

# The Heritagization of the Liberation Struggle in Postcolonial Mozambique

Albino Jopela

Kaleidoscopio - Research in Public Policy and Culture

[a.jopela@kaleidoscopio.co.mz](mailto:a.jopela@kaleidoscopio.co.mz)

## Abstract

Since Mozambique gained its independence from Portugal in 1975 only three historical sites have been declared National Monuments. All three sites, Matchedje, Chilembene and Nwadjahane, which were declared in 2008, are related to the country's struggle for national liberation and they are commonly designated 'liberation heritage'. This can be situated and understood as part of the current nation-building project initiated in 2005 when the former (until 2014) president Armando Guebuza came into power. Ever since then there has been a selective revitalization of state-driven heritage projects, with Government institutions and the ruling Frelimo Party focussing on the memorialisation of the liberation struggle, especially the 'struggle heroes'. While some Mozambicans certainly support the government's initiative in setting up monuments, memorials and promoting 'national unity', many others have contested the specific 'politics' of representation and memorialisation that underline current heritage projects. This paper examines the politics of heritagization of the liberation struggle in postcolonial Mozambique.

## 1. Setting the scene

Whilst collaborating with the National Directorate for Cultural Heritage (*Direcção Nacional do Património Cultural* - DNPC) of Mozambique between 2005 and 2009, I was involved in several projects related to the conservation of immovable cultural heritage. One of these projects was the production of a national inventory of 115 monuments and sites to be declared sites of 'national interest' under the designation of 'national heritage'. According to the justification put forward by the then Ministry of Education and Culture the purpose of this was to, 'provide special protection by the state to sites and monuments of exceptional value' (Macamo 2008: 2). Despite the soundness of the technical justification and the diversity of cultural heritage on the inventory, the Council of Ministers did not approve the document. The reason given was that there were not enough bases on the list - these are FRELIMO military operational bases used during the national liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonial authority between 1964 and 1974 - they made up less than 8% of the total proposed sites.

At first it seemed a contradiction that the government would reject the opportunity to celebrate and protect the country's prime cultural heritage sites whilst at the same time it was actively promoting self-esteem (*autoestima*) as one of the pillars of mozambicaness (*moçambicanidade*) (e.g. pride among Mozambicans about their past and heritage) (see e.g., Guebuza 2006, 2009). A couple of years later, however, I came to realise that my indignation with the government's apparent lack of interest in the protection of heritage sites in the country stemmed from my inability to grasp the politics that engulfs cultural heritage in Mozambique today. Political support was only available to those projects that focussed on the more recent past, and more specifically on the liberation struggle.

My preoccupation in understanding this new or renewed interest in the memorialization of the liberation struggle, seemingly at the cost of all other types of heritage, has directed this study since 2012. In December 2012, I sat down with Mr. Fernando Dava the then Director of the Sociocultural Research Institute (*Instituto de Investigação Sociocultural* – ARPAC), in their head office in the historic part of downtown Maputo. My quest was to understand the government-led liberation heritage drive and ARPAC was spearheading part of this. A series of publications under the title *vida e obra* (life and legacy) was to 'create' and help 'sacralise' national heroes by telling the stories of the lives and legacies of some of the freedom fighters. I asked Mr. Dava a burning question: why was the

government so invested in promoting the legacy of liberation more than thirty years after independence? He told me that, ‘the head of State [Armando Guebuza] is concerned about the crisis of ideology (...) the lack of ideology amongst Mozambicans.’ He went on to explain that for Guebuza, the celebration of heroes was a way of showing respect for the liberation process, for the building of ‘mozambicaness’ (*mocambicanidade*), and that this also helped to strengthen self-respect and national pride among Mozambicans.<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly, the concern about the ‘absence of ideology’ among Africans in general was expressed more than half a century earlier by Frantz Fanon, one of the most important political-philosophical thinkers and a product of the African liberation struggle. His work had greatly influenced the various African liberation movements, including FRELIMO in Mozambique. In the summer of 1960, in a logbook entry entitled ‘This Africa to Come’, Fanon wrote that:

Colonialism and its derivatives do not, as a matter of fact, constitute the present enemies of Africa. In a short time, this continent will be liberated. For my part, the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology (Fanon 1964: 186).

Indeed, Fanon was right. As several commentators have pointed out lately, what concerns us today is not ‘colonialism’ per se, but the painfully incongruent actuality of a post-colonial Africa (Serequeberhan 2004: 226. See also Mbembe 2001; Gibson 2012). But what is the appeal of the notion of ideology in relation to the legacy of liberation struggle that draws FRELIMO back to it more than thirty years after independence in Mozambique?

I argue that the answer to this question lies in the scrutiny of the heritagisation of the liberation struggle within the formative years of FRELIMO during the struggle and the different socio-political and economic contexts of the successive presidencies in Mozambique and their efforts to undertake selective celebration and silencing of particular ‘pasts’ for particular ‘presents’. Accordingly, the call of the first President of Mozambique since independent, Samora Machel (1975-1986), for Mozambicans ‘not to forget the time that has passed’ (*não vamos esquecer o tempo que passou*), meaning the evils of colonialism and the sacrifices made during the struggle for independence; Joaquim Chissano’s (1986-2004) ‘conspiracy of forgetfulness’ and silencing of certain memories of the liberation struggle (including its heroes) and the recent Socialist-Marxist past in the neoliberal era; and lastly, Armando Guebuza’s (2005-2015) renaissance of the memorialization of the legacies of the liberation struggle, represent the different ways in which FRELIMO elites tried to respond to changes of circumstances and the contestation by the different social groups over the content of the officially sanctioned discourse about ‘the past’.

This paper is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the formative years of the liberation discourse built during the struggle and the after independence in 1975. Guebuza’s heritagization of the heroes of the liberation struggle is discussed in the second part of the paper.

## **2. A *Luta Armada* [armed struggle]: the formative years of the liberation discourse**

The construction of Mozambican nationalism can be divided into at least two historical periods: the first period comprises the earlier forms of (proto)-nationalism, which were expressed in the African press as early as 1910s, for instance, *O Africano* (The African) and *O Brado Africano* (The African Voice) that advocated for better treatment of African workers and a better education system. A second moment begins in the 1960s and is marked by the formation of FRELIMO, bringing together various movements, with the common goal of national liberation against Portuguese colonialism leading to political action and armed struggle (Prazeres 2012: 25; Paredes 2014: 132). It is within the later nationalist movement that we found FRELIMO’s officially sanctioned grand-narrative of resistance, shared suffering, the hardships imposed by the colonial regime and the deprivations of war, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Fernando Dava, Maputo, December 4, 2012.

sacrifices of the heroic youth for the sake of the nation and ultimate triumph over ‘500 years’ of colonialism (Bonate 2013: 233). The liberation discourse has been summarized as follows:

The struggle begins in 1960 with the Mueda massacre, which establishes the Makonde as the initiators; the unification of the three Mozambican liberation movements into the name of FRELIMO in 1962 with Eduardo Mondlane as the leader; the beginning of the liberation war with the ‘first shot’ by Alberto Chipande (who is also a Makonde) in 1964 in Chai, Cabo Delgado; the 2nd Congress of FRELIMO on July 20-25, 1968 in Madjedje, Niassa, which tackled the internal strife and initiated purging of the ‘traitors’; the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane on 3 February 1969, after which Samora Machel became the head of the movement in 1970, and with whom the movement took a more populist and Marxist revolutionary form ; operation Gordian Knot by Kaulza de Arriaga in 1970; António de Spínola nominated Vice -Chief of the Major Estate of the Armed Forces of Portugal on January 17, 1974 and the fall of the New State through military and popular uprising on April 25, 1974; September 7, 1974, the signing of the Lusaka Accord, and establishing of the transitional government; and finally, the proclamation of the independence on July 25, 1975 with Machel hoisting the new flag and becoming the first president of the independent nation-state (Bonate 2013: 234).

