

Age of Concrete:  
Housing and the Imagination in Mozambique's Capital,  
c. 1950 to Recent Times

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## Glossary

APIE – Acronym for *Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado*, the government agency that administered all state-owned real estate following the nationalizations of rental buildings in 1976.

*águas* – Roof inclines.

*assimilado* – During most of the colonial era, one of several thousand black Mozambicans legally considered Portuguese citizens. To “assimilate,” an African had to establish that that he or she was sufficiently “civilized,” a standard that included reading and writing Portuguese, eating and dressing as a European was said to eat and dress, and achieving a certain level of income and formal education.

*bairro* – Neighborhood.

*bandla* – Group meeting, discussed in this thesis as the weekly gathering at which, during the colonial era, a traditional leader and his advisors would adjudicate cases brought to their attention during the week.

*cafre* – The Portuguese equivalent of “kaffir,” a racist slur referring to black people, with a meaning that approximates “savage.” In the colonial era, *cafrealização* referred to the supposed “Africanization” of Portuguese who lived in the *subúrbios* or in rural areas, often with African companions.

*caniço* – A type of reed that until recent decades was the most common building material in Maputo’s *subúrbios*. The band of suburban settlements around the city was often collectively called the *caniço*, or the *cidade de caniço* (“city of reeds”), a phrase coined in the early 1960s by the newspaper *A Tribuna*.

*cantina* – A center of social and commercial life in the *subúrbios* that functioned as a general store and bar.

*chibalo* – Forced labor, officially abolished in 1961.

*cidade de cimento* – City of Cement, the predominately European formalized core of Lourenço Marques/Maputo.

*cipaio* – During the colonial era, a “native” policeman.

*colonato* – One of several agricultural schemes in Mozambique during the colonial era, largely made up of Portuguese immigrants.

*colono* – During the colonial era, Mozambican shorthand for the Portuguese in Mozambique, not said with affection.

*cooperante* – Foreign volunteer who came to Mozambique in the years after independence to offer assistance at a time when technical and managerial expertise was in desperately short supply.

*componde* – The basest form of housing found in the *subúrbios*, usually comprised of single-room units arranged in rows, with each unit shared by multiple people. Derived from the English word “compound,” as in the compounds where Mozambican men lived when employed in the mines of South Africa.

*curandeiro* – Traditional healer.

*escudo* – The unit of currency used in Mozambique until 1980.

Frelimo – Portmanteau of *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (“Mozambique Liberation Front”), the anti-colonial movement formed in 1962 that has governed Mozambique since independence in 1975, initially as a one-party, socialist state.

*grupos dinamizadores* (GDs) – During the transition to independence and in the years afterward, the committees that governed neighborhoods, and that managed businesses when business owners fled Mozambique. Initially GDs were largely *ad hoc*, but were later brought under greater centralized control.

*guia da marcha* – In the 1980s and early 1990s, the pass one must secure from local officials to allow one to travel.

*indígena* – Portuguese for “native,” the legal classification of the vast majority of Mozambicans for most of the colonial era. Those with *indígena* status were denied the rights of Portuguese citizenship and, until 1961, subject to terms of forced labor, called *chibalo*.

*mato* – Undifferentiated bush.

*mestiço* – A person of racially diverse origins, specifically of African and European and/or Asian descent. Somewhat more dismissive terms include *misto* and *mulatto*.

*metical* – The unit of Mozambican currency from 1980 onward.

*milando* – Domestic disputes or disputes between neighbors. During the colonial era, *milandos* were generally considered to be under the purview of customary authorities, rather than Portuguese officials, who thought of them as trivial affairs of the “natives.”



*moleque* – During the colonial era, a belittling term referring to black teenaged boys (or preteens) who worked as domestic servants in households in the City of Cement or in *cantinas* in the *subúrbios*, generally living in a unit in the backyard.

*palmatória* – Wood paddle used to whip someone’s palms as punishment, and frequently employed as a symbol of the arbitrary violence of colonial rule.

*quarteirão* – City block, used as a unit of governance in the *subúrbios* from the late 1970s onward.

*quintal* – An enclosed yard in either the City of Cement or its *subúrbios* where cooking and laundering often takes place. When, with the nationalizations of much of the City of Cement in 1976, President Samora Machel announced that Mozambicans would no longer live in the “*quintal*” of the city, he meant that they would no longer live in the equivalent of the servants’ quarters.

*régulo* – During the colonial era, a traditional leader who served at the pleasure of Portuguese authorities, and whose duties included collecting hut taxes and rounding up men for forced labor. Appointments were based on an interpretation of existing practices of inherited rule. Frelimo abolished the institution following independence, though in recent years the position has been resurrected, with functions and importance varying widely throughout the country.

Renamo – Portmanteau of *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (“Mozambican National Resistance,” or MNR). Formerly an armed Mozambican insurgency against the Frelimo regime, initially organized by the Rhodesian intelligence service following Mozambique’s independence, and later backed by apartheid South Africa. The Renamo-Frelimo war lasted approximately 16 years (there is some dispute as to when the war can be said to have begun), and cost an estimated one million Mozambican lives, ending in 1992. Renamo has become a political party, and since 1994 it has been Frelimo’s principal opposition in multi-party elections and in the national assembly.

*subúrbios* – Neighborhoods located outside what were once the official boundaries of the city – and thus generally not served with municipal infrastructure. In the late colonial era, about three-quarters of the population of Lourenço Marques lived in the *subúrbios*, and the vast majority of its African population. The *subúrbios* are not to be confused with “suburbs” as that term is understood in Anglophone contexts, though for the sake of convenience the adjective “suburban” will be used when referring to them in this thesis.

*ultramar* – “Overseas” in Portuguese, and referring to all of Portugal’s colonial possessions. In 1951, Portugal’s colonial ministry was refashioned as the *Ministério do Ultramar* as part of Lisbon’s effort to establish that its African and Asian territories were not colonies, but rather non-contiguous provinces of a single Portuguese nation.

(Abbreviations used in citations are explained in the Bibliography, pp. 322-324)

## Introduction

This is a history of the making of urban space in Maputo, Mozambique. It focuses in large measure on some of the most significant preoccupations of city life: the securing of a place to live and the reconfiguration and maintenance over time of a house, an apartment, or a unit in a compound. To consider where people have lived over the last two-thirds of a century is to explore how they have lived, what they have cared about, and what they have worked for, and so ultimately this thesis is about how housing has long embodied the aspirations and expectations of Maputo's house-builders and home-dwellers.

This thesis departs from most historical scholarship on the built environment in urban Africa in that it shifts the emphasis from laws to practices; from the architect's drafting table to the construction site; from housing officials and professional planners to landlords, tenants, and individual homebuilders; and from government-led projects to places better characterized by official neglect.<sup>1</sup> Yet this is not strictly a "history from

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<sup>1</sup> Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers Under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Hilton Judin and Ivan Vladislavić, eds., *Blank: Architecture, Apartheid, and After* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 1999); Garth A. Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003); Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities, and Italian Imperialism* (London: Routledge, 2007); William Cunningham Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in*

below” as that approach is frequently understood. It does not abandon the discussion of lawmakers, planners, and institutional bureaucracies, and when they are discussed, the thesis does not dwell solely on people’s resistance to them. The shape of the urban landscape is not a one-sided affair, orchestrated solely from either below or from above.<sup>2</sup> In the cramped spaces of the city and its outlying neighborhoods, houses and households are unavoidably connected to the spaces immediately around them, to neighborhood social networks, to municipal authorities, to national initiatives, and to flows of capital.<sup>3</sup>

Even when these connections are absent, it is a felt absence. Residents feel it when there is no active authority capable or willing to provide access roads, sanitation services, drainage pipes, water linkages, or illumination of dark alleys; or to guarantee that residents can occupy tomorrow the mere “palm-and-a-half” of land they intend to build upon today. The officials of the municipal bureaucracy feel it when, no matter how many building codes they legislate, they cannot compel most people to abide by them. National authorities, during the colonial era and since, have felt it when, looking upon the living conditions of most residents of the capital city, they sense the emptiness of their own pretensions to leading a modernizing state. Over the course of Maputo’s history, the spaces of the city have been a medium through which governance has been understood,

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*Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Fassil Demissie, ed., *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Clifton Crais argues that histories of rule must combine “from above” and “from below.” Clifton C. Crais, “Introduction,” in *The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and the Political Imagination*, ed. Clifton C. Crais (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Bekker and Laurent Fourchard, “Introduction,” in *Governing Cities in Africa: Politics and Policies*, ed. Simon Bekker and Laurent Fourchard (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2013), 1–12.

by those who would govern and those who would be governed. The making of the urban built environment has constituted a kind of multilateral politics that has not always announced itself as politics, or even in words.

The thesis brackets somewhat more than a generation lived under colonial rule and some two generations afterward, but it concentrates on the two decades straddling independence, years in which new windows of choice opened and closed in rapid succession. Historians of Africa have subjected the late colonial era to greater scrutiny in recent years, challenging long unchallenged teleological narratives of independence.<sup>4</sup> They have explored the fractiousness of nationalist and anti-colonial movements, and contestations over the very idea of “nation,” and who could claim membership in it. In his recent work on Dar es Salaam, one of the few to specifically address the urban order during late colonialism and decolonization, James Brennan demonstrates how ideas of both race and nation in Tanzania emerged from the fraught relationships between Indian

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<sup>4</sup> Standout examples include Jean Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana, 1954-1957* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005); Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Derek R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Meredith Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence: Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State Building in Cameroon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013); Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). For critiques of the Frelimo-centered teleology in Mozambican historiography and historical memory, see Aquino de Bragança and Jacques Depelchin, “From the Idealization of Frelimo to the Understanding of the Recent History of Mozambique,” *African Journal of Political Economy* 1, no. 1 (1986): 162–80; João Paulo Borges Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes,” *Kronos*, no. 39 (2013): 20–31; Paolo Israel, “A Loosening Grip: The Liberation Script in Mozambican History,” *Kronos*, no. 39 (2013): 10–19.

landlords and African tenants.<sup>5</sup> My thesis also examines ideas of race and nation, particularly among European residents. It puts less emphasis, however, on imagined communities, as scholars usually talk about them, than on the imagined state.<sup>6</sup> It explores conceptions of what government was and what it should do, largely (but not exclusively) from the perspective of ordinary residents of Mozambique's capital city, and reveals how governance was in fact shaped by ordinary residents in ways that have not been previously acknowledged.<sup>7</sup>

I argue that a history of the urban political imagination must necessarily be a material history. A widely shared image of what constitutes "modernity" has long had its most visible and tangible embodiment in the physical existence of the city itself. People use the materials of house construction to define themselves and one another – which in colonial-era Mozambique led to a political conundrum when Africans started building the same way Europeans did, and right next door. Once set in concrete actions prove difficult to revise: the past is physically embedded in the present, and limits what can be done in the future, confusing timelines of "before" and "after." Above all, the problem of governance is put on incessant display. Each chapter demonstrates how the very visibility and tangibility and relative inflexibility of built works have lent politics in Maputo a specific character. No single master narrative can capture Maputo's history since the late

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<sup>5</sup> James R. Brennan, *Taifa: Making Race and Nation in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012). For a study of the role of anti-urban discourse in Tanzanian nationalism see Emily Callaci, "*Ujamaa* Urbanism: History, Urban Culture and the Politics of Authenticity in Socialist Dar es Salaam, 1967-80" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Crais, "Introduction"; Bekker and Fourchard, "Introduction"; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Warren Magnusson, *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

1940s, but an inescapable theme emerges: a state and a city constructed according to what precepts of modernization say they should be cannot be understood solely as impositions from above, as James Scott would understand them, but as common goals.<sup>8</sup> People have often had reason to flee the violence and exploitation of those who would govern. But those who would govern and those who would be governed have also sought to make themselves legible to each other and to reach desperately for one another – usually, in Maputo’s history, without success.

The thesis begins in the late 1940s/early 1950s, when the city then known as Lourenço Marques, the capital of Portugal’s most populous colonial possession, began to experience dramatic rates of growth. Though one of southern Africa’s larger cities, its total population in 1950 was only about 93,000. (See Table 1.) The city doubled in size over the following decade, and in the 1960s it more than doubled again. Recent census figures put the current population of Maputo proper at around 1.2 million and the metropolitan area at around two million, meaning that there are many people alive today who, depending on their age, have witnessed the city’s population increase between thirty and fifty times over.<sup>9</sup> Such a dizzying growth rate since the middle of the previous

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<sup>8</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Magnusson, *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City*; James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Morten Nielsen, “Inverse Governmentality: The Paradoxical Production of Peri-Urban Planning in Maputo, Mozambique,” *Critique of Anthropology* 31, no. 4 (2011): 329–58; Stephan F. Miescher, “Building the City of the Future: Visions and Experiences of Modernity in Ghana’s Akosombo Township,” *Journal of African History* 53, no. 3 (2012): 367–90.

<sup>9</sup> The metropolitan area includes satellite city Matola, which in 2013 had a population of more than 600,000, but is not included in Table 1. Instituto Nacional de Estatística,

century is not uncommon for African cities, but it is a fact worth emphasizing for readers who have not themselves lived through a similar rushed expansion from town to metropolis. In the United States, only perhaps some of the oldest residents of Phoenix, Arizona, have seen anything comparable over the last three or four generations. Into the same span of time the people of Maputo have also compressed the experiences of forced labor, decolonization, and civil war, as well as the traumatic results of efforts to impose first colonial capitalism, then a socialist command economy, and then the policies of structural adjustment. When older residents of the city speak of the more distant past, they are careful to clarify that the city they are talking about is Lourenço Marques, not Maputo, as the city has been called since shortly after independence. While the main reason is to delimit the era of Portuguese rule, which ended in 1975, another motive for the distinction is that, in memory, the low-lying, flood-prone neighborhoods of reed houses where they grew up were, by comparison to today, *mato* – “bush.” When these older residents were children, the boundaries of their yards were often marked off with trees and other plants, if they were marked off at all. The thought is astonishing to people as they recall it today, among thick clusters of concrete-block walls. Without having moved anywhere, they occupy a different place.

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*Estatísticas do Distrito de Cidade da Matola* (Maputo: INE, November 2013), [http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/estatisticas-territorias-distritais/maputo-provincia/novembro-de-2013/cidade-da-matola.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/estatisticas-territorias-distritais/maputo-provincia/novembro-de-2013/cidade-da-matola.pdf/at_download/file). Given the sheer volume of Portuguese-language materials cited in this thesis, foreign-language titles will not be translated.

**Table 1:** Population of Lourenço Marques/Maputo, 1940-2013<sup>10</sup>  
(does not include satellite city Matola)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tot. Pop.</b>	<b>African Pop.</b>
<b>1940</b>	68,223	45,632
<b>1950</b>	93,265	57,755
<b>1960</b>	178,546	122,460
<b>1970</b>	378,348	300,495
<b>1980</b>	755,300	*
<b>1997</b>	946,312	*
<b>2007</b>	1,074,645	*
<b>2013</b>	1,209,993	*

\*Data using racial categories not available

As a history of shelter, this thesis concentrates, though not exclusively, on the neighborhoods of this notional one-time “bush,” where since at least the 1950s the majority of the city’s population has lived, where today the vast majority lives, and that

<sup>10</sup> Colónia de Moçambique, *Censo de população em 1940, I: População não-indígena* (Lourenço Marques: Repartição Técnica de Estatística, 1942); Colónia de Moçambique, *Censo de população em 1940, II: População indígena* (Lourenço Marques: Repartição Técnica de Estatística, 1943); Província de Moçambique, *Recenseamento geral da população em 1950 - II: Inventário das edificações e fogos* (Lourenço Marques: Repartição Técnica de Estatística, 1954); Província de Moçambique, *III Recenseamento geral da população na Província de Lourenço Marques* (Lourenço Marques: Direcção Provincial dos Serviços de Estatística Geral, 1960); República Portuguesa, Estado de Moçambique, *IV Recenseamento geral da população - Distrito de Lourenço Marques* (Lourenço Marques: Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 1970); Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações de Moçambique, *Moçambique na actualidade, 1973* (Lourenço Marques: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 1974); República Popular de Moçambique, *I Recenseamento geral da população* (Maputo: Conselho Coordenador de Recenseamento, 1983); Eduardo Medeiros, “L’*évolution démographique de la ville de Lourenço-Marques (1894-1975)*,” in *Bourgs et villes en Afrique lusophone*, ed. Michel Cahen (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1989), 63–73; Cristina Delgado Henriques, *Maputo: Cinco décadas de mudança territorial* (Lisbon: IPAD, 2008); Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *Anuário estatístico 2013 - Moçambique* (Maputo: INE, 2014), [http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/publicacoes/anuario/nacionais/anuario\\_2013.pdf/view](http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/publicacoes/anuario/nacionais/anuario_2013.pdf/view).



in most other contexts are called slums, informal or squatter settlements, or shantytowns. Such terms will be avoided in this thesis to the extent possible, and not mainly for reasons of courtesy. The literature of urban studies, in Africa and elsewhere, has suffered from their casual use. So have the residents of such places.

Some important clarifications are in order. Words like slum, generally understood as a place whose essence is poverty; informal settlements and squatter settlements, places of unauthorized or illegal occupation; and shantytowns, places of precariously built construction – all terms that clearly overlap with each other – define such places as exceptions to some rule, and in the negative, for what they are presumed not to be. Such words suggest that degrees of wealth, continuity, order, and stability are foreign to such places, and always have been. “The slum” is notably empty as a signifier, yet it is taken to be a category of such descriptive portability that it is possible to talk about neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai, and Nairobi in the same sentence as if they have more in common with each other than they do not.<sup>11</sup> A single book can condense into a little more than 200 pages what it means to live on a “planet of slums.”<sup>12</sup>

When I write “such places” I am acknowledging that hundreds of millions of people currently live in urban districts that are crudely analogous in terms of economic

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<sup>11</sup> UN-Habitat, *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* (London: Earthscan, 2003); Robert Neuwirth, *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, a New Urban World* (New York: Routledge, 2006). In fairness to Neuwirth, he seeks in his reporting project to reveal the specificities of each of the squatter settlements he stays in.

<sup>12</sup> Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006). One of the most insightful of the many critiques of Davis’s homogenizing, ahistorical approach is Brodwyn Fischer, “A Century in the Present Tense: Crisis, Politics, and the Intellectual History of Brazil’s Informal Cities,” in *Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America*, ed. Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann, and Javier Auyero (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 9–67.

marginalization. This is not the only way, however, through which to understand the people who live in such places. In the mouths of urban planners and politicians and well-intentioned advocates for the world's poor, the limited vocabulary used to describe "the slum" serves a specific purpose: it reduces places and the people who live in them to a pathology, a problem to be solved. Often in history the solution to the problem of "the slum" has been to bulldoze it. Another common response to the slum has been to hide it. In the preparations for a meeting of the African Union hosted by Maputo in 2003, for instance, municipal officials erected a high perimeter wall around a neighborhood adjoining the airport – a "wall of shame" according to residents – to screen it from the sight of arriving VIPs.<sup>13</sup> Still another approach, generally adopted by conscientious social scientists and journalists, is to seek to naturalize the slum, to convince outsiders of the humanity of slum dwellers with the revelation that they are ordinary people and hard workers like anyone else.<sup>14</sup> More recently, observers have discovered the slum as a place of extraordinary adaptability and boundless creativity, the finest arts of survival. To famed Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, observing Lagos in the early 2000s from the Nigerian president's helicopter, the city was no longer the "burning garbage heap" he saw at ground level, but "seemed from above an impressive performance, evidence of how well Lagos might perform if it were the third largest city in the world," as demographers predict it soon will be.<sup>15</sup> "Slum" was a term coined in industrializing Britain in the mid-

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<sup>13</sup> José Rebelo, "Abaixo os muros," *Além-Mar*, September 2003, <http://www.alem-mar.org/cgi-bin/quickregister/scripts/redirect.cgi?redirect=EEFlkZAFAPmyQzdzl>.

<sup>14</sup> A classic text of this genre is Janice E. Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in George Packer, "The Megacity: Decoding the Chaos of Lagos," *The New Yorker*, November 13, 2006, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/11/13/the->

nineteenth century, not long before European missionaries began to infiltrate African societies on a large scale.<sup>16</sup> Historically, the redeemers and detractors of “the slum” have echoed the redeemers and detractors of a similarly abstracted “Africa.”<sup>17</sup> Sometimes they have been the same people.

Embedded in this thesis is a conviction about what needs no proof. People who are materially poor relative to others are not defined solely by this fact, for instance. Humanity and creativity and resilience exist everywhere and need not be met with surprise or held up like trophies when encountered in places like the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, the *bidonvilles* of Marseilles, or the outlying neighborhoods of Maputo. I have done my best to strip the prose of the clichéd polarities of so much slum literature: misery and hope.

People imagine many things when they talk about an African “slum,” but they tend not to imagine its past. Perhaps because poverty is often taken as a specific condition that is as timeless as it is universally applicable, the African “slum,” though often commented upon in the present tense, is rarely rendered visible in histories of urban Africa, as if it is obvious what it was like to live in any one of the neighborhoods

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megacity. A documentary on Koolhaas’s Lagos project is Bregtje van der Haak, *Lagos Wide & Close: An Interactive Journey into an Exploding City*, DVD (Submarine, 2006). For a critique of Koolhaas, and the lurid mythmaking surrounding informal settlement in general, see Ananya Roy, “Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 2 (March 2011): 223–38.

<sup>16</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 307.

<sup>17</sup> Deborah Epstein Nord, “The Social Explorer as Anthropologist: Victorian Travellers among the Urban Poor,” in *Visions of the Modern City: Essays in History, Art, and Literature*, Reprint (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 122–34; Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty*, 305–400; John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Vol. 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 316–320.

surrounding any given privileged urban core. It used to be that outsiders only identified history in Africa where they also saw monumental architecture, such as pyramids and the ruins of colonial palaces; one of the great fallacies of such thinking was that most of African history did not leave a physical trace for historians to see. In Maputo, however, there are innumerable physical traces to follow and people to talk to about those traces. Taken together, the making of hundreds of thousands of houses in the neighborhoods of Maputo represents a monumental accomplishment, hidden in plain sight, and embodying countless actions, risks, exchanges, disputes, and failures. To overlook this vast archive of open-air evidence is to miss much of the historical experience specific to living in Maputo as opposed to any other city.

Unlike many cities in Africa, for instance, where independence and the relaxation of influx controls resulted in dramatic population booms, Mozambique's capital exploded in size for a generation while still under colonial rule. Lourenço Marques had one of the largest settler populations south of the Sahara and north of South Africa, and few cities experienced such a rapid and nearly complete abandonment by the settler population. (Clear comparisons can be made to Mozambique's sister colony Angola.) These changes are discernable in the urban landscape, though the historian needs a great deal of help in perceiving them. This is why this thesis, even with its attention to tangible things such as buildings and plots of land and municipal infrastructure, is still fundamentally a work of oral history.

Depending on the individual and the context, people in Maputo talk about the neighborhoods in which they live as *bairros*, *subúrbios*, or, as they do most often, by the

specific names of their neighborhoods.<sup>18</sup> The word “*subúrbio*” deserves further explanation, in part because it can be so easily confused with the English word “suburb.” While both terms have long carried the meaning in their respective languages of a place outside the official boundary of a city, the *subúrbios* of Maputo for decades have fallen within the city’s administrative boundaries, and the word in the Mozambican context now generally refers to a place of less *infrastructure* than an urban core. “Suburb,” meanwhile, suggests in Anglophone contexts a place with less physical *density* than an urban core, and therefore ostensibly a more pleasant place to live than an urban core. I therefore leave “*subúrbio*” untranslated, though for the sake of convenience I will make use of the adjective “suburban” when referring to them.

Like “slum,” *subúrbio* describes a place for what it lacks, but people in Maputo’s neighborhoods do not understand them only for what they lack. It is significant that, in the colonial era, people did not generally use the word *subúrbio*, as they do now, to describe where they lived. The word was a technical term, employed mainly by Portuguese bureaucrats, and to them its use connoted that these peripheral areas were at a lower stage of development, i.e. that the *subúrbios* eventually would be “urbanized” with street grids and illumination and sewer lines. They would at some indeterminate future moment receive the same access to municipal services enjoyed by those living in the neighborhoods of what was then the predominately European quarter of the city, the part

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<sup>18</sup> A point also made in Isabel Raposo and Cristina Salvador, “Há diferença: Ali é cidade, aqui é subúrbio: Urbanidade dos bairros, tipos e estratégias de habitação em Luanda e Maputo,” in *Subúrbios de Luanda e Maputo*, ed. Jochen Oppenheimer and Isabel Raposo (Lisbon: Edições Calibri, 2007), 109–110.

the Portuguese once regarded as the city proper – it was only a matter of time.<sup>19</sup> In the 1960s, when areas of the *subúrbios* were developed piecemeal in this way, it was usually with housing and infrastructure that favored the white population, and it resulted in the dislocation to the far fringes of the city of thousands of suburban residents. People living in the *subúrbios* at the time referred to them collectively as Xitali Mati (“place of the abundant waters” in Ronga) or the *caniço*.<sup>20</sup> *Canico*, a Portuguese word, was the type of reed out of which most houses there were built. It was a material that provided minimal protection against the elements and rotted quickly, but a reed house could be dismantled and many of its materials recovered in case a household was suddenly dislodged by a landlord or by government order. Reeds, that is, were the symbol and substance of a precarious existence. If for officials “*subúrbio*” indicated a stage on an evolutionary path, “*canico*” did not represent a stage on the way to anything other than further squalor. It is difficult to identify precisely when the *canico* became the *subúrbios* in the minds of residents, but it happened sometime in recent decades, when concrete-block construction,

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<sup>19</sup> The principal post-war urban plans envisioning the expansion of Lourenço Marques were João Aguiar, “Plano geral de urbanização de Lourenço Marques, Vol. I: Inquérito,” 1955, IPAD/no. 13082; João Aguiar, “Plano geral de urbanização de Lourenço Marques, Vol. II: Memória descritiva e justificativa,” 1955, IPAD/no. 13083; “Ocupação do solo nos arredores de Lourenço Marques: Plano Director, Memória descritiva” (Província de Moçambique, Direcção dos Serviços de Obras Públicas e Transportes, Secção de Urbanização de Moçambique, October 8, 1958), IPAD/no. 13087; José Vitorino da Costa Bastos, “O plano regulador da ocupação do solo nos arredores de Lourenço Marques” (Ministério do Ultramar, Direcção-Geral de Obras Públicas e Comunicações, Direcção dos Serviços de Urbanismo e Habitação, March 26, 1962), IPAD/no. 13084; Mário de Azevedo, “O Plano Director de urbanização de Lourenço Marques (1969),” *Boletim Municipal da Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques*, no. 7 (December 31, 1969): 17–54.

<sup>20</sup> See Aldino Muianga, *Xitali mati* (Maputo: Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, 1987); Filipe Mata, “O mar vai beber do ‘xitala-mati,’” *Tempo*, May 16, 1982. At times, however, Xitali Mati only referred to the parts of the *subúrbios* where water inundation was at its worst, such as in the neighborhood of Lagoas.

which first began to proliferate in these neighborhoods in the 1960s, began to predominate, and reed construction grew more scarce. Couched in people's current use of the word "*subúrbio*" is a double claim. It is both a claim to belonging to the city and also a claim to a future in the city, privileges that in Maputo, historically, have been denied to most. Concrete has played a vital role in people's claims to citizenship, and its material and symbolic significance is one of the major themes of this thesis.

In the 1960s, local journalists dubbed the *subúrbios* the City of Reeds (*a cidade do caniço*) to contrast it more sharply from the urban core, called the City of Cement (*a cidade de cimento*).<sup>21</sup> One concerned padre likened the divide to "the Reed Wall" – likely a play on the recently erected Berlin Wall – and for similar effect journalists occasionally called it "the Reed Curtain," but neither Cold War-inflected phrase caught on.<sup>22</sup> Many people in the *subúrbios* referred to the City of Cement either as Xilunguine – "place of the whites" in Ronga – or simply *a cidade* ("the city"), and this is still the case.<sup>23</sup> Properly speaking, it is a city of concrete, which is cement mixed with water, sand, and gravel (or other stone aggregate). To be even more precise, it is predominantly a city of steel-reinforced concrete frame construction with concrete or ceramic blocks used as

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<sup>21</sup> Ricardo Rangel, "Os primeiros passos de um fotojornalista famoso," in *140 anos de imprensa em Moçambique*, ed. Fátima Ribeiro and António Sopa (Maputo: Associação Moçambicana da Língua Portuguesa, 1996), 121–23.

<sup>22</sup> "Existe 'um muro de palha' a dividir as duas cidades de Lourenço Marques," *A Tribuna*, October 31, 1962; "Cortina de caniço," *A Tribuna*, November 8, 1962.

<sup>23</sup> See Alexandre Lobato, *Lourenço Marques, Xilunguine: Biografia da cidade* (Lisbon: Agência-Geral do Ultramar, 1970). On the city/*subúrbio* binary as it is employed in contemporary Maputo, see Raposo and Salvador, "Há diferença"; Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, Inge Tvedten, and Sandra Roque, "Engaging, Transcending, and Subverting Dichotomies: Discursive Dynamics of Maputo's Urban Space," *Urban Studies* 51, no. 13 (2014): 2752–69.

infill. “City of Cement” has fallen out of use for the same reason that “*caniço*” has. Masonry architecture no longer divides the haves from the have-nots, since both have it.

When historians describe societies they know little about, usually because the societies are ancient or not European, they often resort to terms from material culture – hence, the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age – often with a very clouded view of the choices their historical actors were capable of making. In researching this thesis, I had the benefit of greater personal familiarity with the people I am writing about, and I was struck by just how much, historically, a material culture has occupied people’s imaginations and conditioned their possibilities. As this thesis intends to make clear, it was, and continues to be, an Age of Concrete.

### **Imagined Citizenships**

Chamanculo, the setting for much of this thesis, is one of the oldest *bairros* of Maputo, and among its most populous and most densely settled.<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 0.1.) People have lived there in some numbers at least as long as there has been a city where the Espírito Santo estuary feeds into the Bay of Maputo, which is to say for more than a century, and a great many of the older men who live there were once employed at the port and railroad facilities just down the hill. The neighborhood’s name is Ronga for “place where the great ones bathe,” and it derives from the ancestor spirits known to frequent a creek that once passed through the area – a creek that now only makes an appearance, never a

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<sup>24</sup> Henriques, *Maputo: Cinco décadas de mudança territorial*, 78–80. Chamanculo is currently split into four neighborhood units that according to the 2007 census totaled about 64,000 inhabitants.



welcome one, during a rainfall.<sup>25</sup> It is testament to the neighborhood's antiquity and to the long legacy of many families there that Ronga, the indigenous language of the immediate Maputo region, is still the mother tongue of a significant number of residents. According to self-described purists, though, many of the younger people in Chamanculo who think they speak Ronga actually speak a blend of Ronga and Changana, a similar language that, due to continual migration from rural areas not far to the north, has predominated in the city since at least the 1960s.



**Fig. 0.1.** Chamanculo, 1969. (Source: 1969 Aerial Survey, MICOA)

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<sup>25</sup> Officials have recently begun to spell Chamanculo as Nhlamankulo to more closely approximate its correct Ronga pronunciation.

A recent road project revealed some of Chamanculo's deeper history to those who were unfamiliar with it. The main road through Chamanculo, named in the colonial era for a Portuguese physician, had been paved for the first time, hastily, almost a half century before, and by the 1980s it had crumbled to dust. The new road was to be a more deliberate affair, laid with paving blocks, rather than asphalt. Even before it was completed, the road was renamed for Marcelino dos Santos, Mozambique's independence-era vice president, whose mother, over 100 years old, still lived in a house in nearby Malanga. Because the road had to be widened from its current footprint, a few feet or so of space had to be carved out of the houses and yards that hemmed it in on either side. As high concrete perimeter walls were peeled away, one gained a better glimpse into the larger yards where successive generations had built houses adjacent to those of their parents and grandparents. Sometimes one could see, in the cross-section of a severed house partition, the rough impression left in plaster of old reed walls that had rotted away, a kind of fossil of the not-so-distant past before concrete-block construction was the norm. Homeowners affected by the new road had been financially indemnified for their troubles (though many said it was hardly enough) and at least one family's house had to be demolished altogether, and its residents resettled on a lot on the distant outskirts of the city.<sup>26</sup> There was no compensating, however, for the loss of two towering fig trees that were felled to make way for the road improvements. The oldest residents of Chamanculo could not remember a time when the trees were not there. The trees easily

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<sup>26</sup> Fernando Bismarque, "Moradores abrangidos pelo projecto reclamam do valor das indemnizações," *O País*, February 8, 2012, <http://opais.sapo.mz/index.php/sociedade/45-sociedade/18903-moradores-abrangidos-pelo-projecto-reclamam-do-valor-das-indemnizacoes.html>.

could have been a century old or more, their trunks had twisted together, and they gave permanent shade to what had long been one of Chamanculo's principal crossroads.

Residents call the part of the neighborhood in the vicinity of the fallen trees Beira-Mar, after the long defunct African soccer club once headquartered nearby.<sup>27</sup> The team's wood-framed, zinc-paneled clubhouse still functions as a bar, but the playing field disappeared in the 1980s when refugees from Mozambique's civil war were settled there, ostensibly temporarily. They built reed structures that in all but one instance have been converted to concrete block in the years since.

In local terms, the people who came to the neighborhood from the countryside some thirty years ago are still considered newcomers. Even many people who came sixty years ago or more are called newcomers by residents who trace their local lineage back further in time. Within a five minute walking radius of the fig trees are some of Maputo's most established families. Eneas Comiche, Mozambique's onetime Finance Minister and a former president of the Maputo city council (essentially mayor), recently restored the wood-and-zinc house he grew up in, though all that can be seen of it from the street is its handsome double-pitched roof. It was the house where, in late 1960, Comiche's family received Janet Mondlane just prior to Eduardo Mondlane's much-publicized return visit to Lourenço Marques, and less than two years before Mondlane assumed the helm of Frelimo, a newly formed movement for independence. Janet Mondlane was an American, and the trip was her introduction to her husband's land of birth. She wrote to Eduardo of

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<sup>27</sup> See Nuno Domingos, "Football in Colonial Lourenço Marques: Bodily Practices and Social Rituals" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 2007).

the Comiche house, and what she thought it revealed about their friend Eneas. About eleven people lived in only three rooms, she noted.

I don't know who supports them. Maybe the brother who's in the [Portuguese] Air Force is very well paid. But the house is as well-kept and clean as a pin. The children are well-groomed...and suddenly I remembered the boy in Lisbon, well-dressed and elegant in his dark blue suit, studying economics. It was here that they grew up, where there wouldn't be anything without a mother's love and affection.<sup>28</sup>

Today the house is used only for family gatherings – Comiche's sister and nephew live in a concrete-block house behind it.

Ana Laura Cumba, who recently passed away, had been living in a house built by her late father, Frederico de Almeida Cumba, the man who as the Portuguese-appointed traditional leader (*régulo*) was perhaps the most feared and reviled African man in Chamanculo from 1945 until 1974. As *régulo* he made himself relatively wealthy, in part through extortion, and had long before converted part of the house from wood-and-zinc into concrete block. Later, sometime after his death, Ana Laura rented out much of the house to tenants, keeping one bedroom for herself and another for her traditional healing practice.

Margarida Ferreira, the daughter of one of the *régulo*'s advisers, lost her house when her husband died; her in-laws simply took it from her. But following the fall of the Berlin Wall her sons returned from East Germany where, like thousands of other Mozambicans in the 1980s, they had been factory workers. They brought back with them to Mozambique a number of domestic appliances, to be used as assets. The brothers sold

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<sup>28</sup> Nadja Manghezi, *O meu coração está nas maos de um negro: Uma história da vida de Janet Mondlane* (Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 1999), 184.

the appliances in Maputo, and the proceeds were used to lay courses of concrete block for a new house for their mother.

Castigo Guambe was living in a wood-and-zinc house, palatial by Chamanculo standards, that his father, a hunter, built in the 1930s. The elder Guambe, who first came to Lourenço Marques in the early 1900s, never worked for anyone else in his life, and he had managed to build a small real estate empire in Chamanculo by the time he died, in the 1960s. About a decade later, shortly after independence, more than two dozen Guambe properties were nationalized by the new Frelimo government, leaving only the original homestead for Castigo and his brother. Castigo built new rental units and a bar in his yard in the 1990s. After several robberies, he was compelled to erect a concrete fence, topped with broken glass, to wall off his property from his neighbors – people living in some of the many houses that once comprised the Guambe real estate portfolio.

The Muhale household dates to the 1960s, on the newer side in Chamanculo terms, and the date April 10, 1976, is inscribed on the bedroom stair to commemorate the day its concrete foundations were poured.

To say that these houses were vestiges of the past would suggest that they were mere antiques. It would be to suggest that they arrived in the present somehow as more or less the same structures they were when originally built decades before, though perhaps worn down by the corrosive effects of a process we tend to oversimplify as “time.” The houses and the spaces around these houses bear the marks of decades of historical change. More to the point, the houses *are* the change – or at least constitute a significant part of the story of what change has meant for the residents of Chamanculo over the past century. Each of the houses mentioned above is an ongoing project, and has never ceased

to be a work-in-progress for the people who have lived in it. In each case, there may have been a clear beginning to the house, but there has been no clear end. “Self-built” is something of a misnomer; people have long hired professional carpenters and stonemasons to build them a house if it is to be anything more complicated than a reed house. If not self-built in this narrower sense, however, the house has nonetheless been custom-made to the owners’ specifications.

A house is one of a family’s greatest single investments, at its construction and over time, financially and also in ways that cannot be measured in currency but rather in the energy and care devoted to its maintenance, furnishing, decoration, and incremental expansion and rearrangement. Even people who are not actively building or repairing or enhancing a house are thinking about it. Many people living in the lowliest housing conditions, such as in one-room units in one of Chamanculo’s many housing compounds (*compondes*), invest in concrete blocks and other materials and store them in the tempered expectation that they may someday be able to put the materials to practical use. Many people hope to pass a house on as their greatest single bequest to the generation that follows. The house contributes to the status of its occupants, makes a claim to permanence in neighborhoods where people historically have been denied the legal grounds for such a claim, and advertises its occupants’ “vision” – the estimable quality of forward-thinking usually attributed to people said to possess it by people who regret that they do not.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Similar observations are made by Paul Jenkins, an architect and planner who has studied Maputo’s growth since the 1980s, and anthropologist Morten Nielsen in his study of houses on the distant outskirts of Maputo built since the 2000 floods. Nielsen’s work, which has had an important influence on this thesis, will be discussed further below.

The relationship of people and the houses they make for themselves has long been a mainstay of anthropological inquiry.<sup>30</sup> The house has been explored as the embodiment of societal structure, as the conveyor of cultural and cosmological meanings, as a site through which gender is produced, and as the product of a craft that constitutes selfhood for the professional building craftsman. Different ideas of what constitutes a “house” are often set against different conceptions of “household” and “home.” In short, scholarship has long addressed how people shape their space, and in doing so the house also shapes them. The protean dynamic of this relationship – how it functions over time – has been widely observed. Architectural historian Paul Oliver, who for decades has catalogued vernacular housing around the world, calls the objects of his study “dwellings” (rather than “houses”) because the word captures the ongoing *process* inherent to them:

“[Dwelling] is the experience of living at a specific location and it is the physical expression of doing so.”<sup>31</sup> Architect John F.C. Turner, whose writings on “self-help”

construction greatly impacted housing policies around the world from the 1970s onward,

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Morten Nielsen, “In the Vicinity of the State: House Construction, Personhood, and the State in Maputo, Mozambique” (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2008); Paul Jenkins, *Urbanization, Urbanism, and Urbanity in an African City: Home Spaces and House Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). See also the recent wide-ranging, multi-authored study of housing in Maputo since 1980 (including a report by Jenkins) at [www.homespace.dk](http://www.homespace.dk).

<sup>30</sup> Some standout examples from Africanist anthropology include: Henrietta L. Moore, *Space, Text, and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Suzanne Preston Blier, *The Anatomy of Architecture: Ontology and Metaphor in Batammaliba Architectural Expression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones, eds., *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Pierre Bourdieu, “The Berber House,” in *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, ed. Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 131–41; Trevor H.J. Marchand, *The Masons of Djenné* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Paul Oliver, *Dwellings: The House Across the World* (London: Phaidon, 2003), 15.

argued that housing ought to be considered a “verb.”<sup>32</sup> Turner had worked on the margins of Lima, Peru, and had seen that self-built houses were built incrementally and in pace with the ever-changing nature of household composition, household economies, and taste.

While many architects and architectural historians have observed how people and the built environment shape each other over time – that is, historically – historians of urban Africa have for their part generally neglected to see cities in three dimensions. When the study of Africa’s urban histories gained traction, in the 1980s, the focus was almost entirely on the labor struggles that took place in them.<sup>33</sup> Labor strikes also left a conveniently large footprint in colonial archives. Such scholarship inevitably concentrated on men, and historians began to widen the scope of urban history to include women’s labor. Research on women’s work required a greater reliance on oral sources but also benefitted from the fact that such labor also left some traces in colonial archives because it was often outlawed and heavily policed.<sup>34</sup> Urban space certainly *mattered* in

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<sup>32</sup> John F.C. Turner, “Housing as a Verb,” in *Freedom to Build: Dweller Control of the Housing Process*, ed. John F.C. Turner and Robert Fichter (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 148–75.

<sup>33</sup> Paradigmatic works include Charles van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, 2 vols. (Harlow: Longman, 1982); Frederick Cooper, ed., *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983); Frederick Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). For Mozambique, easily the most important text on urban labor struggle is Jeanne Marie Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877-1962* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995).

<sup>34</sup> Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Kathleen Sheldon, ed., *Courtyards, Markets, City Streets: Urban Women In Africa* (Denver: Westview Press, 1996); Teresa Barnes, “We



these histories; control over people's mobility between rural areas and cities, and within cities themselves, constituted one of the pillars of labor exploitation. Yet, urban space still only figured as the stage for other dramas.

The cultural turn in Africanist historical scholarship has overlapped in some measure with questions raised at large by postmodernist and postcolonial theorists regarding how the self is constituted through regimes of knowledge and discourses of power.<sup>35</sup> Still, in this body of scholarship the city once again serves mostly as a stage, inert and featureless – in this case a stage for the performance of self.<sup>36</sup> The city has also been amply explored in terms of the performance of hegemony: The small body of literature on architecture, construction, and urbanism in African history that has emerged since the 1990s is almost entirely given over to the intentions of European architects and planners during the colonial era.<sup>37</sup> Though it does not always announce its forbearers, it is scholarship clearly inspired by Edward Said, and how “the other” is constituted by cultural formations, and by Timothy Mitchell, and how the colonized is “enframed” by

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*Women Worked so Hard”: Gender, Urbanization, and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995); Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Marissa Moorman's discussion of Luanda's *musseques* in her study of Angolan popular music is an important exception. Marissa J. Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), 28-55.

<sup>37</sup> Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*; Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations*; Myers, *Verandahs of Power*; Fuller, *Moderns Abroad*; Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar*.

the colonizer, and ultimately this scholarship rests on Foucault.<sup>38</sup> It emphasizes the role of colonial architecture and planning in the maintenance of racial difference and the imposition of control.

The spatial turn in African urban history has been anticipated for years. Various historians of urban Africa, in their assessments of the field, have since the 1980s pointed to the need to look more thoroughly at the making of the built environment. Historian Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch observed in 2005 the “fascinating interrelationship” between people and their homes, how “people build as they think, but think as they build.”<sup>39</sup> But she noted that it had been more than two decades since sociologist and architectural historian Anthony D. King first challenged scholars to address this dynamic, and among historians the call was more or less unheeded. The editors of *The Spatial Factor in African History*, also in 2005, put the state of the field more bluntly: “Presently, no discursive tradition of representing space in academic African history writing exists.”<sup>40</sup> Laurent Fourchard recently commented on just how lopsided the discussion has

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<sup>38</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993); Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995).

<sup>39</sup> Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, “African Urban Spaces: History and Culture,” in *African Urban Spaces in Historical Perspective*, ed. Steven J. Salm and Toyin Falola (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005), xxiv; Anthony D. King, “The Social Production of Building Form: Theory and Research,” *Environment and Planning Development: Society and Space* 2 (1984): 429–46.

<sup>40</sup> Allen M. Howard and Richard M. Shain, “Introduction: African History and Social Space in Africa,” in *The Spatial Factor in African History: The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual*, ed. Allen M. Howard and Richard M. Shain (Leiden:

been. In a 2011 essay reviewing the state of African urban historiography, he wrote that an overemphasis on European intentions, particularly their segregationist schemes, paints a picture of colonizer versus colonized that “omits the agency of African societies, their capacity to overcome such divisions, to ignore them, or even to imagine them differently.”<sup>41</sup>

This thesis examines Mozambican agency historically through the prism of housing. As intimate spaces thoroughly integrated into household economies, houses reveal a great deal about individual choice, and also constraints on choice. The concept of citizenship, vital to this thesis, captures the nature of these many overlapping relationships of mutual dependence. Scholars generally approach citizenship in two ways. The first is to recognize citizenship as most people consciously experience it: as a *legal status*. This is citizenship as formalized by governments. It usually entails political rights, such as the right to vote for one’s leaders or the right to a fair trial, but also may include claims on the state such as the right to economic opportunity or the right to a public education – all generally spelled out in varying degrees of specificity in a constitution or other legitimizing document. This type of citizenship has an easily traced genealogy, rooted in Enlightenment thinking, and historically centered on the figure of the propertied European individual male and his relationship to a bounded entity called the nation-state. Africanists who have addressed the subject have focused on the exclusions inherent to legal citizenship – on where the line has been drawn between those upon whom are

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Brill, 2005), 1. The volume itself deals with space in mostly rural and early colonial settings.

<sup>41</sup> Laurent Fourchard, “Between World History and State Formation: New Perspectives on Africa’s Cities,” *Journal of African History* 52, no. 2 (2011): 229.

conferred civil rights and those who are allotted none. For most of the colonial era, legal citizenship was largely limited to white settler populations, who were thus ruled by civil law, and African majorities were identified as subjects ruled by the arbitrary “customary” law of tribal chiefs.<sup>42</sup> Beginning with independence, many newly formed states defined legal citizenship according to other restrictive criteria – along ethno-linguistic boundaries, for instance.<sup>43</sup> Who belonged to the new nation and who were merely “strangers” and “parasites” unworthy of state beneficence, and possibly subject to expulsion? The recent, dominant discourse of human rights has inspired new debates on legal citizenship, and one critique within Africanist scholarship has been how the human rights apparatus rests on Western conceptions of individuals, rather than groups, as bearers of rights.<sup>44</sup> Legal citizenship receives little attention in this thesis, because when it was most significant in people’s lives, as it was for black Mozambicans who “assimilated” as Portuguese during the colonial era, it was significant to so few people. Even *assimilados*, despite their more elevated legal status relative to other black Mozambicans, were effectively second-class citizens, as were people of mixed race, who for the most part possessed official Portuguese citizenship at birth.

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<sup>42</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Peter Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Harri Englund, “Recognizing Identities, Imagining Alternatives,” in *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa*, ed. Harri Englund and Francis B. Nyamnjoh (London: Zed Books, 2004), 1–29; Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa* (London: CODESRIA Books in association with Zed Books, 2006).

<sup>44</sup> Francis B. Nyamnjoh, “Reconciling ‘The Rhetoric of Rights’ with Competing Notions of Personhood and Agency in Botswana,” in *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa*, ed. Harri Englund and Francis B. Nyamnjoh (London: Zed Books, 2004), 33–63.

A second approach to citizenship, of particular importance to scholars of contemporary Latin America, and the one animating much of this thesis, is to consider citizenship as a *set of practices* that bring people in proximity to a larger community. To see citizenship only as a definitive legal status certified by one's voting card is to obscure the many ways outside of legally defined channels that people seek a relationship to the state, to communities other than the state (such as ethnically based communities), or to the wider world beyond official state borders.<sup>45</sup> Using the word "citizenship" to describe these other relationships is to emphasize that such practices are often a response to a legal citizenship from which people have been excluded, or because legal citizenship, if in hand, has not conferred the benefits that it has promised, or ought to promise. These are alternative citizenships that seek to enlarge what legal citizenship is or to address what legal citizenship has not. Two alternative concepts of citizenship, in particular, are important to this thesis: one is the claim to global citizenship, often expressed as a desire to access the benefits of what people understand to be "modernity."<sup>46</sup> Embodying this desire in the *subúrbios* of Mozambique's capital was the construction of a house out of permanent, industrially manufactured materials, the equipping of it with furnishings purchased at downtown retail stores, and, when the opportunity presented itself, the planning of roads and city blocks in the *subúrbios* according to a rectilinear grid. As we will see in Chapter 5, the residents of Maxaquene, the suburban neighborhood that was the site of Mozambique's first post-independence "slum upgrade" scheme, demanded that

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<sup>45</sup> Felicitas Becker and Joel Cabrita, "Introduction: Performing Citizenship and Enacting Exclusion on Africa's Indian Ocean Littoral," *Journal of African History* 55, no. 2 (July 2014): 161–71.

<sup>46</sup> Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*; Miescher, "Building the City of the Future."

planners install wide, two-lane roads, where previously there had been no roads at all, and were willing to demolish houses that stood in the way to accomplish this. Only two percent of neighborhood households possessed a car at the time.

The other alternative citizenship important to this thesis is urban citizenship. As scholars of citizenship have pointed out, people's relationship to city authorities (and the right to be in the city enjoyed by select people) preceded by more than a millennium people's relationships to a nation-state, a novel invention by comparison – and is often just as important to urban residents.<sup>47</sup> Urban citizenship has been addressed in a number of different ways, but will be understood in part here as many scholars address it: as the ways that people assert claims to belonging to the city (given that the right to tenure is never assured) and to be served by municipal services, infrastructure, and governance (which they have been historically denied).<sup>48</sup>

Given that such claims touch on core matters of livelihood, the practices of urban citizenship inevitably intersect with practices of state citizenship. James Scott's influential critique of the "high modernist" state has much less applicability to places where state power is thin or uneven – places better characterized by state neglect than by state imperiousness.<sup>49</sup> States seek to make populations legible, Scott argues, and people, in turn, seek refuge from the state's predatory behavior by making themselves illegible. People living on urban margins, however, such as in Maputo's *subúrbios*, seek

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<sup>47</sup> James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Cities and Citizenship," in *Cities and Citizenship*, ed. James Holston (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 1–18; Magnusson, *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City*.

<sup>48</sup> See the contributions to Michael Peter Smith and Michael McQuarrie, eds., *Remaking Urban Citizenship: Organizations, Institutions, and the Right to the City* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> Scott, *Seeing Like a State*; Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

recognition by the state, seek to be “legible” to the state, and will do things to make themselves visible.<sup>50</sup> Even though it might be to city authorities that people directly speak, and very localized affairs about which they make claims, they do so in the language and with the understanding of what it means to be within the state’s embrace. James Holston, in his study of what he calls “insurgent citizenship,” argues that for the residents of São Paulo’s *favelas*, construction of illegal housing injected a claim to economic citizenship into national political citizenship.<sup>51</sup> Acts of unauthorized “auto-construction” were simultaneously claims to belonging, to equal opportunity, and to equal political participation – and usually made with reference to constitutional guarantees. The margins of Brazil’s cities, he argues, have been incubators of modern Brazilian democracy. Those who have built the *favelas* have made the state constitution mean something on the ground.

Following Holston, this thesis makes use of the multiple scales at which urban citizenship operates, examining how through small, often individualized acts relative to their homes, people are simultaneously acting with larger claims in mind. In most studies of citizenship, however, including Holston’s, the state to which people direct claims is a relatively coherent entity. A pattern for rights and governance has already been established for some, and people on the outside simply want in. In Mozambique at independence, there was no state worth the name. The people of the *subúrbios* helped conjure it into being.

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<sup>50</sup> Nielsen, “In the Vicinity of the State”; Nielsen, “Inverse Governmentality.”

<sup>51</sup> James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); James Holston, “Contesting Privilege with Right: The Transformation of Differentiated Citizenship in Brazil,” *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 3–4 (June 2011): 335–52.

## The Imagined State

“The state” is hardly the completed, clearly constituted apparatus of governance that the literature of development often takes it to be, cleanly delineated from and above the society “it” is said to govern.<sup>52</sup> Just as citizenships are constituted by acts of imagination, so are states, and any discussion of “the state” must begin with the acknowledgement that no state exists outside of the image people have of it. It is an abstraction shaped by both government and governed, always in formation, and never formed.<sup>53</sup> The abstraction can be experienced vividly through rituals and discourse and people’s interactions with those said to be representatives of “the state” – so vivid, in fact, that the state seems almost tangible. But if the “ensemble of institutions” often understood to comprise the state are barely functioning, then the abstraction can also be quite spectral.

Scholars of contemporary cities in Africa and elsewhere have fixed their attention on what happens in places where state functions are absent or in retreat. They often emphasize the so-called informality of much of urban life: untaxed markets, unregulated

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<sup>52</sup> Timothy Mitchell, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics,” *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (March 1991): 77–96; Akhil Gupta, “Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State,” *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 2 (May 1995): 375–402; Michael Taussig, *The Magic of the State* (New York: Routledge, 1997); George Steinmetz, “Introduction: Culture and the State,” in *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn*, ed. George Steinmetz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 1–49; Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, “Introduction: States of Imagination,” in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, ed. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 1–38; Crais, “Introduction.”

<sup>53</sup> Talal Asad, “Where Are the Margins of the State?,” in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das and Deborah Poole (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2004), 279–88.



labor, unauthorized settlements – all of it said to be the result of “weak” or “failed” African states unable to shepherd the activities taking place within their borders or to otherwise follow a European model said to be the norm.<sup>54</sup> (Seeking a less laden concept than “failed state” to describe post-colonial governmental institutions in Africa, Christopher Lund calls them “twilight institutions” because their actual contours are so difficult to make out.)<sup>55</sup> The culprits are identified as the hollowed-out bureaucracies bequeathed by colonial rule, corrupt leaders, and, decades after independence, the IMF-imposed neoliberal reforms that gutted a sizable portion of the state apparatus.

At the same time, scholars emphasize the ways that people seeking the state’s embrace, or hoping to borrow from its store of symbolic legitimacy, often mimic the state’s rituals and functions.<sup>56</sup> Indigenous Peruvians, living outside the state’s gaze, march annually in strict military-like discipline and wave the national flag to demonstrate

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<sup>54</sup> Critiques of “failed state” analysis include Jonathan Di John, “The Concept, Causes, and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature and Agenda for Research with Specific Reference to Sub-Saharan Africa,” *European Journal of Development Research* 22, no. 1 (2010): 10–30; Philip J. Havik, “Virtual Nations and Failed States: Making Sense of the Labyrinth,” in *Sure Road?: Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique*, ed. Eric Morier-Genoud (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 31–76.

<sup>55</sup> Christian Lund, “Twilight Institutions: An Introduction,” *Development and Change* 37, no. 4 (2006): 673–84.

<sup>56</sup> Finn Stepputat, “Urbanizing the Countryside: Armed Conflict, State Formation, and the Politics of Place in Contemporary Guatemala,” in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, ed. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 284–312; Finn Stepputat, “Marching for Progress: Rituals of Citizenship, State and Belonging in a High Andes District,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23, no. 2 (2004): 244–59; Veena Das, “The Signature of the State: The Paradox of Illegibility,” in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das and Deborah Poole (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2004), 225–52; Monique Nuijten and David Lorenzo, “Ritual and Rule in the Periphery: State Violence and Local Governance in a Peruvian *Comunidad*,” in *Rules of Law and Laws of Ruling*, ed. Franz von Benda-Beckmann, Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, and Julia Eckert (Abington: Ashgate, 2009), 101–23.

that they, too, are members of both the state and the nation. In Guatemala, the civic leaders of towns officially unrecognized by the state construct town squares with all the customary public accouterment. In rural India, people without ready access to local courts fabricate official-looking documents to legitimize transactions.

Anthropologist Morten Nielsen studied a neighborhood at the distant fringes of Maputo that was established by the government in 2000 to re-settle thousands of people displaced by catastrophic flooding earlier in the year.<sup>57</sup> It was intended by planning officials as a “model neighborhood.” When the government presence evaporated, as it soon did, the grid layout of the neighborhood might have fragmented into a planning free-for-all. But residents took matters into their own hands, at least in part. According to Nielsen, many of them hired professional land surveyors to lay out plots. By surveying house plots according to how it was thought that officials would have wanted them surveyed, people in the neighborhood thus imagined an active state, and imagined it governing. Nielsen calls this “inverse governmentality”: acts of mimicry that are a kind of aspirational performance – acts of citizenship to be sure, that reassert people’s belonging to a state either unwilling or incapable of serving them. Through these acts of citizenship, they imagine the state differently than it currently is, and in so doing simultaneously make the state “exist” where it currently does not. In the Maputo case, one can easily imagine a more strictly pragmatic motive to the mimicry as well: What if

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<sup>57</sup> Morten Nielsen, “Filling in the Blanks: The Potency of Fragmented Imageries of the State,” *Review of African Political Economy* 34, no. 114 (2007): 695–708; Nielsen, “In the Vicinity of the State”; Morten Nielsen, “Mimesis of the State: From Natural Disaster to Urban Citizenship on the Outskirts of Maputo, Mozambique,” *Social Analysis* 54, no. 3 (2010): 153–73; Nielsen, “Inverse Governmentality.”

the government, long absent, were to suddenly return to the model neighborhood it had abandoned?

As this thesis will make clear, however, “informality,” a desire for legitimated order, a desire for a judicious governing authority, and the mimicry of state functions in the state’s absence are not limited to contemporary contexts. A widespread disregard for official rules and regulations – often because the rules are unenforced or unenforceable – is hardly exclusive to the post-colonial condition.<sup>58</sup> The informal settlements of African cities were spawned in the colonial era. “The colonial state” was not the unitary, all-encompassing, smoothly functioning entity that officials in London, Paris, and Lisbon hoped it would be. Colonial states, like those that succeeded them, were abstractions in principle and often ephemeral in practice. Systems of control were fragmented and uneven, varying in degree and in time and in place, and while the concentration of force in some areas might give historians the impression of a single-minded effort, it is easy to confuse the rituals and symbols of the colonial state with realities on the ground.<sup>59</sup> As John Comaroff has argued, “The colonial state, in South Africa as elsewhere, was always an aspiration, a work-in-progress, an intention, a phantasm-to-be-made-real. Rarely was it ever a fully actualized accomplishment.”<sup>60</sup> In the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques, just a few miles from the offices of the municipal administration, in a city that was the seat of

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<sup>58</sup> Bekker and Fourchard, “Introduction,” 3–4, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (December 1994): 1516–45; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56.

<sup>60</sup> John L. Comaroff, “Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts, and Fictions,” *Social Identities* 4, no. 3 (October 1998): 341.

Portuguese power in Mozambique, the law was often heard as a distant echo, when it was heard at all. To residents of the *subúrbios*, the municipality was itself a “twilight institution.”

Living outside the law was not freedom. Throughout colonial Africa, “regimes of exception” were engineered into legal systems to sanction extra-legal exploitation.<sup>61</sup> The denial of civil protections to the vast majority of people exposed them to arbitrary violence, and *de facto* regimes of exception reigned whenever legal protections, if granted on paper, were subverted in practice. The *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques were a landscape of exception, largely characterized by official neglect. Negligence was its own form of brutality – punishment without the discipline.<sup>62</sup>

The authorities that were present – *régulos* and the Portuguese post administrators they answered to – were best avoided. In any case, they stood aloof from most of the transactions of urban life. Paying rent and constructing fences between neighbors, unregulated in the countryside because non-existent there, could be highly charged affairs in the dense conditions of the *subúrbios*, and so in the relative absence of a legal order, unofficial rules partially filled the vacuum. Mutual understandings between neighbors, and between tenants and landlords, attempted to regulate where people could live and how they conducted themselves. This was the vaunted “citizenship of daily life” – order

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<sup>61</sup> Gregory Mann, “What Was the *Indigénat*? The ‘Empire of Law’ in French West Africa,” *Journal of African History* 50, no. 3 (2009): 331–53; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

<sup>62</sup> Silvia Grinberg has applied theorist Giorgio Agamben’s ideas of exception to shantytown life (in Argentina). Silvia Grinberg, “Colonial Histories: Biopolitics and Shantytowns in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area,” in *Agamben and Colonialism*, ed. Marcelo Svirsky and Simone Bignall (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 204–25. See also Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Meridian, 1998).

understood through the predictable and the ordinary – and, as Chapter 2 will discuss, the order that prevailed was a relatively conservative one.<sup>63</sup> It had to be, because a system based on norms that are ultimately unenforceable is too fragile to risk putting to the test. With the existing authority too compromised to trust with adjudicating many disputes, conflict either boiled over or was suppressed by one or both of the disputants. To the precariousness of tenure in the *subúrbios* were added the tensions of unresolved conflict and unvoiced complaint – of life lived in unrelieved suspense. Residents of the *subúrbios* were people without a recourse. In such an environment, rules to govern everyday transactions were not only invented, they were held dear.

Scholarship on Mozambique's independence era generally addresses two topics: the heavy hand of Frelimo's rural policies and Frelimo's attempts to forge a Mozambican national identity.<sup>64</sup> In these areas of focus, such work speaks to some of the preoccupations of Africanist histories in general: discourses of nationhood and contests over political power, particularly in the context of party politics. This thesis, however,

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<sup>63</sup> Lynn A. Staeheli et al., "Dreaming the Ordinary: Daily Life and the Complex Geographies of Citizenship," *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 5 (2012): 628–44; Keebet von Benda-Beckmann and Fernanda Pirie, "Introduction," in *Order and Disorder: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Keebet von Benda-Beckmann and Fernanda Pirie (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 1–15. For the classic work on the informal order of everyday urban life, see Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

<sup>64</sup> Christian Geffray, *A causa das armas: Antropologia da guerra contemporânea em Moçambique*, trans. Adelaide Odete Ferreira (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1991); Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique Since Independence* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997); Yussuf Adam, "Trick or Treat: The Relationship Between Destabilization, Aid, and Government Development Policies in Mozambique, 1975-1990" (PhD diss., Roskilde University, 1996); Merle L. Bowen, *The State Against the Peasantry: Rural Struggles in Colonial and Postcolonial Mozambique* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000); Alice Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Post-Colonial Africa: The Case of Mozambique, 1975-1994* (London: Routledge, 2006).

hopes to expand upon a topic much less developed in Africanist historiography: the substance of people's expectations of specific state policies at independence. Instead of focusing exclusively on political contestation over who belonged to the new nation, and what it was that leaders of the independent state wanted to do, and the policies they attempted to implement, this thesis focuses on what it was that residents of Maputo wanted a new state apparatus and its bureaucracy to do – a nascent state whose attention was elsewhere.

In 1974, when the dictatorship in Lisbon was toppled, and the thin administrative apparatus in Lourenço Marques *subúrbios* dissolved, Frelimo was for many city residents little more than an abstraction. After independence, the nascent Frelimo-led state represented less an aspiration, and more a desperate hope. Frelimo's early efforts, and the relative handful of trained personnel available, were almost entirely concentrated on the transformation of the countryside, where more than 90 percent of the population of the new country lived. Frelimo had formulated no urban policy, and what was left of the inherited municipal bureaucracy was dedicated almost exclusively to managing the City of Cement. In ways that have never been acknowledged in Mozambique's historiography, and underexplored in African urban historiography in general, the nature of urban governance was shaped by residents of the *subúrbios* themselves – people who through imaginative acts of citizenship sought to make the state something real in their lives.

