

# Angola's Trajectory and Development Challenges in the 21st Century

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## *Abstract*

This work will seek to analyze the challenges of development in the 21st century from the analysis of the historical trajectory of Angola as a peripheral and African social formation. In this way, it will seek to reflect on the possible alternatives that this country can follow to overcome the various dilemmas imposed by the contradictions of monopoly capitalism and its offspring, imperialism and neocolonialism. In this sense, perspectives for industrialization of peripheral countries in contemporary times must overcome several challenges that are a reflection of the profound contradictions of the functioning of monopoly capitalism, such as: the continuous expansion of the formation of labor reserves in peripheral countries; the need for industrialization and at the same time environmental preservation; the international division of labor through global value chains established by transnational corporations; the crisis of social reproduction and the sexual division of labor; the obstacles to the energy transition and; the agrarian question and food sovereignty. All these contradictions do not act in a watertight and separate way, but articulated and overlapping, which makes overcoming them a complex matter of global dimensions. In view of the above, this article will be structured as follows: the first part will make an exposition on the Angolan historical trajectory in its various phases of integration into the international capitalist system, based on Samir Amin's theoretical perspective on African peripheral social formations; the second, will seek to briefly present the challenges and contradictions listed above that structure the current crisis of monopoly capitalism and finally will seek to present the possible trajectories that Angola may follow in the face of this scenario to overcome or not these contradictions.

*Key words:* Angola; Social formation; Crisis of Monopoly Capitalism; Development Challenges

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## **Introduction**

The issue of development for the peripheral countries of the international capitalist system is a controversial one, which seduces large sections of their populations, constituting a horizon they practically undisputedly long for, but which, at the same time, has swallowed up practically all the projects of political, economic and cultural autonomy that these countries have tried to build historically, in the maelstrom created by the structural tendencies of international capitalism (Furtado, 1974; Arrighi, 1994; Bonente, 2016, Prado, 2020, Barbosa 2021).

From a theoretical-conceptual point of view, for the perspective that aims to overcome capitalism and the consequent international economic and political hierarchization engendered by the expansion of this mode of production, a fundamental question arises: is it possible to use the concept of development strategically for this claim or would it already

be so contaminated, in common sense and social theory, that it would be better to discard it in order to build another concept, free of these ingrained prejudices?

The aim of this article is to indicate that the theme of development can be used strategically to point out ways of overcoming peripheral positions within the international system, mobilizing large sections of the populations of the so-called Third World, as long as they are guided by an understanding of the contradictions in the functioning of contemporary international capitalism (ITPS, 2023).

This paper will try to analyze the challenges of development in the 21st century by looking at Angola's historical trajectory as a peripheral and African social formation. In this way, it will seek to reflect on the possible alternatives that this country can pursue in order to overcome the various dilemmas imposed by the contradictions of monopoly capitalism and its offspring, imperialism and neo-colonialism.

In this sense, the prospects for the industrialization of peripheral countries in contemporary times must overcome various challenges that reflect the profound contradictions in the functioning of monopoly capitalism, such as: the continuous expansion of the formation of labour reserves in peripheral countries; the need for industrialization and environmental preservation at the same time the international division of labour through the global value chains established by transnational companies; the crisis of social reproduction and the sexual division of labour; the obstacles to the energy transition and; the agrarian question and food sovereignty.

All these contradictions do not act in a watertight and separate way, but are articulated and overlapping, which makes overcoming them a complex issue with global dimensions. In light of the above, this article will be structured as follows: the first part will present Angola's historical trajectory in its various phases of integration into the international capitalist system, based on Samir Amin's theoretical perspective on African peripheral social formations; the second part will seek to briefly present the challenges and contradictions listed above, which structure the current crisis of monopoly capitalism and; finally, it will seek to present the possible paths that Angola could take in the face of this scenario in order to overcome these contradictions or not.

## **1. African Social Formations and the Angolan Trajectory**

In order to achieve the objectives of this article, Samir Amin's (1972a, 1972b, 1974) formulations on modes of production and social formations will be mobilized. According to this author, the latter would be historically situated from the simultaneous articulation between different modes of production in which one mode would assume the dominant position for the organization of production and economic distribution while others would act as auxiliary modes to this dominant mode.

