THE NEED FOR IDEOLOGICAL-BASED POLITICAL PARTIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. CASE STUDY THE MPLA AND UNITA OF ANGOLA

© 2023 Issau Agostinho

AGOSTINHO Issau PhD (History of International Relations), Research Fellow, Centro de Estudos Africanos (CEAUP), Universidade do Porto, Portugal, e-mail: mestre_samwange@ yahoo. com.br

Abstract. The political movements in Africa have gone through a significant transformation throughout decades. When the first movements started in the Sub-Saharan region in earlier decades of the 20th century, they would just act as cultural or social associations, since the colonial order would not allow national political movements to exist in African societies under their rule. But during the 1950-1960s those associations transformed into political movements and parties that ultimately fought for independence and transitional governments, respectively. However, 60 years after the national liberations, most African ruling parties, especially the historic ones, are very much keen to explore identity differences from one another to hold onto power, despite the multiparty democratic regimes in which they operate. The claim to belonging to a certain identity (which may be even religious or linguistic) has degenerated into violence and civil wars in many post-independence African societies (Central African Republic, Cameroon, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya, just to mention a few). The assumption that identity-based political parties have not worked well for stronger, peaceful, and integrated African societies (except for a few countries) should bring about a new format of political parties that are ideological-based and which, despite all cultural differences, can indeed offer a better social-political confrontation among different political parties based on a whole set of ideological values. So, although a post-or-quasi-ideology permeates most historical political parties across Sub-Saharan Africa, this paper focuses primarily on the MPLA and UNITA post-war political ideologies as it looks at ideological patterns and verifies through their Statutes the existence of a quasi or full-scale political ideology, and how both parties relate and operate within the framework of political discourse in today's Angola.

Keywords: Sub-Saharan Africa, MPLA, UNITA, Political Parties, Ideology

INTRODUCTION

The modern-day sub-Saharan African political parties trace their roots to earlier 1910s when they started emerging primarily as civic, cultural, or intellectual associations, as the colonial establishment would not authorize them to fulfill political activities, nor to acquire pure endogenous political parties' status that could have ultimately challenged their authority over African societies and territories. However, since most of these associations were created for, and integrated by pioneers of African Nationalism either at home or abroad, in a time when Pan-Africanism had already emerged as an international platform against perpetuated political domination of African people, those earlier associations would become National Liberation Movements across the continent of Africa in-between 1950-1960.

Going from the First All-African People's Conference that "took place in Accra, Ghana, from December 8 to 13, 1958" (All-African People's Conferences 1962: 429), whose purposes, among others, were "a) to give encouragement to nationalist leaders in their efforts

to organize political independence movements, b) to plan strategy for nonviolent revolution in Africa" (*ibid*), to the African Summit Conference of the Heads of States in Addis Ababa, on May 21 to 23, 1963, Nationalism and Independence were largely assumed and emphatically rooted as two most urgent and relevant ideologies for all nationalists and respective movements for independence across Africa.

It is important to stress that although the May 21-23, 1963 event was primarily organized for, and by the African Independent States at the time, it not just underlined Kwame Nkrumah's "four stages for political development to be sought by Africa's political leaders: 1) the attainment of independence; 2) the consolidation of independence; 3) the creation of unity and community among the free African states; and 4) the economic and social reconstruction of Africa" (*ibid*) – presented by Nkrumah himself during Accra's Conference – , but also and most importantly his four stages come about as theoretical framework through which Nationalism and Independence were propelled forward as de facto ideology and plan for action for liberation of Africa, while by inviting once again the same nationalist leaders and their movements to attend the May 1963 Conference, as they have done previously in 1958, it was intended to further legitimizing and sustaining their struggle for national liberation and auto-determination.

For that end, among the invitees for the 1963 Conference were 21 nationalist leaders and their respective movements known as African National Liberation Movements In Non-Independent Territories, represented there by Ajuma Oginga-Odinga[1], Vice-president of Kenya African National Union (KANU). In a memorandum presented by him and signed by all 21 National Liberation Movements, Odinga expressed, among other, that "We propose that a Committee whose members are drawn from the Independent African States and working through the African Liberation Bureau should be set up to confer with the leaders of the African National Liberation Movements of all shades of opinion in Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, Cape Verde Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, Southern Rhodesia, the Republic of South Africa, South West Africa, French Somaliland, the Comoros Islands, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland with a view to enhancing the formation and strengthening of united liberation fronts in these respective territories for the rapid achievement of the goal of total African liberation" (OUA, Speeches and Statements 1963: 140).