### **Fragmented City, Fragmentary History**

Cities resist master narratives. The city is a universe, best grasped in fragments, the more so when it is the past one is attempting to glimpse. This thesis is itself

fragmentary. I have focused on episodes over the last 65 years that, looking backward, seem to have been exceptional windows of choice, moments when more and different options seem to have been newly available to people. One chapter, for instance, addresses the consequences of economic growth in the last decade or so of colonial rule, when several thousand people in the *subúrbios* began building in concrete – though concrete construction was illegal there. Another chapter addresses the nationalizations of Maputo’s largely abandoned City of Cement after independence, when there seemed a historic opportunity to undo the consequences of a century of housing discrimination.

The evidence the thesis makes use of is fragmentary as well. The evidence is the spiny shrubs, reed bundles, corrugated zinc panels, and concrete blocks used as fences; the same reeds and panels and blocks used for house partitions; the plans of houses, yards, compounds, and apartment buildings; the external features with which people embellish their homes, such as pigeon coops and verandas; and custom-made or store-bought chests, bedsteads, and other furnishings. A chest or, for those who cannot afford one, old suitcases, often hold a trove of documents and photographs.<sup>65</sup> Among such materials that have informed this thesis are old rental slips, “native” pass booklets, and ancient title deeds. The reasons people kept such documents, and shared them with me, were often more illuminating than whatever specific written data might appear on them. A machine-printed rental receipt given in 1959 to a man living in a reed house (Chapter

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<sup>65</sup> Do-it-yourself archives, so-called “Tin-trunk texts,” are discussed in Karin Barber, ed., *Africa’s Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). The significance of bureaucratic ephemera is discussed in Lorena Rizzo, “Visual Aperture: Bureaucratic Systems of Identification, Photography and Personhood in Colonial Southern Africa,” *History of Photography* 37, no. 3 (2013): 263–82.

2), a handwritten speech read aloud at the 1963 inauguration of an illegally built concrete house (Chapter 3), and Super-8 films of independent Mozambique's first "slum upgrade" scheme, in 1978, from a Swedish architect's personal collection (Chapter 5), were of as much value, analytically, than much of what I came across in the national historical archives of either Mozambique or Portugal.

This thesis is mostly about areas defined by the lack of official attention and involvement, and the vast silences regarding them in official colonial archives ought not come as a surprise. The silences are in fact highly instructive. The remarkably brief monthly reports of suburban post administrators, the evident puzzlement and disorientation of administrators in the rare instances they found themselves resolving conflicts among suburban tenants and landlords, and the almost exclusive focus of municipal records on matters within the City of Cement help reveal the fuzzy contours of official Portugal's tightly circumscribed knowledge and field of action.

One chapter, however, makes ample use of an official archive. Chapter 3, which addresses clandestine concrete construction in the *subúrbios* in the late colonial era, relies heavily on a sampling of "clandestine constructions" case files found at the municipal building department – files which historians have not, until now, consulted. The case files show homeowners pleading poverty, describing their concrete-block houses as hovels, and abjectly begging for leniency. I was able to interview some of the same people whose files I found in the archive – before I found the files. Off the bureaucratic stage, African homebuilders who dared to build in concrete did not consider their projects to be mere acts of survival, nor their houses to be shacks, but rather they considered them great achievements secured through hard work, patience, good sense, and God's grace. Often



in Africanist historiography when people's relationship to the law is discussed, the starting point is the law.<sup>66</sup> Yet to discuss colonial law and then to explain how colonial law was widely evaded and subverted is still to foreground the lawmaker. It makes law the action and everything that follows the response. It still frames African agency within a wider picture of European agency – the dynamic observed in the files of the municipal archives. Our historic narratives, however, ought to reflect just how distant the various organs of administration could be from everyday life. Interviewing people first about the houses they had built, before I had consulted the municipal archives, was not a calculated choice. It helped me, however, to frame the decisions people had made so that laws and “the state” were located in their proper place in people's calculations of risk – sometimes in the background, sometimes in the foreground, and often somewhere in between. Building in concrete seen only through the eyes of the authorities seeking to suppress it looks like a crime or subversion. Building in concrete seen primarily through the eyes of the builders themselves looks like an act of sacrifice and foresight. The opportunity to speak directly to ordinary people whose same voices are also heard in official archives, and to speak to them before an archive is consulted, is a rare one. It is a useful strategy going forth in the larger project of subverting the dominance that official archives have over the work of historians and how historical questions are formulated.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> John L. Comaroff, “Colonialism, Culture, and the Law: A Foreword,” *Law and Social Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2001): 305–14; Richard Roberts and Kristen Mann, eds., *Law in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1991). A historiography of works based on attempts at control and acts of evasion would be enormous.

<sup>67</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, “*I Saw a Nightmare...*”: *Doing Violence to Memory: The Soweto Uprising, June 16, 1976*, Gutenberg-E (New

Rules not as they are codified in law, but rather rules and authority as people understand them, and as they hope and imagine them to be, are the subject of this thesis. One cannot learn the “rules” by reading them in an official register of laws and regulations, or in the official files that record the subversion of official laws, but rather by listening to what people say about the rules. Moreover, the life of rules is not understood only through what people say, but also through what they do. As Frederick Cooper has argued in his work on labor conflict in the late colonial era, discourse analysis, the great enterprise of post-colonial scholarship, ought not be limited to the words that people verbalize or write. “Discourse does not refer merely to speech acts, but to the range of acts – laden with power – which establish meanings within specific historical contexts: a general strike or the arrest of a striker constitutes discourse, as does a governor-general’s speech or a union’s newspaper or the rituals of a religious cult.”<sup>68</sup> The built landscape, at its many scales, is a record of acts, each laden with power – a palimpsest of gestures that overlap and revise other gestures over time.<sup>69</sup>

The built environment is infused with narratives – narratives of construction and narratives of use. Paul Oliver, in examining how building types and construction techniques are handed from generation to generation, compares the process to Jan

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York: Columbia University Press, 2005), <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/PM.ack.html>; Premesh Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts* (Cape Town: HRSC, 2009); Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>68</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15.

<sup>69</sup> Nick Shepherd and Noëleen Murray, “Introduction,” in *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City*, ed. Noëleen Murray and Nick Shepherd (London: Routledge, 2007), 1.

Vansina's ideas about oral tradition and how it, too, is transmitted, with variations, through time.<sup>70</sup> Buildings and spaces may seem to "say" a great deal on their own behalf, but forms and structures do not actually speak for themselves. This thesis is largely based on interviews: with residents of Maputo, including a number of stonemasons and carpenters; with current and former Mozambican officials of various ranks, from neighborhood block leaders to cabinet ministers; with several former Portuguese-era officials, including those now living in Portugal and those who are now Mozambican citizens; and several foreign architects who were attached to Mozambique's housing department in the late 1970s and 1980s. The interviews were conducted from 2008 to 2013, though they were concentrated during my longest stay in Maputo, from 2011 to 2013. In Maputo's neighborhoods I was usually accompanied by a research assistant, each of whom was a resident of Chamanculo, and who would introduce me to people, translate from the Ronga or Changana on the occasions when Portuguese was not suitable, and was usually as much a part of the conversation as I or the interview subject was. The interviews were deliberately conversational, wide-ranging, and generally long. I recorded some 170 conversations, but many of these were with people who I kept returning to again and again, and inevitably many conversations were not recorded at all, including with the people in Chamanculo with whom I stayed for several weeks at a time. The question of housing did not always come up in interviews. In lieu of more substantial historical work on the texture of everyday life in Lourenço Marques and Maputo, one must read a number of social-realistic novels, newspaper *crónicas*, and published

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<sup>70</sup> Paul Oliver, "Handed Down Architecture: Tradition and Transmission," in *Dwellings, Settlements, and Tradition: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Jean-Paul Bourdier and Nezar AlSayyad (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), 74.

memoirs, as I have done my best to do, but there is no substitute for listening to people talk about the past, and how they regard their place in it. To ask people solely about housing would have been to foreground the houses perhaps artificially. On several occasions, I video-recorded people giving me a tour of their houses. Digital copies of all interviews recordings (both voice and video) and transcripts of interviews will be deposited with the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique as well as with the architecture and planning faculty of the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, both in Maputo. (All interviews cited in this thesis took place in the Maputo area, unless otherwise noted.)

The interviews were a group enterprise of people convened by a male American researcher with his own interests, his own priorities, and his own presumptions about house, home, household, and property – presumptions shaped by his own individual experience of the commodified American real-estate industry and the marketing of the American “dream house.”<sup>71</sup> I have done my best not to impose such idealizations on the struggle for shelter in Maputo, such as by highlighting cases only because they conform to prior expectations of what aspiration looks like. For instance, the reader will not encounter a great deal of discussion about architectural distinction – as might attract the attention of an architectural historian – because architectural distinction is not, historically, what most people have aspired to in the *subúrbios* of Maputo, but rather dignified conformity. Additionally, there is a fundamental weakness in the thesis

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<sup>71</sup> The place of the suburban “dream house” in American history has been thoroughly explored. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Vintage, 2004); Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

regarding a matter that I hope future iterations of this project and the work of other scholars will better address. The making of houses in Maputo silences the role of women. Women tend to put forward their husbands as the sole spokespersons for the history of a house, and in accounts men tend to exclude the role of women, often a *primary* role, in the financing of construction – as the significant participation of single women in the colonial-era rental industry helps to make evident. This is to say nothing of the general silencing of the role of women in the construction process itself, and in the ongoing maintenance of a house. This thesis is mostly about the relationship of a household to its neighborhood, to the rest of the city, and to a state-in-formation, and though I attempt when I can to reveal the internal dynamics of households – such as the best urban ethnographic work does – this is not its emphasis. As Karen Tranberg Hansen has written, the intimate spaces of houses are sites of conflict, and a house that for one member of a household signals a great achievement may be for other members of a household the product of their unrewarded sacrifices and exploitation.<sup>72</sup> Nor was I able to explore in the depth I hoped living arrangements to which stigma was attached. A number of compounds in the colonial era, for instance, were inhabited entirely (or nearly so) by women who relied on sex work in whole or in part for their income – and decades later women were hesitant to even acknowledge that they once lived in a compound, whether or not they engaged in sex work.<sup>73</sup> That many of the cases discussed in this

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<sup>72</sup> Karen Tranberg Hansen, *Keeping House in Lusaka* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Hansen's work is rare. She was able to do research in the same household over more than two decades, resulting in an illuminating work of historical anthropology that did not depend on looking backward.

<sup>73</sup> The classic work on communities of women engaged in sex work (in Nairobi) is White, *The Comforts of Home*.

thesis involve a married couple of man and woman ought not lead the reader to assume that households were thus solely composed, or were even in the majority.

The consequences of not fully examining household dynamics for a project that attempts to explore the everyday politics of housing are steep, since such dynamics are ultimately inseparable from such politics. At the same time, while this thesis argues that the spaces of the city are not solely the background to other dramas, it must be acknowledged that often, and in fact usually in the course of daily life, they *are* mere background. Moreover, the background expands well beyond the city for many of the people who live in it. Many people maintain ongoing ties to rural homesteads, and many women in Maputo (and not a few men) frequently travel to fields (*machambas*) not far from the city – a fact that would be more significant, however, for a work that examines labor and livelihoods, which this thesis does only minimally. The thesis cannot escape the choice of the neighborhood where most research took place. Because Chamanculo is one of the oldest in Maputo, with some of the city’s longest-established families, its dynamics are very different than those in neighborhoods to the north of the city, where many people have immigrated from rural areas, or are the children of people who did. People in Maputo’s oldest neighborhoods have had a very different experience of colonial rule and independence than, for instance, people who came to the city as refugees of the civil war.

This thesis, as I have said, avoids forcing a master narrative upon life in Mozambique’s capital, yet it is precisely for this reason that chapters unabashedly make use of smaller narratives – a method that in some quarters might be belittled as “storytelling.” Many post-*Annales* historians have demonstrated the merit of micro-

narratives in illuminating the lives and thinking of individuals who might otherwise be lost in the abstractions of historians intent on revealing the “structures” of society.<sup>74</sup> The object here is to reveal the palette of options available to people in history and the invisible frame of constraint – not to establish what norms and possibilities definitively were, is if this were even possible, but rather to feel for their contours. (Hayden White likens this narrative approach to pointillism.)<sup>75</sup> To relate the histories of individuals with the details of their lives left in is not for the purposes of making dry history more “accessible.” Rather, the stories are evidence, demonstrating how individual actions and thoughts were embedded in history in a wider canvass of character, memory, and affect.

### **Chapter Organization**

The thesis proceeds in rough chronological order, from about 1950 to the present, however the emphasis is on the decade before and the decade after independence. Because each chapter attempts to stand on its own, there is necessarily chronological overlap.

Chapter 1 is an analytic tour of the spaces of the racially segregated city in the late colonial era, with an emphasis on the spaces of the *subúrbios*, and how they were both materially and socially constructed. I look at different housing types, the methods and materials of construction, the integration of housing and construction into the regional economy, and the status and meaning associated with different types of housing and building materials.

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<sup>74</sup> Alex Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives: Reflections on the Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 45–46.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

Chapter 2 discusses two matters that reveal something of the relationship between the urban order and authority in the late colonial era. One is the relatively conservative order and extra-legal formality of land tenure and the housing market in the *subúrbios* – areas that colonial officials considered chaotic and that current development discourse labels “informal.” It discusses landlord-tenant disputes and the lack of trust in existing authorities to resolve them, forcing disputants to resort to extrajudicial means when conflicts arose. The other matter is how suburban conditions became a political flashpoint in the 1960s – one of the *only* debates that managed to get a public airing during a time of war and harsh censorship. It discusses official housing initiatives, not for the plans themselves, but for the undisguised rage they unleashed among suburban residents, who saw in the local housing agency a stand-in for government as a whole.

Chapter 3 addresses how the burgeoning local economy of the 1960s enabled several thousand people in the *subúrbios* to build in concrete block – even though construction there of houses in anything but precarious materials was illegal. The chapter argues that such challenges to the spatial order embodied a challenge to the racial order.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the first 15 years after independence, and what seemed a new window of choice. Chapter 4 explores the intended and unintended consequences of Frelimo’s nationalizations of the City of Cement, including the spontaneous, grass-roots nationalizations of suburban rental units that the downtown nationalizations inspired – and that Frelimo was compelled to reluctantly accept. Also discussed is the role of the occupation of the City of Cement in crystalizing class difference, and what it says about how the built landscape can freeze inequalities in place.



Chapter 5 addresses the history of Maputo's first, short-lived "slum upgrade" scheme, in the neighborhood of Maxaquene, a project that put in conflict clashing visions of "modernization" and "urbanization," and threatened state power once planning was assumed by residents themselves. It examines the home-making campaign by the state-sponsored Mozambique women's organization, and discusses Maputo under siege, in the 1980s, when dire shortages and the influx of refugees from war in the countryside changed the rules of the urban order, and inspired Frelimo to enact a draconian solution: mass removals of "unproductive" city dwellers to state-run farms.

The conclusion touches on the era of structural adjustment, discussing the shock of IMF-imposed neoliberal policies on housing and land tenure, including the eventual explosion of concrete construction and the changing role of authority relative to the commodification of housing.

## Chapter 1

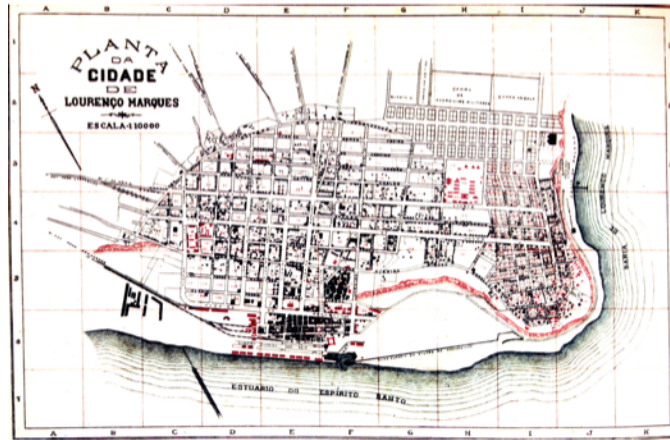
### Spaces of Intimacy, Spaces of Estrangement, c. 1950 to 1975

On February 3, 1976, the first Heroes' Day celebrated in independent Mozambique, President Samora Machel announced the regime's latest major policy initiative.<sup>1</sup> The year before, Frelimo had nationalized land, schools, private health facilities, and even funeral services. Now the moment had come to appropriate all of the country's rental buildings, an order that would take in most of the capital's City of Cement. In a speech before thousands, at a plaza where cement gave way to *subúrbios*, Machel began by declaring that the city had been renamed. Lourenço Marques "died" at 9:35 that morning, he said.<sup>2</sup> Later in the speech, he led his audience, rhetorically, on an inspection of the people's new possession, a Maputo that, now absent most of its pre-independence European population, nonetheless remained Lourenço Marques in its bones.

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<sup>1</sup> Samora Machel, "Independência implica benefícios para as massas exploradas [Speech given February 3, 1976]," in *A nossa luta é uma revolução* (Lisbon: CIDA-C, 1976), 33–70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.



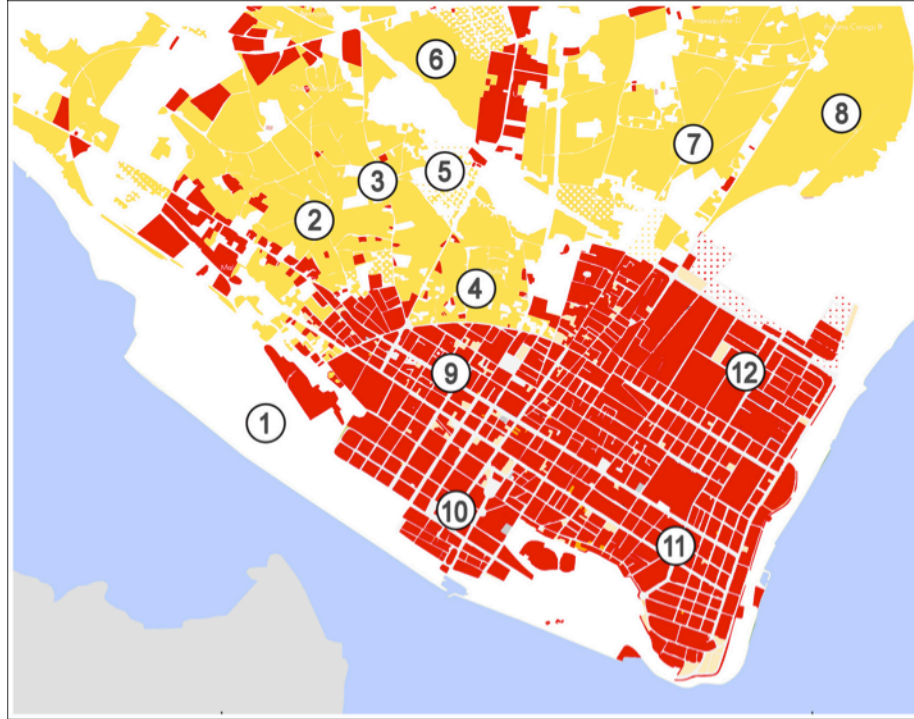
**Map 1.** Lourenço Marques in 1929. The *subúrbios*, north and west of the curve of the Estrada de Circunvalação (“Ring Street” – later Avenida Caldas Xavier), are not labeled. (Source: João Sousa Morais, *Maputo: Património da estrutura e forma urbana, topologia do lugar* [Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001], 134.)

He began by speaking of the *subúrbios*, where most black Mozambicans lived. He walked his listeners up the slope to Alto Maé, the neighborhood just inside the City of Cement and home to people he called the “intermediaries” of colonialism, such as people of mixed race and, until recently, many working-class whites. Then he moved down the city’s principal avenue, pointing out to his listeners the Indian neighborhood and the Pakistani neighborhood (by which he presumably meant a predominately Hindu and a predominately Muslim neighborhood) before reaching the more posh districts that had been almost exclusively white, and that now stood mostly abandoned.

It is a form of apartheid, like in South Africa. It exists, it is good to say it. If we didn’t they would say that we weren’t being honest. We have to face the reality of our country. It was colonialism that created all this. That is why we said at the beginning that our lives reflect at the present moment the structures of colonialism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 56.



**Map 2.** The City of Cement and its *subúrbios* in 2008. Red and yellow areas correspond to areas of formal and unauthorized construction, respectively, and do not align exactly with the municipal chart of “suburban” parcels.

(Illustration by Luciana Justiniani Hees using maps appearing in Cristina Delgado Henriques, *Maputo: Cinco décadas de mudança territorial* [Lisbon: IPAD, 2008].)

**Key**

1. Port and railroad facilities

*Subúrbios* (in yellow)

2. Chamanculo (the southern section of the neighborhood includes formal construction)

3. Xipamanine

4. Mafalala

5. Bairro da Munhuana (Bairro Indígena)

6. Bairro do Aeroporto (Bairro Clandestino)

7. Maxaquene

8. Polana Caniço

City of Cement (in red)

9. Alto Maé

10. Baixa (Downtown)

11. Polana Cimento

12. Sommerschild

Many residents of the *subúrbios* followed the route of which Machel spoke on a daily basis: in the morning up the slope to work in the City of Cement, and in the evening back down the slope to home and to prayer. Young Naftal, the protagonist of Lília Momplé's short story "Caniço," written in the 1980s about Lourenço Marques in the 1940s, takes the walk as he rushes from his neighborhood of reed houses and filth to go to work as a domestic servant in a Portuguese household.<sup>4</sup> Momplé, who in the colonial era worked as a social worker in the *subúrbios*, portrays Naftal's neighborhood as a welter of distended bellies, heaps of garbage, and swarming flies. As Naftal walks up the hill, and along Avenida Pinheiro Chagas, a principal boulevard, his passage through the city strikes him as a forward progress through time, and he gloomily reflects that it is as if he is being left behind. After the houses of reeds, he passes among the modest wood-and-zinc houses of Indians and *mestiços*, with some concrete-block houses mixed in, and then the wood-and-zinc houses thin out and there are only the concrete neighborhoods with streets lined with greenery. "And the smooth scent of the gardens and acacias in flower replaces the stink of misery."<sup>5</sup>

During the immediate post-independence era, it was common when discussing the city's colonial past to describe Lourenço Marques as an apartheid city, as Machel did in his speech. The urban policy of the colonial regime, a Mozambique-based Portuguese architect told *Tempo* magazine in late 1974, had been to "maintain the population divided by economic 'apartheid,' and not stopping with being an apartheid as efficient as South

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<sup>4</sup> Lília Momplé, "Caniço," in *Ninguém matou Suhura*, 4th ed. (Maputo: CIEDIMA, 2008), 23–38. The collection was originally published in 1988; the story won an award linked to the city's centenary celebration in 1987.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

Africa's, this form of apartheid presented an even greater advantage by being less overt and thus less scandalous.”<sup>6</sup> All colonial-era urban policy, the architect continued, had been geared toward “creating and developing a city of cement, growing day by day in altitude, for the housing of a colonial bourgeoisie; and maintaining in its place, in the city's less geographically favored areas, the neighborhoods of *caniço*, where in deplorable living conditions the great mass of workers is heaped.”

Comparing Portugal's policies in its African possessions to South African apartheid planning targeted a mainstay of Portuguese propaganda. Portugal had for decades insisted that its laws were colorblind. In the 1950s and 1960s, at a time when other European colonial powers were withdrawing from Africa, the Lisbon regime held fast, arguing that during half a millennium as colonizers the Portuguese had established they were historically exceptional, unique in their aptitude for absorbing other peoples into European culture.<sup>7</sup> Johannesburg served the Portuguese as a convenient foil. The apartheid metropolis of neighboring South Africa was a stark example of what Lourenço Marques was not. In the revised histories of the Portuguese era that emerged once that era was ending, the claim was inverted. Johannesburg was characterized as simply the more manifest form of what Lourenço Marques always essentially was.

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<sup>6</sup> “‘Apartheid’ na habitação,” *Tempo*, October 27, 1974, 19–20.

<sup>7</sup> The literature on luso-tropicalist theory is vast, as is the literature debunking its premises. Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, *Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas* (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1953); Gerald J. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Cláudia Castelo, *O modo português de estar no mundo: O luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2001); José Luís Cabaço, *Moçambique: Identidades, colonialismo e libertação* (Maputo: Marimbique, 2010).

Lourenço Marques in the decades after World War II was without question a dual city: a predominately European city of concrete-block houses and apartment towers on one side of the curve of Avenida Caldas Xavier, and a much larger and predominately African city of precariously built houses of wood, zinc, and reeds on the other. (Maps 1, 2.) Calling this apartheid, however, whatever rhetorical purposes it may have served in Mozambique in the years just prior to and just after independence, obscures the peculiar kind of dual city it was, as well as the many other divisions to which residents of the city gave definition, and were compelled to live by. The underlying logic of Lourenço Marques, of European populations living separate and distinct from black majorities, was as it had been in many parts of colonial Africa.<sup>8</sup> Residential segregation, however, was not pursued with the same vigor or ideological clarity as it was, for instance, in South Africa.

There were no vast “buffer zones,” for instance, no *cordons sanitaires* to maintain a great distance between predominately African neighborhoods and predominately European neighborhoods. The relative compactness of the city is evident in Momplé’s story, and even in Machel’s words on Heroes Day. Lourenço Marques was a city in which people walked. There had been streetcars since the first decade of the twentieth century, and later some bus lines extended into the inner *subúrbios*. At least until the mid- to late-1960s, however, the most common means of travel, for most people, was on foot. One reason was that for many years bus drivers refused to let people board without

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<sup>8</sup> Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, “Residential Segregation in African Cities,” in *Urbanization and African Cultures*, ed. Steven J. Salm and Toyin Falola (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 343–56; Branwen Gruffydd Jones, “Civilizing African Cities: International Housing and Urban Policy from Colonial to Neoliberal Times,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 6, no. 1 (2012): 23–40.

shoes, a restriction that barred most black women.<sup>9</sup> Another reason was the relative proximity to each other of homes, workplaces, markets, and churches and mosques, which rendered a bus fare an often unnecessary extravagance. Only about three miles separated the most populous suburban neighborhoods from the most exclusive neighborhoods of the City of Cement, and most of the city lay somewhere between. The heart of Chamanculo, Lourenço Marques's largest suburban neighborhood, was situated about a mile above the port and rail facilities, the city's largest employers, and only a few more minutes walking would take you to the downtown commercial district, the *baixa*. Sailors on shore leave often walked up the hill from the port to the brothels of the dense *bairros* of Malanga, Mafalala, and Lagoas ("lagoons") – and beyond Lagoas there was only the airport before one reached sparsely populated areas that few referred to as Lourenço Marques.

This chapter offers a detailed tour of the spaces of Lourenço Marques, a necessary primer for the developments discussed in the following chapters. It demonstrates the place of the built environment in people's lives during the colonial era, materially and symbolically: how urban space did not simply reflect relations among city dwellers, but also conditioned them. The chapter hastens through earlier centuries before slowing down in the 1950s, and it proceeds from large scale to small, from the Bay of Lourenço Marques to houses to backyards. As it does so, a consistent theme emerges: the personal intimacies that prevailed despite segregation, and the separations maintained even in tight quarters.

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<sup>9</sup> L. Lloys Frates, "Memory of Place, the Place of Memory: Women's Narrations of Late Colonial Lourenço Marques, Mozambique" (PhD diss., UCLA, 2002), 189.



## Insiders and Outsiders

The Portuguese were not the only Europeans to show interest in what they later called the Bay of Lourenço Marques, but they were the first, in the early 1500s, and the most persistent.<sup>10</sup> The bay and the Espírito Santo estuary that fed into it gave access to sources of ivory and gold in the southeast African interior; the name given to the bay derived from a Portuguese ivory trader, allegedly the first European to exploit the route.<sup>11</sup> For centuries, the Portuguese at the bay never numbered more than a few dozen, and malaria tended to reduce the settlement to a handful until more troops could be ordered to

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<sup>10</sup> The following account of early Lourenço Marques is based primarily on Alexandre Lobato, *História do presidio de Lourenço Marques, 1782-1786*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Estudos moçambicanos (Lisbon: Gráfica Boa Nova, 1949); Alexandre Lobato, *História do presidio de Lourenço Marques, 1787-1799*, vol. 2, 2 vols., Estudos moçambicanos (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1960); Alexandre Lobato, *Quatro estudos e uma evocação para a história de Lourenço Marques*, Estudos moçambicanos (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1961); Alexandre Lobato, *Lourenço Marques, Xilunguine: Biografia da cidade* (Lisbon: Agência-Geral do Ultramar, 1970); Alfredo Pereira de Lima, "Casas que fizeram Lourenço Marques," *Studia*, no. 24 (August 1968): 7–71; Alfredo Pereira de Lima, "Para um estudo da evolução urbana de Lourenço Marques," *Boletim municipal*, no. 7 (December 31, 1970): 7–16; Alfredo Pereira de Lima, *Pedras que já não falam* (Lourenço Marques: Tipografia Notícias, 1972); Jeanne Marie Penvenne, "A History of African Labor in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, 1877-1950" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1982); Maria Clara Mendes, *Maputo antes da independência: Geografia de uma cidade colonial*, vol. 68, Memórias do Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical (Lisbon: IICT, 1985), 17–27; Gerhard Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques antes de 1895: Aspectos da história dos estados vizinhos, da interação entre a povoação e aqueles estados e do comércio na baía e na povoação," *Arquivo: Boletim do Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique*, no. 2 (1987): 19–75; Jeanne Marie Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877-1962* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995); Valdemir Donizette Zamparoni, "Entre narros e mulungos: Colonialismo e paisagem social em Lourenço Marques, c. 1890 - c. 1940" (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> British maps called it Delagoa Bay and called the estuary the English River.

repopulate the small garrison, and more civilians could be compelled to join them.<sup>12</sup> The Dutch and then the Austrians dislodged the Portuguese for some decades in the eighteenth century, but they too were winnowed by disease and were compelled to give up their respective enterprises. The Portuguese resettled the bay in 1799, but conditions did not significantly improve. The Portuguese military post and its adjoining settlement were located on the northern shore of the estuary where it opened onto the bay, on a sandy spit of land described by historian Alfredo Pereira de Lima as less than a mile long and a quarter mile wide, and “almost drowned by pestilential swamp.”<sup>13</sup> The construction in the mid-nineteenth century of a stone-and-lime wall along the northerly side of the settlement helped stave off raids from that direction, but it did nothing against mosquitos. Beyond the marsh, and on slightly higher ground, were the scattered homesteads of people loyal to the Mpfumu chief, and on the south side of the estuary, little more than a shout away, was the closely linked Tembe clan.<sup>14</sup> The longtime inhabitants of the areas around the bay spoke Ronga, and they called the Portuguese settlement Xilunguine, meaning “place of the white men.” Throughout the nineteenth century, the vast majority of Xilunguine’s residents were not white but rather Africans – traders and slaves – Asians, and people who claimed diverse origins.<sup>15</sup>

Beset by disease, the settlement was for most of its history a precarious place to be for almost everyone who lived there, or who tried to. Considering, in addition to the

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<sup>12</sup> Convicts and political dissidents were often exiled to the colonies.

<sup>13</sup> Pereira de Lima, “Casas que fizeram Lourenço Marques,” 11.

<sup>14</sup> Olga Martins, “‘Va ka Mpfumu,’ Lourenço Marques, e Maputo: Uma inter-relação problemática” (MA thesis, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1995), CEA.

<sup>15</sup> Liesegang, “L.M. antes de 1895,” 43. In 1862, only 84 of 1,021 residents counted in the census were European. By 1896, the European proportion had risen to 1,544 of 3,672 residents.

unsanitary conditions, the poor state of most housing, it is no exaggeration to identify as the first “slum” of Lourenço Marques the settlement itself. Signs of vigor resulted from the growth of Afrikaner settlement in South Africa’s interior from the 1830s onward, and the spike in the overall European population of the hinterland following the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in the 1860s. Lourenço Marques was the closest seaport to Pretoria, with the added advantage to the Boers of being controlled by a power other than the British. In 1876, after Portugal successfully fended off a British attempt to claim part of the bay, it elevated the military post to the status of a town.<sup>16</sup> In 1877, a team of engineers arrived from Portugal to begin draining the swamps that surrounded the settlement on most sides, and they were celebrated as conquering heroes. These two linked developments – the final resolution of Portugal’s sovereignty over the bay and the infrastructural upgrades – allowed Lourenço Marques to expand in pace with the commercial activity churned up in South Africa.

As Jeanne Penvenne writes, press-ganged Africans did the hard labor of digging the dirt that filled the swamps, and the public works projects that made the vicinity of the fort more tolerable for habitation simultaneously made life less tolerable further afield.<sup>17</sup> The dirt for fill was excavated from nearby areas of established African settlement, and after the work was done the empty pits became ponds of stagnant water and breeding

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<sup>16</sup> Recognizing the new strategic value of the port, the British had attempted to claim for themselves the lower shore of bay. The matter went to arbitration before an international commission headed by the French president, Mac-Mahon. The ruling in 1875 in favor of Portugal made Mac-Mahon something of an earthly patron saint for Laurentinos, and his name was bestowed on an important plaza, later the location of Mac-Mahon breweries, the namesake of what is still Mozambique’s most popular brand of beer, “2M.” The historical tenuousness of the Portuguese hold on Lourenço Marques ought to be considered in any evaluation of the Portuguese presence in Mozambique.

<sup>17</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 38–39.

grounds for malarial mosquitos. Unhealthy conditions were therefore displaced from the town to the areas that were now its outskirts. Perhaps just as significant to the future of African life in Lourenço Marques was a fire that swept through the Portuguese settlement in 1875. The fire, just the latest in a recurring series, had been fed by reed-walled, straw-thatched structures, and inspired the first building codes in Lourenço Marques.

Construction in reed and straw was prohibited, pushing much of the African population beyond the bounds of the town's perimeter wall – perhaps the first significant dislocation of Africans in the settlement's history.

With the opening of the gold fields in the Transvaal in the 1880s, the Portuguese settlement came more fully under the glare of global capitalism. Lourenço Marques was graduated from town to city in 1887, a year after the discovery of gold on the Rand, and in the same year the colony's chief engineer gave it its first urban plan. The plan was essentially a Cartesian grid imposed on a non-Cartesian landscape, the planning norm in cities in Europe and in North America at the time.<sup>18</sup> As Valdemir Zamparoni observes, it might have been easier to simply move the settlement to a more salubrious spot, as some advocated, but the impulse to force nature to submit before man and technology

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<sup>18</sup> Zamparoni, "Entre *narros e mulungos*," 252–255. Grids were the norm for European settlements in Africa, going back centuries. Mark Hinchman, writing about eighteenth-century Saint-Louis, in Senegal, observed that the grid plan "represented a wish, an imagined view of an un-built city. One of the grid's more astonishing characteristics was its ability to connote, for European and African audiences, both 'Europe' and 'modernity.' Of the grid's many operations, a dominant one is that it presented itself as part of a universal system. Its repetitive form implied the existence of similar forms elsewhere." Mark Hinchman, "The Grid of Saint-Louis du Sénégal," in *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*, ed. Fassil Demissie (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 307.

overwhelmed such reasoning.<sup>19</sup> Surveyors marked out the straight lines of future growth, and street signs appeared for streets that did not yet exist. An arc was drawn describing a seven kilometer radius from a point downtown, indicating the northerly municipal boundary and the termination of the grid.<sup>20</sup> At some point in the late nineteenth century – it is unclear exactly when – barbed wire was installed along the boundary.<sup>21</sup> The area within the curve was called the Ringed Area (*área de circunvalação*) – later the City of Cement. Beyond the curve the responsibility of city authorities ended, and the *subúrbios*, as the municipality identified them, began.

In the late nineteenth century, Portugal's relationship to Mozambique and to Mozambicans was changing rapidly and radically, as was the relationship of Lourenço Marques to the rest of the colony. In 1895, the Transvaal railway was completed, and in recognition of the city's centrality to Mozambique's economic prospects, the colony's capital was soon moved to Lourenço Marques from the Island of Mozambique, the sleepy former slave port off the colony's north coast.<sup>22</sup> Also in 1895, Portuguese forces destroyed the Gaza state, consolidating Portugal's control over southern Mozambique. "Portuguese" East Africa had until then been limited mostly to trading outposts on the coast and along the Zambezi River.<sup>23</sup> Now, by the terms set out at the Berlin Conference,

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<sup>19</sup> Zamparoni, "Entre narros e mulungos," 254–255.

<sup>20</sup> João Sousa Morais, *Maputo: Património da estrutura e forma urbana, topologia do lugar* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001), 106.

<sup>21</sup> Zamparoni, "Entre narros e mulungos," 256.

<sup>22</sup> Lourenço Marques was designated the new capital in 1898.

<sup>23</sup> For the Portuguese-chartered *prazos* of the Zambezi Valley, an institution that lasted for centuries in various forms, often with only the thinnest ties to Portugal, see Allen F. Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution: The Zambesi Prazos, 1750-1902* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972).

Portugal sought “effective occupation.”<sup>24</sup> While much of Mozambique was then parceled up and leased to foreign concessionaires to administer and exploit, the region south of the Save River, including Lourenço Marques, fell under the direct administration of Portugal.

Military conquest was merely a first step. The ultimate crystallization of Portugal’s new ideology of the whip was the *indigenato*.<sup>25</sup> Instituted in 1899 (with many revisions thereafter) this was the legal apparatus on which rested Mozambique’s system of forced labor. All “native” (*indígena*) men between the ages of 14 and 60 not engaged in formal employment had a “moral obligation” to present on a regular basis six months of labor to the government, or to a designee of the government. Since farming one’s own fields did not count as a formal job, relatively few Mozambican men escaped a term of forced labor. *Chibalo*, as this kind of labor was called, often lasted more than the statutory six months, it could also be levied as punishment for not paying taxes or for the most trivial offenses, and it imposed hardships not just on the men who were forced into backbreaking, sometimes fatal work, but also on families they left behind. *Chibalo* was one of the more brutal facts of Mozambican life, along with forced crop cultivation, until

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<sup>24</sup> We ought not take Portugal’s claim to effective occupation on its face. Colonial control was never complete, nor unchallenged. See Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: The Zambesi Valley, 1850-1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

<sup>25</sup> James Duffy, *Portugal in Africa* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962); Eduardo Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969); Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique: A Study of Quelimane District* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Penvenne, *African Workers*; Kathleen Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), 50–53; Eric Allina, *Slavery by Any Other Name: African Life under Company Rule in Colonial Mozambique* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

both were legally abolished in the early 1960s, though forms of coerced labor nonetheless continued to varying degrees throughout Mozambique.

Many scholars have plumbed the depths of the *indigenato* and *chibalo*, and the subject of forced labor will not be expanded upon here. Penvenne has produced the authoritative account of how the *indigenato* functioned in Lourenço Marques, where *chibalo* labor built nearly all of the city's public works projects, including even the cathedral, erected in the 1940s by crews of men who were chained together as they worked.<sup>26</sup> A few aspects of the *indigenato*, however, deserve to be highlighted here for their consequences for the shape of urban space.

The *indigenato* gave new meaning to Portuguese citizenship, as the corpus of law that over the decades gave shape to the *indigenato* created a legal distinction between “natives” and “non-natives.” Europeans, Asians, and people of mixed race were considered non-natives and were conferred the rights of Portuguese citizenship at birth. A black African, however, was a native unless born to a citizen or until he or she could prove him- or herself sufficiently “evolved” to be considered Portuguese. Those hoping to shed their native status must read and write in Portuguese, earn a reasonable wage in a formal job, dress how a Portuguese was expected to dress, eat what a Portuguese did, and eat it with a knife and fork. He or she must speak Portuguese in the house, and the house must at the very least be one of wood-and-zinc construction, rather than reeds. Sometime after one successfully applied for citizenship, an inspector would visit one's household to verify that standards were being upheld. Over the decades, the African press frequently decried the double standard that did not require the many illiterate Portuguese in

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<sup>26</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*. See also Zamparoni, “Entre *narros* e *mulungos*,” 13–42.

Mozambique to pass a test to obtain citizenship. For black Mozambicans, becoming “assimilated” (*assimilado*) was usually necessary for better educational opportunities and to climb higher up the job ladder.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, having to discard as inferior one’s African identity was for many a humiliating experience, and some blacks who met the requirements for assimilation refused to go through with it.<sup>28</sup> In any case, there were few who met the requirements.

For decades, Portugal trumpeted the existence of *assimilados* to show that its native policies were not racist, since they demonstrated that anyone, no matter the color of his or her skin, could be Portuguese. The number of *assimilados* was alone sufficient to refute the claim. By the abolition of the system in the early 1960s, there were perhaps 5,000 black Mozambicans with *assimilado* status in the entire territory, considerably less than one percent of the total black population.<sup>29</sup> Even following the end of the *indigenato*, the word *assimilado* continued to refer in common parlance to any black Mozambican who had acquired a certain level of formal education and had secured a modestly paying job such as schoolteacher, bookkeeper, administrative interpreter, truck driver, or nurse – the highest positions a black Mozambican could realistically aspire to during the colonial era.<sup>30</sup> In the years after independence, to be *assimilado* carried the unjust stigma of

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<sup>27</sup> Raúl Bernardo Manuel Honwana, *The Life History of Raúl Honwana: An Inside View of Mozambique from Colonialism to Independence, 1905-1975*, ed. Allen F. Isaacman, trans. Tamara L. Bender (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), 105–106.

<sup>28</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 65–69.

<sup>29</sup> There were 4,554 registered *assimilados* as of 1955. Cláudia Castelo, *Passagens para África: O povoamento de Angola e Moçambique com naturais da Metrópole (1920-1974)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2007), 295.

<sup>30</sup> Cabaço, *Identidades*, 220–221.



having purportedly approximated oneself too closely to the *colono*, benefiting from the impoverishment of one's Mozambican brothers and sisters.<sup>31</sup>

However miniscule the total population of people classified *assimilado* may have been in Mozambique during the reign of the *indigenato*, they were, nonetheless a recognizable segment of the population of Lourenço Marques. As Penvenne has illustrated, there had always been in the nineteenth and early twentieth century a number of more privileged Africans in the city, not a few of them highly visible figures in local affairs.<sup>32</sup> They were traders, labor recruiters, journalists, intellectuals, and they were blacks and also people with some combination of African, European, and Asian parentage. For many, their cultural and linguistic fluency, the ability to make connections between different groups of people and different spheres of urban and rural life, was a point of pride and often a source of profit. On paper, however, the *indigenato* pigeonholed more privileged blacks into a single, distinct category called *assimilado*, while hiving off those of mixed race as if they were a separate and identifiable community. The law flattened, conceptually, the textured diversity of interests that collided daily in a place that still retained many of the characteristics of an unruly frontier town. The *assimilado*, the black Mozambican who had supposedly abandoned his African self in exchange for European status, was in more than one sense a Portuguese invention.

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<sup>31</sup> For typical (and stereotypical) post-independence send-ups of the selfish and ultimately self-destructive *assimilado*, see Albino Magaia, *Malungate* (Maputo: Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, 1987); Sant'Ana Afonso, "Eu não sou eu," in "*Eu não sou eu*" e outras peças de teatro (Maputo: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 1981), 97–126.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, Jeanne Marie Penvenne, "João dos Santos Albasini (1876-1922): The Contradictions of Politics and Identity in Colonial Mozambique," *Journal of African History* 37, no. 3 (1996): 419–464.

The *indigenato* altered the lives of even those families not directly touched by *chibalo*. The system institutionalized the debasement of all black labor so that it was cheap and more easily controlled. It was accompanied by the incremental debasement of Africans in general. “Natives” in formal jobs and even Africans who held citizenship – whether assimilated blacks or people of mixed race – saw their roles diminished at the port, the railway, and the municipality – the city’s largest employers. At the low end of the wage spectrum, African earning power was undermined by *chibalo*. And the earnings of those in better positions were eroded by the fitful though continual growth of the Portuguese population, as whites benefited from job preferences.<sup>33</sup>

Among Africans, “natives” carried a pass that showed they had been granted an administrator’s permission to be in Lourenço Marques, and such permission was tied to the securing of a job. People in the *subúrbios* lived in fear of police raids. Those caught without a pass were subjected to vicious whippings or *chibalo* or both, and women, for whom formal work was much harder to come by, tended to live a particularly fugitive existence.<sup>34</sup> *Assimilados*, too, were stopped and ordered to produce documentation; they had to show they were not natives.<sup>35</sup> The right of all black Mozambicans, whether citizens or not, to simply walk the streets of Lourenço Marques, or even the dirt tracks of the *subúrbios*, was made contingent. One did not belong unless one proved otherwise.

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<sup>33</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 97–102.

<sup>34</sup> Jeanne Marie Penvenne, “‘Here We All Walked with Fear’: The Mozambican Labor System and the Workers of Lourenço Marques, 1945-1962,” in *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa*, ed. Frederick Cooper (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983), 153.

<sup>35</sup> Emblematic of their second-class citizenship, the card *assimilados* carried was different than the identity card carried by other “Portuguese.”

The logic of the *subúrbios* and the logic of the *indigenato*, though they were articulated at roughly the same time, were not perfectly synced. The *subúrbios* were where the promise of municipal infrastructure ended; the boundary line that marked the frontier was drawn with a vision in mind of the European metropolis that was hoped would emerge within the curve's embrace. Still, while much of the *subúrbios* overlapped with areas designated "native reserves," such reserves did not take on the same meaning as they did in South Africa and in neighboring British colonies: places where all black Africans not living at their place of employment must live and where only Africans could live. The reserves were places where those with native status were ruled by the "customary" authority of a Portuguese-appointed hereditary leader (discussed in the following chapter). The word *subúrbio* in itself, however, conveyed no precise legal implications relative to either race or citizenship. Officially speaking, one need not be "native" or black to live in the *subúrbios*, and one need not be white to live in the Ringed Area. Segregation was not achieved by overtly racist laws governing urban space, but resulted rather from a combination of ever-more exacting building codes, the continuing suppression of African earning power, and the elevated rents in the Ringed Area.<sup>36</sup> In the early twentieth century, "natives" who owned property within Lourenço Marques proper were allowed to keep it so long as they could establish proof of possession, but few could assemble the paperwork demanded by the municipal bureaucracy to do so. Those who could were limited to 400 square meters (less than one-tenth of an acre), enough space for

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<sup>36</sup> Zamparoni, "Entre *narros e mulungos*," 308–329; Frates, "Memory of Place, the Place of Memory," 89–127.

a house and a small yard.<sup>37</sup> Also in the first decade of the century, municipal authorities indulged in the recurring impulse to “modernize” the face of the city, and such initiatives usually resulted in the demolition of houses that did not belong to whites. As everywhere in the colonial world, fear of the plague, and of darker skinned people as supposedly more likely to be the plague’s hosts, had justified the destruction of a number of houses of Africans and Asians, in the city and the *subúrbios*; the rules exempted white-owned homes from health standards.<sup>38</sup> In 1910, again citing sanitation concerns, the municipality ordered that all new construction within city limits must be built in masonry, confining to the *subúrbios* the builders who could afford no more than wood-and-zinc. In 1932, costly bureaucratic procedures imposed on those who wanted to expand, renovate, or simply paint their existing houses made maintaining one of the aging wood-and-zinc houses in the city that much more onerous. Houses of wood-and-zinc in the City of Cement, furthermore, were assessed a building tax at a higher rate than those of concrete block.<sup>39</sup> Because of the suppression of African wages by the *indigenato* and the inflow of whites from the metropole, Africans could not maintain a hold within the city.

In 1938, the governor-general marked out native reserves at some distance from the city, in which all natives must live unless living in an employer’s compound or home; those houses remaining in newly designated native-free areas of the *subúrbios* would be destroyed.<sup>40</sup> The draconian law would have been of a piece with sweeping South African-style segregation if it had been implemented. But the condition of its implementation, that

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<sup>37</sup> Zamparoni, “Entre *narros e mulungos*,” 309.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 321–329; Coquery-Vidrovitch, “Residential Segregation in African Cities.”

<sup>39</sup> Zamparoni, “Entre *narros e mulungos*,” 309.

<sup>40</sup> Governo-Geral da Província de Moçambique, *Diploma Legislativo No. 616*, 1938.

housing be built for the natives who were to be displaced, was never met. By then, there were very few black Mozambicans within the city proper who were not also living with their employers as domestic servants. Blacks had long since been pushed to the *subúrbios*. Those who were from Lourenço Marques and belonged to the original Ronga-speaking inhabitants had already been squeezed off their land by building codes and pressure from property speculators.<sup>41</sup>

The displacement of Africans from the area where most whites lived had proceeded incrementally and without a set timeline, though nonetheless inexorably. And by 1960, the *subúrbios* were also home to two-thirds of the mixed-race population, about 1,350 people of Asian (mostly South Asian) background, and more than nine thousand whites.<sup>42</sup> Many of these suburban whites lived in concrete neighborhoods that had eaten into the *subúrbios*, displacing the people who had lived there, so while their title deeds said “*subúrbio*,” the neighborhood often had some degree of urban infrastructure. But other whites, mostly men, lived in the *cantinas* – general stores that doubled as bars – they ran in the heart of the *subúrbios*, or in wood-and-zinc houses just at the edge of the city proper, often with African companions; there were also white men who kept two households – one with an African companion, and one with a white and legally recognized spouse in the City of Cement. Alto Maé, the neighborhood of the City of Cement just inside the curve, was somewhat comparable in its demographics to the suburban neighborhoods just outside the curve. The curve itself had in the meantime been

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<sup>41</sup> Penvenne, “A History of African Labor in L.M.,” 255–267.

<sup>42</sup> The census distinguished between the “city” and Munhuana, the administrative jurisdiction that closely approximated the *subúrbios*. *Província de Moçambique, III Recenseamento geral da população na Província de Lourenço Marques* (Lourenço Marques: Direcção Provincial dos Serviços de Estatística Geral, 1960), 23.

filled out with a street – a street that hosted one of the city’s most lively prostitution districts in a city notorious for them. The borderlands where city met *subúrbio* represented the real diversity, in all respects, of the Portuguese empire, though it was not the kind of racial pluralism that Lisbon image-makers were eager to promote.

In the 1950s, with life in rural areas increasingly unsupportable due to hut taxes, forced crop cultivation, *chibalo*, and land dispossession, more and more people from the countryside came to the capital seeking employment. At the same time, the immigration of Portuguese to the city, many themselves fleeing destitution in Portugal, was climbing apace. Between 1940 and 1960, the total population of both city and *subúrbios* almost tripled from about 68,000 to about 178,500 people, with the African population consistently accounting for about two thirds of the population (though likely undercounted).<sup>43</sup> The influx of Portuguese immigrants in the 1950 and 1960s brought city development flush against the *subúrbios*, and yet, even as the two parts of the city came closer together, segregation became more rigid.

By the 1960s, that the City of Cement was “the white city” was not a matter in dispute. Antoinette Errante argues that racial segregation was part of the “artificial homogenization” of the diverse white population of Lourenço Marques.<sup>44</sup> Establishing European superiority meant masking the class differences among whites, and this, in turn,

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<sup>43</sup> Colónia de Moçambique, *Censo de população em 1940, I: População não-indígena* (Lourenço Marques: Repartição Técnica de Estatística, 1942); Colónia de Moçambique, *Censo de população em 1940, II: População indígena* (Lourenço Marques: Repartição Técnica de Estatística, 1943); Província de Moçambique, *Recenseamento 1960*.

<sup>44</sup> Antoinette Errante, “White Skin, Many Masks: Colonial Schooling, Race, and National Consciousness among White Settler Children in Mozambique, 1934-1974,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36, no. 1 (January 2003): 14.

meant rescuing poor, often illiterate Portuguese from comparison with Africans.<sup>45</sup> In the workplace and in bars after work, men from different backgrounds often mixed easily – particularly when the black men were *assimilados*. This kind of essentially human conviviality persists pretty much anywhere, but while people may have felt close to each other as individuals, they inevitably met on profoundly unequal terms. In L. Lloyds Frates’s study of Mozambican women’s memories of late colonial Lourenço Marques, the City of Cement was described as a place where one walked with caution if one went there at all.<sup>46</sup> *Assimilados*, particularly men, could be seen at restaurants, the cinema, schools, and in shops. The beach and government buildings, though, were strictly white places. Mozambican women without shoes or wearing traditional *capulana* wraps could not get on downtown busses or enter stores. In more recent interviews, men described the tension of any encounter with authorities, when forgetting to remove one’s cap in respect could result in physical punishment.

João Pereira Neto, a former ranking official at Portugal’s Overseas Ministry (*Ministério do Ultramar*), recalled in a recent interview that he was shocked by the polarized racial climate that prevailed in Lourenço Marques, which seemed to have more

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<sup>45</sup> Perhaps germane to this discussion is that the most widely read work in Mozambican literature, “We Killed the Mangy Dog” (1964), has as its setting a generic suburban neighborhood in which young boys of various ethnic backgrounds, including Portuguese, dispatch the titular dog. The story is often read as a parable of Portuguese rule, though I find its meanings more ambiguous. Luís Bernardo Honwana, “Nós matámos o cão-tinhoso,” in *Nós matámos o cão-tinhoso*, 5th ed. (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2000), 7–46. Ch. 2 and Ch. 3 discuss poor whites at greater length.

<sup>46</sup> Frates, “Memory of Place, the Place of Memory.”

in common with a city in South Africa than it did with its colonial sister city, Luanda.<sup>47</sup> On a visit to Mozambique's capital in 1970 he was astonished by the sight of black workers rushing home to the *subúrbios* after work in the City of Cement, hoping to avoid being caught up by an informal nine p.m. curfew. "It wasn't an official curfew," said Neto, "but they knew that they ran the risk of running into a group of whites, those that the Mozambicans called a 'posse.'" Mozambique in the 1960s and early 1970s functioned as a kind of renegade province, Neto said – a place where local officials and white civilians undermined Lisbon's attempts at reform.

### § § §

#### **The Reed House**

For most of the twentieth century, the great majority of those who lived in the *subúrbios* of the city slept on a straw mat laid on the floor of a reed-built dwelling. That dwelling, in turn, was usually set in a yard enclosed by a reed-built fence. To live in the *subúrbios* came to be so identified with reeds that the word *caniço* served as shorthand for the *subúrbios* as a whole. Between 1962 and 1963, the new daily newspaper *A Tribuna* ran a series of articles exposing conditions in the *subúrbios*, a campaign the newspaper entitled the "City of Reeds" (*cidade de caniço*) – a term for these neighborhoods that was clearly intended to stress not just their sprawling extent, but also to shame authorities into action.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with João Pereira Neto, Lisbon, Nov. 26, 2010. In 1951, the Ministry of the Colonies was renamed the Ministry of the Overseas [Territories], the *Ultramar*. The official status of Mozambique was changed from colony to "overseas province."

<sup>48</sup> *A Tribuna*'s campaign is discussed at length in the following chapter.



For ordinary Mozambicans the reed house was long the mark of poverty and squalor, and also the precariousness of urban life in general – and it still is. This had less to do with the material itself than with where it was put to use. In the countryside, for instance, a reed house was nothing to be ashamed of. In the countryside of southern Mozambique, a house was circular in plan and walled with *caniço*, a tall, fairly rigid reed that grew in relative abundance by the region’s waterways.<sup>49</sup> Adequately sized tree branches were freely available to serve as pillars and stays. Sources of clay were available, too, often pillaged from anthills, which was used to coat the inside and outside of reed walls, insulating huts against wind, insects, and rot. Houses were cool when it was hot outside, warm on chill nights, and well ventilated. Fabrication of the roof was often a communal affair. Neighbors joined in to bundle the straw tightly together, affix it to a conical roof structure, and then the cone was lifted onto heads and conveyed to the hut, to be followed by a celebration.<sup>50</sup> The roof structure often outlasted most of the rest of the hut, and it was often kept in the family to shelter a succession of new huts. In the 1940s, Eduardo Mondlane provided descriptions of his childhood in rural southern Mozambique to his former teacher, Swiss missionary André-Daniel Clerc; in the resulting novel, *Chitlangou, Son of a Chief* (1950), the young protagonist recalls laying on the floor of his hut, looking up with admiration not at the stars but at the spiraling interior structure of the roof, a “venerable smoke-blackened cone” that had sheltered several

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<sup>49</sup> Júlio Carrilho et al., *Traditional Informal Settlements in Mozambique: From Lichinga to Maputo*, trans. Carola Cuoco (Maputo: FAPF, 2004); Sandro Bruschi, Júlio Carrilho, and Luís Lage, *Era uma vez uma palhota: História da casa moçambicana* (Maputo: Edições FAPF, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> See the description by artist Malangatana Ngwenya, “Prefácio,” in *Com o mundo na cabeça: Homenagem às mulheres de Moçambique*, by Carlos Dominguez. (Lisbon: Associação do Centro Cultural de Matalana, 1997), 6.

generations of his family.<sup>51</sup> “I have often marveled at the skill of the men of my people: from a bundle of sticks, a heap of branches, they have fashioned this covering, in a single piece, which faces all horizons and resists the four winds of heaven.” In Chitlangou’s meditation on roof structure, Mondlane and Clerc were perhaps offering a subtle interpretation of the Mozambican character. “These supple interlaced twigs form a cable which, in its patient itinerary, unites the center to the circumference.”

Holes were dug in the ground by hand for the placing of pillars. Parallel stays were fixed horizontally to the pillars at two or three points on both the interior and exterior of the pillars, and tied in place with plant fibers. Reeds were then slipped into the gap between the parallel stays. Men, when there were men around to volunteer their labor, tended to do much of the construction work, but not exclusively. Most people knew how to build such a house, and most people contributed at some point or another to the construction of one. The only significant cost to the home-dweller in the countryside, other than the time spent locating materials, was in the preparation of brew for the party that followed the placing of the roof.

The immediate surrounds of the Bay of Lourenço Marques, however, had been stripped by the 1950s of much of their naturally occurring supplies of building materials, and so, unlike in the countryside, building a reed house in Lourenço Marques was a

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<sup>51</sup> André-Daniel Clerc and [Eduardo Mondlane], *Chitlangou, Son of a Chief*, trans. Margaret A. Bryan, Reprint (Westport: Negro Universities Press, 1971), 38. This passage was suggested to the author by Maria de Lurdes Torcato, who translated the text into Portuguese for the Mozambican edition. For a description of the materials of reed construction, see *Chitlangou*, 16.

costly affair.<sup>52</sup> Contrary to the popular image of patchwork shantytowns improvised from scavenged waste, building types in the *subúrbios* were highly standardized, and the materials for the typical reed house were paid for in cash at stores downtown or at open-air stands. Reed bundles and tree branches were trucked in from the countryside or came by rail, generally from Marracuene, about 20 miles to the north.<sup>53</sup> Horizontal wood stays were either rough-edged scrap from the lumberyard and cheap, or machine-cut, slightly more elegant, and pricey. For fasteners, wire and nails substituted for plant fibers. Corrugated metal panels were imported from Europe or South Africa until sometime after World War II, when local factories entered into production of some materials as well. The hardy, practical corrugated metal panel, called a *chapa* in Portuguese, could last a century as durable roofing material (as its performance over the last century has proved) and it changed construction patterns utterly: most houses in the *subúrbios* were built rectangular in plan to accommodate the panel dimensions. (More on the *chapa* below.) The houses varied in size, but many houses were about 3.5 meters wide by seven meters long (about 260 square feet) and sheltered two rooms.<sup>54</sup> The width of the house was slightly more narrow than the panel width to allow for a slight roof incline and eave. (Fig. 1.1.)

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<sup>52</sup> For a description of reed-house construction in the *subúrbios* during the colonial era, see interview with Armando Guilundo, May 10, 2011; Björn Brandberg, “Constructions,” in *The Malhangalene Survey: A Housing Study of an Unplanned Settlement in Maputo, Mozambique, 1976*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Göteborg: Chalmers Tekniska Högskola, Arkitektur, 1977); Zoukanta Tuina, “Les matériaux de construction au Mozambique,” in the same volume.

<sup>53</sup> Even today there are several materials stands (*estaleiros*) located by the line from Marracuene. See interview with Gonçalves Mambo et al., Feb. 12, 2011.

<sup>54</sup> Brandberg, “Constructions,” 7.

In 1968, historian Alfredo Pereira de Lima authored a brief history of the progress of the city's European settlement by charting its changing building types. In the early nineteenth century, he wrote, the lack of good quality wood compelled the handful of pioneers who lived outside the fort's walls to build "African cabanas (of the hut type) covered in straw, subjecting themselves to the greatest discomforts."<sup>55</sup> Examples of that type of hut, he continued, were still in evidence, "almost without alterations," in the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques. At the time Pereira de Lima was writing, there were indeed huts in the *subúrbios* of the kind one found in the countryside, but not many. An aerial survey in the mid-1960s estimated that fewer than seven per cent of the structures in the *subúrbios* retained the circular plan, versus 88 percent of structures which were both rectangular and possessed a zinc-paneled roof.<sup>56</sup> One is left to speculate how many of the circular huts were residences and how many were rather the consulting offices of healers (*curandeiros*), who even today build conical-roofed huts in their yards, beside their houses, where they meet their patients and store their medicines. By rendering the "traditional hut" historically immutable, the historian also occluded how much the changed economics of construction in the *subúrbios* changed the meaning of the house for the people who lived in it. In any case, by at least 1950, a durable zinc-paneled roof was considered by most people a more practical alternative to straw. In Lourenço Marques the spare time and neighborly cooperation required to build a sturdy conical roof of the kind Mondlane described were likely in shorter supply than they were in the

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<sup>55</sup> Pereira de Lima, "Casas que fizeram Lourenço Marques," 12.

<sup>56</sup> António Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de Lourenço Marques," *Memórias do Instituto Científica de Moçambique*, C, 9 (1967): 167. The area surveyed was the 770 hectare zone where most of the suburban population was said to be concentrated.

countryside. One suspects that the fading of the practice of building conical roofs also diminished neighborly cooperation.

The 1969 master plan for Lourenço Marques included a study of suburban home construction, in which the author, a Portuguese architect, praised reeds as an urban building material. Reeds, he speculated, filtered out dust and noise, but allowed air and speech to pass through, and so regulated the relationship between intimate home life and outdoor public life without strictly separating them. Perhaps the group feeling common to African culture owed something to the permeability of reed walls, he continued. Concrete walls would impose European-type individualism and were liable to stifle African conviviality “as coercive obstacles, as exoticisms that modify people’s own psychological characteristics.”<sup>57</sup>

It is unclear whether the architect was referring to the walls between yards, the walls of houses, or both. Residents of reed houses, in any case, would not have seconded his rosy appraisal. Few houses rose above the sewage-strewn waters that frequently inundated the suburban landscape, and rot and vermin shortened the lifespan of reeds to at most a few years, so the material had to be constantly replaced. It was also highly flammable. With most everyone in the *subúrbios* cooking on open coals and lighting their rooms at night with kerosene lamps, it was common for fire to set a house alight, and to

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<sup>57</sup> Gabinete de Urbanização e Habitação da Região de Lourenço Marques, *Estudo do “Caníço,”* Plano Director de urbanização de Lourenço Marques 44 (Lourenço Marques: GUHRLM, 1969), 19, MICOA.

consume a few dozen homes before the fire burned out.<sup>58</sup> The more squeezed the space, the more likely a serious fire.



