Creating African Futures in an Era of Global Transformations:

Challenges and Prospects

Créer l'Afrique de demain dans un contexte de transformations mondialisées :

enjeux et perspectives

Criar Futuros Africanos numa Era de Transformações Globais:

Desafios e Perspetivas

بعث أفريقيا الغد في سياق التحولات المعولمة :

رهانات و آفاق

Entangled histories of multiple conflicts: the complex landscape of war and peace in Mozambique[1]

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Introduction

Over the last years, a persistent demand has been made by various peoples and associations that acts of aggression committed in a near past in Mozambique must be recognized and acknowledged as historical wrongs, and that the aggressors offer apology for their wrongdoing.

The history of many of the modern-states that endured the violence of the colonialism is crossed by many political conflicts of belonging and recognition, as well as with the moral and material implications of such conflicts.

Frelimo,[1] the main nationalist movement in Mozambique, turned itself into a political party in 1977. In a context of monopartidarism, Frelimo constructed itself as the "single source of authority" in the production of law and in the dissemination of knowledge about the country's past. This intimate alliance between politics and history produced an official history narrative about the nationalist struggle, which has "*become an instrument to legitimize*" the party's hegemonic "*authority and render it unquestionable*" (Borges Coelho, 2014: 21). This policy strategy has, in parallel, promoted the silencing of a diversity of memories produced by a complex interface between colonizers and colonized, concealing a variety of tensions and antagonisms that permeated (and still permeate) Mozambican society. Indeed, from the point of view of historiography, it is important to be sensitive to the fact that during the processing of an event in historical event there is always something that escapes the record (Trouillot, 1995: 49). No matter how one defines the limits of an event, it is never closed. Any event is filled with constitutive absences, an integrative part of the construction process of the historical event itself. Ominously however, in these power games, is the reduction of huge pieces of history to silence, to invisibility. But can a macro-native conceal other histories?

Nearly 40 years since the declaration of independence inquisitive questionings about the politics of history and memory in Mozambique are growing. They have been fueled by the recent publications of (auto)biographies and accounts of memory produced by the protagonists of contemporary Mozambican history, among which stand out former political prisoners, Frelimo government officials, opposition leaders, among others.

Little by little these memories are giving glimpses about of mechanisms of copying with political violence, mechanisms that were put to place with independence, to deal with '*comprometidos*' (collaborators), a sizeable group of people accused of having work very closely with Portuguese colonial institutions during the nationalist struggle.

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[1] Frelimo was the main nationalist movement in Mozambique, getting access to power with independence, and remaining the dominant political party.
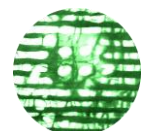
Since the 1992 peace agreement and the introduction of multiparty elections, Mozambique is often described as a country that has been on a successful journey towards reconciliation and peace. However, recent episodes of violence show that many of the conflicts of the past are enmeshed in contemporary practices and structures. In order to solve them, several political activists and members of various political parties have called for truth commissions. Can these commissions or courts, as the ICC, solve the conflicts that continue to wreck Mozambique social tissue?

Southern Africa region has witnessed, over the last 50 years, several episodes of violent conflicts, showing that Mozambique, unfortunately, is no exception. Seeking a way out of these cycles of violence, Thabo Mbeki and Mahmood Mamdani alerted, in an article published earlier this year that "*courts can't end civil wars*".[2] This article answers an attempt to export a model of criminal justice based upon the experiences of courts set up to deal with the violent repercussion of the II World War.

Indeed, the dominant perspective of the Global North on transition to democracy insists in reinforcing a Eurocentric version of modernity, symbolized by a linear transition towards a single legal system and nationhood (understood as an expression of universal jurisdiction, as it is the case of ICC). As several international documents state, the goal is to restore functions of the State, and promote the rule of law in accordance with international human rights norms. This is the case of Mozambique, where the project of national reconciliation (in the aftermath of national liberation and civil wars) rests upon a double articulation of 'let's change the page to let the past go', together with the reinforcement of a western-centric form of regulation. This dominant international model of justice in dealing with past/present episodes of violence, based upon the criminalization of the perpetrators of violence, reproduces violence in the form of epistemicide and privatization of violence (Santos, 1998: 103). As Mbeki and Mamdani emphasize in the above cited article, "*there must be a political process where all citizens — yesterday's victims, perpetrators and bystanders — may face one another as today's survivors*".

Following this line of argument, in this article I will try to analyze a less studied process of processes of 'truth' production and reeducation in non-formal judicial instances.

The study is based on archival research carried out both in Mozambique and Portugal, analysis of media, as well as on interviews carried out with several people that, in Mozambique, suspected of accused of having betrayed the nationalist struggle (by aligning with colonial projects) were part of several 'truth seeking' meetings, organized between 1975 and 1982. Mozambique, led by Frelimo party-state, had a choice: to ignore the fact that people were deprived of their dignity, or they could address it. The 'truth seeking'

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[2] 'Courts can' end civil wars',*New York Times*, February 5th, 2014.
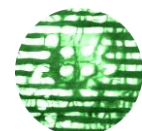
meetings/commissions of inquiry[3] set in Mozambique were the form adopted locally to deal with the traumas of the colonial past.

This paper proposes a more dense and complex interpretation of the political history and social memories of a lesser known period of Mozambique – the end of colonialism and the first years of independence. This analysis requires a clearer and in-depth study of these conflicts, whose roots are to be found in colonial times. This paper, beginning with a short critical evaluation of the discourse of 'reconciliation' and specific notion of 'temporality' associated with it, aims to contrast the single, global model of transition justice with the experiences Mozambique went through, as a means to explore the extent to which the multiple, almost invisible processes of local reconciliation can find an expression within methodologies of national reconciliation processes. Specific emphasis will be placed upon the analysis of state initiatives (1970s and 1980s) to deal with 'traitors of the revolution' in open organized meetings that produced little-known practices of reconciliation. It is in such a context where the limits of the discourse about 'universal jurisdiction' and criminalization of perpetrators of violence are arguably best understood, and where alternatives can find its strongest manifestations and most radical expressions (such as the case of reinforcing experiences of protection and self-determination).

1. Mozambique and the crimes against humanity

Colonialism is a crime against humanity. In Mozambique, as in and many other countries, colonialism, while defying the right to self-determination, meant a larger process of subjugation that included the use of death, disappearance, torture, political exclusion, incarceration, and other form of terror.

In situations of military, political and/or economic transition, the reassessment of the role of law in the transition process becomes a crucial site of a people's or a nation's negotiating the past, present and future. However, allusions to a tabula rasa or to judicial prosecution after traumatic collapses of societal order have turned, in many contexts, into ill-fated attempts to address the challenges of confronting the past when building the future. The law's concern with nations that struggle with transition(s) expresses itself through hybrid concepts, the predominant being transitional or post-conflict justice, restorative justice, or reconciliation.