On June 16, 1960, Diwane Vanombe, a leader of the Mozambique African National Union (MANU), formed by the Mozambican-born Makondes in Tanganyika, visited the colonial administration in Mueda Circumscription, Cabo Delgado, in order to meet with the Administrator. Many residents gathered in front of the Administration office for this meeting between the liberation movement leaders and the colonial administrator. When the Cabo Delgado district governor arrived, the administrator ordered the crowd to salute the Portuguese flag. People refused and the situation became tumultuous. The crowd intervened when two of MANU members were tied-up and taken to a car. In response, the administrator ordered the *sipaíos* to fire at the crowd, resulting in many people being killed or injured. This incident is known as the Mueda massacre (Funada-Classen 2012: 221). The circumstances surrounding the massacre are still ambiguous today, particularly regarding the number of victims. While eyewitnesses claim that the number of ‘deaths on the spot was seventeen’, the official nationalistic discourse claims that the ‘Portuguese colonial administration murdered more than 600 people’ (Coelho 1993: 6; Adam 1993: 27; Adam and Dyuti 1993: 119). Hence, the Mueda Massacre is considered to have contributed considerably to the Makonde people’s politicisation, influencing FRELIMO’s development and its military campaign (see e.g. Pachinuapa and Manguede 2009; Tiane and António 2010; Schefer 2013). According to an interpretative display at the interpretation centre at the historical site of Mueda,

the Mueda massacre aroused the awareness of the Mozambican people in general and the peasants of Mueda, in particular, that Portuguese colonialism was an evil whose end demanded the armed struggle; it was the turning point in the history of the Mozambican people in their struggle against Portuguese colonial occupation; and it contributed to the deepening of the nationalist conscience in the struggle against Portuguese colonial oppression (*Placa didática do Centro de Interpretação do Local Histórico de Mueda* 2010).

Thus, the official discourse also holds that the Mueda massacre ‘showed that the independence would not be granted by the colonialists and that it was therefore inevitable to resort to armed struggle’ (Coelho 1993: 5). The historical site of Mueda, requalified in 2010 as part of the recent heritagization of the struggle, comprises:

- The building of the former Portuguese colonial administration, where the Mueda Interpretation Centre was established;
- The mass grave and the massacre memorial, erected after national independence, rehabilitated in 1999 and requalified in 2010;
- Two camps of two leaders of the revolt against colonial oppression, namely Matias Shibiliti and Faustino Vanomba;
- Two camps of guerrillas from the national liberation armed struggle: Maria Chipande and Ernesto do Rosario Ndupa (Jopela 2014: 23).

The official discourse presents FRELIMO as the result of the amalgamation of disaffected southern intellectuals and central and northern embryonic political movements that had grown among migrant workers residing in neighbouring Tanzania, Malawi and Rhodesia (Sumich 2005: 66). FRELIMO formally unified the National Democratic Union of Mozambique [*União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique*] (UDENAMO) which had been formed in southern Rhodesia on 2 October 1960, and which drew support from Ndaou ethnic group in central Mozambique, influenced by Joshua Nkomo's National Democratic Party; the Mozambican African Union (MANU) which was formed in Tanzania and modelled after the Kenya African National Union (KANU) of Kenya, and the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in Tanzania which grew out of the ethnic based Makonde African National Union; and finally National Union for Mozambican Independence [*União Nacional de Moçambique Independente*] (UNAMI) which was based in Malawi with support of the Malawi Congress Party and drew heavily on ethnic and regional support from Tete province (Funada-Classen 2012: 222). The unification of UDENAMO, MANU and UNAMI to create 'the united movement' FRELIMO took place in Tanganyika on 25 June 1962. Eduardo Mondlane, a foreign educated prominent southern intellectual, nationalist figure and the first black Mozambican to obtain a PhD, was elected as the overall president. UDENAMO's Uria Simango was elected vice president, MANU's Matthew Mamole executive director, UDENAMO's Paulo Gumane assistant executive director and David Mabunda head of the secretariat (Funada-Classen 2012: 230).

Since its formation, FRELIMO has been presented as a genuine nationalist organization that united all Mozambicans. In presenting FRELIMO as the merger of pre-existing parties, and not necessarily as a new nationalistic party, the official discourse attempts to promote the idea of continuity between former nationalist organizations and FRELIMO. In fact, although existing nationalist parties agreed to join the new party, differences between nationalist parties were seen in issues such as the nature of the struggle for independence, strategies and tactics to adopt and prospects of a postcolonial Mozambique (Adam 2006: 72-73). This is why the party was beset by factionalism and internal disputes immediately after its formation. The original leaders of MANU, UDENAMO and UNAMI were soon displaced and leadership positions were often filled by an influx of educated southerners who were close to Mondlane, mostly coming from Nucleus of Mozambican Secondary Students (*Núcleo de Estudantes Secundários Africanos de Moçambique* - NESAM), a movement founded by Mondlane and whose membership included future top-ranking FRELIMO officials such as Joaquim Chissano, Armando Guebuza and Pascal Mocumbi, the later would become Prime-Minister (1994-2004) (Sumich 2005: 67; Funada-Classen 2012: 231). While FRELIMO absorbed most of the rank and file members of the former parties, especially MANU, these displaced former leaders responded with accusations of growing southern domination and attempted to reconstitute their organisations with small numbers of followers. The splits and expulsions within FRELIMO resulted in several rival nationalist parties, mostly paper organizations with no significant following or support (Opello Jr 1975: 79; Sumich 2005: 68).

On September 24, 1964, FRELIMO's national armed struggle for liberation (*luta armada de libertação nacional*) began when its troops launched attacks simultaneously in Chai Circumscription, Cabo Delgado District and in Lago Circumscription, Niassa District. FRELIMO guerrilla fighters attacked mainly colonial administration buildings in northern Cabo Delgado District and the western Niassa District (Funada-Classen 2012: 230). At the very beginning of the armed struggle, when FRELIMO controlled only areas of the Makonde territory and small territories within Niassa (which had a population of some 200,000 individuals), the population began to be concentrated in communal villages for 'protective effects' accompanied by creation of production and marketing cooperatives. Education and health campaigns were also set up (Newitt 1997: 454). During its formative years (1962-1968), FRELIMO transitioned from a Liberation Front of militant fighters into a proto-state with aspects of governmental authority dedicated simultaneously to war and state-building. While mobilised as a military force of guerrilla soldiers to fight the Portuguese, it simultaneously established institutions and social services to benefit the lives of refugees in Tanzania and in Mozambique's northern 'liberated zones' of Cabo Delgado and Niassa (Panzer 2013: 6).

These liberated zones were conceived and based on the experiences of the Tanzanian *ujumaa* of Julius

Neyrere. They were administered by the liberation forces. In the view of FRELIMO leaders, the 'liberated zones' were considered 'laboratory of revolution' since they marked the first experience in 'governing the people through the socialist principles of collective production, free access to education and health care and engagement in building new institutions based on people's power (*poder popular*)' (Fernandes 2013: 141). Although the official discourse about the 'liberated zones' was that they were constituted through an 'almost perfect symbiosis between FRELIMO and the people', in reality, however, they were also sustained by 'force and repression'; in some provinces, it is alleged that 'many recruits were executed', although 'little or no information exists about this type of action' (Igreja 2010: 785). The experiences of 'liberated zones' were considered sources of inspiration for FRELIMO's nationalist project in post-independence period.

Although FRELIMO had early successes in parts of Cabo Delgado, by 1966 they suffered a series of military setbacks. The campaign in Niassa stalled shortly after its launch and suffered some reverses. FRELIMO cells in the capital Lourenço Marques were discovered by the Portuguese International and State Defence Police (*Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado - PIDE*) and rounded up. In addition, FRELIMO was seen as a Makonde movement by the Makua, a northern ethnic group that was probably the largest in the country with a history of hostility towards the Makonde. The Makua generally sided with the Portuguese. Efforts to open new fronts in provinces in the centre of the country failed and FRELIMO was driven back (Sumich 2005: 69). As the war progressed, lack of consensus on the priorities of the armed struggle coupled with internal struggles for control of the leadership resulted in numerous dissensions and assassinations, including that of Eduardo Mondlane on February 3, 1969 (Igreja 2015: 246). Internal disagreements had given rise to two divergent projects regarding the conduct of the struggle and in the projects to be developed after independence (Mesnese 2015: 17). On November 3, 1969, FRELIMO vice-president, Uria Simango, published a letter 'Gloomy situation in FRELIMO' which identified the core of FRELIMO'S moral crisis as one of summary executions. Simango exposed the conflicts that FRELIMO was undergoing and accused FRELIMO's power clique of disposing of political adversaries by stirring up crowds in the war zones, who would eagerly stone to death anyone who was pointed to as a 'traitor' or a 'counter-revolutionary'. He also denounced the presence of a 'southern hegemony' in the leadership of FRELIMO, and urged its removal. The military sector of the FRELIMO leadership dismissed the letter of Simango as the voice of counter-revolution itself; he was an internal enemy, serving the interests of Portuguese colonialism and imperialism. Under the accusations of opportunism, corruption and irresponsibility, Simango and many others from the movement were expelled (Mesnese 2015: 18).

