

Revolutionary Youth in Mozambique:
Socialist Discourses, Organizations, and
Experiences among the Independence Generation
(1964-1985)



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In loving memory of
Irmgard Anna Wetzel

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List of Abbreviations

AAI	African-American Institute
AAM	Associação Académica de Moçambique
AHM	Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique
AIM	Agência de Informação de Moçambique
ANC	African National Congress
ANC YL	African National Congress Youth League
CADAP	Comissões de Avaliação de Documentos da Administração
CCP	Convention People's Party
CEDIMO	Centro Nacional de Documentação e Informação de Moçambique
CONCP	Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas
DD	Departamento da Defesa
DEC	Departamento da Educação e Cultura
DIP	Departamento da Informação e Propaganda
DMO	Departamento de Mobilização e Organização
DOI	Departamento da Organização do Interior
DRE	Departamento das Relações Exteriores
DSD	Departamento da Defesa e Segurança
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend
FESTAC	Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture
FLN	Algerian National Liberation Front
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GD	Grupos Dinamizadores
GDR	German Democratic Republic
KMO	Committee of Youth Organisations

Komsomol	All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League
MANU	Mozambique African National Union
MEC	Ministry of Education
MHN	Mozambique History Net
MINF	Ministério da Informação
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NESAM	Núcleo dos Estudantes Secundários Africanos de Moçambique
OJM	Organização da Juventude Moçambicana
OMM	Organização da Mulher Moçambicana
OTM	Organização do Trabalhador Moçambicano
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
SAAVM	Sociedade Agrícola Algodoeira Voluntária dos Africanos de Moçambique
SMO	Serviço Militar Obrigatório
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TYL	Tanganyika African National Union Youth League
UDENAMO	National Democratic Union of Mozambique
UNAMI	National Union for Mozambican Independence
UNEMO	União Nacional dos Estudantes de Moçambique no Exterior
ZANU YL	Zimbabwean African National Union Youth League

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Prologue: “Before Independence, There Was No Such Thing As Youth”

In the early 2020s, a public debate erupted about so-called ‘roof terrace houses’ (*casas nos terraços dos prédios*), small one or two bed-room constructions that residents had begun building on the roof tops of apartment blocks in Maputo’s central neighbourhoods. The municipality called these makeshift constructions a “disgrace”¹ that was not only illegal, but also dangerous, “putting pressure on the buildings,”² and risking public health.³ The media and municipality viewed the issue as a ‘youth problem,’ as it was mainly young men and women who were involved in the constructions. Like all over the African continent, Maputo’s younger generations were struggling to access affordable housing in an economy marked by neoliberal principles of governance that involved state budget cuts and privatization of the housing market.⁴ Lacking funds to buy or rent houses elsewhere in the city, or the willingness to move to the suburbs, from where one had to penetrate the thick rush-hour congestion to reach work, hospitals and other social services, they opted to build illegally on the roof terraces of existing buildings, where parents or family members lived. In this economy, the fragile constructions on top of townhouses in Maputo’s urban neighbourhoods provided a quick, if not strictly speaking safe or legal, do-it-yourself solution for youngsters anxious to move out of their parents’ homes and start families.

¹ ‘Município de Maputo diz não querer vergonha na cidade - O País - A verdade como notícia’, 2021, <https://opais.co.mz/municipio-de-maputo-diz-nao-querer-vergonha-na-cidade/>.

² ‘Município de Maputo diz não querer vergonha na cidade’.

³ Falta de acesso à habitação leva a construções ilegais em Maputo, 2021, <https://www.voaportugues.com/a/falta-de-acesso-a-habitacao-leva-a-construcoes-ilegais-em-maputo-/5869073.html>; Redacção, ‘Município de Maputo vai remover todas habitações construídas nos terraços dos prédios’, TVM - Televisão de Moçambique, 2021, <https://www.tvm.co.mz/index.php/noticias/nacional/item/7903-municipio-de-maputo-vai-remover-todas-habitacoes-construidas-nos-terraços-dos-predios>; ‘Memórias Difusas - Construções Nos Terraços’, 2015, <https://housesofmaputo.blogspot.com/2015/07/memorias-difusas-construcoes-nos.html>; Zacarias André Nhantumbo, Daniel Aelenei, and Ana Catarina da Cruz Lopes, ‘A Problemática da Auto-Construção Ilegal Em Moçambique – Causas e Efeitos’, *INEGI-Instituto de Ciência e Inovação em Engenharia Mecânica e Engenharia Industrial* (2022): 239-250.

⁴ Julie Soleil Archambault, ‘Urban Precarity and Aspirational Compromise: *Feeling Otherwise in a Mozambican Suburb*’, *City & Society* 33, no. 2 (2021): 303–23, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ciso.12406>; Morten Nielsen, ‘Speculative Cities: Housing and Value Conversions in Maputo, Mozambique’, *Housing Studies* 37, no. 6 (3 July 2022): 889–909, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2021.1935770>.



Figure 1: Roof terrace houses (front row) in central Maputo, September 2018, photo by author

In the same year that this debate erupted, I met a group of young men and women from Maputo during a seminar of the Global History Dialogues Project,⁵ an online oral history course based at the Universities of Potsdam and Princeton, that I was a teaching assistant on during the Covid-19 pandemic, while waiting for a positive travel risk assessment for fieldwork. The group of recent graduates from Eduardo Mondlane University debated the issue of ‘roof terrace housing’ passionately, which one of the participants had selected as their research topic for the course. As I opened the online meeting room where we would have the discussion, I expected to hear echoes of the vast interdisciplinary literature about the struggles of contemporary youth in Africa. Since

⁵ An online course for applied oral history methods, see: Marcia C. Schenck and Johanna M. Wetzel, ‘Shifting the Means of (Knowledge) Production: Teaching Applied Oral History Methods in a Global Classroom’, *World History Connected* 19, no. 3 (2022): 1-39, <https://doi.org/10.13021/whc.v19i3.3327>.

the early-2000s, scholars of youth have looked particularly upon young men's increasing difficulties to access or afford housing with great concern.⁶ Not only has it been associated with youth unemployment, poverty, crime, involvement in violent conflicts, but scholars have highlighted that housing is crucial to allow particularly young men to achieve real "adulthood."⁷ Adulthood, these authors highlight, is defined not by biological age or legal status, but by social markers, such as marriage and motherhood, for women, and the ability to provide for dependents, for men.⁸ For the latter, scholars have highlighted that access to capital (for example to pay bride wealth), a sustained income and housing are crucial. Where the neo-liberalization of state and market has increasingly deprived young people of these social goods, scholars of African youth have observed that material frustrations have become enmeshed with frustrations in relation to identity and masculinity, particularly for young men.⁹

Instead of transitioning into adulthood, Alcinda Honwana wrote famously, African youth now become stuck in a perpetual stage of "waithood."¹⁰ Similarly, Hannah Dawson observed how male youth in the South African township Zandspruit experienced being "stuck,"¹¹ both mentally and physically, in a place where they are unable to realize their aspirations (economic independence

⁶ for a summary of this literature, see: Marc Sommers, 'Urban Youth in Africa', *Environment and Urbanization* 22, no. 2 (2010): 317–32.

⁷ Marc Sommers, *Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood*, Studies in Security and International Affairs (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012) see chapter 9; Karen Tranberg Hansen, 'Getting Stuck in the Compound: Some Odds against Social Adulthood in Lusaka, Zambia', *Africa Today* 51, no. 4 (2005): 3–16.

⁸ Catrine Christiansen, Mats Utas, and Henrik E. Vigh, eds., *Navigating Youth, Generating Adulthood: Social Becoming in an African Context* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2006); Trond Waage, 'Coping with Unpredictability', *Preparing for Life in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon*, 2006.

⁹ James Ferguson, 'Declarations of Dependence: Labour, Personhood, and Welfare in Southern Africa: Declarations of Dependence', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19, no. 2 (2013): 223–42; Alcinda Manuel Honwana, *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change, and Politics in Africa* (Kumarian Press Pub., 2012).

¹⁰ Alcinda Honwana, "'Waithood': Youth Transitions and Social Change', in *Development and Equity* (Brill, 2014), 28–40, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004269729_004.

¹¹ Marc Sommers makes a similar observation about Rwandan youth, see: Sommers, *Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood*. Studies in Security and International Affairs. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012.

from an older generation) or imagine alternative futures.¹² To some, such as the young fighters in Guinea-Bissau’s warzone among whom Henrik Vigh spent several months, the costs of being stuck in youth is equated with “social death.”¹³ The dangers of becoming so-called “youthmen,”¹⁴ who fail to achieve adulthood, drive them into practices of *dubrigagem* (getting by), that are as resourceful as they are violent, with many joining armed groups to attain the means for achieving social adulthood. Others, such as Jeremy Jones’ and Dawson’s informants, resign themselves to a “boring”¹⁵ life, devoid of any sense of agency over their future trajectories.¹⁶

But the discussion in our online meeting room took an unexpected turn. Unlike young people depicted in studies of youth elsewhere on the continent, the group assembled in the digital classroom in mid-2021 did not plot how to escape from the status of youth. The controversies in the discussion did not revolve around the frustrations of waithood or young people’s inability to access social markers of adulthood. While they were certainly frustrated at their inability to access housing, the group argued about whether ‘roof terrace houses’ were the right way for youths to solve the multiple crises in Maputo’ public service provision, or a “selfish” (and unsafe) way of

¹² Hannah Dawson, ‘Youth Politics: Waiting and Envy in a South African Informal Settlement’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40, no. 4 (2014): 871.

¹³ Henrik Vigh, ‘Youth Mobilisation as Social Navigation. Reflections on the Concept of Dubriagem’, *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, no. 18/19 (2010): 140–64.

¹⁴ Utas draws on a concept first developed in relation to Nigerian youths in: Abubakar Momoh, ‘The Youth Crisis in Nigeria: Understanding the Phenomenon of the Area Boys and Girls’, in *Children and Youth as Emerging Categories in Africa*, Leuven (Conference on Children and Youth as Emerging Categories in Africa, Leuven, 1999) cited in: Mats Utas, ‘Building a Future? The Reintegration and Re-Marginalisation of Youth in Liberia’, in *No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*, ed. Richards Paul (Oxford, Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press, 2005), 150, fn. 73.

¹⁵ Jeremy L. Jones, “‘Nothing Is Straight in Zimbabwe’: The Rise of the Kukiya-Kiya Economy 2000–2008”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36, no. 2 (2010): 285–99. Increasingly, scholars highlight the creative efforts generated by youths, who “in the face of these threats to their livelihoods and self-respect; [...] actively and creatively shape the world around them” Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson, *Telling Young Lives - Portraits of Global Youth*, Project MUSE (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 6.

¹⁶ Dawson, ‘Youth Politics’.

prioritising one's personal needs over the development of the country. One participant called Michael Jorge Juma commented for example:

The youths (*jovens*) who live in Maputo city have decided to build their houses on the roof terraces, because they think it's important to stay in the city, where there are most services. There are areas where there is a lot of space, but they don't want to [move there], since all the public services such as schools, hospitals, banks, discos, restaurants, bars, sports venues are in Maputo City, they prefer to stay in the same place. But in my opinion, I think this is very wrong, because I think these youths could fight for all these services to arrive in neighbourhoods further away from the city in order to reduce the overcrowding.¹⁷

Another participant called Rogério Mussuei Jr. responded:

I have a question [...] I think us youths have little time to understand other people's problems because of the difficulties we have, and that's why we don't see many altruistic actions. So, I'd like to know from my colleagues: how can we contribute more to society without harming or delaying our personal development?¹⁸

To this, a third participant called Valdo Congolo responded:

For example, at 6 am to 8 am the roads are a mess, the transport system is terrible and it's very difficult to get to work or school on time. So, we should think about spreading the infrastructure to these places, because we have all this space in Africa, in Mozambique. In Mozambique, specifically in Maputo, the youth who manages to earn an income of 100,000 MTS, for example, is mainly concerned with personal satisfaction and doesn't look out for others. If there were youths like those who fought for national independence, I believe that Mozambique would be different, with more infrastructure and all the public systems would be better.¹⁹

Speaking to over 40 young Mozambicans individually and in group discussions over the course of my master's thesis and roughly one and a half years of waiting for international borders to re-open and university clearances to allow fieldwork again during the Covid-19 pandemic, I learned that

¹⁷ Michael Jorge Juma, group interview with Michael Jorge Juma, Rogério Mussuei Jr. and Valdo Congolo by Johanna M. Wetzel (video), Johannesburg/Maputo, April 24, 2021.

¹⁸ Rogério Mussuei Jr., group interview.

¹⁹ Valdo Congolo, group interview.

more than just differences in housing politics, Valdo, Michael and Rogério's arguments reflected a deeply held, shared conviction about the meaning and role of youth in society, that was starkly at odds with the literature on African youth. Instead of trying to escape from youth, or feeling ashamed of being called a youth, the young men and women I spoke to, associated the term primarily with social responsibility, a heightened sense of agency, and optimism.

When I asked them to explain to me what defined youth for them, my interlocutors echoed sentiments that youth were endowed with a power, special to them, to transform not only their own life trajectories, but also their environment. Valdo, a 30-year-old university graduate and current employee at a municipal agency – who, like many others, considered himself a youth, rather than an adult – had explained to me:

In Mozambique, a youth is [defined as] an individual between the ages of 18 and 35. But there is a catch in it, there are people who even in this age group, do not behave as such, they are not concerned with the development of the country, with their own development. We can also find people above the age of 35 who do everything to see progress. So, for me, youths are the ones who make a difference.²⁰

The fundamental characteristic of a youth, was that even when faced with structural barriers, such as a housing crisis or scarce employment opportunities, he or she should approach such challenges with determination and optimism.²¹ As Ana noted: “To think like a youth is to have positive attitudes, regardless of the difficulties of life, the youth must have the capacity to think that it is a phase and that it will pass.”²² For some, such as Jacinto, a 20-year-old high school student in Matola-Rio, determined to make it into university against all odds and land a well-paid job in tourism, this led to an exaggerated sense of agency amidst all structural obstacles: “us *jovens* (youths),

²⁰ Valdo Congolo, group interview.

²¹ Valdo Congolo, group interview. “I think that a good youth is someone who thinks positively in the first place, someone who, even with the difficulties of life, doesn't see them as a barrier to reach their goals.”

²² Michael Jorge Juma, group interview by Johanna M. Wetzel (video), Johannesburg/Maputo, April 24, 2021.

we need to change things ourselves, we can't wait for others! Drugs cause unemployment. [This is something that us] youths need to solve ourselves."²³ For other, a determination to bring about structural change defined what made an 'ideal youth.' Michael Jorge, for example, explained: "A good youth [...] is someone who seeks development itself, especially within his environment."²⁴ He called this predisposition having *preocupações sociais* (being concerned with social matters). Or for Ana once more:

To be a young person in the Mozambican context is to be ready to fight, above all else [...] To be a youth is to continue dreaming of a better future. It's not possible to dream sitting down, I have to look for something that identifies me, I have to look for something to make my country better.²⁵

Associated with such virtuous and powerful attributes, youth was a category that the Mozambicans I spoke to sought to identify with, even when they had long achieved social markers of adulthood. Conducting phone interviews with peers, friends and acquaintances of the initial group, I often spent hours talking to someone, who referred to him or herself as a *um/a jovem* (a youth) before finding out that they had long been married, become a mother, or ticked other boxes of what the literature on African youth generally perceived as social adulthood. Near 30-year-old Simeão Couane, for example, husband and father of two children, explained to me: "I still feel young simply because I haven't reached my goals."²⁶ And further: "Even if the conditions in our country aren't the best, I think that with commitment from us youth things would improve."²⁷ Others, such as Lourman, a 25-year-old university student and full-time English teacher, tried to prolong youth by wiggling his way out of relationships that aspired to marriage too quickly for his plans. This was not because he could not afford a house or a wedding. He had saved up for both from his job.

²³ Jacinto, group interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Matola-Rio, July 27, 2018.

²⁴ Michael Jorge Juma, group interview

²⁵ Ana Chongo, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Johannesburg/Maputo, April 3, 2021.

²⁶ Simeão Couane, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel (phone), Johannesburg/Maputo, May 31, 2021.

²⁷ Simeão Couane, interview.

Rather, it was because he simply did not want to leave his youth. Looking at his married friends, he felt that they had too soon “resigned” to adulthood. Youth, to Lourman, and similarly Michael Jorge was the time of growth and potential.²⁸ The latter noted: “When I say that there are young people who act like adults, there are young people who, due to the growing lack of job opportunities, businesses with little market, end up falling into conformity.”²⁹

This thesis thus began as an attempt to make sense of a puzzle relating to present-day youth discourses and subjectivities in Maputo and their stark contrasts to other places on the continent. I wondered why young people in Maputo associated things such as social responsibility, agency and potential with youth, when elsewhere on the continent the word signified the very opposite. While the literature on young people’s experiences in present day Mozambique provided rich and nuanced accounts of technology use, intimacy, gendered identities, and many more facets of everyday life, it seldomly engaged with the meaning of the concept ‘youth’ itself.³⁰

In seeking to understand the conceptualisation of youth, ventures into the past were more fruitful. As the Global History Dialogues Project entered the phase during which the students applied oral history methods, Ana, Michael Jorge, Reginaldo, Rogério, Valdo, and I decided to collaborate as the “History of Youth Research Group” within the larger cohort of the Global History Dialogues

²⁸ See: Johanna M. Wetzel, ‘Navigating Youth, Generating Politics – Life History Research with Youth in Maputo’s Bairros, Mozambique’ (Master Thesis, University of Oxford, 2019).

²⁹ Michael Jorge Juma, group interview.

³⁰ The literature about present-day youth is fascinating, see for example Julie-Soleil Archambault’s work on mobile phone use among youth in Inhambane: Julie Soleil Archambault, *Mobile Secrets: Youth, Intimacy, and the Politics of Pretense in Mozambique* (University of Chicago Press, 2016). Or her more recent work on cement and body image, Julie Soleil Archambault, ‘Concrete Violence, Indifference and Future-Making in Mozambique’, *Critique of Anthropology* 41 (2020): 43–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X20941573>; Julie Soleil Archambault, ‘In Pursuit of Fitness: Bodywork, Temporality and Self-Improvement in Mozambique’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2021, 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2021.1934264>.]

Project.³¹ Our goal was to understand how conceptions of youth had changed over time. Each researcher chose a different subject around which to focus their oral history interviews – education, relationships, contribution to development, political activism and access to housing – and identified relatives, neighbours, members of a community centre, or their church who were willing (or eager) to share their personal stories. Jointly, we developed question catalogues for oral history interviews that covered their individual topics, as well as a set of shared questions structured along the life course. Over the course of the next few months, the researchers interviewed 25 people. One year later, Michael, Ana and Valdo continued to work on the project, now as salaried research assistants and interviewed another 21 people, while I was able to travel to Maputo and conduct another 22 oral history interviews myself.

When we asked interviewees of different generations about their experiences growing up, and the meaning of the term ‘youth’ in their lifetime, one impression shared by most was that “*Juventude era uma palavra revolucionária*” (‘Youth’ was a revolutionary word).³² Speaking to older generations, we learned that they remembered independence as a moment of rupture and in(ter)vention in the ways Mozambicans talked and thought about youth, and particularly the Portuguese word ‘*juventude*’ (youth). One woman born in 1961 for example, recounted: “Before independence there was no such thing as *juventude*. Before independence [...] we had the organization of the *moçidade*,”³³ a

³¹ See research outputs: Ana Chongo, ‘Youth and Political Participation in Mozambique’, Global History Dialogues (blog), 2021, <https://globalhistorydialogues.org/projects/youth-and-political-participation-in-mozambique/>; Valdo Daúde Pedro Congolo, ‘Youth and Urban Development in Maputo (Mozambique), 1987-2015’, Global History Dialogues (blog), 2021, <https://globalhistorydialogues.org/projects/youth-and-urban-development-in-maputo-mozambique-1987-2015/>; Michael-Jorge Juma, ‘Changing Conceptions about Access to Housing for Youths in Alto-Maé “A”, Maputo, Mozambique’, Global History Dialogues (blog), 2021, <https://globalhistorydialogues.org/projects/changing-conceptions-about-access-to-housing-for-youths-in-alto-mae-a-maputo-mozambique/>; Reginaldo S. Taimo, ‘Youth and Education in Wenela, Mozambique 1990-2005’, Global History Dialogues (blog), 2021, <https://globalhistorydialogues.org/projects/o-papel-da-familia-no-ensino-e-aprendizagem-dos-jovens-do-bairro-wenela-maputo-mozambique-entre-1990-2005/>.

³² Carla Mabote, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 29, 2022. The term revolution is usually used to refer to the independence era as much as the political project that the governing party pursued during it.

³³ Amélia Lemos, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 22, 2022.

colonial youth organization reserved for children of the Portuguese settlers in Mozambique and associated with Salazar's fascist regime.³⁴ Like this interviewee, many members of the generation that came of age during independence associated the word *juventude* with a form of political organization and linked it to the realm of the new, post-independence state, and the revolutionary project the state engaged them in: "The government always used the word *juventude*,"³⁵ another interviewee, born in 1964, recounted: "It wanted young people to be *o amanha* (the future), that's what it used the term for a lot."³⁶

While this study began as a puzzle about contemporary discourses about youth it therefore soon transformed into an inquiry into their historical roots, or more specifically, the shifts and transformations that discourses about youth underwent during a particular chapter in Mozambican history. While the era that these interviewees referred to lasted only a decade, their recollections of it suggest that fundamental shifts in how Mozambicans thought and talked about youth, or at least used the word *juventude*, occurred during this era. My subsequent rummaging through the pamphlets, news clippings and party publications in Colin Darch's well-kept digital, open-source library, the Mozambique History Net,³⁷ confirmed this inkling. It was here that I came across a pamphlet titled "*Sobre os Problemas Função e Tarefas da Juventude Moçambicana* (About the Problems, Function and Role of the Mozambican Youth),"³⁸ published in 1977, of a speech that the Mozambican President Samora Machel had given shortly after independence, that heralded youth as the 'progressive' force of the revolutionary world with a historic responsibility to bring about

³⁴ Ana Luiza Falcão de Souza, 'A organização da mocidade portuguesa: entre rupturas e permanências (1943 -1974)' (PhD diss., Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2010).

³⁵ Mónica Mucaval, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, October 11, 2022

³⁶ Mónica Mucaval, interview.

³⁷ Colin Darch, 'Mozambique History Net', accessed 29 December 2024, <https://www.mozambiquehistory.net/>.

³⁸ "Juventude: O Centro da Batalha, Discurso do Presidente Samora e Inquérito," *Tempográfica* No. 325, December 1976, 42-60.

the social transformation the revolutionary government envisioned. It was here that the liberation heroes were first described as the ‘youth’ of the Mozambican revolution and that I found the *palavra de ordem* (watchword) “*A Juventude é a Seiva da Nação* (The Youth is the Sap of the Nation).”

The study that I present here is not about memory, nostalgia or the “hauntings”³⁹ of the past in the present. I am not asking primarily why these discourses resonate with young people today, an important question that had sparked my curiosity initially and that could be a focus of future projects. Rather, in the absence of any historiography, about the revolutionization of the term ‘youth,’ I turned to explore how and why revolutionary youth discourses came into being in the first place, and why they became meaningful to a generation of Mozambicans.

