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Kalandula and the CACS Voice or Accountability

Aslak Orre

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Kalandula and the CACS - voice or accountability?

This paper aims to present some of the findings from the first field work in the CMI-CEIC-ADRA research project on the Councils of Community Consultation and Cooperation (*Conselhos de Auscultação e Concertação Social* in Portuguese, abbreviated as CACS in singular and as CACSeS in plural). The research took place during two weeks in Kalandula *município*, Malanje province, in November 2008.¹ The findings and thoughts in this document are preliminary results only, and are meant to stimulate debate in workshops and ongoing research for comparative experiences in other provinces.

Before presenting the data from Kalandula, some brief sections on the legal, political and institutional context is presented. In addition, some theoretical thoughts based on comparative research on the issue of new democratic councils are included, since the idea of a local level “consultative council” is not an Angolan invention. Hence, the document may also serve as a basis for further discussions in Angola about CACSeS and local governance.

In January 2007, the Angolan government issued Law-Decree 2/07 which establishes the legal framework for the organisation and functioning of the provincial governments, and the administrations of the *municípios* and the *comunas*.² The present paper focuses on the CACS at the *município* level, the level which according to the government is supposed to be the focal point of change during the next few years.

An idiosyncratic version of a participatory institution

The CACSeS in Angola have appeared in a context where the government has sought to increase participation and representation of non-state actors in local governance, at least nominally, and legally through the inclusion of CACSeS in the law-decree 2/07. These actions or – at the very least, policy-statements – can be seen as a means to increase legitimacy for the local governance process through inclusiveness (voice) and transparency (a prerequisite for accountability).

The legal opening for the CACSeS and their *de facto* activation, if and when consistently implemented, provides new potential spaces for political and social change in Angola – in what has been dubbed the “participatory sphere”. In a review of similar experiences from many new and old democracies, researchers Cornwall & Coelho find that these “new democratic spaces” are:

‘intermediate, situated as they are at the interface between the state and society; [...] conduits for negotiation, information and exchange. They may be [...] regarded by the state actors as *their* space into which citizens and their representatives are invited. Yet they may also be seen as spaces conquered by civil society demands for inclusion (Cornwall and Coelho 2007:1).

¹ The team involved with field research for this paper consisted of CMI researchers Aslak Orre and Dr. Odd-Helge Fjeldstad as well as various staff members of ADRA in Kalandula. The team is grateful to Dir. Alves da Rocha (CEIC), whose courteous contact work in the Province of Malanje played a substantial part in making the research trip successful. Many thanks also to Vice-Governor Gaspar Neto for information and support.

² The law regulates the attributions and spheres of operation and functions of its respective administrative tiers, as well as going into some detail regarding its individual constituting offices (such as the provincial governors and the administrators of *municípios* and *comunas*). It also spells out some important aspects regarding the distribution of financial items such as central transfers and fees and taxes collected locally.

Or put simply, in the first case the question appears to be how much inclusion the state is willing to “give” (to citizens and their representatives). In the second case, the question is rather how much previously excluded citizens are able to “take” (how much *voice* and *accountability* can be ensured?). In practice, those will usually be interdependent processes. This “theoretic” exposition of things is a rephrasing of the situation found in Angola today: the government talks of “consultation” and “hearings” (*auscultação*) where NGOs and civil society activists speak of “increased participation and transparency” and sometimes even accountability (*prestação de contas*). Expectations are many and surely not commensurate.

Otherwise is not to be expected in Angola, where the government led by MPLA and President dos Santos has been used to governing without systematic or institutionalised correction: neither from parliament (which is totally controlled by the MPLA party), nor from the local governance system (since all local government officials – at province, *município* and *comuna* levels – are appointed by the President or Minister of Territorial Administration rather than elected). And no forums of systematic dialogue or deliberation have existed between government (local or central) and civil society representatives. The particular authoritarian history of colonialism and subsequent wars did little to create an atmosphere conducive for “community consultation” or for transparency and accountability.

In most other developing countries, the “deepening of democracy” debate, and the ensuing creation of new institutions in the participatory sphere, has taken place in a context where established electoral institutions and the legal guarantee of certain rights have proved disappointing or otherwise insufficient – a crisis of democracy, so to say. The new “participatory sphere” then caught the interest of civil society activists and academics as ways to improve governance and impact positively on the lives of the majority of (poor) citizens by “deepening democracy” itself. The typical cases often referred to are from the poverty-stricken areas of Latin-America or India (Gaventa 2007:xii). What distinguishes the current process of institutional creation in local governance in Angola is that the recent reforms have taken place in a local governance setting where no previous structures of even nominal electoral institutions exist, and where local government leaders have hardly ever had the political, legal or personal motives to be accountable to the local citizens. Rhetorically put: when was the time to get disappointed with (local) elections in Angola?

Is Angola then, trying to “skip a stage” in the typical historical trajectory of local democratization? Or is it applying lessons from other contexts effectively, justifiably bypassing discredited institutions of locally elected leadership? Is the drive to implement the CACS a strategic choice to prepare the ground for future local elections? Or is the current process in Angola a case of putting the cart before the horse while in waiting for the locally elected *autarquia* institutions to be implemented? These questions are still up for debate, as the government has been absolutely silent as to why it chose this particular institutional configuration when reforming local governance with law-decree 02/07.

A series of fundamental questions about democratizing local governance in Angola easily comes to mind when researching on the CACSeS in Angola. For instance, their embryonic character as formal institutions begs the question about their moment of conception. Who wanted the CACSeS to be created as they were, and for which reasons? Was the idea to give local (rural) citizens increased *voice* in local governance through some form of representation on the councils? Or rather, was the idea to go a step further than simply hearing the councillors’ (representatives’) opinions, and to create a mechanism whereby local peoples’ representatives could hold government bureaucrats to account? Or are the addition of the CACS to the law-decree 2/07 merely window dressing – *para o Inglês ver*? Whatever their limitations at conception, is it *realistic* that democratically minded people could “seize the opportunity” provided by the creation of the councils and radically

transform them into veritable tools for ensuring that local governance is exercised more in accordance with ordinary people's needs, wants and interests?

