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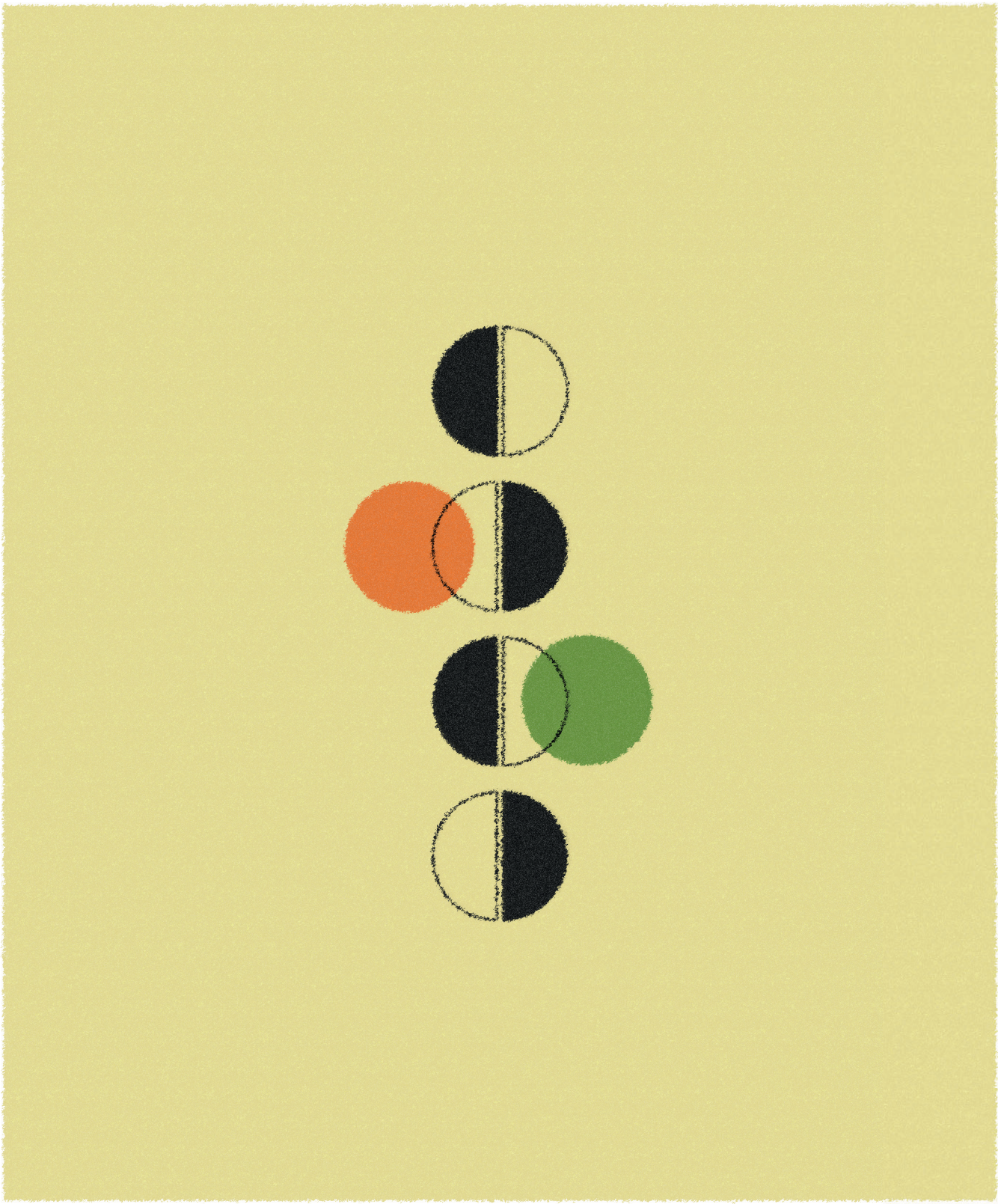
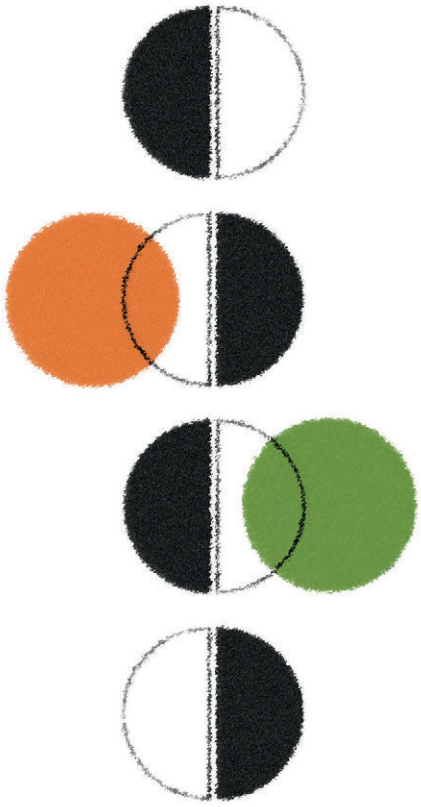


Flora Botelho

CUT ON THE BIAS

The Social Fabric of Women's Lives in Maputo



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Aarhus University
2021

CUT ON THE BIAS

The social fabric of women's lives in Maputo, Mozambique.

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PhD dissertation

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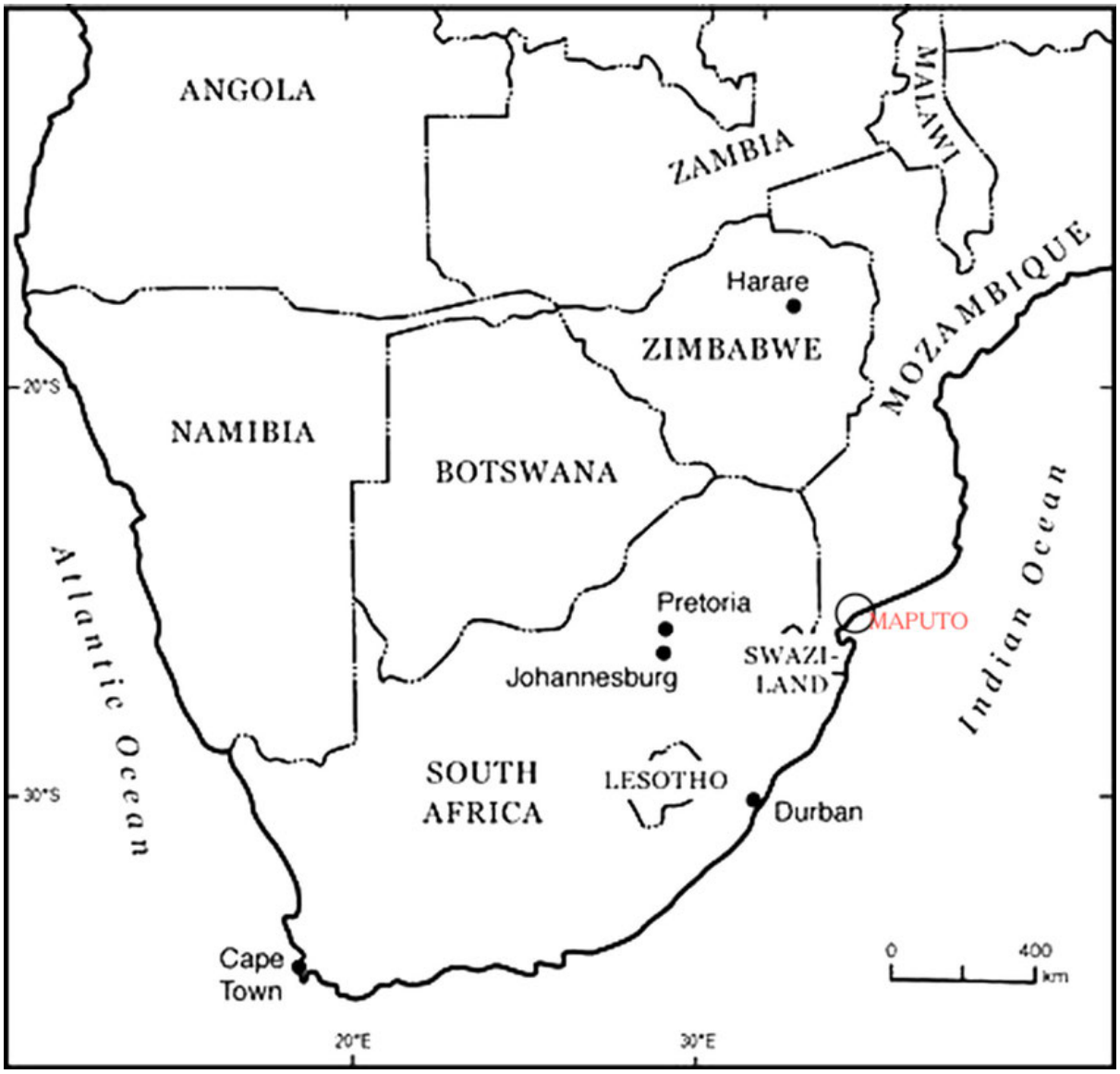

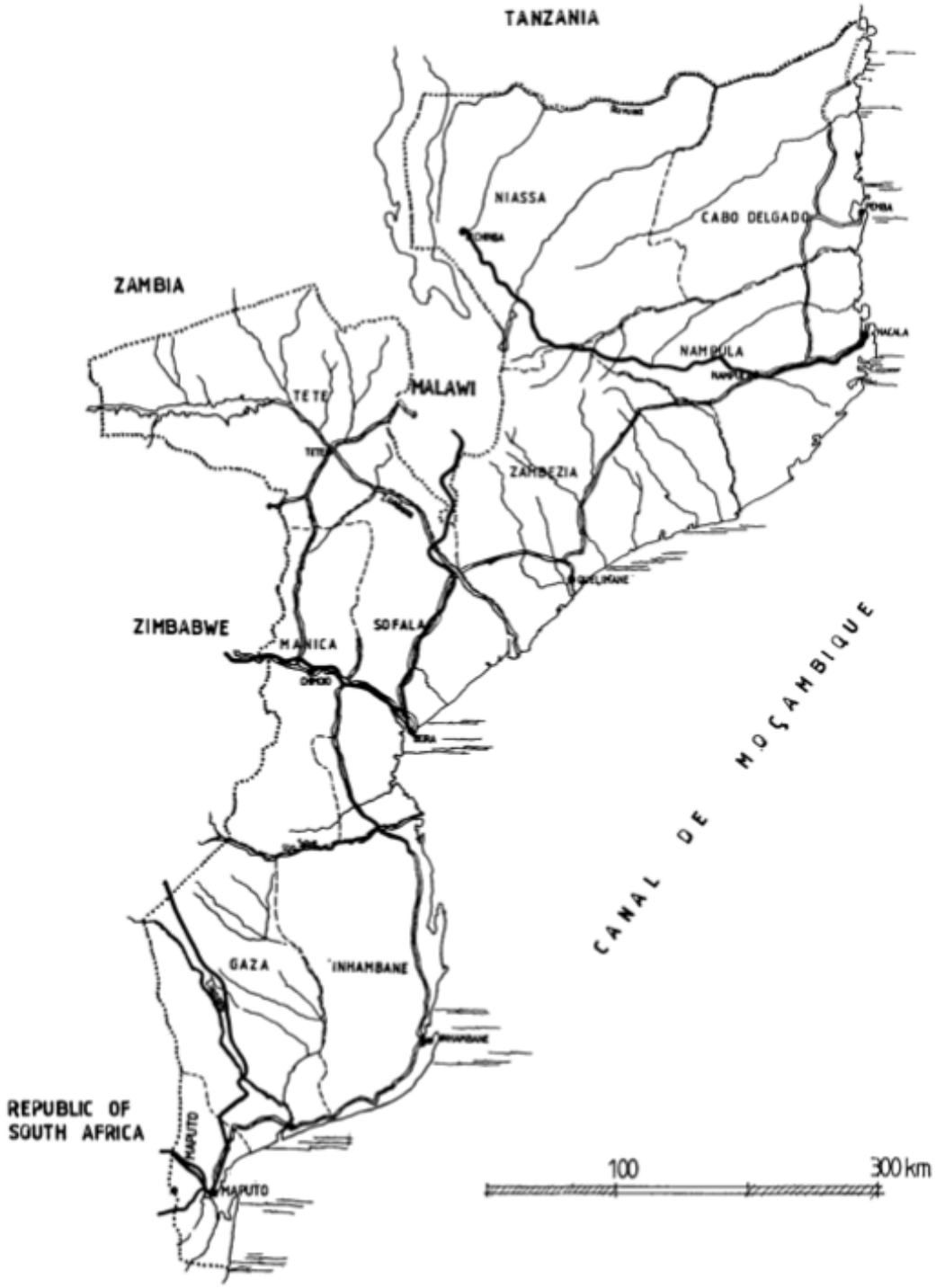

People's Republic of Mozambique
Provinces, major roads, railroads.

CUT ON THE BIAS

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INTRODUCTION

Claro do Lichanga

This thesis is an ethnography of women, of the residents of a poor, peri-urban neighbourhood of Maputo Mozambique, in a context of neoliberal socioeconomic transformation. In the second half of the 2010s, global media was awash with predictions of economic growth, modernisation and development in sub-Saharan African capitals. Maputo was no exception to such meliorist visions. The wider population was to rise out of poverty, and a middle class would finally flourish, bringing with it an entrenchment of democratic liberal values and modern lifestyles (Sumich 2018). The socialist government, in power from from 1975 to 1990, had promoted gender equality through women's insertion in the labour market, and now liberal democracy was bound to carry the project further, using economic and material improvements to help them achieve social status and independence (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000). Women in the outskirts of Maputo were aware of these developments and yet their aspirations and life plans did not seem to align with such prognoses. Rather than yearning for middle-class status, women dreamed of getting married to a man who would buy a plot and build them a house. Rather than adopting and cultivating liberal values of autonomy, freedom and consumerism, women worked at transforming personal relationships into strong kinship bonds and wilfully positioned themselves in relationships of dependence.

Claro do Lichanga, the neighbourhood in which this ethnography took place, was in 2017 an increasingly desirable area of the city. As part of a research team that set out to investigate the impact of middle-class aspirations on the city, I arrived looking for the effects of land speculation and socioeconomic change in domestic spatial and social arrangements. Foreign investment and urban expansion plans targeted Claro de Lichanga as a prime residential site for

the new middle class, and foreign constructors' leaflets and advertisement billboards offered computer-generated visions of high rise blocks replacing the self-built, cement-block houses. Residents were often aware of these dynamics: some of them saw neighbours leaving and their plots being taken over by constructors engaged in "verticalisation" projects, but for the most part, they seemed remarkably unaffected. Even though house construction and improvements were central to most residents' lives, the potential of benefitting from higher land prices and selling their plot did not drive speculation: if no one came to make an offer, they would keep their plot; if a good offer came their way, they would consider it. My general impression was that the possibility of being pushed out of the neighbourhood was met with acceptance by the older generation, and with apparent indifference by the young. In reality, while this attitude demonstrated a tendency to measure expectations when it came to big promises, it was mainly a reflection of the fact that most residents planned to move away regardless of what the destiny of the neighbourhood might be. Building a house was part of the process of becoming a family, producing a marriage and developing one's social person. Living in extended family constellations, both second and third generations in the households of Claro do Lichanga (CL) thus planned on acquiring a plot and building their own house in another peri-urban area, probably further away from the centre and with little or no urban infrastructure.

Residents below the age of sixty, many of them born and raised in the neighbourhood, were accustomed to precarious and alternative arrangements: CL was originally informally occupied after national independence in 1975, and later parcelled out and redistributed to newcomers – refugees from the civil war and relocated groups that were displaced by natural disasters. Bordered today by the university campus, an upper-class residential neighbourhood and the coastal road with its high-end restaurants, business buildings and hotels, CL retains its dirt roads lined with cement-block houses and corrugated iron roofs, each in its regular plots. Water distribution is limited and unreliable, and electricity is pre-paid, lasting only as long as a household can afford. The families that live here are on low incomes, typically derived from the odd paid chore [*biscates*], intermittent jobs as domestic workers, or small businesses. CL's roads, markets and backyards are the site of many of these endeavours: people set up stands to sell food and produce, or offer their services as tailors or hairdressers. The neighbourhood's location and proximity to the city centre has very little significance for the majority of them, as most of their activities happen either in the neighbourhood or in other peri-urban areas.

The lives of the people of Claro do Lichanga were not easy, and they did not pretend that they were. They struggled and they complained, and they wished and worked for something better. The women with whom I lived and spent my days were unhappy with their lack of resources and possibility for change, and were often dissatisfied with their partners. They wanted to study and earn money, and more than anything, they wanted their partners to build them a house, marry them, and provide for them and their children. A proper marriage, involving the

payment of bride price and the construction of a house, was not only desired, but felt as imperative.

It was in this imperative that I found a way to understand the lives that they planned and wanted, and how the relationships that enabled these lives were conceived of and practised. Beginning from the laborious process of becoming a wife, this ethnography maps out the mazy patterns of the city's social fabric that stretches around and beyond neoliberal capitalist democracy.

The ethnographic core

> The minister asked the bride to break two eggs in a bowl, and then instructed the groom to beat them with a fork:
>
> "One egg is the wife; the other egg is the husband. Spouses must be like these two eggs: they cannot be separated, because what God unites, Man does not separate.
>
> "So Senhora Euclésia, Senhor Milton, become like these eggs, unite each other, senhora, let you and your man become one, Senhor, let you and your woman become one. Amen.
>
> "A man must not stray. He must come home to eat his wife's food every day. He must not compare. He must not say that mama's food is better (congregation laughs softly). He must willingly take what his wife offers him, accept it. Come home every day, let her wash his hands, let her serve him well.
>
> "The woman must serve her husband, make the home, prepare the food, serve him well. She must not go back to her parent's house, have her food with them, or bring food from mama's pots. She makes her husband's food now, and she will eat of it too. She does this every day, she will get used to it, and that food will be her food, and that home will be her home.
>
> "Woman was made to be man's companion. The man must lead, care for and provide for the wife. Men nowadays are drinking, beating their wives, failing to support them. It is all upside-down nowadays, the women are leading their husbands back to church, to God's word. The man following the wife, cowed and ashamed. That is not the way of God. A wife must respect her husband. He asks for a glass of water, she says "don't you have legs?". That is not right. There must be respect between them".

This excerpt from the priest's homily is not just a visual demonstration of the Christian ideal of "flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood"; it is also an accurate description of local marriage practices. Though the minister started with the image of two eggs beaten into inseparability, the words that followed depicted something quite different from such fusional union, instead highlighting servitude, obedience and the differently defined roles ascribed to each spouse. The contradiction in being inseparable like two beaten eggs in a bowl while maintaining clear hierarchical positions evokes the complexities that are present in this ethnography. The minister's

prescriptions reveal the efforts that go into producing the marital tie, and the tension inherent in the process of becoming husband and wife. The sermon addressed specific aspects of local relationship dynamics: the desire to return to one's parents' home; the importance of eating together; the woman's servitude and the men's support and guidance. These all illustrate some key traits of local relationships, where marriage entails the making of kinship, intimacy involves hierarchical distances, and these relationships become constitutive of each spouse's personhood.

While this tension and the unequal positioning are perhaps to be expected in a (Christian) marital constellation, I found them to be present in most forms of personal relationships. Marriage is the primary site where these dynamics play out, but the same hierarchical structure is reproduced in all forms of lasting bonds and these also come to compose one's social person. These contrasting characteristics make relationships – and personhood – inherently tensile. This tension characterises general dynamics of local sociality where relationships are based on difference and ideally modelled on kinship.

This tensile sociality is what this thesis sets out to investigate. How the women of Claro do Lichanga actively strive to build relationships that are intrinsically unequal. How they endeavour to serve their husbands, their families and their bosses, and through these relationships, secure themselves a social position in which they are respected, recognised, and cared for. My ethnography traces these efforts, and their failures, and shows how the construction of the social person is a process of establishing and balancing personal relationships of dependence - a process that produces a *tensile relational personhood*; a social person composed of hierarchical relationships that demand the establishing of an appropriate distance. I show how the possibility of intimacy is premised on this hierarchical distance, or *tilt*, an unstable and fragile tie that always threatens to tip over or dissolve away.

These relationships are typically either an intrinsic part of the domestic realm, or become included in it. The households in which most of the ethnography takes place are thus the quintessential social space. They stand in contrast to the street, a space often charged with immoral connotations, locally described as dangerous and essentially unpredictable. There, women and men play, flirt, trick, and engage in non-binding, fluid interactions. These interactions as a rule are unrecognised as relationships, and are either maintained as such or brought into the domestic space, where they are transformed into kinship. I thus show that people can only be socially recognised within personal, binding relationships. The impersonal realm is murky, unpredictable and must be domesticated to become social.

In tracing the practices of domestication and taming that produce personal ties, and the practices of invisibility and partial blindness that avoid them, the thesis shows how these come to compose the social fabric of the city, where gendered, unequal, personal relationships are materialised in the physical organisation of socio-spatial separations that define the movements of its dwellers. Residents of peri-urban areas move around the city centre, or make spaces within it that maintain this social separation. They envision improvements for their lives elsewhere, and

the centre is never a model, an aspiration or a possibility. The city thus appears as a spatialisation of the inherent social inequality and of the separations and distances that define which urbanites are entitled to which area.

The thesis contributes to classic literature on personhood in African contexts (Dieterlen 1973; Gluckman 1963; Miers and Kopytoff 1977; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001;), and specific sociological studies of family and kinship structures in Southern Mozambique (Bérnard da Costa 2007; Passador 2009, 2010; Jardim 2007; Rodgers 2010). It adds to the known picture of lives lived in the vicinity of the state (cf. Nielsen 2009), of the hegemonic order (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2000) and of universal ideals (cf. Tsing 2004), and presents a social reality alternative to neoliberal, democratic adjustments. In so doing, the thesis challenges assumptions about public and private, and develops critiques of intimacy as a notion bound to trust and closeness by including in it distance, secrecy and mistrust.

Specifically, it does so by working outwards from intimate domestic space. Rather than deducing what goes on inside the house from interactions outside of it, my thesis takes its departure from domestic dynamics, which notably allows for the inclusion of women as central actors in the social landscape. It is important to state that even though it revolves around women's lives, the thesis is not a contribution to gender studies, in that it is not concerned with the social production of gendered categories per se. It is rather a classic ethnography of a place that focuses on the women, households and families that compose it as a means of describing the weave of its social fabric.

In so doing, this thesis adds important elements to classic ethnographic studies in African contexts that have shown how men become "big" by adding people, such as wives, employees and dependents, to their personal sphere (e.g. Gluckman 1963), how men's personhood is materialised in the house (Nielsen 2008), how intimacy always holds the threat of danger, and how the outside may creep in and do harm through envy, greed and abusive power (cf. Geschiere 1997). My ethnography, in contrast, shows that *married* men become big by establishing a *family*, building a house *for their wives* and then *repeating* this model in other relationships. It shows the ways in which “the outside that creeps in” is domesticated in continuous efforts to balance the relational tilt, in the continuous making of tensile personhoods that is the art of becoming a wife and being integrated into the husband’s kin. It shows how *women* weave their personhood through these relationships, which become part of who they are, and it shows how they become part of who their husbands, and kin, are. The distinction between the house and the street that emerges from this analysis is thereby markedly different from much earlier work, because the analytical process starts from the inside: not in the negotiations of the bride price between two heads of family, nor in the paternalistic and corrupt practices in the neighbourhood association, but rather in the negotiations that take place in the bedrooms of new couples and in the execution of daily chores in the backyard. The ethnography thus contributes to classic anthropological paradigms by showing how alliance is the core of

society (Lévi-Strauss 1967; Dumont 1971) and kinship is the ideal relationship (Wagner 1974). It constitutes one more contribution to the body of intimate ethnographies that complement and challenge knowledge derived from studies that take the public sphere, or the street, to be the primary social space (Abu-Lughod 1986; Strathern 1972, 1999; Bloch 1995; Carsten 1997).

The thesis also contributes to studies of Maputo, which has been portrayed as a split city, composed of a wealthy centre and a marginalised periphery – a picture that has been variously challenged, nuanced and reaffirmed (Quembo 2009; Lage 2018). More recent studies show how new pockets of less clearly defined privilege (enclaves) are emerging (Morange et al 2012; Bérnard da Costa n.d.), and how residents articulate strategies to secure their belonging and right to the city (Andersen et al 2015; Mazzolini 2016; Morton 2019). This ethnography confirms that having a plot and constructing a house are imperative aspects of building a future for oneself, but it also shows they are not manifestations of a desire for political citizenship or belonging to an abstract community. The recognition that a cement-block house grants local residents is the concrete status of being a person. For inhabitants of the peri-urban areas, the rich, fully urbanised parts of the city are partially invisible and only relatively accessible. These spaces remain enclaves because they instantiate a conceptual separation that preserves the status and protects the privileges of residents of the city centre. Without arguing against studies sensitive to the areas of merging, undefinition and change (e.g. Roque et al 2016), the thesis shows that for many peri-urban dwellers their conception of the city is limited to its outskirts even though they move within other zones. In the movements of these residents around and within the city centre, I show that enclaves are always porous and always contain alternative paths.

Doing fieldwork

My first house in the field was located in an area known as *Casas Brancas* [White Houses], which was built during the socialist era for state employees. The houses there were considerably better than the majority of residences in Claro do Lichanga, and they bordered a part of the neighbourhood that had been gradually occupied by higher-income social groups and transformed into a luxurious residential area. The new affluent residents built paved roads, South African inspired two-storey houses (with guards at each gate), and the area had a little supermarket, a beauty salon and a café frequented by the elite and expatriates. All of this was just two blocks behind my house. Moving in the other direction, into the neighbourhood, roads were unpaved, markets were composed of stands, often laid on a piece of fabric on the ground, or of *contentores* – a stock shop made by converting the space between house and plot-fence into a walled room, and selling tinned goods, electricity credit and sundry other items. When not made into shops, the same space between house and wall could be converted into a bar,

called a *barraca*. Nearly every block had one, attracting shifting clusters of people who gathered by the window makeshift counter.

This ethnography is the result of old-fashion methodology, fortuitous coincidence and specific circumstances. I was part of an interdisciplinary research group doing fieldwork in a cosmopolitan capital, which means that I arrived with a predefined research plan tuned to the overall project, which addressed global transformations, modernisation and specific developments in Maputo[1]. I had my Whatsapp on, and the city centre just half an hour away, with its cosmopolitan facilities and residents. I also had my research colleagues, who periodically barged into my field or dragged me into theirs. Yet, I was quite simply caught by the neighbourhood. I was drawn into those streets and drawn to the people on them. They were what I was interested in, and for a lot of the time, my world. Not because it was entertaining, or directly inspiring, or because it was always pleasant; on the contrary, I experienced, over the course of the fieldwork, all the reactions and feelings that traditionally come out in postmortem publications of anthropologists' personal diaries.

> Managing these multiple spheres of interaction, each woven of radically different cloth, made me hyper aware of the social inequality that characterises Maputo (and the world), and problematised, to a certain extent, my role and position in each of these circles. During the first months of fieldwork, the discrepancy between the city centre and the neighbourhood, so explicit at first gaze, and the fact that I immediately recognised the centre (the food and the cafés, the Portuguese architecture, the conversations over beer) as "just like home" became a reminder of my own privileged background. I knew, all along, that feeling drawn into the neighbourhood was partially a reaction to the violence of the shifts, to the moral hangover and the guilt that came with every trip to the centre, every evening with the elite, every visit to an expat. It was easier not to move. But staying in the neighbourhood was also difficult ("as it should be", I hear the forefathers saying). It was difficult to suddenly be seen as "white", to attract attention, to be charged higher prices, to be constantly asked by strangers or semi-strangers for favours, money, a job, or my hand in marriage. In the end, travelling back and forth was unavoidable. I kept doing it throughout the fieldwork, and got used to it, even if I never truly appreciated it. It was important – practically, ethnographically and also ethically, I believe, to maintain awareness of my own position.

The passing of days in the neighbourhood often felt like a concatenation of nothings: I chatted to the neighbours and vendors, I allowed children to borrow my bike, or to pick mangos off my tree, or waited, in vain, for the landlady or the plumber to come and do repairs. I walked and

1 I am part of Middle Class Urbanism. An interdisciplinary study of the physical reordering of urban sub-Saharan Africa, an interdisciplinary research project funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research (FKK), where I work in collaboration with Morten Nielsen (PI), Anna Mazzolini, Nikolai Brandes and Carla Cortês, all of us focused on Maputo. The aim of the project is to investigate rapid urbanisation processes in sub-Saharan Africa with a special focus on the radical transformations of the built environment caused by middle class urbanism.

walked, watching people, looking at houses with no reference-point to help interpret what I was looking at, buying food from different stands. And I wasted time on trivial tasks like finding rat poison, a seamstress, or a used bike. It was this latter triviality that led me to those people who would become my closest interlocutors and lead me further to my field family.

It only happened because I came to Maputo with my son and his father, Nikolas. I thus arrived as a married woman and mother of a small child, which placed me in a specific category. It also afforded me the advantage of having access to the male sphere through Nikolas, who besides entering circles that were closed to me was, by virtue of his character and curiosity, a motor for continuous socialisation. And so one day we found ourselves walking somewhat aimlessly beneath the burning sun, with our son taking turns on our shoulders, trying to find a second-hand bike. We stopped to ask a group of young men for information, and after we'd moved on, one of them decided to call us back and offer to help. He shoved us into a rickshaw and drove us around the city in the quest for a bike, which we ultimately bought from a random passing cyclist. The young rickshaw driver, Sergio, was, like most of the best informants are, a naturally gifted guide and teacher, and on top of that, a curious and open character. In no time, he became the person we contacted for help and for rides, and he in turn took every chance to show us the place, the food and local habits.

It was in this spirit that he invited us to a family celebration. Sergio lived with his partner, Sandra, and their newborn son, Mojaju, in his maternal grandmother's house. Besides them and the grandmother, there were his cousin Ícaro with his partner Cleuza, and their daughter Radja, Sergio's two little brothers, Nono and Odin, and the tenants Adolfo and Greta with their two daughters, Chelsea and Michelle. I got to know them and the extended family at the party, and I saw them frequently after that. But on that first day at Sergio's house, while I was introduced and chatted to each guest and family member, while I listened to Sergio's explanations, my attention was caught by the young women. Babies tied to their backs, wearing old *capulanas*[2], they worked ceaselessly, bringing water, food, and clean crockery and removing empty pots and dirty plates. They never sat with the guests and it was only very late that they joined the dancing, and then only for a short while.

> I also noticed that my three-year-old son was given a chair, along with a spoon and a plate, while the other children waited in a corner to receive a collective bowl of food served on the floor. And in the background, people were pooling money to run to the corner shop and buy us a bottle of mineral water. I prevented them from going. From that day on, I drank the same tap water that they did.
>
> The ongoing challenge, I think, was to acknowledge my position of privilege and at the same time, refuse its connotations.

2 A traditional cloth worn as a skirt or an apron or used as a baby sling.

I became a frequent visitor at the Simangos and grew close to the three young women who lived there. They were my first point of access to the domestic sphere, and I was gradually incorporated into the group – a process that meant moving from the best chair reserved for a white, foreign guest to the little bench next to the coal stove in the backyard. It didn't take long, though, for my interest and help were welcome, as were the opportunities to laugh at my lack of physical strength. At each family gathering, I learned to balance the burden of domestic chores with snatched moments of conversation with senior family members. From there, I was allowed into other houses, where I established varied degrees of intimacy. Some of them were the Simangos' direct kin, others neighbours or random connections, in other neighbourhoods and other towns. The Simangos remained, however, the central node of my field.

But they were not the ones to become family. Partway through our time in Maputo, Nikolas and I separated and I moved out of the house in Casas Brancas. I left the field briefly, and came back intending to start looking for a room to rent for myself. The search, though, didn't take more than a few minutes. As soon as I got to the Simangos', I found out that Sergio and Sandra had also split up during the time that I had been away, and she had returned to her parents' house. I went to see her there, and they made room for one more.

In the house lived her mother, Rosa, father, Bento, her brother Nacio, her three younger sisters, Teca, Nina and Claudia, her nephew Elton, and a tenant. I lived with the Bhilas intermittently for the next four months, while I kept a place in the city centre (initially because of my son) and later, when I returned to the field alone for an extra month's fieldwork, I stayed permanently with them. Sandra and I shared a room, and she was home with the baby for the first months, so we were always together. During this period, she largely mediated my relationship with the family. After she got a job in a hair salon, though, I was frequently alone with the others, which positioned me more firmly as part of the household. I officially became her son's godmother, and this ritually marked my bond with them, but it was daily life – cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, eating and sleeping – that made a practical difference. By the end, I was like an older daughter in the family constellation, and perceived in the rest of the neighbourhood as belonging to that household. A lot of what I came to understand about family dynamics stems from my own position among the Bhilas, an experience that I could discuss when talking to other women in an equivalent position within their own households. This entailed more than prescribed roles, treatment and expectations of each other; it was also about the attachment and loyalty that are part of familial relationships.

> Being this intensely involved in people's lives meant that choosing what to tell and how to tell it has been a delicate and serious part of the process of writing this dissertation. My first concern has been describe my informants' lives and world in a way that they would recognise. Even though they would disagree with elements of the thesis, it must be something that I can show them. With this in mind, I have tried to hold my analyses and descriptions up against the imagined reactions of my interlocutors, and where possible, I have asked them directly. At the

> same time, each particular person in this ethnography could potentially be exposed in ways that have nothing to do with the fidelity of my descriptions. The fact of the matter is that when situations that occurred and then passed are suddenly registered forever, when periods of people's lives that are now vanished are eternalised in the pages of this thesis, this can have a serious impact on their relationship to these past experiences. If this is the only real consequence of registering these stories, it is still serious enough. I have had to ponder each of the events that I include here. The place and the informants are anonymised, but not all of their connections are untraceable. The people in the ethnography retain their coherence, that is, I do not attach events that happened to one person onto another, I do not divide the same life into different lives. Thus, I have had to leave out events that were enlightening for me, but would not be possible to disguise and, more importantly, events that I couldn't ask for permission to include without already producing the undesired effect of making them eternal.

While having a *mulungo*[3] in their house provoked some neighbourhood gossip and speculation about the Bhilas, my own movements in the area became markedly easier, though they remained restricted. The fact that I was a white (I am not *that* white, but they did not seem to care) *woman* in a peri-urban neighbourhood in Mozambique was, unsurprisingly, challenging in many familiar ways, and I was the target of curiosity, resentment, strategic interest and sexual fetishisation. I managed the attention and the harassment mostly by avoidance: I avoided evenings and bars in general, and with very few exceptions, I did not establish relationships with men except through the Simangos or the Bhilas. The attention lessened and the interactions became less marked by my colour and gender as these households positioned me within a kinship network that made me recognised in the field as their relation.

This position came to define my experience of the field, which I saw from the perspective of the domestic space and explored mostly through the paths that connected to these two families. Besides spending time on daily activities with them, I attended baptisms, funerals, weddings, birthdays, church services, and national festivities; I visited kin, neighbours and clients, all with the Simangos or Bhilas, or with people I met through them. With the exception of a few stands and *contentores* that I had patronised from the start, I even shopped around these houses. I chatted to the rickshaw drivers and Sergio's regular clients, sometimes going with them on their rides, and I talked to Sandra's clients while she braided their hair. In sum, the Simangos and the Bhilas account for the greater share of the intimate, in-depth ethnography.

The final share revolves around Margô. Circumstance led me to her, and she became central to my life in the field, as a first-hand experience of the intimacy and dependence of domestic work relationships. She did not live in CL, but in an even more impoverished peri-urban area. Margô had extremely limited life chances and faced very many challenges. She gave me a broader perspective on the peri-urban lives of women and an in-depth, first-hand experience of what it means to be the most valuable resource in someone else's life.

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3 Local term for a white person.

> My biggest difficulty is familiar to most anthropologists. It is probably a necessary part of fieldwork to struggle to find the balance between respect for ones' informants' lives and choices, and an honest account of social injustice, oppressive practices and exploitative structures. For me, to write an ethnography of women *who were not happy* with their current lives in impoverished and extremely restricted conditions that are directly related to historical exploitation, established power structures and traditional value systems without turning them into victims required a serious revision of my own values, assumptions and ethical convictions. I believe that the entire argument here presented is the result of this effort.

Beyond the neighbourhood

I tell this because it is important to make clear that this thesis is principally an intimate form of ethnography, with the advantages and limitations that implies. The insights derived from this universe are central to the dissertation, as they were central to my experience of the field. Yet, they are set against a more general understanding of the neighbourhood, the city and the country. I gathered background information following a housing project in a different part of the neighbourhood, where I attended meetings, ran interviews with the developers and employees, and sat around and chatted to the immediate neighbours of the project's headquarters, intending to find out how they felt and what they thought of it. These conversations offered me some perspective on the residents' housing aspirations, a few insights into their ambiguous relation to white foreigners' interventions, and a lot of talk about witchcraft, religious rituals and traditions that had nothing to do with the housing project, but everything to do with the social life of the place.

I also broadened by understanding of Maputo by travelling, by public transport, stopping at every town along the coast up to Beira and over to Manica, on the border with Zimbabwe. This allowed me to see rural settings and experience the diversity of the lower half of Mozambique. I also travelled with Sergio and Sandra to visit family and go to the beach in Northern Gaza. This trip was highly instructive regarding extended kin relations, confirmed my impressions of household hierarchies and introduced new elements to my understanding of employment relationships, as it allowed me to enter the beach-resort universe from the perspective of the employee, and not the tourist, as I had previously done.

Besides these explorations I learned a lot from two other acquaintances, Salomão and Ada, from frequenting the city centre, and from the Middle Class Urbanism research project, the MCU.

Salomão was my first contact in Maputo. A bachelor in anthropology, he organised the house in Casas Brancas for me, tried to teach me Changana[4] and told me everything he knew about

4 I did not learn more than very basic Changana, despite my previous confidence that I was going to master it in ten months. My presence made everyone speak more Portuguese, and when they didn't, I often asked for

the neighbourhood, where he had recently conducted research. He also introduced me to his family and neighbours in the informal neighbourhood where he grew up, and to his new wife, son and house, which was still under construction, in an expansion neighbourhood. Salomão remained a regular contact. We would meet for a walk and a meal and I would discuss with him my ongoing impressions, suppositions and doubts. He would explain, refer to local literature and supplement my cases with similar or contrasting ones from his own life, family or neighbourhood.

Ada came later. I met her six months into the fieldwork, through a cousin of mine who visited me in Maputo[5] and struck up a conversation with Ada in a restaurant. If my meetings with Salomão were like brackets of reflection, my time spent with Ada was unfiltered experience. Ada was my access to all of the zones of undefinition: she simultaneously confirmed and upended my understandings of gender roles, of the home-street division and of the split city. She belonged to no categories. A challenging friend, she threw me straight into the world of petty bureaucratic corruption. And with her, there was no avoidance of bars and parties. While this did not place me in predictably uncomfortable situations, because with Ada I was safe from harassment, it did take me into unexpected and sometimes unwanted corners of the night – and into intense arguments with her. The fact was that the only dangerous thing around Ada was Ada.

While Ada took me in and out of the city centre with the same flowing, easy movement, I independently entered circles that were exclusively and always there. One was the expat community, which I met via my son's international preschool. The other was comprised of local residents who I met through the architecture school, an institutional partner in the MCU project. Both these circles offered me direct experience of the broader composition of the city and a (conflicted) break from the field when I spent the occasional evening with them. They also offered me knowledge derived from their own work and their longer acquaintance with the city and the country. Importantly, it was through these circles that I gained access to the local employees of the school and of their households, who became informants in the present ethnography. One last access to city centre residents came later through Nikolas, who after we separated made friends with a mixed circle of expats and local elite, offering me another glimpse of the social structures of Maputo.

If these were connections and experiences restricted to the field, the MCU was not. It has been and still is a sort of "external hard disk-cum-analysis software" that continuously broadens my understanding, background knowledge and disciplinary perspectives, making me attentive to aspects of the field that I wouldn't have noticed, places I wouldn't have seen and details of my own work that I wouldn't have been able to appreciate and connect. Despite the fact that I ended up with an interest that differed in many ways from the overall project's original questions,

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explanations, provoking either a shift in the language of the conversation or getting an account of what had been said.

5 A filmmaker who was adapting a novel by the Mozambican author Paulina Chiziane.

their role has been essential, precisely because it has forced to me attend to everything beyond the women's lives within the houses of Claro do Lichanga that absorbed me so much.

The neighbourhood in the city, the city in the country, the country in history...

Claro do Lichanga[6] is a neighbourhood that, like others in Maputo, was originally occupied in the very late colonial period, in the wake of the independence movement (Jenkins 2000). The groups native to the Maputo area were speakers of Changana (Feliciano 1998), which is today the main language spoken in the neighbourhood (followed by Ronga, although they are extremely similar dialects and cross-fertilised to a degree that makes it often impossible even for speakers themselves to differentiate between them). Nowadays, newcomers from other parts of Mozambique or Africa learn to speak Changana, which marks and maintains its predominance. The vast majority of residents are from the province of Gaza, to the north, constituting approximately 90% of the population of the neighbourhood (Bérnard da Costa 2007, senso 2017). Gaza itself is a patchwork of different ethnic groups who share a common language family and lineage system, which, naturally enough, is the system that predominates today in the neighbourhood.

The post-independence socialist government promised a new era of progress, prosperity and national integration, and people from all over the country wanted to be close to the centre of power when it happened (Newitt 1995). They came, most of them from places nearby, and settled in the immediate outskirts of the capital. Several of the residents of CL, talking about that time, told me that sending their children to school, which was finally open to all, ranked high among their reasons for coming to the city[7]. The importance that residents give to education is evident in the fact that children are raised in Portuguese, being exclusively addressed in this language to ensure their proficiency when they reach school age. They learn Changana through passive listening and only become fluent in it several years later. Even though this has been the case for the past two generations, the residents of CL speak and eventually tend to prefer Changana in all of their informal interactions.

Besides education, the socialist state had ambitions of regularising and urbanising previously informal land-use in the city. Land was declared the property of the state, with use rights devolved to citizens though these had to be formalised and documented. Residents of informal areas living in previously unofficial reed houses, now acquired a deed of use from the government (Andersen et al 2015). On top of documentation, a pilot regulation project was executed in

6 Anonymised to protect informants and avoid the potential generality of these particular stories.

7 I ran a survey about the origins and the future of the neighborhood and interviewed 36 households.

1976-1978 in a neighbourhood bordering CL, where land was parcelled into regular plots and unpaved access roads were laid according to norms defining the distance between house and road. This model was imported to CL and other reed areas by municipal projects, NGOs and by residents themselves in the following years (Saevfors 1986). The civil war that followed independence and lasted for 12 years had a devastating effect on the countryside and on the country's economy and subsistence. This provoked a new wave of migration to the capital and, concomitantly, the arrival of foreign aid. At this point, it was an NGO that reordered the neighbourhood, parcelling plots out to accommodate the newcomers (but the residents that recall it tell it as if it had been president Samora himself, who descended and redistributed the land). A third wave of residents arrived in 2000, in the aftermath of a flood, although the majority of the displaced went to other, more distant suburbs. CL was already quite densely populated by this time, most plots had been halved to 10x15m2 and were thoroughly occupied by cement-block constructions, which are not as easily repositioned as reed.

Indeed, one of the main reasons for the change from reed to cement is precisely the security that the latter is understood to grant. During the colonial period, the native population was forbidden from building with durable materials in the colonial capital, then known as Lourenço Marques, to ensure the possibility of their immediate removal as the authorities saw fit (Morton 2019). The rural migrants that came to work in the harbour, on the railways, or in the houses of the Portuguese settlers, built their houses out of reed in the zones around the city centre (Lage 2018), which was surrounded by a *cordón sanitaire* defending its exclusively white residents (Penvenne 1995). These two forms of occupation characterised Lourenço Marques as a capital composed of two cities: the reed city [*cidade de caniço*] and the cement city [*cidade de cimento*]. Reed constructions were deemed primitive and inadequate by the colonial power, and seen as inimical to the urbanised and civilised image of the capital, but nonetheless fit for the native population. This deprecatory characterisation of traditional constructions has had some impact on residents' notions of what constitutes a good construction. Mostly, though, it is the fact that reed formerly denoted an illegitimate land occupation that has made cement-block houses so valued in the periphery. Today, Claro do Lichanga has virtually no reed and if the material is used it is mainly as a temporary solution during the building process.

Some scholars have argued that the poor population of Maputo is barely urbanised, and because of their exclusion from urban infrastructures and urban logics of production, they simply reproduce rural lifestyles in the outskirts of the city (e.g. Ela 1983). Distancing myself from this position, I argue that the residents of peri-urban areas produce alternative urban lives that are based on different logics, depend on different resources and produce different desires from those found in rural areas. This is a point that will be clearly made throughout the dissertation, as I show how residents of Claro do Lichanga produce and live alternative urban lives. These specific ways of life are nonetheless recognisably embedded in traditional rural lifestyles and aspects of them can be traced back to descriptions of villages in late-19th century Gaza.

This was the time when the Portuguese, who had established themselves in the North of the country as early as the 15th century and maintained annual trading visits with the South for the past two centuries, decided to occupy it, for fear of losing out to the British or French it. Lourenço Marques was the result of their efforts (Lage 2018; Sumich 2018), as was the domination of the Gaza Empire with the arrest and execution of their legendary leader Ngungunhana (Newitt 1995; Khosa 1987). Lourenço Marques remained a village for nearly a century, but during this time, missionaries settled in the countryside, producing the first accounts of the social organisation of the Thonga – a denomination that encompasses all clans from the Gaza region, used first by the Zulus and later by the Europeans (Junod 1912).

Unlike the Northern part of Mozambique, which is traditionally matrilineal and matrilocal, the South of Mozambique was composed, when the missionaries arrived, of patrilineal and polygynous clans whose members were held to be descended from a common ancestor. They practised subsistence agriculture and stock-rearing. In the traditional social organisation, a man, usually the eldest of a set of siblings, represented each village of agnatic clusters. His younger brothers and his sons lived with him, and his daughters were married out, so a woman moved from belonging to her father's kin to being incorporated into her husband's kin. This meant that all the women in a village (with the exception of unmarried girls) were originally outsiders. Their integration into the village was achieved gradually, through the wedding ritual, the payment of the bride price, the building of a hut, the bearing of children and the assumption of a role in the village order.

