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NATIONALISM, URBAN POVERTY AND IDENTITY IN MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

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Nationalism, Urban Poverty and Identity in Maputo, Mozambique

Jason Sumich

Abstract

This paper examines the changing perceptions of Frelimo's nationalist project amongst members of the middle class in Maputo, Mozambique's capital. I argue that nationalism in Mozambique created a system of meaning and new forms of identity that are especially relevant for more privileged urbanites. However, growing urban poverty and inequality has had an effect throughout the social spectrum in Mozambique. The self-same set of nationalist values provides a critique for the failings of the regime as everyday life continually conflicts with the government's message of unity and progress for all and this is causing a loss of support even among the regime's beneficiaries.

Keywords: Maputo, Frelimo, Nationalism, Urban Poverty

Introduction

This paper, although set in Maputo, gives an overview of the major insights I have developed concerning Mozambique through my work for the Cities and Fragile States theme of the Crisis States research programme. My research, based in Maputo and the northern city of Nampula, has focused on the ways in which the ruling Frelimo¹ party has tried since the end of the civil war to maintain and create support for the regime amongst a growing urban middle class and the social tensions that have arisen from this effort. The primary policy objective of Frelimo under the current president, Armando Guebuza, is to prioritise development efforts in rural areas, especially in the centre and north of the country, where the party has historically been weak. In many respects this programme appears to be on the way towards achieving its goal and levels of absolute poverty in rural areas are thought to be declining. However, the country is urbanising rapidly and by some estimations around half the population will live in cities by 2020. Poverty in urban areas is rising, yet since both the government and many of the major donors focus on rural areas, little thought has been given as to how to deal with this. My research highlights how urban poverty produces social effects beyond the misery of the poor. Gross inequality, rising crime, a perceived decline in social mobility and an increasingly pervasive sense of insecurity in urban areas are creating tensions between the party elite and the growing middle class, even though the current period has ushered in an unprecedented time of prosperity for these favoured social groups. Thus, while the Frelimo party has probably never been so secure in its power, the tensions that have been manifested in the liberal period are beginning to undermine the legitimacy of the Frelimo nationalist project.

In this paper I discuss the changing relationship of four people, who can broadly be described as members of Maputo's middle class, to Frelimo's nationalist project. My primary argument is that nationalism in Mozambique has created a set of values and a

¹ Frelimo, (Mozambican Liberation Front) has ruled Mozambique continuously since independence in 1975. Initially they were a socialist party, which adopted Marxist-Leninism in 1977. They largely abandoned socialism in 1989/1990.

cultural system for certain favoured groups, which shaped a social and moral geography for the nation as well as how these groups fit into Mozambican society and how the various parts of the country are linked. However, while my informants may have internalised many of the regime's founding values, these self-same values can also provide a critique to delegitimise the state's ongoing project to 'build a nation' and can provide alternate and unexpected social and moral geographies. In the case of Mozambique this seems to have produced a state that is paradoxically both stable and brittle at the same time. In many ways this is a commonplace assertion, but I hope it provides a response to what I see as linear and instrumentalist tendency in much of the literature concerning 'state-building' and a mechanistic view of the relationship between elites and supporters, often based on an essentialised and unproblematised view of patronage and ethnic identity. Thus, the complex and often contradictory web of obligations, ideals and ambitions for those who seek to 'build' a state and for those who seek to challenge it, boils down to the elegant simplicities of 'greed and grievance' or rational choice theory, and endless effort is devoted to charting what sorts of elites need to be included if the country is to avoid the dreaded signifier of 'fragile' or 'failed'. Doubtless, all these factors are crucial, but it appears to me that underlying systems of meaning, their inherent malleability, and the social contexts that help to produce and shape them largely disappear from view. It is important to understand the economic interests of various factions and to chart coalitions, either among elites or between elites and segments of the wider population. Nonetheless, without trying to understand systems of meaning and how they are shaped on their own terms we can offer only a partial story.

The paper is broadly divided into three parts. The first places my argument within the existing literature of nationalism and the internalisation of political values and asserts that the geographical setting of Maputo and my informants' relationship to the city is decisive in understanding shifts in nationalist identity and systems of meaning. The second introduces the ethnographic setting and uses life histories to trace the changing relationship of four informants with the city and with the nationalist project. The paper concludes with a description of the role of the city in shaping the systems of meaning that underlie the nationalist project.

