Luanda is known for its late-night parties (or farras) that trail into the wee hours and include a bowl of muzongue (fish broth with pieces of cassava, fish, and chili peppers eaten in order to counteract the impending exhaustion and hangover). On November 11, 2001, the twenty-sixth anniversary of Angola’s independence, I was invited to an event called Caldo de Dipanda (Independence Broth) that was to begin at 7 a.m. at the National Radio Station. It was a special independence day version of a bi-monthly live broadcast event hosted by a Sunday morning radio show (Caldo de Poeira, or Dust Broth) where they invite musicians of the older generation to gather, play music together, eat, and reminisce. My fiancé (now husband) and I and a friend, tambourine in hand, arrived half an hour after the scheduled beginning to find some 30 people already gathered. We were directed to a table and served typical Angolan dishes—beans with palm oil, muzongue, boiled cassava and sweet potato—and our choice of beverage. The emcee was already playing a variety of old tunes and inviting various musicians up to the stage to sing their golden oldies.

Enthusiastic hugs and hellos abounded in the audience and people were obviously quite pleased to be together. Almost all the guests in attendance were musicians in their 50s or 60s and, with a few exceptions, they were all men. Younger women employees of the radio station were also present, but they were not guests—they served the food and danced with the band for particular songs.

* Earlier versions of this article benefited from discussion and comments from seminar participants in the Afrisem seminar at Northwestern University’s Program in African Studies and the MacArthur Program at the University of Minnesota, and audience members at lectures I presented at the University of San Diego and at the Center for African Studies at UCLA. I am particularly grateful to David Schoenbrun and Bennetta Jules-Rosette. The outside reviewers for this journal provided assistance in tightening and clarifying my argument and in locating relevant historical sources. Finally, Jean Allman, Allen Isaacman, Hans Nesseth, Mary Thomas, and Bob W. White all read drafts at separate times and asked incisive questions that forced me to sharpen my argument. All of these folks who generously read, listened to, and critiqued this piece share the praise for its insights but none of the responsibility for its limitations, which are all mine.
Of the eight well-known female singers and dancers\(^1\) from this generation of artists four are still alive and in Luanda. But where were they? It was a national holiday, the national holiday after all, and this event was meant to celebrate the conjunction between this older generation of artists and independence.

The point is not to commit the crime of anachronism, i.e., to draw any conclusions about what happened historically from this recent event. Women singers and dancers certainly existed in the 1960s and 1970s, even if fewer in number than their male counterparts. But the absence of these women artists might easily have overshadowed the male artists very happy to be there and to be together. So while I considered what I knew would be Susan Geiger’s question for me ("Where are the women?")\(^2\), my attention also came to settle on these men not as genderless representatives of the Angolan nation but specifically as Angolanos (Angolan men). What was the relation between masculinity, music, and the nation? How were musical production and the music scene gendered? What was the relationship between this gendered musical production and the nation, given that music from this period was and is deemed typically Angolan?

This article explores the relationship between gender and the musical production of the nation in Luanda’s musseques (urban shantytowns). Urban Africans took advantage of reforms in colonial policy instituted between 1961 and 1974 to improve their daily lives, carve out new cultural spaces, and create new artistic practices. The production of a local form of urban popular music, called semba, was at the forefront of this process. In the clubs where music was performed, at the parties where it was played, and in the production of the music itself, urban youth rearranged relations not only between themselves and the colonial state but between urban and rural societies, between members of the urban milieu, and between and among men and women. In so doing, they shaped the cultural basis of nation and thus implicated themselves in the political project of nationalism after 1974.

I argue that the gendered dynamic of musical production and of the music scene helps account for a shift in the involvement of women as cultural producers and the ascendancy of a masculinist ethic at the moment when music became the salient cultural practice. In the mid- to late 1950s young women were actively

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\(^1\) Lourdes Van Dunem, Olga Baltazar, Dina Santos, and Maria Mambo Café are still alive and resident in Luanda. Lilly Tchiumba and Belita Palma are both deceased; Alba Clington is in poor health in Lisbon; and Mila Melo lives in Australia.

\(^2\) Susan Geiger, a pioneer of African women’s history, was one of my mentors at the University of Minnesota. She died in 2001.
involved in the politico-cultural groups that returned to local cultural roots and themes in order to spark political consciousness. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Angolan music was in its heyday, women were less prominent as cultural producers but no less important to the multiple meanings of the scene. The club-based music scene in the musseques was where male musicians became public figures as they rode the crest of masculinist tropes of sports, rivalry, and notoriety that became central to musical production. Women could be the mark of male success but their presence in the clubs was also the object of discussion and ambivalence. Masculinist tropes were critical to the sense of nation produced in the clubs and shared by women and men alike. Thus gender shaped the way that urban youth thought about, made, and experienced the nation before independence.

The Problem

This is part of a larger story of those who did not go to the front or into exile to fight for independence—in other words, it is the story of the majority of Angolans who remained in the country and struggled against colonial rule in their daily lives. It is the story of cultural renaissance in the face of extreme political repression. What was life like for those who “stayed behind”? Why did a large number of the populations of Luanda’s musseques (including the majority of musicians) spontaneously organize behind the MPLA when they returned in 1974, allowing the party to achieve the hegemony required to declare itself the leader of the independent Republic of Angola on November 11, 1975? We will not find answers to


4 Jean-Michel Mabeko Tali notes that the support of musseque residents for the MPLA was decisive in their achieving control of Luanda against the forces of the FNLA and UNITA. See Tali, Dissidências e Poder de Estado: o MPLA Perante Si Próprio (1962-1977) (Luanda, 2001), II, chs. 9–10. On the semi-autonomous nature of the groups that arose to support the MPLA see Franz-Wilhelm Heimer, Decolonization Conflict in Angola, 1974–76: An Essay in Political Sociology (Geneva, 1979), 50–51, 58. See also Edmundo Rocha who, following Christine Messiant, suggests that the tailors, catechists, nurses, pastors, drivers and workers of the musseques were critical to nationalist mobilization both within the city and in the rural areas.
these questions in the realm of explicit, even if clandestine, political activity. The extreme repression that began in 1959 and reached new heights after 1961 not only crushed political activity but also fractured the more explicit relationship between politics and culture that existed in the politico-cultural groups of the 1950s.\footnote{Rocha, Angola: Contribuição ao Estudo da Gênese do Nacionalismo Moderno Angolano (período de 1950–1964) (Testemunho e Estudo Documental) (Luanda, 2003), 76.} Culture could no longer serve as a cover for politics or as a self-conscious political tool for sparking people’s consciousness. At the same time, a new style of music boomed and local culture seemed more vibrant than ever. This new form of music, generally referred to as semba, and the cultural scene that grew up around it created a spirit of insurgency and of Angolan difference while reconfiguring the relationship of culture to politics. This was not a retreat from politics to culture by the nationalist underground, but an explosion of culture into politics by urban residents.

Just as the PIDE (Polícia Internacional da Defesa e do Estado, or the Portuguese secret police) increased its pursuit of “enemies” and “terrorists,” the Estado Novo instituted changes in colonial policy meant to assuage international criticism and convince the Angolan population that Portuguese rule was congenial to their needs. As many Angolans put it, Portugal finally started “to bet on” Angola and this produced some palpable, if extraordinarily belated, changes in everyday life.\footnote{Aside from changes in citizenship, access to school, and employment, the people I spoke with noted such things as access to bank loans that allowed them to purchase their homes, cars, and furniture. Abelino "Manuel" Faria (March 19, 2002) and Carlos Lamartine (September 4, 2001); all interviews carried out in Luanda, Angola. As Jeremy Ball indicates in his dissertation “‘The Colossal Lie’: The Sociedade Agrícola de Cassequel and Post-Colonial Labor Policy in Angola, 1899–1977” (UCLA, 2003), the reforms of the late colonial period have not been closely studied. He argues that in general they “improved the quality of life for Angolans,” as does Maria da Luz Ferreira de Barros in “Alguns Aspectos da Situação Socioeconômica em Angola (1961–1974), Africana 14 (1994), 41–62.} The colonial administration instituted nominal political representation, abolished the most egregious aspects of colonial rule, and promoted a social agenda of African-centered entertainment and recreation, all aimed at win-
ning the hearts and minds of Angolans. Taking advantage of the colonial state's new receptivity to African cultural and recreational activities, some African civil servants opened more than two dozen clubs in the city's nine musseques. These clubs helped to spur the development of musicians and bands and they gave Luanda a new kind of nightlife and form of recreation, albeit one with strong cultural antecedents in the musseques of the 1940s and '50s.