Transitional justice, a prominent element in the liberal peace-building projects, seeks to promote social and political integration and reconciliation, key elements to enhance the rule of law and to increase trust in local, state governmentality (Bell, 2009). This normative model is mainly based on the figure of modern nation-state paradigm, and on a monocultural

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[3] I try to avoid labelling them 'truth commissions', although these different moments represent, in fact, truth commissions. And in various moments, as I will address further on, Samora Machel, president of Mozambique, present in multiple meetings, would emphasize that their goal was 'to find the truth' about the reasons for violence and betrayal.
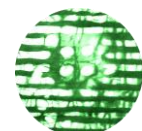
hegemonic version of human rights, proclaiming reconciliation as a core condition for the survival of any modern state.

In contemporary societies, ravaged by conflicts, in order to bring about the process of acknowledgement and reconciliation, several formal mechanisms have been activated: trials and truth commissions (Quinn, 2009). However, as Mamdani defends (2013), truth commissions walk hand-in-hand with Nuremberg-style processes (courts), the distinction being that the truth commissions grant amnesty in exchange for the truth. However, in both cases, these institutions perform in similar ways, with the truth commissions producing a quasi-judicial proceeding.

Transitional justice, quite quickly, transformed itself into 'an official' legal strategy to deal with the atrocities of the past, imposing its concepts and frames on debates on justice, rights, democratization, in the aftermath of authoritarian regimes. This approach, institutionalized and normalized, has been appropriated by a wide range of academics and policy makers, including the United Nations (UN) and well-known international NGOs (Teitel, 2003: 69). For example, recently, one of the global transitional initiatives sponsored the USA' government endorsed transitional justice as mechanism to promote democratization: "*through the reform of institutions, acknowledging truth of past abuses and meting out justice, transitional justice measures can also restore confidence in functions of the State, and promote the rule of law in accordance with international human rights norms*".[4] This statement illustrates a growing tendency that sees transition justice as a set of tools with increasing legal embedment - prosecution and trials, truth commissions, institutional reforms and reparation programs, among others – part of a single model to be used by any society facing a legacy of atrocities. Yet, this global paradigm of transitional justice cannot deal with the diversity of unresolved and contested issues as various authors have pointed out (see, for example, Roth-Arriaza and Mariezcurrena, 2006).

In the words of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, this hegemonic perspective on justice stems for a two central conceptions that structure modern western legal modernity: firstly, that the understanding of the world by far exceeds the western understanding of the world and, secondly, that the understanding of the world and the way it creates and legitimates social power has a lot to do with the conceptions of time and temporality (Santos, 2004: 159). The linear conception of time is at core of modern justice. Societies understand power according to the dominant conceptions of time, as Koselleck (1990) and Fabian (1993) have pointed out. By problematizing how modern historiography created the non-contemporaniety of the contemporaneous, these authors, working in distinct contexts, identified the hierarchies linear temporality generates. Those who have the power to impose a certain teleological version of the world, define (rather, or aim at) their version of societal structuring and related normativity (Santos, 2004). The current model of transitional justice shows clearly the

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[4] See http://demdigest.net/blog/impunity-v-accountability-transitional-justice-global-initiative/, accessed on August 10th, 2014.
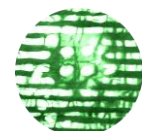
presence of such hierarchical structure: the self-proclaimed democratic societies have the 'right' to impose their version of justice, thus defining as contemporary those that resort to global, modern legal institutions, part of modern-state structure.

Yet justice cannot be achieved without taking into consideration how each country in political transition has its own specific political, economic and social context. As Mamdani has highlighted (2013), violence is a constitutive part of contemporary national projects, developed upon the burden of building a collective political memory. And any national project is also full of silence, forgetfulness, absent actors and elapsed political processes.

In order to understand the cycles of violence that have marked Mozambique history over the last 50 years, one has to understand not only the individuals whose bodily integrity was violated, but also the multiple episodes of war that occurred, including the colonial violence that marked the onset of Mozambique, as a colonial project. Aiming to understand this complexity, in recent decades scholars of Mozambique have focused on the importance and uses of individual and collective memory to construct and interpret the past, to reconcile victims and perpetrators, and to create a contemporary sense of a shared political or social identity through reflecting on past experiences.[5]
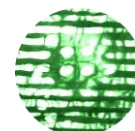
The study of memory challenges positivist understandings of history and anthropology — scholarly projects informed by the search for objective historical truths and pristine cultural traditions (Appadurai, 1981). Memory is not a static entity, but a process, one in which preservation and change, if in differing degrees, are mutually implicated (Clifford, 2004).

The eminently political character of the national project underway in Mozambique is perceived, firstly, in the artificiality its territorial boundaries. The propagated vision of the Mozambican nation, founded upon the politicization of a particular narrative of the nationalist emancipatory project – one part of a complex past and current struggles -, hides numerous ambiguities. This fact explains how memory and justice get imbricated in situations where history plays itself both the ole of liberator or of subjugation. As a result, over recent times, with Mozambique confronting new episodes of violent violations of human dignity and rights, claims of transitional justice, of truth commissions, have appeared on the agenda, intimately associated to claims to 'open up history'.[6]

But can a subject of knowing become a knowing subject? Following this line of inquiry, two important points have to be addressed: whose voice is present in these depositions and testimonies? Indeed, as a careful analysis of meetings reveal, most of the victims of these

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[5] See, among other, Geffray, 1990; Borges Coelho, 1998, 2014; Cabrita, 2000, West, 2003; Ncomo, 2004; Pitcher, 2006; Igrejas, 2008; Thomaz, 2008; Buur, 2009 and Machava, 2011.
[6] "Liga dos Direitos Humanos de Moçambique apoia criação de comissão de verdade", at http://noticias.sapo.pt/internacional/artigo/liga-dos-direitos-humanos-de-mocambique-apoia-criacao-de-comissao-de-verdade_18164161.html, accessed on August 28th, 2014; "Daviz Simango: 'A nossa história toda é mentira'", at http://www.dw.de/daviz-simango-a-nossa-hist%C3%B3ria-toda-%C3%A9-mentira-entrevista-exclusiva-parte-2/a-6246701, accessed on June 22nd, 2014.

cycles of violence rarely participate in the discourse about them. When someone speaks from the margins, about a less known or almost forgotten topic, he or she enters a frame of meaning within which the inquiry itself makes sense, and speak to an audience not normally used to hearing or acknowledging the sorts of things they want to say (Hoagland, 2009).

