



# **The civil wars of the 20th and 21st century: Global war as seen from Mozambique**

Bjørn Enge Bertelsen

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN





# Three dimensions of warfare in Mozambique

1. Dissolution of civilian/military distinctions
2. Increasing centrality of opacity / stealth as well as visual excess
3. The Rise of (Post)Imperial formations: From Brute Politics to Dark Economies





# 1. Dissolution of civilian/military distinctions

Bjørn: So, you have come back! Where have you been since you went in 2013?

Tchopa: Epah! Mano, I have been to Gorongosa. I had to get away from here, you know. Life was no good here.

Bjørn: I understand. And is life better in Gorongosa?

Tchopa: Life is good, yes! I joined them [Renamo] there after first trying farming there also. But that was the same as here; hard work and no pay. So, I joined them as soon as I could.

Bjørn: Now, the war is dangerous. Is it not dangerous to be part of Renamo?

Tchopa: Ah, I do not know. Life is cheap here in Mozambique, anyway. This you should now by know, mano. But to me... Renamo is just a name. But the war is good. It gives me opportunities for things. I can eat meat often. I get respect with others, with the people there [in Gorongosa].

Bjørn: What does it mean “Renamo is just a name”?

Tchopa: You know that I have always hated Frelimo, yes? They are from Maputo and they are rich because we are poor. They steal. They also tell us what to do and not. I do not like that. So, I join those who fight Frelimo and Maputo. But Renamo? Ah, I am not sure who they are... Anyone can join them and anyone -can leave. You can join the war or you can take a break, as I do know. So, it is a place for opportunity, you see?





## 2. centrality of opacity / stealth, visual excess

- Miguel: No, no, no. The war did not end in 1992. It always continues but has now changed. What happens here is this: **Last year [2016] the [FADM] troops went around the city of Chimoio capturing young men:** They asked them ‘Do you have a job?’ and if they replied they were selling stuff or were *ambulantes*, then they would be taken. Many were taken here—it was like the *raptos* in Maputo!
- Bjørn: But how could they just take...
- Miguel: Ah, you do not know anything, mano! The government here does not care! When they need people, they just take them and send them into war! There they die. These are just ordinary people that become soldiers. We are like soldiers waiting to be sent to die. The government does not care, it just wants to kill those that are not the elite, not Frelimo.
- Bjørn: So they die... where?
- Miguel: Those that were taken—sometimes at night also—die in Gorongosa. But the government is afraid that the big newspapers will find the bodies. So, they take them here—to the [municipal] graveyard [of Chimoio] and bury them. To hide the corpses of the young men. I have seen the trucks coming with bodies in the afternoon. At night they are buried, using big machines. **The government works with death—and war is everywhere.**





### 3. (Post)Imperial formations: From Brute Politics to Dark

#### Economies

“Listen, I have been to Gorongosa several times. And they [Renamo] had things there, you cannot imagine. Cars! New computers! When we went into their bases, places they had abandoned... We saw it all. But the most fantastic thing was the helicopter: Every night we would hear a helicopter land, stay for a while and then fly out. They say it was with gold and diamonds from either Mozambique or Zimbabwe. I am not sure where. But it was there—the helicopter of Renamo and the things of Renamo. **War is business, my friend.**”

*FADM officer, Chimoio, January 2016*





# Conclusion

- The three **aspects from Mozambique** *prefigure* global developments – including the rise of a **corporate state form**:
  1. Dissolution of **civilian/military distinctions**
  2. Increasing centrality of **opacity / stealth** as well as visual **excess**
  3. **From brute politics to dark economies**
- Hegemony of Western models of statehood and war **must be challenged**.
- The argument here has been *not* to test Mozambique against various hegemonic theories about warfare in Africa, Big Man politics, theories of patrimonialism etc. Rather, taking the case of Mozambique to *build* such a theory, asking; **what are salient features of global war if we start from the point of view of Mozambique?**







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