None of these questions will be fully answered in the below exposition of the findings from Kalandula, but are worth keeping in mind for the analysis of its significance as a case study. Many democracy activists in Angola will hesitate to seriously consider these fundamental questions, since it always appears easier to work with and improve on existing structures and "rules of the game" as laid out by the mighty government, rather than challenge the whole edifice. More humdrum questions – such as those about the quality of meetings and procedures, the representativity of members and the relevance of the topics discussed, all dealt with in the text below – will be high on the local CACS-promoters' minds in the near future.

Nevertheless, taking a birds' eye perspective on the process is likely to provide answers and ideas obscured by the day-to-day struggle for improved governance.

Legal framework

Before proceeding to present some of the findings from Kalandula, it is necessary to take a brief look at what the law says about the *município*-level CACS.³

The CACS is presented in the law as a body that is to give "consultative support" (*apoio consultivo*) to the *município* administrator. That the CACS is presented alongside the "technical" and "instrumental" support functions to the executive leaves it precious little autonomy, at least from a law-in-the-book standpoint. It is supposed to support the administration and help it take action in matters of political, economic and social character. The administrator will preside over the council, summon the meetings and set the agenda.

The CACS *should be heard* in three vital moments of local governance: in the development of the *município* development plan, activity plan and in the report on the execution of the activities of the administration. This provides for new levels of would-be accountability.

According to the law, the councils shall be composed of "members" (there is a constant reference to *membros* of the council – clearly giving it a flavour of permanence). In addition to the *município* administrator, the members from the executive's side are:

- a) The assistant *município* administrator
- b) all comuna administrators in that *município*
- c) the sector heads (chefes de repartição), such as agriculture, health and education

Representatives of the following categories of people outside of the administration should also be members of the councils (in the sequence the law mentions them):

- d) Traditional authorities
- e) Private or public business sector
- f) Peasant's associations
- g) Registered churches
- h) NGOs
- i) "Other invited" people.

³ Articles 50 and 54 in the law. See the full legal text on the *município* CACS in annex.

The law makes no mention of how or which mechanisms should decide who is selected or elected as representatives to the councils. Finally, the law states that the councils should meet every three months.

Before venturing on to present details from the Kalandula CACS, it is worth mentioning the status of CACS in the province of Malanje.

The provincial CACS in Malanje

According to the law, a CACS has been established at the provincial level, presided by the Governor of the Malanje province. In addition to the entities stipulated in the law, representatives from the parties with parliamentary representation before the September 2008 elections were invited to the provincial CACS. This meant that the provincial leaders of some of the established parties who fell out of parliament that year also feared they would lose their seat on the provincial CACS.

According to various CACS members, the only item that had been up for discussion was information and review of the provincial government's programme. However, one invitation document to the CACS meeting on the 6th of June 2008 that was made available for the researchers brought out some interesting indicators of the process.

All three points on the agenda was presented as "information" from the government to the council. The first point on the agenda was a review of the activities of the provincial government in the first trimester as compared to its programme. Importantly, the invitation also carried an attachment where the government's achievements had been presented according to sectors. Though not amounting to information easy to scrutinize for members of the council, it surely displayed a commitment to transparency. The two last points on the agenda were "information" on the electoral registration process and the arms collection campaign. The leaders of the opposition parties – members of the council – complained that the council was only convened irregularly, and only when convoked by the Governor (who was, at the time, also the 1st provincial secretary of the MPLA party). Nevertheless, Unita insisted that the council had led to increased accountability and that their opinions were taken into account. The other opposition parties expressed the opposite.

CACS in the *municípios* in Malanje province

It proved difficult to gather certain information about CACSes in the other 14 *municípios* of Malanje with which the Kalandula CACS could be compared, since no publicly available written summary exists about the province's CACS. For our analytical purposes, we are interested in the CACSes which since 2007 have been institutionalized, at least to the extent that they have had two regularly convoked meetings and some resemblance of an established membership. According to many informed sources, apart from Kalandula, only the *município* of Cacuso appears to have held regular CACS meetings. This contrasts to the view of some interviewees in the provincial government that a CACS existed in all the province's *municípios* – which we hold as unlikely unless one counts in CACSes with only a nominal "paper existence".

We were able to establish that in the *município* of Malanje city only one meeting had been held in the CACS, in April 2008. The membership had not yet been fixed, and no minutes were written. Those who were present at the first meeting were, apparently, in addition to many leaders of the administration: A few traditional authorities (*regedores*), a few peasants' associations, church organizations, NGOs, and some political parties.

One of the reasons why the CACS didn't take place before was that Malanje was left without an administrator since August 2007 – when the last one was exonerated – until April 2008, when the new one was established. The subsequent period of *transtornos* [that is, abnormal situation of disturbances] – the elections, the periods of absence of the new administrator, the arrival of the new Governor – was given as the grounds for not holding more meetings.

The Kalandula CACS and its immediate context

Município de Kalandula

The Kalandula *município*⁴ is located to the north-west of the provincial capital of Malanje. Its 7037 km² hosts some ninety thousand inhabitants, an eyebrow-raising figure when comparing it to the pre-war population of 140 000. The small town of Kalandula itself lies at about 85 km from Malanje. Kalandula town is built around the single main-street originating from the colonial time. This main street harbours the newly built *município* administration, the refurbished *palácio* of the administrator, the brand new administration building, the police command, some four trader shops, a gas station and the only hotel. There is no industry in the *município*. Kalandula is known first and foremost for a natural phenomenon: The *Quedas de Kalandula*, the cataracts which are, ostensibly, second in Africa only to the Victoria Falls.