Women in rural villages tended and still tend gardens, where they cultivate peanuts, maize, and other vegetables and cereals. In the past, they raised poultry and the newly introduced pigs, while the men tended the cattle, made and fixed tools, and sewed. Men were also responsible for building (a regular event when houses are made of organic material), but the maintenance of the houses was the women's responsibility, as was everything related to the daily flow of the village: cleaning, fetching water or firewood, cooking, etc. Men, in turn, were responsible for visiting other villages, making contracts, collecting unpaid debts, and resolving internal conflicts, often as part of a council (Junod 1912). In contemporary Maputo, families assemble when there are conflicts, intervening in cases of domestic violence, separations and impending divorces, and elders are called upon to represent wrongdoers and to mediate demands over unpaid debts and unfulfilled promises.

In Claro do Lichanga, plots have become too small to cultivate a garden. The older generation of women, the ones that arrived first, used to have them, but now they have either moved them outside the city, or they purchase the produce they need. Many women of the second generation of residents would like to have a garden, and envision a future in a plot with space for it. Some of the former residents that I visited had gardens in the backyards of their houses. The grandchildren of first-comers, however, seemed less inclined to work the fields, and spoke of other priorities for their future houses. With or without gardens, women in CL cleaned,

carried water, washed, shopped, cooked and took care of the children. Some of them also attended school and many worked in paid labour, often being periodic providers for the family.

Ideally, though, it is the men who bear financial responsibility for the household. If in rural settings they took care of sales, trades and marriage contracts, in Maputo they work in a wider array of potentially profitable activities. It is very common for men to work in South Africa, an endeavour that carries prestige and the promise of prosperity. When the colonial power shifted the administration from Mozambique Island to Lourenço Marques, in 1898, it was with the aim of taking part in the export of gold from South Africa. In exchange for the role of transporting it through the country and shipping it away, the Portuguese offered a native workforce for the mines (Newitt 1995). Since this time, young men have engaged in labour migration to South Africa, introducing a cash economy into the South of Mozambique and attaching symbolic value to the practice of displaying and distributing their earnings upon return (Junod 1912; Penvenne 1995). Most of the women that I met had a male relative or husband working and living in South Africa – often nowadays, in sectors completely unrelated to mining. South Africa today stands in the local imaginary as a place of opportunity, of entrepreneurial experiments and of profitable trade. This is no longer an exclusively male space, and women with a bent for economic endeavours make a living importing South-African products. Known as *muqueiristas*, these women carry out the entire process of buying, transporting and selling by foot and on public transport.

But work is also sought in the city centre. Settlers during colonial times employed nearly exclusively male labour in Mozambique (Penvenne 1995). Many men moved to Lourenço Marques and left their families behind, and there they either lived in an individual reed house or lodged with their employers. Domestic work still figures as a typical form of employment for men, though mostly as guards, gardeners, drivers and clothes ironers. After independence, Portuguese households in the city centre were replaced by a Mozambican elite and by European development workers, representing a significant change in the employers' profile. They still made use of domestic help, but unlike the Portuguese, they did not object to employing women, and today they are most regularly preferred as cooks, cleaners and nannies in affluent homes.

Though the residents have changed, the divide between the two cities remains. The reed city is now composed of self-built cement-block houses, and the centre is no longer exclusively white nor Portuguese. Yet, residents of each of these areas live fundamentally different lives and have radically different access to resources and opportunities. The population in Claro do Lichanga make businesses, projects and plans that often orbit around the residents of the city centre. When they do engage, they tend to maintain a relationship in which one part partially ignores the other's reality. Despite an ongoing and underlying dependence between residents of the former reed neighbourhood and the cement centre, the divide is continuously reproduced and for many residents of both sides, Maputo remains an instantiation of the tale of the split city.

Analytical framework

Difference and dependence

Difference and dependence are notions that run through the entirety of this thesis, as they are central to local sociality. Thus, they structure my analysis of kinship, alliance, work relationships, the urban landscape and the place that Maputo, Mozambique and, to a certain extent, Africa occupy in a broader global context. Difference in this thesis is the necessary recognition of the unequal positions and status that different parties occupy in relationships, and dependence is the quality of relational ties.

In my analysis, marriage dynamics in Claro do Lichanga fit remarkably well with classic alliance theory (Lévi-Strauss 1967), which, on reflection, probably has something to do with the strong emphasis on structuralism of my education. Still, however much my presentation of the role and place of the wife echoes *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, the way Claude Lévi-Strauss theorised difference is not sufficient to cover the role it plays in my analysis. Lévi-Strauss was primarily interested in uncovering the mental structures that organised the social world. He relied on a theory of human cognition as a mathematical process of binary association. The social world, it follows, takes shape in the process of analogical compositions that produce conceptual difference - i.e. that define categories in a binary relation of relative difference and similarity to other categories. Lévi-straussian social structure is thus, despite the mythological highs and lows, flat: that is, it is not predicated on power. Claro do Lichanga's social landscape, in contrast, is hierarchical. It more resembles Louis Dumont's description of the Pralamai Kallars (1971). Dumont shows how hierarchy, rather than being solely based on linear domination, is embedded in an understanding of society as a whole of which the different hierarchical positions are parts. Hierarchy thus emerges from a consensus of values and ideas that is essential for social life. In unpacking the caste system and notions of pure and impure, Dumont makes a double contribution to structuralism: first, he introduces the notion of value (cf. Graeber 2001) and thus the possibility of analysing social difference; and second, he accounts for the ideological component shaping social structures. In an implicit way, my analysis relies on the Dumontian contribution to structuralism insofar as it shows that social dynamics are structured by an implicit hierarchical ideology that positions people in terms of differentiated social value in relation to each other.

Hierarchy necessarily introduces the dimension of power. I discuss power directly when looking at work relationships and their potential to become a total form of domination in chapter 4, and I address it tangentially throughout the analysis precisely by tying difference to the notion of dependence and looking at its manifestations as authority, status, influence, subservience and resistance. While dependence appeared in my analytical efforts as a way to understand the bond that people in hierarchically different positions weave with each other, the notion was actually

introduced in social exchange theories with the goal of accounting for power (Cook et al. 2018). In such approaches, dependence is addressed as a defining aspect of power relations, in which one part mediates the goals of another and both parts are interested in controlling the other's conduct so as to achieve their goal. Materialist from the outset, Richard Emerson (1962), Peter Blau (1964) and subsequent scholars (e.g. Molm 1985) set out to develop a general theory of dependence, whose sphere of application ranged from the emotional and psychological to institutionalised power, and from interpersonal to political contexts. Implicitly founded on a rational choice approach, these analyses helped effect an important shift from an understanding of power as an *attribute* to seeing power as a *relation*, and, specifically, as a relationship of dependence. The theory's focus on power as control over resources, and of social difference as product of such control is, however, analytically distinct from my own.

Difference, in my analysis, should not be reduced to a simple product of economic inequality, and dependence must not be seen as a direct causal consequence of differential access to resources. Social hierarchy is much more than merely economic; it is an underlying pattern of the social fabric, a pattern that simultaneously orders and constitutes people and their relational positions. To understand the warp and weft of this fabric, I rely on James Ferguson's historically-grounded analysis of social relationships of dependence in South and Central East Africa, which takes its starting point in classic theories of dependency and their critiques to account for the impact of market society in Southern Africa (Ferguson 2013). Dependency theories are well-established in development and socioeconomic studies, coming as a reaction to earlier developmentalist (i.e. social evolutionist) approaches that perceived the condition of poor countries as a consequence of their pre-modern condition (Friedmann and Wayne 1977). Andre Gunder Frank was the most prominent scholar to address international dependency from a historical-materialist perspective in the 1960s. He showed how relationships between nations have been built and are maintained in a structural relationship of exploitation (e.g. Frank 1966, 1969, 1998), often assumed to correlate with internal socioeconomic inequality, underdevelopment, authoritarian and unstable regimes, and corruption (Schmitter 1971; Cardoso 1971; Rodney 1972). Here, dependency is a structural problem that results from colonisation and the further expansion of capitalism in the form of primitive accumulation; and internal relationships of exploitation are a consequence of this structure. This link has been discredited by other development and socioeconomic studies (e.g. Kaufman et al 1975), but its influence can still be seen in general public perceptions of "the problems of underdeveloped countries". Ferguson's analysis, in turn, moves away from a rigid understanding of dependency as structural inequality and accounts instead for the way in which social relationships of dependence are produced, calling it a "mode of action". The concept is borrowed from Jean-François Bayart, who introduced it as a direct critique of the theories of dependency that dominated African studies up to the turn of the millennium (2000). Bayart argues, in a rather incisive way, for the recognition of the role of so-called underdeveloped countries in their own

history. Dependency, according to him, is less a structural matter, than a historical praxis, and African states, institutions and people have actively sought and produced their international position, often to their advantage (ibid:218-9). Ferguson employs the concept to look at the implications of the adoption of a market economy in a region where social membership has always been predicated on hierarchical bonds, and work relationships have been constructed on the basis of interpersonal dependence.

My ethnography, which presents a social fabric in which dependence is actively produced within hierarchical structures, adopts the idea of the phenomenon as a mode of action, not in the provocative way suggested by Bayart, but in Ferguson's more sensitive use. This mode of action is a fruitful way to understand not only the premises of work relationships (or institutional and international ones), as Ferguson has done, but potentially all relational bonds. Agreeing with and developing his analysis, I show how people are produced through these relationships and strive to occupy not the highest place in the hierarchy, but the appropriate one, and how in this movement, they constitute themselves within the social order.

Difference and dependence, when interwoven, are the nexus that allows me to adopt, refute or rethink established theoretical approaches to each of the elements that compose this ethnography. I thus consider how difference and dependence come to shape local personal and impersonal relationships, look at how they affect understandings of relatedness (cf. Schneider 1984; Carsten 1997) and the local production of personhood (cf. Nielsen 2008), accounting for the racial and gendered elements in this production. I discuss how they reaffirm and nuance previous descriptions of Maputo's social landscape, reflecting on their role in local reformulations of universal ideals of freedom, prosperity and scientific knowledge (cf. Tsing 2004). This nexus also demands a reconceptualization of intimacy.

Intimacy

The choice of engaging with intimacy as an analytical concept was not taken without reticence. First, I was concerned that intimacy is strongly connected to late modern Western middle-class imaginaries surrounding the affective nature of domestic constellations - imaginaries that are at odds with what I found in my field. Second, the term was never used or referred to by my interlocutors, except indirectly, via vaguely related expressions such as "always being together" or "part of the household". And finally, the concept of intimacy is inherently ambiguous, full of implicit connotations and often too broadly defined. Despite these considerations, the topics that I engage with in my analysis resonate with and challenge general understandings of the term and can perhaps provide fruitful reflections on its use. Since I use it as an underlying lens in the chapters that follow, a preliminary explanation of my use of the term is called for.

Intimacy concerns a personal or interpersonal experience that needs to be separated from a broader social context (cf. Davis 1973). This broad definition underlies a general insistence on defining intimacy as a sociological rather than a psychological phenomenon. Still, the concept of intimacy in sociology and anthropology was up until recently implicitly or explicitly infused with psychological definitions, which were, in turn, anchored in specific Western ideas about the human constitution. While anthropological knowledge flagging cultural and social diversity was taken into account, ponderations on the nature of intimacy, up until the 1990s, could not escape the idea that the phenomenon was necessarily about the possibility of expressing or being fully oneself in an inter- or intrapersonal relationship.

The entanglement is etymological: intimacy, deriving from the Latin *intimare*, means "to call out that which is innermost" (Onions 1966). Thus, a range of conceptualisations addressed the conditions and motivations of revealing oneself to an other. Intimacy has been ranked from circumstantial to permanent relationships, or from the weakest to the strongest degrees of trust and emotional attachment (Palisi 1966; du Bois 1974). It has been categorised in different types of relationships, differentiating between lovers, spouses, friends and siblings (Davis 1973). It has also been contextualised, classically within either pre-industrial, or traditional societies with more rigid social roles, or democratic, modern societies with higher degree of individual freedom (Eisenstadt 1956; Ramsøy 1968; Paine 1974; Leyton 1972). Descriptions of intimacy as "a space free from society" (Naegeler 1958), a "game-free relationship" (Oden 1974), a space free from masks, where people build authentic and personal relationships founded on trust dominate both classic scholarly work and popular psychology up to the present day. They vaguely refract ideas reaching back to Aristotle's ideal friendship as a virtue (Aristotle 304BCE; Terian 1981:21), William James 'continuum from intimate to foreign (1906) and Martin Buber's "I and Thou ideal" as a relationship between whole persons that is not circumscribed by norms (1937). They also attempt to account for the apparent human need (a "requirement for survival" cf. Dahms 1972) to establish spaces of interpersonal attachment. This contextualisation and the assumptions connected to it carry over into later analyses of intimacy, as is clear in Anthony Gidden's work (1992), where he traces the development of this form of relationship throughout European history and shows how democratic, egalitarian societies promote the conditions for pure intimacy to flourish. Giddens' major contribution is recognising that it is not the protection from the public sphere, but the intrusion of its values into the private sphere that comes to define the type of intimacy that can be produced. Focused primarily on marital relationships, Gidden's definition shows that the penetration of democratic and egalitarian ideals into the private sphere has produced a space in which individuals can be their authentic selves in freely-chosen bonds built on mutual affection and trust.

Giddens' analysis unifies and challenges previous work on the topic, but, being focused on Europe, it does not address some of the issues with the transposition of the concept to other contexts. Classically, intimacy in the context of sub-Saharan Africa has been perceived as either

lacking or something radically other, often leaning towards the contractual, normative or prescribed (e.g. Junod 1912, Radcliffe-Brown 1952). There is also a general assumption that intimate space in an African context, is a prejudicial space that requires intervention to prevent domestic sexual violence, infibulation and circumcision, child-marriage and HIV contamination (e.g. Nakyazze 2020; Manyaapelo 2019). Contemporary anthropological studies have, however, managed to rethink categories related to intimacy, such as love, sex, kinship and friendship, in order to account for what has previously been labelled as transactional, coercive or violent in Africa (Shipton 2007; Archbaum 2013, 2015; Howana 2012; Manuel 2014; Groes-Green 2011; Cole and Thomas 2010; Porter 2017) and elsewhere (e.g. Rebuhn 1999; Hochschild 2003; Hoefinger 2013). I align myself with these approaches and include hierarchical difference and dependence, with their prescriptions and transactions, in my understanding of intimacy, without losing sight of emotional attachment and feelings.

The turning point for the dominant scholarly conceptualisation of intimacy was its disentangling from the notion of an authentic self. This was in large part accomplished by feminist studies that, benefitting from Giddens' contribution, denounced the intimate, domestic or private spaces as normative constructions defined by moral values and political regulations, and thus, a social construction that produces the idea of a free, real, authentic person (Povinelli 2006; Selickoglu and Zengin 2015; Blatterer 2018). This shift is especially relevant in the case of this dissertation, which sets out to analyse a context that does not operate with the premise of two distinct domains (intimate and public) or with the division between the social persona and the authentic self. Intimacy in my field has nothing to do with being oneself around another person. Rather, it is grounded in everyday experiences, such as sharing clothes, rooms, or beds; in being naked or changing together; in physical contact; in cooking and commensality; or in demonstrations of care, pride or shared joy. Intimacy is also proper to gossip, competition, and the hiding (and discovering) of secrets, money and objects.

Intimacy, in sum, consists in events of partial exposure and vulnerability that produce or reaffirm attachment and potentially, ties of care, duty and dependence. These events, rather than marking a gradual progression towards openness, trust and genuine interpenetration of selves (cf. Oden 1974:3), aim at balancing an optimal degree of distance, concealment and exposure. In this form of intimacy, knowing one another's inner reality is not a goal, and neither full trust nor full disclosure are desired. And those things that one may wish to hide are not understood as aspects of one's personality or character that correspond to true, inner selves. Therefore, specifically relevant for my analysis is work that accounts for the ambiguity of intimate relationships: they may be both reliable and unpredictable or potentially violent, offering both security and danger (Besnier 2015; Palisi 1966). Equally important are theoretical insights that highlight secrecy, distance and concealment as an inherent part of intimate relationships (Simmel 1906; Geschiere 2013; Shapiro 2015) and that focus on the experience of intimacy as an event rather than a defined sphere (Shapiro 2015). Yet, my analysis differs from these: while Simmel

looks at actual intimate practices (in a generalising and hypothetical way), he focuses on relationships between equal peers. While Geschiere accounts for the danger of intimate relationships as a refraction of the inherently dual nature of human feelings, intentions and actions, he does not address actual intimate events but looks at the narratives produced around them, often circulating in non-intimate spaces. And Shapiro focuses on flowy, unbinding connections produced in an intimate event, while I look at the binding properties of intimacy.

Intimacy in this thesis, in sum, is structuring of hierarchical relationships, marking difference and producing dependent relationships that, in turn, (re)produce intimacy. In fact, dependence understood as a mode of action is productive of intimate relationships because intimacy here is about being able to trust the relationship, not the other person. It relies therefore on the correct performance of these bonds. In short, it is composed of actions.

Personhood

These intimate relationships of dependence come to form and compose men and women, and so the notion of the person is a central aspect of the analysis in this thesis. While my ethnography agrees with most established theories concerning personhood in Africa, it also demands a more specific framework that is capable of encompassing the gendered and racial dynamics that were at play in Claro do Lichanga. More importantly, it calls for theories that account for *difference* as a necessary element for the emergence of the social person (cf. Bastide 1973; Dumont 1971), and that distance themselves from Western notions of the individual as an autonomous self, seeking instead to make room for *dependence* and *plurality* (cf. Gluckman 1963; Miers and Kopytoff 1977; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991).

In this regard, I believe that the most influential work on personhood within anthropology is still Marcel Mauss's lecture on the notion of the person from 1938: *Une categorie de l'esprit humain: la notion de personne, celle de moi*. In a sophisticated approach to Durkheim's *homo duplex*, Mauss proposes that the individual person has been wrongly attributed universal existence, and that it in fact must always be carved out of a primary background of indistinction in order to become a moral, legal and logical category. Mauss traces the self [*moi*] as a subject of social history and in so doing, presents us with a sample of the broad cultural-historical variation of the notion of person, while simultaneously pinning down the individual as a specific Western and modern phenomenon. Since then, it has been widely recognised that the notion of the individual is tightly connected to the emergence of the modern nation-state, and that western personhood, which is produced by *contract* in the free association of individuals, is often markedly different from non-western forms of personhood. The latter, in contrast, may be acquired in the processual production of social *status* (Kuper 1988), and are thereby inherently relational. Such relationality of personhood was recognised in early writings of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who contrasted European and "primitive" conceptions of the person saying that "we see

an individual where they see relations" and described the "primitive person" as "a place of participations" (1927). Despite the problematic nature of his assumptions regarding primitive thought, his reflections on participatory personhood have remained an ongoing source of anthropological inspiration (cf. Goldman 1996). The matter still constitutes an analytical problem, not only for social scientists but for societies themselves because, in the words of Lévi-Strauss, the person is always "fragmented in[to] multiple elements that resist synthesis" (1977:11)[8]. Multiple approaches to the relationality of human beings and the variety of cultural forms of "synthesis" have proliferated since Lévy-Bruhl, in the work of, *inter alia*, Maurice Leenhardt 1947, Roy Wagner 1991, Marilyn Strathern 1988, and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro 1996, but they are far from having exhausted the topic.

In this thesis, my understanding of the processual production of personhood in Claro do Lichanga in its moral, cosmological and political aspects relies on such insights, and especially, on Roger Bastide's work (1973). In his contribution to *La notion de personne en Afrique noire* (Dieterlen 1973), he shows that the person in Africa is carved out against two basic anti-principles of individuation: the plurality of elements constitutive of the person and the individual subject's fusion in his own alterity. These anti-principles are conditioning of the process, and the person as a unity is thus a form that emerges in the balance of heterogenous elements (ibid:41). With no ambition to add to Bastide's theoretical formulation, my ethnography echoes his analysis and shows that relationships of hierarchical difference (husband-wife, boss-employee) are both constitutive of the person and that which defines her, and that the multiple elements that compose her are balanced through repeated ritual and daily practices.

Identity

To understand the collective fundament of this ethnography from which personhood is carved out and in which it is embedded, we must look at the specific aspects of political history and gender norms in Southern Mozambique that shaped the collectivities with which women and men in Claro do Lichanga identified, and the identities which they are ascribed. I am not alone in having drawn inspiration from the understanding of the relational person that springs from Dieterlen's collection, often described as a communitarian, collective or composite personhood (Fortes 1973; La Fontaine 1985; Lienhardt 1985),. In fact, the work of Bastide and his colleagues is not only useful for understanding processes of individuation, but their emphasis on the collective has been used, across the continent and its diaspora, to understand processes that situate the person within forms of political and cultural identity (e.g. Corin 1998; Goldman 1996, 2012, 2015).

[8] Translated from French.

I. POLITICAL MEMBERSHIP

The notion of communitarian personhood, still very much present in African philosophy and postcolonial theory (e.g., Gyekye 1987; Menkiti 2004; Masolo 2004), had a strong political impact in the decolonisation struggle, giving rise to important ideological aspects of the Afro-socialist regimes that were implemented in twenty-six African countries in the aftermath of independence. Built upon W. E. B. Du Bois' Pan-Africanism, Leopold Sedar Senghor's *négritude* and Kwame Nkrumah's African personality, the African socialist movement ideologically inverted racial hierarchies and promulgated the "African organic integration of community and self" against the individual alienation of Western ways (Irele 1990). Policies such as Julius Nyerere's familyhood-based village scheme [*ujamaa*] were manifestations of political ideologies that perceived the socialist revolution to be a primarily moral, rather than economic, question.

In Mozambique, this was underpinned by the party's adoption of the Soviet model of social engineering with the promulgation of the image of the New Man [*homem novo*]. The socialist idea of reshaping society was founded on the premise of producing a new citizen, morally and psychologically superior to all previous existing models of citizens. The New Man thus constituted a political project of radical thought reform where old ideas were to be replaced with new ones (Cheng 2009:2-4). In Mozambique, the old colonial subject was to be replaced by the new modern, rational, national citizen, who, unlike the exploitative Westerner, worked for the collective good (Zawangoni 2007). Taking Mikhael Suslov's declaration that the New Man was "the most important component" of the socialist endeavour (Suslov in Heller 1988:43) to heart, the independent Mozambican government declared it to be the central pillar of the Mozambican national building project, which relied on shaping a moral relationship of identity between citizens and the nation, the latter embodied in the Party (Sumich 2021). Central to the project was a transformation of the humiliated colonial subject into a self-reliant, equal member of the global order (Meneses 2015).

The New Man ideological project of Frelimo[9] also included reshaping the place of the woman in Mozambican society (Arnfred 2012). With the goal of integrating this half of the population into the nation-building project, the party condemned tribalism and all forms of subnational belonging as part of its campaign against polygyny and the *lobolo*[10]. These they portrayed as expressions of the exploitation of women, without really hiding that what they actually opposed was their being performed within the domestic sphere instead of the communal villages of the socialist state (Machel 1973:27 in Santana 2016). Clothed in a discourse of emancipation, the new Mozambican woman was depicted in public speeches and in the lyrics of the Mozambican

9 Ruling party since independence, acronym that stands for Mozambican Liberation Front (Frente de Liberação Moçambicana).

10 Traditional wedding with payment of bride wealth

Woman's anthem as "the New Man's inseparable companion" and "the producer and nurturer of the combatants". Emancipation was not meant to be confused with autonomy and gender equality, nor give license to immoral behaviour. Women, according to the Party's vision, were more than welcome to fight for the nation and take up jobs, but they were also meant to marry, bear and raise children, and feed and serve their husbands in the home (Machel 1974; Santana 2016).

The reach of this gendered national identity beyond the scope of the urban elite was, by the time I got to the field, only evident during moments of national celebration. In Maputo's periphery, the markers of what constituted a new man had very little relevance to people's self-perception. Traditional customs and beliefs were widely practised and valued, not least the lobolo, which had central importance in the production of marriage and of complete men and women (cf. Bagnol 2006). Old racial hierarchies were prevalent and comparisons that diminished black people were routinely made. Nationality was rarely used to describe the population in general terms, and rather than "Mozambicans", the terms "Africans" and "blacks" [*negros*] were typically preferred in these circumstances. Remarkably, in what I interpret it to be an explicitly negative identification with abstract racial and national forms of belonging, identity with these categories was often implicitly downplayed by the speaker, who typically employed the third person plural, thereby excluding themselves from the described group. So, a father of thirteen children would explain the role of offspring in their culture by saying "Africans are only good at making children, that is all that they've got".

II. ABSTRACT COLLECTIVITIES AND CONCRETE IDENTIFICATION

Such discursive strategies can be seen as a manifestation of what Franz Fanon describes as the *black subject*'s efforts to distance himself from the inferior category with which has been forced to identify. Fanon describes the black person [*le nègre*] as the product of colonial violence, a category of domination that calls the racialised person into being *per se* and forces him to identify himself with a category of inferiority. The effects of this violence were present in my field, and the ideological reversal of racial hierarchies and the empowerment of African subjects has not effectively erased them. Acknowledging that, I deliberately choose to make these categories visible and account for their permanence. I employ throughout the thesis the racial terms that the residents of Claro do Lichanga used, which were whites [*branco/mulungo*] and blacks [*negros*]. I also adopt 'Africans' rather than 'Mozambicans' in accordance with emic use, which, while reflecting the weakness of the nation-state project in the field, is a usage that should not be read as a dismissal of the plurality of African cultures and ethnicities. If anything, it reveals my own hope that the local choice of the term is a sign that Pan-Africanist movements might have had some impact.

Yet, the refusal to identify positively with these abstract categories has deeper implications for my analysis and is connected to other aspects of local sociality and notions of the person.

This is because the person in Maputo's periphery differs from the relational, partial person in Melanesia (cf. Strathern 1988; Wagner 1991), from the Amerindian perspective-relative, posthuman category of personhood (Viveiros de Castro 1996) and to an extent, from analyses of the local composite person (Nielsen 2008). For my interlocutors, interactions with non-intimates typically go unrecognised, impersonal exchanges are ideally not reciprocal, and people discursively refuse to let themselves be identified by any of these impersonal relations. Departing from the domestic sphere, this thesis shows that personhood is constructed in intimate, enduring bonds of obligation and unequal reciprocity that position people in hierarchical relational positions.

These intimate bonds are part of their personal constitution, and they literally become *wife of ...* or *mother of ....* Here, the relationship between person and name is not one of denomination, but of direct identity; i.e., the name *is* the person (Bérnard da Costa 2004). Identity between members of a genealogical lineage is not only relational, but often total, as in the case of namesakes (idem; Pina-Cabral 2010). Moreover, these bonds constitute their sense of belonging to a collective constructed out of kinship networks and places of origin (cf. Bérnard da Costa 2007). Importantly, the term *belonging* carries the sense of both being part of a group and of being, in a sense, the property of a group (cf. Meyers and Kopytoff 1977), which marks the strictly personal character of these relationships. Thus, the thesis presents a social landscape in which, while personal relationships are fully determinant, general categories are always rejected – including, interestingly, gender categories. Women spoke of "women" in the same self-excluding way that they spoke of men, Africans and blacks.

Partly for this reason, it is important to stress that the use of gender categories in African contexts is not straightforward. The subordination of women to men is present in cosmological orderings and traditional practices reported from various regions across Africa (e.g., Fortes 1973; Richards 1956; Evans-Pritchard 1940). At the same time, mythical androgyny, and/or indivisible complementarity between men and women (eg. Griaule in Dieterlen 1973; Heritier-Izard 1973; Junod 1897), combined with highly performative, convention-based gender roles with broad variation across ethnic groups (cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1952) and with established possibilities of negotiation and subversion within cultures (eg. Webster 1991) have raised the question of the extent to which gender is a Western-imposed category that only awkwardly fits in these contexts (Nzegwu 2004). Without adhering to such postcolonial radical claims of the non-existence of gender categories, with their attached inequality and discrimination, I find these considerations useful to reflect on the differences between Western concerns on the one hand, and local conceptualisations on the other, which takes me back to the original Maussian insight that the bounded individual person is a very specific social construct and allows me to acknowledge that feminist discourse is indeed premised on this specific understanding of the gendered person.

With this in mind, this ethnography will show that gender inequality cannot be locally understood in terms of economic dependence, lack of bodily autonomy, and reduced rights to self-definition and self-assertion, as it is broadly presented in feminist discourse, because a *woman* is a relational category produced and defined through social practices that shape her body (cf. Bagnol and Mariano 2009) and person in terms of the position that she occupies in the constellation of personal, intimate relationships. Without denying either the subordination of women in my field on the one hand, and their agency and capacity to negotiate and subvert socially defined positions on the other, I understand female personhood to be a processual social construct, made through ritual and daily practices that ideally shapes women within a constellation of intimate bonds of difference.

Privacy and publicity

It is important to state that the domestic space in which intimate bonds were produced did not correspond to a private sphere. While it was continuously protected from the outside, this was meant to shield from asocial and unpredictable dangers, rather than the control and the judging gaze of institutions and the community. None of my informants ever spoke of privacy, although they spoke of keeping secrets. The things or information that they kept to themselves were most often not personal per se, and their concealment was not considered a personal right. On the other hand, the ones from whom secrets were kept were typically intimates. The word *people* [*gente*], in the indefinite, impersonal sense of the term, was used, but they hardly constituted a public in the sense of a political or social community. Rather, they were presented as unreliable, unpredictable forces from whom one must hide or avoid being tied to. In this sense, the outside, or *the street*, did not constitute a public sphere. And yet, aspects of the home and the street can appear to correspond to the private and the public respectively. In order to clarify its differences, a quick definition is appropriate.

Considering that the private-public divide is a configuration specific to modern Western society and firmly tied up with its familial structures, it is hardly surprising that I did not find it in my field. The division can be traced back to Greek antiquity in the concepts of *oikos* and *polis*, but its modern version results from the location of production outside of the household, a development of classic liberalism, famously identified and promoted by Adam Smith (1776), which is what gave rise to the early bourgeois family. Stripped of its economic function, the family was allowed to become an emotionally based community, and the home the protected space of intimacy, in which members could express their individual particularity in free, disinterested, affective relationships. Even though it fulfils personal needs and wants for connection, self-expression and safety, the private sphere has been promoted and protected by liberal democracy (Hegel 1821), where individual self-definition, freedom and autonomy were required traits in all citizens (Mill 1989 [1859]:16) and ones that should be exercised without

control from institutions or the gaze from the public. Yet, the dependency of these two spheres goes beyond the democratic need for autonomous, free citizens. The liberal subject, although being his true self in intimate relations, needs public recognition in order to exist fully. His membership of a public is essential; in fact, Hannah Arendt described the need to be seen in the public arena as the need for ontological security (1958), thereby declaring the public sphere to be the social space *per excellence.* Georg Simmel identified the personal requirements for privacy and recognition as two natural, though conflicting human needs to conceal and to reveal (1950:330). The modern subject, in sum, produces himself in the intimacy of the home and shows and asserts himself in the public arena. This is a very specific phenomenon in postmodernity, where the variety of particular selves produced in the home and claiming public recognition has grown exponentially, manifesting itself in forms as varied as identity politics (cf. Frazer's subaltern counter-public 1990; Zaretzky 2015) and reality shows or social media exposure (Blatterer 2010).

The public-private configuration is thus particular in various aspects: privacy is seen as the right to be oneself without the controlling gaze of the public. This implies that the public sphere is controlling, and the self that one presents outside the home is not one's true inner self, but a more or less curated version of it (Hochschild 2003; Illouz 2007; Markus 2010). Yet, it is the public self that needs to be seen in order for the person and the world to exist (cf. Arendt 1958). In Claro do Lichanga, in contrast, the relationships that give a person existence are personal relationships, produced and cultivated within the domestic sphere. When outside the house, people desire rather than visibility, *partial invisibility*, or to be able to move about without being recognised and without establishing ties. The street in Claro do Lichanga occupies a similar conceptual space to the *bush* (Gluckman et al. 1949: 93): neither a European public square where "private people gather to discuss collective needs" (cf. Habermas 1962) nor the Brazilian street where social hierarchies and privileges are made visible (cf. DaMatta 1985). It is a space of unpredictable and treacherous forces that require taming and domestication to become social. And the household, as the discussion about intimacy demonstrated, is not the emotionally-based European bourgeois community where free, disinterested, affective ties prevail (cf. Giddens 1992), but the space in which personhood, embedded in hierarchical, personal bonds of dependence, is constituted. Secrecy and hiding, rather than the exercise of rights to privacy, happen within the household as means of establishing appropriate distances between members, which will grant them status and simultaneous protection.

The understanding of the street as the bush is not meant to deny the existence of institutional associations, democratic and not-so-democratic bodies, political parties or the State. It is only meant to address the ways in which my informants dealt with the space outside the house, which is necessary for an understanding of this ethnographic context and central to the ways in which personhood is constituted. Their presentation of the street reflects traditional cosmological understandings of the uncultivated space outside the fenced rural village, where natural and

supernatural forces lived and threatened the social order (West 2005; Howana 1996; Junod 1897), a cosmology that, for a series of political-historical reasons came to be reproduced in impersonal, or non-domestic interactions in urban spaces. During colonial times, the arbitrary, gratuitous violence of government procedures towards the native population made the world hostile, dangerous and highly unpredictable (Penvenne 1995). After independence, honest ideological plans of nation-state formation quickly transformed into a maintenance of privilege and power by the new Mozambican elite (Sumich 2018). Political changes did not affect the vast majority of the population's daily lives (Cahen 1994), and so they never truly came to take part in the nation as public citizens (cf. Fanon 1963). Bjørn Bertelsen, speaking of Chimoio, a town in central Mozambique, says that there, the public sphere is spatially separated into the cement city and the peripheral neighbourhoods. In the latter, boundaries of sociality and state control do not overlap and the residents have to fall back upon their own resources to deal with matters of collective interest (2016:239). There, political action occurs in momentary organisations with a specific purpose that then dissipate (see also Granjo 2010). Discussing this, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis, as is the very relevant debate over how adequate and realistic it is to import the concept of the public to African contexts (cf. Suleiman 2017). Here the public /private divide is only relevant in terms of what the home and the street in Claro do Lichanga are not. The specific ways in which domestic and non-domestic spaces are made and blurred in this ethnography can, nevertheless, potentially offer food for thought concerning the possibilities for an inclusive democracy in this social landscape and perhaps help rethink the broader political scene that always renegotiates and reinvents Western liberal structures as it imports them.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The ethnography is arranged into five chapters and an epilogue. It begins inside the house, before expanding into the neighbourhood and then the city, and finally broadening out to encompass the global dynamics that play out in the social landscape of Maputo. It does so primarily by exploring the lives of young women from Claro do Lichanga, but also from other informal neighbourhoods – especially women that are in the early stages of their marital relationships and hope one day to be properly wedded, and have a house and children. These stories are contrasted with other trajectories that reveal differences and continuities between generations, genders and social classes. The narrative engages analytically with the different generations of women from peri-urban areas, while the broader social composition of the city marks a point of contrast to these stories. Meanwhile, the elite, the masculine social world in Maputo, and the country's regional differences are the wider landscape in which these women's lives are embedded. Difference is the structuring element of all of these social contexts, from inside the couple's bedroom to conceptual relational positions between continents and races, and the analytical argument that runs through and connects all of the social spaces of this thesis emerges from the ethnographic narrative. By showing that personal relationships of dependence are the basis for sociality, the thesis problematises established understandings of broader social dynamics.

I. Green mangos

The first chapter is about becoming a daughter-in-law. Taking its starting point in the stories of young women who have recently moved into their partners' family homes, the chapter tells of the labour they put into carving out a place within the household and of the insecurity of this period. Although these young women find themselves in an insecure and unsatisfactory position, in which they often feel disrespected by their partners and at times exploited by them and their families, they work and strive to stay. The position that they seek to occupy fits into an ordered pattern of unequal relationships. By presenting how these are woven into the internal division of chores, the order of meals, the upbringing of children and the expectations that family members have towards each other, the chapter shows that hierarchy is intrinsic to the home. It also shows, through family members' management of secrets and how they "manage not to see", that intimacy is not based on trust, but on establishing appropriate distances. In exploring the lives of the young daughters-in-law, the chapter introduces contextual and temporal characteristics of the neighbourhood that have reshaped family constellations in their dwelling patterns and

polygynous practices. Women's ways of relating to their partners' extra-marital relationships opens up for a discussion of marital dynamics and of what is locally considered a good partner. In their efforts to move the relationship along, these women do not look for autonomy or independence, and the respect that they want from their husbands does not depend on fidelity nor on equal treatment. Their expectations and wishes for markers of commitment and displays respect and attachment are the product of a desire to establish their position as wives.

II. At home

The second chapter is about becoming a wife. It starts from the desire, ubiquitous in the neighbourhood, to buy a plot and build a house and addresses the difficulties of achieving it. Despite the fact that house building is perceived primarily as a male activity, the chapter begins with the story of the purchase of a plot by a single mother, in order to demonstrate that land is the most fundamental form of securing the future and a right to the city. However, the house promotes more than just basic security. By analysing the differences between being in the husband's house [*estar em casa do marido*] and being at home [*estar no lar*], I argue that the importance of the self-built house for women, ideally built by the husband, lies in its capacity to materialise the marital relationship and their positions as wives. It shows how moving into a self-built house changes women's status and brings the marital relationship into a new dynamic. It highlights the gendered making of personhood and shows that while for men, the house is background for the figure of their social person, women make themselves in the home.

The analysis of residents' efforts to buy leads into a discussion of their attachment to the neighbourhood as well as their willingness to move elsewhere, and looks at what characterises a good area and a good house, and specifically the value attached to cement blocks. The imperative of building with cement blocks can be traced back to colonisation and to the making of the city and reveals the architectural ideals of peri-urban areas. Finally, the house-building project opens into a discussion of the cosmological qualities of the house (which is ordered space) and the street (which is undefined and unpredictable). Interactions on the street are defined as *friendships* [*amizades*], which are premised on equality and perceived as dangerous and potentially immoral. They can deliberately be kept murky and thus go unrecognised, or they can be cultivated into personal relationships that emulate kinship. I argue that these relationships of kinship, and especially those within the household, are the relationships that come to compose the social person. The chapter shows how the wall between the house and the street is porous: members of the household can be outsiders and friendships can potentially be brought inside. This porosity requires daily practices of protection and the continuous redrawing of boundaries.

III. Girlfriends cost money

The third chapter is about the non-separation of money and affect. I take up the difference between the house and the street adumbrated in the previous chapter and nuance it by showing the continuity between the two realms in their "transactional" approach to affective and sexual relationships. Going into how people expect and demand material expressions of care, which we have seen in the previous chapters, the chapter introduces the dynamics of sexual and flirtatious relations, the ones that happen outside the house, to show that in both spaces, people are aware of what they want from those they interact or have a relationship with. There is no moral differentiation between material and sexual interests, and affect, love and care can be precisely conveyed or produced in these material exchanges. Drawing a continuum from the home to the street, the chapter explores the differences between interactions that avoid the building a ties (the ones at the further side) and relationships in which material expectations are there precisely to construct kinship ties (on the nearer side). And I show how relationships can be in the middle, or anywhere in between. The chapter adds to the overall argument that dependence is constitutive of intimacy in exploring independent interactions. The inclusion of the dynamics of play and flirting broadens the ethnographic picture of Claro do Lichanga and the character of the women in it. With this, the chapter challenges assumptions about the separation of the intimate and the public that are premised on the nature of the exchanges that take place in each of these spaces.

IV. A good boss

The fourth chapter is about the intimacy of work relations. Drawing on domestic employment experiences, the chapter shows how the street can be ordered and included in the domestic world by converting strangers into kin. Through a presentation of interactions between boss and employee that build upon personal loyalty and mutual expectations and, simultaneously, prescribe specific forms of address that mark deference and the circumscription of spaces, products and utensils that mark each their different status, the chapter introduces an analysis of personal bonds of dependence that are structured around diagonal lines, hierarchical distances that are ideally *tilted*, i.e., neither vertical nor horizontal. This opens up for a discussion of the risks involved in the production of such ties, the vulnerability of each party's position and the consequences of letting the relationship tip over, either into a flat relation that does not tie the parts to each other, or into verticality and complete domination. In discussing strategies to maintain the appropriate tilt, the chapter presents an analysis of local morality and discusses notions of good and bad that are based on sharing and distribution, and the understanding of the banality and potential uniquity of evil. In this moral world, people's behaviour is what counts, and violence is not located in the person's character, but in their circumstantial action. This makes relationships simultaneously dangerous and commutable.

V. Different differences

The fifth chapter is about the conceptualisation of social difference. I address interracial relationships and the place of the white man in Maputo's social landscape, where he is understood as generous, good hearted and beautiful. I explore the various practical and discursive manoeuvres through which whites are cleansed of the implications of their dominant position. Direct interactions with whites are interpreted by locals through media and historically-established, discourses of racial superiority, and white people and their worlds continue to be perceived as good and proper, standing as a model for development and as a desired partner in a relationship in which locals necessarily assume an inferior position. The image presented in the chapter reflects global structural inequalities and racialised ideas and models of development that become realised in relationships of dependence. Because the relationship is constructed on the basis of the whites' moral superiority, the result is the production of an essential difference.

The previous chapters were focused on the way in which difference is constructed within familial, marital and work relationships, but they hadn't addressed how difference is conceptualised. Taking its starting point in interracial relationships, the chapter draws a comparison with class, status and gender differences, to show how race is constitutive of fundamentally *different* differences. This analysis allows me to explore inversions of positions when women become providers, and discuss the quality of each of these differences in terms of the extent to which they are temporally defined and negotiable. Racial difference stands out as the difference that can only be bracketed, but never erased, and the white man appears as the radical other (cf. Taussig 1987).

Epilogue

The final part of this thesis brings up general insights about the place that Claro do Lichanga occupies in the city of Maputo and in the global order. training its gaze on the ways in which the patterns of sociality that characterise the weave of this peri-urban neighbourhood are reflected in the spatial separations and social inequalities of the city, the epilogue situates the ethnographic analysis within the broader neoliberal democratic context and presents its contributions to political and theoretical debates concerning development, democracy and feminism. Specifically, it raises questions regarding the applicability of a political system based on contractual rights, individual autonomy and productivity to a social context in which sociality is composed of personal relationships of unequal co-dependence.

CHAPTER I

GREEN MANGOS

> We were sitting in the backyard of Sandra's house while she braided a client's hair and they gossiped about their partners. After complaints about one of the men having been out late the night before, we moved on to discuss when and how often people perform the traditional wedding ceremony, *lobolo*, nowadays. None of the four women were officially married, though they all lived with their partners and had one or two children with them. They explained to me that things were difficult these days, and (quoting Trump's latest remark about "Africans only being good for making children"), told me that "men here are good for nothing" [*não prestam*]. I asked them if that meant that they would like to perform the lobolo. They replied as a matter of course that everyone wanted to, that one must do it [*há de se fazer*]. That said, actually expecting it to happen before moving in together and having children, "like in the time of our grandmothers" [*como nos tempos de vovó*], would be silly, because "while you're waiting for the mango to ripen, other women are eating it with salt (i.e. green)". Sandra added that "if you sit around and wait to be married off the hands of your father you will end up a spinster [*ficar pra titia*]".

The four women in the backyard were all somewhere in their twenties. They lived in their partners' family house, except for Greta, who rented an annex in the back of the house where we were sitting. They were all anxious to improve their situation and move out of the neighbourhood, into their own house, yet none of them had managed to achieve this. And although they already had established relationships – involving cohabitation and children– they wanted to get married properly. For them, the *lobolo* was an imperative and it was not just something they vaguely hoped for at some point in their lives. In fact, they all thought that the way it used to be three generations ago, in their grandmothers' times, when the *lobolo* was the way to start a marriage, was the ideal. They complained of their partners and wanted them to work, come home and not spend their money on street vices. But they worried that if they did not accept things as they were for the time being, then another woman would, and they would end up alone – and none of the women I met in the neighbourhood ever desired a solitary life.

The lives of the four women braiding in the backyard were similar to those of most local women with small children. Cohabitation and parenting without being traditionally married was nowadays the most common way to start a marriage, and women like Cleuza and Sandra lived with their partners' kin. Their relationships were relatively recent, they were young and either finishing or intending to finish secondary school, and in the early stages of their work and domestic lives as wives and mothers. Despite it being the norm, they presented this period with the in-laws to me, what they called living in the husband's house [*viver em casa do marido*], as a compromise made under the consideration that the situation nowadays was harder, and that women must accept and adapt if they are to find and keep a partner.

What the young women told me was that, back in the days of their grandmothers, women would be properly wedded before leaving their own parents' house, and their new husbands would build a hut for them to come and live in. Nowadays, in the city, building a house was a lot more costly – plots had to be purchased, and the construction materials were not cheap, unlike reed. These young couples, with their limited and unreliable income, had a hard time saving up for these plans, yet women often felt that this was a direct result of their partner's immature behaviour. If their men were more responsible and wasted less time and money on superfluous consumption, they would be buying building blocks, they said.

This prolonged period with their in-laws, their partners' time on the street, and not knowing when they would move on to a fully official relationship, with marriage and house, caused them a lot of insecurity. They seemed to want a marriage in which they would have autonomy from their kin and an exclusive marital relationship, which, despite their idealisations, was not the case in the times of their grandmothers. As Southern Mozambique was traditionally polygynous[1], women moved into the husband's agnatic cluster compound. Young women in the neighbourhood, in contrast, wanted to move out of their partners' family house and into their own. But, as we shall see, this was not an expression of desire for autonomy, but a negotiation of traditional family patterns within an urban context that still maintained their embeddedness in their partner's kinship network.

Their insecurity stemmed largely from a fear of other women, seen as rivals that might steal their men. They worried about this and saw traditional, full marriage as a way of reducing this threat. But back in the grandmothers' times, women often had co-wives, which appeared to be somewhat at odds with their ideals. As we shall see, however, this rivalry between women was not simply the expression of a desire for exclusivity, itself the product of modernity and globalisation. While it did express a fear of losing their partners to another woman, what they

1 The occurence of polygyny is much lower in the North of Mozambique, where traditional matrilineal and matrilocal patterns of marriage are still prominent, despite coexisting with Islamic practices (Arnaldo 2003; Bonate 2006)

wanted were established, ordered positions that secured their place within their partners' network of relations and guaranteed their status as legitimate wives.

