

Angola

Ethnicity in Angola

Group selection

Angola consists of 12 to 13 distinct ethnic groups, which settle in the following regions. The Ovimbundu-Ovambo, the largest ethnic group, settles in the central-eastern highlands (Provinces: Bie, Huambo, Huila, Benguela, and Cuando Cubango). They earn their living as farmers. The Mbundu-Mestico (= term used for racially mixed Portuguese-Africans), the second largest ethnic group of the country, live primarily in the provinces surrounding the capital Luanda (Provinces: Luanda, Bengo, Cuanza Norte, Cuanza Sul and Malanje). They are due to the geographical proximity to the Portuguese more educated and work in a variety of sectors. The Bakongo, the third largest ethnic group, live in the northern provinces bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo (Provinces: Uige, Zaire). The Lunda-Chokwe, the fourth largest ethnic group, live in the western provinces of Angola (Provinces: Lunda Norte, Lunda Sul and Moxico). The other minor groups live in central Angola between the Ovimbundu-Ovambo and the Lunda-Chokwe (the Nganguela), in the southeastern provinces Namibe and Cunene (the Helelo and Nyaneka) and the enclave Cabinda in the north of Angola (the Cabinda-Mayombe) ³⁴; ³⁵, 109-110; ³⁶, 18-47; ³⁷. After independence from Portugal in 1975 the dominant liberation movement Movimento Popular de Liberta de Angola (MPLA) under colonialization came to power and installed a Marxist-Leninist single party regime following the example of the United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR). Between 1975 and 2002 Angola found itself with short periods of peace (1990-1992, 1994-1998) in a civil war between the MPLA and the second big liberation movement after independence the Unio Nacional para la Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA). After the loss of their charismatic leader UNITA agreed to a ceasefire, demobilized its troops and has transformed itself to the largest opposition party. Besides minor incidences in the enclave of Cabinda in the north, which strives for independence, Angola has since then lived in peace, but is politically still dominated by the MPLA ³⁸.

Fearon's (2003) list is used as a starting point since it includes all the larger ethnic groups noted above. The list from the Minorities at Risk program is too sparse and the one from the Soviet Atlas Narodov Mira is far too detailed. The reasons for these changes are

³⁴ [Broadhead, 1992]

³⁵ [Levinson, 1998]

³⁶ [Lusani, 2001]

³⁷ [James, 2004]

³⁸ [James, 2004]

as follows: 1. In the literature consulted there was no evidence that the ethnic groups Nganguela and Nyaneka were politically relevant or compactly supported the political movement of any other ethnic groups (Broadhead (³⁹, 149) argues that half of the Nganguela supported the MPLA, while the other half supported the UNITA). Hence, they were dropped from the list (rather than coding them as irrelevant in each time period). 2. Although the Cabinda-Mayombe and the Bakongo are closely related they are kept as distinct groups for the analysis. The reasons are as follows. First, the Cabinda-Mayombe have their own political group, the Frente para a Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda (FLEC). Second, the FLEC does not strive for political power in all of Angola, but for the independence of the enclave Cabinda in the far north of the country, which has huge oil reserves and is therefore economically important for Angola as a whole (over 90% of all Angolas export revenue is based on oil exports from Cabinda) (⁴⁰, 115-119, 308-312). The adapted group list maps nicely into the major political organizations that make up the political arena between 1975-2005. The Mbundu-Mestizo build the primary supporter base of the MPLA, the Ovimbundu and Lunda that of the UNITA, the Bakongo are the main supporters of the Frente Nacional da Liberta de Angola (FNLA) and finally the FLEC finds their main support among the Cabinda-Mayombe (⁴¹, ⁴²).

³⁹ [Broadhead, 1992]

⁴⁰ [Lusani, 2001]

⁴¹ [Broadhead, 1992]

⁴² [James, 2004]

The Role of Ethnicity: Yes, ethnicity played a significant role in the political life of Angola since independence. The reasons leading to this coding are as follows: 1. All of the main political actors during that time period receive primary support from one of the main ethnic groups. Although the MPLA and UNITA tried to build a broad national coalition, their attempt was not very successful and forced them to rely heavily on their core supporters. Moreover, the literature provides evidence that people of these ethnic groups felt represented by those political actors (Ingham 1990: 178-180; ⁴³; ⁴⁴, 109; ⁴⁵, 187-188, 196-197). 2. Heywood (⁴⁶, 48) notes explicitly that nationalism has failed to break ethnic thinking. She also argues that the ideological dimension of the civil war (East vs. West, Socialism vs. Capitalism) had an underlying ethnic dimension, which makes sense, since the conflict could not be settled when the ideological dimension vanished with the end of the cold war. Only after the death of the UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi 2002 could the civil war be successfully terminated. Additionally, she argues that when taking over power the MPLA avoided open elections, because ethnicity could count for more than ideology (⁴⁷, 188).