The debate on these formulations is extensive and intense (Mafeje, 1981; Heimer, 1983, Vidrovitch, 2018), so it will not be our aim to review them in full. For the purposes of this article, it is sufficient to point out that the hegemonic perspective on this issue for a long time implies the perception of successive stages or phases in the development of modes of production. Thus, starting from primitive communism, one would move on to the slave mode, then the feudal mode and, upon reaching the capitalist mode, one could reach the ultimate communist mode of production.

One stone that stands in the way of this perspective is Marx and Engels' definition of the Asian mode of production, which cannot be fitted into this schematic, evolutionary vision. However, among the various flaws that this perspective presents, the one that is most related to our objective is the inability of this type of evolutionist analysis to understand African social formations in their specificities.

Amin's formulations, on the other hand, indicate that modes of production are abstract categories that are not found in pure form in concrete reality, and therefore cannot be described as if they followed an evolutionary line. Thus, by using the concept of social formation to analyze concrete historical changes, it becomes more able to explain Africa's social, economic and political trajectory.

In Africa, as in any other continent, analysis of concrete territorial extensions delimited by states has its value when articulated with broader perspectives of their regional insertion and which at the same time are capable of verifying internal and external articulations with the global socio-economic context, especially since the constitution of the modern international capitalist system.

The study of Angola in this article aims to follow this effort. According to Heimer (1983), in the 1980s there was a certain dissatisfaction with the analytical quality of Angola and Portuguese-speaking African social formations in general, and this situation only worsened in the following decades of neoliberal domination.

Therefore, the revival of the discussion on the articulation of modes of production and contemporary Angolan social formation can be fundamental to better understanding the transformations that have taken place in the southern region of the African continent and the challenges for contemporary peripheries as a whole.

According to Amin, the concept of mode of production is "abstract and does not imply any order of historical succession for the entire period of the history of civilizations, which extends from the first differentiated formations to capitalism" (Amin, 1974, p. 11).

Next, the author classifies the five modes of production that have existed to date: 1) primitive communal; 2) tributary; 3) slave; 4) simple mercantile; 5) capitalist. Three of these (primitive communal, tributary and capitalist) have historically taken on dominant forms and two (slave and simple mercantile) have been auxiliary to these.

It won't be possible to go into a discussion about the characteristics of each of these modes of production, but it is necessary to point out the historical prominence that Amin gives to the tributary mode of production, which would be the normal offshoot of the communitarian modes. Its main characteristic is the separation of society into two fundamental classes: the peasantry, organized into communities, and the ruling class, which monopolizes the functions of the political organization of society and receives tribute from the rural communities (Amin, 1974).

Related to this main characteristic are four more basic and universal characteristics for the functioning of the tributary mode of production:

- 1) the surplus product is extracted by non-economic means, i.e. by an exploiting class that receives taxes through political and ideological domination;
- 2) the organization of production is based on use value and not exchange value. It corresponds to an economic structure in which transfers, whatever their nature, do not

represent an exchange of goods;

3) it is characterized by the domination of the superstructure. Hence the ideological role of the great religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. in tributary social formations. The domination of these religions aids the extraction of surplus and silences the class struggle;

4) one of the attributes of this mode of production is its appearance of stability and even stagnation, which appears as a consequence of the dominance of use value.

This theoretical-conceptual elaboration aims to "resolve" the controversy over the Asian and feudal modes of production insofar as, in Aminist formulations, they are framed as tributary modes of production. Thus, the Asian would be the materialization of central tributary social formations while the feudal acquired a peripheral and almost unusual position in history. However, the specific functioning of the feudal mode of production provided the necessary conditions for two structural changes to occur simultaneously in Western Europe for the emergence of capitalism: proletarianization and the accumulation of money capital.

At this point, the concept of social formations comes to the fore, since no mode of production has ever existed in a pure state in reality, because "historical societies are 'formulations' which, on the one hand, combine modes of production and, on the other, organize relations between local society and other societies, which are manifested by the existence of long-distance trade" (Amin, 1974, p. 14).