In the official discourse the crisis has since been described as a fight between a conservative (i.e. 'opportunists and reactionaries') and a revolutionary line. The heroes of this struggle, are described as young, more in touch with the Mozambican people, committed to the armed struggle, motivated by popular nationalist goals, and dedicated to total independence (which would ultimately require a social revolution). Their opponents are portrayed with the exact opposite characteristics, driven by narrow ethnic, sectarian and class interests. Yet, this discourse fails to acknowledge the divisions within the elite (i.e. age, ideology, personal differences, amplified by real or perceived ethno-linguistic, regional, class and racial cleavages) which have always entwined the movement rather than falling on either side of a revolutionary vs. reactionary divide (Poppe 2009: 94). For the losers of the power struggles within FRELIMO, and those that would later take inspiration from them (e.g. Renamo), the crisis within FRELIMO was one between pluralism and totalitarianism (Israel 2009: 122).

The ideological struggle between the two lines is presented as a frontier in the political history of FRELIMO. The Second Congress of FRELIMO, held in Matchedje from the 20 to 25 July of 1968, formalizes the transformation of the political line of the organization, from a nationalist perspective to a revolutionary nationalist strategy. The agenda was no longer simply an anticolonial agenda: 'it became a revolutionary agenda, which included the foundations of socialism, the end of the exploitation of man by man and the creation of the *New Man*' (Adam 2006: 76). Following the

expulsion of Simango, Samora Machel was installed as the leader in 1970 and held the post – which he later combined with that of President - until his death in 1986.

In 1970 the Portuguese launched ‘Operation Gordian Knot’ to destroy FRELIMO and the areas it controlled. Although the Portuguese captured many bases, most had already been deserted. FRELIMO pulled its troops back and then attacked in the centre of the country (Sumich 2005: 72-73). On September 7, 1974, Portugal and FRELIMO announced the terms of the transfer of power – the Lusaka Accord – that would culminate in Mozambique’s independence. Although FRELIMO longed to be recognized as the only nationalist force in Mozambique, other movements emerged desirous of participating in the process and taking from FRELIMO the exclusiveness of political representation in the territory. For instance, in 1973 there was the United Group of Mozambique (*Grupo Unido de Moçambique*), a civic association based in Beira, which advocated the autonomy of Mozambique. As a political proposal, it defended the liberal principles of multi-partyism and free market (Meneses 2015: 22). Other groups, with little political impact included Federalist Movement of Mozambique (*Movimento Federalista de Moçambique*), the Independent Western Convergence Front (*Frente Independente de Convergência Ocidental*) and the Mozambican Liberation Movement (*Movimento de Libertação de Moçambique*) (Peixoto and Meneses 2013: 96).

The most significant opposition to FRELIMO came from the Revolutionary Committee of Mozambique (*Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique* - COREMO) founded in 1965 and based in Lusaka which was the only nationalist movement besides FRELIMO to be involved in armed struggle: it carried out some military actions in Zumbo, province of Tete (Pekka 2003: 245). In 1974, following the *coup d'état* on April 25, the COREMO and other smaller parties that had emerged would be dissolved, giving rise to the National Coalition Party (*Partido da Coligação Nacional* - PCN) formed in August 1974 and led by Uria Simango (Peixoto and Meneses 2013: 96). The PCN, which included several African nationalists, argued in its political manifesto that no organization could claim the right to be the only representative of the population of Mozambique. In an attempt to challenge FRELIMO's centrality in negotiations for independence, several elements of the PCN were involved in a *coup* attempt on September 7, 1974, mostly in Maputo and Beira (Meneses 2015: 28). However, claiming both military and political victory, FRELIMO became ‘the leading organization of the Mozambican People’, and denounced the various political groupings that emerged as ‘cooperative puppet groups’ in the service of colonialism (Peixoto and Meneses 2013: 100).

Between March and May 1975 seventy-three political figures were identified as ‘traitors to the cause of the people’, classified as ‘enemies’, they were subjected to a ‘revolutionary and popular judgment’, in a court presided over by Machel in Nachingwea, a central training camp which had been established in the far south of Tanzania in the 1960s. (Peixoto and Meneses 2013: 101). In May 1975, about four hundred ‘reactionary agents and traitors to the Mozambican people’ were presented as prisoners to the assembled cadres, journalists and distinguished guests. The group included such notable figures as Joana Simeão, Uria Simango, Lázaro Nkavandame, Basílio Banda and Verónica Anyayiva (Darch and Hedges 2013: 40). Following these trials, prisoners were considered traitors and sentenced to stay in re-education camps where they were later executed (Peixoto and Meneses 2013: 101). These practices of political silence and violence initiated during the struggle for independence constitutes a deep-rooted legacy of the liberation struggle. It remained in the ethos of FRELIMO and continued prominently through the 1980s and the political transition to peace and democracy in the 1990s, resurfacing again since the mid-2000s (cf. Coelho 2003; Igreja 2008; Machava 2011).

More than a military training camp, Nachingwea was also the place where the various traits of FRELIMO governance in post-independence were developed. It was here that FRELIMO militants developed principles and cultivated values such as ‘democratic centralism, respect for decisions taken collectively, respect for decision and hierarchy; mythical conviction that it was necessary to be alert, to train and to mobilize; the need to be united and constantly have the base within the majority of the population’ (Adam 2006: 75). All who went to Nachingwea had to go through a kind of ritual in which, in a sort of collective catharsis, they shared with the group the moment when they had become aware of the nature of colonial oppression. At the same time, they would talk about their land of

origin, their customs, in order to build a collective identity that would extend beyond the limits of the ‘village’ (Thomaz 2008: 182-3). A war veteran recalled his visit to Nachingwea in 1974:

It was there, in the early days of the armed struggle, that military preparation was complemented by an ideology which in turn conveyed new values for the construction of a ‘just, solidary, altruistic, cohesive, socially disciplined society’ with an economic vision founded on the principle of self-sufficiency and dependent essentially on *own forces* and of the *creative imagination* of the people (Cabaço 2007: 412).

The long marches of the people carrying materials, and the complementary long marches of the leaders visiting the war zones, became the most iconic trope of the struggle, immortalised in *clichés* and songs (Israel 2009: 115). Party and military anthems occupy today’s sound-scape of liberation termed *canções da Luta Armada de Libertação Nacional* (‘songs from the War of National Liberation’) (Israel 2009: 110). After the radicalization of 1969, culture came on the agenda, had to become a weapon of combat, part and parcel of FRELIMO’s educational system (Israel 2009: 199).

### 3. ‘Remembering’ and ‘forgetting’ the liberation in postcolonial Mozambique

#### 3.1. Samora Machel (1975-1986): *Não vamos esquecer o tempo que passou* [we shall not forget the time that has passed]

Between May 24 and June 25, 1975, following the Lusaka Accord, Machel undertook a ‘triumphal journey’ (*marcha triunfal*) from the Rovuma River that marks much of Mozambique’s northern border with Tanzania, to the Maputo River in the extreme south, aimed at building a functional national unity and setting the stage for the new phase of nation building (cf. Pachinuapa 2005; Dava *et al.* 2011). A torch with the ‘flame of national unity’ lit by solar rays illuminated the new nation starting from Nangade district, in Cabo Delgado province, running through all ten Mozambican provinces and arriving in Maputo (Machava Stadium) on the Independence Day (June 25, 1975) where the formal handing over of power by the Portuguese to FRELIMO took place. The symbolic meaning of the flame was to enlighten men, the pyre represented the ‘passive and apathetic mentality’ which had to be opposed. The ‘flame of national unity’ was meant to illuminate everyone’s path towards freedom and progress (Borges 1997: 71). This ‘triumphal journey’ constituted the ‘symbolic embodiment of the totality of the new territorial space that now made up independent Mozambique, and (...) summarised and encapsulated the idea of national unity as an overriding political virtue in post-independence Mozambique’ (Darch and Hedges 2013: 28).

Following the path, opened by the armed struggle, Samora Machel led a ‘cultural offensive’ to create a new national cultural identity and to foster national unity (Barnes 1978: 36; Macagno 2009: 20). The nations’ political memory, defined as what was ‘controlled by the authorities, who tried to turn it into collective memory’, was based on the official selective memories of the armed struggle (Souto 2013: 281). The liberation discourse guided the revolutionary nationalist projects such as the construction of ‘new men’ (*homem novo*) and new society, the building of an imagined community from Rovuma to Maputo (*do Rovuma ao Maputo*) and the production of struggle heroes (cf. Coelho 2013).