Angolan popular music exploded in this period and became the first among cultural practices. This resulted from African entrepreneurial initiative in opening clubs and the combined efforts of African- and European-financed activities in developing a network of radio stations, a nascent recording industry, and a series of street- and cinema-based music festivals. Amateur radio clubs and later a state broadcasting system meant that locally produced music could be broadcast to and from various places throughout the colonial territory. Street festivals in the musseques drew huge crowds from across the city, creating a circulation of people between various neighborhoods that otherwise would not have occurred to the same extent. Bands traveled to other cities in Angola and most urban centers had clubs, although the Luanda scene was the largest and most vibrant. People came together and related to each other in new ways because of music.

While students of politics characterize the period from the outbreak of violence in 1961 to the revolt in April 1974 by the Portuguese military (which eventually led to independence in 1975) as violent and politically repressive, Luandans remember it both as a period of limited economic advancement and as the golden age of Angolan music. Armando Correia de Azevedo depicted the music festival held at a musseque cinema as "packed full! It was applause, and happiness, it was a tremendous confusion to go to Ngola Cine—they called it the

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7 As Patrick Chabal points out, however, political representation was notoriously lacking in Portugal’s African colonies even in this period. See Patrick Chabal and others, A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa (Bloomington, 2002), 43.

Olympia of Angola! Yet it is also the period in which the MPLA, the FNLA, and UNITA guerrilla forces were fighting the Portuguese military in northern and eastern Angola. Thus the music of the golden age was produced in the context of the struggle for independence. This is the music that many regard as “authentically” Angolan, free from the political sloganeering of music from the post-independence civil war-torn 1980s and from the overly foreign influenced music of the 1990s. Musicians remember this period as one in which they were able to develop artistically, in which some of them could even make a living from their art and in which everyone shared the same desire: Angolan independence.

Music brought people together and it dignified them. Olga Baltazar remembers the pride associated with Angolan music as it conquered its own space alongside other “national” musics:

a person would feel proud seeing the music of their land. Because it wasn’t just fado, and Brazilian music, and American music—rock—and GVs [Cuban music] and Puerto-Rican music. Do you see? Our music started to claim its space. And it was people’s first choice! And there were artists, well-known ones, who would go sing in various clubs and even in the bars [of the baixa, the “lower city,” or white city].

Everyone I interviewed, men and women alike, raved about the music of this period and the venues where it came to life: parties, clubs, and festivals. Talking about this music scene I often found myself on the edge of my seat, regaled in animated terms punctuated by gestures, laughter, and snatches of song. These were the good old days, the salad days, but what made them glorious

9 Interview with Armando Correia de Azevedo (September 11, 2001). “Confusion” in this context had a positive spin. It was a sign of the fact that the music and the scene were extremely popular and exciting.

10 UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, or Union for the Total Independence of Angola) was formed in 1966 when Jonas Savimbi broke ranks with the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola, or the National Front for the Liberation of Angola). They entered the guerrilla war and fought the Portuguese colonial troops in eastern Angola.

11 Angolan musicians and cultural producers, as well as club or radio audience members, use this past to intervene in and comment on the present. This romanticized past is used to show the failure of the present regime to deliver on the promises of independence and the ways in which it has forgotten artists who supported it. But this does not mean that the contents of these memories are therefore devoid of historical information. The terms in which Angolans critique the present government yield valuable historical truths. Central in these critiques is the question of self-sufficiency, or in other words, the ability to make do for oneself.

12 Interview with Olga Baltazar (November 22, 2001).
seemed to have so little to do with the nationalist struggle. What counted was entertainment and fun. Even those politically active said it was generally too risky to discuss politics in clubs or at parties and festivals because they were frequented by PIDE agents and their informers. Besides, everyone just wanted to have a good time and escape from quotidian pressures and tragedies. Good music, good company, and dancing were the elements of a night well spent. Distant from nationalism and from the guerrilla struggle as these desires might seem, they were, in fact, central to the nation because they produced multiple temporalities and alternative spaces that were parallel to the armed struggle and perpendicular to the colonial project.

Benedict Anderson asserts that the notion of "meanwhile" is critical to conceptualizing the nation. It expresses simultaneity such that what is happening in one place is seen as connected with what is happening at another no matter the distance. For Anderson this unique conception of time is embodied in the novel and newspaper and accessible to a wide group of people through print capital. Through these technologies people come to imagine themselves as part of a community with a common past and common future. In Angola that "meanwhile" was not so much actualized by print capital as it was by sonorous capital, transmitted by radio and made possible by short-wave broadcasting on the one hand, and by recording technologies on the other. For Angolans who remained in the country, both in the cities and in the rural areas, the radio opened up the "meanwhile" of the guerrilla struggle, of the international and continental geo-political scenes.

13 The band Ngola Ritmos is an exception. Formed in the late 1940s by African civil servants, this group was one of the first to play African instruments and music and combine them with European instruments and styles to create something entirely new. Almost all of the band members were also involved in clandestine political organizing. The leader, Liceu Vieira Dias, and the drummer, Amadeu Amorim, were arrested in 1959. Zé Maria dos Santos was jailed in 1960 and Euclides Fontes Pereira "Fontinhas," who worked for the Ministry of Geology, was transferred out of Luanda in that same year. While their music inspired the younger generation, which is the focus of this article, these new groups did not so much imitate their style as continue in the direction they had initiated. Thanks to their example, the younger generation of musicians understood the political risks they faced. The association between Ngola Ritmos and nationalism is eloquently made in António Ole's 1979 film "O Ritmo de Ngola Ritmos" and in Jorge Macedo, Ngola Ritmos, Obreiros Do Nacionalismo Angolano, ed. União de Escritores Angolanos (Luanda, 1989).

14 Chico Coio (February 15, 2002); Luís Martins "Xabanu" (November 21, 2001); and Lamartine.

(where questions about Portugal’s continuing colonialism were debated by the UN and by the OAU), and of the other towns and cities within the country.

While radio and recording technologies allowed for the imagined linkage of different spaces and scales of national significance, Luanda’s music and the music scene held a special significance within this spatio-temporal network. If the “meanwhile” of guerrilla struggle demanded political sovereignty, directly asserted independence in the place of colonial overrule, and propelled a narrative of patriotism based on suffering and sacrifice for the nation, the “meanwhile” of the music scene in Luanda forged cultural and economic sovereignty in the interstices of colonial subjugation while spinning a narrative of citizenship that was urbane, cosmopolitan, and “hot.” The music scene created a space of “otherwise”: it was an alternative space where the participants realized cultural sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency. As Robin Kelley argues in relation to the mid-20th century black working class in the United States:

Black working-class culture was created more for pleasure, not merely to challenge or explain domination. But people thought before they acted, and what they thought shaped, and was shaped by, cultural production and consumption. Besides for a working class whose days consisted of back-breaking wage work, low income, long hours, and pervasive racism, these social sites were more than relatively free spaces in which the grievances and dreams of an exploited class could be openly articulated. They enabled African Americans to take back their bodies for their own pleasure rather than another’s profit.

Culture, Kelley argues, does not always read as a direct political challenge, but this does not mean that it functions merely as an escape valve for the frustrations of the oppressed. While this was the likely hope of the colonial state in promoting

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16 I am using “alternative” in contrast to “oppositional,” following Robin Kelley who borrows the term from Raymond Williams. See Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York, 1996), 47. See also Veit Erlmann on the creation of an alternative space by South African performers, who, he argues, “created alternative worlds and cultural spaces in which blacks could rightfully reflect upon and direct their own destiny, free of white control.” In *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance* (Chicago, 1991), 18. Ch. Didier Gondola also explores this aspect of urban parties in Kinshasa and Brazzaville in the 1950s and 1960s and comes to similar conclusions about the “otherwise” of these spaces and the sovereignty manifested there. See Gondola, “‘Bisengo ya la joie,’” esp. 91 and 99.

17 Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 44.
African cultural activities and recreation, the effects were less accommodating to colonial desires.

Despite the occasional presence and constant fear of PIDE agents or their informers, the clubs were African cultural spaces. In the name and act of entertainment, new relationships and sensibilities emerged between people that gave them a taste of nation. Matemona Sebastião described his band Ritmo Jazz this way:

it was mixed in languages—we spoke all the languages of the provinces. The members were Zé Manuel, from Bembe, Pioca from Mbanza Congo, Mangololo from Malange, Anbrósio Caetano from Luanda, Matemona [referring to himself] from Damba; and Petanga who played five Cuban drums and was from Matela. And since I had learned to speak Umbundu when I was living in the south I could also do translations of that; not to mention Portuguese and French.

