

Historical Failure or Short-term Success? Revisiting Post-Colonial Socialism and the  
Mozambican “project”, 1975- 1994

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## Abstract

This study examines the socialist project in Mozambique under the political party *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* or Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) from the time of independence in 1975 to the end of its 15-year war with Mozambique National Resistance (MNR/RENAMO) in 1994. After achieving independence from a brutal and obstinate system of Portuguese colonialism in 1975, the chief organization that led the anti-colonial struggle, FRELIMO began a process of creating a socialist-oriented modern nation, modelled on existing examples worldwide. Facing widespread hardship and seemingly insurmountable challenges as well as crumbling communist regimes elsewhere in the world, FRELIMO's efforts however, soon came to end in the late 1980s. This thesis critically engages the factors that led to the failure of the development of socialism in Mozambique with particular focus on the way that historians and scholars have understood such factors. Combining a review of the existing historiographical literature on the topic as well as data drawn from primary sources from the historical events under study, the aim of the research is to provide an alternative understanding of the collapse of this much-touted and widely observed period of transition for this southeast African country. The thesis suggests re-conceptualizing the notion of single-state self-sufficient socialism as conceived of by FRELIMO, particularly in nations historically subjugated to colonialism and more recently the dictates of international capital, and in doing so also contends that a number of key elements of socialist theories of development have been overlooked in the process. In the context of a recent global economic recession and the seeming deterioration of state authority in the face of globalization, it is necessary to examine the confluence of historical paths that led to the current situation and in this sense the thesis will contribute another view of these histories.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The problem of global economic and political inequity has been the focus of intense and sustained debate both within academic circles and beyond. The way by which processes of modernization have influenced and driven such inequity has invariably arisen in discussion after discussion and the role of modernity in the process of nation-building has not only shaped how the role of history is viewed but also how millions of people around the world understand the current state of affairs, particularly the global balance of power. During the late 1940s, as waves of anti-colonial struggles spread worldwide, the question of how newly-emerging colonies would be shaped by post-WWII capitalism came to the fore. Even if they were only nominally interested in socialism in theory, a myriad of leading anti-colonial movements at least attempted to identify with the egalitarian goals and aspirations of the masses.<sup>1</sup> Colonial rule across Asia, Latin America and Africa left many countries institutionally and economically in service of elite interests of the metropole, and to a lesser degree to the elites of erstwhile colonies, and certainly not the laboring populations. In the case of numerous sub-Saharan African countries, the role of non-elite Africans in the colonial machine was for the extraction of resources for sale on European markets, a role that continued following political independence. This neo-colonial economic relationship with European and Western markets was addressed by dependency theory.<sup>2</sup> In a number of ways, vested colonial economic powers could maintain their foothold within African nations, but disguised behind shared interests with the emerging African bourgeoisie or with African petty-bourgeoisies (per Frantz Fanon).<sup>3</sup> Nationalist African leaders with strong populist leanings that attempted to ameliorate this exploitative relationship following

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1. Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu, *African Socialism or Socialist Africa?* (London: Zed Press; Westport, Conn.: distributed by Lawrence Hill 1981), 93-96.

2. John S. Saul, *The State and Revolution in East Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 29.

3. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 154.

independence would face the combined opposition of national, regional and global powers, as was the case of the Congo's Patrice Lumumba. Recognition of the role of (neo)-colonial capitalism drove many African leaders and anti-colonial movements to consider alternative systems of nation-building following independence. After achieving independence from Portuguese rule in 1975, Mozambique under FRELIMO strove to build a modern, socialist society modeled on Soviet, Chinese, East German systems of political and social rule.<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously, FRELIMO envisioned the dual nature of socialism as not only as the creation of a particular set of state-society relations, but also as a process of modernization, viewed as a necessary precondition particularly for a country on the periphery of colonialism such as Mozambique.<sup>5</sup>

This thesis examines FRELIMO's attempts to create a socialist society in Mozambique following independence. It discusses why these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful and the factors that contributed to this failure. However, rather than reiterate the existing reasons for this failure, the focus of the discussion will be on the theoretical and historical framework of FRELIMO's notion of socialism, as drawn from the concept of the non-capitalist road to development as well as the notion that it could be constructed and implemented within the framework of a single economy and country, rather than as a system based on the global eradication of capitalism and imperialism.

Mozambique was unique for both its place and time because of the fact that the organization centrally responsible for leading the anti-colonial struggle, FRELIMO, attempted to move beyond the limits of anti-colonial nationalism of other movements in the continent and

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4. Samora Machel, *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary: Selected Speeches and Writings* ed. Barry Munslow (London: Zed; 1985).

5. Nicos Zafiris, "The People's Republic of Mozambique: Pragmatic Socialism," in *The New Communist Third World—An Essay in Political Economy* ed. Peter Wiles (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1982), 140.

elsewhere and was among a handful of sub-Saharan African countries that attempted to do so. FRELIMO attempted to build socialism in Mozambique, that is, a Mozambique that would be free of exploitation by either whites or blacks and sought to do so through its Marxist-Leninist program, which it adopted in 1977.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, Nyerere's and Kaunda's projects in Tanzania and Zambia were primarily based on their understanding of pre-colonial African socialism rather than a more direct application of Marxism-Leninism. This thesis examines the socialist project in Mozambique under FRELIMO from 1975 to 1994,<sup>7</sup> the causes for the failure to construct an alternative to post-colonial capitalism, and in particular how the existing literature has overlooked the role of the limitations of achieving self-sufficient socialism. In doing so, it attempts to answer an important historical question that faced numerous nations following independence: how to achieve genuine justice and modernization in the face of colonial oppression as well as genuine economic liberation (that is, freedom from post-colonial subjugation). The steps taken by FRELIMO in Mozambique stand in contrast to other examples in different regions of the world where colonial rule was overthrown and social revolution was effectively achieved (China, Vietnam, and Cuba) due to the fact that although Mozambique's productive forces were largely agrarian rather than industrial in nature (much like the three aforementioned states), it was not able to construct the type of societies in the same manner that Cuba, Vietnam or China was.

FRELIMO's ascent to political power in 1975 spawned a wealth of literature on the nature of its rule as well as the program it sought to implement. The existing literature identifies a set of historical and material conditions in Mozambique (economic, social, and political) as well as in Southern Africa as the main sources of the limitations in terms of building a socialist

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6. John S. Saul, *Socialist Ideology and the Struggle for Southern Africa*, (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1990), 23.

7. Following Machel's death in 1986.

alternative to capitalism. It also recognizes the role of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), South Africa, Portugal as well as some Western countries in ensuring the destruction and demoralization of the country via RENAMO.<sup>8</sup> Existing critiques of the socialist project of Mozambique rest on several key factors: the economic and social conditions of Mozambique, inherited from Portuguese colonialism deemed as unripe for socialism;<sup>9</sup> the mass exodus of personnel and capital from the country during independence and the subsequent deliberate sabotage of productive equipment;<sup>10</sup> the largely agricultural character of the productive forces of the country; the destruction and terror brought about by RENAMO<sup>11</sup> and, the failure of FRELIMO's program of socialization, communalization and collectivization (as part of its broader attempts at modernization).

### **Existing Literature**

The criteria by which the Mozambican socialist project has been assessed is premised on an index of the social, economic and political dimensions best captured by Munslow's 6-point variable index. This includes: the structure of the country and its position within global capitalism; the program of the organization or party directing the country towards socialism; the means by which the socialist regime achieves state power; conditions of the colonial society on which the socialist society would be built; the leading organization's ideological orientation, and; the degree of opposition to it, both internationally and domestically. It is conceptually useful to examine the prevailing historical work on the topic along these lines as follows.

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8. Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 563; Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman *Mozambique: from Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1982*, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press; Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Gower, 1983), 179.

9. Bertil Egerö, "People's Power: The Case of Mozambique," in *Africa: Problems in the Transition to Socialism*, ed. Barry Munslow, (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., USA: Zed Books, 1986), 134.

10. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 550; Marina Ottaway, "Mozambique: From Symbolic Socialism to Symbolic Reform," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 26 (1988): 213, doi: 10.1017/S0022278X00010442.

11. John S. Saul, "Nkomati and After," in *A Difficult Road – the Transition to Socialism in Mozambique*, ed. John S. Saul (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 396.



Within the historiography there is a broad political understanding of the discrepancy between the theoretical underpinnings of Mozambican socialism and the reality facing the party that sought to implement it; the “unrootedness” of the theories from the Soviet Union and China which were perhaps inapplicable to the conditions in Mozambique.<sup>12</sup> FRELIMO’s goal of achieving socialism in Mozambique raises the question of how it can be met using Marxist theories as guiding principles and why the social changes FRELIMO attempted to implement did not endure. Munslow addresses the gap between Marxist revolutionary theory and the stark reality that faced Mozambique by noting that one of the main factors which decisively impacted the attempts to develop socialism in Mozambique was “the absence of a strong, combative, self-conscious working class which could lead the revolutionary takeover and construct socialism on a strong technological base, a socialism with such a high levels of productions and productivity that the power of the world capitalist economy would be incapable of bringing it to heel.”<sup>13</sup> Correspondingly, the author also makes the point that the conditions for the transition to socialism must be laid more broadly in the continent before the transition itself can occur.<sup>14</sup>

Ottaway argues that the notion that socialism existed in Mozambique must be rethought, and that FRELIMO’s program and its attempts to function as a vanguard party (based on the Leninist model) did not successfully overcome the material and social limitations of Mozambique. In terms of creating a socialist economy (“centralized, planned”), as both a political party and the state itself, FRELIMO did not have the level of influence or control necessary to carry out its program.<sup>15</sup> This was in part due to the alienation of its supporters following its ideological reorientation in 1977 (as Marxist-Leninist) and despite its later attempts

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12. Saul, *Socialist Ideology*, 59.

13. Barry Munslow, “Introduction,” in *Africa: Problems in the Transition to Socialism*, ed. Barry Munslow, (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., USA: Zed Books, 1986), 1, 11, 17.

14. Munslow, “Introduction,” 3.

15. Ottaway, “Mozambique: From Symbolic Socialism to Symbolic Reform,” 213.

to reincorporate those alienated elements which proved unsuccessful.<sup>16</sup> Ottaway states that “the explanation of why the Marxist-Leninism of FRELIMO remained largely theoretical, despite the leadership’s determination to use the Leninist blueprint to bring about a structural transformation of the society, is simple enough: the government-party apparatus – in short, the state – was poorly organized and lacked personnel, experiences, skills and money.”<sup>17</sup> Ottaway asserts that FRELIMO was not in fact a Marxist-Leninist party as it has been made to be, and that it thrived on populist sentiments, particularly during the 1980s, as it increasingly incorporated broader sections of the population (in order to counter the influence of RENAMO).

The failure of FRELIMO’s political mobilization efforts in the countryside must be examined in light of Saul’s assertions that it functioned in a “high-handed manner (at once moralizing and ‘modernizing’) in which it approached such matters often betrayed an arrogance and weakness in methods of political work that would render it more vulnerable to destructive oppositional activity...” Writing in 2005, Saul argues essentially that the failure in Mozambique can be understood in political terms (the adoption of Marxist-Leninist vanguard party strategies inappropriate for mobilizing the population); and, the force of external pressures stemming from South Africa and elsewhere.<sup>18</sup>

It is the general consensus among historians that Mozambique was economically disadvantaged by the nature of Portuguese colonialism. Among the colonial capitalist powers, Portugal was among the weakest economically and functioned on forced labor, and forced cropping of cash crops like cotton and rice that placed Mozambique in a powerless position vis-

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16. Ottaway, 214.

17. Ibid., 222.

18. John S. Saul, *The Next Liberation Struggle – Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy in Southern Africa* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 38-40.

à-vis the world economy and left the country undeveloped.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, FRELIMO's efforts to create a modern Mozambique were seriously hampered by the exodus of Portuguese skilled personnel and the destruction of infrastructure at independence. Much of the country's administrative and technical resources disappeared with the end of Portuguese colonial powers. This was compounded by the loss of capital investment, and led to economic recession. To make matters worse, remittances from Mozambican laborers in South Africa decreased significantly.<sup>20</sup>

Egero notes that by early 1983, while Mozambique had restructured and reorganized the economy, and created numerous institutions as well as political bodies to ensure that such changes did indeed take place, the state was struggling to deal with its growing debt-and meet the elementary needs of the populace. Early failure, states Egero, can be attributed to interferences caused by its regional adversaries (Rhodesia and later South Africa) as well as the type of society inherited from Portuguese colonialism.<sup>21</sup> The failures can also be attributed to what the author calls "material scarcity" which exerts a stifling grip - "the parameters of innovation are narrow," and is "reflected everywhere in society, from the communal village lacking sufficient human resources to keep even simple records of their work, to the state machinery basing its interventions on only the very scantiest information about the reality of the country it is hoping to transform."<sup>22</sup> This is exemplified by FRELIMO's agro-industrial efforts, such as its state farms, which also failed because they were expensive and not highly productive, highlighting the aforementioned discrepancy between the party's plans and social reality.<sup>23</sup> He also contends that the "new state functionaries" who were to administer the new society were drawn from a tiny, privileged group (under erstwhile colonial rule) who were not only in no position to run a

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19. Saul, *State and Revolution in East Africa*, 28-29.

20. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 551.

21. Egerö, "People's Power: The Case of Mozambique," 133.

22. Ibid., 137.

23. Ibid., 216.

country, but also, removed from the Mozambican masses. In order to implement the socialist plans and projects, “*cooperantes*” from the Eastern Bloc came to help direct and organize the necessary work without critiquing the applicability and practicality of the proposed projects.<sup>24</sup>

Hall and Young identify in the origins of FRELIMO’s socialist aspirations the motor force of Western modernization, not entirely dissimilar from Western liberalism, which FRELIMO embraced later on. The problem, according to the authors is that such a modernization scheme would be driven by the state, an institution that was relatively inorganic to the societies which they ruled. Particularly in African societies premised on the amalgamation of multiple cultural and ethnic groups, “the state, to be effective, found itself having to deal with social forces which were not congruent with Western state models and thus to develop various forms of clientelism, patronage and ethnic coalition-building.”<sup>25</sup>

Dinerman writes that FRELIMO’s reluctance to draw a balance sheet in the early 1990s (around the time of the first post-Civil War election) on the achievements and shortcomings of its program is indicative that it had, “...simply overestimated the peasantry’s readiness for socialist revolution and conversely it had underestimated the peasantry’s attachment to ‘tradition.’”<sup>26</sup> This critique echoes those by anthropologists (Christian Geffray) and others who have sought to privilege FRELIMO’s purported failure to grasp the extent to which their modernizing project was incompatible with the largely agrarian nature of society in Mozambique.