As I seek to analyze in this paper, to exorcise the cycles of violence (colonial exploitation, forced labor, liberation war, mass displacements, and civil war) demands responses both from policy makers as well as from the citizens, the people affected, victim and perpetrators. The answer to the violence that has martyrized Mozambican society requires making these problems and debates audible and visible, as a way of finding collective solutions. These challenges includes analyzing what marginalized testifiers are required to do to enter the field of meaning within which the testimony is to be given, as well as strategies we/they might use when giving testimony in light of the discourse within which we/they have to make sense (Hoagland, 2009). As described above, transitional justice became a model of to reconcile conflict-torn societies, and the tools used to examine violence and injustice has to be assessed. Yet, as Sally Merry and Susan Coutin argue (2014: 1), to fully understand the political and social implications of a conflict one has to understand not only the substantive issues involved, but also the knowledge systems applied, since what gets counted and how depends on what can be categorized and evaluated as legitimated knowledge.

It is a prerogative of both courts and truth commissions, while searching for evidences about past abuses, to assemble and interpret information, because they are presumed to be the knowing (official) subjects, working in legitimate institutions, recreating the coloniality of knowledge.[7] As will address below, to be able to denounce the colonial repression that felt upon the political prisoners in colonial Mozambique represents the resistance against a particular colonial relationship, a particular nationalist process.

In the 'truth seeking' meetings set up in Mozambique, it became possible to decipher specific voices from the multiple utterances that form hegemonic discourse about the 'victims of colonialism'. The people that gave testimony about colonial violence experience in jail, up to May-June 1974 in Mozambique, express their experiences in a context where their voices were not used to be heard; many of them even were not fluent in Portuguese, so one has to consider how what they said was heard and/or used (S/a, 1977).

To insist in a monocultural structure to guarantee reconciliation becomes a form to silencing opposing interlocution. For Maria Lugones (2006: 78) communicating requires intercultural translation, travelling between diverse cultural universes, where the people that testify are seen not only as subjected but also as a subject. Multiple approaches to peace and reconciliation – core elements of transitional justice – have to be seen in the time and contexts where they took place, and not in opposition to 'modern' ones, the first illegal and the latter

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[7] This concept is used to refer to a process of translating the diversity of the world - other cultures, other knowledges, other ways of being, onto a monocultural reality, presuming commensurability through Western rationality.
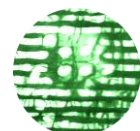
legitimate. Encountering memories and history is a process that claims to be democratized. Seeking to answer this challenge, Borges Coelho defends that "*history could be of great value to the democratic process*", as the past permanently waits to be revisited, discussed and "*shared by all*" (2014: 30-31).

Insisting in reclaim the past, as suggested by Frantz Fanon, "*triggers a chance of fundamental importance*" (1963: 210) for the subaltern other. Here, the silences of the otherness are not a synonym for the victimization of alterity, but of an increasingly active, and even radical presence of these 'other' historical actors—a condition for transforming the memories and narratives they produce. This kind of knowledge, or better yet, inter-knowledge, rests upon recognizing the mutuality of differences and similarities, which allows relationships between and within societies to be reconstructed.

2. Colonialism, war and justice making transitions

The 'truth seeking' meetings[8] set up in Mozambique, from 1975 to 1982 reflect a belief in the processes of uncovering evidence and enabling past actions to be brought into the open, to be discussed and the suspected of perpetrating actions of violence and betrayal recognized and publicly punished.[9]

The guerrilla nationalist was projected as the icon of the truly Mozambican citizen, the model of the 'new man.' This icon was created as an attempt to generate new political identities in the first years of independence. The project of the nation casted Mozambique as being made up of two main groups: those who had fought for independence and the others who made up the mass majority of Mozambican society. This differentiation entailed a strong hierarchy, derived from the necessity to "*limit the electoral capacity of the citizens who were committed to fascist colonialism.*"[10] The category of second-class citizens included many of those whom Frelimo identified as having been allies and supporters of the Portuguese colonial presence (Meneses, 2007).

Shortly after independence, Frelimo sought ways to overcome the separation created between those deemed to be 'collaborators' and the 'Mozambicans.' In 1977-78, the first signs of a political strategy seeking to deal with the present memory of these colonial connections emerged. Frelimo had decided not to opt for Truth Commissions as a form to deal with past wrong done, a key to build the nation. On the contrary, as this presentation seeks to illustrate,

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[8] I use this terms as several of the interviewees for the project emphasized the importance of 'explaining their side of the story, their truth'.

[9] On this topic I follow closely Patricia Haynes' approach (2001: 24-31)

[10] In this manner, the introduction to the first electoral law of Mozambique, adopted in 1977 distinguished between those that were involved "*in the colonial structures of the oppresso*r" and the "*Mozambican people,*" the former being prohibited from political participation.
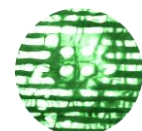
the multiple meetings and the integration processes for the 'collaborators' sought to elucidate, clarify, and offer knowledge about the complexity of the recent history of Mozambique.

The 'collaborators' were a significant and extremely heterogeneous group, lumping together all who did not 'fit' into the epic story that fabricated the 'new man', the icon the new Mozambique (Meneses, 2007). They were those who had given in to temptation, having committed themselves to the colonial system. It included former members of the Portuguese political colonial police, the PIDE-DGS; members of ANP,[11] commando units in the Portuguese army; the godmothers of African troops in the Portuguese army, traditional authorities, politicians belonging to other political associations, members of the lower echelons of the administrative apparatus, or those who "*were not with us* [with Frelimo]." Seen as latent seeds of the colonial ideology, re-routing and re-educating memory through forgetting was an important task that Mozambique sought to fulfill.

One of the freedom fighters interviewed for the project clearly stated, reflecting upon Frelimo's experience during the first years of independence: "*if you can define the terms of the transition, it means you can win the transition, and the conditions of peace, and it means that the other side* [Portuguese colonial administration] *acknowledged that Frelimo had won the war*". People may come to terms with, emotionally respond to, and actively remember and discuss the events of the past as a key element for rebuilding of the society.[12] But power relations are always embedded in these encounters.

Portugal's colonial project for Mozambique, in the footsteps of other colonial powers, resulted in the transformation of the region into a settler's colony. The presence of a significant community of settlers required the creation of an administrative and judicial structure to control the diverse population of their domains. Mozambique, as the project of a new country, had not the possibility of inheriting anything from its colonial metropole, Portugal. And the available structure was the State (Mondlane, 1967: 51); in terms of justice, the existing structure at the time of independence had engaged mostly Portuguese, whose mental templates rested upon colonial references, and branding Portuguese legislation. State, official justice remained part of colonial political landscape. The new liberating forces wanted to carry out justice, in the name of the people, beyond the narrow legal scheme inherited from the colonial times.