Matemona thus defined the band as a group of equals hailing from different parts of the country. Jorge Macedo portrayed clubs and parties in the following manner:

in these get-togethers there were romances, etc. There wasn’t just recreation but also politics in the sense that at parties there was a lot of exchange of affections—and not just romantic but political. The word patricio [compatriot; one from the same land], “my patricio” was used.

Ethnic and regional identifications were thus superceded in musical production and in the clubs. Others talked of the club ambiance as being with “family,” even when the clubs were filled with as many as 300 people. The metaphor of family domesticated the novelty of the growing and changing urban population. In this

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19 Interview with Matemona Sebastião (February 27, 2002).

20 Interview with Jorge Macedo (May 5, 2001).

21 Interviews with Alberto Jaime (Dec. 12, 2001) and Chico Coio.
sense, if music and partying were escapism, or to "forget," they took people away from the solitude of their individual grievances and hardships and delivered them to those at the level of the musseques and to that of Angola more generally.

At the same time, and despite the haloed memories that men and women have of this period, the unity of feeling in the face of colonial oppression was also built on and through the uneven ground of class and, particularly, gender relations. Anne McClintock explains: "nations are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind but are historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed." Angolans produced a sense of nation through music and the music scene, but they did so in gendered terms. As music became semiprofessionalized and mass produced, it became the predominant form of cultural practice. Male musicians were able to cut a public figure as first-among-equals leaders who musicalized and transformed the woes of everyday life, embodied a "hot" cosmopolitan cool, and represented a common urban experience of work and struggle. Thus they symbolized, in gendered terms, the economic self-sufficiency and cultural finesse associated with nation.

If the music scene was an "alternative" space, a kind of "provisional nation" defined by cultural sovereignty and limited economic self-sufficiency, it was also dominated by male producers. Yet women were critical members of the audience insofar as the success of a particular song was measured in dance, and dancing was done by couples. Women could be the mark of male success but their presence in the clubs was also the object of discussion and ambivalence. Female musicians found their ability to participate in the scene beyond performance constrained and therefore they did not emerge as admired public figures and representers of this provisional nation—they were rather figures of ambivalence. Female audience members had more space to maneuver and their attendance at the clubs was part of changing class mores regarding gender. Finally, the growth of radio and recording technologies allowed both women and men to enjoy the music without having to enter the clubs. Women remember the music of this period and

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22 The musician "Xabanu" said that people went out to clubs to "forget" the ups and downs of day-to-day life and the violence of the colonial police who terrorized the musseques. Interview with "Xabanu." Armando Correia de Azevedo described culture in the period as an "escape tube." Interview with Armando Correia de Azevedo (January 25, 2001).

23 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, 1995), 353.

associate it with nation as much as men do. If class more than gender distinguished those willing to take risks and participate politically in the 1950s, gender more than class characterized participation in the club scene.

Late Colonial Reforms and Changes in Everyday Life

What did the shared horizon of late colonial urban life look like? While most scholars have simply dismissed the reforms of the late colonial period as "too little, too late," people’s memories reconstruct a period in which people did better than scrape by and in which they began to imagine new possibilities for themselves. Musicians took advantage of the reforms and they emerged, as a group, at the intersection of changes in education, economy, and culture. In the 1961–1974 period music became a culturally legitimate profession, if not a totally

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25 Aside from formal interviews, I spoke informally with many women about the music of this period and all of them—from the receptionist at the Arquivo Histórico Nacional (National Historical Archives), to the women who work in the music collection of the Radio Nacional de Angola (National Radio Station of Angola), to the president of the Republic’s special advisor, Albina Assis—told me that the music from the late 1960s and early 1970s was authentically Angolan and engaged in the struggle for independence.


28 Benedict Schubert asserts that “members of the majority black population ... said and say that they never got along as well as they did in that period [the 1960s]. It is a profound contradiction of the Angolan war whereby the colonial system, just as it was being attacked, got stronger in such a way that it corrected certain injustices and hardships and it transmitted to many—not just whites and mestiços—the impression that in Angola they were making a step towards progress.” Benedict Schubert, A Guerra e as Igrejas: Angola 1961–1991 (Lucerne, 2000), 82. See also Jeremy Ball, “ ‘The Colossal Lie,’” Ch. 4.

29 Scholars of popular culture and African music, like Karin Barber and Christopher Alan Waterman, have identified such an intermediate class as critical to the emergence of popular urban styles. See Barber, “Popular Arts in Africa,” African Studies Review 30 (3): 14–15, 29–30, and The Generation of Plays (Bloomington, 2000), 2–3; and Waterman, Jùjì: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music (Chicago, 1990), 9, 87.
respectable or economically viable one. Few musicians lived solely off their art, though the possibility of an independent musical livelihood in the future seemed real to them in the early 1970s.

According to Gerald Bender, the government pursued a two-pronged approach of "development and control" to keep Angolans from joining one of the nationalist movements. It did this by giving them a stake in the system and by putting the rural populations beyond the reach of the nationalist guerrillas in forced resettlement projects and increasing the activities of the PIDE in ferreting out political dissidents. As a result one million rurally based Africans were removed from their homes and lands, causing social dislocation and damaging their economic situation.30 This made them more open, in some ways, to alliances with the nationalist forces.31 Relative to the urban populations, Franz-Wilhelm Heimer tells us that the economy experienced real growth in the period and that musseque residents said that exploitation had decreased.32 Manuel Faria, a long-time resident of and club-owner in the Sambizanga musseque said that the "time after '61 was the [period] of greatest benefit we had. In terms of the country because the colono [Portuguese settlers and colonizers] after '61 bet on Angola as part of Portugal.... And we also started moving around more."33

The reforms instituted in September 1961 abolished the indigenato system (thereby making all Angolans Portuguese citizens), forced labor, and illegal land expropriation. Other reforms included an overhaul of the educational system that resulted in a 375 percent increase in enrollment between 1960/61 and 1969/70.34 But while official colonial documents show increased spending in the areas of health, education, and rural social assistance, official decrees were often distant from realities on the ground or had effects other than those intended, particularly in the rural areas.35 Perhaps most significant for the economy in general was the growth of the industrial sector, which occurred largely via the investment of foreign capital in extractive industries (namely mining and oil) and in the establishment of factories geared towards import substitution (textiles, tire tubes, food-

30 Bender, Angola Under the Portuguese, 156–57.

31 Ibid., 194.

32 Heimer, Decolonization Conflict in Angola, 12-13, and 21. Barros also makes this claim ("Alguns Aspectos") though her work is based solely on colonial decrees and is therefore somewhat incompletely researched.

33 Interview with Abelino "Manuel" Faria (March 19, 2002).

34 Elisete Marques da Silva, in Social Change in Angola (Munich, 1973), 209 n. 3.

35 Schubert, A Guerra e as Igrejas, 81.
stuffs, chemical products, petroleum derivatives). Most of these factories were concentrated on the periphery of cities like Luanda, Benguela, and Lobito and provided jobs to people newly arrived to the musseques from rural areas.

While noting the overabundance of unskilled workers in Luanda’s musseques, Monteiro notes that the “free professions” had grown substantially if slowly between 1960 and 1970. These included tailors, auto and motorcycle mechanics, watch repairmen, barbers, and carpenters who had opened up their own shops and sometimes employed one or two people in addition to themselves. Carlos Lamartine remembered that it was from this group of people as well as from the ranks of civil servants that most musicians and club directors hailed. Many of them would have been what Messiant calls the “new assimilados,” whose numbers grew in the postwar period. Together these groups would have constituted a small but growing fraction of the musseques population but they had a powerful effect on the cultural scene thanks to their organizational ambitions and their small disposable incomes. The reforms marginally improved life for people living in the musseques, and more for this emerging middle class than for others. However, through these changes musseques residents developed common desires about how to spend their free time and escape from the poor material conditions that continued to characterize their neighborhoods.

In the mid-1960s some Africans in the musseques, primarily civil servants, opened night clubs and founded recreational clubs and associations. The government promoted the existence of these neighborhood clubs by providing those with a sports component a small monthly ordinance to help with their operating costs. They also sponsored street- and cinema-based music and variety shows that had proven popular with the bulk of the musseques population. This was part of the government’s “counterinsurgency plan” of reforms and associated measures instituted to win over Angolan public opinion.

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36 Barros, “Alguns Aspectos,” 50-60. See also Henrique Guerra, Estrutura Económica e Classes Sociais: os Últimos Anos do Colonialismo Português em Angola (Lisbon, 1979), 127.