For FRELIMO leaders, Mozambican history was essentially the history of colonial oppression, but it was also the history of the Mozambican resistance in its highest form: the armed struggle (Fernandes 2013: 136). Thus, national unity was backed by the long history of suffering, slavery, massacres, deportations, forced labour and forced cultures imposed by Portuguese colonialism (Borges 1997: 94). This was often highlighted by Machel in his numerous public speeches like the one held on July 24, 1975, where he announced the first important measures adopted by the new government of Mozambique during a gigantic rally at the Machava stadium with about 100 thousand people. He addressed the entire Mozambican people. ‘We came here to share experiences, experiences of the suffering of our People. We came to share experiences of the common suffering of the Mozambican People from Rovuma to Maputo’ (Machel 1975: 2). Machel would sometimes weave songs into his

pedagogic speeches(...) *Não vamos esquecer o tempo que passou , não vamos esquecer o tempo que passou...quem pode esquecer o que passou?(...)* (Let's not forget the time that has passed, let's not forget the time that has passed...who can forget what happened?).

Yet, after independence, and despite the words of the old revolutionary song, the public memories that served as the basis to build a common future came not from these numerous experiences of suffering and resistance to colonialism across the country, but exclusively from the 'liberated zones' in the northern provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado. The historical experience of people's power in the 'liberated zones' emerged as a sort of 'fabricated reality' that tested and proved that the FRELIMO had the correct solutions to run the country (Coelho 2013: 22). Thus, the new attitude of FRELIMO's leadership ceased to be 'doing different from the colonialism' to become 'doing equal to the liberated zones' (Coelho 2015: 5). It seems that the nation-building process consisted in the 'nachingweazation' of Mozambique, understood as a process of mimetic reproduction to all Mozambican territory, of the praxis and discursive practices initiated in Nachingweia. This was considered the only model to follow in building the 'mozambican-ness' (Meigos 2016: 3). Capitalizing from the experiences of the struggle, the figure of the enemy was equally central to FRELIMO's nation-building. FRELIMO maintained the binary logic developed during the armed struggle: 'who is not with us is against us' (Meneses 2015: 10). Thus, the Mozambicans were divided into two macro categories: those who had fought for independence and the others who made up the mass majority of Mozambican society. Accordingly, there was the group of revolutionaries and their class allies (the workers and peasants) who encapsulated the idea of 'new man' as opposed to the group of reactionaries (internal enemy) seen as defenders of the colonial project (i.e. cowards and traitors detected and summarily dispatched by the vigilant guerrillas) (Meneses 2015: 29-30). The revolutionary (guerrilla nationalist) was projected as the icon of the truly Mozambican citizen, the model of the 'new man', the leader who embodied the qualities of the heroes who fought colonialism (Israel 2009: 104; Meneses 2012: 129).

FRELIMO's post-independence authoritarian socialist model of development achieved little and intensified the sense of alienation of significant segments of the Mozambican population, some of which ended up supporting the nascent rebel movement Renamo during the war between 1976-1992 (Igreja 2013: 319; Igreja 2015: 246). The designation and interpretation of the origins of the Mozambican postcolonial war remains a matter of polarised debate and point of deep political disagreement among politicians and academics. Mozambican authorities have insisted that the postcolonial war was illegitimate and that Renamo was constituted by a group of Mozambicans who were manipulated by the Rhodesian regime to destabilise the socialist revolution. During the initial period of the war, until the mid-1980s, the FRELIMO government treated the Renamo rebels as bandits (*bandidos*) and terrorists (*terroristas*) and continuously affirmed that 'Mozambique will not negotiate with kidnappers, bandits, criminals and wrongdoers. Wherever they come from, Mozambique will annihilate them and this is not far away' (Igreja and Skaar 2013: 156). Some analysts question the concept of a 'civil war' to characterize the post-independence war because the rebels were trained, supported and financed abroad, mainly by South Africa (Cabrita 2005; Geffray 1991). Although the war was fuelled by discontent due to FRELIMO's violent social revolution that alienated sectors of the population making them more receptive to anti-government rebels, it is extremely unlikely that the war could have reached such levels or lasted so long without the direct involvement of South Africa. It can be speculated that FRELIMO's more radical social programs, such as communal farms (*aldeias comunais*), would not have resulted in civil conflict without the encouragement of neighbouring hostile regimes, nor necessarily caused a wave of popular support for Renamo. But they caused an atmosphere of discontent that that the rebels took advantage of during the war. Although it is said that Renamo did not have broad popular support for much of its history, it is no less true that Renamo was perceived as 'liberator' in some areas under its control (Sumich 2005: 76-78).

### **3.2. Joaquim Chissano (1986-2004): 'Conspiracy of forgetfulness' and contestation of the liberation discourse**



Profound changes followed the death of Machel on October 19, 1986 in Mbuzini, South Africa. The country was living through a serious political, economic and social situation as well as the war between the FRELIMO government and Renamo (Souto 2013: 288). Machel was succeeded by Joaquim Chissano (1986-2004), whose presidency was characterized by the switch from socialist to neoliberal development policies, the end of a 16 years of war in 1992 and the introduction of multiparty-democracy (Adam 2006: 96-97). Apart from the economic changes, Chissano had to transform the Mozambican political system into the opposite of ‘Samorism’, The only way to achieve this was to ‘wipe a sponge over the past’ by organising a real ‘conspiracy of silence’ in order to break with the memory of the socialist past and introduce the new ideological and economic discourse in line with the neoliberal course that FRELIMO has begun to pursue (Cabaço 2007a: 16). Consequently, the legitimacy of FRELIMO as the ‘founding father of the nation’ became suspect due to its alleged betrayal of the promise of the liberation struggle to build an egalitarian society (Bonate 2013: 232). In response, Mozambican government officials have deliberately pursued a strategy of manipulating history to obscure the fact that the same Party that embraced Marxist-Leninist ideology and tried to implement socialism in Mozambique is the exact same party that was now ‘trumpeting neo-liberalism’ (Fernandes 2013: 156). In fact, Pitcher (2006: 88) has argued that ‘organized forgetting’ has comprised a key component of a discursive and institutional strategy adopted by FRELIMO to navigate the transition from socialism to neo-liberalism. Such ‘organized forgetting’ has allowed the ‘ruling party to engage in “transformative preservation”, whereby it has remained in power following democratization and structural adjustment but has remade itself in the process’ (Pitcher 2006: 89).

Chissano’s ‘organized forgetting’ served many purposes. It obfuscated FRELIMO’s own role in the failures of the past, and its renegeing on promises made to the People (workers and peasants). It also distracted ordinary citizens from the effects of restructuring such as unemployment and inequality brought about by the new neoliberal order. Most importantly, ‘organized forgetting’ not just obliterated historical events, it also distorts them. For instance, during the twenty-fifth anniversary of independence despite the brief mention that Mozambique was an ally of other socialist countries, President Chissano portrayed the nationalization process that took place after independence as an affirmation not of socialism but ‘mozambicaness’. It went further to stress the similarities between policy objectives adopted just after independence and current policy goals implying that there was historical continuity between the two periods (Pitcher 2006: 96-97). The concept that best describes the behaviour of FRELIMO ruling elite in the postcolonial period is the concept of ‘transformism’, that is, ‘the continuous change of discourse, which does not correspond to changes in the social origins of those in power or in the objectives of their policies. It corresponds to the change in the public record, in the official discourse, but not in the private arena, and therefore not in real policies’ (Adam 2006: 98).

The new multi-party constitution approved in 1990 by FRELIMO government constituted one of the demands from Renamo. Through two years of negotiation and mutual concessions, Renamo was swayed to recognize the legitimacy of state institutions under FRELIMO rule and the *Acordo Geral de Paz* (General Peace Agreement) was signed in Rome on 4 October 1992. Since FRELIMO won the presidential elections and an absolute majority in parliament (1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014), the structure of the party-state, created since independence, remained essentially the same, despite the formal existence of democratic institutions (Brito 2014: 26). Yet, the environment created by the Peace Accord favoured the unpacking of the liberation discourse given the fact that the source for political legitimacy was to be transferred from the history of liberation to the electoral process. Thus, the official discourse about the liberation struggle and its heroes became a central matter of political dispute. The opposition forces sought to preserve the figure of Eduardo Mondlane as ‘the father of the nation’, challenging at the same time all the rest, ‘charged as an anti-democratic communist deviation taken by FRELIMO under the leadership of Samora Machel’ (Coelho 2013: 28). Despite the promises of forgetting the past, since the end of the civil war both parties have been engaged in serious political confrontations for the definition of the most adequate memories to give meaning to the national unity and identity in a context of political pluralism (Igreja 2008: 541). FRELIMO ruling elites have regarded the postcolonial war as illegitimate on the grounds that it was instigated by external parties

since Renamo was created by ex-Rhodesian secret services and the South African apartheid regime to destabilize FRELIMO's socialist revolution (Igreja 2015: 240).