**Fig. 1.1.** Reed houses in Maxaquene, mid-1970s. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)

And contrary to the architect's theory of reed-based *ubuntu*, the density of settlement kept one's house in often uncomfortable proximity to piles of trash and pit latrines. Inside houses people lacked privacy. Clay insulation would have blunted some of the outside sounds and smells, and prolonged the use-life of reed walls. But the sandy earth of the *subúrbios* was too loose to serve this purpose. In the 1940s and 1950s, those seeking insulation walked with their empty petroleum cans to the mouth of the Infulene River, a few miles away, to fetch black mud. One resident of Chamanculo, Armando Guilundo, recalled that during his childhood in the 1940s and early 1950s his mother did the fetching.<sup>59</sup> She would make the trip to the river and back every day for a week, spread

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<sup>58</sup> In 1968, there were a reported 146 residential fires in the *subúrbios*, compared to 18 in the City of Cement. Areosa Pena and Marcos Cuembelo, "Bairro do caniço: 90 mil casebres para demolir," *Tempo*, February 27, 1972, 19; Areosa Pena, "Fogo," *Tempo*, December 24, 1972.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Guilundo.

the black mud on the floors of the house and halfway up the inside of the reed walls, and when it dried she would bring the surface to a polish with her palms. “We children would help her carry the mud, but we didn’t know how to make the walls,” he said. Cracks would appear before long. She repeated the task two to three times a year. Her work was essential. Untreated reed walls were no better than a sieve against the wind and chill fog.

In style and structure the *caniço* houses were remarkably uniform, but there was some room for personal embellishment. Wood doors and horizontal stays and (if the home-dweller could afford them) window embrasures were frequently painted, sometimes in colorful patterns. Pancho Guedes, the most prominent architect in Lourenço Marques before independence, took hundreds of photographic slides of the patterned doors, a personal collection he calls “The Thousand Doors of the *Canico*.”<sup>60</sup> Yet, for all the time and resources that people invested in building, maintaining, and decorating their reed houses, they nonetheless upgraded to a better type of house the moment they felt they could risk it.<sup>61</sup>

## Houses of Wood-and-Zinc

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<sup>60</sup> Interview with Pancho Guedes, Sintra, Portugal, Oct. 30, 2010. A sampling of the door images can be seen in Pedro Guedes, ed., *As Áfricas de Pancho Guedes* (Lisbon: Sextante Editora, 2010), 300–301. For Guedes's observations of the *caniço* landscape, see also Amâncio d’Alpoim [Pancho] Guedes, “The *Canicos* of Mozambique,” in *Shelter in Africa*, ed. Paul Oliver (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1971), 200–209.

<sup>61</sup> In 2010, a class assignment at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane’s School of Architecture and Physical Planning (FAPF), in Maputo, directed students to talk to people in the city about the benefits of living in a reed house. Students struggled to find such houses, and once they did they consistently found that residents saw no benefit at all. The author thanks architect Rui Gonçalves, a student at the time, for showing him these research projects.

Pereira de Lima dated the beginning of the city's "Tumultuous Age of Wood and Zinc" to the 1870s.<sup>62</sup> Transvaal gold may have given Lourenço Marques a new reason for being, but the burgeoning town was clad in baser metal. At least zinc was what the metal panels were thought to be. To be precise, they were iron or steel sheets galvanized with zinc to inhibit corrosion, though deferring to universal practice they will simply be referred to here as zinc panels or *chapas*, Portuguese for "metal sheet." According to Pereira, *chapas* were first introduced to Lourenço Marques in the 1850s, just as Portugal relaxed import controls to the colony, but while they were used here and there as roofing, it was not until the 1870s that most Europeans and Asians in Lourenço Marques were living and working in wood-framed buildings with walls and roofs of corrugated zinc. The buildings mimicked in structure and style the houses and commercial establishments that predominated in Johannesburg.<sup>63</sup>

Along with quinine and railroads, though less remarked upon, the zinc panel was one of the "tools of empire" that facilitated the penetration of African societies by various European interests in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>64</sup> Lightweight and flat, the panels could be transported easily by ship from foundries in Europe to colonial ports around the globe, and then into hinterlands by rail, pack animal, and on the crowns of people's heads. Wood-framed, zinc-paneled structures required no specialized

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<sup>62</sup> Pereira de Lima, "Casas que fizeram Lourenço Marques," 34–47.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 36; Gerhard-Mark van der Waal, *From Mining Camp to Metropolis: The Buildings of Johannesburg, 1886-1940* (Johannesburg: Chris van Rensburg & HSRC, 1987).

<sup>64</sup> Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 193–223.



knowledge to build, allowing for the rapid construction of administrative offices, mission stations, and mining camps, and the single-family wood-and-zinc bungalow, a housing type originally developed for British settlers posted in India, was eventually packaged in kits for deployment in Melbourne, Lagos, and Kimberley. Moreover, wood-and-zinc buildings could be easily disassembled as need dictated, and conveyed to another site to be rebuilt – a particular advantage for settler populations uncertain of where the most salubrious place to build might prove to be, and for prospectors unsure where they might next strike gold. Apart from the more tangible benefits of the wood-and-zinc construction method, the machine-cut wood beams and the factory-made galvanized panels also helped mark a clear distinction between “modern” colonizer and “primitive” colonized at a time when maintaining such a distinction was a matter of great concern and not a little anxiety.<sup>65</sup> The Baldwin ironworks, in England, enjoyed a near monopoly on the panels distributed in Mozambique and the rest of southern Africa, and it is somehow appropriate that family scion Stanley Baldwin went on to become Prime Minister during the interwar years – the zenith of Britain’s African empire.<sup>66</sup>

From the time that the *chapa* came into common use in Lourenço Marques in the 1870s until independence a century later, Africans of greater means almost always lived in a wood-framed, zinc-paneled house. As we have seen, the changes in the Lourenço Marques building code in the 1910s and 1930s that targeted wood-and-zinc construction

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<sup>65</sup> King, *The Bungalow*, 209–214. For a brief discussion of the role of housing technology in early European perceptions of African societies, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 6, 36.

<sup>66</sup> Pereira de Lima, “Casas que fizeram Lourenço Marques,” 36; Gilbert Herbert, *Pioneers of Prefabrication: The British Contribution in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 144.

within the curve of the Estrada de Circunvalação were understood by the city's African elite as an indirect means of pushing out the African population. In the *subúrbios* Africans continued to build in wood-and-zinc, just as they had from the city's beginnings. Living in a house of wood-and-zinc was one of the fruits of earning a decent living, and one of the most visible emblems of living well – and some no doubt took satisfaction in living as Europeans did. Wood-and-zinc was an upgrade from reeds in that zinc panels blocked the wind and dust and did not need to be replaced every few years. Like reed houses, wood-and-zinc houses were suited to suburban conditions for the same reason they were suited to mining camps: they could be quickly disassembled, a feature that would take on a particular importance in the 1960s when the threat of displacement loomed large.<sup>67</sup> It was in fact only because such houses were considered of “precarious” construction that the municipality allowed them to stand, since in the *subúrbios* permanent construction was with very few exceptions prohibited.<sup>68</sup>

The low-end wood-and-zinc house was a simple shed, with a roof inclined in a single direction. (Fig. 1.2.) Zinc-paneled walls did not have to be frequently replaced as reed walls did, but termites fed on wood pillars and rafters, limiting their use-life. For those who could afford it, a common solution was to elevate the house on a concrete plinth, which also elevated the house above the *subúrbios*' frequent water inundations. The first time the house was expanded in size, from two to four rooms, a roof incline was added in the opposite direction as the first, just as with the reed house. From the standpoint of status, this second incline was what began to distinguish the house from

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<sup>67</sup> Further addressed in Ch. 3.

<sup>68</sup> The prohibition and its contravention are the subject of Ch. 3.

those of its neighbors, and in fact such a double-incline defined the house. One sought to live in a house of *duas águas* – “two gradients” – to drain off rainwater in opposite directions.<sup>69</sup>



**Fig. 1.2.** Conventional wood-and-zinc houses, mid-1970s. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)

From a house of *duas águas* to the embellishments that truly distinguished a wood-and-zinc house was a leap that few could make. The finest houses of wood-and-zinc featured semi-enclosed verandas, many gables, and large pigeon coops (baby pigeons were a Portuguese delicacy) on the outside, and floors of Oregon pine, false ceilings, and many rooms on the inside.<sup>70</sup> The false ceiling was vital to ensuring that what was flashy was also comfortable. Zinc, useful for its durability and portability, was terrible at regulating the ambient temperature. It magnified the heat from outside during the day, turning rooms into ovens, and at night did nothing to insulate against the cold other than fending off the wind. As with zinc-roofed reed houses, rain leaked through the

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<sup>69</sup> Those interviewed whose parents or grandparents built such houses in the 1940s and 1950s include Maria Esperança Tavares, Elizabeth Eurica Cumbana, and Gabriel Chiau – all of whom were still living in the house.

<sup>70</sup> Those interviewed whose parents or grandparents built such distinguished houses include Castigo Guambe, Isaac Araújo, and Luís Hunguana – all houses built before 1940.

holes where nails secured the panels to wood joists, and also at the spine of the roof, where the inclines met. At night it drizzled indoors, even when it was not raining outdoors; moisture would rise from sleeping bodies, condense on the zinc roof panels, and then drip as cold droplets. A false ceiling, though, regulated this indoor climate. It caught leaks from above, stopped moisture rising from below, and, most importantly, formed an attic buffer space that kept hot air from reaching living areas. The steeper the pitch of the roof, the more it drew off heat from below. More panels and more wood were required to maintain room size while the roof rose in altitude, and so these high-peaked roofs (high, that is, against the low-slung norm of the *subúrbios*) advertised from some distance away the relative wealth of the people they sheltered. The finest wood-and-zinc houses, perched on concrete plinths and reaching almost to treetops, gave neighborhoods the barest hint of a skyline. The scale was deceiving: even in the largest houses of the *subúrbios*, all living quarters were located on a single floor.



**Fig. 1.3.** An L-plan wood-and-zinc house built by Jochua Guambe in the 1930s. Note the small pigeon coop above the storage room on the left. (Photo: the author)

Because houses of wood-and-zinc required greater resources to build, popular memory tends to recall them as out of reach to all but *assimilados* and *mestiços*. Yet, while living in a wood-and-zinc house was essentially a precondition of achieving assimilated legal status, not all who owned or lived in wood-and-zinc houses were *assimilados*. Even some of the larger houses were built by people who no one would consider, by any definition, *assimilado*. Jochua Guambe, born in rural Inhambane, came to Lourenço Marques in the early 1900s to escape paying the newly imposed hut tax.<sup>71</sup> He did not work in the city, and he never had need to learn Portuguese. Earning his living as a hunter, he would bag game in Inhambane and then travel to South Africa, mostly on foot, to sell animal skins and claws at a market in Durban. Lourenço Marques was merely a convenient base of operations between his sources of supply and places of demand, and later the city's *subúrbios* became the site of Guambe's small real estate empire. In the 1930s, he built a house of wood-and-zinc for his family, on one of about two dozen lots of property he had purchased in Chamanculo. (Fig. 1.3.) It had the features common to the houses of the suburban elite: a semi-enclosed veranda, a concrete plinth, a false ceiling, and a pigeon coop perched beside the roof. The plan of the house was L-shaped, rather than a conventional rectangle, so instead of two roof inclines, there were four, giving the roof a more complicated profile and a more South African appearance than the more common *duas águas*. There were two bedrooms: one for himself and one for his sons. (He married twice; his second wife died during childbirth.)

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<sup>71</sup> The following account of Jochua Guambe's life is based on interviews with his son, Castigo Guambe, Apr. 14 & 26, May 17, 2011. I lived in the house for three weeks in June 2011.

“If you had a house like this, it was a symbol of the fact that you owned land,” said Castigo Guambe. “It wasn’t just anybody who owned land.” With his native status, Jochua Guambe could not actually be a landowner in the eyes of Portuguese law. But his eldest son Júlio, who worked in a shoe store downtown, had assimilated, and he vouched for his father on titling documents. When Jochua Guambe died, in the 1960s, he left his properties and the family house to Júlio, and when Júlio died in the 1980s, the house passed to Jochua’s youngest son Castigo, who still lives there today. (Fig. 1.4.)



**Fig. 1.4.** Jochua Guambe with his sons and nieces, early 1950s. (Source: Castigo Guambe)

Castigo Guambe replaces the wood-slat interior walls when they rot and he repaints the exterior zinc panels in turquoise when they fade. Only one tree remains of the many that Jochua once planted in the yard, a sick mango that Castigo will not cut down. It was the tree where his father invited the *curandeiras* of the neighborhood to perform ancestral ceremonies, a practice his son continues. Studding the trunk are the heads of rusted nails that for almost a century have secured the drying skins of slaughtered goats.

It will be recalled that the word *assimilado* took on meanings beyond its precise legal definition, eventually applying colloquially to all black Mozambicans of some means. It is likely that some identified their neighbors as *assimilado* in part because they lived in a house of wood-and-zinc. The house made the *assimilado*, that is, rather than the other way around. In the 1930s, while working at the counter of a building materials store downtown, Salvador Simão Hunguana built a house in Malhangalene, a lightly populated, almost rural neighborhood north of the city.<sup>72</sup> The house he built was particularly distinguished for the area, with eight rooms and a large citrus grove. No doubt working at the materials store helped him with supplies. When his *assimilado* friends pulled strings to get assimilated status for Hunguana, his house, just as impressive if not more so than some of the Portuguese-owned homes in the vicinity, overcame his shortcomings with other legal requirements. Somewhat indirectly, housing was destiny: Hunguana's children were able to enter government schools, and eventually acquire higher paying jobs, because of the house their father had built.

In the years following independence, when enforcement of the concrete ban was greatly relaxed, new construction in wood-and-zinc came to an abrupt halt. The wood-and-zinc house, for whatever prestige and comfort it afforded over the reed-built house, could not compete in either prestige or comfort, or in cost, with construction in concrete block.

### *Cantinas*

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<sup>72</sup> The following account of Salvador Simão Hunguana is based on interviews with his son Luís Hunguana, July 13, 17, & 22, 2009.

José da Costa shipped off for Mozambique as a young Portuguese army conscript in the 1940s, and upon his discharge a few years later, unexcited about a return to village life in Portugal, he decided to stay in Lourenço Marques.<sup>73</sup> On his own, and barely literate, da Costa had few prospects. He took a job as the assistant to a stonemason. Then he met an enterprising African woman named Glória da Conceição Nhambirre. She convinced him to borrow a truck so they could go into business transporting firewood from the countryside. They sold the wood bundles at a stand in Chamanculo, and they lived together in the reed house of her family nearby. Nhambirre possessed the acumen, nimbleness, and entrepreneurial drive that da Costa, as he unabashedly told others, completely lacked. But from birth da Costa possessed an important qualification that Nhambirre did not. He was Portuguese, and thus could sign official documents and own a business. After a few years selling firewood, the couple built a *cantina*. (Figs. 1.5-1.7)



**Fig. 1.5.** José da Costa (“Xibinhana”) tends bar at his *cantina*, 1960s. (Source: Sérgio da Costa)

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<sup>73</sup> The following account of José da Costa and Glória da Conceição Nhambirre is based on interviews with their son Sérgio da Costa, Apr. 16 & 28, 2011, and with Dinis Marques, a Portuguese who was employed in their *cantina* as a teenager in the mid-1960s, Leiria, Portugal, Oct. 10 & 17, 2010.



In the 1950s and 1960s, there were hundreds of *cantinas* in Lourenço Marques.<sup>74</sup> The *cantina* was a commercial and social hub of everyday suburban life, a cross between a general store and a bar, and with few exceptions the only authorized business in the *subúrbios*. To say it catered to people's day-to-day needs is to understate just how much people depended on it.



**Fig. 1.6.** Dinis Marques, a Portuguese teenager who came to Mozambique to work at Xibinhana's *cantina*, and friend, in the *cantina*'s yard, mid-1960s. (Source: Dinis Marques)

At six in the morning the first customers of the day filed in, sullen men often on their way to the docks, with an *escudo*-and-a-half in hand for a roll of bread. Throughout the day women or their children appeared at the counter with small change to buy a few tablespoons of cooking oil or a cup of rice. Over the years, the municipality installed public fountains here and there in the *subúrbios*, but even by independence they did not meet demand; the long lines and (for many) the long distance to fetch fountain water were enough to persuade those with a few more cents at their disposal to fill their empty

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<sup>74</sup> Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de L.M.," 313–314; Penvenne, *African Workers*, 40–43.

oil cans at the nearest *cantina* spigot, and to pay for the privilege.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps the most lucrative hours of the *cantineiro*'s day were when men returned from work and gathered to drink. *Cantinas* were the only places where those with native status could legally purchase alcohol, and from the late nineteenth century onward they were essential to Lisbon's strategies for making the colonies a market for (cheap) Portuguese wine.<sup>76</sup>

The *cantina* was a concrete-block structure of impressive size – impressive, that is, only because there was nothing around to compete with it. Older *cantinas*, like the many built in the 1930s, had high roof peaks and wide pediments supported by fluted iron columns so that the entrance was like a cut-rate Roman temple portico.<sup>77</sup> *Cantinas* tended to be elevated well above the rainy season high-water mark, and their wide verandas gave clear views of the street-life passing by. Even after business hours, when tables were put away, *cantina* verandas were a place for men to lounge out of the sun or the rain or to simply congregate away from home. For many women, the *cantina* was a necessary stop during their workday, for many men, the *cantina* was also a place to relax.

In the late 1950s, local administrators identified *cantinas* as a threat to a healthy, well-disciplined workforce.<sup>78</sup> African men were said to be spending too much of their earnings getting drunk rather than sustaining a family. Hours were restricted, so that

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<sup>75</sup> In the early 1970s, women living in Malhangalene would make a weekly trip to the townhouses and apartments of neighboring COOP, a development at the edge of the City of Cement, and, with cans in hand, ask homeowners to make a charitable contribution of water. Guilherme da Silva Pereira, "Bairro do COOP: A peregrinação semanal," *Tempo*, June 20, 1971.

<sup>76</sup> José Capela, *O vinho para o preto: Notas e textos sobre a exportação do vinho para África* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1973); Penvenne, *African Workers*, 40–43.

<sup>77</sup> The *cantinas* from the 1930s often have the date of construction inscribed in the pediment.

<sup>78</sup> Paulo Negrão, "A cantina do china, pt. 1," *O Brado Africano*, October 1, 1960.

*cantinas* were now forced to close at 8 p.m. and all day on Sundays. *Cantineiros* locked up, but customers knew they could enter through the yard, at what was called the “horse door,” a rear entrance so-called because during their nightly patrols mounted police would also sometimes show up there.<sup>79</sup> Usually, though, the officer could be easily bought off with a beer. Perhaps as a result of the new rules, *cantinas* built in the 1960s minimized outdoor space. The newer *cantinas* lacked verandas to command the streetscape. They were turned inward.



**Fig. 1.7.** Glória da Conceição Nhambirre (far left) and José da Costa (second from right) at their daughter's wedding, early 1980s. (Source: Sérgio da Costa)

A serialized short story that appeared in 1960 in *O Brado Africano*, a newspaper of elite African opinion, was written as a defense of the rule-breaking *cantineiros* and their clientele. The economics of poverty, argues the fictional Chinese *cantineiro* of the

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<sup>79</sup> Interviews with Marques.

story, require people to make their purchases a little bit at a time, whenever they get a hold of a little cash, a happenstance that follows its own clock. The African customer, he adds,

likes to converse a little, together with friends someplace, let's say a public place, just as whites do, and this place, similar to the clubs of white people, can only be a *cantina*; that there he feels the pleasure in passing a few convivial hours outside work, wooing women, listening to the radio, hearing the latest news in a different way than he was used to in the bush. And what would be the ideal place for this mutual companionship? Obviously the *cantina*!<sup>80</sup>

The *cantina* was perhaps the only place where, in part because of competition among *cantineiros*, non-Africans were compelled to cater to the pleasure of Africans.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, the *cantineiro* was often seen as a parasitical figure, who schemed for ways to cheat his clientele.<sup>82</sup> The *cantineiro* was often so out of his element and reliant on an African employee or companion to communicate with customers, that he became to his clients a target of ridicule. It was an unequal struggle, but the clientele made ample use of the power to name. Penvenne writes of the generic *cantineiro* moniker: *mumaji*, indirectly derived from the Portuguese for “Want more?,” the badgering question of *cantineiros* seeking to run up a customer's drinks tab.<sup>83</sup> Residents of the *subúrbios* also categorized individual *cantineiros* according to an elaborate, and uncharitable, taxonomy.

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<sup>80</sup> Paulo Negrão, “A cantina do china, pt. 3,” *O Brado Africano*, October 15, 1960, 4.

<sup>81</sup> Those with native status could not legally own formal businesses, and for people with *assimilado* status the obstacles to owning a business were enormous. In the Beira-Mar area of Chamanculo, residents speak of the man who was once the single black owner of a *cantina* there. In the 1960s, when the municipality decided to pave the main roads through the neighborhood, most of this *cantina* was demolished for being in the way, putting the black *cantineiro* out of business. Residents remember the demolition as a gratuitous act – that the paved road curved off its natural track to justify it – and that it was intended as a favor to local Portuguese *cantineiros*.

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, the account of Carolina Adelaide Inguana, May 20, 2011.

<sup>83</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 40.

José da Costa was a fixed, ornery presence behind his *cantina* counter, and his dog Lisboa (“Lisbon”) was always seen dozing at the foot of his stool. The similarities between da Costa’s snarling features and those of his dog earned him the nickname Xibinhana, which in Ronga means bulldog, and which stuck precisely because he hated it. Da Costa and Nhambirre never gave their *cantina* a name – few did – but everyone called it Xibinhana. Another *cantina* in Chamanculo, the only one with two levels, was unofficially called Ximajana – “short one” – because of the small-statured Portuguese who owned it. Another *cantina* was Zestapor, a corruption of “*José está porco*” – “José is piggish” – because of its owner’s generally unhygienic appearance, his practice of storing pig feed in his truck, and his habit of brushing his teeth in the same sink where customers washed their hands. The *cantineiro* just a hundred feet or so away was nicknamed Agaragajo – “Getthatguy.” That is what he would yell from the *cantina*’s steps when a customer slipped away without paying, which apparently occurred with some frequency.<sup>84</sup> In a place without numbered houses and few official street names, the local *cantina* became the most obvious landmark when giving someone directions to one’s house, and it also served as one’s postal address.

## Compounds

In a more distant part of Chamanculo, about halfway between the City of Cement and the campus of the São José de Lhanguene Mission, is what must be the largest pigeon coop in Maputo. Most of the larger houses of wood-and-zinc feature a coop somewhere

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<sup>84</sup> For analogous naming practices in rural Rhodesia, see Dennis Masaka, “Reflections on Black Indigenous People’s Nicknaming of Colonial White Farmers in Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Black Studies* 43, no. 5 (2012): 479–504.

on the roof or in the yard. This particular one is more like a pigeon apartment block. It features some 400 separate holes for pigeons to roost, and it rivals in size the elegant wood-and-zinc house beside which it stands. The house was built in the 1920s by a Goan man named Araújo, but the pigeon coop – expanded several times over the years – was the work of his son António.<sup>85</sup> (Fig. 1.8.)



**Fig. 1.8.** The Araújo residence, built in the 1920s by a Goan railroad employee. Partially visible to the left of the enormous pigeon coop is the enormous *componde* built by António Araújo in the 1960s. (Photo: the author)

António Araújo, whose mother was a black Mozambican, worked for years as a truck driver for the municipality, and as a younger man he sidelined as a journalist for *O Brado Africano*. In the 1960s, he became an entrepreneur. He started a funeral services business – perhaps the only one owned by an African in Lourenço Marques. Then, calling on his connections in the city government, he was able to open a bar and dance club directly adjacent to his house, and because it was 1962, he called the place Twist Bar. His wife, his brother, and his sons took turns behind the counter and in the kitchen while he

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<sup>85</sup> The following account of António Araújo is based on an interview with his son Isaac Araújo, June 8 & 15, 2011.

was occupied with his other business affairs. One of those businesses, a housing compound built at the other end of his property, was meant to target the clientele coming through the bar doors. Numbering almost 100 one-room units, it may have been the largest compound in the *subúrbios*.

The English word “compound,” when referring to housing, possesses a surprising genealogy. A chemical “compound” is related to the word “composition,” but the housing “compound” derives from the Malay word *kampong*, which means “village.”<sup>86</sup> The word’s almost bucolic origins speak to the radical transformations to which global capitalism subjected it: “compounds” were what the British called the earliest colonial housing clusters in Southeast Asia – enclosures for European residences and factories. Later, the miserable barracks-like dormitories where miners were housed on South Africa’s Rand were called compounds, and when larger employers in Lourenço Marques built worker housing, often big sheds to shelter hundreds of people under one roof, “compound” became *componde*.<sup>87</sup> In the first decades of the twentieth century, conditions at these various facilities were considered scandalously abysmal (even by the low standards inherent to a system of forced labor) and they hardly represented a housing solution for the urban African population at large.<sup>88</sup>

By the 1950s, scores if not hundreds of landowners in the city’s *subúrbios* had gotten into the business of building smaller-scale *compondes* for all the low-earning workers for whom employers did not provide housing, and who could not afford to either

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<sup>86</sup> Pena and Cuembelo, “Bairro do caniço,” 19; “Compound, n.2,” *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, December 2013), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/37832>.

<sup>87</sup> Zamparoni, “Entre *narros e mulungos*,” 314–317; Penvenne, “A History of African Labor in L.M.,” 269–276.

<sup>88</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 49, 53–54.

build or rent a reed house of their own. Immigrants from the countryside, arriving in Lourenço Marques by the thousands every year, often found only temporary or informal employment, and many did not have family in Lourenço Marques on whose floor they might lay a mat. The *componde* packed people in close, but it was more pigeon coop than barracks. Instead of everyone sharing the same open space, the typical *componde* featured a series of discrete units arranged in long rows on either side of a narrow yard. (Fig. 1.9.) It was usually of wood-and-zinc construction (and therefore extremely hot) and rooms were often windowless and airless, with the door to the yard being the only opening. The average room was less than 100 square feet, smaller than a room in the average reed house.<sup>89</sup> And people often tried to squeeze many to a room. At Araújo's sizable complex, four pit latrines served several hundred tenants, and the tenants were expected to maintain the facilities themselves. The landlord did give residents free use of a water spigot in the yard, however.

Araújo made no secret of his business plan. It was the same as most *cantina* owners in the *subúrbios*: build a compound in the backyard to house sex workers who would cater to the bar's clientele.<sup>90</sup> But while *compondes* were often stuck with the reputation of brothels, they were not brothels in the strict sense of being dedicated solely to prostitution.<sup>91</sup> Not only sex workers lived there, and moreover sex work was only one of among a number of strategies to which many of the compound's young women and girls (and some boys), usually new to the city, were compelled to engage in.

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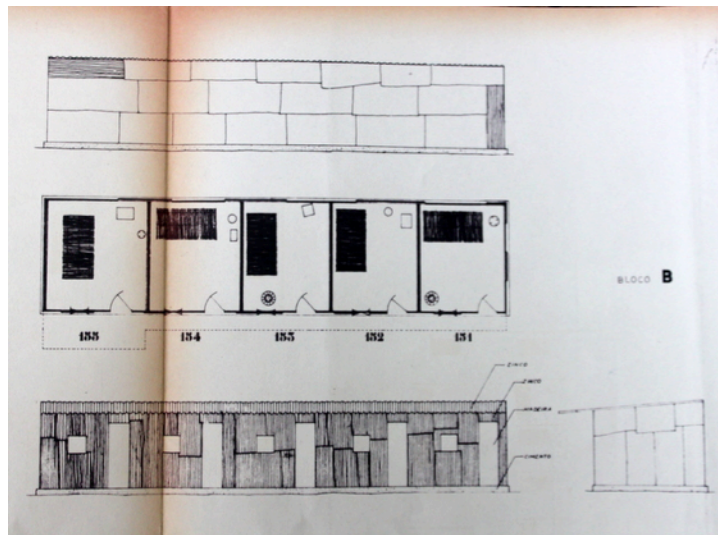
<sup>89</sup> Pena and Cuembelo, "Bairro do caniço," 19.

<sup>90</sup> Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain*, 60.

<sup>91</sup> Interviews with Sebastião Chitombe, May 4, 9, & 16, 2011. Chitombe lived in a Chamanculo *componde* as a teenager, after migrating to the city in the mid-1960s.



To live in a *componde* was to live in the slums of the *subúrbios*, and some homeowners and residents of longer standing in the *bairros* looked down their noses on their compound-dwelling neighbors. The especially rank conditions of most *compondes*, where people were forced to live in such close proximity to their own filth, contributed to the snobbery, as did ethnic chauvinism; to some native Maronga, the speakers of Chopi, Tonga, Tswa, and Changana arriving from further north were unsophisticated greenhorns at best, unattached and potentially dangerous criminals at worst. That many of the so-called “foreigners” who lived in the *compondes* did so as a temporary strategy to accrue savings before returning to the countryside did little to alter the general perception of their rootlessness.



**Fig. 1.9.** Plan and elevations for a typical *componde*, 1963. One should not take the graphic representation of one mat per unit as meaning that only one person lived in each unit. (Source: Gabinete de Urbanização e Habitação da Região de Lourenço Marques, *Estudo do “Canico.”* Plano director de urbanização de Lourenço Marques 44 [Lourenço Marques: GUHRLM, 1969], n.p., MICOA.)

Until the late-1960s, rent in a *componde* could be very low, especially if one shared a single unit with many others, some 100 to 150 *escudos* per unit. But with rents skyrocketing in Lourenço Marques and its *subúrbios*, compound living ceased to be the relative bargain that it had been.<sup>92</sup> In 1971, rent for a single unit could be as high as 500 *escudos* per month, if the compound had a water spigot and illumination, more than rent for an average two-room reed house, which itself had tripled over the previous five years.

“The compounds exist,” argued *Tempo* magazine in 1972, “not for the benefit of the residents, who don’t even realize that it would be less harmful to live in houses of reeds – but rather because of mindsets dedicated to exploitation.”<sup>93</sup>

### **The Bairro Indígena**

For years the municipal government made repeated half-gestures at the housing problem, always with meager results. In 1913, legislation compelling “natives” to register themselves with authorities, for the purposes of eventual labor impressment, also mandated that the municipality dedicate a certain proportion of registration fees toward the construction of formal housing for Africans.<sup>94</sup> But over the next two decades all that the municipality could show for its efforts was a cluster of 33 concrete-block houses, near the market in Xipamanine, intended for “natives” who worked low-paying jobs for the municipality and the railroad. The houses lacked both piped water and electricity, though

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<sup>92</sup> Pena and Cuembelo, “Bairro do caniço,” 14–15, 19.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>94</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 70–71.

at least they were built in solid materials. The city charged a rent so high that few actual “natives” could afford to live there.<sup>95</sup>

In the mid-1930s, an additional source of funding for native housing was identified: indemnification funds resulting from Mozambicans who had died in the mines of South Africa.<sup>96</sup> These funds had accrued for years, unspent, and the South African Board of Mines suggested to the Portuguese that the funds be used on something to benefit Mozambique’s African population. Mozambique’s governor-general revived the long-neglected order to build native housing, and he made the municipality of Lourenço Marques responsible for building it. The city was charged with building “a neighborhood that will come to serve as a model for others and to which can be transferred a part of the native population that currently lives, in the *subúrbios* of the city, in buildings of unpleasant aspect and devoid of the most basic hygienic conditions.”<sup>97</sup>

The project, which broke ground in the early 1940s, was called the Bairro Indígena da Munhuana (“the native neighborhood of Munhuana”), the colony’s first government-led housing project of any size. Other large government projects that targeted the African population were underway by the 1960s, such as in the outlying areas of Matola and Machava, and in other parts of Mozambique. But the Bairro Indígena

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<sup>95</sup> Zamparoni, “Entre *narros e mulungos*,” 320; Penvenne, *African Workers*, 72.

<sup>96</sup> Albino Magaia, “Bairro da Munhuana de 1935 a 1973,” *Tempo*, February 18, 1973; Albino Magaia, “Carta aos habitantes do Bairro da Munhuana,” *Tempo*, December 22, 1974. When a miner died before the end of the contract, or “disappeared,” the mining companies had agreed to indemnify the Portuguese government (rather than the deceased miner’s family) the sum remaining on the contract. This sum, presumably, was in addition to the payments made in gold to the Portuguese for each contract a Mozambican miner signed. It remains unclear whether the indemnification funds sat unused because of the negligence of the mining companies, Portuguese administrators, or both.

<sup>97</sup> Governo-Geral da Província de Moçambique, *Diploma Legislativo No. 616*, 1938.

was far more prominently located, and because for decades it stood as the lone Portuguese intervention of any significance in Lourenço Marques, it took on a symbolic value beyond the numbers it housed – for residents of the *subúrbios*, for colonial officials, and eventually for Frelimo, following independence. In the 1960s, when the legal reforms of the time purged the term *indígena* from official communications, the name of the neighborhood was changed to the Bairro Popular da Munhuana. But even today, a half-century after the name change, few call it anything other than the Bairro Indígena. This section will address the project’s origins; following chapters will more fully address how the residents of the *bairro* regarded it, as well as its fate after independence.

The 22-hectare site selected for the complex was located along the route that connected the City of Cement with the city’s airstrip, and if the project was indeed a superficial gesture, a Potemkin village only “for the English to see,” as the expression went, then it made sense to put it there, where many visiting VIPs entered the colonial capital.<sup>98</sup> The site was at the same time near some of the densest suburban neighborhoods, but there was a good reason the site was not so populous itself.<sup>99</sup> It was a low-lying area frequently as inundated as the pestilential ponds that bordered it to its east and west. Reviewing the plan in 1939, the colony’s health director issued dire warnings to Lourenço Marques officials. Prevailing winds passing over the ponds already rendered

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<sup>98</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 72–73.

<sup>99</sup> 190 “huts” needed to be relocated to make way for the project, though surely some of the so-called huts were rather houses of wood-and-zinc, such as the childhood home of Lúcia da Silveira. Interview with Lúcia Joaquim da Silveira, Apr. 11, 2011; Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques, “Acta” 15, May 28, 1940, note 517, 6. The author thanks António Sopa for forwarding him the transcribed *actas* regarding the Bairro Indígena.

the site “one of the regions of greatest maleficent influence on the city.”<sup>100</sup> Locating a housing project in that part of the *subúrbios* would dangerously aggravate the malaria problem for Europeans downwind, in the City of Cement.

Without a doubt, it ought not pass through the head of a legislator to establish a model neighborhood for natives at the very edge of an area that is systematically condemned by the public hygiene of the city and sanitary precaution in general. For the precise reason that it must be a model neighborhood it must not be implanted on the site indicated in the plan.<sup>101</sup>

He counseled moving the prospective *bairro* to a location further away, for the sake of African and European alike. The housing commission, however, disagreed with the health official’s assessment, and pointed to several factors in favor of the chosen site, including the low cost of acquiring the land.<sup>102</sup>

Meanwhile, the chief engineer of the regional public works department raged that the houses of the complex were designed without thought to the climate.<sup>103</sup> They lacked verandas, and instead of peaked roofs that would help alleviate indoor heat, architects had

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<sup>100</sup> João Augusto Ornelas, Director (interino), Direcção dos Serviços de Saúde, Colónia de Moçambique, “Parecer: 1) Bairro indígena modelar da Munhana, 2) Bairros indígenas do Infulene e da Mahota,” March 6, 1939, AHM/DSNI/cx. 528. A second emphatic opinion followed a month later, in which the director attested to firsthand knowledge of native housing projects in the English and French colonies of West Africa, and said he had never seen a project as “unfortunate” (*infeliz*) as what was planned for Lourenço Marques. Ornelas, “Parecer No. 2: Implantação do primeiro bairro indígena modelar – tipo – ‘Bairro da Munhuana’ – segundo projecto apresentado pela Câmara Municipal,” April 18, 1939, AHM/DSNI/cx. 528.

<sup>101</sup> Ornelas, “Parecer.”

<sup>102</sup> Paulo Augusto do Rêgo, Presidente da Comissão de Construção de Pousadas ou Bairros Indígenas, Governador (interino) da Província do Sul do Save, “Informação,” Colónia de Moçambique, Repartição Central dos Negócios Indígenas, April 28, 1939, AHM/DSNI/cx. 528.

<sup>103</sup> Internal memo, “Informação,” Repartição Provincial de Obras Públicas do Sul do Save, April 2, 1940, filed in Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques, “Projecto para a construção do Novo Bairro Indígena,” 1940 [original cataloging data: proc. 3, cap. 2, cx. 104, vol. 2], MICOA.

for apparent stylistic reasons opted for flat roofs of reinforced concrete as if Mozambique were “Scandinavia, Greenland, Canada, etc.” Putting people accustomed to living in straw huts in such oven-like houses was “an extremely grave error,” as it would compel them to seek refuge at *cantinas* and other places where they would “create disturbances, etc., etc.” He blamed the influence of South Africa for the flat roofs, an invasive species of construction that to his chagrin had already become popular in the European quarters of Lourenço Marques.

During the *bairro*’s first phase of construction, between 1940 and 1943, almost 400 units were built, the majority of them with only one room. Each unit had its own narrow yard, and the yards were arranged along streets in half-circles around a central plaza, where a police post and the *bairro* management office were located. (Figs. 1.10-1.12.) Each property was supplied with piped water and electricity, but use was restricted to certain hours of the morning (for water) or evening (for electricity).<sup>104</sup> In terms of space, the houses were no upgrade from the suburban norm. Rooms were 3.1 meters by 3.6 meters, about 120 square feet, so even a two-room unit in the Bairro Indígena was smaller than many of the reed houses in the vicinity. Nonetheless, the neighborhood initially proved attractive enough that people who were not designated natives – that is, people of mixed race and people with *assimilado* status – occupied many of the units.<sup>105</sup> They did so, presumably, either through the exchange of favors so common within the municipal apparatus, or by illegally subletting from original tenants.

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<sup>104</sup> Helena Alberto Macuacua, “Um breve historial sobre o Bairro Indígena” (Unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 1.

<sup>105</sup> Adelino José Macedo, “Relatório anual referente ao ano de 1946” (Administração do Concelho de Lourenço Marques, January 31, 1947), 5, AHM/GDLM/cx. 352.



**Fig. 1.10.** The Bairro Indígena, n.d. (Source: AHM)

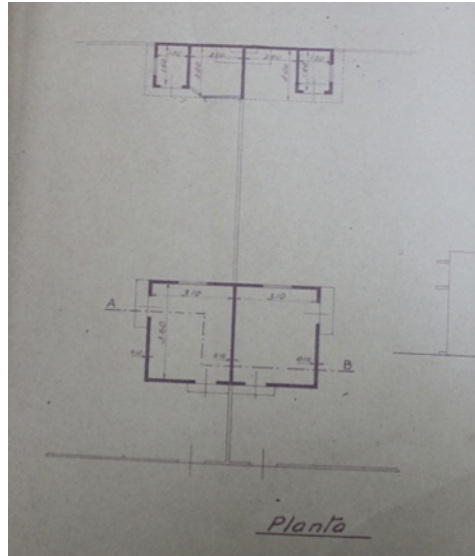
In his report for 1946, the administrator of the *Concelho* – the bureaucracy that most directly governed African lives in Lourenço Marques – harshly criticized the results of the completed neighborhood. At the expense of more than eight million *escudos*, the Bairro Indígena da Munhuana only housed some 3,000 people, and of these perhaps not even half were the “natives” it was intended for. “It is possible that whoever authorized and outlined this type of housing was possessed of the best of intentions, thinking to give maximum comfort to the native population of the city. Unfortunately this goal was not reached and the problem of housing the great mass of the native population of Lourenço Marques remains unresolved.”<sup>106</sup> The Bairro Indígena was “far, very far indeed from meeting needs,” wrote the head of Mozambique’s office of native affairs in 1951.<sup>107</sup> Munhuana “seems to us a drop of water in the ocean.” He added that he regretted that the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> A. A. Montanha, “Informação No. 9: Projecto de Diploma Legislativo respeitante às ‘Vilas Indígenas,’” 3, April 3, 1951, AHM/DSNI/cx. 528.

municipality had carried out its plans without regard to social welfare and the “customs and traditions” of the natives. “This is not just a matter of building houses,” he argued.<sup>108</sup>



**Fig. 1.11.** Plans for the cramped, semi-detached, “bachelor” units that predominated in the Bairro Indígena, 1940. Bathing spaces and latrines are located at the top of the image. (Source: MICOA)

In historian L. Lloys Frates’s view, the radial plan of the neighborhood demonstrates the panoptical ideal of centralized spatial control, the kind one finds in many prison plans, where everyone and everything can be monitored at all times – a design which figures so prominently in Michel Foucault’s ideas of space and power.<sup>109</sup> The police station in the Bairro Indígena featured a turret, for instance; a police officer, if he could maintain the attention for it, could surveil activity in the spacious central plaza. Because the turret was located at the edge of the plaza, however, rather than at its center, it did not afford views of the streets that radiated from the plaza or of the concentric streets that intersected the radial streets – that is, most of the neighborhood. Perhaps more

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>109</sup> Frates, “Memory of Place, the Place of Memory,” 158–160.



significant than the turret were the low perimeter walls of every yard, which rose no higher than one's waist. As James Scott might put it, the plan also made African life not just more visible but more legible, as each unit was given a number and was located on a street with a name, and each tenant established a record with the municipality (i.e. the landlord) of payment or non-payment of a monthly rent.<sup>110</sup>



**Fig. 1.12.** Archbishop D. Teodósio da Gouveia and fellow passengers are shuttled through the Bairro Indígena in the aftermath of Hurrricane Claude, 1966. (Source: Igreja de São Joaquim da Munhuana)

Just about all government initiatives of the time, including forced labor, carried with them the pretension of “civilizing” the natives, and the Bairro Indígena was no exception. Rosa Candla was one of the first residents of the Bairro Indígena.<sup>111</sup> Born in a rural district, she was orphaned at a young age, and in the early 1940s, while in her teens,

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<sup>110</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 9–84.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Rosa Candla, July 27, 2009.

a Portuguese couple drove her to Lourenço Marques to try her luck in the city. She was taken in by a railroad worker who had just acquired a house in the Bairro Indígena. He cared for her like a daughter, they later married, and they lived together for more than sixty years in a two-room unit near the police post. (Fig. 1.13.) In a 2009 interview, Candla could not recall much about her life in the neighborhood during the colonial era, but she did relate one story that for her apparently encapsulated the nuisance of living in such proximity to authorities. Like most of the women in the neighborhood, Candla did her shopping at the nearby Xipamanine market. If she passed the police post with her groceries balanced on her head – as most women in Mozambique do – the officer on duty would order her to remove her bundles and carry them in her hands at her sides, presumably the proper comportment of a civilized Portuguese.<sup>112</sup>



**Fig. 1.13.** Rosa Candla's wedding day, 1960s. (Source: Rosa Candla)

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<sup>112</sup> Until well into the twentieth century, many women in Portugal carried loads on their heads as well, and the romanticized image of such humble workers is frequently depicted on the wall tiles for which Lisbon and Porto are famous. As in Mozambique, wheelbarrows and other conveyances were monopolized by men.

Such harassment aside, living in the Bairro Indígena could hardly be considered a totalizing scenario. Rather, the neighborhood was better characterized by official neglect, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

### **The Portuguese *Quintal***

For untold numbers of young men and women from southern Mozambique, the day-long bus trip to Lourenço Marques was, well before buildings of the City of Cement or its *subúrbios* came into view, the moment of initiation into city life. In the rural areas further north of the city, young men with ambition migrated to the Rand to work on the mines, many avoiding Lourenço Marques altogether. During the last three decades of Portuguese rule, the Mozambican capital was the destination of younger brothers and sisters; the more desperate; tradesmen such as carpenters and stonemasons seeking to establish themselves where there was consistent construction work; and (quite few relative to their fellow travellers) mission-educated teenagers aspiring to higher levels of learning. For most of the younger passengers, it was the first time they travelled faster than they could run. They often boarded the bus without a single *escudo*, without shoes, without food, and, unlike those headed for the mines of “Jone,” most had only a vague sense of where they would stay when they arrived in the city. Some were very young, pre-teens and adolescents. Much of what they knew of Lourenço Marques was what they heard on the bus.

A tangle of reasons justified the exodus, but the push factors were overwhelming. In the 1950s rural life became ever more intolerable with the imposition of forced labor and forced cultivation, and the perpetual dislocations to make way for Portuguese

plantations and other agricultural schemes. One earned a trickle of cash in the city, but in the countryside one earned it in drips and drops if one earned it at all. Without cash one could not pay school fees or hut taxes. The consequence of not going to school was merely illiteracy; the consequence of a young man not paying his hut taxes was a six-month spell, or more, on a work gang. Few Mozambicans cultivated an image of Lourenço Marques as a final destination, a place to build a life and a family and to thrive. At best the city was considered a short- or medium-term measure and a temporary refuge. As soon as they had earned some cash, and once the crisis at home had passed, they would return. This, at least, was how many reasoned at first.<sup>113</sup>

A fictional account serialized in *O Brado Africano* in 1959 and 1960 tells the story of “Moleque Salomone,” a boy from the countryside who tires of laboring in the fields of his Catholic mission school, and seeks escape.<sup>114</sup> At the local *cantina* he is recruited to work in the home of a Portuguese family in Lourenço Marques. The boy thinks he is 12 years old. The recruiter decides he looks more like 14.

Salomone discusses his fate with the old miner sharing his seat. As the landscape rushes past him for the first time, the boy confesses his torn feelings. “No one obligated me to go to the city, but I also didn’t abandon home because I wanted to.”<sup>115</sup> The miner listens, and shares his own misgivings of a life lived mostly away from home. But he

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<sup>113</sup> Interviews with Chitombe; Adriano Matate, July 18 & 21, Dec. 5, 2011; Carlos Muchanga, Oct. 25, 2012. See also Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism*, 150-152.

<sup>114</sup> Luís Polanah, “O moleque Salomone, pt. 12,” *O Brado Africano*, January 23, 1960. Students at mission schools frequently worked in the fields in exchange for room and board and in lieu of paying school fees.

<sup>115</sup> Luís Polanah, “O moleque Salomone, pt. 7,” *O Brado Africano*, December 5, 1959, 5.

offers the boy no consolation. When they arrive at the bus station in Lourenço Marques, the miner has only ominous counsel.

Here life in the city is different than life in the bush. Here no one knows you and you don't know anyone. You'll get to know one person or another, but it won't do you any good. Here you live like a leaf carried from the ground by the wind and that twists in the air without knowing where it's going to fall. The life of a servant is the life of a leaf dragged by the wind. Understand?<sup>116</sup>

He advises Salomone to forget about home; the memory will only distract him from doing a good job. Eventually, he tells him, he will be a different man, a man of the city who scorns the tranquil rural life. When he is older, he will realize his mistake in having chosen the urban life, but he will be unable to return home.

Because of the late hour, Salomone must spend the night on the concrete patio of a *cantina* near the bus stop with other so-called *moleques*. In the morning, Portuguese men come to claim the servant boys for whom they signed up. The first building in the City of Cement Salomone will come to know is the office of the *Concelho* administration. There he will sign the contract that binds him to the Portuguese family for the year. Then he will be introduced to the family's *quintal* (yard), his new home.

The demand for servant boys grew fierce with the growth of the city's white population.<sup>117</sup> They came cheap and they were pliable, divorced from family and most other social connections and possible complications. Servant boys cooked the family breakfast, washed the dishes, made up the beds, fed and walked the dog, and swept the floors. In a household with multiple servants they occupied the very bottom rank, below

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<sup>116</sup> Polanah, "Moleque, pt. 12," 1.

<sup>117</sup> Luís Polanah, "O moleque Salomone, pt. 16," *O Brado Africano*, February 20, 1960, 10. Former servants spoke in recent interviews of the ease with which they found work.

the cook and the *mainato* – the launderer – both of whom were usually male.<sup>118</sup> The cook and *mainato* usually lived in the *subúrbios*, and walked to work. The servant boy lived on site, occupying a single-room, windowless unit in the yard, usually part of a larger concrete-block structure that was also used for storage. He usually slept on a reed mat. During the day, all servants shared the *quintal*, where most cooking and the washing of clothes took place. Homeowners themselves barely saw the *quintal*, except perhaps spying it from a window above.

The servant called the head of household *patrão* – a word that combines the senses of the English words “boss” and “patron.” His wife, the *patroa*, was addressed as Dona Maria or Dona Lourdes or whatever her given name might have been. The servant boy’s daily life was circumscribed by the concrete walls of the *quintal* and the house it served and so life stirring beyond the property’s boundaries was usually glimpsed only a few hours per week. He could grow quite close to the people he served, and depending on how young he was and the sentiments of his employers, he might essentially be raised by them. But the servant’s utter dependence on his *patrões* and his near confinement to their home also left him vulnerable to violent whim. In fiction and in fact, there is no shortage of stories of the swift punishments levied on Mozambican bodies for lax work, alleged theft, or perceived cheekiness. The man of the house, if he did not beat the servant himself, dragged him to the police station to have the police administer the beating. The instrument of choice was a wooden paddle which was whipped against upturned palms, and the *palmatória*, made more lethal by the holes drilled in the paddle, became a kind of emblem of the arbitrariness and brutality of Portuguese rule, long after the practice

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<sup>118</sup> Penvenne, *African Workers*, 148–149.

diminished in the 1960s.<sup>119</sup> The servant's only real protection from an abusive *patrão* was the one-year contract – if he could bear it that long – and a fluid market for servants that left few *moleques* unengaged for more than a few days.

In Salomone's story, the husband feels sympathy for the succession of servants – Salomone's many predecessors – who he has been compelled to take to the police station in order to appease his hysterical wife. A number of former servants recalled similar scenes: they said they harbored more dread of excitable *patroas* than they did of their allegedly more reasonable *patrões*. The characterization ought not be dismissed as mere chauvinism. Many women, such as those recently arrived from Portugal, endured their own form of isolation and confinement in Lourenço Marques, and the proximity of male servants – especially when left alone in their company – likely fed racist fears.

Adriano Matate came to Lourenço Marques in 1950 from Gaza, and found quick employment in the *quintal* of a Portuguese family.<sup>120</sup> He was 16. His schedule was simple: when he was not working or sleeping, he was at church. He left the property to pray twice a week, on Thursday nights and on Sunday afternoons. Once, his *patrão* was away for a week or so. During his absence, police appeared at the home to question Matate. His *patroa* had reported him as a *bandido*, because surely only a thief, she told them, would be slipping out of the yard every night. The police searched Matate's small room, and then took him to the station, indicating to Matate all the while that they did not truly consider him a suspect in any crime. Unfortunately for Matate, he was taken in at a time when local administrators were being pressured by Lisbon to fill labor quotas for the

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<sup>119</sup> Such a beating, after a women alleges that her servants have stolen her gold watch, is portrayed in Momplé, “Caniço,” 36.

<sup>120</sup> Interviews with Matate.

cocoa plantations of São Tomé.<sup>121</sup> Within days, Matate and his cellmates were on a ship for the remote island colony. Matate was told his sentence was nine years. His exile lasted twelve.

For many young men working and living in backyards in the City of Cement, Sunday afternoon, if not spent in church, was spent in the *subúrbios*. Out of sight of *patrões*, and mostly out of sight of police, the *bairros* were a place to let off steam. Residents of Chamanculo recall that during the colonial era, Sunday was the most dangerous day of the week. The servant boys dressed in their most stylish clothes and formed temporary gangs of convenience, roaming suburban lanes in search of other gangs of *moleques* to fight or innocents to rough up. One post-independence novelist, writing about the *subúrbios* in the 1960s, recalled the tranquility that prevailed mid-week compared to the weekend,

that violence, with the fearsome bandits with white trousers, a harmonica on their greedy lips and sugarcane in hand, disemboweling anyone who crossed their path, venting their frustrations and suppressed desires for revenge against the *patrões* who humiliated them from Monday morning to late Sunday afternoon.<sup>122</sup>

More permanent servants, or at least those more favored, shared a roof with their *patrões*. “Rosa Nhampule’s Shanty,” a Christmas tale published over the 1959 holidays in *O Brado Africano*, reported the true story of the Soares family’s beloved elderly maid,

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<sup>121</sup> In 1950, Portugal’s colonial ministry requested 6,000 laborers from Mozambique’s governor-general, and the quota was filled with “vagrants,” “undesirables,” and convicts. Zachary Kagan Guthrie, “Repression and Migration: Forced Labor Exile of Mozambicans to São Tomé, 1948–1955,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 449–62. For years, “São Tomé” served as shorthand for the worst punishment you could receive at the hands of police if you were not sufficiently cautious. This was before local agents of PIDE, the Portuguese political police, began more actively to subject suspects to torture.

<sup>122</sup> Filipe Mata, *N’lhomulo* (Maputo: Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, 1985), 26.



Tia Rosa, a fixture of the household for two generations.<sup>123</sup> One day, Senhora Soares found herself in the attic, and in front of Tia Rosa's bedroom for the first time. The family had always maintained a respectful distance from Tia Rosa's quarters, her refuge from her tiring work. But some unknown impulse compelled Senhora Soares to push open the maid's door.

The unpainted plaster walls of the shanty had already fallen at various points leaving bare the slats; the holes were covered with newspaper; on an old table with a broken marble top lay a mirror so stained and tarnished that it no longer had the least value or usefulness. There was also a chair – Tia Rosa's only usable "furnishing" – and, thrown in the corner, was a bed whose rusted springs had long given up the unfair fight against the massive load of Tia Rosa, so that the slats of the bed were concave and almost touched the ground, with her mattress full of wrinkles and stuffed with a straw that crackled with noise at the slightest touch, and it looked like a bathtub in the center, showing, in negative, a faithful replica of the opulent figure of the aged maid.

There was no other furniture in Tia Rosa's shanty. And the little that we are pointing out was, of course, scrap. But since the old black woman had never complained or demanded anything, no one had given any thought to the situation.<sup>124</sup>

The author's use of the word "shanty" to describe an attic bedroom seems calculated.<sup>125</sup>

If the family could be ignorant of the miniature slum festering just over its head for 30 to 40 years, what could they know of the *subúrbios*, home to hundreds of thousands, that

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<sup>123</sup> Henrique António, "Conto de Natal: A choça de Rosa Nhampule [part 1]," *O Brado Africano*, December 26, 1959; Henrique António, "Conto de Natal: A choça de Rosa Nhampule [part 2]," *O Brado Africano*, January 2, 1960. *Tia* ("aunt") is a term of endearment.

<sup>124</sup> António, "Conto de Natal [part 1]," 3.

<sup>125</sup> Other translations include "hut" and "shack" – neither of which suggests the bedroom of a house.

surrounded the city on three sides? What, for that matter, could they know of Tia Rosa? Where did this Portuguese family's responsibility begin, and where did it end?<sup>126</sup>

## Conclusion

In his introduction to *Struggle for the City*, the edited volume which in the 1980s gave new impulse to African urban history, Frederick Cooper argued that the physical density of city life – “the conjuncture of social processes in narrow spaces” – made what happened there fundamentally distinct than from what happened in the countryside.<sup>127</sup> Close contact compels people to interact in ways they otherwise would not. If physical proximity is a distinguishing factor of urban life, then it must follow that what distinguishes each city is the nature of its proximities. In Lourenço Marques, the relative nearness of city and *subúrbio*, the proximity even outside of the workplace of people of various backgrounds (including a large and diverse European population), and the fact that within both city and *subúrbio* people of relative wealth lived cheek-by-jowl with people with virtually none, engendered forms of personal intimacy that, if not absent in

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<sup>126</sup> The rest of the story is further illustrative of the contradictions of the paternalistic relationship. Shamed by the state of Tia Rosa's room, the family resolves to improve her conditions. They dispatch Tia Rosa on a trip to Johannesburg, and overhaul her room in her absence. On her return, Tia Rosa's reaction to her new furniture and draperies is not what they had hoped. The maid screams; she wants her old bed back. Her life savings were stored in the straw mattress that has been consigned to the flames. The episode took place at the end of 1955. The author reports that Rosa Nhampule died in 1957, at the age of 74, and was buried in rural Manhiça. It is unclear if she left any survivors. The Soares family never witnessed visitors, and Tia Rosa, it was said, never travelled anywhere to visit relatives. She never wanted to travel at all, and she foreswore vacations. Perhaps because, while serving the two generations of the Soares clan, she had nowhere else to go and nothing else to do.

<sup>127</sup> Frederick Cooper, “Urban Space, Industrial Time, and Wage Labor in Africa,” in *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa*, ed. Frederick Cooper (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983), 36.

many other settler-colonial cities in Africa, probably occurred with much less frequency than in Mozambique's capital. That personal intimacy co-existed with great personal distance made for a special poignancy.<sup>128</sup> The European residents of the City of Cement were largely ignorant of the conditions existing just a short walk away, in neighborhoods where some of their acquaintances lived. Even Portuguese *cantina* owners, who lived in the *subúrbios*, often with African companions, were socially isolated and ignorant of much of the life happening around them. For some *subúrbio* dwellers, the narrow distance between the vastly different places in which they lived and in which they worked – just up the slope or just across the street – sharpened feelings of humiliation, kindled resentments, and, at independence, fed expectations.

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<sup>128</sup> The fraught intimacies particular to African women and Europeans in domestic settings in Lourenço Marques deserve much more thorough treatment than they receive here. Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Jacklyn Cock, *Maids and Madams: Domestic Workers under Apartheid*, Rev. ed. (London: The Women's Press, 1989); Rebecca Ginsburg, *At Home with Apartheid: The Hidden Landscapes of Domestic Service in Johannesburg* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

## Chapter 2

### Order and Disorder in the *Subúrbios*, c. 1950 to c. 1965

The curving boundary separating city and *subúrbios* was not, as it was often portrayed, the line dividing order from disorder. Such, perhaps, is the power of the rectilinear urban grid. Its rational geometries suggest rational behavior, and conversely, the labyrinthine lanes of the *subúrbios* suggest chaos. Various forms of order and disorder existed everywhere in Lourenço Marques, often simultaneously. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for instance, nearly all of the land in both the nascent city and its *subúrbios*, whether already inhabited or not, was parceled out and the titles sold to people with connections to the municipal bureaucracy.<sup>1</sup> It was a corrupt process no one would call orderly, but to this day the parcels for both city and *subúrbios* appear on the books at the municipality, on the same chart, much as they did more than a century ago, and a map of Chamanculo can be pieced together from among parcels numbered 201 through 459.<sup>2</sup> In 1947, an official marveling at the pitiable conditions prevailing in the *subúrbios* reported, “These unfortunates, besides living miserably in huts constructed of various materials, are still obliged to pay rents for plots on land that

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<sup>1</sup> António Rita-Ferreira, “Os africanos de Lourenço Marques,” *Memórias do Instituto Científica de Moçambique*, C, 9 (1967): 181–183.

<sup>2</sup> The map of parcels for city and *subúrbios* can be found as an insert in Rita-Ferreira, “Os africanos de L.M.”

might in the past have belonged to their grandparents and are now legally owned and titled by Europeans.”<sup>3</sup> A number of title-holders in the *subúrbios* were also black, *mestiço*, and Asian. Most of the land was in the hands of a very few. By the mid-1960s, an estimated 85 percent of the suburban land not held by the municipality or the state was titled to a mere eleven private landowners, with the rest of it split among several hundred small property owners.<sup>4</sup> According to an overlapping set of norms, much of suburban Lourenço Marques also belonged to a small cabal of *régulos*, traditional leaders appointed by the Portuguese, who many considered to be “owners of the land” (*donos da terra*) by virtue of inherited right.<sup>5</sup>

The housing market in the *subúrbios* functioned substantially according to long-established routine. A prospective renter of land found a clear area on which to build a house, and agreed to pay the landowner an annual rent. The renter and the landlord then informed the local *régulo*, who received a commission for the transaction. A renter might seek permission from the *régulo* before approaching the landowner, and landlords sometimes complained that *régulos* reached agreements with renters without their knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes the *régulo* was the landlord.<sup>7</sup> If a landlord had built a room or house to rent, usually on a monthly basis, he or she affixed sheets of blank white paper to

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<sup>3</sup> Adelino José Macedo, “Relatório anual referente ao ano de 1946” (Administração do Concelho de Lourenço Marques, January 31, 1947), 5, AHM/GDLM/cx. 352. Also cited in Jeanne Marie Penvenne, “Two Tales of a City: Lourenço Marques, 1945-1975,” *Portuguese Studies Review* 19, no. 1–2 (2011): 259.

<sup>4</sup> Rita-Ferreira, “Os africanos de L.M.,” 181. Only 100 hectares (13 percent) of the 770 hectares of suburban land were held by the municipality or the state.

<sup>5</sup> For a list of the *régulo* jurisdictions in 1967, see *Ibid.*, 158–159.

<sup>6</sup> “Nos bairros periféricos: Ocupação de terrenos com palhotas,” *A Tribuna*, November 28, 1962.

<sup>7</sup> An especially fraught arrangement for the tenant. See interviews with Carlos Muchanga, Oct. 25, 2012, and Jan. 30, 2013.

a front window or outside wall, just as one did in the City of Cement.<sup>8</sup> As described in the previous chapter, the houses themselves, except the more elaborate houses of wood-and-zinc, were built according to almost uniform specifications and with almost uniform methods, with little to distinguish one from the other. Three building types have dominated the *subúrbios* for most of the last century. The reed house has been built in essentially the same way for at least 60 years. A wood-and-zinc home built in the 1960s was largely undistinguishable from one built two or three generations before (though it was more likely to have hidden concrete-block interior). The concrete-block home, the subject of the following chapter, emerged in the 1960s, and has been built in roughly the same way, and even with many of the same stylistic flourishes, ever since.<sup>9</sup>

Nor did the suburban housing and construction market function as a parallel or alternative economy, but rather as one integrated into the larger economy emanating from the City of Cement, and linked to the wider region. Nearly all materials used in suburban house construction, even of the most humble reed houses, were purchased at market stalls in and around the *subúrbios* or at large retailers downtown. It was not uncommon for a downtown store to make a delivery of zinc panels directly to the *subúrbios*. Some enterprising individuals in the *subúrbios* became materials suppliers by virtue of owning a truck. According to one rough estimate bandied about in the early 1960s, total

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<sup>8</sup> An African who had built a rental unit, or rented out a room in his house, often was not owner of the land itself, just of the unit.