Because the new political leadership did not trust the inherited legal system, 'traitors', were forced to come open about their wrong-done in these 'truth seeking' meetings set up throughout the country, a key component of coming to terms with the past was

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[11] *PIDE-DGS*: the repressive police during the dictatorship. *Acção Nacional Popular*: the single political party that ruled Portugal throughout the period of the dictatorship.
[12] This process of 'decolonization' was not exclusive of Mozambique. In contexts ravaged by violent conflicts, the social healing can occur by removing those identified as responsible for the wrongdoings from positions of influence and by disbanding or rendering impotent the organizations associated with it. This was, for example, the goal of the politics of 'denazification', carried out in Europe after II World War (Biddiscombe, 2007).
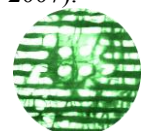
remembering.[13] Compelled by the government in power to attend these meetings, the collaborators felt loss, experienced lack of self-respect, and helplessness. But, as the process of disclosure of suspicions was being opened up,[14] and their 'treason accusations' publicly presented, remembering revealed its potential. As several of them now have argued, the initially unpleasant memories were "*transformed them into new citizens*", part of a stronger society.[15]

3. The political dimension of the 'truth meetings' – creating the 'new citizen'?

In the late 1960s, with the progress of the liberation war in northern Mozambique, and with the emergence of semi-liberated zones, Frelimo faced a sharpening of internal contradictions - political, military and administrative - which resulted in the death of several of its leaders, including its president, Eduardo Mondlane. Reflecting on internal differences that gave rise to two different political projects Frelimo's leadership stated: "*These divergences were manifested in many important instances. For example, in the definition of who is the enemy, in the question of deciding on the strategic line to take (a protracted people's war), on the importance to be given to the armed struggle in relation to the other forms of struggle, etc*." (Frelimo, 1982: 122). This political division in the movement became especially visible after the 2nd Congress of Frelimo, which took place in 1968: hot debates on the strategies to continue the struggle, questions of ethnic identity, who was the enemy (attempts to identify the enemy as the 'whites'), and attempts to limit women's empowerment, among other issues (Ncomo, 2003; Pachinuapa, 2011).

To fight the various abuses that occurred in the liberated areas, forms of 'popular justice' were performed by local political structures, in charge of mediating both civil and military cases (Moiane, 1984: 12-13). However, as Nalyambipano refers, cases involving espionage, treason, were dealt at higher level (with popular participation in the hearings), and the punishment including reeducation in special camps, public reprehension or even the death penalty (2013: 80).

The escalation of the internal contradictions within the movement led Uria Simango, then Vice-President, to publish a pamphlet[16] which, on the one hand, he criticized the radicalization of the revolutionary project and, on the other, openly exposed the conflicts that tainted the movement. Simango argued that Frelimo was not strong enough to fight the Portuguese and their allies while simultaneously waging war against a national bourgeoisie, thus calling for a less radical political project. In addition, and questioning the spirit of laissez faire that reigned among the members of the Central Committee, Simango denounced the presence of a 'southern hegemony' in Frelimo's leadership, calling to overstep this situation. This public position of Simango, that reflected the position of an important wing inside

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[13] Interviews carried out in Mozambique with former collaborators, between 2011 and 2013.

[14] with episodes of strong verbal violence by Frelimo leadership, as the tapes consulted reveal.

[15] Reference to the final speech of Samora Machel

[16] "*Gloomy situation in FRELIMO*", by Uria Simango, published in Dar es Salaam on September 3rd, 1969.
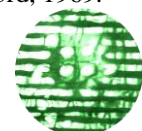
Frelimo, was interpreted by the other, wing as if it were the voice of the enemy, serving the interests of the Portuguese colonialism and imperialism. Simango was accused of treason by the opposing wing, comprising mostly politicians and military leadership, and expelled from the front, late in 1969. To justify the removal of one of the top leaders of the movement, Frelimo publicly accused Simango of opportunism, irresponsibility and corruption, pointing out that this behavior as a threat to the legitimacy and continuity of the struggle (Frelimo, 1977: 140-142). In this statement, Frelimo leadership presented itself as the vanguard in the defense of the interests of the underprivileged people of Mozambique, in radical opposition against the 'new explorers', present inside the movement (Bragança, 1980: xx).

The conflicts in Frelimo had worsened with the emergence of the liberated areas. In these territories, perceived as 'scientific laboratory' of the future independent Mozambique (Bragança, 1980: xxii), the economic and political contradictions, opposed those willing to maintain the exploratory economic system imposed by colonial administration in operation, africanizing it, and those who fought to radicalize the struggle, to free 'the land and the people'. The liberated zones acted "*as an embryonic form of the People's State, a state that defends the interests of the exploited and oppressed classes of society*" (Machel, 1978: 144). These new, embryonic spaces of governance embodied the moral project of the nation, a society envisioned free of exploration, of racial discrimination, of tribalism, and of women's oppression. That is, it was not enough to end the Portuguese colonial presence. The roots of the system had to be removed, including the 'removal' of the people that aligned with politic and economic projects that mimic the methods and models of the enemy.

A persistent characterization of the enemy was present in most of the political writing of Frelimo, throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In the external front the enemy came to be seen as imperialism, including ass the countries whose investments supported the extension of the presence of the colonial regime in Mozambique, exploiting the people and resources (Frelimo, 1977). Internally, the struggle against those considered to have betrayed the ideals of the liberation war, gained room.

From late 1960s- early 1970s, the Portuguese sought, through various political maneuvers, charm a significant (mostly urban) group of Mozambicans under the promise of more integrationist policies. One implication of this process was the consolidation of a small black bourgeoisie in the urban context, especially in Beira and Lourenço Marques (now Maputo). Several of these elements affirmed their nationalist position, although they did not adhere to the revolutionary project of Frelimo. In 1973, in Beira emerged the first political association - GUMO[17] – fighting legally, on the political front, for the autonomy of Mozambique. Abroad,

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[17] United Group of Mozambique
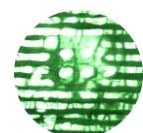
other nationalist groups, such as COREMO[18] (Zambia), continued to operate, although with limited political impact.

In the military side, the Portuguese psychosocial actions resulted in increasing defections in Frelimo, since the end of war did not seem close. In parallel, the Portuguese army performed provocative actions resourcing to a growing number of 'infiltrators' inside Frelimo (Machel, 1977: 107). And in the colonial army, the contingent of black troops was increasing (Borges Coelho, 2003). This process created a large number of well trained and equipped African troops fighting in defense of the colonial regime. It included the Grupos Especiais (GEs), the Grupos Especiais de Paraquedistas (GEPs), the Commandos units, and Flechas, and the volunteers for civil defense (OPVs), totaling about 40,000 troops; in parallel were active less specialized militia forces.