The way the young women held on to these relationships of which they so often complained made it look as if they saw their partners as their best chance of having some socioeconomic security. My first impression was that, despite being dissatisfied, they submitted to the present situation for fear of being unable to make a good life for themselves on their own. Dependent on their partners, who depended on their kin, without real prospects of autonomous improvement, the situation of the women in Claro do Lichanga looked like yet another example of African *waithood* (cf. Honwana 2012), an impression that resonated with anthropological descriptions of young urbanites in contemporary Africa vainly aspiring to autonomy and economic security. Since their prospects are virtually nil, they end up finding themselves stuck for years, sometimes indefinitely, in a position of dependence that characterises a stage of pre-adulthood (e.g. Honwana 2012; Vigh 2006; Mains 2011) [2]. But this condition was not what the women of Claro de Lichanga were trying to escape. Rather than striving for independence with their plans to move away, we will see that women were, while living with their in-laws, very actively weaving ties of dependence that should ideally last beyond this period.

In contrast to descriptions of youth in waithood, none of the women ever expressed a sense of not being full adults; on the contrary, their definition of youth and childhood clearly excluded themselves and their sense of adulthood was never at stake. They did, however, fear not being a proper person [*ser pessoa*], which rather than describing dependent people, categorised those who were not embedded in a network of relationships, like single mothers with no kin (cf. Passador 2009, 2010). Social personhood is locally understood to be inherently relational, which stands in contrast to notions of individual autonomy. Nor is adulthood understood as a life-stage characterised by stability and personal realisation directly related to being a fully developed person (cf. Lee 2001); rather, it is connected to having dependents and providing for them properly. In the case of the women in this ethnography, this was ideally achieved through marriage to a husband that would provide for them and their children. Personhood here, we will see, is produced within relationships of unequal co-dependence that come to define who one is through name and status. Similar to Roger Bastide's analysis (1973), women's individuation was made through their relationality as daughters, mothers and wives, positions that are inherently dependent.

Yet, their dependence on partners and affinal kin was not in any obvious sense economic because, when it came to money, most of these households got by with the collective scrapings and periodic employment of any member. Ideally, women wanted their partners to be the financial providers, but in the early days of their relationships, few men managed to be. And, in

2 Most studies on African adulthood concern young men, but Alcinda Howana looks at both young men and women and finds that they all strive for autonomy and independence (2012).

any case, this expectation did not prevent them from wanting to work and earn money, or to contribute financially to their future plans. The support that they expected from their partners was a desire for security, but, more than that, an expression of responsibility. Thus, their dependence, not only on their partners but also on affinal kin, was rather a product of the inherent imbrication of roles and positions within the family, a form of dependence that was actively sought and maintained.

This chapter thus challenges anthropological discussions of life courses affected by urbanisation and modernisation by following the story of Sandra to examine the period in which young women, living with the man's family, seek to establish themselves as daughters-in-law, that is, as legitimate members of their partners' family. This period is marked less by its economic precarity, than by the insecurity of a relationship that is not yet fully officialised in an environment of widespread female competition. We will see that changes in life course were characterised by negotiations of traditions within an urban setting. The chapter also shows that marriage was not a strategic plan in a context of few and poor alternative options, but that being a wife is deeply connected to being a person [*ser pessoa*] and was what women strived to become. Despite marginalisation and exploitation as undeniable effects of neoliberalism and urbanisation, lives in the outskirts of Maputo were shaped by other variables and followed alternative other paths.

Households

Sandra, the hair dresser who was braiding in her backyard, was the youngest woman of the Simango household. She and Sergio had dated for four years while she attended school and worked in a hair salon, and he was training in the army. Sandra got pregnant and moved to Sergio's grandmother's house to live with him when she was about to give birth, which happened around the time I moved to the neighbourhood. At this point, Sergio had an accident and took leave from the army, working subsequently as a rickshaw driver. The coming baby made them decide to start living together and, following patrilocal custom, she moved in with him[3]. Their relationship was rocky, though, and after six months they separated and she left, taking Mojaju, their son, back to her family's house. In the period when she (and I) lived with her family, I observed the patterns that delineate family relations and the positions of their members, and how these patterns are carried into the women's new homes in the process of producing a marriage. These patterns are characterised by hierarchically defined relations and predefined roles that entail different duties and responsibilities. Sandra's family was, in most senses, typical and represented an ideal model of family for her and most women that I met. It was seeing these

3 As explained in the introduction, the south of Mozambique is traditionally organised by principles of virilocality and patrilineality.

roles, clear in the division of chores and in the spatial use of the house, that I understood what characterises childhood and the different life stages.

Sandra came from a family that lived just one block away from Sergio's grandmother. Her father, Bento Bhila, was a minister at a charismatic church and had been an employee in a plastic factory for the last 24 years. Her mother, Rosa, worked as domestic help for foreigners stationed in Mozambique. Sandra had an older brother, Nacio, and three little sisters – Nina, Teca and Claudia – that lived there, Teca with her two-year-old son Elton. Their four-room house had been constructed by Seu Bento, a process started some 20 years ago, and still unfinished, as attested to by the more recently added annexes, the cement blocks stacked in the corner, and Seu Bento's diverse and frequently discussed building projects. The use of the space in the house changed quite frequently, but there was a sitting room, and Bento and Rosa had their bedroom. The girls and Elton slept together in one room, at times in an annex, Nacio had taken another annex since he returned from South Africa, and a third was periodically rented out. A fourth annex was sometimes used to cook in. Inside the house, one of the rooms was sometimes also used as kitchen. Sandra, Mojaju and I slept in the fourth room for a period of time, in an annex for another.

Domestic chores were divided between house residents by gender and seniority, with women taking the bulk of domestic work, but this was also defined by each member's capacity to provide for others, as will become clearer later in this chapter. Importantly for us here, this division reflected the differentiated positions that each member occupied in the household, positions that were also evident in sleeping arrangements. In the case of the Bhilas, all the children shared one room, including Teca, Sandra's younger sister, who also had a child, actually two years older than Mojaju. Meanwhile, Sandra and I had a room for ourselves and our sons. Teca had fallen pregnant with Elton when she was fifteen, by Kevin, a boy the same age. She had never moved out of her parents' home and Kevin, although a regular visitor, was never introduced to the family and only appeared when Seu Bento and Rosa were out. Sometimes,Teca would sneak out a plate of food for him, but he never came inside for a meal. Despite these apparently secretive activities, mamá and papá were well aware of his existence and of his visits and rather encouraged them to maintain this contact. Their encounters were not perceived as a serious relationship, but rather treated as "practice". Rosa thought Kevin was a sweet boy, but that "they were just children" [*são crianças*]. Kevin's avoidance of his (hopefully) future in-laws was in keeping with a sense of respect, since he had not yet been able to formally introduce himself or to take Teca and Elton to live with him.

Sandra and I, in contrast, had both been "married", that is, had lived together with the fathers of our children in a union openly accepted and recognised[4]. Teca, however, was still a child (i.e. an unmarried girl) and her baby was understood to be the outcome of play [*brincadeiras*], a concept that will be discussed later in this chapter and in the course of the thesis. Since sexual activity does not constitute a marker of maturity, being something one can engage in as play, motherhood, without a marital relationship, is not in itself a marker either – as playful sex can lead to accidents. The marker of adulthood for a woman is in fact, linked to marriage, because it consists in moving from depending on her family (childhood) to depending on her husband (adulthood), and importantly, as she will have children, having someone depending on her. I once spoke to a 19-year-old woman, dressed provocatively and flirting with a male guest while she helped us cook for a party, who explained to me that she was still a child, and men were just play [*eu sou criança ainda, isso aí é só brincadeira*].

These categories, manifest in the spatial separation within the household, carry over some of the logic of previous rural settings, where historical data describes single girls sleeping in one hut and single boys in another, and daughters gradually taking over the mother's tasks until they are married off (Junod 1912). Yet, the continuity between then and now lay less in practical divisions than in the moral logic that defined the form of relationships between family members and prescribed appropriate distances and differentiated rights and duties, similarly to what Heinz Kuckertz, who analyses how prescribed distances and positions are the space for moral reasoning, found in traditional beer festivals among the Mpondo of South Africa (1997). These distances are maintained not only in spatial structure and daily activities but also, and perhaps especially, in the treatment accorded each member, something that becomes visible in the order of meals.

Meals

From the first times I visited the house of the Simangos, I noticed something specific about meals. During celebrations, guests appeared to serve themselves in a specific order – and not only that, they also sat in a specific spatial arrangement roughly divided by gender, seniority and household. First, the young women, who had already laid the table, would come in with basins and jugs and stand in front of each guest, pouring warm water for them to wash their hands. As mentioned in the introduction, they never sat down with the guests, but kept on bringing with more food and drinks and carrying the used dishes away. Guests would then serve themselves: first, older kin, then the men of the household, and finally more distantly related guests.

4 It will become clear that relationships that produce children are considered everlasting in some ways, and separations are, until the woman gets married to another man, considered potentially temporary, and often do not affect the woman's status in the beginning.

After having visited for parties, I began to come round to the Simangos for lunch, tea or dinner on an everyday basis. On these occasions I was typically sent to sit with the men, while the women went about their chores, and I was always asked to serve myself first. Yet, when only the women were in the house, we would sit and eat together, often at the coffee table, sometimes outside in the yard. I assumed that the intimacy of these moments, compared to meals with other members of the household, had to do with my presence and the relative intimacy I had with each of them, and this assumption held until I moved in with the Bhilas. I knew Sandra well, but still didn't have much intimacy with the rest of her family, whom I had only visited a few times. I expected to get to a point where they all felt comfortable with my presence in the house, imagining that something like those afternoons with the women at the Simangos would establish itself with time. I learned, though, that these patterns of meals had little to do with me.

> It was one of the first days. I was sat on the floor with a basin of water and the lettuce while Sandra pounded the garlic and talked to me about her day's successful search for a job. I rinsed the salad and sliced the tomatoes and onions while she fried and cooked the rice, talking about this nightclub. She and Cleuza had got jobs at the same place, starting next weekend, she told me, interrupting herself to go fetch three small fish from the freezer. Discussing the details of the job and moving on to other, less joyful topics, she rinsed and fried the fish, seasoned the salad and, when the rice was cooked, filled a smaller pot with some of it, another one with some of the salad, carefully transferring some of the vinaigrette with it, put two of the three fish on a tray and set these on the coffee table with two plates, two glasses and a jug of water. She quietly knocked on her parents' bedroom door calling "*mamana*, dinner", and then walked out into the backyard, where her father had been sitting.
>
> Seu Bento walked in and Rosa came out of the bedroom, they sat on the sofa and seu Bento called "Claudia. Water to wash our hands". She came in with a jug, a basin and a cloth and washed her father's hands. He then served himself, while Sandra was out in the kitchen filling up another pot of rice. Seu Bento called after a couple of minutes:
>
> "Sandra."
>
> "Papá?"
>
> "*Sal*."
>
> She brought him the salt and went back to setting a glass of water, a plate with the last fish, the little pot of rice and the salad on the dinner table. This done, she told me to serve myself. I replied that I would wait to eat with her. Agreeing, she came couple of minutes later with an extra plate and a glass of water for herself, sat at the table and pushed the plate with the fish to me. I cut it in half, saying I would share it with her, and placed one of the halves on her plate. After we had served ourselves, she took the salad back to the kitchen. We ate in silence, like her parents, the only sound coming from the Brazilian soap opera on the television. Tequinha walked in with her son tied to her back, made a plate of rice and salad in the kitchen and took it out to their brother's room. The other sister, Nina, passed us on her way to the kitchen and

> then back, carrying a pot covered with two plates to the room that she shared with the other girls and the baby. Sandra asked if I wanted more salad, I accepted and got up to fetch the bowl. When the parents had finished, Claudia, the youngest sister, came in and cleared the coffee table, then after taking the plates out to be washed, went to the stove and served herself a plate of rice. Sandra told her to take some salad, which she did, and then sat on the floor with her plate on her lap, watching the television from a distance.

It was, then, in my ongoing efforts to be treated informally and not like a guest, that I came to understand, finally, that the order in the distribution of food was *internally* respected. Thus, asking outsiders to serve themselves first and offering them the best or largest portions were not simple gestures of hospitality, they were the momentary incorporation of those who come to eat in the internal order of the household. At parties, older guests came first, children were never included, and younger women came to work, not eat. This sequence reproduced their positions in households where the father was always served first, receiving the best portion, and the young daughters ate last, after having done their daily chores. What is more, the father's portion was accompanied by the entire formality of a meal (at the Bhila's, mamá sat with him as a rule, but it was only when she ate with him that she was served in this way by the girls). What I gradually came to understand was that my integration into the household did not depend on breaking these apparently formal markers of distance, but on the contrary, on accepting the position in which they were placing me – a process similar in some ways to that of becoming a daughter-in-law, as we shall see in the next section. What I didn't realise then was that, though I was no longer a frequent visitor, who helped out and ate with them sometimes, I was not a guest either. Sandra was, and this will become clearer, treating me as a member of the household who contributed substantially to the domestic economy[5] – second only to her parents.

The value and effects of eating together have been claimed to be universal. Maurice Bloch (1999), following in the footsteps of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Mary Douglas and Janet Carsten, analyses how commensality is a means of producing kinship as powerful as the exchange of bodily fluids. Working with various ethnographic examples from widely varied places, he suggests that the intake of the same kind of food, or food cooked in the same pot, is an intimate act that involves trust – or rather, overcoming mistrust – and binds people together permanently. By the same token, he argues, the refusal to eat together marks enmity and breaks the possibility of a bond. He proposes that an investigation of the different types of food and circumstances in which meals are consumed might enrich and diversify the understanding of how sharing substance produces kinship.

If the capacity of meals to produce ties is really universal, as suggested by Bloch, the types of ties and the ways they are produced are context specific. Sharing a meal is often assumed to

5 Besides paying rent, I routinely gave money for market and brought food into the pantry, as well as paying for some of the girls' individual expenses.

mean eating *together*, a meaning implicit in the word *co*mmensality; yet literature from different periods and places in Africa describes a structure of meals rather similar to how we ate in Claro do Lichanga. Henri Junod, in the first ethnographic description of the inhabitants of Southern Mozambique, tells of how men in the village sat with the other men and waited for each of their wives to bring them food and beer, and the number and quality of dishes that he received reflected his prestige (1912). Literary and biographic accounts of old African kingdoms, such as Chinua Achembe's *Things Fall Apart*, Rebecca Rehyer's *Zulu Woman*, and Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's *Ualalapi,* describe scenes like the ones Junod recounts, with men being brought food by all of their wives. The arrangement of these meals was a product of the spatial organisation of a household in a rural village, which allotted a hut and a backyard [*njungu*] for each wife where each of them cooked, and a central square where the men sat together. These gender-divided meals, with the best bits reserved for the men, are similar to Audrey Richards' description of the Bemba from Northern Rhodesia, where she details that, when eating from the same bowl, older male members would form a concavity in their maize mash and fill it with relish, while children would scoop up bits of mash and quickly dip them in the relish to moisten them. On the rare occasions when wives ate together with their husbands, she tells, they proceeded in the same manner as children, leaving the vegetables and occasional piece of meat for the men (1939). Ghanaian immigrants in London who contributed to a study of eating patterns recalled their lives in the homeland, remembering how food was put aside for their fathers and how they never ate together with them (Tuomainen 2009). If eating together produces kinship, then meals that are eaten in predefined separate groups, with each allotted different portions, are part of producing the structural hierarchy of the families. If substance binds people and produces a home, then the homes in Claro do Lichanga are ones with a hierarchical internal structure and their meals situate each member in a pecking order.

Even when it produces separation, sharing food is an intimate and bonding act. Meals in the households of Claro do Lichanga reflect the inherent tensions of intimate ties – precisely those presented in the extract of the wedding sermon in the introduction. The importance of commensality in the production of marriage, which was made clear in the minister's speech, was recognised and often repeated by senior relatives to young couples. When I discussed it with them, they replied that that's how you make a home [*é assim que se faz lar*], and explained that the longing for the family home in the early days of marriage is strong, and newly-weds find themselves missing their mothers' food. I saw it in the period that Sandra lived with Sergio: she was constantly criticised by him for going over to her mother's too often, even though she did not eat there, and cooked for him and the rest of the household with Cleuza. They told me, echoing the minister, that new couples must get through the first couple of years, and then the wife's food becomes that which will nourish and give them energy [*comida que anima*].

Yet, until couples have daughters big enough to cook for them, they do not sit together for meals and, unless the husband asks his wife to do so, she will bring him food, let him serve

himself, and busy herself again, delaying her own intake. In a different context, Marilyn Strathern described strategies of separation and avoidance as productive of "a quality of personhood", pointing at the reciprocal attention of the parties involved in establishing a cut, and thus relationally producing the social difference that comes to define them (Strathern 1988). This perspective on these movements is enlightening of how marriage and spouses are produced through sharing a meal *separately*.

The temporal and spatial separation that takes place in meals, besides reflecting each household member's differentiated position and entitlement within the family hierarchy, produces an everyday context for the performance of these differentiated roles and positions, or, as Ervin Goffman called it, "an interaction order" that produces distinctive qualities of social relationships through people's concrete interactional practices (1983). More than a simple expression of familial structures, the context of meals constitutes a social space in which mutual feelings are produced and members are recognised in their relational position. Meals are, in sum, daily rituals that reaffirm and morally legitimise families' internal differences. Despite ambiguous orientations and feelings towards other family members – and these will be unpacked in the next sections – the different rights and duties of each member are qualified as fair, that is, legitimated, in the performance of these daily rituals. Papá was respected, feared and adored by his wife and children and they felt that he truly deserved the treatment that he received, which, beyond affording him the best portion of food, was a demonstration of their respect for him.

Deference and submission

Compared to other paternal figures whom I met in the neighbourhood, and in the way his children perceived him, Seu Bento was not an authoritarian. His children found his judgment fair, even though they feared it, and they genuinely wanted to serve him. Many of the residents to whom I spoke described a much more ambiguous relationship with their fathers, often characterised as "mean men", or men that they feared to the point of trembling, or worse, as drunks who did not take care of their families, mistreated their mothers, or abandoned them for someone else. The authority of a father, in sum, is a high moral quality (i.e. a virtue) and it is sought in a husband. A good partner makes decisions for his wife, and children, and his orders are received as an expression of care.

This relationship of respect and fear towards the father and his role as the one who must watch, protect, decide and provide for the family can be found throughout the anthropological literature on relations between fathers and offspring in patriarchal societies in Southern Africa (e.g. Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Sathiparsad 2008; Niehaus 2013). While the father's position is often marked by distance, the mother offers a relationship predicated on warmth and closeness (or, in Radcliffe-Brown's terminology, *indulgence*), even when she also wields authority. Rosa

was an example of a successfully established maternal role: while their relationship was marked by obedience and serviceability and the girls painted her nails, cleaned her shoes, tidied her clothes, and would immediately stop whatever they were doing to attend to her, the children were significantly closer to her than to their father, often spending time chatting when doing daily activities together. While Seu Bento addressed them exclusively in Portuguese, they talked in Changana with mamá.

Since the description of the responsibilities of the village chief in Henri Junod's classic ethnography, it is well established that, in this region, the relationship to the father is ideally defined by deference and respect (Niehaus2013; Radcliffe Brown 1952), but that finding a balance between the abuse of authority and weak leadership is not easily accomplished (Junod 1912:409). What I saw in the daily performances within the Bhila household was that Seu Bento's position demanded, more than the cultivation of certain personal qualities, a continuous effort from all parts to maintain it. His authority was essentially relational, that is, the positions of subordination and obedience had to be embraced by the other household members. That was accomplished in the formal terms of address employed by the children, the lowering of the gaze, hushed voice and immediate responses to his calls. It was also clear in the retrospective approval of all of his decisions, even when they had at the time disapproved of these same decisions.

This subservience was not only affirmative of their parents' authority, but also shows how young women actively produced their own place within the household – within their own, and, as we shall see in the next section, within their in-laws'. That means that they demanded recognition of their position of subordination and refused deferential treatment, something that I saw on a visit to Sergio's kin:

> We came for dinner, bringing some fish. The garden was dark, the women of the house were very shy and I couldn't find a way to get them to let me help with the cooking. I tried for a while, then resorted to putting Mojaju to sleep. Sandra was obviously more skilful in taking on some tasks and stuck around. When things were nearly ready, she sat down with me and, a few moments later, a girl from the house came with a basin and a jug to wash our hands. I have rarely seen such outrage. Sandra refused adamantly to have her hands washed, and speaking angrily, got up and went to do it herself in the basin where the salad had been rinsed.

Although I assumed, at the time, that Sandra's reaction was a form of rebellion against the hierarchical structure, it turned out that this was not the case. She took offense at being treated as if she were in a higher position than the young women from that house, or, as she explained to me later, "I helped them cook and they are coming to wash *my* hands?!". She did not, however, oppose deference when she thought it appropriate. After she got a full-time job, back at her parents', her little sisters started to come to her instead of their parents for small school fees and the odd individual request – something they had been doing with me since I moved in. They also started to bring her tea when she arrived from work early, or set aside a portion of food for her dinner and, when she came home, they brought her warm water for her bath and

sat the food and plate for her while she washed. She, in turn, would call them to iron her shirt or clean her shoes in the morning before heading off to work. By virtue of her salary, she was then in a similar position to the one I had come to assume.

The importance of economic resources and specifically, of being able to provide for others in defining one's position in the household is not coincidental. Yet, such material concerns do not operate in isolation; rather, they overlap with other criteria such as gender and life stage. Sandra and I helped and paid for collective expenses and individual requests and, importantly, as we saw before, we were "married" women. The capacity to support others is the actual value of economic resources and should not be a way of disentangling oneself from dependence, but instead, used to strengthen these same ties.

In the case of the young women of Claro do Lichanga, they worked, with or without the possibility of contributing economically, to enmesh themselves in relationships of dependence and place themselves within the prescribed and ordered hierarchical positions, that is, they strived to occupy their positions rather than to break free of them or achieve a higher status. This was also true when young women moved in with their in-laws, but there, their positions demanded other (and more) effort and investment. They became dependent on other relations, and these were essential for their domestic insertion. They needed parents-in-law to assert their authority, they needed the other women in the house to make room for them, and they needed their mothers-in-law's approval. Being new, and from the outside, made this a tricky business. They often wanted to run away, and expressed a desire for freedom from family constrains. On a daily basis though, they worked hard to become enmeshed in the very fabric that so repelled them.

In the husband's house

Daughters-in-law

Sandra was Bento and Rosas's eldest daughter and, according to her parents, she had always been dutiful. She did well in school and worked evenings in hair salons, and she always performed her domestic chores willingly [*com gosto*]. She moved in with Sergio in the same spirit. The first time I met her, she was braiding a client's hair in the backyard with her three-week-old baby tied to her back. Sandra took pride in saying that she came out of labour ready to go back to her domestic chores[6]. At the first party that I attended, Mojaju was precisely 40 days old – it was the celebration of the end of his seclusion – and Sandra worked from beginning to the end with the other young women, serving all the guests and senior family members without

6 There is status in giving birth easily and painlessly, as well as in being hardworking – qualities that have been valued since Junod was around (Junod 1912; Chapman 2006).

ever sitting down. Cleuza received Sandra well. She criticised her sometimes, and gossiped now and then about her cooking and child rearing (which might seem inoffensive, but is often precisely what sparks intense conflicts that lead to accusations of witchcraft, see Niehaus 2013). Mostly, though, Cleuza guided and protected Sandra, and they soon established a good relationship. They took turns cooking for their household, Sandra also began to take care of Sergio's two younger siblings and they did the domestic chores together.

The Simangos' household recognised Sandra's hard work, in fact, they criticised her on occasion for not taking things a little easier and staying home with the baby until he was one or two years old, instead of restlessly planning work and studies. She did not listen to their advice, but that did not mean that she wasn't attentive to and respectful of older family members and of those residents who had been there since before her arrival. Despite occasional conflicts and the odd bit of gossip, she was in the grandmother's and the uncle and aunt's good books. They supported her relationship with Sergio and, aware of their troubles, advised them and hoped that they could make it work. Support from the in-laws is very important and newcomers strive to achieve it, a difficult task that involves patience and determination and even then, may not work out.

It did for Cleuza, who had moved in before Sandra. She was also on good terms with the Simangos' – better terms, actually. Like Sandra, she had moved in when she fell pregnant by Ícaro, Sergio's cousin who also lived with their grandmother. Their daughter was a year or so older than Mojaju, Sergio and Sandra's son. Cleuza was studying psychology when she found out that she was pregnant, but she paused her studies after the birth. Ícaro worked and studied while she was at home with the baby for the first year. Now she wanted to go back to university, but had delayed because they couldn't afford the outstanding fees. Upon her arrival, Cleuza took charge of the household, which had previously been *disordered* [*em desordem*]. The grandmother, Ceres, spent long periods in her garden, leaving Sergio, Ícaro, Nono and Odin on their own. Ícaro's mother often dropped by to lend a hand, but "she had her own house to watch". With Cleuza there, rooms were swept, things were tidy, there were daily meals, and the two boys had fresh clothes and were on time for school.

Becoming a daughter-in-law, in sum, was a process that women living with their kin actively worked for. They complained, to me and sometimes to one another, and declared their plans and desire to move on, making it seem as if their position among their new kin was something they wanted to escape, and that the self-built home (far away from them) was how they actually envisioned their lives, as opposed to their present situation. They found it hard, but they embraced it, in their daily work and in their attitude and treatment of their affines, and they invested in establishing their place within the household and within the family, even when that meant a place of subservience and ambiguity.

Mothers-in-law

The relationship with the mother-in-law is central to the process of becoming a wife. Difficult and potentially dangerous, these relationships are nonetheless inescapable, and they begin when a woman moves into her husband's house. Even if they were not officially married, cohabiting couples were typically called spouses [*esposo, marido/esposa, mulher*], and the husband's kin were sometimes described as in-laws [*sogros, cunhados*], sometimes as "those from *his* house", but most often referred to using kin terms as if they and their partners occupied the same kin position. Thus, young women that went to live with their partners' kin entered the husbands' sibling set. They were addressed by the young, unmarried women that still lived at home as *mana* [big sister], they addressed their parents-in-law as mãe/mamá and pai/papa, and the relationships that they establish emulate the same patterns.

So for instance, Cleuza was extremely respectful of Ícaro's mother, Radja, a strict, strong woman who did not give anyone but her granddaughter any license. Even though Cleuza went to live with her mother-in-law for a few months when the baby was born, the respectful distance was never breached. They got along, Cleuza listened to Radja's advice regarding childrearing and let her take care of the baby when she was around, which demonstrated her respect. Cleuza's relationship with vovó Ceres was, in contrast, very close. Besides processing the produce that came from the garden and taking over the grandmother's sweet stand in front of the house, Cleuza was also genuinely affectionate towards her, and when vovó was home, they sat together shucking the maize or shelling the peanuts and chatting, laughing softly now and then.

While relationships between a man and his mother-in-law are, in agnatic Africa and elsewhere, typically relationships of avoidance (Junod 1912; Freud 1913; Arno 1976; Stasch 2003), marked by a strong formality of interactions, taboos, fear and often dislike; women and their mothers-in-law, meanwhile, establish relationships of respect and parental authority that tend to emulate and gradually become a parent-child relationship[7]. In Mozambique, relationships with grandparents are, in contrast, marked by ease and affection (cf. Radcliffe-Brown's joking relationships [1956]), while parent-child relationships are marked by authority and obedience, as we have seen with the Bhilas. In line with Radcliffe Brown's classic analysis, grandmothers

7 Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, in his structural-functionalist analysis of kinship patterns, coined the term avoidance relationships as a typological category that reflects prescribed social norms of behaviour in specific family relations. Avoidance is typically practised by those in an inherently tense relationship, most often but not always, affines, and was understood by Radcliffe-Brown to be one of the culturally normalised strategies of conflict avoidance (1952). This type of relationship has been found amongst in-laws of different generations across ethnographic regions spanning from Amazonia to Melanesia (e.g. Bell 1962; Kloos 1971; Schwartz 1973; de Vienne 2012).

7 We will see in chapter 2 that initiation rites and the bridal preparation ritual both teach the girl to please and direct their husbands.

in Claro de Lichanga called their grandchildren *meu marido/minha esposa* [my spouse], weaving thereby a relationship of same-generation alliance that inverted the avoidance rule and afforded them a space of play (idem). Great-grandparents, in their turn, called their great-grandchildren "my brother/sister-in-law", extending the alliance terminology and affording them an even more playful relationship, as is the pattern between siblings-in-law of opposite gender (cf. the *tinamus*, in Junod 1912).

Daughters-in-law, we have seen, ought ideally to occupy the place of an actual daughter when incorporated into the husband's kin group. Cleuza's relationship to Ícaro's mother and grandmother, fitted perfectly into the patterns of local kinship structures. It has been pointed out that relationships of avoidance, or "tense relationships" (Stasch 2003) are not an expression of refusal, but a specific way of cultivating a tie. In the case of men and their mothers-in-law, the relationship often stands as a reminder of marital responsibility, being a relation of intense reciprocal engagement rather than a rejected relationship (Arno 1976; Merlan 1997). Even though the style of avoidance differs in the case of mothers and daughters-in-law in virilocal systems (cf. Ferguson 1999:201), the same is true for their relationship. In this case, the mother-in-law mediates the young woman's incorporation into the husband's kin. One expression of her role is that, in Mozambican Portuguese, the husband's kin is called *sograria*, a collective noun derived from the word for mother-in-law (Passador 2009; Jardim 2007). The mother-in-law thus stands as both a tutor and an obstacle, because she was originally an outsider too, and has gone through the same process of being absorbed into the lineage. This is clear in the fact that traditionally, in the absence of the mother-in-law, new wives would live with and cook for the senior co-wife (Junod 1912; Rosario 2008). At the same time, the mother is responsible for protecting her son and making sure he marries well, that is, she must not allow a "bad element" from the outside to come inside (cf. Geschiere 2013). This is outspoken among them. Women who lived with grownup sons told me that they needed to make sure that their sons did not bring "a lazy one" home, or that the woman that he married would be able to feed him properly and take proper care of his children. Radja, when I asked her, told me, confirming the salience of these traits attention, that Cleuza was "no problem", that she was "a good mother and a good cook". While they must protect their sons from a bad match, having daughters-in-law is also an important element of a woman's life and, as we shall see, of the complete composition of her social personhood (Passador 2009) since part of her duty is, together with her husband, to raise [*fazer crescer*] and see her children married [*fazer casar*] (cf. Jardim [2007], who reports the same use of language in a different Mozambican context).

This dual role could also be abused. Daughters-in-law in rural settings were often treated as an unpaid work force (Bérnard da Costa 2017), and there are reports of conditions similar to slavery, in which they had to take on the bulk of house and field work, being often mistreated by the mother-in-law and even by the husbands' sisters (idem). Sometimes resentment and suspicion would endure for a lifetime, ending in accusations of witchcraft and in mistreatment of

the mother-in-law in their old age (Passador 2009). While I did not hear accounts as dramatic as these, the young women that I met were still in the process of carving out their place in the household, of being accepted into the network of relations in order finally to move from the position of outsider to kin, a process that involved, as we have seen, the maintenance of appropriate distances that not only showed respect and established hierarchical positions but also offered protection.

Yet, this is an ambiguous ideal, and this ambiguity helps explain young women's dissatisfaction with their current situation. Relationships with affinal kin must necessarily go through the mother-in-law, a delicate relationship that can tip into exploitation and abuse. Not surprisingly, it was sometimes, for many young women, a relationship that they wanted to rid themselves from. This desire, though, was not actually for freedom, but rather, for finding the right balance and establishing the appropriate distance.

Secrecy

These social distances were not only achieved through displays of respect, but also through the maintenance of certain secrets. Cleuza knew about Sergio's extramarital relationships, which she kept from Sandra (but not from me), and when he failed to do so, advised Sandra to accept it. Sandra, in turn, found out about Ícaro having a girlfriend [*amiga*], which she never mentioned to Cleuza. But, most of all, they had to keep their marital conflicts and criticism of their partners well hidden from the elders. If a newcomer starts criticising her partner, she will necessarily provoke suspicion. People commonly say that "a good wife makes a good husband", which puts the responsibility on her: if he is not behaving properly, it can be an indication of her failure. Thus, rather than complain, she must rectify things[8]. On top of that, the act of saying bad things *about* him can attract bad things *to* him, turn family members against each other and promote disharmony in the household. The "power of the word" (Horton 1967) is taken seriously in Mozambique (as elsewhere c.f. Taussig 1993:48-58), and what one says or wishes can become true. This is clear when misfortune occurs and someone is suspected, or directly accused of having wished for it. Thus, resentment and anger must be kept hidden, or the resentful may be held responsible for any unfortunate events.

Sandra slipped up a couple of times. Once, after finding a bottle of homemade medicine in her bedroom, she went to vovó Ceres, asking her if she knew what it was. The grandmother did not, so Sandra told her that Sergio had been bewitched by one of his girlfriends, a woman from a South African Zionist church – a church where people learned to turn other people into zombies. That was a mistake. The grandmother's blood pressure skyrocketed, she rested for a

8 We will see in chapter 2 that initiation rites and the bridal preparation ritual both teach the girl to please and direct their husbands along the right path, in techniques that can basically be summarised as cooking food that makes him come home for dinner and offering pleasure that makes him sleep in her bed.

bit and then, without saying a word, left for her garden [*machamba*], where she stayed for several weeks. The episode was recounted in every single subsequent account of Sandra's misdeeds. This and the time when, in the heat of an argument, she said to Sergio that she wished him misfortune. That was proof that Sandra was trouble [*confusão*].

As elsewhere in Africa, wives are always the first to be suspected of witchcraft. They are the essential node in weaving alliance and securing the continuity of the agnatic group (Lévi-Strauss 1967) and in Southern Mozambique, they are traditionally responsible for the group's reproduction and subsistence, being the ones that bear children, cultivate and cook. They are also a powerful resource for re-establishing spiritual harmony, as they can be offered in marriage to a dissatisfied ancestor (Passador 2010; Pfeiffer 2002). The central role occupied by the woman makes her both powerful and feared, and to avoid being the target of suspicions, or held responsible for any adversity, women often adopt strategies that will protect them from accusations of witchcraft. As a rule, and in testament to Geschiere's claim that secrecy and mistrust are intrinsic to intimacy (2013), women tend to produce a space within the household that will allow them to keep some things to themselves. Isak Niehaus' ethnography of a Shangan man in South Africa tells of how, when things began to go bad for him, his wife started to modulate their interactions in a different way: she avoided him more and "stopped telling him things" (2013:106). In Mozambique, women would often keep some of their plans and desires, and parts of their lives (such as precise earnings, some specific friends and, importantly, knowledge of family secrets) to themselves. One way of doing that is to be "chilled" [*tranquila*] – like Cleuza. She was seen by the other family members as eternally patient, subservient and loving. I knew that she was very eager to have her own house, desperate to have more money, anxious about her prospects of going back to university, and did not think that living with the in-laws was ideal – she was especially unhappy about having to take care of Sergio's brothers. She was one of the ones who explained to me that being a young woman in the house of one's husband means that "you're worth nothing, you come last, if ever". Yet, she "did what she had to do" and managed to keep these thoughts from significant others.

Authority and recognition

The desire to move out of the husband's house was not a desire for disentanglement. On the contrary, these relationships were always (re)activated, not only through servitude but also through the demand for recognition. Marital conflicts were not always blamed on the wife, and part of carving out one's place was about demanding the respect that they deserved. That meant that, while everyday conflicts, dissatisfactions and bad feelings should be kept from others, serious conflicts required the elders' authority to be solved. Cleuza and Sandra both referred to the grandmother for advice and help with the raising of children and religious or spiritual guidance and, because both Sergio's parents are dead, Sandra referred to the eldest uncle's

authority and to Ícaro's mother's advice when her relationship with Sergio was on the rocks. As in traditional settings in Southern Mozambique, the elder members of the family were responsible for the family harmony and marital conflicts were treated as a collective problem: I never heard of a situation of divorce that did not involve one or several family meetings, and several cases of domestic violence or other serious misconduct were also taken to the parents-in-law for rectification. This was often the case with Greta.

Greta, the third young woman living in the house, had two daughters, and Adolfo, her partner, worked ironing clothes in a wealthy household in the city centre. As mentioned, she was not part of the Simango's family, but relations between the three women grew closer over the time they lived together and she often took part in the collective chores, occupying in many instances a place similar to the other two. When there were festivities in the house, Greta helped with the preparation, and Cleuza and Sandra also lent a hand at Adolfo's family house in similar circumstances. On a daily basis, they did their domestic chores side by side in the backyard, cleaned the bathroom and the outside area collectively, shared or borrowed utensils and staples, went to market together, and watched over and took care of each other's children. They sometimes took tea[9] together when they were the only ones in the house, and children sometimes ate another woman's food. The actual cooking of evening meals, though, was kept separate. The only time that they decided to cook together resulted in a massive fight, with Adolfo accusing Greta of "cooking for another man", i.e. Ícaro. Adolfo was, in general, short-tempered, very controlling, had a knack for drinking too much and the tendency to become violent, so Greta frequently sought her parents-in-law when things got out of hand and she needed their authority to put Adolfo back in line.

Greta, like Sandra, Cleuza, and most mothers of small children in Claro do Lichanga, had lived with Adolfo's family for eight years before moving into the annex. Although they had construction plans, the move was a result of a falling out with Adolfo's brother's wife, a newcomer. Adolfo had many siblings who had partners and children and, as the women put it, a full house means a lot of work. The newcomer, however, was "lazy"[10], and after a year of frustrations and conflicts it was decided, collectively, that it was best that Adolfo and Greta found their own place. Ideally, they would have moved to their own house, as they had actually bought a plot in the outskirts of Maputo, but it had been sold twice, and the case was still unresolved[11]. After a long period quarrelling and still unable to settle it, they decided to rent for the time being. Greta remained close to Adolfo's family. They attended church together, she regularly visited them with her daughters, was always available whenever they needed a hand,

9 Tea in Mozambique ranges from black tea with sugar to a meal with for instance, chips, salad and bread.

10 See footnote 2

11 A common situation in Maputo, where land transactions are officially illegal: plots are often sold to two or more buyers.

and she turned to her parents-in-law for guidance and help. I met her mother-in-law, who she presented to me as *minha mãe* [my mother], for the first time in one of these situations, when she stopped by to teach Greta how to prepare a different kind of *xima* [maize purée].

Greta's place in Adolfo's family was that of a daughter-in-law, a position respected and maintained by both sides, and the fact of her having moved out did not contradict her embeddedness in the family – even when the moving had been provoked by conflicts within the household. Her ties with the in-laws were continuously cultivated and made permanent. Like her, women endeavoured to make and secure their place in the household, precisely so as to be able to take their position with them after moving away.

The past in the present

Even though women wanted to carve out their place among their in-laws, the frequent expression of the idea that in "the times of the grandmothers" women were first properly wedded and then taken directly to their own house conveyed these women's desire for a spatial distance from them. Yet, these distances were a misconception and an idealisation that contradicted actual practices present in the periphery of Maputo. Despite the differences between rural and urban life styles and the changes that have happened over the last three generations, marriage nowadays was, rather than a break with the past, an adaptation to urban settings that held many continuities with traditional forms of living. In rural settings, traditionally, a girl was properly wedded (though the payment could be negotiated and was often made in instalments) before moving from her kin's village. But the saying still went "don't build your wife a hut before she has given you children" (Junod 1912), and they thus spent a year cooking for their mother-in-law or the first wife, in the case of her absence, before her husband would build her hut and she could cook her own food (Bagnol 2006). Today, despite the last four decades of increased migration and rural exodus that have driven men to move from their place of origin and live far from their kin, it is still common for newly married women spend a period in the house of the man's family, often without him, before coming to live with the husband (Bérnard da Costa 2007), and it is also common that they reside permanently in their husband's homeland while he works in the city or in South Africa. Several residents of CL who had wives *na terra* [back in the homeland], and I also visited a woman in Bilene whose husband was in Maputo. Cleuza too went to live with Radja, her mother-in-law, when the baby was born. I knew women in CL that had daughters living in South Africa and always stayed with the husband's kin when they came to Mozambique, sometimes skipping a visit to their own kin. In sum, couples and families kept on producing kinship ties with the man's entire family through extended stays, and kept on visiting the husband's homeland even after the death of his parents[12].

12 We will see more about the relationship with the homeland and the place of burial in the next chapter.

Living with the in-laws is thus not a simple consequence of urban life constraints that forces couples to wait for the time they will be able to afford their own house. Contrary to claims made by researchers working in other parts of Mozambique (Honwana 2012; Manuel 2014), in informal neighbourhood of today's Maputo, young women's dissatisfaction with their lives and the plans, as well as dreams of moving on, are an expression less of a rejection of their position as subservient, dependent daughters-in-law, and more of the desire to secure this precise position. Living with affinal kin was embraced, with its difficulties, as an important phase in the production of the marriage. The young women of Claro do Lichanga made use of the first years of cohabitation to weave themselves into in the fabric of their new family, and to produce kinship bonds for themselves and their children. Rather than aspiring for autonomy, they were creating co-dependence and laying the grounds for a future as their partner's wife, a future in which kinship bonds will be permanently tended. These young women are not waiting to live their adulthood. The phrase they used to explain it to me expresses it very precisely that they were eating the mangos, even though they were still green.

Mangos out of season

While the first years of the relationship were an important phase, it was also a difficult one, as we have seen. And even though Sandra and Cleuza developed good relationships with their affinal kin, they were full of insecurities. That is because, despite the fact that the relationship depended a great deal on being on good (and appropriate) terms with the new family, women – unsurprisingly – also had to make things work with their partners. Demands, expectations and disappointments, all the things they were discussing in the backyard, at the start of this chapter, preyed on their minds. When women said that they couldn't afford to wait at home for a man to come and marry them, they were referring to female competition, a central and real threat to a relationship in this phase. Their partners, like most young men in the area, had extramarital relationships that ranged between occasional and casual to more regular forms of infidelity. Frustration with their men's unfaithfulness was a constant among the young women I knew, and conversations often went on about how late and how often they stayed out. They often pointed to women that we passed on the street, saying "that one that wants my husband" and explained to me that women are unreliable by nature[13] and, given the opportunity, will steal your partner without thinking twice.

Women's fear of female rivals might seem to suggest that what they really wanted was to be their man's exclusive partner, and their jealousy looked like a demand for faithfulness. Sandra was an exemplary case of such established rivalry with other women. She had constant jealous

13 Contributing to the generalised mistrust and suspicion of women.

conflicts with Sergio. Strong tempered, she confronted him for never being home and complained that he did not show her any respect. Whenever we talked about it, she would tell me that when consumed by jealousy it was difficult to control the waves of anger, and even though she knew better than that, they ended up in heated arguments and sometimes violent fights. She surely felt sexual jealousy when confronted with proof of Sergio's affairs, and she freely admitted it to me. In general, though, she explained her dissatisfaction by listing his other faults and saying that their fights were actually not about his girlfriends.

This was confusing for me at first, attesting to the complexities involved in the relationship to one's husband's multiple partners, a complexity also present in the political history of the place. The south of Mozambique is traditionally polygynous, but the present constitution criminalises polygyny (in the New Family Law of 2004; see also Rosario 2008). The legal framework is, in fact, an expression of the way in which ideological influences concerning family and romantic partnership to which the country has been exposed over the last one and a half century have discursively established a triangular connection between monogamy, civilisational progress and women's rights: practices imposed by colonial Christian rules were followed by Afrosocialism's ideology of the New Man, which promulgated monogamous familial constellations. Added to that, the soft power of media representations of romantic love that poured into Claro do Lichanga's houses through the omnipresent Brazilian soap operas, branded exclusivity as a marker of commitment. These influences trickled down and account for a generational shift detected among upper class urbanites, who have embraced monogamy as an ideal and a norm, even if rarely as a practice (cf. Manuel 2014). In Claro do Lichanga, however, ideals of exclusivity were in my experience circumscribed to quotations of romantic songs and proverbs. When it came to actual, real-life relationships, I never heard any explicit declarations of a desire for fidelity, not even when I asked directly. In practice, varied forms of multiple relationships were still fairly common, including multiple marriages. And closer attention to young women's actual complaints and demands reveals that what they were asking for was not exclusivity. The markers of commitment that they wanted and that would give them security, were of another sort.

Boundaries

When young women complained about their partners' infidelity, they either explained their dissatisfaction in terms of its cost for the household or on the men's carelessness in hiding it. In Sandra's case, she complained of both. "It is expensive to have many girlfriends", she told me. That was why Sergio, despite spending day and night on the rickshaw, did not contribute a penny to the house or the baby's expenses, leaving her to scrape together her meagre earnings from braiding hair in the backyard to pay for their share in the market and to buy nappies. This, women unanimously agreed, was lack of *respect.* In the many conversations I had and heard

about what is expected from a good husband, the term was repeatedly used. Respect, women explained to me, was expressed primarily in bringing money home. That didn't mean that they weren't understanding of the difficulties involved in earning enough to feed the family; they did not judge men for losing jobs or not making enough for periods at time, nor for having a bad day. They only felt disrespected when men spent the money elsewhere, because a man's first responsibility was to provide for the household and maintain his family. This definition of respect cut across social strata and was similarly conceived among middle and upper-class urbanites in Maputo. Indeed, it was so central to their sexual and romantic activities that Sandra Manuel, in her study of these patterns, develops an analytical apparatus she calls the *politics of respect* (Manuel 2014).

Extramarital sex, though, or what they called *play* [*brincadeiras*], was not condemned; rather the opposite. Men that didn't have other women were depreciatively called *matrecos* [tamed men] by both men and women alike. Salomão, when discussing this topic with me, said that the feeling that they need to show their virility by seducing multiple women sits very deep in men. At the same time, he told me, having casual sex, flirting or carrying on a light affair is experienced as a relief from daily pressures and understood as "their right to relax and enjoy life a little". This perception of masculinity attests to an understanding that, far from having to be faithful, men were entitled to have multiple relationships.