The course of development taken by FRELIMO was premised on the notion that the social relations of socialism could be developed using state policies directing the population

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24. Egero, 135.

25. Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan – Mozambique since Independence* (C. Hurst and Company, Ltd, 1997), 222-223.

26. Alice Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Post-Colonial Africa: the Case of Mozambique, 1975-1994* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006, e-book).

towards communal living and collective farming as part of the process of socialization. The main weakness of the existing literature on the subject is it takes the aforementioned goals for granted in that it does not challenge the core notion that they can in fact satisfy the requirements of socialism. The notion of single-state, self-reliant socialism must be examined in light of Saul's point that:

Although there was an active proletariat there [in Russia]—it was to be the single most important factor in the making of the Russian Revolution—it nonetheless remained small and afloat in a sea of peasant production and underdevelopment. Lenin, Trotsky, and others debated whether Russian conditions made feasible a socialist revolution and even when events and their deep commitment to radical change pushed them forward they continued to look to revolution in the more advanced capitalist centers as necessary to provide the elbow room they thought postrevolutionary Russia required.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, due to the small size of the industrial proletariat in Russia, the leaders of the Russian Revolution understood the limitations facing the country and that revolution in regions with more powerful industries was necessary for the Revolution to thrive. If this was the case for Russia, then it most certainly must be applicable to Mozambique, whose conditions were undoubtedly much further removed from the prototype of industrial development seen as necessary for the transition to socialism.

Hanlon further links the failure of socialism with the disruptions that FRELIMO's state and industrial projects faced at the hands of the MNR/RENAMO. According to Hanlon, FRELIMO incorrectly neglected subsistence farmers who had supported the party prior to independence. FRELIMO's take was that once the agrarian component of production in Mozambique had been modernized and socialized, these farmers would be incorporated into this

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27. Saul, *Socialist Ideology*, 19.

system without considering what role they played within the market already in place in the country.<sup>28</sup>

While all the aforementioned limitations to building socialism in Mozambique are valid points, they must be examined in relation to the notion that socialism existed or can exist via social changes led by the state, absent of a wider global revolutionary movement, which despite the claims of FRELIMO and other political outfits, was not in fact on the agenda of the day.

Newitt writes that the traditional social forces in Mozambique were better able to withstand the pressure of the struggle of opposing forces of the Cold War, the brunt of the consequences of which were laid on the population rather than the post-colonial government and its institutions.<sup>29</sup> Correspondingly, she argues that “the main problem for FRELIMO was that the modern sector of the economy grew too slowly to be the locomotive for change. FRELIMO was trying to coax new social relations into existence in a society where more than 80 per cent of the people still participated in traditional family farming.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, according to her, it was not only the case that modernizing shifts attempted by FRELIMO were inapplicable or incompatible with the existing social relations of production, but that they were unable to provide the social and political cohesion necessary to effectively combat RENAMO, a force not only acting against FRELIMO’s attempts to undermine and supplant traditional relations but also one that represented anti-communist regional and global interests.

### **Rethinking the Socialist Project**

In light of such existing research the argument of this thesis is that the failure of FRELIMO to develop socialism is not only due to the overall level of development of the

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28. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots?* London: J. Currey; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 25.

29. Newitt, 577.

30. Ibid., 551.

country, or the shortcomings of its political program and the consequences of it (such as political alienation) or even the war waged by RENAMO and its South African backers. Even if Mozambique had a partially or well-developed industry, or if it did not face the onslaught of RENAMO and the ensuing civil war, the question of whether or not the material prerequisites of socialism could be maintained would still need to be critically considered.

This thesis instead suggests examining the challenges facing the construction of a socialist society in Mozambique in relation to the feasibility of its goal of post-colonial modernity. It examines the political origins of the course taken by FRELIMO and the limitations of such a program in action. It suggests re-examining the feasibility of the notion of the non-capitalist road to development, rather than FRELIMO's ability to meet it. Much of the literature on the construction of a socialist society in Mozambique rests on the view that Mozambique was not suitable for social change along the parameters of classical Marxism, however the argument here is that this is a problematic assumption given that there are historical examples of such change in colonial societies with largely agrarian forms of production (Cuba, China and Vietnam being among the most obvious ones, while Russia of the late 1910s was another). The main weakness with FRELIMO's efforts was the way that Marxism was applied in Mozambique. Although FRELIMO proceeded to establish socialism in Mozambique it did so with the purpose of simultaneously modernizing the country, a process which attempted to build on the remaining aspects of capitalism. This followed from the view that a period of modernization (which involved the rapid industrialization and mechanization of the countryside) was necessary for the establishment of socialism. The problem was that FRELIMO sought to do so within the framework of existing capitalism. Thus FRELIMO was faced with the difficulty of building its goal within the limits of a system that was in essence hostile to it. This contradiction also

explains the relatively easy transition to and willingness to work within the IMF and World Bank during the 1980s, particularly under the leadership of Joaquim Chissano. Furthermore, the theory of the non-capitalist road to development identifies modernization as a key aspect (if not the main aspect) of historic change and privileges modernization above worker/peasant rule. The political and theoretical corollary of this concept, that of single-state socialism, needs to be examined as this was the overarching goal shaping the criteria by which FRELIMO has been judged. Even if it were the case that Mozambique had all of these supposedly missing key elements of socialism, the question of whether or not it would have been able to construct the type of society envisioned by FRELIMO, a society no more in existence in the USSR or East Germany, would be called into question. This is not an argument over terminology or over abstractions regarding socialist or Marxist theories, but an argument over the concrete obstacles that faced socialist-oriented states. Socialism is a system predicated on the end of global capitalism and not on the individual achievements of a purportedly self-sufficient society. This point has been overlooked in the existing literature on the topic, which has privileged an array of limitations and impediments. This is not to say that prevailing reasons for the collapse of FRELIMO's socialist program of development in Mozambique are entirely irrelevant; rather they play a role in limiting Mozambique's ability to lay the basis for future socialism rather than being a determinant of it. Whereas a country with all the said requirements such as the former German Democratic Republic was able to begin the process of creating the political conditions for socialism, Mozambique was not able to and the changes it made after independence remained at the superstructural level.<sup>31</sup> However, the Eastern Bloc did eventually collapse largely due to

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31. Brigitte Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: the Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960-1985* (Münster, Lit., 1995), 42.



the fact that countries could not exist as islands in a sea of hostile capitalism—the process simply took longer.

A central assertion of this work is that the existing literature could be strengthened by reflecting on the more nuanced aspects of Marxists view of socialism. Instead of conceptualizing socialism as a system predicated on highly developed industrial capitalism within each country, the suggestion is to consider an alternative as the prevailing explanation does not fully account for the collapse of Eastern Europe (which clearly met the criteria which Mozambique did not. In other words, a central assertion of this thesis is to refrain from assessing the socialist project against Marxist-Leninist notions alone, as the result is merely an inversion of those same assumptions.

A number of definitions of socialism exist that include variations of Marxist socialism, Keynesianism, Venezuelan socialism,<sup>32</sup> as well as Euro-social democracy. However, these definitions will not provide the basis for analysis here as they do not represent the type of society FRELIMO sought to build after independence. Applying the experience of Keynesian state welfare and Euro-socialist regimes is unsuitable to much of a world absent of such conditions. The difference between "socialism" (or social reforms) of Euro-American countries and Marxist socialism is that the former is an expression of the occasional compromise that occurs in an inherently contradictory system, between labour and capital,<sup>33</sup> rather than a change in the social or political structure of a society. Instead, socialism is defined in this context according to the Marxist definition and by the actual lived experience of socialist projects elsewhere. While this may appear to be wholly inapplicable to the historical, economic and social conditions of

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32. Michael A. Lebowitz, *The Contradictions of "Real Socialism": The Conductor and the Conducted* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2012).

33. Gary Teeple, *Globalization and the Decline of Social Reform – Into the Twenty-First Century* (Amherst, NY; Aurora, ON: Humanity Books, 2000), 19.

Mozambique, this disparity between the definition of socialism and the context in which it is applied in fact captures the essence of the failures of FRELIMO's efforts. Given that FRELIMO identified as a Marxist-Leninist party and that the program it implemented in Mozambique was based on Soviet, East German and Chinese models, it is appropriate to examine its work in light of the Marxist definition of socialism. Rather than being merely the stage after which a revolution occurs or a system predicated on extensive nationalization and socialization of industries and institutions, socialism is a phase that follows the overthrow of capitalism worldwide, and is a classless society that lays the basis for future communism. As numerous historical examples (particularly the Soviet Union) have demonstrated, there is no guarantee that following the end of capitalist rule socialism will necessarily ensue, particularly given the political and economic pressure exerted on such societies. Moreover, certain aspects of bourgeois law that formerly ruled would still be in place, particularly regarding production.<sup>34</sup> As noted by V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, "besides, the abolition of capitalism does not immediately create the economic prerequisites for such a change." Given that capitalism is an international system predicated on competing economic interests, socialism, which would seek satisfy human needs, would necessarily require the most advanced productive forces, which would not be limited by national boundaries.<sup>35</sup>

Conceptually, modernity is perceived as future-oriented, contrasting to tradition, which attempts to conserve the past. Modernity and its attendant cultures are captured by 'words like progress, advance, development, emancipation, liberation, growth, accumulation, enlightenment,

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34. V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1918; Lenin Internet Archive, 1993, 1999), ch. 5, section 3, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/ch05.htm#s.3>

35. Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1957).

embetterment, [and] avant-garde' ...”<sup>36</sup> The ability for a given country to effectively modernize itself is seen as the decisive, empowering factor in the construction of the post-colonial nation-state. Modernity is typically associated with high levels of industrialization (particularly within the agricultural sectors), political and administrative centralization, bourgeois-democratic political processes, widespread literacy and a basic level of education for the populace, rapid urbanization, effective taxation, and the predominance of a single *lingua franca*. Modernity’s globalizing impacts include the transformation of a given place from its local features towards “restructuring across time and space.”<sup>37</sup> The impact of this pattern of historical change is such that many erstwhile colonies have been modified and shaped (economically and culturally-speaking) by the influence of modernity so as to reflect the metropole in a fragmented and uneven sense. In the view of many anti-colonial nationalists, the main task of newly-emerging nations was to complete this historical unevenness and thus mirror the most powerful colonial nations in order to exist as an independent power on the world stage. The way by which prevailing notions of modernity shaped the nation-building efforts of independence-era African leaders has been central to understanding the successes and failures of such attempts to carry out successful modernization projects. The dual nature of Machel's (and by extension FRELIMO's) conceptualization of socialism as representing abundance as well as modernity is poignantly captured in the view that for them socialism meant:

Rest centres for workers; celebrations on holidays, a glass of beer, or wine, or orangeade and good cakes; toy productions for gifts to our children on their birthdays ; flower-growing for tribute to our wives, the mothers of those who will

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36. Göran Therborn, *European Modernity and Beyond: The Trajectory of European Societies, 1945-2000* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1995), 4 as quoted in Peter Kivisto, *Key Ideas in Sociology* (e-book), (SAGE Publications, Inc., 200), [http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/34960\\_5.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/34960_5.pdf), 132-133.

37. Barker, *Cultural Studies*, 184.

carry on the revolution; clean streets in our cities; making parks and gardens for the recreation and delights of adults and children.<sup>38</sup>

In other words, rather than being a scholarly or philosophical abstraction, for Samora Machel socialism was tangible and livable, it was all the luxuries and comforts and modern life. This sentiment has no doubt been shared by millions in the global South and East.

The thesis will evaluate the post-colonial socialist project in Mozambique and endeavor to offer an alternative view regarding why the program of socialism did not succeed, with reference to the existing analyses. The second chapter briefly examines the economic and historical conditions brought about by Portuguese colonialism, FRELIMO's successful anti-colonial struggle against it as well as the origins and shift of the organization. It also discusses the changes brought about by FRELIMO between 1977 and 1983. This chapter identifies what role the colonial conditions played, how the program of industrialization and socialization sought to address this inherited scarcity and why they did not ultimately work. The fourth chapter explores the relationship of Mozambique to other Marxist states such as the Soviet Union during this period (1975 to 1994, roughly when most of the Eastern Bloc states had collapsed), and what defined these relationships. The last section of this chapter provides a more in-depth analysis of the central assertion of this thesis regarding the limitations of creating single-state, self-sufficient socialism.

Since the crux of the analysis of this thesis is premised on a critique of prevailing assertions on the topic, the nature of the research is primarily a review of the existing literature, largely secondary written works. Analysis of these literary sources is complemented by incorporating primary source data so as to provide accounts of the effects and implementation of FRELIMO's policies and program that are less historically removed. Much of the secondary

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38. Samora Machel, *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary*, ed. Barry Munslow (London: Zed, 1985), 91.

historical literature on the topic was examined and critiqued and formed the basis of the central critique and not only includes the major works on the topic but also lesser known monographs and articles that may offer alternative insights into the reasons for the causes, outcomes and effects of Mozambican socialism. Additionally, several of the most prominent historians on the subject (Isaacman and Saul) were participants in FRELIMO's efforts for a number of years, their works were largely written from the point of view of promoting the interests of the party during the first fifteen years or so. Thus examination of a broad political range of monographs on the subject was useful, as well consideration of the changes in the analyses of some of the major writers on the topic.

The secondary works on the post-colonial (re)construction of Mozambique are heavily based on primary historical documents, including speeches by FRELIMO leaders (Samora Machel in particular) and others. I did, however, reexamine some of these sources in order to gauge the actual steps taken by FRELIMO in achieving its aims as many secondary sources examine them from a strictly political point of view.

Employing theoretical perspectives for the work is perhaps the more challenging aspect of it. Given its relevance to the topic, Marxist historical analysis seems to be the most useful framework for discussion of the topic. It is, however, necessary to reframe the classical Marxist analysis to the conditions of Mozambique which did not possess a mass, organized proletariat with a history of class struggle as elsewhere. Nevertheless, given that FRELIMO's goal was ultimately a type of socialism, it will be necessary to look at the history from a class and social perspective that includes an analysis of the gendered nature of the social reforms undertaken by FRELIMO as well as the role of ethnic divisions. This is why works by Trotsky have been

included in this project, as it permits the possibility of reconceptualizing FRELIMO's own Marxist-Leninist views.