The coup d'état in Portugal, in April of 1974, paved the way for the negotiations that ended with a series of agreements with Frelimo, that ended the colonial war and granted the independence to Mozambique in 1975. However the way to independence knew several violent episodes. In the aftermath of the coup d'état various political groups were formed, besides GUMO, challenging the centrality of Frelimo. With the agreements signed in September 1974, Portugal recognized FRELIMO as 'the sole and legitimate representative of the people of Mozambique'. All the politicians and activists integrating other political groups would soon be denounced as "*collaborationist puppets*" at the service of colonialism (Machel, 1974: 19), undermining the nationalist struggle. The broadening of the enemy's definition included "*puppet troops*" such as GEs, GEPs, Commando units of Mozambique, Flechas and OPV, "*increasingly involved in repressive actions to mask the foreign aggression and present it as a civil war between Mozambicans*" (Machel, 1974: 19). The label 'collaborator' was also applied to Frelimo's dissidents, some of whom had formed or joined other new political organizations.

The failed attempted coup by radical white settlers on September 7th 1974 – on the same day the agreements were being signed in Lusaka - boosted Frelimo's suspicion about who were the truly supporters of the revolutionary project. Thus, demarcating the boundary between loyalty to Frelimo's political project and treason was a survival strategy applied from the onset of the transitional government in Mozambique (from mid-September 1975 on). The distinction between truly Mozambican and non-citizens became a curial tool in this operation. These that would support Frelimo's political ideals for a new society were considered 'true' Mozambicans; the non-citizens were labelled collaborators. Addressing the transitional government during its inauguration, in September 1974, Machel stated: "*The blood of our people was not shed only to free the land from foreign domination, but also to reconquer our*

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[18] Mozambique Revolutionary Committee
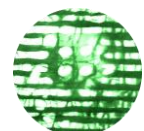
Mozambican personality, to bring about the resurgence of our culture and to create a new mentality, a new society".[19]

Frelimo's concern regarding the potential intrusion of their ranks (and the new state) by former colonial collaborators was real. During the first national committee meeting held six months before the independence, in northern Mozambique, Frelimo decided that membership all party and state structures should be revised in order to avoid the intrusion of former collaborators, Frelimo detractors and counter-revolutionaries:[20] the extended list included former members of PIDE-DGS, members of the Portuguese fascist party ANPs, GEs, GEPs, Commandos, OPVs, including also members of 'puppet organizations and parties', and people considered carrying anti-social behavior (prostitutes, polygamists, etc.). The final report underscored that all people that would fell into these categories should not be allowed membership of Frelimo.[21]

But because the 'enemies' had to live with in Mozambique, side by side with truly Mozambicans, they had be purified from their colonial background and transformed into fully citizens.

The first stages in dealing with collaborators included various strategies of 'naming and shaming', including denouncing of people who had supposedly collaborated with colonial institutions or had shown an 'incorrect' social behavior; many of them were sent to 'reeducation' centers[22] (Thomas, 2008), functioning in remote areas of the country.

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[19] Mozambique Historical Archives – Oral Fund. Lusaka Agreements, Zambia – Fund SM0008.
[20] "1ª Reunião Nacional dos Comités Distritais, Mocuba, 1975", *Notícias*, May 24th, 1975.
[21] "Plenário nacional da FRELIMO: 'Como exercer o poder popular'", *Tempo, nº* 230, February 23rd, 1975.
[22] See, for exemple, "Denunciados e expulsos quatro infiltrados no Ministério do Trabalho", *Notícias,* of January 8th, 1978.
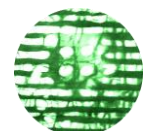
('Internees' in a reeducation camp in Cabo Delgado, 1981)

Another take shaped the relation with the group of settlers that had acted against Frelimo, as well those who had deserted Frelimo, who had opposed his proposed policy, both internally and externally, and had challenged the Frelimo on the military front, as COREMO. Accused of betraying the cause of the people, more than 300 people were arrested between October 1974 and March-April of 1975, and sent under arrest to Nachingwea, Frelimo main political and military camp in Tanzania. There they were subjected to a 'revolutionary and popular' trial, chaired by Machel, between March and May 1975 Following these trials were recognized as traitors, and sentenced to confinement in rehabilitation centers inside Mozambique.

The combination of public trials with reeducation was the continuation of the 'popular justice' Frelimo had performed in the liberated areas. The goal was to rehabilitate people, and to create citizens, and not to destroy them. Samora Machel in a collective interview in March 1975, explained the importance of the popular trials in Nachingwea: "*We arrested them! We*
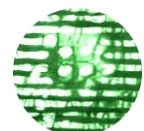
do not kill! They are political enemies! Our policy is for clemency. In Mozambique they will grow and learn from the peasants".[23]

The political project of these centers aimed at transforming the delinquent into a citizen: "*It integrates him in the values of collective life, work, respect for the people, and confidence in his own capabilities. It creates in the delinquent the will and means for him to break up with his past. Gradually, the thieves, the assassin, the bandit, the dealer, all disappear and in his place the worker emerges, the man, the citizen*".[24]

However, as several former detainees expressed, this experience was in practical terms, extremely traumatic. In many camps political detainees set side by side with criminals; many report that the arrest were carried out indiscriminately, quite often following personal vendettas. Also, the judiciary procedures depended from Frelimo's decisions; as a result, the time of detention was uncertain, with little possibility of appeal. In the camps, the fate of inmates depended on the military officers in charge, or at a highest level, on the will of Frelimo's leadership. As mentioned, the camps were located in remote areas and little ideological and political work was part of the reeducation program. Malnourishment, bad weather, diseases, are commonly named conditions detained endured, with no possibility of getting in touch with their families.

A couple of years later, internal and external persistent allegations of abuse of human rights in the camps led Frelimo to put aside the reeducation program.[25] Yet, if most of the camps were closed down by 1981,[26] the former detainees could not leave the camps' region and return back home. Frelimo insisted in maintaining the former detainees away, even though their families were allowed to join them.[27] This new option of reeducation insisted in maintaining potentially suspicious subjects away from heavily populated areas, while work was kept as a tool for reeducating people.