<sup>9</sup> In the recent decade or so, there has been much greater diversity in concrete-block construction. Luís Lage, “The Building of Informal Dwellings: Case Study of Maputo,” in *Traditional Informal Settlements in Mozambique: From Lichinga to Maputo*, trans. Carola Cuoco (Maputo: FAPF, 2004), 75–91; Jørgen Eskemose Andersen, Silje Erøy Sollien, and Khadidja Ouis, “Built Environment Study,” in *Home Space Maputo*, 2012, [http://www.homespace.dk/tl\\_files/uploads/publications/Full%20reports/HomeSpace\\_Build\\_Environment\\_Study.pdf](http://www.homespace.dk/tl_files/uploads/publications/Full%20reports/HomeSpace_Build_Environment_Study.pdf).

investments in precarious house construction in the *subúrbios* (that is, not including *cantinas* and industrial buildings) amounted to 100 to 200 million *escudos*, comparable in value to all oil imports to the province in 1962.<sup>10</sup>

The miserable conditions of the *subúrbios* were the direct result of rational calculations of the cost of African welfare. Local employers, in the effort to keep labor costs down, had earlier in the century largely abandoned responsibility for providing workers housing; the municipality, for its part, determined that it could not afford to provide suburban infrastructure.<sup>11</sup> Housing in the *subúrbios* existed in a legal half-world.<sup>12</sup> Though it was situated on land that was largely held in private title, the *subúrbios* were also considered “native reserves.”<sup>13</sup> Theoretically they functioned as any rural jurisdiction would, under the customary authority of a *régulo*, and the municipality provided no promise of secure tenure to those without title. Housing was permitted there only so long as it remained of “precarious” construction, such as in reeds or in wood-and-zinc, so it could be easily demolished to make way for the previsioned expansion of the City of Cement. Yet, municipal services were not totally absent in the *subúrbios*. Municipal police certainly circulated in the *subúrbios*, in addition to the *régulo*’s *cipaios*. The older neighborhoods benefitted – if that is the proper word – from a bucket system of

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<sup>10</sup> Ilídio Rocha, “Matsui,” *A Tribuna*, November 21, 1962; “Cidade do caniço,” *A Tribuna*, December 30, 1962; Presidência do Conselho, *III Plano de fomento para 1968-1973, Moçambique* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa, 1968), 29.

<sup>11</sup> The municipality was also under pressure from the cantineiros, who profited from running compounds in the *subúrbios*. Jeanne Marie Penvenne, “A History of African Labor in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, 1877-1950” (PhD diss., Boston University, 1982), 267–276.

<sup>12</sup> Rita-Ferreira, “Os africanos de L.M.,” 185–212.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 183–185; Penvenne, “A History of African Labor in L.M.,” 255–267.

sewage removal.<sup>14</sup> Those who paid the fee for this service had their buckets emptied every evening by men who carted disposal tanks through the alleys behind people's yards. One former resident remembers that her parents scheduled dinners early, before the passage of the sewage disposal cart, so that the stench would not ruin mealtimes.<sup>15</sup>

The image of a modernizing state that Portugal cultivated for itself in Mozambique during the last decades of colonial rule depended on the symbolic power of its colonial capital.<sup>16</sup> The urban grid of Lourenço Marques and its avenues of concrete apartment buildings served as a showcase for how laws and building codes and standardized bureaucratic processes could impose a rationalized visual order on chaotic Africa and, by implication, a functioning order.<sup>17</sup> The image had no place in it for the other forms of order that constituted Lourenço Marques. It also masked the disorder that colonial capitalism engendered, and the violence and labor exploitation that gave the city

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<sup>14</sup> The system was a vestige of the one that, earlier in the century, had served most of Lourenço Marques. Jeanne Marie Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877-1962* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995), 52–54.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ana Magaia, Feb. 9, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Jeanne Marie Penvenne, “Fotografando Lourenço Marques: A cidade e os seus habitantes de 1960 á 1975,” in *Os outros da colonização: Ensaios sobre o colonialismo tardio em Moçambique*, ed. Cláudia Castelo et al. (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2012), 173–92.

<sup>17</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers Under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Garth A. Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003); William Cunningham Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); L. Lloys Frates, “Memory of Place, the Place of Memory: Women’s Narrations of Late Colonial Lourenço Marques, Mozambique” (PhD diss., UCLA, 2002), 158.



shape. “Traditional” Africa was somewhere else, populated by people considered not quite ready for progress and who might only be corrupted by it. The *subúrbios*, however, were not just a vague somewhere else, but an intrinsic part of the city itself, the backstage necessary for the performance of modern statecraft that was the City of the Cement. They disrupted any neat categorizations of order and disorder, modern and traditional, and urban and rural, and they were a threat not just to the regime’s image of itself, but as a potential incubator for discontent. One of the duties of Lourenço Marques’s official press censor was to keep images of the *subúrbios* out of the news – with some important exceptions, as will be discussed further below.

Open opposition to the regime coalesced in the early 1960s into identifiable anti-colonial organizations, Frelimo most prominent among them. Not incidentally, many in the highest ranks of the Frelimo hierarchy had either grown up in the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques, or had lived there for a time, and had personally felt the sting of living on the threshold of modernity without being permitted entry. The politics of the 1960s, however, cannot be understood solely from the perspective of those who fled into exile and took up arms – the narrow focus of most histories of the period. This chapter and the next explore the politics that emerged in Lourenço Marques during the last years of colonial rule among people who were compelled to engage with government officials rather than to fight them as enemy combatants. It was a politics centered on the *subúrbios* generally – and the successful effort to make them visible to authorities – and the question of housing specifically. At stake were the regime’s claims as a modernizing

state, and people's hopes to be governed by one.<sup>18</sup> I argue that on these grounds, and in the tight confines allowed by censorship and the political police, a small public sphere came into being.

The first section addresses the overlapping forms of order and authority in the *subúrbios*, and the sense of statelessness that prevailed. The examples used are concentrated in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but the circumstances described apply to a significant degree to the final three decades of Portuguese rule. The section helps explain why people would seek legibility in the eyes of a modernizing state – a dynamic quite contrary to the kind described by James Scott, and his arguments concerning predatory high modernism.<sup>19</sup> The second and third sections discuss a moment in the early 1960s when, due in part to reforms emanating from Lisbon, housing and the conditions of the *subúrbios* were made the subject of one of the only significant public debates of the time. The government (in its guises of municipality and colonial regime) was challenged to serve the African population – a challenge to which it was compelled to respond.

### **The Problem of Fences**

Chamanculo was far less populous and less physically dense in the colonial era than today, and in memory many people recall it as *mato* (“bush”). Unlike in the

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<sup>18</sup> For the modernizing aspirations of both Portugal and Frelimo see Michael Mahoney, “*Estado Novo, Homem Novo* (New State, New Man): Colonial and Anti-Colonial Development Ideologies in Mozambique, 1930-1977,” in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, ed. David C. Engerman et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 165–97; Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement, and the Delusion of Development: Cahora Bassa and Its Legacies in Mozambique, 1965-2007* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

countryside, however, there were indeed fences between properties. Home dwellers were marking the boundaries of their plots of land as early as the 1940s, and probably much earlier. Giving order to urban space in part means being able to divide it, and one had to define the limits of property precisely because the conviviality that according to more nostalgic accounts governed suburban life also had its limits. The construction of a fence, then as now, sometimes preceded construction of a house.

The simplest boundary marker was a wire suspended on short posts, perhaps no more than knee high. Spiny bushes, which came up to the waist, were more effective as barriers – to corral chickens, for instance. Those with some means built fences of reed bundles, and those with even greater means built fences of zinc panels or flattened oil drums. The more costly forms of fencing did more than demarcate property: they hid it. Reeds or metal panels were necessary for shielding pit latrines and bathing spaces, and for anyone who wanted privacy for activities such as brewing alcohol, which was heavily policed. In Chamanculo today, fences are either walls of concrete block built up well above eye level (often with glass shards embedded in the top of the wall) or old fences of zinc panels. Behind these walls are trees. The *mato* did not entirely disappear; rather, it has been put out of sight. A recent satellite view of Chamanculo reveals a green neighborhood, though the neighborhood as one walks through it is dominated by cement gray and dust brown.

During the colonial era, and even until recent times, the reed fence was a source of perpetual friction between neighbors.<sup>20</sup> Firstly, as with any fence, was the matter of who was responsible for it. The fence was built by whoever got to it first. Rarely did neighbors share the duty, and the fence builder often justified his expense by pushing out the boundary of his property by a foot or two. Revising the boundary this way seriously provoked one's neighbor, the more so as the rapid growth of the suburban population in the 1950s stirred a competition for space. No document recorded the interior lines of a landowner's land – the division between two rental plots. Nor did landowners precisely demarcate which plots belonged to whom. The fence itself was the proof of where the fence ought to be. And since reeds rotted every year or so, nerves were not given time to settle. The boundary between two plots was subject to constant revision.

Landowners did not step in to resolve such disputes. The authority, presumably, was his to determine where one rental plot within his property ended and another began. And if the adjoining plots were owned in title by different people, each title-holder might have considered the protection of his tenant's interests the equivalent to protecting his own. Landowners, however, generally stood aloof. In 1962, a member of the newly installed city council publicly chastised suburban landowners for negligence of their properties and for not parceling them in orderly fashion, accusing the landowners of being mere land speculators.<sup>21</sup> Two suburban landowners replied in anonymous letters to a newspaper that their properties were usually occupied without their knowledge, and that

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Bartolomeu Tembe, June 18, 2012. Tembe traces his lineage to the original Mpfumu clan of the immediate Lourenço Marques area, and recently he has been seeking appointment as Chamanculo's *régulo*, largely an honorary position today.

<sup>21</sup> "Nos bairros periféricos"; "Um bairro de palhotas e casas clandestinas e os problemas levantados à roda do seu parcelamento," *A Tribuna*, November 24, 1962.

they rarely actually charged the tenants rent. Tenants did not expect landlords to intervene in conflicts among neighbors, and rarely asked them to.

If one really felt compelled to, one option was to bring a dispute to the *régulo*. As everywhere in Mozambique, the job of the *régulo* and his “native” police force of *cipaios* was to collect taxes, suppress the illegal production and sale of traditional beverages, collect “natives” for terms of forced labor (before forced labor was abolished in 1961), and to execute any other of the administration’s orders within his jurisdiction.<sup>22</sup> He was also the arbiter of customary law, unless overruled by the Portuguese post administrator. Frederico de Almeida Cumba was the traditional leader of Chamanculo from 1945 until he was deposed in 1974.<sup>23</sup> He was someone to be avoided if one could. (Fig. 2.1.)

Frederico, as he is universally recalled, was living in South Africa when Portuguese administrators called him back to Lourenço Marques, and to Chamanculo, where he had grown up. The previously appointed *régulo* of Chamanculo, Frederico’s brother Changalasse, had been accused of protecting sellers of illegal traditional brews, and profiting from it, exactly the kind of activity the *régulo* and his *cipaios* enforcers were supposed to police.<sup>24</sup> Administrators consulted the Cumba family tree in search of a suitable substitute. Frederico was not next in the line of succession, but those ahead of

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<sup>22</sup> Bridget O’Laughlin, “Class and the Customary: The Ambiguous Legacy of the *Indigenato* in Mozambique,” *African Affairs* 99, no. 394 (2000): 5–42.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Ana Laura Cumba, Frederico’s youngest child, Apr. 29, 2011. Cumba, who passed away in 2012, was interviewed at what had been her father’s house in Chamanculo. All older residents of Chamanculo recalled Frederico, but a particularly informative perspective was offered in numerous conversations with Margarida Ferreira, daughter of one of Frederico’s counselors.

<sup>24</sup> Macedo, “Relatório anual, 1946,” 13; Hilário Matusse, “Chamanculo: Memórias de um bairro,” *Tempo*, November 6, 1983.

him were not deemed proper *régulo* material, and so Frederico, an *assimilado* then in his early 30s, was summoned from the Rand.

Officially speaking, Frederico was not technically named *régulo*. There were only four *régulos* in the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques, and according to the “tradition” devised by Portuguese policymakers, and according to administrative diagrams, Frederico was subordinated to one of them. On paper, the leader of Chamanculo was the *chefe do grupo da povoação*, “head of the population group.” Yet if his rank was officially below that of *régulo*, and his presence in political ceremonies less visible, his duties were substantially the same. The people of Chamanculo called him *régulo*. According to his youngest daughter, Ana Laura Cumba, administrators had given Frederico little choice but to accept his appointment, which initially may not have seemed a good career move. His lower-ranked position, for one, did not come with a salary. At a 1972 meeting of traditional leaders and colonial administrators, Frederico complained that the expenses of city life made it difficult to get by without a government stipend.<sup>25</sup> In earlier years, before the boom in the suburban population, the complaint might have had some merit. One Portuguese official recommended in 1950 that, because in the *subúrbios* even traditional leaders had to rent the land they lived on, the government ought to secure land and build houses for them, “to put them in a position of prominence before their subordinated populations.”<sup>26</sup> Over the years, however, city life in fact proved lucrative

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<sup>25</sup> José Gabriel Taveira Pereira, “Relatório da inspeção ordinária ao Segundo Bairro do Concelho de Lourenço Marques” (Inspeção dos Serviços Administrativos, 1972), 132, AHM/ISANI/cx. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Augusto Vaz Spencer, “Relatório da inspeção ordinária ao Concelho de Lourenço Marques e Circunscrições de Marracuene e Maputo” (Colónia de Moçambique, Inspeção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas, 1950), 204,

for suburban *régulos*. Living in the heart of the colonial cash economy they had ample opportunity to fill their pockets through extortion, the acceptance of bribes, and fees – such as the fee charged in rental transactions. Frederico’s jurisdiction was more populous than the effective jurisdiction of any traditional leader in Lourenço Marques, and the income he generated was commensurate with the size of his domain.<sup>27</sup> During his almost 30-year reign, he accumulated a large wood-and-zinc house in Chamanculo with concrete-block interior walls, seven rental homes in Chamanculo and other areas of the *subúrbios*, a concrete-block house in Matola, a car, and a camera to take snapshots of it all. Until independence he probably had little reason to regret returning home from the South African mines.

Frederico did not have an office in Chamanculo, but he had a courtroom. Every Sunday his leather-seated armchair – his “throne,” as his daughter recalled it – was set under two mango trees beside his house for the weekly court session, called the *bandla*. (Fig. 2.2.) Frederico’s counselors arrived before Frederico did, and sat in chairs set beside the throne, and at about seven a.m. they began to hear cases that had been lodged during the week. Frederico would arrive a few hours later, and he would sit silently as his counselors asked questions of the various parties. By evening, after consulting his counselors, Frederico would issue his judgments. Most cases involved domestic relations,

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AHM/ISANI/cx 1. Vaz Spencer evidently valued the power of architecture, arguing that his suggestion “could bring many advantages to the native policy of the *Concelho*.” A similar recommendation was made four years later. Abílio Mendes Gil, “Relatório da inspeção ordinária ao Concelho de Lourenço Marques e Circunscrições do Maputo e Marracuene” (Província de Moçambique, Inspeção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas, 1954), 218, AHM/ISANI/cx. 2.

<sup>27</sup> “Divisão administrativa – autoridades tradicionais – população (1969),” AHM/GDLM/cx. 162.

such as questions of paternity and spousal abuse. There were also cases of theft, such as of chickens or of building materials. A thief or assailant, if found guilty, might be punished at the *bandla* or he might receive a more summary judgment during the week. A sack would be wrapped around his waist and a *cipaio* would lash the accused with a hippo-hide whip called a *chicote*. The purpose of the sack was to catch what the bowels released.<sup>28</sup> More complex cases were referred upwards to the Portuguese *chefe do posto* – the officer who manned the Munhuana post – and from there potentially to the administrator of the *Concelho* – the “council,” the administration that governed most affairs affecting the African population of Lourenço Marques and its immediate environs.



**Fig. 2.1.** The *régulos* of the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques, with Portuguese administrators and *cipaios*, undated. Frederico de Almeida Cumba, Chamanculo’s longtime *régulo*, stands second from left. (Source: Ana Laura Cumba)

Decades later it is difficult to encounter older people in Maputo who will share a *bandla* experience. Perhaps the silence results from embarrassment at the facts that were in dispute (domestic abuse, for example) or perhaps because to appear before the *bandla* was to participate in the second tier of a system of justice that recognized a hierarchy of

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<sup>28</sup> As a girl, Ana Laura Cumba, shocked by the bodily suffering inflicted by her father’s orders, occasionally freed suspects awaiting punishment.



laws: the Portuguese law, reserved for the civilized, and the law of “customs and traditions” that governed the primitive. Or perhaps people do not have these stories to tell because the *bandla* was simply a tribunal to be avoided if at all possible. It cost 40 *escudos* to file a complaint, the equivalent of 25 loaves of bread, and the form of justice dispensed by Frederico and his counselors was not widely trusted. The winner of a dispute over a fence, or any dispute for that matter, was often determined by who offered the higher bribe.



**Fig. 2.2.** *Régulo* Frederico and his counselors preside over the weekly *bandla*. The blue ‘x’ was drawn over photographic images when the subject died. (Source: Ana Laura Cumba)

None of the older residents of Chamanculo spoke in interviews of seeking redress with Portuguese authorities, though some clearly did, just as people reluctantly consulted the *régulo*’s authority. In general, Portuguese authorities were approached with great circumspection. The administrative post and the police station were considered places of fear where one went only when absolutely necessary. At least until the early 1960s, they

were sites of arbitrary violence, where one was taken to be beaten because of perceived disrespect to one's employer, where one was beaten for leaning on the wall, where one was beaten for not standing up in the presence of authority.<sup>29</sup> Following the abolition of the *indigenato* in 1961 (discussed further below), however, people seeking official redress were more likely to go directly to the administrative post, bypassing the *régulo* altogether.<sup>30</sup> This is not to say that post administrators gave complaints an attentive hearing. The daily work logs of Portuguese post administrators at Munhuana from the 1960s are full of dismissive references to mornings and afternoons spent attending to everyday matters called *milandos* – roughly, “native disputes” – that they considered beneath their stature as government officials to adjudicate but which they were often called on to resolve nonetheless.<sup>31</sup> It appears that, except on rare occasions, post administrators did not open case files nor register the existence of individual cases. (At least, such records cannot be located.) Rather, post officers indicated to superiors that on a given day *milandos* – not “disputes,” not “cases” – had been dealt with. In the *subúrbios*, the renowned Portuguese passion for bureaucratic record-keeping was not much evidence.

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<sup>29</sup> In the 1930s, an area of the *subúrbios*, site of the main suburban police post, acquired the name Mukumula (in Ronga, “the one who says ‘strip’”) because of a notoriously brutal police officer who worked there. Before being whipped, one was first ordered to disrobe. Interview with Lúcia Joaquim da Silveira, Apr. 11, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> In 1972, *régulos* complained to an administrative inspector that beginning in 1962-1963, people were more likely to go to post administrators or even to the municipal police to resolve disputes rather than to the traditional authorities. Pereira, *Relatório da inspeção ordinária ao Segundo Bairro*, 5-8.

<sup>31</sup> Numerous (if randomly organized) examples of these work logs can be found in AHM/GDLM/cx. 358, among other places.

Residents of the *subúrbios*, by contrast, often guarded what few paper records they had in their possession. Most homes in the *subúrbios* lacked closets. Few could afford cabinets or armoires. Zinc-panel roofs leaked in the rain, and no walls, not even concrete walls, proved a barrier against moisture. For something of the past to have survived to the present – especially something fragile – took effort. People stored their most valued possessions in suitcases until the purchase of a wood trunk, itself among a family’s most valued objects.<sup>32</sup> In such trunks, stored in brown envelopes, people have guarded wedding photographs and colonial-era forms of identification. Many have held on to their *caderneta de indígena*, the pass document that a half century ago they were compelled to carry at all times. The small booklet informed the official who asked for it of the holder’s name, birthplace, parentage, whether they had permission to live in Lourenço Marques, where they worked, and whether an employer or the police at some time or another had found cause to discipline them. The document was necessary in any interaction with officialdom, and the consequences of not having it were severe. It might also represent the only photo that people had of themselves.<sup>33</sup>

In the same envelope with photographs and old IDs, people often keep years of old rental receipts. Whether one rented a wood-framed, zinc-paneled home with four rooms, a reed house, or a cramped unit in a compound, one usually received a signed

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<sup>32</sup> The word people use for the trunk – *mala* – is the same as for suitcase. For a discussion of “tin-trunk texts,” see Karin Barber, ed., *Africa’s Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). For a discussion of the importance in bureaucratic ephemera to residents of informal settlements, see Matthew S. Hull, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> See Lorena Rizzo, “Visual Aperture: Bureaucratic Systems of Identification, Photography and Personhood in Colonial Southern Africa,” *History of Photography* 37, no. 3 (2013): 263–82.

receipt as proof of paying one's rent. (While some landowners claimed they did not charge rent, not a single person interviewed for this study said they lived rent-free – except if they owned the plot.) The Guilundo family lived in a house of reeds in Chamanculo that they built themselves. The receipts they received for paying the annual land rent were pre-printed with the landowner's name, giving them an "official" appearance, and revealing something of the orderly functioning of the housing market as a whole.<sup>34</sup> (Fig. 2.3.) In the absence of renter's agreements or legal contracts of any sort, receipts were the contracts. They granted the sheen of legitimacy to the tenant's presence up to the point the rent was paid, not inconsequential given that most people's very presence in Lourenço Marques was highly contingent. A thick pile of receipts officialized, in its own small way, a home dweller's tenure – at least tenants *hoped* that it would – and so it is little wonder that piles of these receipts from the colonial era survive to the present, existing now as then as a kind of claim before imagined authorities. Jochua Guambe, an African landlord who owned a few dozen properties in Chamanculo, kept copies of receipts for rents received. The receipts are still in the possession of his son Castigo, even though the properties themselves were nationalized four decades ago.

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Armando Guilundo, May 7, 2011.



**Fig. 2.3.** A receipt given by a landowner to a tenant for an annual rental payment, 1959. The tenant lived in a self-built reed house on the property. (Source: Armando Guilundo)

In the 1960s, all Mozambicans were given the theoretical right of access to civil courts, though in reality, and due to numerous obstacles, few could, or would.<sup>35</sup> They continued to seek redress with the *régulo* or with post administrators, if they sought redress from authorities at all. A handful of cases from the late 1950s and early 1960s provide a glimpse of the fraught, confused relationship between law and authority as it pertained to housing matters. In the 1940s and 1950s, only six housing disputes reached Mozambique's native affairs agency, the *Curadoria de Negócios Indígenas*, which until the early 1960s was officially charged with protecting the interests and well-being of those with "native" classification and with resolving conflicts between them and those who had the status of citizens.<sup>36</sup> From these few cases it is evident why so few housing disputes were resolved through official channels. Administrators, police, and judges were befuddled by the few cases brought before them and unsure who had jurisdiction in such

<sup>35</sup> Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de L.M.," 257–260.

<sup>36</sup> The cases were found in AHM/DSNI/cx. 152. Other cases may exist, but those encountered in the archive suggest that housing cases were rare.

matters. Nowhere in the documentation of these few cases does an official invoke a law that might be germane to the given situation, perhaps due to unfamiliarity with the law, or to a reflexive reluctance to use it to resolve *milandos*.

In 1961, a young carpenter named Joel Chioco Palene sought the help of authorities.<sup>37</sup> Though only 19, Palene was already building his own house, on a plot he rented in Chamanculo. In two months he had built everything but the roof. One day he arrived at the worksite to work on the roof, only to find that his house was gone. In its place a man named Raimundo had built a house of his own. Palene's first course of action was to complain to Chamanculo's *régulo*, Frederico, and his advisors. Palene, the chiefs, and Raimundo then went to the Munhuana administrative post where an agreement was reached: Raimundo would rebuild Palene's house on another area of the same rented plot.

Typical of housing disputes at the time, the owner of the plot in question was absent from the proceedings. He was not absent from the case file; the owner was identified as Frenque Estevão Nhamana, and the file refers to him as a "*misto*," a person of mixed race, which would have distinguished him for officials from Palene, a mere "native." Yet that is all the file says about Nhamana. He apparently did not involve himself in the dispute's resolution, nor does it appear that anyone sought his involvement – neither Palene, Raimundo, the chiefs, nor the Portuguese post administrator. As with many conflicts involving housing, an owner's hand's-off attitude toward his own property was what had contributed to the problem in the first place. Nhamana had rented land to two people on the same plot without evident concern as to where they built their

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<sup>37</sup> AHM/DSNI/cx. 152, processo 4773/A/43.

houses on that plot, and for that act of carelessness no one, not even the affected tenants, held him responsible.

In any case, administrative intervention came to little effect. The agreement between the two tenants did not hold. Six months later, Raimundo still had not followed through on his promise to rebuild Palene's house because, he said, there was no room on the small plot to rebuild it. So Palene returned to the Munhuana administrative post seeking redress. Instead of compelling the land owner to provide a plot for Palene's reconstructed house, seemingly the obvious solution, the administrator wiped his hands of the case. He instructed Palene to bring the matter to the attention of the *Concelho* administration, at the Municipal Building. From there he was sent to the District Court, and from there to the municipal police. The police directed him to just about where he had started: the Munhuana administrative post. Desperate to find someone in a position of authority to come to his aid, Palene filed his complaint with the Native Affairs agency, and the director of the agency forwarded it, without comment, to the governor of the District of Lourenço Marques. Unfortunately, the case file does not record how the case was finally resolved, if it was resolved at all.

That Palene continued to press his case until it reached the governor's desk may owe something to his personal ambition. In 1961, to be 19 and building one's own house on a plot of land that cost 400 *escudos* in rent per year was no small feat. The person who could accomplish that was perhaps more likely to insist on what he perceived to be his rights, whatever the obstacles might be. The obstacle was not outright official hostility. His case was never thrown out, not as far as we know. The injustice of his situation made an impression on his various audiences, and his case was repeatedly referred to higher

authority, eventually as high as the district governor. Yet the sympathy of some officials for Palene, and the sense that something ought to be done for him, did not translate into a concerted bureaucratic effort on his behalf. The mechanism to resolve his case existed. Lacking was the interest in putting the mechanism in motion.

Two years before, in 1959, another carpenter, Chipanela Jentimanhana Macuacua wrote to the inspector of the Native Affairs agency, hoping that the official could get his rent lowered. Macuacua had lived for 18 years near Chamanculo, on a plot behind the municipal slaughterhouse. Between 1953 and 1959, the Portuguese who owned the plot had quadrupled Macuacua's annual rent, to 400 *escudos*. When he fell behind in payments, the landlord moved another 25 people onto the property, knocking down Macuacua's toilet and bathing stalls in the process. "Because I don't have money to move my shack from the plot in question, knowing that the Illustrious Sir" – the official to whom the letter is addressed – "is the father and mother of all the black people of this Province of Mozambique, I come humbly before your Excellency to request the case be investigated." Macuacua's appeal was forwarded upward, without comment, to the secretary-general of the District of Lourenço Marques, and its final resolution, if any, is unclear. It is significant, however, that in neither of these two cases do the complainants, or the officials to whom they address their situations, make mention of the law. In both cases, moreover, legislation may have been applicable: a 1939 law that capped at 40 *escudos* per hectare the annual rent that could be charged "natives" who settled on suburban land.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de L.M.," 184. The rent ceiling was eventually revoked, though I do not know exactly when – possibly in 1961 with the passage of new



Jochua Guambe, a big-game hunter who built a large portfolio of rental properties in Chamanculo (and who was mentioned above) occasionally found himself in a difficult position relative to some of his tenants.<sup>39</sup> Guambe had accomplished what few Mozambicans at the time managed to do. Without a formal education and without ever having worked for a European employer, he had by the 1950s amassed a fortune based on suburban property ownership. He was able to do so, in part, because his sons were *assimilados*; Guambe required the signature of his oldest son to officialize title documents. Guambe himself, though, was considered an *indígena*, he spoke barely any Portuguese, and though his accomplishments earned him considerable stature in Chamanculo, he did not enjoy the respect of some of his *assimilado* tenants. According to Guambe's son Castigo, from time to time one of these tenants would refuse to pay rent. The tenant calculated that the landlord, a mere native, would be unable to collect.

Once, in the 1950s, attempting to collect arrears from an *assimilado* tenant, Guambe lodged a complaint with Frederico, the *régulo*. The tenant did not show up for the *bandla*, and when Frederico ruled in favor of Guambe, the tenant simply ignored the *régulo*'s order. Guambe then resorted to a tactic said to be common in landlord-tenant disputes of the time. While the plot of land on which the tenant lived belonged to Guambe, the wood-and-zinc house on the plot had been built by the tenant himself. Guambe waited for an evening when it threatened to storm. With the tenant out, Guambe sent a handyman to the house to tear the zinc panels off the roof. Rain soaked through the

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legislation governing suburban land, though possibly before the cases cited above. The new legislation did not include a rent ceiling – a “flagrant omission,” wrote Rita-Ferreira. With the new law the administration made official a longstanding disinterest in suburban landlord-tenant disputes.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews with Castigo Guambe, Apr. 14 & 26, May 17, 2011.

tenant's false ceiling and ruined his furniture, and now it was the tenant's turn to lodge a complaint with the *régulo*. Guambe was summoned to the *bandla* to defend himself. "Prove the house is yours," Guambe said to the aggrieved tenant. At least in this case, official-seeming evidence (or rather, its absence) held sway in a court of customary law that so frequently functioned according to the *régulo*'s arbitrary whim. When the *assimilado* tenant could not produce receipts demonstrating that he had paid his rent to Guambe, which would have established his right to live on the plot and to build a house there, the tenant lost his case.

### ***A Tribuna: Behind the "Reed Curtain"***

In early 1961, Eduardo Mondlane took leave from his position as a United Nations research officer and, preceded by his American wife and children, returned to Mozambique for the first time in a decade.<sup>40</sup> In Lourenço Marques, the cool-mannered academic with the impressive credentials was received as a celebrity. During his four-month visit, Mondlane was taken by surprise by the large crowds that gathered for him in the city and its *subúrbios*, and in the countryside of southern Mozambique. It was an unofficial visit, but Mondlane treated it as an opportunity to assess Portuguese rule up close. He was hosted by the Swiss Mission, the Presbyterians in whose schools he had

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<sup>40</sup> Nadja Manghezi, *O meu coração está nas maos de um negro: Uma história da vida de Janet Mondlane* (Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 1999), 163–210; Teresa Cruz e Silva, *Protestant Churches and the Formation of Political Consciousness in Southern Mozambique (1930-1974)* (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 2001), 123–124; José Manuel Duarte de Jesus, *Eduardo Mondlane: Um homem a abater* (Coimbra: Edições Almedina, 2010), 95–105; Robert N. Faris, *Liberating Mission in Mozambique: Faith and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 140–145.

been educated, and he held secret discussions with members of the church in which he encouraged them to act against the colonial regime.<sup>41</sup> He also met with Portuguese officials, and put to them pointed questions about the welfare of black Mozambicans.<sup>42</sup> By all accounts, it appears that the enthusiastic crowds and the conversations Mondlane had during his visit settled him on the course he would take. Soon after his return to America, his impressions of the situation in Mozambique formed the basis of a memo to the U.S. State Department encouraging a harder line toward Portugal, the U.S.'s NATO ally, and the following year, in Dar es Salaam, Mondlane accepted an invitation to head the newly formed Frelimo, a portmanteau of the Portuguese words for the Mozambique Liberation Front.<sup>43</sup>

While still in Mozambique, Mondlane already gave some not-so-veiled indications of his thinking. During a sermon at the Presbyterian church in Chamanculo, he invoked a parable of an eagle, popularized by a Ghanaian missionary early in the century, and often taken as a call for African independence, as it was by many in Mondlane's audience.<sup>44</sup> One stonemason recently recalled the day when Mondlane

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<sup>41</sup> Faris, *Liberating Mission*, 140–143.

<sup>42</sup> Eduardo Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 68–69.

<sup>43</sup> *FREnte de LIBertação de MOçambique*. At the time, “Frelimo” was spelled in all capital letters, but for the sake of readability it appears in this thesis in lower case. Significant portions of Mondlane's *The Struggle for Mozambique*, a sweeping indictment of Portuguese rule published soon after his assassination in 1969, were also based on his 1961 trip.

<sup>44</sup> James Aggrey, author of the parable, had been a mentor of Kwame Nkrumah. The parable also served as the final chapter of the 1950 book that Mondlane's mentor, missionary André-Daniel Clerc, had authored based on Mondlane's descriptions of his rural childhood. André-Daniel Clerc [and Eduardo Mondlane], *Chitlangou, Son of a Chief*, trans. Margaret A. Bryan, Reprint (Westport: Negro Universities Press, 1971), 203–206; Cruz e Silva, *Protestant Churches*, 124; Vincent Doodoo, “Kwame Nkrumah's

visited his worksite, on the far side of the Infulene River, about six miles from downtown Lourenço Marques.<sup>45</sup> The Infulene project was part of a renewed, if half-hearted effort to build housing for Africans, the first since the Bairro Indígena nearly two decades before. The ramshackle Infulene project being built far from the city and people's places of employment was a shoddier version of apartheid planning, but it spoke eloquently of what the Portuguese called their civilizing effort. Mondlane addressed the workers at Infulene with a prophesy. "Brothers, listen well," he said in Changana. "We shall take this land."

Mondlane's months in Mozambique coincided with the most radical reorientation of Portugal's relationship to its African territories since the early 1930s and the first years of Salazar's *Estado Novo*.<sup>46</sup> In the late 1950s and early 1960s, as the other European empires were being rapidly dismantled, Portugal remained steadfast in its refusal to part with its African possessions. In January 1961, shortly before Mondlane's arrival in Lourenço Marques, a revolt broke out in northern Angola, and a massive military mobilization followed in Angola, Guiné, and eventually Mozambique. The United States joined the chorus at the United Nations calling for Portuguese decolonization, and there were even voices within the Lisbon regime that concurred. Salazar quashed a budding

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Mission and Vision for Africa and the World," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 10 (January 2012): 82; Faris, *Liberating Mission*, 143–145.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Alfredo Nhanale, Nov. 6, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, *Salazar: A Political Biography* (New York: Enigma Books, 2009), 504–512; Jesus, *Homem a abater*, 95–105. In 1926, a military coup toppled the Portuguese republic, and from 1932 onward the right-wing dictatorship was led by a civilian, finance minister António de Oliveira Salazar. The Salazar regime, which instituted a quasi-fascist, corporatist restructuring of Portuguese life, was called the New State (*Estado Novo*). A central pillar of the Salazarist program was the more efficient and comprehensive exploitation of the colonies to serve Portugal's needs, necessitating Lisbon's tighter political control.

plot against him by military elements opposed to his Africa policy, and shaken by events he awarded the Overseas Ministry (*Ministério do Ultramar*) to a young academic, Adriano Moreira, who had been pushing liberal reforms.<sup>47</sup>

In Lisbon in 1961, a flurry of new legislation sponsored by Moreira and the regime's "liberal" wing wiped from the books the most nakedly abusive colonial laws. The *indigenato* – the system of forced labor that had long been a focus of international criticism – was officially abolished in Mozambique and the other territories where it had been in effect, as was compulsory crop cultivation. The Overseas Ministry deployed a "psychosocial" campaign to win the loyalty of a wider stratum of Africans, promising more schools and more health clinics, and a small army of social workers from the metropole descended on Mozambique to attend to the "economically debilitated." The word "native" was phased out of the official lexicon, and in government reports and in some newspapers it was replaced by "autochthone," an awkward locution that carried a vague air of scientific objectivity. Already, in 1951, largely to deflect external pressures to decolonize, Portugal had refashioned its colonies as non-contiguous "provinces" of a single "pluriracial nation." With pressures now intensified, Lisbon attempted to inject new life into an idea of Portuguese exceptionalism that Portuguese intellectuals had cultivated for decades. According to regime propagandists, the Portuguese had proven for 500 years that they were natural colonizers, with an innate respect for other peoples and a

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<sup>47</sup> Meneses, *Salazar*, 473–485; Adriano Moreira, *Política ultramarina*, 3rd ed., Estudos de ciências políticas e sociais 1 (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, Centro de Estudos Políticos e Sociais, 1960).

talent for assimilating them into European culture.<sup>48</sup> (Fig. 2.4.) According to this reasoning, recent armed insurrections were not evidence of African discontent, but rather the work of agitators sponsored by Moscow, Beijing, and Washington.



Fig. 2.4. A stamp (c. 1966) bearing Lusotropicalist-inflected propaganda: “Mozambique only is Mozambique because it is Portugal.” (Source: IPAD)<sup>49</sup>

Scholars of Lusophone Africa have thoroughly discredited Portugal’s claims to being a peaceable rainbow nation of long standing, a picture that simply did not correspond to the brutal realities that governed everyday life in the colonies of the more distant past and in the so-called provinces of late colonial rule.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps in part because

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<sup>48</sup> Cláudia Castelo, *O modo português de estar no mundo: O luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> I have written more fully on this image elsewhere: David Morton, “Portugal is Not Small,” *Hotel Universo*, December 29, 2010, <https://hoteluniverso.wordpress.com/2010/10/29/portugal-is-not-small/>. See also Heriberto Cairo, “‘Portugal Is Not a Small Country’: Maps and Propaganda in the Salazar Regime,” *Geopolitics* 11, no. 3 (2006): 367–95.

<sup>50</sup> James Duffy, *Portugal in Africa* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962); C.R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*; Gerald J. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978);

of the outlandishness of much of Lisbon's propaganda, its reform agenda of the 1960s has been dismissed as window dressing – mere legislation that, to the extent that it was implemented and adhered to, impacted far few people to register in the full account of enduring colonial exploitation. In turn, the historiography of the twilight phase of Portuguese rule in Mozambique has been focused, for the most part, on Frelimo's "struggle for liberation" and Portugal's military response.<sup>51</sup> One need not be an apologist for the Portuguese regime, however, to acknowledge that initiatives originating in Lisbon, whatever the motivations behind them, had a significant impact on how life was lived in Lourenço Marques and its *subúrbios* in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The most important change, perhaps, was the generalized economic expansion of the period, resulting from the relaxation of Lisbon's controls on industrial development and foreign investment in its African possessions, the military escalation, the influx of settlers, soldiers, and technical experts from the Metropole, and the growth in South African tourism – a subject of the following chapter.<sup>52</sup> Frederick Cooper has explored similar ground for postwar French- and British-controlled Africa: the politics that emerged from the new strategies of colonial rule – developmentalism and welfare

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Allen F. Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996); José Luís Cabaço, *Moçambique: Identidades, colonialismo e libertação* (Maputo: Marimbique, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> A significant exception is the Isaacmans' recent work on the impacts of the Cahora Bassa dam, the single most important development project in Mozambique during the last years of Portuguese rule. Isaacman and Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement, and the Delusion of Development: Cahora Bassa and Its Legacies in Mozambique, 1965-2007*. For the last decades of Portuguese rule, see Jeanne Marie Penvenne, "Mozambique: A Tapestry of Conflict," in *History of Central Africa: The Contemporary Years since 1960*, ed. David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin (London: Longman, 1998), 231–246; Malyn Newitt, "The Late Colonial State in Portuguese Africa," *Itinerario* 23, no. 3/4 (1999): 110–22.

<sup>52</sup> W.G. Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire, 1825-1975: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 192–221.

colonialism.<sup>53</sup> Cooper, however, does so through the lens of labor mobilization and overtly nationalist and party politics. The vastly different climate and context of Portuguese-controlled Africa in the 1960s, where, for instance, any form of labor agitation or independent party organization was ruthlessly suppressed, limits meaningful comparison. The remainder of this chapter examines the evolving relationship in Lourenço Marques between those who would govern and those who would be governed: how the regime sought to provide for African subjects in ways it never had before, and how people began to develop expectations of what the regime ought to provide for them. It was a politics largely removed from the politics of labor, narrowly considered, or the nationalist politics exemplified by Mondlane and Frelimo, and it was often encrypted in ways that masked that it was politics. The pivot of the relationship, in Lourenço Marques at least, was the problem of the *subúrbios*, as that problem was understood.

In the early 1960s, in part to placate settler interests, the Overseas Ministry devolved more power to municipalities in Africa. The deliberations of municipal chambers were made partially public – creating some space for public debate.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, Moreira's technocratic spirit imbued the various new institutions that Lisbon was establishing in the provinces to replace the now defunct Native Affairs departments. Between 1958 and 1962, responsibility for public housing was incrementally removed from the municipality of Lourenço Marques, whose handful of efforts over the decades

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<sup>53</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Gouvêa Lemos, "Carta aos vereadores: LM = igual a 1/4 de cidade," *A Tribuna*, October 24, 1962.



was widely considered pitiful, and put in the hands of a newly formed entity called the *Junta dos Bairros e Casas Populares* (Board of People’s Neighborhoods and Houses) with its own staff of architects and engineers.<sup>55</sup> Housing for the poor in Portugal’s African cities was an opportunity for the state to showcase social engineering guided by enlightened principles.<sup>56</sup> In the fulfillment of what Moreira called Portugal’s “historic task,” new interracial communities in the African provinces, built from scratch, would act as mechanisms of assimilation. Moreira’s rhetoric focused on developing rural areas, and in many ways it resembled the justifications for previous *colonato* schemes.<sup>57</sup> In 1962, however, Mário de Oliveira, a senior architect with the Overseas Ministry’s Department of Urbanism, and a Moreira acolyte, tailored the minister’s scheme for cities, and elaborated a prototype plan for interracial “Neighborhood Units” on the outskirts of Bissau, the capital of Guiné.<sup>58</sup> Europeans and “evolved” Africans would live side-by-side with the “less evolved” – perhaps the first time in Portuguese policy circles that cities were considered appropriate places for Africans to live, rather than places that would lead inevitably to their ruin. Oliveira, however, cautioned that the process ought to be slow. Houses built for “autochtones” should be similar to the rustic shelters to which they were

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<sup>55</sup> Rita-Ferreira, “Os africanos de L.M.,” 201-202.

<sup>56</sup> Adriano Moreira, “Política de integração [Speech given at the Associação Comercial do Porto, Aug. 28, 1961],” *Estudos ultramarinos*, no. 4 (1961): 7–22.

<sup>57</sup> Cláudia Castelo, *Passagens para África: O povoamento de Angola e Moçambique com naturais da Metrópole (1920-1974)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2007), 143–153; Cláudia Castelo, “‘O branco do mato de Lisboa’: A colonização agrícola dirigida e os seus fantasmas,” in *Os outros da colonização*, ed. Cláudia Castelo et al. (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2012), 27–50.

<sup>58</sup> Mário de Oliveira, *Problemas essenciais do urbanismo no Ultramar: Estruturas urbanas de integração e convivência* (Lisbon: Agência-Geral do Ultramar, 1962); Ana Vaz Milheiro, *Nos trópicos sem Le Corbusier: Arquitectura luso-africana no Estado Novo* (Lisbon: Relógio D’Água, 2012), 348–354.

accustomed so as to avoid “psychosomatic” disorientation. In his planned integrated communities, he argued,

...the habits, tastes, manners, moral conduct of the European, and of the evolved natives, are gradually assimilated by the local population, which thus under constant observation, whether at work, in school, or at sport or recreation, would start modifying its inherited personality, beginning gradually to feel the necessity of participating in social functions, which is indispensable to an existence relatively suited to supporting oneself in perpetuity, as an authentic individual.<sup>59</sup>

Oliveira was emphatic that Portugal’s future in Africa was dependent on such urban planning. It was key to developing “humanistic feelings and love for the Motherland, where religion is also a prime factor, thus calling the autochthones to a complete integration into civilized society and, therefore, into the national community.”<sup>60</sup>

On a visit to Mozambique a few years later, Oliveira saw in the *subúrbios* of Quelimane, in the north, and in Chamanculo, in the capital, favorable conditions for his “Neighborhood Units,” since in these neighborhoods Europeans were already living among Africans.<sup>61</sup> Oliveira recognized the pragmatic importance of keeping up appearances on the international stage, and he underlined the point for his superiors. In the official report of his trip, Oliveira argued that the problem of segregation in Mozambique’s cities had to be resolved urgently, “such that whoever visits us doesn’t think that he is living in a city just of whites, but rather an authentic community of whites

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<sup>59</sup> Oliveira, *Problemas essenciais*, 15.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>61</sup> Mário de Oliveira, “O ‘habitat’ nas zonas suburbanas de Quelimane: Um caso positivo de formação de sociedades multiraciais,” *Geographica: Revista da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, no. 3 (1965): 67–75; Mário de Oliveira, “Relatório do arquitecto Mário de Oliveira da comissão eventual de serviço a Moçambique” (Ministério do Ultramar, Direcção-Geral de Obras Públicas e Comunicações, Direcção dos Serviços de Urbanismo e Habitação, March 3, 1966), IPAD/no. 14419. The author thanks Silje Sollien for bringing this report to his attention.

and blacks – with equal rights for all parties...[O]nly thus can we free ourselves of certain conflicts, and of certain criticisms which are assiduously and currently leveled at us by the blacks.”<sup>62</sup>

Oliveira’s urban vision, like Moreira’s more global vision, depended on fuzzy fantasy. Seen up close, the thousands of Europeans living in the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques were hardly evidence of what Oliveira championed as the historical Portuguese “tendency toward living together without ethnic discrimination.”<sup>63</sup> Racial animus kept even relatively privileged black Africans out of the City of Cement. The Portuguese who lived in the *subúrbios* could not afford to live in the City of Cement, and their low status and their cohabitation with African companions stoked fears among other whites of “*cafrealização*” – a common racist term suggesting Europeans who had been “Africanized” in the tropics.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, people living in the *subúrbios* did not agonize over being segregated from whites, per se, but that they were segregated from the basic municipal infrastructure enjoyed by whites in the City of Cement.<sup>65</sup> Most of the African

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<sup>62</sup> Oliveira, “Relatório do arquitecto,” 20.

<sup>63</sup> Oliveira, *Problemas essenciais*, 13.

<sup>64</sup> “*Cafre*,” the Portuguese equivalent of the slur “kaffir,” denoted not just something or someone as somehow essentially African, but also inferior as a result. There were many slurs that expressed a similar sentiment. See Valdemir Donizette Zamparoni, “Entre *narros e mulungos*: Colonialismo e paisagem social em Lourenço Marques, c. 1890 - c. 1940” (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 1998), 398; Antoinette Errante, “White Skin, Many Masks: Colonial Schooling, Race, and National Consciousness among White Settler Children in Mozambique, 1934-1974,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36, no. 1 (January 2003): 22–24; Castelo, *Passagens para África*, 250–251.

<sup>65</sup> When residents of the Bairro da Munhuana (Bairro Indígena) were surveyed in 1963 by social workers about their housing preferences, the only ones to bring up the question of race or the possibility of multiracial communities were the social workers themselves. Residents were preoccupied about the terrible conditions of their current housing, as discussed further below. Centro de Estudos de Serviço Social e de Desenvolvimento Comunitário, *Inquérito habitacional realizado no Bairro da Munhuana*, Estudos de

population, and not only Africans, were compelled to live in a toxic morass, yet neither in Oliveira's published work nor in his unpublished remarks to superiors about his visits to various Mozambican *subúrbios* did the architect mention flooding, sewage, crime, fire, or disease. These were things that he could not see, or chose not to. Nor, apparently, was he impressed by the near absence of schools or health posts. In a published article, Oliveira sketched the traditional huts and hand-crafted household objects that he discovered on his explorations of Mozambique's *subúrbios*, as if in romantic appreciation, but if he engaged any residents in conversation his writings offer no evidence of it.<sup>66</sup>

Official forays into the *caniço* were conditioned by the official silence that long enveloped the *subúrbios*. Neglect bred its own kind of ignorance. With only the barest of municipal services serving parts of the *subúrbios*, few people who worked within the municipality had any familiarity with the suburban landscape. Moreover, for strategic reasons, the work of social scientists was tightly controlled in Mozambique, and work by foreign researchers in the *subúrbios* all but forbidden.<sup>67</sup> The first lengthy surveys of suburban life emerged only later, in the late 1960s, both conducted by Portuguese researchers. One, by local researcher and longtime Mozambique hand António Rita-Ferreira, yielded important insights on the pressures of the suburban housing market and other aspects of everyday life.<sup>68</sup> The other, which provided part of the basis of the 1969 urban plan for Lourenço Marques, was authored by a former Overseas Ministry official in

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ciências políticas e sociais 72 (Lisbon: Junto do Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina, 1964).

<sup>66</sup> Oliveira, "O 'habitat.'"

<sup>67</sup> Penvenne, "Two Tales of a City," 259–260.

<sup>68</sup> Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de L.M."

Lisbon who did not set foot in Mozambique until 1970.<sup>69</sup> The *subúrbios* were long a wellspring of material for songs and poetry, but the *caniço* was largely kept out of the news and editorial columns of the mainstream press in Lourenço Marques until the advent in October 1962 of a daily newspaper called *A Tribuna*.<sup>70</sup> With a staff made up of some of the era's leading cultural figures, such as poet and journalist José Craveirinha, photographer Ricardo Rangel, and writer Luís Bernardo Honwana, as well as journalistic exiles from *Notícias*, the city's pro-regime flagship paper, *Tribuna* sought to be an oppositional voice in a place where the censor tolerated no meaningful opposition. *Tribuna* settled almost instantly on the cause that came to define it: exposing the conditions beyond the "reed curtain." During the paper's second week of existence, editor Gouvêa Lemos set the tone, penning an open letter to the newly installed members of the municipal council in which he said it was time to recognize that they were responsible for more than just the quarter of the city they inhabited, but also the welfare of the three

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<sup>69</sup> João Pereira Neto, *Estudo sociológico do "caniço,"* Plano director de urbanização de Lourenço Marques 48 (Lourenço Marques: Gabinete de Urbanização e Habitação da Região de Lourenço Marques, 1969), MICOA; interview with João Pereira Neto, Lisbon, Nov. 26, 2010.

<sup>70</sup> António Sopa, "Alguns aspectos do regime de censura prévia em Moçambique (1933–1975)," in *140 anos de imprensa em Moçambique*, ed. Fátima Ribeiro and António Sopa (Maputo: Associação Moçambicana da Língua Portuguesa, 1996), 95–97; Teresa de Sá Nogueira, "Uma mulher na informação moçambicana," in *140 anos de imprensa em Moçambique*, 125–29; Fernando Magalhães, "Gouvêa Lemos: O homem que queria ser jornalista," in *140 anos de imprensa em Moçambique*, 131–34; Ilídio Rocha, *A imprensa de Moçambique: História e catálogo* (Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, 2000), 193–198; Fátima Mendonça, "Dos confrontos ideológicos na imprensa em Moçambique," in *Os outros da colonização: Ensaios sobre o colonialismo tardio em Moçambique*, ed. Cláudia Castelo et al. (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2012), 209–211.

quarters of the city that rarely received the municipality's attention. "Whoever has flown over the capital of Mozambique knows of what I speak," he wrote.<sup>71</sup>

I don't say it to demagogue, nor am I intending to do sensationalist journalism. It's true what I affirm – we know it well. It should be said, and here I offer this suggestion only with the intention of waking up whoever might be sleepwalking. I'm not preaching, I'm not attacking, I'm not rebelling. I'm reminding. I ask that you understand me. We have to speak clearly to one another – or is it still not the time? For this, instead of accusing – as, in any case, would be fair to do – here I am proposing (journalist that I am, I need not be a City Councilmember to present proposals) constructively here I am proposing that the Municipality make an about-face and that energetically, with decision, it confront the principal problems that afflict the population...

He compared the city, with the luxuries bestowed upon it, to a frilly "coquette."

Let's not, at least for now, install more flower vases on our avenues, and let's give water to the *subúrbios*. Let's stop entertaining ourselves, just for a little while, with the construction of more embellishments to the city-we-see, and let's make roads in the *subúrbios*. Let's not have infinite fun making ringlets in girls' hair and let's bring electricity to the alleys and houses of the *subúrbios*...

You will be able to respond that I am speaking of the most difficult things, extremely expensive, almost impossible to do quickly. And even that it's not the Municipality's responsibility, solely the Municipality, to do all that I request. This may be so. But, I ask: When are we going to begin? How are we going to begin? Who is going to begin?

Will there be a time when poets can cease using "the city beyond" as their theme?

When will we call it, all of us, with equal justification, "our city"?

The phrase "our city" embodied a novel argument that the conditions of the *subúrbios* were the result of government negligence, rather than the result of the low civilizational attainments of suburban residents. In January 1963, the paper launched a running exposé it entitled "*A cidade de caniço*" – "the City of Reeds" – elevating the *subúrbios* to an independent "city," rhetorically, to enable readers to see them more

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<sup>71</sup> Gouvêa Lemos, "Carta aos vereadores," 3.

vividly as the wretched mirror image of a “City of Cement.”<sup>72</sup> (The labels stuck; even officials began using them in correspondence.) On the editorial pages that month, and frequently thereafter, residents of the *subúrbios* each gave a short summary of the house in which they lived, the house they hoped to live in, and how much they could afford in rent if the government were to build housing. They spoke of salaries too meager to build houses of their own, the great distances to fetch water (or the expense of buying water at the closest *cantina*), the dangers of walking at night in the absence of streetlamps, and the difficulty in maintaining one’s dignity – expressed as “tidiness” – under such conditions.

“The mosquitos that appear by the million don’t let people sleep,” recounted Benedito Fumo.<sup>73</sup> “They are attracted by the unburied trash. This happens every day because there is no place to bury the trash, because there is no space to dig trash pits. Whenever we dig a pit we see that trash has already been buried there.” “And how tragic when there’s a fire!” wrote Albino Sive in a published letter.<sup>74</sup> “When one house burns, five or ten more catch fire because as much as the firetrucks may try to get there quickly, there are no roads to get them to the site of the calamity. Only after 20 to 30 minutes are they able to connect hoses across people’s yards to get there.” Death by fire, in fact, was one of the most dreaded horrors of suburban life.<sup>75</sup> Kerosene lamps were for most the sole source of illumination, wood-burning stoves were moved indoors when outdoors it was cold or stormy, and trash that could not be buried was burned. When household fires were not carefully tended, the reed landscape served as accidental but effective kindling.

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<sup>72</sup> Ricardo Rangel, “Os primeiros passos de um fotojornalista famoso,” in *140 anos de imprensa em Moçambique*, 121–23.

<sup>73</sup> “Falam os habitantes da ‘cidade do caniço,’” *A Tribuna*, January 17, 1963, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Albino Sive, “Escreve um leitor da cidade do caniço,” *A Tribuna*, January 17, 1963, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Areosa Pena, “Fogo,” *Tempo*, December 24, 1972.

One of *Tribuna*'s respondents was Mozambique's future president Armando Guebuza, then 24 years old and a resident of Chamanculo. "In the city of reeds we live in intolerable disorder," he said.<sup>76</sup> "The fundamental cause of everything that happens there is the lack of means to build more habitable houses and the impossibility of living further from the city of stone since we depend on it as much for our professional lives as for the barest of benefits that come to us from contact with civilization." Months after speaking to the newspaper, he fled to Dar es Salaam to join Frelimo.

Guebuza's few paragraphs in *Tribuna*, restrained as they were, nonetheless packed more critical punch than the average *cidade do caniço* testimonial. Perhaps the just-the-facts tone of most accounts was the work of the official censor, but it is more likely that those interviewed censored themselves, or that editors redlined their more caustic remarks. Not a single one of the suburban residents in the series implicated the municipality or the government at large. None mentioned racism, or even race. Moreover, those given voice were exclusively black men and, it appears, mostly men of what in the *subúrbios* counted as average means or better. Through the drum-beat of testimonials *Tribuna* strategically tailored an argument that few among its readership would dispute: that a civilized male "head of household" who worked hard for his wage ought to be able

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<sup>76</sup> "Falam os habitantes da 'cidade do caniço,'" *A Tribuna*, January 14, 1963, 2. Guebuza used the word "*promiscuidade*," a word frequently used to describe the perceived disorder and confusion of suburban life, and that can have a connotation of immorality. Disorder and confusion are also a lesser used sense of the English word "promiscuity," but in common usage it almost always suggests sexual immorality.



to provide his family with a decent, healthy home – and a just government ought to help him do so.<sup>77</sup>

In June, *Tribuna* ran a large two-page spread by architect Pancho Guedes, entitled “The Sick City.”<sup>78</sup> The roguish Guedes was a singular figure in late colonial Lourenço Marques.<sup>79</sup> In Europe he was recognized as one of Africa’s most creative architectural talents. At home in Mozambique, he was an important patron of young African artists and writers such as Malangatana Ngwenya and Luís Bernardo Honwana, and he maintained close ties to the Swiss Mission; these were all connections that in the eyes of the political police (PIDE) made Guedes a dubious character, especially after Mondlane met with him during his 1961 visit. He also circulated in the *subúrbios* as no other Portuguese architect or planner did. Lourenço Marques was “schizophrenic,” he wrote in *Tribuna*, with a minority living in luxury in one part of the city and the other part, the “the city of the poor, the servants and the maids... living without sewage systems, without water, without light, amid standing water and mountains of filth.”<sup>80</sup> In the *subúrbios* “children come to know hunger, illness, and misery while still young, and lose their charm and their innocence before their time.” He criticized the impractical low-density, Garden City planning represented by the wealthy new Cronistas neighborhood,

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<sup>77</sup> On other occasions, *Tribuna* demonstrated a willingness to depict the poor whites of the *subúrbios*, but refrained from including whites and people of mixed race in the *cidade do caniço* series. Perhaps editors wanted its message about the racially segregated city, while implicit, to also be unambiguous.

<sup>78</sup> Pancho Guedes, “A cidade doente,” in *Manifestos, ensaios, falas, publicações* (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2007), 30–33.

<sup>79</sup> Miguel Santiago, *Pancho Guedes: Metamorfoses espaciais* (Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2007); Pedro Guedes, ed., *Pancho Guedes: Vitruvius mozambicanus* (Lisbon: Museu Colecção Berardo, 2009); Pedro Guedes, ed., *As Áfricas de Pancho Guedes* (Lisbon: Sextante Editora, 2010).

<sup>80</sup> Guedes, “A cidade doente,” 30.

and he included a jab at the racism that officials claimed did not exist. As if in rebuttal to Oliveira's argument for racial integration in the *subúrbios*, Guedes called on the municipality to desegregate the City of Cement. Building public housing in undeveloped downtown areas, he argued, "will revitalize downtown" and "will initiate and accelerate a genuine racial integration – or is it that the '*pretos*' only belong in kitchens and reception rooms?"<sup>81</sup> The piece was among the harshest to appear anywhere in Lourenço Marques at the time, and though the censor initially "suspended" the article, Guedes later recalled how *Tribuna* smuggled it into print.<sup>82</sup> The article was re-submitted to the censor in small sections, and for some reason his "prescription" for the Sick City was easier to swallow when administered in spoonfuls.

Ricardo Rangel, *Tribuna*'s director of photography, followed a similar strategy for the August feature "The Forging of the Adults of Tomorrow."<sup>83</sup> First Rangel submitted to the censor photos of children, most of them black, at play in suburban yards and bathing in muddy pools, and then, a month later, he submitted more photos of children, most of them white, in ballet class and at school. Once approved, Rangel then put the images in juxtaposition with each other on the page, a clear demonstration of who were the haves and who the have-nots, a contrast made sharper by deadpan photo captions. An image of primly dressed children sitting in a school playground, nearly all of them white, was captioned: "Waiting for lunch, a group of kids of all different races in a

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 31. *Preto*, the color black in Portuguese, is considered a much cruder way to refer to people than words such as *negro* or *africano*. "*Os pretos*" strikes the ear much like "the blacks" does in English. The quotation marks are Guedes's.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Pancho Guedes, Oct. 30, 2010, Sintra, Portugal.

<sup>83</sup> Neves, [Ricardo] Rangel, and [Teresa de] Sá Nogueira, "Forja dos homens de amanhã," *A Tribuna*, August 3, 1963, 6-7; Sá Nogueira, "Uma mulher na informação moçambicana," 128.

world where all are equal.” Below was another photo, of two black children in rags, squatting in the dust as one puts a pen to a notebook. “Anyplace is fine when one wants to learn,” read the caption. “Even with rocks from the street serving as desk and chair.”

(Fig. 2.5.)



**Fig. 2.5.** Juxtaposed images of city and *subúrbio* from “The Forging of the Adults of Tomorrow,” part of *A Tribuna*’s “*cidade do caniço*” campaign, 1963. “Some look in shop windows with the bored air of those who already have everything. Others ‘prefer’ to make their own toys.” (Source: Neves, [Ricardo] Rangel, and [Teresa de] Sá Nogueira. “Forja dos homens de amanhã,” *A Tribuna*, August 3, 1963.)

In some respects, *Tribuna* was simply carrying on a tradition of journalistic dissidence that even under the *Estado Novo* managed to persist.<sup>84</sup> In Lourenço Marques, *O Brado Africano*, the newspaper of the city’s African elite, was in the late 1950s purchased by a regime figure and rendered largely toothless, but for decades its contributors had criticized policies of the *indigenato*, and it offered small portraits of life

<sup>84</sup> Sopa, “Alguns aspectos”; José Capela, “A imprensa de Moçambique até a independência,” in *140 anos de imprensa em Moçambique*, 9–27; Mendonça, “Dos confrontos ideológicos.”

in the *subúrbios* by writers who lived there, for readers who lived there.<sup>85</sup> *Tribuna*, however, circulated more widely, and the suburban residents who offered their testimonials in *Tribuna* spoke directly to Portuguese readers, many of whom were only vaguely aware of what life in the *caniço* was like. The harsh conditions of the *subúrbios* were for the first time made a public issue – “public” in the sense that Portuguese authorities were implicated as a responsible party on a stage in which they were compelled to respond – and residents of the *subúrbios* were themselves now rendered as members of that public. *Tribuna*, that is, was creating a dialogue for politics and inviting the previously uninvited as participants. It was a very limited dialogue and a very limited politics, and only possible because in its overt criticism *Tribuna* had selected a very narrow target: the administration of the municipality, whose failures Lisbon was probably eager to have aired. *Tribuna*’s demands were for better service delivery and for more and better planned housing – demands in line with Lisbon’s stated vision for its African possessions. Race and violence and labor exploitation were subjects that, for the most part, had to be read between the lines.

*Tribuna*’s activist phase did not last the year. The paper’s owner was forced to sell to a sympathizer of the regime, resulting in a staff exodus, and by November 1963, filler and blank space regularly replaced the editorial columns. (The most frequently used filler was a public service announcement made on behalf of ophthalmologists calling for people to donate their eyes to the blind, perhaps a wry editor’s revenge for the spiked columns.) The following year, in 1964, Frelimo initiated its guerilla war in Mozambique’s far north, PIDE promptly imprisoned dozens of suspected Frelimo

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<sup>85</sup> Rocha, *A imprensa*, 268–269.

operatives in Lourenço Marques and its *subúrbios*, including some who had been affiliated with *Tribuna*, and the office of the censor tightened its grip on the local press still further.<sup>86</sup> In 1964, a Portuguese crew filmed a tongue-in-cheek quasi-documentary about everyday life Lourenço Marques, intended primarily for audiences in Portugal.<sup>87</sup> By the time it was screened, in 1965, censors had cut away almost half of the director's version, including aerial footage of Lourenço Marques's *subúrbios*.<sup>88</sup> As Gouvêa Lemos and Pancho Guedes had both pointed out, no official arriving in the city by plane from Lisbon could claim ignorance of the sprawling suburban landscape, but it was this very sight that needed to be rendered invisible, at least to a Portuguese viewing public. Not until decade's end did journalists in Lourenço Marques manage to recuperate some of their previous edge, due to the partial thaw of the so-called Marcelista Spring.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Teresa Cruz e Silva, "A rede clandestina da FRELIMO em Lourenço Marques (1960-1974)" (PhD diss., Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1986); Dalila Cabrita Mateus, *A PIDE/DGS na guerra colonial (1961-1974)* (Lisbon: Terramar, 2004), 195; Matias Mboa, *Memórias da luta clandestina* (Maputo: Marimbique, 2009).

<sup>87</sup> Manuel Faria de Almeida, *Catembe*, Film (Produções Cunha Telles, 1965), Arquivo Nacional das Imagens em Movimento, Cinemateca Portuguesa, Bucelas, Portugal.