## Chapter 2: Independence, Redirecting and Rebuilding Mozambique

### I. The Nature of Portuguese Colonialism

Periodization of modern Portuguese colonial rule is generally divided into the three eras that reflect Portugal's shifting orientation within the global economy. These periods include: the Scramble for Africa (1880s); the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic (beginning in the early 1900s), and the Estado Novo (1920s to 1975).<sup>39</sup> Mozambique's economic orientation and composition can also be divided into four periods that correspond to the shifts within the metropole: 1885-1926 (from the Scramble for Africa to the establishment of the Salazar regime; 1926-1945 (consolidation of Salazar government to the end of WWII); 1945-1960 (post-war reconstruction, during which coerced cash cropping became the cornerstone of Portuguese colonial rule); 1960-1974 (the beginning of the liberation struggles throughout the colonies to the end of military coup in Lisbon). Over the three periods (1885-1960), Mozambique transitioned from providing raw goods (agricultural and extractive) towards providing cheap manufactures for European markets.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, from 1961 to 1972 the number of industrial workers increased about 150% from 64,100 to 95,800.<sup>41</sup> However, rather than provide yet another summary of this history, the focus will be on the conditions that prevailed during the Estado Novo (under the rule of Salazar) as well as those under the Caetano regime, as these conditions formed the basis upon which FRELIMO sought to build its system of socialist rule.<sup>42</sup>

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39. Newitt, 317-445. Prior to this however, Portuguese presence in the region began during the early 16th century, mainly through trade and involvement in the political affairs along the east African coast.

40. Jens Erik Torp, *Industrial Planning and Development in Mozambique: Some Preliminary Considerations* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1979), 11-13.

41. Torp, *Industrial Planning and Development in Mozambique*, 13.

42. The overthrow of the Caetano regime in 1974 coincided with the independence of Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Angola.

Portuguese colonialism largely functioned on forced labour, namely cotton production that placed Mozambique in a powerless position vis-à-vis the world economy.<sup>43</sup> Portuguese colonies provided raw materials for Portugal while capital investments were centered on and served the interests of the metropole.<sup>44</sup> As noted by Saul, this exploitative relationship which has been the subject of dependency theory also reflects Cabral's view that colonialism appropriated (through the use of violence) the "national productive forces" of the subjugated society, in order to deliberately keep Mozambique (and its other colonies) in a state of underdevelopment.<sup>45</sup>

Portugal relinquished colonial power relatively late within the century because of its relationship to the world economy, its comparatively weaker position vis-à-vis imperialist powers in Western Europe and the United States, and its dependence on colonial raw materials. Portugal in fact functioned as a secondary colonial power in that it provided contracts for more powerful colonial nations and African goods for their markets.<sup>46</sup> If Portugal was to attempt to reconfigure its economic hegemony along the lines France did (as a neo-colonial power with far-reaching influence in its ex-colonies), it would need to assert political and economic control on a post-colonial government that would more likely be enmeshed in such relations with the United States, South Africa or (West) Germany. Portugal could only maintain that type of control through continuing the violence of the colonial apparatus of rule.<sup>47</sup> By the mid 1970s, Mozambique replaced by South Africa as Portugal's largest trading partner and investor.<sup>48</sup> The significance of the particular character of Portuguese colonial capitalism lies not only in the

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43. Saul, *The State and Revolution in East Africa*, 28-29.

44. *Ibid.*, 29.

45. *Ibid.*, 30-31.

46. *Ibid.*, 35.

47. *Ibid.*, 33.

48. Newitt, 537.



conditions created in Mozambique but also foreshadows future South African interests and motivations, particularly in regards to the funding and support given to RENAMO.

Like other colonies, the trade relationship between the periphery (Mozambique) and the metropole (Lisbon/Portugal) clearly favoured the metropole. It was inherently rooted in a system predicated in the continued maintenance of underdeveloped countries and that such historical-economic stagnation was in fact the source of oppression. Portuguese colonial capitalism was essentially bankrupt and debt-ridden; in Mozambique it accrued massive debt through the fact that it imported more than it exported and by 1970s, nearly two times as much.<sup>49</sup> During the 1970s, Mozambique's trade relationship to non-*escudo*<sup>50</sup> countries was such that it maintained a positive balance of payments. However, in relation to Portugal it sustained a debt that was due to the former's policy of attempting to supplant import goods by developing homegrown industries to produce such goods, but the inability to finance such endeavors impeded these attempts. As a result, the colonial state promoted local markets and restricted foreign goods in order decrease the imbalance in payments; however, Mozambique's debt to Portugal increased. Mittelman contends that the inability to ameliorate the economic situation reflects the "contradictions of a moribund colonial system," a system which – as it subjugated a handful of countries – also functioned in a subordinate and secondary (or perhaps even tertiary) manner to global economic powers. In other words, in order for Portugal to survive on the fringes of the global capitalist market, it stifled economic growth in Mozambique.<sup>51</sup>

Mozambique's economic relationship to South Africa during this period cannot be understated. Earnings from Rhodesia and South Africa were significant in reducing

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49. Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique: from colonialism to revolution*, 145.

50. The currency of colonial Portugal.

51. James H. Mittelman, *Underdevelopment and the Transition to Socialism: Mozambique and Tanzania* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 53-55.

Mozambique's deficit. Its relationship to South Africa was such that by “the 1970s Mozambique derived 42% of its gross domestic product and between 50 and 60% of foreign-exchange earnings from the rand zone.” This provides us with a picture of the type of economic situation newly-independent Mozambique inherited from Portuguese rule, which was essentially “a service economy” that provided migrant labour to South Africa.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of Portuguese colonial rule in Africa, a handful of regional and global powers had investments in Mozambique: Portugal, South Africa, Britain and the U.S.<sup>53</sup> Challenges to the colonial regime in Mozambique intensified during the 1960s particularly as the Salazar regime faced growing opposition from elites within Portugal itself and from white settlers in the colonies.<sup>54</sup> With these insurrections came the colonial secret police, PIDE, in 1956.<sup>55</sup> The Portuguese also established a much more visible paramilitary force in Mozambique which included troops and military bases as well as naval forces.<sup>56</sup> However, even with such conditions, at the time of independence in 1975, Mozambique was amongst 8 key contributors to Africa’s overall industrial output.<sup>57</sup>

The colonial regime in Mozambique orchestrated a systematic campaign of intimidation, resettlement, torture and state-terror against the indigenous populations. Much of their aim was towards the countryside, where, if FRELIMO was determined to be present, they would be subject to relocation and reorganization into villages (or *aldeamentos*). The *aldeamentos* could be much more easily controlled and shielded from anti-colonial forces. There is historical evidence to suggest that failure to comply with the colonial orders to relocate (leaving all

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52. Mittelman, *Underdevelopment and the transition to socialism*, 55.

53. Mittelman, 48.

54. Newitt, 520.

55. Ibid., 57, 59, 519.

56. Ibid., 519.

57. Torp, 7.

possessions in the previous areas of residence) resulted in suspicion of anti-state activities and thus death. This mass resettlement meant relocating to areas with extremely poor living conditions as well as hunger and disease. According to a UN report, these villages were described by some observers as “death camps.”<sup>58</sup>

Beyond forced labour (and the violence that accompanied the failure to do so),<sup>59</sup> Mozambicans in rural areas were virtually at the mercy of the colonial army and those suspected of collaborating or being part of FRELIMO were subject to a wide range of torture and execution. Suspicion was of course used as a pretext to commit sadistic acts of violence against the civilian population, including against women and children. Countless and systematic policies of torture, mass murder, and cultural genocide against the Mozambican population were documented and not only were Portuguese colonial troops committing such acts, but Rhodesian forces participated as well.<sup>60</sup> The Portuguese colonial system dug its own grave in the sense that “...the revelation of the increasingly sadistic, infamous and habitual crimes of the colonial soldiery tore away any pretensions as to the uniquely benevolent or virtuous character of Portuguese colonialism.”<sup>61</sup>

The end of physical abuse, humiliation and exploitation meant the end of colonial rule and instead meant that Africans could now assume positions running and administering their country - formerly a preserve for white Portuguese.<sup>62</sup> Portuguese colonialism attempted to

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58. United Nations, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Reported Massacres in Mozambique," *General Assembly-Official Records: Twenty-Ninth Session Supplement*, No. 21 (A/9621), (New York: United Nations, 1974), 15.

59. A Mozambican woman living in Gaza recalls being beaten by the Portuguese colonial administrators if she did not cultivate their cotton properly [as documented in Nelisse, Ziraida, Felesmina, "Interview with Nelisse, Ziraida, and Felesmina," interviewer Elizabeth Lunstrom, (ALUKA), 2004].  
<http://www.aluka.org.libproxy.uwinnipeg.ca/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF.DOCUMENT.LUNSTRP1B10004>.

60. UN, "On the Reported Massacres in Mozambique," 27.

61. Samora Machel, *An African Revolutionary*, 34.

62. Mittelman, 21.

suppress and change the various cultures in Mozambique and did not promote the development of a colonized elite.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, not only did FRELIMO achieve independence for Mozambique, its politics also had far-reaching (and thus reciprocal) consequences on Portugal itself in terms of the 1974 *coup d'état* which overthrew the Caetano regime of Lisbon.<sup>64</sup>

In 1974, there were 9 million Mozambicans, and 1,150,000 of these were wage-earning Africans and whites, which was approximately 13% of the population. The population of African workers consisted of: 25% transport, construction and industrial workers; 20% migrant workers; 30% seasonal hotel employees or service workers; and 30% contractual agricultural workers. The remaining 10% were white wage workers.<sup>65</sup> This gives us a glimpse into the economic composition of the country on which FRELIMO's program of modernizing socialism was premised.

Approximately a quarter of a million Portuguese lived in Mozambique shortly before Independence and most of these departed during the transitional period, taking with them nearly all of the trained personnel involved in the colonial, civil and economic management of Mozambique.<sup>66</sup> The Portuguese colonial population declined from 250,000 in 1974 to 20,000 in 1977.<sup>67</sup> The mass exodus meant the loss of the country's mere half-dozen economists. The departure of the Portuguese colonists was accompanied by countless acts of sabotage and destruction of property, resources, technology and various forms of capital that was not taken with the settlers. According to Isaacman and Isaacman, these deliberate acts reflected a lack of trust in the new, socialist-oriented government as well as resentment towards the loss of power

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63. Kenneth Hermele, *Land struggles & social differentiation in southern Mozambique: a case study of Chokwe, Limpopo 1950-1987*, (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1988), 24.

64. Saul, *The State and Revolution in East Africa*, 59.

65. Jens Erik Torp L.M. Denny and Donald I. Ray, *Mozambique. Sao Tome and Principe*. New York; London: Pinter Publishers, 1989, 80.

66. Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism*, 49.

67. Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 145.

and position which invariably follows independence.<sup>68</sup> The changes were also reflected in the loss of non-elite Portuguese, thousands of whom worked on Mozambique's railroads and in its ports.<sup>69</sup> No longer able to perpetuate its role as a brutal and parasitic oppressor of non-white peoples, fledgling Portuguese colonialism was adamant on bulldozing whatever chances Mozambicans had to reconstruct their country.

Rather than being a pre-existing formation, the development of the African peasantry resulted from a confluence of conditions set by a system of global capital (whereby the continent had been molded into a dependency). According to Ken Post (by way of Saul) the creation of African peasant classes (or strata) reflects the notion of the law of combined and uneven development, conceived of and expounded by Trotsky.<sup>70</sup> The system of colonial capitalism pushes peasants into two central classes: farmers who eventually profit from their agriculture (capitalists) and those peasants who eventually become agricultural wage-labourers.”<sup>71</sup> However, due to the nature of Portuguese colonialism, the emergence of an independent peasant class that could actually make a profile from agricultural production was prevented. Thus Mozambican peasants were prevented from accumulating profit (and perhaps capital) through a combination of legal and market measures, as well as through restriction of the land they were permitted to cultivate.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the distinction between the so-called traditional chiefs and the would-be capitalists has not always been clear or fully addressed within the literature. Nkavandame, a former member of FRELIMO (and later detractor), often portrayed as representing “traditional”

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68. Ibid., 145.

69. Ibid.

70. Saul, *The State and Revolution in East Africa*, 303.

71. Ibid., 305. This process mirrors the overall pattern of class formation prevalent in industrial societies described by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*. Whereas numerous social strata prevailed under the feudal mode of production, as capitalism proliferated society increasingly formed two classes defined by their relationship to the means of production.

72. Hermele, *Land Struggles*, 16-17.

Makonde chiefs, was not in fact a traditional chief as he has been portrayed.<sup>73</sup> He represented the nascent Mozambican “rural capitalists” or the newly-developed market forces, which Derluigan argues that stood in opposition to “...Makonde traditions of lineage land tenure and circulation of goods.”<sup>74</sup>

## II. FRELIMO's Struggle against Colonial Rule

Despite efforts by colonial state forces to insulate Mozambique from anti-colonial forces elsewhere in the continent, Mozambicans continued to receive information and influence from other African struggles, and to develop nationalist organizations, particularly as many of them had relatives working abroad especially in South Africa.<sup>75</sup> FRELIMO was formed through three expatriate organizations: Udenamo (*União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique*, or National Democratic Union of Mozambique), Manu (Mozambique African National Union) and Unami (*União Africana de Moçambique Independente* or National African Union of Independent Mozambique ), and began largely under the direction of Eduardo Mondlane, who took up residence in the United States prior to independence. UDENAMO was modeled heavily on the Rhodesian anti-colonial movement of Joshua Nkomo (National Democratic Party).<sup>76</sup> Manu, which drew largely from the Makonde population of Mozambique—was also formed in exile in Mombasa, Kenya and was based on the Kenya African National Union (KANU).<sup>77</sup> Like Udenamo and Manu, Unami was also formed by Mozambican ex-patriots living abroad in Malawi, particularly those from Mozambique’s Tete Province. Following Tanganyika’s (the

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73. Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique – A Study of Quelimane District*, (London; Ibadan, Nigeria; Nairobi, Kenya” Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1980), 396.

74. Georgi Deluguian, “Social Origins of Good and Bad Governance: Re-interpreting the 1968 Schism in Frelimo,” in *Sure Road? Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique* ed. Eric Morier-Genoud (Leiden, England: Brill, 2012), 97-98.

75. Newitt, 521.

76. Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: the Revolution and Its Origins* (Longman: London, New York, Lagos, 1983), 79.