⁴³ [Broadhead, 1992]

⁴⁴ [Tvedten, 1997]

⁴⁵ [Heywood, 2000]

⁴⁶ [Heywood, 2000]

⁴⁷ [Heywood, 2000]

Group selection

1975-2002: The time period was chosen from independence to the death of Jonas Savimbi in 2002, after which the UNITA definitely transformed itself from a guerilla movement to a political party. All main political actors where independence movements, which in the winter before Angolas independence (11. November 1975) agreed to mutual recognition with equal rights and responsibility. During spring and early summer 1975, however, the groups became engaged in fights for power over the country. At the same time they received financial and technical (e.g. military advisers) support from the United States (UNITA and FNLA) and the Soviets/Cuba (MPLA). The MPLA could drive the UNITA and FNLA out from the capital city Luanda, where due to the geographical and ethnic closeness (i.e. the majority of the assimilandos and mesticos supported the MPLA, while the UNITA and FNLA stressed the negritude dominance) the Portuguese in November 1975 granted the MPLA formally control over Angola. The MPLA declared the Peoples Republic of Angola (PRA), which is immediately recognized by the Soviet Union, Cuba, the Warsaw Pact Nations, and Brazil. They also began to establish a single party regime following Soviet example, occupied all official political offices and where 1976 officially recognized as the 47th member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Finally, without becoming a member of MPLA, which was dominated be the Mbundu-Mestico people, one had no chance of getting political power. This is the reason why the power access of the Mbundu-Mestico people has been coded as a monopoly (⁴⁸, 164-321; ⁴⁹, xxviii- xxxv). The UNITA and FNLA declared the Republica de Pessao Democrtica de Angola (RPDA), with Huambo as capital and built a shadow government. Their republic and government was never officially recognized, but from 1975-1989 financially and militarily supported by the United States and South Africa. The UNITA dominated the FNLA (⁵⁰; ⁵¹, 197-200; ⁵², 164-165), which in a last attempt to capture the capital before independence was defeated by the MPLA troops and since then never gained political prominence again. They also never held a single province under their control. The Bakongo, the main supporters of the FNLA, are therefore coded as powerless, since there was no evidence that they were formally or informally discriminated (⁵³, 86-88; ⁵⁴, 61- 62). During the whole time period and civil war the UNITA held at least on province and up to 2/3 of the country, which is why the Ovimbundu-Lunda have been coded as having local power (⁵⁵). Finally, the FLEC was defeated by MPLA troops, which needed to gain dominance in the petroleum-rich province to cover their political and military expenses. Since then (1975), the FLEC has maintained a low-level insurgency, which has been ineffective, since the FLEC has split into two subgroups. Again, since there was no evidence of formal or informal discrimination the Cabinda-Mayombe have been coded as powerless. One could object that there have been various ceasefires and periods of peace between 1975 and 2002 and even free and general elections 1992,

⁴⁸ [Lusani, 2001]⁴⁹ [James, 2004]⁵⁰ [Heywood, 1989]⁵¹ [Broadhead, 1992]⁵² [James, 2004]

which should be reflected in the coding. The reasons these periods of peace are not reflected in the coding are the following: 1. Both periods (1990-1992 and 1994-1998) were relative short and in none of the two periods was there an effective change in power (⁵⁶, 189-321). 2. None of the peace treaties brought a significant political change. The parliamentary elections 1992 lead to an absolute majority for the MPLA (130 seats out of 220, UNITA 70 out of 130 and FNLA 5 out of 130) and José Eduardo dos Santos (49.57%, Savimbi 40.07%) missed the absolute majority only scantily. A second round never took place since the UNITA accused the MPLA of fraud, although international observers graded the elections as free and fair. This restarted the civil war again (1992-1994), so that the newly elected parliament first met on April 1997 (⁵⁷, ⁵⁸, 252-255). The establishment of a national government of unity (GURN) as outlined in the treaty of Lusaka (1994) also did not lead to any significant changes in power, since the UNITA held only 4 ministries (mining, trade, health and tourism) and 7 vice-ministers (construction, finance, domestic politics, farming, social welfare, media and defense) of the 29 ministers and 57 vice-ministers. Additionally, dos Santos weakened the position of the UNITA in the government considerably, for example by outsourcing the mining and trade of diamantes to a newly founded holding. One can therefore not speak of a true period of power sharing (GURN in power from April 1997 until August 1998) (⁵⁹, 277-281).