Although widely accepted as a masculine trait, young women quite often felt aggrieved at having to see or know about their partners' affairs. It was a sign of care, for instance, when women avoided relating what they had accidentally seen on the street to a man's partner, and a direct provocation when they confronted a woman with such information. Sandra, despite her manas' efforts to protect her, was constantly exposed to the sight of Sergio with a girlfriend on the street, or to provocative messages sent to her by other women. Sergio, however, did nothing about it, considering it Sandra's job not to make a fuss [*não criar problema*]. The other women of the household, though not fully condemning his behaviour, recognised that Sergio allowed Sandra to "see too much", and that men must know how to "keep these things outside the house". Even though they were critical of his indiscreetness, this was mainly expressed to me when I asked directly what they thought. In fact, none of the women ever criticised or advised him to be more careful. What they did, rather, was repeatedly tell Sandra to be patient and to pretend not to see [*fingir que não vê*]. Every time she lost her temper, either at the Simangos or at home, women said "think of your son, Sandra", reminding her that it is important for a child to be raised in his own house, that is, in his father's lineage. What both old and young women explained to me was that *they* should be the wiser party and give men time to ripen [*amadurecer*, which in Portuguese also means to become mature]. Sandra tried to listen, but argued that it was difficult to manage her temper and accept Sergio's behaviour. Although agreeing that she was not as soft as Cleuza, she also argued, reasonably enough, that none of the other women had to put up with what she did.

All parts of Sandra's story led me to think that even if actual exclusivity was not necessary, an illusion of faithfulness needed to be preserved, a job accomplished when each part does its job – women *pretend not to see* and men *do it outside* – and establish appropriate distances within the household. But that was not what she was requesting. However tricky balancing multiple relationships might be, the balance was not related to either real or illusory exclusivity. What women were saying was that men could have their play *outside* [*fazer fora*], that is, casual relationships *should not interfere with the home* – and girlfriends sending messages to provoke their wives is thus a clear failure to make sure they didn't, just as was men spending the money that should be directed towards the household on play. In reality, both justifications were one and the same: what they were demanding was the preservation of the boundary around the domestic sphere, a marking of limits, something that could be successfully achieved in different ways. Arsênio, Cleuza's partner, for example, managed it by being extremely discrete about his casual relationships. He did not talk about it with kinsmen and never showed anything but complete devotion to his partner and daughter, often being taken for a *matreco*. Adolfo, Greta's partner, on the other hand, was open about his sexual affairs, often stayed out late or until the next morning and regularly flirted with other women in front of his wife. He managed to keep her from complaining by attending to her needs, such as renting a room to resolve the conflicts between her and his sister-in-law, and being extremely protective and possessive of her. Jair, a more affluent man, spent most Sunday nights out, but came home in the morning with a bundle of notes that he would lay on the table before retiring to the bedroom. All three, unlike Sergio, keep their home and their wives.

The separation between the domestic domain and the outside is a well-known dimension of the cosmological order of many societies in Southern Africa and elsewhere, where the bush [*mato*] is often described as dark, malign and chaotic (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Geschiere 1997; West 2005; Nielsen 2008; Niehaus 2013). Among the traditional Thonga, the area outside the compound was symbolically perceived as dangerous, and the maintenance of the boundary between the village and the bush was central in organising the social and the spiritual realms. The underlying logic was that the world must be ordered to become inhabitable, an order accomplished through various ritual and daily practices such as sweeping the yard, fencing the compound and taking sandals off before entering the huts and the square (Junod 1912; Feliciano 1998). These, which we will explore more closely in the next chapter, are all practices kept-up by latter-day urbanites, and performed with the same intent (Meneses 2001, Nielsen 2008, 2011). In keeping with this logic, that which lies outside, such as a casual sexual affair, is necessarily a threat: it has no defined place and thus can potentially destabilise the order of the household. Concretely, a girlfriend that is not kept outside the house might potentially steal the place of the official wife. Thus, what women were asking was for a clear separation between their partners' affairs and their domestic lives, keeping the boundaries clean in order to protect the home and the position of family members.

Rather than being an equivalent of the public sphere, the street is a space of the undefined. Men can keep their play outside, that is, keep it casual and unbinding. But they can also make it an established relationship by bringing it into the domestic sphere and contracting a second marriage. If this is to be done properly, however, he must provide for both and mark his commitment to each of them accordingly. At the life-stage in which the young couples we have encountered found themselves, though, they could hardly maintain one relationship properly, and in such a situation, play and girlfriends represented pleasure, fun, and, clearly, risk: they might prevent them from becoming proper men who supported their families and invested in their future houses. Men that spent everything on fun and pleasure without having an actual family and a household were considered lost [*estar perdido*], a fairly common case, including several of the rickshaw drivers who worked the same corner as Sergio: they often had illegitimate children with multiple women, had dropped out of school, still lived with their parents and spent all their little money and time on drinks and play. This behaviour was not perceived as acceptable. For play to be considered a man's right, he must be "growing his family and their house".

Contemporary peri-urban settings presented a specific set of demands, expectations and temptations for young men and women. Men in Claro do Lichanga experienced more pressure to succeed financially and at the same time had easier access to the immediate pleasures of the street and to superfluous consumption. Women, on the other hand, struggled with insecurity, and the phase before having their own house and being wedded had been prolonged and grown more challenging. These new circumstances, rather than leading to the adoption of modern, urban ideals, were managed along with values and practices inherited from older generations and shared with rural contexts in the South of Mozambique. Despite new contingencies, couples were fundamentally working to order the domestic space and take their appropriate positions within it, protecting it from the undefined and threatening outside.

Legitimate wives

Considering the dynamics surrounding respect and the maintenance of boundaries around the couple and the domestic space, it is no wonder that the demands that young women placed on their partners, apparently motivated by a desire for exclusivity, were in fact the same found among older generations and, remarkably, among women that had cowives. Adamastor Simango, Sergio's oldest uncle, had two wives who lived in different houses, in two different neighbourhoods. The first wife, Imaculada, was the only one who accompanied him to all family gatherings and events. Responding to my questions about his second household, she told me that she did not have any reason to complain because she was "fat" (i.e. well fed), their house construction, in what is considered a good neighbourhood, was progressing well, and her

husband was never away for too long. Tio Adamastor explained that Imaculada was the first wife and must therefore be at his side for social events, but that when it came to presents and time together, he made sure to share equally between the two of them. That, he added, was the way of things: "the first wife came first, the order must follow the sequence [*a ordem deve seguir a sequência*]. She must always come first". At the same time, he claimed that things were different in the time of his father, when women were less demanding and more docile. This impression comes from his recalling the way that his father, mother and co-mother structured their relationship, which, according to everyone in the family, was subject to old Alceu's unquestioned authority. In Alceu's case, both his wives lived in the same two-room reed house. Tio Adamastor recalled that they all, children and mothers, slept together in one of the rooms and papá each night called one of the wives into the other. Although they lived in the same house and shared the same room, the hierarchy of wives was maintained and could still be seen. Wilemina, the second wife, was very respectful of and extremely loyal to Ceres, always by her side during social events and treating her like an older sister.

Cohabitation is one of the forms of structuring polygynous households in the city, but is nowadays less common than keeping two houses. Sometimes the first wife joins the husband's kin in the homeland and he establishes a second household in the city, other times still men go to work in South Africa and form another family there (which Alceu also did). Men that were considered good, or proper, managed not to abandon the first family and kept on providing for them. They also established the hierarchy between first, second and third wives correctly, clearly marking the position of each of them, even when they lived more permanently with the second or third ones. The importance for wives of feeling respected was still the same: their position must be recognised, and the boundaries of the domestic space must be safeguarded.

How to grow a mango tree

A lot of men's excessive play, lack of money and general failure to provide for and protect their wives was excused on the grounds of age. Aware that they picked their mangos green, women repeated to anyone in need of advice, Sandra being a regular target, that "men will ripen if you give them time"; "men are like children", and that when they stray, a wife must endure and wait for them, and they will eventually come home. And even though men were judged for abandoning their families for another woman, failing to provide for his children and spending time and money on superfluous pleasures, and establishing a family was essential to a man's social status and value, women were held responsible for a lot of men's misbehaviours and, if abandoned, often blamed for "not being able to keep their man at home". Conversely, when their partners were good, they took credit and felt like coproducers of men's virtues. What they often preached was that good wives can bring out good qualities in a man, or allow them to

surface, by being virtuous themselves, and two central qualities in a young wife were *endurance* [*aguentar*] and *patience* [*ter paciência*].

Sandra tried. She was herself hard working and assiduous, and came into the household, as we've seen, on good terms with the other women, joining their church, taking part in the domestic chores and sharing family life. She had also been a committed girlfriend over the preceding years, bringing Sergio food at the barracks and giving him moral support to endure the hardships, giving him presents and helping him financially when he was having problems with debts. After the baby came, though, it became hard to "endure" and "to pretend she did not see" and, try though she might, it was always in her face. Things came to a head when, after catching wind of Sergio paying the rent of a girlfriend of his and taking his laundry for this girlfriend to wash, she packed her bags and moved back to her parents'. Nearly eight months later, when Sandra was still living at her parents but in regular and sometimes affectionate contact with Sergio, she found that Lorena[14], this same girlfriend, was pregnant, which prompted Sandra to congratulate him on his forthcoming child and ask him never to contact her again.

Her mother, Rosa, had always known about their conflicts and, even while advising her to be patient, guaranteed Sandra that if she decided to come home, she would talk to Sandra's father and get his permission. Despite her understanding and openness, she had herself displayed a very different approach to her own husband's extramarital relationships in the early years of their marriage. Around the time that their third child, who was now 18, was 6 months old, Rosa heard from a neighbour that her husband had begotten a child with another woman. The girl was called Gabi and was the same age as her youngest. Learning of the baby's existence, Rosa first got her husband to confess, and then contacted the mother and insisted that she brought the baby for her to meet. The woman came over and Rosa scolded her for having behaved incautiously. Gabi's mother showed regret and apologised, and Rosa told her that regardless, it was important that the child was welcome in its father's house. After half a year, though, Rosa, aware that her husband was constantly being asked to give medicine money for the baby, concluded that "that child is getting ill because she is not in her own house" (i.e. her father's) and started to insist that Bento brought the baby to be raised at home. As her husband remained reticent, she called Gabi's mother directly and told her to bring the child for her to raise. The mother did so, but presumably showed some reluctance, because Rosa took both her own baby and the illegitimate girl in secret to Matola, a nearby town where an uncle of hers lived, and hid there for one week, until "the dust had settled". She then returned home with the two girls, who were raised as twins. Gabi lived with them until she got pregnant herself. She now lives with her partner and child.

Rosa and Sandra had apparently divergent reactions to learning of their partners' extramarital offspring. The general understanding, shared by Sandra, is that Rosa was a good, big-hearted

14 Also the same one who allegedly bewitched him, in the episode mentioned earlier in this chapter.

woman and Sandra's incapacity to be this compassionate was a failure of character. To forgive Bento for being so careless as to father an illegitimate child, and on top of that, raise this same child as one of her own was a selfless and virtuous act. That child needed to be in her home, they told me, and Rosa understood and allowed that to happen. When thinking of her own situation, Sandra reasoned that Lorena's "poor child" was not to be blamed and would most likely end up fatherless as a result of its mother's recklessness and immorality. Sandra, though, was not capable of forgiving Sergio. She had suffered his disrespect long enough and was done with it.

More than demonstrating different ethical characters, though, mother and daughter's very different takes on their partners' infidelity were in fact both guided by a common understanding of what the illegitimate child represented. People told me that in Southern Mozambique a child ideally belongs to the father and is, therefore, his responsibility (a notion strongly attested in the lit. e.g. Bérnard da Costa 2007; Bagnol 2006; Feliciano 1998). That is why most mothers of small children who live with their children's fathers moved in with them when they were expecting their first child. Pregnancy places a demand on the father and prompts him to take the first step towards officialising the relationship. Nowadays, it is often when a girlfriend falls pregnant that men are formally introduced to their partner's family, in the ritualised gathering called an introduction party [*festa de apresentação*], and there they ask for permission to take the daughter to live with them[15]. Another woman's pregnancy thus represented an extra demand on a man. In the case of Seu Bento, he could, if dutiful, see himself in the position of having to assume a relationship with the other mother and support two households. If not, he might still find himself under constant pressure and end up being dragged away from his spousal responsibilities. This was what Rosa saw happening in the repeated requests for medicine money. While recognising that the child was indeed suffering from being in the wrong household, Rosa took the lead in sorting things out without allowing it to become a threat to her or her own children. What she then did, in response to the demands from Gabi's mother, was to remove this risk. Rosa was not yet *lobolada*, but she and Bento had three children together, a plot and a house, still half reed, but on its way. Her position as the rightful wife was well established (we will see in the next chapter that plot and construction are strong markers of commitment) and what she did, then, was to preserve her role. Recognising that the requests for financial support were a legitimate claim on her husband, she brought the child under her wing, thereby maintaining herself as the mother of Bento's children and his only official partner. Sandra however, had left Sergio's house. The difference between her and Lorena, the pregnant girlfriend, was minimal: she had nothing more than registered paternity on which to place her claims as the rightful wife. What guarantee did she have that Sergio would choose to support

15 That which Kevin, Tequinha's boyfriend, mentioned in earlier in this chapter, hadn't been able to do yet.

and marry her instead of Lorena, or most likely, not keep them both in this undefined situation indefinitely? The insecurity of her position made her reject it all together.

The jealousy was an expression, as was Rosa's raising of Gabi, of a preoccupation with the boundaries and the positions of the members of the family. It was in keeping with traditional forms of marriage that included multiple relationships, patrilineality and virilocality, and with cosmological understandings of a dangerous world that threatened the home. Adapting to new dynamics and contingencies, these elements were still central to the production of marriage and the family and oriented women's practices across generations. Yet, despite their common understanding of parental and marital responsibilities, rights and risks, the insecurity of Sandra's position, clearly quite different from the position in which Rosa had been, attests to a contextual difference in the process of producing a marriage and a family over the last three generations, a change which is a direct consequence of urbanisation and monetarisation. We have already seen that family relations maintained many continuities with traditional patterns. The spatial disposition of kin, however, underwent marked changes and they were now typically scattered over the city and the country. We will look at this more closely and consider the role of urban housing patterns in the process of becoming a wife in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

IN THE HOME

Plots

I was having dinner with Sergio, still in the early stages of my fieldwork, and he was telling me about his cousin Leandro, who, he explained, was a canny businessman, and had made good money working in South Africa a couple of years ago. He had even owned a car at the time, and with the profits from his business, he had bought a plot of land in Marracuene. "Really, Leandro has a plot in Marracuene?" I asked, more or less capable of appreciating its worth with my beginner's knowledge of Maputo's expansion areas. "What about you, Sergio, do you also have one?", I asked. "No, not yet, I started late". "Does that mean that you want one?", I asked, somewhat surprised, since from the perspective of Sandra he was not showing signs of wanting anything really. "*Everyone* wants to own their own plot", he replied categorically.

This turned out to be true. One of the striking things about Claro do Lichanga was that most residents wanted to move away. With the exception of the older generation, those above fifty or sixty (who declared that they would leave if they were asked to[1], but had no independent desire to do so), residents – and especially men – not only spoke of it as a wish, but presented it as a project in train: no matter if they already owned a plot, had started to build, or had no income or savings to speak of, moving into a self-built house in a different neighbourhood was something

[1] An interesting topic, for another discussion, is how several residents of the generation of firstcomers thought of their space in the neighbourhood as ceded to them by the government. This characterised a relationship of non-ownership of their plots, and as a result, they received rumours about upcoming gentrification and expulsion with gratitude for having been allowed to use it in the first place.

they were working towards. Prices in different areas were common knowledge, as was the price of construction materials, and regardless of real prospects, acquiring a plot was imperative. Talking to male residents about their plans, I regularly received, by way of explanation, variations of the statement that "the Mozambican man's life project is to make children and build houses", a statement that, although not very explanatory, implied a relation between house and family and reminded me of the young women's desire to move out of their in-laws' house.

This chapter follows these plans. We have seen that young women wanted to move into a house of their own as a way of reaching a state of greater security in their relationship, but we haven't yet explored where they wanted to move to, what kind of house they envisioned or how much this project was shared with their partners. In exploring the directions and the shapes that these plans took, we shall see that that the actual house is an essential element in the production and protection of the domestic sphere, and that, in fact, a man's principal reason for building a house is his wife. We shall see, in a mirrored paraphrasis of Morten Nielsen's findings on the same topic, that the house is both a material manifestation of the intimate relationships that take place within it and a medium that enables them to be produced (2008:131). In fact, this chapter is in direct dialogue with Nielsen's work on house construction and personhood, sparked by the overwhelming desire to build a house that he encountered among residents of another peri-urban area of Maputo over a decade before me (ibid).

Although people in CL wanted to build a house, this was a difficult achievement, and I only met a couple of people, both old widows, who described their house as completed. Following the efforts and often paradoxical plans for the acquisition of a plot and the construction of a house, I shall show that, when residents described house-building as a life project, the important aspects of it were not "project" and "house", but "life" and "building". This meant that wanting and working towards a house did not imply a completed construction, but, to the contrary, the house, rather than a finished product, was an ongoing process and what was essential was to be engaged in this process. By looking at this process from inside the house, we will see that the self-built house was, quite literally, *the home*. This indissociable relation became clear in the residents' plans and efforts to acquire a plot and build a house, and was made the more visible in the choices made by Margô. Being unmarried, her endeavours highlighted the importance of the house as the site in which the relationships that constituted the social person were produced. Precisely because of the absence of a marriage, the value of the material house as the instantiation of *the home* was revealed.

Preserving the future

Margô's main preoccupation in life was to buy a plot. She was a single mother and had lived for seven years with her daughters in rented rooms in peri-urban neighbourhoods bordering the city centre. She described the plot as "what will let me die in peace, knowing that my girls won't

be out on the street". Being the family's breadwinner meant that access to the city centre had been critical to her income over these years. Yet, in her determination to acquire a piece of land, she considered areas as far as 40 kilometres away. While I found it hard to understand how she imagined that this was going to work, I also realised that, in a situation like hers of profound precarity, a plot of land was indeed a basic, and maybe the only, form of security that she could provide for her children. Her determination reminded me of Nielsen's informants, who repeatedly told him that to build a house was to preserve [*preservar*] the future (2008:156-7). In Margô's case, it seemed like she was seeking a literal, physical form of preservation of the next generation. Which she was. Margô didn't have any resources, and she feared for her children. But the plot as a home for her daughters was only one of the elements that she was trying to secure.

It was when she heard of a place to buy in a zone called Muhalazi and I accompanied her on a visit that the broader significance of the house for her social person, that is, the composite of relationships that is individuated in her, came through. I however, did not appreciate the importance of the house immediately, because I was too worried about other matters, such as distance and lack of infrastructure, to notice anything else. During the trip, I was unable to stop myself from nagging her with questions of how feasible a life over there would actually be, only to be met with implacable confidence that it was going to work out. On our return, exhausted, I passed the rickshaw corner, stopped to borrow the loo and then sat down to chat to Sergio: "Lord, Muhalazi is far! It took me three hours each way, with no waiting time at all in between buses", and told him that I was accompanying Margô on a visit to a plot that she was interested in buying. "Margô is buying a plot?" he asked surprised. "Yeah, she's is really keen, despite my scepticism. It is very, very far, there's no secondary school, and the roads are so muddy that only trucks can get through when it rains." Sergio, though, just sat there repeating "So Margô is buying a plot... what does it cost, a plot over there?" and before my answer he calculated it correctly, "it must be around 60.000 mt (€800), in Muhalazi... I must pull myself together, I'm lagging behind. I am going to go look at plots in Muhalazi, start saving up to buy my little plot [*meu terreninho*], that's what I am going to do".

Clearly, it was only me who failed to understand Margô's plans to go live in Muhalazi. The distance and lack of infrastructure did not put anyone off; on the contrary, the location did not seem to mean very much when weighed against the real possibility of purchase. People seemed to prioritise a self-built house very highly, willingly making many sacrifices for what amounted to conditions that, from my perspective, did not improve their lives, but on the contrary, brought them further from the city and the networks they already had. When I thought of Sergio, it seemed madness that he would want a plot that far out. He lived with his grandmother, who was barely ever home. What about his little brothers, would he take them with him? There was no secondary school over there. And there was his current work, based in the neighbourhood, where he also had grown up and where many of his close relations lived. Besides, he often spoke

of studying engineering at the university, and still held a position in the army which he hoped to convert into an office job – all activities physically located in the city centre. It did not seem to add up. Sergio did not have the same urgency as Margô. The idea that he needed to secure the future of his son was not a plausible explanation, especially not after having discussed the plot in Muhalazi with Sandra. Her contemptuous reaction to his alleged plans was "Sergio wants to buy a plot? He could start by buying nappies." expressing the opinion that, while such an ambition is intrinsically connected to the idea of doing something for one's children, it was not likely to be the main orientation in Sergio's mind.

Indeed, his sudden determination was, on reflection, a result of the context in which it emerged: knowing that Margô (i.e. a woman, poorer than him) was buying a plot made him feel, in his own words, that he was "lagging behind". More interesting than the competition however, is the natural development implied in this statement, as if a person's life course ought to involve this step. This "personal development" (cf. Nielsen 2008:141), in tune with the way that young women perceived moving out (and being properly wedded, chapter 1) demanded, it seemed, a plot and a self-built house to be successful. And any plot would do, even if it were three hours away from the centre. At the same time, if the house was the goal, the *orientation* towards it already instantiated this development, to the point that Margô's *potential* purchase sparked Sergio's feeling of lagging behind.

The processual aspect of the house, which starts with the manifest orientation towards it, is central to its role in making a life and constructing personhood. When the social person is composed of the intimate relationships that are cultivated within the house, the process of building the house becomes a central part of the process of producing these relationships. And, despite the absence of the relationship per se, the house was also central to Margô's project. But, before we get to the imbrication of personhood and house construction, and, more importantly, the production of the home, we will look at where these houses were built. This will show the importance of the materiality of the house in the production of the social person and the home and how these values have been historically produced and negotiated by peri-urban residents. While this trajectory is central for understanding the home as an ongoing processual phenomenon, it will also take us through more concrete aspects of house construction.

Cement blocks

Adamastor Simango, Sergio's uncle, had a self-built house with his first wife, sons, their daughter -in-law and grandchildren in an expansion neighbourhood often pointed out to me as a very good area [*zona boa*]. I got to see it for the first time when I was invited to a duck barbecue at their place.

> Tia Imaculada was sitting with her daughter-in-law and Tia Randja, who had also come for the barbecue, on a straw mat under the shade of the mango tree, with lettuce and the plucked and

> dismembered duck soaking in basins of water around them. Her baby grandson was sleeping next to them on the mat, a light *capulana*[2] wrapped around him. The spacious yard, with a papaya tree on the right side and another low tree beside the mango was silent, the earth well swept and tidy. Tio Adamastor was sitting on the porch with a cup of tea, looking happy as always. I got out of the car, helped bring in the shopping, accepted tea and a bean cake sandwich, and, when I had finished eating, went to sit on the straw mat and help rinse the salad. Sitting there with the women, I complimented Tia Imaculada on the house, and she, agreeing with me, went on: "It's airy [*fresco*] here, isn't it?" She pointed at the ducks and chickens walking around the yard and then showed the room under construction in the front of the house, right next to the wall surrounding the plot: Tio Adamastor was building her a *barraca*[3]. While we were sitting there, a neighbour came by and started chatting to her and Tia Randja. Tia Imaculada, talking and laughing loudly and ordering and correcting us in our tasks in between, seemed proud, I thought. The daughter-in-law, quiet and shy, didn't engage in conversation with me, so I just listened to the older women's chat while I worked and, when done with the kale leaves, got up to go sit with Tio Adamastor, who'd already brought out the homemade wine and glasses and had been joined by his sons and two neighbours.

Materially, Adamastor and Imaculada' house was not very different from the houses in CL. The cement-block construction was composed of two large bedrooms, a sitting room and a "front room" that was more nearly a porch, with walls up to waist height. The yard was more spacious, but there was no running water, kitchen and bathroom were outside and the walls were neither plastered nor painted. Tio Adamastor, responding to my compliments, told me that the house was not finished, despite their having been living there for about seven years, and ran over further plans to fully enclose the porch, make an extra room, "and then one wants to put in windows and doors, plaster... there's always something to work on". I replied that it already seemed quite nice to me. "You think so? Yes, I suppose it is. But the thing is, the African man never stops building". "Yes, I've heard this before", I replied.

Cement-block constructions in the periphery of Maputo are remarkably similar, leading to interpretations of the phenomenon as the strategic reproduction of a model effective in guaranteeing rights and promoting recognition (Carrilho and L. Lage 2010; J. Lage 2018). Yet, Tio Adamastor's reiteration of the notion that building is a permanent activity in a man's life shows that cement-block houses were more than just a strategy. If the goal were simply to secure their plot and their rights in the city, the house wouldn't need to be in permanent evolution (cf. Jenkins 2009). What is more, as we shall see, the choice of using this material was not completely explained by a simple normalisation of the style, but had been fully integrated into a system of values that associated house and builder and thus come to be considered the proper

[2] Traditional fabric, see introduction.

[3] A bar that sells drinks through a window onto the street, where customers gather on the pavement in front.

thing. I realised that with Margô. She had argued again and again that as soon as she had a plot she would be alright, that she did not care about the house, all she wanted was a place of her own, where she would just raise a structure and move in. Let it be of reed, of tied capulanas, it made no difference; what mattered was to have a place where her daughters could live if she died – that, and to no longer have to put up with evil landladies. On that visit to the plot, though, she described the future position of a little house in cement blocks and a yard with the ground in burned cement all around, leaving no room for weeds [*sem mato*].

That might just have a description of her dream home at a time when it was not at all clear that she would buy the plot. Yet, after what she described as the "miracle" of being able to buy that same plot, as she had no job and no means, Margô continued living in rented rooms. And, when another opportunity left her in possession of a little sum, she did not hesitate and spent it all on cement blocks – that were then stacked in the plot, waiting for another stroke of luck. In the meantime, no reed hut had been built. Rather than moving out there immediately, she chose to prolong the construction process into what seemed to me like endless uncertainty.

This curious way of investing in a house is precisely what made Nielsen call house construction in Maputo a "perpetual temporal movement" towards an ideal (2008:131). The house as a life project, as we've heard people like Tio Adamastor saying, works, according to Nielsen, as a material medium through which people create individual personhood (idem). What he shows is that house-construction and the social person are both, rather than an end goal, an ongoing imbricated process that becomes visible, or is instantiated in the building (ibid:148-149). That means that the type of material involved in the process is evidence of the person's becoming. Nielsen's informants assessed different residents' "levels of development" or "stagnation" in life by looking at their houses. A stack of cement blocks displayed advancement, in contrast to precarious huts or long paused constructions, which showed that "those people were just surviving, staying alive", without making any progress in their lives (ibid:149). Margô, like Nielsen's informant Nelson, wanted to preserve a future for her daughters, but it should be future of which they might be proud. A stack of cement blocks materialised a future house that was in keeping with the development of the person, while a provisory hut (that in all likelihood could become permanent) was a display of paralysis, stagnation and failure.

Adamastor's ongoing construction plans expressed that well, but there was more to this than a need to move out of the family home and build a house in cement blocks. He and Imaculada had lived in his mother's house in Claro do Lichanga for many years. In fact, it was Tio Adamastor who built the house in which Vovó Ceres lived now, a house considerably more finished than the one he lived in with Imaculada. But he had built it for his mother. At Vovó Ceres's house, Imaculada had been a daughter-in-law, like Sandra and Cleuza were now. In her new neighbourhood, at the duck barbecue, she was happy. After Sandra and Cleuza arrived, she left us to finish up the food (except when we needed her help with the odd little thing) and sat in the porch drinking wine with Tio Adamastor and the other guests. Later she danced with

Tia Randja for hours while we laughed and clapped. She had a completely different attitude, a serenity and confidence that the young women did not have. She was in *her* house. If it had been imperative that Adamastor bought a plot and built a house, it was a house that he built *for Imaculada*.

Tia Imaculada' attitude shows that the house that her husband built for her has a direct effect on the position that she occupied in the family. Margô did not have a husband to build a house for her, yet, by investing in cement blocks, the house that she planned would embody the value that she wanted attached to herself (cf. Nielsen 2008), almost as if it could make up for, or maybe disguise, that absence of this relationship[4]. If the house can manifest and add value to its owner, and the building material is a component of this personal value, as we understood from Nelson's assessment of other people's houses (Nielsen 2008:149), then we need to understand how specific materials came to embody them better than others. We shall thus look at the genealogy of the cement block house in Maputo in order to understand its significance as an aesthetic element and as a symbol of security. The cement-block construction, we shall see, was an investment in securing precisely the relationships, i.e., marriage and children, that were produced within it. Rather than a material manifestation of the individual personhood of its owner, as Nielsen proposes, the house was an instantiation of the relational quality of the person in that it materialised and secured the intimate relationships that composed him and her.

The Caniço[5] Generation

Just like Adamastor, it had also been imperative that his father, Alceu Simango, build a house for his young wife. Still young, in the late 1960s Alceu decided that he wanted to marry the daughter of a local chief (*régulo*) in the province of Gaza. To make himself worthy of her, he went to the capital Lourenço Marques with the aim of becoming an *assimilado*[6](a common strategy during the period, see Penvenne 1995:8). He got a job with the Portuguese in the railway company and the job set him on his course. When he was granted the coveted *assimilado* status and had saved up, he went back to Gaza to marry Ceres. He took her from his father's

[4] Margô's solitude was not only stigmatized but a source of actual insecurity. She hid the fact from most people, and for a long period lived with a man with whom she didn't get along to, among several reasons, be able to speak of a husband. This will be further explored in the fourth chapter (see also Bérnard da Costa 2007:132).

[5] Reed in Portuguese, gives the informal occupations its name of City of Reed (Cidade de Caniço), see introduction.

[6] An *assimilado* was granted Portuguese citizenship. To achieve this formal status, the person had to "establish that that he or she was sufficiently civilized," a standard that included reading and writing Portuguese, eating and dressing as a European was said to eat and dress, abandoning primitive costumes and beliefs and achieving a certain level of income and formal education. Interestingly, the lobolo was one of the habits that had to be abandoned.

house with a proper *lobolo* and moved into a reed house that he had built for her on his family's land in the province, the house in which she had all of her five children. Ceres only saw Alceu sporadically during the first decade of their marriage: he did not stay for longer than a couple of years before taking off to work in the mines in South Africa, where he established a second household. When the independence movement started, though, Alceu went back to Mozambique and the railway work in the capital, and brought their oldest living child, Adamastor, with him to attend school. Ceres and the other children only came to Maputo after independence, when Alceu was allotted a plot in Claro do Lichanga where he could build a reed house.

Compared to his father's trajectory, Adamastor's path towards building a house took a lot longer and cost a lot more money, both because plots are now increasingly illegally commercialised, and because traditional reed construction fell into disuse in the city over the decades. Although partially a development that results from urbanisation changes in housing patterns, the importance of a cement block house is, primarily, a direct inheritance from the colonial era. For residents of Claro do Lichanga, the model of a "proper house" – what Nielsen's informants called a *casa de raiz* (2008) and the one we see repeating itself in the neighbourhood – has similar architectural elements to a Portuguese colonial house (Lage 2001; Mazzolini personal communication). During the colonial period, though, natives were not allowed to build with durable materials, and the centre proper was, through a series of practices and mechanisms, kept exclusively for whites. The colonial city was idealised as "a corner of Europe in Africa" (Penvenne 2005) and it was under this pretext that, to prevent masonry from interfering with the government's plans of expanding the city, the immigrants that came and settled in the outskirts were only allowed to live in in reed or wood houses. Besides being easily removable, reed was seen as a primitive form of construction and associated with other characteristics that were used to discriminate against the natives. The informal occupation area were also deemed to be cesspools of diseases – not entirely untrue considering the lack of sanitary infrastructure and education. A house made of bricks or cement blocks became, in this context, a symbol of status and prestige, associated with being civilized, clean, cultivated and wealthy (Lima 2013; Martins n.d.:67), and a form of security and life upgrade to which urban dwellers during the colonial period gradually began to aspire. A clear expression of this was the explosion of permanent constructions in the periphery in the years immediately following independence, when the prohibition fell (Saevfors 1986). Another expression of it is the number of clandestine constructions during the colonial period, some of them made built in bricks under a veneer of corrugated iron and wood (Morton 2019).

Since the cement house was equated with having a permanent place in the city – and therefore forbidden to the natives – its role in producing security and ensuring the right to stay has made it a central need for local people, and more than that, a marker of status. Nowadays, the reed house has been stripped of its pejorative colonial connotations and an element of pride

and nostalgia often permeates the narratives of those who lived part of their lives in these constructions. Yet, it was perceived as a fragile construction and a precarious way of living, as well as a mark of poverty and vulnerability. Tio Adamastor's desire to give his widowed mother a cement-block house was evidence of that. Even though he described her as being used to leaving in reed huts, which she had done for most of her life, he thought that she should have a proper shelter [*um abrigo de verdade*]. Not only did he build a cement house for her in Claro do Lichanga, he also wished to replace the reed hut in her kitchen garden with a one-room construction in cement blocks. Most of the material, which he had bought a couple of years earlier, was stacked next to her hut when I visited the place, in yet another demonstration of the intentional quality of house construction.

As we see in the efforts made by Tio Adamastor, the cement-block house became considered proper, deeply ingrained in the way people in the periphery imagined their lives and, more than that, connected to their sense of self-worth. The relationship between building a cement house and people's future in the city carries thus the inheritance of times when, to be entitled to live in it, one needed a certain status and a certain type of house. It is not a coincidence that, 50 years later, house construction is a way for people to claim rights to the city. These rights offer more than an advantageous position in the urban landscape. Notions of what a proper person is, attached to being civilised and recognised by the whites, still had weight and oriented the choices of poor urbanites in the periphery, guiding their strategies of to legitimate their presence. But, as we have seen, these houses were not constructed for the builder. The ideal, proper shelter is a shelter for the family.

A legitimate home

David Morton, in a discussion of the significance of the cement house in late colonial Maputo, retells the speech given by Malé in the ceremony of inauguration of his house, in which Malé explained what the accomplishment represented to him: "the ambition of every man is to have his own house. Among us natives, this ambition becomes even greater – it is in fact a major concern – because it is customary for us to marry only after having built a roof under which we can raise a family ... I managed, six years after getting married, to replace the old house of reeds with a house of stone, which still seems a dream to me, a gift from God." (Morton 2019:284). From Henri Junod's description of Thonga life to studies of today's poor neighbourhoods of Maputo, passages like the one from Morton's work expressing a natural association between house and family are common in the literature (e.g. Loforte 1996; Bérnard da Costa 2007), as they are in my informants' plans. Malé's words, though, expose a central element in this association, an element that is defining of people's practices surrounding house building: a self-built house is the ambition of the Mozambican man *because it is a condition* of marriage.

Marriage, though, was also a condition for house construction: in my field, male house owners that were not married were rare, and such cases raised a question mark. The only story I heard of a single man that built a house was told with a tone of criticism by his relatives, who presented it as illogical – why didn't he stay with mamá? – and affirmed that "a house without a woman isn't a home" [*casa sem mulher não é lar*]. In the classic ethnography of the Thonga, a man's house was his first wife's hut (Junod 1912: 311). So, if men need a house to bring a wife into, and a house needs a woman to be a home, then the threads in this weave – the marriage, the home and the house – affect and produce each other. We have seen how construction of house and personhood are imbricated processes. Now we will look at how this is, in fact, a gendered process, fully dependent on the intimate relationships in which men and women were embedded.

The link between house construction and marriage has been unalterably present for generations in rural and urban Southern Mozambique (Loforte 1996; Feliciano 1998; Bérnard da Costa 2007:68), but the changes in housing patterns that occurred in Maputo over the last decades brought changes in marriage patterns too, some of which we have seen in chapter 1. A crucial one, expressed in the speech above, was, as might be expected, the cement-block house. What Malé declared to be a custom – that is, to build a house before getting married – is held by couples in nowadays Maputo as the right course to follow, and house construction is placed before the wedding. We saw it in the young women's descriptions of "the times of the grandmothers", the idealised image of being properly wedded and taken from their parent's house to a house of their own. Contingencies meant that now, they needed to wait for the time when their partners could afford the costs of a plot and a house, which, as we saw, meant staying for a prolonged period *em casa do marido* [Changana *kaya nuna*][7]. While Malé, like Saul Simango and Seu Bento, lived in a time when plots were either simply informally occupied or could be regularised with the payment of a small fee, today plots were sold for sums far in excess of the earnings of an average peri-urban resident, ranging, according to what I heard, from 800 to 4.000 euros. Back in the days, men would build a reed house not least to mark their occupation of the space[8] and bring their wives to live there. Then, if possible, they would invest in a cement construction – which had not been as urgent for Seu Alceu, for instance, as it had been for Malé. Nowadays, in contrast, people most often waited until at least one room was built in cement blocks before moving in. The effort, we have seen, involved in constructing a cement house was much greater than in building with reed. More than simply prolonging the period at the in-laws', we shall see that the imperative of the cement-block house has also

[7] Original terms are in the language in which they have been used, explained and discussed with me. Because the house and the family were more insistent topics, I discussed them with my informants in both languages, and they combined allowed me to understand the local significance of these terms, which is why I present them both here.

[8] See for example Jenkins 2009 for an understanding of the edification and acquisition of formal rights of use of land.

produced a resignification of the self-built house in terms of commitment, security and status for the wife.

We saw that among the traditional Thonga, a man brought each new wife to live in his compound and there built her a hut. Each hut, wife and kitchen formed a unit that could be designated, like its parts – the wife, the hut and the hearth – by the same term, *njangu/ngámu* (Sitoe 2011; Feliciano 1998). In Claro do Lichanga, njangu nowadays means the marital family. The amalgamation of these meanings in one single word, rather than simplifying the concept, actually exposes the existence of different senses of respectively family, house and home, which have been produced by the patrilinear and virilocal system and the movement of women. There is a conceptual difference between the hut (*kaya*, which also means the place from where one originally comes), the village or the man's compound (*muti*) and the home (*njangu*, but also with conjugations of *kaya*). So, a woman that leaves her husband and goes back to her parent's house, for example, is called pejoratively *xivuyakaya*, literally, "returned to where she came from", kaya here signifying for her parent's house; while a woman that is returned to her father by her husband is called *ntlhrlavukati,* "given back from home". *Vukatine* is to be home, and refers exclusively to the house of the marital family. The term used in Portuguese, *no lar*, conveys the same meaning, etymologically connected to the hearth (lar derives from *lareira* which means fireplace, carrying some of the associations implied in njangu), and is used to describe the home made in the self-built house: a woman who lives in the house built by her husband *está no lar*, that is, she is home.

The fact that a home is only produced when the couple is in their own house, even after years of cohabitation, is telling of the production and the meaning of marriage. A woman living with her partner at her in-laws' lives is, as we recall, in *casa do marido* [*nuna kaya*] and spatial separation from the affines is necessary for her to be *no lar* [*vukatine*]. Here, the house as the material manifestation of the production of a home is, precisely, what enables its existence. This attests to Lévi-Strauss' canonical insight about the role of the house as the materialisation of an unstable alliance, which he drew from a comparative essay on the social organisation of indigenous peoples from North America and in Medieval Europe. He, as I do here, shows that the conceptual association between house and home puts the woman at the core of the alliance so as to transform it from an external relationship between two units into an internal relationship that forms a unity (Lévi-Strauss 1982). Without the constructed house, the woman is at *his* house. With it, *she and he* are home. The house, therefore, is made *for the wife* as a manifestation of marital commitment and a space in which marriage can be produced.

The conceptual imbrication of the marital unit, the house and the fireplace is still widespread in Mozambique, as demonstrated by the fact that different families that share the same yard cook separately (like Greta and the Simangos). Notably, it is this practice that describes the family unit. So, when I asked for a list of the members of a household, residents would group them in terms of "those that eat together" and "those that eat their own food" (see also Bérnard

da Costa 2007). The conceptual separation of families in terms of separate "sauce pans" [*panelas*] was evident in the raising of boys, who when scolded for approaching a stranger and begging for food were rhetorically asked: "are you this lady's husband?". What this utterance shows is that, more than separating families, the intake of a woman's cooking by a man produces the marital tie – to the extent that when Greta and Cleuza cooked together (chapter 1), Adolfo reprimanded his wife with the question "is Ícaro your husband now, for you to be cooking for him?". But, for as long as the couple lives in the husband's house, the woman will cook for his whole family. It is only when they move out of the in-laws' house that she starts cooking for him – or for *their* family. The context which the minister, in the beginning of the introduction of this thesis, described as essential in the production of marital unity thus only emerges then. The self-built house, as the phase that follows the period with the in-laws, produces the necessary physical separation for relatedness through commensality to be fully practised (cf. Carsten 1997).

But while in the cases studied by Lévi-Strauss, the materiality of the house solidified and stabilised the alliance, in Mozambique, the house does not give the relationship an illusory fixed form (Lévi-Strauss1982:187). Rather, in its ongoing construction, the very same materiality comes to emphasise the processual aspect of the relationship, to the extent that each house construction is exclusively associated with a specific marital family. Unlike the European house, which materialises the lineage and thus can be inherited, in traditional rural Mozambique, when a person died, her hut was thrown into the bush and, in the case of the death of the chief, the entire compound was abandoned and another village was founded (Junod 1912: 319). Such practices can be found in other sub-Saharan rural contexts (e.g. the Marakwet in Kenya *in* Moore 1986) and in varied forms elsewhere, such as in Janet Carsten's description of "a state of permanent construction" in Langkwai, where people, while never discarding houses, are always shifting, moving and adding to them, making them endlessly plastic in order to accommodate "the productive work of kinship" (1997), and in Maurice Bloch's telling of the process of solidification of the house alongside the strengthening of marriage ties among the Zafimaniry of Madagascar, where the wooden structure of the house is made more and more solid as the marriage becomes more stable with the birth of children (1995).

The process of building a house is thus broadly linked to the gradual construction of familial ties and, in Southern Mozambique, figures as one of several ritual markers that will produce the incorporation of the wife into the man's lineage. For many women living in CL, to be *no lar* was a movement towards becoming the node that made alliance into kinship and thus towards occupying the relational position that she wanted, becoming a wife. The house was both the manifestation of this process and the physical space in which it could happen. Nielsen's informants called house construction "*o desenvolvimento do homem*", "the development of a man", setting the development of the house and of individual personhood side by side (2008:149). The house, though, like the man, was not dissociable from the wife and the family, and cannot stand for the individual owner without necessarily implying the intimate relationships

that make him. While Nielsen and I are in agreement that personhood is intrinsically relational, I show that it was constituted primarily by the domestic ties that were produced and maintained within the home.

(Wo)Men and houses: personhood revisited

The importance of the physical house, in its processual form, is precisely that it offers a protected space in which these relationships and people could be cultivated. As I stated earlier in this chapter, if the cement-block was adopted as the ideal materialisation of this process, this adoption, more than an attempt of poor urbanites to prove themselves worthy of living in the city, or rising up to the white man's level, was a product of how it fit into already existing value patterns. In this regard, we saw its historically continuous role in the production of marital unity. Now we will see that this role places the house consistently as a central element in the organisation of the cosmological world, which is – as we saw in the first chapter – murky, chaotic and unpredictable and must be ordered to be inhabited (cf. West 2005:44-5; Howana 1996; Granjo 2007). In this world, people and intimate relationships need to be continuously shielded from forces that threaten to destabilise them – such as potentially disruptive girlfriends or illegitimate offspring. Morten Nielsen has argued that what makes house construction parallel to the making of the social person is the fact that, when engaged in construction, the person is placed within a network of reciprocal relationships with significant others, relations that are established in the constant activation of the process of building the house (2008). Because the world is unpredictable, according to Nielsen, relationships are necessarily dangerous and potentially harmful. Nevertheless, they are essential for the construction of the person, as it is through the reciprocal exchange of valuables (money, favours and daughters) that one is able to grow one's personhood. Therefore, he explains, a series of mechanisms need to be employed in order to control the risk that these relationships entail. The house in this process is central, as it is both the medium through which these relationships are activated and protection from the dangerous world. Nielsen shows how it is important to evade or keep a distance when establishing relations with others, because "everyone wishes the other harm" [*nós desejamos o mal de outras pessoas*] (2008:148). This is done through the partial occultation of oneself, or the strategic revelation of the parts that can attract a reciprocal relation while carefully hiding what might attract evil. To hide these parts of oneself, one needs a "place to hide one's head" (2008:129), i.e., a house. But a house is not quite a concrete, stable material that can keep things from being viewed, it is rather a form of protection that, despite its material quality, still demands continuous work in the form of sweeping, cleaning and other rituals that help keep harm at bay.

This is all very good. Yet, when observing at the house as protection and as a medium for the making of social personhood *from the inside*, it looked rather different. In my ethnography,

while it was true that the house allowed a person to evade forces that were inherently dangerous, these forces were not the relational composites of the person. On the contrary, the relationships that came to constitute the person among my informants in Claro do Lichanga were those produced inside the house. Thus, while offering protection from the outside, the house was primarily the space where permanent relationships were produced, and where dangerous forces were transformed into permanent ties. More than protection *from* dangerous relationships, the house offered protection *of* constitutive relationships.

In Nielsen's analysis of house- and personhood construction, the nature of the house and the nature of relationships are both marked by his analytical standpoint. When it comes to the nature of relationships, Nielsen finds his informants constantly managing the capricious forces of the outside when they, with the aim of accessing needed valuables, engage in reciprocal exchanges that can later be evaded. Because these interactions take place and are kept in the chaotic outside, they are not being ordered, but only momentarily stabilised in order for the exchange to happen. The inhabitable world, seen from where my ethnography was conducted, was not being made in the outside space that Nielsen analyses. It was precisely inside the house, that one "hid one's head" and found protection from the unpredictable forces with which one was forced to engage. And in the houses that compose my ethnography, there was an order, as we saw in the last chapter, in the prescribed hierarchical positions that household members occupied. The domestic space, unlike the outside, was a patterned weave of relationships, and the relational place of each member came to define them. They were thus a rather essential aspect in the production of personhood. Being the inhabitable social world, the house was, par excellence, the site where the social person was produced.

The domestic order, as we have also seen, demanded continuous protection from the outside. This brings us back to the nature of the house in Nielsen's analysis. From the outside, the house appears as a means through which men activate relations, or, as Nielsen puts it, it is that which "puts the builder in the game" of exchanges that take place out in the street. That is, the house makes the owner visible (2008:85). Yet, we have seen here that this visibility was indissociable from what the house attached to the owner, such as, for instance, the status of a family man [*chefe de familia*]. This is rather like what Marilyn Strathern found of exchanges in Hagen, where women are concerned with their intimate relations, while men work to secure a home from which they can engage with the world, making the domestic composite a foundation of their social appearance (1999:91).

