THE ILLEGITIMACY OF DEMOCRACY? DEMOCRATISATION AND ALIENATION IN MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

Jason Sumich
Crisis States Research Centre
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Jason Sumich
Crisis States Research Centre

Abstract

This paper examines the effects of democratisation in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. I argue that the introduction of multiparty democracy has weakened the state's legitimacy amongst a group that was once a pillar of the regime. I demonstrate this assertion by examining the growing alienation between the urban middle class and the dominant, state-based elite in Maputo. Through the investigation of this growing social separation the paper concludes that although the stated aim of democratisation is to subject the government to the 'will of the people', it instead appears that the state seeks to be legitimate with the foreign donors that help to fund the democratisation project, rather than with the wider population.

Key words: Maputo, Frelimo, Elites, Democratisation, Legitimacy, Middle Class.

Introduction

Between 2002 and 2004 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Maputo, the capital and largest city of Mozambique. My research was concerned with the social formation of the ruling Frelimo elite from its genesis in the late colonial period to the present day.[1] I was particularly interested in how the practice of power was conceived and legitimised through the dramatic political and economic changes that have characterised Mozambique since independence in 1975. Due to my research interests I spent a considerable amount of time during fieldwork trying to ascertain how members of the Maputo-based Frelimo elite and middle classes felt about the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1992. Democracy and its accompanying project of political and economic liberalisation were introduced to bring an end to a long standing civil war and create a political system based on a wide consensus and legitimacy. This may have been the stated rationale of the liberalising project, but many of my informants had a far more nuanced and ambivalent view of democratisation. There are benefits in the new system to be sure and while old socialists still exist, few complained about capitalism *per se*. A frequently heard comment was: "While capitalism may not be the best system, it's the best we have". Still, there was a generally perceived sense that the benefits of the new order were being monopolised by an elite that was increasingly ignoring their obligations to the wider population. Thus, for many members of Maputo's middle class, democratisation is also characterised by growing corruption and a general hardening of the class structure, resulting in a ruling elite that can increasingly use international support to ignore the social groups they once courted. These changes were widely

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[1] Frelimo (Mozambican Liberation Front) waged an 11 year liberation struggle against the Portuguese and has ruled Mozambique continuously since independence in 1975.

disapproved of. However, as the following example will demonstrate, this did not automatically cause outright opposition.

Relatively early into my fieldwork work I was speaking to a young man who launched into a litany of abuse against Frelimo. For at least five minutes he described a catalogue of what he felt to be the ruling party's faults, errors, penchant for corruption and overall uselessness. This young man, a *Mulatto* (a person of mixed-race), was born in Maputo and belonged to the middle class. He therefore appeared to be rather unlikely to vote for Renamo[2] yet he obviously was not enthusiastic about Frelimo. I asked him which party his family supported and he said: "Oh, they vote for Frelimo". I then asked which party he would vote for and he said: "Frelimo". I was puzzled by his response and asked why he would vote for Frelimo if he disliked them so much. He replied: "Because the pockets of Frelimo are already full while the pockets of Renamo are still empty". He was implying that Frelimo would not have to steal too much more to support themselves in their current lifestyle, while Renamo officials would have to begin from the bottom and work their way up. A vote for Renamo would thus be a vote for even greater levels of corruption.

At the time I found the response very interesting as it turned the oft heard argument about African politics being based on systems of patronage on its head. Further into fieldwork though, after I had heard many similar statements I began to see these types of comments as indicative of the growing alienation between the middle class and politically-based elites in Maputo since the civil war and democratisation. Immediately after independence the then socialist Frelimo government viewed many established urbanites with suspicion; they were considered to be those most likely to have been 'contaminated' by colonial bourgeois culture because they had not been 'cleansed' by participation in the liberation struggle.[3]

> However, urbanites became a strong base of support for the regime, as they tended to be the prime beneficiaries of the new order. Pitcher, a scholar of Mozambique, observed: In the initial years of the Frelimo government, its socialist, nationalist and modernist ideology and policies derived from it appeared to be 'mutually empowering' for urban, educated, African elites from the south from which the leadership was mainly derived. Moreover, support also came from a small working class concentrated in the industries around the southern capital of Maputo, and even smallholders, particularly those who had some experience of wage-work and the 'modern' way of life that the Frelimo was pushing.[4]

In addition to experience with the 'modern' way of life held dear by Frelimo, many established urbanites also had very similar social backgrounds to much of the party leadership. Members of both these groups often came from the colonial petty bourgeois, primarily from families who worked in the lower levels of the state bureaucracy and the professions or the urban working class, and both had benefited from at least some access to education.[5] Established urbanites were therefore initially

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[2] Renamo was originally an armed movement, with ties to Rhodesia and Apartheid South Africa, which fought the Frelimo government during the civil war. It now is the major opposition party and generally advocates a pro-rural, Afro-nationalist line.

[3] Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence,* London: Hurst & Co, 1997.

[4] Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975-2000,* New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 25.

[5] Jeanne Penvenne, Attitudes Towards Work and Race in Mozambique: Lourenço Marques, 1900-1974, Unpublished Paper (Boston, 1979).

receptive to Frelimo's socialist and radically modernist message since they could understand it and had an intimate connection with the conditions from which it sprang. The alliance between these two groups was also consolidated along pragmatic grounds. After Frelimo's victory in the liberation struggle there was a large-scale exodus of Portuguese settlers that deprived Mozambique of the vast majority of its technical and managerial classes.[6] As the illiteracy in Mozambique at independence was estimated between 90% and 97%, Frelimo desperately turned to anyone who had the necessary skills and education to ensure that the new nation could function.[7] These measures ushered in a period of unheard of social mobility in Maputo. Just about anyone with any education whatsoever, outside of those branded as 'enemies of the people', was catapulted into the expanding bureaucracy. Throughout fieldwork I heard many stories of the immediate post-revolutionary period where students were promoted to teachers and workers found themselves on the committee that ran their factory almost overnight. This has created a generation whose positions in society are intimately connected with Frelimo and a firm base of support.