In this way, social formations are "concrete, organized structures characterized by a dominant mode of production and the articulation around it of a complex set of modes of production subject to it" (Amin, 1974, p. 14).

Amin's perspective makes it possible to analyze the specificities of the African reality because the tributary and capitalist modes of production were not implemented in a pure form, i.e. the mechanisms of production and distribution of the surplus did not function historically in a full and exclusive way, requiring the articulation with mechanisms of auxiliary modes of production, a fact that is still verified today.

In addition to this analytical advantage, Aminist formulations make it possible to compare the different articulations of modes of production in the central and peripheral regions of the world economy and their various social, economic and political impacts on the African continent and other continents or regions.

In this way, the establishment of the dominant modes of production had historical periods of articulation with the auxiliary modes and changed with different intensities, establishing different forms of production and distribution of surplus in each era and/or region. Although under capitalist rule there is a tendency towards the continuous and incessant expansion of its mechanisms of social reproduction, this tendency often occurs in a contradictory way and with serious limitations.

In this sense, Amin warns that "while pre-capitalist formations are characterized by a stable coexistence of different, articulated and hierarchical modes, the capitalist mode tends to become exclusive and destroys the others" (Amin, 1974, p. 20).

However, the speed, intensity and extent of this destruction takes place over a long historical period with comings and goings, advances and setbacks that have concrete historical relevance for conjunctural analysis.

This tendency of the capitalist mode of production to exclusivity, when it is based on the deepening of the internal market, also leads to the tendency of this social formation to move closer to the pure model of how Capital works and to the establishment of a growing polarization between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This would lead to a standardization of the functioning of the social formations that would correspond to the central countries. In the meantime, on the other hand, if the capitalist mode of production introduced from abroad, that is to say based on foreign trade, does not tend to become exclusive, but only dominant, this means that the social formations of the periphery do not tend towards this growing polarization. The growing homogeneity of social formations will be opposed to the persistent heterogeneity of peripheral formations, which does not, however, mean juxtaposition. (Amin, 1974, p. 312)

For these reasons, since it is a truncated social structure, one cannot understand the economic systems of the periphery without understanding their relations with the center and with elements of the global social structure.

Samir Amin classifies peripheral social formations by continental regions (African, Eastern and American), indicating that they have not historically transformed in the same way, because they were not integrated simultaneously and did not fulfill the same functions in the development of capitalism at the center.

For the purposes of this paper, we will only look at the formulations proposed by Amin for analyzing peripheral African social formations.

### **1.1. African Peripheral Social Formations**

Even when recognizing the cultural, historical, political and economic diversity of the African continent, it is possible to define, according to Amin, based on the transformations generated in the historical period of colonization, three macro-regions which, from different modes of integration into central capitalism, built different structural characteristics engendering different regimes of work and accumulation as a basis of support. These are: 1) the commercial monopolies of West Africa; 2) the concessionary monopolies of Central Africa and; 3) the monopolies of the settled colonists of Southern Africa.

In all three cases, the colonial system organizes society to produce, in the best possible conditions from the point of view of the metropolis, export products that ensure only a meager remuneration for work, which is then stagnated. Once this objective has been achieved, the traditional societies of contemporary Africa disappear and become dependent peripheral societies. (Amin, 1974, p. 350)

While in the mercantile period, which corresponds to the period of transition from

feudalism to the capitalist mode of production in Western Europe, the American periphery played a decisive role in the accumulation of money capital by the European commercial bourgeoisie, the African periphery played no less important a role, but was reduced to supplying slave labor for the plantations of the American periphery. In this period, therefore, Africa functioned, in Amin's words, as the "periphery of the periphery" (Amin, 1974, p. 338).

It was also during this period that Africa lost its autonomy. In the previous period, the region's historical and geographical conditions had allowed and fostered a more or less autonomous continental development, but with the integration into nascent capitalism, the continent began to be shaped according to the external requirements of mercantilism.

In this sense, the slave trade economy acted as a disintegrator of traditional societies as soon as they were integrated into the world capitalist system, which brought about substantial changes compared to the long-distance trade of the pre-capitalist period. This economy only disappeared with the consolidation of capitalism in its industrial form in the central countries, changing the functions of the system's peripheries. Both America and Africa began to supply products that could reduce the value of constant and variable capital, i.e. they began to supply raw materials and agricultural products to the central countries.

