

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

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Abstract

What one can label the civil wars of the 20th and 21st century in Mozambique – with particular periods of intensity from 1976 to 1992 and from 2013 until now – have profoundly shaped the post-independence era in terms of socio-economic trajectories, political subjectivities, troubling legacies and memories, regional divisions, and much more. What can such a protracted period of recurring instances of civil war learn us about war in general – at a global level? How can the harrowing experiences of violence and suffering instantiated on Mozambican soil inform our comprehension of war in a global age of permanent violent clashes, of omnipresent militarism and of an increasingly belligerent state form? Rather than insularizing or exceptionalizing the Mozambican civil wars – by way of emphasising local and purely national dynamics or by way of labelling or typologizing these in terms of macroeconomic or political schemata conforming to certain preconceived ideas of wars and unrest in the global South – I will in this paper attempt to draw on my own ethnographic material from Manica province as well as other analyses to answer such questions. The overall aim of the paper will then be to use the available material on the civil wars in Mozambique as a prism for analysing, understanding and redefining the nature of contemporary global war and political-military dynamics more generally.

Introduction

As already indicated in the call for papers for this panel, the period of intense warfare immediately following Mozambican independence has been accorded various terms by scholars, observers and politicians—within and outside Mozambique. Many analysts have also probed how the various forms of labelling produce, reveal and expose modes of scholarly analysis, ideological orientation or political bent.¹ Further, this issue of labelling is also complicated by the fact that what I here, for the sake of simplicity, will call “post-independence warfare”, unfolded in various ways, with varying intensity in various locales and times. Thus, the term “post-independence warfare” is, largely, an unsatisfactory shorthand for complex processes relating to representation and analysis—locally situated, nationally, scholarly, politically, internationally etc.—covering a vast geography spilling the borders of Mozambique.

As with any amorphous entity, also this comes with an enormous lacunae in terms of research not yet undertaken. Crucially, this concerns local experiences and histories that are *irreducible* to a related range of simple dichotomies that have informed understandings of the period: Renamo versus Frelimo, government versus rebels, the state versus bandits etc. As Michel Cahen has also made clear in his paper here (Cahen 2017), it is imperative that we can move away from the Manicheism—i.e. the obsessions with dichotomous and valorized juxtaposition between two parties—that has characterized both the writing of history and, I would add, also much other social science and humanities research on Mozambique’s conflictual past and present.

Related to this point, the recent period of warfare from 2012 onwards has also been labelled a “low-intensity war” (Wiegink 2015)—a term that may serve to describe this context at some level. The problem, however, with gradations such as “low” or “high” intensity, is that it smuggles into our analysis a semblance that both *sanitizes* war through scale-making, as well as indicates a clear-cut image where war is *rational* and *containable* and with limited impact. Anyone who has followed the recent development of political violence and warfare in Mozambique—including attacks on civilian buses, political assassinations, refugees to Malawi etc.—will, I hope, recognise such characteristics as flawed.

And here it might also be worthwhile to also make a general point: It is important to bear in mind that representative power, i.e. what Feldman has called “the social being of

¹ For some works, please see Coelho (2011 [2009]), Hultman (2009), Igreja (2008), Minter (1989), Saul (1999), Bertelsen (2016a), Cahen (2002), Coelho (1998), Dinerman (1994), Emerson (2014), Igreja (2013), Morgan (1990), Obarrio (2017), Roesch (1992), Vines (1991), Wiegink (2013), Young (1990).

narrative truth” (Feldman 2004), locally does not necessarily conform to those we normally accord authority. For instance, I found during my work in Honde that the person whom people alleged spoke the truth about the postindependence period of warfare was someone both me as an observer and the local community would describe as *maluco*—mad. One may relate this to the fact that many view the period of war as one of prolonged madness, of the suspension of human nature and sociality, perhaps, as I have also done (Bertelsen 2016b). But one may also attempt to broaden this point when approaching the Mozambican postindependence warfare (as well as other contexts) and ask: To what localities do we go? Where do we extract “perspectives”? What is a source and an authority for our analyses?

