



The peace processes in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola still face challenges

Alexandre Briozo Gomes Filho / 29 de agosto de 2024 / In English

Political sciences | A comparative study explored the roots of conflicts and the successes and failures of democracy implementation in the three African countries

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*Illustration: Mitti Mendonça

Throughout History, countries across the African continent have been immersed in conflicts caused by territorial and political disputes or by ethnic and religious reasons. The origin of these conflicts lies in the division of Africa by European countries in the late 19th century during the Berlin conference, marking the beginning of neocolonialism on the continent. Among the consequences of these conflicts are the weakening of territorial infrastructure, the expansion of economic and political crisis, the increase in poverty among the population, and the high number of refugees and displaced people, in addition to thousands of deaths. Attempts at promoting peace between the entities causing these conflicts are common in the geopolitical landscape of Africa. In this context, a [doctoral dissertation from the Graduate Program in Political Science at UFRGS](#) conducted a comparative analysis of the conflicts and peace processes in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola.

"A basis for comparison was to select countries that experienced periods of instability both before and after independence, with their main milestones being civil wars," says the author of the study, Mozambican political scientist Cremildo Coutinho. Another important element that determined the comparison of these three political units is the fact that these instabilities were, in some way, influenced by the Cold War. The researcher's objective was to study how the pacification process occurred in these countries: whether through violence, war, or negotiations. His hypothesis was that the aspects that contribute to the success of these peace processes are power-sharing and strengthening of institutions. The peace agreement of Angola was signed in 1991, of Mozambique in 1992, and of the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1999.

Challenges, successes, and failures

Cremildo secured a doctoral scholarship at UFRGS with the intention of writing about conflicts and peace processes, initially focusing only on the case of Mozambique. But then, his supervisor, Professor Eduardo Svartman from the Graduate Program in Political Science, suggested a comparative study. With a background in Anthropology and a master's degree in Political Sciences, Cremildo chose to deepen his knowledge acquired in his previous studies, such as the studies about ethnic cleavages and rivalries in these three countries.

The methodology used by the researcher was essentially a qualitative approach (which concerns the level of reality that cannot be quantified, working with the universe of meanings, motivations, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes). Within this approach, the political scientist chose to investigate similar cases to, based on the variables present in them, understand the existing similarities among the three countries, the reasons behind these similarities, the differences in the researched variables, and what lies behind those presumable differences. "All of this is to analyze which elements contribute to these conflicts, how these conflicts are managed, and what is the effectiveness of this specific modality of managing a respective conflict," says the researcher.

The initial period of the study coincided with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, leading the researcher to use interviews with political leaders conducted by various media outlets (such as Reuters, Al Jazeera, National Radio of Angola, BBC and Mozambique Television) and digital platforms such as Youtube and Facebook as the main sources. Additionally, he also relied on information from newspapers circulating in the respective countries and the peace agreements signed by the three political units.

In conclusion, Cremildo observed that the peace processes in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola were not a failure, but they were also not a complete success, considering that there are still challenges to overcome. Regarding the institutional arrangements of the provisional governments, which served as the basis for this new beginning in these countries, the introduction of multi-party systems and the need for democratization were noted, allowing for the regular occurrence of elections – a reality that did not exist in these places. However, these electoral processes are still marked by disagreements before, during, and after the elections, due to allegations of fraud.

Despite the existence of well-crafted constitutions and elections held every five years, the lack of compliance with legislation is still recurring in some cases. As for the multi-party systems, there is the occurrence of turning a political opponent into an enemy, which happens in all three analyzed countries. In Mozambique's case, the disarmament of extremist groups is a problem that has not been completed, even 30 years after the peace agreement.

"In these countries, there is both a need for consolidation and strengthening of institutions and the fortification and consolidation of power-sharing because where there is no sharing of power, one cannot speak of an effective peace process"

— Cremildo Coutinho

Possible achievements

Regarding the contribution of his research to African studies, Cremildo hopes that it serves as a basis for the study of conflict situations, such as occurs in Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia, for example. "There is a vast subject about Africa that has not yet been perfectly investigated," he notes. In this regard, he emphasizes that achievements such as the UFRGS African Week are special for the consolidation and perception of the reality of the continent. "This ends up opening a deeper view and understanding of African reality, and not just an apparent knowledge that has been connoted," he concludes.

Translated into English by **Enzo Sezar de Assis**, undergraduate student enrolled in the course "Supervised Translation Training II (English)" of the Undergraduate Program in Language and Literature, under the supervision and translation revision of Professor Elizamari R. Becker (P.h.D.) – IL/UFRGS.

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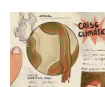
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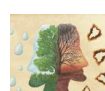
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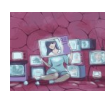
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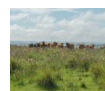
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