<sup>88</sup> Only 11 minutes of censored material from the film survive, including a fictional romantic vignette that takes place among the shanties of Catembe, the fishing village for which the film is indirectly named, as well as a scene showing people of different races dancing together at a downtown nightclub. It has been called the most censored film in Portuguese history. Mário Lopes, "A vida a preto e branco em Lourenço Marques que a censura não deixou ver," *Público*, January 16, 2013, <http://www.publico.pt/culturaipsilon/noticia/catembe-a-vida-que-a-censura-nao-nos-deixou-ver-totalmente-1580929>.

<sup>89</sup> Marcello Caetano assumed the helm of the Portuguese regime in 1968 after Salazar, then almost 80 years old, suffered a brain hemorrhage. On the Caetano phase of Portuguese rule in Mozambique, see Amélia Neves de Souto, *Caetano e o ocaso do "Império": Administração e guerra colonial em Moçambique durante o Marcelismo (1968-1974)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2007).

## Housing Debates

*Tribuna* helped usher in a debate about government housing that would take place beyond its pages. As *Tribuna* had frequently reported, the projects built by the housing agency in Matola and in Machava (where Infulene was located) had proven to be disasters.<sup>90</sup> Because of their great distance from places of employment in Lourenço Marques and limited bus service, most houses in these projects remained vacant for some time after being built. In Matola, only 30 families had moved into the 100 houses that had been built there.<sup>91</sup> Machava had proved even less attractive. A fractional 22 of 350 of units were occupied there – and the sight of so many newly built concrete-block houses sitting derelict amid tall weeds, and photographed for the pages of *Tribuna*, must have been a shameful embarrassment to the housing agency. “This in Mozambique,” read the caption to a photo of a vacant house with broken windows.<sup>92</sup>

The most elaborate solution to the housing crisis in these years did not emerge from the housing agency, however, or from the architects and planners who began arriving from the Metropole to draw up another urban master plan for Lourenço Marques. Rather, in October 1963, a detailed plan for housing projects to be located just outside the City of Cement was put forth by a working group of African nurses at Lourenço Marques’s central hospital – an initiative directly inspired by *Tribuna*’s “*cidade do*

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<sup>90</sup> “Bairro residencial abandonado: No meio da desolação o capim é rei,” *A Tribuna*, January 17, 1963.

<sup>91</sup> Centro de Estudos de Serviço Social e de Desenvolvimento Comunitário, *Inquérito habitacional*, 11.

<sup>92</sup> “Bairro residencial abandonado,” 3.

*caniço*” coverage.<sup>93</sup> In Mozambique at the time, to be a nurse was one of the most prestigious positions that a black Mozambican could hope to achieve. Associational life in Mozambique was heavily regulated, group gatherings of any kind might be monitored, and any association of formally educated Africans was likely to raise suspicion. In his speech at the hospital presenting the plan, Alvaro Chovane, who headed the nurses’ initiative, spoke the language that Lisbon would approve of, defending the right and desire of the “autochthone” to evolve just like anybody else. “All of us have the pride and the clear conscience of our condition as Portuguese,” he said, “and thus, we believe that ‘luso-tropicalism,’ in a real and practical sense, means ‘multiracialism.’”<sup>94</sup> The projects in Matola and Machava, he argued, were no more than “encampments,” and their great distance from the city was contrary to the worthy goal of “integrating less evolved autochthonous populations.” No one should interpret people’s rejection of the badly planned Matola and Machava as a distaste for modern housing, he argued. Romantic arguments that reed houses were the appropriate housing for Africans were “true negations of the natural evolution of societies, not even to speak of its incompatibility with the norms of urbanism and hygiene that must preside in any given city, the more so in a capital city.” Chovane sought to remove the racial basis of housing projects altogether. Residents should be selected based on economic need, “not by his pigmentation.”

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<sup>93</sup> “A extinção da cidade do caniço,” *A Tribuna*, October 27, 1963; A. Samuel, “Rescaldo de um debate: ‘Extinção da cidade do caniço,’” *A Tribuna*, October 28, 1963; Grupo Central de Trabalhos para o Problema Habitacional dos Económicamente Débeis, “O problema habitacional dos económicamente débeis,” Lourenço Marques, January 1964, ANTT/SCCIM/no. 84.

<sup>94</sup> “A extinção,” 8.

The nurses group had conducted a survey of African staffers at the hospital, and used the surveys to develop its housing plan. The final report included drawings for two-story, medium-density housing with yards (yards were considered a must for the lifestyles of residents) and a careful cost estimate of materials and construction, including the cost of temporary quarters where people could live while displaced by construction. A model of one section of the proposed project was put on display at the hospital, and in February 1964 a debate was held at the hospital amphitheater on the merits of the project. The report itself was authored by a Portuguese psychiatrist, and one senses the *padrinho* politics typical of colonial-era Mozambique at work here.<sup>95</sup> Nurse Chovane's avowed loyalty to Portugal likely was not in itself sufficient to gain a hearing for the group's proposal. An African initiative required the backing of a white patron for it to be permitted. Even still, having a white patron was not bullet-proof protection. The copy of the report cited here was found in the archives of the Portuguese intelligence service.

The municipality, in any case, felt moved to reply to the nurses – or, more precisely, to the Portuguese physician who had authored the project brief.<sup>96</sup> City councilors thanked the working group for its “diligence” and “devotion” to the problem, but maintained that such matters were no longer within the municipality's administrative purview, nor within its ability to accomplish given its limited resources. The letter also took exception to the nurses' portrayal of a dual city. “[N]ever has the Portuguese

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<sup>95</sup> For a short but vivid analysis of how white *padrinhos* (“godparents”) represented African *afilhados* (“godchildren”) in important matters, see the novel João Paulo Borges Coelho, *As visitas do Dr. Valdez*, 3rd ed. (Maputo: Ndjira, 2010), 20. See also Penvenne, *African Workers*, 127.

<sup>96</sup> Grupo Central de Trabalhos para o Problema Habitacional dos Económicamente Débeis, “Económicamente débeis,” 12–19.



civilization left room for doubt about the equality of rights of its fellow citizens, neither today nor when there existed the juridical institution of the *indigenato*.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the municipal administration had “never been divided into city of reeds and city of reinforced cement, expressions that may be used with frequency, but have no official recognition.”

The nurses’ proposal was a rare example in late colonial Mozambique of a grass-roots effort to directly influence government policy. It was a rare example, too, of citizenship as practice, process, and the conjuring of an imagined future, and not simply the possession of a legal status, which for the nurses, all of them *assimilados*, had long before proven to be a kind of second-class citizenship. Like most elaborate ideas intended to improve suburban living conditions, the nurses’ proposal gained no further traction. Responsibility for housing projects was put in the hands of a regional planning agency, and when in 1969 a new urban plan was released, no mention was made of the nurses’ proposal.<sup>98</sup> Few idealistic proposals of any kind gained traction, including the urban plan itself.

Housing officials, stung by the failures of Matola and Machava, were meanwhile conducting their own research into how to improve housing delivery. In early 1963, just as *Tribuna* began its “*cidade do caniço*” series, and the nurses started up their working group, a team of social workers was dispatched to the Bairro da Munhuana, formerly the Bairro Indígena, to conduct a survey.<sup>99</sup> The idea was that the residents of Munhuana

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>98</sup> Mário de Azevedo, “O Plano Director de urbanização de Lourenço Marques (1969),” *Boletim Municipal da Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques*, no. 7 (December 31, 1969): 17–54.

<sup>99</sup> Centro de Estudos de Serviço Social e de Desenvolvimento Comunitário, *Inquérito habitacional*.

could offer useful advice for future housing projects based on their experience of living in government-built housing.<sup>100</sup> Instead, the residents subverted the intentions of the researchers and boldly voiced their frustrations with government services. The episode provides a rare insight into the nature of people's relationship to the colonial state, such as it was, and their expectations of it.

When built in 1940, the Bairro Indígena ("neighborhood for natives"), introduced in the previous chapter, represented the first significant venture by local officials into housing the city's African population, and its last for almost a generation. Even before construction began, health officials had warned that its location, in a depression amid malarial marshlands, would prove a disaster for the complex's future residents. A government engineer had ridiculed the design of housing units, inappropriate for both the climate and the size of the families that would probably live there. The Native Affairs director complained that there were no social program associated with the project – it was just buildings. That the project planners ignored such remonstrations spoke to the carelessness with which municipal officials regarded the issue, and continued to demonstrate over the next two decades. The dire predictions proved correct. Flooding was an annual trial for residents of the complex, and by the early 1960s, most of it had fallen into disrepair.

To reflect the changing complexion of Portuguese policy, the official name of the neighborhood was changed, from the "Native Neighborhood" to the Bairro Popular da Munhuana ("The People's Neighborhood of Munhuana"), and for a brief moment it was officially called Bairro do Ultramar – though people to this day continue to call it by its

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 11, 23.

original name. The mere fact of the 1963 study, according to those who conducted it, was possibly unprecedented. In their final report, the social workers pointed out that people in Munhuana were not accustomed to “meetings with whites in order to say what they think.”<sup>101</sup> “[T]he influence of this absolutely new situation,” wrote the social workers, led those surveyed to respond to questions in too passionate a frame of mind. That is, respondents had used the opportunity to press for demands. “[T]he group interview, through the emotion that it provoked in its participants, made them less capable of an objective perspective of realities,” the authors concluded.<sup>102</sup>

In individual interviews and in group meetings residents complained about the constant flooding, how water continually inundated sewage systems so that feces streamed through houses, and how units – most were only one room – were far too small to accommodate a family. The newest units did not even have doors, either internally or to the outside, a focus of particular outrage. The women of Munhuana were hardly consulted by researchers, because the social workers did not speak local languages and did not engage a translator for the survey; the report is therefore essentially a compendium of male complaint. A number of men complained that living in such close quarters with other family members undermined their authority, since discussions could not be had in private. Decency was also compromised, since fathers could not maintain a respectable distance from daughters.

Some residents offered policy prescriptions to the effect that, given the government’s ineffectualness, it should simply enable people to build houses for

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 118.

themselves. “It would be better to be given land to make a house,” said one.<sup>103</sup> “If the Government doesn’t have money to build, it’s better to give us land, in a good place, survey lots, give us house plans, to build a house in blocks, with the right to live there forever.” Another clarified: “*Our* house, that we would pay for in installments, built by us, with the help of the Government.”<sup>104</sup> It was clear that the regime’s prestige, and not just that of the housing agency, had been dramatically compromised by Munhuana. One resident said that the poor conditions of the neighborhood represented “how the Government thinks of us.”<sup>105</sup> The paltry, door-less new houses built in the neighborhood were like “a materialization of the image that the Government has of the residents of the Bairro,” wrote the report’s authors, summing up some older residents’ sentiments, as if “they don’t deserve more.”<sup>106</sup>

The survey had given vent to a form of dissent in which residents were able to channel grievances directly to government officials – and perhaps many officials were compelled to absorb it, if not necessarily respond to it, since the report was published in 1964 by the *Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina* (Superior Institute of Social Sciences and Overseas Policy) in Lisbon.<sup>107</sup> Dissent requires a medium, and it was clear that the survey, despite its stated purpose, had inadvertently helped people articulate discontent and feelings about the regime that they had perhaps not given shape to before. For one resident quoted at length by researchers, the episode

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 112 note 1.

<sup>107</sup> The institute, founded just a few years before, was a creation of the technocratic, reformist wing of the Salazar regime, and its first director had been Adriano Moreira, prior to his appointment as Overseas Minister.

was, in addition, an opportunity for reflection on the disorientations inflicted by modernity.

This story of one room won't do. We do not live alone. We have different familial ties than Europeans do. Our cousins are our brothers. For the European, money is his security – but not for us. Today evolution runs its course, runs for its goal without catching its breath. Civilization is like a car in motion, but we do not know how it goes. We are inside the car and we cannot stop. There are some, however, who can no longer keep going. My mother is no longer capable of moving forward. The elderly are not going to change their ways and they can no longer work. They count on us. We are tied from behind. We drag so much behind us.

I liked this conversation, it allowed me to unload my thoughts. It was good.<sup>108</sup>

By 1966, the Bairro Popular da Munhuana had its own dedicated social worker, and she performed her own, updated survey of residents. Lília Momplé, mentioned in the previous chapter, later became a noted writer of fiction, and her unpublished report to her superiors demonstrated greater empathy with its subjects than the average bureaucratic document.<sup>109</sup> In the few years since the first Munhuana survey, people in Lourenço Marques had new reason to be wary of government workers soliciting people's opinions. PIDE greatly expanded its network of informants, and people were detained on the barest pretexts.<sup>110</sup> Neighbors distrusted neighbor, and the residents of Munhuana were certainly suspicious of the social worker who had gathered them together in meetings, and who

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<sup>108</sup> Centro de Estudos de Serviço Social e de Desenvolvimento Comunitário, *Inquérito habitacional*, 119–120.

<sup>109</sup> Lília Momplé, “Relatório síntese do sector social” (Lourenço Marques: Junta dos Bairros e Casas Populares, 1966), MICOA.

<sup>110</sup> PIDE officials destroyed the records housed at its Lourenço Marques headquarters in 1974, but I discovered in the archives of the governor-general a “burn after reading” report from the PIDE office, dated 1963. A number of case files were opened on people simply for being overheard complaining about discriminatory treatment. SCCIM, “4<sup>o</sup> trimestre resenha de informações, nos. 38 – 50” (1963), AHM/GDLM/cx. 351. See also: *Tortura na Colónia de Moçambique, 1963-1974: Depoimentos de presos políticos*, *Libertação dos povos das colónias 11* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1977); Albino Magaia, *Yô Mabalane!*, 2nd ed. (Maputo: Cadernos Tempo, 1988); Mateus, *PIDE/DGS*.

went house to house asking questions. Being of mixed race, Momplé writes, heightened suspicions that she was a PIDE informant, for surely if PIDE were rooting out discontents they would plant someone more like the residents themselves.

Though guarded with Momplé, however, residents did not keep silent. “In general the meetings that have been held up to now began in a climate of great tension, people looking at us with suspicion, and it was always difficult to create a dialogue with them,” she wrote.<sup>111</sup> “Little by little, however, standoffishness gave way to true explosions of aggressiveness.” Residents leveled direct accusations of negligence at the housing board, “and the Government in a more veiled way.” It appears that little had changed in the living conditions at the complex since 1963. Repairs were never made, said one resident – “all the Board wants is to receive the rent!”<sup>112</sup> Another complained of the absurdity of residents being ordered to paint the exterior walls of their houses, while the housing agency did nothing to repair them. “The outside of the house does not matter! We do not live outside! But the Board doesn’t care! Animals live in these houses, not us!” The neighborhood still flooded regularly.

Momplé described one resident who would not receive her into his house:

He sat in the doorway and calmly said to us: “Look girl, I’m not so much a child that I would believe in the Board. The Board never did anything for the Bairro, nor did it want to do anything! Why are you annoying us like this?”

He spit on the ground ostentatiously, wanting to demonstrate his complete lack of respect for the Board, and added: It would be better if you got another job, because the Board only wants to let you be disgraced.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Momplé, “Relatório,” 16.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. Momplé reported that the man later relaxed his stance and responded to the survey “after getting to know us better.”

An intern was kicked out of another house, with the resident yelling “I’ve had enough of the Board’s lies.”<sup>114</sup> That Momplé was a young woman (her intern probably was, as well), and not a young white woman, likely emboldened the people she talked to. In interactions she describes with mostly male “heads of household” she was addressed as “girl.” Given the potential consequences at the time of even trivial shows of dissent, however, such disrespect indicated more than a belittling of Momplé, but also a brazen dismissal of the regime – which is why Momplé included the details. She wanted her superiors to know just how grave the Board’s position was, and not just the Board’s. “[B]ecause it is the Board that is the Official Entity that has the closest contact with residents, they have gotten used to identifying it as the Government and with whites,” she warned in her report.<sup>115</sup> “This identification means that everything that the Board ‘doesn’t do’ will have repercussions that dangerously transcend the specific scope of its activity.”

Momplé sounds a positive note, observing that people’s aggressiveness toward her, and indirectly toward the government as a whole, “is, truly, an appeal,” a desire to be more fully “integrated” into the “larger social context.”<sup>116</sup> She reports that after venting their complaints, residents appreciated “the unexpected opportunity that had been offered to them to speak with the Board, and hope as well that soon it would be concretized in deeds.”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 17.

## Conclusion

What was it about housing and the conditions of the *subúrbios* that, among the long list of possible grievances, led them to be the flashpoint of debate? At a time and place in which debate of any kind was so restricted? One must acknowledge, first of all, the role of Lisbon's reformist agenda. Lisbon's liberals of the early 1960s, figures such as Moreira and architect Oliveira, looked with scorn upon Mozambique's local officials and powerful settler interests, who were seen as incompetent, backwards, racist, and whom they saddled with much of the blame for jeopardizing Portugal's position in Mozambique.<sup>118</sup> The reformist agenda was simultaneously a modernizing agenda, and the cities of Africa, with their teeming slums, offered highly visible evidence – to themselves and to the world at large – of what must be modernized. Allowing the journalists of *Tribuna* a modicum of freedom, at least for a time, in order to expose what was initially construed as a problem of official incompetence certainly fell within the bounds of acceptable reform.

Another factor was at work, however – one that speaks to the nature of the built environment in general, and its role in perceptions of order and governance. The politics of modernity are necessarily the politics of visibility. The spaces of the city are not just incessantly experienced, they are on perpetual display. Whenever a suburban homeowner looked upon a deteriorating reed fence, he or she might think of the neighbor who lived beyond it and of the conflict that loomed between them, and pondered whether the corruptible *régulo* could or should intervene. Every time residents of Munhuana walked through their doorways, they could picture the door that the government had not put

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<sup>118</sup> See interview with Neto.



there. Buildings are a primary landmark of governance and also its absence, which is why those who would govern seek to represent their accomplishments through monuments and stadiums, and to hide places like the *subúrbios* away, by censorship if necessary. Yet they could not hide poverty from those who lived in poverty.

### Chapter 3

#### Clandestine Concrete House Construction in the *Subúrbios*, c. 1960 to 1975

I hardly moved a finger clandestinely  
But a militant in fact I am.

I happened to be born  
in a great and prosperous colony.

I put flowers before the statue of Sr. António Enes  
recited verses of Camões during some such “Day of the Race”  
and came to sing a march called “*A Portuguesa*.”

I grew up.  
My roots also grew  
and I became a subversive in authentic illegality.

That’s how I subversively  
clandestinized the government  
of the Portuguese *ultramar*.

That’s how!

– José Craveirinha, “Unclandestineness” (1980)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> José Craveirinha, “Inclandestinidade,” in *Cela I* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 1980), 85. António Enes was the Portuguese official who in the late nineteenth century led the conquest of the Gaza state of southern Mozambique; Camões was the author of the sixteenth-century Portuguese national epic, *Os Lusíadas*. The uncorrected version of Craveirinha’s poem inserted “legality” for “illegality.” The awkward phrasings in my translation – “clandestinized” and the title “Unclandestineness” – reflect the deliberate awkwardness and sarcasm of the original Portuguese.

On a Saturday afternoon in 1963, Daniel Malé and his wife Adelina Cossa hosted a party to celebrate the completion of their new home.<sup>2</sup> The house was built a few feet from the house of Malé's parents, on a fenced plot the Malé family had long rented in Chamanculo. Among the party's few dozen attendees, two were guests of honor. One was Malé's employer, the Portuguese owner of the watch store downtown where Malé worked, who had helped him purchase the materials for the house. The other was Cossa's brother, the stonemason who built it. Rute, the couple's six-year-old daughter, was dressed all in white for the occasion, and with a gloved hand she turned the handle of the front door, officially inaugurating the home as open for living. (Fig. 3.1.) Malé called everyone to attention, and he read a prepared speech.

Ladies and gentlemen. I just want to say a few brief words. It is with the most profound satisfaction, with the most sincere thanks, that here today, at this simple party, I see all of you joined together.

I want, at this moment, with a simple gesture, to especially thank my esteemed *patrão*, Sr. José António Ferreira, for whom I have worked for ten years, and in whom I have had not only a *patrão*, but if I may say, a good friend, and also my brother-in-law José Inácio Cossa, both of whom contributed so much toward the materialization of my dream. The ambition of every man is to have his own house. Among us natives, this ambition becomes even greater – it is in fact a major concern – because it is customary for us to marry only after having built a roof under which we can raise a family. There was a time when a shack was enough, and this is why, without being able to afford much, I built a shack of reeds. These days, however, as one struggles to build a roof, one does so with better financial conditions. Thus, at the cost of many sacrifices and with the help of others, such as the help of my *patrão*, present here, who contributed with windows, doors, and wood beams, and the help of my brother-in-law, who offered his services as a stonemason, and my own effort, I managed, six years after getting married, to replace the old house of reeds with a house of stone, which still seems a dream to me, a gift from God.

The honor of having all of you here present and the satisfaction of knowing that my children are going to grow up in a house of stone, and not one of

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<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Daniel Malé and Adelina Cossa, June 4 & 7, 2011; interview with stonemason José Inácio Cossa, June 14, 2011.

reeds like the one I grew up in, is for me a great source of happiness for which I thank all those who contributed.

Thank you very much.<sup>3</sup>

Brimming with pride in the house, and throwing a party to mark the occasion, Malé did not give the impression that he had anything to hide. Yet his house of stone, by which he meant a house of concrete block, was according to municipal officials a “clandestine construction.” In the 1960s, the municipality revived long dormant regulations that prohibited building houses in concrete or in any other permanent materials in the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques since these were areas designated for eventual expansion of the City of Cement.<sup>4</sup> In the *subúrbios* one could lay concrete foundations so long as the slab did not project too far above the ground. Such housing solutions were considered sufficiently “precarious.” But one was officially forbidden from building anything that might obstruct a bulldozer’s path.



**Fig. 3.1.** Rute Malé inaugurates her family’s new concrete-block house, built “clandestinely,” Chamanculo, 1963. (Source: Daniel Malé)

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<sup>3</sup> The handwritten speech was kept for 50 years in the same envelope as Daniel Malé’s photographs. Translation from the original Portuguese by the author. *Patrão*, left untranslated here, combines the English senses of patron and employer.

<sup>4</sup> Governo-Geral da Província de Moçambique, *Diploma Legislativo No. 616*, 1938, arts. 5 and 6; *Editais*, March 7, 1934.

If caught the consequences could be steep. The fines for building in concrete block easily could exceed several months' salary. Failure to pay fines or to bring the house into compliance with the relevant codes might ultimately result in demolition. A fine was a serious blow for a household that had scrimped on everyday expenses for years, as many did, in order to stock up on the necessary building materials and to hire a stonemason. Demolition, if it came to that, would have been catastrophic. From 1961 to 1971, Lourenço Marques municipal police issued more than two thousand citations for so-called clandestine structures.<sup>5</sup> More than 95 per cent of the actions were against houses located in the *subúrbios*. Yet, despite the risk, thousands of suburban residents went ahead and built concrete-block houses. Some did so discreetly, hiding concrete walls behind zinc panels. Others, such as Daniel Malé and Adelina Cossa, built more brazenly.

The final 15 years of Portuguese rule were years of new contradictions in the colonial capital. An influx of Portuguese settlers curbed the ambitions of higher-educated African workers, but the rapid growth of the local economy expanded job opportunities for many others, such as in the service sector and the building trades.<sup>6</sup> Many people, most

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<sup>5</sup> The *Obras clandestinas* registries are located in the *Departamento de Urbanização e Construção* of the *Conselho Municipal da Cidade de Maputo* (CMCM), and the case files recorded in the registries are archived at the municipal headquarters building itself. Registries pre-dating 1961 and from mid-1971 until independence could not be located. The registries begin again with cases from 1978, but are sporadic until the 1990s. I used a sample of approximately 120 case files for this study. Case files will be cited by the colonial-era institution that created them, the *Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques, Departamento de Serviços de Urbanização e Obras* (CMLM-DSUO), and by that department's coding system, [Case number]/ OC [*Obras clandestinas*]/ [Year].

<sup>6</sup> W.G. Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire, 1825-1975: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 217; Jeanne Marie

of them men, saw their buying power increase substantially. At the same time, suburban neighborhoods became far more dense with immigrants from the countryside, with dire consequences for public health. To make matters worse, the City of Cement now expanded into the *subúrbios*, resulting in mass displacement of African residents to make way for housing and infrastructure that mostly served the European population. Security of tenure in the *subúrbios* had never been more tenuous. Even with a looming threat of removal, however, there were a number of people intent on staying put, people who lacked any officially recognized right to their suburban plots, but who staked a claim to belonging for themselves and their children by investing in permanent construction, illicitly if the law insisted it was illicit.

Such concrete challenges to the spatial order simultaneously constituted a challenge to the city's racial order: an act of "insurgent citizenship" to give substance to the empty legal citizenship then on offer.<sup>7</sup>

### **"Huts in the air"**

In the 1960s, the city's population more than doubled, to more than 380,000.<sup>8</sup> The colonial capital absorbed thousands of Portuguese military personnel, technical experts,

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Penvenne, "Seeking the Factory for Women: Mozambican Urbanization in the Late Colonial Era," *Journal of Urban History* 23, no. 3 (March 1997): 354–356.

<sup>7</sup> James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Maria Clara Mendes, *Maputo antes da independência: Geografia de uma cidade colonial*, vol. 68, Memórias do Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical (Lisbon: IICT, 1985), 99.

and social workers.<sup>9</sup> With them came thousands of Portuguese fleeing the squalor and stifling parochialism of home. To house them, more new units of masonry construction were added to the City of Cement between 1959 and 1967 than in the entire history of the city to that point.<sup>10</sup> Avenues of apartment towers, often built on speculation and cheap construction loans ultimately underwritten by the government, constituted a kind of political stagecraft.<sup>11</sup> For the regime and also for many European settlers, the sudden skyline of Lourenço Marques was a symbol, perhaps *the* symbol, of the Portuguese commitment to staying in Mozambique.<sup>12</sup> The number of Portuguese continuing to live among Africans was an embarrassment to those invested in the conceit of white prestige, and a newly established housing authority subsidized homes for poor whites in Matola, a new satellite city about six miles from downtown.<sup>13</sup> Even still, in City of Cement neighborhoods that were expanding into the *subúrbios*, reed houses came up nearly flush

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<sup>9</sup> Jeanne Marie Penvenne, “Settling Against the Tide: The Layered Contradictions of Twentieth-Century Portuguese Settlement in Mozambique,” in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 79–94; Cláudia Castelo, *Passagens para África: O povoamento de Angola e Moçambique com naturais da Metrópole (1920-1974)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> The figures are for properly registered constructions: 7,877 household units from 1959 through 1967 versus 7,610 units from the nineteenth century through 1958. Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques, Direcção dos Serviços de Urbanização e Obras, “Número total de edificios particulares de alvenaria existentes na cidade de Lourenço Marques e subúrbios, até 31 de Dezembro de 1969,” folder entitled “Diários de Serviço 1968-1971,” AHM/GDLM/cx. 361.

<sup>11</sup> “Propriedade horizontal,” *Tempo*, December 3, 1972; “A acção do Montepio de Moçambique,” *Tempo*, June 17, 1973; “O escândalo da especulação imobiliária,” *Tempo*, August 6, 1972.

<sup>12</sup> For a deep discussion of the place of the Lourenço Marques skyline in the colonial imaginary see Jeanne Marie Penvenne, “Fotografando Lourenço Marques: A cidade e os seus habitantes de 1960 á 1975,” in *Os outros da colonização: Ensaios sobre o colonialismo tardio em Moçambique*, ed. Cláudia Castelo et al. (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2012), 173–92.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

against the concrete. Residents of the City of Cement, and even more so those of the neighborhoods that surrounded it, keenly felt the contrast.<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 3.2.)



**Fig. 3.2.** The City of Cement, 1971. (Source: F. Sousa/AHM)

In the 1960s, the local economy surged with the lifting of restraints on local industry, the growth of the South African economy, the flourishing of Lourenço Marques as a major South African tourist destination, and a massive build-up of the Portuguese military presence, already underway before the eventual outbreak of the guerrilla war for independence, in 1964.<sup>15</sup> Early in the decade, hoping to relieve pressures to decolonize,

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<sup>14</sup> Isabella Oliveira, *M. & U., Companhia Ilimitada* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1999); L. Lloys Frates, “Memory of Place, the Place of Memory: Women’s Narrations of Late Colonial Lourenço Marques, Mozambique” (PhD diss., UCLA, 2002); Lília Momplé, “Caniço,” in *Ninguém matou Suhura*, 4th ed. (Maputo: CIEDIMA, 2008), 23–38; Jeanne Marie Penvenne, “Two Tales of a City: Lourenço Marques, 1945-1975,” *Portuguese Studies Review* 19, no. 1–2 (2011): 249–69; Penvenne, “Fotografando Lourenço Marques.”

<sup>15</sup> As Penvenne notes, opportunities for women expanded, but far less than they did for men. Penvenne, “Seeking the Factory for Women,” 356–357. See also Penvenne, “Mozambique: A Tapestry of Conflict,” in *History of Central Africa: The Contemporary Years since 1960*, ed. David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin (London: Longman, 1998), 243–246; Penvenne, “Two Tales of a City,” 256–257; W.G. Clarence-Smith, *The Third*



the Salazar regime abolished the system that had for decades subjected much of the population to periodic terms of forced labor, and it set out to boost Africans' access to health care, schooling, and formal employment. Much of the reform was cosmetic, but for many in Lourenço Marques there were real rewards.

The service sector expanded to meet growing Portuguese consumer demand, and in addition to the traditional jobs at railyards, the port, and the kitchens of Portuguese families, there were now more positions at hotels and restaurants and cafés and social clubs, printing presses and auto shops, and the counters and stockrooms of clothing stores and hardware stores and furniture stores. More people, particularly men, entered the job market with skills that were better compensated, such as bookkeeping and typing. At the same time, perhaps thousands of African men were employed as stonemasons on hundreds of construction sites in the City of Cement as the building of a more impressive Lourenço Marques skyline became one of the city's principal enterprises. Many Africans in Lourenço Marques came to possess more potent buying power, enough to sample the city's blossoming consumer culture. Downtown retailers, hoping to tap the African market, engaged African commercial agents to circulate through the *subúrbios* and sign people on to installment plans for radios, clothes, beds, and sofas.<sup>16</sup>

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*Portuguese Empire, 1825-1975: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 192–223; Malyn Newitt, “The Late Colonial State in Portuguese Africa,” *Itinerario* 23, no. 3/4 (1999): 110–22; Amorim Remigio Manuel Pery, “A evolução da economia moçambicana e a promoção do bem-estar socioeconómico (1960-2001)” (Licenciatura thesis, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2004); Victor Pereira, “A economia do império e os planos de fomento,” in *O império colonial em questão (séculos XIX-XX): Poderes, saberes e instituições*, ed. Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo (Lisbon: Edições 70, 2012), 251–85.

<sup>16</sup> Conversation with Alfredo Cossa, a former retail agent, June 23, 2012. See also the Luís Bernardo Honwana short story, “Inventário de imóveis e jacentes” [“Inventory of

Meanwhile, even as more wealth filtered into the *subúrbios*, they grew more dense with reed houses. More people flocked there following wide-scale land dispossession in the countryside and to seek employment in the growing city. In the rainy season the welter bred disease, and in the dry season the concentration of reeds kindled frequent fires, which consumed a dozen or more homes at a time.<sup>17</sup> The growth of Lourenço Marques also rendered security of tenure in the *subúrbios*, such as it was, even more uncertain than it had been. Residents of the *subúrbios* were not squatters. The land they occupied was mostly in private hands, and most people paid an annual rent to a landowner for a parcel on which to build a house. Others rented houses on a monthly basis, or rented rooms in warren-like compounds. It was not unusual for a landlord to suddenly double or triple the rent, forcing a tenant to move elsewhere.<sup>18</sup>

When the boundary separating city proper from *subúrbios* was first plotted, in the late nineteenth century, the line was intended to limit the municipality's promise of infrastructure. Now, with the rapid growth in the City of Cement of the Portuguese population, the municipality considered the *subúrbios* as zones awaiting imminent development and "urbanization" and regarded the people who resided there, sometimes for generations, as obstacles to progress. Suburban landlords sold out to private

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Furniture and Effects"], in *Nós matámos o cão-tinhoso* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2000), 47–53.

<sup>17</sup> António Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de Lourenço Marques," *Memórias do Instituto Científica de Moçambique*, C, 9 (1967): 196–197.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 184; José Gabriel Taveira Pereira, "Relatório da inspeção ordinária ao Junta Local da Munhuana do Segundo Bairro do Concelho de Lourenço Marques" (Lourenço Marques: Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos, 1972), 130, AHM/ISANI/cx. 3; Areosa Pena and Marcos Cuembelo, "Bairro do caniço: 90 mil casebres para demolir," *Tempo*, February 27, 1972. See also the 1959 case of Chipanela Jentimanhana Macuacua, discussed in the previous chapter.

developers, expelling scores of home-dwellers at a time, sometimes without prior notice.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the reed house was costly. Unlike in the countryside, Lourenço Marques had been stripped of most natural building materials long before. Nearly everything that went into a home's construction was purchased at markets, including the zinc panels used for roofs, the tree branches used for supports, the thin wood slats that kept reeds in place, the nails and wire that secured the various components, and the bundles of reeds themselves, which came in by rail from rural areas.<sup>20</sup> The wood-and-zinc house was better against the wind, but it was like an oven in the sun, and its wood elements were still susceptible to rot and to fire. It was far more costly than the reed house – so costly that construction in wood-and-zinc virtually ceased altogether following independence, once people in the *subúrbios* were able to build more freely in concrete.

*Canico* embodied the bareness of protection, the meagerness of material well-being, the flimsiness of one's ostensible rights as a citizen, and the fleeting, impermanent nature of one's tenure on one's plot and one's stake to living in Lourenço Marques. Reeds, though, were well suited to the *subúrbios* in at least one respect. They were portable, as were the components of wood-and-zinc houses. A 1959 chronicle in *O Brado Africano* entitled "Huts in the Air!" described the pitiful sight of the reeds and stakes of

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<sup>19</sup> Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de L.M.," 192–195.

<sup>20</sup> Björn Brandberg, "Constructions," in *The Malhangalene Survey: A Housing Study of an Unplanned Settlement in Maputo, Mozambique, 1976*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Göteborg: Chalmers Tekniska Högskola, Arkitektur, 1977). See also Ch. 1.

dismantled huts carried on the shoulders of men and the heads of women.<sup>21</sup> Their landlord has sold the lot they rented to make way for new development, and now they must go in search of another plot, arriving at the property of “Mr. Whoever” to beg him “to be so kind as to arrange a few meters of space to reconstruct their miserable huts.” Mr. Whoever consents, but a few months later he sells the land out from under them. The tenants must once again strike their huts, as if they were the tents of nomads, and begin their wanderings anew.

### **The Concrete Imperative**

Living in the City of Cement never registered in the aspirations of most suburban dwellers. But cement did. A number of African civil servants managed with government help to secure a plot and build a house in Matola.<sup>22</sup> (Figs. 3.3, 3.4.) A home in the City of Cement was for black Mozambicans unimaginable, but Matola, though further away, was closer to possible, a place where from the 1960s onward the sons and daughters of the suburban elite, if they were able to surmount the considerable bureaucratic obstacles involved, lived in decent concrete-block houses with ample yards to raise some animals and grow vegetables. The jaunty, high-peaked roofs of many Matola houses became a hallmark of modern living, and in the half century since have never gone out of style. They are the model for tens of thousands of concrete-block homes built in Maputo’s

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<sup>21</sup> Henrique António, “Crónica da semana: palhotas no ar!,” *O Brado Africano*, October 3, 1959, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Rita-Ferreira, “Os africanos de Lourenço Marques,” 211–222; interview with Gertrudes Vitoriano, July 27, 2009; interviews with Ana Magaia, Feb. 9 & 18, 2011.

*subúrbios* since independence (but especially since the 1990s).<sup>23</sup> Chamanculo-raised Ana Magaia, the noted actress, recalled that as a child in the 1960s she loved visiting cousins who lived in Matola. “They weren’t houses for rich people, they were normal houses for people to live in and raise their children with dignity.”<sup>24</sup> Magaia went to the toilet several times a day during her visits to Matola, just for the pleasure of being in a well-appointed interior bathroom.



**Fig. 3.3.** In the 1960s and early 1970s, the colonial administration helped civil servants build houses in the satellite city of Matola, and the Matola-style roof remains to this day a symbol of modern living. This undated image, from Mozambique’s colonial-era public affairs office, notes that the builder is African. (Source: AHM)

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<sup>23</sup> See Luís Lage, “The Building of Informal Dwellings: Case Study of Maputo,” in *Traditional Informal Settlements in Mozambique: From Lichinga to Maputo*, trans. Carola Cuoco (Maputo: FAPF, 2004), 75–91. Lage emphasizes the practicality of “fan”-patterned roof inclines (from above the roof looks like a fan). Such a plan accommodates room-by-room incremental construction.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Ana Magaia, Feb. 18, 2011.



**Fig. 3.4.** In another image from the colonial-era public affairs office, Mozambique’s governor-general (and former Overseas Minister) Sarmento Rodrigues presents official title to a new Matola property owner, mid-1960s. (Source: AHM)

A 1963 advertisement in *A Tribuna* depicted a relatively modest house not in Matola, but in the new seaside neighborhood of Triunfo, and beckoned, “AFRICANS! A house for you!!! ... GIVE YOUR CHILDREN A TRUE HOME!”<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 3.5.) The monthly payment plan for both land and house would have been in the range of what the wealthiest suburban residents could afford, though the promised urban infrastructure was lacking. Triunfo’s developer disappeared amid a cloud of scandal in the early 1970s, without having provided new homeowners with water, sewers, or paved streets.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “Africanos! [advertisement]” *A Tribuna*, August 4, 1963, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Albino Magaia, “Bairro do Triunfo: O gato não quer mostrar o rabo,” *Tempo*, August 5, 1973.

**AFRICANOS ! Uma casa para você !!!**



**SE QUER PESSOALMENTE TER A SUA CASA !  
SE NÃO QUER PAGAR MAIS RENDAS ;**  
Então, venha, sem demora, aos nossos Escritórios  
e nós o ajudamos a realizar a sua aspiração !...

VIVA NUMA CASA DECENTE E BONITA !  
— DÊ A SEUS FILHOS UM VERDADEIRO LAR !

**A CASA QUE ACIMA SE MOSTRA — OU OUTRA DO MESMO GÊNERO —  
PODE SER SUA SÔMENTE POR 48.000\$00, INCLUINDO O TERRENO**  
ENTRADAS DESDE 5.000\$00 — PRESTAÇÕES MENSAS DESDE 500\$00

**AGÊNCIA TRIUNFO, LDA. — Prédio Montepio, 1.º andar - sala 2 — C. P. 163 — Telef. 2418**

**Fig. 3.5.** A 1963 advertisement makes an appeal to African homebuyers. “Live in a decent and beautiful house!” (Source: *A Tribuna*, August 4, 1963, 21)

Most suburban residents saw Matola and Triunfo from a distance, but they were able to buy into the concrete dream at ground level. With so much cement being poured into the City of Cement, production capacity for the material spiked, the price of cement dropped, and sacks of cement filtered into *subúrbios*. Many people could afford to buy at least a sack or two, which they used to lay a thin floor for their house. The most basic cement surfacing could not bear the weight of a seated chair.<sup>27</sup>

As insulation, cement was a much less troublesome alternative to riverside mud, or to clay, which was too distant to fetch. One plastered the interior reed walls first, and

<sup>27</sup> Cement mix (lime and clay) is combined with sand, gravel, and water, and the mixture sets as concrete. The distinction between cement and concrete, however, tends to be blurred in everyday speech (in both English and Portuguese). When concrete is reinforced with steel rods, such as for the roofs of today’s better appointed suburban houses and for almost the entire City of Cement, it is called *betão armado*.

then the outside if one could afford to. The plaster lasted longer than cruder materials, and municipal authorities judged it acceptable.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps better still, it gave one's house what was considered a more modern, dignified look. A well-applied cement finish could pass as masonry, and even officials were fooled. Police circulating through neighborhoods were known to puncture plastered walls with an iron rod on occasion, testing to see whether the homeowner had dared build in concrete block.



**Fig. 3.6.** A plastered wall, Maxaquene, mid-1970s. With time, plastered surfaces cracked, revealing the reeds within. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)

With time, though, a chunk of the thin cement shell would break off, and then another, revealing the reeds within, like the straw jutting from a scarecrow's shirt, and

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with stonemason José Cossa, June 14, 2011. See also the ad for lime mix in *O Brado Africano*, July 15, 1959, 4. "Natives!!! Make your huts in lime... To make them prettier, last longer, not cost so much, not expose them to rain and protect your health!" Only a very small fraction of people reading the paper would have been building circular thatched huts, such as the one pictured. The ad was likely a signal to readers in the *subúrbios* to buy cement mix (which includes lime) to plaster their rectangular, reed-walled, zinc-roofed houses. Censors at the time were liable to remove images clearly identifying housing in the *subúrbios*.



one was forced to acknowledge that a plastered reed wall was ultimately a poor imitation of the real thing. (Fig. 3.6.) Jaime Tembe, an employee at an auto parts store, in the early 1950s had a reed house built in Chamanculo for his family, and just a few years later he had the interior walls plastered with cement.<sup>29</sup> About a decade later, in August 1964, he read a newspaper article about the death of a young boy in an accident at home. The story shocked him. The boy lived in a house of reeds plastered in cement, just like Tembe's house, and following a heavy rain a piece of the cement broke away from the wall where it met the ceiling and crushed the boy's head as he slept. Tembe, a father of four, decided that morning that he would build a house of more solid materials, despite the great cost.

Tembe proceeded in typical fashion. He built a wood-framed, zinc-paneled structure, and for the interior divisions he erected walls of concrete block. Unlike Daniel Malé's house, where the transgression was on display for anyone to see, an illicit interior was often masked by a legal exterior. (Figs. 3.7, 3.8.) With many of Tembe's neighbors in Chamanculo working as laborers on downtown construction sites, there was no shortage of builders available to do the job. Tembe consulted one such builder, his cousin, and the two discussed how many rooms were needed, what the dimensions would be, and what materials Tembe would need to purchase.

No plans were drawn up, but this is not to say the project lacked planning. Tembe calculated that he needed to buy 76 zinc panels and fabricate 315 concrete blocks. The specific quantities are less significant to the historian than the fact that almost a half century later Tembe could recall them, as well as the cost of each material, including the

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<sup>29</sup> The account below is based on interviews with Jaime Tembe on Apr. 30, May 9 & 11, 2011; May 17, 2013.

prices for each of the half-dozen different lengths of zinc panels. Tembe's memory is impressively precise, but more to the point is that most people interviewed recently about houses they built in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s could still recall what they paid for building materials decades before. Construction in the *subúrbios* has never been a rash act.



**Fig. 3.7.** Exterior of Jaime Tembe's house, Chamanculo, 2011.  
(Photo: the author)

Once he knew what to buy, Tembe sketched out a savings schedule. For the next two years he “tightened the belt a little” in order to procure the necessary cement sacks, gravel, sand, and zinc panels, and before he built a house he had to build a shed to store his slowly growing supply of materials. At a time when few had bank accounts, building materials were one of the ways one invested in the future. The construction process was often a long one, subject to any number of interruptions due to cash flow problems, family emergency, or flooding, and moreover houses were expanded room by room over

lifetimes and over generations. There may have been a clear beginning to these projects, but there was no clear end.



**Fig. 3.8.** Jaime Tembe at home, 2011. The interior partitions are of concrete block, though a cardboard-like material is used in the veranda. (Photo: the author)

The register of cases for those who were caught in the act of illegal construction give an idea of the people who ventured to build in concrete. Approximately 80 percent of the names that appear are male, and in the sampled files most of the men were identified as married. This is not to say that women did not play an important role in the planning and construction of the family house. Rather, men were presumed by officials (and often by the men themselves) to be the head of household, and made chiefly responsible for the illegal construction, even when in some cases wives and other members of the household financed much of the project, such as through the sale of produce and traditional brews. In recent interviews, men were frequently put forward as the sole spokespeople regarding construction of the house. Single women, however, were named in the files as transgressors almost as often as single men, giving perhaps a greater indication of the energies that women in general devoted to home construction. Despite a great deal less access to waged work, and often burdened with the responsibility of

sheltering children – an onus that single men usually did not share – single women often belonged to female-only lending clubs that helped them stock up on building materials.<sup>30</sup> As Jeanne Penvenne observes, “Autonomy, a measure of control over one’s living space, a secure home, however simple, was a central component of women’s strategies to control their lives” – a means of avoiding living with men solely out of necessity.<sup>31</sup> Many people, if they could, built a small rental unit to earn extra income, and there is some indication that a majority of those that did were women – precisely *because* they could not rely on waged work.<sup>32</sup>

The owners of clandestine concrete homes were not generally the wealthiest Africans. They were railroad employees and factory workers and workers that historians of Mozambique tend to overlook: truck drivers, schoolteachers, and employees at cafés and at retail stores. Those few on what was for Africans the highest rung of the colonial-era wage hierarchy – government clerks, nurses, and bookkeepers – rarely turn up in the case files, perhaps because they had the means and connections to ward off police and building inspectors, or perhaps because those in this relatively small group were moving to more distant areas like Matola. Among those who invested in concrete construction, stonemasons are conspicuous for their near absence. They built for others but did not earn enough to build for themselves.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Penvenne, “Seeking the Factory for Women,” 368–369.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>32</sup> Raúl Bernardo Manuel Honwana, *The Life History of Raúl Honwana: An Inside View of Mozambique from Colonialism to Independence, 1905-1975*, ed. Allen F. Isaacman, trans. Tamara L. Bender (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), 163–164.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with stonemason José Cossa; interviews with stonemason Alfredo Nhanale, June 5 & Nov. 6, 2011; interview with stonemason João Madeira, June 8, 2011 & Jan. 12, 2012.

More than any other reason, people mentioned their children when explaining their decision to take the risks of investing in concrete construction. Providing for one's children meant securing them against the dangers of the climate and fire, but also ensured them greater comfort, and a valuable legacy. Parents were also concerned about their own comfort; construction of a concrete house often took place simultaneously with the purchase of new furniture. One ought not reduce these house projects to pure calculation. Among the reasons Daniel Malé wanted to build in concrete, he said, was that he simply thought it was "beautiful."

A beautiful house, then as now, was for the most part one that was well-constructed, showed no cracks, and had many rooms. There was a great deal of uniformity among houses, both inside and out, and in fact conformity. Concrete houses tended to be painted white if the walls had been smoothed out, unlike the vibrant, multicolored neighborhoods in so many other cities in southern Africa and elsewhere. It was as if building a concrete-block house was more about taking established steps to success, dutifully assembling a kit of pre-selected parts, than an opportunity for creative distinction and standing out amongst one's neighbors. In recent years, many people have built handsome roofs in the fashion of the high-peaked Matola roofs. But a steel-reinforced concrete slab is necessary to do this, and in the 1960s this was not only prohibitively expensive for nearly all homebuilders in the *subúrbios* (it is very expensive even now) but would have attracted too much attention besides. Modesty was valued, but it was also enforced, more by jealous neighbors than by police.

The number of people who built clandestinely in concrete block is difficult to estimate. An aerial survey conducted in late 1966 counted 1,753 concrete-block

residences in the densest part of the *subúrbios*, where most of the suburban population lived.<sup>34</sup> This figure represented only about five per cent out of the total of 33,351 residences in the surveyed area, and likely included several hundred government-built housing units, still leaving as a remainder more than one thousand concrete-block houses, nearly all of them surely unauthorized. The number and proportion of houses in concrete likely increased substantially over the following decade.<sup>35</sup> And the survey figure did not capture, because airborne cameras could not, the number of houses, such as that of Jaime Tembe's household, whose concrete blocks were masked by zinc panels or even reeds.

### **The Faint Echoes of the Law**

The concrete in Jaime Tembe's house was hidden, but not because he actively sought to hide it. While there were those who deliberately concealed concrete with other materials, in Tembe's case he simply used exterior zinc paneling because his budget allowed only partial concrete walls. He did not discover that concrete was officially prohibited until after his project had already gotten off the ground, and he learned it when his neighbor, a railway worker, was caught and heavily fined for having done much the same thing. During a search in the *subúrbios* for weapons, police had entered the neighbor's house, and not finding guns or blades, they gave the neighbor trouble for his

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<sup>34</sup> Rita-Ferreira, "Os africanos de L.M.," 187.

<sup>35</sup> The *obras clandestinas* files after 1965 usually included a bird's-eye schematic of the area in question, derived from the 1966 aerial survey, that featured every house or outbuilding on the ground. The "clandestine" structure was indicated on the schematic with highlighter. But in most of the cases reviewed for this article, the highlighter indicated a place that on the schematic did not show a structure, probably because the concrete house was built only after the date of the aerial survey.

concrete interior walls. Tembe later said he did not know why his own house escaped attention.

Many people building houses in concrete, especially in the earlier 1960s, were unaware that what they were building was, from the municipality's perspective, "clandestine." Such was the usual experience of the law for residents of the *subúrbios*: one tended to discover the rules when police, the *régulo*, or his *cipaios* arbitrarily decided to brandish them. Even still, it was not the law, precisely, with which people contended, but rather the persons of the police, the *régulo*, or the *cipaios*. And to the extent that inchoate rules condensed into more salient form with the greater knowledge of their enforcement, it took some time for such rules to be factored into how residents of the *subúrbios* calculated risk.

Much of life was governed by rules that had no basis in official decree. Most people in the *subúrbios* understood, for example, that they must not be caught outside their homes after 9 p.m., especially in the streets of the City of Cement, though there was no curfew legally in place.<sup>36</sup> They knew that they must remove their caps when passing a police officer or other official on the sidewalk. They knew that, without shoes, they would not be permitted entry to many downtown establishments (an unofficial barrier that disproportionately affected African women).<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, as recounted in previous

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with João Pereira Neto, a former ranking official at Portugal's Overseas Ministry (*Ministério do Ultramar*), Lisbon, Nov. 26, 2010. There is a vivid popular memory of the unofficial curfew, and the scramble to get home after work to avoid getting caught up in it, and yet there are some older residents of Maputo who say with absolute certainty that by the 1960s they no longer faced such harassment. The discrepancies point to the complexity of historical memory and to the unevenness of the curfew. See Frates, "Memory of Place, the Place of Memory," 173–174.

<sup>37</sup> See especially Frates, "Memory of Place, the Place of Memory," 205–206.

chapters, broad areas of the written law were widely flouted, subverted in many cases by the people who were charged with enforcing them. Not only in the *subúrbios* but in all of Lourenço Marques the law was often heard as a distant echo, heeded (if heeded) for reasons that had little to do with the mere fact that it was the law. *Tempo*, a weekly magazine that began publication in 1970, dedicated much of its early reportage to exposing the city's "clandestine" economy. To take a year at random, just in 1973 there were articles on pirate taxi cabs, unlicensed cafés, illegal gambling houses, falsified lottery tickets, and contraband sales of wine, matches, produce, fine clothing, automobiles, and foreign currency.<sup>38</sup> Civil construction in the City of Cement relied on the expertise of falsely credentialed engineers and thrived on padded bills.<sup>39</sup> *Tempo* columnist Rui Cartaxana argued in 1973 that the tendency of Portuguese law toward vagueness and the baroque enabled officials at various levels to make arbitrary decisions according to "personal criteria."<sup>40</sup> The natural outcome was corruption: the "Law of Hat in Hand." As it appeared on paper, the law was a pretense, an ideal to which some in

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<sup>38</sup> "Candongia de fósforos," *Tempo*, July 29, 1973; "Mercado negro de moeda estrangeira em Moçambique," *Tempo*, August 19, 1973; Mário Lindolfo, "Escape livre no contrabando de automóveis," *Tempo*, September 16, 1973; Calane da Silva, "Vinho clandestino: Candongueiros em guerra aberta," *Tempo*, April 22, 1973; Albino Magaia, "Ilegalidade e a ineficiência prejudicam o turismo," *Tempo*, May 6, 1973; Calane da Silva, "Motoristas e taxeiros piratas em pé de guerra," *Tempo*, June 24, 1973; "Contrabando nas boutiques," *Tempo*, March 18, 1973; Ribeiro Pacheco, "O mundo fechado do pano verde," *Tempo*, October 14, 1973.

<sup>39</sup> Areosa Pena, "Construtores civis em luta pela legalidade," *Tempo*, February 25, 1973.

<sup>40</sup> Rui Cartaxana, "A 'lei' do chapéu na mão," *Tempo*, September 16, 1973, 80.



Lisbon aspired but that many people in the various levels of Mozambique's administrative hierarchy regarded with only passing interest.<sup>41</sup>

A prohibition against concrete in the *subúrbios* dated from the 1930s, possibly earlier.<sup>42</sup> It had no relevance to the vast majority of suburban homeowners until they had the means to build in concrete, which for most people came long after promulgation of the law. By the 1960s, when many more people did have the resources, memory of the ban likely had faded, not just in the *subúrbios*, but at the municipality, as well. When the new push against so-called clandestine construction began, in the early 1960s, African homebuilders in the *subúrbios* were not even the motivating concern.

From the 1930s onwards, the Salazar regime sought to discipline the growth of the many cities within Portugal's many borders, beginning with the cities of the metropole.<sup>43</sup> The idea was that planning and construction should proceed on a rational and orderly basis, as befitted a modern state. An office for urbanization in Lisbon produced new master plans for cities in the colonies and municipal administrations were charged with enacting more expansive building codes. The governor-general of Mozambique approved a new building code for Lourenço Marques in 1960.<sup>44</sup> The wording of the code specifically exempted houses in the *subúrbios*, so long as they remained of precarious character, as the law already said they must be. The clear intention of the legislation was not to bring the *subúrbios* up to standard, but rather to

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<sup>41</sup> For the aspirational, "work-in-progress" nature of colonial states, see John L. Comaroff, "Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts, and Fictions," *Social Identities* 4, no. 3 (October 1998): 321–61.

<sup>42</sup> See note 4.

<sup>43</sup> João Sousa Morais, *Maputo: Património da estrutura e forma urbana, topologia do lugar* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001), 156.

<sup>44</sup> Governo-Geral de Mozambique, *Diploma Legislativo no. 1976*, May 10, 1960.

maintain order and the quality of construction in the City of Cement, the part of the city that mattered to policymakers.

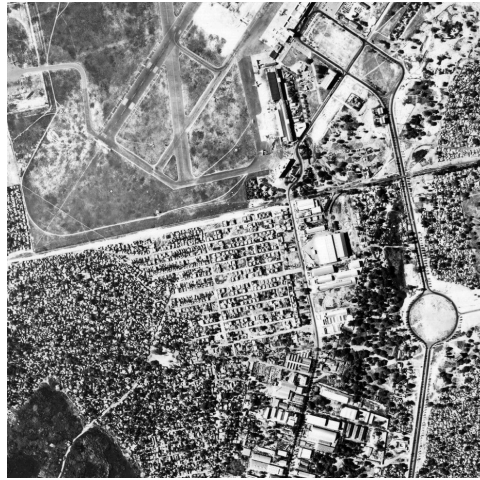
In the event, the enforcement apparatus indeed focused on the *subúrbios*, though still not on African homebuilders. In the late 1950s, a private real estate concern divided up a large parcel of suburban land adjoining the airport into small lots, expelled the people who had been living there in reed dwellings, and began selling the lots at discount rates.<sup>45</sup> Most of the buyers were Portuguese working in the bottom rungs of civil service, not a few of them police officers, but a number of African homebuilders also purchased properties. Among these pioneers was the artist Malangatana Valente Ngwenya, who then invited several of his friends to join him, including some of the brightest lights in the city's African arts scene, such as sculptor Alberto Chissano and playwright Lindo Nhlongo.<sup>46</sup> Malangatana and his friends clustered in one corner of the neighborhood, informally segregated from the much larger area where most whites lived, and closer to Lagoas, a neighborhood notorious for its rank conditions and numerous brothels. The real estate company failed to provide public amenities such as water and properly graded streets, nor did it secure such agreements with the municipality, but this did not dissuade almost 700 people from living in what was publicized as the Bairro do Aeroporto ("the airport neighborhood"). (Fig. 3.9.) In late 1962, just before the Christmas holiday, building inspectors staged an enforcement sweep that continued through the first month of the new year, issuing notices to more than one hundred households informing them

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<sup>45</sup> "Bairro do Aeroporto: A mais definitiva das situações precárias," *Tempo*, May 9, 1971; "Os habitantes do bairro clandestino do aeroporto defendem o seu direito a um tecto," *A Tribuna*, November 21, 1967.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Lindo Nhlongo, May 3, 2013.

that their homes were built in areas where permanent construction was forbidden. What immediately precipitated the action is not clear. The potential consequences were: all homeowners faced demolition.



**Fig. 3.9.** The Bairro do Aeroporto, or “Bairro Clandestino,” in 1969, visible at the center of the image as the neat grid of streets wedged between the airstrip and the *caníço* (at bottom left). (Source: 1969 Aerial Survey, MICOA)

What followed, in the chambers of the municipal building and in the press, was one of the rare political debates to receive a meaningful public airing in Lourenço Marques during this time. (Not incidentally, it occurred simultaneously with the public exposure of suburban conditions, discussed in the previous chapter.) The terms of the dispute pitted the values of economic fairness against the values of law and order.<sup>47</sup> Neighborhood residents argued that the City of Cement had become unaffordable and that citizens had little choice but to build their houses in the *subúrbios*, without permission if necessary, where cheap land was available; city bureaucrats were simply

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<sup>47</sup> For a sampling of the long-running debate, see the exchange between two letter-writers to *Tribuna*: J.M., “Edilidade, progresso, clandestinidades, terrenos, etc.” March 24, 1963; António Manuel Ralha, “O bairro do Aeroporto continua a dar que falar...” May 3, 1963.

obstructing progress and individual enterprise, they said. Defenders of the municipal building code decried the ruinous precedent of giving official sanction to unregulated construction and shoddy infrastructure. The municipality eventually compromised. It retracted its demolition threat, and agreed to supply the Bairro Clandestino (“the clandestine neighborhood”), as it was popularly known, with street illumination and public fountains to fetch water. Neighborhood streets, however, remained unpaved.

Far more was at stake in the dispute than the limitations of municipal governance or the maintenance of the rule of law. The Bairro Clandestino revealed the cracks in white social cohesion.<sup>48</sup> The deep class differences that divided Portuguese settlers in Mozambique were always a source of deep concern for officials.<sup>49</sup> News in early 1961 of the insurrection in Angola had contributed in Lourenço Marques to a hardening of a unified white “caste,” argues sociologist (and former Frelimo minister) José Luís Cabaço, who grew up in Alto Maé in a white working-class family.<sup>50</sup> Yet, the almost simultaneous roll-out of Lisbon’s reform campaign, he observes, designed for the material uplift of Africans and to win their loyalty to Portuguese rule, was seen by many poor whites as a violation of Lisbon’s longtime pact with the settler population: that white jobs and status would never be threatened by African competition. Being denied the right to build a

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<sup>48</sup> Antoinette Errante, “White Skin, Many Masks: Colonial Schooling, Race, and National Consciousness among White Settler Children in Mozambique, 1934-1974,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36, no. 1 (January 2003): 7–33; Castelo, *Passagens para África*, 264–288; José Luís Cabaço, *Moçambique: Identidades, colonialismo e libertação* (Maputo: Marimbiq, 2010), 211–212.

<sup>49</sup> There were regional divides, too, reflected in the many social clubs organized according to the part of Portugal from which one originated. There was also a longstanding social divide between Portuguese born in Portugal and those born in Mozambique, which in the 1960s tended to be a class divide as well.

<sup>50</sup> Cabaço, *Identidades*, 211–212.

house for oneself in the one place one could afford to – in the Bairro Clandestino – would have fed such resentments.

At the same time, white homebuilders living among black homebuilders in substandard conditions in the *subúrbios* undermined the carefully constructed edifice of white prestige on which the Portuguese “caste” depended. The Bairro Clandestino was not like the government-built housing for poor whites in Matola. Nor was it similar to the integrationist fantasies of white liberals who envisioned government-built Neighborhood Units in which Europeans (living in better houses) would live side-by-side with Africans (living in houses suitable to their degree of “evolution”) in order to help civilize them.<sup>51</sup> In the Bairro Clandestino, white families with heads of household in respectable employment (such as police officers) had seemingly descended to conditions no different than a growing number of African families – and in houses not built by the government but rather in conditions that occupied an unsettling middle ground between suburban precariousness and the ideal of modern urbanization.<sup>52</sup> Officials used the legalism of “clandestine” to characterize inconvenient realities as supposed deviations from the norm. To segments of the Portuguese population, to municipal officials, and, perhaps, to higher levels of the Portuguese administration, the Bairro Clandestino may have seemed frighteningly normal.

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<sup>51</sup> See Ch. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Penvenne, “Fotografando Lourenço Marques,” 182. See Ch. 2 for a discussion of the fear of “*cafrealização*.” South Africa’s own “poor whites problem,” and its link to segregationist policies, is germane here. Jeremy Seekings, “‘Not a Single White Person Should Be Allowed to Go under’: *Swartgevaar* and the Origins of South Africa’s Welfare State, 1924-1929,” *Journal of African History* 48, no. 3 (2007): 375–94.

Completing this picture of Portuguese households living in imperfect conditions was the image of Africans living in better conditions. For decades, the racial order had been supported by a spatial order in which African life in the *subúrbios* was made precarious by design – both legally and materially. Now, concrete construction by African homebuilders was proliferating just outside the curve of the City of Cement. The closing distance likely aroused the sort of ambivalence and anxiety described, in very general terms, by theorist Homi Bhabha in his observations on the colonizer who produces an “Other” who is “almost the same, but not quite.”<sup>53</sup> The episode of the Bairro Clandestino unfolded over several years, during which time enforcement actions against clandestine construction in other parts of the *subúrbios* more than doubled. In 1965, the annual number of violation notices jumped to 295, up significantly from 122 in 1962, peaked at 358 in 1969, and then dropped to 154 in 1970, the last full year for which colonial-era registries are available. A large majority of the violations were concentrated in Chamanculo, Xipamanine, and Mafalala, the most populous neighborhoods of the *subúrbios*. No documentation was found that speaks directly to the motivations behind the enforcement blitz in these neighborhoods, but one can easily imagine officials at various levels of the municipal apparatus, from the municipal council down to municipal police, acting with urgency to prevent future Clandestine Neighborhoods. Nor should we discount the possible involvement of the governor-general, or of Lisbon. Accepting as permanent any of the self-built concrete structures of the *subúrbios* would have sacrificed the cultivated image of the modernized city – orderly, salubrious, rational according to

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<sup>53</sup> Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 153.

prevailing ideas and ideologies of urban planning, and white.<sup>54</sup> In Lourenço Marques, fealty to the creed of modernist urban planning had consequences similar to those in so many other cities.<sup>55</sup> Forcing people to live in precarious housing to uphold an arbitrary and unrealistic standard of what a city should look like, while at the same time withholding the most basic of city services, amounted to the subjection of the vast majority of the city's African population to permanent inequality and indefinite squalor.<sup>56</sup>

With white lives lived in such proximity to black lives, aspirations overlapped. While the Bairro Clandestino became a matter of public debate, the tide that followed of enforcement actions against African homebuilders did not. Yet, *O Brado Africano*, long a voice of elite African opinion, seemed eager to connect the dots. The newspaper had under new ownership become something of a banal mouthpiece for the regime, but a more critical voice occasionally could be heard, such as in its 1964 commentary on the

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<sup>54</sup> Morais, *Maputo: Património da estrutura*, 161.