I believe any rethinking of the period of the so-called “civil war” that aims to move beyond conventional and long-rehearsed analyses should also critically relate to such fundamental questions relating to methodology, epistemology and analysis. I will in the following draw on various forms of mainly anthropological material—including interviews, fieldwork observations and written and digital material—to explore what one could call the contours of the new wars as these come into view and unfold in Mozambique. In a sense, I will therefore use Mozambique *neither* as a case for particularising and insularizing *nor* to test whether it conforms to international patterns or models. Rather, I will use the material to inform our understandings of current warfare and attempt to show how the Mozambican wars prefigure the shape of global wars more generally.

So, how are we to approach trying to understand the periods of post-independence warfare in Mozambique in relation to changing geopolitics and dynamics of war more generally? In line with two of the aims of this panel—namely to, first, contribute to a “social and decentralised” history of the civil war and, second, to relate the current political-military confrontations to those of the past—I will in this paper draw on ethnographic and historical material from Manica Province collected in the period 1998 to 2017. Specifically, I will use this material to support exploration of these goals of a social and decentralised history that is also alert to the connectivities between the past and the present in Mozambique. However, my main aim in this paper is to use the case of Mozambique as a prism for understanding changes to war on a global level and contemporary level in terms of highlighting 3 factors or dimensions that are identifiable in the long trajectory of post-independence war in Mozambique and which indicate, more broadly, global trends in warfare. The three factors I will identify in a very summary fashion here today are:

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

Let me start with the first:

1. Dissolution of civilian/military distinctions

Propelled by revolutionary and liberationist forms of warfare, such as that carried out by FRELIMO in Mozambique's war of liberation, increasingly towards the end of the 20th century the distinction between domains, actors and practices as civilian and military, became indistinct, invalid, inoperable. Such developments were, of course, integral to the notion of the revolutionary militant and to ideologies of liberation which were crucial for FRELIMO as guerrilla movement. Later on it was also central to notions of re-moulding Mozambican society through creating New Men and Women—often through cadres intervening, disciplining and re-organising social order and its hierarchies. Put differently, and undoubtedly simplifying, we may say that both as liberation movement and in its incarnation as early Party-State, Frelimo aimed for a dissolution of military-civilian distinctions through operating a utopian militancy of revolution, anticolonialism and profound transformation. Intensifying such indistinction, from the past two decades following the so-called GPA in Mozambique, we also know that the recognition of various forms of sovereignties and authorities have pluralised agents of violence, force and war, including un-uniformed community police, vigilante groups, private security guards, life guards and spontaneously formed mobs (see also Bertelsen 2009, 2016a).

The post-independence war era is also crucial in inaugurating such indistinction, although at a different level: For one, it is widely documented that troops believed to be loyal to Renamo were clad in outfits from government troops—and vice versa (see also Nordstrom 1997). Such an element of confusion and of the carnivalesque is, of course, well-known. But more interestingly, Sergio Chichava (2007a) also touches on the same in an incisive 2007 paper that, I believe, is a very important intervention in debates on anti-state armed rebellion in Mozambique. Based on material from Zambézia, Chichava has several times shown how the movement PRM (*Partido Revolucionário de Moçambique*), established in 1976, not only prefigured Renamo temporally but also in terms of appropriating resources from the police, including fatigues, in order to attack these more effectively (Chichava 2007b). Further, as Jentzsch (2014) has demonstrated, also for Zambézia, the dissolution of distinction between supposed counterparts in the civil war not only involved (seemingly) arbitrary violence and

non-uniformed groups blending into local populations but also the rise of a range of non-government and non-Renamo loyal groups, such as the infamous Naparama (see also Chichava 2007a: 417-423).