In their turn, Renamo uses memories with the goal of establishing counter-narratives about the origins of multiparty democracy in Mozambique. Renamo considers that the memories of their postcolonial war against the FRELIMO government political and ideological brutality which created communal villages, re-education camps and executed innocent citizens, should be recognized by the official structures of the Mozambican state as a continuation of the liberation struggle, 'the struggle for Democracy' that Mozambicans were denied by the one-party system imposed by FRELIMO in the post-independence era (Igreja 2008: 540; Igreja 2015: 240). On many occasions, Afonso Dhlakama, self-titled 'Father of Democracy', claimed his heroism in Mozambique arguing that, 'in the same way Eduardo Mondlane, considered a national hero for his struggle to liberate the Mozambican people from colonial rule, [he] fought for the achievement of democracy in the country' (Paulino 2015: 3). Renamo also claim that they were not the only ones to have killed and destroyed, but that FRELIMO also participated in the process of destruction and the harrowing of Mozambique (Igreja 2008: 541).

But despite FRELIMO's efforts to limit the liberation discourse exclusively to the period between 1964-1974 and its refusal to recognize other 'struggles for liberation' as legitimate, for many different social groups the meaning of 'liberation heritage' cannot be dissociated from events such as the extreme violence of the sixteen years of civil war that has remained in a sort of 'limbo' of the collective memory of Mozambicans and the politics of the current multi-party dispensation. Figures whipped out from history during the struggle days and Machel's presidency were now, during Chissano's presidency, re-emerging as heroes deserving a place in the pantheon, like Uria Simango, or even war veterans who were still alive and who even in FRELIMO's selective criteria, would be considered 'witnesses' by virtue of having participated in the struggle from early days. In 2000 Phaniel Guidion Mahluza, former leader of COREMO now integrating Renamo ranks took to the press with a series of interviews to shake some of the core foundation claims of the liberation discourse.

It was in this context of a serious threat to its power and due to poor electoral performance, that FRELIMO engaged in the process of choosing a new presidential candidate in 2002 during its Eighth Congress, although Joaquim Chissano could still run for a third term. The risk of losing power was especially acute for a significant group of militants occupying prominent positions in the state apparatus, as well as for many who were engaged in business, since most of the new national entrepreneurs came from the leadership of FRELIMO and of the state; their economic success depended largely on links with political power. It was expected that the 'testament' from the generation of the liberation struggle generation would be passed on to a younger generation, to which four of the five candidates<sup>2</sup> (nominated by the *Comissão Política* of FRELIMO) belonged. Armando Guebuza, the only candidate that still belonged to the generation of the liberation struggle, was elected Secretary-General of FRELIMO and party candidate for the presidency. He began a vast 'revitalization' of FRELIMO party structures at all levels, travelling to all districts to prepare the party for the 2003 municipal elections. Not only did it begin to put pressure on the state administration (controlled almost exclusively by FRELIMO members), but it also mobilized liberation struggle veterans to play an active role in elections (Brito 2014: 28). Thus, the veterans began to resort to the memories of the struggle aiming at reaffirming their own heroic nationalist identity linked to the leadership of FRELIMO, whose past and present were already undergoing public scrutiny and re-assessment (Bonate 2013: 232).

#### **4. Armando Guebuza's heritagization of the liberation struggle (2005-2015)**

---

<sup>2</sup> These candidates were: Eduardo Mulembwé (former President of the Assembly of the Republic), Hélder Muteia (former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development), José Pacheco (Governor of the Province of Cabo Delgado) and Lucas Chomera (former Governor of the Province of Zambézia) and Armando Guebuza (then Head of Parliamentary FRELIMO).

In his inauguration speech as President of the Republic on February 2, 2005, Guebuza stated:

In the distant year of 1962, the Mozambican people decided to take decisive steps to free themselves from foreign domination, an essential step to begin the *fight against poverty* that was rampant in Mozambique (...) With President Mondlane we learned that, *united from Rovuma to Maputo*, we could overcome the foreign domination (...) *Mondlane's teachings were inherited and improved by Samora* who, with the steadiness of a commander, knew how to take his boat to safe harbour. In 1975 he proclaimed National Independence and led the process of construction of the Mozambican State until his assassination in Mbusini (...) *Chissano* is admittedly *the Peacemaker* in Mozambique, the leader who gave a significant boost to the spirit of tolerance and concord. It was with him that *we deepened the democracy we had been cultivating since the founding of FRELIMO*, creating the conditions for the opening of the country to multipartyism (...) Today, we assume the leadership of the destinies of the Mozambican people so that, in the next five years, *we will step by step, continue to materialize their dream* (...) Therefore, what we are going to demand of ourselves [civil servants] is not to walk, but to *step up the pace in the march towards the 'better future'* we all hope for (added emphasis in italics) (Guebuza 2006a: 10-11).

A key hallmark of Guebuza's presidency is captured in the above quotation. Guebuza's utilisation of FRELIMO's political ancestors and Mozambican national heroes in the construction of a national identity aiming to mobilise the Mozambicans to adhere to its government program, the 'fight against poverty'. Given his preoccupation with inculcating a notion of utopia capable of building a national identity to sustain the liberation discourse and therefore to legitimize FRELIMO's right to rule, Guebuza resorted to notions of 'mozambicaness' and to the already sacralised heroes of the liberation struggle to mobilize Mozambicans to adhere to the 'new struggle' (i.e. the fight against poverty), thus legitimizing the agenda of his governance. At the same time, through the exaltation of the national heroes and their monumentalization, Guebuza claims for himself a prominent place in the pantheon of the liberators of the nation, having as its political ancestors the 'Architect' (Eduardo Mondlane) and the 'Father' (Samora Machel) of the Mozambican nation.

The revaluation of national heroes was promoted through several projects:

- Celebration of 87<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Eduardo Mondlane as part of the celebration of the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FRELIMO in 2007 (including declaration of Nwadjahane as national heritage site in 2008);
- Celebration of 75<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Samora Machel and the declaration of Chilembene as national heritage site in 2008;
- Celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of II Congress of FRELIMO in Matchedje and declaration of Matchedje as national heritage site in 2008;
- 2009 consecration of the year to Eduardo Mondlane, the 'Architect' of the National Unity;
- Celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of 18 heroes of the 'Generation 25 of September' (the generation of the liberation struggle);
- 2011 consecration of the year to Samora Machel, the 'Father' of Mozambican Nation.

Each of these projects illustrates the way Guebuza sought to revive the national heroes in his 'patriotic discourse' to mobilize the Mozambicans behind his agenda which was discursively constructed around the 'fight against poverty'. With this 'patriotic discourse' Guebuza sought to promote the idea of national unity using the same logic of exclusion of the 'other' which was developed during the armed struggle and used by Machel in the first Republic (i.e. 'whoever is not with us is against us'), and which aimed at legitimizing the historical right of FRELIMO to continue to be the sole leader of the Mozambican people. In what follows I present some examples to support this argument.

#### 4.1. Celebrating the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FRELIMO

After years of remembering without much monumentalization of the figure of Eduardo Mondlane, FRELIMO party decided to pay a tribute to Mondlane, on February 3, 2007, with the inauguration of a monument, a statue of his bust (see Figure 1), located in the prime neighbourhood of Maputo

(*Bairro Sommerschield*, along FRELIMO street), right in front of the headquarters of the Central Committee of FRELIMO party.



**Figure 1:** View of the monument of Eduardo Mondlane inaugurated on February 3, 2007 (2014).

This revitalization of the figure of Mondlane was part of Guebuza's project to recover the hegemony of party-state by highlighting the liberation credentials of FRELIMO and the idea of a party of unity of all Mozambicans pursuing the same agenda since the days of the armed struggle. As Guebuza stated in his speech during the ceremony of unveiling the monument:

This homage happens in the year in which FRELIMO, one of the most important works of Mondlane celebrates 45 years of its existence. Forty-five years of a Party:

- Consistent with its agenda;
- Persistent in its materialization; and
- The results it pursues.

Forty-five of a FRELIMO that continues:

- To reflect the image of its founder;
- To be the promoter of national unity, self-esteem, peace and the struggle for national development; and
- Inspiring the Mozambicans to new victories (Guebuza 2007a: 8).

