives of displaced Angolans is to engage in the (deliberate) art of forgetting. While Angolan women's participation in national liberation struggles as patriotic mothers and combatants deserves to be documented and celebrated, the testimonies of those who lost their homes and families as a result of the war, and their experiences of forced displacement also deserve to be part of the country's history.

In the same way that questions pertaining to issues of displacement, return, and belonging are central to diasporic and exilic communities, the question of refugees and internally displaced persons/IDPs continues to be a crucial global issue. The tensions between nation-state and international humanitarian crises and the tenuousness of citizenship are all embodied through refugee status. In Angola, the post-independence political turmoil shook the physical and figurative foundations of home for many Angolans. The almost three decades of bloody skirmishes which ended with the signing the Luena Peace Agreement between the MPLA forces and UNITA rebel forces,[2] destroyed most of the country's infrastructures, decimated close to one million of the population, and left approximately four million Angolans internally displaced. For vast majority of Angolans, both place and the idea of "home" was radically transformed and increasingly indefinite, insecure, and unlocatable. In Culture and Imperialism, Edward Said aptly captures the exclusions and other forms of alienation that were created in the aftermath of independence struggles across the global South:

> [I]t is one of the unhappiest characteristics of the age to have produced more refugees, migrants, displaced persons, and exiles than ever before in history, most of them as an accompaniment to and, ironically enough, as afterthoughts of great post-colonial and imperial conflicts. As the struggle or independence produced new states and new boundaries, it also produced homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants, unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, rejected by the established order...

War as an act of aggression and control destroys people's basic means of survival: shelter, access to basic amenities, means of production, affective networks, and protection. Said's assertion evokes the violence and trauma of displacement in the sense that when a people become displaced, connections with family and community are shattered beyond repair. According to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights/UNCHR the internally displaced are "persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result

of armed conflicts, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or manmade made disasters, and who arc within the territory of their own country."[3] In 1969, the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) provided a legal definition for 'refugee' as "every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality."[4] But, whether one is forced to flee the country into exile or remains within the nation, displacement brings with it loss and trauma. As an entry point to understanding the life-shattering events of being, let us consider the account below from my interview with Florita Matos.[5]

Florita was internally displaced in the province of Moxico in 1992 after her village was torched down by soldiers she believes were MPLA soldiers. She fled to a nearby village and later relocated to a refugee camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where she stayed until 2006. She returned to Angola in January 2007 under the UN Refugee Agency's repatriation program, but she was denied identity and birth registration documents/ bilhete de identidade by the government because she did not have the "right" documents.[6] In 2010 she managed to move to Namibia with the help of a church organization she volunteered for.[7] She narrated some of her experiences as a refugee and the challenges faced by people who are forced to flee because of war:

> Everything happened so fast. I was twenty years old at the time. I remember mothers screaming and babies crying. In no time our entire village was engulfed in smoke. We fled our village in confusion. We were not able to collect our belongings. A lot of confusion. We did not know where we were going or what lay ahead of us. We just fled and left everything behind. Everyone was just running. Even today I can still smell the smoke that overwhelmed my senses and stung my eyes as we fled. There are times when I close my eyes I can see the bellows of fire. In that confusion I was separated from my family. I thought my mother and my younger brother were with me. But they were not. To this day I don't know if they are alive somewhere or dead. I don't know if they were left behind in the village. I just don't know and I may never know. All these people think it's easy to throw people out of their homes and then expect them to go somewhere. When you lose the home where you were born and grew up, you lose everything. When you lose your family, you also lose your home. It's not an easy thing to return to your country and then have people treat you like a stranger. I have been homeless all my life: when the soldiers burnt down my village, when I was in the refugee camp, when I returned and the government denied me identity documents. I am Angolan. It is my home because this is where I was born. But, I am still homeless in my own country. You understand what I mean? I am happy in Namibia, it is my home, but it is also not my home. Nothing can replace my village which no longer exists. I don't think I will ever be at home anywhere anymore. It's complicated.

Florita's account reflects what many Angolans who were displaced during the war continue to experience: losing both the site of home (the village "where I was born") and the sense of home as belonging ("I am homeless in my own country"). For Florita, the desire for a more stable place to call home is countered by her recognition that home "no longer exists." She also sees her homelessness as a result of her missing family. Home for her is not just spatial, it is affinal/relational and without her family, her sense of homelessness is magnified. From her

village in Moxico to a refugee camp in the DRC to Namibia, Florita's account is a melancholy catalog of places she has lived but never really feels at home in. As a businesswoman, Florita has prospered in exile and could be said to be much luckier than many other former refugees, but she makes it abundantly clear that nothing can compensate for the loss she has suffered.

What, then, is home for Angolans who have lived for almost three decades in places they have never felt they belong? If we consider Florita's statement that "I can still smell the smoke that overwhelmed my senses and stung my eyes are we fled. There are times when I close my eyes I can see the bellows of fire," then it is possible to see how the bodily, sensory, and affective experiences of home attest to both her nostalgia for home and the reality of abandonment or desertion, have produced for her a conflicting relation with Angola. The smoke, fire, and the screaming she visualizes whenever she closes her eyes are reminders of her sense of loss and signify her frustration and sadness at not being at home rather than the hope for returning home.

Staying with the overarching theme of the gendering of war in Angola, this chapter uses accounts women who were formerly displaced and others who still live in exile to interrogate the multiple meanings of 'home', the longing for stability at home and the elusiveness of this stability for many people in post conflict Angola. I titled this chapter 'becoming refugee' to reiterate the simple fact that one is not born a refugee, but rather becomes a refugee. Refugeehood, as used here, is therefore a process of becoming and not a state of being. I define refugeehood as a condition of displacement and estrangement, of being outside the confines of political normality, but one where emplacement—the flipside of displacement—becomes a strategy for survival.[8] Thus, for many displaced Angolans who never felt quite at home in the neighboring countries where they sought asylum and who mourned the loss of their villages and social networks when the war broke out, remembering their experiences of displacement and narrating about 'home' is a painful attempt to reconstruct their lives.