While such temporary “becoming-other” reflects the continuous shifts in loyalties and the metamorphosis of various movements—and, beyond this, the severity of the Frelimo state unpopularity in Zambézia—it also underscores the heterogeneity of agents and groupings wielding violence in both war-time and in the (nominal) peace time period. These examples also suggest the dissolution of the social and practical significance of civil-military distinctions—a development not only fuelled by the disintegration of the project of the unified Frelimo state but also by the fact that global capitalism has produced a novel form of statehood that elsewhere has been called the “corporate state” (Kapferer and Bertelsen 2009). Another element related to the dissolution of military-civilian distinctions—beyond metamorphosis, shapeshifting and the carnivalesque—are also clear from the recent period of warfare. Both Nikkie Wiegink (2015) and Michel Cahen (2015) also point to the possibility of new groups of recruits to Renamo in the recent period of warfare.

My own material from recent research in Chimoio and Gondola supports such an argument and I will here only present one interview with a man I have known since he was a teenager in 1998—a man I call Tchopa. *Tchopa* [a pseudonym] hails from a peri-urban community close to Chimoio. An entrepreneurial young man, when at around 20 and coming from a very poor peasant background, Tchopa engaged in agricultural production tending *machambas* his father had let him use. He supplemented this with operating a makeshift, single-table *banca fixa* in a local market on the outskirts of Chimoio, selling sugar he had smuggled from Zimbabwe. Throughout his twenties, he was rather unsuccessful in his business ventures and gradually returned to his rural homestead, setting up a moderate house (even by local standards) and getting two children with his girlfriend. Impoverished and gradually more disillusioned with what he called “the politics of thieves [*política do grupo mbava* (thief)]” that he saw as marginalising people like him, he also increasingly came into trouble with neighbours due to accusations of theft, drunken fights and debts that were incurred but not honoured. Leaving just a note to his girlfriend that he was leaving for Gorongosa, he disappeared in 2013. His brother and several other relatives went to Gorongosa by bus looking for him but did not find him—despite hearing rumours about him having joined Renamo there. Then, suddenly, in 2015 he re-appeared in Chimoio and I met him again, by chance, and had the opportunity to talk to him:

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?

During his stay, Tchopa also bragged about the wealth amassed in Gorongosa—it seems he was eager to convey the impression that fighting was worth it and that he would emerge ‘a big man’ (*um homem grande*). However, returning after two years, he only brought with him MZN 50 to give to his girlfriend and his two children, spending the rest of the little money he had with him on *nipa* and eating at various households of his family members. He then disappeared again, returning to the promised land of Gorongosa after only three days in Chimoio.

What can we draw from this? For one, the story of Tchopa—and there are others like him in Chimoio—indicates the emergence of a zone of indistinction when it comes to war: It is difficult to know who is who and anyone can join and leave Renamo, it seems. Further, Tchopa operates with notions of wealth and accumulation and thereby mimics the increasingly hegemonic socio-political ideals of individual accumulation and capitalist notions of opportunity. But as with the capitalist notion of opportunity, however, wealth remains a mere spectacle—a horizon that remains unattainable to non-elite subjects such as Tchopa. We should, thus—and contra some econocentric assumptions (see Collier and Hoeffler)—be wary of deploying template arguments in the vein of material greed being the motor of continued adherence to or initial push to take part in struggles such as those of Renamo—also as you can, it seems from Tchopa, move in and out of intense contexts of war. Instead, I think we should follow Michel Cahen’s call to explore the world of Renamo—a political as well as cosmological system where notions of stolen wealth and opportunity are

strong orientational points for people like Tchopa. Surely also, if we mapping the world of Renamo is crucial, we also need to take in situated notions of wealth, well-being, value and social order—but that is a subject for another paper (but see Bertelsen 2016c, for instance).