In 2007 the UNDP financed research and the development of a “profile” of the Kalandula *município*. It was organized by external consultants and printed in glossy colours. In principle the profile should – having taken stock of existing human and natural resources, as well as citizens' and environmental needs – give rise to a *município* development plan. A document entitled a “development plan” was provided for the researchers, but amounts to little more than an activity list without time frames, budgets or attribution of responsibilities.

The *município* is subdivided in 5 *comunas* (Kalandula town, Kota, Kinje, Kateco Kangola, Kuale) and then in *regedorias*. Each of the *comunas*, except for the town, is headed by a *comuna* administrator. The *regedorias*, each of which can consist of tens or hundreds of villages, are (in practice, but without legal reference) headed by *regedores*, who answer to a *regedor comunal* (meaning, the head regedor of the *comuna*, the *comuna* administrator's contact point to the many *regedores* and *sobas*).

The Administration is, not unlike most other *municípios*, painfully in need of qualified staff. The *município* only employs 38 staff members, of which only 4 have the level of *técnico médio* or higher (though this figure excludes some technicians in the Health, Agriculture and Education sectors). It is in light of this that the Administration has invested considerable public resources into setting up improved homes to attract more qualified staff.

In 2008, Kalandula was chosen among the 68 *municípios* in Angola – and among four in Malanje province – to become, for the first time, budgetary units of the state budget. This made it eligible to receive a block grant amounting to the equivalent of USD 5 million from central government funds. To which extent this sum was made available to the local administration (and the *município* inhabitants), will be dealt with below.

Kalandula was among the first few *municípios* that received support from the UNDP as part of its decentralization and municipal development programme. This support dates back to 2004, when the

⁴ When discussing local government structures in Angola it is preferable to use the Portuguese denominations of *municípios* and *comunas*, rather than to attempt translations into English, as the English corollaries ‘municipality’ and ‘commune’ could bring about unwarranted associations with the reader.

município administration started to receive training and administrative infrastructures such as computers, furniture, and buildings. The administrator was invited to study trips with peers to local governments in Cape Verde and Portugal. Several of the staff members at the administration received long and several short term training courses in Luanda. In addition, a young UNDP staff member briefly resided in Kalandula in 2006 and was supposed to back up the *município* development programme. However, the UNDP cadre left the *município* prematurely, and without having made any significant achievements. As a precursor to the CACS, the administration had instituted a *conselho municipal* some years ago, with irregular meetings.

The following information is drawn from direct observations and interviews during the ten days of field work in Kalandula in the beginning of November 2008. Very little written documentation was forwarded. In particular, only one of the minutes of the meetings in the CACS was made available to the team, despite being of particular interest to this study.

By November 2008 there had been three meetings in the Kalandula CACS. The first one took place in April 2008, the second in July, and the last one on the 24th of October. The “membership” of the CACS was changing in composition, with the government representatives providing the most stable element.

It is fair to say, as an overall opener, that the CACS council was only embryonic still in November 2008. None of the citizens we talked to casually had any inkling about the existence of a CACS (much less its complicated wording), or at all that there was such a thing as a council. People who could be expected to be relatively well informed, like coordinators of the peasant associations, had not heard of the CACS. Even a supposed member of the CACS did not recognise having participated in such a council.

The politico-administrative culture

According to various voices, the Kalandula *município* administration was quite “closed” or inaccessible. Despite having been a *município* with special attention from UNDP there is, in short, no sign that the UNDP project did lead to fundamental changes in the governance culture or shift decision-making power or financial resources from the provincial to the *município* level (the investment in the Administration’s infrastructure and know-how appears to have been the principal results). One source blamed this on lack of political will with the provincial authorities. To our research, it is uncertain whether such a resistance emanates from the province, or from further down the apparatus of the local organs of the state.

To provide an explanation for what many identified as “resistance” to change or the durability of old ways of governance, one is tempted to highlight three features of administrative culture and power relations, as these have been limiting factors in other experiments with citizen-state “spaces for change”. According to Cornwall and Coelho (2007:24):

“Our studies show that pervasive inequalities in power and knowledge and embedded political cultures pose considerable challenges for creating inclusive deliberative fora. They suggest that even in cases where there is considerable political will to ensure the viability of these institutions, inequalities of power and knowledge and embedded technocracy affect their democratizing prospects.”

The most defining characteristic of local governance in Kalandula is, as in most places in Angola, the close links between the state administration and the ruling MPLA party. This link was personified in the Administrator, who also serves as the 1st secretary of MPLA in Kalandula *município*. The 2nd secretary of MPLA is the head of the education sector. There are also

connections between the MPLA party and the people at SINFO (state information services), the police, and lastly with the traditional authorities (who, being paid by the state/MPLA, also tend to be associated with state power, more often than not displaying the MPLA banner on a pole outside their huts).

Another feature of the administrative culture is the continuing dominance of the Administrator as a person, perpetuating a culture of big-manism, even though – and this we want to stress – the administrator in Kalandula does not appear to be personally cultivating such an image. With financial decentralization and the arrival of the 5 million dollars to the *município*, then – if anything – the culture of dependence on the Administration intensified, with all resources worth mentioning arrive through the Administrator.⁵ He and a close knit staff creates the investment plan (after consultation with the CACS members) and executes it through contracting; he hires more people than anyone in the *município*; he presides over the CACS; he hosts parties and national celebrations and lives in the newly refurbished *palácio*, a considerable villa for a town the size of Kalandula. In the *palácio* garden one could find four new generators, three large and three small tractors, and four grinding mills – in short, the bulk of the new investments acquired by the *município*. It might be that the machinery was placed there, if only temporarily, for reasons of convenience, expediency and security. Still, it does create a visible manifestation of the origins of the machinery, and this display of “cargo” does little to clarify things for citizens – who from the outset have vague conceptions about the distinction between state property and resources, and those of the “*dirigentes*” (a popular expression denominating the state and party elite).