Two of the signatories of that memorandum were the Angolan National Front for Liberation of Angola (FNLA), led by Holden Roberto, and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), led by Agostinho Neto. Indeed, while UNITA (National Union for Total Independence of Angola) was created afterwards in 1966, one of his creator, Jonas Savimbi, has been an important figure of FNLA's earlier nomenclature during that time, as "In March 1962, Roberto named (…) Jonas Savimbi to leadership position in his government-in-exile" (Adelman 1975: 561-562), known by the Portuguese acronym GRAE. In fact, the Angolan post-independence civil war will occur between the MPLA-led government and UNITA itself, until 2002. For the country, both civil war and post-civil war will symbolize the departure from nationalism and independence as their (and others') major ideology as observed during national struggle against colonialism, to post or quasi-ideology in which access to state power was the ultimate goal in midst of absence, minor or larger political ideology, as both movements moved from liberation movements status to political parties in later 1980 (for MPLA) and 2002 (for UNITA).

Therefore, although a post or quasi-ideology permeates most historical political parties across Sub-Saharan Africa, this paper focus primarily on the MPLA and UNITA post-war

---

[1] When Kenya conquered its independence in December 1963, Ajuma Oginga-Odinga climbed to Vice-president position a year later, in a free Kenyan republic lead by President Jomo Kenyatta, both from KANU.

political ideologies as it looks at ideological patterns and verifies through their Statutes the existence of quasi or full-scale political ideology, and how both parties relate and operate within the framework of political discourse in today's Angola.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the Social Science literature on political parties in Sub-Saharan Africa focuses much on the political parties system, which can be understood as the way how vertical relationship towards state power is established, and horizontal competition towards dominance in the political marketplace for state power achievement or maintenance is obtained; and less on their political ideology, which is a set of values and ideas that differentiate one another, although sometimes both concepts can be intertwined.

As such, in terms of the political parties' system, it is worth noting that, while nationalism and independence were two correlated ideologies during the liberation struggle in Africa, a one-party system emerged, fostered by socialism ideology as a ruling strategy implemented by the very same National Liberation Movements in post-independence and for the most time before 1990 democratic openness would take Africa by storm. The failure of a successful democratic transition either by deliberate intention of sitting governments or by the incompatibility of western-like democracy with local idiosyncrasy assured the already one-party system to transition into a one-dominant-party system in the 1990s and most of the 2000s.

The one-party system, which operated amid the Angolan civil war (1975-1992), amplifies that the country has turned itself into a sort of "socialist laboratory" (Agostinho 2018: xvii) that "stems from the fact that such an orientation of the Angolan state, under the guidance of an MPLA of Marxist-Leninist type; that creates a one-party regime (which meant no recognition of other political forces, not even the participation of civil society organizations and citizens not members of the MPLA in the political life of the country); and which promotes increasingly intolerant actions, with an apex in 1977 (when the episode of 5/27 occurred, following or not the so-called coup attempt)" (*ibid*).

"In one-dominant-party systems, political opposition parties, although given free rein by the government, tend to be small, fragmented and ultimately ineffectual in providing a credible alternative to the main party in ideological and policy terms" (Chege 2007: 30). Although Chege brings Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Tanzania) into this category, adding that "By the time Nyerere moved to declare Tanzania a one-party state in 1965, Tanzania had made it so by popular choice" (*ivi*, p.31), Angola only descended into a one-dominant-party system in two occasions, one following the 1992 post-elections crisis, when UNITA's refusal to participate in the second round of presidential election gave MPLA the chance to lead the country as the only dominant political force, as new political parties elected for the first time for parliament could not challenge its solidified status; and the other following the 2008 parliamentary election when landslide majority win further solidified its dominant position in the Angolan political marketplace.

In both occasions no other party, except the ruling MPLA itself, seemed able to give a *credible alternative to the main party in ideological and policy terms* and thus might have induced it to embrace, willingly or unwillingly, the autocratic one-dominant-party system type between 2011 and 2017, characterized by a period of political and social activist repressions, electoral fraud allegations over 2012 and 2017 general elections by the opponents, and further weakening of political parties opposition, including the UNITA, as it continued to lose election after election and saw its political credibility as an alternative force among people shrink enormously.

As most studies reveal, both autocratic and one-dominant-party systems have occurred across the continent even at times when constitutional changes were made to allow the one-party regime to be replaced by multiparty-regime, as for in 1989 there were at least "11 military regimes; 29 one-party regimes, 5 inclusive multipartyism, and 1 racial oligarchy" (Carbone 2007:4). However, in many countries, those changes were just made to keep state power afloat as "Many of them succeeded in maintaining power by making sure that reforms were kept to a minimum and thus preventing any real changes (as did the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, the Parti Démocratique Gabonais or the Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais)" (ibid).