Drawing on snippets of mainly my own material and the broader trajectory of the Mozambican post-independence era, I have indicated here that there is an increasing non-salience to the distinction between civilian and military domains. The importance of the rich and varied Mozambican material in this respect is that it both prefigures and is more varied than many cases worldwide. Thus, we could, I argue, use the Mozambican material to show that what we used to distinguish as separate forms of warfare and violence—such as guerrilla warfare, acts of terrorism, political assassinations, rapid police action or tactical killings through drone use—are now part of a broader theatre of perpetual war with no prospect for peace. Drawing on a similar kind of analysis, Éric Morier-Genoud (2017) calls the present Mozambican context a form of ‘proto-war’ (*proto-guerre*): Emphasising the current context of various forms of armed confrontations between heterogeneous forms of government forces and groups generally thought to be Renamo-affiliated, he emphasises as one of the three factors of the period that this is a form of war that is *non-declared* from the official level.

In such a continuum of a paradoxically non-declared yet all-embracing (but not total) war, the state has become its own war-machine, throwing off balance the very distinction between conventional notions of state and non-state at the same time. Further, and again reflecting the rise of a zone of indistinction between military and civilian (and war/non-war), the notion of sovereign control of territory won through battles and checkpoints are now less important than the possibility to punish, discipline and coerce populations into compliance for various purposes of extraction and accumulation. Looking towards the world from the vantagepoint of Mozambique, there is a sense that the notion of non-peace and perpetual war here has prefigured global developments where citizens are mobilised as agents of war, fighting both invisible and visible battles against those labelled terrorists, internal enemies or external threats.

2. Increasing centrality of opacity / stealth as well as visual excess

As Michel Cahen has made clear in his paper (2017) and has also been underlined by many scholars of and on Mozambique, the post-independence war was, from certain vantage points, extremely complex. To repeat, this means it is irreducible to the dichotomies of Renamo and government forces. However, it was also experienced as chaotic for those that lived through it—not only in the sense of the carnivalesque, the intense practices of shapeshifting of

military actors and, not least, the excessive use of spectacular violence. These traits were exacerbated by the sense of bewilderment incurred by constant rumours and the difficulty of ascertaining event from non-event, actual killings from rumour about these etc.

This dimension—which I would like to call the centrality of opacity and stealth, on the one hand, coupled with visual excess on the other—go beyond the conventional tropes pertaining to war, such as ‘the first victim in war is truth’ or the call for, and rightly so, more research to be done on the war also in Renamo areas. Rather, instead it reveals the tendency that while war is ever- and omni-present, as I also argued above, it also crucially revolves around domains of secrecy, stealth, opacity, on the one hand, and transgression, excess and the spectacular on the other. Again, there are trajectories here linking the legacies of the intensity of the 1980s to the present-day *proto-war*, to again use Morier-Genoud’s term (2017). In such a context, present-day Mozambique is awash with information about the war and alleged events—much of this through mobile phones in addition to conventional media or major Internet sites. However, crucial here is that the digital media and the use of mobile phones as dissemination platforms in and of themselves may be vehicles for *not only* documenting and informing about events: Rather, they may be seen to *comprise* textual machines through which events are generated. Let me be specific and exemplify through showing you a few of the SMSes I am talking about—all text messages that I intercepted between early 2013 and late 2014 in Maputo—all translations mine:

Text 1 – SMS intercepted 30 January 2014

In an offensive attempting to destroy a group of FADM military that threatened the northern flank of the perimeters of the Gorongosa mountains, the forces of Renamo attacked today from 7 in the morning, a military position in Piro, a few kms from Gravata and 40 from Satungira, provoked by the catastrophic losses of FADM. They were approximately 200 men and used various pieces of artillery, including the favourite arms of FADM, powerful anti-air weaponry and automatic guns. The battle lasted around 3 hours and our source tells us that there might be more than 70 deaths as there were few survivors and as the defeat was total.²

Text 2 – SMS intercepted mid-January 2014

From now instability has installed itself in Mozambique, since yesterday. Did I not say this to you? Latest. News+Latest. News+Latest. News. Sources in MDM confirm officially that this war in 9 months, on top of many injured, has already killed 2965 FADM soldiers, 24 civilians and 14 suspected Renamo guerrillass. WAR DEAF AND MUTE!! Note how and when the

² Original text, with typos and SMS language, reads: «Numa ofensiva que visava destruir um grande ajuntamento militar das Fadm que ameaçava o flanco norte do perímetro da segurança da serra de Gorongosa, as forças da Renamo atacaram hoje por volta das 7 horas, uma posição militar em Piro, a poucos Km de Gravata e a 40 de Satungira, provocando perdas catastróficas às FADM. Eram 200 homens aproximadamente e continha várias peças de Artilharia incluindo arma de eleição das FADM, os poderosos sistemas antiaéreos de tiro rápido. A batalha durou cerca de 3 hrs e nossa fonte fala de mortos que podem ultrapassar 70, houveram poucos sobreviventes porquê derrota foi total.»