For this new type of exploitation of the peripheries to be advantageous, it would be necessary for capitalism to reach its monopolistic phase. Only then could the capital of the central countries, using modern means, extract what it wanted from the periphery in favorable quantities and conditions.

It is in this context that Africa is shaped by the three macro-regions that marked the continent's trajectory until at least the period after its independence. It can therefore be understood from these points that the constitution of these macro-regions corresponds to the three forms of integration of the continent into industrial capitalism in its monopolistic phase.

In the first macro-region, that of the colonial trade monopolies, located in West Africa, passing through the Sahel region and part of East Africa, there was no knowledge of mineral wealth that would attract foreign capital, which did not encourage colonization by settlement and allowed peasant communities to remain on their land, but their production began to be directed towards the export of goods under the strict control of the commercial houses of the colonial powers.

In the second macro-region, that of the concessionary monopolies in Central Africa, more specifically in the Congo River basin, the sparse population density and lack of strong hierarchies in the existing communities prevented the slave trade economy from functioning to its fullest, opening up space for more direct and violent plundering that culminated in the implementation of large-scale exploitation through the monopolies of large concessionary companies, with the colonial domination of the Belgian Congo being an exemplary case (Delpechin, 1992).

The third macro-region, that of the monopolies of settled colonists aimed at creating labor reserves in the southern part of the continent, began with the establishment of colonization by settlement in order to benefit the mines, plantations and local industries with cheap labor under the direct control of the colonial bourgeoisies.



## 1.2. Angola's trajectory as an African social formation

In view of Amin's classification, we can indicate that Angola falls within the latter macro-region, but not in a pure way, since, throughout its history, it has incorporated characteristics of the other macro-regions at different times and in its various regions. With this in mind, we have delimited some phases in Angola's history, in order to get closer to our research object, in order to verify the different ways in which this territory has been integrated into the regional and global economies.

The phases are as follows: a) pre-colonial; b) colonial until the end of the 19th century; c) from the end of the 19th century until independence in 1975 (with a sub-phase from 1920-1975); d) from 1975 until the end of the war in 2002 (with a sub-phase from 1992-2002); e) from 2002 to the present day (with a sub-phase from 2017).

Each phase corresponds to a structural change in Angolan social formation, both in its internal articulation and in its more global integration. However, these delimitations are discretionary and may contain sub-phases which, with a more careful and in-depth look, could become new phases in the Angolan historical process.

The first phase refers to the longest period and the one in which we have the least quantity and quality of data and information. It corresponds to the period of transition from the communal to the tributary mode and involved the articulation of various kingdoms that would have different functions in the economic, political and cultural dynamics of the region according to some distinct characteristics: nomadic or sedentary; more hierarchical and centralized political formation or more decentralized collectivist; agricultural or pastoral; based on internal or long- distance trade.

A relevant phase of the pre-colonial period refers to the advance of the Bantu peoples from the northwest and center of the continent to the south, which began to structure the various kingdoms and peoples within a common cultural matrix that in the later phase would confront the European colonial onslaught.

The second phase corresponds to the beginning of European colonization at the end of the 15th century until the end of the 19th century, when a slow, continuous and far-reaching change took place with the consolidation of what Amin called the slave trade economy. During this period, the territory in question began to play the role of periphery of the periphery for the almost exclusive supply of slave labor to the Americas.

During this phase, Portuguese colonization underwent variations, but without robustly entering the territory we know today as Angola. In this sense, it established itself preferentially on the coast, using strategies and tactics that alternated between military attacks and diplomatic negotiations with the kingdoms and peoples established in the region in order to extract the slave labour that the capitalist system needed for the functioning of the mercantile period of transition to industrial capitalism.

This Lusitanian strategy allowed, to a large extent, the survival of characteristics of the tributary mode of production and land ownership regimes based on family lineages that still have repercussions today.

The third phase begins with the intensification of colonial and monopolistic imperialist

domination, the key event of which was the Berlin Conference in 1884- 5 and the various treaties that followed it and delimited the borders of what we now call Angola.