77. Munslow, *Mozambique*, 80.

colonial name for Tanzania) independence in 1961, Udenamo, Manu and Unami moved their headquarters to Tanzania and received support from Julius Nyerere.<sup>78</sup> At the time of its *formation* in 1962, little separated FRELIMO's constitution from UDENAMO's. The latter's was in fact politically further to the left in its militancy than FRELIMO while the FRELIMO constitution attempted to appeal broadly to all nationalists against Portuguese colonialism.<sup>79</sup>

FRELIMO began as an organization premised on political goal of national liberation, on a united front of various social forces united in this common goal: ending Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique.<sup>80</sup> Like other armed liberation movements on the continent, FRELIMO's decision to take up arms against the Portuguese was due to the stifling political conditions and in particular the colonial state's ban on all African nationalist parties, rather than due to ideological necessity.<sup>81</sup> Pointing to FRELIMO's place within a global network of Marxist-inspired guerilla warfare, Derluguian notes (in reference to the coalescence of FRELIMO and other African anti-colonial movements) that "the decision to launch the guerilla campaigns back in the home countries logically flowed from the recent guerilla successes in Indonesia, Vietnam, Algeria and, above all, Cuba."<sup>82</sup> However, during the late 1960s, as Cuban revolutionary Ché Guevara met with African revolutionary East and West, discussing tactics of anti-colonial guerilla warfare, FRELIMO rejected the possibility of receiving Cuban guidance in Tanzania. FRELIMO was adamant that continuing use of its tactic of gradual, long-term political work would be more

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78. Ibid., 80.

79. Edward A. Alpers, "The Struggle For Socialism in Mozambique," in *Socialism in sub-Saharan Africa-A New Assessment*, eds. Carl G. Rosberg & Thomas M. Callaghy (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1979), 270-271.

80. Hermele, 22.

81. David Wield, "Mozambique -- Late Colonialism and Early Problems of Transition" In *Revolutionary Socialist Development in the Third World* eds. Gordon White, Robin Murray, and Christine White (The Harvester Press Publishing Group, 1983), 81.

82. Georgi Derluguian, "Social Origins of Good and Bad Governance: Re-interpreting the 1968 Schism in Frelimo," in *Sure Road? Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique* ed. Eric Morier-Genoud (Leiden, England: Brill, 2012), 89.

effective than Guevara's program of targeted actions (which he argued would spark peasant revolt). FRELIMO preferred to rely on the theories the organization developed (not to mention its own lived experience of struggle in Mozambique) rather than on the tactic directives from Guevara, which it viewed as alien and inapplicable to Mozambique.<sup>83</sup>

From 1964, the year of FRELIMO's founding to 1968, its membership increased by 2800%, and most of these forces were found in northern Mozambique (Tete, Niassa and Cabo Delgado), as well as in Tanzania.<sup>84</sup> In the liberated zones, FRELIMO was faced with the question of what socio-political form the new institutions of rule ought to take, specifically in relation to the rural chiefs.<sup>85</sup>

As a party, FRELIMO was not dominated by the Marxist leanings of individual members from the beginning. In fact, its crystallization into a specifically Marxist-Leninist organization in 1977 was preceded by years of internal struggle, particularly from the late 1960s onward. Prior to independence, FRELIMO's leaders argued in favour of a populist anti-capitalist anti-colonialism.<sup>86</sup>

After the death of Eduardo Mondlane in 1969, some party leaders who had used their positions to acquire privilege or were revealed to be involved in corruption were expelled. New forms of social production, for instance, were used by some leaders such Nkavandame for personal gain.<sup>87</sup>

A key aspect of FRELIMO's success was its ability to empower the peasantry and win its support through reorganization of the parts of the countryside from which Portuguese colonial

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83. Mittelman, 38.

84. Wield, "Mozambique -- Late Colonialism," 82.

85. Ibid., 82.

86. Interviews in Depth: Mozambique, FRELIMO – Marcelino Dos Santos, (Richmond, BC, Canada, LSM Press 1971), 3.

87. Wield, 83.



forces had been expelled. This involved ending the centuries-old process of coerced colonial production and replacing it with self-managed labor that would reap the benefits of its own labor. Alongside social reconfiguration, FRELIMO executed acts of anti-colonial resistance and sabotage, such as disrupting communication between colonial Rhodesia through the Beira Corridor to Mozambique. FRELIMO's increasingly successful hearts-and-minds campaign had a deeply discouraging effect on the colonial soldiery Portugal had dispatched, and it ultimately contributed to the 1974 military coup in Lisbon, which toppled the Caetano regime.<sup>88</sup>

Internally, FRELIMO was divided into two tendencies: one, led by Uria Simango which favored the perpetuation of the colonial system, but under indigenous Mozambican rule: and one which envisioned a Mozambique free of all exploitation.<sup>89</sup> Despite such class-based and social differences within the leadership, FRELIMO was able to affect change and create liberated zones not through excluding the *régulos* but by winning them over as part of their broad strategy of creating a common political front against Portuguese colonialism.<sup>90</sup> In the northern province of Cabo Delgado, during the 1950s, peasants involved in cotton production developed their own cooperatives against the control normally asserted by colonial rule and these cooperatives were trans class in nature. Peasants who led the cooperatives (and who were wealthier) ended up joining FRELIMO once they came into direct conflict with the colonial state. As Hermele poignantly notes, “obviously, their objectives are partly the opposite of those that motivated Mondlane and the majority of his co-founders of FRELIMO. But they nevertheless represented a tendency which had a material basis inside Mozambique and which was important.”<sup>91</sup> Although in Samora Machel's speeches, he highlights examples of workers revolution and makes an

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88. Ibid., 84.

89. Interviews in Depth– Marcelino Dos Santos, 1.

90. Hermele, 24-25.

91. Hermele, 23.

argument derived from a class analysis (oppressor vs. oppressed), he does not draw such a distinction in terms of class in its program for social liberation in Mozambique and refers to the revolution in populist terms. This seems to betray FRELIMO's recognition that much of the country's population remained agricultural.<sup>92</sup>

FRELIMO did not however, come to power without any opposition in Mozambique. Four months after the 1974 coup in Lisbon, the colonial ruling class in Mozambique as well as the African middle class attempted to form groups to counter FRELIMO's projected victory.<sup>93</sup> However, FRELIMO's detractors and opponents (both European and African) were faced with its popular and thus overwhelming support.<sup>94</sup>

For Samora Machel, theoretical uses of Marxism ought to be shaped by the particular circumstances of the context in which they are being applied. Thus, he was particularly critical of those who sought merely to adapt the theories of other countries, organizations or individuals. At the same time however, "this reformulation of Marxism-Leninism must not degenerate into an ideology of 'African socialism': It is necessary for us to be always on guard against the chauvinistic deviations of 'specific socialism.' We reject the idea that there can be an 'African socialism' or a 'Mozambican socialism.' We consciously affirm that there can be no socialism other than scientific socialisms."<sup>95</sup> Machel's assertion in this regard underscores not only the philosophical origins of its dual program of national and social liberation in Mozambique, but also its political acceptance of Marxist socialism – of a singular and historically defined notion of socialism. Machel (and at least FRELIMO under his direction) sought to shape Mozambique

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92. Machel, *An African Revolutionary*, 4.

93. Wield, 85.

94. Ibid., 85.

95. Marina Ottaway, "Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism in Mozambique and Ethiopia" in *Communism in Africa* ed. by David E. Albright (Indiana University Press, 1980), 125. [Original citation from book (Extracts from the Report of the Standing Political Committee to the Fourth Session of the Central Committee of FRELIMO, presented by President Samora Machel, in Mozambique Information Agency, *Dossier, 4th Session of the Central Committee of FRELIMO elected by the Third Congress* (Maputo, Aug. 7 - 16, 1978), p. 6.)].

according to a predetermined notion of socialist modernity, in clear distinction from Julius Nyerere who in contrast identified in pre-colonial Zanaki social organization a socialist future for Tanzanians.<sup>96</sup>

FRELIMO's struggle against the colonial rulers depended heavily on supplies brought from outside of Mozambique, and in particular from Tanzania. The ability to transport these supplies also depended on people sympathetic to the organization as well as a certain degree of sacrifice and hardship involved in carrying and traveling long distances through dangerous regions.<sup>97</sup> The liberated zones were within the three northernmost provinces: Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Northern Tete.<sup>98</sup>

Following independence, FRELIMO attempted to supplant traditional rural authorities by encouraging literacy campaigns, women's political empowerment and by creating communal farms on which peasants were to work to build post-independence Mozambican socialism.<sup>99</sup> However, FRELIMO's efforts to create a modern Mozambique were seriously limited by the exodus that followed independence. Much of the country's administrative and technical resources disappeared with the Portuguese colonial powers. This was compounded by the loss of capital investment and skilled workers, and led to economic recession. Additionally, remittances from Mozambican labourers in South Africa were significantly less.<sup>100</sup> These conditions, combined with peasant opposition to communal farms (and thus return to their ancestral homes and farms), led to significant economic decline for Mozambique.<sup>101</sup> Disputes also arose over the

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96. Viktoria Stöger-Eising, "Ujamma Revisited: Indigenous and European Influences in Nyerere's Social and Political Thought," *Africa* 70(1): 130-131.

97. Isaacmen, *Mozambique*, 84.

98. FRELIMO, *Aspects of the Mozambican Struggle*, 8.

99. Newitt, 546-549.

100. *Ibid.*, 551.

101. *Ibid.*, 549.

repossession of erstwhile colonial lands, which many peasants had attempted to regain, whereas the government wished to use the lands for state farming projects.<sup>102</sup>

In his analysis of Mozambican and Tanzanian socialism, James Mittelman argues that "the captures of state power launched the period of socialist transition in Mozambique, but the nationalization of financial institutions did not direct Tanzania along that path."<sup>103</sup>

### III. Implementing Socialism: Economic and Social Changes under FRELIMO

*Some of you ask: 'what is socialism in Mozambique?' Socialism in Mozambique means happiness for us.<sup>104</sup>*

The unique feature of FRELIMO was its Marxist-Leninist orientation, in contrast to numerous other anti-colonial movements in the continent that were thoroughly nationalist in character and sought to establish an indigenous, African bourgeoisie that would not only supplant the previous colonial authorities, but would also continue with neo-colonial relations of economic exploitation in much the same manner that the colonists did. In the case of Mozambique, this meant that the traditional chiefs and nascent elite would have merely supplanted the colonial rulers. Notably, following Independence, under the FRELIMO government, privately owned companies were allowed to continue functioning, but under the control of the state.<sup>105</sup> This is a key point and one that necessitates further examination in terms of its impact on FRELIMO's ability to lay the basis for its reforms. The continued presence of private property within the country stands in contradistinction to FRELIMO's goal of achieving socialism.

From 1977 to 1983, FRELIMO's guiding policy towards the country's agriculture was that of socialisation which involved collectivization and the creation of communal farms. This

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102. Ibid., 553.

103. Mittelman, 7.

104. Samora Machel, *An African Revolutionary: Selected Speeches and Writings*, 90.

105. Torp, *Industrial Changes*, 25-27.

involved the concentration of farm lands to augment production and the creation of common living quarters for peasant families, respectively.<sup>106</sup> FRELIMO attempted to modernize (and thus begin the process of socialism) through the creation of “rural wage laborers or, much less frequently, cooperative members,” formerly peasants.<sup>107</sup>

Independence for Mozambicans meant the end of “forced labour, physical punishment and insults from Portuguese administrators,” and instead meant that Africans could assume positions running and administering their country which they were previously prevented from holding.<sup>108</sup> This was best demonstrated in the reorganization of institutions along egalitarian political lines, such as the public health centers, like the capital city Maputo's main general hospital.<sup>109</sup> Hanlon notes that shortly after independence, workers’ councils were developed to run the hospital along lines that reflected the staff and workers of the hospital in the form of workers committee.<sup>110</sup>

The first successful post-independence measures taken by the government involved the expansion of health care to all areas as well as the reduction of illiteracy and the increase in school enrollment, including vaccination and post-natal care as well as the reduction in the cost of pharmaceutical drugs and their accessibility for rural residents.<sup>111</sup>

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106. Merle L. Bowen, "Beyond Reform: Adjustment and Political Power in Contemporary Mozambique," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30 (1992): 260, accessed January 4, 2014, doi: 10.1017/S0022278X00010715.

107. Dinerman, 65.

108. William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: an Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press; London: Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1994), 21.

109. Carol Barker, “Bringing Health Care to the People,” in *A Difficult Road—the Transition to Socialism in Mozambique*, ed. John S. Saul (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 325.

110. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: the Revolution Under Fire*, (London: Zed Books, 1984), 68.

111. Minter, 22-23.

Nationalization, Production Councils and the *Grupos Dinamizadores*<sup>112</sup>

Under FRELIMO, Mozambique developed a political apparatus to develop the economy towards socialism. This apparatus is captured by two main features of the newly-independent country: the “Economic and Social Directives” and the Production Councils.<sup>113</sup> It is crucial, however, to view the implementation of such directives in the context of economic scarcity resulting from the mass exodus of colonial capital and personnel. The mass exodus of a quarter million settlers—which began in 1971—had far-reaching and pronounced effects on the economy and infrastructure of the country. It seems that the settlers literally dropped whatever they were doing and left: “in the cities construction almost came to a complete halt, leaving unfinished high-rise blocks; owners of small and medium industrial enterprises – from brick-producers to garage repairers – left the country; larger industries kept going with a steadily decreasing number of managerial and skilled workers; as settlers left, the market for locally-produced consumer goods, particularly luxury goods, severely diminished; and most domestic servants lost their jobs as settlers left.”<sup>114</sup> To compound the situation, retreating Portuguese soldiers and the white settlers who were leaving in droves, destroyed infrastructure. The government under FRELIMO responded by persuading some to remain within the country<sup>115</sup> but there were few incentives to persuade them to do so.

The Production Councils were officially launched in December 1976 after a two-month trial period. They worked in conjunction with the Administrative Structures and the Dynamizing Groups (20) and were responsible for mediating the process of production, work termination,

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112. Dynamizing groups.

113. Torp, 19-20.

114. Wield, 86.

115. Torp, 17.

benefits and wages as well as the workplace social programs such as childcare.<sup>116</sup> In other words, the councils served to reorganize the social and economic life of the factories in the direction of the aims laid down by the government. In 1980, these Production Councils were extended to state farms, which struggled with numerous problems involving production and worker participation.<sup>117</sup>

It is worth noting that these Councils functioned as State Owned Enterprises, Enterprises managed by Administrative Commissions or Privately Owned Companies.<sup>118</sup> Although the main purpose of industry in colonial economies is to provide for markets in the metropole, by the early 1970s some 63% of industrial output went towards Mozambique's internal market, which, combined with its comparatively large industrial working class could potentially provide a basis for the development of socialism in Mozambique.<sup>119</sup>

Torp notes that while the FRELIMO had gotten rid of most of the "material basis" for Portuguese colonialism (namely the privately owned land), the industries continued to be owned by capitalists (presumably foreign ones). This stood in contradiction to worker control of the means of production within the industries, which had yet to be resolved by the government at the time.<sup>120</sup> The question of who the owners of capital are arises, as well as how can Mozambique begin to lay the basis for socialism short of expropriating these owners and thus place production in the hands of the producers? A cursory examination of the economic shifts in Mozambican industry appeared to indicate "growth without development" where the "agro-industries geared towards export, the consumption goods industries and the intermediate goods industries represent an important industrial infrastructure and important linkages between agriculture and industry,

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116. Ibid., 25.

117. Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 152.

118. Torp, *Industrial Changes*, 25.

119. Ibid., 7-8.

120. Ibid., 8.

which by now can be utilized to produce commodities needed by the Mozambican population.”<sup>121</sup>

Notably, the government nationalized those aspects of industrial production under improper care of foreign capital as well as those of importance to the nation.<sup>122</sup> This indicates the continued existence of relations of production that are not socialist-directed.

FRELIMO’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress in February 1977 produced the National Planning Commission whose job was to direct the “Economic and Social Directives.” In this plan, the first few years following independence would be directed towards the development of popular democracy (or *poder popular*)<sup>123</sup> which would form the substrate of socialism, to come later. The plan specifically designates a set of goals to meet production for subsistence, export and agriculture.<sup>124</sup> Beyond the status apparatus, within the working class itself, the Production Councils play a role in preparing workers to eventually take hold of the means of production.<sup>125</sup> This is indicative of the role of the industrial working class in Mozambique which is clearly not ready to assume a leading one.

The Dynamizing Groups can be viewed as an extension of the vanguard of the working class in the workplace (and elsewhere), observing and assessing what takes place there in relation to the class interests of the working class and peasantry. In protecting and extending the interests of workers in the workplace, the DG also further developed their own class consciousness. The main role of the DGs was to act as a political arm of FRELIMO and in the interest of the working class at the point of production. The DGs fulfilled a number of functions,

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121. Ibid., 16.

122. Ibid., 17.

123. Bertil Egero, “People’s Power: the Case of Mozambique” in *Africa—Problems in the Transition to Socialism* ed. Barry Munslow (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., USA: Zed Books, 1986), 116.

124. Ibid., 18-19.

125. Ibid., 19.



including ensuring that workplace management functioned in accordance with the political line set out by FRELIMO, particularly in regards to wages and profits as well as political orientation and improving the worker political consciousness.<sup>126</sup>

Saul describes the role of the *grupos dinamizadores* as “committees established in every sector of the society—in school and workplace, in urban neighborhood and rural village—which, from my observation, are now providing Mozambicans with impressive new opportunities for self-government and political education” which in other words meant that the *gds* functioned as organs of *poder popular*, or grassroots power in all areas of social and productive life.<sup>127</sup> The *gds* also functioned to protect FRELIMO’s collectivization and communalization of agricultural work from the “bureaucratization and coercion all too characteristic of neighboring Tanzania’s related attempts at *ujamaa*-villagization.”<sup>128</sup> The goals of the Dynamizing Groups were to facilitate bottom-up decision-making rather than to reinforce FRELIMO by administering orders from above, and sought to turn the people into active agents of change rather than recipients of party directives.<sup>129</sup> FRELIMO was not to pick the members of the Dynamizing Groups; they would be picked from non-party civilians.<sup>130</sup> However, the extent to which both *gps* and the Production Councils actually represented worker interests requires closer analysis. There is historical evidence to suggest that following the implementation of directives from the FRELIMO government to increase production in 1976, for domestic purposes, some workers felt that the profits produced under the regime ought to be divided among the workers, which Machel opposed and referred to as “ideological diarrhea.” In Mozambique’s metal manufacturing plant

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126. Torp, 20.

127. Saul, *State and Revolution in East Africa*, 85.

128. *Ibid.*, 86.

129. Ottaway, 128.

130. Ottaway, 128.

(CIFEL), the workers lamented that they were neglected from the decision-making process, which they felt was solely in the hands of the government.<sup>131</sup>

### Agricultural Production

Under FRELIMO's socialist directives, Mozambique's agricultural sector (comprising of the majority of the population) would be collectivized in a span of ten years.<sup>132</sup> However, from the mid-1970s onwards Mozambique was beset by natural disasters including drought and flood, the latter of which affected the ability to produce food, particularly in the southern region. This led to an increase in the amount spent on importing food.<sup>133</sup> Two existing social units would be transformed, according to FRELIMO's plan of socialism: the villages and the plantations. Villages across the countryside would be transformed (which would include cooperatives whereby the agricultural output of the village would be served), while state farms would also be built. Communal villages would be created by politically persuading the inhabitants from traditional villages to join them.<sup>134</sup> The *régulos* (rural chiefs) were supplanted in favour of *grupos dinamizadores*.<sup>135</sup>

Isaacman and Isaacman note that state farms in particular were to become sites of improved productive methods that would in turn improve Mozambique economically. Accordingly, production would be increased by expanding agricultural land by improving the technological level of agricultural techniques in use.<sup>136</sup>

Part of FRELIMO's plan of communal production included the relocation of dispersed peasants into communal villages (*aldeias comunais*), however, the nature of this social endeavor

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131. Tony Hodges, "Mozambique: Machel Wants Production not Ideology," *African Development* 1236 (1976), Mozambican History Net, [http://www.mozambiquehistory.net/economy/conditions/19761200\\_machel\\_wants\\_production.pdf](http://www.mozambiquehistory.net/economy/conditions/19761200_machel_wants_production.pdf).

132. Dinerman, 51.

133. Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 146.

134. Ibid., 148, 152.

135. Dinerman, 50.

136. Ibid., 148, 149.

is indicative of the limitations of FRELIMO's program in the Mozambican countryside. According to Mozambicans interviewed some decades later, FRELIMO encouraged Mozambicans living in *aldeias* to relocate to *aldeias comunais* in order to live in closer proximity with other families and to avoid the flooding that occurred closer to their previous homes, as the new communal village was located on higher ground. After having been relocated to the communal villages, people also worked on the *machambas do povo* (or people's farm) where they grew peanuts.<sup>137</sup> However, there is evidence to suggest that FRELIMO's program of communal living in this region of Gaza was a requirement rather than an option.<sup>138</sup>

While production levels increased over a four-year period (from 1977 to 1981), it was not enough to reduce the amount of imported food (and thus the country incurred economic debt). This was due to the fact that rather than improve the output per hectare, production expanded to include greater land.<sup>139</sup> Underscoring the lack of trained technicians and personnel that faced Mozambique at independence, machinery that was imported to increase productivity on state farms did not necessarily become the means to such an end; it could be inapplicable to a given crop or the type of soil, or there was a lack of experience using it. Isaacman notes that due to the fact that agricultural cultivation was seasonal (occurring only a few months a year) much of the equipment went unused. This is demonstrated by the fact that over a two-year period in the early 1980s, fully 65% of the tractors available to CAIL (*Complexo Agro-Industrial de Limpopo*) were not used.<sup>140</sup> There were also associated problems of labor usage, particularly how to use thousands of seasonal workers who depended on the irregular cultivation of crops.<sup>141</sup> The

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137. Tandy, Sonta and Alina, "Interview with Tandy, Sonta and Alina," interview by Elizabeth Lunstrum, Lunstrum Interviews (Mozambique).

138. Nelisse, Ziraida, Felesmina, "Interview with Nelisse, Ziraida, and Felesmina," interviewer Elizabeth Lunstrum. ALUKA. 2004. <http://www.aluka.org>.

139. Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 149-150.

140. Ibid., 150-151.

141. Ibid., 151.

government responded to the increasingly difficulties associated with large farms (composed of smaller ones) by breaking them up and by requiring that they produce more than one crop. This was a step towards resolving the triple dilemmas of food shortage, unused capital (machinery) and idle labor.<sup>142</sup> In an ideological sense, communal villages would help develop and augment the consciousness of the rural population. This was attempted in a condition of incredible economic and material scarcity.<sup>143</sup>

One of FRELIMO's most noted (and perhaps most documented) achievements was its creation of primary health care. Prior to independence the vast majority of health services were concentrated in Maputo (formerly Lourenço Marques), and many physicians left Mozambique around the time of independence, much like other colonial professionals who primarily served the settlers and the administrative apparatus.<sup>144</sup> Liberated zones, did however, contain medical clinics which were originally created to treat anti-colonial forces, but were later expanded to treat members of the broader community.<sup>145</sup>

Although it faced shortages in trained medical personnel, funding and basic structures of health care (such as clinics and hospitals), FRELIMO made numerous leaps in medical care for Mozambicans. Its primary achievement was the provision of preventive medical care, as it was unable to provide widespread curative care in the face of scarcity. Preventive care involved vaccination campaigns primarily against smallpox as well as mass education<sup>146</sup> in order to prevent the development and proliferation of illnesses that plagued the population.<sup>147</sup> A significant development was the political regulation of unnecessary and harmful drugs that were

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142. Ibid., 152.

143. Ibid., 153.

144. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: the Revolution Under Fire*, (London: Zed Books, 1984), 55-56.

145. FRELIMO, *Aspects of the Mozambican Struggle*, (Richmond, B.C.: LSM, 1971), 7.

146. Which in some instance relied on the sense of social responsibility and voluntarism of some of the health workers instead of pay, as explained on *op. cit.* page 63.

147. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, 55-60.

previously allowed under the colonial government. This regulatory policy not only reduced the price of drugs but also limited allowable drugs to the most necessary ones.<sup>148</sup> In other words, pharmaceuticals in Mozambique served genuine medical purposes that were in the interests of the people rather than market purposes.

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148. *Ibid.*, 62.

### Chapter III: Civil War, Retreat and Privatization

#### I. The Origins and Development of the MNR/RENAMO

Mozambique's relationship with South Africa had numerous dimensions, but was largely driven by economic interests and strategic political considerations. South Africa's policies towards its neighbors, particularly Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola and Namibia were defined against the backdrop of Cold War politics. South Africa viewed itself as part of a global struggle of West vs. East or of the capitalist states against socialist ideologies. The governments of South Africa worked with white colonial forces in Rhodesia and Mozambique to crush black anti-colonial resistance but when the Smith regime and Caetano colonial government fell (in 1980 and 1974 respectively) it pursued a policy of destabilization north of its borders against postcolonial regimes perceived as pro-communist.<sup>149</sup> However, the anti-communist discourse espoused by the South African government was but a mere pretext for the fact that it opposed any states (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana) and organizations that were assisting anti-Apartheid fighters within South Africa.

Mozambique's economic and regional importance to South Africa can be seen in terms of its economic, strategic and political relationship with latter. South Africa not only maintained investments in the country (the Cabora Bassa dam, to name but one), but also depended on Mozambican labour for its mining industry. The political threat posed by the fact that a largely black population rose up to overthrow European colonists no doubt contributed to South Africa's lasting political interest in Mozambique. South Africa's rulers feared that the fervor of independence emanating from Maputo would resonate with its country's masses nearby.<sup>150</sup>

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149. John Daniel, "The Impact of the Cold War and the Fall of the Berlin Wall on Southern Africa," in *Panorama: Insights into Asian and European Affairs*, 1:2009, 137-140. [http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_18025-544-2-30.pdf](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_18025-544-2-30.pdf).

150. John S. Saul, *The State and Revolution in East Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, c1979), 63.

The MNR, or as it was later called RENAMO, was the product of Rhodesian state security forces as well ex-PIDE members, and was formed in 1974 on the eve of Mozambican independence.<sup>151</sup> The Rhodesian colonial government was motivated to cultivate opposition to FRELIMO because of the latter's support to ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army). Some of the Mozambicans who joined RENAMO were originally recruited by the Portuguese colonial forces against FRELIMO.<sup>152</sup> By the late 1970s, as the MNR (Mozambican National Resistance) spread into the rural areas of eastern Mozambique, it destroyed communal villages FRELIMO had set up which forced some peasants to return to their pre-communal village homes.<sup>153</sup> However with Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the MNR was nearly driven out of Mozambique but was later taken under South Africa's wing.<sup>154</sup>

After independence, Mozambique maintained a cooperative relationship with S. Africa, culminating in a secret 1979 agreement. The MNR was nearly driven out of Mozambique in 1980 with Zimbabwe's independence but was later taken under South Africa's wing.<sup>155</sup>

According to Kühne, this relationship was damaged by the South African government's view that Mozambique was aiding (deliberately or otherwise) the ANC and its training and support of RENAMO.<sup>156</sup> As far as political motivations go, Chingono argues that what motivated Rhodesia and later South Africa to seek to destroy the Mozambican economy (through developing and supporting the MNR/RENAMO, is that these settler regimes viewed the non-

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151. Steven Metz, "The Mozambique National Resistance and South African Foreign Policy," *African Affairs* 85(341): 492-493.

152. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 532.

153. Mark F. Chingono, *The State, Violence and Development*, (Aldershot, England; Brookfield, Vt.: Avebury 1996), 42.

154. Minter, 40-41.

155. Ibid., 40-41.

156. Winrich Kühne, "What does the Case of Mozambique Tell Us About Soviet Ambivalence Toward Africa?" in *Angola, Mozambique, and the West*, ed. Helen Kitchen (New York: Praeger, 1987), 109.

capitalist social system proposed by FRELIMO as a threat to both their white-supremacist rule as well as to the established capitalist economic order.<sup>157</sup>

South Africa's interference in Mozambique also reflected its policy of punishing any neighbouring state that supported anti-Apartheid movements, particularly by providing training bases. South African interference in Mozambique extended even to launching a commando cross-border raid inside Maputo targeting ANC members resulting in the deaths of 13 of them during the early 1980s.<sup>158</sup> At the beginning of the 1980s, as the Reagan administration launched its Cold War crusade against communism, South Africa found a Western ally. In 1981, six American diplomats were ordered to leave Mozambique under suspicion of spying. South African-backed "UNITA and RENAMO operations were explicitly designed to destroy the economies and spread terror among civilians" so that neighbouring Africans would see the socialist governments as huge failures. RENAMO's acts of sabotage and attacks also wanted to paint a picture of FRELIMO as a socialist government which had failed to protect and feed its own people. In the early 1980s, for example, "...in drought-stricken areas RENAMO attacked food relief convoys. Some estimates put the death toll from famine during this period at over 100,000."<sup>159</sup> Despite South Africa's goal of installing pliant regimes in neighboring countries (RENAMO in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola) in order to sustain its political and economic hegemony, the extent to which such goals (if they were actually achieved) would in fact improve South Africa's security is questionable.<sup>160</sup>

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157. Chingono, 29.