This foundation in traditional Mozambique was crucial. A man's dream (Junod was told) was to build his own village, a circle formed by various huts, each with a wife to cook for him and give him children. The number of njangu that a man possessed represented his greatness and made him a big man among others. The yndlo, or kaya, was the wife's, and the muti, the village made of wives and children, was the man's. His greatness was not materialised in huts, but in the social world that belonged to him. This is still true for peri-urban Maputo: the house,

as the materialisation of the marital union was, rather than a medium to activate relationships that produced the social person, the space in which the relationships that produced the social person were made and at the same time, the manifestation of these relationships. That is why it promoted the visibility that put the builder in the game – in its ongoing process, it continuously made the builder.

The street

Evidence of how relationships within the household came to define people – in and outside the house – is the way in which they become the preferred choice of address. In Claro do Lichanga (as opposed to the city centre) people respected name taboos and indirect forms of address, people in a lower position addressed those above with the kinship terms – mana, mano, tio, mamá, meu marido. Otherwise, the default form of address and reference was the marital or parental relationship in the form of "mulher/marido de..." [wife/husband of] or mãe/pai de ..." [mother/father of]. That meant that, besides being defining and constitutive of personhood, multiple familial relationships produced several forms of reference and address that were used at or about the same person, attesting to the relational character of personhood and to the extent to which these relationships constituted them.

In contrast to the domestic space's hierarchical, constitutive bonds, where people were named by reference to the relationships in which they were embedded, in the streets of Claro do Lichanga interactions typically went unnamed and were systematically denied. Acquaintanceship, in Simmel's use of the term as a relation that one recognises by name and where interactions are marked by discretion (1906:452), was virtually non-existent in CL. People, instead, insisted that they did not know people with whom they had markedly personal interactions and of whom they possessed personal information. This was accomplished by maintaining people within the categories of "client", "the charcoal lady [*senhora*]", "the one that sells the bean cakes", or "the one that lives over there", or blatantly declaring that they didn't know who I was referring to and always refusing to acknowledge any direct connection with them. They, in sum, engaged through strategies that allowed them to distance themselves from others and refuse any form of tie.

I saw this in daily interactions, but it became quite evident when I ran a survey in the neighbourhood. My assistants, local residents, took me to houses that they chose quite carefully, often meaning that we had to walk a long way to get to each of them. When I asked about the criteria, however, they were evasive, uttering something to the effect of "I know that there is a lady who lives in a house over there", but refusing to explain how they knew it and why it mattered for our survey or our visit. When I asked about what their relation was, they denied having any – except, obviously, when we had interviewed kin. Yet, once in people's houses,

they appeared to know each other, because, in the scripted opening chat[9] it invariably came across that they were aware that the person's son was living in South Africa, or that the wife had died the year before, to which church they belonged or what recent business ventures the person was engaged in. And, despite directly affirming to me that they did not know the person, they had no problem reporting these exchanges to me when the conversation had been in Changana.

Information, of course, could come in different ways. Claro do Lichanga being a densely occupied neighbourhood, people saw and heard a lot of their neighbours' lives. They often gossiped as well, and there was no conflict in actually having knowledge of bits of people's personal lives, just as, when in direct interaction, it was not an issue to exchange personal information. It was in fact appropriate, as we just saw, when visiting or whilst braiding a client's hair. But simple information on the nature of their acquaintance, such as someone with whom an informant went to school, or had been out drinking, or that attended their parents' church would only be acquired if I had the capacity to draw the connection, by for instance taking the information that "she goes to that church over there" and asking "isn't that the church your parents attend?" in order to receive the confirmation "it is". Thus, by insisting that they did not know the person, they were not denying having information about the person. This curious communication pattern shows instead that they were simply refusing to establish any personal connection between them, or rather, refusing to let that person be an aspect of themselves. In refusing to draw an association, they concretely produced distance and avoided any form of tie. Completely contrary to domestic relationships, that were precisely the primary reference of who a person was, people refused let interactions from the street define them in any way.

What this produced was a space for freer forms of relationality – what they called play and which we will explore in the next chapter – that, in their undefined and unbinding form, were non-hierarchical and impermanent. Friendships were, as we've seen, either cross-sex, casual sexual partners or flirts, from which people derived fun, pleasure or material gains, or competitive, suspicious forms of relations between women. Because they were generally morally condemned, women most commonly refused to recognise themselves in such relationships, and brought them instead into the vocabulary and structures of kinship, turning non-kin into comadres or manas, or if of a different generation, aunties or grannies. Interactions with same-sex peers –

[9] *Ndzava*, an old custom, referred to as *djungulisana* by Junod (1912:354), meaning literally "news" (Sitoe 2011:207), is a ritualized arrival at anyone's house, that involves sitting down or standing against the wall in the absence of chairs, and waiting in the yard for the house owner to appear, normally bringing the chair, water and, when outside of the neighbourhood, most often food. In the last case, the visitor finished eating before a prescribed exchange of news was performed. This is part of the practices of protection of the domestic space, which we will briefly discuss in this section.

sistas[10] – were otherwise treated with the same distancing mechanisms that we have just seen, denying them recognition. Every time I asked into it, I received lengthy lectures about how people were untrustworthy and unreliable and how "one day a woman will go partying with you and say that you look beautiful, the next day she will be gossiping about how ugly you looked in that dress and trying to steal your man". In sum, even though they could have fun, fluid interactions with peers, these were discursively rejected as relationships and characterised, both in practice and in their descriptions by suspicion and competition.

When it came to one's partners' male friends, they were invariably accused of being bad influences. Men also had relationships from the street that they cultivated within a kinship nomenclature, most often cousin [*primo*]. And, for those with whom they maintained distance, they also used the same strategies as women, describing people that they interacted with on a daily basis as "that one that sits at the corner" or "that one that drives a rickshaw" – without implicating themselves in this identification, or else declaring not to know them at all. When activating connections on the street for a momentary purpose, kinship terms were employed, or the group was described as family, to be later dissolved into the same undefined, untrustworthy mash. I saw Sergio, who had a knack for being a spokesperson, do this twice: he got all the men on the square to help with the task of transporting a load, by "calling the *maxaca"* [gathering of relatives], and he made a thief return a stolen phone by preaching about how they were "all family". These are very similar to the dynamics that Nielsen describes in his thesis, in which groups of people can be circumstantially shaped into the structures of the muti, but are otherwise dangerous, ephemeral and unreliable (2008:66-8).

Although the street was apparently a lawless realm in which people can extract, evade and trick, in contrast to the house, with its morally-binding, predefined structure of relationships, the street and the house were not two distinct moral worlds. Unlike descriptions from elsewhere, they did not constitute a typological divide, such as what Roberto DaMatta describes as a defining trait of Brazilian culture, in which the forms of sociality that take place in each of these two spaces are categorically prescribed by different moralities and give rise to social persons of two different qualities (DaMatta 1985). What I found in Claro do Lichanga was rather a continuous underlying logic of how relationships and people were produced within an unpredictable and unreliable world – a logic that gave rise to two different sets of interactive practices and strategies that could respectively produce ties or evade them. Yet, the house was constructed on the street, that is, the domestic space was embedded in this murky world. Therefore, the boundary around the domestic space was not stable nor solid, and the two spaces were neither statically nor singularly defined. On the contrary, as we have seen, the limits of the domestic realm were porous and demanded constant redrawing as envious neighbours, competitive friends and other unknown forces continuously threatened its internal order. More

[10] A term that lost its kin-making properties when it was incorporated, untranslated, into Portuguese.

than protection, this order required continuous remaking, as the outside was brought in with new alliances, carrying with it potential danger, and entailing continuous domestication. The self-built house was part of producing this domestic order and in protecting it and its members, who, insofar as they were indissociable from their domestic relations, also carried this constellation with them when weaving through the street.

CHAPTER III

GIRLFRIENDS COST MONEY

> I was out with Ada and her girlfriends and as usual, we migrated improbably over the course of the evening, from party to bar to disco, and embracing every shade of denizen of the night. One of the pit-stops that night was a well-known downtown pizzeria, where we were joined by César, a man I hadn't met before. He was a *friend* [*amigo*] of Chiluva, Ada's mana. We sat there, drinking and eating and laughing as always, and when the bill came, I took out my wallet, already anticipating that I was going to pay for Ada at that stage of the night. But Ada ordered me to put it away, saying that *he* would pay. When we got in the car, she told me off for having offered "He pays. Can't you see? Women are paying men for those bills their whole lives, when they bounce on the space-hopper[1]". [*é ele quem paga. Estás a ver? A mulher está a pagar a vida inteira ao homem, a vida inteira ela senta no pula-pula*].

Chiluva and Augusto, I learned on the ride home, had been in an extramarital relationship for several years. As Ada bluntly put it, their relationship was understood as (but, important to stress, not *only* as) a transactional deal, in which "the sex that the woman gives" corresponds to the payment of the restaurant bill that the man gives (or other payments and presents). This, far from being a special case, was a common arrangement. Ada herself had countless stories of *amigos* with whom she went out for dinner or on trips to beach resorts, stories designed to showcase their luxury and consumption. It was perfectly normal to want material advantages from men. Even in official, established relationships, couples openly discussed their material expectations and talked of sex as a transaction item. One example of this is the *kulaia*, the ritual preparation of a young woman for her marriage, where she is taught that being a good wife revolves a great deal around sexual practices. The older women and the madrinha teach techniques and explain how these can please and motivate a husband to be good towards them, giving their wives what they want (Guerra 2018). And women did want specific things from

[1] Reference to a popular Brazilian funk song, in which the expression is a metaphor for sex.

their husbands. We have seen in the previous chapters that women had a legitimate expectation to be loboladas, properly housed and fed, and that their husbands 'brought money home', which they considered a demonstration of respect. In fact, attempts to separate affective or sexual relationships from material interests had been absent all through my fieldwork, regardless of the type of relationship people were in.

This chapter explores this common element in associations spanning from flirtatious, potentially sexual interactions with strangers to official marriages, which, despite being very different in their form, content and effects, were practised under the same transactional principle. From momentary interactions to established relationships, we will see that each part wanted some*thing* that the other could give or had some*thing* that the other wanted. Exploring the ways in which these exchanges were practised will show that their transactional logic was explicitly activated and discussed and never morally condemned. Flirtatious interactions and marital bonds appear here as two extremes of a continuum along which people engaged in transactions, that is, exchanges with explicit expectations of acquiring something, that at the same time, conveyed desires and feelings. While they functioned under the same principle, the foundation for, the items involved in, and the effects of these exchanges varied along this continuum: in the household they were founded on prescribed and generalised expectations of sex, food, and children in exchange for financial support, a house and ritual payments, and these exchanges produced marital ties and kinship. In the street, they were founded on the spontaneous and momentary desire for sex, drinks, money or any other item that could potentially be extracted from someone with whom a bond could be denied or evaded, thus producing a space of free interaction and pleasure.

As we have seen, the house and the street were often described as two separate domains and people generally adopted different interactional strategies in each of these spaces. Yet, as we have also seen, they were governed by a common underlying logic that assumed the world to be murky and potentially harmful. In exploring the specificities of transactional interactions within and without the domestic space, we will look closer into the strategies employed to deal with the world's capricious forces (cf. Nielsen 2008), and see how the affective economy is central in producing order within the home and in managing, and profiting, from the unpredictability of the world outside. In the house, gifts are expected, as is their return. The gifts are not understood as equivalents that cancel each other out; on the contrary, they maintain people in webs of unequal obligation to each other. While I have already made clear that women in Claro do Lichanga are not striving for autonomy or freedom, we will see now that the material


De Keur
STERKWATER


BEAUTIFUL WAX
BEAUTIFUL BLOCK PRINTS

aspect of the unequal co-dependence that characterised domestic constellations produced bonds of obligation. Gifts, expected for their material value, made people obliged towards each other, yet, they did not try to annul this by reciprocation – quite the contrary. It was precisely the feelings of attachment, duty and obligation that were conveyed through material exchanges that made gifts commensurable and central to the production of relatedness.

Let us begin, in keeping with the opening vignette, with sexual interactions. These best reveal the transactional logic that permeated sociality in Maputo's periphery more generally, and were also critical to the production of relatedness within the homes of Claro do Lichanga. In doing so, we will see that money and sexual or affective relations did not require morally separated domains; on the contrary, material exchange was the appropriate means to convey, and produce, feelings and desires. While flirting practices involved "playfully" expressing feelings of love or attraction with the aim of acquiring something, or managing these same feelings with the aim of evading the relation, within in the household, exchanges were the appropriate manifestation of prescribed feelings of care, concern and obligation.

Gift theory and exchange within the household: the transactional production of people

That exchange is essential to the making of social relations is well-established knowledge within the social sciences since Marcel Mauss's seminal essay on the gift (1925). Looking at the phenomenon of *hau*, Mauss proposed that exchange emanates from a compulsion to reciprocate, produced by the spirit of the gift. Thus, one gives something back not because the giver demands it, but because one feels obliged to respond with an equivalent gesture of generosity, which, importantly, can be directed to a third party. Gift-giving thus moves away from a focus on the materiality of exchanges and suggests that the principle underlying these practices is essentially of a social nature – that is, people feel compelled to reciprocate because the flow of things maintains social ties.

Despite these insights, much social theory continues to operate, implicitly or explicitly, with an assumed division between flows of affect and flows of money. Thus even though we mainly agree that all forms of exchange were essentially about producing social relations, these latter have been more or less divided into transactions and gifts, the latter about ties, the former about things. One influential source for this division can be found in Adam Smith's advocacy for a complete separation of personal and impersonal spheres with the restriction of impersonal and self-interested exchange to the impersonal sphere, that is, the market, which would promote the maximisation of productivity and profit (1759). Importantly for our analysis, this should liberate the private sphere from material interests, thus allowing personal relationships to be governed

by sympathy, equality and affection. This divide generates an opposition between personal and impersonal exchanges, the former taking place between particular, unique individuals, the latter between generic subjects or entities that are characterised solely by their function in the transaction. Monetary exchange comes to be directly linked to this quality of market interactions, which, by virtue of their impersonality and generality do not produce any form of ties, or "leave no traces" (Simmel 1971:121).

Another assumption that comes to influence exchange theory is the definition of what counts as exchange, what can be traded and what can be given. In very broad terms, traded items, by virtue of the monetary exchange, are considered commodities, that is, generalised and exchangeable things; while gifts are considered personalised and imbued with singularity. When it comes to sex as an item of exchange, though, the act can be practised as a gift (within, for example, Christian morality) or as a commodity (in prostitution); yet, notions of individual integrity and universal human value have led to a general understanding of sex, in the contemporary Euro-American order, as something that must be shared. When shared, sex is, along with feelings and various forms of affective commitment, understood as an interpersonal experience or state, rather than something people exchange. Thus, when persons or their bodies fall into the category of commodities or gifts - which is common in various cultural practices around the world - they offer an analytical challenge for exchange theory. This is because transactions are thought to de-personify (both the parties involved in the transaction and the item/person being transacted, cf.Kopytoff 1986) whereas gifts imply disinterest (they are not for the giver's sake). Both understandings necessarily go against the notion that sexual and emotional acts and states between individuals engaged in a personal relation must flow freely and ideally reciprocally and simultaneously, without implying any loss to either of the parts. Attempts to label these exchanges as something other than transactional (cf. Bagnol 2006; Shipton 2007; cf. Donnan and Magowan 2010) demonstrate the difficulty in reconciling "universal" values of freedom, individual agency and personal integrity with contexts in which sexual acts, wives and children are found to be the items being exchanged.

Thus, although gifts are not circumscribed to affective relations (on the contrary, see the kula in Malinowski 1922; or potlatch in Godelier 1996), affective relationships are still expected to be cleansed from any transactional logic. This has of course been repeatedly challenged by social scientists, and it has also been pointed out that intimates have material expectations and compare what they give with what they get, including sexual benefits (Zelizer 2005; Tanner 2016). Yet, there remains a strong assumption that the intimate sphere is expected to be infused with the logic of gift giving, that is, a freely chosen act in which interest or expectation of reciprocity is either absent, secondary or disguised, as, for instance, in generalised (cf. Sahlins 1972) or delayed reciprocity (cf. Bourdieu 1997). Here, an implied assumption that personal and intimate exchanges must be non-transactional in order to form ties (in contrast to the self-interested, tie-cancelling logic of the Smithian market) is still operative. Thus, boundaries between

sexual/emotional flows and material interests tend to be analytically maintained, often through efforts that redraw them in ethnographically blurry contexts (Rebhun 1999; Groes Green 2013; Hoefinger 2013; Bernstein 2010).

Indifferent to these efforts, people in Claro do Lichanga were aware of what they wanted in return for a gift, and the category of gifts included sexual or affectionate acts. Thus, in non-binding interactions, men gave women presents expecting, for instance, sex in return, and precisely because these gifts had the potential to produce ties, the different parties sought to maintain the interaction with a space from which they could escape. In the household, meanwhile, spouses attended to each other's demands, well aware of what they expected back. These transactions were, rather than a sheer expression of material interest, precisely what wove affective ties and the relational positions that constituted each person – ties, we have seen, based on unequal co-dependence. Through these exchanges, spouses and kin established and maintained their place within the fabric of hierarchical ties that composed them. These positions implied, precisely, mutual feelings of obligation towards each other, which meant that, rather than giving as a way of freeing oneself from the obligation imposed by the other's gift, exchanges were based on the permanence of such feelings of obligation and affection.

More productive than working with separate categories of gift and transaction in this context then, is thinking, along with Marylin Strathern, of exchanges that connect and exchanges that cut, or attach and detach, producing respectively, relationships and individuation (and addressing in this way the problem, delineated by Roger Bastide in 1973, of disentangling individual social personhood from its social fabric with which this thesis is concerned). Although Strathern's analysis has served other purposes, such as addressing the role of money in the emergence of the individual and the relationship between market society, the state and changes in familial relationship over the course of thirty years (1999), this chapter will continuously draw parallels between the ways in which exchanges makes kin and people in Hagen and Claro do Lichanga.

Generalised, defined expectations

In the form of exchange practised within the households of Claro do Lichanga, people had definite expectations that were generalised as regards the time and the form of the return. That is, couples knew what they wanted from each other, in return for what they gave, as do we by now: wives wanted a house, a wedding, and their material needs provided for. For this, they gave their bodies, children and food. Thus, Greta, as we saw in the first chapter, was fully welcome and integrated into her husband, Adolfo's, kin-group. He worked and paid for their basic needs, their girls attended school, they had enough to eat, clothes to wear and when Greta needed to leave the in-laws' house, he rented an annexe for them. He had also bought a plot,

even though they were swindled out of it[1]. In return, he expected, on top of a meal on the table and his clothes, children and home to be properly taken care of, her body to be constantly available and exclusively his. She confided in us that it was hard to have him coming home late at night, drunk, and waking her up roughly, often violently, for sex. Although she wished he were more sensitive and gentler, she would never refuse him, or try to persuade him to leave her alone, because she was *his* wife, and that granted him access to her body.

The fact that Adolfo demanded it does not counter the notion that sex was something that women *gave* to their husbands. This was not only a narrative presented in rites of passage practised in Mozambique (such as the kulaia, in Guerra 2018, female initiation in Osorio and Macuacua 2013; Arnfred 2015; Mariano et al 2015), but spoken of in daily language as something they offered, and, at the same time, something that they *had to* give. This obligation, though, was premised on receiving from their husbands the gifts to which they were entitled. Here, isolated, predefined prestations, which we encountered in the previous chapters, were many and explicitly demanded by women, and they were commonly and unproblematically set alongside the sex that they gave their men – in the words of Ada, they were "paying back their whole lives". It was following this logic that one afternoon, when Sandra had moved back in with her parents, Sergio passed by to see her and the baby, bringing with him a bag of clothes for his son. Sandra made clear that she was not impressed at all, receiving them dryly and making the visit short. The next day, when we woke up, she told me, in disbelief, that Sergio texted her in the evening asking her to come around to his place so that they could have sex. "He brings over a couple of little baby clothes and thinks I'll be all happy", and then in a breathy voice, impersonating a silly girl, "oh, yes, let's shag! – Eh!"

The bag of clothes was, in the end, far from a sufficient present. But when she refused to go see him that evening – and this, we will see, is quite unlike the situation involving Chiluva and César – Sandra was not disputing the equivalence of sex and the present, but rather the assumption that this solitary present could legitimate Sergio's claim on her as a wife and sexual partner. What he did, she thought, was simply not enough to grant him the liberty, not after all his failures. She said this clearly, and was outraged when I tried to argue that maybe he was just, in his way, trying to fix things between them: "Fix things? First let him show us what he actually can give us".

Exchange is thus not seen as disinterested in affective relationships in CL. More than that, it is well-defined: one knows what one can expect from and what to give to one's spouse. But it is, as this episode shows, generalised and, ideally, maintained in a continuous, permanent flow. Sandra was placing a claim on the father of her son – for her to be his wife, he would have to give what was expected of him. A house and financial support were a wife's legitimate demand,

[1] As explained earlier in the thesis, they were caught in one of the neighbours' and authorities' scams that are so typical of Maputo.

and if he met her demand, then he had a general right to his wife's obedience, domestic work, children and to her body. Sandra judged that the bag of clothes did not count as what a father and a husband ought to give; thus, it did not have the property of positioning them within a domestic constellation that would grant him rights to her body.

Marital unit

Within a marital relationship, then, what one gave was returned in the form of a different and unequal gift, and these reciprocal offers placed husband and wife in unequal positions of co-dependence. In traditional rural constellations, the internal domestic economy was structured such that wives cultivated their husbands' gardens. The food was the women's, and they prepared it for themselves and their children and offered it to their husbands (Junod 1912). Such arrangements are found in many other places. Marilyn Strathern, for instance, discussing the domestic economy of her fieldsite, describes how women in Hagen cultivate their men's land, which the men in turn clear and fence. They then raise the pigs that will be used in payments to her kin and converted into shells (or money) to buy more pigs. In this way, men are producers and transactors, women are just producers (1972), precisely like Thonga men, whose responsibility was to "pay visits and collect debts", and "make contracts", turning cattle into wives and daughters into cattle, besides building huts, tools and clearing the fields (Feliciano 1998; Junod 1912).

Nowadays, in the city, men often bought a plot to serve as a kitchen garden for their wives, or they built them a bar [barraca] in front of their house. Jeane, the owner of the barraca on my street told me that it was her husband Benjamin who built it and set it up for her, but it afforded them only paltry earnings. But, she said, it was alright, because in Mozambique a woman's earnings are her *mimo* [indulgence]. "This way, I can *me txuná* [titivate myself] – and showed her varnished nails – and then, the day one's missing something in the pantry, we can still eat". This statement made me pause and check what precisely she meant by *mimo*, and I enquired into how often she went to the market with her earnings, establishing that Jeane was the one shopping daily for food. Nevertheless, she reiterated that "it is still the husband who supports the household and pays the bills". While I wasn't in any doubt that, if she was paying for the food, she was paying for the bulk of the domestic expenses, her insistence echoed both the way in which Salomão had explained the rules of domestic economy and the traditional division of the rural Thonga.

I came to hear from other barraca owners that the business had been a present from their husbands. The barraca's role in the domestic economy was thus presented as the wife's individual production and profit, something that, rather than supporting, could be offered. Benjamin, however, who often had a beer with Nik (my ex-husband), told him one time that he earned so little as a policeman that they wouldn't make ends meet if it weren't for Jeane's barraca

(which was, by the way, a very successful business). Just as Jeane's barraca supported her family, Vovó Ceres's garden had repeatedly been the sole source of food for her household during periods of her children and grandchildren's lives, both during the years when her husband lived in South Africa and was only occasionally back, and after his death. In a perfect reoccurrence of Hagen dynamics, where women's work is also perceived to be for themselves, in Southern Mozambique, a woman's contribution was directed inwards and her earnings were for her own self-indulgence, even when in practice it was invested in the household and consumed by all of its members. The effect of this is to make the domestic sphere an instantiation of the wife, her person encompassing the entire household (Strathern 1972).

But it did more than this: it also structured the household and positioned the husband within this structure. This was made explicit in women's stories of plots and house construction. The efforts involved in such projects often included women giving their savings to their husbands. Asking Rita (the wife of Sergio's cousin Leandro) if the fact that her earnings were part of the sum didn't mean that they had bought it together, she replied "yes, we bought it together, but it was him who made the purchase". When I pushed and asked if she could have done it herself, she replied that no, she couldn't. "And also", she added, "it would have left him with no morale" [*além do mais, havia de deixar aquele ali sem moral*].

This understanding of the domestic economy produced a position of provider and owner [*dono*] for the husband and simultaneously made the wife, although financially dependent on him, capable of serving him the food that she cultivated or bought with the fruit of her labours. This, importantly, did not mean that women's efforts and contribution went unrecognised. Women commented on other women's business skills, reported who supported each household without obscuring the fact that often mothers and wives were the breadwinners, and they seriously wanted to earn money themselves, all while reaffirming their husband's responsibility to support them[2]. What they were doing, rather than undermining their own importance, was arranging economic practices within their own household constellations in ways that reaffirmed the relational positions that they ought to take. Refusing to use their contribution to place them in a higher position, that of the provider, these women reinforced their husbands' role, fitting old and new dynamics into the traditional division of domestic roles. The husband was thereby kept responsible for the overall domestic economy and was the one who provided the means for her to feed him and his children. Strathern, quoting an informant about the importance of these forms of unequal exchanges, argues that dependency can carry a positive connotation when it

[2] Mentioned in the introduction but worth repeating here, several women, for varied reasons ranging from sheer necessity to knack and will, set up businesses that made them the official supporters of their households, some of them while living with their husbands. Their economic prominence sometimes involved an inversion of marital roles and they became the highest authority, being the ones that disciplined the children and defined the rules. We will return to this in chapter 5.

refers to mobilising relationships, and people are seen to grow important with the relationships by which they are supported (1999:99). In Claro do Lichanga, women in established relationships with men who provided for them benefitted from precisely this form of personal importance.

The ideal marital economic unit showed in small, everyday practices. Tio Adamastor's eight-year-old granddaughter, Imaculada, often danced at social gatherings and the grownups cheered her and paid small change for the performance. She always took her coins home for her grandfather to keep. One of the times when she brought him her "earnings", he told me that the reason why she always did that was because he was her husband (by virtue of her being his wife's namesake). Similarly, as we saw in the previous chapter, where the small boys were scolded with the words "are you this woman's husband to come asking her for food?" [*e você é marido dessa senhora pra perdir comida a ela assim?*]. This common utterance relied on the implicit understanding that exchanges, payments and gifts produced people relationally, and conversely, that these relations came with defined affordances.

We have seen how husbands and wives' daily production and maintenance of their relationship was achieved through the gifts that could be demanded and expected from each other. It was the mutual recognition of the position that each of them occupied within this domestic unit that formed the basis for the exchanges between them, and conversely, gifts were what placed them in their appropriate positions and made them visible in their appropriate roles. We will now look at the role of ritual markers, and at the expectations of relatives towards each other, since they are in non-negotiable positions when contrasted to the relatedness produced by alliance. We will now see that the status of the wife was never fully stabilised, which becomes relevant when we look at the flows of negative feelings that could be managed through payments.

Mutual recognition

Defined positions came with defined entitlements. It was in this knowledge that one particular uncle attended Livia's engagement party. The man presented himself to me as Livia's father's brother from Bilene, a town in the province of Gaza. Very chatty, he and his wife asked to be in all of the pictures that were being taken with my phone, embracing every single guest in the party for the cameras. During the ceremony, the fiancé, Augusto, handed out the engagement money to Sergio, Livia's elder brother, who would take the place of their deceased father. Sergio then handed the whole amount out to Tia Carol, who was his father's older sister. Carol kept some of the money, handed some of it back to Sergio and finally, took a small part and handed it to the brother from Bilene. A few days later, when I was going through the events of the party, I asked Sergio for the name of the uncle from Bilene, which I had forgotten, to which Sergio flatly replied that he didn't know him. After having insisted for a while, I was forced to give up. Sergio had no information about the man. This made me understandably confused, so I

continued asking about him to other family members. It turned out that no one knew the man who had claimed to be their father's brother from a second marriage. He came to the party, I now understood, to take a share of the engagement payment. His position as paternal uncle, regardless of having had any actual contact with his niece, guaranteed him a share as his automatic right, and he made sure to make use of this right. Curious to find out if he was an impostor, I brought up the matter on a visit to Tia Carol, the older sister. She attested to his identity; even though she hadn't met him personally, she was aware of the existence of the man and confirmed that it was him on the day. She was also fully aware of his motivation in showing up to the engagement of a niece he had never met.

Strathern says that reciprocity affords a change of perspectives, where parties see themselves from the point of view of the other, producing thereby, mutual recognition (Strathern 1999:99). Reciprocity was ritualised at the engagement party, affording kinsmen recognition through the performance of defined exchanges. But just as kinship status granted recognition, so did the continuous practice of one's position, with gifts helping to cultivate more intense ties and continuously activating the possibility for a relationship to grow and expand (ibid:110). Tia Carol, unlike the unknown uncle, had been present in the life of her brother and his children and cared for them in various ways: she attended all special occasions, paid regular visits, was there for births and baptisms and the like – which is no mean feat when one considers how hard it is to travel in Mozambique. In return, when I went to Bilene with Sergio and Sandra, it was simply mandatory that we visited her: there was no excuse not to come to see her once we were in the region, even though her house was in Chicumbane, almost two hours further away. When we arrived, we were well received with a special lunch, the typical family formalities, offers to stay the night and a request for her sister to host us in Bilene. This is an example of how her position in the relationship was nurtured through constant investments, in the form of visits and meals. The place that she occupied was made ritually visible at the engagement party, when Sergio's gesture of handing over the entire sum to her recognised her as *the* representative of their father's lineage. Sergio's father's younger brother collected what he was entitled to, but, in Bilene, it didn't even occur to any of us to go see him.

When money is a legitimate way to recognise and return care, one's performance of one's role can be counted and marked by monetary means. And when relational positions have specific and differential values, they can be monetised, that is, expressed in a quantified manner. A daughter/wife's value can be quantified as 100€ in a lobolo payment. Yet, unlike kin, her position is always negotiable and always potentially revocable, thus necessitating a continuous flow of gifts and payments. Even if giving a house and paying the bride wealth officially made a man the husband of the woman who in turn gave him sex, food and children (i.e. his wife), both his and her prestations must be kept flowing and correspond to their mutual expectations in quantifiable value terms. Sandra did not recognise the bag of baby clothes as an appropriate gift, but she did receive a bicycle for Mojaju, which she proudly photographed and posted on social

media. The different material value of the two gifts played no small part in explaining her different reactions, but there were also other contingencies at play: at the point he came with the bike, Sergio had taken back up his job in the army and identified Sandra and Mojaju as the beneficiaries of his potential death benefits. He was working for the future, going on a dangerous mission, sacrificing himself, instead of sitting around with the rickshaw drivers and spending his meagre earnings on Coca-Cola and loose women. He was showing responsibility towards them. His gift quantified the position that he able to assume. A bicycle and the compensation contract offered him recognition as a father and as a potential husband.

Transactional feelings

> Madalena had a four-year-old son and lived with her mother, sister and niece in Claro do Lichanga, in one of the old plots that hadn't been reparcelled. Watching our sons playing in the backyard I commented on how lucky they were to have so much space.Madalena replied that their plot was good, but that in Guava plots were even bigger. She had one, she told me, with her son's father. Completely unaware of the status of their relationship, I asked if they planned to build. They were already doing so. "Are you then going to move into the house together when it's ready?" I asked. "Oh, this only God knows". Would you like to? I asked. And in an oblique answer,Madalena replied "I can't tell, but he has given us the freezer and the stove (she had shown them to me earlier), he bought the plot, and we are building. He seems to wish us well [*nos querer bem*]."

In the same reticent way that I saw many times in the field,[3]Madalena recognised the good feelings that came with her son's father's presents and material investments. The uncertainty about the future, an expression of the arduous work involved in making a marital relationship, did not prevent her from recognising the affect that was being built alongside their house. Strathern, analysing how exchanges in Hagen produce people and kin, shows that an important part of what these exchanges do is to produce and maintain a flow of positive feelings between parties that depend on one another: men induce care from their agnates and prevent resentment and ill-wishing through gifts, payments, and compensation for deaths. Women show continuous care through their service and gifts to their husbands and elicit a desire in them to return the gifts either to them or their brothers (1999:102,110-14). In a similar way, exchanges inside the house in CL produce the attachment that binds family members in defined and unequal relational positions. While in Hagen, a man keeps up the flow of payments and gifts throughout

[3] This relates to a widespread scepticism about the future, an attitude prescribed by taboos and customs at least as old as Junod's account of the Thonga, in which certain attitudes that show reliance on expected developments might bring bad luck (preparing for a baby before they are born can cause still birth, building a hut before the wife has borne a child may provoke sterility, and so forth – Feliciano 1998; Junod 1912). It composes a picture of an unreliable world.

his life in order to ensure his wife nurtures and produces children, and his maternal kin stay generally positive towards him (ibid:113), in Claro do Lichanga men strived to establish the foundation for women to be incorporated into their kin: through the period with the husband's family, the construction of a house, and the payment of bride price. In an economy of positive dependency (cf. ibid: 99) such as those in CL and Hagen, exchanges carry and enable a flow of feelings between the different parties: they elicit good sentiments. daTarcísio (Madalena's son)'s father had not yet brought them to live with him and his kin, but he cared for them through his gifts.

While the effects of these exchanges are similar in CL and in Hagen, their practice is the diametrical opposite of what L.A. Rebhun describes as the affective economy of Caruaru, a small town in northeast Brazil (1999). There, affective economy takes the more commonly described tones of patronalism, where personal relationships cover for economic interest. So, while in CL, as we have seen, people explicitly treated material needs and desires as legitimate expectations in intimate relationships, recognising the transactional aspect of feelings, in Caruaru, economic interactions had to be made personal, and for that, their material interest had to be disguised. Thus, people in Rebhun's ethnography spoke of love, friendship and care when they engaged in transactional interactions, but unlike in Claro do Lichanga, where things were a means to convey and produce feelings, feelings were used to clothe these transactional exchanges. In order to cleanse them of their material motivations, people spoke of ongoing engagement with each other in terms of affection, and personalised all forms of transactions by turning them into favours and good-hearted help rather than a direct exchange for profit (ibid:66-76). In Claro do Lichanga, in contrast, people spoke of love and care precisely because their material desires were being met.

These particular gifts and payments thus had the capacity to convey and produce positive feelings, but that was not true of just any present. When Sandra complained about the bag of clothes as an insufficient gift, she said that it lacked love: "If he loved us, she said, would he fail to come and drive us to the hospital when Mojaju fell ill? Would he have let us leave his house? What he has for us is not love". This last sentence had been used by her before, back in the time when she lived with him, when, after having been told off for wearing a short dress, Cleuza tried to convince her to be obedient, saying that Sergio told her off because he cared for her. "Then he should pay for his child's nappies. What he has for us is not love".

Financial care was the appropriate vehicle for a husband's affection, so Sergio must pay for nappies if his authority and concern were to be heard as care. Wives in turn cared for their husbands by nurturing them and their children. In these unequal gifts, feelings of love, care and obligation that were neither quantifiable nor differently measured were produced and conveyed. Gifts produced attachment, that is, the emotional element of relational ties. What was given to one another had no direct equivalence, and was not expected to. The transactional aspect of intimate exchanges was appropriate precisely because mutual affection made them

commensurable. Without the need to separate material interest from emotional attachment, money was simply one of the legitimate forms through which one could produce a bond.

Flows of negative feelings

If positive feelings flowed with appropriate payments and gifts, negative ones required management to be avoided or doused. Strathern discerns between transactions that produce attachment and those that produce detachment: looking at relations from a man's point of view, she shows that men will emphasise attachment in cross-sex relations, maintaining a flow that nurtures them, and detachment in same-sex ones in acts that define, or individuate them. Thus, accusations of bad feelings in Hagen fall typically on agnates, precisely because these are the relations from which one wishes to detach (Strathern 1999:103). In Mozambique, such negative feelings and their management were an inherent part of alliance, manifest, as we have seen, in the tensile relationships within the household and in the strategies to balance them: those of deference, secrecy and spatial distancing. But beyond living kin, ancestors and spirits were also an active part of alliance contracts and often the ones that were most feared. Payments and gifts, we will see, were an essential part of managing potential flows of negative feelings from them, and their omission was a classic source of conflicts.

To be on good terms with ancestors one had to maintain the order defined by the patrilineal and patrilocal system. Thus, a child belonged to the father and must grow up in his house. A deceased relative must be buried at home, that is, in the land of their kin, with their ancestors (Howana 1996; Granjo 2011). Ritual offerings of drinks, food and money had to be made at ceremonies. And to avoid their dissatisfaction, ancestors must be given namesakes, with whom they will share personhood (Bérnard da Costa 2004; Pina-Cabral 2010). Interestingly, once wronged, spirits can be offered a living wife in compensation (Pfeiffer 2002:186-8; Chapman 2006:504-5), a demonstration of how alliances, in a classic Lévi-Straussian sense, are efforts to invert inimical relations that condense the relation between the husband's and her original family in the wife. In the case of a spirit wife, the woman is quite literally the relationship between her family and the ancestors. Brigitte Bagnol, however, has argued that this role is not restricted to spirit wives. Even when the groom is alive, the most important aspect of bride wealth payments in their ritual form in Mozambique is its relation to the spirit world. The lobolo, she argues, balances relations between living and dead (Bagnol 2006) because it secures the continuation of the lineage while compensating the ancestors of the bride for their sacrifice (ibid; cf. Granjo 2005). The wife is a gift and a sacrifice, the most important item exchanged between the families, and the compensation for this sacrifice produces recognition, i.e. reciprocity as a change of perspectives. In Mozambique, the lobolo is essential to avoid flows of negative feelings. This avoidance though, had to be maintained in daily actions, so women kept up their flow of gifts – subservience, children, work, food – to produce attachment, that is, feelings of loyalty, duty and

obligation that could deflect suspicions and accusations of ill-wishing and ill-doing. This helped detach them from the potentially inimical side, reaffirming her place within the husband's kinship group. Her work makes her, quite literally, the stabiliser of the alliance (for effects of the feminine nurturing role outside the household see Bertelsen 2016:214-16).

And yet, the fundamental instability of marital positions was grounds for a permanent fear of bad feelings. Even after all the ritual markers of commitment are fulfilled (bride wealth, house and children), which in principle completed the incorporation of the wife into the man's kin, and even after a fully committed marital life, marriage can still be dissolved. Wilemina, Alceu Simango's second wife, married another man after his death, making her position among the Simangos' kingroup a matter of dispute. From their perspective, she was still welcome and dear to them, but no longer their kin, belonging now to the group of another man, also deceased. From her side, though, it was different. She was highly committed to them, present at every festivity, and she still expected the treatment due to her as Alceu's widow, feeling aggrieved when this was refused, as happened at the wedding of Alceu's nephew, to which she was invited, but not taken along with the female members of the family to the beauty salon. Women were inherently mobile.

As the wife's position was never fully secure and she was simultaneously the stabilising element between families and between the living and the dead, her death, typically, broke alliance into enmity again, releasing a flow of negative feelings. The aftermaths of three deaths of married women that I witnessed in Claro do Lichanga involved conflicts and accusations of witchcraft. In one of them, the husband's family accused the deceased of having a lover and the lover of killing her; the woman's original kin, meanwhile, accused the husband of having killed her. Lobolo debts were not settled and the husband's family refused to do so now. I did not see the resolution of this case, but over the following days the body waited in the morgue while they quarrelled, awaiting a rightful place of burial. Fault for another death was pinned upon the deceased's mother-in-law, accused of having an interest in the daughter-in-law's death as a means to increase the productivity of her kitchen garden. In this case, witch or not, the mother-in-law won the dispute and the burial took place in their land in Inhambane, because she had been properly wedded and belonged therefore with their kin. Worse than being killed out of greediness was to be misburied, which would invite negative feelings from wronged ancestors (see Howana 1996; Granjo 2007 for cosmological balance). The third deceased woman was sent on her way by the preacher with the story of how David's son was killed as God's punishment for David's sins.

> "During the seven days of the baby's ailing David only fasted and prayed, but when the baby died, he got up, washed, had a meal and slept with his wife. When his servants questioned his behaviour, David said 'When he was ill there was still a chance of God taking pity on me, but now, I can't bring him back to life, what good would it do?'"

The homily, attendees explained to me, was an attempt to encourage people to move on with their lives and not get caught up in resentment and anger. In Africa, they went on, deaths always lead to accusations of murders, which is often followed by revenge witchcraft within the deceased's family. In the case of this death (of bone tuberculosis), it had been the deceased's own mother who had supposedly killed her with witchcraft. That was what Tutu, a client of Sergio's, declared over lunch, recounting the version of the deceased's husband, who also had unsettled debts with her kin. Although the preacher attempted to stop these flows of negative feelings, it remained the case that payments, settling of lobolo debts and ritual offerings to ancestors were unavoidable. Without them, a decision on the rightful place of burial, essential to prevent negative emotions from doing harm, could not be reached.

Strathern says that while wives are individuated in the relationship between affines, men (that is, husbands) produce themselves through these transactions in processes of attachment (returning profits to their wives and their kin) and detachment (freeing themselves from debts and inverting bonds of obligation and dependence) (1999:89-113). In Claro do Lichanga, men needed to produce attachment to become husbands, but they could also refuse to "return profits" to the wife, thus denying her recognition and refusing the position of husbands. The children, while a gift from his wife, were the man's by right, and if they were not raised in his house, the ancestors' dissatisfaction might manifest in their bodies. To return the mother's gift, though, was a choice – a chance to weave ties. When Sandra left Sergio's house taking their son with her, Mojaju repeatedly fell ill. Seu Bento then asked Sergio to come to his house and demanded that he took his daughter back and treated her properly[4]. Sergio said that he was not ready to take her back and that there had been so many conflicts that he could not trust her not to wish him ill. Sandra's father then told Sergio that, regardless of his wanting to live with her or not, he had a responsibility for his child; he should therefore buy a plot and build a house for his son. Sandra would live there then, in her son's house, even though they were not lobolados. Sergio declared that he did not have the means to buy a plot and build a house, but that if the issue was Mojaju, he would take him home with him and send him to be raised by Tia Randja. Once more attesting to the fragility of marriage, his actions attempted to produce detachment from the mother of his child, and here without any concern for possible flows of negative feelings. By proposing to attend to demands of patrilocality while excluding the mother of his child, Sergio simply denied Sandra recognition and reciprocity, and refused her as a wife.

Denial of recognition and reciprocity, while highly condemnable in the domestic sphere, was the essential *modus operandi* of interactions on the street. But there, the rules of the game and the effects of these evasions were quite different.

[4] This took place many months before Sergio took up his job in the army.

Friendships

In the evening when Augusto came to meet us at the pizzeria, Chiluva left with us, rather than with him. His idea in coming to meet us late at night was obvious, and made even more explicit in the half hour discussion that followed our exit. Standing on the pavement, he tried to convince her, but she did not feel obliged to do fulfil his wishes. On the contrary, and this is important, she did not feel inclined to, because as she said to me in the car, "*ele não é meu marido*" [he is not my husband]. Augusto was what women in Mozambique call an amigo – something that, my manas explained to me, "every girl has: it does not mean we betray our husbands; we are not looking for someone else, but a girl needs a friend whom to ask for mobile phone credits or a trip to the hairdresser". These friendships were more or less loose, sometimes maintained solely through text messages, 'likes' on Facebook and the odd phone call, other times involving real encounters that ranged from a walk to the bus stop to nights-out, and encompassed everything from no physical contact to a full sexual relationship. This was the case for Chiluva and Augusto, who had been in a long-lasting extramarital affair.

Morten Nielsen has described some relations in a periurban neighbourhood of Maputo as, using his informants' own terms, "friendship out of interest" (2008:102). Since all interactions were necessarily entered into and managed on the basis of mistrust, people carefully maintained proper distances when they engaged with each other, trying to extract what they needed or desired while evading the other's claims on, or attempts to take something from, them. In such a scenario, friends were, precisely, a resource and a threat: one had to manage to dodge their interests while taking what one desired. The careful distance described by Nielsen is of a different kind from that maintained between family members. In the home, people feared behaviour and feelings that might disrupt their ties, such as betrayal, resentment and selfishness. The distance there was thus "tilted", that is, established between appropriate hierarchical positions (which we will see more of in the next chapter). On the street, in contrast, one feared the establishment of a bond and maintained a distance that precisely allowed parties not to assume relational positions, maintaining an ideally flat interaction. The actual threat in these interactions was not to lose something to the other, but diametrically opposite to the threat inside the household, to become obliged.

Concerned as they were not to get entangled, people were interested in making a profit, and they did so with a clear conscience, convincing a person to give them something and then avoiding their attempts to get hold of them. Ricky, a mechanic who worked a couple of blocks away from the Bhilas, would always ask his clients for money to buy the necessary piece for the repair, then turn his phone off and go to the bar, only to come up with an excuse and some way to keep the client and get more money the next day. I followed one of these spins of his, and when I questioned it, asking if he didn't pity the poor client; he laughed and said "*ê, eu não conheço aquele ali não*" (aaah, I don't even know that fellow), the recurrent statement that, as

we saw in the previous chapter, declared expressed strangerhood and refused any form of tie. When Ricky drank the client's money, he was able, in focusing on the extraction of the desired item, not to see the client in his full personhood. Maintaining the client (and himself, by not letting this relation define him in any way) in partial anonymity, Ricky was able to dodge the formation of a relationship.

By attempting to evade any form of tie, this way of doing business is rather different from the transactional interactions of a Smithian market, with its interpersonal transactions (see Simmel 1971:121-6). Insofar as in the liberal market, parties do not recognise each other for their unique individuality, but are interested in each other only as means for the acquisition of a desired thing, both parties get what they want (product:money), and the transaction leaves no traces because it cancels the debt via discrete and immediate reciprocity. In the streets of CL, in contrast, it was the denial of reciprocity that allowed them to avoid the formation of a bond. Because reciprocity necessarily involves a change of perspective (cf. Strathern 1999), cancelling the debt would grant the other recognition.

