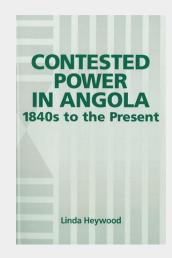
## Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present

A detailed historiographical examination of the role the Ovimbundu people have played in Angolan politics from Portuguese colonization to the present. Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present argues that the Ovimbundu of central Angola have been key players in the history of modern Angola. The work focuses on the tensions between the centralising forces of the state and the pull of local, regional and ethnic tendencies which have characterised the modern history of Angola. The study begins with a chapter which highlights the relationship between relatively weak pre-colonial Ovimbundu statesystems and the autonomous local economic, political and social institutions that functioned in the villages. The chapter also looks at how both state and local systems adapted to the commercial, political and cultural imperatives of industrializing Europe and America. The subsequent chapters explore the emergence and transformation of the Portuguese colonial state in central Angola, including issues of pacification and colonialization, the Estado Novo andthe politics of subjugation. They illustrate the contradictions between the rhetoric of racial democracy of the apologists of the colonial state and the reality of rising ethnic and regional tension. The study concludes withthe evolution of Ovimbundu nationalism during the colonial and post-colonial periods. It argues that the divisions of the Cold War and continuing ethnic and regional divisions frustrated the Ovimbundu leadership in its efforts tomake the state more inclusive. This quest to reshape the state remains a salient feature in the relationship between the Ovimbundu and the state. Linda Heywood is Associate Professor of History, Howard University.



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