By centering the experience of formerly displaced persons, whose experiences have been sidelined in most studies of the Angolan civil war and post conflict national reconstruction, I argue that the concept of "home," both as a material place and an ideological one, is paradoxical territory for the orphaned, the displaced, and the returnees who continue to be seen as outsiders.

Given that ethnographic studies on the experiences of Angolan refugees is scant, Florita's experiences help fill a vacuum in the literature. Her above account is a reminder that the figure of the refugee is one "of the 'inter'—or the in-between—of the human way of being", neither wholly 'inside' nor completely 'outside.'"[9] Moreover, anthropologists, Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock refer to this kind of displacement as a "social suffering" since it "brings into a single space an assemblage of human problems that have their origins and consequences in the devastating injuries that social force can inflict on human experience. Social suffering results from what political, economic, and institutional power does to people and, reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems."[10] Conditions in refugee camps undoubtedly lead to feelings of 'out of placeness', which in turn can result in a conflicting sense of one's home, and magnify the debilitating melancholy accompanying one's sense of Othering. Indeed, since Hannah Arendt's description of the Jewish refugees of the post-WWII as the "scum of the earth," abject people cast aside by those in power, the figure of the refugee has certainly been constituted as the undesired Other.[11]

I read accounts such as Florita's and other testimonies that form the basis of this chapter not only as narratives of loss and continuous restlessness in the Angolan post-war moment, but they are also stories of resilience that demonstrate the various repertoires of survival of the

formerly displaced. These narratives suggest that an intimate meaning of home is of great importance for those who have been forced to flee and who return with the hope of starting life anew. It is within the context of these changing social relations, political crises, ongoing histories of displacement and cross-border flows of people and ideas that I investigate the complexities of home and belonging.

In writing this chapter, I am in conversation with literary iterations and African diaspora theorizing of 'home' because African diaspora studies as a field of inquiry is obsessed, and rightfully so, about the meanings of home and belonging. Diaspora theorists often challenge and destabilize the fixity and permanence of homeland and any sense of rootedness in place. For instance, scholars including Paul Gilroy, James Clifford, Brent Edwards, among others posit that rooted in histories of displacement, diasporic communities are constantly creating connections between the here and there, the past and present.[12] Germane to these discussions around issues of displacement and home is the crucial argument that people who establish homes elsewhere as a result of the processes of displacement ought to be seen as occupying interstitial space of the margins, or what Edward Soja refers to as "Third Space."[13] For diasporic communties, therefore, whose home is neither here nor there, this "Third Space" allows the overlap and displacement of areas of difference from which the nation as homeland is constantly being negotiated. In the theorizing of diasporic communities, some feminist scholars including Jacqueline Nassy Brown, Deborah Thomas, and Tina Campt have offered useful critiques of the genderless or masculinist understanding of diasporic be/longing and anxieties.[14] These feminist critiques emphasize women's experiences and perspectives in the study of exile. What is significant to point out here is that displacement is a traumatic experience for everyone involved and refugeehood is a form of displacement that requires a gendered analysis.

It is, perhaps, important to note from the outset that it not easy to speak of and about the refugee. Whether in politics, popular culture, or humanitarian interventions the figure of the refugee is variously taken up as an object of aid, suffering, fear, sadness, guilt or animosity. For instance, in the contemporary moment of "war on terror" in which the enemy is considered to be everywhere and nation-states have bolstered their border surveillance, and where election campaigns around the globe are rife with the rhetoric of the refugee as a 'problem' and a threat to the social fabric of the nation and economic prosperity, it is crucial that we recast the gaze from the disciplining apparatus of the state and focus on the human experience of the figure of refugee. Furthermore, paying attention to narratives of the displaced helps us to see how political spaces continue to frame refugees as the cultural 'other' and often times the non-responsible and unworthy of citizenship. Of course, because of this 'othering' refugees are also seen as the scapegoats for the breakdown of social cohesion. Or, as Francesca who spent four years as a refugee in South Africa but now lives in Lisbon recalled:

> Those years were hell for me and for my children. We were called names like 'rats.' We were treated like dirt as if we were non-humans. I had to console my sons by telling them 'listen, son, we may be homeless now, but our situation was temporary.' We perservered because I knew one day we would return home. So, we returned to Angola after four years. And you know what? People would say to me 'are you back for good?' It was as if no one wanted us around no matter where we went. When I got a chance to move to Portugal after marrying a Portuguese man, I told myself that I would never return to Angola. As much as I still love it and I have fond memories of my childhood and adulthood there, I don't think I will ever belong there. My life is here now.[15]

Francesca's experience of her refugee status is akin to Said's description of his exilic condition: "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home."[16]

My emphasis on these narratives of displacement is a conscious effort to avoid what has been the trend in humanitarian discourse of speaking for the suffering refugee. Narratives of the formerly displaced force us to shift our gaze, to offer an "oppositional discourse"[17]—as Homi Bhabha frames it—on the humanity of the refugees who are more often than not ensnared in the depersonalizing gaze of politicians, Western aid and development expats, border control agencies, and the media. Liisa Malkki is critical of the tendency to visualize and represent the figure of the refugee, as a mute body.[18] The rendering of refugees as helpless, vulnerable, and docile bodies caught between transnational social spaces continues to be critiqued as the global migrant crisis deepens. Malkki contends that reducing the figure of the refugee, particularly images of women and children, to a mute body generally dehistoricizes the displaced person and reifies the idea that female refugees as special kind of powerless and "less dangerous aliens."[19] Yet, the notion of "less dangerous" does not shield women from the violence and emotional harm. In fact, it serves to reinscribe a particular form of gendered refugeehood that further entangles them in the web of political displacement where "less" actually becomes "more." The "more" here is linked to excessive, overwhelming, and unbounded hate toward the "other."