However, besides the prevalence of some characteristic features of the dominant political party maintained by the MPLA through the 1992, 2008, 2012, and 2017 general elections, such as state power, political discourse, public policy, and solid parliamentary majority, UNITA has lately surfaced as a strong political opponent, as perceived leadership's likeability and party's favorability seems rising among Angolan millennials, particularly in urban areas and among the youths in Luanda city, as well in its traditional stronghold in the Angolan heartland of Bie and Huambo, all three representing more than 1/3 of the Angolan population of about 33 million (INE, Projeção da População 2022). All of that might have created, for the first time, a de facto two-party system in the country, as the system seems to transit from one-party-dominant system by MPLA, to a dual-party system where both MPLA and UNITA "have a roughly equal prospect of winning government power" (Salih 2007: 46).

With regard to ideology, it is necessary to look at it as a larger picture, which implies African ideology both in colonial and post-independent times, in a way that even if much has changed since the 1990s, it still is influencing political parties structure and ideology nowadays. For instance, the idea of African socialism in terms of Julius Nyerere's philosophical and sociological perception of African realities is quite remarkable and timely. To Nyerere, as quoted by Graham (1972) 'Ujamaa, then, or familyhood describes our socialism (…). It is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man' (Nyerere 1968:11-12). "Ujamaa is an African concept (…). It has been the basis of African community life for centuries" (Graham 1972: 40).

That same larger picture under Ujamaa was the dominant political ideology for most parties in Africa, particularly among historical ones like the Angolan MPLA, while its opponent UNITA, although it has practiced socialist experiment for many decades, seems to have now solidified the capitalist path and views, at least in terms of its political discourse.

A narrower picture of political ideology, instead, brings about a theoretical concept of what ideology is all about. To that aim Kura (2007) writes that "Political ideology, which is one of the defining differences between political parties, is conceived here to mean a body of ideas that epitomises the social and economic needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class or society. Broadly, it is a set of doctrines, a coherent system of ideas, beliefs, and values that inform the political, economic, and even social method(s) of societal organisation and governance. (…)" (p. 69), adding that "The differences between the ideological orientation and persuasions of parties provide voters with a choice of how their interests should be provided for and protected" (ibid).

Nevertheless, a part from the larger ideological picture as socialism or Ujamaa, for MPLA, and a sort of capitalism for UNITA in-between 1975–1992 and beyond that, there is much to be known in terms of specific ideological differences among the two, particularly in terms of Kura's (2007) "coherent system of (…) beliefs and values" (ibid) and how these can

be applied at state and societal levels as a whole as a narrower picture of ideological differences that easily or hardly distinguish between the two.

In the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA), political parties "compete, based on a project for society and a political program, for the organization and expression of the will of the citizens, participating in political life and in the expression of the universal suffrage, through democratic and peaceful means" (CRA, 2010, art.17, paragraph 1). They are expected to perform that in observance of a set of principles such as national independence, national unity, and political democracy, whose objectives should contribute to the "a) consolidation of the Angolan nation and national independence; b) the safeguarding of territorial integrity; c) strengthening national unity; d) the defense of national sovereignty and democracy; e) the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights; f) the defense of the republican form of government and the secular nature of the state" (ivi, art.17, 3).

Furthermore, within the scope of the Angolan law on political parties, they are defined as "permanent and autonomous organizations of citizens, constituted with the fundamental objective of participating democratically in the political life of the country, freely competing for the formation and expression of the popular will and for the organization of political power, following the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, with the law and with their statutes and programs, intervening, namely, in the electoral process, through the presentation or sponsorship of candidates" (Lei dos Partidos Políticos de Angola, 2010, art. 1).

Although under the CRA and the Angolan law on political parties, ideology is not a mandatory principle, objective to be pursued, or means to achieve the objective, the Statutes are generally believed to be founding documents that in addition to the identity, system, mission, values, public policy programs, rights and duties of its members, visions, and philosophy of society, must also include party's ideology. For this, looking at the 2017 MPLA Statutes and the 2019 UNITA Statutes should determine what ideology both have and how they differentiate from one another, both as larger and narrower ideological pictures.