³⁹ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, 2nd ed. (University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

1. Introduction

On a warm December day in the year 1976, a crowd of roughly a thousand men and women in their teens and early twenties gathered in the conference hall of Josina Machel Secondary School in central Maputo.¹ On this day, at the end of Mozambique's first year of independence, the change that had lingered in the air over the past year was still fresh with possibility. Many of Maputo's residents had not heard of the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo), until two years earlier, when the news that an African army had fought and defeated the Portuguese in the northern provinces had spread like wildfire. Those who had followed the fighting, clandestinely during the night, ears pressed to the radio, wives guarding the door, had made sure to never reveal such dangerous information to their children.²

Now sitting in the hall, these young men and women were coming of age in a new world. By the end of 1976, they had seen the turbulent days of racial violence that had followed the signing of the Lusaka Agreement, when squads of white settlers took up guns and brought havoc to Maputo's

¹ "Transformar Emoção e Entusiasmo da Juventude em Força Material ao Serviço da Revolução," *Jornal Notícias*, December 16, 1976, 6; 'December 1976 Historical Weather at Chimoio, Mozambique - Weather Spark', 1976, <https://weatherspark.com/h/m/150077/1976/12/Historical-Weather-in-December-1976-at-Chimoio-Mozambique#Figures-Temperature>.

² Amélia Lemos, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, 22 June 2022.

black suburbs, and angry residents marched towards the white centre of town.³ They had seen Frelimo militants multiply on the streets of their residential neighbourhoods, distributing pamphlets, flyers and spreading *palavras de ordem* (watchwords). So-called Grupos Dinamizadores (GDs)⁴ headed by Frelimo militants now moved around the *bairros* (African suburbs) with a new air of authority, ‘educating’ their neighbours, siblings and peers about the meaning of the transformations. These youngsters had cheered the hoisting of the flag of independent Mozambique in Machava stadium on June 25th or watched their parents dance through the night of June 25th in the suburbs.⁵ They had seen their fathers and mothers rise in this new order, convening or attending meetings each evening to debate the latest political developments, study a new pamphlet or read Marx, Engels and Mao’s red book until the early hours of the morning. Proudly and openly, they now saw their fathers and uncles gathered around the radio, the president’s voice booming, wives serving the beer.⁶

What these young men and women had witnessed over the course of the last three years was much more than an administrative transition to independence. Following the departure of the Portuguese colonial administration, the liberation movement Frelimo had taken over the colonial state and set out to transform it into an instrument of revolution, with the goal of establishing a ‘New Socialist Society.’ Frelimo believed that beyond political and administrative reform, decolonisation meant “dismantl[ing] the [...] cultural, financial, economic, educational, legal and other systems which, as

³ Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence*, 1st ed. (Ohio University Press, 1997), 44–45; Colin Darch, *Historical Dictionary of Mozambique* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 136–37.

⁴ On the GDs, see: Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire*, (London: Zed, 1984), 49–50; Luís de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo e a Construção Do Estado Nacional 1962-1983* (Maputo: IESE, 2019), 84; Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 51–56.

⁵ Mónica Mucavel, interview by Valdo Congolo, Maputo, 07 September 2022; Martins Zunguza, interview with Ana Chongo, Maputo, 11.07.2022; Odete King Kazamila, interview by Valdo Congolo, Maputo, 02 August 2022.

⁶ Maria Alegria, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, 26 May 2022; Marco Roque de Freitas, ‘Sounding the Nation, Sounding the Revolution: Music and Radio Broadcasting in Post-Colonial Mozambique (1975-1986)’, *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 29, no. 1 (2022): 80–103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19376529.2021.2019745>.

an integral part of the colonial state, were destined exclusively to impose foreign domination and the will of the exploiters on the masses.”⁷ In their stead, Frelimo dreamt of a “new system of life led by [the] People,”⁸ a “pure and healthy society”⁹ of New Men and Women, free from exploitation, corruption and the vices that characterised colonial life.

The ‘phase’ of the Mozambican revolution that was the construction of the New Socialist Society, was an extremely ambitious project of political, economic and social engineering. Modernist, socialist, militaristic, Maoist, Fanonian, puritanical and Marxist in its ideological contours, Frelimo envisioned the establishment of the New Socialist Society through a political system of democratic centralism, led by a vanguard party that represented the ‘People,’ the economy was centrally planned, and social services provided to all Mozambicans through the state.¹⁰ Indeed, over the course of the first decade of independence, Frelimo abandoned the colonial state administration, stripped ‘traditional authorities’ of their political powers, nationalised the health, education and housing sectors of the economy, and established production councils and party cells in most non-state companies. It was in this vein that the political study groups during which Mozambicans read Marx and Mao were meant to spread ‘political consciousness,’ the GDs thought of themselves as establishing *Poder Popular* (People’s Power), and the militants’ lectures focused on imposing a new revolutionary morality.¹¹

⁷ *Jornal Notícias*, September 24, 1974, quoted in Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 49.

⁸ Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico da Frelimo, “O Processo revolucionário da guerra popular de libertação: artigos coligidos do órgão de informação da Frelimo: ‘A Voz da revolução’ desde 1963 a 1974.” In: *Coleção textos e documentos da FRELIMO*, Maputo, 1977, accessed via MHN, 131.

⁹ Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico da Frelimo, 131.

¹⁰ Thomas H. Henriksen, ‘Remarks on Mozambique’, *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 5, no. 3 (1975): 216, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1167018>.

¹¹ Benedito Luís Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution - Urban Cleanup Campaigns, Reeducation Camps and Cities’ (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2019), 3; Benedito Luís Machava, ‘The Road Not Taken: Decolonization & Political Imagination in Mozambique’ (Webinar, Yale, 2022), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDcQucZcAys>.

But the main vector for revolutionary change were Mozambicans themselves. Like Fanon, Mao, Marx and Lenin, Frelimo was “profoundly wedded to the creation of a ‘New Man.’”¹² To Frelimo, the challenges of decolonization and socialist, modernist state-building were inseparable from the need to orchestrate a social, cultural and moral revolution on the level of each individual citizen. “The most important victory,” Machel noted in relation to the liberation struggle as early as 1970, “cannot be measured in figures – how many soldiers we have killed, how many square kilometres we control; it is valued in the new system of life led by people.”¹³ To Frelimo, the construction of the New Socialist Society was as much a project of political, economic and social reform, as it was a method of “purification,”¹⁴ in which the party viewed themselves as “as saviors entitled to deliver the ‘masses’ from darkness, social degeneracy, and cultural alienation.”¹⁵

Much of the construction of the New Socialist Society was thus aimed at ‘mobilising,’ ‘concientializing,’ and, where needed, violently coercing Mozambicans to abandon the many long-standing and deeply meaningful features of productive and social life, such as practices, such as polygamy, lobolo (bride wealth), and ancestor worship, that Frelimo associated with ‘vestiges’ of ‘colonial-feudal,’ and ‘capitalist-imperialist’ rule. While the morality of the Mozambican revolution has recently received new attention as the subject of historical inquiry, however, it has gone largely unnoticed that this project also rested to a large extent on Frelimo’s ability to create a generational

¹² Henriksen, ‘Remarks on Mozambique’, 216; Luis, Solange Evangelista. ‘O Homem Novo nas Literaturas Africanas em Língua Portuguesa pré-independência’. *Revista Cadernos do Ceom* 33, no. 53 (18 December 2020): 62–70; Palermo, Guilherme Lauterbach. ‘A categoria de “Homem Novo” aplicada pela Frente de Libertação de Moçambique : suas expressões nos testemunhos de ex-combatentes da FRELIMO’, 2017; Vieira, Sérgio. ‘O Homem Novo é Um Processo’. *Tempo* 398 (1978): 27–38.

¹³ Machel cited in Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 60.

¹⁴ Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution’, 3; Yussuf Adam, 1991, 59 cited in João T. Gomes Cravinho, ‘Modernizing Mozambique: Frelimo Ideology and the Frelimo State’ (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1995), 64–65.

¹⁵ Machava, 26.

break. “The development of our process depends on the new generations,” Machel stressed already in 1970:

For the first time in our history, children and young people are growing up outside of colonialism, outside of dogmatic traditions. There is a generation, the first, that is being formed in the heat of the revolution. It is this generation that over the next 20 years will be called upon to continue the task we have begun. They are the nursery from which the selected plant will grow, that will make the revolution triumph once and for all.¹⁶

On December 15th, 1976, facing the thousand young men and women in the assembly hall of a Maputo secondary school, Machel declared: “[T]he essential role in achieving [...] the establishment of the material and ideological basis for a socialist society falls to the youth.”¹⁷ Because of their “youthfulness and their relative immunity from the alienating ideology and social customs of the colonial-capitalist system,”¹⁸ Machel continued, they “are best equipped to respond critically to new values and to continue our country’s revolutionary process.”¹⁹ According to Machel, the success of the Mozambican revolution depended on its ability to “forge”²⁰ the youth into the “Embryo of the New Man.”²¹ As ideal future-citizens, Machel imagined the revolutionary youth to be at once loyal, obedient, disciplined, never deviating from a meticulously defined set of behaviours, language, dress, even thoughts and feelings, and at the same time as creative, enthusiastic and full of initiative. They were exemplars of Frelimo’s ideal subject-people, both independent and fully under Frelimo’s control.

This dissertation provides the first historical study of the construction of ‘youth’ as a revolutionary political category during the socialist era in Mozambique. It investigates on the one hand, how and

¹⁶ Samora Machel, “Educar o Homen para vencer a guerra,” *Estudos & Orientações*, 1970, 11-12.

¹⁷ “Transformar Emoção e Entusiasmo da Juventude em Força Material ao Serviço da Revolução,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 16, 1976, 6-7.

¹⁸ “Transformar Emoção e Entusiasmo,” 6-7.

¹⁹ “Transformar Emoção e Entusiasmo,” 6-7.

²⁰ “Transformar Emoção e Entusiasmo,” 6-7.

²¹ “Transformar Emoção e Entusiasmo,” 6-7.

why Frelimo came to construct youth as a revolutionary category, and on the other, what effects this discursive shift had on the institutional, material and social realities within which young Mozambicans fashioned their everyday lives. I argue that in both respects, the Organização da Juventude Moçambicana (Organisation for Mozambican Youth, OJM) played a fundamental, yet underappreciated role. Through the decision to create this organization, the Frelimo party leadership first articulated its revolutionary conceptualization of youth. Furthermore, this process had the consequence that Frelimo ‘wrote’ youth into its state-socialist script, the basis of Frelimo’s official discourse, and finally, it was through the OJM that young people across the country encountered, became literate in, and derived emotional and embodied experiences from Frelimo’s discourse about revolutionary youth.

The OJM was founded as a mass democratic organization modelled on the Leninist prototype that had spread all over the socialist world in the second half of the 20th century.²² It had the ambitious mission to “organize the youth so that it can take pride of place alongside the working classes in the fight to establish the material and ideological basis for a socialist society.”²³ This pertained to the “political and ideological preparation”²⁴ of not just a selected few, but all Mozambicans between the ages of 14 and 30.²⁵ Soon, OJM activities populated the pages of the state media, cast as instances of the ‘Mozambican youth’ fulfilling its revolutionary duties. Reports featured ‘youth’ ploughing the fields of collective farms in school holiday brigades (*trabalhos das férias*) in the name of national development, ‘exchanging experiences’ with factory workers, proudly parading for high-level diplomatic delegations from abroad or cherishing ‘authentic national culture’ in their

²² Jeremy Friedman, *Ripe for Revolution: Building Socialism in the Third World* (Harvard University Press, 2022), 278.

²³ “Intervenção do Presidente Samora Machel ao ser concordado com medalha de ouro Artur Becker,” *Jornal Notícias*, Maputo, December 6, 1980.

²⁴ Secretariado Nacional da OJM, “Resolução sobre a Cultura, Desporto e Recreação,” in: *Organizar da Juventude é Consolidar a Revolução: Documentos da I Conferência da Juventude Moçambicana*, October, 1980, accessed via MHN, 61.

²⁵ “Programa da OJM,” *Tempográfica No. 380*, January 1978, 47.

Makwaela dance groups. As the leader of a youth neighbourhood clean-up group noted after a *jornada da limpeza* (clean-up day) to a journalist of the newspaper *Notícias*: “What we did today was one of the tasks entrusted to us by the nation, now that the youth in Mozambique is defined as the *seiva da Nação* (sap of the Nation).”²⁶

The OJM never penetrated society as deeply as its Leninist models. Although it claimed to have counted nearly half a million members comprising ca. 25-30% of all students, and 20% of workers by 1986, these numbers are likely highly exaggerated.²⁷ Already in 1981, Jorge Rebelo, Secretary for Ideological Work, noted in an internal meeting that the East German ambassador to Mozambique attended that, “the majority of youth in our country behave absolutely indifferently vis-à-vis the OJM and its initiatives.”²⁸ Especially the organization of the rural youth was “extremely complicated and limit[ed] itself mainly to state owned estates, collective villages and cooperatives.”²⁹ Political instability and war compromised the OJM’s ability to pursue activities and reach the ‘masses’ even more in the 1980s, so much so that the East Germans expected any possible expansion or increase in the OJM’s reach to be “severely hindered by the political and economic situation in Mozambique also in the foreseeable future.”³⁰

Yet, especially in Maputo, where Frelimo enjoyed widespread popular support, literacy and education levels were higher and the media had a wider reach, the OJM played a pivotal role in the

²⁶ “Centenas de Pessoas limpam valas nos subúrbios de Maputo: Iniciativa da OJM,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 17, 1976, 2.

²⁷ This number is based on the OJM’s own statistics available to the East German state-youth organisation at the time but was likely much smaller. Zentralrat der FDJ, Abteilung Internationale Verbindungen, “Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation der Moçambiquanischen Jugend und zur Organisation der Moçambiquanischen Jugend (OJM),” Berlin, December 1986, BArch, DY-24, Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Germany, 2.

²⁸ Jorge Rebelo, cited in: Zentralrat der FDJ, “Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation,” Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Germany, 2.

²⁹ Abteilung Internationale Verbindungen, “Hinweise für das Gespräch mit Zacarias Kupela, Generalsekretär der Organisation der Moçambiquanischen Jugend (OJM)” Berlin, Juli 1984, BArch, DY-24, Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Germany, 1.

³⁰ Brigitte Schmidt, II. Sekretär, “Entwicklungstendenzen in der Organisation der Moçambiquanischen Jugend,” Botschaft Maputo, Politische Abteilung, Maputo, 07.06.1984, BArch, DY-24, Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Germany, 3.

dissemination, institutionalization and normalization of Frelimo's revolutionary language. The OJM not only provided the backdrop for a wide dissemination of Machel's speeches on the subject of youth, which became firmly established as 'superior guidance' (*orientações superiores*) across the party-state's bureaucratic infrastructure, but it actively created an organizational culture based on quoting, referencing and reproducing Machel's revolutionary discourse on youth in content and form. Through the OJM, higher- and lower-level cadres became 'ideologically literate,' meaning they acquired the skill to speak and write in the tone of the party-state's authoritative discourse. And it was through the OJM that the Frelimo party-state coordinated the bulk of its pedagogical activities, including political, cultural and volunteer activities, which involved both members and non-members alike. Through these regular, ritualised and embodied activities, members of the independence generation encountered, derived meaning from, and wrestled with Frelimo's authoritative discourse on revolutionary youth. This is not to say that young Mozambicans were passive subjects to the authoritative discourse, but it became a force they needed to reckon with, and it shaped the discursive repertoire that Mozambicans drew on at the time and that we can hear echoes of today.

This introductory chapter begins by making a case for this study's significance through a review of the existing Mozambican historiography. Subsequently, I outline the three bodies of literature that have informed this study's underlying theoretical framework, namely an interdisciplinary, Africanist scholarship on present-day youth, a historical scholarship on youth politics and forms of organized youth in African anti-colonial struggles, and a global historical literature on state-socialist youth organizations and the kinds of experiences they enabled for particular generations. I conclude that to understand not only how and why Frelimo constructed youth, but also how it became meaningful to a generation of Mozambicans, we need to bring in a fourth literature on the revolutionization of language in state-socialist contexts.

Throughout the introduction, I will use the terms youth and young people to designate distinct social phenomena. While I use the term ‘youth’ to designate primarily a concept that is constructed in discourse, I use ‘young people’ to refer to the amorphous social group that the concept ‘youth’ usually tries to describe. As I will discuss in full in the theoretical framework, in reality both are entwined but not always the same. The experiences of young people may have little to do with the assumptions, expectations, stereotypes and ideals bundled up in the term ‘youth,’ things that very often adults, rather than young people, attribute to the concept. But once they started to be called ‘youth’ by Frelimo, young people were forced to relate – positively, negatively, or indifferently – to the concept and all its assumptions. Disentangling the relationship between the concept (‘youth’) and the social group (‘young people’) in a time and place where the concept gained popularity and political salience, is part of what this study is attempting to do.

Youth in Mozambican Historiography

To begin this study, I explore Mozambican historiography in search of youth. Unlike other political categories that were central to Frelimo’s revolutionary discourse, such as ‘peasants,’ ‘workers,’ and ‘women,’ youth has gone largely unnoticed by scholars of Mozambique’s recent history. I argue that the reason for youth having remained a silent chapter is that the historiography of Mozambique has developed in step with its times, both in relation to academic trends and the drastic political changes that the country has undergone in the last 50 years. This shaped both the kinds of sources that scholars of Mozambique have had access to, and the kinds of research subjects, questions, and methods they have deemed relevant to further historical knowledge. While these conditions have long been unfavourable to a research project such as this present one, recent developments have made this a timely intervention.

Three waves of scholarship characterise the historiography of Mozambique. Firstly, the socialist era that followed independence made new critical, economic and social histories of life under colonialism possible. For the first time, scholars were able to access the Portuguese colonial state's records, which had been transferred to the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM) and collect oral histories freely inside the country.³¹ The newly set up Centro dos Estudos Africanos (CEA), founded in 1976 at Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), was a nodal point for the production of historical studies during this era. Over the course of Samora Machel's government, 1975-1986, the CEA hosted Mozambican and foreign scholars, such as Jaques Depelchin, Allen Isaacman, Ruth First and Yussuf Adam. These scholars produced a host of works that focussed particularly on the situation of peasants and workers under colonialism and their involvement in anti-colonial resistance.³²

The focus on these particular social groups grew from the CEA's close relationship with Frelimo's political project, and its Marxist inclination. UEM scholars were encouraged – and often also happy – to adopt a Marxist lens in their teaching and research, which was seen as standing in contrast to the paradigm that had governed research and teaching at the university under colonialism, with its focus on Durkheimian social theory and colonial anthropology. During the first inaugural lecture at the UEM, for example, the new director Fernando Ganhão, “encouraged the teaching staff and students to engage with the ‘Marxist theory of social change,’ which he claimed was, ‘in sharp

³¹ Benedito Luís Machava and Euclides Gonçalves, ‘The Dead Archive: Governance and Institutional Memory in Independent Mozambique’, *Africa* 91, no. 4 (2021): 553–74, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972021000425>; Gerhard Liesegang, ‘The Arquivo Historico de Moçambique and Historical Research in Maputo’, *History in Africa* 27 (2000): 471–77, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3172128>.

³² “O Mineiro Moçambicano: Um estudo sobre a exportação de mão de obra,” (Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos, 1977), later published as: Ruth First, *Black Gold. The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant*. (New York: St. Martin's Press 1983); Allen Isaacman et al., “‘Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty’: Peasant Resistance to Forced Cotton Production in Mozambique, 1938-1961”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13, no. 4 (1980): 581–615.

conflict with the [...] reactionary theories of the bourgeoisie social Science.”³³ Furthermore, the context of the recent transition to independence provided a strong political incentive to produce a ‘usable past,’ as Carlos Fernandes noted, “a history that was relevant to the construction of a socialist society under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist party.”³⁴ The CEA’s first director, Aquino de Bragança, an anti-colonial activist, journalist and personal advisor to Samora Machel, forged this close entanglement with the party.³⁵

It was in this spirit that the *Oficina da História*, a social and oral history research group modelled after the History Workshops popular in South Africa and the United Kingdom, produced much of the early Mozambican history inside Mozambique. The *Oficina* had an explicit epistemological and methodological commitment to Marxist historical analysis, as well as to a revolutionary politics informing academic practice, as authors of the first issue of the *Oficina*’s journal *Não Vamos Esquecer!* (“we will not forget”) asserted:

The oral source constituted an exceptional opportunity to give the word [voice] to the people. But this word cannot be given with an academic or paternalistic spirit, which would leave the final word to academic experts [or] professional historians, but [the word must be left with] a revolutionary spirit in order to respect and promote the creativity of actors and primary bearers of History.³⁶

³³ Fernando Ganhão, ‘Problemas e Prioridades na Formação em Ciências Sociais,’ (1984), cited in: Carlos Fernandes, ‘History Writing and State Legitimation in Postcolonial Mozambique: The Case of the History Workshop, Centre for African Studies, 1980-1986’, *Kronos*, no. 39 (2013): 133.

³⁴ Fernandes, ‘History Writing’ 138.

³⁵ The Centre’s first collective research project, for example, was a study titled “Zimbabwe: The Rhodesian Question” that had been commissioned by the Frelimo government to guide its political and military aid to the Zimbabwe African National Union’s Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). See: Fernandes, 134. For a detailed study of Frelimo-ZANU relations, see: Clinarete Victoria Luis Munguambe, ‘Nationalism and Exile in an Age of Solidarity: Frelimo-ZANU Relations in Mozambique (1975-1980)’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 161–78, <https://doi.org/0.1080/03057070.2017.1273537>; Clinarete Victoria Luis Munguambe, ‘Solidarity on the Battlefield: A Social History of ZANU and FRELIMO on the Mozambican Frontier, 1975-1980’ (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2024).

³⁶ *Não Vamos Esquecer!* 1 (Fev. 1983), 38, cited in: Fernandes, ‘History Writing and State Legitimation in Postcolonial Mozambique’, 139.

The result was that the Oficina's studies usually embraced Marxist terms of analysis, including a dualistic understanding of colonialism through compliance and resistance, as well as a commitment to Marxist research subjects, especially workers and peasants. Early Mozambican histories focused on Mozambican miners in South Africa,³⁷ colonial agriculture and forced cotton production,³⁸ and urban worker resistance,³⁹ leaving other social groups like women, intellectuals or indeed youth, and other forms of organizations that may have existed largely unnoticed.

Since the days of the Oficina de História, socialist-era historiography has come under harsh criticism. This critique was directed less at the Mozambican scholars of the CEA, than at the foreigners who had begun publishing English-language 'general histories' of the Mozambican anti-colonial struggle during or after their stay in Mozambique, many of them as *cooperantes* (development workers), on the invitation of Frelimo.⁴⁰ The Oficina had also produced a number of studies pertaining to Frelimo's history, in particular the liberation struggle and the 'liberated zones.'⁴¹ Critics noted that this socialist-era historiography used "formulations that follow and reproduce the analyses present in Frelimo's official texts [...] taking on the constructions and ideology of the

³⁷ "O Mineiro Moçambicano"

³⁸ Isaacman et al., 'Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty'; Yussuf Adam, *Cooperativização na agricultura e modificação das relações de produção no período colonial em Moçambique*, Coleção Identidades (Maputo: Promédia, 2006).

³⁹ Jeanne Penvenne, 'African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877-1962,' *Social History of Africa* (Portsmouth, NH, United States: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1995).

⁴⁰ Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism To Revolution, 1900-1982 (Profiles. Nations of Contemporary Africa)* (Westview Press 1983); Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: The Revolution and Its Origins* (London; New York: Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd, 1983); John S. Saul, *Difficult Road: The Transition to Socialism in Mozambique*, 1st ed. (New York: Monthly Review PR, 1985).