<sup>55</sup> Critiques of modernist planning include Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961); John F.C. Turner and Robert Fichter, *Freedom to Build: Dweller Control of the Housing Process* (New York: Macmillan, 1972); John F.C. Turner, *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments* (London: Marion Boyars, 1976); James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). For African contexts, see Garth A. Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003); William Cunningham Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> The last colonial-era urban plan for the city, approved in 1972 but not implemented, made the radical suggestion that “traditional” houses be allowed to be built in specified “sub-integrated” areas of the inner *subúrbios* – instead of demolished and replaced with high-density government housing. In 1974, during the transition, some architects criticized this idea as inherently racist, since it meant consigning the African population to permanent substandard housing, a debate echoed in the controversy over the 1977-1979 Maxaquene Project, discussed in Ch. 5. Mário de Azevedo, “O Plano Director de urbanização de Lourenço Marques (1969),” *Boletim Municipal da Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques*, no. 7 (December 31, 1969): 42–44; Morais, *Maputo: Património da estrutura*, 181, 187; “‘Apartheid’ na habitação,” *Tempo*, October 27, 1974.

predominately white Bairro Clandestino. It reads as a sideways critique of the municipality's treatment of illicitly built homes in other suburban neighborhoods, the neighborhoods that were home to *Brado Africano*'s editors and their readership:

We believe it isn't legal the way [the Bairro Clandestino] was constructed, how it "appeared," you would say, overnight ...

But now it does not seem to us opportune to punish those who, with God knows what sacrifices, built their homes, sometimes little by little, with their own hands.

We believe they have transgressed laws and municipal codes, regulations and edicts, practices and customs. But what we do not believe is that they did it deliberately, for the pleasure of transgressing what was and is determined by higher authorities.

The opportunity arose for them to have "their home," a home that they might call "truly theirs." And those buildings arose, by the dozens, by the hundreds, because many are those who had and continue to have that very human aspiration.<sup>57</sup>

For the editors of *Brado Africano*, defense of the aspirations embodied in the construction of the Bairro Clandestino amounted to an assertion of their own.

In previous decades, in protest of the laws of assimilation, in which black Mozambicans seeking Portuguese citizenship had to prove they were sufficiently "evolved," the newspaper's journalists had called attention to the purportedly low conditions, unhygienic habits, and substandard learning of poor whites in Mozambique.<sup>58</sup> In the 1960s, discussions of racial inequality were suppressed, but in the matter of the Bairro Clandestino, the editors of *Brado Africano* managed to resurrect, in a small way, some of the paper's subversive tradition. In recurring updates of the controversy, editors

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<sup>57</sup> "Pensamentos...O bairro clandestino," *O Brado Africano*, May 9, 1964, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Jeanne Marie Penvenne, "'We Are All Portuguese!': Challenging the Political Economy of Assimilation: Lourenço Marques, 1870-1933," in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (London: Currey, 1989), 255-88; José Moreira, *Os assimilados: João Albasini e as eleições, 1900-1922* (Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1997).



seemed to revel in describing the unsavory conditions of the neighborhood: the open sewers and the flowing trash and the flies that bred in the filth.

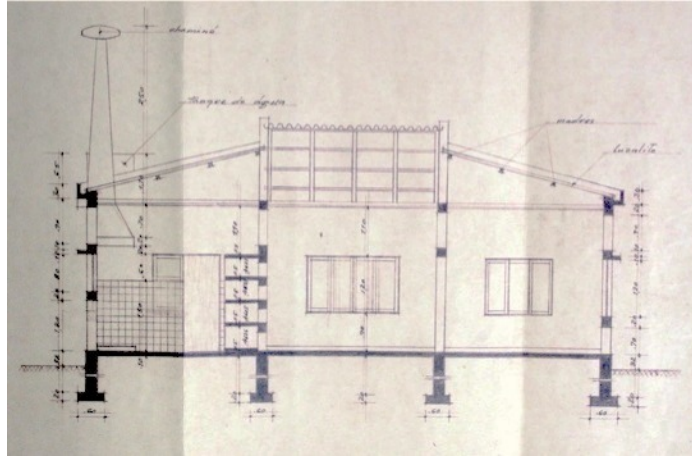
### **Hidden in Plain Sight**

The controversy over the Bairro Clandestino revealed just how pliable the concept of “clandestine” could be. The neighborhood near the airport was by no means hidden or built in secret, and any VIP visiting Lourenço Marques would have gotten a good look at it upon landing. Malangatana’s house there was designed by Pancho Guedes, Mozambique’s leading architect. (Both Malangatana and Guedes were earning significant international attention at the time.) When the artist was slapped with a notice of transgression in 1967, he protested that he had no reason to think that building there was illegal: the agency selling the plots had advertised in the newspapers.<sup>59</sup> (Fig. 3.10.) It was this very assertion of normalcy, despite supposed illegality, that José Craveirinha was addressing in his sarcastic poem, “Unclandestineness” (1980), which began this chapter. Craveirinha, who was jailed by PIDE in the 1960s, characterizes his rejection of Portuguese rule as the natural act of being himself rather than a conscious revolt; the lie foisted upon him that he was Portuguese was the truly “clandestine” behavior. “I hardly moved a finger clandestinely,” he writes. “But a militant in fact I am.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> CMLM-DSUO 341/OC/66, “Malangatana Valente Ngwenya.”

<sup>60</sup> That Craveirinha’s father was Portuguese adds further complexity to the poem.



**Fig. 3.10.** Elevation for the house of artist Malangatana, designed by architect Pancho Guedes, from Malangatana’s “clandestine construction” case file, 1967. (Source: CMLM-DSUO 341/OC/66)

Much of the *subúrbios* was in any case as much out of sight as it was out of mind, foreign territory to many police and other municipal officials – and certainly to Lisbon.<sup>61</sup> The cultivated blindness toward the *subúrbios* meant that most activity in the *subúrbios* was “clandestine” in the sense of being hidden from the eyes of officials. But, again, this had more to do with the officials than the activity. In the early 1960s, with war against guerrilla movements for independence already underway in Angola, and hostilities in Portuguese Guiné and in Mozambique imminent, officials came to fear what they could not see. The *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques, with their miserable conditions and labyrinthine streetscape, now represented more than a public health threat, as they had for decades: they also loomed as a potential incubator of insurgent activity. PIDE staged a raid of suspected Frelimo operatives in the *subúrbios* in 1964 arresting dozens and

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<sup>61</sup> And also virtually closed off to researchers. Penvenne, “Two Tales of a City,” 257–260. See discussion in the previous chapter.

crushing the independence movement's Lourenço Marques front.<sup>62</sup> In the years that followed, infrastructural improvements, such as the widening and paving of some of the handful of drivable roads through the *subúrbios* and the installation of lampposts, were widely understood by residents of the *subúrbios* as motivated not by the government's desire to improve conditions for the people who lived there, but as means of enhancing police surveillance. Residents learned to dread the black uniforms and black helmets of the newly formed roving units known as the *choque* ("shock") police.<sup>63</sup>

If enforcement of the concrete ban in the *subúrbios*, uneven though it was, stemmed from the need to preserve the image of the modern city and the pretense of the law, it was also a show of force and a means of intimidation. One recalls the unfortunate railroad worker, Jaime Tembe's neighbor, penalized for having interior concrete walls when police failed to catch him with weapons. Yet many homebuilders were not intimidated. So long as one had a high reed fence around one's yard, one felt reasonably safe against casual discovery of construction happening behind it.

Most of the many houses in Chamanculo hit with notices of violation were usually located on parcels where a once ragged roadway, recently widened and paved, went through. This was not because houses had been condemned to make way for road improvement; such obstructions to development would have been swiftly demolished, without further bureaucratic ado. Rather, police were likely reluctant to venture without good cause far from the road into a tangle of narrow tracks in search of houses that

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<sup>62</sup> Teresa Cruz e Silva, "A rede clandestina da FRELIMO em Lourenço Marques (1960-1974)" (PhD diss., Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1986); Matias Mboa, *Memórias da luta clandestina* (Maputo: Marimbique, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> Hilário Matusse, "Chamanculo: Memórias de um bairro," *Tempo*, November 6, 1983.

violated the building codes. The *subúrbios* were illegible, at least to municipal officials.<sup>64</sup> Addresses in the *subúrbios* were virtually non-existent, and when an alleged code violator was first given notice, the location of the house was identified in the file by the nearest *cantina*, bakery, lamppost, or factory. In one file, an official left a note saying that he could not follow-up with an alleged transgressor because he had lost his way trying to find the house.<sup>65</sup> Forty and fifty years afterward, the safety of invisibility is the most common explanation offered by those who built in concrete for why they took the risks they did. The real threat came not from building inspectors or police happening upon one's illegal house or construction site. The danger, rather, was being turned in by a jealous neighbor. Files show that it was common for five, six, or seven years to pass from the time one built one's house to the time one was caught.

Of course, not everyone in the *subúrbios* who considered building in concrete block in the 1960s and early 1970s thought of themselves as taking the same risk. When Daniel Malé was caught, in 1968, five years after inaugurating his house with a party, he had his *patrão* on hand to help bail him out. The two went together to the building inspection office, paid "something," and the matter was quickly resolved. Lúcia Joaquim da Silveira and her husband also built a concrete-block house in Chamanculo in the 1960s, one much larger than Malé's and Cossa's. She said in a recent interview that she had no reason to think police would bother her since the house, located in a blind alley and surrounded by a fence, did not attract too much attention to itself.<sup>66</sup> The couple's

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<sup>64</sup> The legibility-illegibility formulation of state power is from Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 9–83.

<sup>65</sup> CMLM-DSUO 10/OC/63, "Joaquim da Costa."

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Lúcia Joaquim da Silveira, Apr. 11, 2011.

standing may have been protection enough: her husband had been a professional footballer in Portugal, and drove a Mercedes. Domingos Ozias has worked for the municipality for more than 40 years, beginning in the late 1960s, including a year's stint in the building inspection office. He said that many people building clandestinely stayed out of trouble by bribing police to look the other way. "Municipal police are people, too, aren't they?"<sup>67</sup>

It was an unusual game of cat and mouse, played in slow motion. People collected materials and built a house little by little, often over years. Municipal police, patrolling the *subúrbios*, were by turns capricious, lazy, oblivious to much that was happening behind reed fences, and perhaps ambivalent about punishing people for building houses similar to ones they might themselves build – and similarly illicit, if the officer's house was in the Bairro Clandestino. In the late 1960s, Pancho Guedes supervised the construction of what he called a "Clandestine School" in Chamanculo for the children of women who worked in a nearby cashew factory.<sup>68</sup> The school was built in reeds, not concrete; what made it "clandestine" was that a school must be built in permanent materials.<sup>69</sup> Guedes recalled that the first time he and workers built the school, police told them they had to complete it in a weekend. Unable to do so, it was torn down. They failed on a second attempt as well. On the third try, though, the police brought over prisoners to help build it.

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with Domingos Ozias, Sept. 13, 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Miguel Santiago, *Pancho Guedes: Metamorfoses espaciais* (Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2007), 109–110; interview with Pancho Guedes, Sintra, Portugal, Oct. 30, 2010.

<sup>69</sup> Honwana, *The Life History of Raúl Honwana*, 96.

## **The Performance of Inferiority**

Many case files of those caught for building clandestinely do not tell neat narratives. A number of cases appear to have been resolved in ways that were not recorded, or perhaps never resolved at all – and one might read in the silences stories of pardon, bribery, and varying degrees of bureaucratic incompetence and disinterest. But the many cases that were pursued at any length took on an almost ritualistic quality, with the municipal bureaucracy subjecting the alleged transgressor to an arduous process devised seemingly for little other practical purpose than to enshrine his second-class status.

By 1965 the municipality of Lourenço Marques was absorbing the reality of its decision of a few years previous to pursue the ban on permanent construction in the *subúrbios*. There were now almost a thousand houses identified as clandestine constructions that would have to be demolished if the letter of the law were to be followed. Demolition under the circumstances was an undesirable outcome for almost everyone involved. There were already perhaps thousands of people being displaced by the outward expansion of the City of Cement, and colonial officials had reason to worry about the discontent being stirred up by the mass dislocations.<sup>70</sup> Given that the clandestine concrete-block houses in question were not standing in the way of any

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<sup>70</sup> Rita-Ferreira, “Os africanos de L.M.,” 192; Pereira, “Inspeção ordinária ao Munhuana,” 137; Lília Momplé, “Relatório síntese do sector social” (Lourenço Marques: Junta dos Bairros e Casas Populares, 1966), 6–7, MICOA. See also the tense log entries of Munhuana post administrators in mid-1963 as they considered how to break the news to hundreds of households that they would have to make way for new high-tension electricity wires and a new military base. “Diários de Serviço,” AHM/GDLM/cx. 358

imminent plans, only the theoretical potential for future development, demolition would have exacerbated the housing crisis for no other reason than to assert the principle that the *subúrbios* were strictly temporary lodgings. So the municipality refashioned the enforcement process to offer homeowners an opportunity to keep their concrete-block houses intact.<sup>71</sup> The decision affected the cases that were opened in the years just before, and nearly all the cases in the frame of this study.

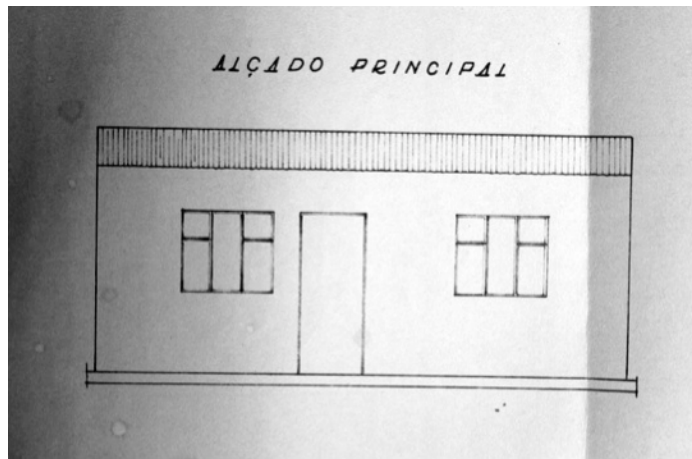
At the same time, more obstacles for the alleged transgressor were strewn about the process. A homeowner served with a notice of violation was given ten days to respond, and his house was then surveyed by officials for its quality of construction and its estimated cost. The homeowner could name a technical expert of his own choosing to be present at the evaluation; usually it was the stonemason who had built the house. A commission of three technical experts from the municipality – a health official and two engineers – would then meet to review the findings of the evaluation. The resulting reports were remarkably thorough, describing in detail the structure of a house and enumerating the steps the homeowner must do to forestall immediate demolition. In a typical case, a homeowner was ordered to make some improvements to the house, to secure permission in writing from the owner of the property to build in concrete, and to sign a declaration affirming that he would demolish the house whenever requested by the municipality, at his own cost and without indemnification.

The homeowner also had to submit plans and elevations for the house. The case files are replete with blueprints for many houses no more elaborate than a large tool shed. (Fig. 3.11.) Perhaps the most onerous burden for the homeowner was paying the fine and

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<sup>71</sup> Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques, *Edital* 3/65, February 2, 1965.

accumulated back taxes. Fines – calculated as a percentage of the estimated cost of house construction – could total many months’ salary or more, and transgressors entered into years-long installment plans to pay them off. Deficiencies in construction were to be corrected, but failure to correct them did not result in demolition. They simply prolonged the process, which often lasted years, sometimes a decade, before reaching closure – if the case were ever closed. In the very rare instance that a house *was* demolished it was usually because the alleged transgressor stated outright to officials that he would rather lose the house than pay the fine. Most homeowners could not afford to factor a potential fine into the costs of construction.



**Fig. 3.11.** Front elevation of the house of Daniel Malé and Adelina Cossa, from Malé’s “clandestine construction” case file, 1968 (Source: CMLM-DSUO 283/OC/68)

Once the suburban homeowner in violation completed all the necessary steps, the structure did not then receive a stamp of legitimacy. Instead he was awarded what was called “precarious title” to the house. This did little more than affirm the status quo: the house was permitted to stand until future development required demolition. The only benefit to the homeowner, other than avoiding the immediate destruction of his house,



was that he would no longer be considered in on-going violation of the building code, and was theoretically no longer subject to a future penalty.<sup>72</sup>

The benefits to the municipality of “precarious title” were several. It gave the appearance that suburban construction was under control and conforming to minimal standards, without at the same time obligating officials to acknowledge such clandestine structures as either legal or permanent. Nor did “precarious title” lower the standards set out in the building code. This was a temporary dispensation for what was supposed to be a temporary structure. Another benefit: the levying of penalties was no doubt lucrative for the municipality and, when payments were off the books, to the specific officials involved.

The typical evaluation produced by the commission was loaded with condescension:

The house in question, while very modest, is conventionally constructed, does not threaten collapse and has satisfactory hygienic and health conditions, for native habits, except in what was said as to mosquito screens in the doors and windows, the lack of ceilings in the rooms, insufficient illumination and ventilation, as well as lack of toilets, kitchen, water provision, and drainage...

In any case, if the municipality were to authorize a precarious title, attentive to the problem of habitation in the *subúrbios* of the city, particularly with respect to habitation for autochthones, and moreover because in reality we are dealing with a construction of clearly provisional character, the Commission is of the opinion that the owner must be enjoined to complete the following work...<sup>73</sup>

A house was almost always characterized as being both of sound construction and “of clearly provisional character” – built solidly enough not to collapse, but not so solidly built that it could not be taken down if need be. Such ambiguous judgments undermined

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<sup>72</sup> There were some instances, however, when homeowners complained that they *were* fined again for what seemed to be the same offense.

<sup>73</sup> CMLM-DSUO 36/OC/63, “José António Mascarenhas.”

the logic of the entire enforcement effort: if masonry houses were “of clearly provisional character,” as houses of reed and of wood-and-zinc were understood to be, why were they prohibited to begin with? Also noted in nearly all cases was that the house was “intended for the habitation of autochthones” or “for native use” or sufficient “for native habits,” with the clear implication that a lower standard ought to apply to Africans. In a city where housing played such a vital part in how race and modernity were understood – a city, furthermore, where the largely African City of Reeds was separated from the largely white City of Cement by a boundary that was increasingly flexible – the proliferation of concrete construction in the *subúrbios* could be to many Portuguese profoundly unsettling. People caught for building in concrete seemed to detect this unease, and to tailor their responses to officials accordingly.

As part of the process of responding to the code violation, the alleged transgressor submitted a statement on his own behalf.<sup>74</sup> Thrust from the backstage of the *subúrbios* into the theater of a bureaucratic proceeding, and pleading for leniency, the homeowner felt compelled to play the part of the lowly supplicant, and to play it with feeling. Most statements were brief. All pleaded ignorance of the law. Almost all pleaded poverty. Most petitioners portrayed themselves as the sole earner responsible for many family members. Most explained the decision to build in concrete block as a matter of life and death, given the fires that terrorized everyone living in the City of Reeds. The statement of Ricardo Niquisse, a 33-year-old office worker who built a three-room house in Maxaquene, was a common one:

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<sup>74</sup> To be precise, he verbally dictated a statement that was transcribed and notarized by an official at the municipality. The resulting texts were therefore often a mix of the first and third person.

The correspondent is poor, the spare salary he receives not being enough to pay rent. After some years of work he managed to put together some money and with the help of friends and people accustomed to protecting him constructed a little house in order to be able to shelter in it his wife and the six children he possesses. As fires in rustic houses, covered in straw and made of reeds, have recently been verified, the correspondent resolved to make it out of [concrete] block and covered in zinc to provide better protection.<sup>75</sup>

Another, António Almone, married with five children, and living in Chamanculo, explained that he had been living with his family in a reed house, but “one day there was a fire that burned my whole house down and I was left with nothing, only my children were saved, and on the same land where there was a fire there were houses made of [concrete] blocks and these houses escaped the fire.”<sup>76</sup> Alice Malendya, a 48-year-old domestic worker living in Chamanculo, testified that she “built a modest house with the little money that her deceased husband left her, seeking thus to secure a roof for her children” and that a harsh penalty would “destroy completely her ability to reserve for her little children the little that their father left them.”<sup>77</sup> (She described herself as “a native”; an official, following the new Lisbon-approved nomenclature, wrote “African.”)

Claims of poverty and fears of conflagration required no exaggeration or special showmanship. These were the everyday experiences of suburban life. But by playing to the sympathies of the municipal officials in this way the accused portrayed the building of his concrete house as if it were little more than a desperate act of survival. Perhaps the most poignant moment in each appeal to leniency – poignant because of the effort at self-effacement it must have required – was when the transgressor described his house. In

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<sup>75</sup> CMLM-DSUO 163/OC/63, “Ricardo Niquisse.” It is notable that Niquisse said he used zinc panels to “protect” the concrete, rather than to hide it.

<sup>76</sup> CMLM-DSUO 243/OC/66, “António Almone.”

<sup>77</sup> CMLM-DSUO 36/OC/65, “Alice Malendya.”

nearly every case the homeowner was moved before his unseen audience of officials to diminish what amounted to one of the principal achievements of his working life and perhaps that of many family members. The house, no matter its size, was referred to in the statements of the accused as “modest,” or as a *casita* or *casazinha* – a little house. António Samora Sebanhana, a 62-year-old toolmaker for the railroad, erected a six-room concrete-block house – larger than most other homes in Mafalala – but he stressed to officials that it was of the “*cafreal* type,” “little more than a *cafreal* construction,” “a dwelling for an autochthone of very feeble economic possibilities.”<sup>78</sup> The house that Sebanhana characterized as a crudely built hut was valued by the commission at 10,000 *escudos*, roughly the equivalent of what Sebanhana earned in a year.

Similarly, Alice Malendya’s “modest house,” built to “secure a roof” for her three children, had seven rooms. Ricardo Niquisse’s concrete *casita* protected his family from fire, but it was also built as a profit-making enterprise, with space to rent out to others. A 21-year-old café employee named Inácio Manjate stated “my only goal was the shelter of the people of my family in my charge” – eight people, including his wife, his parents, siblings, and cousins. The report in his case file notes that the structure was not built initially as a house, but as a *cantina*.<sup>79</sup> And when Daniel Malé received his notice of violation, he explained to officials that “owing to his advanced age” – he was 32 when he made the statement – “he was improving his *casita* for the end of his days and living in a house of reeds would offer various dangers. As I have three children, I remain overloaded by the care of my mother, who is a widow, so you can see the difficulties I have in

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<sup>78</sup> CMLM-DSUO 75/OC/64, “António Samora Sebanhana.”

<sup>79</sup> CMLM-DSUO 164/OC/63, “Inácio Manjate ‘Mazino.’”

supporting such burdens.”<sup>80</sup> Just five years before, as a seemingly much younger man, Malé had thrown a party to celebrate a house that was “a source of great happiness,” a “dream” realized through his own effort and the efforts of those close to him.

Occasionally, the transgressor was more self-assured. Bernardo Ernesto Mário, a 27-year-old bill collector, introduced himself by stating that he had received a high level of formal education.<sup>81</sup> He then went on to explain that,

desiring to flee the dangers of the so-called City of Reeds, dangers of fire, sickness, and parasites, [he] resolved, at the cost of many sacrifices, and striving highly, to construct a *casita* of wood and zinc, with block interior divisions, where he could live in a civilized manner, in harmony with the guidelines of the Government that wishes to elevate the level of the African population.<sup>82</sup>

Essau Ezequia Maninguane, also 27, a secretarial assistant at the Agriculture Ministry, adopted a notably officious tone. He stated that he built his concrete-block house, in Chamanculo, for fear of the

innumerable fires that have destroyed dozens of homes made of reeds, leaving their occupants in a lamentable situation of isolation, not only for losing their humble possessions, but also because some children have burned to death, and thus the petitioner was seen working to construct a house in block as a precautionary measure.<sup>83</sup>

He reminded officials that the government faced a housing crisis, and that furthermore “these days the level of development represents a very important factor” – meaning the higher development of Africans. Equating one’s decision to build in concrete to climbing the evolutionary ladder of civilization – ideals expressed in Portuguese propaganda – may

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<sup>80</sup> CMLM-DSUO 283/OC/68, “Daniel Malé.”

<sup>81</sup> “Fourth class,” a level which few black Mozambicans were given an opportunity to achieve.

<sup>82</sup> CMLM-DSUO 96/OC/64, “Bernardo Ernesto Mário.”

<sup>83</sup> CMLM-DSUO 272/OC/66, “Essau Ezequia Maninguane.”

have been spoken in pride and to impress officials, but it also may have been intended as a sarcastic jab at official hypocrisy.

Some said they were led to believe that concrete construction was permissible by the fact that so many others seemed to be doing it. One resident of Chamanculo “saw many constructions of the same type being erected with a great naturalness and greater calm, which seemed to the petitioner not to have whatever impediment.”<sup>84</sup> “In the area where I built there are already many identical structures,” attested another Chamanculo resident.<sup>85</sup> It was this very normalization of concrete in the *subúrbios* that gave officials reason to worry. As it was, there were just too many cases to process. More than once in the late 1960s a municipal official noted in a case file that he could not yet schedule an evaluation of the house in question “given that there are many hundreds of cases in identical conditions.”<sup>86</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Performance of Citizenship**

In the very last years of Portuguese rule, a different climate prevailed in the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques than a decade earlier. Fear of PIDE was as widespread as it had been, but in recent interviews people recalled that police and administrators had by then dispensed with pettier forms of harassment. The precipitous drop in enforcement actions against “clandestine” constructions between 1969 and 1970 may have been the result of a sobered municipality. Leonardo Samissone Bocucha, a black city council member, was in 1972 asked by a reporter for *Tempo* magazine what he thought the

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<sup>84</sup> CMLM-DSUO 250/OC/66, “Jossias Filimão Pondeca.”

<sup>85</sup> CMLM-DSUO 35/OC/65, “Luís Machanguane Natala.”

<sup>86</sup> CMLM-DSUO 93/OC/65, “Fernando Andreas Miglietti” [the entry was dated 1969]; CMLM-DSUO 23/OC/68, “Felisberto Elías Pondeca.”

solution should be to conditions in the *subúrbios*, where the council member lived. “I’m going to say again that all these problems will only have a solution when the reeds that constitute the habitations of the majority of the 360,000 residents of the *subúrbios* are substituted by cement or another material that guarantees an acceptable level of hygiene,” Bocucha said. “Whenever that happens, the issue you are referring to, that is sanitation, would be resolved as it has been in the large buildings of the City of Reinforced Concrete.”<sup>87</sup> His answer was essentially that the solution ought to be the same for blacks as it had been for whites – though he managed to say so without explicitly mentioning race, the consequences of which could be severe. Then again, he did not need to. A political language of citizenship now existed in which claims that invoked suburban conditions amounted to much the same thing. Several thousands of others were making claims without words at all. Blocks and mortar were sufficient.

In 1972, Alfredo Manjate, a schoolteacher, decided to put to the test his own convictions about equal treatment before the law.<sup>88</sup> Seeing that white and Asian merchants built their concrete-block *cantinas* in his Chamanculo neighborhood seemingly without permission or apparent repercussions, he hired a stonemason to build him and his family a concrete-block house. As the walls of the house got higher, and visible from the street, his neighbors said he was foolish to risk spending so much on something that he would eventually have to tear down. Police threatened him directly. A common police practice, however, was to let people build until the walls reached roof-level. The eventual fine would be higher that way, and the distress for the homeowner

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<sup>87</sup> “Balanço de 4 anos: Que fizeram (ou puderam fazer) os ‘homens-bons’ de Lourenço Marques,” *Tempo*, October 8, 1972, 11.

<sup>88</sup> Interviews with Alfredo Manjate, Feb. 8 & 11, Sept. 17, 2011.

more acute. Manjate ignored the warning. He gambled that independence would happen before the house was completed, and either by intent or by coincidence, his timing was almost perfect. The walls were finished a few months after the April 1974 “Carnation Revolution” in Lisbon, which toppled the Caetano regime, ended 48 years of Portuguese dictatorship, and precipitated Mozambique’s independence the following year. (Fig. 3.12.)



**Fig. 3.12.** The Manjate residence, Chamanculo, 2011. (Photo: the author)

And yet for all the nonchalance that many people today attributed to their “clandestine” building activities of a half century before, there were still plenty of others at the time who had been more cautious – people who in the last decade or so of Portuguese rule had considered building in concrete block, but had then decided against it. Perhaps thousands pent up their ambitions, so that one almost immediate consequence of Mozambique’s independence was a sudden burst of concrete-block construction in the *subúrbios*.<sup>89</sup> That many in the last phase of Portuguese rule clearly feared officers of the law when it came to house construction while many others did not is a reminder that the

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<sup>89</sup> Ingemar Saevfors, *Maxaquene: A Comprehensive Account of the First Urban Upgrading Experience in the New Mozambique*, Human Settlements and Socio-Cultural Environments (UNESCO, March 1986), 10.



historian must be attentive to individual situations, and people's specific fears, preferences, and personalities. Instead of trying to calculate the risks people took as if they all took the same risks, the historian must rather consider the risks people *thought* they were taking, and this varied from person to person.

Neither the transitional government nor the Frelimo regime that assumed full power in 1975 lifted the ban on concrete, but nor did the municipality demonstrate much interest in enforcing it; demolishing the illicit houses would have been bad politics.<sup>90</sup> The window of opportunity lasted only a few years, however, due to the shortages in the city of all building materials and the increased difficulty in transporting them. Not until the 1990s, following the end of the civil war, did concrete construction pick up again in earnest, so that today it is by far the predominant form of suburban construction. Those who are not building in concrete are thinking about building in concrete, and even many with minimal resources are storing up concrete blocks for the day they can start building.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>91</sup> Morten Nielsen, "In the Vicinity of the State: House Construction, Personhood, and the State in Maputo, Mozambique" (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2008); Jørgen Eskemose Andersen, Silje Erøy Sollien, and Khadidja Ouis, "Built Environment Study," in *Home Space Maputo*, 2012, [http://www.homespace.dk/tl\\_files/uploads/publications/Full%20reports/HomeSpace\\_Built\\_Environment\\_Study.pdf](http://www.homespace.dk/tl_files/uploads/publications/Full%20reports/HomeSpace_Built_Environment_Study.pdf); Paul Jenkins, *Urbanization, Urbanism, and Urbanity in an African City: Home Spaces and House Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

## Chapter 4

### The Nationalizations and their Consequences, 1976 to 1987

Sometime in 1975, some months before independence, Sebastião Chitombe went to visit his friend's new home.<sup>1</sup> Until recently, the friend had been a neighbor of Chitombe's, in a compound in Chamanculo, but now he was living in an apartment that a Portuguese co-worker of his had left in his care. When Chitombe visited the friend, it was the first time he had ever been inside an apartment in the City of Cement as a welcome visitor, rather than as a laborer. The experience was bewildering. Entering through the apartment's front door, rather than the servants' entrance, Chitombe went to the bathroom and washed his hands. "It was the first time I'd ever been in a bathroom like that for a reason other than to wash the floors," he said in a recent interview. In the living room he turned the light switch on and off. He took pride in knowing the light was "ours," even though the apartment was not his.

Chitombe and thousands of other residents of the *subúrbios* were soon offered an opportunity to acquire an apartment of their own in the City of Cement. On February 3, 1976, Chitombe was listening on the radio to Samora Machel, Mozambique's first president, as he spoke before thousands of supporters in a plaza at the edge of the city. With most of the city's European population now gone, tens of thousands of homes and

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Sebastião Chitombe, May 4, 9, & 16, Sept. 17, 2011.

apartment units in the City of Cement were available for occupation. “The city must have a Mozambican face,” declared the president. “The people will be able to live in their own city and not in the city’s backyard.”<sup>2</sup> He used a word for backyard, *quintal*, that to everyone listening meant servants’ quarters. Lourenço Marques, Machel announced, would now be called Maputo.

Only perhaps a handful of cities share circumstances roughly comparable to Maputo’s – cities such as Luanda, capital of Angola (which also became independent from Portugal in 1975), and the larger coastal cities of Algeria, from which the French withdrew in 1962.<sup>3</sup> Like Maputo, these were sizable African cities developed for the almost exclusive use of white settlers. And these cities were all abandoned so rapidly that there was no significant period of transition from one situation to another. In mid-1974, a year before Mozambique’s independence from Portugal, some 60,000 residents of the City of Cement – a large majority – were European.<sup>4</sup> By mid-1976, a year after independence, a large majority of residents of the City of Cement were African. Rarely has a city found itself in a position to so utterly reorient itself.

This chapter and the one that follow look at the decade after independence as a new moment of choice in Maputo, a time that seemed a unique window of opportunity to undo a century of housing discrimination and structural inequality. Yet, even in such

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<sup>2</sup> Samora Machel, “Independência implica benefícios para as massas exploradas [Speech given February 3, 1976],” in *A nossa luta é uma revolução* (Lisbon: CIDA-C, 1976), 69.

<sup>3</sup> Otto Greger, “Angola,” in *Housing Policies in the Socialist Third World*, ed. Kosta Mathéy (Munich: Profil, 1990), 129–45; Djaffar Lesbet, “Algeria,” in *Housing Policies in the Socialist Third World*, ed. Kosta Mathéy (Munich: Profil, 1990), 249–73.

<sup>4</sup> António Rita-Ferreira, “Moçambique post-25 de Abril: Causas do êxodo da população de origem europeia e asiática,” in *Moçambique: Cultura e história de um país*, Publicações do Centro de Estudos Africanos 8 (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1988), 122.

revolutionary times the City of Cement remained a zone of relative privilege. It became the home to party elites, war veterans and military families, and those with better salaried work, generally as government functionaries – Mozambique’s nascent African middle class. For the thousands of people from flooded zones and the countryside who were given shelter in the City of Cement, life there proved so expensive and excruciatingly difficult to sustain, even when rents were very low, that many retreated to the *subúrbios*. For most *subúrbio* residents, the City of Cement remained out of reach – many never even considered the possibility. Sebastião Chitombe, for instance, never did. This chapter demonstrates how during the early years of independence, the built environment conditioned people’s choices, and in fact dramatically constrained possibilities for change. It argues that a system of inequality can prove remarkably durable once it has been reinforced in concrete.

This chapter also scrutinizes the nascent Mozambican state – not as a history from above, nor as a history from below, but rather a history in which Frelimo leadership, on the one side, and the residents of Maputo, on the other, sought to make themselves visible to each other. If the colonial state was better understood as an “aspiration, a work-in-progress, an intention, a phantasm-to-be-made-real” than as “an ensemble of government institutions,” the same observation is even more applicable to Frelimo’s struggles after independence to assert a role for itself within Mozambique.<sup>5</sup> It was in rural areas where Frelimo staked its legitimacy – where it attempted to impose policies that often proved as unpopular as they were heavy-handed. In cities, by contrast, Frelimo action was, initially,

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<sup>5</sup> John L. Comaroff, “Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts, and Fictions,” *Social Identities* 4, no. 3 (October 1998): 341.

less characterized by a commanding posture and centralized planning and force than it was by trepidation and contingency and improvisation. What the state was and what it should do were open questions subject to a much greater degree than in rural areas to the expectations and imaginations of residents themselves. Despite its revolutionary creed, the new regime did not guarantee a right to shelter, a right so common to other socialist regimes, and it became a right – or at least the approximation of one – through ground-level actions. More significant to the lives of most urban residents than the nationalizations of the largely abandoned City of Cement were the spontaneous “nationalizations” they inspired in much of the suburban landscape, a fait accompli that Frelimo was compelled to accept – and which the leadership thereafter characterized as part of its original plan. For many residents of both the City of Cement and the *subúrbios*, an understanding of urban citizenship was inseparable from their relationship as tenants to the state as landlord, and as buildings fell into disrepair around them, they felt the state collapse as well.

### **Internal Enemies**

In the lead-up to independence, conditions in Mozambique’s urban areas did not initially register high on Frelimo’s list of priorities, if much at all. Most of the movement’s leadership had either grown up in the *subúrbios* of Lourenço Marques or had lived there at one time, and they were no strangers to the stark inequities of the capital. But Mozambique was overwhelmingly rural. More than 90 percent of the population lived in the countryside, and even many urban dwellers farmed land just outside cities, or

moved back-and-forth between cities and rural homesteads.<sup>6</sup> The Mozambique the Portuguese left behind entered the community of nations as one of the most underdeveloped, with astronomical rates of infant mortality, disease, and illiteracy in both city and countryside, but Mozambique's way forward would be through a modernizing revolution of agricultural production. City-bred though they might be, and hostile to what they saw as the obscurantism and backwardness of rural ways of thinking, Frelimo leaders had through a decade-long bush war come to identify themselves with what they saw as rural and thus authentically Mozambican values.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, it was through wartime governance of rural "liberated zones" that Frelimo formulated ideas of how it would transform Mozambique.<sup>8</sup>

Because of Frelimo's initial inattention to urban policy, interventions in cities during the first years after independence took on the quality of *ad hoc* crisis management, with officials improvising responses to emergencies rather than executing well-prepared plans. Not until 1979, with a national conference on cities and "communal neighborhoods," did the government set forth principles of urban management and planning. The first urban crisis preceded independence. It was a crisis of authority. On April 25, 1974, junior officers of the Portuguese army staged a bloodless coup in Lisbon, toppling a right-wing dictatorship that had ruled Portugal and its overseas possessions

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<sup>6</sup> Kathleen Sheldon, "Machambas in the City: Urban Women and Agricultural Work in Mozambique," *Lusotopie*, 1999, 121–40.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique Since Independence* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997), 84.

<sup>8</sup> Barry Pinsky, "Territorial Dilemmas: Changing Urban Life," in *A Difficult Road: The Transition to Socialism in Mozambique*, ed. John S. Saul (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 284; Merle L. Bowen, *The State Against the Peasantry: Rural Struggles in Colonial and Postcolonial Mozambique* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 45–61.

since the 1920s. The left-wing leaders of the coup were considerably more radical than the general they installed as head of the new provisional government, so that in Lisbon, in Luanda, in Bissau, and in Lourenço Marques it was unclear for months what impacts Portugal's "Carnation Revolution" would have in Africa.<sup>9</sup>

In Lourenço Marques, news of the coup stirred a mixture of extreme emotions among the Portuguese population. Agents of the local delegation of PIDE, the political police, were arrested, and political prisoners were released from Machava prison. Troops stationed at the central army barracks rammed military vehicles into walls to disable them.<sup>10</sup> Many Portuguese who were young at the time remembered the euphoric sense of possibility as teachers disappeared from classrooms, press and movie censorship vanished, and local newspapers ran stories introducing their readers to Frelimo.<sup>11</sup> Portuguese students filtered into the *subúrbios*, where most of them had never been, to teach literacy classes.

Many others, though, were struck with fear as to what might come next. Press censorship and distance from the battlefield had for a decade insulated Laurentinos from the realities of the war, and the regime's propaganda had portrayed Frelimo as bloodthirsty "terrorists." The sudden fall of the Lisbon government caught residents of the City of Cement by surprise. Even many sympathetic to majority rule and some of the

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<sup>9</sup> António de Almeida Santos, *Quinze meses no governo ao serviço da descolonização* (Porto: Edições ASA, 1975); Norrie MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa: Metropolitan Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire* (London: Longman, 1997), 124–157; Fernando Amado Couto, *Moçambique 1974: O fim do império e o nascimento da nação* (Maputo: Texto Editores, 2011), 314–318.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Afonso Mapelane, July 7, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Couto, *Moçambique 1974*, 321–324; Isabella Oliveira, *M. & U., Companhia Ilimitada* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1999); interviews with Dinis Marques, Leiria, Portugal, Oct. 10 & 17, 2010.

goals of the independence movement feared what their fate would be under a government that took its cues from the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. They also feared anti-white violence. Some, including elements of the military, contemplated a Rhodesia-style declaration of independence from Portugal so that Mozambique could remain in the hands of a white minority.

During these months of uncertainty the lines of authority in the *subúrbios* remained for the most part in place. But now Frelimo sympathizers felt free to organize, and they mobilized mass demonstrations and strikes throughout the city in an effort to gain leverage for Frelimo in its negotiations with Lisbon. The Lusaka peace accords were signed on September 7, setting a timetable for Mozambique's independence and establishing a transitional government to govern Mozambique in the meantime, comprised of both Portuguese and Frelimo officials. By the following June, Portugal was to withdraw all of its troops and cede control of Mozambique exclusively to Frelimo.

The news from Lusaka coincided with a revolt in Lourenço Marques. Right-wing elements seized the radio station and some former Portuguese army personnel styling themselves the "Dragoons of Death" sped through the *subúrbios* and opened fire indiscriminately, killing scores of people. As Portuguese troops attempted to gain control of the insurrectionists, thousands of people demonstrated in the City of Cement against the handover agreement – not all of them white Portuguese, and most of them unaffiliated with the pre-meditated revolt. Frelimo, realizing that a victory a decade in the making



could be lost in Lourenço Marques, hastened to get its own troops on the ground in the capital. They were flown there in Portuguese transports.<sup>12</sup>

Residents of Chamanculo recalled the panic that gripped the neighborhood as crowds rushed through suburban lanes to escape from the shots being fired at Xipamanine market. Barricades were erected in the streets to block entry to the roving killing squads, and they were manned by people armed with nothing but sticks and knives. Some residents exacted revenge on vulnerable targets close at hand and who had no role in the violence, assaulting *cantina* owners, and looting and setting fire to their stores. Glória Nhambirre, the African co-owner of Chamanculo's Xibinhana *cantina*, spirited her Portuguese husband away to the safety of one of their houses on the city's outskirts.<sup>13</sup> A furious crowd appeared at the doorstep of Chamanculo's *régulo*, Frederico de Almeida Cumba, a man who during almost three decades of rule had ordered countless beatings and extorted countless payoffs.<sup>14</sup> But Frederico was not at home; he, his wife, and his two elder daughters were away. Ana Laura, however, his youngest, was home, and she opened the door and waved her father's pistol in the air. A *cantineiro* who stood his ground with a gun in hand was likely to be killed. But the sight of the twelve-year-old girl compelled the crowd to move on and vent their anger elsewhere. When Frederico

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<sup>12</sup> Clothilde Mesquitela, *Sete de Setembro: Memórias da revolução* (Lisbon: A Rua, 1977); Carlos Camilo, "Moçambique. Os acontecimentos de 7 de Setembro e 21 de Outubro de 1974," in *Seminário "25 de Abril 10 anos depois"* (Lisbon: Associação 25 de Abril, 1985), 341–43; Rita-Ferreira, "Moçambique post-25 de Abril," 132–134; MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 147–152; Couto, *Moçambique 1974*, 418–443.

<sup>13</sup> Interviews with Sérgio José da Costa, Apr. 16 & 28, 2011. The Xibinhana *cantina* is described in Ch. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Frederico's rule is discussed at length in Ch. 2. The following account is based on an interview with his daughter, Ana Laura Cumba, Apr. 29, 2011.

eventually returned to Chamanculo, he was no longer *régulo*. A friend of his gave him a job pumping gas at a local service station.<sup>15</sup>

Within a week, and with Frelimo troops now stationed in the capital alongside Portuguese troops, tensions abated. The following month, on October 21, however, another round of violence broke out, sparked by members of a Portuguese commando unit. Scores may have been killed – this time most of them Portuguese civilians – and in the aftermath there were arrests of almost one thousand people regarded by Frelimo as suspicious for one reason or another.<sup>16</sup> The flight of most of Mozambique’s European population, and of tens of thousands of others, began in the days after Lusaka and the September 7 uprising, and was accelerated by the events of October.<sup>17</sup>

Independence was not experienced in Lourenço Marques as a clean, linear narrative from one regime to another, but rather as a running crisis punctuated by smaller

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<sup>15</sup> Hilário Matusse, “Chamanculo: Memórias de um bairro,” *Tempo*, November 6, 1983.

<sup>16</sup> Camilo, “Os acontecimentos”; Rita-Ferreira, “Moçambique post-25 de Abril,” 136–138; MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 151; Couto, *Moçambique 1974*, 451–452. The full dimensions of these episodes cannot be explored here, but it is worth noting that the events of October have received less attention in histories of Mozambique than the earlier episode, perhaps due to historians seeking to protect Frelimo’s history from the taint of racialized violence. Among many people interviewed in Chamanculo, there is no disputing that once it appeared that there were Portuguese who were again seeking to subvert the Lusaka agreement, and to kill Africans while doing so, Europeans were then themselves targeted indiscriminately, generally by ordinary citizens.

<sup>17</sup> One must be careful not to attribute a narrow set of motives to those who left Lourenço Marques and Mozambique for Portugal and for neighboring South Africa and Rhodesia. Those directly involved in plotting violence fled in fear of imminent arrest. There were many others, though, who were involved in demonstrations, or who simply waved a Portuguese flag on September 7 – many of whom were not even white Portuguese – who feared that they would be identified as subversives by Frelimo. And there were others, perhaps most others, who feared a coming race war or economic collapse or turmoil of a nature still to be determined. Rita-Ferreira, “Moçambique post-25 de Abril”; interviews with Marques.

ones. The perception of urban planning, or economic planning, or any state-led planning of any kind, as activities that take place in cloistered meeting rooms, and then implemented on the ground after a process of debate and careful review, is based on the assumption of a placid reality that never truly exists – still less so in a country stumbling into being. The Frelimo leadership was pulled into Lourenço Marques before it felt itself minimally prepared to. People in the *subúrbios* and in the City of Cement alike found themselves threatened with extreme violence at the exact moment the war was supposed to have been ended. Chamanculo's *régulo* was effectively deposed and officials began to disappear before it was clear who, if anyone, was going to take their place.

One important consequence of the uprising in September and the shootings in October was that they hardened the perception among Frelimo decision-makers that Lourenço Marques, already understood as the heart of colonial power, would remain enemy territory even after the enemy had officially withdrawn. Suspect were not only the Portuguese who intended to remain, but the literate and formally educated Mozambicans who would comprise the bureaucracy upon which the new state would rely – people who by virtue of having achieved a measure of career advancement in the colonial era often bore the stigma of having supposedly sold out their fellow Mozambicans. To the more dogmatic Frelimo *cadres*, anyone who had lived in Lourenço Marques had to one degree or another come under the poisonous influence of capitalistic, individualistic, and anti-Mozambican attitudes. There were, indeed, Mozambicans who wanted to see Frelimo fall, and some who even plotted to bring it about. But these relative few were far outnumbered by the “internal enemy” that populated the anxious imagination of Frelimo leaders and that became a mainstay of Frelimo propaganda during the first decade of

independence.<sup>18</sup> Those not following the party line or achieving Frelimo goals were not just lazy or undisciplined or incompetent or simply thieves, but were characterized as counter-revolutionary saboteurs.<sup>19</sup> This domestic enemy was usually depicted as a Westernized urbanite.<sup>20</sup>

For people in the *subúrbios*, the violence that erupted in the months after the Lusaka agreement demonstrated just how fragile the peace would be and how tenuous, when it came, independence. After September 7, the wood shipping crates of people leaving Mozambique began to appear in stacks along city streets and at the port, and yet many Mozambicans suspected that the Portuguese fleeing the city might not be leaving for good. Many Portuguese harbored the same thoughts, particularly those who had never even seen Portugal and had called only Mozambique home. Some assumed they would return to Mozambique when the chaos subsided, others hoped that some new order, one

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<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, the speech Machel gave to launch his series of *ofensivas* against “indiscipline” and “counter-revolutionary” activity. Samora Machel, “We Are Declaring War on the Enemy Within [Speech given March 18, 1980],” in *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary*, ed. Barry Munslow, trans. Michael Wolfers (London: Zed Books, 1985), 86–103.

<sup>19</sup> Benedito Luís Machava, “State Discourse on Internal Security and the Politics of Punishment in Post-Independence Mozambique (1975–1983),” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 593–609.

<sup>20</sup> The stock figure of the “internal enemy” was a cartoon character named Xiconhoca (“Chico the Worm”). Well-fed and with a thick cigar usually hanging from his lips, Chico cut the figure of the stereotypical self-involved city dweller, in thrall to Western clothing styles, vice, and luxury, and always willing to sell out his fellow Mozambicans for personal gain. Chico appeared in newspapers and on posters playing many roles: the office bureaucrat, the store owner hoarding goods for sale on the black market, and the spy, on the phone to his paymasters in South Africa and Rhodesia. The city was not Chico’s only stomping ground, but it was clearly his natural habitat. FRELIMO, *Xiconhoca, o inimigo* (Maputo: FRELIMO Departamento de Trabalho Ideológico, 1979); Lars Buur, “Xiconhoca: Mozambique’s Ubiquitous Post-Independence Traitor,” in *Traitors: Suspicion, Intimacy, and the Ethics of State-Building*, ed. Sharika Thiranagama and Tobias Kelly (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 24–47.

that did not include Frelimo, might somehow be imposed on Mozambique – perhaps through the intervention of apartheid South Africa or the Rhodesians. They did not consider their departure to be abandonment. Some left houses and apartments in the care of older children who, caught up in the excitement of events, opted to stay in Mozambique while the rest of their families left for South Africa and Portugal.<sup>21</sup> Some offered Mozambican friends or work colleagues the use of their furnished apartments in their absence. Schoolteacher Alfredo Manjate was offered an apartment by a colleague, but he later recalled the offer as an insult.<sup>22</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, in 1974 Manjate was building his own house, in Chamanculo, and “didn’t need to be someone else’s caretaker.” Another schoolteacher, a friend and neighbor of Manjate’s, was gifted an apartment by a departing Portuguese colleague – one who had no intention of returning. But he, too, declined the offer, in part out of fear that it would put him in an unfavorable light with the new regime.

In late 1974 and 1975, the City of Cement increasingly took on the aspect of a ghost town. In December 1974, a reporter for *Tempo* described the changing dynamics of the real estate market.<sup>23</sup> As apartments in the wealthiest neighborhoods opened up, some people living in (white) working-class districts moved in to take their place. Some streets in these outer areas, conspicuously those that gave direct access to the *subúrbios*, were left almost entirely vacant – making for an unplanned racialized “buffer zone” much

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<sup>21</sup> Journalist Carlos Cardoso was a notable example. Paul Fauvet and Marcelo Mosse, *Carlos Cardoso: Telling the Truth in Mozambique* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2003), 30.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Alfredo Manjate, Sept. 17, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Mendes de Oliveira, “Manter os ‘escritos’ ou baixar as rendas,” *Tempo*, December 15, 1974.

broader than the mere width of street that existed before. It seemed as if the process happened in waves; one tenant would leave, inspiring many of his neighbors to leave at the same time. In one area of about 100 houses in Malhangalene, the City of Cement neighborhood that bordered the suburban *bairro* of Maxaquene, only two houses were still inhabited. One Portuguese couple that remained noted that some of their former neighbors had stripped their houses of faucets and pipes before departing. In abandoned streets, sidewalk graffiti read “Street of Deserters” and “Street of Runaways.” Some of those who had opted to stay were apparently disgusted with those who did not. (Fig. 4.1.)



**Fig. 4.1.** The moving crates of emigrating Portuguese sit at the Lourenço Marques docks, undated. (Source: Ricardo Rangel/CDFF)

One facet of the real estate market did not change: the unwritten code that effectively barred entry to prospective black tenants. Since the violence of September and October, apartments in abandoned zones continued to stay vacant. Given the crashing European and Asian demand for housing, why did landlords not lower the rent to accommodate people living in the *subúrbios* in the same way that landlords in the ritzy

Polana neighborhood had lowered rents for working-class whites? From a profit-making standpoint, observed the *Tempo* reporter, the situation was “illogical.”

Will the owners of buildings in Lourenço Marques continue, as before, with the utterly discriminatory attitude of “not being exactly interested in renting their houses to the largest segment of our population”? This was what the mentality used to be. It’s just that back then this was “understood.” Now it shouldn’t be. It has to be repressed. Severely, if necessary.<sup>24</sup>

As it emptied out, the City of Cement remained the predominately European citadel that it long had been, except now with a widening moat between the shrinking white population and the *subúrbios* surrounding it on most sides. Independence, in June 1975, did little to change the picture. An overwhelming percentage of Mozambique’s European population (and a large segment of its mixed-race population) had departed by 1976, including most building owners.<sup>25</sup> Yet even many months after independence, few from the *subúrbios* moved into the City of Cement to occupy the tens of thousands of units that had become abandoned.

Why did people not seize the opportunity? In the absence of landlords, and with the accustomed barriers to entry effectively gone, why did people not squat in the City of Cement, at the very least to enjoy the advantages of higher ground and running water? Fear of the still unstable political situation, as mentioned above, remained a factor. But the residents of the city’s *subúrbios* were fundamentally disinclined to squat in the City of Cement because they were not squatters. They had little if any experience of occupying land against the wishes of landowners, and to do so ran counter to what most understood life in the city to entail. As previous chapters have illustrated, a host of

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>25</sup> The common figure cited, difficult to establish with precision, is that 90 percent of the Portuguese population eventually left Mozambique.

formalized practices constituted the making of a house and home in the supposedly “informal” *subúrbios*. Paying rent was one of them. People paid rent because it was demanded of them, of course, but in the act of doing so one at the same time legitimized one’s claim to the space one occupied, as relatively tenuous as that claim might be. To find a plot and build a house in the *subúrbios*, or even to find a rental unit and nest there, was a fundamentally conservative endeavor, characterized by deliberation and foresight. It was a carefully considered bet on one’s future in the city, and to make a move to the City of Cement at a time when the future was so uncertain was a dramatic leap quite out of keeping with people’s usual strategies. Moreover, recent events had demonstrated that one of the few benefits offered by suburban life, its defensibility in times of danger, offered a kind of security in turbulent times.

Later developments suggest another factor, more speculative. Beginning on September 7, 1974, a timeline was put in place: Frelimo would soon take complete control. Any dramatic move ought to have the blessing of the new government, and people waited upon Frelimo to instruct them as to what they ought to do.

### **The View from Above: “Exploitation of Man by Man”**

The first rainy season in independent Mozambique was for the new government its first flood season. In late January 1976, a tropical storm hit the Lourenço Marques area, and even the neighborhoods of the *subúrbios* that usually escaped serious flooding were inundated with sewage-strewn waters. Once again the district hardest hit was Munhuana, still popularly known as the Bairro Indígena (“neighborhood for natives”), a long-standing symbol of the carelessness and neglect that characterized government



housing initiatives of the colonial era. It had been built, in the 1940s, in a low-lying area between two malarial marshes, a location where health officials had warned it must under no circumstances go, and there had been some degree of flooding there every rainy season since, as well as periodic evacuations of varying duration.<sup>26</sup> This year the floods reached about five feet in places. (Fig. 4.2.) The government resolved to shutter the Bairro Indígena and relocate its residents permanently, as well as residents of other neighborhoods colloquially designated Xitali Mati – in Ronga, “place of the abundant waters.” Several hundred people were provisionally evacuated to the camping grounds near the beachfront, but the tourist park could not hold the thousands who needed temporary shelter, to say nothing of a permanent new home.<sup>27</sup>



**Fig. 4.2.** The Bairro da Munhuana (Bairro Indígena) flooded, 1976.  
(Source: Igreja de São Joaquim da Munhuana)

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<sup>26</sup> See Ch. 1.

<sup>27</sup> “Agrava-se no país problema das cheias,” *Notícias*, January 30, 1976; “Redobremos esforço colectivo na produção e planeamento,” *Notícias*, February 1, 1976; “Presidente Samora Machel contacta populações afectadas,” *Notícias*, February 3, 1976.

Only now, some seven months after independence, did Frelimo officials turn their attention to the many abandoned units of the City of Cement. The party's Central Committee charged a trio of ministers with drafting legislation that would nationalize all abandoned houses and apartment buildings, so that they could then be distributed to people who needed shelter.<sup>28</sup> In the course of a few days, a solution was devised that impacted people's relationship to the urban space in Mozambique's cities perhaps more than any deliberated plan, before or since. Its greatest impact, discussed in the next section, was completely unforeseen, and certainly unintended.

It stands as one of the curiosities of the early independence period that the nationalizations of the City of Cement came about almost as an afterthought. The first month after independence was marked by nationalizations that Frelimo characterized as the pillars of the revolution.<sup>29</sup> The first, a provision of the constitution that went into effect with independence, was the nationalization of all land within the territory of Mozambique, a step fundamental to Frelimo's eventual program of agricultural reform, and also intended to put a halt to the speculation and alienation of African land that characterized the Portuguese era. On July 24 – called for years afterward the Day of the Nationalizations – all private health facilities and private schools (including the many

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<sup>28</sup> The minister of public works and housing, the minister of justice, and the minister of finance. Much of the following narrative derives from interviews with the former longtime minister of public works and housing, Júlio Carrilho, July 29, 2009 & June 5, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Samora Machel, "A nossa luta é uma revolução [Speech given July 24, 1975]," in *A nossa luta é uma revolução* (Lisbon: CIDA-C, 1976), 7–32; Rita-Ferreira, "Moçambique post-25 de Abril," 145–148.

run by religious organizations) were expropriated.<sup>30</sup> Private legal representation was prohibited, so that all Mozambicans would theoretically receive equal access to the law. Funeral services were also nationalized, addressing one of the more humiliating tribulations of urban life: families sometimes went hungry in order to pay morgue and burial fees.

Making certain basic services the sole responsibility of the government was not just a means of enshrining them as universal rights, but also of imposing equality. Whether Frelimo in the decade after independence was “authentically” Marxist-Leninist, as it officially declared itself to be in 1977, has been a subject of debate.<sup>31</sup> Some scholars who once sought in Mozambique an exemplar of African socialism (but not exclusively such scholars) have argued that, once installed in Maputo, Frelimo became a statist autocracy of urban elites who merely wrapped themselves in the mantle of socialism and “people’s power” out of some combination of naiveté and cynical calculation. Historian Michel Cahen, for instance, a former Frelimo supporter who became a fierce critic,

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<sup>30</sup> Perhaps by design, the nationalizations fell on the same date, 101 years before, that the Bay of Lourenço Marques was definitively declared in international arbitration to be a Portuguese possession, a date important enough in city history that one of the city’s two principal avenues was named for it. When the colonial-era names of Maputo’s streets were changed to reflect new heroes, such as Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx, Mao Tse Tung, and Eduardo Mondlane, Avenida 24 de Julho kept its name, but marble slabs were installed beside sidewalks that explained its new meaning as the “Day of the Nationalizations.” The Day of the Nationalizations was celebrated annually in the first decade or so after independence, and though the nationalizations of rental properties occurred on a much later date, for the sake of official commemoration it was bundled in official memory with the Frelimo “achievements” of July 24, 1975, as if it had been planned from the beginning. The Portuguese word for “achievement,” *conquista*, can also be translated as “conquest.”

<sup>31</sup> John S. Saul, “Mozambique: The Failure of Socialism?,” *Transformations*, no. 14 (1991): 104–10; Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*; Michel Cahen, “Check on Socialism in Mozambique: What Check? What Socialism?,” *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 57 (July 1993): 46–59.

pointed out that Frelimo did not nationalize Mozambique's banks until 1978. One of the implications of this line of argument is that Frelimo's policy failures, and the strength of the South African-backed Renamo insurgency that brought Mozambique to its knees in the 1980s, ought not be laid at the feet of socialism, *per se*, but rather blamed on the self-interested high-handedness of the Frelimo hierarchy. At the time, the Frelimo leadership itself, while clearly under the influence of Soviet and East German mentors, in fact took some pains to distance itself from its patrons, at least rhetorically. It declared that its brand of socialism was not imported, and that it was guided by pragmatism rather than dogmatism. Of course, what seemed a pragmatic policy to those formulating it could seem dogmatic to those whom the policy most affected. The nationalizations and "interventions" of private businesses in the first years after independence, for instance, were defended as the only possible response to the flight of business owners and managers from the country. Even businessmen who remained in Mozambique, however, often felt that they were treated as criminals by the government.<sup>32</sup>

A bold line did not divide pragmatic thinking from idealized thinking, the more so as Frelimo was not a hive mind, but rather an organization whose internal debates often pitted self-styled ideologues against self-styled technocrats.<sup>33</sup> Government initiatives, to the extent that there was time to elaborate them, were never quite finished or polished, and were the products of sometimes clashing or contradictory intentions.<sup>34</sup> And in their

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<sup>32</sup> M. Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 27–100.

<sup>33</sup> See recent memoirs by ranking Frelimo officials: Sérgio Vieira, *Participei, por isso testemunho* (Maputo: Ndjira, 2010); Jacinto Veloso, *Memórias em voo rasante*, 3rd ed. (Maputo: JVC, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 80–81.

implementation, they became subject to any number of revisions – and not necessarily by the planners themselves. We should not assume, furthermore, that everything that unfolded in Maputo after independence can be understood through government initiative.<sup>35</sup> None of this was perhaps more true than with the nationalizations of Mozambique’s rental buildings.

Júlio Carrilho was the minister of public works and housing for most of the first decade after independence. Born and raised in the far north of the country, he had gone to architecture school in Lisbon in the 1960s, later fleeing to Sweden where he joined Frelimo. In 1974, when he was appointed to the transition government, he was one of the few college-educated Mozambicans that Frelimo could call upon. Arriving in the capital in September 1974, he had little knowledge of either Lourenço Marques or its *subúrbios*. At independence he was 29. Tasked with one of the government’s vastest portfolios, a ministry responsible for building and maintaining roads and bridges throughout the country, as well as water provision and urban sanitation infrastructure, he did not see housing as central to his workload.

Carrilho recently explained the initial decision to nationalize the City of Cement in practical terms. Building landlords had left the country, he said, and just as abandoned businesses were expropriated in order to keep them in operation, abandoned housing

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<sup>35</sup> An excellent corrective to the trend in evaluating Frelimo policies based on how they were declared by politicians rather than by the grounded realities of their conception and implementation, came from two scholars based at Mozambique’s Center for African Studies, themselves very much steeped in Marxist theory. Aquino de Bragança and Jacques Depelchin, “From the Idealization of Frelimo to the Understanding of the Recent History of Mozambique,” *African Journal of Political Economy* 1, no. 1 (1986): 162–80. See also Yussuf Adam, “Trick or Treat: The Relationship Between Destabilization, Aid, and Government Development Policies in Mozambique, 1975-1990” (PhD diss., Roskilde University, 1996).”

units were expropriated in order to distribute them to those in need. President Machel was set to announce the new policy on February 3, 1976. But just a day beforehand the Central Committee decided that the draft legislation did not go far enough. More radical elements insisted that renting out shelter for a profit was “exploitation of man by man.” *All* rental units in the country’s various cities of cement, not just abandoned buildings, must be nationalized.<sup>36</sup>

Thousands gathered at a plaza, now called the Plaza of the Heroes, to hear Machel’s speech.<sup>37</sup> As recounted earlier, Machel began by describing the apartheid-like divisions of the colonial capital, he announced the city’s new name, and he declared that “The people will be able to live in their own city and not in the city’s backyard,” a phrase that equated living in the *subúrbios* with living in the servants’ quarters. The phrase soon afterward became a slogan of the building nationalizations, used on posters printed by the public works ministry.

Machel offered various justifications in his speech for the nationalizations. By giving the City of Cement “a Mozambican face,” Frelimo was abolishing the racial barriers that had defined the city during the colonial era. By expropriating the buildings, Mozambique was cutting off a source of income to absentee landlords, who were allegedly using the collected rent to fund subversive activities within Mozambique. And, finally, the buildings ought to belong to the people who had suffered for their construction – not just the building laborers working for poor wages, but also the masses of peasants whose exploited labor indirectly had financed the building boom. The City of

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<sup>36</sup> Maputo-Matola represented about half of the nation’s formal building stock.