158. Minter, *Apartheid's Contras*, 40.

159. Minter, 38-42.

160. *Ibid.*, 43



By the early 1980s, however, the broader goals of socialization of agriculture were postponed in favour ending a destructive war waged by the South African-backed RENAMO, who by 1982, had:

...destroyed 840 schools, twelve health clinics, twenty-four maternity clinics, 174 health posts and 900 shops. RENAMO guerillas mutilated, shot to death, beat to death, and axed, bayoneted, disemboweled and knifed to death defenseless civilians, including children. They dumped dead bodies or body parts into wells. They crushed severed heads in millet grinders, or placed them on the empty shelves of looted shops. Sometimes they chopped their victims to pieces and cooked the flesh. They kidnapped foreign technicians and aid workers, killing some and holding others captive for publicity purposes. They mined roads and rail lines and attacked traffic; they derailed trains and destroyed buses, shooting at passengers who tried to escape and setting alight the wrecked vehicles with the wounded inside...“By 1987, destabilization had cost the Mozambican economy an estimated US\$7 billion; RENAMO had either destroyed or forced the closure of 490 health clinics and hospitals, 1800 schools and 1500 rural shops; about two million people had lost access to health care services; about 25 percent of all children had been forced out of schools; and an estimated 430,000 people, mostly infants and children, had died from war-related causes.”<sup>161</sup>

Earlier on the prevailing view was that RENAMO's success could be traced to its foreign (largely South African patrons and financiers), vis-à-vis RENAMO's development into a party in the growing civil war in Mozambique.<sup>162</sup> More recently, however, two major trends have dominated discussions of the conflict in Mozambique between the government and RENAMO: one that privileges external factors (regional and global) and one that lays blame squarely on FRELIMO. The former tends to highlight the role of South Africa and certain Western countries in funding and directing RENAMO to cause violence and inflict destruction. The latter explanation underscores FRELIMO's policy failings and abuses as the causes.<sup>163</sup> Dinerman argues that both the revisionist view and pro-FRELIMO assessment of the growth and

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161. Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution*, 54-60. RENAMO's attacks had also caused displacement on a massive scale.

162. Dinerman, 36-37.

163. Chingono, 4.

incorporation of RENAMO in Mozambique following the end of the Civil War tacitly accepts FRELIMO's official claim that it effectively undermined the rural authorities.<sup>164</sup>

Of the stream that lays responsibility at FRELIMO's feet, a number of explanations prevail that cluster around the assertion that due to its treatment of and policy towards the rural authorities and the peasants themselves FRELIMO inadvertently created opposition to its program of modernization which, "RENAMO had merely succeeded in tapping."<sup>165</sup> The opposition to FRELIMO's project was due to its treatment of the population, particularly the fact that it resorted to some autocratic measures to carry out its agenda. There is also its lack of appreciation of the variety and diversity of its population which it sought to "modernize."<sup>166</sup>

Chingono's critique captures how FRELIMO was the source of the problem: "the intended transformations were not attuned to the desires and aspirations of its supposed beneficiaries, the peasantry. They instead generated discontent, unrestlessness, and resistance. This in turn formed the internal dynamics for the escalation of the military conflict: when the RENAMO rebels came promising a return to the old ways of doing things, the most disaffected and disinherited peasants welcomed them as their liberators."<sup>167</sup> Instead, he argues, FRELIMO's aim was to change the social relations of production within the agrarian section of society as "the thrust was on increasing peasant productivity through introduction of large-scale and high-technology state and collective farms. This reflected an elemental belief in the superiority of large-scale production." This process was carried out through the creation of state and collective farms on which some peasants were forced to work, which entailed a reversion to the former

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164. Dinerman, 64.

165. Ibid., 64.

166. Dinerman, 37.

167. Chingono, 41. Failure to welcome RENAMO could result in injury or death.

colonial policy of forced labor. However, there was a basic lack of capital to invest in these projects, which resulted in little change in production level.<sup>168</sup>

The privileging of FRELIMO's policies of rural and economic transformation as the causes of the growth and violence of RENAMO are premised on the view that such policies inadvertently contributed to opposition, particularly through opposing socialist modernity against tradition. In any revolutionary change, either social or political, opposition will develop, and FRELIMO's seizure of the Mozambican state in 1975 as well as its prior move towards excluding the rural chiefs no doubt contributed to such opposition. However, this has arguably been the case virtually everywhere else, and the models on which FRELIMO was based are no less the case. According to Alden, at the time of negotiations between the Mozambican government under FRELIMO and RENAMO during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the former was in the process of transitioning to a neo-liberal economy and a corresponding political constitution.<sup>169</sup>

The death and destruction wreaked by RENAMO, and in particular their choice of targets represent a hostility and hatred towards the state and of FRELIMO. These targets include communal villages, and other edifices that symbolized FRELIMO's program of modernization (including hospitals, or government buildings). Despite the acts of petty theft committed by RENAMO, Cahen argues that "we are dealing here with a struggle against the state and its people, a struggle for control of the population."<sup>170</sup> Sumich argues that "RENAMO thrived where the population had been deeply alienated by FRELIMO's social revolution."<sup>171</sup>

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168. Chingono, 36-37.

169. Chris Alden, *Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State*, (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 13.

170. Cahen, 55.

171. Jason Sumich, "'An Imaginary Nation,' Nationalism, Ideology and the Mozambican National Elite", *Sure Road? Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique* ed. Eric Mourier-Genoud (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012. E-book), 120.

## II. Economic Hardship, Retreat and Privatization

### Economic Decline

Saul assesses South Africa's destabilization policy towards Mozambique in comparison with the isolation and hostility faced by the Soviet Union, but asserts that it surpasses the latter; instead, what is at work was a pernicious policy of unraveling the already precarious state of development within the country.<sup>172</sup> Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Mozambique faced the combined obstacles of the worst drought of the century, renewed South African determination to destabilize the regime (with American and British backing) resulting in attacks on Mozambique's precarious agriculture sector as well as mass displacement.<sup>173</sup> Between 1983 and 1984 drought left 100 000 people dead from hunger.<sup>174</sup> According to Hanlon, "by the time President Machel declared his goal of victory over underdevelopment, clouds were already gathering on the economic horizon. The storm broke out in 1982. Mozambique's earnings began to fall sharply just when they might have been expected to increase...The drought and the widening war cut agricultural production and exports. World recession meant that Mozambique's terms of trade deteriorated; the unit value (or price paid per tonne) of exports fell by 20% in just two years...Thus export earnings fell from a peak of \$281 million in 1981 to \$132 million in 1983."<sup>175</sup>

FRELIMO's 1983 Fourth Congress signaled a shift away from its post-1977 emphasis on central agricultural planning, and away from class struggle.<sup>176</sup> This step away from earlier planning methods was attendant with new foreign investment policies (beginning in 1984)

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172. John S. Saul, *Socialist Ideology and the Struggle for Southern Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1990), 67.

173. Hanlon, *Who Calls the Shots?* 20-22.

174. Dinerman, 54.

175. Hanlon, *Who Calls the Shots?* 24.

176. Kühne, 111.

whereby private capital could invest in the country unhindered by FRELIMO's previous policy of nationalization.<sup>177</sup> By the mid-1980s, agricultural production in the country had dropped by 50% from the early 1980s. A large majority of the population, about 80%, engaged in agriculture as their main occupation.<sup>178</sup> The factors that led to this sharp decrease in agricultural production included severe drought and the general sense of insecurity (that hampered agricultural production) that emanated from the RENAMO-induced civil war.<sup>179</sup> Some of Mozambique's central exports dependent on agricultural production were negatively affected, and some of their processing and manufacturing industries such as cotton, cashews, and sugar were also impacted.<sup>180</sup>

Mozambique's decision to participate in UN sanctions against Rhodesia from 1976 onward resulted in further economic loss, specifically loss of revenue it previously received by providing the Rhodesians access to its ports and remittances from its migrant workers.<sup>181</sup> Beginning in 1983, FRELIMO began to make changes to the private sector, allowing it more flexibility and a greater role overall in Mozambique's economy. Such decisions occurred after drawing a balance sheet of its goals since 1977 and did not reflect a shift in the language of socialism (at least according to FRELIMO itself), but rather the means to get there.<sup>182</sup>

FRELIMO's shifting political course was also accompanied by numerous problems with the political functioning of its governing bodies. There were multiple discrepancies between what ought to have been the case and what actually occurred. For example, Ottaway notes that although in 1979 FRELIMO's policy was that there ought to be a distinction between the party

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177. Ibid., 111.

178. Jens Erik Torp, *Mozambique—Economics, Politics and Society* (London; New York: Pinter Publishers, 1989), 39.

179. Torp, *Mozambique*, 41.

180. Ibid., 42.

181. Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 146.

182. Dinerman, 53.

and the state (i.e. a distinction between political tasks and administrative tasks), “it remains quite difficult to judge the extent to which this idea has been implemented. There is some evidence that the party is still carrying out functions which appear to be clearly administrative in nature. For example, the party establishes the detailed production plans in some peasant cooperatives, although it is not supposed to do so in theory.”<sup>183</sup> Ottaway suggests that other than such a tendency representing the early stages of the development of a socialist state, it may represent a pattern of “centralization and bureaucratization” evident in other “socialist” countries.<sup>184</sup>

However, she overlooks the fact that many members of FRELIMO had virtually no experience in the political tasks in running a state, and that this can also be said of the civilian population, which lived under colonialism. Such a comparison with erstwhile “socialist” states seems problematic, not only due to the aforementioned reasons, but also because in an exemplary country, such as Russia, there were in fact organs of workers class rule (soviets), workers organization and unions before and after the 1917 Revolution whereas in Mozambique none such existed under the repressive colonial conditions.

Ottaway’s critique of FRELIMO’s efforts to heighten consciousness of class and social enemies underlines some of the struggle between its political goals and the social reality it faced. Such efforts were fraught with the limitations associated with the role that such enemies (specifically, the former colonial-era collaborators) played shortly after independence, namely that due to their closeness with the Portuguese administrative apparatus, which gave them training or skills necessary for administrative purposes.<sup>185</sup>

One author disputes this depth and quality of the economic and political transitions of the 1980s commenting that by 1988, four years after signing the Nkomati Accord little had changed

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183. Ottaway, “Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism,” 129.

184. Ibid., 129.

185. Ibid., 131.

in the direction expected by international donors such as the IMF, World Bank and U.S. government. Ottaway argues that the economic reforms by FRELIMO were equally as shallow and “symbolic” in nature as the process of socialization embarked on from the late 1970s.<sup>186</sup> She also asserts that the process by which such reforms were made was very similar to the initial steps taken to implement socialism (i.e. from the top down).<sup>187</sup> Cahen astutely observes that FRELIMO’s turn to neo-liberalism was slowed down by the war with RENAMO, rather than being the cause of it.

The obstacles and general scarcity faced by Mozambique culminated in FRELIMO’s 1989 decision to disavow Marxism-Leninism at its 5<sup>th</sup> Party Congress.<sup>188</sup> During the late 1980s and early 1990s the state restored rural chiefs to their positions of authorities in some regions.<sup>189</sup> However, according to some observers, FRELIMO’s ability to navigate politically through these shifts is indicative of the presence of an overarching character of the organization. One author argues that underlying FRELIMO’s shift from a self-described Marxist-Leninist party in 1977 to leader of “free-market democracy” in 1989, was an adaptive nationalism rooted in the goal of modernization.<sup>190</sup>

FRELIMO’s political profile can be characterized by its dual commitments to nationalism and modernization, the latter of which resulted from its experience of the conditions of Portuguese colonialism. Sumich contends that FRELIMO hoped to create a Mozambique that served Mozambicans but that would be on equal footing with European powers.<sup>191</sup> ...As FRELIMO embraced the new neo-liberal ethos, its “nationalist ideology has not been

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186. Ottaway, “Symbolic Socialism, Symbolic Reform,” 217.

187. Ibid., 221.

188. Dinerman, 61.

189. Ibid., 63.

190. Sumich, ““An Imaginary Nation,””, 128.

191. Sumich, 129.

discredited...” Sumich refers to FRELIMO’s program as “revolutionary modernist nationalism.”<sup>192</sup> Further corroborating Sumich, Deluguian poignantly observes that “...FRELIMO was able to achieve and maintain over different epochs the position of key mediator between core and periphery.”<sup>193</sup> FRELIMO's leaders took advantage of changing global political dynamics over the decades to portray themselves as continually leading and constructing the Mozambican nation-state.

### Structural Adjustment Programs/IMF and the World Bank

The obstacles facing FRELIMO and its decision to rethink the goals laid out soon after independence took place in the context of an overall global economic shift during the 1970s. Western and European banks (particularly the IMF and the World Bank) lent African, Latin American and East European countries billions of dollars in loans, and through increased interest rates and decreased wages of the populations of the global South, these loans doubled by the 1980s. Most of these loans were made to Latin American countries, specifically Mexico and Brazil and were made by the IMF and the World Bank.<sup>194</sup>

During the 1970s, the wealthier nations of the world (including the OPEC countries and the Soviet Union) began investing huge sums of money into Western European banks, called Eurodollar pools. These pools of money were used as loans made out to countries in the global South. Lender countries assumed that borrower countries would be able to repay these loans through rising incomes which came about through rising oil prices, a major export in Latin America.<sup>195</sup> Other than the fact that Western banks had enormous amounts of static currency

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192. Sumich, 131.

193. Deluguian, “Social Origins of Good and Bad Governance,” 80.

194. Robert K. Schaeffer, *Understanding Globalization: the Social Consequences of Political, Economic, and Environmental Change* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 95-97.

195. Schaeffer, *Understanding Globalization*, 97-98.



they also wanted to loan money to particular countries so that they could afford to buy North American (in the case of pro-U.S. Latin American regimes) commodities.<sup>196</sup>

By early 1984 Mozambique could no longer pay its debts and filed for bankruptcy; it had to seek loans from the IMF to pay off its debts.<sup>197</sup> In the ensuing dialogue between the FRELIMO government and the IMF as well as the World Bank, the latter two conveyed the view that the main obstacle to overcoming the financial crisis was government interference in economic matters<sup>198</sup> reflecting the overall trend towards neoliberal restructuring along free-market lines. In 1984 Mozambique became part of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>199</sup>

Torp contends that the strongest manifestation of FRELIMO's professed realization of its erroneous economic policies was its adoption of the PRE (*Programa de Reabilitação Economica* or Economic Rehabilitation Program) in 1987.<sup>200</sup> According to Torp, there were five main aims involved in the PRE that would revitalize the variously weakened and dysfunctional areas of the economy. The government's previous centralized methods of administration were seen as impediments to economic growth.<sup>201</sup>

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196. Schaeffer, 98.

197. Hanlon, *Who Calls the Shots?* 113.

198. Ibid., 115.

199. Gillian Gunn, "Mozambique After Machel" in *Angola, Mozambique, and the West*, ed. Helen Kitchen (New York: Praeger, 1987), 127.