Nevertheless, following the introduction of neo-liberal democracy this alliance is beginning to seem increasingly strained. While most of my middle class friends and acquaintances feel they are materially better off since the fall of socialism, many of them are also alienated from the government and its associated elites, whom they view as increasingly isolated and dependent on international networks to bolster their power. However, as the introductory response shows, few think there is another viable group to whom they might offer their allegiance. This paper examines the causes of the growing sense of alienation between members of the elite and middle class in Maputo. I argue that the democratisation process, contrary to its expressed intent, has resulted in Mozambique's ruling elite distancing itself increasingly from those who were once a bastion of the regime.

Elites and the Middle Class in Maputo

To better understand the growing sense of alienation between the regime and its former pillars of support one must first explore the origins of the Maputo-based ruling elite and the urban middle classes. The terms elite and middle class are used in this paper both as a description of their standard of living and as a measure of their relationship to the primary source of class power in Mozambique. Class structures in Maputo are not static and have been deeply influenced by political changes, such as the introduction of economic liberalisation and privatisation. However, as noted by Pitcher, despite the rhetoric of market reforms as a technical fix, the process is inherently political and is reshaped by internal dynamics.[8] Liberalisation was officially intended to create new avenues of legitimation on the political front, to

—, The Unmaking of an African Petite Bourgeoisie: Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, Unpublished Paper, (Boston, 1982).

[6] Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (London, C. Hurst & Co, 1995).

[7] William Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique,* Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1992.
Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: The Revolutions and its Origins,* London, New York and Lagos, Longman, 1983.

[8] Anne Pitcher, Recreating Colonialism or Reconstructing the State? Privatisation and Politics in Mozambique. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22 (1996), pp. 49-74.
—, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatisation, 1975-2000* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

disentangle the state from the economy and to create space for an emerging class of entrepreneurs.[9] However, in reality, the state is the ultimate source and primary guarantor of the Maputo elite's class power and the connection between the government and the economy remains tightly interlinked, although transformed, by the fall of socialism. While members of the upper levels of the elite may have left active politics and have now developed substantial economic interests, these interests are built through the use of political power and influence and are sustained, in part, through the dense social networks that tightly intertwine an emerging bourgeoisie and the state. Thus, the amassing of economic interests on a large scale frequently depends on the control of, or access to, state power. In many ways the state is the ultimate resource as it unlocks the door to further accumulation.[10] Or, to put it simply, as a Mozambican who came from a politically connected elite family told me when explaining the characteristics of the new liberal order: "The difference between your country and mine is that in yours money buys you power while here power buys you money".

While the role of state power and influence is central to the creation of an elite class based on the Frelimo party , this does not mean there is uniformity within the ranks of the elite. Party insiders talk about a variety of 'tendencies' or even factions, associated with prominent party figures such as a 'Chissano tendency', based on the former president. A 'Guebuza tendency' centred around the current president. A 'Machel tendency', spearheaded by Graça Machel, the widow of the first president, and a 'Diogo tendency' led by the Prime-Minister Luisa Diogo.[11] These tendencies coalesce around different issues and often take strikingly different positions on the major questions of governance, such as democratisation, the nature of the free market, and the role of international agencies. Some of these differences can be traced to the existing range of social backgrounds within the ruling elite.

There is the revolutionary old guard, consisting of a combination between northern guerrilla commanders from the liberation struggle and southern, former *assimilados* from Maputo and its hinterlands.[12] Then there are those who joined Frelimo after independence, both from ideological affinity, and/or because they had necessary technical skills. Finally, there are the younger more 'technocratic' members of Frelimo who came of political age towards the end of the socialist period and the children of the ruling elites, who in many cases are not official Frelimo members and have only childhood memories of socialism, yet who rely on the same social networks. Despite the considerable differences between these segments of the elite though, there are many commonalities. Membership in the various tendencies is frequently overlapping, with various people joining one or another on an issue by issue basis. In addition, while there are heated internal debates and members of the elite can be scathing towards each other in private, they are linked by an urban oriented modernist ideology, bonds of mutual loyalty and friendship, shared material

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[9] Carrie Manning, *The Politics of Peace in Mozambique: Post-Conflict Democratization, 1992-2000*, WestPoint and London, Praeger, 2002.

[10] Harry West, "Govern Yourselves": Democracy and Carnage in Northern Mozambique. In Julia Paley (ed) *Towards an Anthropology of Knowledge,* School of Advanced Research, Santa Fe, 2008

[11] Jason Sumich, and João Honwana, *Strong Party, Weak State?: Frelimo and State Survival through the Mozambican Civil War*, Unpublished Paper (London, 2007).

[12] The term *assimilados* (the assimilated) refers to a former colonial category, which theoretically allowed a small segment of the African population to enjoy equal status with Portuguese settlers, but whose members were in reality subject to widespread discrimination and humiliation.

interests and often kinship. At least during the time of my major fieldwork, all but the most disillusioned tended to band together when facing outsiders.