Nationalism, Identity and the City

My insistence on the importance of Maputo in shaping nationalist identities in Mozambique may appear counter-intuitive. Both the liberation struggle (1964-1975) when the nation was forged and the post-independence civil war (1977-1992) when the nation was transformed seem to follow Eric Wolf's famous pattern of 'Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century' (1968). In accordance with a well-worn pattern, both instances involved alienated elites who mobilised various sections of the disgruntled peasantry, either to overthrow the regime or to force it to make serious concessions. The actual benefit to this amorphous, ill-defined and deeply internally divided social group known as the peasantry is more ambiguous. It is difficult to say if the revolutionary government's programme of collectivisation and its attempts at rapid industrialisation, or the current 'liberal' government's programmes of structural adjustment and 'free markets' significantly improved the lives of many people in rural areas. However, especially during the revolutionary period, there was a concerted attempt to take some relatively poor and relatively rural people and make them neither poor nor rural any more. Moreover, at least during the revolutionary period, this rapid jump in social status was combined with a moral project and the creation of a new form of nationalist identity (for similar examples from the Soviet Union and China see Fitzpatrick, 1994, 1999,

Hoffman 1994 and Feuchtwang 2001). This process creates certain kinds of social geographies of nationalism, linking urban areas and the hinterlands and binding them together by creating new kinds of identity, opportunity and legitimacy under the overall rubric of 'building the nation'.

The opportunity that Frelimo created for at least some of the nation's citizens to experience unprecedented social mobility remain a point of pride for the party elite, even if the lustre has faded from other aspects of the revolution. In May 2009, I had a conversation with Senhor Macamo, a man who previously held many ministerial posts and who remains a member of Frelimo's powerful central committee.² Senhor Macamo waxed lyrical about the opportunities created for Mozambicans during the eleven year liberation struggle (1964-1975) and the initial post-independent period:

Many people talk about how things like the expanding bureaucracy under socialism created opportunities, which of course it did, but that is too simplistic. The liberation struggle itself created tremendous social mobility and also regional, as many of these people came from the north. It was the struggle that brought peasants to the fore for the first time really. Granted these were people who usually hailed from the upper strata of the peasantry. They may have been poor, often little better off than their neighbours, but they had access to some education. People from this group became generals (we did not use the title at the time, but they had basically the same powers), provincial governors and even national directors on some occasions. This was not the classic model of urbanisation, they moved to cities because they already had positions and power, not to gain them. We created a situation where something that would normally take generations happened in just a decade or so. There were limits though; provinces like Nampula, Zambezia and Sofala were largely left out, because of their particular history and social structures. The elites of these places were often outside of the struggle and they did not gain the same benefits. Now the process is no longer as radical or as quick and it is usually the sons of the previous beneficiaries that use the existing structures. For others the process is much slower and more incremental.

The process that Senhor Macamo describes almost appears as if the previous, highly restrictive routes of social mobility that drew a privileged few into the growing cities under colonialism were subjected to a strong dose of amphetamines by the liberation struggle. In this respect the Mozambican case appears as a post-colonial version of that described by Benedict Anderson for the formation of nationalism in other former colonial states in his celebrated 'Imagined Communities' (2006). For Anderson, the introduction of local elite schools in colonies that funnelled people into growing colonial bureaucracies created a pilgrimage or social route that tied opportunities, common experiences and loyalties to a specific territory. In Mozambique, the process of creating a 'pilgrimage' that brought people from relatively disadvantaged areas to the summit of power in Maputo as part of a wider revolution to create the nation, did not simply create a nationalist elite but also a crucial pillar of legitimation for their project. However, while this process formed a nationalist subject that provided a firm base of support for Frelimo, the binding together of a moral project with loyalty, adherence to a specific set of values, identity and territory, does not simply happen and then become frozen in time. As this paper will demonstrate, while many people may have internalised the regime's founding values, which led to new forms of identity, the twists and turns, compromises and corruptions, disillusionments and betrayals

² All names used for informants in this paper are pseudonyms.

that have followed independence in Mozambique have allowed these identities to evolve in unexpected directions. These directions have loosened the bonds between Frelimo and its followers and even between supporters and the nation that Frelimo embodies.