2003-2005: The time period was chosen from the death of Jonas Savimbi (2002) to the end of the coding time period. After the death of Jonas Savimbi and his deputy in 2002 the UNITA, the only remaining big opponent of the MPLA after 1975, surrendered, turn power in all provinces to the government, disarmed completely and transformed itself into a political party, which is with 70 of the 130 seats in parliament in largest opposition party. Since the MPLA government holds all ministries, provinces and the absolute majority in parliament. The next presidential and parliamentary elections have been rescheduled several times. To date the next parliamentary elections are assumed to be held 2008 or 2009, although the definitive date has not yet been set. The Mbunda-Mestico, the main supporters of the MPLA, have been therefore coded as having dominant power rather than monopoly power, because they have formally agreed to share power based on fair and free elections (⁶⁰, 104-108; ⁶¹). Note, however, that the MPLA is trying to broaden its electoral base and has therefore since 2003 loosened its ethnic ties considerably. It is therefore becoming more difficult to map a single ethnic group to the MPLA as time passes. All other groups play at best a minor role in Angolan politics. The UNITA is with 70 parliamentary members the biggest opposition party, but has no real political influence. It also lost formal political control of the provinces it once controlled. As the Bakongo and Cabinda-Mayombe whose situation remained unchanged between the two time periods distinguished, the

⁶⁰ [James, 2004]

⁶¹ [Haan and Santana, 2005]

Ovimbundu-Lunda group are coded as powerless between 2003 and 2005 (⁶², ⁶³). There was no evidence of formal or informal discrimination by the ruling MPLA.

2006-2013: As stated in the previous comments, ethnicity plays a role in Angola's political arena despite different (failed) attempts of political parties to establish an Angolan identity and thereby win the support of voters „outside“ their traditional bases (e.g. ⁶⁴, 7; ⁶⁵, 10). Only the ruling MPLA, due to its dominance and its hold on the machinery of the state, has had some success in this regard and further consolidated its power position in recent years.

This is aptly reflected in its landslide victories in the legislative elections in 2008 and 2012 (⁶⁶; ⁶⁷). Originally an Mbundu-Mestizo Movement, MPLA has been increasingly successful in attracting/co-opting elites and citizens from other ethnic groups, mainly from the Ovimbundu-Ovambo and the Bakongo groups (e.g. ⁶⁸, 10; ⁶⁹, 33; ⁷⁰). In today's Angola the key route to political power is an MPLA affiliation. In this sense, the MPLA regime is no longer representing the interests of one ethnic group but has become more inclusive. The same is not true for the most important opposition parties. While UNITA still has a mainly Ovimbundu-Ovambo followership, and in 2008 FNLA received most of its votes from ethnic Bakongo, most Bakongo and Ovimbundu-Ovambo voted MPLA both in 2008 and 2012 (⁷¹). This illustrates the MPLA's success in reaching out to citizens from other groups than its original Mbundu-Mestizo followership. On the other hand, recent voting patterns show that ethnicity is still a salient dimension of political contestation. UNITA, FNLA, and also PRS (with a predominantly Lunda-Chokwe support base) remain, to a large extent, ethnic organizations. Yet also within the governing MPLA, as within the Angolan state on the whole, questions of power are "further complicated by subethnic and racial dynamics" (⁷², 107), as for example even president Dos Santos' ethnic background is more complex than claimed. Therefore, MPLA's win of the election and the simultaneous decrease of votes for the UNITA can be seen as a tendency of overcoming ethnically motivated politics, yet ingrains as well a tendency to further minimize the political integration of parties and groups outside the "omnipotent" MPLA (see literature review below)

Focussing on the executive branch of state power, the Angolan cabinet has comprised ministers from all three major ethnic groups (Mbundu-Mestizo, Bakongo, and Ovimbundu-Ovambo) since 2006, the latest (⁷³). In line with this, a new period of ethnopolitical power-sharing is coded from 2006 onwards, with the Mbundu-Mestizo as senior partner and the Ovimbundu-Ovambo and the Bakongo as junior partner. The Lunda-Chokwe also have been granted one cabinet seat from 2006 onwards, yet this must be regarded as mere tokenistic form of inclusion and thus code the Lunda-Chokwe as powerless. (⁷⁴).

As far as the Angolan exclave Cabinda is concerned, there is still

⁶² [James, 2004]

⁶³ [Haan and Santana, 2005]

⁶⁴ [Orre, 2010]

⁶⁵ [Roque, 2008]

⁶⁶ [United States Government State Department, 2008]

⁶⁷ [Bertelsmann Country Report, 2010-2014]

⁶⁸ [Orre, 2010]

⁶⁹ [Armundsen and Weimer, 2008]

⁷⁰ [Roque, 2009]

⁷³ [United States Government State Department, 2008]

⁷⁴ [United States Government State Department, 2008]

an active separatist movement and some low-scale outbreaks of violence have occurred in the recent past, most notably a FLEC attack on the bus of the Togolese national soccer team (⁷⁵). There have been some attempts by the central government to coopt Cabindan elites but no meaningful steps towards political inclusion (⁷⁶). On the other hand, the U.S. State Department human rights reports (⁷⁷) do not report evidence of systematic state-led discrimination against Cabindans. On these grounds, the Cabindan Mayombe are coded as powerless.