<sup>37</sup> Machel, “Independência implica benefícios.”

Cement, he said, was “built atop our bones, and the cement, sand, and water in those buildings is none other than the blood of the workers, the sweat of the worker, the blood of the Mozambican people! They are the highest forms of exploitation of our people.”<sup>38</sup>

As Machel ended his speech, he issued a caveat. The president warned that not everyone who wanted an apartment or a house in the City of Cement would get one. Only those who made a reasonable income, he said, would be able to afford to live in a nationalized building. The buildings were now national assets. Living there would not be free. For all the rhetoric of populating the City of Cement with Mozambicans, the Mozambicans most likely to benefit were those who could, through their rent, best maintain the physical condition of the colonial inheritance.

Much of the best vacant property was spoken for. Much of the wealthy districts, such as Polana and Sommerschield, were already occupied by Frelimo officials and various state institutions, or reserved for foreign diplomats and the many foreigners, Frelimo sympathizers, who arrived in Maputo to volunteer their skills for the socialist cause. Whole apartment high-rises were requisitioned by ministries for use not just as offices but also as housing for employees.<sup>39</sup> Thousands of former Frelimo guerillas and their families were offered apartments in the rest of the city, as were several thousand victims of flooding earlier in the year.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>39</sup> Maria Clara Mendes, “Les répercussions de l’indépendance sur la ville de Maputo,” in *Bourgs et villes en Afrique lusophone*, ed. Michel Cahen (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1989), 281–96; J.D. Sidaway and M. Power, “Sociospatial Transformations in the ‘Postsocialist’ Periphery: The Case of Maputo, Mozambique,” *Environment and Planning A* 27, no. 9 (1995): 1472–1475.

Still, several months later, much of the City of Cement continued to lay vacant. Machel ordered Carrilho to get them filled quickly, and the result was lowered rents. Rent was now pegged to household income, so that families earning less were charged less than higher-income families, no matter where in the City of Cement they were housed.<sup>40</sup> By 1979, most units in Maputo were occupied.<sup>41</sup> A survey in 1980, however, determined that less than eight percent of the country's "working class" (factory workers who lived almost exclusively in urban areas) lived in cities of cement.<sup>42</sup> The majority of units in formalized urban areas had a head of household who worked in the service sector, and the majority of these were government workers. As Carrilho told the Popular Assembly in 1987, "[I]n less than nine months it was possible to change the face of the cities of our country. But that change didn't have as its objective the substitution of bourgeois tenants with tenants who were workers or farmers. The immediate objective was rather to make it more possible for Mozambicans to quickly occupy the cement areas of cities, independently of the class to which they belonged. And this is what happened."<sup>43</sup> It would have been more accurate to say "independently of the *race* to which they belonged." A class barrier remained – though not absolute – and in 1987, with the new

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<sup>40</sup> The number of bedrooms still factored into the equation, however. The progressive rent structure was considered the equivalent of an income tax. Direção-Geral, APIE, "Fundamentação, Semanário Nacional sobre Novas Rendas," November 21, 1987, 2, MICOA.

<sup>41</sup> By 1980, there were 24,000 unfulfilled requests for housing in Maputo, while APIE was only able to furnish 30 per month. Luís David, "Mais de onze mil inquilinos não pagam renda de casa," *Tempo*, December 7, 1980, 14.

<sup>42</sup> The actual figure was for percentage of people living with electricity and running water, which with rare exceptions corresponded with living in one of the country's Cities of Cement. Júlio Carrilho, "Ajustar as rendas ao valor das casas," *Tempo*, October 4, 1987, 27.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 25–26. His comments were made within the context of a speech that justified the free-market reform of the rental structure, to be discussed in the concluding chapter.



imposition of structural adjustment policies, Carrilho was arguing that it ought to continue.

As residents of the city recalled in recent interviews, rent was not the only cost to living in the City of Cement. One also had to factor in the costs of electricity and water. To cook the meals most people were accustomed to – and that they could afford – they would need their large mortars and pestles to make corn meal. One was prohibited from bringing them into apartments, however, because thousands of people pounding corncobs on verandas would compromise the structure of buildings. Nor could one use a coal-burning stove. In 1977, on the one-year anniversary of the nationalizations, a reporter wanted to know how it was, given the space still available in the City of Cement, that so many people continued to live in suburban flood zones; that rainy season, more than 1,700 families were washed out of their homes. The answer, he discovered, was that people thought they could not afford to live in the City of Cement. Many people said that they did not have the furniture, such as beds, that they believed was necessary to live there. All they had were straw mats.<sup>44</sup>

People like Sebastião Chitombe never even considered a move to the City of Cement. By 1976, he was 22 and living in the shabby backroom of a Chamanculo *cantina* that he had purchased at deep discount from a departing Portuguese the year before. His friends were laborers, most of them living in the crowded compounds where he used to live, and not able to afford rents in the city. There was considerable reluctance even

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<sup>44</sup> A representative of the municipality said that the displaced people were “poorly informed” – and that subsidies were available to help pay for furniture. “Iniciadas medidas de emergência para socorrer populações atingidas,” *Notícias*, February 7, 1977. Within the week, more than 1,400 of the families were reportedly given shelter in the City of Cement.

among some with greater means, people generally from more privileged backgrounds, and for whom such a move was potentially possible. Helena Macuacua, a young teacher living in the Aeroporto neighborhood, thought it was too risky.<sup>45</sup> “I couldn’t put the money together for it,” she said. “I saw the rent was going to be very high, and also my husband wasn’t someone I could trust. I preferred to plant myself here where things were accessible rather than go to the city and afterward suffer the consequences.” Benjamim Benfica, another schoolteacher, lived in a wood-and-zinc house in Chamanculo that his father, a truck driver, had built. He chose to honor his late father’s wish that he never give up the house.<sup>46</sup> “We didn’t have electricity, we didn’t have a sewage system, but it was *my* house. This is the fundamental part.”

Benfica was young for a homeowner, only 21 at independence. Many of his friends, and many of Helena Macuacua’s friends, jumped at the chance to live in the City of Cement – though many also returned to the *subúrbios* within a few years when costs proved too much to bear. It was not unusual for people venturing a life in the City of Cement to return after a month or two – even those who had a free apartment provided by an employer. Many others, like Benfica’s father, had spent their adult lives saving up to build a house of their own in the *subúrbios*, and some families had lived on the same plot for decades. A house was the one solid investment that one could pass on to successive generations. For many people of this older generation, the City of Cement had been so distant and the lifestyle it required so unattainable that living there never took shape as aspiration. And a common anxiety persisted since the period of transition: that the

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<sup>45</sup> Interviews with Helena Macuacua, July 2 & 6, 2009.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Benjamim Benfica, Sept. 30, 2011.

government would not survive and that the old order would return. Given that the new housing rules dictated that a family could only have one house, the situation was still too uncertain to exchange the home one had for a house one had not even hoped for.<sup>47</sup>

### **Nationalizations from Below**

In the days after the announcement of the rental building nationalizations, a line formed outside the offices of the public works ministry downtown.<sup>48</sup> As instructed, the current tenants of rental buildings were queued up to register their units with the government, their new landlord. Many thousands waited, and the line snaked through the streets of most of the *baixa*. Officials at the ministry were perplexed: there should not be that many renters needing to register their units. Carrilho, the minister, left his desk and questioned people in line. Most of them were not residents of the City of Cement, he discovered. Rather, they were people who rented one of the perhaps tens of thousands of rental units built of reeds or wood-and-zinc in the *subúrbios*.

During the transition period, a new authority had asserted itself in the *subúrbios*. These were the *grupos dinamizadores* – “dynamizing groups” – usually known as “GDs.”<sup>49</sup> They were comprised of people who had stepped forward in the lead-up to

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<sup>47</sup> A second house was permitted if located in the countryside or at the beach.

<sup>48</sup> Interviews with Carrilho.

<sup>49</sup> Pinsky, “Territorial Dilemmas,” 288–306; Bertil Egerö, “People’s Power: The Case of Mozambique,” in *Africa: Problems in the Transition to Socialism*, ed. Barry Munslow (London: Zed Books, 1986), 114–39; Jeremy Grest, “Urban Management, Local Government Reform, and the Democratization Process in Mozambique: Maputo City 1975-1990,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 1 (March 1995): 147–64. Former GD members interviewed for this study include: (in Chamanculo) Benjamim Benfica, Sept. 30, 2011, Jan. 22, 2013; Adriano Matate, Nov. 18 & 21, Dec. 5 2011; Gabriel Chiau, June 21, 2011; (in Maxaquene C) Augusto Duvane & Salomão Manjate,

independence to declare their loyalty to Frelimo and their readiness to take orders. Many had formed spontaneously, and the “GD” designation was bestowed by Frelimo after the fact. GD activists were almost exclusively male, and their credentials to lead usually rested on having had a formal job, a higher level of formal education, or by having previously run afoul of PIDE. As the colonial apparatus faded away, they increasingly took on a governing role in the *bairros*. During the transition and the early years after independence, Frelimo had only the most tenuous grasp on the city, and the movement’s hierarchy depended almost entirely on the GDs to communicate and carry out its directives, to keep a watch out for those deemed “subversives” and “counter-revolutionaries,” and to settle all the disputes of everyday *bairro* life. Members of the GDs were to “follow the correct ideological line, avoid becoming individualistic, but to be permanently in contact with the masses, instructing and learning, correcting and being corrected.”<sup>50</sup> Many people’s experience of Frelimo in these years was either through a speech on the radio or an encounter, often an unpleasant one, with the local GD.

These loose governing bodies often found themselves translating vague and generalized orders into specific actions on the ground. According to Carrilho and other officials at the time, GDs who heard Machel’s speech on Heroes’ Day, and his characterization of rent as “exploitation of man by man,” began “nationalizing”

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Mar. 23, 2013; (in Polana Caniço A) Lúcia Massingue, Mar. 25, 2013. (Massingue served as the mandatory representative in her GD of the Mozambique Woman’s Organization [OMM].)

<sup>50</sup> “Comités e grupos dinamizadores: Da crítica à autocrítica a prática forja o militante,” *Tempo*, March 2, 1975, 62.

compounds and rental houses in the *subúrbios* as well.<sup>51</sup> According to Carrilho and former communications minister José Luís Cabaço, Frelimo's Central Committee had never intended to nationalize suburban rental units. Though the subject had been broached, it was recognized that while most building owners in the City of Cement had fled the country, many landlords in the *subúrbios* were Mozambicans and they had stayed. Implementing a policy that would set Mozambican neighbors against one another made little practical sense. Machel's speech therefore specifically targeted the inequities embodied in the City of Cement, how it symbolized racial exclusion and was built at the cost of unrewarded Mozambican toil. Machel made no mention, for example, of compounds – the slums within the *subúrbios* that represented the basest form of urban shelter. His speech and the nationalizations law itself referred to the expropriation of rental “buildings” (*prédios*) – wording that policymakers did not imagine was open to interpretation.<sup>52</sup>

When the Central Committee was informed of the spontaneous nationalizations then taking place in the *subúrbios*, it felt obligated to accept them. If charging rent at a profit for shelter was an unacceptable form of exploitation, then indeed, it must be unacceptable everywhere. One can only speculate what the effect of reversing the suburban nationalizations might have been. Just days after the Frelimo hierarchy had decided to address an immediate need, and to relocate the residents of flooded

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<sup>51</sup> See, for instance, the comments of Maputo's one-time APIE chief (and later government minister) José Chichava. “Devemos defender nossas conquistas alcançadas com a independência - exorta José Chichava,” *Notícias*, July 23, 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Conselho dos Ministros da República Popular de Moçambique, *Decreto-Lei No. 5/76*, 1976.

neighborhoods, the new government found itself the reluctant landlord to a good share of suburban building stock.

Such grassroots policymaking was rare under a government known for its heavy-handed, top-down approach, and it spoke more to the nature of most people's expectations than the re-occupation of the City of Cement did. The nationalizations in the *subúrbios*, as Carrilho later reflected, addressed a long-held and heartfelt desire: it was a demand by suburban dwellers (or at least those who had pushed for it) for a meaningful form of citizenship, one in which the government acknowledged its responsibility for all parts of the city. The government, meanwhile, never acknowledged that its policy had been effectively hijacked.

How many total units were nationalized is difficult to estimate. APIE, the state agency created to manage the newly nationalized properties, became responsible for about 40,000 units of residential, commercial, and industrial space in the City of Cement and in other masonry structures of the metropolitan area.<sup>53</sup> It never managed to complete an inventory of these units, however, as it tried to do, and APIE did not even attempt to do so for the tens of thousands of properties it officially owned in the *subúrbios*. In the older neighborhoods, where rental units and especially compounds were densely clustered, most everyone was affected or knew someone who was.

Albertina Amaral's mother, Ana, had no formal employment, but had used the proceeds from making traditional brews to build a wood-and-zinc house in Xipamanine.<sup>54</sup> Eventually, Ana, Albertina, and Albertina's children moved into the backrooms that Ana

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<sup>53</sup> APIE is an acronym for *Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado*, or the State Real Estate Administration.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Albertina Amaral, July 21, 2009.

built on the same plot of land, and rented out the original house. A tenant had been living in the house for only two months when the nationalizations were announced. Albertina, when interviewed in 2009, was still full of rancor that the local *grupo dinamizador* had “snatched” what she called the “mother house.”

Machel said that he was taking the clinics and other houses like that [i.e. in the City of Cement], not these shacks. But these people that called themselves *régulos*, they took the shacks and the rents too. Then they said it was the government that took the shacks...I don't think that's what Machel said to do, but humanity is bad, and it was humanity that took these shacks.

The loss of their property caused heartbreak for many, she said. “Some people had to pay rent in their own house! Do you see? This is something no one can bear. And these pitiful people suffered from heart attacks, they became sick, they died. Because of this many people died. Because of their houses.”

Benjamim Benfica, the young schoolteacher, had become the note-taker at GD meetings in his area of Chamanculo. He respected the decision to nationalize rental properties, including two rental units his late father had built on nearby plots in order to earn extra income.<sup>55</sup> A third unit, built of wood-and-zinc and located within a few feet of his own house, became vacant just before the nationalizations. When Benfica learned that the unit would now probably go to a tenant he did not know, who would not pay Benfica rent and who he could not evict if he proved a bad neighbor, he opted to demolish the structure instead. According to the law, for this act he might have been accused of destroying state property.

Jochua Guambe, the hunter who from the proceeds of selling animal skins and claws had over decades assembled a small real estate empire in Chamanculo of

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Benfica, Sept. 30, 2011.

approximately two dozen plots, had died in the mid-1960s.<sup>56</sup> His holdings then passed to his oldest son, Júlio, who lost it all in February 1976 – all except for the family house that his father had built some four decades before. Júlio died in the mid-1980s, still deeply embittered for having lost his patrimony so soon after inheriting it. Upon his death, his youngest brother, Castigo, moved from an apartment in the City of Cement back to Chamanculo. If he had not moved back, he would have lost the family house to APIE. Some years later, due to frequent thefts, he was compelled to build a high wall between his plot and the wood-and-zinc rental houses that his father had once built at great cost. Castigo recalled his experience of the nationalizations in hushed tones. He did not want neighbors to overhear and to think he wanted the properties back.

During the colonial era, António Araújo ran perhaps the only African-owned funeral services business in Lourenço Marques.<sup>57</sup> He carved coffins in his yard, in the shadow of his giant, 400-hole pigeon coop. A month after independence, his business was nationalized (along with all funeral services in Mozambique) including the hearse. And in February 1976 he lost most of the enormous residential compound that he had built a little more than a decade before.<sup>58</sup> The compound was populated by scores of single women who made a living either mostly or in part through sex work. For them, the nationalizations eventually meant a reduction in the monthly rent. The more immediate impact, however, was that once Araújo lost possession of the compound he cut off its water supply.

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<sup>56</sup> Interviews with his son, Castigo Guambe, Apr. 14 & 26, May 17, 2011. See also Chps. 1 & 2.

<sup>57</sup> Interviews with his son, Isaac Araújo, June 8 & 15, 2011.

<sup>58</sup> See also Ch. 1 for a description of the compound. For reasons that are not clear, Araújo was allowed to keep the six units of the compound closest to his house.



It is unlikely that Araújo's loss would have pricked the conscience of Frelimo officials. Despite his credentials as a former journalist for *O Brado Africano*, and an associate of the likes of Karel Pott, he seemed to fit the profile of the "exploiter" that Frelimo was demonizing in countless speeches. Some officials felt immediate remorse, however, for having dispossessed the many people, like the Amarals, who had built perhaps a single rental unit or two in their yard – many of them single women who lacked access to formal wages, and who had somehow saved enough to invest in a small, rent-generating asset. Within weeks the government produced a brief "clarification" of the law.<sup>59</sup> It specifically referred to people in the *subúrbios* who had built houses of reeds or of wood-and-zinc for rental income. Those who had yet to recoup their investments in these constructions at the time of the nationalizations were entitled to partial indemnification. And those who had no other source of sustenance owing to "physical incapacity or advanced age (or other reasons properly justified and accepted)" were entitled to a monthly subsidy. To receive indemnification or the subsidy, however, one would also have to know that such remedies were available, and to be willing and able to fill out the necessary paperwork downtown. Many if not most of the women affected did not speak Portuguese.

Sometime in the 1980s, a man came to Chamanculo and set up a desk under the fig trees at the neighborhood's main crossroads. He claimed that for a small payment he could ensure that one's nationalized property was returned. He was soon exposed as a

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<sup>59</sup> Conselho dos Ministros da Republica Popular de Moçambique, *Regulamentação do Decreto-Lei no. 5/76*, 1976. The language of the clarification largely repeated language from the original law that was intended to indemnify Portuguese retirees who, having been self-employed, and thus lacking a government pension, relied on rental income. Conversation with José Luís Cabaço, former minister of communications and transport.

charlatan and chased out of the neighborhood, but he no doubt had seen a potentially fertile opportunity in the sense of dispossession that many had felt. Today the resentment still runs high, enough that many become silent when the subject is raised – not out of fear of speaking ill of the government, but of creating problems with neighbors. One’s former tenants often continue to share the same yard.

The nationalizations fundamentally changed the relationship between neighbors in the *subúrbios*. There was, initially, the crude leveling effect of dispossessing many of the more privileged families – the people who counted as the aristocracy of the *bairros*, many of whom had been rooted there for generations, and who sometimes served as *patrões* and godparents to their less fortunate neighbors. Tenants who had depended on the goodwill of landlords when it came to improving the conditions of rented property now depended on the state – through the mediation of the GDs, which distributed units and collected the rent. As a landlord, the state, such as it was, simply did not have the capacity or the resources to maintain properties for its suburban tenants. Efforts to provide renters with building materials such as zinc panels and bundles of reeds to patch up deteriorating *caniço* homes fell well short of need. “Everything ended up destroyed,” said Albertina Amaral.

For example, this house here that they destroyed [the “mother house” she had lost], it was full of grace, it was beautiful, this house, it was beautiful. But then they came by and made it understood that it was nationalized, that it belonged to the state. When they saw that it was falling apart, they didn’t do a thing. And many houses fell into ruins like that, many houses fell apart.

In the 1980s, APIE rolled out an initiative to reimburse residents of the *subúrbios* who fixed their own rental units. Officials fretted that few were taking advantage of the

program because few knew about it.<sup>60</sup> Tenants' "lack of awareness" was frequently cited by APIE for many of its difficulties serving its ostensible customers. Information was conveyed by GDs either via the "people's journals" (*jornais do povo*) maintained on a wall in each neighborhood, or through large neighborhood meetings. Many people, however, learned policies second-hand or not at all, and clarification, if needed, was not forthcoming. Carrilho, the former minister, recalled a renter from the *subúrbios* intent on closing the gap between government and governed. The man appeared at the ministry demanding to speak to him. He complained that his front door was crooked, and needed fixing. The minister replied that the problem probably was not that the door was crooked, but that the whole house was. The government, said the minister, could not build him a new house.

Years later, former Frelimo officials freely characterized the nationalizations in the *subúrbios* as a "catastrophe."<sup>61</sup> Carrilho, now a professor of architecture, reflected that the fundamental mistake was "turning a technical problem into a political one." The question remains *who*, exactly, made housing a political matter. Was it, in fact, overzealous members of the GD, as several former high-ranking officials attest? That is not how the nationalizations are remembered among the several former GDs who were interviewed for this study. The order to nationalize suburban units came to them directly from above, they said – from the Frelimo leadership. The reasoning some attributed to Frelimo was that the party wanted to demonstrate that the nationalizations were not

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<sup>60</sup> Fernando Manuel, "Reparação de casas: APIE reembolsa...mas ninguém sabe," *Tempo*, February 7, 1982.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with José Forjaz, former national housing and planning director, Apr. 15, 2013. Also, conversation with Cabaço.

racially motivated – that Frelimo did not just target white and Asian landlords. Any other version of events was considered by the former GDs a means of deflecting responsibility for a policy that few, if any, would defend today. The most radical rearrangement of relations of propertied power in the *subúrbios* took place in less than a week in February 1976, and yet it is difficult to determine, who, if anyone, actually wanted it to happen.

### **The Spiral Downward**

If the “dynamizing groups” were for many Maputo residents their principal link to Frelimo, APIE was the face of the new state bureaucracy. Though less than two percent of the entire country lived in homes administered by APIE, the agency was one of the young republic’s larger bureaucracies, with offices in all the major urban centers, and several in Maputo. From its inception, APIE was overwhelmed by its task, in part because the law that brought it into being gave no precise orientation as to what its task was.<sup>62</sup> Was APIE to use the nationalized properties as a source of revenue for the state? Was it supposed to invest revenue into the maintenance of buildings? These were the overarching questions, never quite resolved, but there were countless smaller matters of how to manage real estate that might be second nature to anyone in the field of property management. In 1976, however, the people who had such knowledge in Mozambique had either vanished or been dispossessed. Management of even small private enterprises that had been expropriated or in which the state had “intervened” had proved a struggle, and

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<sup>62</sup> Rui Zunguza, “APIE reclama estatuto jurídico,” *Tempo*, July 29, 1984.

such challenges paled beside the administration of much of the built environment of a major African city.<sup>63</sup>

With the nationalizations of rental buildings, the government had only obliquely acknowledged the right to shelter. It took responsibility for the City of Cement belatedly and hurriedly, and in the case of the *subúrbios* it appears the responsibility had been foisted upon the government. The nature of the relationship between the state and the people upon which its power ostensibly rested had yet to be crystalized. What it was people had a right to and what it was the government expected of people in return were still wide-open questions, and this was true everywhere in Mozambique. For most people in Maputo – tenants of the *subúrbios* and tenants of the City of Cement alike – that relationship would be mediated and understood to a significant degree through APIE. At a national level, Frelimo attempted to construct the New Man of socialism (*Homem Novo*), and to impose its modernizing projects on a Mozambican populace that the party hierarchy regarded as mired in backwardness.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, for far more down-to-earth reasons, APIE often found itself tutoring its tenants in Mozambique’s cities of cement in the how-to’s of “modern living.” Not even the people who ran APIE, however, had a firm sense of its proper role relative either to the assets in its charge or the people sheltered under its roofs. “We don’t know what we are or what we want to be,” said the chief of APIE’s Maputo delegation in 1984, eight years after the nationalizations.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> See, among others, Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Mahoney, “*Estado Novo, Homem Novo* (New State, New Man): Colonial and Anti-Colonial Development Ideologies in Mozambique, 1930-1977,” in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, ed. David C. Engerman et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 165–97.

<sup>65</sup> Zunguza, “APIE reclama estatuto jurídico,” 8.

By then APIE had become notorious for pervasive ineptitude and outrageous levels of corruption. Throughout the late 1970s and the decade of the 1980s, no single branch of government earned for itself more negative coverage in the media than APIE did. Employees of APIE frequently took the best apartments in the City of Cement for themselves.<sup>66</sup> Prospective tenants who canvassed the city in search of vacant properties were often told immediately upon making their request at APIE that the desired unit was already occupied.<sup>67</sup> It was as if APIE functionaries were using home-seekers as their personal real-estate scouts. In 1980, amid fears that the state apparatus was failing badly to fulfill expectations set by the party, Machel launched his “offensives” against “indiscipline” and corruption in government, and he made APIE one of his principal targets. (Fig. 4.3.) The director-general of APIE and several of his deputies were arrested for “completely misinterpreting the guidelines set by the President of the Republic.”<sup>68</sup> Further investigation led to the arrest of employees who had effectively turned clusters of apartments into personal fiefdoms. APIE employees sold off furniture stripped from apartments, rented out apartments for personal gain, gifted apartments to lovers, and even used some units to operate brothels.<sup>69</sup> As one journalist wrote in 1980, APIE had become

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<sup>66</sup> “Combate à corrupção na APIE,” *Notícias*, October 15, 1977; Rui Zunguza, “Doença da APIE: Financeira não...de gestão talvez!,” *Tempo*, August 19, 1984.

<sup>67</sup> “Está ocupada,” *Notícias*, January 30, 1978.

<sup>68</sup> “Detidos cinco responsáveis por desvirtuamento das orientações,” *Notícias*, January 25, 1980. It appears that APIE was not just the first target of Machel’s 1980 campaign of *ofensivas*, but may have in fact inspired them.

<sup>69</sup> “Novas irregularidades detectadas na APIE,” *Notícias*, January 26, 1980; “Proseguiu ofensiva presidencial contra a incompetência e o desleixo,” *Notícias*, January 30, 1980.

a “State within the State.”<sup>70</sup> “This is the central question – the question of Power. And APIE would seek to challenge Power.”



**Fig. 4.3.** President Samora Machel addressing a Maputo crowd during his “offensive” against corruption, 1980. (Source: Martinho Fernando/CDF)

Perhaps much of the focus on APIE owes something to the fact that Maputo reporters experienced the failures of the agency directly, as residents of the city and as tenants. When they reported on the performance of state farms in the countryside, for instance, they did so as visitors. Moreover, APIE embodied all that Frelimo leaders regarded as corrosive and threatening to their revolution. All areas of the state apparatus were staffed by novices to governance and all were susceptible to corruption. Even the purest of APIE bureaucrats, however, fit too easily the stereotypical image of the nefarious but otherwise nebulous figure of the “internal enemy” ubiquitous in party propaganda – as did many of those who APIE directly served: the “bourgeoisie” who benefited from the privilege of living in an apartment. Journalists who attacked APIE’s performance were doing so well within range of the party line – and all media in Mozambique were state-controlled. This is not to downplay the pervasive corruption at APIE, but much of what was called corruption and sabotage could be chalked up to

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<sup>70</sup> David, “Mais de onze mil inquilinos não pagam renda de casa,” 17.

inexperience and incompetence, and even the best-intentioned office workers would have had difficulties managing so many unruly assets.

This was the central problem: the government had inherited a legacy that even under the best circumstances would have stretched the capacities of the state. These were not the best of circumstances. Buildings, of course, require constant attention and upkeep and repair, but APIE lacked the trained personnel and the materials to do so. The generalized collapse of the Mozambican economy following the Portuguese withdrawal resulted in dire shortages, including shortages of nails, paint, wood, zinc panels, cement mix, and tools.<sup>71</sup> The careful rationing of oil restricted the transport of what materials were available domestically. APIE answered only a fraction of tenant requests for repair.<sup>72</sup> In 1979, 1,500 new toilets were ordered to replace broken ones. Only twenty were delivered.<sup>73</sup>

Elevators, initially a novelty for many people, became something of a curse. By the mid-1980s, functioning elevators were the exception.<sup>74</sup> Replacement parts were scarce, as was the expertise to fix the elevators properly, and after 1984, APIE stopped paying the companies responsible for elevator maintenance because it could not afford to.

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<sup>71</sup> Alfredo Tembe, "Materiais de construção: Quem não tem divisas fica 'a ver navios,'" *Tempo*, September 20, 1987.

<sup>72</sup> In 1980 APIE reported that almost 12,000 repair requests had been made at its Maputo branch in the four years since the nationalizations, and only about 2,000 had been addressed (which is not to say addressed satisfactorily). "Na APIE a melhoria ainda vem a passo de tartaruga," *Notícias*, March 18, 1981.

<sup>73</sup> "Parque imobiliário do estado: Serviços de manutenção em reorganização no Maputo," *Notícias*, September 8, 1979.

<sup>74</sup> Arnaldo Henrique, "Quando irá acabar 'alpinismo' forçado?," *Tempo*, August 30, 1987.



Residents were forced to trudge up and down ten, 15, 20 floors several times daily, and older residents found themselves more or less trapped in their apartments.

When the government expropriated Maputo's hundreds of apartment blocks, it also inherited the approximately one thousand men who guarded and cleaned those buildings. Adequate supervision of such an instant workforce proved impossible, and guards earned a reputation for being free agents – for being absent from duty, for illegally appropriating apartments for themselves, for abetting burglaries. Whether or not this reputation was a fair one, for many tenants the presence of the guards (and their frequent absences) helped engender the feeling that living in the City of Cement meant they were on their own.<sup>75</sup>

From the beginning, APIE had trouble collecting rent. After the first year, some 30 percent of tenants in the City of Cement were in arrears.<sup>76</sup> The agency began listing overdue renters in the newspaper to shame them into payment, but by 1980 the rate of non-compliance remained about the same.<sup>77</sup> People had various reasons for not paying. Some, compelled to make their own repairs to APIE properties, unilaterally discounted their costs from their rent. Others, as APIE acknowledged, interpreted the nationalizations as meaning they did not have to pay rent. "More awareness is needed," said one official in 1979, in what was by then a common refrain.<sup>78</sup> The fact that many government workers were given free accommodation by the ministries they worked for

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<sup>75</sup> "Quem controla os guardas dos prédios?," *Tempo*, March 23, 1980; Filipe Mata, "Roubos nos prédios: Qual a responsabilidade dos guardas?," *Tempo*, January 17, 1982.

<sup>76</sup> "Nacionalizações," *Notícias*, July 24, 1977.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*; David, "Mais de onze mil inquilinos não pagam renda de casa," 14.

<sup>78</sup> "Inquilinos assumirão parte activa na valorização dos imoveis do estado," *Notícias*, August 14, 1979, 6.

no doubt confused matters. And yet the people whose finances were most precarious – the thousands who were evacuated to the City of Cement after being flooded out of their houses in the *subúrbios* – were also those who most reliably paid their rent.<sup>79</sup>

If we attempt to read their actions (and allow ourselves to speak broadly) we can see how different segments of urban society understood their relationship to their housing, to APIE, and to the state, in different ways. Those in the upper echelons of the new governing class considered their house in the City of Cement a right, a part of their pay package – even in those cases when it was not. Salaried workers, who were perhaps government workers, expected that the payment of rent entitled them to a properly maintained property in return – the typical relationship between urban taxpayer and government service provider. As one apartment dweller put it in 1980, “We fill the holes that APIE’s maintenance department left open and this situation cannot continue because we have contracts with APIE, which *establish the rights and responsibilities of both parties*, and we have paid our rents.”<sup>80</sup> (Emphasis added.) Among the very poor, for whom a home in the City of Cement was an unexpected gift bestowed by the government in its good will, paying one’s rent (if one was able to pay it) was an act of responsibility and of solidifying one’s relationship to the state – in short, an affirmation of citizenship.

When the doors to the City of Cement were opened in 1976, Machel said he looked forward to the influence on the city of an influx of people from the countryside, who would bring with them their rural, communitarian values, and to putting city dwellers to work in the countryside, where they would learn what it meant to be

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<sup>79</sup> Narciso Castanheira, “APIE: Limpar a própria casa,” *Tempo*, May 22, 1983, 21.

<sup>80</sup> “Quem controla os guardas dos prédios?” 13.

authentically Mozambican.<sup>81</sup> Yet he had also made it clear that the nationalizations, though of symbolic importance to all Mozambicans, would only directly benefit a relative few: people who, in other speeches on other days, were demonized as the “petit bourgeoisie.” Such contradictions were liable to crop up in an improvised hours-long speech, but they also reflected one of the principal contradictions of the dominant thinking in the upper ranks of Frelimo. At the same time that they championed “authentic” rural values, Frelimo leaders also considered themselves the clear-eyed agents of modernization, with all the conceits of “civilized” behavior that entailed, including what a properly modern city should look like. During his speech, while listing the do’s and don’ts of making a home in the City of Cement – such as not bringing livestock into buildings – the president instructed future tenants to not hang their colorful *capulanas* (Mozambican sarongs) outside their apartments. “Otherwise the city will look as if it belongs to *monhés*,” a common though pejorative term for Indian and Arab Muslims.<sup>82</sup>

Even most people who went to work at an office dressed in suits and ties or at the barracks in military fatigues had families largely made up of people who did not, including relatives recently arrived from the countryside. They did not need the president to tell them that the City of Cement was an uncomfortable fit. Despite prohibitions, many of these residents continued with their daily routines: cooking on open coals, raising goats and chickens in their apartments, and pounding corn on their verandas. Throughout the late 1970s, journalists played up stories of simple Mozambicans baffled by the use of

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<sup>81</sup> Machel, “Independência implica benefícios.”

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

bathrooms and flushing toilets, and children who relieved themselves everywhere except where they were supposed to. Housing officials despaired of the threat to public health, and the damage to what they considered the nation's patrimony.<sup>83</sup> To resolve the "cultural problem," the public works ministry embarked on a hygiene awareness campaign, instructing tenants on the importance of keeping stairs, landings, corridors, and elevator shafts free of trash, apartments and yards free of animals, and on what constituted the proper use of a sink.<sup>84</sup> One lesson, increasingly important for everyone to learn as water shortages and pipe ruptures became more common, was "How to live a normal life alongside excrement."<sup>85</sup> (Fig. 4.4.)

In the years just after independence, writers of fiction chose as their principal subject the nature of colonial oppression. By the mid-1980s, the focus changed with the change of the writers' addresses, and now a common theme was the post-independence occupation of the City of Cement, and the attendant sense of alienation people felt in their new surroundings, particularly rural people.<sup>86</sup> In the macabre 1980s short story "Unexpected Death," by Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, a man named Simbine checks on the

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<sup>83</sup> Tabo Motema, "APIE: Que função social?," *Tempo*, May 22, 1983; Fernando Manuel, "Habitação: Para preservar o património," *Tempo*, March 31, 1985; "Consolidar política habitacional," *Tempo*, June 23, 1985.

<sup>84</sup> The "Housing hygiene" series appeared in numerous May editions of *Notícias*, the national daily newspaper.

<sup>85</sup> "O insólito: Fazer uma vida normal ao lado de fezes," *Notícias*, May 31, 1980.

<sup>86</sup> Marcelo Panguana, "Na hora da mudança," in *As vozes que falam de verdade* (Maputo: Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, 1987); Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, "Morte inesperada," in *Orgia dos loucos*, 2nd ed. (Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 1990), 61–70; Lília Momplé, *Neighbours* (Maputo: Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, 1995); João Paulo Borges Coelho, *Crónica da Rua 513.2* (Lisbon: Caminho, 2006); Lília Momplé, "Stress," in *Os olhos da cobra verde* (Maputo: CIEDIMA, 2008), 5–18; Lília Momplé, "Um canto para morrer," in *Os olhos da cobra verde*, 45–66; Luís Savele, "Tsendzeleni," in *Teatro moçambicano: Três peças num só palco* (Maputo: FUNDAC, 2011), 3–84.

progress of a balky elevator by unwisely peeking his head through a pane-less window into the elevator shaft.<sup>87</sup> He becomes stuck there, and the elevator, when it finally comes, crushes his skull. Simbine's mother, wondering why the elevator is stuck somewhere above her, is forced to ascend to her son's tenth-floor apartment by the stairs, and once there she discovers his corpse still upright, his stiff hands clawing the edges of the elevator portal. Who was to blame for this tragedy? Simbine's mother believes it was the evil spirits present at her son's birth that had foretold his premature end. The building's guard expects that *he* will be blamed, since he was drinking at a bar instead of being present on duty when Simbine's children sought help for their trapped father. But the deeper blame, the guard reasons, rests with APIE, for having ignored his advice to replace the missing glass pane in the window of the elevator door. And ultimately, the guard tells himself, Simbine brought the misfortune on himself by taking three wives, a sure way to stoke jealousies, and invite sorcery. The implication is clear: in Maputo, the man of the countryside will meet his doom.

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<sup>87</sup> Ba Ka Khosa, "Morte inesperada."



**Fig. 4.4.** A poster instructing new residents of the City of Cement on how to use flush toilets. (Source: Ministério da Saude/Direcção Nacional de Medicina Preventiva/AHM)

By the mid-1980s, Renamo forces were laying waste to much of southern Mozambique. The war that had begun in the central region of the country now burned at the city's edge. Tens of thousands fleeing the violence took refuge with relatives in Maputo, and already crowded conditions – ten people to a one- or two-bedroom apartment was common – reached intolerable levels in both the *subúrbios* and the City of Cement.<sup>88</sup> Gas shortages became more acute, supplies of food, coal, and wood were cut off, and to fuel cooking fires in the City of Cement people were compelled to tear up parquet floors.<sup>89</sup> Overcrowding accelerated the deterioration of building structures so that, for many, a house or an apartment in the City of Cement was rendered a dubious privilege at best, a garbage dump and deathtrap at worst.

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<sup>88</sup> In 1985, the public works ministry conducted surveys in a handful of buildings in the City of Cement, to evaluate the state of building degradation (which was extensive in all cases). The reports also listed the professions of the heads of households as well as the number of people living in each unit. The surveys, though not organized, are stored at the MICOA library.

<sup>89</sup> Filipe Ribas, “Não há gás, não há carvão, não há lenha,” *Tempo*, November 20, 1983.

## **Conclusion: An Immovable Legacy**

“Tsendzeleni,” a play performed in Maputo in 1989, takes place in Alto Maé in 1985 as food and fuel become scarce and trash piles grow higher just outside apartment doors.<sup>90</sup> A woman from the countryside on her way to see her daughter is stranded midway in Maputo when her bus is ambushed by Renamo, and she seeks temporary refuge in Alto Maé, just within the City of Cement. There she witnesses people consumed by their individual problems. In their selfishness they cannot resolve the problems they have in common – such as the ubiquitous piles of trash. A black marketeer quarrels with sanitation workers, who request rice in exchange for carting away the trash, since they cannot buy any food with their municipal salaries. (There is no food to buy.) A doctor almost kills his neighbor for moving the trash pile in front of his door – after the doctor has just finished moving it in front of his neighbor’s door. The doctor starts building a wall in their shared veranda, though it will block his neighbor’s only means of egress. This way he can protect the space he has declared his.

The play is ultimately about how the City of Cement is not just the site of corruption, but also how it has somehow corrupted those who live there. In the City of Cement people are anonymous, black market goods are openly bartered for sexual favors, and no one takes responsibility for their neighbors and community. Anything goes. In the adjoining *subúrbios*, however, from where most have come – and where conditions,

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<sup>90</sup> Savele, “Tsendzeleni.” The title (in Changana) means something to the effect of “I am in the middle of the street, without shelter, naked to the elements.” It is repeated as the first line of the play’s chorus, followed by the lines “I continue to live/Though they hate me, I continue to live.”

presumably, ought to be worse – the people are disciplined, there is vigilance against crime and corruption, and common spaces are kept clean. It is a romanticized picture of the *subúrbios* during this time, to be sure, but one that comports with the romantic vision that persists in recollections today. The woman from the countryside, who has suffered more than anyone, appears in Maputo as the poor, wandering saint, and she stands as ultimate witness to just how far from their roots people became after moving so high off the ground and into apartment blocks.

What was it about the spaces of the City of Cement that inspired such angst, paranoia, neglect, and isolation? Why were yards in the *subúrbios* swept clean every morning while stairwell landings in the City of Cement became garbage receptacles? Part of the explanation must surely be found in the physical qualities of the spaces themselves. In the *subúrbios* there were few reliable door locks, yards were sometimes shared by neighbors (and someone always had an eye on what was happening there), and everyday activities, such as the fetching of water, put one in constant contact with others – people, moreover, with whom one generally had years of familiarity. The greater sense of order and community in the *subúrbios*, under objectively worse housing conditions, was partly due to the very lack of privacy that so many complained about. *Grupos dinamizadores* had an easier time monitoring and directing activities in the *bairros* than they did in the City of Cement (for good and for ill) because people in the *subúrbios* were already accustomed to monitoring their neighbors – and, knowing that neighbors were probably watching, monitoring themselves.<sup>91</sup> In the City of Cement, however, one could keep

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<sup>91</sup> Though situated in a radically different context, Jane Jacobs's classic description of the everyday forms of vigilance that keep a Manhattan block safe and livable is germane



mostly behind closed doors. Most common areas, upon which no windows faced, rapidly transformed into no-man's land.

Another factor was the felt absence of the state. In the *subúrbios*, people had new landlords, APIE, represented on site by the GDs. But tenants remained in the same or similar units as before. APIE failed to maintain the condition of their units, people were compelled to make repairs themselves, and to their disappointment APIE turned out to be like any disinterested landlord. In the *subúrbios*, at least, these were the kinds of frustrations people had long endured. In the City of Cement, however, surroundings were entirely new or even exotic to tenants, and the terms of their occupation were from the outset determined by APIE. Sustaining a life there, moreover, required much greater dependence on APIE's attention. Most people could not manage on their own even if compelled to. When clogged toilets flooded apartments and could not be repaired, and when elevators creaked to a halt and could not be put in motion again, it created a sense of helplessness and abandonment that trying conditions in the *subúrbios* did not. Visibly, the sight of apartment high-rises that so recently looked so new now deteriorating so rapidly, without a shot being fired in the city, would have reinforced, or even engendered, a feeling that the state, such as it was, was itself in free-fall – which in most respects it was. Living in the City of Cement was for many their primary interaction with the government, and naturally one of the most important means through which their relationship to the state was understood. Yet in the City of Cement, where people were

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here. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

neighbors with government ministries, and often neighbors in the same building, the state could still feel impossibly distant.

Which brings us to the principal factor, one discussed earlier, of how hostile the spaces of the City of Cement were to people's accustomed ways of life. For all the condescension directed toward so-called bumpkins who did not know how to use flush toilets and who raised animals in bathtubs and in stairwells, the real issue was not that people's everyday practices were inappropriate to the City of Cement, but that the City of Cement was fundamentally inappropriate to Mozambique, a permanent reminder of colonialism's colossally "bad fit." And much was beyond Frelimo's ability to control. There was little the government could do, after lowering rents, to make apartment living affordable, or for that matter, livable.

The problem, at its base, was concrete. At independence, the buildings of the City of Cement were not going anywhere. And the buildings were subject to fall apart if not properly maintained, requiring an investment in the buildings themselves, in the army of building superintendents to look after them, and in the bulky bureaucracy required to manage it all. To foot this bill, Frelimo was initially compelled to preserve the kind of economic and social segmentation that in other areas – such as public health and education – it refused to do. Even life in a rent-free apartment, however, proved considerably harder for many than life in the *subúrbios*. Inequality was seemingly hardwired into the city's structure.

## Chapter 5

### Planning in the *Subúrbios*, 1977 to 1992

In early 1977, the young People's Republic of Mozambique established the National Housing Directorate and located it in the *subúrbios*, in a group of buildings on the route to the airport. This was something of a re-branding of an existing institution. The Directorate's stripped-down, single-floor facilities had been built in the late 1960s to house the Portuguese-era planning and housing agency, the Office of Urbanization and Habitation.<sup>1</sup> To the architects and planners who once worked at the agency, the complex had been known as the Office of the *Caniço*, because of its location and its task of improving suburban conditions.<sup>2</sup> For their part, the people living in the reed houses surrounding the so-called Office of the *Caniço* came to call their neighborhood *Urbanização* ("urbanization") in recognition of the government installation in their midst.<sup>3</sup> The gestures of reciprocity more or less ended there. During the final years of Portuguese rule, the Office of the *Caniço* designed schools and market facilities for the *subúrbios*, planned infrastructural improvements, and planned new housing projects in

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<sup>1</sup> Gabinete de Urbanização e Habitação da Região de Lourenço Marques (GUHRLM).

<sup>2</sup> Interview with António Barata Feyo, former Lourenço Marques planner, Ericeira, Portugal, Nov. 30, 2010; interview with José Bruschy, former chief architect for the team that produced the 1969 urban plan, Lisbon, Jan. 13, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Much as the names of many areas of the *subúrbios* derived from the name or nickname of the local cantina owner. See Ch. 1.

more distant areas, but by independence it had little to show for its efforts. The prefabricated primary schools erected in the *bairros* were so few relative to the number of children in need as to be little more than novelties.<sup>4</sup> (Some of the schools came equipped with swimming pools; the school in the Beira-Mar area of Chamanculo, built in 1972, was never filled with water.) Staff from the Office of the *Canico* rarely circulated in suburban neighborhoods, nor was it common to consult suburban residents on projects in the works.

Aloofness was hardly a quality peculiar to Mozambique's colonial-era housing and planning agency. It was the habit of urban planners and architects the world over to see cities in two dimensions and from commanding heights – the view afforded by maps and blueprints. The Office of the *Canico*, however, had few resources at its disposal in the march to modernization, and a relatively reduced mandate.<sup>5</sup> The “psychosocial” outreach of the colonial regime during its last decade, of which the activities of the Office of the *Canico* were a part, was something of a last-ditch effort to win Mozambicans over to Portuguese rule.<sup>6</sup> The office's projects took the form of scattered interventions. It did not seek widespread structural changes in Mozambican life.

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<sup>4</sup> República Popular de Moçambique, *Cidade de Maputo Plano de Estrutura* (Maputo: Instituto Nacional do Planeamento Físico, 1985), Appendix IV, FAPF/no. 558a. See also the map of Lourenço Marques schools and their 1973 student populations (with racial breakdowns) in Maria Clara Mendes, *Maputo antes da independência: Geografia de uma cidade colonial*, vol. 68, Memórias do Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical (Lisbon: IICT, 1985), 217.

<sup>5</sup> A better demonstration of the Portuguese dalliance with “high modernism” in Africa is the Cahora Bassa dam project, initiated in the late 1960s in the Tete district (and later called Cahora Bassa). Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement, and the Delusion of Development: Cahora Bassa and Its Legacies in Mozambique, 1965-2007* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> See Ch. 2.

Its successor agency in independent Mozambique had even fewer resources at its disposal. Its explicit function was a technical one, but as with all post-independence Mozambican institutions, its implicit mission was to effect universal, revolutionary change in people's relationship to the notional state, and to each other – to produce “Mozambicans” and to “mobilize” them toward collective goals. The previous chapter discussed the beginnings of a relationship between the residents of Maputo and the nascent state. Emphasized were the ways that people in the *subúrbios* foisted responsibilities on the new Frelimo authorities at a time when the state's attentions were absorbed elsewhere – a remarkable inversion of the narrative of heavy-handed, state-centered policymaking as it was experienced in much of the countryside. This chapter continues to trace this developing reciprocity, as government entities more consciously sought to absorb the *subúrbios* into the body of the notional nation and the embrace of the state, or rather, the state-always-in-progress.

This chapter offers an account of the first urban planning project in the *subúrbios* after independence. The Maxaquene Project, led by architects and planners at the National Housing Directorate, may have been the first of its kind in Africa, at least on the large scale at which it was deployed.<sup>7</sup> In upgrading living conditions, it sought to

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<sup>7</sup> The following account of the Maxaquene Project is a synthesis of the published and unpublished accounts of project participants, primarily Ingemar Saevfors, *Maxaquene: A Comprehensive Account of the First Urban Upgrading Experience in the New Mozambique*, Human Settlements and Socio-Cultural Environments (UNESCO, March 1986), and also Barry Pinsky, *Notes on the Maxaquene Urbanization Experience* (Toronto, November 1980), FAPF; Barry Pinsky, “Análise do projecto de Maxaquene/Polana Caniço e da situação do projecto de PNUD/DNH,” June 18, 1979, BP; Barry Pinsky, “Territorial Dilemmas: Changing Urban Life,” in *A Difficult Road: The Transition to Socialism in Mozambique*, ed. John S. Saul (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 279–315; Diego Robles Rivas, *Barrio Maxaquene Monografia*

preserve rather than destroy existing suburban housing. To do this successfully it was necessary to invite the participation of all residents in the planning process – some tens of thousands. In both respects the Maxaquene Project rejected the authoritarian slum-clearing paradigm that had prevailed not just in Mozambique, but on the continent under both colonial and independent regimes for the better part of a century. For its significance in the history of African urbanism alone this largely forgotten project would be worth recalling, but its importance to this study is to demonstrate the extent to which the roll-out of the project – the *act* of shaping space – rather than some initial plan or a final, imposed result, gave meaning and definition to the relationship between suburban residents and the state they aspired to have. The previous chapter described how the spontaneous grassroots nationalization of rental properties in the *subúrbios* by elements in the neighborhoods themselves was a way of positing a set of rights and responsibilities relative to a government then just coming into being. Similarly, people in the

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(Direcção Nacional de Habitação, República Popular de Moçambique & UNDP-Habitat, 1981), MICOA/no. D-6481; Diego Robles Rivas, *Barrio Maxaquene Encuesta Socio-Económico* (Direcção Nacional de Habitação, República Popular de Moçambique & UNDP-Habitat, 1981), MICOA/no. D-6481. It is also based on numerous interviews with people involved in the project: Ingemar Sävfors & Eva Sävfors, Mar. 10, 2013, Stockholm, and also Ingemar Sävfors, Mar. 11-12, 2013, Stockholm; Barry Pinsky, Nov. 5, 2012 & Jan. 15, 2013 (Toronto, by Skype); Patrice Comege Mussenge & Carlos Macave, Oct. 18, 2012; Augusto Duvane & Salomão Manjate, Mar. 23, 2013; Lídia Massingue, Mar. 25, 2013; José Forjaz, Apr. 15, 2013; Daniel Nhambaga, Apr. 21, 2013; Antastásia Titos Mahumane, Antonietta Titos Mahumane, Ana Vasco Machaieie, et al, May 4, 2013; Prafula Jaiantilal, May 13, 2013. More clearly individualized points of view will be specifically cited. Paul Jenkins addresses the Maxaquene Project in Paul Jenkins, “The Role of Civil Society in Shelter at the Periphery: The Experience of Peri-Urban Communities in Maputo, Mozambique,” in *Urban Development and Civil Society: The Role of Communities in Sustainable Cities*, ed. Michael Carley, Paul Jenkins, and Harry Smith (London: Earthscan, 2001), 39-40.

neighborhoods affected by the Maxaquene Project, through the act of taking part in the project, visualized both a state and a link to the state, and to make demands accordingly.

James Scott, in *Seeing Like a State* (1998), devotes much of his critique to examining how “high modernist” urban planning is used in the infiltration of state power.<sup>8</sup> States seek to make otherwise amorphous populations “legible,” he argues, so that they can be controlled, taxed, and potentially “improved” – and legibility, in turn, entails the imposition of rectilinear street grids, houses and businesses with addresses, and areas zoned for specific, pre-designated functions so that future growth is held hostage to present expectations. The visual order of straight lines substitutes for the functioning order of everyday life, which can often look quite messy when seen only through maps and aerial photography – especially places like the *subúrbios*. Colonial regimes (say, Portugal in Africa) and revolutionary regimes (Mozambique at independence would be an obvious case) are particularly prone to imposing high modernist solutions – almost invariably destructive ones – because during such scenarios “each disposes of an unusual degree of power.”<sup>9</sup>

Maputo’s *subúrbios*, however, were better characterized not by a history of unwanted attention from the state, but by its marked absence. And when planners appeared in Maxaquene, people did not fill the fuel tanks of bulldozers with sand, or resort to the many forms of resistance that Scott describes for similar historical episodes. Rather, neighborhood residents saw an opportunity to make their houses and households and suburban lanes visible to the state after decades of living in the city’s “backyard,” as

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<sup>8</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

President Samora Machel once put it. Participation in the Maxaquene Project initiated a form of self-governance that portrayed itself as governance from above. Through the act of planning the layout of streets for their neighborhood, residents of Maxaquene imagined a functioning and benevolent state where there was not one yet.<sup>10</sup>

Nor would there be. Maputo, both before and after independence, offers an important corollary to Scott's argument: scenarios in which the state did not possess "an unusual degree of power," but was rather in many respects weak and neglectful. Along these lines, the last third of this chapter discusses the fate of urban planning in the 1980s, when the ramshackle Mozambique state neared collapse on most every front, and when Frelimo's attempts at making Maputo's neighborhoods legible – by carving them up into administrative units, and by expelling "unproductive elements" – were just about all it could manage to do. This was less evidence of a confident state flexing its power, than it was the mark of its desperation.

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<sup>10</sup> Anthropologist Morten Nielsen describes a similar phenomenon for a neighborhood at Maputo's fringes in the 2000s – an intended "model neighborhood" where the state has made its mark with surveyed plots, but has subsequently withdrawn. As discussed in the thesis introduction, Nielsen uses the term "inverse governmentality" to describe when people perform as if governance is present precisely because governance is absent. Morten Nielsen, "In the Vicinity of the State: House Construction, Personhood, and the State in Maputo, Mozambique" (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2008); Morten Nielsen, "Inverse Governmentality: The Paradoxical Production of Peri-Urban Planning in Maputo, Mozambique," *Critique of Anthropology* 31, no. 4 (2011): 329–58.



## The Maxaquene Project: Changing Expectations

Following independence, Machel recruited architect José Forjaz to help build the new country.<sup>11</sup> Born in Portugal, Forjaz had come to Lourenço Marques in his teens, and returned to the city after his studies, but as a Frelimo sympathizer he had left in the 1960s for neighboring Swaziland, where he had established a solo architectural practice. With degrees from the University of Porto and Columbia University, few people in any field in Mozambique matched Forjaz for credentials. While the architect was valued for his technical expertise, Forjaz also gained Machel's confidence as an advisor on a range of matters, and he helped Frelimo cultivate sponsors in Europe. He was a natural choice to head the new Housing Directorate, and he gave the small agency a larger profile than it might otherwise have had.

Upon assuming the directorship, however, it was not clear what the agency ought to do. As Frelimo had yet to turn its attention toward urban matters, Forjaz had not been given precise orientation, and there was no obvious way to deploy the agency's limited resources. His first task was a basic one: to staff up. Only a few Portuguese personnel stayed on after independence, and in all of Mozambique there were now no more than a half-dozen Mozambican architects, including himself and his superior, the minister of public works. Forjaz recruited specialists by tapping networks of Frelimo sympathizers in Europe, Latin America, and North America, and they tended to be more radical in outlook than Forjaz himself, who sought what he considered to be pragmatic goals. In the

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<sup>11</sup> José Forjaz Arquitectos, ed., *José Forjaz Arquitecto* (Almada, Portugal: Casa da Cerca, Centro de Arte Contemporânea, 2010); António Cabrita and José Forjaz, *José Forjaz: A paixão do tangível, uma poética do espaço*, *Histórias que tecem a História* (Maputo: Escola Portuguesa de Moçambique & Centro de Ensino e Língua Portuguesa, 2012); interview with Forjaz.

short term, that meant continuing colonial-era site-and-service projects, such as the one in Matola, and designing and building schools. Forjaz himself became involved in building guesthouses to host VIPs who would be attending Frelimo's upcoming Third Party Congress, the event at which the movement officially declared itself as a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. Few initiatives addressed in a significant way the conditions in the country's various *subúrbios*.<sup>12</sup>

In 1976, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) had provided Mozambique with bulldozers and helped fund the emergency relocation of residents living in Maputo's flooded areas to newly surveyed areas northeast of the city. UNDP also paid for the services of an architect and planner to be put at Mozambique's disposal. Ingemar Sävfors, a Swede who had grown up in French Congo, had already logged experience on projects in several African countries, and that year he had been involved in a social and housing survey of the suburban Maputo neighborhood of Maxaquene.<sup>13</sup> When Sävfors returned to Maputo in 1977 to work for the freshly minted Housing Directorate, the office did not know how to put him to use.

At first Sävfors made work for himself, designing schools and other facilities. He was openly scornful of the on-going project in Matola, which surveyed plots on distant, virgin terrain, installed basic infrastructure, and then provided technical assistance to

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<sup>12</sup> For the challenges facing DNH at its founding, see Pinsky, "Territorial Dilemmas," 293–294; Paul Jenkins, "Mozambique," in *Housing Policies in the Socialist Third World*, ed. Kosta Mathéy (Munich: Profil, 1990), 147–79; Paul Jenkins, "The Role of Civil Society," 33–50.

<sup>13</sup> Krisno Nimpuno et al., *The Malhangalene Survey: A Housing Study of an Unplanned Settlement in Maputo, Mozambique, 1976*, 2 vols. (Göteborg: Chalmers Tekniska Högskola, Arkitektur, 1977). Much of the area called Malhangalene at the time of the survey was later identified as Maxaquene when neighborhood boundaries were given greater definition.

people building concrete-block houses. It served only perhaps several hundred households, at great cost, with the beneficiaries mostly civil servants. Sävfors later recalled that some Matola homeowners complained that their houses had not been outfitted with garages. After decades of disappointments, governments and donor agencies throughout the continent were already rethinking the housing-based model of urban improvement: even the most bare-bones housing schemes were too costly relative to the number of people who actually benefitted.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the more ambitious the project, the longer it took to implement, and long periods of project gestation meant that people currently in need were compelled to exercise extreme patience or simply leaped over for the sake of the following generation.

Sävfors had worked on a small project in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, a few years before, one that diverged considerably from most state-led housing strategies in Africa at the time. The Ouagadougou project had immediate positive results because its objectives were relatively modest.<sup>15</sup> The idea was that one could make a rapid impact simply by opening paths of access through tightly packed settlements. Doing so instantly made possible fire and ambulance services and trash pick-up (if, that is, the municipality devoted resources to such services). It also made possible the gradual (and more expensive) installation over time of infrastructure: water pipes, electricity, sewage lines. Infrastructure, which people could not build for themselves, took precedence over

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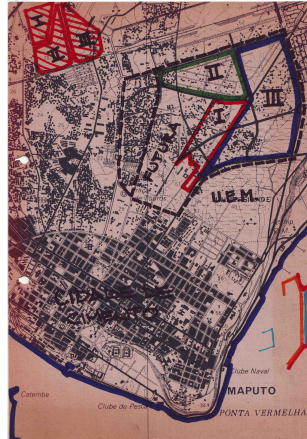
<sup>14</sup> See also Branwen Gruffydd Jones, “Civilizing African Cities: International Housing and Urban Policy from Colonial to Neoliberal Times,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 6, no. 1 (2012): 31–32.

<sup>15</sup> The project appears to be the one followed up by architect Antoni Folkers and others in the 1980s. Antoni Folkers, *Modern Architecture in Africa* (Amsterdam: Sun, 2010), 97–138.

housing, which people had been building for themselves for a long time. Forjaz gave quick approval for what was termed a “pilot” scheme, and an area of about 60 hectares in the neighborhood then identified as Maxaquene One was chosen for it. A Canadian *cooperante*, architect and planner Barry Pinsky, was later assigned to the team as well, and he and Sävfors worked as lead partners on the project.



**Fig. 5.1.** Maxaquene One before the Maxaquene Project, 1977.  
(Source: Ingemar Sävfors)



**Figs. 5.2 & 5.3.** Maxaquene relative to Maputo's City of Cement, 1977.  
(Sources: MICOA, above; Ingemar Sävfors, below)

Maxaquene was not an obvious place to intervene. Most of the suburban population was concentrated to the northwest of the City of Cement, in long-established neighborhoods such as Chamanculo, Xipamanine, Minkadjuine, and Mafalala. Maxaquene, however, was located in a more recently settled area due north of the City of Cement. (Figs. 5.1-5.3.) It was chosen as the site of intervention primarily due to its comparatively lower population density. In the older,

more established suburban neighborhoods, cutting roads through the tightly woven fabric of houses and alleys would have necessitated the displacement of far too many people. Not so in lower-density Maxaquene One, and yet there were enough people in the area (close to 10,000) for the plan to make a significant impact. There was also the added benefit that planners knew more about Maxaquene than most other suburban areas, thanks to the survey that Sävfors and a team of Swedish architecture students had conducted the year before, probably the first study of a suburban population and their homes in a decade. The study was useful not just for the data it generated about incomes, family structure, and house construction, but also because Sävfors and others had worked side-by-side with Maxaquene's *grupos dinamizadores* (GDs), the neighborhood-level governing committees whose cooperation they would also need on the current project.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, there was a sense that the study had constituted an agreement with the people in the neighborhood: that if there was to be government intervention in the future, it ought to be in Maxaquene. The planners feared the consequences of breaking that implicit promise.



**Fig. 5.4.** The planning team meets with the local *grupo dinamizador*, 1977 or 1978.  
(Source: Barry Pinsky)

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<sup>16</sup> For the origins of the GDs, see Ch. 4.

The GD for Maxaquene One took to Sävfors's proposal with enthusiasm. (Figs. 5.4, 5.5.) One section of Maxaquene One, with a population of about 2,000 people, was chosen as a testing ground, and the GD organized a mass meeting there to inform people about it. Residents were told that opening up space in the neighborhood was a necessary first step toward water provision and other amenities, such as schools and health posts, but that some people would have to be moved to make way for the new roadways and public areas. And unlike under the colonial-era administration, when people were given small lump-sum payments to soften the blow of being displaced, those whose houses would have to be demolished in the Maxaquene Project would not receive indemnification. The new government could not afford it.



**Fig. 5.5.** A neighborhood meeting to discuss the project, 1977 or 1978. (Source: Barry Pinsky)

There was no significant dissent voiced – at least that is how the meeting was recalled. Of course, dissenters under such circumstances may have felt it wise to keep their opinions to themselves, especially given that so many others were enthusiastic about the prospect of water provision and the other advertised benefits. The GD gave the planners the go-ahead, but on one condition: that no one who was to be moved would be displaced completely from the neighborhood. Memories of colonial-era removals were still fresh. The *caniço* housing just south

of the neighborhood had been stamped out by formal development, mostly for working-class Portuguese, in the 1950s and 1960s. An industrial zone to the north had displaced many others. And the area just to the east was populated by many people who in the 1950s had been forced from their homes to make way for a new golf course by the bay shore. Given this history, anyone compelled to sacrifice for the betterment of the neighborhood must benefit from the improvements in some way.

After conducting an aerial survey, the planners returned to the neighborhood with a rough plan for roadways. Like the plan for Ouagadougou, this initial scheme attempted to minimize demolitions by diverting proposed roadways around houses as much as possible. In the meantime, an “urbanization commission” (later called the “residents commission”) was established by the GD to work with the planners – the near equivalent of the residents commissions then known only in some apartment buildings in the City of Cement.

The commission rejected the resulting zigzags out of hand. Once awakened, the desire to be “urbanized” manifested itself, in this instance, in a demand for straight roadways, just as one saw in the City of Cement, even if it meant that more houses would have to be demolished and more people resettled elsewhere in the neighborhood. “It’s not a real road unless it’s straight,” said Augusto Duvane, the former GD member responsible for housing, in a recent interview. “If you’re going to do something, do it right!”