In Fitzpatrick's extensive historical work on Stalinism, she points out that while overall living conditions may have worsened during Stalin's 'revolution from above', it also created extraordinary conditions of social mobility for many young people, especially those from worker or peasant backgrounds (1979, 1999, 2000). Therefore, despite the brutal and repressive nature of the regime, it also created a social base that actively implemented the state's policies since cadres were self-interested beneficiaries. However, this formulation is not without its limitations, as noted by Hellbeck: "Implicit in the term 'self-interest' or in the question of what people 'really' thought is an assumption of a transcendental self, lacking historical specificity..." (2000:78). Kotkin addresses these issues in his work by understanding Stalinism as a 'civilisational' and fluid cultural system (1995). Instead of viewing the Soviet population simply as dupes, or self-interested agents of the regime, he points out that many people actively internalised the regime's values creating an empowering, if demanding new identity (1995: 223). While such an identity can demand tremendous self-sacrifice, it does not imply unthinking obedience though, as pointed out by Hellbeck, it also created the possibility for dissidence as the rhetoric of a particular regime appears to be far removed from the actual, day to day, practice of power. (Hellbeck 2000:111).

Frelimo's nationalist project differed from Stalin's in many ways. The prime victims of Stalin's early period, *kulaks* and the *petty-bourgeoisie*, were often the major beneficiaries in the Mozambican revolution. Frelimo also had powerful security services, 're-education' camps for dissidents, and as the civil war worsened, a growing reliance on coercion. Yet despite their best efforts, the party lacked the power, the state apparatus and the time to enact such a dramatic social revolution. Nonetheless, Frelimo's revolutionary nationalist ideology was also a civilisational and cultural project, even if it did not cast its net as far as the Soviet Union did. As I have written elsewhere (Sumich 2009), revolutionary nationalism had its origins in the particular social background of much of the party leadership and their relatively weak ties to so-called 'traditional' culture. Beyond the party's Marxist intelligentsia, it is doubtful that the intricacies of socialist theory were widely understood. Exploitation was not conceptualised as the result of social relations created by a mode of production, but instead as a manifestation of wickedness (Hall and Young 1997). Frelimo's socialism, therefore, was an attempt to vanquish this evil and create a 'good' and pure society. For the leadership, this effort demanded the abolition of the 'feudal' structures of patriarchal chiefly leadership, the destruction of ethnic and regional identities, and the suppression of the 'superstitious' beliefs that had supposedly left the population 'primitive' and docile. In practice this project was elitist in conception and top-down in implementation, but for the initiated, it was also a deeply moral vision that would unite a fractured population and lead the way to overcoming the legacies of colonial rule - poverty, backwardness and humiliation. For the believers this involved the internalisation of new values, social structures and an understanding of Mozambique's diverse peoples, their connections and their place in the wider world. This was a cultural system that unified the party's cadres in the face of ever growing challenges to their rule. Despite Frelimo's Maoist inflected rhetoric, with its distrust of established urbanites and the official lauding of the peasantry, this cultural system was also deeply urban in its outlook. Collectivisation was not simply supposed to aid in the extension of social services to the peasantry and rationalise agricultural production, but above all it would extend Frelimo's value system to the

'backward' elements of the population and create 'cities in the bush' (Hall and Young 1997). The role of actual urban areas, as opposed to embryonic dream cities in the bush, was even more concrete. Here was the centre of power and culture and the pilgrimage of a party member from a dusty district seat to Maputo was akin to the goal of creating the *homem novo* (new man), the embodiment of a new, and truly national Mozambican personality.