As stated earlier, the middle class in Maputo often shares a similar background to many members of the ruling elite.[13] Although I have not conducted an exhaustive survey, evidence from interviews demonstrates that while some were new arrivals, many came from Maputo and its surrounding hinterlands or from other towns in Mozambique and were already enmeshed in the urban social fabric. The highest levels of power were firmly monopolised by the revolutionary old guard, what O'Laughlin refers to as the "Frelimo family".[14] However this period also opened dramatic possibilities for social advancement through the expanding state.[15] The origins of the ruling elite and the middle class may be broadly similar, but in the democratic period the differences between the two seem to be hardening and there is a widespread belief that avenues for social mobility are decreasing since many elites are able to amass wealth and power through their connections to Frelimo that are denied to others.

Which Constituency?

In the era of democratic neo-liberalism, the importance of the international community is widely recognised.[16] International actors are able to influence local political decisions through the distribution or withholding of aid and by insisting on structural reform.[17] In many cases the distribution of aid is attached to conditions that specify the reforms the government must enact in order to receive resources. This has led some authors to claim that the fall of socialism in Mozambique has brought forth new sets of relationships between the Mozambican state and international agencies that strongly resemble aspects of the colonial period.[18] It is, however, a rather different aspect of the interconnections between Mozambique and international agencies that I seek to focus attention on. I discuss below how the changing political circumstances that have accompanied the fall of socialism have made it imperative for the state to appear legitimate in the eyes of an international community that provides power and resources, which enable elites in Maputo to treat previous sources of support more casually. While there are aspects of these relationships that resemble older colonial forms of power, I draw attention to the internal freedom of manoeuvre that the elites' reliance on foreign aid allows.

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[13] For the historical origins of these groups see: Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence*; Bridget O'Laughlin, *Class and the Customary: The Ambiguous Legacy of the Indigenato in Mozambique*; Jeanne Penvenne, *The Unmaking of an African Petite Bourgeoisie*: Lourenço Marques, Mozambique.
—, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877-1962*

[14] Bridget O'Laughlin, *Class and the Customary: The Ambiguous Legacy of the Indigenato in Mozambique*.

[15] Many members of the Indian merchant class follow a different trajectory.

[16] The international community refers to the chief international organizations such as the UN, major lending agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF, government agencies such as UNAID and DFID, and powerful NGOs such as Save the Children and Oxfam. These groups do not speak in a unified voice, but they tend to support a programme of political and economic liberalization to varying degrees.

[17] For examples please see Carlos Castel-Branco, Christopher Cramer and Degol Hailu, *Privatization and Economic Strategy in Mozambique,* Discussion Paper, WIDER, United Nations University, 2001.

[18] Joseph Hanlon, *Peace Without Profits: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding in Mozambique,* Oxford and Portsmouth NH, James Currey and Heinemann, 1996, pp. 80-83.

Structural adjustment and moves towards a more free market economic model, supplemented by heavy reliance on international aid, preceded democratisation in Mozambique, yet they are often popularly seen as being intimately interconnected. The onset of the deregulation of the economy hit Frelimo's urban base hard as the currency was radically devalued, salaries were frozen, and subsidies removed. For many urbanites life became even more difficult and corruption began to flourish, as civil servants could no longer live on their salaries, and restrictions against personal enrichment amongst the Frelimo elite lessened.[19] The working class lost its formerly privileged position after structural adjustment reforms and many have been forced into the uncertainties of the informal market, whilst state employees have seen steady reductions in the buying power of their official salaries. For elites and the middle classes in Maputo, however, new opportunities appeared, both in business and importantly, with the growing international aid sector. Positions with international agencies range from the humble, such as driver or secretary, to the glamorous, such as field representative or project coordinator. While salaries at many ministries averaged around £160 a month during my fieldwork, pay at international agencies often began at around £385 and could reach £825 or higher. In addition to direct employment I knew many members of the middle class who had tangential connections with which they supplemented their incomes, such as offering Portuguese lessons to foreign personnel. In spite of this seeming openness of opportunity, elites have had the ability to effectively monopolise many of the highest positions. Aside from the fact that they, especially the younger members, often have higher degrees of education, or at least attended more prestigious universities, they derive an immense advantage from their social networks. Members of the elite can call on a wide range of friends and family who hold, or have held, high positions in aid agencies, newly privatised businesses and the government on an almost rotating basis. These networks form structures of power that link elites, the government, business and international agencies in mutually beneficial and self-sustaining ways. The introduction of democracy and free market policies was supposed to enable the 'will of the people' to make itself felt by a government whose former policies were thought by many to have become elitist and out of touch. Yet many members of Maputo's middle class feel they are increasingly ignored and denied access to high positions.

During the transition to multiparty democracy, Frelimo spent much of its energies addressing and seeking to enlist the support amongst its traditional audience, educated urbanites.[20] As was the case in the socialist period, Frelimo felt they could be counted on to understand the dream of creating a 'modern nation' that would provide for its citizens. Therefore competition for the spoils of the new system often remains a 'privileged' activity for elites and the middle classes in Maputo, who have the education and the social connections (in differing degrees) to take advantage of the new types of opportunities that have been created. Many people from both groups have achieved a level of prosperity that would have been unthinkable twenty years before. Still, there is a widespread belief amongst members of the middle class that I knew in Maputo that the prosperity they have achieved pales in comparison to that of elites and that further social mobility is blocked. Democratisation and electoral

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[19] Graeme Harrison, Corruption as 'Boundary Politics': The State, Democratisation and Mozambique's Unstable Liberalisation (*Third World Quarterly*, 20, 1999) pp. 537-550
Judith Marshall, Structural Adjustment and Social Policy in Mozambique, (*Review of African Political Economy*, 47, 1990) pp. 28-43.
[20] Carrie Manning, *The Politics of Peace in Mozambique: Post-Conflict Democratization, 1992-2000*, p. 132.

victories have given Frelimo legitimacy with international agencies and Mozambique's major donors. The question remains though, in whose eyes is legitimacy sought: those of the electorate or those of the international community?