The third feature worth mentioning is the close link between the administration and the “traditional authorities” – the *regedores* and the *sobas*. When asked about the role of the *sobas* and *regedores*, they always present themselves as a sort of “messengers” between the government and the “communities” (as they express it) as well as “controlling” the communities. They see themselves, confirmed by most others, as simultaneously representatives of the government in the “communities” and representatives of the “communities” before the government. This position as “intermediaries” in Kalandula is certainly not unique in Angola or in other African countries – it is a most interesting feature of rural socio-political organization. As local authorities, they appear to be still exercising real power in many fields of village-level life, drawing on customary notions of law and norms as well as the legal order of the state. However, the hundreds of *sobas* and *regedores* in Kalandula are paid by the state, something which draws them ever closer to the administrative apparatus, and puts them in a position of dependency.⁶ Most *sobas* in Kalandula also display the banner of the ruling MPLA-party outside their houses. Consequently, the border between the “traditional authorities” and state and party power is certainly blurred. It also has the effect that it is deeply problematic – at the very least – to simply portray the *sobas* as the representatives of their communities (as frequently done in discussions about the CACSes).

These are features of the politico-administrative culture that the UNDP and its project were in no position to easily change.⁷ This is not to say that there has been no change in Kalandula, or that there has been no result of the UNDP support.

⁵ A possible objection to this brush statement is that many jobs and resources, including the town’s electricity, are provided by the new and large town hotel, ostensibly owned by Mr. Kapunga – a rich businessman and MPLA Member of Parliament.

⁶ The research team observed two sessions of public ceremonies involving many *sobas* as well as the *município* administration: the 11th of November celebrations as well as next day when some 40 *sobas* and *regedores* of the *município sede* converged on the administration to receive their trimonthly “subsidies”. The very subservient behavior of the *sobas* vis-à-vis the administration was unflinching.

⁷ It is worth questioning if the consequences of such an analysis were significantly considered and baked into the UNDP project as it was being conceived and executed.

For all its training efforts and equipment, the readiness of the Kalandula administration to host a CACS is certainly the most significant institutional reform. With the founding of the CACS in early 2008, it was the first time other citizens than members of the government entities or the traditional authorities had been invited to a formal council before the administration. It was also the first time a public investment programme had been announced and put up for discussion to the “public” – insofar as the CACS representatives could be seen as the “public” – before the investments took off. It presented to the CACS members a somewhat detailed budget, one that was available to the *município* in its entirety and up for discussion. This fact alone has certainly sown a seed of increased transparency.

The CACS has its precursor in the Council of the *Município*, dating a few years back and clearly inspired by the influence of the UNDP programme. It was unclear how regular these councils had been held. Rather more regularly it happened that the administrator summoned the council of traditional authorities (mostly the *regedores*).

Composition

The membership composition of the CACS seems to follow the law (2/07) in its stipulations on composition. The membership can be ordered in five categories, as referred to in the law. It appears that the membership is solely composed of people specifically invited by the Administrator, either in personal capacity or as representatives of organizations.

We take the list of participants during the March 1 2008 extraordinary meeting, of which minutes were obtained, as a point of departure.

STATE AND GOVERNMENT: The administration (that is, the government) is represented by the *município* administrator and his assistant administrator; four *comuna* administrators; one member of the *município* administration’s secretariat; local representatives of the national ministries in the person of the *chefe de secção* (sector director) of, respectively, the industry and commerce, agriculture, education, health and the urban housing sectors; the head of the civil defence organization (ODC); the security services (SINFO) and lastly the Police Commander.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES: In the category of “traditional authority”, the four *comuna regedores* were invited to the first meeting, as well as the *município* regedor.

NGOS AND CHURCHES: In the non-governmental – or “civil society” – category, only ADRA (*Associação para o Desenvolvimento Rural e Ambiente*) is represented as an NGO – the only one operating in Kalandula. There are four churches that each has a member in the CACS: The Catholic Church, the Adventist Church of the 7th Day, the African Methodist Church, and the *Bom Deus* Church.

PRIVATE SECTOR: There are no business associations or trade unions in town, but the peasant’s associations are answered for by the UNACA-representative: the UNACA is a governmental organization set up to help peasants’ cooperatives. It was very hard to get consistent information about the representative of the towns’ traders: the *comerciantes*. Two women were pointed out by the administration as members to represent the traders. One of them could hardly recall having been at a meeting at the Administration at all. The other one said she had been told that although she was invited she had been “exchanged” for another person, who turned out to be Monteiro Kapunga – owner of the Kalandula hotel, one of the very rich men in Malanje and as from September 2008, parliamentary member for the MPLA.

Summed up, the distribution of the 25 members (present) during the first meeting was:

- 12 state representatives
- 6 traditional authorities
- 3 NGO and church representatives
- 4 representatives of the “private sector”

What changed in the later meetings? The attendance was increased to around 40, according to the Administration’s claims⁸, with the bulk of the increase explained by the invitation of more *regedores* (traditional authorities). The Administration informed that in the later meetings, the membership had been expanded to include *all* the eighteen *regedores*, so as to ‘avoid trouble’. The *regedores* are usually assisted by a “secretary” who is, as is always mentioned, helping out the *regedores* who are more often than not illiterate. All in all, the same source now counted ‘almost 45’ members of the CACS. He also went on to provide an explanation for not inviting more representatives of the several dozens of associations in the *município*. ‘We have to find a solution to the transport problem so that they can come to the meetings’.⁹

The four political parties who are present in Kalandula with a local chapter with an office each were offered an invitation by the Administrator: The MPLA, Unita, PRS and PRD. The provincial leaderships of the latter two parties were unaware of, and doubted, the participation of any of their party members in the CACS. It seems, however, that at least once the Unita 1st secretary of Kalandula took part in a meeting. The Unita cadres we interviewed were unaware of the event, and doubted that their leader might have gone to such a meeting without their knowledge. According to one Administration member in the CACS, the PRS or the PRD had no real presence in the town (they only appeared shortly before the elections it was said) and so only a Unita member turned up at one meeting. When the local Unita chapter was asked about the CACS, no awareness of the CACS was acknowledged or any invitation to the same. It is reasonable to say that the various political parties have an uneasy relationship in Kalandula. Given that the GURN-government has been terminated, some expressed doubts that the representatives of the political parties would be invited to the forthcoming meetings.

