

Population Politics in the Tropics

Population Politics in the Tropics explores colonial population policies in Angola between 1890 and 1945 from a transimperial perspective. Using a wide array of previously unused sources and multilingual archival research from Angola, Portugal and beyond, Samuël Coghe sheds new light on the history of colonial Angola, showing how population policies were conceived, implemented and contested. He analyses why and how doctors, administrators, missionaries and other colonial actors tried to grasp and quantify demographic change and ‘improve’ the health conditions, reproductive regimes and migration patterns of Angola’s ‘native’ population. Coghe argues that these interventions were inextricably linked to pervasive fears of depopulation and underpopulation, but that their implementation was often hampered by weak state structures, internal conflicts and multiple forms of African agency. Coghe’s fresh analysis of demography, health and migration in colonial Angola challenges common ideas of Portuguese colonial exceptionalism.

SAMUËL COGHE is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Global History at the Freie Universität Berlin.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83786-6 — Population Politics in the Tropics
Samuël Coghe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Global Health Histories

Series editor:

Sanjoy Bhattacharya, *University of York*

Global Health Histories aims to publish outstanding and innovative scholarship on the history of public health, medicine and science worldwide. By studying the many ways in which the impact of ideas of health and well-being on society were measured and described in different global, international, regional, national and local contexts, books in the series reconceptualise the nature of empire, the nation state, extra-state actors and different forms of globalisation. The series showcases new approaches to writing about the connected histories of health and medicine, humanitarianism and global economic and social development.

Population Politics in the Tropics

*Demography, Health and Transimperialism
in Colonial Angola*

Samuël Coghe

Freie Universität Berlin



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83786-6 — Population Politics in the Tropics
Samuël Coghe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108837866
DOI: 10.1017/9781108943307

© Samuël Coghe 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Coghe, Samuël, author.

Title: Population politics in the tropics : demography, health, and transimperialism in colonial Angola / Samuël Coghe, Freie Universität Berlin.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2022. | Series: Global health histories | Originally presented as the author's thesis (doctoral)—European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, 2014. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021039264 | ISBN 9781108837866 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108932103 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108943307 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Angola—Population policy. | Angola—Population—History. | Portugal—Colonies—Angola—History. | Angola—Politics and government—1855-1961. | Public health—Angola—History. | BISAC: MEDICAL / History

Classification: LCC HB3664.4.A3 C64 2022 | DDC 967.3/03—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021039264>

ISBN 978-1-108-83786-6 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For Laura and Nora

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83786-6 — Population Politics in the Tropics
Samuël Coghe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	page	viii
<i>List of Figures</i>		ix
<i>List of Tables</i>		x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>		xi
<i>Note on the Spelling of Proper Names</i>		xiv
Introduction		1
1 Sleeping Sickness, Depopulation Anxieties and the Emergence of Population Politics		28
2 Tropical Medicine and Sleeping Sickness Control Before 1918		65
3 Introducing Social Medicine: Inter-Imperial Learning and the <i>Assistência Médica aos Indígenas</i> in the Interwar Period		109
4 Re-assessing Population Decline: Medical Demography and the Tensions of Statistical Knowledge		146
5 Saving the Children: Infant Mortality and the Politics of Motherhood		178
6 The Problem of Migration: Depopulation Anxieties, Border Politics and the Tensions of Empire		206
Conclusion		244
Epilogue: Demography and Population Politics, 1945–75		250
<i>Bibliography</i>		262
<i>Index</i>		308

Maps

1.1 The hinterland of Luanda around 1900	<i>page</i> 30
1.2 Parts of the Luanda district included in the 1900 census, either by nominative census or estimate	45
3.1 AMI and sleeping sickness sectors in Angola, 1927–8	122
4.1 Administrative divisions of Angola, including major towns, 1929	169
6.1 Levels of ‘native tax’ in Angola, 1942–5	225
6.2 Foreign mission stations encroaching upon the southeastern province of Bié, 1938	229