Table 1. **Larger picture of ideological differences and similarities between MPLA and UNITA (2017–2022)**

Political Party	Ideological references	Values and beliefs therein	Political orientation
MPLA	"The MPLA is a political party ideologically based on democratic socialism, which advocates social justice, humanism, freedom, equality, and solidarity" [MPLA Statutes, art. 9, paragraph 1]	• Democratic socialism • Social justice • Humanism • Freedom • Equality • Solidarity	Stands between Left and Center-left; Progressive
	"The Congress is the supreme organ of the MPLA, which determines the character and ideological orientation of the MPLA" (*ivi*, art.69)		
UNITA	UNITA's 2019 Statutes do not explicitly state the ideology it follows. However, it mentions as set of objectives and values that may be intended as such, as follows: "In the pursuit of its program, UNITA has, among others, the following objectives: (a) to build a democratic rule of law and a society founded on solidarity, equal opportunities and social justice" [UNITA Statutes, art. 6]	• Democracy • Rule of law • Solidarity • Equal opportunity • Social justice	Center-or Center-left?
	"The Congress is the supreme organ of the Party, which is responsible for: (a) Establish the political-ideological line of the Party" (*ivi*, art. 25)		

Retrieved differences among the two
MPLA • clearly specifies its ideological lineage (democratic socialism), which stands between left or center-left in terms of political orientation • clearly specifies it will pursue a democratic socialism UNITA • does not explicitly state its ideological lineage, although it can be resumed from its objectives. Yet, since it does not do so, it is not easy to establish whether it stands as left or right party in terms of political orientation • although perceived as promoter of liberal democracy in its political discourse, it solely refers to democracy without adding what kind of democracy it would be (socialist democracy; liberal democracy, or else)
Retrieved similarities among the two
Both political parties will stand for: • Democracy • Social justice • Solidarity • Equality/Equal opportunity • Congress is the only supreme organ that can establish ideology or ideological lineage

Source: Elaborated by the author from the 2017 MPLA Statutes, and 2019 UNITA Statutes

Table 2. **Narrower picture of ideological differences and similarities between MPLA and UNITA (2017–2022)**

Narrower ideological pictures	MPLA	UNITA	Similarities between the two	Differences between the two
Religious beliefs	"congregates, in its ranks, Angolan citizens (…) without distinction (…) of religious belief" (MPLA Statutes, art.8, paragraph 1)	"Party members are equal in rights and duties, without discrimination on the basis of religious faith" (UNITA Statutes, art. 14, paragraph 1)	✓	
Race and racism	"without distinction of social group, gender, skin color" (*ivi*, art.8,1)	"without discrimination on the basis of race" (art. 14, 1)	✓	
Ethnicity	"without distinction of social group, gender, skin color, ethnic origin" (*ivi,* art.8,1)	"without discrimination on the basis socio-cultural condition" (*ivi,* art. 14,1)		MPLA refers to not discriminating its members on basis of their ethnicity, while UNITA does not use that term, but uses «socio-cultural» instead.
Identity and culture	"MPLA applies, in a pragmatic way, the universal values of a modern and dynamic democracy (…) compatible with socio-cultural values and with the legitimate aspirations of the Angolans" (*ivi,* art.9, 2)	"UNITA is a union of peoples, aspirations and cultures" (Preamble), with aim at "(2) the building of the Angolan Nation" (Preamble)	✓	

Narrower ideological pictures	MPLA	UNITA	Similarities between the two	Differences between the two
Family and marriage	Member of the party will be "firm fighter for the promotion and equality of women, for the defense of the family, and for the well-being and development of children" (*ivi,* art. 28, x)			While the Statutes of UNITA does not make any reference to family and marriage, MPLA's does make reference to promoting and defending family, but without mentioning what kind of family and marriage does it support.
Market economy	"the development strategies to be adopted, in the areas of society, economy, security, and globalization" (*ivi,* art. 96, d)	"Promotes, within the framework of a sustainable market economy, territorial and social solidarity" (*ivi,* art. 5, e)		UNITA brings a clear standing for market economy, while MPLA will adopt strategic economic measures in a framework of economic development, which means pure market economy might not be its only option.
Subsidy and poverty alleviation measures				Neither party has in its Statutes elements linked to subsidies or poverty alleviation measures.
Land ownership		"It advocates (…) ownership of the land by the people" (*ivi,* art. 5, g)		Only UNITA advocates in its Statutes the land ownership, by the people.
International alignment	"MPLA may affiliate with international organizations of political parties which do not pursue objectives contrary to the law, the present Statutes or the Program of MPLA" (*ivi,* art. 124, 1)	"UNITA can affiliate with international organizations that fight for democracy, social justice, and the defense of human rights" (*ivi,* art. 77,1)	✓	In terms of international affiliation with like-minded parties, MPLA is a Socialist International (SI) member, whereas UNITA is a Centrist Democratic International (CDI) member.
Pan-African matters		"In Angola's international relations, it defends the reciprocity of advantages, the political and economic integration of Angola in Africa and the development of privileged relations with all countries in the world on a basis of reciprocity of		UNITA shows in its Statute a better positioning into Pan-African matters than MPLA does.