In what follows I will examine the multiple conceptions of home in its relation to memory as conceived by Angolan women I had conversations with during my fieldwork in Luanda, Benguela, and in Portugal. An analysis on how nostalgia for the past plays a crucial role in helping Angolans to reconstruct and envision a different kind of future for themselves and their country. Their narratives of displacement reveal the deeply entrenched role of nostalgia in the reenacting, reimagining, and reclaiming of an intimacy with home. Edwards Said reminds us while the exilee's separation from 'home' produces an unimaginable sense of loss, this kind of displacement and detachment can, nonetheless, open up new ways of perceiving the one's relationship with the world.[20] I will conclude by examining the idea of return to underscore the tensions that arise when displaced people embrace the idea of 'going back home.'

The Multiple Meanings of Home in Post-War Angola

Representations and renderings of home can be best understood via a cross-section of interdisciplinary scholars including literary theorists, postcolonial theorists, and transnational/diaspora studies scholars. For instance, Carole Davies posits that, "Home can only have meaning once one experiences a level of displacement from it. Still home is contradictory, contested space, a locus for misrecognition and alienation."[21] Similarly, in her work on *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-century Fiction*, Rosemary Marangoly George provides a useful analysis of the idea of home and its multiple meanings, both literal and figurative when she contends that although "the word's wider signification [is] as the larger geographic place where one belongs... home is also the imagined location that can be more fixed in a mental landscape than in actual geography."[22] These different modes of conceptualizing 'home' are central to my analysis of the multiple ways in which Florita and other formerly displaced Angolan women conceptualize home and recall the trauma that put them into a refugee status.

In periods of political turmoil, a displaced person experiences an unexpected destabilization of events that pushes them to ask pertinent questions, such as, 'where am I' and 'who am I' in relation to my country and the people around me. When refugees are forced to flee

they lose home and are faced with the reality of reconstructing a 'new' world. The caveat at this point is to avoid falling into the trap of considering the refugee as a person who is pathologically incapable of functioning in exile.[23] Put differently, given that the idea of home is inextricably linked to temporality, an analysis of the multiple meanings of home for refugees can lead one into the trap of becoming too concerned with the past: the period when an individual fled their original home, or the future: the anxious moments of waiting to return to one's original home. Indeed, the danger with such an approach to home in terms of refugeehood ignores the present moment when the refugee could be utilizing their social capital and displaying great resilience as strategies not only to survive but also to thrive under moments of uncertainty and homelessness. Furthermore, the link between home and temporality in understanding refugeehood could also lead to the danger of collapsing events in the past, present, and future and the move from homeland to host nation to homeland. What this linearity of time ultimately fails to account for are the nuances and the paradoxes in refugee mobility made through time and space, back and forth between national and intralocal boundaries, while all the time carrying the past with them, living the present, and imagining future possibilities.

I now return to the question that I posed earlier in the introduction: what is home for the displaced? In thinking about home, our first representation of it is a geo-spatial locatable place. Maybe this understanding is why it is commonplace to ask someone 'Where are you really from' as a way to physically and culturally situate them. Home, in this case, denotes a level of familiarity between people and place. There is no doubt that in conventional conceptualization of home, we see it as "the physical center of one's universe –a safe and still place to leave and return to (whether house, village, region, or nation), and a principal focus of one's concern and control."[24] Naficy also posits that home "can be built, rebuilt and carried in the memory and acts of imagination."[25] As we saw in Edward Said's quote earlier, projects of globalization and nationalism in contemporary times have altered discussions of home. Thus, it is also true that for others home is not fixed in space but can be reproduced anywhere. Technological advancements and wars fought in the name of defending territories, for example, continue to destabilize current living conditions. The processes of modernity, as various diaspora theorists have argued helps us rethink physical realities of home and pay attention to the discursive dimensions of home.[26] In her study on the expatriates on the Cayman Islands, anthropologist Karen Fog-Olwig points out that rather than "locate their home in 'reality'" islanders construct their own discourse of home based on their shared narratives of "homelessness."[27]

Since the refugee experience of home is first and foremost defined by shared stories of the loss of home, refugees' conceptualize home as something fluid and one that is constantly being negotiated and contested. Home for most of the displaced is spatial and a longing, but it is also affinal in that it's about the social networks one creates after they are forced to flee their original home. The important thing to note here, and always, is that refugees experiences of displacement are not homogeneous.

Image 17: An Angolan refugee camp in Namibia. *Source: AFP/Getty Images.*

On a humid afternoon I met with Engraçia at a local restaurant in Ilha de Luanda.[28] I thought she looked much younger than fifty-four, despite the creases on her forehead and her tired eyes. She brought two of her children, both girls. Engraçia works several temporary jobs but at the time of my fieldwork, she was working as a house cleaner at the place I was staying. She had agreed to be interviewed on the grounds that I teach English to her oldest daughter, Fiona. Here is her story of displacement:

I wanted to get away from the gunfire. In 1991, I joined thousands of other people from Malanje who were fleeing. We were put in big lorries and taken to Zambia. As soon as we reached Zambia, I started missing my home. The thought of never seeing my village again and my farm made me sick. I wondered what would happen to those who stayed behind. But, it was also a relief to sleep at night without hearing the sounds of gunfire or fearing of being ambushed by soldiers in the agricultural farm. The camp gave me a peace of mind. I was thirty years old at time. I had lost my husband in the war in 1983. See, I was very young when I got married. I think it was a good thing that I did not have a husband when I became a refugee. Because some of the women in the camps were always worried that they would never see their husbands again or that their men would marry other women. Sometimes we would hear rumors of women and girls who were violated sexually by some officers in the camp or other Angolan men. Many things happened there. Life in the camp was not easy...the constant worry because nothing is certain when you are a refugee. Before I fled to Zambia, I had my own farm where I grew lots of food, but in the camps, I had to learn to live on so little. People would scramble over the small rations that the agencies distributed every week. Mothers with children suffered the most, I think. They had to give up their rations in order to feed their children. It was a safe haven living there but it also was a temporary home filled with hardships. I worked as a cleaner and cook in the camp. I returned to Malanje in 2004. I had so many dreams of going back to home and starting life afresh. But when I got there, I could not find my house. It was gone. My home was gone and I could not find a job. I moved to Luanda and stayed with a friend. Things got really bad between us and I decided to move out. My friend treated me like I was a burden. With no place to live, I started sleeping on the streets and begging passersby for money just to survive....that is the most painful part of my life. I even think life in the camp was better. The streets became my home for almost five years. Even though I now live in shelter run by a local church here in Luanda, I spend most of my days in constant anxiety and fear that they might throw me out. But, I

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do my best to stay positive. I clean homes for different people, sometimes even homes of very rich Angolans. That is how I have been able to sustain my family. For now, my children are my home.