Figures

1.1 Registered sleeping sickness deaths in Angola, 1895–1910	<i>page</i> 39
1.2 (Hospital vs. total) reported sleeping sickness deaths in Dondo, 1895–1905	42
3.1 <i>Sanzala-enfermaria</i> in N’dalatando, the capital of the AMI Cuanza Zone, ca. 1929	123
3.2 Session of lumbar punctures in N’dalatando, with the (Goan) director of the laboratory, Bruno de Mesquita, and ‘native’ nurses, ca. 1929	128
3.3 Number of preventive atoxyl injections in Angola, 1926–32	132
3.4 ‘Prophylactic session’ in the Cazengo region, ca. 1929	133
4.1 Medical registration of the population in the Quissama Subsector, ca. 1929	154
4.2 Demographic and medical registration card, late 1920s	155
4.3 Evolution of the ‘native’/‘black’ population in Angola, 1846–1939	164
5.1 Infant welfare in Luanda, ca. 1935	190
5.2 ‘Native maternity’ of São Salvador do Congo, with African nurses/midwives, ca. 1934	202
6.1 Labour migration between Angola and São Tomé e Príncipe, 1910–45	211

Tables

1.1 Population numbers in Angolan censuses, 1844–1900	<i>page</i> 44
4.1 Demographic indices in the Cuanza Zone, 1927–30	162

Acknowledgements

This book grew out of my PhD thesis defended at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence in 2014. Over the years, it has greatly benefited from discussions with colleagues at the project's various intellectual homes. I wish to thank first my supervisor Sebastian Conrad, who has given this project his continuous intellectual and moral support, at the EUI and later at the Freie Universität Berlin. The EUI provided a most stimulating scholarly environment in which to embark on a transimperial project on colonial Africa. Formative for this book were also my long stays at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG), where I had the chance to be part of Veronika Lipphardt's vibrant research group. Here I also met Alexandra Widmer, with whom I happened to share a common interest in colonial population politics and whose feedback, encouragement and friendship have accompanied me ever since. The workshops of the research network on Demography and Population (funded by the German Research Foundation) greatly enlarged my vision on population and demography, for which I thank fellow network members Regula Argast, Maria Dörnemann, Ursula Ferdinand, Heinrich Hartmann, Axel Hüntelmann, Teresa Huhle, Morgane Labbé, Jesse Olszynko-Gryn, Petra Overath, Christiane Reinecke, Thomas Robertson, Corinna Unger and, again, Alexandra Widmer. In Berlin, Andreas Eckert and Baz Lecocq have opened the doors to the world of African history for me. Further, the informal reading group on African history provided me with crucial feedback and collegial support during the last periods of revision. Many sincere thanks to Sarah Bellows-Blakely, Marie Huber, Stephanie Lämmert, Dörte Lerp, Christoph Kalter, Marcia Schenck and Daniel Tödt. I would also like to thank my other (former) Berlin colleagues Catherine Davies, Franziska Exeler, Sebastian Gottschalk, Minu Haschemi Yekani, and Christoph Kamissek, as well as Teresa Huhle for reading chapters at various stages of this project.

This book has been supported by pre- and postdoctoral scholarships provided by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EUI and the MPIWG. I am also indebted to the staff of numerous archives and libraries. I want to

xii Acknowledgements

express my special gratitude to all employees at the National Library in Lisbon and the library of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin, the main libraries I consulted for this book and places where I felt very much at home; to Ruth Gbikpi at the EUI and Ellen Garske and Ruth Kessentini at the MPIWG for providing me innumerable books and articles through their fabulous interlibrary loan systems; to Jacques Oberson at the League of Nations Archives in Geneva; to Emily Burgoyne at the Baptist Missionary Society Archives in Oxford and to Fathers Gérard Vieira and Martin Dejonge at the Archives de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit in Chevilly-Larue near Paris. Not the least I want to thank the entire staff of the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino in Lisbon, who endured my insatiable demands for more sources and brought me, over the years, hundreds of boxes and bundles of (often still unsorted) documents. My sincere gratitude also goes to Alexandra Aparício and Seu Mateus for facilitating and guiding my archival research at the Arquivo Nacional de Angola and to Luiz Damas Mora for sharing private letters from his great-uncle with me. Finally, I am also indebted to Márcia Gonçalves and Léo Péria-Peigné who retrieved some additional sources for me in Lisbon and Chevilly-Larue at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic made travelling impossible.