Legitimacy

In a recent and influential book on African politics, Chabal and Daloz claim that African societies are held together by patronage networks, which, in their view, means the links in these societies are horizontal instead of vertical.[21]

> Indeed, if class is defined (in keeping with standard sociology) as a self-consciously constituted group organised to defend its economic interests and assert these interests against other similar ensembles, then the continent is largely devoid of social classes. … Even if it had achieved the economic means of its hegemonic ambitions, any elite which became a ruling 'class' thus cutting itself from the rest of society, would rapidly lose prestige, influence, and thereby legitimacy.[22]

There may be elements of truth to this assertion when describing certain interactions, but if one reads it as describing Maputo, it is an oversimplification of a set of complex processes. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the top ranks of the Frelimo party and their relatives and close associates have begun, through liberalisation, to expand from their political base into the economic realm, both business and aid based. Despite fierce internal disagreements, members of this group tend to take a common stand and defend their interests *vis-à-vis* other social groups. In a manner similar to Leys and M. Cohen's formulation of the African national bourgeoisie, class is based on the ability to access political and foreign networks, which lead to wealth and status.[23] It is therefore, political connections that lead to a relationship to the means of production as they exist in Maputo. Thus, those who were able to rise to positions of importance in the state bureaucracy under socialism were ideally placed to take advantage of the liberal openings and amass wealth. One of the major strategies in elite class consolidation is through connections with foreigners, both capitalists and the international agencies (who were providing around 60% of the government's budget at the time of my fieldwork). Thus, in answer to the earlier question posed concerning which constituency Frelimo needs to represent, while internal constituencies retain importance, elites are now finding it more expedient to cultivate legitimacy with the international community than with their own population.

Part of this growing alienation lies in the nature of the transition from a single party system to a multiparty system. Democratisation has been a major research topic of recent times, but despite the analytical attention, there is a strong tendency in this body of work for a normative position. This position takes democratisation for granted and is usually combined with a technical approach that seeks to measure levels of democracy and its stability with less attention to the social dynamics that

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[21] Patrick Chabal and Jean Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument,* Oxford and Indianapolis, James Currey and Indiana University Press, 1999.
[22] Ibid p. 41.
[23] Colin Leys, The Kenyan Bureaucracy, In Chris Allen and Gavin Williams (eds.), *Sociology of 'Developing Societies': Sub-Saharan Africa,* New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1982, pp. 176-78.
Michael Cohen, Public Policy and Class Formation, In Chris Allen and Gavin Williams (eds.), *Sociology of 'Developing Societies': Sub-Saharan Africa,* New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1982, pp. 179-83.

continue to shape it in specific conditions.[24] Even the more penetrating works on democratisation, such as Deborah Yashar's work in Guatemala and Costa Rica or Elisabeth Wood's work on El Salvador and South Africa have only limited applicability to the situation in Mozambique.[25] Unlike the situation described by the above authors, Frelimo did not face a popular movement demanding democracy, nor was democratisation a way to allow the people a 'voice' while protecting elite economic interests. To a significant degree, elite material interests are often bound to the liberal project as opposed to preceding it. Nor was democracy created in Mozambique by breaking down the unity of old elites and creating multi-class coalitions, a condition Yashar sites as necessary for democracy to take root.[26] As observed by Morier-Genoud, liberalisation was not undertaken by the Frelimo elite due to ideological conviction or in response to a massive popular demand, but because it seemed to be the only way to end the war and remain in power.[27] It was also the most promising avenue to ensure the continued infusion of large amounts of desperately needed foreign aid.

In Mozambique, when Frelimo was contemplating the transition to multiparty democracy during the civil war, the party sent out cadres to canvass opinion. Admittedly this was only possible in areas where the government exercised a high degree of control, so places where Renamo was strong and could probably count on popular support were not canvassed. Yet the results of the survey indicated that a majority of the population was against the move to multiparty democracy on the grounds it could create more conflict in a country already mired in civil war.[28] International agencies and most donor countries operated under the assumption that "… democracy was expected to bring greater accountability, better governance, and the improved economic management and performance".[29] As the civil war had reached a situation of stalemate and sponsors on both sides were losing interest in the conflict, it was thought that democratisation might finally bring the war to a negotiated end. Both Frelimo and Renamo depended on outside support (to differing degrees), and democratisation seemed to be to the most promising strategy to access foreign funds. During the first elections, voting patterns nation-wide tended to follow the military developments of the civil war. In areas where Renamo was strong they dominated the vote; an equivalent monopoly was evident in areas where Frelimo held sway. Instead of much of the population 'exercising their democratic will' in many cases it appeared that the voting was, in part, determined by the desire of the population to placate the strongest force in their area.[30] Local legitimacy thus appears to have been low on the list of concerns due to the very fact that democratisation

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[24] Eric Morier-Genoud, *Shaping Democracy: Frelimo, Liberalism and Politics in Contemporary Mozambique,* Unpublished Seminar Paper, (Oxford, 2007).
[25] Elisabeth Wood, *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.
Deborah Yashar, *Demanding Democracy: Reform and Reaction in Costa Rica and Guatemala, 1870s-1950s,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997.
[26] Ibid, pp.16.
[27] Eric Morier-Genoud, *Shaping Democracy: Frelimo, Liberalism and Politics in Contemporary Mozambique.*
[28] Carrie Manning, *The Politics of Peace in Mozambique: Post-Conflict Democratization, 1992-2000*
Marc de Tollenaere, *Fostering Multiparty Politics in Mozambique.* in Jeroen de Zeeuw and Krishna Kumar (eds.), *Promoting Democracy in Postcolonial Societies,* Boulder, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006, pp. 75-98.
[29] Carrie Manning, p. 16.
[30] Ibid.

occurred as a way for ruling elites to hold power, and for insurgent elites to gain access to the networks of power and externally generated priorities.