As part of the celebrations of the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of FRELIMO, on June 20, 2007, the day that Mondlane would have be 87<sup>th</sup> had he be alive and five days before the celebrations of the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Independence of Mozambique, a state ceremony took place in the village of Nwadjahane, the birth place of Mondlane. This village is located 6 km from the Administrative Post of Chalala, in Mandlakaze distric, Gaza Province. This state-led public event was marked by the inauguration of the Open Museum of Nwadjahane which includes: (i) a house built in 1920 where Mondlane resided during his childhood (see Figure 2); (ii) a house built by Mondlane in 1961 (see Figure 3); (iii) a didactic plaque in front of the '1961 house' inaugurated by President Machel in 1975, during his 'Triumphal Journey' from Rovuma to Maputo (see Figure 4); a memorial monument to Mondlane erected in 2005 (see Figure 5); (v) a sacred forest (*khokholo*); and (vi) a cemetery where several people of Mondlane's family are buried, including his parents Nwadjahane Mondlane and Muzamusse Mbembele, together with the first wife, Chude Bila, of his father.



**Figure 2:** The house built in 1920 where Mondlane lived during his childhood (2012).



**Figure 3:** The house built by Mondlane in 1961 (2012).



**Figure 4:** Didactic plaque in front of the '1961 house' inaugurated by President Machel in 1975.



**Figure 5:** The memorial monument in honour of Mondlane erected in 2005.

An in-depth study of this state ceremony has been made by Inguane (2007) in which he analyses of the processes of negotiating social memory through two cultural heritage sites in Mandhlakazi district: Nwadjahane and Coolela. It is worth highlighting elements of Guebuza's 'patriotic discourse' during his speech on the day of the event. It begins by emphasizing that 'the young Eduardo had an origin and youth surrounded by much poverty, exacerbated by colonial and fascist domination'. Mondlane is presented as 'a young man of exceptional qualities' who was 'persistent and determined to materialize his dreams', who overcame the various obstacles imposed on him by the colonial authorities who prevented him from entering any secondary school in Mozambique (Guebuza 2007b: 25). At one point Guebuza said:

It was also thanks to his *persistence in the pursuit of his dreams* that Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane emerged and was consecrated as the Architect of National Unity, for having promoted the fusion of the three movements of the dawn of our nationalism. Mondlane has grown up as a figure of great prestige within FRELIMO, in Mozambique, in Africa, and in the world. *Mondlane created FRELIMO* and, in two years, led the preparation of political and military conditions for the launching of the National Liberation Armed Forces. Of the nearly two hundred and fifty initial men, politically and militarily trained, FRELIMO members were growing into the thousands either in front of the liberating fire or in the underground. *The FRELIMO of Mondlane, our FRELIMO*, thus showed to be a movement of an entire people, desirous of their freedom and independence. *FRELIMO thus had, as it has until now, its agenda synchronized with the agenda of the Mozambican People* and, therefore, was already unstoppable in its march (added emphasis in italic) (Guebuza 2007: 7).

Two ideas expressed in the passage above constitute the mark of Guebuza's 'patriotic discourse'. The idea that perseverance (e.g. 'persistence in the pursuit of his dreams'), as well as other values (e.g. 'self-esteem'), are authentic pillars that allowed the heroes like Mondlane to overcome the various obstacles imposed by colonialism. For Guebuza, these values embodied by the heroes of the liberation struggle must be a source of inspiration and therefore be mobilized by Mozambicans to face current challenges - mainly the 'fight against poverty'. The second idea is to present FRELIMO as founded by the heroic figure of Mondlane as the same organization as the FRELIMO party, created in 1977, that continues to direct the destinies of the country, following the teachings of this 'uncontested' national hero. In this sense, Guebuza appears as a political 'heir' of Mondlane which adds an historical layer of legitimacy to his current governance agenda. Yet, critics have pointed out that since the creation of the Party in 1977, FRELIMO used to celebrate its anniversary on February 3 as illustrated by a gazetted Ministerial Diploma 70/86, of December 24, 1986, which determined the issuing of a postage stamp commemorating the 'Tenth Anniversary of the Creation of the FRELIMO party' (Rapouso 2012: 17). Thus, the conflation of the Party (created in 1977) and the Liberation Front (created in 1962) not only aims at reminding the Mozambicans who 'liberated' them but also gives the public the idea that FRELIMO is the oldest Party and therefore 'experienced, more nationalistic and patriotic, simply the best to lead the country'. All these attributes end up weighing in the day-to-day speech of some FRELIMO members who then propagate the idea that 'It is a national imperative that FRELIMO wins elections for the good of the nation' as the Party secretary for propaganda and mobilization once stated (Beúla 2007: 1).

The exaltation of Mondlane had its peak with the consecration of 2009 as 'Year of Eduardo Mondlane'. The main festivities took place in Nwadjahane on June 20, when Guebuza inaugurated the monument in honour of Mondlane (see Figures 6-8), the Resources Centre of Nwadjahane and launched the first computer *Made in Mozambique*, called Dzowo (a joint venture between the company SAHARA Computers and the Ministry of Science and Technology of Mozambique).



**Figure 6:** Monument to Eduardo Mondlane in Nwadjahane inaugurated in 2009 (2012).



**Figure 7:** Panels placed along the passage of the monument illustrating episode of Eduardo Mondlane's life (2012).

**Figure 8:** Pedestal for the statue of Eduardo Mondlane in the monument. Statue not placed until December 2012.

## 4.2. Celebrating the 'Father' of the Nation: Year Samora Machel

### 4.2.1. Machel in bronze statues and infrastructure development

The consecration of 2011 as the 'Year of Samora Machel' aimed at celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the 'founder of the Mozambican nation'. Two major programs were launched: the construction in all provincial capitals and later in Chilembene of monuments with statues of Samora Machel, and the creation of the Samora Machel Center for Knowledge and Development (*Centro de Conhecimento e Desenvolvimento Samora Machel*), as a way of 'valuing the thinking, life and legacy of President Samora Machel' (República de Moçambique 2011: 2). For the construction of monuments, a strategy for decentralizing implementation and financing was initially adopted. The initial *orientação* (directive) from the Party was the inclusion of all activities within the government Economic and Social Plans, from 2006 to 2011.<sup>3</sup> The first statues produced and erected in the provinces of Gaza, Inhambane and Nampula were disapproved because they 'did not dignify the honoured figure' (Republic of Mozambique 2011: 4). Thus, the statue, modelled for Niassa province, which was 3.27 meters high, was closely monitored by the central government. It was considered very satisfactory and adopted as the model for all provinces, including Chilembene. This recentralization was driven by the lack of adherence of the national contractors to public tenders for the first statues (Decreto n°. 15/2010 de 24 de Maio).

Thus, the process of construction of the monuments became centralized under the coordination of the Ministry of Culture who estimated the total cost of the production of 10 statues, each 3.27 metres, to be 58.89 million Meticaís (approximately US\$ 2 million) (República de Moçambique 2011: 5). Given the limited availability of funds, it was decided to prioritize the production of only six statues in 2011 (for the provinces of Niassa, Nampula, Tete and Sofala, Maputo city and Chilembene). The estimated cost was 30.45 million Meticaís (USD 650,000). Without public tender, the production was awarded to Nhatugueja Artes, a Mozambican company that modelled and then subcontracted the South African foundry, Godwin Foundry, to produce the bronze statue for Niassa province. Within this framework, the construction of the massive monument to Machel to be placed in Independence Square (*Praça da Independência*) in the capital Maputo, the place where the central ceremony of the 'Year Samora Machel' would take place on October 19, 2011, was estimated at US\$ 20 million and a production time of approximately 23 months. Due to financial and time constraints, the Municipality of Maputo City came up with a 'Plan B', namely, the production of the statue by North Korea (Mansudae Overseas Project Group), at a fraction of the cost: US\$ 1 million (República de Moçambique 2011: 3).

Although it was not possible to obtain any confirmation from authorities in Mozambique regarding the builder of the Machel's statue in *Praça da Independência*, several independent sources attribute the ownership of the design and foundry of the statue to Mansudae Overseas Project Group (cf. Anonymous 2011e; Glanfield 2016; Pollard 2016). The imposing bronze sculpture of Machel is 9 meters tall and weighs 4.8 tons. It sits on a marble slab of 2.7 metres high, at the beginning of the avenue with his name, overlooking Maputo bay (see Figure 9).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with ME, Maputo, March 13, 2014.



**Figure 9:** Monument to Samora Machel at *Praça da Independência* in Maputo city (2013).

The statue, a tribute to ‘the man of the people’ (*Homen do Povo*) was inaugurated during a state ceremony without the presence of the *Povo* (see Figures 10-11). In fact, *Praça da Independência* is considered to be the place where a strong relationship between Machel and his People was forged. It was here where Machel, a few hours after he proclaimed National Independence, was inaugurated President of the People’s Republic of Mozambique, and it was in the same space where the people bade farewell to their leader, following his tragic death in Mbuzini. *Praça da Independência* is also the space where Machel made some of his most vigorous speeches such the launching of the ‘political and organizational offensive’, or on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of independence. During all these events the *Povo* massively joined Machel at *Praça da Independência*. But on the day he was returned to this space, the *Praça* was almost empty. Apart from the official guests at the ceremony, FRELIMO’s masses organizations (OMM and OJM) and students from some schools around the city, there was little *Povo* (cf. Anonymous 2011m).