4. From political prisoners into comrade freedom fighters?

In March 1978 Frelimo leadership held a meeting with former political prisoners. The meeting was called to discuss suspicions of betrayal and collaboration of the political prisoners with PIDE-DGS, the Portuguese political police, in charge of the special penitentiaries (or jail sections) where political prisoners were kept in colonial times. This suspicion stained, dramatically, the political curriculum of many former political prisoners (Langa, 2011: 368-369). These meeting inaugurated a new cycle of sessions of 'naming and

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[23] *Daily News* (Tanzania), of April 22nd, 1975.
[24] "Unango: Homens reconstruídos", *Tempo,* nº 480, of December 23rd, 1979.
[25] Interview carried out in Maputo, in March 2014.
[26] "Libertados 684 reeducandos", *Notícias,* September 28th, 1981.
[27] "Brevemente: Famílias de ex-reeducandos no Niassa", *Notícias* of August 14th, 1980; "Organizar famílias de ex-reeducandos", *Notícias,* of November 17th, 1981.
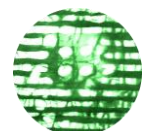
shaming' in the country, whose roots reflect a significant lack of confidence in "*their own comrades*", as one of the participants in the meeting protested.[28]

During the preparation for Frelimo's III Congress, held in 1977,[29] many people who were ready to join Frelimo's ranks, were identified as collaborators and expelled from the party; similar purges occurred in the state apparatus and in several public companies. With the transformation of Frelimo into a political party, one witnesses a broader campaign aimed at identifying the "*agents of the enemy that had infiltrated the structures of popular power*", as a form to reinforce the purity of the ranks inside the party. Late in 1978, in the aftermath of this event, and with the rise of political and military instability in the country,[30] the Frelimo leadership issued a violent statement, proclaiming "*the need for vigilance upon all elements that had collaborated with colonial-fascist organizations*".[31] All collaborators – GEs, GEPs, Commandos, former PIDEs, etc. had to publicly display their pictures and a short autobiographies detailing how they had been caught by the colonial regime. Many of these collaborators were deprived of many rights – they could elect but not be elected; it was extremely hard to be promoted, etc.

This new cycle of dealing with the betrayal shows some innovations. In order to overcome the separation created between the collaborators and the 'Mozambican people', the strategy adopted then by Frelimo combined punishment (public display of betrayal) with purification processes. For Borges Coelho, the 'purification' happened by presentation, written, individual biographies of committed, demonstration of his remorse, key to his release of potential blackmail face his past, now annoyance (2003: 191). In fact, in this new context, people accused of collaboration, in most cases, were not threatened with arrested. But they had to publicly explain their stories and underwent, at their working and living places, supervision by the party and the state. As publicly stated, "*only by knowing, controlling and closely watching the lives of these elements will be able to deliver them from the enemy and commitment to reintegrate them in society*".[32]

In parallel, the purifying campaign of Frelimo ranks knew other developments. Many middle to high rank party cadres had been political prisoners in colonial times, and shadows of betrayal of the 'political cause of the people' were mounting in 1978. As part of its restructuring strategy, Frelimo set up a series of meetings with former political prisoners during colonial times in Maputo. Around 350 people participated in the meeting.

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[28] Interview carried out in Maputo in 2012.

[29] During this Congress the movements was transformed into a political party, of Marxist-Leninist orientation.

[30] Caused by RENAMO (Mozambique National Resistance), a movement formed and funded in neighboring countries, military challenging the socialist project of Frelimo.

[31] "Afixar até dia 15 a lista dos elementos comprometidos", *Tempo*, nº 427, of December 1st, 1978.

[32] ibid.
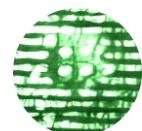
Following a short presentation of the goals of the meetings by President Machel, the people present were invited to give their version about their experience as political prisoners.[33] At the end of the meetings, Frelimo categorized them into three groups: the heroes (those who had preferred death to betray the people's cause); the vacillating (who had come to compromise minimally with the colonial administration in exchange for small privileges, but remained faithful to nationalist ideals); and the traitors (those who sold themselves to PIDE and denounced their comrades).[34]

In the aftermath of these meeting a couple of elements were pronounced guilty of political treason by Frelimo leadership and sent to jail. Some others, for their incapacity to acknowledge their betrayal were sent to reeducation camps. The vast majority, however, was submitted, following Frelimo's decision, to a 'purifying' process of military and political training at Matalane, a process that lasted for a couple of months.

This group included well-known politicians and intellectuals, as the group of former political prisoners included names as José Caveirinha and Rui Nogar, well-kown poets; writers as Albino Magaia and Luis Bernardo Honwana, world-known painter Malangatana Valente or Cadmiel Muthemba. Moisés Massinga or Matias Mboa, active politicians.[35]

According to the testimonies of some former political prisoners who lived this experience, it came to be perceived as an "*exam, not only in terms of capacity, but also to see to what extent one could trust them*".[36]

Indeed, in the initial meeting with the former political prisoners, Samora Machel, who headed the meeting, clarified the reason behind it:

We all had children, we had wives, we had our parents, our mothers! But we opted out to dedicate our lives to the struggle [...]. *Making war is not the same as going to a banquet, do not you?* [...] *These meetings, comrades, is to to discover how many betrayals are there in Frelimo! Military* [Frelimo] *gave themselves up with guns! Entered into agreements with the enemy! Because of the problems! Yes, material problems. So it would be good that you help me* [...] *we want to free everything*! [37]

As asserted by the multiple political leaders of Frelimo that participated in the training at Matalane, the goal was to clear off the ideological vices acquired in the long stay in prisons, and elevate the level of political ideology of the participants. In the words of some people

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[33] See also Machava, Benedito (2011), "'We don't want to be called anymore ex-pps: notes on the puritication of other collaborators in Mozambique". Paper presented in 2011 in Lisbon.

[34] "Ex-Presos políticos: Três tipos de comportamento', *Tempo,* nº 407 of July 23rd, 1978.

[35] As several of these former political prisoners explained during the interviews, who were accused of treason and then submitted to re-education processes, they underwent a difficult period of political marginalization after independence (see also Laban 1998 and Mateus, 2006).

[36] Malangatana's testimony, in Mateus, 2006: 643.

[37] Mozambique Historical Archives – Oral Fund. "Meetings with former political prisioner, 1978", Fund SM0006.
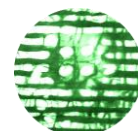
interviewed, these meetings came to downsize the contributions of the former political prisoners to the liberation struggle.[38]

(Meeting with former political prisoners at Matalane, 1978 – Photograph by Kok Nan)

However, for most of them, this process of mental liberation contributed to clear the suspicions about them, by clearing their pasts.

Ultimately, this was a form to redeem the prisoners, to stop thinking that the top leadership of the party was still suspicious of them. It was the way he [Machel] *found of bringing people together. Before we were sent to training, he said:*

'- I'm currently talking with people who do not know. Let us consider 'enemies''.

But in the final days of the course, in Matalane, he said:

'- Now you are comrades, because you already know the philosophy of FRELIMO, you have been 'boiled' in the same pan as us, so we are already equal.'