Tilly (1994) has argued that cities played a vital role in the formation of European nation-states. With respect to Africa, Freund has pointed out that whilst cities may not have created a sense of national identity, it was in urban areas where this identity would be most relevant (Freund 2007:91). Cities, as the areas where power and wealth are concentrated, are vital points on the social 'map' of the nationalist imagination. It is here that people from diverse social and geographical origins come to live and the dream of national unity either comes true or becomes a nightmare. Castells asserts that cities are simply 'containers of social and class relationships' (quoted in Merrifield 2006: 101), but as shown by Harvey (2006) for Paris and Holston (1989) for Brasília, cities are also deeply implicated in shaping these relationships, albeit sometimes in unexpected ways. The sets of social relations that grow from urban areas help shape forms of nationalist identity and it is where contacts with the world outside of the nation's borders are concentrated. This is certainly true in the case of Maputo. As the capital and largest city (with an estimated population of 1,094,315, more than twice its nearest rival), Maputo is the undisputed centre of wealth and power in Mozambique. As a city, Maputo was crucial to the post-independence formation of a nationalist identity and it has also been at the centre of the changes to that identity that have accompanied the waning of the revolution.

The Ethnographic Context

On 5th February 2008 a riot broke out in Maputo, a Frelimo stronghold, the first since independence. The riots were blamed on the rising price of transport, which was forcing many urbanites to spend half their salary or more just to get to work. Price hikes in fuel also meant that the price of food, much of which is imported, was also spiralling. While these factors, combined with rising crime, gross inequality, growing urban poverty and an increasingly unpopular president were well-known, the violence seemed to catch everybody, including many of the participants, by surprise. Initially mobs attacked *chapas*, the mini-van taxis that are a ubiquitous feature of urban life in Mozambique, overturning and burning them. Wider frustrations soon came to the fore and groups of people started targeting those driving luxury cars, the symbol of the new rich, and also burned down a school named after the current president, Armando Guebuza. However, despite such symbolic attacks on the president, this was not necessarily an anti-government revolt. One rumour that circulated endlessly claimed that the rioters attacked a convoy of luxury cars, but when they found that the convoy contained the former president, Joaquim Chissano, they started cheering and demanded that he re-take power. It seemed that the rioters were more intent on reminding Frelimo that they also shared the city and were suffering, rather than being aimed at overthrowing the regime. This sentiment was voiced by a young rioter who was interviewed on the evening news. When asked why he resorted to violence and the destruction of property, his reply was: 'They [the government] think they can cut us off, well we can cut too!'. The riot continued for two days and shut the city down. It was only quelled when the government deployed contingents of police with permission to shoot on sight, and made a panicked agreement to subsidise the cost of transport. Estimates vary, but a common tally was 32 people killed, many shot by the police.

The February 5th riot is the most dramatic indication that the social contract between the rulers and the ruled is being broken. It also appears that this sentiment is felt most intensely by those who have been historically close to the regime and amongst its major beneficiaries and who see themselves as squeezed between the corrupt arrogance of the rich and the violent fury of the poor. The reasons given for this situation depend on who one speaks to. They range from growing inequality, Guebuza's penchant to ignore urban areas in favour of extending Frelimo's reach into the parts of the countryside where the party has historically been weak, rampant corruption and a loss of vision and purpose on the part of the party. The rioters were pointing out in particular that Frelimo's loudly proclaimed goals of unity, progress and a better life for all are nowhere in evidence. Many members of the elite are well aware of the growing frustration and are caught between sympathy and the fear that they will be targeted the next time a riot erupts. As I was told by Senhor Marques, a member of the central committee and a former minister:

The future is uncertain. The old leadership of Frelimo has kept its unity even though there are many internal conflicts, but I can't say how long that will continue. There are a lot of big projects coming in, but they don't create jobs. There has been a huge increase in the number of universities, but there is nowhere for the young to go. They are becoming increasingly frustrated and, unlike their elders, they are not attached to Frelimo in the same way. Even within Frelimo, the party machine is now just being mobilised for elections, we do not actually listen to the base. Chissano [the former president] gave people the freedom to do what they want; now the party is becoming increasingly autocratic. Guebuza will win the next election without a doubt, but the party is looking at serious challenges ten years down the line. The 5th of February can easily happen again.