At this point, especially from the 1920s onwards, there was, for various reasons, a Portuguese policy aimed at ensuring territorial domination of the interior, causing the dismantling of the societies that had resisted until then in their traditional mode of social organization to incorporate the general features of the third macro-region described by Amin, that of the settler monopolies established to create reserves of labour for mineral exploitation, agriculture and small regional industry. This exploitation was mainly aimed at supplying raw materials and agricultural products to central industrial capitalism.

Another relevant factor of this period is that Angola, at this stage, has, in some areas of its territory, characteristics similar to those of other African macro- regions. Such as the dominance of monopolies over mineral resources, which has similar characteristics to the neighboring macro-region, i.e. concessionary monopolies.

As Menezes points out, "foreign monopoly concessionary capital was present in the Portuguese colonies from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (...). The sector most heavily 'invaded' by foreign capital was undoubtedly mining, through the actions of very technologically and financially advanced companies" (Menezes, 2000, p. 158-159).

In addition, Portugal was never able to establish in Angola, as it may have done in Mozambique, the English model of creating labour reserves through colonization by settlement and therefore also had to launch something similar to the strategy of commercial monopolies to extract the products needed for central capitalism.

This hybrid Portuguese model went into decline with the advance of the various national liberation movements which, combined with changes in the international political and economic situation in the second half of the 20th century, put Portuguese ultra-colonialism in check. This decline reached its definitive stage in 1975 with the conquest of independence by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

Since independence, the country has entered a new phase in which the attempt to implement socialism and the various internal and external constraints it has faced have been the decisive factors in its structuring as a social formation.

From an internal point of view, the survival of traces of the previous phase - such as the dominance of foreign monopolies over the exploitation of mineral reserves, especially in the oil enclave of Cabinda - and the civil war - with its links to the international geopolitical context as well as the country's ethnic bases - were important. From an external point of view, the crisis of the communist bloc, the rise of neoliberal hegemony, the demise of the Third World perspective and the international economic crisis of the 1970s were decisive events in Angola's trajectory.

Combined, these internal and external challenges placed the country in a whirlwind of sudden transformations in the structuring/destructuring/structuring of its forms of social organization, in a short space of time, which had intense repercussions in the following phase that began in 2002 with the end of the civil war and coincided with a new expansive cycle of the international economy.



The establishment of peace and political stability was combined with the so-called commodities boom and the rearticulation of Chinese foreign policy towards the African continent in general and its search for raw materials, energy resources and strategic support in international organizations. Since Angola is an oil-rich country, it became a key player in this new Chinese international strategy.

During this period, the country experienced a notable increase in its economic growth rate, averaging 12% in the period 2002-2010. This was the highest rate in the southern region of the African continent and one of the highest in the world (Rocha, 2011, p. 116).

However, this growth based on the exploration and export of oil ended up orienting the functioning of the economy towards dependence on this resource, thus remaining extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in its price in international trade.

During this period, there was also a kind of renaissance of the Third World, renamed the Global South, which led to a rapprochement between the peripheral regions, culminating in the creation of the BRICS.

However, all these transformations in the international conjuncture do not negate Yeros' (2022) considerations which, as we shall see, shed light on the contradictory nature of this period, which generalized the model of creating semi- proletarianized labour reserves for the continent as a whole.

Angola seems to be part of this dynamic because, without being able to take advantage of the more favorable international geopolitical context of the first two decades of the 21st century, it has not incorporated its young population into salaried jobs, which could lay the foundations for a project that would break through and overcome the long-term barriers posed by the various phases of its historical social construction outlined in general terms in this section.

In 2017, the country entered a new sub-phase with the election of João Lourenço as president, after 37 years in which José Eduardo dos Santos had held the position. With this change in the presidency of the Republic and the restrictions on access to the dollar stimulated by the US government (LUSA, 2018), there was a redirection and a rapprochement with the IMF resulting in the loan granted in 2018. Angola shifted the center of gravity of its historical trajectory to the dictates of neoliberal globalization, complying with practically all the requirements and conditionalities imposed by the IMF in this agreement that disbursed a total of around US\$4.5 billion (FMI, 2022).