⁴¹ Oficina de História / CEA, *Para uma História da Luta de Libertação de Moçambique: Problemáticas, Metodologias, Análises*, Maputo, Centro de Estudos Africanos, (Maputo: 1982); Oficina de História / CEA, *A situação actual nas antigas zonas libertadas de Cabo Delgado*, Maputo, Centro de Estudos Africanos, (Maputo: 1983); Oficina de História / CEA, *Ngapa: uma localidade remota*, Maputo, Centro de Estudos Africanos, (Maputo: 1983); Oficina de História / CEA, *Poder Popular em Nandimba: um problema de terra, abastecimento e desagregação*, Maputo, Centro de Estudos Africanos, (Maputo: 1984); Oficina de História / CEA, *Poder Popular e desagregação nas aldeias comunais do planalto de Mueda*, Maputo, Centro de Estudos Africanos, (Maputo: 1986); Yussuf Adam and Ana Maria Gentili, 'O Movimento Dos Liguilanilu No Planalto de Mueda, 1957-1962', *Estudos Moçambicanos*, no. 4 (1983): 41-75.

official discourse, the myths on which this discourse was based.”⁴² They accused socialist-era authors of thereby “participating in the work of legitimisation”⁴³ of Frelimo’s official version of events.

This was particularly salient, since Mozambique was engulfed in another armed conflict that had begun shortly after independence and peaked in the mid-1980s. Frelimo plunged into a war⁴⁴ against the insurgent movement Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo), first in the centre of the country, but later spreading throughout Mozambique’s vast territory.⁴⁵ Some of the historians who had spent time at the CEA or as *cooperantes* in Mozambique in the 1970s and 80s became passionately involved in the debates surrounding the civil war, and indeed, provided academic legitimacy to Frelimo’s positions on the conflict in accounts that uncritically reproduced the official canon, for example depicting the resistance movement as South African puppets, rather than a locally grown insurgency that fed on grievances and Frelimo’s political failures.⁴⁶ This canon, João Paulo Borges Coelho famously remarked several years later, functioned for Frelimo as an

⁴² de Brito, A Frelimo, o Marxismo, 9–10.

⁴³ de Brito, 9–10.

⁴⁴ The interpretation of the war with Renamo continues to be a matter of taking sides in an academic debate that started in the 1980s. See Gervase Clarence-Smith, ‘The Roots of the Mozambican Counter-Revolution’, *Southern African Review of Books* 2, no. 4 (1989): 7–10; Otto Roesch, ‘Is Renamo a Popular Movement in Mozambique?’, *Southern African Review of Books*, no. 12 (1989): 20–22; Michel Cahen, ‘Mozambique: The Debate Continues’, *Southern Africa Report* 5 (1990): 26–45. In a recent publication, the authors of *The War Within* adopt the term ‘civil war,’ while the Frelimo government continues to use the term ‘war of destabilization,’ a term that portrayed the war as a war of aggression backed by Rhodesia and then South Africa, thus delegitimizing Mozambican Renamo fighters as foreign puppets, or the ‘sixteen years war,’ a slightly more neutral term. Following David Armitage’s definition of a civil war as acknowledging the “familiarity of the enemies as members of the same community: not foreigners, but fellow citizens,” these authors have argued that “there is no question that the war pitted from the start [...] members of the same national community – Mozambicans against Mozambicans.” See: Éric Morier-Genoud, Michel Cahen, and Domingos Manuel do Rosário, eds., *The War Within: New Perspectives on the Civil War in Mozambique, 1976-1992* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 2.

⁴⁵ Renamo started out as Mozambican National Resistance (MNR). Like Frelimo, Renamo capitalized its acronyms for the duration of the war.

⁴⁶ Isaacman, ‘South Africa’s Hidden War’, *Africa Report* 27, no. 6 (1982): 4–8; Saul, *Difficult Road*; Paul Fauvet, ‘Roots of Counter-Revolution: The Mozambique National Resistance’, *Review of African Political Economy* 11, no. 29 (1984), <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056248408703571>; Hanlon, *Mozambique*; Phyllis Johnson and David Martin, eds., *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War* (Zimbabwe Pub. House for the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, 1986); Steven Metz, ‘The Mozambique National Resistance and South African Foreign Policy’, *African Affairs* 85, no. 341 (1986): 491–507.

‘apparatus’ of power to legitimize the party’s undemocratic rule.⁴⁷ History and politics, Borges Coelho argued, have been too ‘neighbourly’ in Mozambique, allowing Frelimo to position itself as the sole authority on historical knowledge, holding a “monopoly on explanations of the past.”⁴⁸ Central to Frelimo’s grip over history is “a specific account of the liberation struggle which, codified as a script, became an instrument to legitimise [Frelimo’s] authority and render it unquestionable.”⁴⁹ Rather than having to face up to its failures or take the grievances of people in certain regions seriously, the liberation script allowed Frelimo to depict Renamo as the most recent version of a long line of ‘reactionaries’ and ‘enemy manouvres,’ that it had defeated over the course of the struggle.

Thus, deeply enmeshed within this highly divided academic landscape, the Renamo war, and specifically its end in 1992, produced another wave of ‘revisionist’ historical scholarship, with a very different focus, but yet again, one that left youth largely ignored. Unlike the socialist-era scholarship, this generation of scholars was not primarily interested in the colonial era, but the ways in which Frelimo’s state- and nation-building project had alienated parts of Mozambican society. Following the peace agreement between Renamo and Frelimo in 1992, this new generation of scholars was able to access not only regions in which support for Frelimo had been strong throughout the war, but also zones in which Renamo had found wide-spread support.⁵⁰ These new studies, often based on ethnographies and oral history interviews with communities in areas that had been affected by the war, challenged socialist-era accounts of liberation, peasant emancipation

⁴⁷ João Paulo Borges Coelho, ‘Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes’, *Kronos* 20–31 (2013): 21.

⁴⁸ Coelho, 21.

⁴⁹ Coelho, 21.

⁵⁰ This observation was also made by: Jessica Schafer, ‘The Use of Patriarchal Imagery in the Civil War in Mozambique and Its Implications for the Reintegration of Child Soldiers’, in: *Children and Youth on the Front Line: Ethnography, Armed Conflict and Displacement*, ed. Jo Boyden and Joanna de Berry (Berghahn Books, 2004), 89.

and the enthusiastic reception of Frelimo's revolutionary policies. Instead, they chronicled how long histories of deeply rooted conflicts around land, state authority, religion and culture ran through the Mozambican population's encounter with Frelimo after independence in ways that shaped the dynamics of war.⁵¹

This post-1992 generation of scholarship expanded our understanding of the categories that made up Frelimo's revolutionary imagination of society, especially the peasantry, and the ways in which people who fell into them defied the roles and expectations of the Frelimo state. Like the peasantry, young people, who supported Renamo also defied Frelimo's expectations and ideals of youth, but this observation seemed rather irrelevant to an understanding of the war at the time.⁵² Young Renamo fighters captured primarily the attention of anthropologists and scholars of conflict, who related their findings to a growing Africanist and global body of scholarship on children and youth in armed conflicts. This work highlighted youth and children's agency in fast-shifting environments of armed conflict,⁵³ rather than Frelimo's state- and nation-building project.⁵⁴ In part, this was a response to the Mozambican government's war narrative, echoed by sympathetic academics, who

⁵¹ For book length studies, see Christian Geffray, *A Causa Das Armas - Antropologia Da Guerra Contemporânea em Moçambique* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1991); Michel Cahen, *Moçambique: La révolution implosée* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2000); Jocelyn Alexander, 'Political Change in Manica Province', (Maputo:Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Maputo, 1995); William Finnegan, 'A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique,' *Perspectives on Southern Africa* 47 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Geffray, *A Causa Das Armas*.

⁵² There has been a shift in this regard in relation to the more recent and ongoing conflict in Cabo Delgado, where insurgents refer to themselves as Al Shabaab (the Youth) and scholars have been trying to understand young men's relationship to the insurgent group through the lens of youth as generational, and social category. See for example Rufino Siteo, "Youth Engagement in Violent Extremism in Northern Mozambique: Social Movement Analysis to the Radicalization Process," unpublished workshop paper, Mozambique Day, Belfast, June 2024; Eric Morier-Genoud, "Youth, generations and the insurgency," Mozambique Day, Belfast, June 2024.

⁵³ Mats Utas, 'Victimcy, Girlfriending, Soldiering: Tactic Agency in a Young Woman's Social Navigation of the Liberian War Zone', *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (2005): 403–30; Henrik Vigh, 'Youth Mobilisation as Social Navigation. Reflections on the Concept of Dubriagem', *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, no. 18/19 (2010): 140–64, <https://doi.org/10.4000/cea.110>; Luisa Enria, 'Love and Betrayal: The Political Economy of Youth Violence in Post-War Sierra Leone', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, no. 04 (December 2015): 637–60.

⁵⁴ Schafer, 'The Use of Patriarchal Imagery'; Alcinda Honwana, 'Children in War: Reintegrating Child Soldiers', *IDS Bulletin* 40, no. 1 (2009): 63–68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2009.00010.x>; Nikkie Wiegink, *Former Guerrillas in Mozambique* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020); Nikkie Wiegink, "'It Will Be Our Time To Eat': Former Renamo Combatants and Big-Man Dynamics in Central Mozambique", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 4 (2015): 869–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2015.1060090>.

used the figure of the child as agency-less victim to highlight the extraordinary physical violence through which Renamo enforced recruitment of minors into its army, a choice that, while depicting a reality, also allowed the Frelimo government to exert pressure on the insurgency's international supporters.⁵⁵

While the Renamo-conflict continues to be an important topic in recent historiography,⁵⁶ Frelimo's continuous re-election despite the party's turn away from socialism towards a neo-liberal market economy, and a persistent sense of post-socialist (or perhaps rather post-Samora) nostalgia among some sections of Mozambican society has sparked renewed interest in the party's wider, ideological project of nation-building and its legacies.⁵⁷ Against the background of the debates in both the 1980s and 1990s, the early 2000s saw a number of new, critical historical studies of social categories that had been politicized by Frelimo during the socialist-era, in particular 'women',⁵⁸ but also 'workers',⁵⁹ 'peasants',⁶⁰ and religious authorities.⁶¹ Among this newer scholarship, a third historiographical trend has crystallized. It has developed an analysis of Frelimo's ideological history

⁵⁵ Schafer, 'The Use of Patriarchal Imagery', 89.

⁵⁶ Several of the above publications are quite recent, see: Morier-Genoud, Cahen, and Rosário, *The War Within*; Wiegink, *Former Guerrillas in Mozambique*; Justin Pearce, 'History, Legitimacy, and Renamo's Return to Arms in Central Mozambique', *Africa* 90, no. 4 (2020): 1774-795, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/S0001972020000315>; Hlongwana James, 'Old Habits Die Hard: Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana (RENAMO) Propensity for Military Confrontation against Its Professed Embrace of Peaceful Conflict Resolution, 1976 to 2017', *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 12, no. 5 (2018): 63-68, <https://doi.org/10.5897/ajpsir2018.1073>.

⁵⁷ Marcia Schenck, 'A Chronology of Nostalgia: Memories of Former Angolan and Mozambican Worker Trainees to East Germany', *Labor History* 59, no. 3 (2018): 352-74; Janne Rantala, "'Hidrunisa Samora": Invocations of a Dead Political Leader in Maputo Rap', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 6 (November 2016): 161-77; M. Anne Pitcher, 'Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 76, no. 1 (2006): 88-112.

⁵⁸ Kathleen Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, NH, United States: Heinemann Educational Books, 2002); Heidi Gengenbach, *Binding Memories: Women as Makers and Tellers of History in Magde, Mozambique* (Columbia University Press, 2010); Stephanie Urdang, *And Still They Dance: Women, War, and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989).

⁵⁹ Eric Allina, *Slavery by Any Other Name: African Life under Company Rule in Colonial Mozambique*, (Reconsiderations in Southern African History, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

⁶⁰ M. Anne Pitcher, 'Disruption without Transformation: Agrarian Relations and Livelihoods in Nampula Province, Mozambique 1975-1995', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 1 (March 1998): 115-40.

⁶¹ Eric Mourier-Genoud, 'Of God and Ceasar, The Relation Between Christian Churches and the State in Post-Colonial Mozambique, 1974-1981', *Le Fait Missionnaire* 3, no. 1 (1996): 1-79.

through critical reading, rather than an uncritical reproduction of the liberation script.⁶² As Frelimo continues to limit access to state archives, these scholars have begun drawing on new and innovative methodologies at the intersection between ethnography, archive (both in Mozambique and abroad), memoir, music, literature, film and photography.⁶³ Furthermore, the opening of ‘solidarity archives,’ i.e. archives of solidarity committees mostly in Eastern Europe countries that have had close relationships with Frelimo during the struggle and the socialist era, has made new sources available through which historians were able to bring new facets of the liberation struggle to light.⁶⁴ Another new body of sources feeding this scholarship are veteran’s *depoimentos* (testimonies), both oral and written up as memoirs, many of which have been produced through the Ministério dos Antigos Combatentes in Maputo. These texts, used in combination with oral history interviews, have provided a new, largely unused source material for critical interpretation.⁶⁵

⁶² A Special Issue of *Kronos* sparked some of this trend. See Paolo Israel, ‘A Loosening Grip: The Liberation Script in Mozambican History’, *Kronos* 39 (2013); Raquel Schefer et al., ‘Fictions of the Liberation Struggle: Ruy Guerra, José Cardoso, Zdravko Velimirovic’, *Kronos*, no. 39 (2013): 298–315; Liazzat J.K. Bonate, ‘Muslim Memories of the Liberation War in Cabo Delgado’, *Kronos*, no. 39 (2013): 230–56; Joel Das Neves Tembe, ‘Uhuru Na Kazi: Recapturing MANU Nationalism through the Archive’, *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 257–79.

⁶³ Paolo Israel, ‘Mueda Massacre: The Musical Archive’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 6 (2017): 1157–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2017.1382186>; Alba Martín Luque, ‘“We Have Made History”: Yugoslav Visual Solidarity with FRELIMO’s Struggle (1967–1975)’, in *Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Africa: New Perspectives on the Era of Decolonization, 1950s to 1990s*, ed. Helder Adegar Fonseca, Lena Dallywater, and Chris Saunders (München: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023), 103–40, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110787757>; Alba Martín Luque, ‘Disparando imágenes: una historia visual de la guerra de descolonización del África portuguesa contada desde el caso de estudio del Frente de Liberación de Mozambique (FRELIMO), 1955–1975’ (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.2870/459244>; Drew A. Thompson, ‘Visualising FRELIMO’s Liberated Zones in Mozambique, 1962–1974’, *Social Dynamics* 39, no. 1 (2013): 24–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2013.774583>; Schefer et al., ‘Fictions of the Liberation Struggle’; Fernandes, ‘History Writing and State Legitimation in Postcolonial Mozambique’; Colin Darch and David Hedges, ‘Liberation and Biographical Narrative in Mozambican Historiography: The Struggle in Cabo Delgado, 1962–1974’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 47, no. 4 (4 July 2021): 605–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2021.1957621>.

⁶⁴ Ana Moledo, ‘“A New Phase of Anti-Imperialist Cooperation”: The Making of Liberation Alliances in 1960s’ (Unliberated) Southern Africa’, *Comparativ* 29, no. 4 (2019): 13–29, <https://doi.org/10.26014/j.comp.2019.04.02>; Natalia Telepneva, *Cold War Liberation: The Soviet Union and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, 1961–1975* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.5149/9781469665887_Telepneva; Klaus Storkmann, ‘Fighting the Cold War in Southern Africa? East German Military Support to FRELIMO’, *Portugese Journal of Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (2010): 151–64, https://doi.org/10.1386/pjss.9.2.151_1; Chris Saunders, Lena Dallywater, and Helder Adegar Fonseca, eds., *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War ‘East’: Transnational Activism 1960–1990* (De Gruyter, 2019).

⁶⁵ Darch and Hedges, ‘Liberation and Biographical Narrative in Mozambican Historiography’; For examples of the memoirs, see: João Facitela Pelembe, *Lutei pela pátria: memórias de um combatente da luta pela libertação nacional* (Maputo,

Thus, through a creative use of new sources and methodologies, these scholars have brought new perspectives on the actual history of the liberation struggle, as well as the material and ideational production of the liberation script, to light, embedded in a wider project of ‘writing the Nation.’ These recent developments have generated a host of new insights into the liberation struggle, but also the early years of independence, including of Frelimo’s disciplinary regime,⁶⁶ bilateral relationships⁶⁷ to the Soviet Union, East Germany, Yugoslavia, and ZANU, and the role of the

Mozambique: J.F. Pelembe, 2012); Sérgio Vieira, *Participei, por isso testemunho* (Maputo: Ndjira, 2011); Matias Mboa, *Memórias da luta clandestina* (Maputo: Marimbique, 2009); José Phahlane Moiane, *Memórias de um guerrilheiro* (Maputo: King Ngungunhane Institute, 2009); John William Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley to the Dream of Freedom: Memories of Lisungu* (Terra Alta, WV: Headline Books, 2017); Francisco Valentino Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho: Memórias de Um Povo Em Armas*, Kindle Edition (Maputo: Prize Books, 2022); An incredibly rich collection of transcribed interviews, so-called ‘depoimentos,’ can be found in: Ana Bouene Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da luta de libertação nacional* (Maputo: Marimbique, 2012).

⁶⁶ Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution’; Victor Igreja, ‘Frelimo’s Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36, no. 4 (2010): 781–99.

⁶⁷ Among others: Eric Allina, ‘“Neue Menschen” Für Mosambik, Erwartungen an Und Realität von Vertragsarbeit in Der DDR Der 1980er-Jahre’, *Arbeit, Bewegung, Geschichte: Zeitschrift Für Historische Studien* 15, no. 3 (2016): 65–84; Marcia C. Schenck, ‘Bound for Work: Labor, Mobility, and Colonial Rule in Central Mozambique, 1940–1965 by Zachary Kagan Guthrie (Review)’, *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 18, no. 2 (2021): 120–21; Tanja R. Müller, ‘The Imaginary of Socialist Citizenship in Mozambique: The School of Friendship as an Affective Community’, *Twentieth Century Communism* 15, no. 15 (2018): 134–57, <https://doi.org/10.3898/175864318824414798>; Storkmann, ‘Fighting the Cold War in Southern Africa?’; Munguambe, ‘Nationalism and Exile in an Age of Solidarity’; Martin Luque, ‘Disparando imágenes’.

media.⁶⁸ Scholars have placed an explicit emphasis on the processes through which Frelimo constructed political categories, such as ‘the People,’⁶⁹ ‘the Enemy,’⁷⁰ ‘culture,’⁷¹ and the ‘nation.’⁷²

Building on this scholarship’s insights about the workings of Frelimo’s political discourse, this thesis makes a long overdue contribution to Mozambican historiography by focusing on the revolutionary construction of youth as a central and critical part of Frelimo’s political ideology in the socialist era.⁷³ In doing so, I provide the first account of the OJM, which is a particular blind spot in the Mozambican historiography. While feminist historians and economic historians have produced monograph length studies of the Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (OMM)⁷⁴ and studies of workers have also addressed some of the roles of the Organização do Trabalhador Moçambicano (OTM),⁷⁵ I am not aware that a single historical study exists of the OJM.

⁶⁸ de Freitas, ‘Sounding the Nation, Sounding the Revolution’; Marco Roque de Freitas, ‘Rádio Clube de Moçambique: História económica e cultural de uma empresa radiofónica num contexto colonial (1932-1974)’, *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura*, no. 21 (2021): 97–120; Ros Gray, *Cinemas of the Mozambican Revolution: Anti-Colonialism, Independence and Internationalism in Filmmaking, 1968-1991* (Boydell & Brewer, 2020); Rui Assubuji and Patricia Hayes, ‘The Political Sublime. Reading Kok Nam, Mozambican Photographer (1939-2012)’, *Kronos*, no. 39 (2013): 66–111.

⁶⁹ Maria-Benedita Basto, ‘The Writings of the National Anthem in Independent Mozambique: Fictions of the Subject-People’, *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 185–203.

⁷⁰ Justin Pearce, ‘Simango, Gwenjere and the Politics of the Past in Mozambique’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 4 May 2021, 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2021.1907136>; Colin Darch and Paolo Israel, ‘Mozambique’s “Teachers of the Negative”: The Confessions of FRELIMO Dissidents at the Nachingwea Camp, March–May 1975’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 56, no. 2 (2023): 159–90; Maria Paula Meneses, ‘Xiconhoca, o inimigo: Narrativas de violência sobre a construção da nação em Moçambique’, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 106 (2015): 09–52, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.5869>.

⁷¹ Maria-Benedita Basto, ‘Writing a Nation or Writing a Culture? Frelimo and Nationalism during the Mozambican Liberation War’, in *Sure Road?: Nationalisms in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique*, *African Social Studies Series* 28 (Leiden, United States: Brill, 2012).

⁷² Eric Allina, ‘Unimaginable Community: Watchwords and Frelimo’s Abandoned Nationalism in Independence-Era Mozambique’, *The Journal of African History* 65, no. 1 (2024): 85–103, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853724000100>; Basto, ‘Writing a Nation or Writing a Culture?’

⁷³ Two exceptions are Michael Panzer’s study of the Mozambique Institute, Frelimo’s school in exile in Dar es Salaam during the liberation struggle, and Ana Leão’s study of “children and youth in Mozambique’s struggles.” Michael Panzer, ‘A nation in name, a “state” in exile: The FRELIMO proto-state, youth, gender, and the liberation of Mozambique 1962-1975’ (PhD diss., State University of New York, 2020); Ana Leão, ‘A Luta Continua: Children and Youth in Mozambique’s Struggles’, in *Invisible Stakeholders: Children and War in Africa*, ed. Angela McIntyre (Institute for Security Studies, 2005). While both of these studies write about young people as youth, neither reflects on the ways in which this category was politicized at their time of writing and what that meant for the sources they engaged with and the young people they write about.

⁷⁴ Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain*.

⁷⁵ Pitcher, ‘Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below’.

Furthermore, the present study contributes new insights to our understanding of Frelimo in the socialist-era more widely. Through an exploration of not only why and how Frelimo constructed youth, but also how this conceptualization became meaningful to Mozambicans, I reveal a new dimension of how mass democratic organizations such as the OJM constituted a normalizing force for Frelimo's authoritative discourse.

Youth as Discourse, Political Organization and Experience

This study is concerned with the construction of 'youth' as a revolutionary category in Frelimo's political discourse and its implications for organizational practices and effects on the experiences of coming of age among a particular generation of Mozambicans. The study is guided by three research questions: Firstly, how and why did Frelimo construct the concept youth in its discourse? Secondly, what kinds of practices, organizational cultures and policies did this conceptualization enable? And thirdly, what kinds of experiences and subjectivities arose from both discourse and policies?

In this section, I outline the four bodies of literature that have informed this study's approach to these questions. First, I review an interdisciplinary, Africanist scholarship on present-day youth that has shaped my understanding of youth as a socially constructed category and its relationship to discourse. This literature shows that even beyond the case at hand, youth is never a 'natural' category, but always socially constructed and usually at least in part through discourse. While emphasising this socially constructed nature of youth, this scholarship has few theoretical tools to offer in relation to gaining an understanding of the actors that are engaged in these processes of construction, particularly when they took place in the past. Thus, complementing this first literature, I review a second, historical scholarship on youth politics, that has produced rich accounts of the ways in which historical actors in particular circumstances shaped discourses about

youth. A particularly rich body of literature exists in relation to anti-colonial struggles, especially in South Africa, which has generated important insights for the Mozambican case. While I draw on these insights, I also argue that they need to be enhanced by a third literature to make sense of the kind of state-driven, pedagogically minded youth politics that characterized Mozambique during the socialist-era. This third literature forms part of a wider body of scholarship on youth in state-socialist, and particularly Marxist-Leninist contexts and gives insights into the kinds of purposes, organizational practices, but also experiences that so-called mass democratic organizations for youth have generated. Finally, while this study builds on all three literatures, I suggest that it is through a fourth literature that we can understand not only how and why Frelimo constructed youth as a revolutionary, political category, but also what kinds of effects this had on the way Mozambicans of the independence generation related to the category. This literature is grounded in a close examination of the workings of ‘authoritative discourse’ in the late Soviet Union and provides a fourth and final set of relevant insights.