Samora needed people in certain sectors and he did not trust many people. To know people was necessary 'grab' those who had been the prisoners to see if, in fact, they had changed their mind, if they had not gone over to the enemy. And to complete it was necessary to use

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[38] Interviwes carried out in Maputo in 2012.
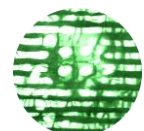
military training for people revert to what they were, but with more and better little preparation. [39]

Yet, one of our interviews stressed that several political prisoners had dare to challenge the monopolizing vision of Frelimo over the meaning of nationalism, and the party wanted to confront them on the meanings and goals of the struggle, that is, about the core message about the icons of Mozambique revolutionary project, born out of the liberation struggle.[40] In the words of Reinhart Koselleck (1990: 103-104), the modern concept of history is marked by the reduction of plural stories to a single, hegemonic narrative. A central feature of modern history is the original violence it entails, resulting from the imposition of a monolithic analytical matrix, an analytical device that annihilates differences, and closes any possibility of dialogue. This one-dimensional reduction is, in itself, a methodological option and a historical fact.

By allowing 'the lion to tell also his side of the story', this meeting open possibilities for dialogue with other existing political narratives. Transforming a given feature, a given interpretation of a problem into a meta-narrative undermines the analytical process; this approach conveys the risk of turning one particular version of events – naturally partial – into the only possible historical narrative, occupying the centerpiece of reason, the central theme of history.

5. Becoming Citizens: There are no more collaborators, just Mozambicans!

The final episode of reconciliation with the colonial past took place in 1982, two years after a large group of people had been ordered to publicly exhibit their pictures and confessions of collaboration with colonial institutions.[41] Meetings between Frelimo politicians and exposed collaborators took place throughout Mozambique, in various locations, so that all people involved could openly expose his own case, and apologize for it. These final meetings –one of which took place in Maputo, headed by Samora Machel - were called to close the two-year process of self-criticism and public vigilance upon a large group of collaborators. This last group was extremely heterogeneous: it included the last ones that had not 'fit' in the revolutionary project of Mozambican citizenship, those who had collaborated with the colonial system. Among the collaborators were former members of the colonial political police, of the ANP, well trained troops who had served in the Portuguese army, the godmothers of war, traditional authorities, personnel in the lower echelons of the administrative apparatus, members of other political associations that had contested Frelimo's hegemony in the early years of transition and independence, among others.

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[39] Chivite's testimony, in Mateus, 2006: 625.

[40] Interview carried out in Maputo, in 2012. On this topic see also the interviews presente in Laban 1998 and Mateus, 2006.

[41] Mozambique Historical Archives – Oral Fund. "Meetings with collaborators, 1982", Fund SM0006.
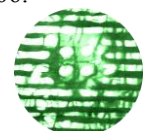
(Meeting with the final group of collaborators in Maputo, May 1982 – Photograph by Kok Nan)

In the interviews carried out, people revealed how apprehensive they had been when they had received the call to attend the meetings. Many of them, aware of the outcomes of previous truth seeking meetings, said goodbye to their close relatives, sure that a formal conviction was waiting most them, after an open session of popular justice. For them, then, this was the path though that Frelimo had chosen to close their processes.

As briefly expressed above, the 'purification' has started by presentation, written, individual biographies of collaboration, demonstration of remorse, key elements to release any potential blackmailing about their problematic past (Borges Coelho, 2003: 191). This was a humiliating exposition: their now 'inconvenient' past collaboration was exposed to the public. Many of them occupied middle and upper level positions in the government, and could be scrutinized by their subordinates and employees.

In May 1982, one of the main meetings was held in Maputo. This meeting, known as the 'Meeting with the collaborators ' fully restituted the civil and political rights that had been denied to these collaborators. Indeed, at the closing ceremony, President Machel's proclaimed *"there are no more collaborators, there are only Mozambicans"*[42]

This stage of 'naming and shamming' was replete of violent psychological episodes. The meeting was attended by a large public. The collaborators were called to come up front and openly speak out their 'crimes'. Samora Machel was harsh confronting them. Recognition of

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[42] "Já não há Comprometidos, há Moçambicanos", *Notícias,* June 8th, 1982.
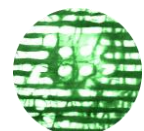
the wrongdoing, confrontation of their pasts, was the key to become fully Mozambicans, part of the long process that Machel defined as "mental decolonization."[43] But the collective therapy played an important role in reinforcing support and setting the stage for the gruesome testimonies, replete of violence. Many of them, confronted with their murky past, confessed their fears of being killed by the people they has denounced and get arrested or killed: "What would the people of Manjazaze do to you", interrogated Samora Machel one of the former PIDE members. And he recognized publicly: "*If had gone back to Manjacaze, they would had kill me*".[44]

These episodes, taped by the then experimental television of Mozambique, reveal an exercise of citizenship, were people meet to understand each other, but where the negotiations of fully citizenship depended upon the willingness of the 'collaborators', to come open about their past and to recognize that their past behavior was far from the ideal Mozambique citizen Frelimo had defined. At the end of their depositions, most of them, including commandos involved in war massacres, begged for forgiveness, in highly moving and convincing ways, from the "People of Mozambique".

"*I attended "the meeting of 1982. I was there. I had been a commando in the Portuguese army, but I also had supported the liberation struggle. For a while I could not understand why I was questioned and almost proscribed. I felt judged. But how President Samora Machel led this process allowed discern what was the PIDE, which was ANP, which was OPV, which was another kind of involvement with colonial way of thinking and acting*"[45]

In fact, just a couple of them refuse to acknowledge their 'betrayal' and their past of collaboration and were sent to jail.[46]

The meetings with the collaborators was performed redoing the route of memory, clarifying and making known their historical backgrounds.

Samora Machel, speaking initially in the first day of the meeting held in Maputo, strenght the role of history:

"*Just reviewing the past will be possible to know the present. Just knowing the present will be possible to make the prospect of the future. These are three key elements in society: past, present and future. Pages are marked by history.... We cannot go against them. History is history*! [...]

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[43] "Descolonização mental, nosso actual problema", *Notícias*, May 11th, 1982.
[44] "Cruz de Cristo servia a tortura de homens", *Notícias*, May 12th, 1982.
[45] Interview carried out in Maputo in 2012.
[46] "O exemplo de um método", *Notícias,* May 20th, 1982.

You were part of the colonial structure. Your tasks and actions were complementary, competing for the same goal. Which one? Prevent the independence of Mozambique.[...] We decided to expose your pictures in the windows. We asked for your biographies. We did it to expose your collaboration, so that every citizen could identify you. We did it so that people could exercise vigilance over you!