Engraçia's story is her own, but sadly there are elements that mirror how other women experience refugeehood. Her example of incidences of sexual violence on girls and women, and women in the camps who lived in constant fear of their husbands deserting them is revelatory of feminist critiques of home as a place that is always inscribed with inequalities of power.[29] For the women in the camps, their temporary home in Zambia may have been a safe space away from the violence in Angola but it certainly was also "an illusion of coherence and safety based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance."[30] Displacement not only functions as the point of identification of refugeehood, it also hints at the way in which the intersectional oppressions of patriarchal ideologies, global capitalism, and local tradition displace women's identities.

Engraçia's narrative is about both displacement and emplacement. If displacement describes the process of separation from a place that acquires meaning through the everydayness of life, then emplacement is the processsby which that place is given meaning.[31] Emplacement is about the mundane. According to Arjun Appadurai, emplacement strategies may include rites of passage which function as "social techniques for the inscription of locality onto bodies."[32] Indeed, quotidian practices as evidenced in the narratives of Florita, Francesca, and Engraçia, such as house-cleaning,raising a family, cooking, farming, and running a business constitute the "interworking of place, identity and practice in such a way as to generate a relationship of belonging between person and place."[33] Engraçia's account provides insights about the strategies used by refugees who find themselves living in shifting and unfamiliar spaces. Emplacement is about having an 'insider' local knowledge of the best coffee shops, as in the case of Francesca who frequents her local cafes in the neighborhoods of Lisbon and was eager to introduce me to such places. The most touristy restaurants to dine, as in the case of Engraçia who gave me a brief walking tour of the Ilha evidence knowledge even when one is unable to afford the experience.

Insider knowledge is commonplace information that has to be acquired on the ground, which is why refugees struggle when they first arrive to a new home. Francesca admits that she had challenges getting around Lisbon when she first moved there: "I didn't know how to use the train system here. Remember, I fled my home in Huambo in the early 1990s. I was just from a small rural area where I farmed and raised cattle. See, I had never been on a train before. At first, I found Lisbon to be chaotic. It was scary and I experienced some cultural shock in my first few months here." This sense of being unable to deal with the day-to-day negotiation of a new place can be disorientating for refugees, as Francesca continues to explain: "It took time for me to get used to the pace of life here. In the refugee camp in South Africa, life was very difficult. There were many of us living in shantytowns with no running water. But life in Lisbon scared me because things were just different. If it were not for my husband, I don't think I would have managed."

These narratives underscore the importance of emplacement for the displaced and the ways in which a lack of knowledge of the new spaces disempower the refugee, albeit temporarily. According to Ghassan Hage, there are different repertoires for survival that make the process of emplacement possible: familiarity, security, community and a sense of possibility.[34] The narratives of the women cited, thus far, demonstrate how one or all of the four repertoires have enabled them to conceptualize home and find ways to being away from home.

Of course, not all refugees feel similarly disoriented and disempowered by their new homes. For example, Florita insisted that she was never scared about living in Windhoek, in any case she found it exciting: "Maybe because I had been used to moving from place to place. I have always been a curious person. Once you lose everything you left behind as a refugee and you realize that you can never go back, you stop being afraid. For me it is always about the present. As a refugee you don't take the present for granted."

Florita's sense of self in refugeehood speaks to Doreen Massey's assertion that place and the idea of home changes us, "not through some visceral belonging (some barely changing rootedness, as so many would have it) but through the practicing of place ... place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us."[35] Women's narratives of displacement highlight that indeed, the idea of home, especially as spatial, is intricate and slippery because for bodies on the move, home is not always easily locatable. Instead it tends to be constructed daily at best and minute by minute at worst. I will now turn to providing a brief analysis of nostalgia and how it relates to and informs displacement.

Nostalgia for what?

What purpose does nostalgia serve for displaced people living in refugeehood? Is it a way for them to escape the monotony of their everyday life? The term nostalgia is from the Greek roots *nostos*, which means to return home, and *algia* which means longing. Svetlana Boym defines nostalgia as "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy."[36] Nostalgia is now more commonly used to refer to a bittersweet longing for the past, rather than the pain or sickness that such longing causes. While this definition is insightful, nostalgia as I use it here implies more than just an ephemeral sentimentalization of the debilitating socio-political condition experienced by the formerly displaced persons. Rather than depoliticize and trivialize women's longing for home as a mere romanticization of the past, I consider their narratives of nostalgia as dynamic political discourses which signify a longing for a particular socio-economic and political system, grounded in the vision of unity of all Angolans, cooperation, and economic stability.

In the context of forced displacement, I posit that in spite of painful memories there remained a strong commitment from many interviewees to the idea that the lost home was an idyllic place of beauty, productivity and communality, in other words, the epitome of homeliness. For the displaced, nostalgia serves a purpose in refugeehood by allowing the refugee to recall the lost home and keep it alive because in nostalgia the past is used to serve the needs of the present. Of course, the home that is recalled from the perspective of the present is not the home as it was but the aspects of home that have been chosen as worthy of remembering. Nonetheless, nostalgia for women such as Florita and Francesca signifies a longing for security and prosperity. This longing is not a delusional form of escapism from the banality of the everydayness, but it symbolizes women's—individual and collective—strategy for critiquing and coping with the present.