Youth as Discourse

In one sense, this thesis takes as its starting point the study of youth as a ‘word,’ a socially constructed label, that took on a specific meaning in the particular context of the Mozambican revolution. In taking this focus, it builds on a long tradition of interdisciplinary Africanist scholarship on youth. The most recent wave of this large and continuously growing literature broke in the early 2000s, as a reaction to doom-laden prognoses about Africa’s ‘youth bulge.’ Political demographers researching conflict at the time correlated all kinds of evils with it: political instability, unemployment, violence and crime. As recently as 2004, a group of demographers found

an “extremely robust”⁷⁶ correlation between this so-called ‘youth bulge’ and political instability. A particularly (in)famous example was Richard Kaplan’s travel reports from a trip around West Africa, in which the statistic served as a screen onto which he projected his deeply racist, pessimistic views about the future of the entire continent. In this work, he gave male, urban youth in West Africa, the much-quoted title of “loose molecules in an unstable social fluid that threatened to ignite.”⁷⁷

Since the early 2000s, much scholarly effort has gone into dismantling the assumptions underpinning such pessimistic accounts. “Thus constructed,” Ismail and Alao wrote in 2007, “the ‘youth problem’ contributes to a trivialization and criminalization of young people and is limiting in several respects.”⁷⁸ Scholars have noted that the correlations between, for example, the number of youths and violent instability have been buttressed, in part, by the assertion that young men are “inherently violent,”⁷⁹ when both biological research and counter statistics have challenged this claim.⁸⁰ Nancy Scheper-Hughes pointed out that ‘youth bulge’ studies feed into “dangerous discourses of ‘savage,’ ‘barbaric,’ and (above all) ‘dangerous’” male youth.⁸¹

Another line of critique pointed to the fact that such doom-laden accounts fundamentally misunderstood both young people’s lived realities and who counted and did not count as a ‘youth’

⁷⁶ See: Henrik Urdal, ‘The Devil in the Demographics: The Effect of Youth Bulges on Domestic Armed Conflict, 1950-2000’, *Social Development Papers The World Bank* no. 14 (2004): 16. Richard P. Cincotta, ‘Half a Chance: Youth Bulges and Transitions to Liberal Democracy’, *Environmental Change and Security Program Report*, no. 13 (2008): 10; Elizabeth Leahy et al., *The Shape of Things to Come: Why Age Structure Matters to a Safer, More Equitable World* (Population Action International Washington, DC, 2007).

⁷⁷ Kaplan 1996, 16, cited in: Marc Sommers, ‘Governance, Security and Culture: Assessing Africa’s Youth Bulge’, *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 5, no. 2 (2011): 295, <https://doi.org/10.4119/ijcv-2874>.

⁷⁸ Olawale Ismail and Abiodun Alao, ‘Youths in the Interface of Development and Security’, *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 1 (2007): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800601176477>.

⁷⁹ Richard P. Cincotta, Robert Engelman, and Daniele Anastasion, *The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict after the Cold War* (Population Action International-Security Demographic Washington, DC, 2003), 44.

⁸⁰ Gary Barker and Christine Ricardo, *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence* (Citeseer, 2005).

⁸¹ Nancy Scheper-Hughes, ‘Dangerous and Endangered Youth: Social Structures and Determinants of Violence’, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1036, no. 1 (2004): 315, <https://doi.org/10.1196/annals.1330.002>.

in African societies. Instead of endorsing ‘Western’ epistemologies that designated anyone of a certain age-group as a youth, the quickly emerging counter-scholarship that constitutes today’s bulk of the study of youth in Africa,⁸² drew on ethnographic research to argue that issues of ‘youth’ are always also issues of social categorization and language. Perhaps most famously, Deborah Durham in 2000 coined the analytical notion of youth as a “social shifter,”⁸³ an “arbitrarily defined label in relation to generational politics.”⁸⁴ Durham drew on an older anthropological scholarship to argue that markers of youth and adulthood were deeply entrenched in systems of social and material reproduction and relations. Among the Nuer studied by Edward Evans-Pritchard, for example, youth were created in age cohorts through rites of passages that usually involved extensive performances.⁸⁵ In “gerontocratic organization [...] based on a hierarchy of secrecy and control over marriage,”⁸⁶ others, such as David Pratten, noted, initiation rites gain importance, because through them “elders maintain their power and status through their ability to interpret and give meaning to social existence.”⁸⁷ “All of these studies,” Durham concluded, “affirmed the long-held anthropological principle that social categories are culturally constructed [...] and] how youth were created through the exercise of power and claims to knowledge of elders.”⁸⁸ To describe this process, she ‘borrowed’ a term from linguistics: “a shifter is a special kind of [...] term that works not through absolute referentiality to a fixed context, but one that relates the speaker to a relational, or indexical context.”⁸⁹ Such a term, according to Durham, can “go beyond immediate relationships

⁸² David Pratten points out that some of this boom was sparked by the 2003 ASA conference on Youth in the 21st century. David Pratten, *The Youth Reader*, forthcoming.

⁸³ Deborah Durham, ‘Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to Parts 1 and 2’, *Anthropological Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2000): 113.

⁸⁴ Pratten, *The Youth Reader*.

⁸⁵ Edward Evans-Pritchard, *Kinship And Marriage Among The Nuer*, Revised ed. edition (Oxford : New York: Oxford University Press, U.S.A., 1990), cited in: Durham, ‘Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa’, 115.

⁸⁶ Pratten, *The Youth Reader*, 7.

⁸⁷ Pratten, 7.

⁸⁸ Durham, ‘Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa’, 115.

⁸⁹ Durham, 117.

being negotiated.”⁹⁰ In other words, when “people bring the concept of youth to bear in situations, they situate themselves in a social landscape of power, rights, expectations, and relationships.”⁹¹

A similarly popular insight among scholars of African youth was most famously captured by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s 1978 interview, where he stated that “*La ‘jeunesse’ n’est qu’un mot*” (“the ‘youth’ is merely/ nothing but a word”).⁹² What Bourdieu noted as a “banal” observation was that while any society will have members of different ages, the meaning that this fact is given, who is whose senior and whose junior, is “variable and subject to manipulation.”⁹³ According to Bourdieu, “youth and age are not self-evident facts, but are constructed socially, in the struggle between the young and the old.”⁹⁴ Bourdieu called such struggles ‘classification struggles,’ which occur in specific ‘fields,’ that are in turn regulated by ‘laws.’ While not many scholars of youth have developed their analysis through an application of Bourdieu’s full theoretical ‘apparatus,’ scholars of African youth have adopted Bourdieu’s phrase, “the youth is merely a word” to point our attention to the very different (in relation to North America and Western Europe) kinds of actors and social forces through which the meaning of youth is constructed in different contexts. Through Bourdieu, scholars have also shown how across the African continent, youth was a highly contested social category, fractured along lines that included class, gender, rural-urban divides, and religion.

⁹⁰ Durham, 117.

⁹¹ Durham, 117.

⁹² Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question* (College de France, France: SAGE Publications, 1993), 95. Trond Waage, ‘Coping with unpredictability “preparing for life” in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon,’ In: *Navigating Youth, Generating Adulthood*, ed. Christiansen, Utas, and Vigh (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2006).

⁹³ ‘On est toujours le vieux ou le jeune de quelqu’un. C’est pourquoi les coupures soit en classes d’âge, soit en générations, sont tout à fait variables et sont un enjeu de manipulations.’ Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, 95.

⁹⁴ ‘Ce que je veux rappeler, c’est tout simplement que la jeunesse et la vieillesse ne sont pas des données mais sont construites socialement, dans la lutte entre les jeunes et les vieux.’ Bourdieu, 95.

Both Durham and Bourdieu's insights are valuable for the exploration of the case at hand. When Machel stepped up to the podium of Josina Machel Secondary School to address the 'Mozambican youth' on December 15th, 1976, he did not make an objective observation about a demographic or even socially homogenous group. Machel's use of the term revolutionary youth addressed an 18-year-old black factory worker as much as a 24-year-old white student at the University of Lourenço Marques, the ballet-dancing daughter of an *assimilado* (colonial category of an 'assimilated person') in Maputo's *cidade cimento* (literally cement city, term for neighbourhoods restricted to European settlers) as much as the farmer's son or mission school student in rural Niassa. The designation youth, the 'word,' was among the few things uniting those sat in the assembly hall, a shifter that Machel employed to "situate [his audience] in a social landscape of power, rights, expectations, and relationships."⁹⁵

Unlike the young people that Durham is describing, however, it was not young people themselves in first instance, who involved the label 'youth' to claim particular situatedness, but Machel and the Mozambican state through him, who used the label to place young people into new social and political relationships. And while anthropologists of kinship and generation have long noted similar practices by social elders, who powerfully shaped youths' aspirations through their control over the social markers of adulthood (the secrets imparted through rites of passages, access to land, and bride wealth), Machel's motives for calling on youth were derived from a different set of considerations, rooted in a particular moment in history.⁹⁶ If the insights of the presentist youth literature can therefore illuminate how youth is constructed (namely through discourse), we must

⁹⁵ Durham, 'Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa', 117.

⁹⁶ Pratten, *The Youth Reader*, 7.

turn to another body of literature to gain an understanding of why particular historical actors should choose to engage in such discursive constructions at particular times in the past.

Youth as Political Organizations

An understanding of youth as a socially constructed category came perhaps more naturally to many of the social historians who took an interest in youth in the context of anti-colonial struggles and armed struggles for liberation. Unlike the present-focussed youth literature, this scholarship paid close attention to the historical processes that shaped how constructions of youth shifted across time and place, and the events and actors involved in such processes. In addition, this scholarship developed a nuanced theoretical toolkit for the study of youth as a political category in contexts of anti-colonial liberation and revolution. The literature developed mostly in the 1990s, when book volumes titled *Vanguard or Vandal*, or *Heroes or Villains* stressed that post-colonial regimes had gotten caught in a dichotomy that viewed the category youth either in relation to a heroic narrative of liberation or through stereotypes of crime, idleness and unemployment.⁹⁷ In response, these scholars suggested paying close attention to the processes, actors and events that had contributed to the emergence of these dichotomous constructions of youth in relation to politics.

This literature reveals that the category youth had undergone a drastic politicization in many places across the African continent. One of the observations highlighted by this body of literature is that the politicization of the category youth (and in fact also the category ‘student,’ albeit in a different way)⁹⁸ was often the result of the development of organizations that were active in anti-colonial

⁹⁷ Jon Abbink, ‘Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa’, in *Vanguard or Vandals* (Brill, 2021), ; Jeremy Seekings, *Heroes or Villains?: Youth Politics in the 1980s* (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1993); Jeremy Seekings, ‘Beyond Heroes and Villains: The Rediscovery of the Ordinary in the Study of Childhood and Adolescence in South Africa’, *Social Dynamics* 32, no. 1 (2006): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533950608628717>.

⁹⁸ For an insightful discussion that traces the historical circumstances under which each category came to dominate both in public discourse and young people’s identifications, see: Seekings, *Heroes or Villains?*

resistance. In the first half of the 20th century, some nationalist movements, for example, grew out of youth organizations, such as the Ghanaian Convention People's Party (CPP), which started out as the Committee on Youth Organization of the United Gold Coast Convention.⁹⁹ Senegalese Lamine-Gueye's movement Jeune Senegal (Young Senegal) predated Senghor's cohort of nationalists.¹⁰⁰ And in Somalia, the first "recognisably Somali 'nationalist' organisation [was] the Somali Youth Club."¹⁰¹ In other cases, nationalist movements created youth organizations for purposes of recruitment. According to James Brennan, this was "a common strategy of emerging nationalist parties during the late 1940s and 1950s"¹⁰² in Anglophone countries. Among the Anglophone nationalist movements who shared a tradition of political organizing (so-called 'Congress' movements), most created not only main wings and women's wings, but also youth wings (or leagues). This "trend,"¹⁰³ as the former Secretary General of the OJM called it, gave rise to political organizations, such as the Tanganyikan African National Union Youth League (TYL), the African National Congress Youth League (ANC YL), the Zimbabwean African National Union Youth League (ZANU YL) and so on. While these youth wings differed in relation to their purposes, ambitions and strategies and abilities to operate 'above ground' in contexts of growing state repression, many played active, often violent roles in the anti-colonial struggles that lastingly shaped how media, colonial states, liberation movements and young people themselves perceived 'youth.'¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Aristide R. Zolberg, 'Youth as a Political Phenomenon in Tropical Africa', *Youth & Society* 1, no. 2 (December 1969): 205, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X6900100205>.

¹⁰⁰ Zolberg, 205.

¹⁰¹ Cedric Barnes, 'The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, c.1946–48', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (2007): 280, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531050701452564>.

¹⁰² James R. Brennan, 'Youth, the Tanu Youth League and Managed Vigilantism in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 1925–73', *Africa* 76, no. 2 (2006): 222, <https://doi.org/10.3366/afr.2006.76.2.221>.

¹⁰³ Amour Zacarias Kupela, Notes, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, 03 July 2022.

¹⁰⁴ Clive Glaser, *The ANC Youth League, Ohio Short Histories of Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013); Brennan, 'Youth, the Tanu Youth League'; Emma Orchardson, 'The International Origins of the Malawi Young Pioneers', (blog) 2022, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/blog/the_international_origins.

The discourses through which these organizations constructed the meaning of youth could be vastly different, but the historiography highlights that they were usually linked to the particular historical experiences of these youth organizations, as well as the wider ideologies of their respective anti-colonial movements. In Zanzibar, for example, Thomas Burgess traced the development of two distinct forms of youth identities during the Zanzibari Revolution, ‘vanguard’ and ‘client’ youth. These categories, Burgess argued, were linked to two different models of political organization. Vanguard youth “defined themselves as a distinct historical cohort,”¹⁰⁵ that shared experiences of nationalist mobilization, ‘political studenthood’¹⁰⁶ and travel abroad, all organized through Abdulrahman Muhammed ‘Babu’s youth organisation, the Youth’s Own Union (YOU).¹⁰⁷ As a consequence, Burgess observes, “Youth emerged as an imagined generation comparable to and in rhetorical relationship with elders, workers, women, and racial terms employed in the partisan discourse of the time.”¹⁰⁸ Client youth, in contrast, rooted their understanding of the category youth in “‘timeless’ principles of patronage and patriarchy,”¹⁰⁹ practiced by the Afro-Shirazi Party Youth League (ASPYL). This organization, which was set up as a recruiting mechanism throughout the Afro-Shirazi Party’s branches, promoted a discourse, in which the meaning of youth was determined “by what position they occupied within the life cycle between birth and death, with youth possessing its own characteristics as a generation, and having its own separate social and political roles to play.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ G. Thomas Burgess, ‘Imagined Generations: Constructing Youth in Revolutionary Zanzibar’, in *Vanguard or Vandals*, by Jon Abbink, ed. Ineke Van Kessel (Brill, 2005), 55, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047407003_008.

¹⁰⁶ Dan Hodgkinson, ‘An Oral History of Zimbabwean Student Activism’ (2018).

¹⁰⁷ Burgess, ‘Imagined Generations’, 59–61.

¹⁰⁸ Burgess, 62.

¹⁰⁹ Burgess, 55.

¹¹⁰ Burgess, 65.

The effects of such processes of category construction were far reaching. As scholars of liberation struggles and political youth activism have long noted, identities built around youth, masculinities or ‘political studenthood’ could powerfully shape young people’s aspirations, animate particular forms of activism, and give meaning to experiences of political violence.¹¹¹ Furthermore, this literature has identified certain shared features among the kinds of discourses that anti-colonial struggles produced. A particularly rich historical scholarship on this topic emerged in relation to the South African anti-apartheid struggle, where, as Jeremy Seekings notes, “The category of youth [...] is political rather than a sociological or demographic construct.”¹¹² In his study of “the construction and reconstruction of th[e] category [youth] in South Africa,”¹¹³ Seekings notes that apocalyptic and liberatory stereotypes about youth existed in parallel, but dominated at different times in the country’s recent history. Apocalyptic stereotypes that cast youth as ‘hostile’ and identified them “with violence and destruction,”¹¹⁴ were rooted in media discourses from as early as the 1960s, that combined “racist imageries of African ‘idleness’ and savagery (feared by white South Africans for so long), with the western tradition of urban male criminality and the associated feat of generational rebellion.”¹¹⁵ Liberatory stereotypes, on the other hand, focussed on the “political commitment of the youth and their contribution in the struggle for justice and liberation, [...] depict[ing] them as purposeful and altruistic,”¹¹⁶ rather than disorderly and destructive.

¹¹¹ Richard Waller, ‘Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa’, *The Journal of African History* 47, no. 01 (5 April 2006): 77; Dan Hodgkinson, ‘The “Hardcore” Student Activist: The Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), State Violence, and Frustrated Masculinity, 2000–2008’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39, no. 4 (December 2013): 863–83; Dan Hodgkinson, ‘Politics on Liberation’s Frontiers: Student Activist Refugees, International Solidarity, and The Struggle for Zimbabwe, 1965–79’, *The Journal of African History* 62, no. 1 (March 2021): 99–123, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853721000268>; Luisa Enria, ‘Love and Betrayal: The Political Economy of Youth Violence in Post-War Sierra Leone’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, no. 04 (December 2015): 637–60; Catrine Christiansen, Mats Utas, and Henrik E. Vigh, eds., *Navigating Youth, Generating Adulthood: Social Becoming in an African Context* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2006).

¹¹² Seekings, ‘*Heroes and Villains?*’, xi.

¹¹³ Seekings, ‘*Heroes or Villains?*’, xii.

¹¹⁴ Seekings, ‘*Heroes and Villains?*’, xi.

¹¹⁵ Seekings, 4.

¹¹⁶ Seekings, 6.

While the South African case differed in many important respects from the Mozambican case at hand, Seeking's account has informed my understanding of youth as a category, whose meaning is constructed by actors drawing on multiple discursive repertoires, including, but not limited to youth organization's actual political activism. In the Mozambican case, Frelimo's revolutionary youth was shaped by stereotypes similar to the South African 'liberatory view,' but derived much more from an imagined, idealized vision of a revolutionary future society than actual historical experiences (see chapters two and three). Similarly, 'apocalyptic' stereotypes, derived from colonial-era discourses, fed into Frelimo's constructions of youth, but as the 'liberatory' view's counterpart, the 'enemy' inside the youth's head, which needed to be overcome for the New Man to emerge.¹¹⁷ Building on these insights, this study places a similar focus on the historical processes and organizational politics that shaped youth discourses during Mozambique's socialist era. While in most of these cases, members of political youth organizations (and also outside of organizations, as in the South African case) played an active part in how the media, state officials and ordinary people perceived the category youth, young Mozambicans had considerably less agency to claim and shape the label youth during the anti-colonial struggle. As I will show in chapter two of this thesis, for reasons to do with Frelimo's struggle politics, the label 'youth' was confined to a realm of the liberation struggle that was far removed from the battlefield or street riots against colonial police. It was only after independence that the former liberation movement turned vanguard party embraced the category youth and wrote it into its wider political discourse.

¹¹⁷ On Frelimo's New Man, see: Sérgio Vieira, 'O Homem Novo é Um Processo', *Tempo* 398 (1978): 27–38; Solange Evangelista Luis, 'O Homem Novo nas Literaturas Africanas em Língua Portuguesa pré-independência', *Revista Cadernos do Ceom* 33, no. 53 (18 December 2020): 62–70; Guilherme Lauterbach Palermo, 'A categoria de "Homem Novo" aplicada pela Frente de Libertação de Moçambique : suas expressões nos testemunhos de ex-combatentes da FRELIMO', 2017.

While the bulk of this literature focusses on youth in anti-colonial struggles across the African continent, several studies also produced rich insights into processes of discursive construction after independence where the new nationalist government was the main actor driving new discourses about youth. Not many nationalist leaders in power were as ambitious and fervent in their revolutionary vision and discourse as Samora Machel and the Frelimo leadership. But most developed some form of discourse about youth, either in relation to creating generational breaks with the colonial era or in relation to passing on the values of the liberation generation. Among the more youth-focussed leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Ahmed Sékou Touré in Guinea and Abeid Karume in Zanzibar, there was a shared a view of youth with similarities to Frelimo's and in fact also the South African 'liberatory view' of youth. This view regarded youth as both active political agents in relation to nationalist parties and subjects of a revolutionary state pedagogy, through which the state gained the ability to 'forge' an ideal future citizen.

Such regimes shared the language of 'organizing' their societies along similar categories (typically workers, peasants, women and youth)¹¹⁸ and typically established youth organizations tasked with the youth's 'correct' ideological and political socialization. As Jeffrey Ahlman writes, the Nkrumah government "sought to present the [Ghana] Young Pioneers as part of an increasingly all-encompassing process of ideological socialization."¹¹⁹ Discipline and performance were important ways of demonstrating the nationalist party's success at socializing the youth, and by extension, controlling the future. As Thomas Burgess notes in relation to the Zanzibari Young Pioneers:

A typical Young Pioneer parade submitted, as bodies of evidence, thousands of uniformed young people, whose synchronized movements were supposed to demonstrate the sort of discipline, unity and regimentation upon which officials

¹¹⁸ See: Jeffrey S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens, OH, United States: Ohio University Press, 2017), 9.

¹¹⁹ Ahlman, 'Living with Nkrumahism' 101.

believed nation building relied. They momentarily affirmed the feasibility of what was intended to be a revolution in island society.¹²⁰

While these studies point to an important dimension of ‘youth politics’ as something that could be state-initiated, rather than driven by young people, and loaded with nationalist and revolutionary rituals, symbols and language, the Africa-focussed scholarship on these kinds of youth organizations is rather thin, especially with regards to their effects on both, their members and the wider revolutionary societies they operated in. How were revolutionary youth organizations situated in the wider political systems? What roles did they play? And how did they shape experiences and subjectivities among members and the wider society?

Youth as Revolutionary Experience

To approach these questions, it has been useful to turn to a third literature that has paid close attention to the kind of post-independence, revolutionary, state-socialist youth politics that Frelimo engaged the independence generation in. This scholarship has highlighted that twentieth-century states, regardless of ideological orientation – fascist, socialist or indeed democratic – pioneered a range of discourses, policies and pedagogies to ‘forge’ incoming generations in the image of an ideal youth. From fascist Italy to the 1950s United States, scholars such as Luisa Passerini and Félix Krawatzek have argued that in the 20th century, youth became a “metaphor for social change.”¹²¹ As on the African continent, constructions of youth, embedded in political discourse, tended to emerge in parallel to new forms of political organization. Particularly socialist regimes, spearheaded by the Soviet Union and China, embraced the kinds of discourses and organizational practices that

¹²⁰ Thomas Burgess, ‘The Young Pioneers and the Rituals of Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar’, *Africa Today* 51, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 5.