It is against this social backdrop that I want to introduce the four primary informants for this paper and their changing relationship with the nationalist project. All four can loosely be defined as members of an urban middle class, with high levels of education and professional jobs, and all four, in divergent ways, owe much of their social position to the revolution. Of the four, I have known two since I first started fieldwork in Maputo in 2002. For one, Naema, I am well acquainted with her family and she has met members of my own. I have celebrated holidays, birthdays and major rituals at their house and have been well positioned to watch their changing attitudes. I have known Varyna for an equal amount of time and have visited her house on multiple occasions. In this case, however, I am much less well acquainted with her wider family, largely due to the fact that her mother is convinced that I am a CIA agent and was always wary in my presence. Pascal I have known for three years and as he is a relatively recent immigrant to Maputo, the only things I know about his wider family is what he has told me. Chuabo, the final informant, I met in 2009 and our interactions thus far have been restricted to more official interviews and the collection of life histories.

The first life history, that of Senhor Chuabo, provides an example of the kind of social mobility that characterised the revolutionary period. This combined the prospect of advancement with a moral project that tightly bound Chaubo's fate to the revolution and the nation. The next two histories, Naema and Varyna will demonstrate how values internalised from the nationalist project are now becoming 'de-territorialised'. In his analysis of the late Soviet period, Yurchak(2006:114-115) describes de-territorialisation as the process in which:

...the routine replication of authoritative discourse enabled new identities, socialities, and forms of knowledge that were enabled but not determined by the authoritative rhetoric. This internal displacement of the system's dominant discourse was different from the dissident kind of opposition and was not articulated in oppositional terms; indeed it did not preclude one from feeling personal affinity to many of the values that were explicitly and implicitly central to the socialist system.

In the case of my informants, de-territorialisation not only describes the *ways* in which nationalist values create new forms of identity, but in a more literal sense, these forms of identity are becoming progressively unmoored not only from the nationalist project that created them but from the territorial confines of the nation that once gave them sustenance. The final example is that of Pascal, the youngest of the informants mentioned here and perhaps the first to have to deal with the reversal of the process of social mobility that he had been taught to expect as normal.

Chuabo

I first met Chuabo at his office, a large converted house in one of the most expensive parts of the city. While he lacks the ability to launch into asides in fluent English like so many members of the elite, he shares their self-confident and prosperous air. This is not surprising, considering the startling mobility that has characterised his life; through the revolution he has become an unqualified success. Chuabo was born the year the liberation struggle began in the far north, in one of the poorest and most remote provinces in Mozambique. He was raised by his grandparents as his mother and father worked in Zambia for much of his childhood. His village was near an Anglican Mission that also had the best school in the area. Most of the students, including Chuabo, came from rural backgrounds, but due to the education they received and the opportunities created after the revolution, many subsequently became high-level cadres. In 1977 Frelimo negotiated a deal with Fidel Castro, which allowed one thousand Mozambican students (a hundred from each province) to obtain their secondary education in Cuba. The best students were selected, often those from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds and Chuabo, was picked to go. He went to Maputo for orientation and this was the first time he interacted with people his own age from all over the country. They were then sent to a specially constructed school that Chuabo described as similar to a seminary, as it was an enclosed compound far from any town. After graduation Chuabo, as well as many of the other students, was offered the chance to study at university in Cuba where he took a degree in economic statistics. He finally returned to Mozambique in 1985 and was assigned to a position with the National Directory of Finance and Planning.

During his time in Cuba, Chuabo had become a believer in the socialist ideal. He was deeply impressed by the way the Cuban leadership lived with apparent simplicity, and how social differentiation seemed to be insignificant. His return to Mozambique after eight years proved to be disillusioning. Everything was conducted in a top-down manner. It was impossible to do something without the consent of someone higher up; therefore no one really did anything. Furthermore, unlike his experience in Cuba, the social gap between the leadership, with their myriad of privileges, and the wider population was large and accentuated by growing corruption. He eventually quit government service and went to Maputo to study law. Senhor Macamo (the former minister mentioned in the introduction) was his lecturer and after graduation he joined Macamo's firm and is now a partner. His wife is also a professional and he has been able to send his children abroad to study. Although he has

doubts about some of the directions in which Frelimo seems to be heading, he is still loyal to the party and deeply grateful for all of the opportunities it provided him. Under Frelimo a process of social mobility that might have taken generations under different circumstances was shortened to mere decades. The party gave Chuabo an identity as part of a wider moral project; he went from being a relatively well-educated peasant to a member of the vanguard and someone being groomed for positions of leadership. This created a social pilgrimage that involved a gradual journey from one of the nation's most remote provinces to a position of privilege within Maputo itself, with his fortunes intertwined with that of the revolution. Chuabo is the epitome of a process that created a nationalist identity and bound a generation of cadres closely to the party, but which is also a process that is becoming difficult to replicate in the current era.