The Return

Closely tied to the feelings of nostalgia for the displaced is the idea of return. Nevertheless, the fact that while living in exile "refugees go through a process of transformation which enable them to create new social networks transcending ethnic and religious boundaries and weakening

their attachment to the place of origin,"[37] complicates the assumption that all refugees desire to return home when conditions in their homeland have changed and the cause of their flee is no longer in place. Since the formal signing of the Luena Peace Accord in 2002 when the UNHCR has entered into tripartite agreements with representatives from neighboring countries that still host Angolan refugees including the DRC, Congo Brazzaville, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa, over 400,000 former refugees had been repatriated by 2007.[38]

Image 18: Angolan refugees in the DRC queue up to take a train to Angola under the UNHCR repatriation program. *Source: UNHCR/B. Sokol*

When the future is discussed with regard to the temporality of refugeehood it is often with the assumption that the return to the home will occur. As some scholars posit "Return is a central feature of the refugee experience. It is part of the definition of being a refugee and of the involuntary nature of refugee migration."[39] However, some diaspora theorists argue that that many people in diaspora have no desire to return 'home' because for many diasporic people the longing for one's place of origin—or what Avtar Brah calls 'homing desire'—does not necessarily mean a desire to return there.[40]

Despite these debates about 'return', Al-Rasheed reminds us that the 'myth of return' is mostly related to the refugee's relationship with the home country and its population prior to the flight. From Angola to South Sudan, there are many individuals who fled their war torn countries during the late twentieth century and who identified wholeheartedly with their country of origin during the glory days of the struggle for independence but not with the present regime, regarded themselves as temporary 'guests' in different host countries and awaited the moment to return home.[41] 'Host' nations—whether in Africa or Europe, represented the place where the refugees finally found a place to start a new life. 'Home' was a physical homeland left behind in which one is rooted and that has to be re-claimed.

One of the biggest challenges in the project of return, however, is the fact that since the clock can never be turned back and the past cannot be completely regained, there is, therefore, no possible restitution of the lost home. This, in part, is what makes the refugee's loss so profound. While physical property may be regained or compensated for financially, the lost home can never be brought back. Massey rightfully observes that when people talk about returning home they often imagine "going 'back' in both space and time, which ignores the fact 'that you can never simply "go back" home or to anywhere else as both you and the place you left behind will have moved on."[42]

Indeed, a number of the women I encountered in both Angola and Portugal were aware of this reality. In spite of her strong feelings about the right to return, one informant who left

Angola thirty five years ago to escape persecution from the MPLA regime, and who refused to be recorded during our interview, confessed sadly: "It's not possible for me to go and live there and start the life which I stopped over 30 years ago."[43] However, it can be difficult for refugees to come to terms with the fact that the country they left behind has moved on without them and that things they left behind no longer exist. The realities of refugeehood is that refugees are, for the most part, denied access to their former home and, therefore, lack any experiential validation that everything is not what it was. As a result, they may still understandably imagine home to be preserved in the state it was when they left, even if rationally they know this cannot be the case.[44]

In spite of their emotional belief in, and desire for, the preservation of their lost home, most of the refugees are aware that the reality has moved on and in some cases believe the physical alteration of their homes and villages to be an explicit policy to prevent their return.

Florita and Francesca's narratives, in particular, demonstrate the confusion that results when the image of the lost home is confronted by reality. For both of them being denied identity documents and being questioned why they are back was a shattering realization of the politics of return.

Conclusion

The experiences of former refugees are diverse, complex, and uniquely their own. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, while there are those who returned to Angola under the UN repatriation program and continue to make the best of their current conditions, there are those who live in the neighboring countries and other places abroad who express considerable and understandable reluctance to return under the prevailing conditions of instability. Those who refuse to go back explain that the political and socio-economic environment, which is laced with uncertainty, is what hampers their possibility of return.

Looking beyond the more literal and obvious readings of home, with the claim that home has multiple meanings and it is spatial, temporal, and affinal is an important aspect of refugeehood. This understanding of home underscores the fact that the meaning of home for the refugee is dynamic, multilayered, and contradictory. What does emerge from my analysis of narratives of displacement is that to lose one's home is a life-shattering and transformative event, which has repercussions for many years and even for subsequent generations. The very process of becoming a refugee sets the individual on a course of ongoing negotiation and contestation about the meaning of home.

Despite the intricate nature of the material under consideration, two clear takeaways have emerged from this chapter. Firstly, by examining the meaning of home it has been possible to arrive at a more nuanced reflection of what it is that the refugee loses when they are forced to leave their home and why that loss remains a preoccupation even when life in exile seems successful, as in the cases of Florita and Francesca. There has been a tendency—at least from a refugee policy perspective— to either put emphasis on the physical property that has been lost as a way of assessing the refugee's legal claim to compensation or a preoccupation with the United Nations' preferred durable solution of repatriation as a solution to the refugee 'problem' and a return to the prior status quo. The rationale continues to be that if the refugee has either received financial compensation or has been able to return to their original homeland then the damage has been mitigated. However, what the narratives of displacement, which formed the basis of this chapter, have illustrated is that there is no 'going back.' The refugee is not only dealing with the loss of his or her physical property, but also the neighborhood and all its social networks. Home is the complex web of social relations including family, friends, acquaintances, and even

enemies.

The second crucial point highlighted in this chapter is that of the resilience of those living in refugeehood. Considering home as spatial, temporal, material, and affinal reveals just how great a loss is potentially faced by the refugee. However, what the narratives, that made the basis of this chapter, also made clear is that although initially debilitated, many refugees deal with the challenges of refugeehood not only by making do and trying get by, but also in most cases by prospering. The point here has been one of hope as well as loss, which confirms statements made throughout this dissertation that Angolan women should be seen as actors in their own lives rather than as passive victims.

I finally posit that by placing refugee narratives at the center of war stories, my analysis contributes to an emerging trend in the field that sees the refugee story as central ratherthan peripheral to research on forced migration. I consider this chapter as a response to current hostile discourses that seek to dehumanize refugees and most often simply reduce them to their travelling suffering bodies.

Limitation of Study and Future Research

This chapter only scratched the surface when it comes to this topic of refugeehood. As I write this dissertation I think it would be fair to claim that this subject of refugees in the Angolan context is limited by lack of any substantive academic scholarship. In fact, much of what is available with regards to the Angolan civil war and the refugee crises can only be found in policy reports of the UN and other humanitarian advocacy agencies. To this end, there is also a need to look at what happens after the conflict in terms of peace building and national reconstruction. Angolan women who went into forced or self-imposed exile in the neighboring countries and in Europe harbored hopes and dreams for their homeland, and some returned with new skills and knowledge. Although sometimes this created tensions between the formerly displaced and those who had fully endured the hardships of war, it also created in an influx of new talent and leadership capacity. One question looms against this backdrop: What were the impacts of these returnees on women's status and women activists' agendas in post-war Angola?