Narrower ideological pictures	MPLA	UNITA	Similarities between the two	Differences between the two
		advantages and identity of purposes and, in particular, with African countries" (*ivi*, art. 5, h)		
Abortion				Not specified in both Statutes, although both will likely follow cultural values regarding the sacredness of human life in African and Angolan traditions.
Fiscal policy and taxes payment				Not specified in neither Statutes.
Migration and boarder management				Not specified in neither Statutes.
Public debt				Not specified in neither Statutes.
State participation in the economy				Not specified in neither Statutes, although as for UNITA it will likely observe his market economy choice more easily than MPLA.

Source: Elaborated by the author from the 2017 MPLA Statutes, and the 2019 UNITA Statutes.

On the whole, either larger or narrower ideological pictures demonstrate that both MPLA and UNITA have more similarities than differences on a wide range of issues concerning political, economic, and social life in Angola, although, in some specific sets of values, one is more bluntly clear than the other. For instance, MPLA defines itself as ideologically based on democratic socialism, which UNITA does not do. On the contrary, it seems to embrace the same values that democratic socialism is known for, such as social justice, solidarity, and equality or equal opportunity. Hence, while the former can be defined as a center-left political party, the latter could also be defined as such, unless it defines itself otherwise.

As far as international affiliation is concerned, the MPLA is a member of Socialist International (SI), standing for progressive policy and left up to center-left orientation, which is consistent with its history, ideology and values. UNITA, instead, is a member of Centrist Democratic International (CDI), standing for a sort of conservatism from both right and centrist positions. In the wake of retrieved similarities it shares with MPLA on basis of social justice, solidarity, and equality or equal opportunity, which are consistent with its historical background, it seems that UNITA's affiliation with CDI is more based on shared democracy views rather than on social values as above. If so, then its international affiliation conflicts with most of its perceived social values and beliefs it shares with MPLA, at least in terms of its precedence, as for SI those values come regardless of liberal democratic order, which comes second to or substituted by equivalent democratic socialism.

IDEOLOGY OR QUASI-IDEOLOGY THROUGH PUBLIC POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Despite most organizing principles coming within the framework of the country's Constitution, the Angolan law on political parties, and individual party's electoral programs and manifesto presented and updated during elections time, the ongoing Statutes of both MPLA and UNITA show a substantial commonality than they perpetuate through political discourse and social positioning, especially on several issues relevant to the society as a whole, as seen on *Tables* 1 and 2.

Indeed, in their political discourse, both parties will deliberately bring general and historical views to play out as core values that distinguish one another rather than a specific set of ideological values and beliefs, for there are not many that they could display for their political and dialectical confrontation in daily or yearly basis. For that aim, UNITA will claim that it is one of the promoters of democratic opening, multipartyism, and market economy which came about in late 1991 through the Bicesse Peace Agreement signed with the MPLA-led government, while MPLA will claim that it has ended the civil war, promoted reconciliatory process with UNITA rebels, and guaranteed peace, stability and territorial integrity, which are indispensable for economic reforms and development of Angola.

Besides, when those general and historic views are not used to distinguish both parties before public perception, they often will choose different strategies aimed at amplifying contrasted views on several socially relevant or pressing issues at the moment, such as corruption, politicizing judiciary brunch, police brutality against social and political independent activists, mass poverty, youth unemployment, and social housing, or public media censorship. On different occasions, both parties will interchangeably accuse each other or deny any wrongdoing.

This may happen, on the one hand, because there are those substantial commonalities in larger ideological pictures identifying both parties, which they are willingly aware of and choose to, instead, minimize by perpetuating opposing political and social views on occasional but not strategically relevant issues such as abovementioned, on the other hand, because, perhaps, both the MPLA and UNITA choose not to go into an ideological spat that could backfire on them and provoke public anxiety, bearing in mind that the Angolan society as a whole is not yet used to dealing with such an approach of doing politics, not even the majority of Sub-Saharan countries.