Minister of Defense is called to the Assembly of the Republic to tell the truth? Or is he more concerned with and busy with his candidature to become President of the Republic? Fernando Gil MACUA DE MOCAMBIQUE³

In Text 1, we see military-style language, almost a telegraphic form. But reflecting the opacity of war, it is very hard to determine who won and who lost. In Text 2, we see the sender claiming to be Fernando Gil and what is interesting here is that this SMS also creates an event in the sense of constituting a political intervention of opposition in the digital domain—drawing on seemingly spectacular numbers of dead government soldiers.

In both SMSes, the excess and opacity of war provides for the eventual intervention drawing on the realms of the digital. These texts are, of course, extremely rich and its key features may be presented in only a summary fashion here. Such crucial features include that they operated within the domain of creation or imagination—and work to expand these imaginaries. However, they are directional—and instructive—in a sense not only inventing authority figures but also goad these into action; generating these figures as senders and instigators of past, present and future action.

However, such directional and instructive dimensions drawing on the imaginal terrains of war, are also part of everyday-life and I would like to draw on some recent material from Chimoio here. Spending a few weeks in Chimoio in March 2017 and relating to long-term interlocutors, many of them now in opposition to the government, conveyed a profound sense of war as integral to their everyday life. Crucial to many accounts were the stealth and trickery that war involves and conversations often referred to the two (failed) attacks on the convoys of Dhlakama in 2015—which all attributed to government forces—as well as rumours about battles unfolding close by. One of my interlocutors, that I will call Miguel here, operates a stall in the municipal market in Gondola and recounted the fighting between Renamo forces and FIR or government forces that unfolded there. However, he was also concerned with other ways in which war consumed his life:

Miguel: Do you know, Mano Bjorn, that we still have this system here of forced conscription?

Bjørn: Is it true? I thought this ended with the peace in 1992?

³ Original text, with typos and SMS language, reads: «Baixas desde que a instabilidade se instalou em Mocambique ate ontem. Eu nao vos dizia ? Ultima. hora+ ultima. hora+ ultima. hora. Fontes do MDN asseguraram em off que esta guerra, em 9 meses, para alem de muitos feridos, ja matou 2965 militares das FADM, 24 civis e ainda 14 gerrilheiros supostos da Renamo. GUERRA SURDA I MUDA !! Nota Quando e que Ministro da Defesa e chamado a Assembleia da Republica pra dizer a verdade ? ou anda mais preocupado e ocupado com a sua candidatura a Presidente da Republica ? Fernando Gil MACUA DE MOCAMBIQUE».

- 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.

My interlocutor Miguel was not the only one talking in these terms and reflecting on a war that seemed opaque, a government that seemed to use stealth and a form of violence that was excessive. I will not here dwell on other well-known aspects of war as stealth/opacity as well as excess but it suffices to relate to the spectacular violence of attacks on buses and trucks perpetrated on the national highway or the immense overkill by FIR or FADM forces in Gorongosa.

So, to conclude this section, what we see here, in a sense, is war as oscillating between the realm of the event, of what happened, and the planes of the non-event, the rumour and the rumoured event. Both planes of the event are real but in a skewed form where war is not only total and totalizing but also grossly excessive, opaque and exhibiting stealth. Here we see clearly how such notions of war—long-standing in Mozambique—can help us make sense of related and emerging understandings of war as autonomous and robotized (Coker 2015), remote-controlled through drone warfare (Turse 2012, Scahill 2013, Benjamin 2013, Sandvik and Jumbert 2017), war as integral to social media and the digital realm (Kuntsmann and Stein 2015) or war as forms of assault magic extending its violence from realms of invisibility (Whitehead and Finnström 2013). Again, the Mozambican legacy and present of war arguably prefigures and, thereby, can be used to make sense of and define the twenty-first century forms of war.