What narratives of the formerly displaced can help reveal is that life in the refugee camps or simply being away from 'home' is a constant struggle for self-definition as women attempt to cultivate new networks and seek new avenues for inclusion and belonging. For many who have survived the painful loss of their family members, returning home means a "reunification with graves"[45] and facing the possibility that they will never be fully accepted as citizens. It is here that I call for an urgent feminist ethnography of displacement. Future research on this subject might help address a variety of questions around the gendering of not just war, but the refugee crisis. What, for example, do lives of IDPs tell us about civil wars in Africa, the social world of squatters and slum dwellers, and sustained personal and collective efforts to redefine the organizing principles of society in peacetime? This question underscores how there is never a full closure from war, only attempts to figure out how to live with its remnants.

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[1] Toni Morrison. *Love*. New York: Random House, 2003: 86

[2] The killing of UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, in February 2002 led immediately to end of the civil war. But peace was formally restored to this resource rich nation in April 2002 with the signing of the Luena Memorandum of Understanding.

[3] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1998a, Resolution 1998/_5o. April 17; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1998b, "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement." UN Doc. E/CN./4/1998/53/ Add.2. April 17.

[4] The Organization of African Union, "1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa," 1(2)).

[5] All former refugee participants quoted have been given pseudonyms, which have been chosen to reflect their real names.

[6] The Angolan government offers identity documents for returnees who applied for local integration in the former asylum countries.

[7] Florita owns a beauty salon and shoe store business in Windhoek. Her business allows her to travel back and forth to Luanda, which is where I met her for the interview.

[8] While the term 'refugee' tends to conjure up images of 'non-citizens' who are apolitical and in dire need assistance, scholars such as Katy Long have defined refugeehood as a collective experience arising from the extreme denial and deprivation of political rights as well as the right to "hold a collective identity of one's choice." See: Katy Long. *The Point of No Return: Refugees, Rights, and Repatriation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 14.

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[12] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso, 1993; James Clifford, "Diasporas", *Cultural Anthropology*, 9.3 (1994): 301-38; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994: 392-403; Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modem Nation", in *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge, 1990; William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", *Diaspora*, 1.1 (199 1): 83-99.

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[14] Tina Campt and Deborah A Thomas. "Feminist Gendering Diaspora: Transnational Feminism, Diaspora and its Hegemonies," *Review*, (2008): 1-8; Deborah. A. Thomas and Tina Campt, "Diasporic Hegemonies: Slavery, Memory, and Genealogies of Diaspora." *Transforming Anthropology*, 14 (2006): 163–172; Jacqueline Nassy Brown, "Black Liverpool, Black America, and the Gendering of Diasporic Space." *Cultural Anthropology* 13, no. 3 (1998): 291-325. Also see Marianne Hirsch, Nancy K. Miller (eds.). *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

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[16] Edward Said, "The Mind of Winter: Reflections on Life in Exile", *Harper's Magazine*, (September 1984), 50.

[17] Homi Bhabha. *The Location o f Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994b.

[18] Liisa H. Malkki. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995a. We can also compare the idea of the contsruction of the refugee as a muted subject to the notion of docile patriots with regards to war on terrotism. See Jasbir K. Puar and Amit Rai. "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots." *Social Text* 20, no. 3 (2002): 117-148. https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed June 9, 2017).

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[22] Rosemary Marangoly George. *Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996: 11.

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[24] Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson, 1998, "The topic and the book", in Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (eds), *Migrants of Identity - Perceptions of Home in* a *World of Movement*. Oxford: Berg: 6.

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[26] See for example Paul Gilroy. *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*. London: Penguin, 2001; Stuart Hall, 1990, "Cultural identity and diaspora", in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

[27] Karen Fog-Olwig,1997, "Sustaining a home in a deterritorialised world", in Karen Fog Olwig and Kirsten Hastrup (eds) *Siting Culture: the Shifting Anthropological Object*. London: Routledge.

[28] Ilha de Luanda/ the Island of Luanda is a beautiful peninsula located in the province of Luanda. The ilha is a favorite with tourists.

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[30] Biddy Martin, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 1986, "Feminist Politics: What's Home Got to Do with It?" in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. ed. Teresa de Lauretis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 191-212.

[31] Laura C. Hammond. *This Place Will Become Home: Refugee Repatriation to Ethiopia*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2004: 79.

[32] Arjun Appadurai. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996: 179.

[33] Laura C. Hammond. *This Place Will Become Home: Refugee Repatriation to Ethiopia*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2004: 145,83

[34] Ghassan Hage,1997, "At home in the entrails of the west: Multiculturalism, "ethnic food" and migrant home-building", in Helen Grace, Ghassan Hage, Lesley Johnson, Julie Langsworth and Michael Symonds (eds). *Home/World: Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West*. New South Wales, Western Sydney: Pluto Press,1997: 103.

[35] Doreen Massey. *For Space*. London: Sage, 2005: 154.

[36] Svetlan Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001: xiii

[37] Gaim Kibreab, 2003, "Citizenship rights and repatriation of refugees." *International Migration Review*, 37(1): 33.

[38] As of 2012, the UN refugee agency estimated that more than 100,000 Angolans were still living in exile in several countries, including the DRC (74,500), Zambia (23,000), South Africa (5700) and Namibia (1700). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2007. Repatriation to Angola Officially Ends after 410,000 Refugees Go Home. 26 March 2007. http://www.unhcr.org/4607b7d24.html

[39] Giorgia Dona and John Berry, 1999, "Refugee Acculturation and Re- acculturation", in A. Ager (ed.) *Refugees: Perspectives on the Experience of Forced Migration*. London: Cassell:180.

[40] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996: 197; Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001; Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, 2003, "Nation, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in: Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur [eds]. *Theorizing Diaspora. A Reader*, Malden / Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: 1-22.