¹²¹ Luisa Passerini, ‘Youth as a Metaphor for Social Change: Fascist Italy and America in the 1950s’, in *A History of Young People Volume Two: Stormy Evolution to Modern Times*, ed. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, Revised Edition (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 281–340; Félix Krawatzek, ‘Youth as a Political Force in Twentieth-Century Europe: An Overview’, in *Youth in Regime Crisis: Comparative Perspectives from Russia to Weimar Germany*, ed. Félix Krawatzek (Oxford University Press, 2018), 51–82, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198826842.003.0003>.

we saw mirrored (albeit in distorted ways) among some African revolutionary regimes after independence. According to an East German political dictionary from 1967, a socialist youth policy was “part and parcel of the policy of the Marxist-Leninist party in a socialist state,”¹²² and aimed at “a continuous development of the socialist personality in a young person.” Like Nkrumah, Sékou Touré and indeed Machel, socialist discourses about youth depicted the category as a powerful political agent with a historic responsibility to ‘continue,’ and ‘construct’ the communist future that all socialism aspired to. Addressing the party in 1920 Lenin noted that:

it is all the more necessary to dwell on this question [of what the youth organisations in a socialist republic should be like] because in a certain sense it may be said that it is the youth that will be faced with the actual task of creating a communist society.¹²³

The ideal socialist youth was selfless and dedicated to the revolutionary project, as the East German Youth Act of 1974 professed: “[youth] continue the revolutionary work of preceding generations with great seriousness and do everything in their power to meet the demands made on them in our day.”¹²⁴

And like the Mozambican Frelimo party-state, such regimes tended to run large-scale youth organizations with elaborate pedagogical programmes to ensure the socialization of new generations in alignment with these values. According to Gleb Tsipursky, the Soviet Union constituted what Zygmunt Baumann has called a ‘gardening state’ in the sense the Soviet regime strove to “transform—to garden—their populations, thus growing an ordered society that fits the

¹²² “Sozialistische Jugendpolitik,” *Kleines Politisches Wörterbuch*, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1967). 598.

¹²³ Vladimir Lenin, ‘The Tasks of the Youth Leagues’, in *Collected Works of V. I. Lenin*, vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1920), 283–99.

¹²⁴ Miranda Brethour, “‘Wer die Jugend hat, hat die Zukunft’: Raising Global Cold Warriors Through the Jugendweihe in the Former German Democratic Republic”, *Strata University of Ottawa Graduate Student History Review* 8 (August 2018): 67.

leadership's needs and ideals."¹²⁵ Youth organizations played a significant role in that endeavour. The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) under Stalin or the East German Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ) involved the majority of their young in diverse forms of pedagogical activities. Besides political committees meant to represent the interests of the youth, the Komsomol, for example, also ran a cadre school, a youth magazine, a youth tourism agency, youth clubs for cultural events, lectures and seminars, dance groups, school holiday and work camps, festivals and even an office for foreign relations with its own solidarity committee.¹²⁶

These activities, scholars of various Soviet generations have argued, produced emotional and embodied experiences among entire generations. Studying state-sponsored popular cultural activities in the Soviet Union, many of which were coordinated through the Komsomol (just as in Mozambique through the OJM), Gleb Tsipursky argued, for example, that “helps illuminate the evolution of Soviet emotional regimes and emotional communities,”¹²⁷ as Soviet youth and cultural policy constantly strove to “ensure that young people expressed and experienced officially prescribed sentiments within state-sponsored popular culture.”¹²⁸ While some young people in such activities “participated in [...] cultural activities in ways that departed from the intentions of the leadership; [and...] failed to experience and express prescribed feelings,”¹²⁹ Gleb argues that

¹²⁵ Gleb Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun: Youth, Consumption, and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1945-1970*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), 10.

¹²⁶ Robert Hornsby, ‘Strengthening Friendship and Fraternal Solidarity: Soviet Youth Tourism to Eastern Europe under Khrushchev and Brezhnev’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 71, no. 7 (2019): 1205–32; Robert Hornsby, ‘The Post-Stalin Komsomol and the Soviet Fight for Third World Youth’, *Cold War History* 16, no. 1 (2016): 83–100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2015.1078316>; Gleb Tsipursky, ‘Pleasure, Power, and the Pursuit of Communism: Soviet Youth and State-Sponsored Popular Culture during the Early Cold War, 1945–1968’ (PhD diss, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2011).

¹²⁷ Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun*, 11.

¹²⁸ Tsipursky, 11.

¹²⁹ Tsipursky, 46.

“significant numbers among the young readily devoted themselves to cultural activities that bore a substantial ideological load, such as singing songs elegizing Stalin.”¹³⁰

Juliane Fürst highlights further in her study of Stalin’s ‘Last Generation’ that ritualized Komsomol activities worked to ‘integrate’ young people into wider Soviet life. It was the seemingly mundane ritualistic practices, such as the Komsomol assembly, de-facto meaningless electoral practices, and other day-to-day practices that shaped people’s relationship with the state.¹³¹ As Fürst notes: “regardless of their factual democratic credibility, Soviet practices and rituals produced integrative powers and gave stable frameworks in which individuals were able to find identities and meaning.”¹³² Yet, this was a fragile construct and the Soviet state constantly anxious of its demise. The integrative powers of these rituals, Fürst notes, “was often in the imaginative sphere - as long as people believed in their value, they worked, the moment doubts arose, their many shortcomings became obvious.”¹³³

When Machel declared in 1976 that the youth were “the Embryo of the New Man”¹³⁴ he was thus repeating a credo that resounded among some African liberation movements, but much more loudly all over the socialist world. This was a world that Machel considered Mozambique to be part of and to which the makers of Frelimo’s youth policies had intimate links. While the intimate connections to this global world of revolutionary, socialist, youth organisations did not result in a direct, one-way influence, as was long assumed, Frelimo did draw on particular sources of inspiration from these socialist discourses and organizational practices selectively, for reasons that

¹³⁰ Tsipursky, 8.

¹³¹ Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 95.

¹³² Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 95.

¹³³ Fürst, 111.

¹³⁴ “Juventude: O Centro da Batalha, Discurso do Presidente Samora e Inquérito,” *Tempográfica* No. 325, December 1976, 42-60.

were rooted in the politics of state- and nation-building during the early years of independence. Like the Soviet Komsomol, Frelimo's OJM ran a wide range of pedagogical activities, from so-called *grupos culturales* (cultural groups) that practiced and performed dance, choral singing, theatre and poetry, via weekly meetings, seminars, and widespread but highly unpopular volunteer work activities. The OJM had also made plans to set up its own magazine and took initial steps throughout the 1970s and 80s to create cultural centres, a radio show and a cadre school. None of these would ever grow to become nearly as wide in their reach as the Komsomol's institutions. Yet, they had profound effects in other ways.

Youth and the Revolutionization of Language

One of the paradoxes at the heart of this study is that although the OJM had a fairly limited reach in terms of members and its most active time period, Frelimo's revolutionary conceptualization of youth seems to have become widely and deeply engrained in the consciousness of a generation of Mozambicans who came of age in Maputo during the socialist experiment. To gain an understanding of the kinds of roles that state-socialist youth organizations, like the OJM could play, I found a fourth literature, or rather individual scholar, insightful.

Alexej Yurchak's *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* is widely known for its arguments in relation to the demise of the Soviet Union. In this study, Yurchak was primarily interested in what the changes in late socialism meant for Soviet People's experiences of the regime's fall and the system's demise. Over the course of the book, however, he developed a nuanced understanding of the Komsomol's role not in relation to its pedagogical activities, but precisely, in Fürst's sense, as an institution through which Soviet generations encountered officialdom in ritualistic ways. Yurchak's study of the 'last Soviet generation' focusses on how these encounters were mediated by

language, in particular something he calls the socialist state's authoritative discourse.¹³⁵ Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin, Yurchak argued that what characterised the use of language in the late Soviet Union (between the 1950s and the 1990s) was the existence of different, coexisting kinds of languages that Soviet people associated with different spheres of life: the family, friends, the community (*svoy*, meaning 'us'), or the Soviet state, with all its affiliated institutions.¹³⁶ The latter language was associated with state-socialism, its values, principles, and visual and ritualistic discourses. It was the language of Komsomol meetings, reports, party posters, rallies, political speeches, and government approved films.

Authoritative discourse was encoded in a particular "script" that sharply demarcated it from all other types of discourse.¹³⁷ Its words and signifiers could not be translated effortlessly into everyday communications, and when used, they would be recognized as belonging to the state-socialist script. The centrality of script lay in the fact that all other types of coexisting discourses needed to be organized around the it. To be taken seriously, other discourses had to establish their relationship to the script, "refer to it, quote it, praise it, interpret it, apply it, and so forth,"¹³⁸ without, however, interfering with its code or changing it. As a result, the state-socialist script became omnipresent and experienced as "immutable and therefore unquestionable."¹³⁹

Despite the myriad of differences between the Soviet and the Mozambican context, the notion of 'authoritative discourse' is helpful in understanding the socialist-era as well as the ways in which

¹³⁵ Bakhtin; Mikhail, *The Dialogical Imagination: Four Essays by Mikhail Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 342-43, cited in: Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 13. According to Bakhtin, authoritative discourse "coheres around a strict external idea or dogma (whether religious, political, or otherwise) and occupies a particular position within the discursive regime of a period."

¹³⁶ Bakhtin *The Dialogical Imagination*, 342-43.

¹³⁷ Yurchak, 13.

¹³⁸ Yurchak, *Everything was Forever*, 13.

¹³⁹ Yurchak, 13.

Frelimo's revolutionary youth discourse became so deeply engrained in the independence generation's discursive repertoire. Like Soviet state-socialism, the Mozambican state-socialism rested to a large extent on the establishment of an authoritative discourse based on a revolutionary, socialist script. Scholars of the Mozambican post-independence era have long noted the peculiarity of Frelimo's language. Machel himself was an "effective orator, lively and entertaining."¹⁴⁰ He delivered captivating speech performances and was widely known for his charisma and magnetism as a public speaker.¹⁴¹ As we will see throughout the chapters, this was a magnetism that many young people felt drawn towards.

Some scholars have remarked its fervour,¹⁴² while others have explicitly used the term 'script' (i.e. liberation script) to describe how Frelimo encoded knowledge in particular forms of revolutionary terminology.¹⁴³ In very literal terms, one of Frelimo's first concerns was the question of which of Mozambique's many vernacular language to elevate as the independent state's official language. In a widely debated move, the leadership chose to adopt Portuguese as the national language, despite its colonial origins and the vast majority of Mozambicans not being fluent in it. Frelimo's Portuguese, however, would be appropriated through a process of *enriquecimento* (enrichment) through vocabulary that would "simultaneously [...] reflect and structure new human

¹⁴⁰ Colin Darch and David Hedges, 'Political Rhetoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975', *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 64.

¹⁴¹ John S. Saul, 'The African Hero in Mozambican History: On Assassinations and Executions – Part II', *Review of African Political Economy* 47, no. 164 (2 April 2020): 336, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2020.1792119>; Allen Isaacman, 'Samora Moises Machel and Comrades: A Tribute', *Africa Today* 33, no. 1 (1986): 3; Patricio Langa, 'O homem na sociedade ou a sociedade no homem: Desafios epistémico e metodológico para uma análise sociológica do carisma de Samora Machel', *Revista Angolana de Sociologia*, no. 13 (1 June 2014): 67–79, <https://doi.org/10.4000/ras.985>; Colin Darch and David Hedges, 'Political Rhetoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975', *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 32–65; Benedito Luís Machava, 'The Morality of the Revolution - Urban Cleanup Campaigns, Reeducation Camps and Cities' (PhD diss., Michigan, University of Michigan, 2019), 23, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/145971>.

¹⁴² Jocelyn Alexander and Gary Kynoch, 'Introduction: Histories and Legacies of Punishment in Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (September 2011): 410, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2011.602880>.

¹⁴³ João Paulo Borges Coelho, *Memory, History, Fiction: A Note on the Politics of the Past in Mozambique* (EHESS, Paris, 2010).

relationships.”¹⁴⁴ In this process, terms were invented, adapted or filled with entirely new meanings. The term *engajado* (‘engaged/committed’), for example, was coined to refer to “those who were ideologically committed to the revolution.”¹⁴⁵ The colonial-era term for domestic employee, *domestico* (‘domestic’) became *empregado* (‘employed’).¹⁴⁶ Youth, as we will see, became one such word.¹⁴⁷

As in the Soviet Union, the Frelimo state’s authoritative discourse penetrated public space, at least in the urban areas. As Anne Pitcher noted, visitors to Mozambique in the late 1970s found themselves surrounded by:

Consciously crafted murals, brightly colored political posters, random graffiti, buttons, badges, and decals [that] constantly informed even the most casual observers where the country had come from and where the new government wanted it to go. Sculptures depicted a valiant struggle against the colonial Portuguese and the triumphant victory by [Frelimo] in 1975. Striking images illustrated the defense and consolidation of national independence under the leadership of the Frelimo one-party state. Bold slogans drawn on street pavements in the newly named capital of Maputo proclaimed the end of feudalism, colonialism, and backwardness, or celebrated the equality of women, the arrival of justice, and the construction of socialism. Phrases etched on the factory walls of state companies from Zambezia in the north to Maputo in the south exhorted workers to improve production; while colorful, state-commissioned posters implored rural peoples to breastfeed their babies, vaccinate their animals, give blood, educate their offspring, and harvest more cashew and cotton.¹⁴⁸

Over the course of the first year of independence, the urban landscape was completely transformed to reflect the authoritative discourse of the new regime. Streets and cities were renamed after the heroes of the liberation script and the wider socialist world: Avenida Mao Tse Tung, Karl Marx,

¹⁴⁴ Christopher Stroud, ‘Portuguese as Ideology and Politics in Mozambique: Semiotic (Re)Constructions of a Postcolony’, in *Language Ideological Debates*, ed. Jan Blommaert (De Gryter Mouton, 1999).

¹⁴⁵ Stroud, ‘Portuguese as Ideology’, 351.

¹⁴⁶ Stroud, 351.

¹⁴⁷ In relation to children an entire new word was invented, the continuador (‘those who would continue the revolution’). See: Stroud, 351.

¹⁴⁸ M. Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975–2000*, *African Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

Julius Nyerere and Vladimir Lenin. Authoritative discourse and its various scripts (liberation script, socialist script) came to dominate in the media, Frelimo publications,¹⁴⁹ academic research,¹⁵⁰ as well as public memorialisation rituals, theatre plays, dance performances, choral songs, poems, films, radio broadcasts, memoirs and oral history accounts. As in the Soviet Union, the state's authoritative discourse not only existed at the level of words but permeated visual discourses of ideology (films, monuments, architecture, posters, photographs, fashion, etc.). Crucially, Yurchak writes, authoritative discourse also existed on the level of ritualistic discourse (institutional practices, meetings, reports) and many other centralised 'formal structures' of everyday practice (urban space, school curricula, dress).

Yurchak's employment of Bakhtin's authoritative discourse thus allows for an understanding of not only how and why Frelimo reconceptualized youth as a revolutionary, political category in its own political ideology, but also how this conceptualization came to have wide-spread effects. Once Machel had articulated the characteristics of the 'Embryo of the New Man' during his seminal speech on December 15th, 1976, this text was not only widely spread and re-printed, it became part of the Frelimo state's socialist script. As authoritative discourse, the fact that the majority of Mozambicans were illiterate and would have never read the re-printed speech was less important. Instead, they encountered the discourse and its constructions of youth as it turned into *palavras de ordem* (watchwords), 'spread' across their neighbourhoods by young OJM cadres tasked to do precisely that, as their local GD representatives began referring to it, quoting it and placing their

¹⁴⁹ Amélia Neves Souto notes the presence of the liberation script in Frelimo's pamphlets, meaning publications of the AIM, such as the Estudos e Orientações Series Amélia Neves De Souto, 'Memory and Identity in the History of Frelimo', 2022, 19.

¹⁵⁰ Fernandes, 'History Writing and State Legitimation in Postcolonial Mozambique'.

assertions about life in relation to it, as their children began arguing with them about the importance of their attendance of choral group practice as a matter of national development.

Understanding Frelimo's youth discourse as part of a wider authoritative discourse opens this study up to asking what were the kinds of social settings in which young people encountered Frelimo's authoritative discourse? And what kinds of meanings did they derive from it in these social settings? Like in the Soviet Union, where the Komsomol was one of the primary sites for the production and consumption of authoritative ritualistic discourse, much of these encounters happened in the OJM and were mediated through the OJM activities. Understanding the OJM as a space in which young people encountered Frelimo's authoritative discourse thus illuminates a new and so-far overlooked dimension to the roles played by the mass democratic organizations during the socialist-era.



Figure 2: "Youth! We constitute the necessary sacrifice for our country's defence," in: Stoud, "Portuguese as ideology," 355.

Sources & Methodology

This study thus traces the construction of youth as a revolutionary political category in socialist-era Mozambique in Frelimo's political discourse, through the organizational practices of the OJM, and from the perspectives of the young men and women who positioned themselves or were positioned by others in this category. This meant on the one hand, that I sought a deep understanding of the evolution of Frelimo's own thinking, writing and speaking about youth from the movement's inception in 1962 until the end of Samora Machel's presidency through his early death in 1986, but particularly in the years around independence. I also sought a chronological understanding of the kinds of activities, campaigns and directives that the party's revolutionary youth discourse justified. On the other hand, I sought to get a broader understanding of the kinds of experiences that Frelimo's discursive construction of youth, as well as the OJM's activities and ritualistic practices enabled among the young men and women they targeted. The subsequent section is therefore divided into two parts: Firstly, 'Frelimo's perspective,' which comprises a discussion of the Mozambican archives, newspaper sources and oral history interviews with elites; and secondly, 'young people's perspectives,' which comprises a brief discussion of oral history methods.

Tracing Frelimo's Perspectives on Youth

To gain an understanding of Frelimo's perspectives, I consulted a decade of archival, as well as media sources and published materials. As I will show in chapters two and three, Frelimo developed its youth policies during the transition to independence and the years leading up to the foundation of the OJM in 1977 but first attempts at establishing a shared consensus around the role of youth took place during the liberation struggle. Because of the rupture in the Mozambican archive around the time of independence this meant engaging not with one, but with two, very different archives and source bodies.

The Struggle Archive

Unlike most liberation movements, with the exception of the ANC, Frelimo does have a struggle archive, and its collections were central to this research. It was here that I explored the roots of the OJM in its unofficial and highly contested predecessor organization, the Frelimo Youth League (FYL). While the records of the struggle archive are fragmented, incomplete and difficult to access, in combination with memoir and oral history interview sources they generated a rich picture of the discourses and organizational practices that shaped a range of different and contested constructions of youth during the liberation struggle.

Following independence, Frelimo officially handed over the documents produced in its military bases, training centres, and exile offices in Dar es Salaam, Algiers and Cairo to the 'Fundo da Frelimo,' a special collection within the AHM today located in downtown Maputo. As Elisabeth Banks reminds us:

working with these documents, one is confronted by the fragility of archives. The majority of the collection had built up during Frelimo's time in exile in Dar es Salaam, and only exists in Maputo because someone had thought – in the midst of a fast and unexpected transition to independence – to bring these papers over the border. The archive consists of whatever documents seemed important enough to salvage as Frelimo moved their state, that then survived four decades in storage in a tropical climate without air-conditioning in an area of the Maputo downtown that routinely floods when it rains.¹⁵¹

The completeness of Frelimo's struggle archive is thus difficult to assess and basing historical narratives on these sources requires careful assessment of its limitations. Despite the efforts of dedicated and skilled staff, the collections are catalogued and sorted in only the most rudimentary manner, according to the Frelimo departments that produced them. The Fundo itself is an uncatalogued, largely unstructured assortment of boxes, which an understaffed team of archivists

¹⁵¹ Elisabeth Banks, 'Socialist Internationalism Between the Soviet Union and Mozambique, 1962-91' (PhD diss., New York University, 2019), 31.

have begun labelling jointly with researchers in the past decade.¹⁵² Like Jeffrey Ahlman noted in relation to the Ghanaian post-independence archive, the Fundo also “offers occasion to reflect upon the realities of postcolonial governance and the near-continuous budget shortfalls that have plagued this and other [...] governmental institutions over much of the last half century.”¹⁵³

But the neglect of the Fundo is also the result of the political climate I described above, in which politics – or more specifically Frelimo – still holds and defends the “monopoly of explanations of the past.”¹⁵⁴ In relation to the Fundo, Frelimo defends this monopoly by keeping access deliberately untransparent in an attempt to “control institutional memory as a way to keep the ruling party in power in the context of multiparty politics.”¹⁵⁵ While some scholars, particularly Mozambicans and scholars at Mozambican universities have to go to great length to produce the correct *credenciais* (credentials)¹⁵⁶ to get access to the sources in the first place, foreign researchers, who pay comparatively higher fees and publish in languages other than Portuguese outside of Mozambique, have often reported gaining access more easily than their Mozambican colleagues. According to Euclides Gonçalves and Benedito Machava:

State functionaries often rank information seekers according to their perceptions of the danger and exposure involved in providing information. Whereas journalists are often viewed with suspicion, due to their profession they are perceived as the least dangerous and most legitimate information seekers. Foreign researchers, who are often Caucasian (including those working for international NGOs), are perceived to be more dangerous than journalists but less dangerous than their Mozambican counterparts.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Banks, 32.

¹⁵³ Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*, 23.

¹⁵⁴ Coelho, ‘Memory, History, Fiction’, 21.

¹⁵⁵ Benedito Luís Machava, ‘State Discourse on Internal Security and the Politics of Punishment in Post-Independence Mozambique (1975–1983)’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 555, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2011.602897>.

¹⁵⁶ To obtain a credencial, researchers typically need to ‘explain’ their intentions to the person authorizing the letter. “Who one knows in the area – a prominent political figure, a party member, or a local figure of authority – is often an asset in these interviews.” See: Machava and Gonçalves, ‘The Dead Archive’, 567.

¹⁵⁷ Machava and Gonçalves, 568.

At the AHM, researchers deemed ‘dangerous’ usually have to undergo a lengthy bureaucratic ritual to receive permissions to access the Fundo. During this months-long process, who one knows, how one presents one’s research, and who stamps and signs the various requested declarations and *credenciais* can determine the kind of access one will be granted. In addition, some collections, such as the records of the Departamento da Defesa (Defense Department, DD), later Departamento da Defesa e Segurança (Defense and Security Department, DSD) are entirely ‘off-limits,’ as the archivist liked to remind me daily. This situation means that not only does the historiography of the struggle period continue to remain scarce, even if one is granted access to parts of the Fundo, the understanding that can be derived from these sources remains highly fragmented and partial.

The collections to which I was granted access, after a comparatively quick and fairly obstacle-free bureaucratic access procedure, were the collections of the Departamento da Organização do Interior (DOI), Departamento da Educação e Cultura (DEC) and Departamento das Relações Exteriores (DRE), and several boxes in the collections of the Departamento da Informação e Propaganda (DIP), Administração (Administration), Presidência (Presidency), and Governo de Transição (Transitional Government).¹⁵⁸ They contained thousands of unsorted pages of documents in total with no guidance to help determine, which might be of relevance. The documents ranged from communication (telegrams, letters, reports) among the different Frelimo branches across Tanzania, Algeria, Egypt, and the Mozambican interior (as the bases in the country were referred to) to communications with actors external to Frelimo.

This included, as we will see in chapter two, a surprisingly active line of communication between the Frelimo Youth League and youth organisations across the socialist world. Surprising, because,

¹⁵⁸ Other collections in the archive are: Departamento de Saúde, Departamento de Defesa/ Defesa e Segurança, Espólio Fernando Ganhão, Espólio Eduardo Mondlane. Since the Fundo does not have or make available a catalogue of its collections, this information might be of use to other researchers.

as we will explore in chapter two, the League was never officially founded and had no real base in Mozambique that it represented. In their midst, one could find anything from ephemeral flyers, brochures, copies of lectures given at the Mozambique Institute, lists of donations received from Frelimo's supporters, travel reports, visa requests, receipts from the local butchery, to the occasional secret report that had slipped into the box from one of the classified boxes of the DD. Consulting these archives, command of not only Portuguese, but also English, French, Spanish and even occasionally German was a useful asset, as Frelimo cadres attended international youth conferences and communicated with donors, youth organisations and national administrations across the globe.¹⁵⁹ Together, the materials painted a colourful picture of life in the vibrant Dar es Salaam headquarters, and Frelimo's diplomatic work.