Crucially, Morier-Genoud notes—mirroring my long-term interlocutors from Honde and Manica Province—that knowledge about the war is rare, uncertain and frequently

contradictory (Morier-Genoud 2017:155). To me this underlines a general trend in warfare, namely the death of uncertainty as to so-called ‘facts on the ground’: while there has, of course, always been manipulation and propaganda in war—not least documented in Virilio’s work (2005 [1998], 2002)—knowledge of battles, deaths, prisoners of war, territories have normally seeped into and coalesced in the public domains. Not anymore, and this in itself is a paradox: The proliferation of communication media and digital technology, coupled with the rise of ‘the citizen journalist’, has not produced a more clarified and illuminated image of war and its unfolding. Why is that so? Here we turn to the third dimension I would like to present.

3. The Rise of (Post)Imperial formations: From Brute Politics to Dark Economies

This third dimension relates to what I would like to call ‘the rise of (post)imperial formations and the transition from brute politics to dark economies. I would like to start this section with a glimpse from my fieldwork in early 2016. Then, many of my interlocutors, and several of which had been in the Gorongosa area, argued that covert and, nominally, illicit forms of extraction was integral to the war. One, a FADM officer whom I interviewed in Chimoio, told me:

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.

At one level, this account seems to support the now-classic yet very problematic arguments made in the ‘greed, not grievance’ literature—most vocally expressed by economists Stephen Collier and Hoeffler (2002). Crucially, the approach underlines how one cannot have a purely ideational reading of the waging of war—neither from government-controlled forces nor from those attacking the state. However, as is generally acknowledged, this form of approach quite problematically posits external or non-state-condoned violent politics or violent struggle as fuelled by greed on various levels. Further, it accords an almost ontogenetic property to state discourses, sanitizing state violence and positing those disloyal to the state as beyond the realm of politics—as I have argued extensively elsewhere in the case of Mozambique (2005). Nor is, of course, prospects for immediate material gain an all-round, template explanation catering to, for instance, guerrillas such as Renamo—as Wiegink has also noted (2015:8-9).

At another level, the stories of extraction also resembles accounts from analysts and observers relating to the 1970s and 1980s of Renamo: poaching, smuggling, illegal mining and other nebulous forms of surplus generation were, it was argued by some of these analysts, integral to Renamo's modus operandi in several places in Mozambique (see, e.g., Duffy 2000, Hall 1990).

While such earlier analyses of the 1970s and 1980s may have revealed economic dimensions inherent to Renamo warfare, the Cold War dynamics accorded a sense of political-ideological bifurcation to the struggles. Although such bifurcation is deceitful, as also this panel seeks to address, it nevertheless clarified at a macro-level some of the political dynamics at work. Now, however, the imperial formations fuelling dynamics of war are more nebulous, more unpredictable, and these are more directly related to economic interests and formations, rather than ideologically charged struggles for institutional, territorial or political control. In some instances, wars are waged or war-like situations are sustained for extractive purposes—such as in parts of the Congo. As Žižek has noted, “[b]eneath the façade of ethnic warfare, we thus discern the workings of global capitalism” (Žižek 2011 [2010]:163). This indicates, to me, that any discussion of war in our contemporary time must also necessarily involve a critical analysis of the global workings of capitalism (see also Friedman 2003) as well as an analysis of the rise of the in/security industry, including the militarization of societal functions, urban orders and control of the poor, disgruntled or refugees (Buxton and Hayes 2016, Graham 2010).