What about the private sector? Some of the ‘entrepreneurs’ who had operated in the town were invited to the first few meetings. These had, however, ceased their membership as they no longer had any contracts in Kalandula. This questions the wisdom of inviting non-residing people as *members* to the council, something which also counts for the very rich hotel-owner.

One admitted problem was the weak attendance of women. In the 1st of March meeting, the only woman member was invited as a representative of the traders in town (“private sector”). At later meetings, a representative of the Women’s Forum of Kalandula (*Fórum da Mulher*) appears to have taken part. It should be mentioned in that respect that several interviewees confirmed that the Women’s Forum had a somewhat paralysed existence for the time being, but that it was very close to the Administration and the Party organization. This is not surprising as the 1st Secretary of the Forum was the wife of the Administrator (and 1st Secretary of the MPLA) and the 2nd Secretary of the Forum was the wife of the 2nd Secretary of the MPLA. One staff member of the Administration explained the low percentage of women in the CACS as a consequence of the low number of women staff in the Administration – something that was beyond the local Administration’s control. Nevertheless, many women had active and leading roles in the agricultural associations which could be potential vocal members.

⁸ Recall, no written records or minutes were available for the posterior meetings.

⁹ Here it should be kept in mind that some of the *comunas* and villages are located more than an hour’s drive away with a good car.

Agendas

The three meetings had different agendas. In brief, the first meeting was to “take stock of the government’s activities”. The second was to define priorities on how to use the USD 5 million allotted to the *município*.

We were given access to the minutes from the first meeting of the Kalandula CACS, on March 1, 2008 – oddly presented as an “extraordinary” meeting. The minutes are worth quoting in some length, as they give an insight into the work of the council and the internal power relations.

The minutes refer that the original agenda had the following points:

- 1) Recommendations from the previous meeting (probably referring to the CACS’ precursor, the *município* council);
- 2) presentation of the budget proposal for 2008;
- 3) presentation of the 2008 budget for the hospital of the *município*;
- 4) information about the education sector, a seminar in Luanda, the up-coming visit of the Minister of Public Works, a provincial meeting on the water sector investments, and
- 5) the National Police’s anniversary.

The minutes then refer that the agenda was set aside by the Administrator. Instead he proposed only two points: 1) Information about the council’s composition in light of the decree 2/07; and 2) Contract on the *município* programme between the [now in bold letters, AO] the Administrator of the *Município* and the Minister of Finance.

On the first point, the minutes refer that the Administrator gave a “dissertation” (exposition) on what the law says about the council composition.¹⁰

Under the second point on the agenda the Administrator announced that Kalandula had been promised the amount of 5 million USD, and that the money will go to the construction and rehabilitation of social infrastructure and to fight poverty.

The convocation/invitation to the meetings arrived in writing to – at least – some of the members. However, one CACS member remarked that the invitations were never accompanied by an agenda.

Structure

The *município* Administrator is the president of the CACS. Little else information was forwarded about internal organization, but all sources explained that it was the Administrator who had the dominant role, and who directed the meeting procedures.

The CACS in Kalandula has no permanent sub-bodies, like working-groups. This is interesting insofar as such working groups could have been necessary instruments to train its members in scrutinizing the Administration’s actions.

Several people commended the Administrator for ensuring that the members were treated with lunch and refreshments during the sessions.

¹⁰ The minutes say: “No tocante ao ponto um, o Sr. Administrador Municipal fez uma breve dissertação baseada na Seccão I do Capítulo IV do Decreto Lei nº 2/07 concretamente o seu artigo 54 que determina a sua composição.”

Participation

All interviewees confirm that it is the CACS president (the Administrator) who speaks most. Thereafter follows the *regedores* who bring out their concerns from their own *comunidades*. However, as one member of the administration put it: “the *regedores* still behave as invited guests”. In the context of Angola, it would still be unrealistic to expect, however, that more than a minority would quickly overcome past traditions of submission and speak up. One key informant told us, ‘most of the members go there to hear rather than opine’, and that ‘civil society is still too timid’.

Nevertheless, the minutes of the March 1 meeting refer that there was held a brain-storming session apparently to hear about the representatives “concerns” (*preocupações*). The ideas brought forward amounted to a “wish-list” for necessary acquisitions: Tractors and other machines, cattle, building materials for social infrastructure, electrical pumps (for irrigation), rehabilitation of specific road stretches, generators for the *comunas* and grind-mills to ease the work-load on women.

This was referred as a profound discussion before the meeting issued some recommendations, three of which were actually phrased as action points for the Administration concerning the new acquisitions, and two as action points for the traditional authorities – which both were actions to promote moral and education in the “communities” (*as comunidades*).

Indeed, several interviewees from the administration confirmed that the most effervescent meeting was the first one which elaborated on the investment projects.

Meanwhile, when opening interviews about CACS with the *sobas* interviewed, they all immediately started to talk about the tractor-issue (see section below). This could not but leave the impression that the *sobas*’ first thought of the CACS was as a mechanism to release such a precious resource as mechanised traction to till the land. It was rather complicated to conduct a discussion about the CACS from any other angle.