Records of other youth organizations that existed in parallel and especially in the military realms of the struggle were much more fractured. While the FYL operated mostly in the diplomatic realm, under the section *assuntos juvenis* (youth affairs), which was moved from the DOI to the DRE in 1968, the military youth organizations were under a contested and split jurisdiction of the DOI as well as the DD, later DSD. As such, their records, if they produced a written trail, are still largely off limit to the public and I was limited to occasional mentions of the so-called *Juventudes* in communications with the DOI. Furthermore, it seemed that even in relation to the FYL, crucial documents were missing or had never existed in the first place. For example, while I was able to establish through the script of a lecture that one of the leaders of the FYL, John Kachamila, had given at the Mozambique Institute in 1967¹⁶⁰ and a report that Kachamila and his travel companion

¹⁵⁹ At the same time, I regretted not reading KiSwahili, ShiMakonde or Nyanja, languages in which the earliest letters stamped by the Frelimo Youth League seem to have been written in.

¹⁶⁰ "Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique" given by John William Kachamila at the Mozambique Institute, Dar es Salaam on March 10, 1967, 10.03.1967, Cx. 29 RR, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

and other FYL leader, Francisco Cabo had written that a meeting with the Central Committee had taken place in Nachingwea, during which they discussed the prospects for the formal foundation of a Frelimo Youth League, I was unable to locate minutes of the meeting during which this proposal was discussed. Given that the meeting was held in Nachingwea, the document is likely in the 'off-limits' collection of the DD, if it exists at all.

Memoirs & Oral Histories of the Struggle

Despite its fragmented nature, I found the struggle archive useful, when put into conversation with other sources, in particular memoir and oral sources. Memoirs and interviews both come with their own limitations, especially as Frelimo's hold over History continues to permeate the public sphere today. As noted above, the liberation script "aimed to invent a single past in order to create 'Mozambicans' who were united in a persistent struggle against a common enemy, without fractures and without differences."¹⁶¹ From the day Frelimo took to government, much of its discourse, cultural products, educational policy and historical knowledge recited the heroes, enemies, victories and binaries of this liberation script and one would find few Mozambicans today, who have not learned to speak, sing and dance Frelimo's version of the liberation struggle. The memoirs are no exception to this. Their majority is written by struggle veterans, who are careful to reproduce the liberation script's most important pillars before embellishing it with their own stories of their own heroic deeds.¹⁶² For this reason, scholars were initially rather unenthusiastic about their usefulness

¹⁶¹ Maria Paula Meneses, 'Singing Struggles, Affirming Politics: Mozambique's Revolutionary Songs as Other Ways of Being (in) History', in *Mozambique on the Move*, ed. Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies, 12 (Brill, 2018), 264.

¹⁶² Darch and Hedges, 'Liberation and Biographical Narrative in Mozambican Historiography', 610. Darch and Hedges also note that: "Outside that tradition, works by dissidents and their sympathisers have appeared, arguing that FRELIMO's behaviour during the struggle and afterwards has been misrepresented," see: António Disse Zengazenga, *Memórias de um rebelde: uma vida pela independência e democracia em Moçambique*, 2013; Barnabé Lucas Ncomo, *Uria Simango: um homem, uma causa*, 3rd ed. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018).

for historical research.¹⁶³ Furthermore, the memoirs are often self-published, contain inaccuracies and contradictions. Some seem to be written up entirely from memory “with little fact checking [... or] an editorial control process.”¹⁶⁴

Yet, Colin Darch and David Hedges have argued that even if we accept that the memoirs are “produced for purposes relevant to Mozambique’s current politics,”¹⁶⁵ they represent an intriguing source. Through a close reading of the particularly rich memoir of struggle veteran Salésio Nalyambipano, Darch and Hedges have argued that the memoir literature “affords access to a set of testimonies which, [...] are so diverse and detailed as to constitute fundamental sources for individual experiences of the struggle, as well as for the broader politico-military process.”¹⁶⁶ In the case of this thesis, I was lucky that both protagonists of the pre-independence youth organisation FYL, Cabo and Kachamila, had recently written a memoir that contained important reflections on their attempts to create the Frelimo Youth League. A comparison of both memoirs to each other, but also my interviews with both authors and the evidence I found in the archive, generated further productive ruptures to explore. While Cabo’s memoir, for example, carefully avoids the subject of their relationship to Uria Simango,¹⁶⁷ or Lazaro Nkavandame, who the post-independence leadership stigmatised as the archetypical ‘traitor’ figure to the revolution, Kachamila’s memoir speaks of their close relationship seemingly without hesitation. The archival records, in turn, show, that both Cabo and Kachamila were shaken to their core, when they found out about Simango’s expulsion from Frelimo and asserted their unconditional loyalty in a letter to him at the time. In

¹⁶³ Souto, ‘Memory and Identity in the History of Frelimo’; Teresa Cruz e Silva, ‘Memória, história e narrativa: Os desafios da escrita biográfica no contexto da luta nacionalista em Moçambique’, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 2015, 133–52, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.5916>.

¹⁶⁴ Darch and Hedges, ‘Liberation and Biographical Narrative in Mozambican Historiography’, 610.

¹⁶⁵ Darch and Hedges, 607.

¹⁶⁶ Darch and Hedges, 608.

¹⁶⁷ Simango was denounced a traitor after publishing a letter critical of Frelimo’s post-Mondlane leadership, and detained, show-trialled and probably executed after independence. See: Pearce, ‘Simango, Gwenjere and the Politics of the Past in Mozambique’.

other instances, the memoirs fleshed out the events the chapter recapitulates with memories of personal impressions and experiences.

I was even luckier that despite their advanced age, both protagonists were alive, healthy and available to be interviewed. A full discussion of the oral history interviews will follow below. For now, it suffices to say a few points on these elite interviews and their particular position in wider public narratives. Their oral accounts were notably streamlined through the process of writing the memoir. Narratives of their growing up, their journey to Frelimo and work during the struggle were structured along the same milestones that structured their written accounts. But the oral accounts also afforded me the opportunity to dig for details not provided in the memoirs, address what appeared to me as contradictions, and understand the meaning of a particular anecdote not just through words, but through tone and facial expression. Again, comparison of the different sources brought nuances, tensions and contradictions in the stories to the surface. Comparing the written accounts to the oral accounts and the archival records was useful to understand which memories were formulated at the time, and which had entered the authors' narrations of the self at a later point in time.

The interviews also furthered my understanding of the protagonists' positionalities and how they shaped their oral narrative, memoirs and as well as the letters and reports produced in the archive. I learned, for example, that Kachamila is a rather fearless character, who seems as unintimidated by Frelimo back then, as he is today.¹⁶⁸ Not only is he one of the wealthiest men in the country, a

¹⁶⁸ In his memoir, Kachamila recalls an instance in the military training camp Kongwa, where he initiated a strike, in a quarrel with the deputy commander. Because he was not granted an audience with Commander Samuel Magaia and his deputy, Samora Machel, who visited the camp to select new fighters, he waited in front of the commander's meeting room until late at night. When Kachamila was finally permitted to raise the issue of the quarrel: "Samora Machel quickly said, 'This group is very disruptive,' and added that 'in military discipline, a military order has to be fulfilled and questioned later.' To this, I immediately asked, 'If the order was to be shot, does it mean I would ask after being dead?' He didn't like the joke and remained silent. But Magaia wanted to know [about the quarrel...] He recognized the injustice." Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 624.

former minister for natural resources with ongoing links to natural resource extraction projects, he also chose a most peculiar location for our interview. Located on Avenida Mao Tse Tung, Kachamila met me at the Serbian Honorary Consulate, his ‘office,’ where I learned that after having spent many years studying in Belgrade, then Yugoslavia, Kachamila kept close relations to the Serbian government and acted as the appointed Honorary Consul of Serbia in Mozambique. Francisco Cabo, on the other hand, chose a location for our interview that revealed a concern about how his interaction with me – a foreign researcher – could be viewed by others within the party. Instead of his home, or a neutral location, he asked me to meet him in a conference room in the Frelimo headquarters where we kept the door wide open.

Unlike Kachamila, Cabo chose his words carefully and his narrative rarely deviated from his memoir. Both memoir and oral account not only reiterated the liberation script, they also smoothed over or corrected those opinions, feelings and loyalties that emerged from the archival record, but would be considered “going against Frelimo’s line” after independence and seemingly, still today. Kachamila’s memoir was as much a stream of consciousness as his oral narrative. Both were filled with anecdotes that not only contradict some of the liberation script but that his enemies could easily make use of to question his loyalties during the struggle. As such, Kachamila’s privileged position and fearless character freed his narrative from the confines of the Liberation Script and brought a historically rich source into existence. Cabo’s memoir, on the other hand, was a deliberate intervention into contemporary politics within Frelimo, with a subtle but clever opportunism. When I asked him about the Frelimo Youth League’s ultimate rejection during our interview, his eyes lit up and a cheeky smile appeared on his lips: “On that subject, I will reveal all the facts in my memoir, which you’ll be able to buy very soon.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Francisco Cabo, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 22, 2022.

In relation to exploring the organizational practices and discourses about youth that predated the OJM, Frelimo's liberation archive has thus provided rich, even if fractured, source material, especially on the activities of Cabo and Kachamila's Frelimo Youth League. When complemented with memoirs and oral history interviews, these sources helped generate a dense trail of the activities, ambitions and tensions that youth organizations during the struggle for liberation navigated amidst contested discourses about youth.

The Post-Independence Archive

For Mozambique's post-independence archive, "any semblance of a stable documentary record begins to evaporate,"¹⁷⁰ as Jeffrey Ahlman noted for the Ghanaian archive. Although the socialist party-state collected much of its documentation, Frelimo has only made small fractions of it available to the public and keeps a closed-lid on the archives of the mass democratic organizations. This study has therefore needed to gain an understanding of how and why Frelimo constructed youth as a political category by drawing on alternative sets of sources. Firstly, I relied on a close reading of Frelimo's own publications, many of which have been made available through the national agency for information and digitized by dedicated librarians. Secondly, examining over a decade of daily newspaper articles in the *Journal Notícias* allowed me to reconstruct a detailed chronology of the OJM's activities that involved the public and its members. Thirdly, I was able to gain some insider views on the OJM through its communications with East German advisers and ambassadors, who had close relations with the OJM leadership at the time. This documentation I accessed through the German Federal Archive. Finally, I conducted elite interview with the leading figures of the OJM during the socialist era and in particular during the time of the organization's foundation.

¹⁷⁰ Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*, 23.

Following Frelimo's ascent to state power, the new state produced and kept a vast record of documents but did not develop a legal framework or institutional capacity for archiving and making their documentation accessible to the public. Socialist Mozambique was an "archive-minded state" that "referred to its archive whenever new policies were elaborated and announced to the public."¹⁷¹ The problem with the public administration was not that it did not produce an archival record, but that the vast record it produced has since fallen victim to neglect, austerity and secrecy. During the socialist era, no policy or state directive had formulated guidelines on what was to be done with this record. In the absence of any legislation, funds or indeed, physical space to store documents, public administrators found practical solutions to make do. Documents ended up on shelves in attics, basements and verandas of public buildings.¹⁷² During the years of war and material shortage, they were reused to write on or sold as wrapping paper on the informal market.¹⁷³ Occasionally, the archives fell victim to ransacking or burning during the civil war. In other instances, however, local administrators themselves decided to remove or burn the documents for want of space or a sense of not having any "old papers in his new building"¹⁷⁴

Since the end of the socialist era, a lack of legislation, funds and general archival awareness has further accelerated the deterioration and destruction of the archival record at the level of municipal governments. Mozambique only introduced its first legislation on archiving in 1992, after the signing of the peace accords with Renamo and in the run up to the first democratic elections.¹⁷⁵ According to this legislation, the archives of local administrations were to be sent to central archives at the provincial level from where they would be brought to the AHM after 10 years and opened

¹⁷¹ Machava and Gonçalves, 'The Dead Archive', 560.

¹⁷² Machava and Gonçalves, 560.

¹⁷³ Machava and Gonçalves, 557.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Virgílio Sabuni, Lichinga, 2015, cited in: Machava and Gonçalves, 557.

¹⁷⁵ See República de Moçambique (RM), 'Decree no. 33/91,' *Boletim da República* no. 43, October 26, 1992, cited in Machava & Goncavales, 556.

for public consultation after 30 years.¹⁷⁶ The reality, however, is that the laws have not been implemented in any meaningful way. According to Machava and Gonçalves' assessment: "critical gaps in the legislation and much larger structural challenges have rendered the [bodies charged with implementation] no more than a well-intentioned but ultimately failing project."¹⁷⁷ Consequently, according to the above authors, no files had been deposited at the AHM in 2021.¹⁷⁸

When I conducted fieldwork in 2022, I found a slightly different, but no less challenging situation. In April 2022, the AHM staff were working on making available the first files after 1975 of the Ministry for Information (MINF). While I relied on the support of a fellow researcher with a longstanding relationship to the archivist to obtain access, when I did get the chance to view the hard-copy catalogue inside the AHM building on the UEM campus, I found that the staff had been working on cataloguing the records of the MINF and a few boxes were available for consultation. As with the pre-independence record, and for the reasons elaborated above, this was an extremely fragmented archival record. It was catalogued and sorted into the ministry's sections (Gabinete do Ministério, Gabinete Nacional, Organizações das Massas etc.) and contained a selection of documents from shortly after independence to the early 1990s in no particular order. In relation to the OJM or the youth policies more widely, the archive was helpful to get a rough understanding of the OJM's relationship to state institutions, such as the Ministry for Information, but due to their extremely fragmented nature not very helpful overall. I consulted the boxes 446, 160, 509 and 352 in detail, which were labelled as communications with the OJM and other mass democratic

¹⁷⁶ In 2007, a second, even more ambitious piece of legislation reformed the archival regime. Instead of the AHM, the public records should now be handed over to the Centro Nacional de Documentação e Informação de Moçambique, CEDIMO), which was in turn part of the Ministry of Public Administration. Commissions (Comissões de Avaliação de Documentos da Administração (CADAPs) comprising civil servants and a trained archivist and working under the guidance of the Secretariado Nacional AE (Sistema Nacional de Arquivos do Estado) should be created in all government institutions that would be tasked with the evaluation, selection, listing and classification of files to be archived.

¹⁷⁷ Machava and Gonçalves, 'The Dead Archive', 559.

¹⁷⁸ Machava and Gonçalves, 559.

organisations. What I found were in their majority communications about the participation of MINF employees who were also OJM members and were invited to, requested permission to attend or reported on OJM events.¹⁷⁹ Another type of communications related to cooperation projects between the MINF and the OJM, such as OJM requests to send a journalist to report on activities, or to obtain particular photos or films to share with their members.¹⁸⁰

Furthermore, during my frequent visits to the OJM and Frelimo's party headquarters, I often walked past a room with neatly stored files in which selected individuals consulted documents. Speaking to the OJM's former secretary general Zacarias Kupela, he confirmed that the organisation had not only kept a meticulous record, but that he was certain it was stored and accessible under the right conditions.¹⁸¹ My first point of inquiry was thus the OJM itself, where – after a lengthy process of finding the person responsible for such inquiries, who turned out to be none other than the current Secretary General Silva Livone himself – I was told that the organisation had no documents in their offices themselves, but that they were stored next door, in Frelimo's headquarters. After another round of inquiry, I was eventually told that if I would provide a list of the documents I would like to know about, someone from the OJM could consult them for me. Without a catalogue, I thus drew up a two-page list of documents I had found references to in the newspapers, interviews or other documents. Predictably, the OJM cadre who had been put in charge of managing my request came back with the sad news that she had consulted the archive and not a single one of the documents I requested was there. Although the OJM was not

¹⁷⁹ Comunicado “Conferencia Internacional de Solidariedade com os Jovens vitimas do Apartheid na Africa Austral,” 1988, Cota 352, Secção: Gabinete Nacional, Organizações das Massas, MINF, AHM, Maputo; Comunicado “Seminaário Regional da Juventude da Africa Austral” organizada pela FDJ, November 12, 1982, Cota 352, Secção: Gabinete Nacional, Organizações das Massas, MINF, AHM, Maputo.

¹⁸⁰ Comunicado 8/07/80, OJM requesting images for a film about the joint construction of a 50 bed maternity ward in Sofala between the Komsomol and the OJM, Cota 352, Secção: Gabinete Nacional, Organizações das Massas, MINF, AHM, Maputo.

¹⁸¹ Zacarias Kupela, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, July 3, 2022.

a party organisation from its foundation but only integrated into the party structures after its second congress in 1985, and as part of the public administration, should thus be accessible to the public under the laws governing archival access of 2007, its records seem to have been transferred to the party archives and thereby removed from public access. It is uncertain whether Frelimo will ever grant public access to its party archives, and certainly unlikely that it will do so for the purposes of academic research. Even among those who are deep ‘insiders’ to the party, access does not seem within easy reach.¹⁸²

In the absence of OJM and governmental archives, my reconstructions of how and why Frelimo constructed youth as a political category, and the kinds of organizational practices and discourses that arose from this, relied on three alternative source bodies. The first is a rather scattered, but rich collection of publications by Frelimo during the independence era. For most of the meetings, conferences and congresses that the party attributed decision-making powers to during the socialist experiment, the Agencia de Informação de Moçambique (AIM) subsequently produced published reports, in the form of brochures. These usually entailed the opening and closing speeches of the event, speeches given during the event and any resolutions that were passed. In most cases, journalists were also present at the events, and the daily and weekly newspapers *Tempográfica* and *Notícias* subsequently published not only the speeches and resolutions, but often also a summary of the debates that took place inside working groups. As Colin Darch noted in a paper in 1983, however:

the student of Mozambique, whether citizen or foreigner, when confronted with the mass of documents produced since 1962, has no guide to point out to him those articles, communiqués or interventions which were of importance in determining a policy [...] No way of knowing that, for example, a particular meeting of the Central Committee was concerned with the building of a state apparatus [...] no reliable reference work – in bibliographic or other form – to

¹⁸² Zacarias Kupela, interview.

tell him or her which of the dozens of presidential discourses dealt with education, or health, or foreign relations.¹⁸³

As such, Darch's helpful overview of Frelimo publications,¹⁸⁴ and his even more helpful open-access online library called Mozambique History Net (MHN) were important collections that I consulted during this research. The MHN holds a collection of organized published Frelimo materials, including pamphlets, news clippings, and digitized excerpts from books. The library includes a near-complete collection of Samora Machel's speeches, as well as several brochures published by the AIM, reporting on Central Committee Meetings, Frelimo Congresses, and the *Educação e Orientações* Series. Beyond the MHN, I also sought out publications in the library of the University of the Western Cape, the UEM in Maputo and the digital Aluka archive on JSTOR.

The second and most important source body I relied on was the daily newspaper *Jornal Notícias*. *Notícias* copies are held in the library at the AHM and provided a chronological backbone of both, the actual activities that the youth policies generated and “public expressions of the institutionalized worldview”¹⁸⁵ of the Frelimo government. Over the course of my fieldwork, I analysed over a decade of copies of the daily newspaper *Notícias*, beginning in the early 1970s and stretching until the OJM's second conference in 1985. This deep analysis allowed me to reconstruct the activities of the OJM in great detail, as the publishers of *Notícias* considered it their responsibilities to report on the mass democratic organisations, and the OJM, in turn, regularly requested that reporters were present at all their events: performances of song and dance, voluntary work, literacy campaigns or a travelling theatre play titled “A Juventude é a Revolução.” This culture of transparency extended beyond the youth policies and characterised the party-state's wider relationship to the media and

¹⁸³ Colin Darch, 'Published Documentation of the Party FRELIMO: A Preliminary Study', *Mozambican Studies* 2 (1983): 104.

¹⁸⁴ Darch, 'Published Documentation of the Party FRELIMO'.

¹⁸⁵ Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*, 23.

the public. Passionate readers submitted poems heralding “the endless enthusiasm of the Youth” and *Notícias* documented closely the journeys that young men and women undertook to represent ‘the Mozambican Youth’ at conferences and diplomatic visits abroad.

The deep media analysis also allowed me to get a sense in the changing discourse about youth, and particularly the break at independence. Prior to independence, the very term youth did not feature in public discourse. In the daily newspaper *Notícias*, the word *Juventude* appeared only scarcely before 1975, usually with reference to beauty products or juvenile sports competitions. With independence, headlines gradually appeared that commented on a “Youth reunion” or a “Youth study group,” which convened to learn about the political line of the new Frelimo government. In 1976, the frequency of the word *Juventude* in public discourse increased drastically. As I describe in detail in chapter three, Machel’s speech during his ‘meeting with the *Juventude* on December 15th served to establish ‘*A Juventude*’ firmly as part of the public discourse during the socialist experiment, and fill the term with its new, revolutionary meaning.

Thirdly, an amorphous set of transnational “shadow archives”¹⁸⁶ as Jean Allman has called them, were further valuable resources for the post-independence period. In the case of Frelimo’s youth politics, a somewhat unlikely, but productive archive has been the German Federal Archive’s (Bundesarchiv) deposit communications between the OJM and the German Democratic Republic’s mass democratic organisation for youth, the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend, FDJ). The FDJ and the OJM had extremely close relations that left a rich and dense archival record in the Bundesarchiv. This record, stored in the DY-24 collection entailed bilateral agreements, travel scheduled for mutual visits, as well as reports, letters exchanged between both organisations, reports authored by the permanent envoy of the FDJ in Maputo, or the embassy staff about their

¹⁸⁶ Ahlman, 25.

assessment on the internal workings of the OJM and the state of the bilateral relationship, and a wealth of sources on the planning and implementation of joint projects, the so-called Friendship Brigades. This material was useful to get an assessment into the internal workings of the OJM, which media reports and Frelimo publications were careful to conceal. As invited attendees to the OJM's conferences, FDJ cadres had a rare insider view into the relations between Frelimo and the OJM, as well as the OJM's own assessments of their successes and shortcomings, which they dutifully related to their superiors.

Finally, I conducted interviews with some of the founders of the OJM in an effort to understand how their initial ambitions and the challenges they faced shaped the OJM's organizational practices and wider constructions of youth. Among these interviewees were the OJM's first Secretary General, Zacarias Kupela, as well as the vice secretary Alcinda Abreu. Both headed the OJM throughout the decade of Samora Machel's presidency, and in Abreu's case even beyond. Furthermore, a core group that referred to itself as '*atropelados*' (the overrun/ the ones taken by surprise) significantly shaped the process of the OJM's foundation. Among the seven people that constituted this group, I was able to interview five. Their memories added valuable insights into the inner workings of the Frelimo party-state during the phase in which it conceived of the revolutionary conceptualization of youth and the organizational structures.

Perspectives of Youth, Perspectives of a Generation

If it was mostly through documentary sources, and a few selected memoirs and elite interviews that I was able to gain an understanding of how and why Frelimo constructed youth as a political, revolutionary category, to understand how ordinary Mozambicans derived meaning from Frelimo's discourses and organizational practices aimed at 'forging' this revolutionary youth, I needed to find a way to access the memories of those men and women, who had encountered or experienced Frelimo's authoritative discourse at the time.

