



Magnificent and Beggar Land: Angola Since the Civil War

By Professor Ricardo Soares de Oliveira



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Magnificent and Beggar Land is a powerful account of fast-changing dynamics in Angola, an important African state that is a key exporter of oil and diamonds and a growing power on the continent. Based on three years of research and extensive first-hand knowledge of Angola, it documents the rise of a major economy and its insertion in the international system since it emerged in 2002 from one of Africa's longest and deadliest civil wars. The government, backed by a strategic alliance with China and working hand in glove with hundreds of thousands of expatriates, many from the former colonial power, Portugal, has pursued an ambitious agenda of state-led national reconstruction. This has resulted in double-digit growth in Sub-Saharan Africa's third largest economy and a state budget in excess of total western aid to the entire continent. Scarred by a history of slave trading, colonial plunder and war, Angolans now aspire to the building of a decent society. How has the regime, led by President Jose Eduardo dos Santos since 1979, dealt with these challenges, and can it deliver on popular expectations? Soares de Oliveira's book charts the remarkable course the country has taken in recent years.



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Editorial Review

Review

'A lucid, clear and remarkably well-informed look at a particularly complex and so often absurd country, served by writing of a rare literary quality. Brilliant!' - Jose Eduardo Agualusa, Angolan novelist 'This is a stunning book, which takes the lid off Angola in a way that I have never seen equalled for any African state - and does it, moreover, for a state which is both extremely important and very little known. It is superbly written, and draws on a detailed familiarity that gives a feel for the place that no amount of simple fact gathering could ever convey. It will be absolutely essential for understanding Angola. At the same time, it paints a convincing picture of the African oil state that will have a resonance well beyond Angola, and should bring it to the attention of anyone concerned with African development, and especially the "African miracle" that has been built largely on the back of temporarily booming commodity prices.' - Christopher Clapham, Professor, Centre of African Studies, University of Cambridge 'Fascinating, provocative, and based on extensive field research, the book is an in-depth contribution to understanding Angola's path after the end of the civil war'. - Manuel Ennes Ferreira, Professor, ISEG, Technical University of Lisbon 'Nothing like this book has existed. Drawing on a large number of interviews and years of closely following the country's politics, Soares de Oliveira provides a hugely informative insight into Angola's extraordinary postwar transformation. He provides a detailed analysis of the emergence of an Angolan oligarchy and its roots in an exercise in postwar parallel state building. And he shows superbly how this state has completely monopolised politics, and has rebuilt its place in the world - and in Angola itself - but has not, at any rate as yet, become a developmental state delivering widespread material benefits.' - Christopher Cramer, Professor of the Political Economy of Development, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London 'Ricardo Soares de Oliveira's profound knowledge of the political economy of petroleum in Angola is once again revealed in his new book on the country's post-2002 trajectory.' - Alves da Rocha, Professor, Catholic University of Angola and Director of CEIC 'This is the best study of Angola in English, and one of the best books in any language on what remains a poorly understood country. It also serves to illustrate some of the deeper complexities underlying the "Africa Rising" narrative that has become so prominent in international business circles.' - Stephen Ellis, Desmond Tutu Professor, Free University, Amsterdam and author of *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990*

About the Author

Ricardo Soares de Oliveira is University Lecturer in Comparative Politics, University of Oxford, fellow of St Peter's College, Oxford, and fellow of the Global Public Policy Institute, Berlin. He is the author of *Oil and Politics in the Gulf of Guinea* and co-editor of *China Returns to Africa* and *The New Protectorates*, all of which are published by Hurst.

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