Decision-making

In the “constitutive” meeting of the CACS on March 1 2008, the minutes report that the Administrator highlighted that the CACS is merely a consultative, not a deliberative organ:

Por outro lado clarificou os participantes que o Conselho Municipal é um órgão de consulta e de apoio ao desempenho do Administrador da gestão da coisa pública e não deliberativo, quer dizer não toma decisões respeitantes aos problemas globais do município.

Referring to the law text, the Administrator confirmed this opinion in interviews. However, in the October 24 meeting of the CACS, there was one example where the CACS had made a decision, partly on its own. After the Administrator had announced that the three new tractors acquired by the Administration now “belonged” to the CACS, in the sense of letting the CACS manage the use of the tractors, the CACS provided at least some guidance to their management. The CACS then decided that the tractors would be rented out, with tractor drivers, for the price of 15 000 kwanza per hectare worked. This system had been instituted as from October,¹¹ but was apparently an improvement on a previous tractor rental scheme operated by the public enterprise Mecanagro, which had caused some dissatisfaction.

¹¹ Yet there were already several complaints that the tractors had somehow been “diverted” from public benefit.

The agenda of the meeting that was planned for December 2008 is worth mentioning. The prime item on the agenda would be a discussion and approval of a Code of Conduct (*Código de Postura*) to be implemented – according to the Administrator – almost as a by-law after the CACS has approved it. The Administrator had already drafted a *Código de Postura*, inspired on texts from Cape Verde and Portugal. The proposal text is massive, counting 182 articles over 51 pages. It is mostly a collection of do's and quite a lot more don'ts, and most articles and sub-points are armed with a whole array of possible fees (*taxas*) and fines (*multas*) for infringements. The Administrator explained that these fees and fines will bring some income to the *município* which it can keep for its own benefit, although the most important function of the code of conduct would be its regulatory effects on people's behaviour.¹² He added, though, that even if the CACS is not a deliberative organ, he expected that the CACS would make changes to the text, and reiterated that it would only be validated by the CACS' approval.

Expanding the CACS?

We have argued above that the membership of the CACS in Kalandula is deficient from the point of view of representation and accountability. The model of representation adopted in Angola is quite "corporatist" – that is, representatives come from predetermined "interest groups" or just "groups", like "communities". For now, this corporatist model of representation stands, as long as election based representation is not on the agenda.

In which ways could some of these shortcomings be met within the parameters of the current law?

Firstly, attention to the way the members are selected is vital. A committee of respected members tending to suggest innovative methods of choosing representatives – short of full suffrage elections – could ensure improvements. It could increase the number of constituencies represented, and simultaneously establish some distance between the members and the Administrator (who invites the members). Alternatively, it is also possible to adopt a more complicated model of selecting/electing the CACS members at *município* level from bottom up, in a hierarchical structure starting at or below the *comuna* level. Such models have been tried out elsewhere in Africa (Uganda, Mozambique), with successes as well as failures.

Secondly, a more permanent membership (with time-bound terms) would enhance the members' self-esteem, confidence and knowledge of the government process. Permanent members would also be better equipped to scrutinize the government's actions, even though invited by the Administrator.

One evident group to be included would be the peasant farmers' associations which ADRA have supported through many years. In different, yet in complementary ways from the *sobas*, the associations' coordinators represent the interests of many people in rural life.

Concluding remarks on representativity and accountability

The very government is directing (*dirigir*) the CACSes. Perhaps civil society is too timid yet. But we cannot expect the CACSes to run ahead of developments of the rest of the country! We can't expect the CACSes to be more advanced than the general situation. So if the CACSes are weak, it is the result of other weaknesses. There is an autocratic tendency in governance. But they have to give at least some

¹² The researchers' "lay-eyes" on the legal text instilled us with the perception that it should be reviewed by jurists to ensure its constitutionality. Another side question is if it is desirable to import law texts developed for an urban context in Europe into rural Angola.

semblance of democracy, to create the image that we are a democracy. But bit by bit, these new institutions will tighten around the government's neck, and society will evolve.

Senior civil servant, anonymous

The institution of the CACS brings one major institutional advance which is confirmed by the study in Kalandula: It has the clear *potential* to instil a culture or expectation – that is, institutionalisation – that promotes increased transparency of governance. One consequence could also be more *vertical* accountability in the sense that the Administration has to be open about their plans and answer for their achievements. Even if only in a limited sense, and even if the gulf of knowledge and power between the state representatives and the other members makes real scrutiny of governance a long shot, regular CACS meetings have sown seeds for the transparency and accountability to grow. An extra bonus is that some *horizontal* accountability is introduced by inviting so many staff of the various state organs to the council.

The institutionalization of the CACS, fragile as it is after only a few meetings, could prove to be one mechanism which could “loosen” the politico-administrative cultures, which we argued work as countervailing forces to a change towards transparent and accountable governance.

It is important to note, however, that the above mentioned identification of the potential for increased voice and accountability does *not* automatically mean that the current institutional and legal framework will bring out the full potential envisaged for the discourses on democratic decentralisation and participatory local governance. Hence, this observation should not be taken as a confirmation that the right institutional recipe has been found in Angola, and that it is now a mere question of emending the current practices.

Much is made in state and public discourse in Angola about the issue of participatory governance, which in particular internationally funded development organisations such as the UNDP and the *Fundo de Acção Social* (FAS) feeds into. With the exception of some of the experiences from Brazil and India (Heller 2001), there is not much evidence indicating that the export of the “participatory” models of governance by development agencies into adverse contexts have actually produced much in terms of popular empowerment.¹³

Without being dismissive of the Kalandula reforms, it is worth cautioning that participation is closely linked to questions of representation and accountability. Questions about accountability and representation are indeed complex issues, fraught with dilemmas and ambiguities (Przeworski, Stokes et al. 1999). This is not the place for an in-depth discussion about these complex principles, but some questions would set the stage:

- Who is represented in the supposed participatory institutions? In other words, which constituencies of the citizenry are represented? In common-place parlance, a local government would not be considered “participatory” if only a small minority – like local elites – participated.
- Do the CACS members represent anyone but themselves if they are invited to the council, rather than elected by some constituency (that is, those they purportedly represent)? Are they *accountable* to their supposed constituencies? Do they share information about proceedings and decisions in the council?