Varyna

I first met Varyna in 2002. She was born just a few years after the revolution and her family is well-connected with Frelimo. Varyna's father is a southerner from an *assimilado* family (the *assimilated*, the highest position available for blacks during the colonial period) and had been a soldier with Frelimo during the liberation struggle, later rising to the position of director of a state company during the socialist period.³ Varyna's mother, also from an *assimilado* family, is from the north and after the struggle she was able to get an education, rising to a high state position. Varyna's childhood was privileged; she studied at an International School and became fluent in English. Then, after the end of apartheid, she studied in South Africa. When she returned to Mozambique after university she worked at a ministry. The pay was low, about \$300 per month, but she did make contacts in the NGO sector. She later won a scholarship to undertake a Master's degree in the UK and upon her return to Mozambique she obtained a much better paid position with the UN and was promoted to head of the regional office abroad.

Much like Chuabo, Varyna is bright and hard-working and both owe many of the opportunities they have enjoyed to the victory of the revolution. Unlike Chuabo, however, her nationalist identity did not come about through a gradual progression, nor was it something that needed to be struggled for; she has never thought of herself as anything other than Mozambican and a citizen of a sovereign nation. She champions many of the party's modernist goals and has little sympathy for ethnic and regional fault-lines and rivalries. She feels that witchcraft is a divisive superstition of the ignorant and she also attaches immense value to education and the ideal of progress. While she has some sympathy for Frelimo, it is more to do with class status and family connections. On the occasions when she actually talks about local politics, she usually holds the party in good natured contempt. She personally does not think there would be many significant changes were the Renamo⁴ opposition to win. The opportunities Chuabo enjoyed came through the consolidation of the nationalist project and are firmly based on his connections in Mozambique and the party. Varyna's on the other hand are becoming progressively more de-territorialised. Her family's relationship to Frelimo may have started her on her path, but now she is more dependent on the vagaries of the UN bureaucracy than the favour of the party that no longer has a moral claim for her allegiance. Increasingly she sees herself as part of an international middle class, with whom she often has more in common than many of her own countrymen. In some ways Varyna represents the triumph of the nationalist project, the creation of a truly

³ See Hedges 1999, Mondlane 1969 and Penvenne 1989 for a more detailed description of the legal category of *assimilação* the role of *assimilados* in late colonial Mozambique.

⁴ Renamo (Mozambican National Resistance) are the former rebels who are now the main opposition party.

Mozambican subject with an aversion for the 'backwardness' and divisiveness of the past, who supports the need for a strong and perhaps fierce state to safeguard the overriding ideal of unity. While she believes in nationalist values, they also provide a ready-made critique as rhetoric appears ever more divorced from reality.

Naema

Naema was born in the mid-1960s in a northern provincial capital. Her mother is a Mozambican of Indian descent and her father was a Portuguese settler. Early in her childhood the family was thrown into poverty after her father was arrested for running guns for Frelimo during the liberation struggle. They were able to stay with some well-off family members in Maputo, who supported them and arranged for Naema to attend school. Naema was in secondary school at independence and she became a party supporter and student activist. After graduation, she qualified as a teacher and was sent to the north. She then met her husband, João, who was a soldier. João is also of Indian descent and from the same province. His father had been a merchant running a 'bush' shop that sold matches and soap to villagers. During the liberation struggle he sided with Frelimo and was awarded a government post in the provincial capital after liberation. João joined the party and was briefly a member of the presidential guard until he was dismissed for insubordination. They later moved to Maputo where Naema secured another teaching position. Her salary was inadequate for their growing family and João lacked the necessary papers to find work, so he survived by doing odd jobs. Naema now describes this period as the *tempo da fome*, or the time of hunger. Their fortunes have improved considerably since the fall of socialism and the end of the civil war. Naema now teaches for a private school, which pays around 10 times the salary of a state-run secondary school. João formed a company, and the business is prospering. They were able to buy their apartment when the government privatised housing and have since sold it and bought a *quinta* (a country house) in an outlying suburb with a garden large enough to raise some crops. All four of their children have had private educations; three have gone on to university and the youngest should start next year.