⁷⁵ [Bertelsmann Country Report, 2010-2014]

⁷⁶ [Bertelsmann Country Report, 2010-2014]

⁷⁷ [United States Government State Department, 200

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Political status of ethnic groups in Angola

From 1975 until 2002

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ovimbundu-Ovambo	0.38	DISCRIMINATED
Mbundu-Mestico	0.26	MONOPOLY
Bakongo	0.13	POWERLESS
Lunda-Chokwe	0.09	DISCRIMINATED
Cabindan Mayombe	0.02	POWERLESS

From 2003 until 2005

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ovimbundu-Ovambo	0.38	POWERLESS
Mbundu-Mestico	0.26	DOMINANT
Bakongo	0.13	POWERLESS
Lunda-Chokwe	0.09	POWERLESS
Cabindan Mayombe	0.02	POWERLESS

From 2006 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ovimbundu-Ovambo	0.38	JUNIOR PARTNER
Mbundu-Mestico	0.26	SENIOR PARTNER
Bakongo	0.13	JUNIOR PARTNER
Lunda-Chokwe	0.09	POWERLESS
Cabindan Mayombe	0.02	POWERLESS

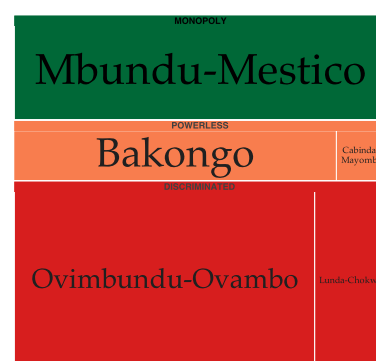


Figure 19: Political status of ethnic groups in Angola during 1975-2002.



Figure 20: Political status of ethnic groups in Angola during 2003-2005.



Figure 21: Political status of ethnic groups in Angola during 2006-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Angola

From 1975 until 2013

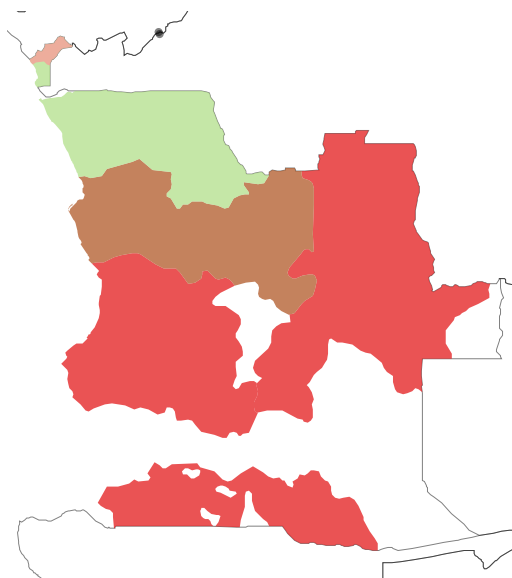


Figure 22: Map of ethnic groups in Angola during 2006-2013.






Group name	Area in km ²	Type
 Ovimbundu-Ovambo	291 550	Regionally based
 Lunda-Chokwe	268 748	Regionally based
 Mbundu-Mestico	181 428	Regionally based
 Bakongo	137 440	Regionally based
 Cabindan Mayombe	4172	Regionally based

Table 10: List of ethnic groups in Angola during 1975-2013.

Conflicts in Angola

Starting on 1961-02-04

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Portugal	MPLA		1961-02-04			
Government of Portugal	FNLA		1961-03-15			
Government of Portugal	UNITA		1966-12-26			

Starting on 1975-11-11

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Angola	FNLA	Bakongo	1975-11-11	No	Yes	Yes
Government of Angola	UNITA	Ovimbundu-Ovambo	1975-11-11	No	Yes	Yes

Starting on 1991-06-03

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Angola	FLEC-R	Bakongo	1991-06-03	Explicit	Yes	Yes
Government of Angola	FLEC-R	Cabindan Mayombe	1991-06-03	Explicit	Yes	Yes
Government of Angola	FLEC-FAC	Bakongo	1992-06-06	No	No	No
Government of Angola	FLEC-FAC	Cabindan Mayombe	1992-06-06	Explicit	Yes	Yes