Even many of the straight roads, however, were not exactly straight. The 1969 master plan, approved in 1972 but never implemented, envisioned new roads and highways running through various suburban neighborhoods, including Maxaquene. Fearing that to tinker with the 1969 road plan too much might invite unforeseen problems in the future, the Maxaquene planners retraced its general outlines. For reasons that are unclear, the main access roads in that



plan, while parallel to each other, curved gently away from the principal thoroughfare, like the veins of a leaf. Not exactly straight, but straight enough.<sup>17</sup> The Maxaquene planners then plotted ancillary roads, made narrow to minimize disruption to people's existing houses. The commission demanded wider roadways, however. Again they had a more prosperous "urbanized" future in mind. The widest access roads were 18 meters, the equivalent of almost five lanes of highway. At the time, fewer than two percent of Maxaquene residents possessed a car.<sup>18</sup>

As an organizing principle, Maxaquene One was broken up into a few dozen *quarteirões* – "blocks." It was perhaps the first time in Maputo that such a word was applied to fluid suburban space. Each *quarteirão* was comprised of some 50 to 80 households (roughly 250 to 400 people), each *quarteirão* elected a committee and a leader, and at the center of each *quarteirão* was plotted a "plaza" where water spigots would eventually go, and which would serve as a "semi-public" area where meetings could be held and children could play. More difficult to plan for were future schools, health posts, and childcare centers, which were to serve a wider area than a single block. Colleagues who had worked in roughly similar Latin American contexts offered some guidelines, and the planners made educated guesses as to how much space they would have to reserve for still-to-be-determined public installations. Some 25 percent of the

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<sup>17</sup> For that matter, even the street grid of the City of Cement was not perfectly rectilinear. Streets frequently crossed avenues at oblique angles, resulting in many trapezoidal property lots – and even more irregular shapes where the city grid met the curving street that once formed the boundary of the city proper.

<sup>18</sup> One is reminded of James Ferguson's analysis of modernity in the cities of Zambia's Copperbelt. While anthropologists were busy critiquing the conceits of Modernization Theory – the idea that there is a universal template for developmental progress – Zambian copper miners themselves fully embraced the idea. James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

total area of Maxaquene One would have to be kept clear. Some of it could come out of already existing open space. Most of it would have to come out of people's yards and houses.

Explaining to residents that houses would have to be demolished was different than convincing individuals to demolish their own houses. Making this case, however, was not the planners' task. The problem was up to the neighborhood's urbanization commission to resolve. Members of commission and the project's assigned social worker, Prafula Jaiantilal, went house to house, translating the plan into practical realities for each of the residents who was going to be affected. "There are people who are always resistant," she later recalled. "But after talking to them many times we overcame their concerns. Neighbors influenced neighbors." As it happened, the number of people who had to be resettled was relatively small, certainly when compared to the many people who simply had to move their houses a few feet. For the some 90 percent of residents who were living in houses of reeds or wood-and-zinc, having to shift a little to make way for a road was not a terrible burden, since such materials could be recovered and a house therefore more easily rebuilt. Many, in any case, were houses made of reeds already near the end of their use-life.

Not a few houses built in concrete block, however, were also situated in the new right-of-ways, and their owners faced a greater loss of investment. Their predicament stirred little sympathy among their neighbors. Some had started building in blocks only since independence, when authority was in total flux and the enforcement of the ban on concrete had effectively lapsed.<sup>19</sup> The ban had never been officially repealed, however, and some went on building in concrete even when they were advised not to since it would hamper the future ability to improve suburban conditions. The same logic applied in the colonial era as well, but at the time any

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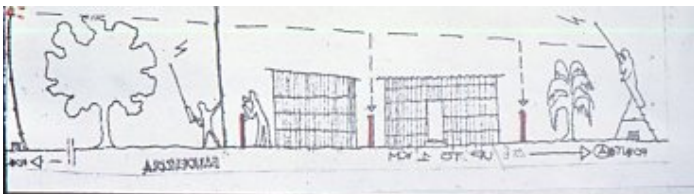
<sup>19</sup> See Ch. 3.

infrastructural upgrade meant certain displacement for the people already living there. Now, however, some of those building houses in concrete were doing so in defiance of what many had reason to think was the common interest, and they did not want to see their image of an appropriately modern plan of urbanization compromised by the selfishness of the few. Even before the planning team arrived at Maxaquene, anonymous vigilantes had under cover of night destroyed two newly built concrete-block houses in the northern part of the neighborhood. Other resentments were also likely in play: The more one displayed one's relative wealth, the more one raised suspicions that one's wealth was ill-gained.

Suspicious were also raised because the roadways had somehow avoided the houses of members of the GD. This concern may have been allayed in part when the concrete-block house of one prominent GD member was demolished to make way for a future school. Some other owners of in-the-way concrete-block houses were given concrete houses that had been abandoned, or they were given another unit, outside the neighborhood, that the government had recently nationalized (thus breaking, at least in some instances, the initial promise that no one would have to leave Maxaquene). The number of people inconvenienced to such an extent were few enough that more than 30 years later those most involved in the project could recall each case. There was one case that particularly stuck out in memory, of a police officer who steadfastly refused to sacrifice his concrete-block house to the project. The case went all the way to the desk of Forjaz, the national housing director – an incident he recalled – but no one could remember exactly how it was resolved.

The second challenge was more strictly technical. Planners in any context, and for reasons long ingrained in the culture of the profession, tend to favor a blank slate – or what they see as a blank slate. Better to clear a site, trees and all, in order to afterward build a project

exactly according to blueprint – and then plant new trees, this time in more preferable locations. Before the advent of GPS, working on cleared terrain was also the easiest way to survey lines, since there was nothing to obstruct surveying instruments. In Maxaquene, however, the goal was to do as little damage as possible, and lines had to be surveyed through structures that were very much in the way of viewing scopes. The solution was to mount strobe lamps on the top of poles, so distant points could be seen over the roofs of houses. (Fig. 5.6.) Once surveyed, and houses moved out of the way, it might only take a few hours to bulldoze the access roads for a *quarteirão*. For the many residents involved in the surveying and in finding leftover land to settle uprooted families, the work gave them a more personal stake in the project, and at the same time they developed a new skill set. “They were amazed themselves with how they could ‘create’ space,” Sävfors later recalled. As the project spread from the initial test site, a group of men now adept in the process circulated from *quarteirão* to *quarteirão* to help in the surveying and to train others.



**Fig. 5.6.** Illustration of how plots and roadways were surveyed despite physical obstacles. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)

The making of roadways, the shifting of houses, and above all the collective hands-on participation that these activities entailed, gave many residents of the neighborhood a new perspective on their relationship to the city. (Figs. 5.7, 5.8.) People’s ideas of rights and responsibilities, that is, their conception of urban citizenship, changed as the project progressed, and thus so did the project. Before the planners arrived, expectations were generally very low.

People had been given to understand that whatever benefits independence might bring, they would be slow in coming. As people helped lay out roadways, however, their expectations changed. If, at the beginning the project, people found themselves consenting to (or simply tolerating) something that they had not conceived, now they had very specific ideas of how the project ought to proceed going forth. They now sought to align their houses with the roadways, and they wanted rectilinear plots – what they took to be as the conventional marks of secure tenure and permanence in a modern city.

The desire for some form of secure tenure was longstanding. Participation in the project brought it to the surface. Some felt they could not invest in their property, such as by building a better quality house, unless they knew the land was theirs to build on. Some felt the need for security more acutely: those who had been displaced by the project to another part of the neighborhood, where they now lived on a plot that had been carved out of another's. The planners initially resisted the call for systematic plot parceling. They feared that it would create conflict among neighbors – that it would somehow wreck what they perceived as the community spirit. From their outsiders' perspective, the visual disorder of households and yards may have sprung from an organic logic that they did not understand, and upon which they should not trammel. Their concerns were pushed aside. People started surveying plots on their own, with the support of *quarteirão* leaders and the urbanization commission, and marked out boundaries with whatever was at hand, such as sticks or rocks.

Faced with a new impulse they could not control, the planners chose to assist the parceling process. Barry Pinsky produced an illustrated “how-to” manual on how to properly survey plots, and it was distributed among each of the block surveying teams.<sup>20</sup> The manual

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<sup>20</sup> Direcção Nacional de Habitação, *Manual de parcelamento* (Maputo, 1978), BP.

showed how to arrange plots so that they all fronted on new access paths or a roadway, and how to adjust street and path grids to accommodate trees (which were important as meeting places, among many other uses). Guidelines were set. It was up to each *quarteirão* to choose whether or not to parcel out plots. Thirty of the 33 blocks in Maxaquene One opted in. After plots were surveyed, homeowners were not required to move their house immediately. For many, adjusting one's house to the newly surveyed layout represented a second shift following soon upon the move required by the access roads. Until the reeds of one's house had rotted and needed replacing, one was not forced to immediately vacate what was perhaps only a small piece of a neighbor's property.



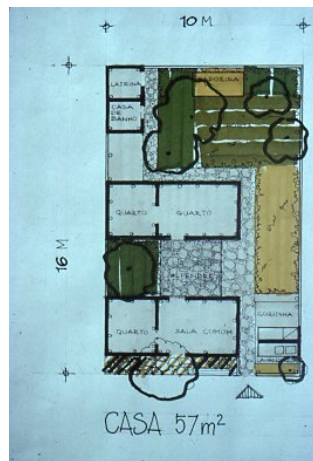
**Figs. 5.7 & 5.8.** After the clearing of access roads, 1977.  
(Sources: Ingemar Sävfors, above; Giorgio Marchetti/MICOA, below [contact sheet image])

The greatest obstacle to surveying plots was to determine how big a standard plot should be, a decision with far-reaching consequences. There was a general consensus among residents

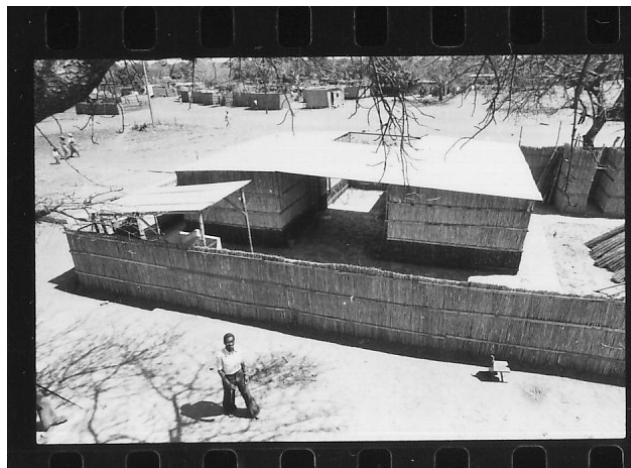
that every plot ought to have standard dimensions, which required taking land from some people to give to others – a kind of equalization. People naturally wanted plots as large as possible, to be able to accommodate animals and a small garden and to keep living quarters and cooking areas at a sufficient distance from latrines. Many had in mind the enormous plots that had been hastily laid out for flood victims soon after independence, in an area further north. But that area had been sparsely settled before the flood victims arrived. The Maxaquene planners demonstrated that the same dimensions that had been used in that neighborhood, in 360 square meter plots, would, if applied to Maxaquene One, force the expulsion of more than one thousand families. After a great deal of discussion at group meetings, plots of less than half that size – 160 square meters – were reluctantly agreed to. (Fig. 5.9.) The choice was a fundamental one in that it forced residents to consider how urban life, and livelihoods, ought to be defined. To convince people of the viability of the smaller plot, planners developed a dozen hypothetical plans, each showing a different arrangement of house and latrine and the potential for house expansion. The plans were posted outside the planners' neighborhood office for everyone to see, and the urbanization commission was asked to pick the plans it preferred. (Fig. 5.10.) Planners, technicians, and volunteers from the neighborhood then got to work building two model reed homes, based on the selected plans, so people could see in three dimensions how such an arrangement might work. The key was to design a better-functioning latrine and to push house and latrine to the opposite extremes of the plot. To make this option appear more appealing, planners sketched in a vegetable garden between house and latrine.



**Fig. 5.9.** Debating plot size, 1977. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)



**Fig. 5.10.** The winning plan. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)



**Fig. 5.11.** A model house. (Source: Giorgio Marchetti/MICOA [contact sheet image])



As GD member Augusto Duvane later recalled, the model houses were larger and of far better materials and workmanship than anyone was likely to build on their own. (Fig. 5.11.) Reeds corroded within a year or two; it made little financial sense to build an elaborate house out of the material. Rather, as another resident recalled, the model reed houses inspired the designs of concrete-block houses that people built later on. The model reed homes were a form of advertising – intended to sell people on the plot size, rather than on the houses themselves. Their ultimate importance is not so much in how persuasive they were, but rather the dynamic they represented: planners seeking to convince the planned-for.



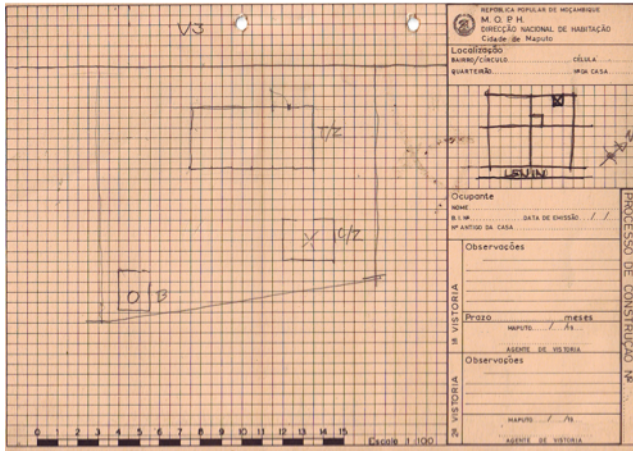
**Fig. 5.12.** The “typical housing block,” following plot parceling. (Source: Barry Pinsky)



**Fig. 5.13.** Participation in the Maxaquene Project initiated a form of self-governance that portrayed itself as governance from above. Here a slab of concrete commemorates the date of the organization of Block No. 5, Cell B, by the Ministry of Public Works and Habitation and the National Housing Directorate. (Source: Giorgio Marchetti/MICOA [contact sheet image])

Each plot now had a defined place within each block, at least relative to other plots, and was given its own number, registered with the neighborhood GD office. (Figs. 5.12, 5.13.) To have their newly surveyed plots officialized in this way was the closest that most had ever come to possessing a title deed. Those wanting to build in concrete consulted with one of the planners or with the main technical worker, Carlos Macave, and were given improvised building permits (Fig. 5.14.) Initially, Pinsky and Sävfors typed up “declarations,” but with about one request coming in per day, it became expedient to have a house plan sketched out quickly on graph paper on site. Written out on a single sheet of paper, with the pre-printed letterhead of the Housing Directorate, the “permits” bypassed the convoluted and costly construction approval process that the municipality required, and gave permission to a homeowner to build in concrete. In April 1978, a favorably update of the Maxaquene Project appeared in *Tempo*, the weekly magazine, noting that all the alleyways in the neighborhood had disappeared. “In place of these alleys, roads have been opened that allow access from block to block. When ‘block’ is mentioned, someone might wonder how it is possible to use that word in one of these neighborhoods.

Nonetheless, new access roads make it possible to use that word today.”<sup>21</sup> As one resident proudly put it to Sävfors following the making of roadways and plots, “Now we are *urbanizado*.”



**Fig. 5.14.** A sample of an improvised building permit granted to homeowners by project technicians, showing the dimensions of plot, house, and outbuildings, as well as location relative to new access roads. The municipality nullified all such permits in 1979, halting much new concrete-block construction in Maxaquene. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)

### The Maxaquene Project: Who Decides?

What most impressed the planners at the time was how quickly the residents of Maxaquene One “mobilized.” They were astonished at how thousands of people, whose previous experience of mass organization was limited to weekly neighborhood cleanups, could be inspired to work together for common purpose, how they could break into smaller specialized units for various tasks, how many were willing to make sacrifices for what was perceived as the common good, and how many others were eager to assist those compelled to make such sacrifices. The classic planning dynamic had been inverted. A government agency had not imposed a plan; the planning proposals of the two foreign architects were more like well-meaning suggestions. Rather, planning inspired the creation of local governing organs to facilitate planning: first the

<sup>21</sup> Narciso Castanheira, “Em todo o país: Em marcha o ordenamento das zonas suburbanas,” *Tempo*, April 2, 1978, 32.

urbanization commission (later called the “residents commission”) and then the block committees.

Yet the question remains: just how participatory was this project of participatory planning? “Mobilization,” the mustering of people toward collective action, had almost military connotations. The term peppered so many Frelimo policy prescriptions that it seemed to be an end in itself. But by whom and for whom were people mobilized? At mass meetings, who felt empowered to speak? Those who worked on the project, and residents today, recall near absolute unanimity in the project’s execution. The lack of any substantial problems in the roll-out of the Maxaquene Project surprised the minister of public works, Júlio Carrilho, when he asked Carlos Macave, the technician from the Housing Directorate attached to the project, to report on its progress. “Neighbor influenced neighbor,” soothing over anxieties, as Jaiantilal, the social worker, put it. Influence, however, can take many forms on a spectrum between persuasion and compulsion. The planners at the time worried that there might be people harboring doubts who did not feel able to voice them, or that people were of a mind to simply accept what the GD members and the urbanization commission told them was best. Meeting after meeting, women in attendance kept silent until finally, during one evening meeting, two women spoke up in dissent. Barry Pinsky recalled that later that night he and Sävfors celebrated with a drink. He could not remember what it was that had moved the women to speak. There was a chance, though, that the willingness of the two women to complain meant that women’s silence on previous occasions signaled assent.

The molding of consent in the neighborhoods in Maputo after independence was undoubtedly a male-dominated enterprise. Not just men, but men with formal employment and higher levels of formal education, were favored for election to *grupos dinamizadores*. Orders

filtered downward from Frelimo officials, and they were posted on neighborhood notice boards called *Jornais do Povo* (“newspapers of the people”).<sup>22</sup> Literacy in Portuguese was assumed to be an essential part of the job (though not a requirement). To get more female representation in *grupos dinamizadores*, Frelimo mandated that there must always be at least one member who represented the Organization of the Mozambican Woman (OMM). Without the quota, it is likely that many GDs would have lacked women’s representation entirely. Nor was the OMM itself exactly representative of women’s interests.<sup>23</sup> The OMM was created during the independence war to “guarantee the implementation of women’s emancipation as defined by the Frelimo Party” – a party whose hierarchy was almost exclusively male.<sup>24</sup> After independence, in Mozambique’s cities, the OMM was also given a specifically pedagogical role: teaching women how to properly maintain a male-headed urban household. Lídia Massinge, who was the OMM representative in Polana Caniço in the 1970s and 1980s, said that she instructed women in hygiene, how to dress well, and how to comport oneself with one’s husband – that one must not argue with one’s husband in public or in front of the children, for example. Women were advised on how to plan, with their husbands, the household finances, so there was enough for food and other expenses. “I grew up in a mission [school] and I was always given advice on how to live in a home,” Massinge said, recalling her credentials. Many women in the neighborhood were recent arrivals from the countryside, and Massinge advised them on how to tend to the urban male. In the countryside, men left in the morning for work without eating, but in Maputo women must learn to cook breakfast and lunch for their husbands, and to keep them clean. While women were

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<sup>22</sup> Roberto Cordeiro, “Jornais de parede,” *Tempo*, December 22, 1974.

<sup>23</sup> Kathleen Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), 129–143; Isabel Maria Casimiro, “*Paz na terra, guerra na casa*”: *Feminismo e organizações de mulheres em Moçambique* (Maputo: Promédia, 2004), 183–193.

<sup>24</sup> OMM statute cited in Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain*, 132.

instructed in the OMM on how to maintain Frelimo's *homem novo* ("new man") in presentable and productive shape, their own husbands often discouraged their participation in the OMM. Anastásia Titos Mahumane, a resident of Maxaquene, recalled that her husband would beat her whenever he discovered that she had attended one of the organization's meetings.<sup>25</sup>

There were other forms of organization, of course. Women had their own money-lending clubs (eventually joined by men).<sup>26</sup> Women led the weekly neighborhood cleanups. Their labor was disproportionately relied upon in any collective neighborhood endeavor, since many men were said to be otherwise engaged in proper jobs. The report of the OMM national conference in 1976 remarked on how social inequality had been institutionalized in the home, so that girls grew up only learning how to serve the needs of men.<sup>27</sup> A separate resolution, however, addressing the social problems to which urban women were prey, diagnosed the malady of "liberalism," i.e. "the abuse of individual liberty."<sup>28</sup> It went on to cast blame on the tendency of the urban housewife "to demand the mechanical division of household chores with her companion, the man, without her having other tasks to justify it."<sup>29</sup>

In the Maxaquene Project, too, women were involved in much of the manual work. In films of the building of the model reed houses, for instance, men are seen nailing the frames

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Anastásia Titos Mahumane, Antonietta Titos Mahumane, Ana Vasco Machaieie et al, May 4, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Gerhard Seibert, "Auto-organização e entreajuda das populações nos bairros peri-urbanos de Maputo e Luanda," in *Subúrbios de Luanda e Maputo*, ed. Jochen Oppenheimer and Isabel Raposo (Lisbon: Edições Calibri, 2007), 163–74.

<sup>27</sup> República Popular de Moçambique, *Documentos da II Conferência da Organização da Mulher Moçambicana, realizada em Maputo 10 a 17 de Novembro de 1976* (Maputo: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 1977), 55–56.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

together, and managing the job, while women haul all of the materials to the site.<sup>30</sup> Once the project and the neighborhood were divided into blocks, however, women were immediately elevated in stature. The *quarteirão* committees, which managed how parceling would take place, were divided evenly between men and women. What impact this had in how decisions were made and how women were perceived and how they perceived themselves is hard to discern, but over the months women began to be more active in open meetings, more likely to speak up, and more involved in the details of the rollout.<sup>31</sup> About six months after the completion of most of the roadways and plots in Maxaquene One, women were likely the motivating force behind the project's next stage. They were not shy in voicing discontent over an issue that impacted them most of all: water.

Residents had become impatient. When the Maxaquene Project was initially presented to them, they were told that creating paths of access was a necessary prelude to essential infrastructural improvement. The statement was remembered as a promise: open the roadways, and infrastructure will follow. People wanted roads and street illumination, but they were desperate for water access. Only a handful of private taps served a neighborhood of some 10,000 people. Most women were compelled to walk as much as a kilometer to get to a public fountain. In the late colonial era, in what had become a weekly ritual, more than one hundred women from the neighborhood would go to the apartment towers and townhouses at the edge of the City of Cement to beg Portuguese families for the use of their taps.<sup>32</sup> Before the project began, the frustration over water did not coalesce into any kind of collective mobilization to pressure the

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<sup>30</sup> Sävfors has many Super-8 short films of the project in his personal archive in Stockholm. Ten of them were recorded for this study.

<sup>31</sup> Pinsky, *Notes on the Maxaquene Urbanization Experience*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Guilherme da Silva Pereira, "Bairro do COOP: A peregrinação semanal," *Tempo*, June 20, 1971.

new government to do something about it. Now, however, because of the way the project had progressed, there was a channel for complaint and a language of justification. If there were fountains in parks in the City of Cement, why was there not drinking water in Maxaquene, which was now also *urbanizado*? As one older resident said to Sävfors, “How is it possible they can water the lawns downtown but there’s not a drop to kill the thirst of the people?”

The anger telegraphed from household to household so that a neighborhood mass meeting was held to address the issue. For the planners, it was a particularly tense moment. They had been essentially acting in the role of the government, but largely independently of it, without much, if any, government cooperation – and virtually none from the municipality. Now they were being held accountable for services that it was the responsibility of the municipal water utility to provide. Sävfors attempted to convince a representative of the Housing Directorate to speak at the meeting, but there was no response. A deal was eventually struck with the utility to pump water to taps located in the central public area of each neighborhood block, rather than to each household. Residents themselves would have to do the labor. Planners and residents alike recalled that people were so animated by the prospect of water, that they virtually ran to the shovels to begin digging the trenches for pipes. (Fig. 5.15.)



**Fig. 5.15.** Volunteers dig trenches for water pipes, 1978. (Source: Ingemar Sävfors)



People in Polana Caniço, the neighborhood directly to the east of Maxaquene One, liked what they saw happening for their neighbors, and soon the project expanded there, and also to the neighborhood then called Maxaquene North, so that the project came to encompass some 300 hectares, a significant enlargement from the original 60. By the middle of 1979, two years after the start of the project, more than 40,000 people had benefitted from access roadways and were self-surveying their plots. Yet with much work still to do the project simply ended, with residents left wondering why.

There had always been significant resistance to the Maxaquene Project among some staff at the National Housing Directorate, and open hostility from municipal officials. The *subúrbios* were seen as a colonial creation, the very embodiment of colonial-era inequities. Any plan that envisioned their preservation was belittled as “patchwork,” recalled Sävfors, more worthy of the Salvation Army than the housing department of a modernizing movement that sought the socialist transformation of Mozambique. A Portuguese couple working at the Housing Directorate, one a sociologist, the other an architect and urban planner, circulated a memo in October 1978 calling the project both “technically incorrect” and “dangerous.”<sup>33</sup> The relatively low densities that the project was hardening into place were financially unsustainable in the long term and over the whole city, they argued. The cost of infrastructure would be exorbitant. The ideal for many at the Housing Directorate was the kind of high-density government-built housing that one saw in the Eastern Bloc. This option was currently well out of reach for Mozambique, given available resources, yet the memo argued that it was better to wait until resources became available for such a project than to act precipitously. The Maxaquene planners, agreeing with this

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<sup>33</sup> Internal memo, “Implicações urbanísticas das intervenções no caniço,” Bárbara Lopes and Filipe Lopes, October 23, 1978, Direção Nacional de Habitação, República Popular de Moçambique, IS, 2-3.

call for higher densities, set aside areas for eventual multi-story housing blocks when the project was extended into Polana Caniço and further parts of Maxaquene. The housing blocks have never been built.

Behind the critique, however, was more than a pragmatic cost assessment. The benefit of a city, argued the memo, was to bring people in close contact in order to bring about “collective living.”<sup>34</sup> The Maxaquene project, in its unforeseen turn toward parceling out lots for single households, compromised the socialist ideal in favor of individualistic ambition.

The fact that families demand having concrete limits to their land, so that they can invest in it their power of savings in terms of housing, seems to us indefensible in a society that is constructing a collective life in the socialist mold. That they do it with the idea in mind of securing possession for their children... means that the dynamic of such a society wasn't understood.<sup>35</sup>

The memo's argument that Maxaquene had too many rural characteristics was contrary to the opinion of most people in Maxaquene that it was not rural enough. Residents continued to question the wisdom of plots that to them seemed too small.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the criticisms within the housing agency, hostility from the municipal administration, and ambivalence within the Frelimo hierarchy, Forjaz, head of the Housing Directorate, was pleased with what he saw at Maxaquene and Polana Caniço, and his approval had kept it running. “No one fully believed in it,” Forjaz later recalled. Most in Frelimo, he said, had only a “superficial” knowledge of the *subúrbios* and could not appreciate the priority of infrastructure for most people there, rather than housing.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Bartolomeu Tomé, “Ordenamento dos subúrbios: Porque pararam os trabalhos em Maputo,” *Tempo*, November 16, 1980.

In mid-1979, Sävfors's contract expired, and he returned to Sweden. Maputo and other cities were now being run by an Executive Council, which had some autonomy from the central government. Responsibility for the Maxaquene Project (and other planning and infrastructure functions) was soon shifted from the National Housing Directorate to Maputo's Executive Council, which did not bode well for the project given how inimical the municipal government had always been to the project. The municipal bureaucracy, still in thrall to the building code and a narrow idea of what a modern city should look like, rejected the legitimacy of the hundreds of *ad hoc* building permits that had been issued. It demanded that all recent and future constructions in permanent materials submit the proper documentation, including building plans and the other costly paperwork normally associated with building in the City of Cement. (The cost of an official building permit was almost twice the average monthly salary, but most of the houses built in Maxaquene would not have met code.)<sup>37</sup> New construction in Maxaquene came to a halt, at least for awhile. Some people who had over time accrued concrete blocks to build a house went ahead and erected their houses. They stacked the blocks loosely and did not mortar them together so that – if need be – they could dismantle the structure and recover the materials.<sup>38</sup>

The larger issue, according to Jaiantila, the social worker, was funding. A municipal official told her that as modest as the project was, it was too expensive to implement in every neighborhood, and if everyone could not benefit, no one should. The municipality, now responsible for the Maxaquene Project, would not continue funding it. Before embarking on the Maxaquene Project, Sävfors had been advised by an official at the UNDP to avoid building a

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<sup>37</sup> Barry Pinsky wrote in a 1980 report that the officials at the municipality, charging 5,000 *meticals* per request, were “profiting from *burocratismo* to exploit people who only want to build very simple 2 to 4 room houses in any case!” Pinsky, *Notes on the Maxaquene Urbanization Experience*, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Tomé, “Ordenamento dos subúrbios.”

“West Berlin” – that is, an island of privilege in a city of need. In the eyes of some, that was what had happened. As Sävfors later observed, the expectations churned up by the Maxaquene Project, if not met, could easily have jeopardized the legitimacy of the city’s administration, and perhaps Frelimo’s legitimacy as well.

### **Communal Neighborhoods**

In early 1979, Frelimo organized a conference to lay out for the first time its principles for urban policy.<sup>39</sup> In preparation for the conference, a delegation of ministers had visited Maxaquene to observe the pilot project, then still in progress, and it came away favorably impressed. Several resolutions published at the conference’s conclusion bore the Maxaquene stamp – most notably in the call for participatory planning.<sup>40</sup> The thrust of the conference, however, was how to gain control over Mozambique’s cities. Since independence, and even before, governance of city affairs had been left almost entirely in the hands of the neighborhood GDs. With the municipal apparatus barely functioning, and with the attention of the Frelimo hierarchy focused on other matters, these local governing committees worked largely on their own. It was in this vacuum that the Maxaquene Project was possible. Now, however, the party hierarchy was paying closer attention.

The revolution was flagging. South Africa had cut off Mozambique’s regular supply of convertible gold specie (which had been used to purchase oil and other vital imports), state-led farming initiatives were failing, and industrial productivity in Maputo had come almost to a halt. People from the countryside were flocking to Maputo, and by 1980 the city’s population was

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<sup>39</sup> República Popular de Moçambique, *Primeira Reunião sobre Cidades e Bairros Comuns: Resolução geral* (Maputo: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 1979), FAPF/no. 13767.

<sup>40</sup> Pinsky, “Territorial Dilemmas,” 300; Jenkins, “The Role of Civil Society,” 39.

more than 755,000, just about double what it had been in 1970.<sup>41</sup> Mozambique was facing a predicament historically common to most rapidly urbanizing societies: Once farmers left their fields for the city, they no longer provided food either for city-dwellers to eat, or for themselves. The influx into cities deepened the more widespread crisis Mozambique had been weathering since before independence. As Oscar Monteiro, the chief of the cities conference, said in his opening speech, Mozambique's cities, built to accommodate a settler minority, did not have the infrastructural capacity for so many people, and the sudden population growth was exacerbating food and water shortages and worsening levels of urban unemployment and crime.<sup>42</sup> The solution to making "unproductive" people productive was to be the establishment of "communal neighborhoods." Communal neighborhoods were the main topic of the conference.

The communal neighborhood idea attempted to bottle the spirit of the wartime "liberated zones," the "communal villages" underway in the countryside, and the citizen activism of the type observed in Maxaquene.<sup>43</sup> It did not chart a specific course for government intervention. There were no drawings or plans visualizing what an ideal neighborhood ought to look like, for instance. Rather, the "communal neighborhood" was a figurative device: the place that resulted when an urban area was given precise boundaries and political definition within party and state structures, and then its residents "mobilized" toward collective goals.

Frelimo took some immediate steps following the conference. The *grupos dinamizadores* were brought under stricter party control.<sup>44</sup> Influx controls were reinstated for the first time since the colonial era, and were more stringent than they had been during colonialism's waning days.

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<sup>41</sup> República Popular de Moçambique, *I Recenseamento geral da população* (Maputo: Conselho Coordenador de Recenseamento, 1983).

<sup>42</sup> "Construir a vida nova nas cidades," *Tempo*, March 4, 1979, 19.

<sup>43</sup> "Construir a vida nova nas cidades."

<sup>44</sup> Pinsky, "Territorial Dilemmas," 298–312.

A stranger to a neighborhood must now report to a local official with what was called a *guia da marcha*, a movement pass signed by another official at the stranger's point of origin. This was the corollary to making so-called unproductive elements productive: ensuring that even more unproductive elements would not add to the problem. Keeping what was considered the surplus population under tighter control also reflected the powerful strain of paranoia, discussed in the previous chapter, that characterized so much Frelimo policymaking and propaganda during its first decade of governance. Lacking formal work, one was at risk of being labeled a subversive. Policing the "internal enemy" was for the Frelimo hierarchy as great or greater a motivator for making the *subúrbios* more legible than was the desire to pull cities more fully into the socialist embrace – or rather, the two objectives went hand in hand.<sup>45</sup> Monteiro, in his speech, said he looked forward to the creation of "red cities," but he also quoted Samora Machel's words of the year before, when in the Popular Assembly the president called for the making of communal neighborhoods.

We don't know ourselves because we don't live in an organized way. We don't know ourselves and that is why the enemy slips through the cracks, that's how he infiltrates. The first measure above all in our cities is to constitute ourselves in communal neighborhoods for better vigilance, for blowing the whistle, for neutralization of all type of agents.<sup>46</sup>

Over the following year, the first population census since independence was launched, and the work of dividing cities into political units began. The drawing of boundaries for suburban neighborhoods was the first time the constituent *bairros* of Maputo's City of Reeds had ever been given precise spatial definition, after decades of not even appearing on many maps.

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<sup>45</sup> Victor Igreja, "Frelimo's Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36, no. 4 (2010): 781–99; Benedito Luís Machava, "State Discourse on Internal Security and the Politics of Punishment in Post-Independence Mozambique (1975–1983)," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 593–609.

<sup>46</sup> "Construir a vida nova nas cidades," 18.

Frelimo portrayed this act as a gesture of recognition, a promise that after a century of neglect the *subúrbios* were now fields of government action.

What would seem to be little more than the plotting of lines on a map prompted considerable handwringing within the party's highest circles. The "General Resolution" of the cities conference had specified that for a communal neighborhood to function properly, its population should be about 12,000 people.<sup>47</sup> The Frelimo hierarchy treated the figure as sacred. Sometime in 1980, Adriano Matate learned this first-hand.<sup>48</sup> Matate will be recalled from the extraordinary travails he suffered as a new arrival to Lourenço Marques, described in Chapter 1. As a young man working for a Portuguese family in the 1950s, he ran afoul of the *dona* of the house, and after being briefly detained by police he was summarily dispatched to the cocoa plantations of São Tomé. On São Tomé he became the leader of a plantation work crew, participated in an island-wide strike, and married a Cape Verdian woman, and after twelve years in exile he returned to Lourenço Marques with his family. He first found work in a hotel café, and then at the gas utility. Having settled in Chamanculo, he became during the transition to independence a member of Chamanculo's *grupo dinamizador*. A few years later, soon after the communal neighborhood initiative was launched, he was summoned to the Frelimo Central Committee. The matter was urgent. He was sent for in a black Mercedes sedan with small Mozambique flags flying from the hood.

At the offices of the Central Committee, Matate was given an audience with the most powerful men in Mozambique. Present were President Machel, Vice President Marcelino dos Santos, and Minister of the Interior Armando Guebuza. They were joined by several others who

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<sup>47</sup> Each *bairro* was to be divided, in turn, into "communal units" of no more than 2,000 people, and each unit was to be broken down into "blocks" of no more than 250 people. *Resolução geral*, 19.

<sup>48</sup> Interviews with Adriano Matate, Nov. 18 & 21, Dec. 5, 2011.

Matate understood were “experts.” All were on their feet because the president was in an animated mood, as he often was, and so long as he was standing, everyone must. Machel explained to Matate that Chamanculo was far too populous to be governed as a single neighborhood. He ordered Matate to figure out how to divide it in three. “Comrade President, I can’t do that,” Matate responded. “It must be four.”

The president paced up and down the room, and then blurted, “It must be three!” Years later, Matate played up the drama of the moment. He recalled that Guebuza, the future president, put his face in his hands, as if in sympathy with Matate’s fate, and that he heard him mutter how this meant jail for the poor neighborhood secretary. Matate had contradicted an order from the Maximum Leader, and many people at the time were jailed for less. Matate, however, had faith in his calculations. He had counted homes in Chamanculo in the course of his various functions, and he knew that if divided into three neighborhoods, each new division would be too large, but divided into four, they would be more manageable and yet still meet the prescribed minimum of people.

The vice president now spoke on Matate’s behalf. “He’s the owner of Chamanculo,” dos Santos reminded the president. “If anyone knows how to divide it, it is him.” To be “owner” of a neighborhood was a title once reserved for *mpfumus* and other traditional leaders. Dos Santos, who like Guebuza had been raised in Chamanculo, was vouching for Matate’s authority and his wisdom.

“Chamanculo!” Machel addressed Matate, as if Chamanculo were his name. “Okay, four neighborhoods. But I don’t want any neighborhood with 9,000 or 10,000 people. It has to be 12,000!”



Three days later, Matate was again picked up from his home in the black Mercedes and brought to the Central Committee to confer with the president. He brought with him four maps, one for each new neighborhood, Chamanculo A through Chamanculo D, and spread them out on a table. The president was eager to review Matate's work in detail, insisting that they go over every significant boundary marker: the bus depot, the two big fig trees, the notary's office, the "Dlembula" grocery. The president was familiar with each of them. "That man would walk a lot around [Chamanculo]," Matate later recalled. "He knew it like he lived here."

The importance of the episode to Matate is clear enough. He talked about his role in boundary-setting as if by doing so he had fathered not just one, but four neighborhoods, through courage and insight that had won over the president himself. The partition of Chamanculo also reveals a great deal about the nature of Frelimo governance at the time, particularly the president's habit of micro-management during Mozambique's generalized collapse, and the leadership's desperate faith in a precise formula to trigger socialist change.

Beyond giving old neighborhoods new geographical definition, there was little that the municipality or the state could do to improve living conditions. Major new infrastructure on the scale that was needed was well beyond the capacity of the municipality – to the extent that the municipality could be said to exist as a functioning institution. The inner *subúrbios* were passed over almost entirely for improvements in favor of neighborhoods that lay at the outer edges of the city.<sup>49</sup> People had been living in these neighborhoods in some numbers since the 1960s, many having been re-settled there after being displaced to make way for new development in and around the City of Cement.<sup>50</sup> Some had been displaced twice over when private interests began

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<sup>49</sup> República Popular de Moçambique, *Plano de Estrutura*, Appendix IV, 1–4, FAPF/no. 558a.

<sup>50</sup> António Elias, "Hulene: Experiência-piloto em risco de desaparecer?," *Tempo*, March 30, 1986; Alexandre Luís, "Bairro George Dimitrov: Entre dificuldades e auto-suficiência," *Tempo*,

developing these outer areas for residences destined mostly for Portuguese, accounting for what little infrastructure there was. A great deal of this outer terrain was already surveyed for plots. These areas were now the principal destinations for people immigrating from the countryside, and even a minimal intervention, such as the subdivision of existing plots, could make a significant difference. The primary schools, health posts, and covered marketplaces now being built there were usually the first within miles. Water was a major preoccupation, and wells were dug, though the few that were had to serve thousands.

By focusing on these still semi-rural neighborhoods, Frelimo planners hoped to stimulate a more concerted cultivation of a belt of “Green Zones” around the city, especially along the Infulene River valley that divided Maputo from Matola. Many women in the outer areas were already cultivating land on abandoned Portuguese *quintas*, and cooperatives were formed in the hope that crop production at the city’s edges could help feed Maputo.<sup>51</sup> The capital would cease to be the “parasite” on the rest of Mozambique that it always had been, while at the same time giving some substance to Frelimo’s professed desire to bring the city to the countryside and the countryside to the city.<sup>52</sup>

The areas of Hulene (in 1979) and Malhazine and Benfica (both in 1982) were all given precise boundaries and reborn as “communal neighborhoods,” and concrete monoliths topped with red stars were erected in each to mark the occasion. In Hulene and in Malhazine, a

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November 15, 1987; Alexandre Luís, “Mahlazine: Bairro que se ergue do esforço popular,” *Tempo*, December 20, 1987.

<sup>51</sup> “Zonas verdes para as cidades,” *Tempo*, March 25, 1979; Hilário Matusse, “Zonas verdes: Produzir comida nos quintais,” *Tempo*, May 30, 1982; Hilário Matusse, “Zonas verdes: Combate à fome começa nos nossos quintais,” *Tempo*, June 6, 1982.

<sup>52</sup> “Zonas verdes para as cidades”; Paul Jenkins, “Image of the City in Mozambique: Civilization, Parasite, Engine of Growth or Place of Opportunity?,” in *African Urban Economies: Viability, Vitality, or Vitiation?*, ed. Deborah Fahy Bryceson and Deborah Potts (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 107–30.

neighborhood makeover became an opportunity to flush out religious groups to which Frelimo had been hostile. In Hulene, wrote *Tempo* in 1979, “religious sects abound, seeking to exploit the people through their obscurantist intrigues,” and the church of the Twelve Apostles, still under construction, was seized to make a neighborhood cultural center, reportedly at the request of neighborhood residents.<sup>53</sup> Benfica, named for a Lisbon soccer club, was renamed in honor of Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian communist leader. Residents had trouble pronouncing the new name, but some hoped that the gesture would encourage Bulgaria to come to the neighborhood’s aid.<sup>54</sup> The name never stuck.

The inner *subúrbios*, where the bulk of Maputo’s population lived, were largely passed over until 1985, when Dutch aid funded the construction of extensive drainage trenches cutting through the areas skirting the City of Cement to the northwest.<sup>55</sup> The trenches dramatically reduced the flooding that annually befell neighborhoods such as Munhuana, Lagoas, and Maxaquene, and their construction made a far more decisive mark on the timeline of Maputo history than they are usually given credit for. The project also harkened a new age of Western donor assistance in the life of the city, which did not enter into full swing until after the end of war with Renamo in 1992. For the most part, though, these were years in which people were expected to “count on their own efforts” and achieve “self-sufficiency,” with little help from above.

By 1983, a drought in many parts of Mozambique undermined Frelimo’s remaining hopes for stimulating production. Maputo residents remember it as the Year of Cabbage, because

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<sup>53</sup> Albino Magaia, “No Hulene: Uma vida nova para um bairro,” *Tempo*, July 1, 1979, 24; Albino Magaia, “Hulene: Kanimambo Frelimo!,” *Tempo*, July 1, 1979.

<sup>54</sup> One resident compared it to the common practice of naming children with an eye to a future patron. Luís, “Bairro George Dimitrov: Entre dificuldades e auto-suficiência,” 26.

<sup>55</sup> Augusto Casimiro, “Drenagem de Maputo: Afogar as inundações,” *Tempo*, January 27, 1985.

it seemed that was all there was to eat. Exasperated by what it frequently portrayed as Maputo's surplus population, Frelimo now took draconian steps to make the city self-sufficient. It launched *Operação Produção* ("operation production") an initiative that sought to rid the city of all "unproductive elements," "undesirables," and "delinquents," and to put them to work on state farms.<sup>56</sup> During the initial, voluntary phase, those without formal work were given trips back to their "homelands." In the subsequent compulsory phase, those without the proper proof of employment were swiftly "evacuated," sometimes by commercial jetliner or military air transport, to farms in remote Niassa or Cabo Delgado, more than 1,400 miles away. Some tens of thousands were relocated through *Operação Produção* from its launch in 1983 until Frelimo was compelled to abandon the project less than a year later. In terms of numbers and the distances to which people were removed, the expulsion bore little comparison with the piecemeal urban displacements of the colonial era, and was more akin to the forced urban-to-rural migrations in Mao's China a generation before. *Operação Produção* turned into a massive exercise of arbitrary force, as the neighborhood officials charged with identifying those who should be expelled used this task as cover for vendettas and extortion.<sup>57</sup> Women were frequently targeted by accusations of prostitution.<sup>58</sup>

From about 1984 onward, the Renamo insurgency entered a new phase of destruction, expanding further into southern Mozambique.<sup>59</sup> Violence in the area around Maputo intensified,

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<sup>56</sup> Narciso Castanheira, "Operação Produção: Primeiros voluntários avançam," *Tempo*, July 10, 1983; Narciso Castanheira, "Operação Produção: De casa em casa," *Tempo*, August 14, 1983; Albano Naroromele, "Operação Produção: Uma missão histórica," *Tempo*, August 14, 1983.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Bartolomeu Tembe, head organizer of *Operação Produção* in Chamanculo, May 17, 2013; Narciso Castanheira, "Operação Produção: Punir os desvios," *Tempo*, July 24, 1983.

<sup>58</sup> Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain*, 155.

<sup>59</sup> Alex Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique* (London: Centre for Southern African Studies, University of York in association with James Currey, 1991), 98,100.

and shacks and emergency tents appeared nearly everywhere in the city, filling up the few open spaces in the inner *subúrbios*. Those who could not find space under a relative's roof or in a backyard erected reed shelters or donated tents along roadsides or in playing fields. The loss of playing fields stoked particular resentments among the young. One night in Chamanculo, several shelters erected in what had been the soccer field of the Beira-Mar club were set alight. Given the near state of siege that Maputo faced in the mid- to late-1980s, it is remarkable that a kind of order prevailed. In a process echoing events of a decade before, when people in the *subúrbios* awaited instructions before occupying units in the City of Cement, refugees from the countryside generally obeyed the instructions of neighborhood officials as to where they should seek shelter. During a time when Maputo served as a kind of refugee camp for all of southern Mozambique, what is perhaps more telling than where the refugees built houses is where they did not.

The Polana Golf Club was originally established in 1908, and in the 1950s it moved to its current location on the flatlands below Polana Caniço.<sup>60</sup> The people who lived in reed houses in the way of the links were pushed up the slope, and those who resisted were burned out of their homes. During the colonial era, the club was not just a playground for the Lourenço Marques elite, but more specifically for British and South African businessmen. Boys who lived on the plateau above the golf course, many of them the children of the families who not long before had been displaced by it, earned money by fetching balls. As they got older they worked as caddies.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The following account of the golf club is based primarily on an interview with two men who have been running it since independence, Alfredo Dique Fumo and Samuel Languene, Nov. 9, 2012, and also a conversation with longtime employee Dinis Nhaca, Nov. 6, 2012. Before independence, Polana Caniço was known to its inhabitants as Ka-Polanah. Polana "Caniço" distinguished the neighborhood from Polana "Cimento," the exclusive neighborhood just to the south, in the City of Cement.

<sup>61</sup> Using old donated equipment, the caddies would get together on off-days at a course they made for themselves in the bush. Because there were only six holes, a proper 36-hole championship required six tours of the "greens."

In 1970, the club installed a barbed-wire fence around the course perimeter, and patrolled it with dogs. Children from the neighborhood above had been wandering onto the course at night to pick fruit from trees, and people were crossing the greens on their way to the nearby shore, where they fished and trapped crabs in the shallows. They were now forced to take the long way around the course. After independence, though, with the club's membership essentially vanished, people from the neighborhood took down the wire fence, and they put the wire to other uses. The neighborhood's population increased many times over in 1976, when the government surveyed large plots to re-settle thousands of people who had been flooded out of Maxaquene, and women began to cultivate *machambas* at the edges of the golf course.

Yet the course continued in operation. A few of the caddies, then in their late teens, became the establishment's *grupo dinamizador* by default, and they ran it in the way that many workplace GDs ran businesses whose management had abandoned the country. The names of champions with unambiguously African names appeared for the first time on the wooden tournament plaques hanging in the main hall of the clubhouse. The grass was not mowed, except by goats and cows from the neighborhood that pastured on the greens. In the 1980s, it became a favorite in-town escape for some Western *cooperantes* and technical advisors from the Eastern Bloc, who found a round of golf there to be an adventure.<sup>62</sup>

In 1988, hundreds of refugees who had been living in tents or other shelter in other neighborhoods were re-settled on plots surveyed along the course's west margin, but the strip of lost land did not dramatically change how the course was played. People were now freely crossing the greens, but the course managers marked out two paths for foot traffic so they would not disrupt play too much. People kept to the paths. During a time of emergency, when space

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Pinsky, Jan. 15, 2013.

was dear and wood for cooking scarce, the largest single open space in Maputo remained mostly open and its venerable fig trees untouched. The golf course had been a site of trauma for the people who had once lived there and a place of exclusion afterward, and few activities more fully embodied elite privilege and imported taste as golf. Yet there was no pressure from the municipality or the Frelimo hierarchy, or from the increasingly crowded neighborhood just beyond the back nine, to significantly alter the status quo.

For the managers of the club, this was no mystery. They had kept the club in operation and put it to use. Like any functioning institution (in a place where there were so few, one might add) it deserved to be left alone. “They respected it,” said Alfredo Dique Fumo, the golf club’s longtime director, of the course’s neighbors. “At least the *ma-ronga* did,” he added, referring to the area’s original inhabitants, such as himself. After the war ended, in 1992, a number of families of demobilized Renamo militants were settled in the sodden areas to the north of the course, where no one else would live. The golf course became a kind of buffer zone, keeping the stigmatized population at some distance from Polana Caniço. When people on the road did not get out of the way of cars entering the club, or when they idled on the fairways and obstructed play, Fumo said they were the newcomers being difficult.

Frelimo’s interest in maintaining the golf course can perhaps be chalked up to a desire to please foreign dignitaries. The respect of the club’s neighbors for the integrity of the grounds, however, points to a sentiment manifest in so many other episodes of Maputo’s history: a desire to maintain an ordered space that suggests the presence of a ruling authority – precisely because such authority is otherwise not much in evidence.

## Conclusion

### Multiple Trajectories

In 1987, a new era officially began in Mozambique as Frelimo began to implement market-oriented reforms according to conditions set by the International Monetary Fund.<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps the new era began in 1989, when Frelimo shed Marxism-Leninism as official state doctrine. Or perhaps both changes were only truly rendered significant a few years later with the signing, in 1992, of the Rome peace accords between Frelimo and Renamo, ending a long, catastrophic war and enabling the new policies of structural adjustment to take effect throughout the country. Peace also heralded Mozambique's new birth as a "donor darling" of European development agencies, a status solidified in 1994 with the country's first multi-party democratic elections, and opened wide the door to non-governmental organizations in the functioning of government services. Then again, some who lamented Mozambique's abandonment of socialist principles saw an earlier date, 1984, as the disastrous year of capitulation to

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<sup>1</sup> M. Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 101–178; Iraê Baptista Lundin, "Negotiating Transformation: Urban Livelihoods in Maputo Adapting to Thirty Years of Political and Economic Changes" (PhD diss., Göteborg University, 2007).



capitalism.<sup>2</sup> That was when impending state collapse compelled Maputo to reach a non-aggression pact with apartheid South Africa, the patron of Renamo violence – an agreement which included provisions for greater South African investment in Mozambique. Of course, private enterprise had never disappeared entirely from Maputo after independence, and one must also account for the active black market that made life in the city possible during the 1980s. For many Mozambicans today, the decisive year of change was 1986, when President Samora Machel was killed, along with 34 others, in a plane crash on a South African mountain within sight of Mozambique. Crime and corruption are said to date from after the Mbuzini tragedy. Relative to the disorder and uncertainty of today, nostalgia often characterizes the “Time of Samora” as a golden age of alleged order achieved by the imposition of harsh discipline and tireless vigilance inseparable from the memory of Comrade Samora himself.

In the late 1980s, Renamo guerillas harassed the edges of Maputo, but did not enter the city, enabling the economic restructuring to take effect there before most anywhere else in Mozambique. One of the first major initiatives to be implemented was the reform of APIE, the state real estate agency that, since the 1976 nationalizations of rental properties, was landlord to some 40,000 units in the urban core of Maputo and Matola, in addition to uncounted (though many thousands) of compound units and houses in the *subúrbios*.<sup>3</sup> Rents were to be allowed to rise to reflect market demand, and a

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<sup>2</sup> Views summarized in John S. Saul, “Afterword: Nkomati and After,” in *A Difficult Road: The Transition to Socialism in Mozambique*, ed. John S. Saul (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 391–418.

<sup>3</sup> Júlio Carrilho, “Ajustar as rendas ao valor das casas,” *Tempo*, October 4, 1987; Brigitte Lachartre, *Enjeux urbains au Mozambique: De Lourenço Marques à Maputo* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), 254–256.

bargain sell-off of properties to their tenants begun. Living in the City of Cement had by the late 1980s taken on a hellish quality, as will be recalled from Chapter 4. With frequent blackouts, paralyzed elevators, avenues lined with piles of trash, and seemingly endless water stoppages, life there was hardly more livable than it was in the *subúrbios*, and in many ways less so. The costs of living in the City of Cement, moreover, even when rent-free, had long before compelled many people to return to the *subúrbios* if they had family there and space waiting for them. The market reforms took on real significance after 1992 with the advent of new demand: an influx into Maputo, first of UN peacekeepers, and then, shortly thereafter, a legion of NGOs, all in need of office space and housing for staff. Those residents of the City of Cement who had managed to stay in the City of Cement through the most trying years now held possession of valuable assets that only appreciated in value with time, and the ever-greater foreign presence. A new *rentier* class came into being, seeming to finally fulfill the destiny of the many buildings built during a flurry of state-sponsored speculation during the last five years of Portuguese rule. Many government workers who had received units in the City of Cement as a perk of employment now used proceeds from renting or subletting those units to fund construction of a new house in the *subúrbios*, or on larger plots at the fringes of the city and in Matola. In the early 2000s, Maputo's first new office tower in decades was completed and named for its primary tenant: a Portuguese cement company. The first four floors were occupied by the nation's first shopping mall. The changing face of Maputo led one critic of Mozambique's development model to refer to the "recolonization" of the City of Cement.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Hanlon, "Mozambique: Under New Management," *Soundings*, no. 7 (1997):

By the 2000s, a Maputo economy stimulated by donor largesse became more fully a node of foreign direct investment. Following democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, South African capital flowed into Mozambique, notably into the “Maputo Corridor,” a revitalization and expansion of the pitted road joining the Rand and Maputo intended to reassert the historical link as an axis of regional economic growth.<sup>5</sup> By the late 2000s, the exploitation of vast coal reserves in Mozambique’s Tete province (largely to meet Chinese demand) and natural gas reserves by multinational mining operations was helping produce annual national growth figures in the double digits.<sup>6</sup> Mozambique’s links to China were resulting in massive new infrastructural projects, such as a new bridge that will join Maputo to Catembe.<sup>7</sup> In Maputo, Beijing also built a new presidency building, a new national assembly building, new airport terminals, and a new national soccer stadium. Meanwhile, households in the *subúrbios* of Maputo and other cities were being hooked up to electrical and water infrastructure at a rapid pace. Many users of electricity pilfered it, but most was paid for using a pre-paid credit system.

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184–94.

<sup>5</sup> Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor, “Transmission Belt for Transnational Capital or Facilitator for Development? Problematising the Role of the State in the Maputo Development Corridor,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 39, no. 4 (2001): 675–95; Lachartre, *Enjeux urbains au Mozambique*, 266–273.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua Kirshner and Marcus Power, “Mining and Extractive Urbanism: Postdevelopment in a Mozambican Boomtown,” *Geoforum* 61 (2015): 67–78.

<sup>7</sup> Johan Lagerkvist, “As China Returns: Perceptions of Land Grabbing and Spatial Power Relations in Mozambique,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49, no. 3 (2014): 251–66; Morten Axel Pedersen and Morten Nielsen, “Trans-Temporal Hinges: Reflections on an Ethnographic Study of Chinese Infrastructural Projects in Mozambique and Mongolia,” *Social Analysis* 57, no. 1 (2013): 122–42; Howard W. French, “Mozambique,” in *China’s Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa* (New York: Vintage, 2015), 11–41.

A new building type emerged in the *subúrbios* in the 1990s consonant with the greater activity at Maputo's port: metal shipping containers, often repurposed to shelter bars or other businesses. The most far-reaching visible change in the *subúrbios*, however, has been the proliferation of concrete-block construction.<sup>8</sup> Since the 1990s, local production capacity for cement has boomed. Castigo Guambe, whose family has appeared several times in this thesis, was by the early 1990s using space on his property to fabricate concrete blocks for sale, as many in Maputo were doing who had space to spare and a modicum of capital to invest. Guambe had lost in the nationalizations of 1976 the Chamanculo real estate portfolio that his father, a hunter, had assembled in the neighborhood during the first half of the twentieth century. Now Guambe was able to build several rental units in his yard, and also rented space for people to park their cars. He built a small unit near the street which he rented out to a shopkeeper, and he opened a bar in his front yard which had one of the few billiards tables around.

A narrow reading of events since the 1990s might see in them the classic upward growth curve promised by neoliberal economic policymaking. And yet, a singular focus on rising gross domestic product obscures countless other trajectories – many of them downward, and many that cannot be so easily charted. Years of growth have also been years of impoverishment, as government employment has shrunk and prices for basic goods have risen.<sup>9</sup> While it is often pointed out that the benefits of Mozambique's economic growth have been concentrated disproportionately in the capital, it is also true

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<sup>8</sup> Jørgen Eskemose Andersen, Silje Erøy Sollien, and Khadidja Ouis, "Built Environment Study," in *Home Space Maputo*, 2012, [http://www.homespace.dk/tl\\_files/uploads/publications/Full%20reports/HomeSpace\\_Built\\_Environment\\_Study.pdf](http://www.homespace.dk/tl_files/uploads/publications/Full%20reports/HomeSpace_Built_Environment_Study.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Lundin, "Negotiating Transformation."

that economic growth in Maputo is itself narrowly concentrated. That much of the population manages to *desenrascar* (“scrape by”) – through daily improvisations, petty trade, and linkages with the countryside – has produced a rich field of scholarship, and will not be expanded upon here.<sup>10</sup> Suffice it to say that upgrading from reed construction to shelter in concrete blocks does not mark the end of hardship. Even in what seems a prosperous household, prosperity may not be equally shared, and in fact may coexist alongside great want, sometimes in the same room. Many people rent the units they live in, furthermore, and so what may appear on the outside as greater permanence and fixity may be nothing of the kind. One of the remarkable facts of Maputo’s building culture is that even people living on scant and unsteady incomes invest in concrete blocks little by little, perhaps stashing them just outside their small compound unit, in the hope of eventually building a house. Maputo and its fringes are dotted by countless concrete-block dwellings lacking doors and roofs, and many other projects may rise no higher than a few courses of block. For many, concrete is the index of one’s aspirations, which can be much higher than the measure of one’s affluence.

The proliferation of concrete, furthermore, has changed the dynamic of neighborly relationships in ways that cannot be said to be better or worse – simply different. Between yards, concrete walls would seem to have settled, once and for all, the problem of flexible boundaries that bedeviled relationships between neighbors when the borders of plots were marked with reed or zinc fences. Yet, the expense of concrete wall

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<sup>10</sup> Jochen Oppenheimer and Isabel Raposo, *Pobreza em Maputo* (Lisbon: Ministério do Trabalho e da Solidariedade, Dept. de Cooperação, 2002); Ana Bérnard da Costa, *O preço da sombra: Sobrevivência e reprodução social entre famílias de Maputo* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2007); Lundin, “Negotiating Transformation.”

construction and its material permanence can preclude negotiated settlement, and raise the stakes of conflict. Block chiefs are frequently called in to settle disputes when, seemingly overnight, one resident builds a concrete-block wall that encloses part of a neighbor's plot.<sup>11</sup> Since the late 1980s, Anastásia Titos Mahumane has lived on a plot she purchased in Maxaquene, in what in the late 1970s was one of the pilot blocks of the Maxaquene Project.<sup>12</sup> She moved there following her separation from her husband because, not wanting to “make a commotion,” she had let her husband keep what had been their shared house for his life with his new wife. Mahumane's income comes largely from selling charcoal, which earns her 20 to 40 cents per sale. She was only able to convert her house into concrete block, in the late 1990s, with help from her church. She uses what little land she has around the house to cultivate cassava roots, which she then replants in a *machamba* in the countryside.

A few years ago, while she was away from Maputo, one of her neighbors built a concrete wall several inches into her yard on one side. This minor land grab, however, was nothing compared to the six feet or so of land that her neighbor to the other side later took from her plot – perhaps as much as a quarter of her open space. She sat in her yard and scowled at her neighbor as he built his wall. “I wasn't going to say anything,” she said in a recent interview. When the neighbor started building around her water spigot, which would have denied her access to it, she at last called on the block chief to intervene, and he ordered the neighbor to dismantle that part of the wall. The block chief would not order the neighbor to take down the entire wall, however, due to the builder's

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<sup>11</sup> “Bairro do Aeroporto: persistem ligações eléctricas clandestinas e conflitos de terra,” *Verdade*, December 18, 2014, <http://www.verdade.co.mz/nacional/50919>.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Anastásia Titos Mahumane et al.

large investment in the project. This was a common response – or rather the common non-response – to an increasingly common problem of wealthier residents encroaching on more vulnerable neighbors. Another block chief, in nearby Polana Caniço B, said of such situations, “You have to have patience, you have to have understanding... While someone is away at work, and the other builds a wall, you’re not going to knock it down. We are a poor country, so you can’t knock down a concrete wall.”<sup>13</sup>

In Chamanculo, concrete divided two brothers. Brothers Benjamim and Paulo Benfica had inherited their wood-and-zinc house from their father, a truck driver, in the 1960s, and in 1976 Benjamim had destroyed the rental properties on the site instead of watching them be nationalized and occupied by strangers.<sup>14</sup> Benjamim had enjoyed good fortune as a schoolteacher, eventually running his own technical school in northern Mozambique, before returning to Maputo to open a private school and live at the family homestead in Chamanculo. The brothers split the property between them, each eventually building their own, adjoining concrete-block houses. But Paulo had not fared as well as his younger brother, and he wanted to sell off pieces of their common property to raise cash. Benjamim refused to break up the property that his father had purchased in free title in the 1940s. “My brother just has the spirit to sell!” said Benjamim.<sup>15</sup> The resulting animosity was such that, some years ago, Benjamim returned home one day to find that his brother had started building a concrete block wall that divided the property between them. With funds lacking to finish it, Paulo’s barrier rose no higher than one’s knees, and

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<sup>13</sup> Conversation with Albano Goda, Apr. 17, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> See Ch. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Conversation with Benjamim Benfica, Jan. 22, 2013.

in early 2013, Benjamin unilaterally dismantled what he called the “Berlin Wall,” joking that “history has been made.”

Maputo’s built environment, I have argued in this thesis, is not merely an inert stage for other historical dramas, but rather embodies in itself some of the central dramas of urban life. The making of suburban space has historically conditioned people’s relationship to the state, how people imagine the state-in-the-making, and to a widely shared image of a modernizing world. A kind of politics and a set of claims has been engendered through the medium of urban space that cannot be understood solely in terms of nationalist movements, the mobilization of political parties, or the plans and intentions of ruling regimes – the typical framing elements for histories of the period of African decolonization and post-independence state formation. And this politics certainly cannot be restricted to the “before” and “after” language of colonialism and post-colonialism because, in the spaces of the city, far too much of the past remains embedded in the present, and keeps a tight grip on possibilities for the future.

The built environment has historically served as a ready metaphor for theories of modernization and human development, from primitive shack to civilized apartment tower. The story of the Age of Concrete, however, cannot be considered a story of progress, or for that matter of decline. We must use a different scale.



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*Elsewhere*

Ingemar Sävfors, personal archive, Stockholm (IS)

Barry Pinsky, personal archive, Toronto (BP)

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(all Lourenço Marques/Maputo)

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