¹³ Some very interesting experiences have been done in Mozambique with ambitious reforms and institutional engineering in the area of participatory local governance and local planning and financing – in a local government institutional context quite comparable to that in Angola. However, after almost 15 years of experiences, many achievements have been made, yet serious obstacles to increased popular participation have also become apparent (Hodges and Tibana 2005; Åkesson and Nilsson 2006; Forquilha 2008; Forquilha 2008).

- To which extent do representatives meaningfully participate in governance (that is, having at least some *influence* over the executive) if deliberative powers are ruled out *a priori*, as in Angola.¹⁴

What can be brought out from the case of Kalandula with regard to representation is that representation is heavily dominated by the state agents, that is, the Administration staff, and other units universally associated with the party-state. The dominance becomes even clearer if one considers that the *regedores* who are CACS members are part of the party-state complex. The *regedores* are, after all, in the category of “traditional authorities” closely linked to the state (as paid agents, and more commonly than not appointed by the Administrator). Furthermore, it is highly problematic to simply assume, as many clearly do in Kalandula, that traditional authorities simply represent their “communities”, a much too simplified interpretation of their role in the villages and in-between the rural populations and the local administrations. The very concept of “community” has also been criticised as an abstract reification of population concentrations which are heterogeneous and ridden by internal conflicts. These problems have been amply discussed in other African settings (Buur and Kyed 2005; Kyed and Buur 2007).

Even some of the “civil society”-representatives are probably very close to the party-state apparatus (like in the case of *deputado* Monteiro Kapunga and the Women’s Representative). It is deeply problematic, from a democratization point of view, that there is such a high concentration of elements closely associated with the state and the ruling party present in the CACS.

Briefly put, it is theoretically possible, though in practice usually unlikely, that one party entrenched in the executive can effectively communicate with and represent the interests of all sectors of society. It is after all so that when we speak of representatives in a participatory assembly, then these representatives should represent and present someone’s interests *before* the state – which is paradoxical if they are simultaneously personally part of the state apparatus.

The same dilemma counts for the accountability functions of the council. If nearly all members are very close to the ruling party and the state apparatus, it is unlikely that they will serve as watch-dogs on that state.

With weak representation, and weak accountability functions of the council, it is also difficult to see how the CACS could contribute much – in its own right – to making governance *responsive* to popular interests. This does not amount to an accusation that the Administration is wholly *unresponsive*, as there are other mechanisms – like pragmatic attention to the issue or ideology, for instance – which can ensure responsiveness.

In a short conclusion, and to answer the title question, one could say that the observations of the CACS experiences in Kalandula indicate the following: That the seeds have been sown in the administration as well as in some parts of civil society in Kalandula town for the expectation of some increased inclusion and voice by representatives of the local citizenry. Yet, the institution of the CACS is still embryonic and feeble, and it will take much institutionalisation as yet to transform this expectation into leverage that *de facto* increases the accountability of local government before the local citizenry – if indeed, the CACS institutions in their current form survive political development beyond the next few years.

¹⁴ Actually, the word participation only occurs in Article 3 of the law-decree 2/07, stating that the local organs of the state are ruled by the principles of ‘administrative deconcentration, legality, differentiation, transfer of resources, temporariness, and participation and collegiality’. There is no other reference to how participation – or by whom – participation in governance should take place.

Annex- the legal parameters

CAPITULO IV
Organização em especial
SECÇÃO I
Órgão de apoio consultivo
ARTIGO 54º.

(Conselho Municipal de auscultação e concertação social)

- 1 Conselho Municipal de Auscultação e Concertação Social, tem por objectivo apoiar a Administração Municipal na apreciação e tomada de medidas de natureza política, económica e social no território do respectivo Município.
- 2 Para efeitos de aplicação do disposto no nº.1 deste artigo, o Conselho Municipal de Auscultação e Concertação Social deve ser ouvido antes de aprovação do programa de desenvolvimento Municipal, do plano de actividades e do relatório de execução dos referidos instrumentos.
- 3 O Conselho Municipal de Auscultação e Concertação Social é presidido pelo Administrador Municipal e integra os seguintes membros:
 - a) Administrador Municipal Adjunto;
 - b) Administradores Comuns;
 - c) Chefe de Repartição Municipal;
 - d) Representantes de Autoridades Tradicionais;
 - e) Representantes do Sector Empresarial Público e Privado;
 - f) Representantes das Associações de Camponeses;
 - g) Representantes das Igrejas reconhecidas por lei;
 - h) Representantes das ONG's.
- 4 Sempre que julgue necessário o Administrador Municipal pode convidar outras entidades não contempladas no número anterior.
- 5 Quanto às competências, organização e funcionamento, são aplicáveis as disposições do respectivo regulamento interno.
- 6 O Conselho Municipal de Auscultação e Concertação Social reúne-se ordinariamente de três em três meses e extraordinariamente sempre que o Administrador Municipal o convocar.

Annex - monthly subsidies for traditional authorities in Malanje, Oct 2008

Monthly subsidies	Nr.	Rate AKZ	Sum AKZ	Sum USD
Soba grande (<i>regedor</i>)	250	20 397	5 099 250	67 990
Soba grande assistant	248	13 032	3 231 936	43 092
Soba	1422	18 357	26 103 654	348 049
Soba assistant	1277	10 199	13 024 123	173 655
Sekúlo	1932	16 317	31 524 444	420 326
			78 983 407	1 053 112

AKZ/USD : 75/1

Source: Governo Provincial de Malanje

The number column refers to number of traditional authorities in each category who receives monthly subsidies. The term “subsidy” is consistently used with reference to the payment to the traditional authorities, as if to avoid the term “salary” – which would have implied that there is a fixed employment contract between the state and the traditional authorities.