Ricky's client was not a sexual friend, but commercial activities were the only other instance in which the term amigo was commonly used, being one of the preferred terms of street sellers calling out to passers-by to examine their wares. And the interactional style of the mechanic with his clients was typical among "friends", as Nielsen noted and as my manas warned me about (in chapter two). This style involved a skill, *esperteza* [cunning], which was essential in non-commercial interactions such as flirting. Here, the initial encounter would happen by chance. In many cases, the man expressed interest, generally in very strong terms, explicitly pronouncing a desire to marry the girl. She would then go along with it, asking him to prove himself a good man. Most of the time, neither of them believed the other's declarations and both knew, or had a good idea, of what each other's real interest was. Still, they would use this language to try and extract the object of their desire. Sometimes, usually in parties or more alcohol-infused circumstances, the man would more directly express his sexual interest, which the woman would manage through partial refusal and delay, all while asking for things – drinks, most typically. Women talked about it as normal fun, and pronounced it a skill [esperteza] to flirt, accept drinks from a man and disappear before he became too handsy. If they played it well, the interactions would continue over text messages, more presents could be given (in the form of cell phone money transfers) and reciprocity delayed until he gave up or she gave in. Casual sex could also be managed in the same deflecting way, understood as something he was extracting from her. This shows that the focus was not centred on taking without giving back, but in not letting these exchanges form relationships. For this reason, and not because they didn't want to give, the parties strived to keep the interaction limited to the thing that they desired and evade the others' expectations or requests, and with them, escape the risk of getting entangled in the unpredictable forces of the outside world (seen in chapter two).

Although the desire to acquire something was clearly a motivation to be esperto (for both the mechanic and the women), the style of interactions and the space that this form of flirtatious engagement produced were also desired in themselves. If people engaged with each other with an interest in extracting something that they desired, this desire was often open-ended, sparked by the momentary opportunity, and the attempt to get it was pleasurable in itself. By avoiding reciprocating or by trying to take more than one gives back without recognising the other, one escaped their potential claims (precisely as Chiluva did when she explained that Augusto wasn't her husband) and kept the exchange anonymous and undefined. Unlike in the household, the street was thus made up of free and equal interactions, a space for what people called, appropriately, play.

Practising extraction – risks and losses

By either partially or entirely avoiding giving what the other wanted, people hid parts of themselves and simultaneously refused to see the other completely, producing a partial blindness of sorts. With the same underlying logic that made people fence, clean and build a house to "hide their heads", flirting was the engagement and skilful manipulation of the capricious forces of the outside world.

Marylin Strathern, in *The Gender of the Gift*, describes exchanges in terms of extraction. Things, she says, are a product of relationships and component parts of their owners. In desiring a thing that the other has, one makes it detachable, and the action of extracting it, or attaching it to herself, becomes a measure of the extractor's personal value (1988). In Hagen, however, all of these interactions are or form relationships, and it is the relationship that is in fact added to the person engaged in the exchange, becoming a component of her personhood. In my field, however, extractions, although fitting perfectly with her description of the action, did not add value to the extractor per se, but depended on their skill in maintaining the interaction at the desired distance so as not to be relationally defined by it. If a tie were established, extractions became claims. Thus, extraction was accomplished by evasion, and this was tricky: while a complete evasion would interrupt the interaction (and Ricky would lose the client or be hunted down until he paid him back), the permanent delay risked the weaving of a bond (he would begin to owe the client so much that he would become obliged), as did conceding to their wish: not taking any advantage could in this case, make the client loyal, which as we will see in the next chapter, was the foundation of enduring work relationships. Thus, extraction had an element of play and an element of deceit. Sometimes both parties were aware of the rules of the game, most times they could not be completely sure. What mattered was not to be concerned about the other's expectations, avoiding obligation. That meant that if the other party misunderstood or was fully deceived, it was simply their loss.

Sometimes, one's refusal to feel obliged resulted in more than just a momentary loss for the other, as in the following case that I witnessed. I was in the sitting room, watching the television, when someone knocked on the gate. The girls went out to see who it was, and I heard their laughter and high-pitched voices out there just before they walked inside, Sandra carrying a four-month-old baby in her arms and followed by a sulky-looking woman. "Mana Flora, look here, does this child look like Nacio?" I replied that not from where I stood, no. "This *senhora* is claiming that this is his child!" and burst out laughing scornfully. The woman, humiliation evident, grabbed the baby that Sandra was handing over to her and left with hurried steps, looking at the ground in the midst of the girls' laughter. Regardless of the context in which this child had allegedly been conceived, the mother had no ties of obligation with either Nacio or his kin. She was simply unrecognised, just someone that they didn't know.

This was far from being a unique occurrence: a stranger's claims always fell into the void. The tenant at the Bhilas' was one of these men my manas described as having a "trousers' problem" [*problema de calça*] – he couldn't keep them on. Living alone in the rented annex, he had no one to cook for him. Logically enough, he brought a different woman round each evening. Some of them said that they cooked him a meal out of pity, most of them hoped that he would ask them to stay, many actually believed that was going to happen. These ones suffered when he then disappeared the next day and avoided them until they gave up. Yet, they simply had to give up. He, like Ricky, declared that he did not know them in response to my objections. His skill was to evade each and every one of these women, extracting the food and the sex that he desired from them without letting them weave a tie. As long as he refused to recognise them, their claims were misplaced.

Skill in extracting and managing claims has been studied in depth by Christian Groes-Green (2013). His informants, female residents of Maputo's periphery, were skilful in keeping long-lasting engagements based on the exchange of sex and company for material rewards with richer, foreign men, whom they called sponsors. They juggled with their sexual partners' desires to maintain their interactions on the outer limit of their plot walls, and used their sexual skills to keep extracting gifts, often in the form of large sums of money. Interesting in Groes-Green's analysis of these dynamics is what he calls the formation of a triangular reciprocity in which his informants' profits from these engagements were shared, or "returned", to their own kin. These dynamics, although not analysed as such by him, fit well with the understanding of different transactional practices within and outside of the household. The *curtidoras* [players] dodged the formation of ties with their sponsors while they took what they wanted, and invested these extractions in the cultivation of permanent kinship bonds. They managed to maintain a distance that allowed them not to become dependent and at the same time profit from their sponsors' interest, desire and often feelings without forming reciprocal bonds of obligation. Sometimes sponsors were also playing, other times, they grew attached. Here, a cultural clash in understandings of intimacy, love and material interest offered an extra challenge in the

management of feelings and sometimes women ended up getting entangled and forming ties (Groes-Green 2014).

Managing feelings

If the different culturally defined expectations sometimes entangled curtidoras in affective relationship with their sponsors, this was not a risk exclusive to intercultural couples. Sexual affairs between locals were also potentially productive of attachment. If saying "I will marry you" when flirting was an attempt to trick, and to say "prove it" was an attempt to trick back, sometimes people got tricked, and sometimes both sides forgot that they were playing. Then the difficulty became one of managing these affects and keeping it from becoming serious. To do so, transactions had to be kept specific. When in the house, items being exchanged are predefined, but generalised (i.e., a man has the general obligation to provide and a general right to his wives' bodies and children), on the street, one gets a night out with paid drinks and gives sexual pleasure, or the promise of it. When transactions between friends extended over a long period of time, partners started to feel entitled to lay claims on each other, and that was why, when Chiluva fought off Augusto's insistence to go home with him, she indicated that he did not have a claim on her, that she was not *his* woman. In keeping exchanges specific, what was being managed were their feelings, the attachment that is produced in the prescribed material prestations.

This is not to say that such engagement did not shift from being totally discrete transactions to blurry and fluid engagements. Ada had an affair that lasted so long that she would say that he was almost a second husband, and when talking about him she would affectionately express *saudade*, and describe how much she liked her *gajo português*. These feelings had to be continuously managed so as not to be conveyed in terms of legitimate demands upon each other. That is what she was doing when another of his amigas called her directly to ask to have the Portuguese man's Sundays exclusively for herself. Ada's reaction was to reassure the woman that she would never be any impediment to their Sundays. Then she turned up at his house and, informing him of the phone call, she asked for 1000€, which, according to her, he paid. Instead of entering female competition for rights over him, Ada treated it as an opportunity. But she was only capable of doing so because she focused her desire on the thing that could be extracted, the detachable piece of him, rather than on him as a person, that is, her partner. Thus she could refuse to get attached.

In a rather different, Western context, boundaries between detached and attached sexual interactions can also become blurry. Bernstein (2010), in an historical analysis of the development of transactional sex in Europe and North America discuss the postmodern fixation on authenticity through the phenomenon of "the girlfriend experience", a form of transactional sex in which the client purchases a bounded authentic experience of sexual and romantic

intimacy. Through the examination of various cases, Bernstein shows that, although produced through mutual agreement, in order to keep it in a liberal market form of transaction, both parties, worker and customer, often swayed between real feelings and the desire to define it as a service.

Such boundaries between real and performed, authentic and artificial, were not present in Claro do Lichanga. What it had in common with the context described by Bernstein, though, was that people often found themselves having to manage the feelings that were produced in a long-term intimate form of exchange. These potential ties reveal for us the common underlying transactional logic of these engagements within and outside the house: gifts are a legitimate way to convey and produce feelings of attachment. Thus, despite the different strategies and different effects of exchanges in the house and on the street, these did not constitute two completely separate realms. Transactional engagements were typically situated, and moving, along a continuum, according to how the different parties balanced the premises of their interactions to keep them on either side of the plot wall. Chiluva was affectively attached to Augusto, as he was to her, but they refused the obligation and kept it free. Sandra, in contrast, refused to let her relationship with Sergio be based on anything but appropriate ties.

CHAPTER IV

GOOD BOSSES

> Margô had four children and lived in a poor, informal neighbourhood in Maputo. Her children's father, Antonio, had gone to work in South Africa eight years earlier, while she was pregnant with their youngest child, and had never returned. They lived with his family at the time, and after a year away he sent a message home saying that he was not keeping her anymore, so the family threw her and the three girls out, but held onto the oldest child, a boy. Since then, she had been living in rented rooms, moving every time landlords reached their limit of delayed or failed payments, and trying to make a living from odd jobs like carrying water from the well to residences, doing laundry, and when luck struck, working as domestic help.

It was in this capacity that I met her, and through her that I came to learn about how employment relations involve a specific type of intimacy. Through the story of Margô, one that was not very different from that of other domestic workers whom I met, we will see that hierarchical work positions were not an obstacle to an intimate, personal relationship, but actually intrinsic to it. We have seen that relationships between family members were characterised by their relational position within a hierarchical order that entailed ties of duty, obligation and unequal co-dependence. We have also seen that interactions with strangers, or non-kin, were characterised by a systematic refusal to form a relational tie. We have, however, looked very little into circumstances in which relationships outside the household are intentionally produced, and here employment figured as one of the relations that people often strived to recognise. Exploring domestic work relations will show that they too were modelled on kinship and, as such, relied on the same structure of differential duty towards each other that we have seen within the household. And like kinship, they also founded a personal and intimate bond. Departing from how Margô and I became close, I will in this chapter analyse how the

hierarchical social difference that structures domestic work relations was constitutive of intimate relationships, and how they, like kinship, were produced and established out of a recognition of dependence, rather than on the levelling of unequal positions. The maintenance of this bond required *a tilt*, that is, a balance of proximity and distance to keep the relationship from dissolving into horizontality or generating complete dependency in a vertical structure of domination. A tilted relationship entailed intimacy and simultaneous hierarchical difference, and secured a space of agency for employees in which they could actively and intentionally produce a bond of dependence with their employers.

Becoming a patroa

My discomfort in taking part in local structures of inequality meant that it was under a lot of pressure that I broke and hired a cleaning lady. Rat pressure. The original arrangement was for her to come a single time and do a thorough search for rats, combined with a disinfection of cupboards, closets and other dark corners. But the rat was nowhere to be found, prolonging the quest. And she really needed the work. As it was, she kept on coming back every week, working assiduously, making herself needed, and with her presence in the house and our brief exchanges between chores, we started to get to know each other.

It was during one of these chats that she one day suggested that I should learn to cook traditional Mozambican food, and offered to teach me.

> We arranged for the cooking class to take place at hers, since I didn't have any of the necessary utensils. I came over on the agreed day, early in the morning, to find that she lived in a six square metre room with no windows, inside her landlady's unfinished cement-block house, located in a much poorer area of town, right next to the railway. The youngest of her three girls was home, playing with the neighbour's baby when I arrived. A few children followed me on my way in, and women sitting by their gates looked up when I passed. Margô introduced me to her daughter, locked my bag inside the house and took me to the market. Our walk attracted stares, and in response to each of them Margô introduced me with undisguised pride as her *patroa*.
>
> By the time we got back from the market, a group of neighbours had gathered in the yard. Margô offered me an apron, brought me water to wash my hands, and sat me on the only chair, placing the first task on my lap and sitting her daughter on the ground next to me, to help with its execution. We worked and we talked – I got the life story of one of her neighbours, was filled in on her landlady's witchcraft and general malevolence, learned about the school schedule of her daughters, and tried, as best I could, to grate the coconut and grind the peanut.
>
> When all the ingredients were prepared, she announced that we were going to cook it in my house. I insisted we made it there, so that everyone that had helped could eat it, but she refused. Jennifer left for school, the neighbours went home, and we sat and, talking about her hardships,

> waited for Sergio to come and pick us up in the rickshaw. It was sitting there that she told me that her biggest fear was that she would die and her daughters would end up on the street, with no place to live.
>
> Once in my kitchen, the mood somewhat lighter, we continued the culinary lesson and our chat: she told me that I needed a *mukume*, a bed linen of sorts, to become "a real woman" [*uma mulher de verdade*], recounted the tale of a white boss she had once had who loved her food, and confided that the nanny of my neighbour, whose house Margô also cleaned, humiliated her and was preferred by the employer, all because "*Margô é pobre*" [Margô is poor]. Then, when the dish was ready and the rice simmering away on the stove, Margô started to get ready to leave. Surprised, I insisted that she stayed to eat with me, and, in the end, she gave in. Yet, when we served our plates and I took a place at the table, she drew a little low bench up to the kitchen door and sat with the plate on her lap, looking out at the backyard.

Margô's demeanour during the meal felt like a refusal to establish a personal relationship with me and an insistence on maintaining work positions that explicitly entailed subservience and superiority. It felt like a boundary that I was not allowed to cross: I was not supposed to eat with her friends, was introduced as her boss, and she would not sit with me and share a meal. On the other hand, a lot of what we had shared over the course of the day seemed to contradicted this interpretation: she had taken me to her house, exposed her poverty (of which she was ashamed), her fears and hardships, and offered me more than the cleaning she was hired for. She had made herself vulnerable and told me of how it felt to be poor, and of the condition of a domestic worker in Mozambique, of how it felt to clean someone's house and not be allowed to use the toilet or the kitchenware, to be allowed nothing but a piece of bread after cooking a meal for the boss.

I expected these gestures to allow us to suspend, or even abandon the formality of an employment relation, which was maintained on very hierarchical terms: Margô, in a common way to domestic employees in Maputo, engaged with me as her boss in ways that explicitly marked our difference of status, expressing respect through the use of formal terms of address and deferring to my opinions, and showing subservience and humility (in spite of my discomfort). Conversely, she expected me to adopt a hierarchically superior position, exercising authority: she asked for my permission to leave before doing so, and consulted me on personal matters, deferring to my judgment. And, in spite of what I expected to happen, these markers were present throughout the day of the cooking lesson: she tied the apron around me, washed my hands, gave me the only chair to sit on while the others sat on the ground, and kept on using formal terms of address, in the course of intimate, exposing interactions, like laughing and crying together.

We have seen that distance was always present between intimates in this thesis, and the closest relationships were marked by non-reciprocal formality and displays of respect and deference, with authority and subservience being central to ties between spouses and parents

and children. Distance was also permanently present in the form of suspicion and secrecy and what mattered in a marriage, as in the relationship between parents and children, was the sense of commitment and care that was expressed in practical and material gestures. In sum, appropriate positions within the household were defined by an oblique line, in which hierarchy was maintained from a distance in a relationship of unequal co-dependence. In exploring relationships of dependence in this chapter we will see that this hierarchical distance depended precisely on keeping this line at the appropriate angle – neither flat nor upright, but at a tilt. Similarly, but not identically, my relationship with Margô became intimate within a frame of continuous formality, all with the expectation that some sort of commitment and care was being produced. It was not the construction of what I understood as a friendship, nor a simple contractual relationship, but a relationship modelled on kinship, yet in which the dependence was much more pronounced. In it, equality was never even considered and intimate disclosure was not desired.

Margô continued to be deferential over the entire course of our relationship, and I continued to be placed in a position of authority, with expectations and demands that increased as we became closer, to the point that I found myself accompanying her to the hospital to demand a change of medicines from the doctor, making sure landladies treated her fairly, advising her eldest daughter about school and boys and even sitting her partner in front of me and lecturing him on being a good man (to no effect). We were intimate at a distance, I was always positioned as a superior, the relationship was tilted.

Gradual exposure

The construction of a personal relationship between employer and employee was practised in Maputo, as had happened between me and Margô, through a process that involved reaffirming difference and establishing intimacy within it, maintaining in this way a tilt, a slanted line between the two parts where hierarchy is never dismissed. On some level, I had, up to that point, perceived intimate interactions between people in formal relationships, such as between subordinates and superiors, as transgressive. They depended, I thought, on the temporary removal of markers of status. Intuitively I assumed that intimacy demanded a temporary establishment of equality. Unsurprisingly, this assumption is part of a general western understanding much discussed in studies of intimacy within psychology and social studies of work relations (e.g. Nevis, Backman and Nevis 2003). In this logic, recreational, out-of-work interactions are established in temporarily bounded spaces of informality that allow for the flattening of work hierarchies and interactions in which people engage with each other as individuals, rather than through rank and status (ibid). Conceptually, in the West, intimacy has been loosely associated with affection and attachment, with privacy and the personal, and with informality. Intimate aspects of life are shared in personal, close relationships and intimacy is

thus related to the process through which one exposes one's innermost self, or to the production of an interpersonal space in which the inner can be revealed (Davis 1973). In Giddens' positive understanding of modern intimacy as a democratisation of the private sphere (1992), intimacy presupposes the inexistence, or the suspension, of social roles and hierarchies and the establishment of a space of equality in which people can be "themselves", (an equality grounded on common humanity). Such intimacy flourishes in a relationship based on empathy, compassion and affection that allows for mutual self-disclosure and trust.

If we look back, it is clear that this was not what constituted intimacy among family members in Claro do Lichanga. On the contrary, if intimacy entailed exposure, this happened, as between Margô and me, within hierarchical patterns, maintained in everyday interactions, such as meals, sleeping arrangements and the domestic division of chores. Deferential forms of address employed within the household were extended to interactions outside the household in Maputo, and respectful interactions between strangers were conducted with the use of kinship terms such as mother or father. This use of kinship idioms, according to Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, is a widespread habit in the African continent that "indicates hierarchy rather than sentiment in non-kinship relations" (1977:25). In domestic work relations in Maputo, formal terms of address was employed regardless of circumstances. Name taboo was respected, *senhor(a)*, *patrão (oa)* and other titles were always employed, and employers were never addressed directly in the second person. In spite of most expats' protests, I never met a domestic worker who followed their requests to drop deferential terms. Margô herself would shift, at times even employing Filó, an affectionate nickname[1], but she never addressed me directly. At the same time, she referred to herself in the third person, which, though not an uncommon practice among domestic workers, was remarkably consistent with Margô. This style of speech allowed her to exclude herself from a direct interpersonal relationship, precluding, precisely, the dyad that is defining of western intimacy (Buber 1937; Davis 1973).

Besides the use of formal, deferential forms of address, employees in Maputo marked distance in the refusal to eat together, as we saw Margô do with me. Vera, who worked with an expat family, never sat at the table, but ate in the kitchen after the family had had their meal, saying that their food (which she cooked herself following their recipes) was not real food, and joking gently about white people's taste. Madalena, a nanny, always accompanied her boss and the boss' daughters to a café. Not a single time did she accept their offer of food or drink at the establishment. I myself have been in a situation that marked this limit very clearly. Being the only parent of the preschool that my son attended without a car, I was sometimes offered a ride by one of the children's private drivers, which I accepted not least for the opportunity of talking to the driver. On one of these rides, I opened a small bag of peanuts, which I often used to share with people in a range of different circumstances. Even though he was not my employee,

[1] Flower in Changana

but was simply doing me a favour, and on previous occasions had chatted quite freely to me, the offer embarrassed him deeply and he could not accept [*não senhora, não, muito obrigado*].

The refusal of food is often perceived in anthropological analyses as an antisocial act. If eating together, or sharing the same food, is analytically seen as an intimate practice that can potentially produce a bond (cf. ch. 1), its avoidance is understood to be a declaration of the rejection of such a bond (Miller, Rosin and Fiske 1998). While this rejection can literally be a protective measure – and I saw people refuse food for fear of being bewitched during my time in the field –, in the specific context of domestic work in contemporary Maputo, not eating with their bosses was a refusal to breach a marker of difference, and that was charged with several layers of meaning. The separation of employers' and employees' meals was connected to forms of straightforward domination and was normally imposed from above: employers in Maputo commonly limited the type and amount of food that their domestic workers were allowed to consume, as well the cutlery and crockery that they might use. Workers abiding by this separation, then, could either be interpreted as reproducing an internalised sense of inferiority, that is, of not *being worthy of* sharing substance with their superiors, or as a declaration of enmity, as having *no desire* to share substance with them. Without rejecting the possible presence of both of these aspects in domestic work relations, I would like to draw attention to the fact that these analyses imply that the refusal to share substance is a refusal to form a relationship. Yet, workers strived to form a relational tie with their bosses. So, what seems to be of greater relevance than detachment in their refusal to eat together is precisely what attaching properties the act had. From any point of view, both nannies were close and intimate with their bosses. Embla, Vera's boss, kept her as a confident, telling her about her extramarital love affair, her frustrations with her boss at the UN and her obsession with losing weight (things that Vera gossiped about to me). She found Vera's presence pervasive and at times invasive, but at the same time let her interfere in and reconfigure aspects of her private life such as what her son was fed and how to organise her drawers. Margô hugged me, laid her head on my shoulder, and often sat holding hands with me. We undressed in each other's presence. In sum, emotional attachment and physical proximity were cultivated within all of these interactions, and the refusal to eat together was not meant to produce a cut. On the contrary, difference and distance are not undesirable – what we have learned so far is precisely that intimacy is intrinsically hierarchical. And in somewhat the same way that family members were entitled to different portion sizes and types of food, bosses and employees reproduced these manifestations of difference. The main result of spatial and temporal separation of meals was, as in the household, to maintain this difference and to produce, rather than a break, a tilt. Keeping commensality within hierarchical patterns was part of weaving relational positions within this specific order. Intimacy with employers, then, was not refused, but established in its specific ideal form.

The insistence on maintaining hierarchical forms of address and behaviour was a way of keeping a tilted distance and marking differential status. Local employers tended to enter

employment relationships on these terms, as did the Southern Europeans I met in Maputo. They took up their superior status and engaged in practices that produced dependency, helping and simultaneously performing authority over employees by, for example, helping financially and advising them to choose a good partner, take an education, invest in a plot instead of giving money to church and so forth. They also engaged directly in the production of intimate, kin-like relations. One resident of Casas Brancas (the part of CL with better houses where I lived for the first months, presented in the introduction), for instance, had her live-in maid share a room with her children, whom they called "auntie". And I heard several employers affirm that their maids were part of the family and explicitly express their dependence of them, declaring that their lives didn't function without their maids and nannies, recounting how their children were emotionally attached to them, and when in direct interaction thanking them with sentences such as "I don't know what I would do without you". Physical expressions of affection were not uncommon either, and these bosses showed real concern for their employees' families and financial struggles, helping to pay extra expenses and giving presents. At the same time, staff were not allowed to leave without direct permission, had no fixed work hours (at least these were never respected), were asked to do chores that did not strictly fit with the job description (mostly physical work), and were spoken of as ignorant, irrational, unkempt, dirty, and very often, as a burden.

Risk and danger

The embrace of hierarchy by superiors, who expected subservience and reinforced unequal positions, necessarily implied a recognition of their own power. The construction of such relationships was therefore loaded with a danger of domination, of a fully vertical relation, and so maintaining the right tilt was central. In employees' efforts to minimise this risk, exposure happened slowly and partially. Margô did so by gradually involving me in intimate aspects of her life that revealed her social stigmas, that which made her vulnerable.

Margô had initially told me that she lived with her husband and three girls, a partner with whom she "has no problem", and was "a good man, just had no luck". After the local fashion, she called my son "husband" [*meu marido*], as he and her children's father were namesakes, and let me assume that the man she lived with was Antonio. It later turned out that this wasn't the case. I was already aware of their economic struggles, and had helped with school fees and the odd extra expense, when one day she phoned late in the night, crying inconsolably, saying she had been thrown out of the room for failing to pay the rent. I made sure they could stay in the room for the night and promised to come to her aid the next morning. While we walked around the neighbourhood looking for a new room, she told me (again) of how her landlady was a witch, an envious, cold-hearted woman who wanted to make her and her daughters suffer. We found a new place, which I secured for her, and the girls helped carrying their belongings from

the old to the new room, looking quite accustomed to the task. During the entire day, no sign was to be seen of the man who supposedly lived with them, making me vaguely doubt his existence. The moving done, Margô walked me to the bus stop, giving me the opportunity to carefully ask what had been nagging me through the day: where is he? As a reply, I got a full outburst: "that one [*aquele ali*] does not do anything, he only takes my money and spends it at the bar. He was sleeping with that senhora, she bewitched him... *that one* is just a burden, he drinks and becomes violent, we are all very tired of him".

That one, it turned out, was not Antonio, who, I came to learn much later, had abandoned them several years earlier. This was not the first time I had asked her about her husband; on the contrary, we had previously discussed their partnership and his character and she had repeatedly affirmed that everything was fine. It was partly the fact that she could tell that I was *boa* [good] that made her confide aspects of her life that were potentially threatening to her employment and our relationship in general.[2] The fact that I came to her aid when she needed, and had been helping her since we met made her think it was worth the risk, she could make herself vulnerable.

The fact that intimacy between employer and employee was necessarily dangerous, as it was in family relations, was one of the reasons it did not entail complete trust and full disclosure. In an unpredictable world in which everyone potentially desired the other harm (as we have seen in chapter 1, cf. Nielsen 2008), it was precisely the necessary vulnerability of intimacy, the necessary exposure of oneself, that made it dangerous. Geschiere has shown that, among the Maka, intimacy, kinship and the home are pervaded with danger, and mistrust is not an indicator of more or less intimacy but rather an intrinsic part of these relationships (1997; 2013). In the same way as among the Maka, trust was not the basis of intimate relationships in Maputo either, yet exposure was a necessary part of these ties. Here exposure did not mean the disclosure of oneself to the other (cf. Giddens 1992), but involved actions with the capacity to produce dependence. To make it a relationship of positive dependency (cf. Strathern 1999) and not complete domination, these needed to be balanced at an optimal hierarchical distance, a relational order that allowed for gradual and partial exposure, that is, a tilted relationship. It was precisely the establishment of the right tilt that protected the two parties from dangers. These, we will see, were multiple, including the refusal of recognition, envy, witchcraft and other forms of attack, and, especially, the danger of *being eaten*, that is, completely exploited (cf. Bertelsen 2017). Exploring these dangers in detail will allow us to understand more concretely the ways in which witchcraft and evil were intrinsic to intimacy, adding ethnographic insights to Geschiere's analysis of these dynamics in Cameroon (1997). But before we turn to this, let us

[2] Besides the stigma of being a single mother and poor, employers in Maputo found it undesirable to have domestic workers with alcohol/addiction problems at home.

explore one further aspect of the way the tilt is constructed, namely, the sense of loyalty that bound the different parties, which is central to the role of dependence in this social fabric.

Dependence

Proper employment for poor urbanites was rare and highly desired, and the risk that Margô ran in developing a personal bond with me was real. She risked losing both her job and my kindness when she exposed her problems and difficulties, which went far beyond an abusive drunken partner, no social network and deep poverty. Had I adopted common local judgements or followed local advice, she would have lost her source of income and our relationship. I, for my part, saw that Margô had no one, and felt that I couldn't possibly stop employing a single mother of three girls, nor deny any help that I could afford. This sentiment was precisely, I came to realise, what employees hoped to generate in their relationship with their employers: a sense of loyalty and exclusive commitment, which was not uncommonly achieved: domestic employment relationships, when loyal, could stretch over decades or even a lifetime. I met people in Maputo who felt that they could never have another nanny watching their children or call another driver to take them, and Mamá Rosa's boss was so attached to her that she wanted to take her with her to the north of the country when her development project was relocated. Loyalty, in the sense that I employ here, is an interpersonal value that binds the parties in a thoroughgoing faithfulness (Ladd 1967:97). The characteristic that marked the relationships that I am calling loyal is that of steadfast commitment, which is moral rather than contractual, and yet prevents people from renouncing the bond, in contrast with ties that can be continuously revised. It is thus the sense of the "strict and determined continuity" (Royce 1907) of this tie that I specifically want to retain. Cultivating the boss's loyalty had little to do with doing a good job. Even Margô, who attempted to make herself as indispensable as possible, and was fully determined to get rid of the rats and see what else she could offer, knew that it was not her good work that was central to securing her job, but rather making me recognise how dependent she was on me and, based on this recognition, develop a sense of obligation towards her. Through my personal experience I came to understand that loyalty towards an employee is not built around the transaction, but rather around the person.

The house in which I lived in Claro do Lichanga had a permanent night guard, Paulo, who stayed as tenants came and went, with the allotted tasks, assigned by the landlady, of filling the water reservoir and sweeping up leaves in the morning. Unlike Margô, Paulo's approach was to spare himself any trouble if he could get away with it and, since I placed no demands on him, the taught me how to fill the water, began to work fewer and fewer hours, increasingly failed to show up, grew steadily less fastidious when sweeping the yard, and slept more and more soundly through the night. As I would not complaint to the landlady, he took it easy, knowing that in the worst-case scenario, the only thing at stake was his night sleep. This was clear when I moved

out of the house: he dreaded the arrival of the future tenants, readying himself for less financial help throughout the month and less "understanding of his situation", and he asked me not to forget him and his family. In the following months, the couple of times that I came by the house to greet him I found him sitting on the plastic chair on the sidewalk, keeping a watchful eye on passers-by. When I commented on this, he laughed along with me saying "No more straw mat for Paulo" [*Paulo já não tem mais esteira*], and moved on to tell me about his family, ask about mine and fill me in on the little he knew about the new tenants. The conditions had changed, but he had kept his job.

The landlady seemed to be a loyal employer, not only judging by Paulo. The house, one might say, also had its own plumber. It was by local standards a good house, which did not mean that the corrugated iron plates on the roof were not full of holes, the water pump would not periodically stop working, or that home appliances were not old and battered. Many of these problems became part of life, others were addressed by Laura, the landlady, and regardless of whether the issue was a leaking roof or a malfunctioning stove, Laura would always send for or tell me to call the same plumber, Castro. Castro seemed to bring Paulo's work ethic to an acme of perfection. He failed to come at most appointed times. When he showed up, at random hours, he would start on the task and then disappear after a short while, leaving things unfinished, most often asking me for money to buy tools and pieces and then not coming back for days. When he managed to finish the job, it was invariably done poorly and the problem would return. Despite that, I was absolutely not allowed to find another plumber. Trouble with him would accumulate, Dona Laura would lose her patience, bring him over and supervise his work, shouting at him, prompting him to do it properly, standing there to make sure he did not leave before his task was satisfactorily executed. While he addressed her as senhora, she called him *Magro* [Skinny].

The dynamic between Laura and Castro was like a tilted bond of obligation: she had the capacity to give him something he lacked and needed, and felt obliged to do so. This work configuration was something many poor urbanites in Maputo desired, and any employment was welcome. This was so because, however desperate and willing to work with anything at all they were, to get a job as a poor person in Maputo was not easy. For any position one needed luck and very often a contact. A simple job as a guard or an informal real estate agent was, as a rule, embedded in a network which could only be accessed via someone who was already on the inside and, even then, to get in was difficult and most often costly. When this was achieved, one's chances of keeping the position were highly dependent on strengthening these bonds and cultivating the same motivation that led to them being given a chance into the desire to secure them their position. Castro had achieved this, as was clear in Laura's steadfast preference for him, which was completely unrelated to any professional assessment: she was committed to employing *him*, not his services. Their relationship was marked by this loyalty, expressed in simultaneously hierarchical and intimate terms.

As I experienced with Margô, employees cultivated this relationship through practices that were less about making themselves indispensable to their bosses than about making bosses understand that employees depended on them. Vera for instance, was hired primarily as a nanny. For her very generous salary, she, in a way typical of Mozambican domestic employment, worked flexible hours and days, being available on weekends and at nights, and cared for everything that concerned the child – dropping him off and picking him up, cooking, feeding, bathing, entertaining, putting to bed – on top of household chores such as cleaning, washing and cooking. Embla knew everything about Vera's family – the son who was building a house and planning a wedding, the husband who was unemployed, the younger son who was now enrolled at a private college. In other words, Embla knew how much not only Vera, but her entire family, depended on her salary, and how many investments they had made relying on her employment with Embla. Vera and her relatives thought that Embla clearly had a bond with them. Thus, when Embla was about to leave Mozambique, Vera's family expected to inherit the car and the furniture, and hoped that Embla would provide for them until they could find Vera a job with another expatriate family. Having received repeated proof of Embla's kindness towards them (in the form of a considerable salary), Vera and her relatives assumed that their dependence was recognised and that it entailed a sense of duty and responsibility for their continued well-being.

What Vera did, by making herself available, loyal and reliable, and simultaneously sharing her family's hardships with Embla and accounting for the improvements they were able to make thanks to "Embla's generosity", was to weave a bond of dependence and make it explicit so as to produce in return a sense of duty. As we have seen within the household, personal relationships in Maputo were not woven on the basis of equality and reciprocity, but are rather made up of asymmetrical obligation. Wives needed their husbands to take responsibility for them, support them and their household financially, construct a house, make sure they were well fed and not in need. They endured a lot to maintain their positions, and couldn't single-handedly demand better treatment, but often needed someone in a position of authority – parents, parents-in-law, me – to do it on their behalf. Their relationships were not practised in terms of autonomy, but rather built upon the recognition that the parts were unequally dependent on that relationship. When an employee established this bond with their employer, it was precisely the mutual recognition of their dependence that allowed them to expect care and support from their employers. Hierarchical positions entailed different duties towards each other and a necessary state of dependence for the ones in the lower position.

James Ferguson has argued that dependence in Southern Africa is the necessary structure of local relationships and can be understood as a "mode of action": a social practice that allows for hierarchical membership and relational existence (2013). Starting from the understanding, broadly attested in the literature since Radcliffe-Brown, that people in sub-Saharan Africa are constituted by their social relations, Ferguson argues that a person does not precede a relation

of dependence, but is instead constructed in it (2013:226). His analysis shows how work relations have been continuously produced in terms of dependence through pre-capitalism, colonialism and the present market society, revealing an understanding of social membership predicated on hierarchical bonds. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff have argued that wealth in Africa is measured in people, that is, power and status derive from the number of dependants that a person has (1977), an argument reaffirmed by several scholars since (e.g. J. and J. Comaroff). Conversely, to belong entails both "belonging in" and "belonging to" (1977:10,24). Ferguson, attesting to this, argues that *to be* someone *is to belong* to someone (ibid:228). What has changed, he shows, is that, while in past regimes people were a rare and valuable resource, now market economy has transformed people into a surplus, in a process of systematic exclusion from work relations that produces a class of socially non-existent people. In Maputo, this condition was expressed in the often-heard sentence "*ele/a não é pessoa*" that described people without not only kin, but any position in a hierarchical social structure. The way in which a work relation and the person's position in it come to constitute her personhood was visible in the way Margô proudly presented her patroa to passers-by when we walked together in her neighbourhood, and talked about herself to me as "*sua Margô*" [your Margô, third person conjugation].

If dependence was a mode of action that allowed people to exist relationally, it was also a position that afforded them material and personal security, being in fact, the only means to realise it. Vera's family's expectations, for example, was a common one and was often met: I met many employees who had inherited clothes, cars and even a flat when their European bosses left, and very many who had improved their lives with the continuous help of bosses who stayed. Such a bond with a (white) employer was, not least for this reason, a widespread desire, as we will see in more depth in the following section. But to weave the relationship properly, one needed to take a risk, not only in exposing oneself, but also in committing to the relationship without being fully certain that it would be reciprocated. Vera, for instance, found herself in the middle of all those projects when Embla left Maputo and she, the sole bread winner of the family, was left unemployed. Embla's furniture and the car were sold to expatriates arriving in Maputo and the job Vera subsequently found offered her a salary corresponding to precisely one tenth of what she had been earing with Embla. The vision of one graduated son and another one properly wedded and housed was replaced by stacked cement blocks, an education set on standby by delayed fees, and a postponed ceremony. Embla was sure that "things would turn out alright for Vera" and did not worry about the outcome of her investments. But such investments did cost a lot, and there was a serious risk of losing out.

For instance, a man I knew, José, when he glimpsed a remote possibility of being hired as a private driver on a trip to South Africa, got himself a passport and made costly repairs on his car in anticipation of the job, at which point he was informed that his services would not be needed. Margô too committed to long term projects relying on her income and the extra

assistance that she got from me. My departure was met with waves of anxiety and fears of not being able to continue her plans. Yet, workers took these risks, because investing in these plans, when they had the chance and even if they would likely fail, was part of the way the relationship was woven[3]. It was in fact necessary, since it was by virtually producing an improved future that employees simultaneously attached this same future to the boss's resources, revealing their dependence and making their unequal capacities explicit. The recognition of their different capacities and their reliance on the boss' resources for the execution of their projects was what enabled the formation of a tilted bond.

Good and evil

A relationship of dependence, we have seen, had the effect of making the different parties unequally vulnerable. This was so because one party was necessarily subjected to the other's power, and power, as is its way, could always be misused. The risk of making oneself vulnerable and submitting to the other's power was dealt with, as we have seen, through varied strategies of partial and gradual exposure that aimed at producing the right tilt. The importance of balancing this relationship was directly related to protection: not getting too close or fully dependent, placed at the other's mercy. Although these strategies were important, they were not enough to prevent negative feelings and desires from emerging within the relationship, and bosses becoming domineering, abusive or contemptuous. For this, one had to rely on their morality, and generosity was the principal moral quality of a boss. Local assessments were generally simply made in binary terms of good [*bom*] and evil [*mau*] people.

Ideas of good and evil in Maputo were directly connected to generosity and largesse in the first case, and stinginess and egotism in the second, making these qualities quantifiable in terms of how much one shared and gave. Such understandings are not specific to either Maputo, Mozambique or Africa (see e.g., Ewart 2013 on the obligation to share in an Amerindian context) and resonate with some Christian moralities in both earlier and newer forms (Rio 2010), as well as with the capitalist ethic that underlies most newer ideologies (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001)[4]. In Africa, though, (re)distribution is the sole criterion of assessment of moral righteousness, which means that efforts involved in the production of wealth are not counted: what matters is how it is consumed. Operating with this logic, people judged that a good person shared, whereas a bad one ate alone [*come sozinho*]. Knut Rio and colleagues, in a collective work on Christianity and witchcraft in Africa and Melanesia, have shown that individual

[3] Nielsen demonstrates how this specific form of investment in doomed plans is a way of preserving the future by folding it into the present, realising it in its precarious form in the now. For a detailed analysis, see Nielsen 2008.

[4] E.g. democracy, human rights, national welfare.

consumption is widely considered an immoral and dangerous act and associated with witches (2017). Accumulation, a practice often condemned in moral systems by virtue of its antisocial nature (Marwick 1970; Kelly 1993:177), was ambiguously perceived in my field, as in other parts of Africa: if on the one hand it had an element of "fixing capital" (cf. Marx 1887), which stagnated social flows and was seen as behaviour that showed indifference towards or scorn for others, on the other, it was a necessary part of the display of wealth, which was not censured. Thus, power, which is necessary for the functioning of society, is expressed through wealth, status and violence, and it is synonymous with witchcraft (Geschiere 1997)[5]. In Claro do Lichanga, anyone with status, power and wealth was suspected of being or straightforwardly labelled as a witch, and relations with them were always maintained with a degree of scepticism. For them not to be thoroughly condemned and feared, they had to compensate for their accumulation with continuous redistribution; that is, they had to show goodness and be generous.

Expectations of generosity were tailored to the type of relationship between the two parties and to the giver's wealth, that is, they were proportional to the actual availability of resources. An example of it is how one time, when Sergio needed a large sum of money to pay a fine, he received seven euros from Tia Randja, which he considered really nice of her because her sole income derived from a sweet-stand in front of her house, but Tio Adamastor, in Sergio's words a former high-ranking army officer with two houses, who received retirement benefits from the state, gave him seven euros as well, claiming that this was all he had. This left Sergio very aggrieved, as he felt that the uncle refused to recognise his resource-rich position and Sergio's dependence on him.

This is why white bosses were so highly desired. If expectations were proportional to people's means, here whites were perceived as endlessly resource-rich, and becoming their dependent was seen as an opportunity that could change a person's life. Stories of people who received cars and even flats from their white bosses circulated, and though some were mere gossip, they were not all necessarily exaggerated. Francisco, Sergio's youngest uncle, lived in the richest part of the city, in a flat left to him by his European bosses. Years after having moved away, they still paid him a monthly salary, which he lived off (he had also initially inherited a car, but ended up "drinking" it). Cases like Francisco's fueled expectations like those of Vera's family's, reinforcing at the same time the conception of whites as *good*, i.e., resourceful and generous. Around the end of my stay in Claro do Lichanga, initial speculation about Sergio being the likely heir of my ex-husband's car had developed into a widespread certainty that the car had already been given to him. On my side, certainty of my generosity was direct: my manas had reserved and name-tagged all of my belongings, months ahead of my departure.

[5] It is actually in this ambiguity that new Christian Pentecostalist ideologies are accommodated, preaching against accumulation and simultaneously encouraging material improvement (James 2019; Smith 2001).

This moral assessment of people's generosity was not exclusive to whites, and bosses were defined as bom [good] or mau [evil] based on their willingness to make concessions. One of Margô's closest friends, Leo, had, according to his and Margôs' description, an extremely evil boss [*um patrão muito mau*], who made him do the work of a bricklayer when he was hired as a guard, even though they knew he had epilepsy. And, when Leo fell ill, urinating blood, and needing money for medical treatment, the boss advanced him the sum but subtracted it from his next salary. He also denied him paid sick leave. The knowledge of how bosses can be evil was what made Paulo, the guard, worried when I moved out of the house. He repeatedly talked to Margô about how accustomed he had grown to having "uma patroa boa" and didn't know how he would get by if the next ones were not. My goodness was partially attributed to him being allowed to "be chilled and not have any problems with me" [*estar relaxado*, *não ter problema*], since the fact that I was not strict with his work hours made it possible for him to have a second source of income selling mobile phone credits at the market. He also appreciated the daily meal, but mostly, it referred to the petty cash that he could ask for to cover unexpected expenses: as children in need of medicine and an empty pantry were routine in his household, the extra help throughout the month was crucial for them to get by. What my generosity did, beyond the actual provision of needed help, was to recognise his dependence.

We have already seen that this conjuncture is the norm for most domestic employees in Maputo, and their dependence and reliance on their bosses' will to help them out was often their only chance to improve their lot. And as I have said, expectations were tailored to the type of relationship one found oneself in. Kinsmen should, clearly, be first in line to help a person in need. Sergio, again, ranked his relatives according to who had helped him throughout his life: after his parents died, Tia Vera began to support him and his siblings, and Tio Adamastor covered extra expenses. Vera died, though, and after some years, Tio Adamastor went to prison, and no one else came to their aid, not even Francisco, the younger uncle "who had a car and a flat". Sergio had several accounts of times in which he needed financial help, like the one related above, and with them, the list of those who refused to help – one of them being a situation in which my ex-husband saved him from jail by paying the fine, after he had tried all of his relatives. This event came to strengthen our relationship and his loyalty towards me, as had my coming to help Margô secure a roof for herself and her daughters. In turn, people's failure to help in times of need was invariably perceived as an expression of bad feelings or intentions. Sergio explained to me that Tio Adamastor's stinginess in the story of the fine told above, in which he only received seven euros, was a result of his envy: he did not like the fact that Sergio had "advanced more" [*havia avançado mais*] than his own son. Margô, similarly, described her father as the most evil man on earth: he had worked in a bakery and never brought his grandchildren bread. In fact, all of her close kin were as evil-hearted as her father: she once sought ought her sister when in need of money to pay her eldest's school enrolment fee and the sister made Margô give her the best blanket she owned in return for the money. Margô tells this story of her coming

with her sole good blanket to the sister's house, incredulous that her sister could actually take it, just "to make her suffer" [*pra me fazer sofrer*]. This shows that the refusal to recognise dependence within networks of kinship, where such relationships are prescribed, is more severely judged.

As we can see, it was not only bosses who were appreciated for their generosity, but, as a rule, people that wanted to *eat alone* [*quer comer sozinho*] while others around them went hungry were seen as evil, or motivated by evil sentiments, and any kind of accumulation was perceived with suspicion. People that rose above family and neighbours were suspected of profiting at the cost of others. When I say at the cost of others, I mean it quite concretely. Tia Vera, for example, was "a good woman of the church", as they described her. She supported her orphan nephews and her mother throughout their difficult periods and was respected and cherished at the local Zionist church. Her family adored her, thought her a good, righteous woman who spoke beautifully about God and lived what they considered a very correct life. But her status, or rather, the fact that her wealth was visible in the very pretty house [*uma casa muito bonita*] that she had built in the neighbourhood, attracted suspicion and envy, and the fact that she never married did not help. Neighbours were convinced that she was a witch, preying on the congregation. When she got ill and died, her family attributed it to witchcraft by envious others. Outsiders, though, explained to me that witches' need for flesh gradually increased, making it more and more difficult to keep their position, which led to them being consumed by the dark forces. Thus, stinginess and greed, both leading to accumulation, were necessarily interpreted as an expression of misuse of power in relationships with dependents, in which the most resourceful engaged in excessive extraction to the detriment of those who had less. While Tia Vera's case was complicated by the fact that she "developed" financially without constituting a family, thus attracting more suspicion, her material improvement was also simply judged to be the direct result of exploitation.