200. Torp, *Mozambique*, 23.

201. Ibid., 50.

## Chapter IV: Mozambique in Historical, Regional and Global Perspective

### Global Socialist Networks: Mozambique, the Eastern Block and the CMEA

As a country with socialist-oriented goals, it is necessary to situate Mozambique in the framework of both the countries that served as guides, as well as the period of time during which it attempted to achieve its goals. The argument of this paper has consistently been that the one overarching theme during the 1970s and 1980s was the notion of socialist modernity as an alternative to the capitalist path of “development.” This was certainly the case for Mozambique and to some extent Tanzania.<sup>202</sup>

Nyerere’s view of pre-colonial socialism was premised on the social organization of *ujamaa*, which “refers to a family relationship of a spirit of cooperation and equality, as well as a preparedness for mutual aid and the sharing of possessions.” *Ujamaa* is often depicted as a form of socialism. However, socialism, when used as a term to denote an economic system, differs from *ujamaa*. *Ujamaa* is used to denote the solidarity between members of a community and an ongoing faith that the lot of the individual is intensely interwoven with that of his fellow humans. To Nyerere, *ujamaa* is a description of the traditional precolonial community where the dignity of humans was foremost. It is a form of society to which Nyerere would like to return in order to eradicate the evils of individualism and selfishness brought about by Western colonialism.<sup>203</sup> In this sense, Nyerere inverted the concept of Marxist socialism, placing pre-colonial forms of socialism as primary.

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202. Although Nyerere was adamant that egalitarian socialism could be traced to his Zanaki roots; Viktoria Stöger-Eising, “Ujamaa Revisited: Indigenous and European Influences in Nyerere’s Social and Political Thought,” *Africa* 70(1): 130-131.

203. Albert Venter and Michele Olivier, “Human Rights in Africa: Nyerere and Kaunda,” *International Journal on World Peace* 10 (March 1993): 24.

Nkrumah's vision for Ghana's future was shaped by the notion of exerting full political control of the country, in order to harness the resources and power of the country for its own benefit. Wielding such political power would be the best defense against renewed attempts to subordinate and subjugate Ghana to European colonial control. Nkrumah conceptualized Africa's subjugation along the lines of dependency theory as well as V.I. Lenin's theory of imperialism as an extension of capitalism. Dependency theory identifies the root of economic exploitation of the majority of the world's countries in an inequitable trade relationship with the (neo) metropole/core<sup>204</sup> whereas Lenin's theory argued that imperialism is the natural outgrowth of a particular phase of capitalism, defined by the export of finance capital elsewhere. Nkrumah applied both theories in his understanding of Ghana's position vis-à-vis British colonialism and imperialism more broadly, but rejected the solutions offered, particularly those suggested by Lenin.<sup>205</sup>

In many ways, Nkrumah's conceptualizations of the post-colonial course for Ghana resembled FRELIMO's, particularly around 1977 and after 1983. The programs of both rested on strong nationalist sentiments that sought to consolidate and protect their countries' resources and populations from foreign colonial control and viewed the so-called traditional sectors of the society as obstacles to achieving their ultimate goal of modernization. However, where Nkrumah sought to strengthen Ghana's position in the continent and worldwide by strengthening institutions inherited from the colonial era under African leadership, FRELIMO attempted to reconstitute Mozambique along socialist lines. In Ghana the main task following independence

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204. Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," in *Theory and Methodology of World Development – The Writings of Andre Gunder Frank*, ed. Sing C. Chew and Pat Lauderdale (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3, 8.

205. Kenneth W. Grundy, "Nkrumah's Theory of Underdevelopment: an Analysis of Recurrent Themes," *World Politics*, (15)3: 441-442.

involved supplanting the former authorities; in Mozambique, the constitution was the order of the day.

According to Nkrumah's vision, economic advancements for societies previously under colonial rule would come about through a state-mandated program of development. However, rather than embark on a program of nationalization, as some post-colonial nationalist leaders did, Nkrumah sought increased investment from foreign capital.<sup>206</sup>

For Kaunda, history progressed through phases, or stages, in a manner to similar to that described by Marx and Hegel. According to this description, humanity began at a "primitive phase" and over time approached a phase that would manifest certain qualities such as love and respect, rather than technological or social advancement alone. This set of stages, this progression was set out by God, rather than by the continuous development of the means of production. In this sense, Kaunda combines his Christianity with some of the views espoused by Marx and Hegel.<sup>207</sup>

FRELIMO viewed its struggles and its achievements in Mozambique as part of a broader struggle against global imperialism, both before and after independence. It argued that it not only faced Portuguese colonialism but also the forces of global imperialism (including NATO, France, West Germany, England, the U.S. and Japan) allied militarily with the colonial country. Additionally, the same powers that were militarily allied with Portugal (unsurprisingly) maintained economic and financial interests in Mozambique for which the Portuguese play the role of middle-man.<sup>208</sup>

However, FRELIMO's revolutionary aspirations came up against the fact that it inherited a formerly colonial economy that was "trade dependent."<sup>209</sup> Mozambique's path to

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206. Grundy, 446-447.

207. Venter & Olivier, 25-26.

208. FRELIMO, *Aspects of the Mozambican Struggle*, 2-3.

209. Zafiris, 116.

modernization can be traced to the notion of the non-capitalist road of development.<sup>210</sup> After the end of WWII, “the Soviet Union under Stalin persevered in prescribing a Soviet-style non-capitalist road for decolonizing countries. The assumption underlying this prescription was that “socialism” *had* now been achieved in the USSR, in record time and against imperialist opposition, and was therefore *a*, if not *the* sole, model suited to emulation.”<sup>211</sup> Despite the Soviet Union’s international image as a purveyor of proletarian revolution, it in fact promoted a policy of siding with, what it broadly termed anti-colonial or “anti-imperialist” forces, which reflected “a lack of resources to carry out its goals elsewhere as well as a desire to minimize further escalation of the Cold War with the U.S.”<sup>212</sup>

Yet for African states that attempted to build socialism (such as Somalia, Angola and Mozambique) they received little support from the existing self-proclaimed socialist countries. The reason for this appeared to be that while the Soviet Union was a superpower in the military sense, it was not economically speaking.<sup>213</sup> According to Munslow, “socialist countries account for only 7 to 8 percent of the foreign trade of Third World countries by the mid-1970s.”<sup>214</sup> The relatively weaker Soviet economy (in relation to the United States and Western Europe) is arguably one factor; however, these policies were determined in relation to its political aspirations. The common notion that the Soviet Union’s *modus operandi* during the decades-

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210. William D. Graf, “The Theory of the Non-Capitalist Road,” in *The Soviet Bloc and the Third World*, eds. Brigitte Schulz and William W. Hansen, (Boulder; London: Westview Press, 1989), 27.

211. Graf, “Non-Capitalist Road,” 29. Saul wrote in 1991 that he had warned Frelimo about the cost of “embracing a particularly lifeless brand of Marxism on offer from the Soviets as the ideological instrument for codifying its radical intentions.” In John S. Saul, “Mozambique: the Failure of Socialism?” *Transformation* 14(1991): 107.

212. Georgi Deluguian, “Social Origins of Good and Bad Governance: Re-interpreting the 1968 Schism in Frelimo,” Morier-Genoud, Eric. Sure road? *Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012. E-book, 90.

213. A view which was shared by officials in the Carter Administration during the Cold War as described by Hans Abrahamsson and Anders Nilsson in *Mozambique: the Troubled Transition from Socialist Construction to Free Market Capitalism* (London; New Jersey: Zed Books, 1995), 34.

214. Barry Munslow, *Africa: Problems in the Transition to Socialism* (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., USA: Zed Books, 1986), 17.

long Cold War was driven by a desire to expand and consolidate its political influence have also been taken at face value rather than evaluated based on the actions it took. Non-Russian Marxist supporters of the Soviet Union, particularly Marxists or socialists south of the Sahara, have been mistakenly characterized as mere tools under the influence of Soviet political influence rather than possessing a command of Marxism in their own right. These assertions, Saul says, attempt to dismiss the fact that "...many Africans saw the severe limitations of 'anti-white feelings' for the grounding of their own revolutionary processes that facilitated their finding a Marxist-based class analysis a more adequate tool for understanding and acting upon their situation."<sup>215</sup> That southern Africa functioned as a mere stage upon which Cold War powers could exercise their struggles implies that Africans were but passive recipients of the politics and ideologies of others rather than active agents mediating, renegotiating and constructing Marxism in its numerous variations. Far from being a mere extension of the Soviet Union, Mozambique in fact allowed limited Soviet military presence in the country, in line with its constitutional pledge to disallow foreign military presence in Mozambique.<sup>216</sup> Mozambique's relationship with the Eastern Bloc was the result of a complex set of factors resulting from the political and objective conditions facing both sides.

The GDR (formerly the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany), was perhaps economically most developed of all states where capitalism had been overthrown. By the 1980s it was heavily industrialized with a comparatively small agriculture sector. Both sectors of its economy were under state and collective ownership, respectively. Even at the time of the transition of the country under the Soviet Army, overall, the country was still overwhelmingly

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215. John S. Saul, *Socialist Ideology*, 42-43.

216. Kühne, 108.

industrialized.<sup>217</sup> Its outlook toward the extension of the non-capitalist path elsewhere was beset by seemingly contradictory statements that reflected its fundamental political outlook as well as its changing policies and the shifting terrain on which they were based. The foreign policy of the GDR expressed the importance of promoting global class struggle while at the same time the notion of “socialism in one country.” The cause of international workers revolution was set aside in order to secure the GDR’s short-term political interests. Schulz argues that rather than simply acting as a mere purveyor of Soviet foreign interests, the GDR acted in national self-interest which it saw (or claimed to see) as part and parcel of the international socialist community’s interests. In regards to countries in the sphere of “national liberation” and in relation to the working classes of capitalist countries in the West, the attitude of the GDR was that of “proletarian internationalism,” while the policy was to peacefully coexist with the capitalist world.<sup>218</sup>

The GDR tried to support social liberation movements in 3<sup>rd</sup> world nations but also attempted to maintain strong state-level relations with the governments of such countries. However, this obviously proved problematic as it was contradictory.<sup>219</sup> For instance, throughout the 1950s, while its official position was in favour of supporting communist movements in the global South, it maintained amicable relations with governments that sought to crush those movements. One example is Sudan, where the communist movement was subordinated by the Eastern Bloc to maintain its relationship with the Sudanese government in the name of anti-imperialism. Time and time again, in various parts of the world (for instance, in China, to name but one) communists were directed to ally themselves with so called ““revolutionary democrats””

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217. Schulz, *Development Policy*, 123.

218. *Ibid.*, 15-17.

219. *Ibid.*, 21.

rather than to struggle for socialist revolutions.<sup>220</sup> This was but a mere expression of its policy of peaceful coexistence.<sup>221</sup>

The concept of national democracies advocated by Eastern Bloc regimes and their supporters was subject to a great deal of debate as well as:

...theoretical confusion surrounded the concept of 'national democracies' and what precise course their development should take. In sub-Saharan Africa during the sixties, such diverse countries as Guinea, Ghana, Tanzania, and Congo-Brazzaville were considered national democracies led by 'revolutionary democrats,' not in the direction of bourgeois democracy but rather of opening the 'perspective of socialism.'<sup>222</sup>

However, in practice the implications behind the rhetoric of national liberation and two-stage revolution were quite lucid. As late as 1980, the program of the South African Communist Party unambiguously asserted that before socialist revolution can occur, national liberation must occur through a democratic revolution.<sup>223</sup> In South Africa, the Communist Party attempted to apply its program of two-stage revolution to the situation of Apartheid, whereby a black majority remained under white minority rule. The struggle against racist oppression and segregation was likened to the primary stage (the democratic revolution), while the second (non-existent) stage would take place after defeating the Apartheid system through a trans-class movement, with the proletariat at the lead.<sup>224</sup> As evidence of the success of its program, the SACP pointed to Mozambique as having achieved these two successive revolutions.<sup>225</sup> While emphasizing the fact that South Africa has a highly developed industrial working class compared to Mozambique, the

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220. Schulz, *Development Policy*, 33.

221. Graf, "Non-Capitalist Road," 30.

222. Schulz, *Development Policy*, 33.

223. South African Communist Party, "The Role of the Party and its Role in the National Liberation Movement." University of Cape Town Libraries, Manuscripts and Archives Department, BC 1081. 1980. <http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF>.

.DOCUMENT.CIR19800000.026.021.000, 2.

224. South African Communist Party, "The Party in the National Liberation Movement," 2-3.

225. SACP, 6.



document continues to the argue in favour of its two-stage plan.<sup>226</sup> The SACP asserts that the ANC can be distinguished from nationalist movements in South Africa because it talked about genuine economic liberation.<sup>227</sup> The SACP asserts that “the ANC clearly rejects the kind of nationalism ‘which will lead to an elite group amongst the oppressed people (gaining) ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.’”<sup>228</sup> History has of course shown that the ANC became the very class it previously admonished.

The economic path outlined by the GDR for countries that hoped to join the “socialist bloc” (for example, Mozambique and Angola) included a self-derived program of nationalization and “control over foreign capital.”<sup>229</sup> However, as Schulz poignantly notes, what such a contradictory program, “...assumed, of course, was that imperialism was willing to play by the rule of this game and would continue to show interest in investing in the country and trading with it. In other words, it assumed that imperialism would make itself a willing partner in this scheme, despite its knowledge that the ultimate aim of the leadership of socialist orientation was to nationalize all foreign holdings and to recognize only public ownership of the means of production.”<sup>230</sup>

Yet simultaneously, Mozambique was not given the assistance to reach such an (unattainable goal) as demonstrated by the fact that it could not become a full member of the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which included the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba<sup>231</sup>) and only had “observer status from 1979 onwards because the Eastern Bloc and Soviet Union were “unwilling to subsidise the enormous investment necessary to expand

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226. Ibid., 9.