The consequences of this new sub-phase will be decisive in ascertaining what alternatives this social formation can pursue in order to face the challenges of development in the 21st century. These challenges are directly connected to the contradictions in the functioning of monopoly capitalism in its imperialist and neo-colonial phase, as we will see in the next part of this work.

## **2. Monopoly capitalism in crisis and its contradictions**

In this section, we will present the general characteristics of the crisis generated by monopoly capitalism and briefly explain the main challenges/contradictions that this crisis imposes on the peripheral countries in order to indicate, in the final considerations, in

general terms, how these present themselves in Angola at the moment and what their possible alternatives are.

Yeros and Jha (2020) counter the perspectives that analyze the current crisis of capitalism only through the prism of the tendential fall in the rate of profit and with an almost exclusive focus on the growing organic composition of capital, these analyses invariably point out that this is a kind of repetition of previous crises of capitalism.

According to Yeros and Jha, on the contrary, we are facing a dramatic outcome of a social system that has dominated and endured for five hundred years. From this perspective, imperialist and neo-colonial actions are fundamental to understanding the permanent crisis of capitalism in its current phase of financial monopolization and the nature of its contradictions.

Unprecedented conditions of systemic rivalry emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, undermining the colonial bases of monopoly profits due to the emergence of the Third World and the establishment of the communist bloc and its centrally planned economic strategies. In addition, the increase in monopolistic competition between the US, Japan and Western Europe further intensified the difficulties for large companies in realizing profits.

In response to this crisis, there has been an escalation of imperialist aggression against the Third World and an effort to implement so-called "neoliberal globalization", with some key elements: 1) the dismantling of the Bretton Woods agreements and the maintenance of the strong dollar; 2) the advance of capital exports between the advanced economies and, in an intense way too, to the peripheries; 3) the rapid technological leaps that turbocharged the organic composition of capital; 4) the acceleration of mergers and acquisitions in all sectors, leading to the establishment of widespread monopolies; 5) the financialization of profits, which explains the persistence of monopoly capitalism but also its imminent collapse; 6) the intensification of primitive accumulation, which occurs most devastatingly in the peripheries and; 7) the escalation of war spending, mainly by the imperialist triad (USA, Japan and Western Europe) (Yeros and Jha, 2020, p. 4-5).

It is within this broader context of crisis that we now present its most prominent contradictions, which, in our view, constitute the challenges for development in the 21st century.

**a) *The expansion of labor reserve formations***

Yeros (2022), with a specific focus on the transformation of the world of work in the neoliberal period, points out, following Marx, that one of the basic contradictions in the development of capitalism is its global tendency to form labor reserves.

This contradiction has materialized contemporaneously through widespread semi-proletarianization, which is a global trend, but which manifests itself in a specific way on the African continent. This semi-proletarianization has become widespread on this continent, generating the convergence of all regions with the structural characteristics of the third macro-region pointed out by Amin, that of the monopolies of settled settlers and the creation of labour reserves.

The semi-proletarianized condition is one in which:

(...) a labor force, for a significant period of time, such as a generation, does not come to depend on wage employment for its social reproduction, despite having lost all or part of its means of production, but maintains or actively seeks a combination of wage employment, autonomous work and simple use values, alongside care work and state social policies. This social condition includes: temporary, periodic or seasonal wage labor relationships; peasant production for own consumption; small-scale production of goods for sale; direct use of natural resources; extraction of minerals and other high-value resources for sale; and a wide range of self-employment activities, both in rural and urban areas, in small businesses and in the provision of services, whether located at home, in rented spaces, outdoors or in transit over long distances (Yeros, 2022, p. 104).

Using data from the International Labor Organization (ILO), Yeros points out that the general trend of the employment situation in Africa over the last 30 years (1991-2020) reveals a substantial increase in the working-age population (more than doubling in the period, from 310 million to 633 million) without the corresponding inclusion of this growing portion in salaried jobs, which has only increased slightly over these 3 decades (from 15% to 16%).

A large proportion of this young population has become "self-employed" (currently 28% of the total workforce) and/or "contributing family workers" (which has fallen from 17% to 11%), classified as "vulnerable" by the ILO. The category that is growing the most across the board is "out of the labor force", from 80 million (35% of the economically active population) in the last decade of the 20th century to 214 million (39% of the economically active population) in 2020.