[41] Rogaia Moustafa Abusharaf, for instance, observes that while many South Sudanese women who were displaced in Sudan expressed their a strong desire to return home, some IDPs did not want to return home due to instability of the current regime. See Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf. *Transforming Displaced Women in Sudan: Politics and the Body in a Squatter Settlement* London & Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

[42] Doreen Massey. *For Space*. London: Sage, 2005: 124.

[43] Author's field log, December 12, 2015 in Lisbon.

[44] See Helen Taylor. *Refugees and the Meaning of Home: Cypriot Narratives of Loss, Longing and Daily Life in London*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

[45] Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf. *Transforming Displaced Women in Sudan: Politics and the Body in a Squatter Settlement*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Concluding Remarks

The War is Over, Now What?

Throughout this dissertation, I have demonstrated that the armed struggle against colonialism and the post-independence civil war in Angola brought about gendered situations that were both debilitating and empowering. I have focused on women's narratives and their experiences in wartime because these testimonies give voice not only to women's suffering in societies torn by wars and conflict, but also to their active efforts to resist oppression and make peace.

I began by asking why and how Angolan women from diverse ethno-linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds supported and sustained the war efforts. In her work, Margarida Paredes tells stories of female Angolan ex-combatants. She quotes one former combatant of FAPLA saying, "I wanted to fight, it was that euphoria of wanting to fight, I had to participate and wear my uniform to liberate Angola from Portuguese oppression. It was an adventure."[1] So, how could Angolan women such as the one cited above and the ones I encountered during my fieldwork, who joined the armed struggle, not have found the militaristic space of guerrilla camps empowering? There is no doubt that there were more women at various sites of power such as the military fighting for their nation, yet as Zillah Eisenstein observes their visibility in these spaces was considered "unusual because females are more often than not out of view – made absent, silenced – rather than seen. So the fact that women appear more present needs attention."[2]

While narratives of women who engaged in combat and who were not afraid to get involved in acts of violence to fight against their own oppression continue to receive much attention in the contemporary moment, these narratives still run contrary to perceived notions of women as maternal beings inclined toward peacemaking. And even as war seduces and the stories of brave soldiers on the war front evoke deep feelings of patriotism in the national imaginary, it is the male soldier who is celebrated both at home and abroad. Thus, to state that women continue to be hidden figures in war histories, even in the twenty-first century, would not be an understatement. Even as African women used wars of national liberation in the latter half of the twentieth century as spaces for redefining models of African womanhood, conservative gender ideologies saw them, and continue to do so, as apolitical. However, what both the Angolan armed struggle and the post-independence civil war conflict demonstrate is that women, like men, can be violent and that while many women supported the wars in a non-combative way, this did not make them apolitical.

I have argued that because war is gendered, women not only experience wars differently from men, but they are also mobilized differently to support these wars. It is therefore imperative for feminist scholars of militarization to attend to certain questions such as: how do gender dynamics shift when societies go to war? What pushes some women to join their male counterparts on the front lines? How do gender ideologies shape the ways in which wars are organized and fought? What happens to women who stay behind in civilian camps when men go to war? What happens to military forces when women join the rank and file? What are the impacts of war on the female body? What happens to women when wars come to an end? Does the participation of women in armed conflict open up more avenues for their involvement in national politics or does it stymie them? How can we understand the refugee experience as a gendered experience?

These questions offer insights into understanding women's experiences in wartime. Addressing the aforementioned questions requires a "feminist curiosity" of war, to use Cynthia

Enloe's phrase, which alerts us to the subtle ways that women are implicated in war and militarism and pushes us to search for women's stories of war and ensure these stories are told in ways that reflect the unique and diverse experiences of women. Therefore, the gendering of war means that, culturally, most societies perceive women as inherently peaceful while men are considered to be war mongers and prone to violence. Indeed, it is true that men tend to be the perpetrators of violence and women are often disproportionately victimized by war and conflicts in gender-specific ways. Yet, this binary logic also obfuscates the fact that, despite the dominant representations of women as victims in the narratives of war, women have been involved in waging war in various roles, both as victims and perpetrators.

It is worth acknowledging here that many feminists have already argued against this binary and have shown how women participate in anti-other conflicts and in war. For instance, scholars including Margaret Powers, Paola Bacchetta, and Claudia Goonz, have illustrated the ways that, like men, women are driven to join military and paramilitary institutions as a result of various factors such as "conviction, opportunism, and active choice."[3] It is within this framework that female Angolan ex-combatants and their experiences in wartime should be understood.

Women who joined the MPLA guerrilla fighters in the bush advocated militancy and militarism as one viable pathway to subjecthood and liberation. During the 1960s and the 1970s as nationalist movements intensified their anti-colonial resistance, some women, especially within the MPLA, felt the need to prove themselves as "citizen-soldiers" by embodying gender roles formerly proscribed for them. It is no wonder the MPLA called for women to embody the "revolutionary mother" role and demanded the sacrifice of all Angolans in the battlefield in order to bestow the right to citizenship and prove loyalty to the soon-to-be independent nation. Thus, women ex-combatants I spoke with emphasized that they needed to stage themselves on the "frontline" as men do in order to claim equality in society and to be treated as subjects in their own right.

Cynthia Enloe reminds us that telling the story of wars and conflicts through the eyes of those who were involved helps to "make feminist sense" of them.[4] When women ex-combatants tell stories that are uniquely their own, their testimonies offer counter narratives to the binary discourses of war. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, approaching gender as a social construction rather than as a natural trait helps to untangle the intricate ways in which women engage in violent activities. Although women can be militarized to become perpetrators, the hyper-masculinity involved in this process, and the central role it plays in military institutions as an ideal and as an organizing principle, creates unequal power relations. However, many Angolan women who took up arms and militarized their bodies did not necessarily see themselves as victims of that process. While still politically marginalized as women due to the masculinist nature of military and national liberation struggles in general, these women perceived militarization as an opportunity they otherwise might not have had.