Although international actors were influential in pressing for the democratic transition, this did not mean that Mozambican elites were completely held hostage and unable to influence the course of events. In many ways democracy was more about dividing the spoils of state than it was about deciding who would wield power.[31] The political transition has ushered in a period of increasing corruption at the same time that the limited social safety nets that existed have been withdrawn. Thus, many feel that the distance between elites and 'the people' becomes ever more obvious.

The perception of growing social distance between the elite and the wider population does not, however, necessarily translate into a direct loss of support for Frelimo in Maputo. Although voter turnout was extremely low, Frelimo won the 2004 election with a landslide victory and Maputo remained a party stronghold. In the elections for the Assembly of the Republic (the Mozambican parliament) Frelimo won 17 seats as opposed to one for Renamo in 1994, 14 as opposed to 2 for Renamo in 1999 and 2004.[32] In the first municipal elections contested by Renamo in 2003, Frelimo won 76.22% as compared to 12.75% for Renamo.[33] It can be further argued that Frelimo would have won an even stronger victory, but a 'civil society' party named *Junta Pela Cidade* (Together for the City) won 8.02% of the vote.[34] This party is widely seen as consisting of members of the old socialist wing of Frelimo.

Thus, in a seeming reversal of patrimonial politics, many who criticised Frelimo continued to vote for them, as shown in the introductory example, or simply abstained. One middle class woman who came from an old Maputo family came to the heart of the situation by stating they had to continue with Frelimo: "Because we have already been through this with Frelimo, we have paid for the houses, the cars, education for their children. With Renamo we would have to start all over again". This is of course not the only reason many in Maputo do not support Renamo. There is still considerable bitterness over the civil war, especially for those with family members in the southern provinces where Renamo's attacks were often extremely brutal. Furthermore, the wartime propaganda campaign against Renano was intense. One woman in her thirties who grew up in Maputo told me she was shocked when she first saw Renamo leaders on TV signing the peace accords, as she had thought they were not human but almost mythical monsters. Still, the above statement stands at odds with Chabal and Daloz's formulation, which states that the wealth of a 'big man' is a measure of pride for the community and beneficial as it will be redistributed through horizontal social links.[35] Instead, many of Maputo's middle class seemed to sense a flow of wealth in the opposite direction and made a reasoned choice between those who are already rich and those who would have to steal more and leave them with even less.

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[31] Malyn Newitt, Mozambique, in Patrick Chabal with David Birmingham, Joshua Forrest, Malyn Newitt, Gerhard Seibert and Elisa Silva Andrade (eds.), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, London, Hurst & Co., 2002, pp. 185-235.

[32] http://africanelections.tripod.com/mz_details.html#1994_Assembly_of_the_Republic_Election

[33] Lauriciano, Gil and Bonifacio, Antonio, Mozambique Municipal Elections: Final Results, http://www.sardc.net/editotrial/NewsFeature/040501.htm

[34] Ibid.

[35] Patrick Chabal and Jean Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*, p. 42.

This leads us to a question that has not been addressed by Chabal and Daloz's notion of neo-patrimonialism. How does an elite retain legitimacy amongst social groups that do not necessarily feel they are benefiting from it? For many members of the middle class I knew in Maputo, one of the cornerstones of Frelimo's legitimacy is their role as the liberator, protector, and in many ways, the creator of the nation. As a lecturer at one of Mozambique's private universities explained to me: "People here (in Maputo) always complain about Frelimo, but when the elections come you will see all of them in queues that fill the streets waiting to vote for them. You see, Frelimo is more than just a party, you have to realise it is more like a religion". This was a remark I heard echoed many times throughout fieldwork. If Frelimo can no longer count on the unbridled enthusiasm of the immediate post-independence period, they do appear to have a firm hold on the nationalist imagination of many of Maputo's middle class. This brings us to another seeming paradox: those who are best able to understand the meaning of democratisation, and also the most likely to support it, are also those least likely to vote for the opposition and actually change the regime.[36] Even today there seems to be very little sense of voters 'shopping around' for a party that represents one's interests; and the idea of switching parties often brought forth expressions of scorn. For many democratisation was not so much about changing regimes as it was about ending the war and introducing new civil rights and freedoms. Nevertheless, even these freedoms are often viewed ambiguously, and one heard frequent nostalgia for the 'order' of the earlier socialist period, as opposed to the supposed chaos and dramatic increase of crime in the current era. It was not uncommon to hear the well off propose truly draconian punishments for relatively minor offences as it was thought that even petty crime could unleash further disorder.

Additionally, democratisation in Mozambique has been bedevilled by the fact that while one can vote for competing parties, it can be very difficult to discern much in the way of ideological differences between them since both advocate similar platforms (democracy, free markets, some form of decentralisation, respect for 'civil society') or risk alienating the international community. Thus Frelimo is increasingly reliant on its history and self-proclaimed role as the liberator and guardian of national unity to win votes.[37] For others who perceive elites to be increasingly aloof, self-interested and corrupt this vision is becoming hard to sell. Growing alienation, however, has not yet endangered Frelimo's ability to rule. In fact their hold on power appears to be becoming ever more solid after the 2004 election that basically turned Mozambique into a single-party elected state. Frelimo not only dominates the political scene, but has also firmly established itself in the economy and the emerging civil society as well. Therefore while the democratisation process has strengthened Frelimo's legitimacy with powerful foreigners as they have followed injunctions to 'liberalise politically and economically' there is a feeling among the middle class of Maputo that it has made them less accountable in certain respects – in contrast to the scenario described by Chabal and Daloz – to the internal groups they used to rely upon. Many aspects of the liberal period have stirred social resentments, but democratisation has not provided a suitable replacement.