227. Ibid., 6.

228. Ibid., 8.

229. Schulz, *Development Policy*, 41.

230. Schulz, 43.

231. Kühne, 109.

Mozambique's economy if it entered the CMEA."<sup>232</sup> Certain states that were "socialist-oriented" received considerably different treatment. Lack of a well-developed and politically active proletariat made such countries (such as Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia) distinct from the east-European ones that had supposedly already achieved socialism.<sup>233</sup>

The nature of this trade was such that by 1987 "the GDR's exports to developing countries consisted mainly of machinery and equipment, especially for transport and communications, electrification, building and construction, the textile industry, machine building, printing and the processing of agriculture products...Imports from developing countries consist mainly of raw materials, including crude oil, hard coal, rubber, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, phosphate, cotton, cotton fabrics, protein fodder, vegetable oil, coffee, tea, cocoa, and tropical fruits."<sup>234</sup> Specifically with Mozambique, exports included machinery for the following industries: textile garments and leather; construction; and, transportation. Imports from Mozambique to the GDR included a variety of fruits and tea.<sup>235</sup> Nevertheless Mozambique's economic relationship with the GDR was limited: In 1980, approximately 9.5% of Mozambique's imports were from, and 8.1% of its exports were to East Germany.<sup>236</sup> This coupled with what Kühne highlights as the results of Mozambique's marginalized status on the CMEA. Its "comprehensive socialist, Marxist-Leninist orientation of FRELIMO's current program...could not be sustained if such integration were not to materialize. Thus, Machel had to seek new partners and a new look."<sup>237</sup> China was not much of an option either, as its support for

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232. Winrow, 199.

233. Gareth Winrow, *The Foreign Policy of the GDR in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 189.

234. Schulz, *Development Policy*, 136.

235. Schulz, 139.

236. Kühne, 107.

237. *Ibid.*, 110.

FRELIMO decreased with the latter's support to the MPLA faction in Angola, which China opposed in favour of the FNLA and UNITA.<sup>238</sup>

### **Limitations of Post-colonial Socialism**

In 1979, John Saul and Giovanni Arrighi made the simple yet powerful point that “we therefore come full circle to that dichotomy observed above that between what is historically necessary both for development and socialism, and what may appear at present to be historically possible. Any strategy directed toward socialist construction in Africa must therefore face up to the full complexities involved in creating a state power dedicated to the task, and in generating or tapping social forces capable of underpinning such a state.”<sup>239</sup>

Discussion of implementing non-capitalist alternatives outside the Western world often invokes the critique that they have borrowed or reused Marxist notions molded on Euro-American experiences, rather than African ones, as has too often been the case.<sup>240</sup>

Correspondingly, capitalism within sub-Saharan Africa invariably draws attention to the nature of production within the region, and in the case of Mozambique, the prevalence of subsistence family farming. Saul contends that Marxist theories have varied in their analysis of peasants as a force for revolution and that Marx himself dismissed them in this regard. He highlights numerous contemporary examples from around the world of peasants playing a revolutionary role (most notably and perhaps most numerous in China in 1949). He asserts that instead of

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238. Winrow, *The Foreign Policy of the GDR*, 101.

239. Giovanni Arrighi and John S. Saul, “Nationalism and Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*. (New York: Monthly Review Press 1973), 21.

240. Jean Copans, “The Marxist Conception of Class: Political and Theoretical Elaboration in the African and Africanist Context,” *Review of African Political Economy* 32(1985): 25-38.

undermining the pivotal role of peasants, the expansion and domination of capital globally in fact underlines the centrality of their role.<sup>241</sup>

Mozambique lacked the heavy industry necessary for the overall development of the means of production and thus relied on the products of heavy industry of other nations.<sup>242</sup> Torp notes that “...during the transition towards socialism there might emerge antagonistic contradictions between the immediate producers on the one hand and the Portuguese capital and Portuguese settlers on the other,” but that they could not “...present a thorough analysis of the kinds of conflict which have emerged in relation to foreign capital in Mozambique in the last few years.”<sup>243</sup> In fact, the means by which other socialist-oriented nations attempted to improve production was through importing Western productive technology in order to manufacture commodities. In order to balance the cost of such imports, they would export raw materials and manufactures.<sup>244</sup> However, the problem with this is that given the overwhelming need for rapid industrialization, such countries invariably become enmeshed in the economic cycles of the West as exemplified by Hungary, which, despite membership in the CMEA and a place with the Eastern Bloc community, traded at a rate of 50% with Western countries, rather than with other Eastern Bloc nations. The results of such were that (as one author has noted), financial crises in the West were also imported in Eastern European nations.<sup>245</sup>

Facing a lack of economic support from the CMEA, diminishing productivity and a lack of technical capacity to increase it, Mozambique socialized aspects of its society “at the superstructural level while still continuing to work within the capitalist world economy.” This

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241. Saul *The State and Revolution in East Africa*, 298-299.

242. Torp, *Industrial Changes*, 35.

243. *Ibid.*, 38.

244. André Gunder Frank, “The Socialist Countries in the World Economy,” in *The Soviet Bloc and the Third World*, eds. Brigitte Schulz and William W. Hansen, (Boulder, Colorado; London: Westview Press, 1989), 9.

245. Frank, “Socialist Countries in the World Economy,” 10.

meant that Mozambique's social and political institutions were reorganized along socialist lines, while the underlying base (or economy) remained capitalist. Instead of ending the continued presence of capitalism in its society FRELIMO carried out nationalizations and attempted to reallocate production towards the public. It also allowed foreign companies, but attempted to exercise control of them within the country through its legal system and through government regulation.<sup>246</sup> Cahen has perceptively argued that FRELIMO's Marxist discourses should not be taken at face value in terms of assessing the nature of socialism in Mozambique. The author even goes so far as arguing that "Mozambique has not been a Stalinist *state*, even if the single party has mimicked, *at the level of political superstructure*, the Stalinist model."<sup>247</sup>

In his critique of the *Draft Programme of the Communist International*, Trotsky contends that the success of socialism depended on the victory of the proletariat worldwide, rather than on the level of economic maturity of a single, given nation. Drawing from the practical, lived experience of the Russian Revolution and the society that emerged thereafter, Trotsky asserts that for societies under workers' rule, such as the former USSR, socialism can only be realizable by building upon the most advanced productive forces, with the most well-developed technology and by continually developing the means of production under the direction of a socialist-oriented state. Building on the views laid out by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* that the nature of modern capitalism is such that the means of production invariably transcend the limitations imposed by nation states in order to continually expand, Trotsky's analysis flies in the

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246. Schulz, *Development Policy*, 43

247. Michael Cahen, "Check on Socialism in Mozambique: What Check? What Socialism?" *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 57 (July 1993), 48.

face of the then-prevailing view of building on “the curbed and domesticated productive forces, that is, to the technology of economic backwardness.”<sup>248</sup>

The premise of socialism, both in practice and in theory is the expansion and development of the productive forces of society, a task which FRELIMO attempted to do using imports and through reorganizing factories and farms along collective and communal lines. The main problem with this endeavor was that it took place in the context of an economy that was bound to a broader system of imperialism and thus the possibility of maintaining a “...policy of self-reliance vis-à-vis international capitalism,” in order to offset the “drain on the surplus which, sooner or later, is engendered by dependence on foreign capital; and (2) because of the impact of foreign investment (with respect to choice of techniques and to its sectoral distribution) upon the structure of the tropical African economies.”<sup>249</sup> Although the authors add the caveat that “it does not follow, however that the disengagement from international capitalism is a *sufficient* condition for development,”<sup>250</sup> the premise for a policy of self-reliance in relation to global capitalism remains unclear. In the case of Mozambique (as well as so many other nations) such a policy proved to be not only not doable but also disastrous because, as so many scholars have pointed out, the country’s state following independence reflected centuries of Portuguese colonialism.

Attacking Stalin’s obsession with the necessity of passing through stages, Trotsky’s exposes his opportunist appetite noting that:

...the dialectic of the historical ‘stages’ is relatively easy to understand in periods of revolutionary ascent. Reactionary periods, on the contrary, naturally become epochs of cheap evolutionism. Stalinism, this gross ideological vulgarity, the worthy daughter of the party reaction, has created a cult of its own of progress by stages, as a cover for its political tailism and haggling over rags...in our own

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248. Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* translated by John G. Wright, (Published New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1957), edition [2d ed.], 52.

249. Giovanni Arrighi and John S. Saul, “Nationalism and Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa,” 21.

250. Arrighi and Saul, *op. cit.* 21.

country the proletariat ‘skipped’ the stage of democratic parliamentarianism, granting the Constituent Assembly only a few hours, and even that much only in the back be skipped over, just as in Russia the period of the four Dumas could not be skipped over. The present counter-revolutionary stage in China, however, was historically in no sense ‘unavoidable’. It is the direct result of the catastrophic policy of Stalin and Bukharin, who will pass into history as the organizers of defeats.<sup>251</sup>

Trotsky examined the Russian Revolution and came to the conclusion that it was able to occur despite being a weak link in the imperialist chain because of the weakness of the regime and the combined and uneven nature of capitalism within Russia. Rather than advocate a period of extended capitalist or bourgeois development in order to prepare for proletarian revolution, Trotsky suggested that the proletarian revolution would fulfill the shortcomings emerging from the fact that a bourgeois revolution in Russia never materialized.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, as he himself notes in the abovementioned, as the USSR under Stalin (and his political inheritors) advocated their two-stage program, they were keenly aware of the fact that the historical events leading to their ascendancy did not include such a formula.

FRELIMO sought to build an economically viable, independent modern state within the framework of global capitalism. Socialism is premised on the elimination of the global hegemony of capitalism, on the construction of the most advanced productive forces – something which Mozambique did not have. However, it is also premised on the global demise of capitalism, something which – given the spread of capitalism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century – Marx and Engels anticipated. This is a key aspect of Marxism and their theorization of socialism, as well as the lived experiences in the (former) Eastern Bloc, China, Vietnam, Cuba, etc.

The problem was that FRELIMO exercised little to no control over the basis of their socialized institutions, namely their economy. Capitalist ownership of the means of production in

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251. Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, 240-241.

252. Ibid.

Mozambique continued after 1977 and it seems that FRELIMO had attempted to convince some aspects of the colonial regime to stay in Mozambique following independence, rather unsuccessfully. There was a situation in Mozambique where the society was socially reorganized to reflect collective, socialist state-building, while the economic base was left as is. The problems with high-handedness or the lack of political effectiveness reflect gap between them and their goals. It seems that FRELIMO felt that they could build upon the economy they inherited from the Portuguese as part of their modernization schematic, and reconstitute their society in that direction. Saul asks: “...how had FRELIMO come to abandon ‘the peasant line’ and democratic practices that had seemed so much a part of its liberation struggle against the Portuguese?”<sup>253</sup> The reason for this seems to be that they privileged the necessity for economic modernization over and above the socialization of Mozambique. Saul further contends that FRELIMO adopted many of the Soviet Union’s weakest and politically undemocratic aspects, such as its “overbearing vanguardisms, the most inflexible of primitive accumulation-driven economic strategies, the most unnuanced of class analyses, and the most unilluminating and disempowering versions of Marxist methodology.”<sup>254</sup>

They also adopted a view of historical “development” that proved to be historically problematic and unworkable, namely the non-capitalist road and its two-stagism. Thus, there is a contradiction between the producers and those who own capital. In the absence of a broader program to end capitalist relations in Mozambique (and in South Africa), the pressure invariably comes down on the producers.

Some scholars have pointed out that Mozambican peasants expected to have their land returned to them (after it was appropriated by the Portuguese) only for it to come under

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253. John S. Saul, *Recolonization and Resistance: Southern Africa in the 1990s*, (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, c1993), 72.

254. Saul, *Recolonization and Resistance*, 73.



government control. Additionally, some of Mozambique's key industrial sectors felt silenced, although the purpose of the *grupos dinamizadores* and Production Councils was to bring about worker and peasant participation in the new state. There is also the problem of the pressures of the external economic and regional forces which compounded the urgency to improve the technique and level of productivity, which seems to have contributed to some of the heavy-handedness of FRELIMO's methods. The critiques of FRELIMO's plan within the countryside as being mired in modernist arrogance need to be squared with other evidence that suggests that the traditional forces were not necessarily so, but rather as Derluguian has suggested. There is also the fact that the distinction between traditional and colonialist modernity has been shaped by colonialism itself, an aspect which historians perhaps take for granted.

## Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to critically assess the political impact of the historical origins of FRELIMO's socialist experiment in Mozambique during the first decade or so after independence. From the time that it struggled as an organization fighting for liberation from Portuguese colonial rule up to the signing of the Lusaka Accord, FRELIMO struggled with the internal tensions of appealing to a broad, popular mass on the basis of anti-colonial nationalism while envisioning a non-capitalist future for Mozambique. These internal tensions and contradictions not only reflected the historical circumstances FRELIMO inherited from centuries of colonial rule, but also the idiosyncratic nature of its political response to such conditions. After having attained control of the country's administration, FRELIMO proceeded to redirect and reorganize production in a manner that would speed up its modernization schemes. However, FRELIMO attempted to do so within the framework of the continued presence of domestic and international capitalism, thus continuing the basic contradiction of capitalism between owners of production and the workers and peasants who control the means of production. The continuation of capitalism in Mozambique was due to the fact that FRELIMO attempted to use it as a foundation for its program of modernization. The result was such that undemocratic and ineffective practices developed overtime. FRELIMO's program of reorganizing the countryside did not coincide with the actual wishes of the populace there, and the fact that it was done through directives and by force is indicative of the inorganic nature of its program in relation to the countryside. Thus, the goal of building socialism in Mozambique resulted in the separation between the aspirations of the population and FRELIMO (the government). The question thus remains, what could have been done differently in Mozambique? The dual goals of modernization and socialisation needed to be conceptualized not as separate

stages leading to a future Mozambique that mirrored Western-Euro societies, but as one common goal that meets the political demands of the population. A politically empowered populace ought to have been the basis of FRELIMO's plans to mechanize agricultural and industrial production, rather than the other way around. Moreover, the collective political strength of Mozambique's various peoples could have been aggregated to drive out or defeat RENAMO.

Currently, the political profiles of sub-Saharan African countries are dominated by a handful of prevailing themes: political instability and corruption, economic dependence on foreign aid and military intervention as well as poverty. These themes however only offer a glimpse into the social realities present in this particular region and gloss over the historically complex road that led to the current situation. In stark contrast to the view of a helpless "3<sup>rd</sup> world" country dependent on the political vicissitudes of the neo-colonial countries, Mozambique's rich post-colonial history, particularly in the years following independence capture the attempts by a former colony to take command of its future. These efforts took place against the interests of the erstwhile metropole and a belligerent neighbour dedicated to a system of racist segregation and subjugation. Its efforts must be viewed in the context of the theme of modern nation-building, though premised on a non-capitalist alternative.

The argument of this thesis is that the current historiographical literature could be deepened by examining the causes of the failure of FRELIMO's socialist project by rethinking the shortcomings of its goals, and in particular, the atomized, self-dependent nature of its goal in the context of its ties to regional and global economic interests. In doing so, the hope is for future historians and students of history to deepen their understanding of the region as well as of socialist and Marxist theories of modernization. This is particularly relevant in the current

context, which is marked by widespread political protestation over sharpened inequities and injustices resulting from the recent global economic recession.

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