It can be speculated that this scenario is symptomatic of the difficulty of FRELIMO and government structures in mobilizing social groups outside the FRELIMO social organizations (the youth and women’s league) in an urban environment. It may also mean that the great discrepancy between the modes of official memorisation (in bronze monuments) and the popular forms of invocation of Machel. It appears that for many Mozambicans who remember the ‘time of Samora’ (*tempo de Samora*) the greatest celebration of Samora is not to hold state-led ceremonies with monumental statues accompanied with hallow ‘patriotic speeches’, but to follow what Samora always believed: to fight present day deep-seated corruption (‘the enemy of the People as he would put it’) in state apparatus, to better serve the people through transparency and integrity in the public service and above all, for leaders to take a moral stand where they are ‘first in the sacrifice, and last in the benefits’ for the good of the people. But the public perception is that these values of Samora constitute a moral ground perhaps too high for the current leadership whose primary goal is self-enrichment through appropriation of state resources at all cost - as some iconic veterans of the struggle amongst the FRELIMO elite (e.g. Graça Machel, Sergio Vieira, Jorge Rebelo) have recently admitted publicly (cf. Manhice 2010; Rebelo 2013; Anonymous 2016a).





**Figure 10:** View of the platform at inauguration of the monument to Samora Machel during Graça Machel's speech (Image courtesy: Johane Zonjo).



**Figure 11:** View of the 'empty' *Praça da Independência* during the inauguration of the monument to Samora Machel on October 19, 2011.

The second major component of the celebrations of 'Year Samora Machel' was the development of the Samora Machel Knowledge and Development Center (CCDSM), a programme which aggregated 10 main areas of intervention under different government departments aiming to maximize social, economic and cultural potentialities of Chilembene. The CCDSM programme was structured in sectoral implementation units including cultural heritage, heritage of liberation struggle, fish farming, agriculture and agro-processing, tourism, public works, digital technology, environment and energy (República de Moçambique 2011: 3). Some of these projects were implemented outside the historic site of Chilembene but still within the *Posto Administrativo* of Chilembene such as the construction of new petrol station (see Figure 12) and a local hotel (see Figure 13) located some 8 km from the historic site.



**Figure 12:** Petrol station (*bombas de abastecimento*) of Chilembene (2012).



**Figure 13:** Hotel Kapulana in Chilembene (2012).

An inter-ministerial commission was created to oversee the programme coordinated by the Minister of Culture and assisted by the Minister of Science and Technology. The operationalization of CCDSM was initially budgeted at 7.6 million Meticaís (approximately US\$ 254,000) to be obtained through the reallocation of funds by government departments at central and provincial levels (funds from the investment budget line). There was an additional 6.9 million Meticaís (approximately US\$ 230,000) for various works, such as the rehabilitation of infrastructures (República de Moçambique 2011: 3).

#### 4.2.2. Valuing Machel's legacy?

The celebrations of 'Year Samora Machel' were officially started on Heroes Day (February 3, 2011) with the unveiling of the first of the 10 Machel's bronze statues that were to be built across the country. Like in other events, Guebuza's 'patriotic speech' during the state ceremony highlighted the

continuity of the ideas that guided FRELIMO since the liberation struggle and the need for Mozambicans to use these values as inspiration in the current struggle against poverty. As he stated:

When we celebrated the Year Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, we paid homage to the spirit of National Unity that he conceived and made it grow in each one of us. Throughout that year, we also extolled the values that we subscribe to as a Heroic People, values that President Eduardo Mondlane incarnated and instilled in the builders of our nation. President Samora Moisés Machel was heir, custodian and promoter of the commitment of President Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane with the National Unity and with all the noble values that characterize us as a People, a very special People (Guebuza 2011a: 21).

Guebuza, referring to Mondlane and Samora, rather than exalting their achievements, seeks to show that there is a close relationship between the three, as individuals who shared the same life experiences and ideals. In doing so, Guebuza seeks to win legitimacy for himself since Mondlane and Samora are national symbols generally accepted by Mozambicans (Posse 2015: 89).

In the same speech, Guebuza then moved to link Machel to his own political agenda by stating:

The Year of Samora Machel, through which we mark the 25 years since the murder of our late President, has a very profound meaning (...) With this year, we are not just remembering:

- the charismatic leader;
- the galvanizer of the Mozambican People for the great battles;
- the statesman admired by the outside world and feared by our internal and external enemies.

In declaring the Year of Samora Machel Year, we are also, above all, crystallizing something that touches our hearts, in the context of our struggle against poverty and our well-being. For the swift success in the fight against this scourge, Mozambique clamours for more men and women who, like President Samora Machel:

- believe in themselves;
- have faith in their abilities;
- are convinced of their objectives;
- have enough individual discipline to carry out their plans, the plans for the well-being of the wonderful Mozambican People (Guebuza 2011a: 22).

Later during the celebration in Chilemebene, on September 29, 2011 (Machel's date of birth) while inaugurating the statue to Samora Machel together with the CCDSM, Guebuza stated:

When we unveiled that monument, we did not put just one statue in the open. We did much more than that. We have created another opportunity for each of us to review the values represented by President Samora Moisés Machel. We want each of us to rediscover yet another glorious page of history that has made us a united and determined People, a very special People. We want that in this act, each of us also rediscovers the men and women who have marked this glorious, epic and heroic History (...) Samora Machel is a Hero in our History because of all the qualities and virtues that we would like to see emulated by All Mozambicans, who are now engaged in the fight against poverty (Guebuza 2011e: 75).

He repeated this theme during the celebrations in Mbuzini on October 17, 2011 :

(...) to recall President Samora Machel is to seek the inspiration, the strength and the momentum for the continuation of the long march for the consolidation of peace and National Unity in Mozambique. (...) for us, President Samora Machel only disappeared from the our physical conviviality, for he lives in each of us through:

- his ideals and vision;
- the correctness of the causes he defended (Guebuza 2011c: 62).

As seen in the above, Guebuza's 'patriotic discourse' attributes 'belief in oneself, faith in skills, conviction in goals, and individual discipline' as values associated with Machel's figure, and promotes

the idea that building bronze statues of Machel constitute ‘an opportunity for Mozambicans to review the values represented by Machel’ and to follow ‘Machel’s ideals and vision’. Guebuza seeks not only to appropriate the figure of Machel given the magnitude of this national symbol in the collective memory, but at the same time distort the values for which Machel is collectively remembered by much of the population in order to attribute to him new values that best serve the cause of the current government. Thus, while Guebuza praises Machel for values that could be understood as ‘self-esteem’, which is considered important in the fight against poverty, Machel is often remembered by the public for his stance against the suffering of the people due to corruption and appropriation of state resources by state officials for individual benefit, which is a hallmark of Guebuza’s administration. There is a widespread realization that today’s ‘FRELIMO leaders cannot set an example of transparency, honesty and simplicity, as it was in Samora’s time’ (Manhice 2010).

As Jorge Rebelo, one of the founders of FRELIMO seen by many as one of the last moral reserves of the liberation movement, commented in an interview in 2013:

One of the things that marked Guebuza’s presidency was the immortalization of the figure of Samora. The statues were built everywhere, benevolent tributes and speeches were made. However, simultaneously, the evils that Samora fought against increased. I speak of corruption and plundering of national resources. Is Samora figure really being valued? If we talk about the legacy of Samora we just say that he was a great leader, he was the first president of independent Mozambique. We do not enter into his thinking. It seems that the current leadership of FRELIMO and the country is not interested in Samora’s thought. They hide his thinking. In his [Guebuza] speeches, he forgets that Samora despised corruption, the suffering of the people, the privatization and expropriation of common good to satisfy the appetites and greed of a small group of leaders (Rebelo 2013: 2).