38 Interview with Carlos Lamartine (September 4, 2001).

39 Guerra refers to this group as the African semi-bourgeoisie (in contrast to the petit-bourgeoisie who possess some capital and some means of production, the semi-bourgeois have only their salaries and their “culture”) and puts their numbers at around 20,000 in 1970 for the country as a whole, although the majority would have lived in Luanda. Guerra, Angola, 122–23, and 109–112 & 158–59 on the semi-bourgeoisie.
But Angolans used these clubs and venues to meet their own entertainment needs and thereby made them politically meaningful. By taking up the reforms, they participated in colonial society while carving out their own nation. Armando Correia de Azevedo used a political language to describe cultural endeavors: “Portugal started to make some reforms. But one couldn’t talk of independence ... this was prohibited ... and so Angolans also started to be ‘diplomats’: we started to be ‘good’ Portuguese, etc., and exactly so that we could fight for the Angolan cause.” This was particularly true for civil servants who worked in the administration during the day but returned home to the musseques and its rich Angolan culture at night. A uniquely Angolan culture, particularly in music, developed in and circulated through clubs and festivals and via radio and a small recording industry. Government involvement varied from permission, to support, to sponsorship but could not be equated with state control. The meaning and significance of these spaces was defined by those who produced and consumed the music. The musician Santocas described the scene in the following terms: “there was a certain interest, a certain connection and it was in this way that we felt that the national music had a certain following and a certain accreditation because it was national, played by nationals and also put at the disposition of nationals.”

Like the bulk of the musseques population, musicians were, by and large, young, male, and single. With few exceptions, they had day jobs as mechanics, tailors, welders, beer salesmen, factory workers, or as low-level civil servants. Musical gigs allowed them to buy new instruments, guitar strings, nice clothes for performances, and drinks at clubs when they were not playing. By and large, the money musicians earned performing at clubs or at street- and cinema-based music festivals and variety shows was not enough to cover all the costs of daily life, especially for those with a family. But if finances were well managed, these gigs allowed musicians to purchase new clothing and instruments and could even help

40 Interview with Correia de Azevedo (January 25, 2001).
41 Interview with António Sebastiã o Vicente “Santocas,” (November 26, 2001).
43 Interviews with Chico Coio (February 15, 2002); Carlos Lamartine (September 4, 2001); Carlos Alberto Pimentel (October 3, 2001), Benguela; Matemona Sebastiã o (February 27, 2002); and Luí s Martins “Xabanu” (November 21, 2001).
44 Chico Coio said that after many years in a band he had to leave and go solo when he started a family because the band rehearsals took up too much time.
Changes in the economy instituted after 1961 allowed those with jobs, and someone willing to back them up, access to loans. Stores in the center of the city that sold instruments and clothing would let musicians purchase items on lay-away via monthly payments at the bank. Dressing well was especially important for musicians and they followed the latest fashions via magazines and films and transformed them into symbols of Angolan urban identity. Chico Coio remembered that everyone had their own tailor or seamstress and that personally tailored outfits were much preferred to those purchased ready-to-wear. In this way, musicians both emerged from and sustained this burgeoning sub-group of self-employed Africans.

Attending clubs to hear Angolan music was also a means of supporting local entrepreneurs or neighborhood-based clubs. Clubs were either member-based or individually owned. While they had to be registered with the government, they were autonomous. Those that were member-based collected dues. But the parties held at these clubs (which is where bands played) were, for the most part, self-sustaining. Attendees, who need not be members, bought a ticket allowing them access to the party. The band (or bands) were then paid based on ticket sales. Clubs functioned with a very narrow margin of profit. Indeed, Lamartine remembered that clubs lived a precarious financial life, often going into and out of bankruptcy. Despite this delicate financial situation, membership-based clubs were also places where people learned skills like budgeting, marketing, and management. As the former Maxinde club president Alberto Jaime remembered:

we wrote reports—annual reports—praised the work of the managing body, and presented balance sheets. We would have meetings and people

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45 Matemona Sebastião remembered splitting up his band over an argument with their manager, who was not accepting gigs for them outside Luanda. He stopped playing for three months. The other band members begged him to rejoin them and they set out on their own. Matemona opened a bank account for each band member and helped them manage their earnings. He also said that several times he helped other band members pay the rent when they were without work outside the band. Interview with Matemona Sebastião. Lamartine also referred to bands that were managed by non-musicians and that disagreements over management often led to changes in these frontmen.

46 Interviews with Coio, Faria, Lamartine, and “Xabanu.”

would make accusations—"that budget is all lies!"—but that was all part of it, it was a way for people to participate.\(^{48}\)

In a sense, clubs were training grounds for independence where people could learn the skills needed to run their own lives and their own country. Since the majority of musseques residents worked for someone else, the experience of participating in a club or of just spending one’s limited disposable income there to hear a new characteristically Angolan kind of music created a sense of sovereignty.\(^{49}\) Against the arrogance of those who had gone into exile, Jaime defended the work of those who remained in Angola, arguing that "the struggle is fought on various fronts" and that he worked via the clubs to bring people together so there would not be a dispersion of "Angolan patriots" and "progressive Angolan forces" who had grown up with the generation of 1950s politico-cultural groups but had not headed off into exile.\(^{50}\)

Access to clubs was restricted by the price of a ticket and a dress code (which also presumed a certain financial liquidity). But even musseques residents who were not part of the emerging new elite would have been able to attend club performances occasionally if not regularly. In any case, the streets were literally filled with music. Bands played at music and variety shows held in the streets of the various musseques and at the Cine Ngola, a movie theater located on the edge of the most populous musseque at the time, Rangel. Combined with the fact that this music was played increasingly on the radio and that transistor radios were accessibly priced, the music circulated more widely than the somewhat restricted circuit of clubs. Finally, people always gathered outside clubs, as they did outside cinemas, to accompany the festivities from afar and create their own party in the street when they could not afford to enter.\(^{51}\)

Everyday life in the musseques in the late colonial period was changing from what it had been. As Jean-Michel Mabeko Tali notes, those returning to Luanda from years in exile or in the guerrilla struggle did not recognize the city they had left behind in the early 1960s: "in that year of 1974, Luanda was the prosperous capital of a colony in the midst of economic development."\(^{52}\)

\(^{48}\) Interview with Alberto Jaime (December 12, 2001).


\(^{50}\) Interviews with Alberto Jaime (December 4 and 12, 2001).

\(^{51}\) Ibid. And interviews with Armando Correia de Azevedo and Carlos Lamartine.

said, the division between the white city and the black city, the baixa and the musseque still existed, and each area had grown in size. Despite the censure of the PIDE and thanks, in part, to this de facto segregation, Africans in the musseques had been able to establish their own world. African Luandans took advantage of the legislative and social changes to secure their cultural sovereignty and a degree of economic well-being. One could walk down the street in the musseque and see African-owned businesses (like barbershops, tailors, and mechanics) conducted out of people’s homes or adjacent properties. Parents could more easily educate their children and themselves. Employment, though still competitive, was available. Recreational and sports associations flourished in the various musseques, as did clubs that were more strictly for entertainment. Almost everywhere one went in the musseques one could hear the sounds of Angolan music on transistor radios on the street or on the home radios and record players of the emerging middle class. Despite the differences between the new middle class, the old elites and the bulk of recently immigrated musseque residents, they forged an urban culture in which the horizontal signifier “patricio,” or compatriot, superceded the vertical relations of class.

Masculinity and Music

Men, in particular, spoke with great animation about the rivalry between bands, their notoriety and popularity as musicians, and their friendships. Male camaraderie characterized the music scene in the musseques from at least the late 1950s. Carlos Alberto Pimentel remembered rivalries between bands in that period as ultimately unifying and friendship-oriented, productively competitive in the way that team sports are often considered. Pimentel noted:

We created a kind of confrontation. This or that neighborhood would go play in another neighborhood in order to see who played better, or show who played better. And then there was always a group of girls who would accompany us from their neighborhood to ours—and there was terrible [i.e. great] stuff! Sometimes we would get angry and end up in fights. That was terrible! [laughter] But in the end, it was healthy because we made great friends in that period. We ended up coming together at big parties where we would all end up playing music. We even began to see that all of

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53 For other work on masculinities in Africa, see Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, eds., Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa (Portsmouth, 2003). Particularly in relation to music and culture see Gondola, “Popular Music,” where he discusses Congolese music of the 1950s and 1960s as a male culture and Mwenda Ntarangwi, Gender, Identity, and Performance: Understanding Swahili Cultural Realities Through Song (Trenton, 2003), esp. Ch. 6.
us were in favor of creating more happiness and animation in the culture of Luanda.\textsuperscript{54}

Initially, bands were a form of recreation and tended to be formed by groups of male schoolmates or friends from the same musseque. Rivalries between bands produced a sense of music as recreation, or music as sports-like activity.\textsuperscript{55} Indeed, bands are much like teams—a group of people must work together, each refining his/her talent and skill in the context of the whole. Rivalries between bands created an opportunity for young men to learn to interact with youth from other neighborhoods and schools, to defend themselves, and also to see conflict as resolvable.\textsuperscript{56} Female friends and attention were associated with these struggles and were, indeed, a sort of prize or symbol of victory. As Pimentel noted, if they played particularly well a group of girls might follow them home to their neighborhood.