It was an act of justice! ... Revolutionary justice. In other countries would have been dragged to the courts. In other countries where revolution had triumphs, you had been shot. [...] But we also did it to prevent that had a double life, to allow you to break free. By publicly exposing your collaboration with organizations and repressive forces of colonialism, we have destroyed the secret that bounded you to the enemy. You were a reservoir for the enemy to blackmail you anytime. [...] The liberation is right here - narration of the sufferings. [...] Today, we are in an independent Mozambique, you are now citizens of an independent and sovereign country, respected by the international community! We liberated our country so that Mozambicans could always control and decide their fates![47]

Accentuating that the past lives with us, Samora Machel, at the end, after all several session that the meeting lasted, saluted the people that had had the courage to trust each other and that had dare to expose themselves to the 'People'. The final question posed to all of them was – 'compatriots or collaborators?'[48] And the almost unanimous cry became – compatriots. As the large band crossing the room announced by them, "*with the liberation of Mozambique the collaborators has also won a country, a fatherland*".

In an 'era of the witness' (Wieviorka, 2006) as we live on, debates over the adoption of official silence in countries that have known war-torn conflicts have oscillated between two perspectives: pragmatic arguments for, and moral condemnation of this type of strategy. The arguments in favor of state silence have been justified on the grounds that instituting formal mechanisms to achieve accountability for past violence can potentially imperil the fragile peace in deeply divided societies. However, longitudinal analyses of the dynamics behind official silence demonstrates that silence is neither complete nor does it result in the political death of memory (Ricoeur, 2006). The example of Mozambique and the debates over history and memory highlighted the right to political memory, the urge to deal with 'the ghosts of the past'.

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[47] Mozambique Historical Archives – Oral Fund. "Meetings with collaborators, 1982", Fund SM0006.
[48] "Comprometidos ou Compatriotas? – Presidente Samora convida colaboracionistas a optarem", Notícias, May 11th, 1982.
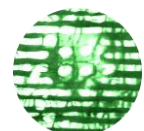
Conclusions

Nation-state building is a violent process in nature. The identification and persecution of the collaborators in Mozambique and the violence that characterized these processes is an integral part of independent Mozambique history. The study of the reconciliation processes promoted by Frelimo between 1975 and 1982 goes in line with Mamdani's claim (2012: 7) for a more inclusion-depth historical research that contributes towards a broader theorization of African experiences in conflict resolution process.

The International Criminal Court (ICC), Truth Commissions (TC) reproduce a model for criminal justice that, by proxy, reproduce the experiences of war courts set up with end the II World War. However, other models have been in used in Africa to deal with conflict situations, as the case of the truth commissions in Mozambique illustrate. As several situations analyzed show, in truth commissions the goal was to broaden trust and to create conditions for people to regain their dignity, as fully trusted citizens. But these conditions are hard to achieved, as the case of Mozambique demonstrates. In order to understand the contexts and times of transition, to grasp the complexity of tasks of building a nation, it is important to unveil and study the multiple layers in which politics of state-building and governmentality are put in practice across different periods.

The constructions of social groups of 'enemies' – both internal and external – was the approach used by Frelimo to deal with the collaborators, an integral part of the larger politics and ethics of nation building. The collaborators personified the figure of the traitor/enemy necessary for the edification of the new nation-state, and Frelimo used them to define the boundaries of national belonging and citizenship in a period fraught with suspicious loyalties and allegiances to the new regime. Tobias Kelly and Sharika Thiranagama sustain that "*accusations of treason have historically played a central role in the attempt to maintain social order and political authority. To make accusations of treason is to make a claim to power, to try to police the boundaries of permissible politics, and to exert authority in the face of constantly shifting affiliations*" (2009: 3).

The three stages of truth seeking analyzed here show how Frelimo, through 'naming and shaming' the 'close allies' of colonialism struggled to (re)construct the wrecked social tissue of the 'new' Mozambique. The social engineering applied in different moments to deal with those then perceived as "*close enemies*", and the challenges met to "*decolonize their mentalities*",[49] reflect delicate social processes that contributed to restored the dignity of the former 'collaborators', as fully Mozambicans.

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[49] "Descolonização Mental é o Nosso Porblema", Samora Machel's initial speech at the meeting with the 'comprometidos' held in Maputo. *Noticias*, May 11th 1982.
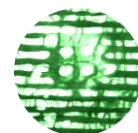
The use of open meetings to publicly expose the past activities (now no longer were considered acceptable) of those accused of betrayal, contributed to generate a broader sense of belonging and offered, with all the violence associated with it, a moment for the aggressors to offer an apology for their past actions, strengthening Frelimo's authority and legitimacy. This top-down processes of reconciliation, although meet multiple resistances, open up the possibility for Mozambicans, in their diversity, to negotiate their way through contradictory ethical and political demands. Indeed, the collaborators and those that confronted them (from Frelimo political leadership to the common citizen) came to know more about the colonial political processes in Mozambique, fostering a coming to terms with the past through various mechanisms including remembering, forgiveness, trust, civic engagement and social cohesion. It should be underlined that the truth seeking processes were not determined by Mozambique's political elite's rush for spoils and political power; rather, what these processes transmit is the urgency to domesticate society and to mold them according to particular (temporal and geopolitically peaking) aesthetics and moral ideals (Peterson, 2012: 284). As such, the state-building project had to manage multiple positions, allegiances and betrayals, as fundamental components of the new nation.

By vivisecting the past memories of violence, the processes analyzed in this paper illustrate how memory is a crucial part of dealing with past violence. By openly exposing the reasons that led to betrayal, the truth meetings set up internally in Mozambique produced other versions of history. In these 'other histories', memory acts as an instrument for social transformations, re-connecting and reconciling people, reconstructing trust after long episodes of violence and helping healing traumatic events (for both victims and perpetrators).

A relational world is all about a heterogeneous history, combining, in a dialogical way, located, active and specific events and actors. Knowing, seeing, witnessing, attesting and speaking always flows from a particular body, located in a particular time and space, both literally and relationally.

As have been argued elsewhere (Meneses, 2011; Peixoto and Meneses, 2013), what is required is a narrative made of interconnected histories, locally and regionally articulated, challenging conventional wisdom. This theoretical and methodological shift answers to a growing concern to recover silenced histories from various locations, where African experience is theorized both from within its own experiences and in relation to other realities. After all, at the core of modern nations acts of extreme violence can always be found – a fact that is reflected in war memorials, lists of historical monuments, and streets' naming. But the persistent silence about African contribution to human rights and citizenship academic discussions evidences the heritage of a broader conflict that disrupted utterly the rights of Africans – the violent colonial encounter – a conflict that remains to be addressed in all its complexity.
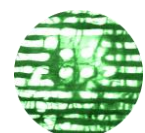
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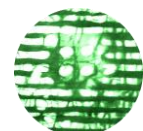
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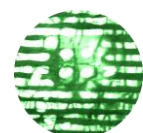
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