Let us consider at least one of these – race. Although both parties will not discriminate their affiliates based on the race they belong to, in reality there is still unsolved racial bias in Angola going back to colonial time. According to Domingos da Cruz (2019), "the colonial process that made the outward settlement movement possible, at the same time in which is embedded one of the hermeneutic keys to understanding the contemporary situation of racism in Angola. A reality that I call neo-racism" (p.18). He goes on saying "Neo-racism manifests itself in traditional, shameless, and brazen ways. But also in molecular form, and in recent times in the form of nano-racism. By nano-racism we mean this narcotic form of prejudice against color[2] expressed in the anodyne gestures of everyday life" (*ivi*, p.19). In a nutshell, while neo-racism comes from outside in forms of white migration and culture who claim to be superior, nano-racism happens from within the country, perpetuated by Angolans themselves because of perceived difference in skin color and what it entails for historical and cultural stigma that Africans and their blackness have gone and still go through either home or abroad. So, choosing not to deal with it does not mean it is not an issue at all, but rather a pragmatic acknowledgement that "top-down approaches to the emergence and salience of ideology

[2] It refers to skin color.

would suggest that Africans will not organize their political opinions according to identifiable value structures" (Conroy-Krutz and Lewis 2011: 27).

Nevertheless, many narrower ideological issues such as abortion, fiscal policy and taxes payment, migration and boarder management, public debt or state participation in the economy, which were not addressed into their Statutes (see Table 2), could easily be implicated in political debates and discourse without fearing causing public uproar among the Angolans, which by adopting a step-by-step approach can and will be used to such an ideological spat over each party's values and beliefs, and thus become complementary to general and historical views inserted into larger ideological picture. In other words, it would help move both parties and society from quasi-political ideology to full scale political ideology.

In the end, all of this is reminiscent of similar experiences seen across the Sub-Saharan region as "Internally, parties are facing challenges of discipline, ideology, inter- and intra-party conflict and lack of adequate resources, all of which affect their functioning" (Kura 2007: 50), confirming the outside perception that ideology "is not a significant emphasis in the electoral politics of most African states" (Walle 2003: 304–306).

FINAL NOTES AND DISCUSSION

Both the MPLA and UNITA have gone through significant ideological and structural changes from the point of view of the National Liberation Movements status during 1950–1975 as well as of Political Parties in the late 1990 and 2000s.

As National Liberation Movements, they operated in a time where African politics were characterized by Pan-Africanism, African Independence, and Liberation from outside colonial powers, as well by Unity towards a common goal for peace, progress and prosperity. In such an environment, Nationalism and Independence were not just their most fundamental and pressing ideology, but also for 20 other similar movements known as African National Liberation Movements In Non-Independent Territories.

In the aftermath of the achievement of independence in 1975, amidst civil war aimed at state power control in Angola, the MPLA, as most of those movements that climbed to power between 1960–1980, embraced socialism, thus transforming itself and the country into a single-party regime. Although the 1991 Bicesse Peace Agreement entailed a first democratic openness and formal transition from a one-party to a multipartyism system, the post-electoral crisis that followed suit created the following political phenomena:

1. Despite the existence of multipartyism, Angola went from that to a one-dominant-party system headed by the MPLA, as new political parties could not stand the chance to compete with it;

2. The 2008 parliamentary election, whose landslide majority further solidified MPLA's dominant position in the Angolan political marketplace.

Besides nationalism ignited during the liberation struggle, either one-party in a socialist regime or one-dominant-party in democratic openness are sub-products of the political party system more than they are of political party ideology. If so, considering that only one party was still dominant from at least 1992 up to 2017, it was also its ideology (socialism) and one-party dominance (system) that were at the forefront of the Angolan political discourse and public policy.

In fact, after several elections' loss to MPLA (1992, 2008, 2012, 2017), UNITA seems to emerge from political ashes and setbacks, as likeability (of the leader) and favorability (of the party) seem to rise among the Angolan millennials, particularly in urban areas and among the youths in major cities such as Luanda, and historical heartland of Bie and Huambo, all three

representing more than 1/3 of the Angolan population of about 33 million. If such factor will be transformed into favorable vote in the upcoming 2022 general elections[3], then we might be witnessing, for the first time, a *de facto* two-party system in the country, in which one-party-dominant system by the MPLA could lead to a dual-party system where both the MPLA and the UNITA will be dominant.

In terms of political ideology, however, we look at both parties' Statutes as depositories of their quasi-ideology or full-scale ideology, tracing from their similarities and differences and determining how they use that to distinguish from one another, particularly in terms of public political discourse and Angolans' perception of both the MPLA and UNITA.