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[36] For a fascinating account of how democratisation was viewed in parts of the rural north see Harry West, Harry, *"Govern Yourselves": Democracy and Carnage in Northern Mozambique.*

[37] Bjorn Enge Bertelsen,' It Will Rain Until we are in Power!: Floods, Elections and Memory in Mozambqiue'. In Harri Englund and Francis Nyamnjoh (eds.), *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa,* London and New York, Zed Books, 2004, pp. 169-191.

Graeme Harrison, 'Democracy in Mozambique: The Significance of Multiparty Elections', *Review of African Political Economy*, 67, 1996, pp. 19-35.

Elites and the Simply Privileged

As mentioned earlier, one of the areas of the new economy that continues to hold the promise of 'progress' for both elites and the middle class is the growing NGO sector. Yet, even here, members of the middle class often feel at a disadvantage. In many cases they lack the same level of qualifications as members of the elite and they do not have access to the same social networks that interlink the state, businesses and the NGO sector. The following two case studies are used as examples to demonstrate that, despite similar social origins, elite social networks are allowing elites to monopolise the opportunities that have appeared in the new era.

Osvaldo was in his early thirties when I conducted fieldwork. He comes from an old southern family that has been long established in Maputo and was well-off during the colonial period. His father worked with the Portuguese army and also owned several houses, deriving a good portion of his income from renting several houses he owned. The family's fortunes began to decline with independence. Several family members fled and his father was declared an 'enemy of the people' and many of his properties were nationalised. Despite his father's status as an 'enemy of the people' Osvaldo leads a relatively comfortable life, although he feels his opportunities for advancement are limited. He studied accounting in Mozambique and went on to work with the NGO sector. He then tried to enter the private sector, but it was not a success and he lasted only a few months. He has gone back to NGO work and has relocated abroad. The last time I spoke to him, he was considering applying for foreign citizenship.

In many ways Osvaldo's background is parallel to that of the majority of my elite informants. He probably would have been a member of this privileged category if his father had not been an 'enemy of the people'. He came from an urban, southern background, his family had been relatively privileged in the colonial period, he is well-educated and he has travelled widely. Up to the present time his career has been mostly successful as well. In other ways, however, he differs significantly from his elite counterparts. His family's history was too tainted by collaboration to allow them much of a place in the new party structures after independence. Even though his father had sufficient skills and education to find a job that would not leave them destitute, the family does not have the social connections with the party elite to allow them to reach the summit of society. Nor is Osvaldo able to take advantage of elite networks to moderate the otherwise unpredictable private sector, leaving him dependent on aid agencies. In Osvaldo's view his best chances lie outside Mozambique. The move from socialism to neo-liberal democracy promised to increase the access of 'the people' to the political system, but has paradoxically left many of those who are dissatisfied with few options but individual alienation and retreat.

The next case study demonstrates the difference in strategies for social advancement for a young member of the elite. Varyna comes from a well-established family and her parents fought in the liberations struggle. Since independence family members have held high-ranking posts, both within the state and in the private and NGO sector. They are well-educated and Varyna has also studied abroad. Upon her return to Maputo she obtained a job at a government ministry. I asked her what the interview process was for government employment and she responded with a bemused look. She told me that when she arrived at the ministry she was informed that she was

hired. She thought that her parents had probably put a word in for her. Varyna later felt that she was not being paid enough in the ministry and she utilised the connections she made there to branch out into the more remunerative international agencies. She then won a scholarship to do post-graduate education abroad. When she returned she was able to get a good position with a major international agency where she still works.

These case studies demonstrate a level of privilege among elites and the middle class in Maputo that would be difficult, if not impossible, for the majority of Mozambique's population to achieve and yet differences remain. Unlike the example from the elite, Osvaldo has not managed to develop the social or family connections, nor has he benefited from the markers of elite status, such as education abroad, to advance beyond his current situation. Although the barriers between classes are not impossible to transcend, Osvaldo's example illustrates how the lack of a certain level of social connections makes advancement more difficult. This directly contradicts the Frelimo government's early socialist promise of equality for all of Mozambique's citizens. While many of the Maputo middle class that I knew, including Osvaldo, appreciate aspects of the new freedoms of the post-socialist era; they feel that they are ultimately blocked, despite the promise of a new and open society.

In contrast to the middle class, elites have a far greater ability to access influential outsiders. Despite the factions, disagreements and internal differentiation among the elite, their positions and social networks still defend their interests. While some members of the middle class are able to find well-paid careers in international agencies, they rarely have the educational requirements to rise to the highest levels or to hold multiple positions with the state, business and development agencies, as elites are able to do. Frelimo is not yet in great political danger. Furthermore even critics of the current system, such as Osvaldo, still believe in the overall nationalist ideals that elites claim to represent. However, there is a growing perception that some benefit from the system far more than others and the sense of solidarity that underlay revolutionary nationalism is beginning to fade. Abner Cohen spoke of the need for elites to create and believe in a "universalist mystique", the idea that rulers are not acting out of pure self-interest, but in the good of the wider group.[38] Currently it is rather difficult for the elite to convince the groups that they traditionally relied upon that this is the case.