Participation in military institutions gave some women the opportunity to achieve upward mobility as former combatants, the opportunity to get training in "nontraditional" fields through enlisting in the military, and, for some, an avenue to engage in national politics. For example, women ex-combatants such as Ruth Adriano Mendes and Rodeth Makina Gil, whose testimonies I cited in Chapters 2 and 3, observed that their experiences and presence in the Angolan armed forces helped shape their present roles as key political figures within the MPLA and in parliament.

Of course, Angolan women's participation in national liberation struggles was not devoid of contradictions and intricacies. As this dissertation has also suggested, there are a number of

ways that gender perspectives are central to how wars of national liberation are organized and fought. Chapter 2, for instance, demonstrates that the omission of women's diverse roles as 'patriotic mothers' from the telling of war stories preserves the idea that, not only are women the innocent and protected "other" in wars, they also are largely perceived of as apolitical.

For this reason, I have argued that despite Angolan women being seen as playing behind-the-scenes roles as patriotic mothers within the grand narratives of wars, sharing their testimonies of the manifold ways they contributed to the national freedom struggles is one way that scholars of African women's history can begin the process of recuperating women's voices in the politics of the nation. I explored the active role of women in supporting and sustaining national liberation struggles as patriotic mothers to underscore not only the important role that women played in the rural areas or civilian bases, but also to shed light on how difficult it is for women's roles in wartime as 'non-combatants' to be acknowledged and appreciated as military roles. This lack of appreciation for 'non-combatant' women, especially in anti-colonial struggles, has contributed to the erasure of women's voices and experiences of war in the history of modern nationalism in Angola, and indeed across the African continent.

In this study, I have relied on testimonies of women civilians and ex-combatants in order to ensure that women's voices are not muffled within the rhetoric of Angolan history and the discourse of war. Analyzing ex-combatant women as both victims and perpetrators is intended as a way to reveal the complex and contradictory character of women's experiences and, in turn, to expand the ways we understand African womanhood in the contemporary moment. Ultimately, it is necessary to recognize not just the role of women in war and conflict, their resistance and activism, but also to document the abuse and torture they experience if we are to create new political discourses that take into account the complexity of women's lives in wartime.

National wars are often fought on and through bodies, women's bodies in particular. Men's violence against women in war and peacetime reveals that sexuality itself is always gendered. Cases of wartime sexual violence, as Lisa Price posits, help to explain how "the socially-organized and organizing practices of gender and sexuality [are such that] violence is experienced as sex, and, too often, sex is experienced as violence."[5] Given that both masculinity and patriarchal domination are rooted in the ethos of war, women's bodies are often easy targets of sexual violence. Whether it is for the purpose of humiliating the enemy or an expression of male supremacy that gives warring men a right to control women's bodies, sexual violence and other forms of gender based torture against women cast a bright spotlight on the fact that in war, as Cynthia Cockburn aptly asserts, "penises, fists and weapons are interchangeable and the purpose of assault is not only the woman's physical destruction but her social annihilation."[6]

Women's suffering, trauma, abuse, and fear related to their activism during the 1961-1975 liberation struggles and the 1976-2002 civil war period has often been approached as either a marginal subject or an isolated incident of war, conflict and political unrest, ultimately of trivial importance and reduced to the footnotes of archival documents. Thus, Chapter 4 historicizes and engenders the experiences, traumas, and silences of women within the prevailing narratives of Angolan history. It fleshes out the engendering processes of memory and trauma through survivor's narratives and painful memories of war related to sexual violence during the civil war, the political persecution, and the abuse and torture of women by both the MPLA regime and UNITA military forces. The stories related to the traumatic experiences of women are usually omitted from history and the official public discourse, while academic scholarship also tends to treat them marginally, especially within the Angolan academic dialogue where the issue of gender and political violence remains on the periphery.

Closely related to the subject of violence on women's bodies is the issue of displacement. Women in war-torn and post-war societies continue to live a militarized life, sometimes as combatants but more often as refugees and displaced people. Forced displacement is a reality of war. As such, this study also examines Angolan women's narratives of displacement and how they conceptualized 'home' in the post-war period. Life in refugee camps, on the streets, and in exile has been a continuous struggle for self-definition as the displaced seek ways to forge new networks and ways of belonging. Narratives of formerly displaced Angolan women highlights how, despite losing their homes, relatives, and friends to war, the women I spoke with depended on their own social capital—that is, the value of their relationships with other people—to enable them to reconstruct their lives and redefine 'home.' Formerly displaced Angolan women have stories to tell and sometimes their testimonies, like those of survivors of wartime violence, are incongruent to the regime's official narrative of a glorious and heroic nationalism. It is precisely for this reason that women's narratives and their experiences of war need to be documented.

Angolan politics and its history remain precarious and quite complicated as evidenced by the anecdotes in the introductory chapter. However, when we analyze experiences of women in wartime as central rather than marginal to the historiography of Angola, this reorientation helps us to consider how women's testimonies document the gendered bias of nationalism and also signal a shift from the discourse of high politics to that of the everydayness of struggle.

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[1] Testimony of Maria de Fátima Jesus Moreira as told to Margarida Paredes in an interview. See Margarida Paredes. *Combater Duas Vezes: Mulheres Na Luta Armada Em Angola*. Lisboa: Verso da História, 2015: 230.

[2] Zillah Eisenstein, "Resexing Militarism for the Globe" in Robin Lee Riley, Chandra Mohanty, and Minnie Bruce Pratt, eds. *Feminism and War: Confronting US Imperialism*. London & New York: Zed Books, 2013: 27.

[3] Claudia Koonz. *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987: 4-5; Paola Bacchetta, "All Our Goddesses Are Armed: Religion, Resistance, and Revenge in the Life of a Militant Hindu Nationalist Woman," *BCAS/Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 25, No.4 (1993): 38-53; Margaret Powers and Paola Bacchetta (eds). *Right Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

[4] Cynthia Enloe. *Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

[5] Lisa Price. *Feminist Frameworks: Building Theory on Violence against Women*. Halifax, Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2005:110.

[6] Cynthia Cockburn. *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism, and Feminist Analysis*. New York: Zed Books, 207: 251.

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