The negative trends of widespread semi-proletarianization are crucial in the contemporary scenario when we look at the political and economic possibilities for development. The question of how to absorb this growing young population within a national/regional development project is urgent.

#### *b) The need for industrialization and environmental preservation*

One of the alternatives for reversing the trends pointed out in the previous section would be a process of promoting salaried employment through the industrialization of the productive sector. However, the Gordian knots presented to peripheral countries that postulate autonomous industrialization projects are difficult to untangle.

In general, the peripheral states during the neoliberal period lost their tools for mobilizing financial resources for sovereign industrialization initiatives, becoming "hostages" to the resources of multinational companies from the central countries (which, as we shall see, created a global structure for extracting value from the South to the North) or hegemonic international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank and their austerity policies.

The context of neoliberal globalization has also put up barriers and diverted efforts from regional and multilateral integration initiatives that could minimize financial, technological and natural resource dependency, as well as from the consumer market for autonomous industrialization projects.

Strictly national initiatives (with the possible exception of China) have ended up being

isolated or restricted, while attempts to open up to international free trade have reinforced the primary export conditions and social problems of these countries.

All these Gordian knots are becoming more difficult to untie with the imperative need for environmental preservation. In this sense, the existing models that have had some success in terms of industrial development present the countries of the Global South with a gigantic challenge to industrialize while reversing the process of environmental destruction that puts humanity's survival at risk.

c) *The international division of labor and global value chains*

The international division of labour today is marked by the transnationalization of multinational companies and rigid hierarchization controlled through global value or commodity/product chains.

Suwandi, Jonna and Foster (2019) state that during the neoliberal period there was a change in the global structure of industrial production from the North to some regions of the Global South (mainly East Asia) but this did not change the global process of exploitation and transfer of value between these regions.

In this structural change, industrial production (which has become localized in the Global South) and consumption (practically restricted to the populations of the North) are increasingly separated from each other in the world economy.

“Moreover, the added value associated with these commodity chains (...) is disproportionately attributed to economic activities in the richer countries at the center of the system, while most of the work takes place in the poorer countries on the periphery or in the Global South” (Suwandi, Jonna and Foster, 2019, p. 4).

In this way, a new imperialism would be at work which would arbitrage labor globally, and so the value derived from low-wage work in the periphery would be captured globally by this "new" structure set up by the multinationals.

According to these authors, imperialist exploitation is hidden in contemporary international transactions in the realm of exchange where so-called free competition operates, but is revealed when we enter the realm of production where global value chains deepen global inequality through: 1) global capital- labor relations; 2) the profound wage inequalities between the Global North and the Global South; 3) the differentiated rates of exploitation on which global labor arbitrage is based and; 4) the phenomenon, of the capture of value from the South (production) to the North (consumption).

d) *Social reproduction and the sexual division of labor*

Perhaps the most neglected challenge, but no less central to the challenges of development, is certainly related to the crisis of social reproduction and care, which is closely intertwined with the sexual division of labor.

According to Nancy Fraser (2020), the current crisis of capitalism, in its financialized form, places the problem of social reproduction within a globalizing and neoliberal regime that:

(...) promotes the reduction of state and corporate investment in social welfare, while recruiting women into the paid workforce - removing care work from them and placing it on families and communities, while at the same time diminishing their capacity to carry out this work (Fraser, 2020, p. 277).

Centred on debt, or rather the indebtedness of states, especially those in the South, and of families, with an emphasis on those in the North, this regime intensifies the contradiction inherent to capitalism between economic production and social reproduction with a new configuration in which emancipation joins with commodification to undermine social protection, generating a "progressive neoliberalism, which celebrates 'diversity', meritocracy and 'emancipation', while dismantling social protections and expelling social reproduction from itself" (Fraser, 2020, p. 271). 279).