Band nomenclature was informed by rivalries. The musician Carlos Lamartine’s first band, formed with his friends from the neighborhood Marçal where he lived, was called the Kissueias do Ritmo. Lamartine explained:

$kissueia$ is a term of kimbundu expression which more or less means enemies, or bandits, vampires. But in the good sense. In that period the groups, because of their interaction with other groups, had this tendency to use these names that denoted competence. Some could have happier names while others would look for different designations in order to intimidate the others and to say we are stronger.\textsuperscript{57}

Similarly, Pimentel noted that bands often played a song with their name in it in order to fix themselves in the minds of their audiences.

As bands became increasingly oriented to an urban music circuit that included many different neighborhoods and sites of performance, rivalries centered on offering something new to the audience. Bands competed for audience approval whether at a party, a club, or in one of the musical talent shows

\textsuperscript{54} Interview with Carlos Alberto Pimentel.

\textsuperscript{55} For related work on rivalry or competition between bands and musicians see Waterman, \textit{Jùjù}, 22 and Erimann, \textit{African Stars}, 169.

\textsuperscript{56} See Laura Fair on a similar dynamic that moved in the other direction (from dance/\textit{ngoma} to soccer) in Zanzibar. Laura Fair, \textit{Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Zanzibar (1890–1945)} (Athens, 2001), 227, 239, 263.

\textsuperscript{57} Interview with Carlos Lamartine (August 9, 2001).
of the mid-1960s. Matemona Sebastião, the guitarist for a band called Ngoma Jazz who moved to Luanda in 1960, described the rivalry in sports-like terms:

In that period, we played as if there were a dispute. [MM: what do you mean?] A dispute, like as if it were soccer—you go to the field and see who wins. At that time the dispute was about who had come out with a new song. There would be a party with lots of people and we would create something new to surprise the other groups. I remember one time that there was a group that had come down from Cabinda for an appearance at Aguaíela Angolana [Angolan Watercolor—a talent show at one of the big cinemas in the musseques] and we thought—ha, let’s go see who they are! Who’ll play better? They played and everyone applauded—it was Cabinda Ritmo. Now, it was Ngoma Jazz’s turn and I remember that I got up and walked in with my guitar and everyone was all enthusiastic! We had followers just like in soccer.58

At other points in the interview Matemona stressed how important the audience was and that good musicians knew how to read their audience and play to them. Yet Matemona’s description shows how bands directed themselves to one another, composing new material to surprise the other bands as much as the audience. The sports analogy that he used elucidates the male culture of bands, which emphasized an explicit competitive component as fundamental to this new musical form of artistic expression. But the sports analogy was also a way for him to say we were important, we mattered, because athletics was a realm already associated with notoriety and popularity. The 1950s witnessed a proliferation of soccer clubs in the musseques and at least two of the multinationals with factories in the city sponsored soccer teams.59 In fact, some of the earliest clubs were based on soccer teams. Even before 1961, Angolan athletes received scholarships to study and play in Portugal60 and Angolan athletes were lauded both in the metropole and in Angola, thus enjoying a visibility unusual for Africans in colonial society.

58 Interview with Matumona Sebastião (February 27, 2002).
59 The two companies were Cuca, the Belgian-owned beer company and Textang, a textile factory.
60 Interestingly, two Angolans who benefited from such scholarships were Rui Mingas and Barcelo de Carvalho (“Bonga”) who distinguished themselves as musicians as well as athletes once in Portugal.
The sports analogy is interesting because it was one that musicians them-
selves used and, in fact, many musicians were also soccer players. As soccer
became increasingly popular in the musseques, it was increasingly available as a
symbolic resource used to give meaning to other activities like music. Unlike the
war for independence going on at the same time, these were disputes that
produced a greater sense of connection between the competitors. However, it
would be all too easy to forget that the phenomena of rivalry and dispute
resonated with another local cultural practice—carnaval. Every year, in
accordance with the church calendar, carnaval groups would perform in the streets
of the musseques and in the avenues of the baixa (the white neighborhood).
Rivalries between different groups fueled song compositions and dance
choreography as much as did the parody of royal and bureaucratic power. Song
lyrics often ridiculed other groups and the dynamics of insult and riposte might be
drawn out over several carnaval seasons. In his discussion of carnaval and
soccer groups in the 1980s, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho notes that song repertoires
developed over many years and that carnaval groups included both men and
women, young and old, though dance sections were often sub-divided by gender
and/or by age. Many women participated and, in fact, many male cultural
producers (i.e., not just musicians but emcees or club owners as well) remembered attending carnaval practice with their mothers, aunts, or
grandmothers. Carnaval was banned from 1961 to 1968 and the local press and
those interviewed depicted the post-1968 carnivals as consistently falling short of
their former glory. Carnaval had given way to the urban music scene that was
more youth-centered and had greater range throughout Angola, thanks to the
spread of radio and the fact that bands traveled to perform in other cities. But the
role of women as cultural producers was eclipsed in this process as music moved
out of backyards and carnaval groups to become professionalized and centered on
clubs. Youth and gender, more than neighborhood, now shaped the content of the
rivalry.

61 Phyllis Martin mentions soccer player, musician, and politician Emmanuel Dadet and
soccer player cum musician Paul Kamba. Martin, Leisure and Society, 119 and 143–45.
62 I thank Hans Nesseth for helping me think about this and offering me the term “we”-ness.
63 See Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, Ana a Manda: Os Filhos Da Rede (Lisbon, 1989), Ch. 10
64 Alberto Jaime (December 12, 2001).
65 For example, Armando Correia de Azevedo, Alberto Jaime, and “Santocas” all
remembered that their parents or grandparents participated in carnaval. Azevedo and Jaime both
participated or attended with their parents.
If playing in bands taught young men something about social interactions between neighborhoods, their peers, and between young men and women, learning to play (i.e., musical education) was an intergenerational male experience. Pimentel, for example, remembered frequentlying the Club Atlético de Luanda where he would sit by the table where the members of the band Ngola Ritmos were seated in order to listen to them play and learn what he could. All of the musicians interviewed recounted similar experiences of learning how to play, compose, and sing at the feet of their elders (or mais velhos). Luanda’s Music Academy, which offered a program in classical music, admitted few Africans. African civil servant Guilhermo Assis had a music school in the city neighborhood of Ingombotas that some musicians frequented. By far the most common way to learn was to watch others play and beg a try from an “elder” when he took a rest. Furthermore, informal musical apprenticeships with older musicians marked the generational transmission of particular styles.

Male friendships within and across generations were central to musical study and production. Saturday afternoons in the musseques were generally spent with family and neighbors at late-afternoon lunches in the backyard. A circle of “the elders” in conversation, some with instruments in hand, would form and an impromptu jam session would begin. At such family gatherings, it would not have been unusual for women to sing or even play an instrument. Given the gender division of labor, however, it is not surprising that musician Rui Mingas remembers his grandmother participating by singing and playing dikanzu (a narrow wood instrument scraped with a stick), but not his sisters (although one of his sisters later became a singer). The hungu player Kituxi learned by watching

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66 Fair talks about how soccer marked the life cycles of men in the interwar period in Zanzibar and I would argue that music functioned in a similar way in Luanda. See Fair, Pastimes and Politics, 228.

67 The musician Carlitos Vieira Dias remembers learning how to read music there as a boy and Matemona attended the school as a young man in the 1960s in order to refine his guitar playing. Interviews with Sebastião and Carlitos Vieira Dias (March 18, 2002). Jorge Macedo, a musician and ethnomusicologist, credits Assis with transferring Angolan rhythms to the guitar as early as the 1950s. Interview with Jorge Macedo (May 11, 2001).