In part, generational considerations went into this process. If we can locate the beginning of a new doctrine that centred on youth in the early independence years, and its gradual end with Machel's death in 1986,¹⁸⁷ the age cohort that would be exposed to Frelimo's youth policies most directly and strongly was born between and 1960 (15 years old at independence) and roughly 1970 (five years old at independence). As I described in the prologue to this study, the bulk of the oral history interviews used in this thesis were conducted through a collaborative project with four research assistants in Maputo, who I met through the Global History Dialogues Project. The majority of the resulting collection of 68 intergenerational oral histories were with men and women of this age cohort and all of them remembered encounters – pleasant, unpleasant, or entirely indifferent – with Frelimo's discourse about revolutionary youth as a fundamental experience of their coming of age.

I refer to this age cohort as the 'independence generation' throughout the study, because at least among urban, middle-class Mozambicans, the drastic changes of independence and in fact also a common experience of Frelimo's youth politics had shaped a generational identity. Age cohorts alone do not necessarily make for generations, as we are aware at least since the publications of Karl Mannheim's essay titled "the Problem of Generations."¹⁸⁸ Mannheim argued that what makes a generation is a "similarly stratified consciousness" of the same historical events. For the age cohort that came of age around the year 1975, independence and Frelimo's arrival in Maputo was one such event. David Mataval, born in 1964, for example noted:

Naturally, I was very young, but even now I remember that there was a historical milestone, which was the differentiation between the time before independence and the time after independence. Even though I was small, I could see a change, I mean here, it was a city of whites, a city of mulattos, a city of Indians and [...]

¹⁸⁷ In reality, the OJM's second congress in 1985 marked a turning point in Frelimo's youth policies.

¹⁸⁸ Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations (1928)', in *Theories of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1996), 109–55, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24984-8_9.

another part that was black. And from that moment on there was a certain miscellany, that is to say there was a certain mixture because the time was already different and that was more or less what marked me from that very day, 25 June 1975.¹⁸⁹

Others, such as Elias Massingue, born 1962, noted: “Independence meant so much to me that I can’t even question it.”¹⁹⁰ These drastic changes that marked independence as a historical event thus anchored this age cohort in a similar historical ‘location,’ as Mannheim would say.

Importantly, however, Mannheim also recognized that one’s participation in a generation intersected with other axes of social difference, as well as the particulars of human agency and individual decision-making. While individuals in the same age cohorts and thus generational unit had equal possibilities of experiencing the events that characterised a historical moment, not every individual experienced these events with equal intensity. In Mannheim’s words, only an actual participation in the “characteristic social and intellectual currents of their society and period”¹⁹¹ would render an individual an actual member of their generation. In this sense, the people we interviewed for this study represent a particular social group, located at the intersections of various axes of social differentiation. They belonged to an urban middle class, who despite perhaps being born elsewhere, had spent their youth and most of their adult lives in Maputo. Almost all of them had been to primary and most of them also to secondary school. The vast majority had learned a white-collar trade, such as teaching, secretary, or accountant, or a blue-collar profession, such as mechanic, driver, or domestic employee. When we interviewed them, they were still in their professions or received state pensions and lived relatively average urban lives in Maputo’s suburbs.

¹⁸⁹ David Matavel, interview by Valdo Congolo, Maputo, July 3, 2021

¹⁹⁰ Elias Massingue, interview by Ana Chongo, Maputo, July 11, 2022

¹⁹¹ Mannheim, ‘The Problem of Generations’, 304.

In addition to their generational 'location,' their position in relation to class, education, urban/rural, and regional differences across Mozambican society also shaped their generational experiences. Mozambique's southern, urban, middle classes were the social group among which Frelimo most successfully established its authority and found long-lasting supporters. Rasmi Laxmane, born in 1958 in Maputo and a 16-year-old student at Liceu António Enes at independence, remembered:

[When the] liberation movement started [to arrive] then. We were already grasping the situation a little. Between 1974 and 1975, during the transitional government, we were older and more or less all Frelimo militants [activists]. The militancy [activism] wasn't just at school, but also in the Alto-Mae neighbourhood itself.¹⁹²

It is part of the argument of this thesis, that this experience was exacerbated by the particular kind of attention that this generation received from the Frelimo government and Machel, both, as 'targets' of its discursive constructions and a range of policies and activities developed through the OJM. Massingue, for example, continued in the interview:

Look, I saw independence but I was still a child. I followed the rhythm of Frelimo's arrival; in fact, for me Samora Machel was a president chosen by the Mozambican nation; he was [Mozambican] national and born, the first black man to lead the country; he loved children and was an open person who encouraged the youth and helped the poorest people; flowers that never wither (*flores que nunca murcham* [Frelimo's watchword about children]), the dawn of tomorrow, love between men and freedom between peoples.¹⁹³

In a way then, the same dynamics that created a generational identity among this particular cohort of urban southerners who came of age during the socialist-era also allude to the main questions at the heart of this research. How did Frelimo's political discourse, in Massingue's recollections about the Mozambican nation, Frelimo's claim to power, the future, and the youth, become meaningful

¹⁹² Rasmi Laxmane, interview by Michael-Jorge Juma, Maputo, July 31, 2022.

¹⁹³ Elias Massingue, interview by Ana Chongo, Maputo, July 11, 2022

to this group of people? Through which mechanisms did they encounter Frelimo's discourse, and what kinds of experiences and subjectivities did they enable for them?

In the interviews, we structured our questions along the life course, with a particular focus on the periods of childhood, teenage and early adulthood. We were attentive to moments of encounter with the Frelimo party-state, as well as instances where the interviewees drew on discourses or ideas about youth to describe the meaning of certain choices or experiences. Furthermore, a set of questions about the meaning of youth, its ideals and expectations gave concrete illustrations to how young people related to the government's revolutionary discourse. For the majority of this study, I read and analysed the intergenerational interviews to provide insight into the past. Reading them as oral histories of youth in a particular historical era, they shed light on the conditions that shaped young people's life in the Mozambican capital during the socialist experiment and particularly their encounters with and experiences of the youth policies. I used them inductively, to point towards other sources and factors of relevance for understanding changing youth identities, and deductively, to confirm or contest written historical narratives about their time. Triangulated with other sources, they contribute to a historical narrative about changes and continuities for a so-far underexplored group and particular policy in Mozambique's history.

Co-creating Oral History in a Research Team

In this context, it is important to briefly note the kinds of challenges and opportunities for interviewing that arose from conducting oral history interviews collaboratively, in a team with young Mozambicans. I grounded my considerations about collaborative oral history interviewing in a long tradition of the History Workshops where similar to the notion of the "epistemological

salience of the speaker”¹⁹⁴ that guides some of today’s emancipatory research agendas, oral historians in the 1960s were of the opinion that working-class researchers had perspectives and experiences that made them “peculiarly well-placed to write about many facets of industrial and working class history.”¹⁹⁵ In this context, collecting and jointly writing oral histories were thought to best further the emancipatory politics of history writing in order to “change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry; [...] break down barriers [and...] give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place.”¹⁹⁶ Since the initial days of the History Workshops, feminist and postmodern scholars in particular have called for careful reconsideration of the imagination that oral history could liberate marginalized historical subjects, or that these subjects have one ‘authentic’ voice.¹⁹⁷ Africanist (feminist) historians White, Miescher, and Cohen remind us that:

In postcolonial Africa, specific issues of representation, leadership, and authority have continually resituated “voices” as authentic or appropriated, representative or distinctive, intrinsic or democratic, reinforcing the identity of a “voice” heard or surveilled and the voice’s associated moral and ideological properties. The African “voice” - cradled, massaged, liberated, and authenticated within the expert approaches of the African historian - comes to represent (or at least presents the opportunity to reach for) truth while it bolsters scholarly claims to objectivity.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Linda Alcoff, ‘The Problem of Speaking for Others’, *Cultural Critique*, no. 20 (1991): 7, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354221>.

¹⁹⁵ Raphael Samuel, ‘On the Methods of History Workshop: A Reply’, *History Workshop*, no. 9 (1980): 163.

¹⁹⁶ Paul Richard Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

¹⁹⁷ Much of the debate around epistemology and the politics of “giving voice” was driven by feminist scholars, particularly in African women’s history. See for example the following contributions: Kirk Hoppe, ‘Whose Life Is It, Anyway?: Issues of Representation in Life Narrative Texts of African Women’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 3 (1993): 623–36; Heidi Gengenbach, ‘Truth-Telling and the Politics of Women’s Life History Research in Africa: A Reply to Kirk Hoppe’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 27, no. 3 (1994): 619–27; Kirk Hoppe, ‘Context and Further Questions: Response and Thanks to Heidi Gengenbach’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (1995): 359; Luise White, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Indiana University Press, 2001).

¹⁹⁸ White et al., “Introduction,” 3-4.

Rather than through ‘voice giving,’ postmodern oral historians view oral history’s value in its ability to embrace how historical meaning is co-constructed in the act of narrating personal experiences.¹⁹⁹ This view emphasizes and celebrates subjectivity, both on behalf of the speaker and the oral historian: “the historian who selects the people who will be interviewed, who contributes to the shaping of the testimony by asking the questions and reacting to the answers; and who gives the testimony its final published shape and context.”²⁰⁰ Postmodern oral historians thus reframed oral history’s initial emancipatory potential towards an emphasis of the epistemic salience of the speaker *as well as* the historian.

For the present study, this means paying careful attention not only to the ways in which my own positionality, as one of the interviewers, shaped the knowledge imparted with me during my interviews, but also consulting my co-researchers to understand how they view their relationship to the interviewees, and how it has shaped the knowledge co-created in the interview. During frequent conversations and reflections with the co-researchers individually, as well as in group discussions, their submitted written materials in preparations of, during and after the interviews, and conversations held during the process of supervising the research papers they wrote for the Global History Dialogues website, I learned how they viewed their positionality in relation to the interviews. Perhaps most importantly, unlike myself, my Mozambican co-researchers contacted and interviewed individuals to whom they had had long-standing relationships as neighbors, former teachers, members of their or their parents’ church, relatives or family friends. Trust building is an important part of any oral history interview, and the Mozambican researchers

¹⁹⁹ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (SUNY Press, 1991); Michael H. Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

²⁰⁰ Alessandro Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’, in *Oral History, Oral Culture, and Italian Americans*, ed. Luisa Del Giudice, *Italian and Italian American Studies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2009), 73, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230101395_2.

brought a significant advantage in this regard. During the interviews, they often affirmed their long-standing relationships with the interviewees, mentioning common acquaintances, former names of buildings or roads or commonalities with their own parents.

Furthermore, when interviewing in Maputo (or anywhere in Mozambique), concerns about seeing and being seen can significantly shape the interview process and being seen with a white foreigner produces different kinds of anxieties (and opportunities) than a seemingly casual conversation with a neighbor's son or daughter. I experienced this while trying to interview a group of men who had been involved in a youth volunteer literacy class shortly after the transition to independence, an interview that never came to fruition, because of concerns about receiving a white, foreign researcher in their neighbourhood. Such challenges were rarely faced by my Mozambican co-researchers, who were not only able to move freely and unnoticed in their neighborhoods of residence but were also well versed and well connected in the municipal bureaucracy and able to produce the requested forms with ease. Interviewees had nothing to explain to curious neighbors or onlookers when sitting in their garden with an acquaintance from two doors down and often expressed excitement at the idea of passing down their experiences to the next generation. Finally, unlike myself, the interviewees considered themselves and were considered by their interviewees as "today's youth." In this sense, the interviewees had stakes in telling their own stories and experienced the process as quite meaningful.

Chapter Outline

The chapters in this thesis are structured thematically, although they also follow a loose chronological order. The second and third chapters begin this study with an investigation into the question how and why Frelimo conceived of youth as a revolutionary political category in the first place. Chapter three, and more so chapter four begin the inquiry into the kinds of effects this

conceptualization enabled with a particular view to organizational practices and the politics of language more widely. Chapters five and six finally turn to the oral histories of those people who fell into Frelimo's category of revolutionary youth during the socialist era and their encounters with this discourse.

Following this first introductory chapter, **chapter two** begins the story with an exploration of the roots of Frelimo's socialist era youth discourses and practices during the struggle for liberation. Drawing on recently declassified and so far unused documents from Frelimo's struggle archive, as well as memoirs and interviews with two youth activists, this chapter argues that unlike most other contexts in which youth came to be constructed as a political category as a consequence of the emergence of 'youth' as political actors and their involvement in events during the anti-colonial struggle, this was not the case in Mozambique. Through an investigation of various groups and organizational structures that referred to themselves as Youths or Frelimo Youth League, I show that although such groups courted Frelimo for official recognition of their role and organizational activities, such attempts ran afoul tensions and infighting in the movement. As a consequence, 'youth' as a political category, form of organization and political actors remained on the margins of Frelimo's discourse and were mostly active in the diplomatic realm of the struggle.

In the absence of meaningful events or organizations that would have shaped the politicization of youth during the liberation struggle, **chapter three** offers a close investigation of the political context at independence, asking how it shaped Frelimo's post-independence youth discourses. Through a detailed analysis of reports, resolutions and speeches given at three important meetings, this chapter investigates how Frelimo delegates debated and decided on the party's post-independence youth politics. It introduces the argument that the decision to create a national level organization for youth, the OJM, was the most important factor in motivating Frelimo to develop a unified conceptualization of youth, in other words, to 'write' youth into the state-socialist script.

Debating and discussing the challenges that the party faced in the transition to independence, Frelimo delegates began developing ‘universal truths’ and ‘knowledge’ about ‘the youth.’ Once this revolutionary conceptualization was developed, this chapter argues, it soon entered Frelimo’s authoritative discourse.

Chapter four turns to organizational practices and simultaneously moves further along the chronology of the youth policies, by exploring the foundation of the OJM. Tracing the foundation process through a detailed analysis of newspaper records, archival documents and interviews with the OJM’s founding members, this chapter argues that one of the most important ways through which Frelimo’s revolutionary conceptualization of youth gained popularity and salience was through the dissemination, and ‘normalization’ of Machel’s authoritative discourse within the structures of the OJM. Over the course of conferences, seminars and visits that members of the OJM’s National Secretariat held across Mozambique’s widely dispersed provinces, attendees and future OJM members not only learned about the mission and vision of the youth organisation, but also became ‘ideologically literate.’ Trickling down through the hierarchies of the organization, and involving young people beyond it through campaigns, this chapter argues that the dissemination and normalization of Frelimo’s authoritative discourse was one of the ways in which the OJM lastingly shaped the independence generation’s discursive repertoire widely beyond its membership base.

Chapter five turns to the oral histories of members of the independence generation who fell into Frelimo’s category of the revolutionary youth to ask how they related to this category. Focussing on a specific context in which these young people encountered Frelimo’s discourses about youth, this chapter provides a detailed exploration of youth cultural activities, drawing on newspaper and interview sources. I argue that the cultural activities enabled their participants to attach emotional meaning and embodied experiences to the abstract ideals in authoritative discourse. Performing

cultural forms steeped in authoritative discourse, such as revolutionary hymns, dances representing Mozambique's cultural heritage or theatre plays about the meaning of the revolutionary project, provided opportunities for participants to embody the ideal revolutionary youth: being 'at the front line' of progress and transformation, enlightening others, feeling like 'the star of the government.'

Chapter six subsequently turns to a different context in which the independence generation encountered Frelimo's revolutionary construction of youth: calls to come to the service of the revolution. Drawing on oral historical accounts as well as media and archival sources, this chapter asks how members of the independence generation related to the ideals of the revolutionary youth when living up to them required giving up careers, engaging in manual labour or risking their lives. Tracing the conception, implementation and effects of a set of labour recruitment policies, including the directives of March 8th, volunteer work, and the obligatory military service, this chapter reveals the violent underbelly of Frelimo's revolutionary construction of youth. I argue that in the context of Frelimo's revolutionary youth discourse making difficult demands on young people, it came to be perceived as an expectation coupled to a threat of violence if unfulfilled. As such, Frelimo's authoritative discourse became an instrument in Mozambique's wider system of discipline and authoritarian rule.

Finally, taking us back to the beginning of this thesis, the **conclusion** revisits the arguments of the thesis and offers a discussion of the echoes of Machel's revolutionary youth discourse in the present.

2. Youth Organizations in the Struggle for Liberation (1964-1969)

Introduction

John William Kachamila had just turned 18 when he boarded his first plane. He was seated between Francisco Valentino Cabo, Judas Sindi, Alfredo Sigauke and Gorge Fanhana, with whom he had boarded the plane in Dar es Salaam. According to Kachamila's memoir, they had lived together in Mgulani refugee camp in the city, alongside many other Mozambican refugees who had been recruited by the Mozambican liberation movement Frelimo and had attended Kurasini International College.¹ The five young men were sitting in an unusual plane. Rather than flying straight to its destination, it stopped in Khartoum, Asmara, Cairo, and Kiev.² At each stop, more students boarded the plane, until there were over 100 young men and women from all over the African continent. Many hours later, they landed at their final destination, in the early hours of the morning. As he disembarked, Kachamila experienced an unfamiliar cold creeping through his summer clothes: the Moscow winter of 1964.³

¹ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 106–8; Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, 43–44.

² Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, 47.

³³ Kachamila, 47–48.

The year 1964 is where this study begins its explorations. Unbeknown to the vast majority of Mozambicans, the year 1964 initiated the last decade of Portuguese colonial presence on Mozambican soil. 1964 was also the year in which Frelimo established its first political-military training camp in Kongwa and Algeria-trained fighters fired the mythical first shot that initiated the armed struggle in the north of Mozambique, a struggle that would conclude with the signing of the Lusaka Accords in 1974. Most importantly, for the story we are exploring here, 1964 was the year in which two Frelimo cadres proposed to create a youth organization, called the Liga Juvenil da Frelimo or by its English name Frelimo Youth League (FYL), and one of them was John Kachamila.

This chapter explores the origins of the Organização da Juventude Moçambicana's (OJM) discourse and organizational practices through the prism of its unofficial predecessor organisation, the FYL. I draw on archival sources from Frelimo's little explored struggle archive, the Fundo da Frelimo at the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM) alongside memoirs and oral histories to show that unlike post-independence youth organizations in other contexts of anti-colonial struggles, the kind of organization that the OJM grew out of was not very established inside Mozambique during the struggle itself. Rather than engaging in the kinds of activities that political youth became known for elsewhere, such as mobilization, sabotage or protest, beginning with Kachamila's return from Moscow, the unofficial FYL's activities remained concentrated almost exclusively in the struggle's diplomatic realms.

Despite the existence of so-called *Juventudes* (Youths) and 'Youth Leagues' inside Mozambique, who played an active military role, the FYL leadership had at best a distant relationship to these military youth structures. The nature of this relationship became evident during a journey to the so-called liberated zones inside Mozambique when an attempt to represent and advocate for these military youth leagues, who saw themselves as 'youth,' and demanded recognition and leadership

from the FYL cadres in Dar es Salaam ran afoul of the tensions within Frelimo in the mid to late 1960s. The journey brought to light the vastly different discourses and organizational practices between the diplomatically oriented FYL leadership in Dar es Salaam and the military structures that also called themselves youth leagues on the Mozambican battle grounds. While the former had adopted the language of internationalism, socialism and youth vanguardism that resembled the Soviet Komsomol's own discourse as well as the discourses that prevailed in the diplomatic circles of transnational youth movements at the time, the latter were concerned with matters of war, discipline and command. Following the failed attempt to align both realms, the FYL leadership was forced to retreat to diplomatic activities, which it would continue until the end of the liberation struggle.

By tracing the journeys of the two young men – Cabo and Kachamila – who led the FYL into and through this era of diplomacy, internationalism and socialist-inspired conceptions of youth, this chapter provides a deep insight into the roots of the OJM's later discourses and organizational cultures. While Kachamila and Cabo left the country during Frelimo's internal crisis in 1968, the unofficial statues, programmes, and letters remained in the Frelimo offices in Dar es Salaam. Furthermore, Kachamila and Cabo were succeeded by none other than the later founder and secretary general of the OJM, Zacarias Kupela. Kupela joined Frelimo in Mozambique in 1969 from Zanzibar. He would accompany Frelimo's leaders to Maputo in 1974, where Machel selected him as the head of the OJM's National Secretariat, the organ that prepared and led the foundation of the OJM and remained the OJM's Secretary General for the entire duration of Machel's presidency.

Besides illuminating for the first time the history of organized youth during Frelimo's liberation struggle, this chapter sheds new light on an academic debate about the transnational journeys of ideas during the Cold War and particularly the afterlives of the political imaginaries conceived

through solidarity exchanges, in this case through the exchange between the Soviet Union and Frelimo's youth. Political visions or 'imaginaries' represent a growing area of interest for understanding the nature of transnational entanglements and their significance in shaping local histories of liberation and post-independence nation-states.⁴ Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor's work on soldiers' 'military imaginaries,' or Adom Getachew's intellectual history of 'self-determination,' for example, engage with specific political visions that were conceived and negotiated transnationally, while Eric Burton's work on 'hubs of decolonization,' or George Roberts' study of Dar Es Salaam approach transnational cross-fertilization through the study of particular spaces.⁵

Understanding the significance of ideas conceived in Moscow or Havana to the trajectory of a particular Southern African liberation movement is, however, complex work, as movements competed, and entanglements operated on diplomatic, military, and civil levels simultaneously.

⁴ Some of the pioneering works in this global history of the Cold War include: Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Among the works that engaged with southern African liberation movement's global entanglements are the edited volumes and special issues by: Chris Saunders, Lena Dallywater, and Helder Adegar Fonseca, eds. *Southern African Liberation Movements* (De Gruyter, 2019); Chris Saunders, Helder Adegar Fonseca, and Lena Dallywater, eds., *Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Africa: New Perspectives on the Era of Decolonization, 1950s to 1990s*, *Dialectics of the Global* 15 (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023); Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor, and Blessing-Miles Tendi, eds. 'The Transnational Histories of Southern African Liberation Movements: An Introduction', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017), 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2017.1278982>; Jocelyn Alexander et al., eds., 'Liberation Beyond the Nation: An Introduction', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 46, no. 5 (2020), 821–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2020.1810912>; As well as a growing body of monographs that study in detail transnational entanglements between particular actors: Natalia Telepneva, *Cold War Liberation: The Soviet Union and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, 1961–1975* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.5149/9781469665887_Telepneva; Alba Martín Luque, 'Disparando imágenes: una historia visual de la guerra de descolonización del África portuguesa contada desde el caso de estudio del Frente de Liberación de Mozambique (FRELIMO), 1955-1975,' (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.2870/459244>.

⁵ Jocelyn Alexander and Joann McGregor, 'Adelante! Military Imaginaries, the Cold War, and Southern Africa's Liberation Armies', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 62, no. 3 (2020), 619–50, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417520000195>; Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton University Press, 2019); Eric Burton, 'Hubs of Decolonization. African Liberation Movements and "Eastern" Connections in Cairo, Accra, and Dar Es Salaam', in *Hubs of Decolonization. African Liberation Movements and "Eastern" Connections in Cairo, Accra, and Dar Es Salaam* (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 25–56, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110642964-006>; George Roberts, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar Es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961–1974* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Tracing any one journey across the globe with only fragmented sources can be challenging.⁶ Little is therefore known about the longer term trajectories of transnationally conceived ideas, and their specific impacts on southern African liberation struggles.⁷ Regarding one of the largest bodies of transnational literature on students in the Soviet Union, Constantin Katsakioris, for example, notes that only very few studies pursued their protagonists beyond the university campuses, asking explicitly how this time shaped the students' ideas throughout their political lives.⁸ And while “the literature on the regional dynamics of Southern Africa’s liberation wars has only begun to touch on the complex histories of cross-border movements, relationships and interactions,”⁹ even less is known about how and why some of the ideational products of such entanglements turned into realities while others failed. As the story of the unofficial FYL shows, timing could matter more than ideological overlap. Even though the OJM and Samora Machel himself would echo the discourses and organizational practices of Cabo and Kachamila’s Soviet-inspired proposal for the FYL’s official foundation after independence, during the liberation struggle it ran afoul of tensions and infighting among the Frelimo leadership during the 1968-split. In the case of the Mozambican liberation struggle, ideas about youth were at best contested, but the Frelimo leadership had no political will to adopt them – until independence.