There is a huge care gap in the central countries that has generated another global chain, but now of "care", which has promoted the emigration of racialized women from the Global South to the North and the displacement of this gap to the peripheries, creating a scenario that fits with the "strategies that, marked by a gender bias, are employed by indebted and cash-strapped post-colonial states that are subject to IMF structural adjustment programs" (Fraser, 2020, p.280). These strategies contribute to further squeezing the socio-reproductive capacities of peripheral societies.

e) *The energy transition*

Any development project in the 21st century must be underpinned by a degree of autonomy and energy sovereignty. This imperative logically leads to the question of the possible sources of energy generation in the various regions and countries and their sustainability in the medium and long term (BAD, 2016).

The question of the transition to a low-carbon, environmentally sustainable energy matrix uniquely highlights the injustices of the international economic, social and political structure. The countries of the Global South have contributed the least to environmental depletion and non-renewable energy sources, but they will have the least room for carbon-intensive industrialization. On the other hand, the green transition of initiative and domination by the North could essentially use sources (solar, wind, hydraulic, etc.) from the South, reinforcing the history of imperialist and neo-colonial domination (Becker, 2021; 2023).

Given this scenario, if a just energy transition is not imposed, this movement will end up aggravating the social and environmental problems of peripheral countries (BAD, 2016). In addition, countries that are structurally dependent on oil for their national income will have to make Herculean efforts to overcome this dependence by seeking projects based on new energies.

f) *The agrarian question and food sovereignty*

Finally, the agrarian question, which seemed outdated both theoretically and historically in the last century, has re-emerged as an unavoidable protagonist in terms of the absorption of the workforce; the political and social organization of the peasantry; the question of land and land ownership; and the possibilities for industrialization in a country or region. All these issues converge on a central axis which is the establishment of food sovereignty for their populations (Moyo, Jha and Yeros, 2013).

In these terms, for the peripheral countries of the Global South, the agrarian question still has a strong national liberation content that can contribute if it is worked within a sovereign and popular project of control over natural resources, mobilizing the peasantry and boosting production and consumption, without necessarily falling into the exploitative webs of global product/merchandise chains.

In this sense, combining control over natural resources with industrialization efforts is essential in order to deal with the negative tendencies of widespread semi-proletarianization and the capacity for environmental preservation alongside food sovereignty.

### **Final considerations**

Faced with the challenges described in the previous section, some general lines should be reflected on in the Angolan context, in order to build development alternatives in its current phase.

Agostinho Neto stated in a political slogan that "agriculture would be the base and industry the decisive factor". Used in the post-independence period to mobilize resources and Angolan national ideology for a project of industrialization via import substitution and Soviet-inspired central planning of the economy, this statement no longer has the same meaning and appeal today, but it does sum up the major challenges that the country must face from a development perspective in the 21st century.

The key expression in the Angolan government's official speeches and projects is related to the "diversification of the economy" which, between the lines, reveals the country's need to simultaneously industrialize, increase agricultural production capacity and escape dependence on oil.

Since at least the second half of the 20th century, Angola's trajectory has been marked by dependence on the exploitation of oil and its derivatives and, in this sense, it is confronted with the issue of energy transition in a dramatic and urgent way.

With regard to the model of social reproduction and, consequently, care in Angola, until at least the early 2000s, a community model predominated (without the continuous, frequent and active participation of the state), which was reinforced by the constraints of the civil war and the role of women.

This model is being eroded by the advance of neoliberal globalization and growing urbanization. The state, which has been absent from this responsibility, has not built the tools to reverse this situation and has become increasingly incapable of meeting social demands in this area.

In general, women, especially from the lower classes, have taken on practically the entire burden of social reproduction and care, while at the same time being compelled to earn some income (especially in the informal sector) to guarantee minimum subsistence conditions for their families.

The last sub-phase of Angola's trajectory represented a political and economic turn in the belated attempt to incorporate the country into neoliberal standards of internationalization,



condensed in the agreement signed with the IMF in 2018.

However, the global crisis that intensified shortly afterwards aborted this belated incorporation, with serious social consequences, but it did provide a window of opportunity for the country to try to circumvent the economic webs and power structures hidden in global product/merchandise chains and foster an industrialization that will have to be a construction aimed at taking advantage of the emergence of the Global South in the interstices of the open dispute between the US and China over the dominance of the international social system in decline and, most likely, the need to create a new social system.

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