68 “Xanbanu” learned to play and compose with Catarino Barber; Pimentel remembers seeking out Manec Faria; and the guitarist “Duia,” who is credited with having studied and taken up Congolese guitar styles, particularly the emphasis on the solo, trained Marito.

69 Interview with Rui Mingas (January 13, 2002). These politics of music, space, and gender are glimpsed in António Ole’s film “O Ritmo de Ngola Ritmos,” in a scene where the band has a reunion at a Saturday afternoon lunch, or funjada. All the male musicians form a circle and begin playing. Women are seated in chairs against the garden walls outside of the inner circle. José
a cousin of his. He would go to his house in Rangel with a jug of wine in hand to coax his cousin to teach him.

The music scene moved from being neighborhood-based in the late 1950s and early '60s to being club- and festival-based by the late 1960s. The number of bands grew and many musicians—though not yet professionals in the sense that they could earn a living playing music—concentrated increasingly on improving their technique, rehearsing for hours and playing regularly at clubs and festivals. Musicians garnered notoriety and respect and made a decent amount of money, at least enough to cover expenses of the trade—instrument maintenance, clothing, shoes and nightly food and drink. When I asked the composer Xabanu what the scene in the clubs was like, he said "It was very hot! The scene was really hot because if you didn't go to the clubs you were a nobody, you weren't known." For young Angolan men and women, the clubs were the place to be. They became the measure of urban entertainment. Club owners often pointed out that people came from other provinces to visit Luanda clubs and that by the early 1970s Portuguese tourists and residents began to frequent the musseque-based clubs as well. Being seen at these clubs was important and particularly so for musicians.

MM—If you were to go to Maxinde [one of the most popular clubs] on a Friday night, would there be a lot people you knew?

Xabanu—No, no. There would be a lot of people I didn't know. But the majority of people were known—or what I mean is that we were known to everyone but we couldn't possibly know everyone because we were the poerentes maximos [those who created the most dust, the famous ones], you know? When we would hang out in an area chatting, people would gather around us to look and see what we were doing, and try to be friendly with us. The only thing is that in that period no one asked for autographs because they didn't know to!
Many musicians contrasted the respect and attention they received back in the 1960s with the ignominy and poverty they experience today. Chico Coio remembered that when a particularly renowned artist would enter a club, people would stand up and clap before he had even begun playing. Audiences demonstrated their respect for artists by showing up on time to see the bands and artists perform. Coio echoed Xabanu’s sense that music made you somebody:

Everyone sang. Many of our leaders who are out there played guitar and, in those days, were musicians. What I mean is that there was an expression like they had in Brazil at that time—to be someone you have to play soccer or you have to sing—in order to be known, in order to be on top. So many of our leaders, I am not going to cite names, also dedicated themselves to music. Even people with medical degrees left medicine to go into music because music gave you more: it gave you fame and it gave you money. So therefore people abandoned other arts and in that period everyone was a musician. Today no, now everyone wants to be a politician, a deputy in parliament, and I don’t know what else. Why? Because music has no expression.

Coio mentions that music was the predominant area of artistic expression. Though he has a critical view of people wanting to do what will make them famous and earn money (being a musician in the 1960s and a politician in the 1990s), his comments also point to the lack of space for African politicians in the colonial system and the fact that music represented a respectable form of male labor. The music scene was therefore a unique realm in which Africans could create a public profile among the urban population. Bands and individual artists had fans who would follow them from club to club, event to event. Musicians managed to express common experiences of life in the musseques and to make people dance. For this, they gained the respect and often adoration of their listeners. Unlike sports stars (Diniz, Rui Mingas, Barceló de Carvalho or Bonga Kuenda) who moved to Portugal to play on the metropolitan teams, musicians continued to live in the same neighborhoods they always had; they continued their day jobs and endured the shocks of the colonial system just like everyone else. If the clubs produced a kind of “provisional nation,” popular musicians functioned as metaphorical representatives and representers of that nation, as first among equals.

Although musicians generally lived in conditions similar to those of their fans, being known as a musician had other perks. Whereas the attention of groups of girls had been the prize in neighborhood band rivalries, girlfriends were a mark

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74 Interview with Coio.
of popularity on the club scene. Girlfriend, in this context, meant something more than just a fan or friend but something less than a committed relationship, a love interest perhaps. Male musicians would invite their girlfriends to the clubs for their performances. By inviting many girlfriends on the same night, musicians could demonstrate their popularity, often at the expense of the young women’s emotions—a situation that caused some consternation for families concerned about their daughters’ well being and their reputations.

On a single night an individual [artist] might have 4, 5, 6, 10 girlfriends attending the show and he wouldn’t know with which one he was going to leave! And if I brought 10 girlfriends to the center, Artur Adriano would bring so many others, and the band members would bring along so many more, and the Kiezos for example was a band with at least 8 –10 members, and each of them invited 2 or 3 girlfriends to the club, so you can imagine what the place was like. They would enter the club as the girlfriends of the band but this didn’t mean that this didn’t drag in behind them a pile of men who were interested in them. Naturally, there were some altercations, some battles between the diverse attendees of the club. If this, on the one hand, created a certain insecurity for some families, you know, respected ones that went to the centers but didn’t want their daughters involved in such conflicts, on the other hand, it gave us a certain pleasure to see lots of women crying because in the end they discover that their boyfriend has a bunch of girlfriends!

Lamartine notes that such situations worried the parents of young women who were keen to protect their daughters’ honor. Clubs were potentially dangerous places for young women’s reputations. They might be duped by some young musician or rub shoulders with prostitutes, especially since clubs in Marçal and Bairro Operário were near zones notorious for prostitution, and prostitutes who earned a decent living could easily buy a ticket and enter the club. A clear double standard regarding male and female sexuality existed such that young men could frequent the clubs without parental concern and they could even patronize prostitutes (which could be seen as part of becoming a man) as long as they eventually found the right girl and married. That the stakes were quite different for young men and young women is underscored by Lamartine’s comments that seeing young women upset and lost in the game of love was entertaining for the musicians.

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75 Interview with Lamartine.

76 I do not want to create the impression that these young men were overly cruel or insensitive. It is important to remember that, for the most part, club attendees and the musicians
Women in the clubs helped define masculinity. The symbolic capital of female attention was bolstered by the fact that men outnumbered women in the urban shantytowns. Song lyrics often centered on women—either in praise or condemnation—and figured men as victims of heartbreak or of scheming women. The musician Chico Coio offered one compelling interpretation:

Our music from that other time spoke more about day to day relations—love songs, popular songs, songs for or against women. The music used to be like it was in Brazil or in other parts and here it wasn’t so different—some in favor of women, but mostly it was speaking badly about women ... songs that criticized women, that women are this or that... The world only talks, it doesn’t provide. Even today they talk about women, talk about men, talk about people. As my father said: “when someone is spoken about, he is spoken about because he did something good, or because he possesses some good.” No one talks about someone who is in the garbage, right? Lots of people today talk about women—that they are like this or like that because they are good; who doesn’t like women? It is because of this that they are talked about.... Because they are valuable.  

Women matter. According to Coio, women are the subject of so much discussion and reflection in song and conversation because they are important to men and because they are socially valuable, particularly when they are few in number. Thus while women were not the main producers of music, they were nevertheless productive of it.

Band-organized, club-based music was male-dominated and generated a novel, urban masculinity. Young men learned to play instruments from “the elders,” male musicians, and relatives, honed their skills in all male generally neighborhood-based bands, and used women to demonstrate their success, parade their sexuality, and quantify their notoriety. Songs about women included both social critique, aimed at defining women’s behavior in particular ways, and themselves were quite young (late teens and early twenties) and love/romance was largely still an experimental and game-like affair.