In promoting the slogan ‘Samora lives’ (*Samora vive*) the political elite of FRELIMO do not necessarily want to live according to the ideas and vision of Machel, but rather to use the figure of Machel, for political gain. It has become common to hear ordinary citizens saying ‘if Samora was alive, such thing would not have happened’. Some believe that Samora wouldn’t have spent millions of meticais from the public treasury with monuments with bronze statues while millions of Mozambicans still live in deep poverty. Some episodes provide interesting insight into Samora’s position with regards to a ‘personality cult’ hugely promoted by Guebuza administration.<sup>4</sup> It is reported that a conference was organized in the palace of the Presidency in late 1970s (supposedly by officials of the Ministry of Information or the Department of Ideological Work) and the room had a certain ‘decorum’. When Samora entered the room, he ordered the staff to undo the scene and rhetorically asked: ‘do you want to make me another Kim Il Sung?’ On another occasion Aquino de Bragança (an advisor to Machel) reportedly suggested to Samora that FRELIMO’s ideology and political line should be called *Samorism*, and Samora’s response was, ‘I am not Kim Il Sung, that is [could only happen] in North Korea’ (Adam 2012: 1).

Despite leading a Mozambican delegation to North Korea between 14-21 May 1978 with the aim of taking note of the Korean experience regarding the methods and paths used to build socialist society (Gheorghe 2016), Machel was unhappy, it is said, with the large painting depicting his ‘liberation’ that North Korean artists contributed to the Museum of the Revolution. ‘There was a problem about the eyes. They looked more Korean than African. Even now [1983], after considerable retouching at the President’s behest, this representation of the arrival of the guerrilla leadership in the former

---

<sup>4</sup> Some examples include the over-ritualization of the figure of the head of state in its Open and Inclusive Presidencies with broad television coverage; the wide circulation of Guebuza’s more than 480 official speeches (compiled in seven volumes under the theme ‘*Our Mission*’) as authoritative documents for political orientation in matters of governance (cf. Gonçalves 2012); or the campaigns of manifestation of support promoted by the Party in the periods in which Guebuza faced crisis of popularity, like the march and public rally of January 18, 2013, with banners placed across Maputo saying ‘Guebuza, the beloved son of the People’, ‘Guebuza, friend, the People is with you’ or ‘Viva Guebuza, undisputed leader of all Mozambicans’.

Lourenco Marques might be subtitled, “Springtime in Pyongyang” (Lelyveld 1983: 1). Ironically, Samora is celebrated in the same way that he strongly opposed during his life.

In a context characterized by fierce competition between FRELIMO, Renamo and more recently MDM, Guebuza’s ‘patriotic discourse’, that mobilizes the memory of the martyrs who died in the name of FRELIMO, forging a group identity and legitimizing FRELIMO’s claim to power, often fuels different forms of contestation, sometimes leading to outright boycott by opposition forces and those supporting alternative narratives of the past or not. For instance, the provincial delegate of the MDM described the reasons and circumstances under which his party attended the ceremonies of the inauguration of the statue of Samora Machel in Lichinga.

Unfortunately some people can not live in diversity and people do not believe in democracy (...) When we went with MDM flags on the spot to receive, to attend an event to receive the President of the Republic, people felt as if we were offending and we tried to explain, even with threats from the police and threats of violence, we went there to participate, of course we went there with flags that symbolized our organization. So we had to resist (...) against all threats and weapons (...) We persisted there to listen the speech of the head of state because that was state ceremony, it was not a party ceremony. So that's the reason we resisted to attend such a ceremony (...) that's MDM's philosophy to participate in state ceremonies.<sup>5</sup>

The MDM party, being without parliamentary seats and hence excluded from formal invitation by the state, nevertheless has adopted a strategy of showing its party colours and symbols during state organized events. The MDM’s motivation has nothing to do with the hero to be remembered or celebrated, it is all about claiming visibility in the public space and also distancing itself from the other opposition party, Renamo, who boycott state events. completely. This happened not only in Lichinga but in others districts across the province, as was noticeable during the celebration of Francisco Magumbwa in Lago district (see Figure 14).



**Figure 14:** Member of the MDM attending the state homage to Francisco Magumbwa on June 17, 2013. (Imagery courtesy: Elisio Jossias)

The meeting between MDM and FRELIMO members in these state events has not always been orderly. During the inauguration in Beira on June 4, 2012, supporters of MDM and FRELIMO

<sup>5</sup> Interview with RP, Lichinga, August 30, 2013.

parties verbally and physically assaulted each other. It started when a group of FRELIMO members went to raise the flags of their party where the members of MDM were standing. This exacerbated the tension between the two groups. Independence Square, where the statue was placed, ended up divided in what was meant to be a ceremony aiming to build national unity. For the majority, the participation in the event was about showing party alliances. It had nothing to do with the celebration of Machel and his legacy. When the Mayor of Beira and President of MDM Daviz Simango spoke, the MDM vibrated, and when Governor of Sofala Carvalho Muaria spoke the MDM supporters turned away. The colours of the T-shirts and caps looked as if they were purposely dyed the same colour (green) to be confused. The only difference was in the logos and photos of the presidents of each party. FRELIMO T-shirts had been stamped with the image of Guebuza while those of MDM had the image of Simango (Anonymous 2012d).

Unlike MDM, Renamo has for years boycotted public official events. Two Renamo members, one of them veteran of the liberation struggle, shared their reasons for not taking part in the celebrations of ‘Year Samora Machel’ in Lichinga:

One must have self-respect before it can be respected by others. What happens if we are even invited to these meetings, these celebrations, you arrive there the speeches instead of focussing on the issue at hand, then they pronounce defamatory words, contrary to the purpose of the gathering (...) many people never liked that, that's why we decide not to get there (...) actually, we do not even need them to invite us.<sup>6</sup>

Attend the celebration in this roundabout? No. I stopped participating in these little things a long time ago. They use injurious terms and if one does not master his own temper, bad things may happen (...) to avoid that just stay at home, let them do (...) you see, these things should be nonpartisan but they want to pull everything to a ‘single dish’: FRELIMO. This is a mistake, it is a serious mistake, because we are also Mozambicans.<sup>7</sup>

It appears that like the past FRELIMO-led nation-building processes, Guebuza’s ‘patriotic discourse’ that accompanied the exaltation of national heroes, deployed the rhetoric of national unity while clearly alienating all those who are not with FRELIMO. Thus, for many, the struggle for liberation and recognition in the nation continues, ‘against amnesia, against attempts at silencing’ (Meneses 2012: 125).

## 5. Concluding remarks

The above discussion sought to illustrate the different socio-political and historical contexts under which the liberation heritage discourse was promoted, mobilised, contested, and even suppressed in postcolonial Mozambique. The discussion on the formative years of the liberation discourse built during the armed struggle help us understand the underpinnings of the ‘liberation mentality’ initially constructed in the spaces of the liberated zones and later elevated to the category of national ideology in the postcolonial period. Consequently, despite the call for Mozambicans ‘not to forget the time that has passed’: the evils of colonialism and the sacrifices made during the struggle for independence, Machel’s mobilisation of liberation discourse for state-craft and nation-building was fraught with numerous contradictions which alienated part of the Mozambicans with far-reaching consequences as some went on to support Renamo.

Following Samora’s death, Chissano’s promoted a ‘conspiracy of forgetfulness’ and a strategy of silencing of certain memories of the liberation struggle (including its heroes) in order to steer the country from socialism to neo-liberalism. The terms that put an end to the 16 years of war between FRELIMO and Renamo were translated in practice into peace without accountability for the violence of the past, leading to memory struggles between both parties. The multi-party democratic dispensation also allowed an increasing contestation of the official liberation discourse by different

<sup>6</sup> Interview with VL, Lichinga, August 28, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with MB, Lichinga, August 28, 2013.

groups. It was during Chissano's presidency that the liberation discourse was seriously threatened by forgotten veterans and disenchanted voters. It is within this context that FRELIMO experienced the inherent risks of losing power and therefore resorted to its exclusive source of a legitimate claim to power - the liberation struggle.

Given his preoccupation with inculcating a notion of utopia capable of building a national identity to sustain the liberation discourse and therefore to legitimize FRELIMO's right to rule, Guebuza resorted to notions of 'national unity', 'mozambicaness' and to the already sacralised heroes of the liberation struggle to mobilize Mozambicans to adhere to the 'new struggle' (i.e. 'the fight against poverty'), thus legitimizing his political agenda. At the same time, through the exaltation of the national heroes and their monumentalization, Guebuza claims for himself a prominent place in the pantheon of the liberators of the nation, having as its political ancestors the 'Architect' (Eduardo Mondlane) and the 'Father' (Samora Machel) of the Mozambican nation. However, there is a great discrepancy between the liberation heritage discourse and the *modus operandi* of the current governance that this discourse is meant to serve, on the one hand, and the liberation discourse and the collective memory amongst the Mozambicans of some of the national heroes mobilised by the state, on the other. Therefore, one of the traits of this heritagization process is the continuous failure to incorporate a multitude of voices not aligned with the official liberation heritage discourse.

## References