Social Mistrust

The political and social changes that have swept through Maputo since independence are a common topic of conversation amongst both elites and the middle class. The hope, fear and hardship of the initial post-independence period is often used as a counterpoint for many who wish to make sense of the moral order of the current era. While many frequently remark upon the negative aspects of socialism - the fear of informers, the growing authoritarianism among the government and the chronic shortages - it is often called the *tempo de fome* (the time of hunger), and is a period that is frequently idealised, especially the early years before the height of the civil war when the abovementioned hardships increased drastically. This nostalgia is even found among the young, those who were but children during much of the socialist period. An example of this can be seen in a conversation I had with two young men in

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[38] Abner Cohen, *The Politics of Elite Culture: Explorations in the Dramaturgy of Power in a Modern African Society,* Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 1981.

their mid twenties in 2002. They were both students at University Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), the major state-run university in Maputo. They came from southern families and had grown up in Maputo. They were speaking about liberalisation and they remarked bitterly about the inequalities that have become more deeply manifest after the transition. They remember the socialist period as difficult and arduous, but they also felt there was a sense of solidarity, with efforts to ensure that everyone received a share of the little that was available. "There was more equality back then. Sure the government people got better rations, but even the ministers were thin, they did not wear flashy suits and drive Mercedes to their mansions like now". After the liberalisation of the economy, however, the same 'thin' ministers who promised the glories of socialism seemed to become rich overnight. They both stated that sometimes it was better for everyone to have an equal share of a little as opposed to what they see as the massive imbalances that exist today.

For these reasons it appears as if Samora Machel has become an icon among younger members of the urban poor and middle classes in Maputo. It was not uncommon to see young people with t-shirts with pictures of Samora Machel on the front and his slogan *a luta continua* (the struggle continues) on the back. When speaking about corruption a frequent comment was; "*Nao a via acontecer se Samora estivesse vivo*" (This could not happen if Samora was alive). For many, Samora Machel has become the symbol of the best aspects of the socialist period - the free health care and education, the lack of corruption, self-sacrifice and the commitment to build a nation that would protect and benefit everyone.

Older informants, who were young adults during the socialist period and who were trying to establish families, are often more tempered when speaking of their memories of the time. Neama came from a reasonably well-off Indian family and moved to Maputo shortly after independence from the central city of Tete. Her husband had recently earned a university degree and had been called to work as an engineer in Maputo. She remembered how difficult it was when they first arrived - many of the stores were closed and her husband's salary was very low. They had access to government rations but according to Neama they were not adequate and they often had to search for money to get bread. While she was often scathing about many aspects of the socialist period, Naema referred to the Frelimo government as the 'communists' and frequently emphasised their strictness (despite the fact she had kinship connections with some of them). She thought it was particularly harsh that religious celebrations were cancelled because 'they did not believe in God'. Still, she also missed the sense of togetherness and solidarity she recalls from the period. Sometimes her relatives would send her food, or when she managed to find something that was usually rare she would call all of her friends and have a party, sharing it out. People were constantly together and because of the hardship everyone, according to Naema, relied on each other and shared what they had. She feels that while life has become much easier since the fall of socialism, this sense of solidarity is rapidly diminishing. Now everything has become very concentrated within the nuclear family and the former easy reciprocity has begun to disappear.

Others were not necessarily so negatively disposed towards all aspects of the socialist period and while there were numerous cynical remarks, many also did feel they were part of a bigger project to transform the nation. The importance of feeling part of a grand project has been recognised, and as noted by Morier-Genoud, Frelimo is trying to revive the old socialist nationalism based on the necessity of unity, if not its

previous egalitarianism.[39] Nonetheless, the practices and the ambiguity of the new moral order can make this difficult. Many among both the wider population and even among the elite in Maputo sneered at the perceived acquisitiveness of certain members of Frelimo. One former Frelimo party member told me in despair: "They (the elite) are just thieves now. Look at the country, they are acting like the colonialists used to". Another characterised the new era as 'savage' or 'gangster' capitalism, reminiscent of Chicago during the time of Al Capone. The critiques of the present are based in a perceived rise in inequality and perhaps, a seeming loss in moral direction, yet these nostalgic idealisations seem to downplay the existence of status differences during socialism. But such differences did exist and became more pronounced as the government became increasingly authoritarian. By the mid 1980s high-ranking party members benefited from special access to a wide variety of goods and services.[40] However, it did not appear as if critiques of the current era were confined strictly to the actual existing inequalities. To be sure, no one wanted a return of the shortages, war, informers or fear, but many missed the pervious sense of solidarity, even if it was created through hardship. The emerging class system of the liberal era has its roots in the previous system, but liberalism and democratisation has not lessened its accompanying sense of social mistrust, if only perhaps because now it can be more openly expressed. I will now turn to an event that crystallised the sense of unease at the power of elite social networks in a dramatic fashion, the assassination of the journalist Carlos Cardoso and the subsequent trial.