A note on the global war as seen from Mozambique

As the recent phase of the Mozambican postindependence war illustrates, the 21st century has, arguably, seen the emergence of a proliferation of wars that are differently constituted than the mass-organized national and imperial wars of the 20th century. In contrast to such global wars—including World War I and II—the rise of post-nationalist social and political formations in the shape of what arguably constitutes a corporate state generates other differently configured wars and modes of warfare: Mutating forms of terrorism, special operations blending policing and military capabilities, paramilitarization processes, autonomous warmachines in the shape of drones, cyberwarfare in infospheres, assemblages of organized violent crime gangs, predatory kleptocratic elites etc etc.

In a phase of transition towards a “corporate state” where the economic logic becomes “ontologically foundational, permeating all social and political relations” (Kapferer 2017; Kapferer and Bertelsen 2009), warfare seems to turn into a form of governance for its

capacity to deeply shape (or produce) realities and moulding subjectivities and forms of life. The hegemonic economisation and profit rationality seem to require violent fragmenting and atomizing processes and the dislocation and disarticulation of the state's civil functions. Any type of social/institutional cohesiveness needs to be replaced by forms of anarchic arbitrariness fomented by aleatory power alliances (eventually transcending national borders), warfare and widespread corruption (Zagato 2017). The almost complete withdrawal of what Habermas would have described as the "public sphere" feeds into widespread sentiments of insecurity and institutional ambiguity/fragility. Concepts like "necropolitics", "narco-capitalism", "society of enmity", "state of exception", "drug war capitalism", "disaster capitalism" etc. are all terms devised to capture the current transformation.

Also dubbed as chaotic modes of domination through "dirty little wars" (Joxe 2002), this tendency towards warfare governance is globally expanding. For instance, the process of internal and external militarization initiated in the United States with the "war against terror" (since 2001, but that concretely started one decade before with the Iraq war) and which was also described as "infinite war", is now expanded to Europe, where terrorist attacks proliferate in a rhizomic way, often following schizophrenic logics and frequently recalling colonization and anticolonial struggle (Bertelsen & Zagato 2015). An outcome of these events is the rampant militarization of states and societies and on the African continent, initial narratives of 'Africa Rising' positing economic growth and stability has gradually been complemented by the militarization of state response to popular uprisings, the instalment of various forms of drone warfare capabilities, widespread use of private security and violent private policing, and the transformation or hardening of authoritarian tendencies in state formations.

In some ways this new wave of wars resembles, of course, the expansionist dynamics of pre-nation state eras—especially warfare waged at the porous and moveable borders of various imperial formations. Further, many wars—prior to the 20th century nation-state fuelled wars, in particular World War I and World War II—were waged in concert with or heavily supported by commercial or, later, capitalist interests. Following an exceptional era of stability where warfare was largely organized by nation-states or other imperial forms comprised of nation states—or forces opposing the nation-state or empire (as in the anti-colonial wars)—with the steady dismantling of the nation-state and the rise of the corporate state form, the nature of war is, once again, changing: Privatized, open, wild, mercenary and rhizomic may serve as some provisional descriptions.

Whether we are referring to "conventional" or "post-national" (or fluid) war, the state keeps playing a central role. Along with armed conflicts in countries like Syria, France,

Turkey, among others, the idea of civil war has once again found a stable place in political debate. In theory, the threat of civil war –the Hobbesian war of all against all - is what guarantees the existence of the state, the only body capable of organizing a peaceful political life in a collectivity. However, in reality the modern State “only persists through the practice of the very thing it wants to ward off, through the actualization of the very thing it claims to be absent” (Tiqqun 2010:79). Indeed, it recognizes that without (civil) war the reason for its existence vanishes. In this perspective the state does not put an end to war, but it manages it through displacement as well as violence and the threat of it. In this sense, warfare becomes a form of governance. As it happens in many regions the state turns warfare into a semi-independent process, an automatism that tends to involve the entire population and where specific operations are decided and organized by power lobbies with a high degree of autonomy.