Surprisingly though, their rising prosperity has been matched by increasing alienation from the regime. Despite the fact that her husband is a party member and her eldest daughter a candidate member, Naema feels that the leadership is morally bankrupt, and Frelimo is largely composed of corrupt, murdering thieves. João is also a strong critic of the government, although he remains a firm supporter of the first, socialist president, Samora Machel. According to him, during the time of Samora, the government was not populated with self-interested thieves, but sincerely concerned with the plight of the people and the revolution had a deeply moral base. Neither of them sympathises with Renamo. João fought against them in the civil war and they both have the standard view of the opposition in Maputo, that Renamo is a party of ignorant killers. However, Naema often argues that it is Renamo who brought democracy and they should be given credit for ending the outright dictatorship. Their alienation with the Frelimo regime also coincides with a growing fear of the wider population. During the revolution, Frelimo championed a militantly non-racial line, but that has begun to fade with the introduction of the more populist logic of electoral democracy. The Indian population is often resented. They were one of the big economic winners of the post-socialist period and are frequently accused of discrimination and exploitation. This resentment has been matched by sometimes venomous outbursts of racism. Naema once told me the problem with blacks is: "Their hearts are as dark as their skin". One of the reasons they left the city centre is to ensure their safety. However, their

hostility towards the majority population tends to be directed to those outside their social circle.

As the nationalist project fades as a goal worth defending for Naema and her family, it is being replaced by a growing emphasis on Islam. They were always believers but the family has become noticeably more devout since I first met them in 2002. João has stopped drinking - a pastime he used to enjoy heartily - and he now attends the mosque five times a day. Their daughters have slowly begun to abandon the fashions of choice for young women in Maputo in favour of more 'Islamic' garb. When speaking about Islam to me, which they do with increasing regularity, they stress the purity and universality of the *Umma*, the sense of belonging to what is, by definition, a moral project and an oasis in a corrupt world. They are also beginning to re-orient themselves to the East. After their unsuccessful efforts to arrange for their children to study in South Africa or Europe, a common strategy among the upwardly mobile in Maputo, they are making plans for their eldest son to study in India or Pakistan, countries they have never visited. Additionally they have arranged a marriage between their eldest daughter and a Mozambican Indian who lives in Kuwait, a man she has never met in a country she has never seen. It is doubtful they would have considered this option seven years ago and they are still circumspect about it. It was only a relative who told me that their eldest daughter had never actually seen her fiancé and had simply exchanged emails with him. Unlike the de-territorialisation of opportunity experienced by Varyna, Naema and her family are undergoing a de-territorialisation of morality. They still consider themselves to be Mozambicans but their place in a nation that they see as increasingly corrupt and hostile is uncertain and the purity promised by the earlier nationalist vision disappeared long ago. Instead they align themselves with a different vision of belonging, a specifically international *Umma*.

Pascal

Pascal was born during the civil war and was raised outside a provincial capital in the south. His father was from the north and joined the liberation struggle. He became a police officer after independence and was rising rapidly through the ranks. However, he had vague connections to the losing side of an internal power struggle and his career stagnated. Pascal's mother is a primary school teacher, also from the north. Her family has also been involved with Frelimo since the independence struggle and her brother eventually rose to the rank of General. Pascal did extremely well in school and won a scholarship to study at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, the most elite public institution in the country. He graduated in 2007 with very high marks but, like most from his discipline who graduated with him, he has been unable to get any sort of permanent job. Pascal has had three job interviews, but after each he was always taken aside by the interviewer and asked if he has a party card. When he replied that he did not, he has always been told to "deal with it". Initially Pascal was not willing to compromise his principles; he feels that Frelimo is ossified, corrupt and dictatorial and he had no interest in being a member. However, as his period of unemployment persisted, Pascal began to reconsider, as did just about everyone he knew in university. The party leadership is increasingly worried about opening their ranks simply to what they call 'careerists' and the already arduous procedure of becoming a member is becoming even more restrictive.