To prevent such judgements, it was not enough to support close family members, as Tia Vera's story proves. Good people distributed their wealth, consuming together. In the neighbourhood, residents used periods of employment as a chance to throw birthday parties and make other celebrations that involved inviting all of one's relations for a feast. People explained the habit as a consequence of knowing that abundance would probably not last, so they should seize the opportunity when it was there. While ephemeral income did make projects a lot more urgent, as we have seen in the way workers invested their resources, these celebrations served other purposes as well, and they had other effects. Being both a form of conspicuous consumption and a display of generosity, "eating together" had the incongruous double purpose of protecting the host from being envied while exposing her present well-being. In the ambiguous way that power worked, any gesture of giving was both an act that shared one's resources and simultaneously increased the person's importance and status. This was very clear in stories of men who had made it in South Africa, which always involved their coming home, having a feast

and giving money to kin and neighbours. This practice made them *known*, that is, they became broadly *recognised*, and grew with the number of dependants that they had. When social relations are a measure of one's wealth (cf. Miers and Kopytoff 1977), sharing produces relationships of momentary dependence that became included in the giver's person. Giving thus, was a means through which one augmented one's social personhood. At the same time, sharing was also a way of protecting oneself from attacks motivated by envy and made sure that people felt included in the distribution of wealth, that is, that they were invited to eat.

These notions of morality reinforced the notion of dependence as a mode of action. When the distribution of wealth is a measure of a person's character, and at the same time a means to produce relationships of dependence, such forms of ties are not only practically sought ought but also a moral ideal.

The outside that creeps in

If greediness and selfishness are, as mentioned above, generally condemned in a range of moral systems (cf. Rio et al. 2017), in many parts of Africa, these feelings were understood to be inherently human, and thus something that anyone might potentially feel. This understanding of human nature was simply a manifestation of the cosmological order in general, which, as we have seen in the previous chapters, assumed the world – and people – to be potentially harmful, or as my manas explained this to me, "given the chance, everyone is bad" [*se deixar, todo mundo é ruim*]. Geschiere in his discussion of intimacy and trust argues that, in contrast to the Christian notion of pure good and pure evil, people in his field are always considered capable of both good and evil actions, such as accumulation, eating alone, or coveting what the other owns (2013). As we have seen, these potentially harmful feelings must be kept out through fencing, protection rituals and other practices that attempt to promote partial invisibility. The problem is that a tilted relationship with a resource-rich person necessarily afforded more visibility, since, as Ferguson rightly puts it, dependence relationships produced them as persons (2013). While this meant increased social status, it also made it more difficult to dodge the potentially evil forces of the outside world. Thus, employees of, especially, but not only, resource-rich bosses, found themselves having to deal with this new, and often unwanted attention. Margô was both proud and scared of having a white patroa, because our relationship increased her importance and visibility, attracting both respect and envy. From the moment that I became part of her life, she became permanently suspicious of people's bad intentions towards her and her children. Margô acquired importance and actual support, but was also repeatedly attacked by envious witches who, over the course of the months of our acquaintance: made her partner mistreat her, take her money and betray her; put a magic charm in her daughter's school books, who suddenly decided to quit school and church; and touched Margô with witch fire [*lume de feiticeiro*], making her fall suddenly ill with fever and a rash. Although she was still poor, she

was now "mine" (cf. Ferguson 2013), and with this she was enlarged: the relationship was included as a component of her social personhood – I constituted her, just as she constituted and defined me, making me a patroa.

When this happened, it indirectly affected the bosses, and they were the ones with the means to protect their employees. Sandra's boss at the hair salon, for instance – whom she called "auntie" – owned many stands and employed many people and was therefore very respected at the market. When a customer accused Sandra of having stolen hair strands from a wig, it was under the authority of the salon owner that the officer assessing the case refused the charges. Thus, the resource-rich party must exercise their influence for the benefit of their dependants, which in itself, was an act that strengthened the ties of dependence and enlarged their personhood. While bosses were often the main protection that dependents had against outsiders' envy and evil, they could also be the source of evil themselves. We have seen this, when "evil crept in" and manifested itself in the form of an intimate in households in the stories of wives who poisoned their husbands and of mothers who killed their children (chapter 3). We will look now at the internal dynamics of the work relationship, where the biggest threat lay. Here, the way to protect it from becoming destructive was to maintain the right tilt.

Domination

As we have seen, a tilted relationship is produced in line with intimate, hierarchical patterns that allowed for partial exposure and the cultivation of sentiments of loyalty and obligation. The position that each of the parties occupied was necessarily unequal, but for it to be maintained this way by both parties, they both had to feel that these were their places by right. That is to say that they must inhabit their positions, similarly to the subservient role that women took and strived to take in the household, but not identical. Here, employees must feel that they cannot possibly covet their bosses' position. The significance of this acceptance of difference in roles, entitlements and privileges is central for understanding how the social fabric of Maputo's periphery was woven, starting from the domestic space and working out into the city and beyond, and we will see more of is in the next chapter. Between domestic worker and boss, specifically, its accomplishment depended on the right performance of strategies of distancing and partial secrecy.

If partial secrecy was used among family members to establish the correct hierarchical distance in terms of deference, care and respect (chapter 1), and hiding or partial blindness was used in flirtatious and casual sexual interactions on the street to allow actors to detach what was desired without granting each other recognition (chapter 3), what these strategies did in work relations was to partially hide parts from one another, in such a way that neither of them was fully confronted with the objective size of the inequality between them. Hard as it might seem, employers managed to ignore large parts of the life conditions of their employees. In order to

relate to them as if it were "not so bad" they had continuously to other them, despite the closeness and intimacy. At the same time, they needed a clear enough grasp of their life-conditions to be able to assess gifts with *their* value reference, saying that they cannot afford to give them a sum that corresponded to one third of the employee's monthly salary, but was what they spent on one meal in a restaurant, or giving them the amount and treating it like a grand gesture. Employees, for their part, typically did not register their employers' actual wealth, which meant that they could both grossly overestimate their resources in an abstract, almost mystical way and at the same time be shocked when faced with the concrete value of their expenditure and earnings. These practices mutually reinforced each party's rightful place in the tilted relationship, determining what each of them was entitled to and limiting in this way, what one could desire.

Not uncommonly, though, these efforts failed. One of the ways it could fail was when no bond was established and employment either ceased or was maintained as a transaction between two independent entities, in a horizontal interaction that failed to recognise the inherent difference and what it entailed. Quite often, employees, in spite of investments in producing intimacy and a sense of obligation between them and their employers, were disappointed when their bosses, for various reasons, failed to assume the position. In some circumstances this happened as a result of simple lack of resources; in other cases, though, refusing the relationship was perceived as a moral failure – something Northern European bosses were more prone to. In an attempt to produce equality, they refused to behave in accordance with the superior position that they were expected to take and failed to recognise the position of dependency in which their employees found themselves. In not recognising difference, they severed bonds of duty and rejected any sense of responsibility for their employees, framing their relationship as much as possible in terms of a transaction between equals (cf. Botelho 2021). Another way it could go wrong, was when parties developed evil feelings towards each other. The greatest risk of a dependence relationship thus actually lay within its space of intimacy, in the ever-present possibility that the relationship would tip over and become destructive.

To prevent relationships from becoming destructive, all strategies of partial secrecy, cultivation of loyalty and hierarchical intimacy that we discussed were valid, but, ultimately, they had to rely on each other's morality. And, as these relationships were unequal, the moral challenges were different for the different parties. When the tilt wasn't well managed, the one in the position of dependant might grow resentful and envious of their bosses, or develop "greedy": feelings that most often took the more or less damaging forms of stealing, extorting, mistreating children and seducing partners. Bosses, in their turn, were often afraid of being tricked, suspecting that their employees were slacking, abusing their good will, and trying to take advantage of them. For bosses, however, the real danger lay in the temptation to abuse power. When the tilt was not properly maintained, employers could other their employees to the point

of losing sight of their humanity, and dominating them completely. They made them completely dependent and finally they were eaten [*comidos*].

When this happened, the tie became vertical, making the position of dependence one of domination, and the relationship, instead of mutually constructive of their personhood became destructive. That was when the dependant suffered the effects of having an evil boss that annulled their personhood. It happened more often than not. The vast majority of the people I met in Claro do Lichanga had found themselves in a situation of not having been treated like a person, their work exploited, their salary withheld. An awful lot of employment agreements ended when the employee got tired of working without being paid and quit, most often never to see the delayed salaries. And very many executed their work under continuous strict control and unreasonable demands, like Leo did as a guard. Margô had a boss that demanded her full availability between 6am and 8pm and would not let her leave without permission. She expected her to accompany them on trips over weekends and sleep over when they needed someone in the house, which up to here, were all standard requirements among the majority of employers. In fact, employers often discussed the insolence of a cleaner who wanted to leave "when clock struck six". This patroa, however, walked around after Margô controlling her execution of chores, which included scrubbing and waxing the parquet on her knees. Every single cupboard in the house was locked and nothing could be touched without permission. When Margô had to do the laundry, the patroa would ask her to cup her hands and then pour the necessary amount of washing powder into them. The employment was summarily terminated when Margô failed to turn up one day, because her purse had been stolen on her way to work. Not that intolerance for missing work days wasn't common: Tereza, a nanny I knew, had a very severe oil burn on legs and arms, so she called her boss. The boss told her to come anyway and did not glance at the wounds upon her arrival. Exploitation took more extreme forms, resembling still not-so-distant slavery in the widespread practice of having *criadas*, [literally "those who have been raised"], girls from a poor household who came to live with a family and take over the domestic chores. I met an under-age live-in maid who worked for food and shelter, slept on a mat and had no free days. This was clearly the extreme point of otherwise less obvious forms of abuse, which fed partially on a general mistrust of employees' loyalty and intentions, but mostly the excess of power wielded over them. These abuses, regardless of their intensity, constructed and reinforced notions of "lesser human beings" (Bertelsen 2019). They were, rather than a emulation of kinship structures, what Meillassoux describes as the use of kinship terms as a means of ideological domination (1978: 38), a very common practice that can be traced back to historical contexts, both in Mozambique and elsewhere, where slaves were intertwined with domestic constellations (cf. Freire 1933) in alternated practices of incorporation and othering that solely served the powerful (Meillassoux 1978).

The risk of making oneself in a murky world in which people's intentions were essentially shifty and unpredictable, and everyone could always feel bad things or behave badly was why

relations were inherently tensile. Here, to "develop", or to grow oneself, one needed to establish ties of positive dependency that only worked when at the right tilt, a hierarchical distance that when properly balanced came to compose the people within it. Personhood was thus a composite of tensile relationships produced and maintained on the basis of difference. They composed the household, the marital unit, the extended kinship network and broader relationships that connected race and class hierarchies without disrupting them. We will see that the city was precisely made up of these hierarchical relationships, always personal, always entailing difference that maintained distance at the right tilt. We will now explore the nature of, what, we will see, constitute *different* differences.

CHAPTER V

DIFFERENT DIFFERENCES

> "The dynamics of colonisation led to the emergence of a complex system of moral obligations in which the White man occupies a key role in the distribution of "development". Thus, African developmentalist redemption, along with the acceptance of the Holy Spirit, is not situated within an economy of limited goods, but rather linked to the success of the African's cooperation with the White Man" (Dias de Andrade 2016:242)
>
> "The formation of associations or alliances in constant search of new projects is a collective strategy of social betterment that contrives to sidestep the disadvantages or limitations connected with being African. [According to the local narrative], the African's inherent envy [of one another] prevents them from pursuing any form of progress, but that which involves an alliance with *muzungu* society" (ibid:277)[1].

Up to now I have explored how relationships in Claro do Lichanga and in Maputo were constructed and how people were constituted within them. I have analysed how people took up positions of inequality in their personal relationships and established a bond of obligation and unequal co-dependence that either produced or emulated kinship. The previous chapters have shown that there is a hierarchy between people in personal and intimate relationships and that in none of them – be that in marriage, in the family or in work relations did the people in this thesis strive for equality. On the contrary, people assumed and maintained difference.

[1] Translated from Portuguese.

This dual character of relationships, which were simultaneously intimate and marked difference, has been woven into the background of the analyses. In this chapter it will come to the front as I explore the ways that difference is variously performed and especially, conceived. How difference is conceived, or what it entails, has been present but remained undiscussed. Yet, the hierarchical structure of relationships described throughout the chapters was not merely a practical patterning of interactions, but productive of that which partially defined who people were, i.e. individuated them (cf. Bastide 1973): their place, their sense of entitlement, and what they were allowed to do or want (as with young women who wouldn't have their hands washed or serve themselves first, or children who wouldn't sit on a chair when adults were present). People from informal neighbourhoods didn't think of the city centre as their place, and they didn't aspire to have the same things or live the same good life that they saw in the soap operas and in the houses that they cleaned. The understanding that there was a conceptual difference that characterised people in these hierarchical positions was naturalised and contributed to determining the ways in which the social fabric was woven, not just in interactions, but deeper in each person.

My interest in exploring the conceptualisation of difference at this point is the necessity of addressing interracial relationships and their place and position in the social landscape of hierarchical associations. Race has, for both an empirical and an analytical reason, been largely absent from the dissertation. The empirical reason is that the topic was not always actually present in everyday life conversations, activities and interactions in Maputo. Yet, I was aware that race had a dominant role in defining self-perceptions, even in the absence of actual interracial interactions, both because of the colonial past and because of the way people spoke about themselves and about me. So, in full awareness that not addressing racial dynamics would be an inaccurate representation of this social reality, I nonetheless found it appropriate to make the analytical choice of "bracketing race out", an adoption of Marcio Goldman's proposed exercise of minoration (Goldman 2017:18-20 cf. Deleuze and Bene 1979), in which a dominant character is removed from the narrative to allow other developments to take the stage. The exercise is not intended to remove the element in the absolute, but simply to allow the configuration to take another form. Thus, because I wanted to let affinity, employment, affect and transactions "take the stage" (to run with the analogy), I left race out for the time being. Yet, the matter was always there as an extra element of difference, even when bracketed out, in the form of the white partner, the white boss, the white godmother, making their appearance in relationships that produce other, specific forms of difference. The difference between locals and whites has been repeatedly alluded to, indicating in an explicit but undiscussed way, what we might call a *different* difference.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, elaborating on Deleuze and Guattari's contribution to anthropological thinking, suggests that their notion of inclusive disjunction allows us to think of relations that do not have identity as their cause and do not produce similarity. Disjunctive

relations, in contrast to conjunctive ones, create divergence and difference (Viveiros de Castro 2009:224). The notion is illuminating of an aspect of all relationships in this thesis, since they reaffirmed and recreated difference while simultaneously composing the social person. But, while marital status, class and gender were relations of both conjunction and disjunction, that is, they were productive of both difference and complementarity, this dynamic was markedly different in interracial interactions. Every time one of these positions was taken by a white person, the hierarchy was reconfigured because "white" as qualifier of one of the parts altered the relationship, producing difference and a lack. To understand the specificity of this qualifier and what it did to relational dynamics in Maputo, as well how it affected the conceptualisation of social differences and thereby, of personhood, I will explore interracial relationships and the place of the white man [*o branco/mulungo*] in the social landscape of Maputo. This will be accompanied by a further exploration, by way of comparison, of the conceptualisation of the various relationships that I have looked at up to now. Thus, interracial difference will be examined in a two-fold manner. Focusing on the moments in which race was made visible, I will examine the processes that produced and maintained a conceptual difference between black Africans and white foreigners and at its practical, experienced difference. For this I will focus on relationships that produced the White Man as generous, that is, morally superior, and on the physical instantiation of racial difference in ideals of beauty that guided cosmetic and marital practices. This will be done in contrast to the production of difference in relationships between black locals, giving us an opportunity to explore them in more detail.

Generous whites

I met Claudio over a Sunday afternoon beer. In the introductory chat he told me that he had a son in Copenhagen, a place he himself has never been. That is because Claudio's son's mother, Anne, used to work for a development agency in Maputo. Claudio and Anne were together for three years – at the time they met, he lived with his mother and was studying Law at the university, but after a short time, he moved into Anne's flat in the centre. She had a "Silvercard" from her work, with a fifty euros *per diem*, and she left it with him. He dropped out of school and thought that "that was the life". The cherry on the cake was when she announced that she was pregnant.

But one day, when she was seven months pregnant, she told him she that her contract had ended and that she was moving back to Denmark. She paid the upcoming three months' rent on the flat and told him he could have everything that was in it. He sold most of houseware and threw a party in which he could make a profit from the many bottles of spirits that were left. It was not until three years later that he met his son for the first time, when Anne came on a visit to Maputo. The boy had not been registered in his name.

> Drunk and with tears in his eyes, Claudio concluded: "Looking back, I was a fool to think that 'that was the life' [*aqulio lá que era vida*]. Had I finished my studies instead, I would be able to provide for my son, keep them here with me".

Relationships like these were one typical trope in the forms of association between black locals and white Europeans. Anne, like many other expatriates in Maputo, got involved with a local, someone who was infinitely poorer than her. While living there, she brought him into her temporary, foreign life, and the couple adopted the configuration that most interracial romantic or sexual relationships have: the white party is the provider, the local the lucky one. Claudio became the fortunate, rich and satisfied partner of Anne, and the future father of Anne's child. The fact that he lived in an upper-class neighbourhood, and had a white woman, positioned him in Maputo as a resource-rich man and at the time, as a head of a family. It placed him above the indigent, the resource-poor and those who didn't have a white wife and a *mulato* child. Under the sign of the white woman's generosity and wealth, Claudio could rise and become someone better. Anne complemented him, made him bigger.

The relationship, at the same time, was envied, judged and criticised by people that knew them or heard of their story. Claudio was a black African and his partnership with Anne provoked labels such as lazy, short-sighted and opportunistic. People in his wider social circle condemned him with common preconceptions about interracial relationships and he was judged for "wanting to take a place that wasn't his". The sight of an interracial couple made people frown and state that the local was interested in "taking advantage" or that "they are thinking that they are something". By way of explanation for these judgments, Ada told me that "Africans don't like those that date whites, they immediately think bad things [*pensam coisa ruim*]".

They certainly did. When Margô heard that Nik and I were separating, her immediate reaction was to despair. Margô was convinced that he was abandoning me for a local woman. "I knew it, Filó shouldn't have left him alone to go travel. I saw the pictures of him on the beach, Filó, with *black women* [*negras*]. The women from here are smart, Filó, they are witches." I explained, again and again, that this was not the case. She, however, was absolutely sure that I was being naïve and proud, and kept "revealing" events from the periods when I had been away: Nik had had a party with *those black women* [*negras*] at my house, Margô had babysat for him to *go out*, and so on. Over the course of the following couple of months, though, she seemed to have understood the situation, as the lectures on the local women's wit and evil began to wane. Yet, months later, when Nikolas actually started seeing someone, she returned to the topic "Didn't I say so? You didn't believe me, now he is there, see? With *this black woman* [*essa negra*]."

Margô's reaction was not unique. On the contrary, both my manas and Nikolas' male friends from Claro do Lichanga were highly suspicious of his girlfriend. Sandra and Cleuza's reaction to the news was to ask me to "warn him": "The women from here Dona Flora, tcha! you can't trust them. All they want is, look! [gesture of putting something in their mouths], to eat." When

I argued that I had met her and that she was actually nice, the men laughed and my *manas* accused me of being too good-hearted: "Dona Flora doesn't understand, she is good [*boa*], she doesn't see it".

The local judgement on this relationship was unambiguous, no one gave Lulu (Nik's girlfriend) the benefit of doubt. She was a black woman with a white man, necessarily with him out of interest. Their relationship was made of divergence; a racial incompatibility, a morally defined difference in which her colour indicated her (lack of) value. And, despite the opposite gender configuration, Claudio was no different. His relationship with Anne had a dual, contradictory effect that made Claudio simultaneously closer-to-white and not-white. It was the source of his social superiority and at the same time, a marker of his lack. While Anne was in the city, their relationship brought him into the luxurious bits of Maputo and the highest social strata. When she left, it turned out that her country and her permanent life weren't for him, they were not his place. Without her there, the judgments were proved right: he wasn't "something", and he had been lazy and short-sighted. The mark of their relationship made his race visible, and him into just another resource-poors black man. This contradictory effect of making the local partner both whiter and closer-to-white defined both men and women in relationships with mulungos, as racial difference overrode other differences.

If the relationship made Claudio not-white, it made Anne "the white man". She was what expatriates were expected to be. Both Claudio and those who discussed his story understood Anne leaving as a simple consequence of her contract ending. No part of her conduct was debated – neither her generosity (which was perceived at best as a matter of course for someone with so much, at worse as a result of Claudio's *esperteza*) nor her departure. Only one person, Cleuza, wondered for a moment about the implications of Claudio having the corporate credit card, asking me if "he then had to give her money". I replied that she probably had two credit cards, and after an "ah!" of understanding, the curiosity ended. She was rich, she shared with her partner, and when she no longer had a job, she went home – like the vast majority of expatriates. The multiple aspects, consequences and alternatives that this association had, the different affective and material degrees of dependence, the non-reciprocal desires, interests and advantages being produced, met and denied, the choices made: his enjoying the easy pleasures of a wealthy existence, her financially supporting a local partner, having a child, leaving alone, maybe single mothering, his heart-break, regret, shame – these aspects were not raised. In the midst of a negotiation of sentiments, hopes, expectations and imagined futures, the unequal power internal to the relationship came to define both the outcome and the narrative that established racial hierarchy in material and moral terms and made the whites into generous providers, the locals into lazy opportunists. The relationship's actual configuration and position in Maputo wiped the complexity away, and it established itself in its interracial definition: a disjunctive association of parts in which the surplus of the white is affirmative of the lack of the black.

This simplification became crystallised in conceptualisations of white and black lovers and partners, of their specific qualities and the advantages of being with one or the other. Ada, for instance, told me that "all of my boyfriends are white, I only date white men! The only man from here that I have had is my husband (i.e. the father of her daughters). The others are, all of them, white. African men, uffff!. No, I can't stand them. They are violent, controlling, jealous. White men are good, they are chilled". At the same time, African men were depicted as sexually attractive and sexually skilled by many of the women with whom I talked, and, in line with what Ada expressed, men that could take the role of head of the family. White men were perceived as good, easy, but also soft. Often, they were maintained, as Ada did, "outside the house", that is, in unbinding sexual relations that offered fun and gifts.

These stereotypes of black and white male sexuality were similar to what Sandra Manuel found among her informants from Maputo's upper class, who as a rule described African men (and women) as preferable sexual partners, and African masculinity as associated with increased sexual appetite (2014:101-2, 1021-2). This corresponds to Christian Groes-Green's description of how young men's lack of economic resources tend to be compensated for by virility, domination and violence (2009). Women in my field reproduced these stereotypes in their preferences. Ada herself described how the only man who tried to "tell her what to do" [*mandar*] was her husband, including the use of physical violence, which she did not condemn; on the contrary, she respected it as his "attempts to impose respect". Subjectively perceived as positive, these stereotypes contributed to a conceptualisation of same-race relationships as the appropriate romantic partnership that legitimated perceptions of interracial couples as formed out of interest and representing an attempt to rise above "their own kind".

Franz Fanon, in his psychological study of the colonial subject, argues that colonisation has produced an inferiority complex through a double process in which economic inferiority became internalised and epidermalised in the black subject (Fanon: [1952]2008: xiv-xv). This complex marks the psychological experience of the black person, who continuously tries to overcome their inferior position by "whitening themselves" with the adoption of the metropolis' language, habits and, importantly, through interracial sexual and affective relationships (ibid). Fanon analyses the different desires projected by black men and women onto an interracial intimate relationship, and says that a man tries to rise up to the white man's level by dominating and possessing a white sexual partner, in an internal conflict of admiration, competition, revenge and resentment towards white men (ibid:45-50). A woman, in contrast, wants to whiten herself by internalising the virtues of the white race and mothering a mixed-race child, which will allow her to distinguish herself from her fellows (ibid:27-30). In both cases, the "person of colour is looking to achieve ... deracialisation", and in their desire, race overrides every other consideration, that is, other qualifiers such as class and status have no relevance (ibid:53).

What Fanon found in individual psychological processes was reflected in the way interracial relationships in Maputo were socially defined by their racially determined qualities, to the point

that otherwise observed gender roles could lose their significance. The generally negative assessments made of others' motivations for engaging in a relationship with a white person reflect the internal "inferiority complex" of which he speaks and which has the double effect described by him throughout his work, of producing social distinction and furthering racial alienation: in engaging in strategies to overcome their experienced inferiority, black people "make themselves whiter'", distancing themselves from other blacks, and at the same time, are constantly reminded of their non-whiteness. The process, from a social structural point of view, does nothing but reproduce the very racial hierarchy that produces the complex of inferiority.

If intersubjective and psychological processes reproduce it in people's lived experience, this hierarchy was originally the product of a systematic political and economic strategy of occupation and domination. Colonial power was raised upon the myth of white superiority, what Maria Paula de Meneses, who studied the legal system of labour in colonial Mozambique, describes as "the pillar of colonial architecture" (Meneses 2010:81). She shows that laws were deliberately written to maintain the local population in a position of subjugation, offering the Portuguese free labour under the flag of a civilising project that would raise the natives to European levels (idem). The lasting effects of these classifications were visible in the continuous use, by the local population, of the same discriminatory criteria that the colonial power applied (laziness, unproductivity), which we saw when Claudio regretted his own conduct.

And yet, I see that the choice that he made, of enjoying the comfort and luxury of a having a rich partner who was willing to support him, was a maneuvering and negotiation of values and worldviews, in which locals, rather than striving to live according to a European work ethic, made a locally-informed assessment of the situation's advantages and benefits. We have seen the curtidoras (cf. Groes-Green 2013) in chapter three, who managed sexual and romantic associations with white men with the aim of extracting material support, comfort and pleasure. But, even then, their relationships played on traditional interracial configurations, echoing white settlers' widespread practice of having affairs with local women. In fact, the opposite configuration is also found today. Female sexual liberation in the West has meant that local men can enter similar forms of sexual relationships with western women. These are seen for example among beach boys in Gambia (Nyanzi et al 2005) and Zanzibar (Depres 2017), who benefit materially and culturally from engaging in sexual affairs with female tourists and development workers. Altaïr Depres, without denying that structural racial inequality is reproduced in these arrangements, shows the complexities involved in managing feelings, expectations and cultural differences through a delicate ethnography of interracial couples in Zanzibar. Looking at how these encounters involve both sides' negotiations of intimacy, she explores local men's (and their kin's) expectations of financial support from western partners who, in turn, have to balance their ideal constructs of romantic relationships that build on autonomy and financial independence (2019).

In Maputo too, romantic relationships between whites and locals involved the negotiation of feelings, expectations and desires in an association involving unequal power and advantages, and racial hierarchy was reproduced in them. While the local partner was judged, the white partner was perceived as good for their willingness to support the other.

Godmothers and bosses

Anne's surplus and generosity were, in a way, like mine. People repeatedly told me how good I was, good not only to my manas, who according to them "could turn to mana Flora for help" as she was therefore "already family" [já é familia], but also to Margô, Paulo, and "even strangers". The day before my departure, the manas from the neighbourhood threw a farewell party. They came to my house with food and we ate, drank Amarula, played music and they spoke their goodbyes. In her speech, Ângela said (and I listened, not without a great deal of discomfort) that "having mana Flora coming into our lives showed us that you [*você,* i.e.2nd person formal address] are just like the people we see on the television. Brazilians have a good heart, your race is generous and good. We see it on the tv and now we know it is true because we have met you [*você*]. Cheers for mana Flora!".

In sum, people to whom I became close often expressed feeling "blessed" or "lucky" to have a relationship with me. They also often expressed their admiration by way of their own lack: "I couldn't be this good to my own kin" or conversely "not even my kin have been this good to me". On the one hand, they knew that I had resources that allowed me to be "this good", so much that in daily life, they treated it as a matter of course that I would help and provide. They did "turn to mana Flora" when in financial need, counted on my contributions for festivities, asked for presents with ease, and, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, had long expressed the expectation that I would leave them my clothes upon my departure. Yet, while they were clear about the reason why "whites can (afford to) be so generous", the causal relation became displaced in their narrative, turned into an inherent part of who I, the *mulungo*, was. In this movement, the complementarity of our relationship – the affective bond, the material support, the care and the loyalty – became a marker of moral, radical difference, a difference that was placed in the body, in the colour of our skins.

The same can be said of Nik, who "saved Sergio from jail when all his kin refused to do so", and of Vera's boss and others that we met in the previous chapter. Tio Francisco, we saw, had worked for an Italian family since he was a boy – cleaning, taking care of the house and running small errands. When his father died, he went to live in the family's house. He kept working for them, and they helped him out, especially keeping him on track during his troubled youth when, after the death of his father he started drinking and "was getting 'lost'". In Tio Adamastor's words, "this family saved Francisco. They adopted him after the death of papá". When the Italians moved back to Europe, more than a decade ago, they left him in charge of their property.

Francisco no longer has the car, which he lost in drinking debts, but he still lives in the same house. The family's generosity is known by all of those who know Francisco, fuelling, as we saw in chapter four, the image of the white man as the superior, resource-rich paternal figure. While this family was seriously generous, other actions that have very little cost to the white giver still get the stamp of white kindness, like my giving up my seat in the public transport to a limping passenger, who then made a five-minute speech to the entire bus about the goodness of white people's hearts.

The (colonial) past in the present

The image of the generous, good white has been continuously constructed in colonial and postcolonial contexts (see, for instance, Hoefinger 2013 for practices of moral cleansing and racial reification in Cambodia). In Mozambique, the presence of development workers in the country over several decades has reinforced present conceptions of the good white that have their origins in the arrival of the first Portuguese traders (cf. Rita Ferreira 1960; Allina 2012; Morton 2013). This image, although reinforced by developers' actual intentions, is extended to white foreigners in general, as the opening quote of this chapter, which tells of contemporary black-white relationships made of historical, crystallised notions is an example. In a study of the effects of the implementation of a mineral extraction project in the North of Mozambique, in which a community of white engineers was relocated to the area, the anthropologist Inacio Dias Andrade shows how the presence of colonial rulers, missionaries, and later, of development and aid workers came to compose the relationships that now exist between the local population and the engineers. What Dias Andrade shows throughout his thesis is that colonialism imposed poverty, through the taking of land and resources and the imposition of taxes, thus creating a context in which the white foreigners became the native population's only access to certain material resources. To access these, though, Africans had to subordinate themselves, which had the double effect of offering potential improvements and at the same time, making them racially inferior.

If European colonisers all over Africa presented themselves as inherently superior and as the source of improvement and development for colonial subjects, this had different ideological and moral varieties. In Mozambique, Portugal moved from the initial centuries' direct exploitation of work force via *shibalo* (slavery) to a labour system clothed with a civilizational intent. Since the population was the colony's most profitable resource, nothing could be more logical than leading "the primitives" to civilised ways by teaching them the value of work (Martins n.a.). From the late 19th century, in order to respond to the era's dominant liberal tradition, which proclaimed that the colonies and their peoples were an integral part of the motherland, Portugal implemented a system for registering and control of the native population, named *indigenato*, in

which forced labour, determined by law, was meant to bring benefits to Africans and teach them discipline (Penvenne 1995:72).

As proof of its intentions, the system granted the status of *assimilado* to those that had risen to the living manners of the whites, that is, in David Morton's words, thoroughly "abandoned their African selves" (2019:40). After payment of a substantial application fee, the applicant would be evaluated on employment, economic means to support himself and his family, adoption of European living standards manifest in housing and living conditions, fluency and daily use of the Portuguese language within the household, and the abandonment of traditional customs and beliefs deemed primitive. Assimilated blacks were officially Portuguese citizens, but in practical terms, they were kept under Portuguese superiors, receiving never more than a tenth of a Portuguese salary and always objects of direct discrimination. Very few were placed in prominent positions, and they were the ones who came to form the small local bourgeoisie in the colonial capital, and would later lead an outspoken rebellion against colonial domination (Penvenne 1995). In general terms, the assimilated population composed a negligible percentage of the national total, and was far from homogeneously matching the legal depiction of new European subjects. Numerous accounts of how the status was sought as a means to achieve specific ends, rather than proof of having "evolved" from African backward ways, are registered (Penvenne 1995; Morton 2019)[2]. Jeanne Penvenne, in her study of work relations in colonial Mozambique, goes to great pains to show the native population's dissatisfaction and resistance throughout the entire period of Portuguese presence. She successfully demonstrates that men and women were not just passively submitting to the exploitation and humiliation of Portuguese domination, but developed strategic approaches, critical discourses and eventually, direct rejection of the legitimacy of their power. Nevertheless, these racialised markers of personal value have been embedded deep in people's self-assessment and in the practical choices they have made in their lives up to the present day. Even in her collection of cases, the white boss appears as the only resource to improve their lives and often as a paternal figure (ibid:57), and a patron, implied in the official word *patrão* (Morton 2019:71).

In the decades before independence, Portugal further developed the civilisational discourse into claims of a non-segregationist multiracial nation (directly contrasted to South Africa) in which whites and blacks lived side-by-side, and where it was precisely this close conviviality that gradually brought Africans into civilisation. Known as lusotropicalism, this especially successful form of imperialism was a self-professed field of Portuguese expertise. They had proven over "500 years that they were natural colonizers, with an innate respect for other peoples and a talent for assimilating them into European culture" (Castelo in Morton 2019:95). That is, they would be living side by side, if it weren't for the black subject's incapacity to be like the whites.

[2] Including the story of Alceu Simango in chapter 2, who saw it as a way to marry Ceres with a traditional lobolo, precisely the thing he ought to have abandoned to achieve assimilado status.

And yet, the white man was, despite the black man's natural inferiority, going to the trouble of helping him. At this point, racism became naturalised, and the ascribed qualifiers internalised as the discriminated subject's inherent attributes.

Locals looked for this conceptual difference in present-day, actual interracial encounters. As so, they were involved in the configuration of employment, familial and affective relationships. It was partly with the Historical White Man that locals wanted to associate themselves, the resource-rich, paternal one who had what they did not, could do what they could not, who offered the locals the possibility of being "something", of being someone who only existed in this constellation, which, once again, had the dual effect of making them more and less at the same time; closer-to-white and not-white. In Fanon's words, the black man is a product of the encounter with the white, and both the black subject and the African continent are the aftermath of colonisation (Fanon 1967). It is in the interracial relationship, a relationship of complementarity and radical divergence, that the local's non-whiteness is made visible, made real.

White and black superiors

The place of the coloniser as the ruler has, in many respects, been occupied by what is now the local elite (Fanon 1961; Mbembe 2001); yet this substitution has not completely changed the initial configuration, or the specificity of interracial encounters. White and local bosses alike take the superior position in their work relations and are expected to help, support and take responsibility for their staff, as we saw in the previous chapter. But the conceptual difference between the local employer and the worker is different. Salomão, for instance, was a university educated young man. He was, unlike my *manas*, always addressed in Portuguese by vendors, and received all the deferential signs of respect in these interactions. Not least by Margô; when he came over to the house, she was serviceable and submissive, and he for his part, ordered her around and spoke down to her. In his absence though, she warned me:

> "That one, Filó, is *esperto*. Keep your eyes open, he wants to take things from *Filó*. That day when the plumber came to fix the stove, Filó, Salomão came over. And I did not want to let him in, Filó, but he walked in, he behaves as if the house was his, doesn't it? I did not want him in here in your [*senhora*] absence, but he came and said he was going to supervise the plumber. But he walked around taking things, playing with them, touching the boss's computer (Nik's ipad). I started to put things away, I did not like the way he messed with everything... He wanted to steal, Filó. I took the boss's telephone and stuck it in my *capulana*, and the other things, I shut them in the wardrobe and kept an eye open. These liberties, Filó... *that one* [aquele alí] you cannot trust.

The idea that local superiors are *espertos* is recurrent. People from Claro do Lichanga and other peripheral zones of Maputo often expressed the idea that those in positions of power were clever – they had seized their chance to climb up the greasy pole. A rickshaw driver once explained at length how "the ones living in the city centre, the ones in the Party, they cheated and *ate* others, that is how they became powerful and big. Not only the ones from the ruling Party", he explained, "but also the member of the opposition, they had all done the same". Similar to what Bertelsen (2017) found in Chimoio and other scholars have found elsewhere (eg. Geschiere), upward mobility is perceived as the result of selfish conduct and cleverness, that allows one to have more at the cost of others. Such a worldview was described by George Foster, largely depreciatively, as the cognitive orientation of a society of limited goods (1965). Discarding the most reductive elements of his typological depiction, there is nonetheless an important characteristic of Foster's "social type". Foster argues that redistribution as the only means to accumulate only addresses "the closed system", that is, the members of the community (ibid:306). Enrichment though, is also possible by "tapping sources of wealth" recognised to be external to the group (idem) but, this, is *conceptually different* from the first strategy because it does not entail loss to the other members. This understanding relates directly to the notion that the white man, with his capitalist system that guarantees endless production and economic growth, arrives as the source of extra goods – an idea found in mythical registers in various parts of the world (e.g. Guss 1986). Important here is the idea that this produces a conceptual separation between locals and whites that entails different moral assessments and expectations from each of them.

Thus, *conceptually*, the African elite was not different from the poor. There was nothing that inherently entitled them to their wealth; on the contrary, the fact that they occupied superior positions was circumstantial. It was only when working as street vendors, cleaning the elite's houses and serving them food that the ones being served were treated *as* naturally entitled to the position that they occupied. In this circumstances, class and status differences were actualised in direct interactions in which the elite was treated like a superior while remaining conceptually identical. The *performance* of difference between locals tapped into kinship models and into a practical, objective respect for the more resource-rich party. Relationships of dependence across classes were constantly being produced between employers and employees, and these, just like interracial relationships, produced difference and hierarchy. The difference is that the local boss's qualities were not displaced, their direct causality was not forgotten. Even though a local employer might be generous and kind, as well as infinitely resource-rich, they were not inherently entitled to their position; on the contrary, they had seized it. When it came to the hierarchy that structured these relationships, the positions were performed as essentially different, but the difference was conceived as circumstantial.

Importantly, because local superiors were, by virtue of the structural position, necessarily exploiting the poor, expectations of generosity were modulated. They were not essentially

generous, and their giving help could only be performed and recognised in interpersonal relations. This did not mean that they were less likely, or less expected, to help. The expectations were, however, different, and typically fell into the category of obligation. Local employees, like younger and less favoured kin, thought of their bosses' sharing, distributing and helping as their *duty*. In contrast, whites, being foreigners, were exempt from these bonds. Here, the understanding of their resources as external meant that they did not have the obligation to redistribute or "disaccumulate" (cf. Geschiere), which prevented people from demanding from whites in the same way that they demanded from "their own". The effect was double. In the comparison, "black generosity" lost some of its virtue, while white generosity" carried the extra value of being freely given.

This conceptualisation of whites did not mean that they were only perceived as good. On the contrary, they have found themselves, in other times and places, encompassed in the local economy of extraction and perceived as predators and exploiters. The Mozambican elite for instance led a direct attack on Portuguese colonisation, presenting them as people who lived off and profited from African blood[3]. In other colonial contexts, whites have been associated with supernatural forces and slavery understood in terms of theft and control of African bodies, under the trope of zombie-making and cannibalism (White 1997, 2000). This wariness of whites was studied by Bjørn Betelsen in contemporary Mozambique, where a Pentecostal mission in the northwest of the country came to be accused by locals of being cannibal witches. In this case, Bertensen shows that, while the narrative fit into the understanding of previous experiences of exploitation, the fact that the missionaries came to occupy a position that was too close, preaching equality, communion and common humanity while clearly maintaining a privileged position was decisive in forming locals' judgment on them. The preached closeness came to position them as the "same other", i.e. the witch (Bertelsen 2017).

These examples contrast with the discourses about whites that I encountered in important ways. In Honde, as in many other colonial contexts, the presence of whites is experienced as one of foreigners who come to *take* something and leave. In contrast, people in my field only ever spoke of whites as people who come, *give* and leave. Yet, when it comes to expectations of redistribution, neither those who saw whites as extractors and exploiters, nor those who saw them as generous givers, included them in the moral economy of obligation.

This did not mean that locals did not cultivate generalised hopes and expectations towards whites. They did, and unlike a local boss, resource-rich kin, or a close relation in a period of affluence, this was not circumstantial but generalised and anticipated. Since the white superiority of resources instantiated itself as a permanent, constituent part of the relation, it was essentialised. Therefore, locals did not have to know the white person before they assumed that they would be both resource-rich and generous, they could *see* it. This is quite similar to James

[3] In e.g. several issues of *O Brado Africano*, see Penvenne 1995

Ferguson's American friend, mentioned in the previous chapter, who when visiting Johannesburg, described a "steady parade of out-of-work black South Africans offering themselves in one or another kind of service" (2013:224). In my case, strangers in the periphery of Maputo very often wanted to become associated with me, whether through kinship, marriage or work. I rarely walked through parts of the city in which I wasn't known without at least one greeting from a stranger, asking if I did not need their work or if I wasn't interested in marrying him. An adult woman who worked next to Sandra's hair salon at the market repeatedly asked me to become her *madrinha*, saying that she could do with a white godmother; sellers often took the chance to say that they were looking for work, and so on and so forth. We have seen that these expectations are not a simply a direct product of contemporary intersubjective relations and match the promises made by historic interracial encounters. The idea of the good-hearted white is also, just like Ângela said, continuously fuelled by media and other broader discourses that come to be searched after and instantiated in direct interpersonal interactions.

Fair beauty

The reason why people approached me, on the streets of Maputo, and James Ferguson's American friend, in Johannesburg, was precisely because our difference was visible, it was manifest in the body. Fanon discusses the black person who cultivates himself to European manners and, being included in the social sphere of whites, hopes to hear from his white counterpart "you only look like a black" (2008 [1952]:50). The violence of this utterance, clear to anyone who hears it, is in that it flags the inescapability of one's race, its eternal marker on the body. Fanon's depiction of the black appearance as ugly (ibid: 29, 56, 58, 86, 146) is painfully similar to depictions that I heard routinely growing up in Brazil and during fieldwork in Mozambique. In both places, as elsewhere, racialised markers of beauty became fixed in the shade of one's skin, the shape of one's nose and the type of one's hair, reasons why rhinoplasty, whitening creams and an endless range of products, techniques and materials constitute gigantic slices of the global cosmetic industry that targets consumers of African descent. In Claro do Lichanga, women's heads were something that drew my gaze.

HEADS

In CL, like in other informal neighbourhoods of Maputo, either head ties or hair-grooming were a necessary part of women's attire, for reasons of beauty and modesty. Women wore a head tie or a hat when going to church, receiving blessings or doing spiritual or religious work during ceremonies. They also did so when doing housework and going to bed, in these cases for protection from grease, dirt and creasing. Finally, they wore a hair tie when their natural hair was ungroomed. Older women wore the head-scarf on a daily basis and styled their hair for special occasions; younger women always had it groomed and changed style frequently. So

frequently, in fact, that hair extensions, or *braids* [*tranças*], as they were called, at least in informal neighbourhoods of Maputo, were closer to an outfit than a physical feature. And their range was vast, as was that of their price, stretching all the way from synthetic strands that were hard to tame, wasted easily and cost pennies, to natural human hair, imported typically from India, which cost more than a month's earnings (50 euros). Styles were even more diverse, and their crafters were everywhere: almost every household has a skilled "braid master" [*mestre de tranças*]. Hair, in sum, was one of the items that made the local economy go round, and women in Claro do Lichanga both spent and earned their money with it.

On a side note, real human hair also contributes to making the global economy go round, as it constitutes a serious economic segment. Worth 7 billion dollars and expected to nearly double in the next four years, it is a global industry that starts its harvesting primarily in India and Hong Kong, but also in Latin America. This is interesting in itself because the hair comes from bodies that are most often very dark-skinned, but It is seen in Mozambique as "white person's hair" - i.e. not kinky. The strands are then treated, coloured, artificially curled or straightened and covered with preservatives, typically in Bangladesh and Myamar, and then made into extensions before becoming a commercial product that fetishizes its naturalness. African-Americans lead the consumer market with forty percent of its total by value, followed by Latin Americans of African descent and then Africans, in a perpetuation of aesthetic assessments of personal value that can be commodified.

It is worth underlining, however, that regardless of the aesthetic origins of such hair stylings in historical forms of racial domination, they are also (and perhaps primarily) an incredibly creative site of cultural production. Hairdressing in African contexts and in the African diaspora is a perfect example of the invention of culture in Roy Wagner's sense of the term (1975)[4] and one of the richest compositions that came out of colonial contact. In the precolonial period in southern Mozambique, as in other parts of Southern Africa, men and women of different groups styled their hair in various ways that marked ethnic affiliation and social rank (Thunberg 1795), and they seemed to have neither prescriptions against public exposure of natural hair nor any imposition of styling or covering of heads (Miller 2001; Junod 1912). According to Hlonipha Mokoena, the head tie or scarf was imposed in several African colonies by custom and law, to protect male settlers from local women's sensuality (in Koabane 2016), something also described by Junod (1962 vol. II [1912]: 91-92). Christian modesty, brought by contact with Europeans and especially missionaries, rather than simply imposing itself, promoted a negotiation of moralities and aesthetics that resulted in an overflow of styles and shapes of hair attire. Head ties today are colourful, festive, variedly styled, and worn in part as generational, regional, religious and ethnic markers. In South Africa, the habit of wearing a head tie has, after

[4] Wagner defines culture as the product of a dialectic between people and their social world, in which culture is shaped by people's manipulation, innovation and maintenance of the conventional symbols they share (1975).

being denounced as colonial violence, been reclaimed as a symbol of feminine empowerment and racial identity (Khoboane 2016b; Pumza 2016). In informal Maputo, an infinite catalogue of braids and braiding was available and the possibility of changing styles frequently, or of using a variety of colours, textures, lengths and volumes was fully explored.

And yet, even though women's head attire was essentially desired and adopted in ways unrelated to how "white" it might look, these women's participation in the trade and consumption of its products was nevertheless an instantiation of racial difference. In other words: without wishing to claim that women's hairstyles in Maputo's periphery were reducible to attempts to reproduce whiteness, I nonetheless suggest that they were *also* an expression of a desire to possess "white people's hair" [*cabelo de branco*], and of shame of their natural hair. These choices, we will see, drew on racial hierarchies and their physical manifestations. One of the situations in which this was made clear to me was when my *manas* asked me for *my* hair for braids. The requests were meant as a compliment, but they also marked racial difference and their lack of and desire for something that a white woman had.