Portions of Chapter 3 appeared in earlier versions in ‘Inter-imperial Learning and African Health Care in Portuguese Angola in the Interwar Period’, *Social History of Medicine* 28.1 (2015), 134–54 and ‘Sleeping Sickness Control and the Transnational Politics of Mass Chemoprophylaxis in Portuguese Colonial Africa’, *Portuguese Studies Review* 25.1 (2017), 57–89. Chapter 4 is a substantially revised and enlarged version of ‘Medical Demography in Interwar Angola. Measuring and Negotiating Health, Reproduction and Difference’, in: Alexandra Widmer and Veronika Lipphardt, (eds.), *Health and Difference. Rendering Human Variation in Colonial Engagements*, New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016, 178–204. It also contains a few reworked paragraphs published earlier in ‘Tensions of Colonial Demography. Depopulation Anxieties and Population Statistics in Interwar Angola’, *Contemporanea. Rivista di Storia dell’800 e del ’900* 18.3 (2015), 472–8. I would like to thank Oxford University Press, Baywolf Press, Berghahn and il Mulino for their kind permission to re-use this material.

During archival stays and conferences in Portugal, Angola and Brazil, I had the chance to discuss parts of this book project with many eminent colleagues working on Portuguese colonial history and the lusophone world, most notably Eric Allina, Warwick Anderson, Cristiana Bastos, Mariana Candido, Cláudia Castelo, José Curto, Rita Garnel, Ana Carolina Vimieiro-Gomes, João Pedro Gomes, Márcia Gonçalves, Philip Havik, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, Alexander Keese, Paulo Teodoro de Matos, Maria da Conceição Neto, Inês Queiroz, Eugénia Rodrigues, Ricardo Roque, Ricardo Boaventura Santos,

Ana Cristina Nogueira da Silva, Jorge Varanda and Jelmer Vos. I am very grateful for their active support and the convivial discussions. I also gratefully recognise the comments received during many other workshops, most notably those in Florence, Berlin, Rostock and London organised by Moritz von Brescius, Daniel Hedinger, Nadin Heé, Christoph Kamissek, Jonas Kreienbaum and Valeska Huber, and not the least the incomparable ‘platform’ workshops staged by Sebastian Conrad in exquisite places in and around Berlin. Finally, I also want to thank Shane Doyle, Sarah Ehlers, Guillaume Lachenal and Myriam Mertens for sharing their thoughts on colonial demography and medicine with me.

During the final stages of this project, I greatly benefited from the generous, detailed and constructive feedback from the anonymous reviewers, which helped me in rethinking and revising the manuscript. I am also indebted to Rachel Blaifeder, Lucy Rhymer, Emily Sharp and Natasha Whelan for skilfully guiding me through the publication process at Cambridge University Press; Maria João Lourenço Pereira for drawing the maps; Natasha Klimenko for taking care of the other maps and pictures; and Jess Farr-Cox for making the index and, together with Margot Wylie at an earlier point, correcting and improving the English of this manuscript. Of course, any errors and imperfections that may remain are mine.

This book would have been much more difficult in the making without the hospitality and conviviality of my friends in Lisbon. To Ana, Bernadette, Emiliana, Inês, João, Márcia, Rui and Teresa, Sofia, Susana and Xico: *muito obrigado!* I am immensely grateful to my family in Belgium and Bremen, and to my closest friends, most notably Carl and Olivier, for their enduring support, love and friendship. Finally, my greatest debt is to Laura Stielike and our daughter Nora, to whom I dedicate this book. From the beginning, Laura has accompanied this project, engaging in countless discussions, reading and commenting on chapters, and enduring my late nights, absences and preoccupations. Her love and support, as well as Nora’s affection and humour, have sustained me through the many vicissitudes of this project.

Note on the Spelling of Proper Names

Geographical names are spelt according to the current official norms in Angola. Orthography has changed at various times in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and is now close to the orthography used in the 1920s and 1930s (e.g. Luanda, Cuanza river, Quiçama). Many places in Angola and neighbouring countries have changed names during and after the colonial period. I have retained the names most commonly used by the Portuguese during the period under study (e.g. São Salvador do Congo, Nova Lisboa, Léopoldville, Northern Rhodesia). At the time, Portuguese names were often interchangeably used with African names (e.g. Nova Lisboa = Huambo). Names of African peoples are spelt according to international Bantu standards (e.g. Kuvale, Kwanyama).