Glossary and abbreviations

PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH
ADRA	<i>ACÇÃO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO RURAL E AMBIENTE</i> . ACTION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT. ANGOLAN NGO
CACS	<i>CONSELHO DE AUSCULTAÇÃO E CONCERTAÇÃO SOCIAL</i> . COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION.
COMUNA	LOCAL ORGAN OF THE STATE, NEXT BELOW THE MUNICIPIO (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH A LOCALLY ELECTED “COMMUNE” COMMON IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE). HEADED BY AN APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR.
MECANAGRO	STATE COMPANY TO PROMOTE MECHANISATION OF AGRICULTURE
MUNICÍPIO	LOCAL ORGAN OF THE STATE, NEXT BELOW THE PROVINCE (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH A LOCALLY ELECTED “MUNICIPALITY” COMMON IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE). HEADED BY AN APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR.
PALÁCIO	PALACE. THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR IS IN ANGOLA, BY COLONIAL TRADITION, REFERRED TO AS THE <i>PALÁCIO</i> .
PROVINCE	ANGOLA IS DIVIDED INTO 18 PROVINCES, EACH HEADED BY A GOVERNOR WHO IS DIRECTLY APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. THE GOVERNOR PRESIDES OVER A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WITH COMPARATIVELY LITTLE FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL AUTONOMY.
REGEDOR	HEAD SOBA, APPOINTED FROM THE RANKS OF THE SOBAS TO BE THE PRIME CONTACT POINT WITH THE LOCAL STATE ADMINISTRATION.
REGEDORIA	DIVISION OF TERRITORY AND JURISDICTION OF A PARTICULAR REGEDOR.
SOBA	GENERIC TERM REFERRING TO THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY, USUALLY AT VILLAGE LEVEL.

Interviews

Date	Name	Posititon
Oct 29	Rui Roque	Director da ADRA, Antena de Benguela
Oct 30	Domingos Issanzu	Reserach of Social Action, based in Katandula (ADRA)
Oct 30	Lucas Lucamba	Coordandor, projecto Balamuka, ADRA Katandula
Oct 30	Nelo Monteiro	Consultor para o Município de Kalandula, IEPALA
Oct 31	João Joaquim Pedro	Administrador Municipal de Katandula
Nov 3	Pinto Pedro Vunge	Project officer, Intermon Huambo, (previous CDR in Kalandula)
Nov 4	Pedro Dembue	Project coordinator, ADRA Quela
Nov 5	Gaspar Neto	Vice-Governador para a Área Económica, Malanje
Nov 6	Alfredo Dala	Director Prov. de Apoio e Controlo às Adm. Municipais e Comunais, Malanje
Nov 6	Angelina Diogo	Substituto do Delegado Provincial das Finanças, Malanje
Nov 6	Cila Monteiro	Director Provincial de Plano, Malanje
Nov 6	Jenuíno Roque	Coordenador do Programa de Descentralização, ADRA Kalandula
Nov 6	Simão Paulo Domingos	Chefe da Secção das Finanças e Repartição Fiscal, Malanje
Nov 8	Padre Viana	Missão Católica de Kalandula
Nov 9	Regedor João Pascoal	Regedor da Área João Pascoal
Nov 10	João da Cruz	Secretário Área Administrativa, Unita Kalandula
Nov 12	Joana Macudy	Comerciante, Kalandula
Nov 12	Miguel Mangueira	Funcionario da Secretaria da Administração Mun., Kalandula
Nov 13	José Kalandula	Regedor adjunto, Kalandula de Baixo, Kalandula
Nov 13	Tomé Dias de Sousa	Chefe da Secção de Agricultura, Kalandula
Nov 14	Finesa Moyo	Coordenadora do programa HIV/SIDA, ADRA Kalandula
Nov 14	Guilhermina Diva	Coordenadora adjunta do Fórum das Mulheres, Kalandula
Nov 14	Pedro Ngolome	SINFO, Kalandula
Nov 15	André Futavula	Coordenador, Núcleo Representativo das Associações , Kalandula
Nov 15	André Manuel Gaspar	Secretário do Regedor João Pascoal, Kalandula
Nov 16	Benjamin Mendes	Comandante da Polícia, Kalandula
Nov 16	Domingos Kangundo	Soba, Bairro Kazela, Kalandula (group interview)
Nov 16	Dona Laurinda	Comerciante, Kalandula
Nov 17	Ernesto Manuel	Administrador Comunal de Kateco-Kangola
Nov 17	Pedro Brandão	Chefe de Gabinete, Administrador Municipal, Malanje
Nov 18	Filipe Windua	Secretário provincial do PRD, Malanje
Nov 18	Santos Magalhães	Secretário Provincial de Unita, Provincia de Malanje
Nov 19	João Daniel	Secretário provincial do PRS, Malanje

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SUMMARY

This report presents some of the findings from field work carried out in October-November 2008 in Kalandula, Malanje province, on the fresh experiences with the new Concelhos de Auscultação e Concertação Social. It also discusses the findings in light of policy statements and international experiences with similar institutions. The research on the Kalandula CACS is part of a wider research project involving the collaboration between the Centro de Estudos e Investigação Científica (CEIC), ADRA and Chr. Michelsen Institute. The findings and thoughts in this document are preliminary results, and are meant to stimulate debate in workshops and ongoing research for comparative experiences in other provinces. The research design was developed with Nelson Pestana (CEIC) and Idaci Ferreira (ADRA), who will carry out research on the CACS in Uíge and Benguela respectively, based on the same research design. Final report to be released in early 2010.

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