This apparent “becoming horizontal” of war—its fluidification—does not imply a reversal of societies towards a Hobbesian primordial condition of war of all against all. Indeed, it is fundamental to distinguish between war and violence to the extent that the first is always the result of an organized collective process. War is not a metaphor that one could infinitely apply and generalize to any realm of social interaction or subjective experience. It is rather a collective practice that relies on technological developments (it has therefore an intrinsic historical dimension) in terms of weaponry and strategy.

At the current time, global wars not only revolve around dark economies of extraction but are also networked in ways that transcend national borders: Thus, as one could argue that the period of postindependence warfare in Mozambique had an element of proxy war to it— i.e. that the government and Renamo, crudely, both relied on capital, training, support and political legitimacy from external actors—the same thing can now be said for contemporary Europe’s wars in Northern Africa, particularly Libya. There, after violent toppling the Ghadafi regime, Europe through the European Union, is now paying local warlords and militia groups to stem the number of refugees setting out to cross the sea towards Europe. In a sense, again, one may learn a lot from using the examples of proxy wars from, for instance, Mozambique to analyse the present-day dirty, networked wars often orchestrated from Europe.

Conclusion

So, to conclude: It is important to emphasise that my drawing out of salient features from Mozambique to signal certain aspects of warfare globally, necessarily glosses over a range of

dimensions and features. As most people in this room would know—and my co-panelists in particular—to produce general and broad statements about the murkiness of war, is highly problematic. So, I might admit it at once: I am guilty of oversimplification and of not sticking with my limited ethnographic material.

However, what I aimed to do in this paper was to move away from the comfort of particularism in order to actually draw on the case of Mozambique (writ large) to indicate more general and global trends. Put differently, it has been an attempt to frontload and to showcase Mozambique and bring its experiences and dynamics to bear on also non-Mozambican and non-African discussions of war warfare.

I have done so for several reasons—including moving discussions in and on Mozambique to a more general level—but the most important is perhaps this: Analyses of so-called African conflicts and politics are far too easily compartmentalized, fed into models of certain typologies and understandings that are drawing on ideal types from a West that is, thereby, not only hegemonic but is also producing a certain analytical discourse where African cases represent anomalies, lack, dissolution, disintegration, weakness. As scholars I think we should always challenge such hegemonic models and both their epistemologies and presuppositions. I believe very simple way to undertake such a critical task, is to shift to defining, for instance, Mozambican cases as paradigmatic—to define our material here as the point of departure for analysis. My very small contribution in this regard has been to take the case of postindependence warfare in Mozambique and to use this as a lens to indicate global patterns of war.

Several general conclusion may be drawn from Mozambican trajectories as I have outlined them here—but one is this: It is no longer possible to uphold the image of a state as dispersing its form of violence and discipline in an orderly fashion to counter external and internal enemies: War has, of course, been thought of as a particular form of state violence, but has now changed to involved the corporate state form and other murky and non-imperial formations, privileging perhaps mediation over physical action and spectacularity over territorial conquest (see also Cowen and Gilbert 2008)

Related to—and intrinsic to—such changes in global warfare is, of course, the spectre of terror. As Boehmer and Morton notes, “For early twenty-first-century Western societies, it seems, terror represents the ultimate fear, the unsaid that can only be condemned, never condoned...” (2016:6). The omnipresence of terror is, of course, intrinsic to how war now is enacted, related to and imagined as comprising, if nothing else, a global form of violent spectacle. As should be clear from Mozambican history and as I hope I have alluded to

sufficiently, the context of Mozambique is again a case in point—prefiguring the trajectory of large-scale warfare through guerrilla fighting to acts of violence conveniently labelled “terrorism”. I believe that not only in the context of understanding conventional warfare but also seeing war as integral to the political, state and the social, one may also want to scrutinize the notion of terror—from the point of Mozambique and then extending more broadly. But that will have to be the subject of another paper.

A last point: the idea here has been *not* to test Mozambique against various hegemonic theories about warfare in Africa, Big Man politics, theories of patrimonialism etc. Rather, it has been to take 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? I hope I have managed to point out some features.

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