77 Chico Coio (February 15, 2002).

78 Gondola says of the Congolese music scene in the 1950s that “Although women were not composing or performing, all musical creation, diffusion, and performance revolved around them. Woman was a powerful source of inspiration for the musicians.” Gondola, “Popular Music, Urban Society,” 72.
romantic praise that idealized women and showed the power they had to break men's hearts and make them vulnerable.79

"Good Girls"

I had difficulty finding women who attended clubs as audience members that I could interview. Hence, the picture offered here is based on the recollections of men, of female musicians, of women who chose not to attend the clubs, and on speculation. If male behavior and participation in the music scene was, in part, characterized and transformed by dueling bands, female behavior and participation was supposed to follow social norms that constructed them as "good girls." Insofar as male musicians had sisters and female cousins who attended shows, or were looking for nubile young women, they too sought to maintain patriarchal norms of female behavior (conservative dress, going out in groups, dating only with parental permission and the intention to marry). Dishonoring a young woman (i.e., taking her virginity) was not only socially reprehensible, it carried legal consequences, as a young woman's lack of virginity could constitute grounds for canceling an engagement.80 While female musicians distanced themselves from the scene beyond the stage, young female audience members were also critical to the scene. Although we do not hear their own voices on the matter, we can get at some of their actions and perhaps thoughts indirectly. As Lamartine's comments indicate, some young women did not find it entertaining that they had been betrayed publicly and that their boyfriends had shown them a lack of respect. But clubs also offered a novel form of entertainment and a degree of independence from the kind of family oversight that would have reigned at parties in the homes of friends and family. For young women proactive in their sexuality, clubs were spaces where they could maneuver more freely. Finally, women who engaged in prostitution also likely looked to clubs as places where they could establish a social profile and connections in

79 Urbano de Castro's "Semba Lekalo" is a critique of young women who drink too much, while África Show's "As meninas de hoje" ("The Girls of Today") has our narrator stalling a young woman's advances as he tells her that he does not want to get involved without talking to her parents first, lest he make problems for himself. The implication is that "girls today" are bolder about their sexuality than they used to be, but that the proper thing to do is consult her parents whether she wants that or not. (Angola '70s: 1972-1973 (Paris, 1999), Compact disc liner notes pp. 19, 23, 24) Elias Dia Kimuezo's "Diala Monzo" recounts a tale of infidelity, of "one woman" (the narrator's wife) who had "two men," "one inside, one outside" the house. Urbano's "Rosa Maria" and Artur Adriano "Belita" both sing of the love of one's life and the devastation experienced when lost.

80 Interviews with Carlos Lamartine, Carlos Pimentel, and Luís Martins "Xabanu."
urban African society. The clubs where music was played embodied contradictions for women—they required women's presence to make them viable and yet they were also potentially dangerous spaces for women. Consequently, female presence in clubs was the subject of class, generational, and gender contestation.

The double standard was most exaggerated for artists. If male artists could flaunt their popularity by having many girlfriends (i.e., their sexualization followed their fame), female artists had to struggle against the image of the female singer as prostitute (they were always already over-sexualized). Lamartine explains:

our parents ... thought that the artistic life was the lumpen life, the life of a bandit, one without a future, and for this reason, singers were not considered to be responsible, not even for marriage. And therefore the girl who sang, or hung out with bands, or participated in theater could be taken as someone lacking judgment, a prostitute, or just irresponsible—these were the most pejorative terms used to characterize people that participated.

Despite the fact that most of these young people would have known (or at least known of) female cultural producers who performed publicly (in carnaval and in the politico-cultural groups of the 1950s), women who performed in clubs had to struggle with the notion that they were morally sullied. Male musicians, on the other hand, were seen as merely irresponsible. Luanda in 1960 was a predominantly young and male city in which women had fewer economic

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81 Interview with Luis Martins "Xabanu." The lyrics to the África Show song "As meninas de hoje" are one indication of this. Jose Luandino Vieira's book No$so Musseque (Luanda, 2003), presents a female character, Toneta, who makes and breaks sexual unions as she pleases, and Jacques dos Santos's book, ABC do Bé Ó (Luanda, 1999) includes both the fictional depiction of young prostitutes and stories of some of Bairro Operário's famed madams.

82 Interview with Lamartine.

83 This may have had to do, in part, with the fact that several Portuguese-owned clubs in the city had dancing girls who did strip tease or cabaret shows. Pimentel told me this and then noted "at our parties the girls just sang and danced." The musseques, particularly Bairro Operário and Marçal which were also the site of numerous clubs, were known for prostitution. See Dos Santos, ABC, esp. 243–46, and Monteiro, A Família, 393–98. When the main site of musical production and consumption in the musseques moved from backyard parties to more public clubs this then caused some tension for women. Interview with Pimentel.
opportunities. Since no one could live solely off music, male artists all had other jobs. In general, musicians were civil servants or practicing mechanics, painters, tailors, and so on—part of the emerging middle class—and they could therefore more readily combat their depiction as irresponsible. For male musicians, music was recreation. As it became increasingly professionalized in the late 1960s and more lucrative with the growth of a recording industry in the early 1970s, music became a respectable male occupation. For female musicians, on the other hand, who had less access to education and to employment, and whose reputations were more dependent on their family name and their behavior, music had a more ambivalent meaning.

Dina Santos and Lourdes Van Dunem, two of the best-known female vocalists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, both emphasized that they were not interested in the club scene beyond the opportunity it offered them to perform. They did not, for the most part, hang around the clubs before or after performances. Van Dunem was born in 1935 and perhaps the crowd was a bit young for her, but this was not the case for Santos. Most of the other artists and those attending the clubs were her age and some were her friends. Her husband was the lead singer of the band Os Kiezos (The Brooms), a band that was a staple of the club scene. Yet for Santos, the clubs held little charm: "I have a failure, a defect—I don't drink, I don't smoke and the artists that don't know me don't believe it." Santos associated the stereotype of the artist dependent on drink or drugs for inspiration with the clubs. For her clubs were not a place where she was going to learn anything new about music, meet her friends, or improve her social

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85 Santos noted that her family was not pleased when she planned to marry a musician but that they eventually acquiesced. While this seems to contradict my argument, I think it is a result of the very complex and agitated social scene of mid-20th century Luanda where the old-line mestiço aristocracy was displaced from the power center as they lost their jobs and their neighborhoods to Portuguese immigrants and where a new generation of African families was able to establish itself. Santos's parents lived in the musseque Marçal but she grew up in her godparents' home in the baixa of the city and her godmother's sister was the highly regarded singer, Belita Palma. Her ex-husband (who is a half-brother of Lamartine) came from a family of civil servants and his father was one of the founders of the Liga Nacional Africana (or National African League). Nonetheless, his father also had many wives and Santos's family may have feared that, as Angolans like to say, "The son of a fish is a fish." On the other hand, his family was well established and musicians were achieving a degree of respect for themselves, as Coio's comments suggest.

86 Interview with Ricardina "Dina" Carvalho Santos (April 6, 2001).
profile. If male musicians could, in part, measure their success in numbers of girlfriends and in their social attractiveness as participants in club audiences, female musicians had to distance themselves from the interactions of the club party scene and focus their attentions on their stage performance.

The song "Semba Kassequel" by Dina Santos demonstrates some of the tensions women experienced in the urban environment as well as some earlier characteristics of the Luanda music scene. In the song she sings about how the young women in the musseque Kassequel want to put a curse on her. Here we see the territorialism of urban neighborhoods that was also present in the rivalry of different bands. The lyrics do not tell us why the young women want to put a curse on the song’s narrator but given what we know about the context we could guess that it has something to do with men or, if it is autobiographical, with Santos’s success as a singer.

Mana, yalongwe o divwa dyami Sister, just look at my disgrace
Ilumba ya Kassequel The girls from Kassequel
Andala ngo kungilowa Want to put a curse on me

Kizuwa kina ngasengwele ka kassequel That day when I went to Kassequel
Mana Rosita wamugikola aiué Sister Rosita called to me

Aiué mama úé (repeat) ‘i-way’ mama ‘way’
O ilumba ya kassequel The girls from Kassequel
Andala ngo kungilowa Want to put a curse on me

Aiué mama úé (repeat) ‘iway’ mama ‘way’
O ilumba ya kassequel The girls from Kassequel
Andala ngo kungilowa Want to put a curse on me
Andala ngo kungijiba They want to kill me

The lyrics focus on the narrator’s disgrace, her worry and shame. From the lyrics we can see that both women and men policed female behavior and engaged in their own kinds of rivalries. The instrumentation, fast paced and edgy, makes the narrator’s grief danceable. By transforming this scene into a danceable music, Santos transforms her private “disgrace” into her public success. However, the very public nature of musical performance opens her to the charge of moral turpitude. Because female singers were literally in the limelight and because they

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87 This song was translated from Kimbundu to Portuguese by Marie Francisca Jacinta of Radio National de Angola in Luanda, 15–17 April 2002. I am grateful to her for her help.
were limited in number, their activities were much more open to public censure and public comment. Furthermore, both Santos and Lourdes Van Dunem mentioned that they were not like some of the other women performers out there, thus advancing the stereotype of the dissolute female singer while distancing themselves from it. Conscious of the stereotype, these female performers guarded their own behavior while policing that of other women (who always remained nameless).