My manas in the neighbourhood did play with the idea of braiding with real human hair, but they were not fixated on it. They would meet an acquaintance after church who had got hold of a delivery from India and had a good deal to offer, or look at the range of braids hanging on hooks on street stands, but they all, after reaching the very simple conclusion that they couldn't afford it, went with the synthetic options. Margô, on the other hand, took it very seriously. She repeatedly said on her way home from a day's work that "today I will go straight to the hair dealer and buy myself real hair. I will. Then people in the neighbourhood will see that Margô is pretty, that Margô is not poor". And yet, she came back again and again in synthetic braids: "I can never get myself to do it, Filó. As soon as I set off, I think of all the other things that need buying, it never gets to my braids". Then, when I was about to return to Maputo, she asked me to bring her hair (in a misconception of what sort of things were more readily available in Europe). "Are you sure you don't want the money, Margô?" "Sure. If you give me the money, I won't be able to get myself to buy the hair."

The notion that having strands of real non-afro hair braided to her head would give Margô a specific social status, that they were going to prove that she was "not poor", that she was "worth something", brings up ideas of bodily composition that suggest that taking a bit of a white person, or rather, a white person's physical trait, can produce a better person, a person of more value. The weaving of non-afro hair produces whiteness as an aesthetic reference and as a real, material part of the black person's body. The result is the recognition of appropriate womanhood, attractiveness, orderliness, and of material resources – of proper, *local* womanhood. The need for real hair rather than a synthetic imitation was proportional to the need for recognition. Margô needed it more because she had none.

Far from being absolute, the value system changed according to generation, status and resources. If in informal neighbourhoods, the price of the product indicated its symbolic value, in the city-centre rich local women valued styling their own hair rather than braiding. There, the practice involved a completely different range of products, techniques, professionals, and, importantly, the woman's actual hair. This created another evaluation in which the person's hair, rather than being ranked according to price and quality, was valued according to its "weight" and malleability, in terms of "hair that grows" (Cruz 2017). These assessments overlapped with more global understandings of variations in African hair, which have even been properly systematised into eight categories, ranging from "wavy to "kinky", in America by Oprah Winfrey's hairdresser Andre Walker, (andrewalkerhair.com) and adopted by African women and women of African descent all over the world. Here, to have hair that can achieve a length that can be styled is what is desirable, a valuation that disregards the fact that styling hair depends more on resources than on genetics.

Finally, let me reiterate that this discussion is not an attempt to reduce hairstyling in Maputo to efforts to look white. I am not ignoring the groups of women, in the centre of Maputo and elsewhere, who deliberately chose to oppose these trends and adopt kinky, short hair, dreadlocks or other styles that reject the white aesthetic (both my acquaintances and in the literature, e.g. Manuel 2014; Sumich 2018). Yet, regardless of how politically-oriented styling choices are, and of the fact that they were not informed by any simple desire to look white, hair in Maputo was a clear racial marker. Even if women in Maputo are not merely covering their African "bad hair" (Cruz 2017), this is nonetheless part of what they are doing when they asked me for my hair, or when Margô asked me to buy her real, "white person's" hair [*cabelo de branco*], and when they have to cover their ungroomed, unbraided heads. Their actions reflect Fanon's description of the black colonial subject who attempts to look white and, by means of dress, manners and posture, to transform their phenotype (Fanon 2008[1952]:2-4).

SKIN

Since hair strands are much more accessible in Maputo than in Copenhagen, I waited until my return to buy Margô's present, and Sandra accompanied me to help me with the task. We were walking back from the hair shop when she remembered that she needed a body lotion, so I offered to buy her one. We went into a shop and stood in front of a counter with several creams and lotions under the glass. When the seller asked us what we wanted, Sandra pointed, without saying a word and without looking at me, at the whitening lotion. It was only after this, that I noticed the amount of skin-lightening treatments available in the city centre and also started to be able to spot the faces of those who had undergone them (all of whom came from another social stratum, one that could afford more effective products and procedures than those available in Claro do Lichanga).

In Mozambique, unlike Brazil, where race is graded and defined by the colour of one's skin (Telles 2006), locals are always black, and whites are foreign (except among the elite where the designation white Mozambican exists for Portuguese descendants who stayed). That did not mean that different shades (like the different types of afro hair) didn't have different value. People with slightly lighter skin were considered more attractive, an assessment that has been present for centuries. Junod mentions that "a light complexion is preferred to a very dark one", and, adding his own explanation, "because the white and yellow races are regarded as superior" (1962:183). Without wishing to generalise this claim, or suggest that locals necessarily find dark-skinned people unattractive, it was nonetheless my experience, while living in Maputo and travelling across the country, that white people and white looks were considered aesthetically superior. I heard people laughing at an "ugly boy who was dark, dark, dark, really black [*escuro, escuro, escuro, preto mesmo*!]". I heard several descriptions of beautiful women who were *clarinhas.* Children were often told not to pick their noses to prevent it from becoming broad. When I asked about this, the woman I was talking to replied that they wanted to have a thin nose, "like Flora's [yours]". I watched them avoiding the darkening of their and my skin and making jokes such as the one Sergio, at a party in my house, made: "Ô Flora, do you know why we don't drink coffee around here? Because coffee is black and we are already too dark!", making all the guests laugh. I was told not to stand in the sun so as not to "become black like them", stating with this recommendation the undesirability of their skin colour.

Without dismissing the various positive assessments I heard of blacks and Africans, not least for their sexuality, physicality and looks (e.g. Manuel 2014, my own direct observations), I want to point out the unquestioned, taken for granted disadvantage of being black, a conceptualisation that becomes essentialised in the body through these practices and narratives. The white man on the television, the ones in the books and magazines, were a significant element of present day Mozambique, shaping the way locals or wanted to look, representing the colour that they did not have, and embodied in the hair they braided onto theirs. Whiteness was a resource and a status that was visible in one's physical appearance. It was also revealing of this gradation when Sandra told me that people were speculating about "Flora and Mojaju". "Since you came to live with us, the neighbours, all a bunch of envious ones, are saying that Mojaju is *mulato*, and that he is not Sergio's son. People are so stupid; can't they see that Claudia also has hair like Jaju's? And *mamana* is light, very light [*clara*, *clarinha*...]. In our home, it is only me and papa who are *black* (said in English)".

Disregarding the tortuous paths of this gossip, the evaluation of skin tones made here, which was also routinely and unreflexively made in social interactions in Maputo, is an example of colourism. Since Alice Walker's "If the Present Looks Like the Past, What Does the Future Look Like?", the essay in which she denounces a prejudicial ranking of shades of skin internal to the female black community, which produces a split and a hierarchisation of African-American women based on their skin tone (1983:290-312), colourism has consistently been a widely

discussed topic in the literature on racism. It is recurrently brought up to point out how people across the globe are favoured in terms of how close to white they are, as evidenced by the "paper bag test" in the United States (Kerr 2005), and race definitions in Brazil (Fry 2009). What is interesting about colourism is that, as well as having the effect of producing internal splits, it also restates that a fairer skin, even if preferred, it is still not-white. In this way, mulattos and blacks are both marked with their non-whiteness, neither one nor the other is free from their lack of whiteness. Miscegenation is thus one more association with the white man, one more instantiation of his presence that poses an unachievable ideal, once more the double effect of interracial relationships. When whites were inherently superior and their position was instantiated in the body, it was in the body that the desire to be white would manifest itself. With it, came a production of difference and an impossibility of erasing it, accompanied by a gradation of value proportional to the shade of their skin. Whitening products, when consumed, reminded them that they were not white.

The other curious point about the gossip was the speculation about Mojaju being mixed-race. The fact that people talked is an expression of the mixed feelings of envy of the family's relationship with me, suspicion of the reasons for it and, interestingly here, speculations about the possible advantages of this relationship, which included (positive) miscegenation. Whitening [*branqueamento*] through miscegenation is a possibility that has historically been a major fear of colonial powers in Mozambique (Penvenne 1995), an official policy of social improvement in Brazil (Vianna 1922) and, among the population, in a perfect echo of Fanon's reading of the black woman's aspirations in sexual relationship with a white man (2008:24-44), it was, in the words of Henri Junod, "an aspiration shared by all natives, for whom the possibility to lay claims on any European blood is a source of pride" (1962 vol. II [1912]: 183). This historical register was often voiced in similar ways in today's Claro do Lichanga, such as when Chico, the Bhila's tenant, said that he "always wanted to marry a white girl... to lighten up [*clarear*] his family".

Other differences

Despite the status attached to a lighter skin, hair that grew long and a slender nose, and the benefits of being in an actual relationship with a white person, none of this was enough to compose one's personhood as anything other than lacking. The interracial relationship was disjunctive, it produced, in new and always changing forms, continuous difference and separation. In contrast to racial difference, all other hierarchies were complementary and, thus, participating in such hierarchical relationships made the different parties bigger, more complete persons. The status that people achieved in the production of internal hierarchies was not double. Married women occupied the position of a full, complete woman. A man wanted to build a house for himself and grow himself, develop himself, make himself complete (on the cosmological complementarity of man and woman for the production of individual personhood,

see Bastide 1973:29-40). What is more, the difference between a single girl and a wife; a young man and a head of family were a matter of generational differences, thus temporary and tied up with practical contingencies. And whereas race was an essential difference that overrode the gender configurations of romantic partnerships, a local husband and wife configuration, while constituted on the basis of hierarchical difference, was a relationship of complementarity, and it did not carry any lack. Plus, it was built on gender differences that were less fixed and less essentialised than the racial ones.

Gender difference in Claro do Lichanga was partially thought of as natural. Men were held to have a strong sexual instinct and women were thought to be closer to danger and death because of their menstrual blood and child bearing. Men's sexual drive justified "predatory behaviour" and they were meant to hunt, protect, control and take care of their own. Women's proximity to danger made them need more seclusion, taboos, control and protection. None if this denied women's sexual drive, and despite strong variations across the country, Mozambique has continuously recognised women as active sexual beings capable of pleasure (Groes-Green 2013; Rosario 2008; Manuel 2014).

Other aspects of gender roles, though, were pragmatic, that is, either contextual, temporary, negotiable or reversible. Southern Mozambique's gender roles were seen as a social norm, and as such, as arbitrarily defined, and people were aware that they were conventional. Women served and men commanded but things could be different. A woman with a head for business and a proactive approach to their problems, we have seen in passing, could become the breadwinner; and that would change the dynamics in the house, or as I heard the child of one of them say, "in our house, mama is the one who tells us what to do" [*mamá é quem manda lá em casa*]. *Muqueiristas,* women who imported and resold products from South Africa, were for instance normally the highest authority for their children, and were not submitted to their husbands. They could also be what Christian Groes-Green called curtidoras, women who managed flirtatious, sexual and romantic relationships for their economic advantage. Through these, they had a means to contribute to the household economy, gain space for manoeuvre and in this way, were less submitted to their male relations (be that a father, a husband or the boyfriends themselves). Madalena the nanny was clearly one of the women who strove for financial self-sufficiency. Even though she relied on her brother's support, she carved out a space in which she could provide for herself, her son and her sister and mother, which made the lack of clarity regarding her future with the father of her son less pressing.

Besides these alternative constellations that emerged in the urban landscape, everyone was also aware that the norm in the north of the country was inverted. Stories of how the women up there had the upper hand, liked their men tame, lay down the rules of the house and focused on their own benefits, desires and profit were told in oral tales and jokes, such as about men of the north coming home, seeing a pair of man's shoes at the entrance and going around the village one more time to "give their wives time to finish", and featured in national literature, such as in

Paulina Chiziane's *Niketche*, read by most school children. Knowledge of regional differences circulated and provoked suspicion, admiration and prejudice. As such, women from the north figured as concrete exemplars of the fact that most of the differences between men and women were not imperative laws of nature, but practical norms.

Racial difference, however, was conceived of as absolute. The hierarchical position and the superiority of the *branco* was non-negotiable and unquestioned. The white man's foreignness, his historical and contemporary generosity and his visible physical features were the three elements that produced radical difference and with it, the dual effect I have repeatedly stressed of making the Africans black, that is, not-white (unlike, say, the Amerindians of Brazil who can and do become white [*virar branco* cf. Kelly 2005]). The impossibility of actually becoming white has already been explored and exhausted in the topic of the formation of the African elite (cf. Mbembe 2001). The postcolonial elite, which pretends to be white in interactions with the poor (us clean, them dirty, etc.) loses its whiteness when interacting with foreigners. Taking the place of the whites is thus a one-sided, fragile and momentary effect of some interactions and cannot avoid the marker of lack and non-whiteness that the presence of the white man as a model of personhood, as defeated power, as historical father effects; a radical difference (cf. Taussig 1993).

Despite it being conceptually absolute, racial difference was instantiated in practice. What this meant was that race could be underplayed, invisibilised, and intentionally or unintentionally stressed. It was, as I said in the opening section of this chapter, most often not there. I was made white, sometimes when I was asked to be, as when Margô needed me to secure her a rental deal, or when Mojaju needed to be taken to the hospital. Sometimes accidentally, like once when casually brushing my hair in front of the family. Most times, though, among family, we cooked, washed the children, watched television, talked, and went to the market, we spoke of plans and events, of men and problems, of jobs and studies and of our children, and skin colour and race were simply not part of the discussion. Just like the other relational differences, they were inconspicuously part of the broader weave.

EPILOGUE

This thesis has presented an ethnography of women, residents of a poor peri-urban neighbourhood of Maputo, against a backdrop of urban expansion and transformation, sparked by democratic liberalisation and a window of economic growth. We have followed the women of this ethnography in their family and marital lives, in their play, friendships and flirts, in their work relations, and looked at the conceptual place that they occupied in the city as poor, black women. We have seen them weave their relationships, and themselves, within a pattern made of hierarchies and prescribed distances, where social ties are premised on the recognition of difference and made of personal obligations. And we have seen them create, protect and expand these relationships within an unreliable and undefined outside. The social world presented in this thesis, although embedded in wider urban and global weaves, is an alternative to the dominant socioeconomic order. It is made of its own material.

Specifically, the social fabric of these women's lives was made out of particular cosmological, political and moral material. The cosmological world in which it was woven was murky and unpredictable, and made up of non-social forces. It needed domestication to become social, and could only be given order by the incorporation of newcomers into networks of kin through alliance and relatedness. These networks were made of relationships that extended beyond living relatives, including ancestors and deceased; and they composed the social world. They demanded continuous protection from the potentially dangerous forces that lay outside, so the domestic realm was fenced, swept and partially hidden from the outside, and interactions with strangers or non-kin were either kept unrecognised, or brought into the domestic sphere and made into kin.

The politics of these intimate relationships were marked by the active production and maintenance of hierarchies in which power in the forms of authority, influence and status should always be unequally distributed, making dependence constitutive of social ties. Thus, people engaged in personal relationships in which power differences were recognised, and it was expected that those in superior positions would use their resources to help their dependents. These dynamics were tinged by the double meaning of belonging, that entailed both being part of a kinship group and being their property (cf. Miers and Kopytoff 1977). Dependents thus belong *to* someone.

These expectations were of a moral character, and relational ties were characterised in terms of obligation and duty. Notions of what was proper or correct involved assuming an appropriate relational position and performing its prescribed responsibilities accordingly. Because human nature was conceived to be simultaneously good and bad, moral righteousness was a product of behaviour, rather than essence, and a good person was always relationally and contextually defined. That meant that relational ties were inherently tensile and needed to be continuously maintained within their appropriate distances and optimal degree of dependency – the right tilt – so as not to become destructive or dissipate.

This pattern of sociality, always made of difference, always producing dependence, continuously shielded from a threatening outside, was reflected in the spatial disposition of the city. Maputo's city centre has classically been described as an enclave (Lage 2018; Morton 2019). In this ethnography, the city centre enclave was, rather than a physical structure, a process that depended on the continuous marking of difference and distance (Nielsen et al 2020), practices that, as we have seen, constituted the premises of sociality in Claro do Lichanga. People's social conduct relied on the maintenance of distance and a strategic blindness to those who did not participate in the fabric of personal relationships. Rather than reifying the centre's privileged position in the socio-spatial hierarchy, these practices kept it outside the range of references and aspirations of residents of the periphery for whom the cement city was, as it had historically been, a place that was "not for them". Rather than striving to occupy it or to copy it, the people in this ethnography made their lives outside and beyond the city centre, continuously weaving an urban fabric alternative to the central model.

If enclaves are characterised by exclusive access to certain urban infrastructures (Le Goix 2006) or, conversely, can describe spaces of exclusion characterised by limited access to public infrastructure (Roussel 2003), peri-urban Maputo could be defined as an enclave by virtue of its alternative infrastructures. There, urban life was made possible by other means. The city took shape on the grid adopted from official plans in the informal parcelling out of plots and in the evolving, life-long construction of houses along sandy, unpaved roads. Urban life meant getting by with the commercialisation of produce from kitchen gardens in markets that multiplied to keep pace with peri-urban expansion, following urbanites in their new houses, along with private wells and solar panels where municipal electricity and water distribution were absent, and

privately organised, long-distance collective transport. These infrastructures, whether profitable corporate innovations that offered certain types of services, such as prepaid electricity and mobile phone credits, or traditional modes of livelihood that relied on growing produce, carrying water, and cultivating ties of dependence that would provide house and food, were always something other than the urban proper[1].

Maputo's spatialised enclaving was a physical manifestation of the processual web of personal relationships that produced and constituted the infrastructures of urban life around the city centre. But, more than that, it was the manifestation of what I have called the *different* differences of the social world - viz. the conceptual and practical understanding of the different positions occupied by each person in the social fabric. In particular, it demonstrated the radical opposition between black locals and foreign whites. The core of these different differences, we have seen, was racial, and the white man occupied a conceptually different position of superiority among the people in this ethnography, as markers of whiteness were adopted by locals, generating a double effect of making them closer to being white and simultaneously non-white. This, I argued, was an expression of how the Portuguese civilising discourse, run alongside the systematic exploitation and discrimination of locals, has left its most enduring imprint in notions what is proper and what is right. Thus, the thesis has told of how the importance of the cement-block house, of the Portuguese language and the imposed racial hierarchy with their physical and moral attributes were deeply engrained in notions of proper personhood and had a defining role in securing residents' place in the city. We also have seen how colonisation's racial hierarchy, although embedded in local patterns of sociality, and thus part of the inescapably hierarchical, always unequal relationships of this social fabric, has imposed the superiority of the white man in more categorical, non-negotiable terms. Unequal socioeconomic positions were naturalised in racial differences visible in the body, and conceptualised both physically and morally as essential difference. Thus, when it came to the spatial disposition of the city, the centre continued not to be “for them”, manifesting the endurance of colonial definitions of who was entitled to the city and reproducing a pattern of exclusion from spaces deemed civilised, modern or developed, that is, the city proper.

The urban has a central importance in imaginaries of development and progress. Urbanisation has been classically perceived as a step towards modernisation, playing a central role in both economic growth and national political maturity. Today, the assumption that

[1] The "inventiveness" of the informal occupations was recognised and capitalised on in private and public urban planning (e.g. Jenkins 2013; Forjaz 2005; Macucule 2016; Viana 2009), which were adjusted to the way the periphery was made, leading to arguments that the concept of the urban has been blurred and officially diversified to encompass these multiple forms of living. Without wishing to enter this discussion, I am simply pointing out that the alternative infrastructures of the periphery are different from those of the city centre and a direct consequence of the latter's exclusionary boundaries.

modernity would automatically follow urbanisation has fallen to earth in project failures that rather intensified poverty in urban contexts and led to urban exodus in certain African contexts in the 1980s and 1990s (Adepoju 1984; Ferguson 1999.). Yet, cities are still a central component of development plans (Beall et al 2010), a development that follows a defined path, laid out by the West, and leading to a democratic, inclusive, economically self-sufficient nation-state (see for example, the OECD 2020 on urbanisation). A body of citizens is the foundation of liberal democracy, a political community in which people can advance their individual and collective interests under the assumption of equal membership shared with unknown others. This body of citizens, not only by virtue of its etymological meaning, has typically been conceptually linked to urban space. Liberal democracy is preconditioned by the existence of a civil society and a sizeable middle class (Lipset 1959), categories defined respectively by their urban professional occupations (Stevensson 1913) and their institutional articulation in the urban space (Schwedler 1995:5). The image of the city as the locum of liberal democracy, however, is diametrically opposed to a reality, like that of Claro do Lichanga, in which the relationships that connected urbanites were personal and hierarchical, and where group membership referred primarily to one's place in a network of kin. Achille Mbembe describes this dissonance, calling liberal democracy in African contexts a caricature. Pointing at the proliferation of "private, indirect governments"; that is, concentrated forms of power that run under the norms of redistribution typically labelled clientelism (2001:66), he argues that democracy in these contexts has become the distorted narrative of fake governments (ibid; cf. J. and J. Comaroff 2006). The same dissonance is in fact also recognised by development programmes that try to remedy it, fighting corruption and attempting to create welfare on the basis of gender equality, civic consciousness and rights-based citizenship (stated for instance, in the latest UNDP mission, 2020).

If Maputo is not a body of citizens, it isn't so for a number of reasons which this thesis has demonstrated. The people in this ethnography did not operate with a logic of contractual rights. Nor did they strive for citizenship. What is more, the same underlying relational logic governed all relationships, which started in the home, and expanded beyond it into a dangerous and undefined non-social world. This not only undermines the notion of the public as the social space per excellence, but the assumption that values constructed in the public sphere are defining of intimacy. In contrast to Anthony Giddens' analysis of modernity, in which democratic values infuse the private sphere, and equality and freedom come to shape marital relationships (1992), in Claro do Lichanga a form of intimacy predicated on hierarchical difference was what produced the social and political world.

Thus, the analytical contribution of this ethnography has perhaps been to show that the insistence on inculcating these universal values and in following the path of progress might be partly a consequence of the devaluation of the domestic-cum-feminine domain in broader political analyses. If the social world can be perceived, as I have done in this thesis, to be produced and

maintained with the same logic of personal relationships of unequal co-dependence, then, a general tendency to look to the public in search of political and social space might have obscured the implications of a sociality predicated precisely on the relational patterns that characterise the home. When women and families in this ethnography carved out their place in the city, acquiring a plot and constructing their houses, they produced security and guaranteed their permanence and their future. This security was not produced in terms of citizenship rights, and they did not claim their place in an abstract political community. Rather, a plot and a self-build house afforded them personhood status: a relational, composite person constituted by hierarchical ties; one was a wife, a mother, or an employee. The women in this ethnography, in sum, were not striving to become equal, autonomous members of an abstract collective, but producing themselves concretely as persons embedded in a network of intimate relationships.

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The thesis has shown a mode of living alternative to dominant paradigms. Yet, each of the political-historical periods and their ideological foundations have had their effects, and tinged in each their way the weave of local sociality. We have seen how the women in this thesis actively negotiated different ideologies' influences and premises, and recreated their lives incorporating old and new values. But although we looked at the outcomes of these negotiations in marriage patterns, housing strategies, flirtatious interactions and work relations, I dedicated less attention to the conditions that allowed for these negotiations, namely, the apparent malleability of ideological projects that made it possible for them, in all their dissonance, to overlap and resonate (cf. Nielsen and Brandes 2019). Thus, I affirmed (perhaps a touch too categorically) that the presence of Frelimo's Mozambican woman and New Man in the periphery of Maputo was relegated to official celebration dates. Despite the party's intention to divorce both from the colonial and traditional past and produce a thoroughly reinvented subject made of socialist, modern values (Zawangoni 2007), I have shown that people did not shun traditional practices and beliefs but, on the contrary, continued to cultivate and reaffirm their importance. Concretely, women did not demand monogamic exclusivity; they expected to be properly loboladas, and their men to support them financially. Nevertheless, their social position and attitude resonated with aspects of the socialist project because their subservience was simultaneous with their desire and efforts to go to school and earn money. In a way, this fit the prescribed role of the New Mozambican Woman, who should be modest, subservient at home, but rational, modern and contribute to the revolution and the country with her labour (Santana 2016).

Women's active participation in remunerated activities also fit well with the neoliberal order, where enrolment in the labour market holds central ideological importance. At the same time, women's productive role in the domestic economy, as we have seen, can also be traced back to traditional divisions of chores in rural settings, where women were responsible for the gardens,

the cooking and daily maintenance of the village. Thus, their transfer to urban settings with the inclusion of a wider variety of labour activities, was less an adoption of the work ethic of the socialist woman, and even less so of a market approach to productivity, than the manifestation of ideological resonances. They reveal the ways in which the implementation of ideologies relies on the possibility of attaching new ideas to old practices, echoing Marshall Sahlins classic argument in *Islands of History*, where he, with a structuralist analysis of history, shows how events are organised within existing cultural schemes, which are, in their turn, changeable, historically-produced systems (1976). The Mozambican socialist project, despite its explicit goal of revolutionary transformation and rejection of old paradigms, just like the subsequent opening up of the market with its ideology of individual freedom, accommodated already existing ways of life.

However, since insertion in the labour market was, as we have seen, rare and intermittent among the majority of my interlocutors, labour productivity cannot be said to figure as an impactful neoliberal value within peri-urban modes of living. Rather, it was the nature of *play*, which I described as a typical mode of interaction that took place on the street, conducted with the aim of extracting pleasure or profit, which mostly resonated with aspects of liberal capitalist ideology. In the street, people engaged in casual flirtatious or sexual relations in exchange for drinks and gifts, and freed themselves from expectations of reciprocity, extracting something that they wanted and evading the other's claims, a manifestation of material pleasures, superfluous consumption and free, non-committal relations. These interactions fit somewhat with liberal, capitalist ideology in which individual freedom is of central importance and where people are encouraged to pursue their individual and material interests and increase their profit. And yet, as we have seen, the street's non-binding, free interactions were not a manifestation of the free market. If transactions in the liberal market are guided by individual interests and cancelled out by immediate reciprocity, in Claro de Lichanga reciprocity was evaded and exchanges were potentially binding. If transactions are morally condemned when practised in the intimate sphere of Western contexts, in Claro do Lichanga the negative connotations of the street were not a condemnation of materialistic interests, which were perfectly legitimate, but sprang from its potential capacity to deflect people from their duties towards the home by overinvesting in superfluous pleasures. The resonance thus shows the dissonances between the different operational logics at play.

These dissonances go beyond divergent logics and moralities of exchange, and they are what interest me most as I conclude this thesis, precisely because I have told a story of an alternative mode of life. In liberal democratic ideology, the market is not simply the space of monetary exchanges and material interests, but also the space of productivity that secures the collective prosperity of the national community. Productive participation in the labour market is both the basis for membership in the nation and a means to personal autonomy and independence (Allais 2012; Ferguson 2015). The core of this thesis' argument is precisely that women were not

pursuing either autonomy or equality when engaging in remunerated activities or taking an education, but on the contrary, they invested these assets in the production of personal ties of unequal co-dependence. The argument has implications for the potential reach of liberal democracy's universal values and regarding the adequacy of the language of citizenship and rights in such a context. The women in this ethnography strived to secure their place in the city by weaving personal ties of obligation and making themselves into persons entitled to demand a house, financial support and the appropriate treatment afforded by their position as wives and mothers. These claims were not made in terms of their rights as women, as part of a general category, but in terms of the proper way of being treated, that is, their demands and expectations were made on the basis of what was right (cf. Ferguson 2015). Thus, rather than a model of membership in a political community with accompanying individual rights, their claims depended on being recognised as a person enmeshed in a network of intimate relationships. Their personhood, rather than being based on social contract, was premised on the social status attached to the relational position that they occupied (cf. Fortes 1973; Radcliffe-Brown 1956).

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More than just providing a straightforward contrast with modern Western contexts, the analytical points in this thesis touch upon the foundation of national state ideology, contributing to James Ferguson's 2015 argument for distributive policies in *Give the Man a Fish*. Focused mainly on Southern Africa, but drawing on other postcolonial contexts as well, Ferguson demonstrates the incompatibility of, on the one hand, the neoliberal logic of productivity, in which individual participation in the labour market is considered the basis for both sustainable individual economies and the stability of national welfare systems, and on the other, local understandings of sharing as a moral obligation to redistribute unequal resources. He shows how the market is, more than an economic system, the basis for political membership in neoliberal democratic nation-states, which rely on productivity for democratic consciousness (2015:39-40). The ethnography in this thesis contributes with detailed insights into how these ties of dependence that rely on the moral obligation to redistribute are woven and conceived, and how this pattern is at odds with the Protestant ethics of capitalism.

In posing a challenge to liberal common sense, this thesis also contributes to rethinking the long-debated application of feminist rights, predicated on equality, autonomy and equal political membership, to postcolonial settings. As in Saba Mahmood's description of Islamic piety as a form of agency that seeks its own submission (2004), the women in this ethnography actively produced their dependency. Postcolonial feminism has denounced the way in which Western feminism has portrayed "third-world women" as passive, objectified victims of traditional gender inequalities and global structural injustices (Mohanty 2006). This ethnography thus offers a contribution to this debate by writing about women in a postcolonial context as subjects, not

objects of study, and through them revealing local and global power hierarchies without victimising or blaming them. Postcolonial feminism has, in its efforts to nuance "women" as a universal category, attempted to problematise the concepts of self, gender and individual so as to encompass non-western logics (ibid). While my analytical focus has not been to rediscuss or redefine gender categories, this thesis has shown the specific ways in which women in Claro do Lichanga made themselves into relational beings within ties of dependence and in this way, it has contributed with one more nuanced image of womanhood.

I have, in sum, attempted to present a social logic at odds with the individual-centred, modern democratic society. This thesis exposes the specificity of the modern nation-state, raising once more reserves about the importation of this model, with its universal values of equality, rights and freedom as the recipe for improving people's lives, running a country and building a family. But this is not to deny that improvement is desired. The presentation of the specific weave of these women's lives does not prevent us from recognising the structural injustice that holds poor, black Africans at the bottom of the global hierarchy (cf. Ferguson 1999) despite more than two decades of a supposed global order of cultural diversity. If Claro do Lichanga is made of an alternative social fabric, it is a fabric embedded in a dominant order that systematically reproduces historical racism and geographically determined inequality.

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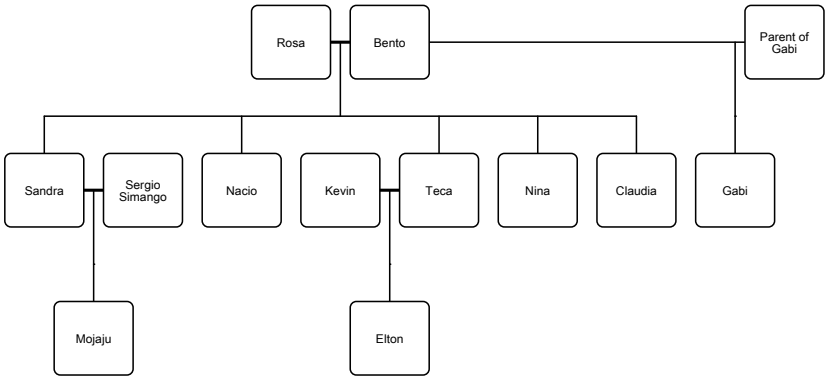
Glossary of forms of address

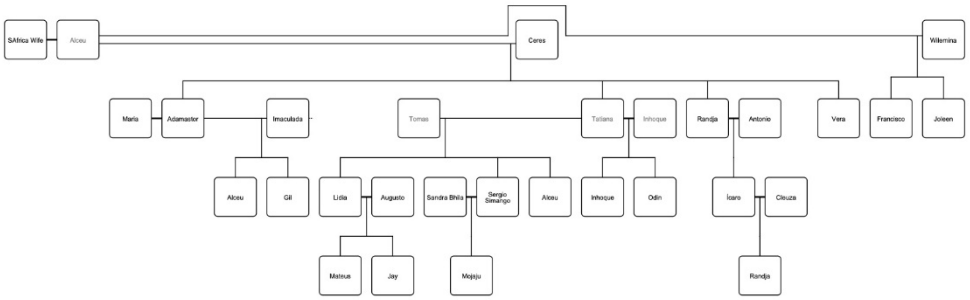
Portuguese	Changana	Translation
mãe/mamá	mámáná	mother
pai/papá	-	father
avó/vovó	kókwáná	grandmother
avô/vovô	kókwáná	grandfather
tia/titia		aunt
tio/titio		uncle
cunhada	sivale(tinámu)	sister-in-law
cunhado	sivale	brother-in-law
mana		big sister
mano		big brother
primo/prima		cousin
esposa/mulher	njangu/nghámú	wife
marido/marido	núná	husband
comadre		relat. betw. the mother and godmother
compadre		relat. betw. the father and godfather
madrinha		godmother/maid of honour
padrinho		godfather/best man
senhor/seu		sir/master
senhora/dona		madam

Family trees

BHILAS



SIMANGOS



ABSTRACT

This thesis is an ethnography of women from a poor, periurban neighbourhood of Maputo, Mozambique, during a period of neoliberal socioeconomic transformation. The study looks at how women from the neighbourhood (despite expectations of increased individualism and capitalist aspiration) actively strive to produce relationships that are intrinsically hierarchical and grounded in bonds of duty and obligation. It explores the different settings in which they cultivate these relationships: within the domestic sphere and the neighbourhood, but also in professional or institutional settings. And it examines the ends to which they put such relationships: marriage, moving to another area of the city or to a self-built house, earning a living, putting their children through school, or generally securing a future and a social position in which they are respected, recognised and cared for. Guided by their wishes and plans to make a good life, they articulate intersecting notions of propriety, status and influence, which are realised in their network of relationships and dependent on the quality of these bonds and of the people with whom they maintain such bonds. This ethnography, then, studies the ways in which these women's networks of relationships, always personal, and always produced on the premise of difference, become constitutive of their person.

By exploring these movements, the thesis argues that the making of a social person is a process of establishing and balancing personal relationships of dependence that come to compose one's personhood. In their efforts to weave these bonds, these women strive neither for equality nor closeness, but rather for an adequate hierarchical distance, a "tilt". The analysis leads to a conceptualisation of personhood as a tensile, hierarchical collectivity: a composite of personal relationships of dependence that demands continuous balancing. The thesis' narrative starts within the domestic space and moves outwards into the other spheres that are part of these women's lives, and in so doing it comes to map the social landscape of Maputo, presenting a city composed of gendered, unequal, personal relationships of dependence that are modelled on kinship. By analysing social personhood in terms of a composite of personal relationships that are intrinsically unequal, the argument shows how Maputo's social urban fabric is materialised in the physical organisation of the city, made of porous socio-spatial separations that define the movements of its dwellers and characterise a society with no civil arena, where all social spaces are personalised.

With classic sociological definitions of personal and impersonal relations as a backdrop, together with assumptions derived from psychological and sociological understandings of intimacy that are bound to specific, western conceptions of the individual, I discuss how intimacy and dependency in African contexts are imbricated aspects of relationality, and central to the process of production of men and women. I do so from a gendered perspective, building towards a reflection on important differences in the process of production of social personhood, which expands our understanding of dependence and intimacy in an African context by including the unequal positions of men and women in these relationships, yet undiscussed in this light. Importantly, the argument adds to debates surrounding democratisation and development projects in African countries in that it uses local practices of morally good relationships and local understandings of the collective and the public to problematise the unquestioned adoption of equality and democracy in international agents' practices and in global discourses.

ABSTRAKT

Denne afhandling er en etnografisk optegnelse af en gruppe kvinder fra et fattigt forstadskvarter i Maputo, Mozambique under en periode med omfattende neoliberal, socioøkonomisk forandring. Studiet undersøger, hvordan kvinder fra en af byens nabolag aktivt forsøger at skabe iboende hierarkiske relationer baseret på ansvar og forpligtigelse, og dette på trods af forventninger om øget individualisme og kapitalistiske aspirationer. Afhandlingen udforsker de forskellige kontekster, hvori kvinderne skaber sådanne relationer: i hjemmet og i nabolaget, såvel som i professionelle og institutionelle kontekster. Derudover undersøger afhandlingen de hensigter, kvinderne har for at konstruere sådanne forhold: at indgå ægteskab, at flytte til en anden bydel eller et selvbygget hus, at tjene til dagen og vejen, samt helt overordnet at sikre en fremtid og en social position, hvor de er respekterede, anerkendte og draget omsorg for. Kvinderne italesætter i ønsket om at skabe et godt liv en række overlappende ideer om ordentlighed, status og indflydelse, hvilke realiseres gennem deres netværk af relationer. I lyset heraf, undersøger denne etnografi de måder, hvorpå kvindernes relationelle netværk, hvilket altid er personligt og altid er skabt på en præmis om relationel forskel, bliver konstituerende for deres person.

På baggrund af en udforskning af disse bevægelser, argumenterer afhandlingen for, at dannelse af en social person kan ses som en processuel etablering og balancering af afhængigheds-baserede, personlige relationer, der til sammen udgør deres 'personhood'. I deres bestræbelser på at sy sådanne relationelle bånd, søger kvinderne hverken lighed eller nærvær, men en passende hierarkisk distance – en hældning. Afhandlingens analyse tilbyder en konceptualisering af 'personhood' som et spændt, hierarkisk kollektiv: en samling af afhængigheds-baserede, personlige relationer, der stadig balanceres. Afhandlingens fortælling begynder i hjemmet og bevæger sig derefter gradvist ud i de andre omkringliggende sfærer, der udgør kvindernes liv. Herved tegner afhandlingen et kort over det sociale landskab i Maputo, et kort, der portrætterer en by sammensat af kønnede, ulige, afhængigheds-baserede personlige relationer, der alle hviler på et relationelt slægtsskabsformat. Ved at analysere termen 'socialpersonhood' som en samling af iboende ulige, personlige relationer, viser afhandlingen hvordan Maputos urbane, sociale stof materialiseres i byens konkrete, fysiske sammensætning. Porøse, rumlige opdelinger bestemmer indbyggernes bevægelsesmuligheder og bevidner om et samfund uden civilsfære, men hvor alle sociale rum er personaliserede.

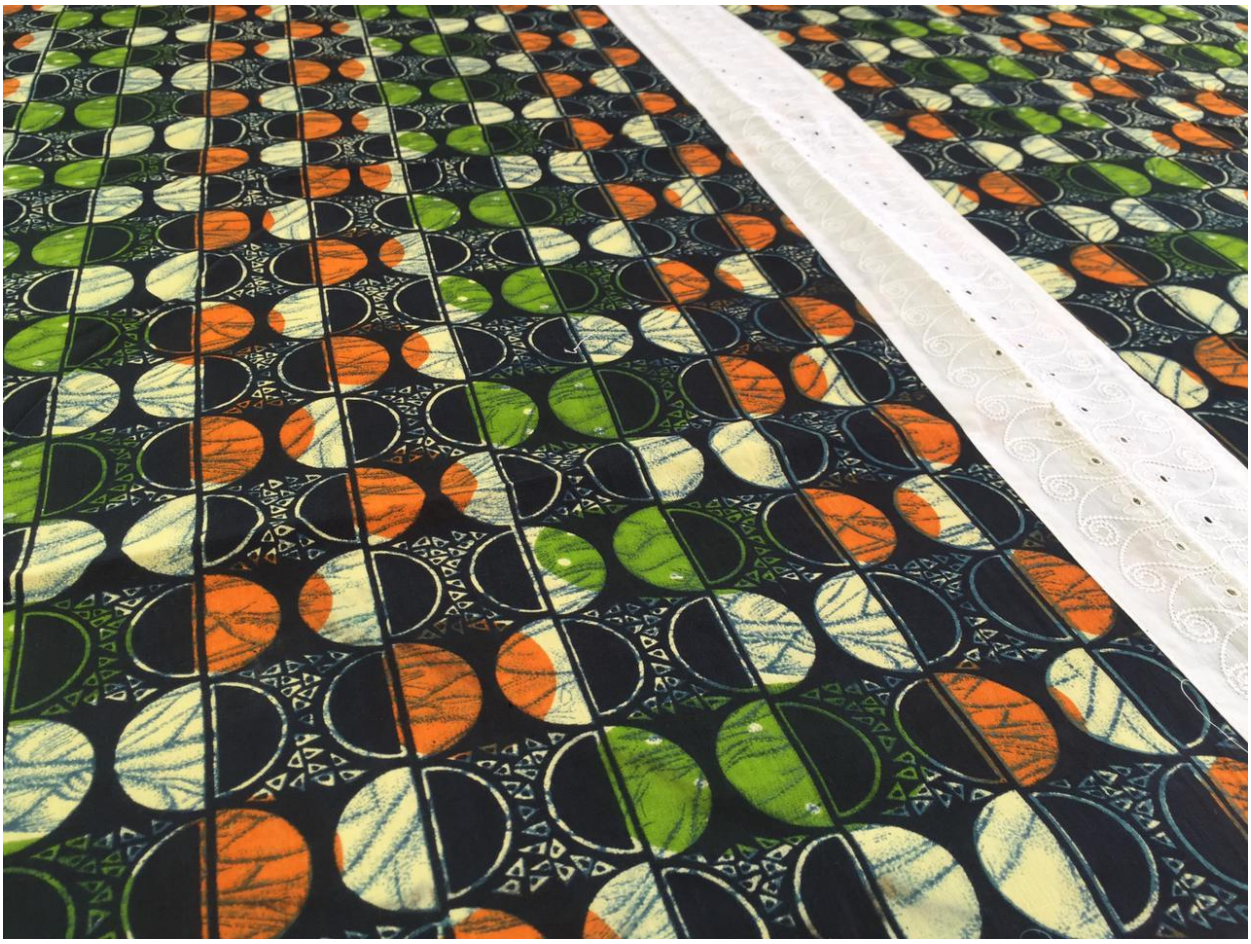
Med klassiske, sociologiske definitioner af personlige og upersonlige relationer som bagtæppe, og kombineret med psykologisk og sociologisk forankrede forestillinger om intimitet i relation til vestlige forståelser af individet, diskuterer jeg, hvordan intimitet og afhængighed i afrikanske kontekster overlapper med ideer om relationalitet, samt hvordan disse to begreber er helt centrale dimensioner i konstruktionsprocessen af mænd og kvinder. Dette gøres fra en kønnet tilgang og udmunder i en bredere refleksion omkring afgørende forskelle i måden, hvorpå socialt personhood konstrueres for henholdsvis mænd og kvinder. Ved at inddrage betragtninger omkring de ulige positioner mellem kønnene, bidrager afhandlingen således med en udvidet, og hidtil overset, forståelse af afhængighed og intimitet i en afrikansk kontekst. Afhandlingen bidrager desuden med vigtige perspektiver til diskussioner omkring demokratisering og udviklingsarbejde i afrikanske lande, idet argumentet anvender lokale forståelser af det fælles og det offentlige samt lokale eksempler på den moralske gode relation til at problematisere ureflekteret overførsel af begreber som lighed og demokrati i både internationalt udviklingsarbejde og i større, globale diskurser.

RESUMO

Essa uma etnografia sobre a vida de mulheres de um bairro periurbano de Maputo, Moçambique, durante um período de neoliberalização econômica. O estudo centra-se nos esforços das moradoras desse bairro para tecer relacionamentos intrinsicamente hierárquicos, atados por obrigação e comprometimento, contrariando assim expectativas de uma maior presença de valores associados ao neoliberalismo, como autonomia e individualismo. A tese explora os variados contextos em que esses relacionamentos são cultivados – no espaço doméstico, no bairro, no trabalho e em instituições – assim como o propósito dos mesmos – casar-se, mudar-se, adquirir casa própria, garantir renda, dar educação aos filhos; enfim, preservar um futuro e uma posição social nos quais elas sejam respeitadas, reconhecidas e cuidadas. Orientadas por seus planos e sonhos de uma boa vida, as mulheres dessa etnografia articulam noções de respeitabilidade, status e influência que, por serem realizadas em sua rede de relações, dependem da qualidade dos laços que as atam, assim como das pessoas com quem esses laços são mantidos. As mulheres dessa etnografia, então, discernem relações boas e más, as primeiras concebidas em termos de parentesco, as últimas em termos de amizade, normalmente pautadas por competitividade entre iguais. Aqueles com quem as relações são impessoais não são reconhecidos, sem que sejam trazidos para a esfera pessoal e transformados em parentes. Essa etnografia conta, então, como o tecido de relacionamentos de cada mulher, sempre pessoais, e sempre baseados em diferença, se torna constitutivo de sua pessoa.

Explorando esses movimentos, argumento que o tecer da pessoa social é um processo de estabelecimento e equilíbrio de relacionamentos pessoais de dependência que compõem a pessoa. No esforço de tecer esses laços, essas mulheres não buscam nem igualdade, nem proximidade, mas procuram, pelo contrário, manter uma distância hierárquica apropriada, "inclinada". A análise, assim, sugere uma concepção de pessoa como uma coletividade hierárquica tênsil, composta por relações instáveis que demandam um equilibrar contínuo. A narrativa se constrói a partir do espaço doméstico e se move em direção a outras esferas que compõem a vida dessas mulheres, mapeando dessa forma a topografia social de Maputo, que se apresenta aqui como uma cidade composta de relacionamentos de dependência moldados pelo parentesco. Ao analisar a pessoa social enquanto um conjunto de relacionamentos intrinsicamente desiguais, a tese mostra que o tecido social de Maputo é materializado na organização da cidade, cujas separações sócio-espaciais definem o movimento de seus moradores e caracterizam uma sociedade sem arena civil, onde os espaços sociais são personalizados.

Em contraste com definições sociológicas clássicas de relações pessoais e impessoais, assim como com conceitos de intimidade que pressupõem a pessoa como indivíduo ocidental, discuto como intimidade e dependência em contextos africanos são aspectos da natureza relacional de homens e mulheres, e elementos centrais no processo de se fazer pessoa. O faço a partir de uma perspectiva de gênero, o que promove uma reflexão sobre diferenças importantes no processo de produção da pessoa social e permite expandir a presente concepção de intimidade e dependência em um contexto africano ao incluir as posições desiguais que homens e mulheres ocupam nesses relacionamentos. Ao descrever conceitos locais de relacionamentos moralmente corretos, assim como do que constitui o espaço público e o espaço coletivo, essa tese problematiza a adoção universal dos valores de igualdade e democracia característica de práticas e discursos de organizações internacionais, e contribui assim com o debate sobre projetos de desenvolvimento em países da África.



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