Carlos Cardoso had been one of the senior managers of the Mozambican State News agency during the socialist period. Although he came from a wealthy white Mozambican/Portuguese family and had studied abroad during the late colonial period, he was a committed socialist and quickly returned to Mozambique upon independence.[41] While he had occasional confrontations with the Frelimo government, he was a strong supporter of Samora Machel. After Samora's death and the transition to capitalism, Cardoso became increasingly critical of government policy, which he felt primarily benefited the wealthy. He left the state-run news agency and formed two independent papers, *Mediafax* and later the *Metical*. These papers were distributed by fax, but they became very influential in Maputo beyond their limited circulation of a couple of hundred. Cardoso began advocating economic nationalism, and accused Frelimo of selling the country out from beneath the feet of its citizens.[42] He also began to report aggressively on cases of corruption, especially scandals arising from the privatisation of banks.[43]

On November 22nd 2000 Cardoso was assassinated while being driven home from work. Although the government was initially slow to pursue the case, their hand was forced by mounting pressure, both internal and international. Six people were eventually arrested and the murder was blamed on the Satars, a prominent Indian family with mafia ties, who were involved with embezzling funds from one of the banks that Cardoso was investigating. All six defendants were found guilty and three received sentences of twenty-eight years in prison. During the trial one of the accused

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[39] Eric Morier-Genoud, *Shaping Democracy: Frelimo, Liberalism and Politics in Contemporary Mozambique.*

[40] Margaret Hall, and Tom Young, Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence.

[41] Paul Fauvet and Marcelo Mosse, *Carlos Cardoso: Telling the Truth in Mozambique,* Cape Town, Double Story, 2003.

[42] Ibid.

[43] When major banks were privatised, assets worth millions of pounds were embezzled; the BCM (Commercial Bank of Mozambique) and *Banco Austral* (Southern Bank) were two of the worst cases.

claimed they were acting on the behalf of Nyimpine Chissano, the son of the then president. Nyimpine had been employed by one of the banks in question as a consultant when its assets disappeared. Nyimpine was called to testify.

The scandal connected to the Cardoso case was beginning to tarnish Mozambique's reputation with the international community. The government was under intense pressure by donors to deal with the case in a manner that demonstrated their goals of 'good governance' and transparency and accordingly the trial became the second ever televised trial in Mozambique's history. Internationally this had the desired effect and that year Mozambique was awarded more foreign aid from the World Bank than they had requested, effectively shoring up the losses from the scandal.[44] Domestically however, at least outside the ranks of the elite, it sparked ever more speculation of a wide-ranging conspiracy.

The trial was electrifying, both for elites and for the wider population in Maputo. Throughout its duration those who could not afford a TV could be found huddled against the nearest radio. Talk in every taxi or bus concerned the possible fate of the *filho de galo* (son of the rooster, referring to Nyimpine Chissano). My elite informants would rush home during their lunch hour to watch the trial on TV. When Nyimpine was first called before the court many of my middle class informants invited friends and family over to watch the unfolding spectacle. I was present at a middle class home and observed how the audience initially took great joy in watching the young man in a designer suit, who was rumoured to be fabulously wealthy, uncomfortably mumble answers to the judge's questions. In their eyes, they had finally seen the epitome of the 'arrogance' of the elites' new wealth humbled publicly. For a brief time it appeared that the social networks at the heart of the state had been defeated and their power brought out into the open. The owner of the house delightedly told me a story about Nyimpine being forced to leave a shop because the other patrons started loudly jeering when he arrived.

As the trial progressed it appeared as if Nyimpine would survive his encounter with the law more or less intact (he was later charged). In response to this, stories concerning Nyimpine told to me by middle class informants became ever more fantastic, taking on all the elements of a Greek trajedy. Reactions amongst members of the elite were more diverse. Some also told me stories of Nyimpine's supposed nastiness, yet others claimed that most of these were simply rumours and he was a scapegoat because he came from a powerful family. While opinions diverged, few were willing to state their belief in his guilt publicly. It appeared that more was at stake than the possible disgrace of one man, but rather that the emerging class system and its associated social networks, so advantageous to elites, was being questioned.

For the middle class of Maputo it appeared that democratisation and capitalism had not brought an opening of opportunity as much as it had solidified the power the socialist leaders and allowed them to amass wealth in a way that struck many of Maputo's middle class as unjust and conspiratorial. However, the reason that this trial did not lead to a response apart from mockery was that it appeared that little could be done. The elite have far stronger backers now through the international community and few harboured any illusions that the opposition would be better. This is not to say that ruling elites need no longer concern themselves with securing internal legitimacy because the numerous scandals that surrounded President Chissano did hurt him

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[44] Joseph Hanlon, 'Do Donors Promote Corruption?: The Case of Mozambique', *Third World Quarterly* 25 (2004), pp. 747-63.

politically. In his inaugural speech in 2005, the new President, Armando Guebuza, promised, in a bid to win back support from the disaffected, to put an end to the spirit of *deixa andar* (let it go, let it roll, a phrase that refers to Chissano's perceived permissive attitude towards corruption and the misuse of power). But what the conflicting attitudes towards the Cardoso case demonstrate is that while securing internal legitimacy is important, it is secondary to securing external legitimacy.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed one of the central paradoxes of the democratic project in Maputo: that the process of democratisation has left a group that was once a pillar of the regime feeling disenfranchised and that the elite have less need to rely on them politically than previously. This analysis is accurate in as much as democracy was introduced less to legitimise the government with the people as it was to legitimate it with the international community and to end the civil war. Unlike the conception of power in Africa held by Chabal and Daloz, in which elites derive internal legitimacy through patrimonial networks, in Maputo that is exactly what is harming the legitimacy of elites since these networks seem ever more tightly restricted.

Nonetheless, a growing sense of alienation in Maputo does not necessarily harm Frelimo, as at present there are few groups that former supporters feel they can turn to represent their interests more effectively. Democratisation and its accompanying liberal project have not 'opened up' the political system, but rather they have allowed the hierarchy under socialism to transform into a hardening class structure under the current system. However, for those outside the elite this class system does not seem based on merit as much as on conspiracy, putting the ruling party's legitimacy in danger. It remains to be seen if a stable political system can be built on these foundations.

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