Tia Lourdes,88 as she is affectionately known, told a journalist that her parents defended her choice of a musical career against the censure of her neighbors.89 She also proclaimed to the same journalist, “I am the personification of contradiction,” a phrase he used as the title of his interview with her and which succinctly sums up the difficult position in which female musicians found themselves. In order to defend her good name, her father’s cousin (Liceu Vieira Dias, one of the founders of the early band Ngola Ritmos) had to pick her up before and drop her off after their rehearsals.90 Like Santos, Tia Lourdes emphasized that she did not drink or smoke and would much rather go to bed early in order to preserve her youthful looks (a concern tied to her sense of what it means to be a woman and to her role as female performer) than stay out all night in the clubs. While Santos and Van Dunem privatize as individual taste their decisions to not participate in nightlife beyond performance, these seemingly personal predilections are nonetheless strategically chosen positions in a field of limited and fraught options for female performers.91 Their lack of desire to maneuver in the proxy nation of the club scene belies its gendered bases.

Yet the club scene was not completely off-limits to young women, even if it was an ambivalent space. If, as Lamartine mentioned, clubs generated a certain anxiety for their parents, some young women probably attended clubs as an escape from parental control. Lamartine consolidated his relationship with the

88 “Tia” means aunt and is used here in the honorific sense of being the elder female of Angolan music.


90 The Van Dunem family is one of the best known and largest of the old Luanda aristocracy. Many family members still exercise economic, political, and cultural power in present-day Angolan society.

91 My husband recalls his mother and her friends referring to Tia Lourdes as a gaitêira or a woman who speaks her mind freely and does what she wants. The term however has a negative charge to it. A woman with a public presence is open to comments on her behavior in a way men are not.
woman who would later be his wife at Club Maxinde and she was from a “good” family. Young women could attend events with siblings, girlfriends, and cousins or might attend a particular dance with their boyfriends. After all, one of the signs of audience approval was dancing, so women were a required presence in the clubs. Therefore clubs struggled to control prostitution in their environs and to promote a “family” atmosphere. Young couples would attend club parties in groups so that they could dance with each others’ girlfriends and boyfriends without worry. An unaccompanied male might end up in fisticuffs were he too audacious in inviting other young men’s dates to dance, so it was generally recommended that men bring their own dates. As three different interviewees noted when I stupidly asked them if there were women at the clubs: if there was music then there was dancing and if there was dancing then there had to be women!

Women were likewise involved at the organizational level in the clubs. Maxinde’s long-time president, Alberto Jaime, recounted that the club had female members and therefore women involved in the administration as well. Olga Baltazar participated in Maxinde’s party commission, whose members had the responsibility for organizing dances, hiring bands, doing publicity, organizing dress competitions (dresses made from local magazines), and children’s matinees. Jaime self-consciously promoted the club as a family environment. To that end, the distribution of activities followed gendered lines. For example, Jaime’s wife, Cipriana Jaime, was the person in charge of the kitchen and cooking while other female members were involved in decorating the club for parties. Events themselves often found the directors seated at tables with their wives and other adult family members. Yet not everyone agreed that the clubs provided a family environment. Albina Assis and Efigênia Mangueira, who had been involved in the earlier politico-cultural groups in the 1950s, mentioned that they had attended the clubs one time or another but that they were married and the clubs did not hold much interest for them. They also suggested that the cultural scene in the clubs was not of the same political tenor as the politico-cultural groups they had been involved in and was therefore not as appealing to them. Neither one condemned the clubs but they both demonstrated a certain reserve in discussing them and Assis mentioned that clubs were for her “bohemian” brother (he was a famous musician) and his ilk. While Jaime defended the clubs as spaces where the

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92 Interview with Alberto Jaime (Dec. 12, 2001).
93 Ibid.
94 Albina Assis (January 17, 2002) and Efigênia Barroso Mangueira Van Dunem (February 2, 2002).
new nation was constituted by the family of Angolan men and women, Assis and Mangueira looked back to the earlier politico-cultural groups as associations that offered a more authentic nationalism, greater cultural integrity, and legitimate female activity.

As these contrasting opinions show, clubs were a site of struggle in this period of social upheaval and battles over changing class lines played themselves out in gendered terms. The old-line Luanda families had been economically and socially marginalized by increased white migration to the capital beginning in the 1920s. Many had been forced to move from their homes in urban neighborhoods to the musseques. Their hold on precious social and cultural capital was further eroded by the changes put in place by the colonial government after 1961 because a larger group of people then had access to education and jobs in the civil service. Some middle-class families that were not of the old guard had garnered a name in the urban social scene for being families who educated their children and exhibited respectable behavior. As the club scene became the centerpiece of urban entertainment, it further challenged the older generation's cultural hegemony. Clubs were open to anyone who could pay for the entrance ticket, and for certain dances and parties women even got in free while men had to pay the entrance fee. Lamartine remembers that the tickets cost 100–200 escudos in the late 1960s, a price he said would have been accessible to civil servants, those engaged in the liberal professions (mechanics, painters, tailors), and students whose parents had some means. Others described the price as modest without giving exact figures. Unlike the earlier neighborhood-based "contribution parties," where each person would bring something, bands played for free, and everyone just made do with what was there, the clubs depended on ticket sales to pay the bands and other costs associated with the parties. The more tickets sold, the better the take for everyone.

Thanks to Portuguese soldier clients, prostitutes could sometimes afford to dress well and buy a ticket to enter a party at Maxinde. Prostitutes could thus try to negotiate a better position in the urban African social milieu. Simultaneously, the stigma of prostitution haunted female performers, as indicated above. Some female performers, who hailed primarily from the urban elite, therefore used the

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95 Christine Messiant analyzes the social changes in Luandan society in this period in her dissertation, "L'Angola Colonial, Histoire et Société, Les Prémisses du Mouvement Nationaliste" (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1983). She notes the development of a novo assimilado (new assimilated) class who, for the most part, grew up in the interior, were schooled at Protestant missions, spoke local languages, and who (aside from being educated and Christian) had experiences quite unlike those of the urban assimilados.
label of “prostitute” to dismiss other women involved in the cultural scene whom they felt did not maintain their own notions of classed womanhood. Meanwhile, a dress code and guidelines about behavior—not getting drunk and treating the others at the club respectfully—were meant to set a standard for club attendance that cut across moral and social divisions of class. As my interviewees reminded me, someone with a history of poor behavior would not be allowed to enter no matter what their social class or position. In this way, clubs produced Anderson’s sense of “horizontal comradeship” by replacing older criteria of family and origin with a set of rules about conduct and dress, which while still exclusionary were nonetheless more attainable by a broader slice of urban society.

Conclusion

I have argued that once inside the club, gendered relations and hierarchies troubled any easy sense of “horizontal comradeship” that cut across class lines. But if clubs intimated the nation, then what kind of a nation was it? Well, it was musseque-based, urban, youth oriented, “hot,” urbane, and gendered. On the one hand, the gendered interactions and processes played out in the clubs give us some clues about the fissures and fragments of the nation, its potential future fault lines. (They also suggest why the stakes were different for male and female musicians in commemorating the link between music and nation on that morning in November 2001). On the other hand, these fragments also constituted a productive tension that helped to create the nation. It took both men and women, as I was reminded, to create a meaningful audience, to sing and dance to these new Angolan intonations.

While guerrillas struggled against colonial power in the forests in the name of political independence, urban-based audiences and performers manifested a cultural sovereignty that moved them into nation and towards nationalism. They created adjacent temporalities and alternative spaces that if not beyond the gaze of the state, have been largely outside the ken of scholars. In the spatial and temporal realm of urban culture, Angolan men and women created the social and cultural stuff of nation. This cultural and social world was distinct from that of the guerrilla struggle.

The urban cultural world of musseque residents informed their political involvement in independent Angola in particular ways. Urban residents created a cultural sovereignty for themselves that shaped their political conviction that independence should be popularly based and self-run. The spontaneous neighborhood

96 Interviews with Olga Baltazar and Carlos Lamartine (Sept. 4, 2001).
committees and political cells that appeared in late 1974 sprang from this urban milieu. The MPLA tried to harness this energy as *poder popular* (people’s power). But despite its roots in an earlier urban Luanda, the MPLA no longer understood urban political culture. This misunderstanding and the political differences it produced exploded in the attempted coup against the government in 1977. One musician from the period mused that it was certainly no mistake that three of the most popular musicians from the period were killed by the MPLA in the crackdown on coup dissidents.

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97 See Tali, *Dissidências e Poder de Estado*, II.
98 Interview with Alberto Teta Lando (May 15, 1998).