The best opportunity for Pascal currently is with the Ministry of Education. The government policy under the current president, Guebuza, is to build 'poles of development' in the rural areas. If Pascal managed to make the right connections with the ministry there is a good

chance that he could be assigned work in the districts. It is not an option that Pascal relishes; in fact he sees it as a step backwards. He would often joke: “yeah it would be great; I could have dinner with the head of the district, the commandant of the police and the other local aristocrats and plot how to get out”. Unlike Varyna and Naema, Pascal is undergoing a process of re-territorialisation, a reverse of the social pilgrimage he has been taught to expect. Since independence, hard work and educational success were supposed to allow one a gradual progression from the hinterland and small towns to the capital. Now, it appears the opposite is true and he is in danger of being expelled from Maputo and sent to some far-off district seat. During the socialist period Frelimo had a tradition of sending high-ranking members to provincial posts as trouble-shooters, but the opportunities open to Pascal are widely considered to be dull and unrewarding. The lack of social mobility for those outside the chosen few is combined with, in Pascal’s view, the dictatorship of a self-serving elite. For him, the moral basis and legitimacy Frelimo claim for their nationalist project is simple hypocrisy.

The lives of all four of the people I described have been connected to the revolution. They, or members of their family have been party members, served in the government, the army or the police and all four have benefitted from independence. Historically, it is people with similar experiences who have formed a bastion of support for the Frelimo party and none of them, even the most embittered, necessarily wants Renamo to win. Furthermore none expect the regime to fall in the near future. In fact, some, like Chuabo, remain deeply committed to Frelimo, even if they have many personal doubts. All of them are examples of Frelimo’s crowning achievement as all, in divergent ways, have internalised the values associated with the nationalist project and that has become a basis for their identity. However, as Chuabo’s generation begins the gradual process of retiring from public life, the nationalist project appears to be progressively hollowing itself out. For the younger generation, these same nationalist values provide a mirror to reflect the regime’s failings. While none of them is necessarily opposed to the party and they are among the most privileged people in the nation, Chuabo alone is an active supporter. For elites to secure their power they need committed followers and as the violence of 5th February 2008 demonstrated, the disaffection of the less privileged may be growing much faster.

Conclusion: The City, the Nation and Systems of Meaning

In the early post-independence period Frelimo liked to claim that the ‘new man’- a truly Mozambican citizen based on self-sacrifice, collective labour and rationality - had been forged in the ‘liberated zones’, areas under Frelimo’s control during the liberation struggle (Vieira 1977). The reality of these claims, as opposed to the party’s nostalgic view and the actual unity of purpose amongst the population in the struggle, are open to debate (Hall and Young 1997, Newitt 1995). However, in the cities, especially Maputo where the party’s power and personnel are concentrated, Frelimo’s nationalist project did help to create a system of meaning and a set of values that was internalised by at least certain social groups that became bastions of the regime. However, it is also in Maputo where the failings of the nationalist project are most apparent. This creates a paradox whereby the population of the city has internalised nationalist values, identity and systems of meaning more concretely than many other parts of the nation, but also where the everyday shortcomings at the highest levels of the party are most visible and open to critique by the self-same set of values.

The four case studies I have presented in this paper are meant to give a sense on a personal level of how nationalism in Mozambique created a system of meaning and how that system

is beginning to change. Whilst I do not claim to have represented the entire population of Maputo, my goal has been to show the unintended and counter-intuitive effects of developmental interventions that are masked in the standard language of ‘service delivery’, ‘stake holders’ and ‘policy making’. The Mozambican government and the major donors probably never intended to undermine the regime in its stronghold, by focusing on rural poverty and neglecting urban areas. Furthermore, it is unlikely that either of them expected to lose support from among those who have been the major beneficiaries of the economic transformation of the past decade or more. Urban poverty, however, does not just affect the poor but has social effects across the entire urban spectrum. I do not consider that Frelimo is in great danger, in fact the party is arguably the most important factor linking individual citizens to a place called Mozambique. None of the people I have mentioned hold themselves in opposition to the regime, yet few would support it either. There is a danger that the party’s impressive façade is being steadily hollowed out as crucial social groups begin a long process of withdrawal and their logical successors are by no means apparent.

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