So, generally put, by confronting both Statutes (MPLA 2017 and UNITA 2019' Statutes) we discover, as far as a larger ideological picture is concerned, that the MPLA clearly specifies its ideological lineage, which is democratic socialism, whose political orientation stands between left or center-left, whilst UNITA does not explicitly do so. Thus, you cannot tell whether it stands for left or right in terms of political orientation. However, retrieved similarities show that both political parties will pursue democracy, social justice, solidarity, and equality or equal opportunity. Hence, both parties seem to share the same leftist values, which can indicate that UNITA may also be at the left, perhaps more at the center than its rival. In fact, while MPLA's affiliation with Socialist International is consistent with its leftist values, historical background, international alignment in world affairs as well as public policy, UNITA's affiliation with Centrist Democratic International, even in wake of similar leftist values as the above-mentioned, seems more democracy-driven than leftist-value-driven, which, perhaps, can be halfway conflicting with its historical background and social views, since market-based economy that it holds dear does not fully embrace socialist values such as social justice, equality, and solidarity as democratic socialism (MPLA) does or is expected to do.

Unless UNITA has changed its historical socialist views for which it is known, it is more coherent with Socialist International than with the Centrist Democratic International. Or, it is its membership within the CDI that will be useful to position itself at the center rather than at left, which, again, still is not resolving potential ideological conflict between socialist values and capitalism and free-market, which do not champion nor state interventionism in the economy, nor state funding social welfare (education, health, unemployment subsidy, poverty alleviation measures, and so forth). Let us assume UNITA will win the upcoming 2022 general elections and clinch power, then the following questions would emerge:

1. Will its public policy be left or center-oriented?

2. Will it let full free market function while intervening in the economy or not intervening in it?

3. How will it materialize leftist values such as those without conflicting with capitalism, free initiative, and individualism it holds dear?

4. Will its government be transformative or continuative of the established Angolan position in the world and African affairs?

5. Will it deepen democracy or promote sustainable development?

On the other hand, MPLA too has some public policies that are incoherent and conflicting with its ideological stand. For instance:

1. Although the market economy is not mentioned in its Statutes, how then it is investing time and energy to attract foreign investors?

2. Since it follows democratic socialism, would not a socialist market (like China's) be more suitable for its leftist values and openness for foreign investors?

---

[3] Editor's note: This article was written before the 2022 elections in Angola, which explains this and all further references related to upcoming events.

3. How would it deepen liberal democracy without conflicting with its historical values as well as ideological choice, and how will it prevent political transition through just and fair elections in Angola?

In the meantime, as far as a narrower ideological picture is concerned, made by specific elements that can constitute a set of values and beliefs, such as religious beliefs, race, and racism, ethnicity, identity and culture, family and marriage, both parties have a similar take on them, leading to not discriminatory among the Angolans. However, others such as abortion, fiscal policy and taxes payment, migration and border management, public debt and state participation in the economy, neither Statutes have addressed these issues, which leaves us wondering why would both parties not bring about any unwavering take on such issues. In fact, whenever those elements were to be used as narrower ideological features that could easily foster each party's identity beyond the historical and repetitive views they are known for and help voters decide properly based on individual preferences and the party's capacity of persuasion by claiming its views on race and racism, or fiscal policy and taxes payment systems, for instance.

Anyhow, despite not having empirical evidence to support that, it is our understanding that both parties will not engage in such an ideological spat knowingly that in reality, they are all alike either ideologically, socially, and politically. Bearing that in mind, if they are to explore or endeavor into such a confrontation through public political discourse and public policy, probably most ordinary citizens will be aware of how closer they are than they perpetuate on daily basis. Paradoxically, to reach that conclusion, an ideological spat is the only way out. The full-scale ideology has to surpass the quasi-ideology, even though it is indeed reminiscent of similar experiences seen across the Sub-Saharan region.

REFERENCES

Adelman, K. L. (1975). Report from Angola. Foreign Affairs, 53(3), 558–574. https://doi.org/10.2307/20039527.

Agostinho, Issau (2018). Angola, formação e democratização do Estado, Roma: Edizione Nuova Cultura.

All-African People's Conferences (1962). International Organization, 16(2), 429–434. http://jstor.org/stable/2705395.

Carbone, Giovanni M. (2007). Political Parties and Party Systems in Africa: Themes and Research Perspectives, World Political Science Review, Vol. 3 [2007], Iss. 3, Art.1.

Centrist Democratic International. Parties. https://www.idc-cdi.com/parties/ (accessed 7.4.2022)

Chege, Michael (2007). Political Parties in East Africa: Diversity in Political Party Systems. Report prepared for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) as part of its global Programme on Research and Dialogue with Political Parties, Stockholm: International IDEA.

Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey and Lewis, Dominique (2011). Mapping Ideologies In African Landscapes. Afrobarometer Working Papers. Working Paper No 129. https://afrobarometer.org/publications/wp129-mapping-ideologies-african-landscapes (accessed 7.4.2022)

Constituição da República de Angola, 2010. Diário da República, Órgão Oficial da República de Angola, I Série No 23, de 5 de Fevereiro de 2010.

Cruz, Domingos da (2019). Racismo: o machado afiado em Angola, Lisboa: Exclusivo Edições.

Graham, J.D. (1972). Political Ideologies In Contemporary Africa. The Centennial Review, 16(1), 23–40. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23740452.

INE.Projeção da População. https://www.ine.gov.ao/inicio/estatisticas (accessed 7.4.2022)

International Socialist. Full list of member parties and organizations. https://www.socialistinter-national.org/about-us/members/ (accessed 7.4.2022)

Kura, Sulaiman (2007). Contemporary African Political Parties: Institutionalisation for the Sustainability of Democracy. Journal of African elections. 6. 41-90. 10.20940/JAE/2007/v6i1a3.

Lei dos Partidos Políticos de Angola, 2010. Diário da República, Órgão Oficial da República de Angola, I Série N° 229, de 3 de Dezembro de 2010.

MPLA. Estatutos do MPLA. https://mpla.ao/ao/documentos/estatuto-do-mpla/ (accessed 7.4.2022)

Nyerere, Julius (1968), Ujamaa: Essays on socialism, Dar-es-Salam: Oxford University Press.

OUA. Speeches and Statements Made at the First Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit, 1963. https://au.int/en/speeches/19630508/speeches-and-statements-made-first-organisation-african-unity-oau-summit-1963 (accessed 07.04.2022)

Salih, M.A. Mohamed (2007). Political Parties in Africa: Challenges for Sustained Multiparty Democracy. Africa Regional Report Based on research and dialogue with political parties, Stockholm: International IDEA.

Shilaho, Westen K. (2017). Political Power and Tribalism in Kenya, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65295-5.

UNITA. Estatutos da UNITA. http://www.unitaangola.com/PT/Tableestatutos1.awp (accessed 07.04.2022)

Walle, van de Nicolas (2003). Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems. Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 41, N°. 2 (June), pp. 297–321.

ЗАПРОС НА ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ ПАРТИИ, ОСНОВАННЫЕ НА ИДЕОЛОГИИ В СУБСАХАРСКОЙ АФРИКЕ. ПРИМЕР МПЛА И УНИТА В АНГОЛЕ

© 2023 И. Агоштиньо

АГОШТИНЬО, Иссау, Центр африканских исследований Университета Порту, Португалия, электронный адрес: mestre_samwange@yahoo.com.br

Аннотация. Политические движения в Африке претерпели существенную трансформацию на протяжении десятилетий. Когда первые политические движения возникли в субсахарском регионе в начале XX в., они функционировали как культурные или общественные организации, поскольку колониальный режим не позволял национальным политическим движениям существовать в африканских обществах. Тем не менее, в 1950-е – 1960-е гг. эти организации трансформировались в политические движения и партии, которые в конце концов повели борьбу за независимость и создание переходных правительств.

Однако спустя шестьдесят лет после национального освобождения большинство африканских правящих партий, в особенности «исторических» – формировавшихся в эпоху борьбы за независимость, очень активно стремятся подчеркивать отличия друг от друга в идентичности, чтобы удержать власть, несмотря на то, что ныне они существуют в условиях многопартийных демократических режимов. Претензия на принадлежность к определенной идентичности (которая может быть даже религиозной или языковой) выродилась в насилие и гражданские войны во многих постколониальных африканских обществах (в Центральноафриканской Республике, Камеруне, Анголе, Мозамбике, Кении и многих других).

Предположение, что основанные на идентичности политические партии не способствовали формированию жизнеспособных, мирных и целостных африканских обществ (за исключением нескольких стран) должно вызвать к жизни новый формат политических партий – основанных на идеологии, которые, несмотря на все культурные различия на самом деле смогут предложить лучшую социально-политическую конкуренцию между различными политическими партиями, основанными на целом комплексе идеологических ценностей. Хотя пост- или квазиидеология пронизывает большинство «исторических» политических партий во всей субсахарской Африке, в данной статье автор рассматривает преимущественно послевоенные идеологические модели МПЛА и УНИТА и то, как в их уставах отражается существование квази- или полноценной идеологии, как эти партии функционируют в рамках политического дискурса в сегодняшней Анголе.

Ключевые слова: субсахарская Африка, МПЛА, УНИТА, политические партии, идеология