⁶ For a discussion on sources, see: Alexander, McGregor, and Tendi, ‘Transnational Histories’, 3–4.

⁷ One fascinating example of such a study is: Geoffrey Traugh, ‘Reading Rostow in a Rhodesian Prison: Anticolonialism and the Reinvention of Modernization in British Central Africa’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 64, no. 4 (2022): 1–30, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417522000287>.

⁸ Constantin Katsakioris, ‘Students from Portuguese Africa in the Soviet Union, 1960–74: Anti-Colonialism, Education, and the Socialist Alliance’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 56, no. 1 (2021): 143, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009419893739>.

⁹ Alexander, McGregor, and Tendi, ‘Transnational Histories’, 9.

Fractured Traces of Military Youth Leagues (pre-1964)

The Mozambican Liberation Front, Frelimo, was founded in 1962 under the auspices of the Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas (CONCP),¹⁰ and the Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere. At the time of its foundation, Frelimo subsumed three independent anti-colonial movements that had been founded by exile workers in neighbouring British colonies, namely the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO), founded in southern Rhodesia, the National Union for Mozambican Independence (UNAMI), founded in Malawi, and the Mozambique African National Union (MANU), founded in Kenya in 1961 as a coalition encompassing the Makonde African National Union, that was most active in southern Tanzania and Cabo Delgado.¹¹ Frelimo held its first congress in Dar Es Salaam, where the members elected as President Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, a 42-year old US-educated academic and former United Nations officer, as Vice-President Uria Simango, a protestant minister, and as Secretary of Foreign Affairs Marcelino dos Santos, a poet and long-term activist at the CONCP.¹²

¹⁰ According to de Brito, Dos Santos's previous efforts to align himself with one of the local anti-colonial migrant movements, so as to have a Mozambican movement represented at the CONCP had failed. In 1961, he joined UDENAMO, and wrote a political programme for the organization, which they hadn't had until that point. The CONCP, however, expressed distrust in its leader Adelino Gwambe after their participation in the founding conference at Casablanca (1961). Furthermore, the relationship between Marcelino Dos Santos and Adelino Gwambe became tense and the latter expelled dos Santos from UDENAMO (which later Frelimo sought revenge for by not assigning Gwambe a leadership position in Frelimo, and Tanzania revoking his right to residence). Mondlane stepped in this vacuum, and thus enjoyed the full support of the CONCP. De Brito believes that the similarities of Frelimo's political programme to UDENAMO's testify, however, Dos Santos, in his function as Secretário das Relações Exteriores in Frelimo, was also the "principal redactor do programa político da Frelimo"¹⁰. Luís de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo e a Construção Do Estado Nacional 1962-1983*, Maputo: IESE, 2019. 32–35.

¹¹ De Brito argues that these movements, which were themselves created only shortly before Frelimo, were in embryonic states, with little organizational structures and impact in Mozambique. Born in the neighbouring countries, they were the "result of the politicization of some groups of Mozambican emigrants," (p. 32) organized through funeral societies. They were influenced by the independence movements, which developed at the time in their host countries. Without the ability to legally gain a foothold in Mozambique, these organizations had very limited possibilities to construct a solid social basis internally, and their activities were directed mainly at international institutions. de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 32–33.

¹² De Brito, 35. While Frelimo was not the *only* anti-colonial movement fighting for the liberation of Mozambicans from Portuguese colonial rule, it has sustained its hegemony throughout the liberation struggle.

Unlike liberation movements in the region, Frelimo never got the chance to develop extensive structures inside Mozambique, including youth structures. Frelimo was never allowed to operate above ground in Mozambique and structures, such as the university student union Núcleo dos Estudantes Secundários Africanos de Moçambique (NESAM) were banned as early as 1964. The movement's stronghold were the areas in the north, bordering Tanzania where indeed, Frelimo's predecessor organization MANU seems to have made attempts to set up youth structures that followed the model of the Tanganyikan African National Union Youth League (TYL). These structures have been largely neglected in the historiography. As I explained in the introduction, one of the reasons for this neglect is that they only left highly fractured traces in the archive.

Nevertheless, among these fractured records, a trail of letters, reports, tickets and bills hint at the existence of very active organizations that referred to themselves as Juventude or Youth League.¹³ Several hundreds of letters were signed and stamped in the name of the 'Frelimo Youth League,' 'Juventude da Frelimo' or 'Liga Juvenil da Frelimo.' Their changing names as well as signatories suggests the existence of three distinct periods in the FYL leadership. A first leadership cohort called itself the 'Frelimo Youth League' in English and wrote letters from Dar es Salaam most actively between 1962-1965. A man named P. M. Nalika (in later documents also referred to as Mapunju Nalika Polande, or just Polande) frequently signed his letters as Treasurer of Youth League, and someone named K.M. Dewasi signed as Secretary General of Youth League. Correspondence was most often in Swahili, and sent from Dar es Salaam to Frelimo's various branches throughout Tanzania, discussing travel, fundraising events, and reunions with various

¹³ For example: Letter to Eduardo Mondlane signed by Mariano Matsinha (Secretario do DOI), Songea, 28 September 1967, Ref: B/6, 107/FLM/67, Cx. Songea, DOI, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique; Letter to the commander of Lundo Refugees' Settlement in Mbamba-Bay signed by W. G. S. Kadewele (Provincial Secretary), 22 October 1968, Ref: 242/68/NS/FLM, Cx. II Congress Songea 2, DOI, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

'Secretaries of Youth' across Frelimo's branches in Tanzania. In 1965, traces of Nalika's and Dewasi's letters in the archive fade and a second cohort of youth representatives appears.

This second cohort began to call itself the 'Liga Juvenil da Frelimo' in Portuguese and occasionally, in English, 'Frelimo Youth League.' It comprised only two eager letter writers, by the name of Francisco V. Cabo and John W. Kachamila. Both worked in Frelimo's head offices in Dar es Salaam between 1965 and 1968/69. Their letters came from within Frelimo's Departamento da Organização do Interior (DOI) and later the Departamento das Relações Exteriores (DRE) and were sometimes signed as coming from the section for *assuntos juvenis* (youth matters). Their communications were in English, Portuguese and only occasionally Swahili. Rather than writing to the Frelimo branches in Tanzania, they communicated with international organisations abroad, such as the World Federation of Democratic Youth, state-youth organisations from countries, such as East Germany or Yugoslavia, but also party and non-affiliated youth organisations from Sweden or the United Kingdom. Letters speak of material support, visits to international youth conferences, seminars and solidarity campaigns. In 1968, Kachamila's and shortly after also Cabo's letters no longer show Dar es Salaam as their sending address, but Belgrade, Yugoslavia. At that time, a third, more loosely organised cohort of individuals began to use the 'Liga Juvenil' stamp in Dar es Salaam. Signing increasingly as 'Secretary for Youth' is a man named Amour Zacarias Kupela, who would eventually become the head of the National Secretariat for Youth after independence, and the first secretary general of independent Mozambique's mass democratic organisation for youth.

In addition to the communications from the FYL's various representatives in Dar es Salaam, letter writers in other departments, especially the DOI, refer to '*Juventudes*,' or 'Youth Leagues' in tones that suggest a disconnect from the kinds of activities that the FYL representatives engaged in from the head offices in Dar es Salaam. In a letter to the commander of Lundo Refugee Camp in Mbamba-Bay, just across the North-Western border in Tanzania, for example, the Frelimo

provincial secretary William Kadewele wrote in 1968 that “we hope that our newly formed committee and its Youth League, will always work confidentially with your Office, as we had agreed upon, and your advices given to them again will be very much appreciated.”¹⁴ Unlike the FYL leadership in Dar es Salaam, who were students barely in their twenties, his letter revealed that youth leagues in the branches did not necessarily have to be young in relation to biological age or social markers of adulthood in northern Mozambique. Many of the men on Kadewele’s list were in their forties, and had dependants, such as wives and children, of their own. On another occasion, Kadewele reported to the commanders in Lundo of a visit from the two youth leagues revealed that the youth leagues or *Juventudes* that the DOI communicated with and who were stationed in branches across Tanzania and Mozambique were engulfed in the world of armed warfare: “There were two groups which came from Unangu and Maniamba together with their chairmen [...] one Youth League Aidi Saidi, Maniamba branch. [Chairman] Aidi Saidi has 28 militias at his branch, and these militias are many times participating in combats [sic].”¹⁵

Another report from a Frelimo branch in Niassa also suggested that *uma Juventude* (a Youth) was involved in militia activities, distinct from *guerilleiros*’ (guerillas) activities, but military in nature. In a report on the situation at the Niassa branches that was addressed to Eduardo Mondlane in 1967 the DOI Secretary Mariano Matsinha wrote in the section ‘*Juventude*’:

Although the *juventude* (youth) are beginning to appear on the scene of the [p. 3] struggle, given their contribution, morale is not yet high, due to their material conditions, clothing and weapons. I think that this area should be given special

¹⁴ Letter to the commander of Lundo Refugees’ Settlement in Mbamba-Bay signed by W. G. S. Kadewele (Provincial Secretary), 22 October 1968, Ref: 242/68/NS/FLM, Cx. II Congress Songea 2, DOI, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

¹⁵ In a letter to the commander of Lundo Refugee’s Settlement in Mbamba-Bay, W. G. S. Kadewele, wrote of a visit: “There were two groups which came from Unangu and Maniamba together with their chairmen [...] one Youth League Aidi Saidi, Maniamba branch. [Chairman] Aidi Saidi has 28 militias at his branch, and these militias are many times participating in combats.” See: Reports on Namuli camp & Mitomoni signed by W. G. S. Kadewele (Provincial Secretary), 10 October 1968, Cx. II Congress Songea 2, DOI, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

attention in order to win over these youth, who could tomorrow be the backbone of the popular militias that we intend to organise. That being the case, a certain number of military uniforms and weapons should be sent as soon as possible. The clothing situation, even for our guerrillas in this area, is already an acute problem. But I dare to make these suggestions bearing in mind that a friendly country has promised to send us 10,000 uniforms, and of that number, I think it would be possible to earmark some for the youth. Trying to do so would be a stimulus for those who already co-operate and an incentive for those who are still reluctant.¹⁶

Finally, a report from a DOI conference held in Mbeya in October 1965 gives some insight into the kinds of activities the *Juventudes* were involved in. As one participant relayed:

For example, the sale of [Frelimo membership] cards is a dangerous service in certain areas and for this reason, in our area, we had to organise 50 *rapazes da juventude* [kids from the youth] to help us evacuate adept [sic] members who buy cards, in order to avoid them being killed by the Salazarists, and also to place leaflets in the homes of the fascist leaders themselves.¹⁷

What kinds of organizations were these *Juventudes*? What was their role in the military struggle and their link to the FYL in the Frelimo headquarters in Dar es Salaam? There are few historical accounts through which to interpret particularly these latter traces. One of these few is Joel das Neves Tembe's interview-based narrative of the Cabo Delgado front. Tembe's account does not go into depth, but suggests an intriguing story of Frelimo's early structures inside Mozambique, in the early days of war and the role that these military youth leagues, also known as *Juventudes* or militias played in it. According to his veteran sources, the youth leagues were unarmed, untrained civilian forces that originated in Lazaro Nkavandame's cotton cooperative, the Sociedade Agrícola Algodoeira Voluntária dos Africanos de Moçambique (SAAVM). The SAAVM mirrored Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) structures, including branches, each headed by a

¹⁶ Letter to Eduardo Mondlane signed by Mariano Matsinha (Secretario do DOI), Songea, 28 September 1967, Ref: B/6, 107/FLM/67, Cx. Songea, DOI, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

¹⁷ Conference Report "A Conferência da DOI em Mbeya," 03 October 1965, Cx. Songea, DOI, Fundo da Frelimo, Arquivo Histórico de Mocambique, Maputo, Mozambique, VIII.

chairman. Chairmen oversaw two types of civilian committees (called 'sita' and 'kumi') as well as a youth league. The civilian committees dealt with social disputes and other problems.¹⁸ The youth leagues, in turn, fulfilled functions such as carrying military equipment, food and other materials from Tanzania into the interior of the country. They lived in close proximity to the branch chairman or in a designated youth camp. When the SAAVM and MANU were subsumed into Frelimo in 1962, this included the existing chairmen system and its youth leagues. When Lazaro Nkavandame became the head of DOI in 1963, he expanded the system throughout Niassa and in the west.¹⁹

According to Tembe's account of the front in Cabo Delgado, the youth leagues seem to have lost some of their status in 1964, when the first Algeria-trained Frelimo guerrillas arrived in the province. Following Mondlane's trip to the south of Mozambique in 1961, where he had devoted significant time to visiting Swiss mission schools across the country, a stream of young, educated, and predominantly southern Frelimo supporters had made their way to Dar Es Salaam.²⁰ Others joined Frelimo from the refugee camps in Tanzania, or were recruited directly from Cabo Delgado. From this pool of mostly new recruits, two groups totalling 250 men were sent to Algeria, in 1962 and 1963 to receive military training from the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). The group included later military leader and president Samora Machel. Upon their return, these soldiers moved into Cabo Delgado, where in 1964, according to Frelimo's liberation script, they 'officially' initiated the armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial forces.

¹⁸ Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 16.

¹⁹ Margaret Hall and Tom Young note, however, that it is 'doubtful that this authority had much substance' in these parts of the country. Hall and Young, 16.

²⁰ See: de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 41–44.

The arrival of these uniformed, armed and trained soldiers caused tensions of command, status and authority. According to Tembe's interviews, a two-tier system emerged: the Algeria-trained soldiers, now referred to by Tembe's veteran interviewees and in the archives as guerrillas or *militares* (soldiers) on the one hand, and the by comparison untrained and unarmed youth leagues, now referred to as *milicianos* (militias) or civilian groups. While the Algeria-trained *militares* were under the command of the DD, then headed by Filipe Magaia and after his death in 1966 by Samora Machel, the untrained *milicianos* remained under the command of the chairmen and by extension the DOI, headed by Nkavandame. Over the course of the armed struggle, tensions emerged across many lines of division, one of which was between Nkavandame, then head of DOI, and the military leadership around Samora Machel in the DD. Tembe's interviewees stress that when the DD set up military training camps in Tanzania, first in Bagamoyo, then Kongwa and later in Nachingwea, some chairmen and *milicianos* received training under the command of the DD. Upon their return, however, they often went back to living in their established youth camps where they were de facto under the authority of a chairman. In this manner, they remained 'youths' rather than becoming 'soldiers.' This perception of difference in status was further fuelled by the Algeria-trained *militares*' privileged roles in the fighting and access to scarce war materials. From Tembe's account of the Cabo Delgado front, it appears that the youths accused the numerically few Algeria-trained soldiers of primarily executing attacks against the Portuguese but leaving the defence of liberated territories to the chairmen and their youth leagues. One of Tembe's interviewees recalled that during a meeting with Jorge Rebelo and Candido Mondlane in 1966 in Nambwavila: "the chairmen criticised the military, saying that they didn't fight; that the military only walked around without fighting; that

the enemy was in Mueda and the military didn't fight; that the ones fighting were in fact the *milicianos* [militias].”²¹

The credibility of Tembe's veteran sources is difficult to gauge, especially given that oral accounts of the liberation struggle remain shrouded in mythical and politicized narratives, as we have seen. While the tensions between the DD and Nkavandame, have been described by other scholars, the youth leagues as such are not usually described as a decisive factor in these tensions.²² They do, however, seem to have been on the losing end of the 1968 internal splits and tensions. Alongside Nkavandame's real contributions to the liberation struggle, the *milicianos*' role, and their claims to youth, came to be associated with the 'reactionary forces,' rather than the 'revolutionary forces' after 1968. Sitting with me many years later in the Frelimo headquarters in 2022, Cabo explained:

There are some people who want to associate FYL with the attitudes of Lázaro Nkavandame. This is one of the things that confuses me. It has to be very clear that FYL, the youth wing of Frelimo, as a structure, had nothing to do with the attitudes of Lázaro Nkavandame, although he had pretensions of taking over this youth wing of Frelimo. What happened was that, in the interior of Mozambique, he had his structure, which was the structure of the chairmen [...] it was a political-administrative structure and in this structure he had some youths who performed the functions of militiamen, others were teachers, so he had a series of people who were performing various functions and it is the [young people at] these fronts that we were working with. So, it wasn't necessarily FYL, it was young people carrying out various tasks. Now, he [Nkavandame] was more connected to these young militiamen, who were not from FYL but from Lázaro Nkavandame's organisation, but since they were youths, we worked with them to give them proper guidance. What happened

²¹ Joel das Neves Tembe, *História da luta de libertação nacional* (Maputo, Mozambique: Ministério dos Combatentes, Direcção Nacional de História, 2014), 281.

²² Walter C. Opello, 'Pluralism and Elite Conflict in an Independence Movement: FRELIMO in the 1960s', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 2, no. 1 (1975): 66–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057077508707943>; John A. Marcum, *Conceiving Mozambique* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65987-9_8; Michael G. Panzer, 'The Pedagogy of Revolution: Youth, Generational Conflict, and Education in the Development of Mozambican Nationalism and the State, 1962–1970', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (December 2009): 803–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070903313178>.

was that certain young militiamen went astray and obeyed Lázaro Nkavandame, but that doesn't mean that it was FYL that was obeying him.²³

The fact that Cabo wanted to distance himself and the FYL that was associated with him, from Nkavandame in the interview, given that Nkavandame was painted as the archetypal traitor shortly after his expulsion from Frelimo in 1968, points to the militia youth's historical fate. It also reflects, however the disconnect between the multiple political structures who laid claim on representing the youth of the Mozambican liberation struggle. As we will see next, Cabo's and Kachamila's political youth was grew from very different experiences and was underpinned by very different sets of ideas about the meaning and role of youth in the struggle.

The FYL at the 'Diplomatic Front' (1964-1968)

The FYL in Dar es Salaam emerged through very different circumstances than the Youth Leagues in the military realm, namely as the product of John Kachamila and Francisco Cabo's political biographies. Both spent their early childhoods in the North of Mozambique. According to his memoir, John Kachamila was born on Mozambican soil, in the Lago District bordering lake Malawi just south of the border of today's Tanzania, on January 30, 1946.²⁴ At a young age, his parents migrated across the border. He spent his childhood in Tanganyika, in Mtipwili and Kilosa, where his father established a small business selling bread and other goods, and the children had access to education, clothing, and health services.²⁵ Kachamila's schooling took place entirely in English in Tanganyika. Following primary school in Kilosa he transferred in grade three to a Catholic school in Mwanza in 1957, then in grade four to a Catholic primary school in Mbeya, and finally entered as the top student of his grade into St. Joseph Middle School, a catholic boarding school for boys

²³ Francisco Valentino Cabo, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, Mozambique, 22 June 2022.

²⁴ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 124.

²⁵ Kachamila, Position 168.

and in his own words: “the best Black school in the region.”²⁶ Of St. Joseph School, Kachmila remembered: “While there, I met fellow countrymen who were interested in politics. At that time, Tanganyika was already in the decolonization process, which made us aware that Mozambique deserved independence as well.”²⁷

Francisco Valentino Cabo, on the other hand, spent his childhood on the Mueda plateau, close to Nangololo mission. His mother gave birth to him across the border, in a Catholic hospital in Ndanda, Tanganyika, on 17 September 1945.²⁸ She passed away during the birth of her sixth child and Cabo grew up with his maternal grandparents, while his father stayed in a near-by village and later emigrated to Tanganyika. Cabo’s schooling took place at various Catholic mission schools in the area, including the Nangololo boarding school. While embracing catholic values, he maintained a strong rootedness in Makonde culture and generational categories. He received his first communion and confirmation at the mission during school term and passed through the initiation school *Likumbi* in the school holidays.²⁹ “Those who did not pass through the initiation rites were not considered an adult person,”³⁰ he notes in his memoir. Returning from *Likumbi*, he acquired the status of *mwali* (the life stage of youth in the Makonde gerontocratic order) and returned to Nangololo mission school in 1959, where he completed in the following year, second in his class.

Both young men were drawn into politics through their experience of Tanzanian independence in 1961, an influence that manifested in a nationalist and pan-African sentiment. Kachamila witnessed the moment of independence while attending St. Joseph school. A year later, in May 1962, the Pan

²⁶ Kachamila, Position 226 and Position 412.

²⁷ Kachamila, Position 633.

²⁸ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 15.

²⁹ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 27–33.

³⁰ Cabo, 32.

African Freedom Movement for East Central and Southern Africa met in Mbeya, and Kachimila together with other students attended:

Mbeya is a plateau and it's cold, but not even that dissuaded us. We didn't eat anything, since we left school early in the morning, but the fact that we were eager to see and hear African nationalist leaders talking about pan-Africanism and independence, live and for the first time, helped us survive. That was the event that instilled deep nationalism and the wish in me to participate in the Liberation of Mozambique.³¹

In Mbeya, Kachamila "became involved" with a group of Mozambicans around his cousin Mkali, who had heard of Frelimo's foundation in Dar Es Salaam in 1962 and wanted to join the movement. They wrote to the headquarters and waited for authorisation for several months before travelling to Dar es Salaam by bus. In 1962, he finished eighth grade and left a few months later for Dar es Salaam to join Frelimo.

Francisco Cabo experienced Tanzanian independence through an uncle who lived in Tanganyika. He came back to the Mueda plateau with stories of Nyerere, *uhuru* (independence) and TANU on visits in the late 1950s. Following the Mueda massacre, which Cabo heard about immediately afterwards, he joined in clandestine mobilization work, selling MANU cards and assisting a maternal uncle, who lived in a near-by village and who organized secret meetings and debates.³² In October 1962, after Frelimo's foundation, his uncle and others convened a first meeting to present the report of Frelimo's first Congress, which called for the "mobilization of youths for military training abroad."³³ Cabo and other attendees signed up and arrived after a long journey, several months later, in February 1963, in Dar Es Salaam.

³¹ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 414.

³² Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 60–61.

³³ Cabo, 78.

Witnessing Tanzanian independence directly or through family networks was an eye-opening experience for Cabo and Kachamila. Before their 18th birthday they decided to join Frelimo to support the struggle. But joining Frelimo also gave Cabo and Kachamila the opportunity to acquire more education, a personal ambition now pursued in the name of nationalism. When they arrived in Dar es Salaam in early 1963, at the age of 17, they were deemed too young for military training.³⁴ Kachamila initially arrived in Ilala Camp in Dar Es Salaam.³⁵ There, he “reported to the office and was welcomed by Joaquim Chissano, who advised [him] to continue [his] studies at the Afro-American Institute, and [that he] would be gradually involved in bigger Frelimo tasks later.”³⁶ Although their lives had been intimately entwined with Tanganyika and later Tanzania and TANU, Frelimo and the aid organizations that supported it classified Cabo and Kachamila as Mozambican political refugees, which gave them access to housing, health and education services.

Both Cabo and Kachamila enrolled at the African-American Institute (AAI), later Kurasini International College, and lived in Mgulani refugee camp. Through the AAI, Kurasini and Mgulani, Kachamila and Cabo were exposed to a range of new ideas about nationalism, anti-colonialism and Pan-Africanism. All three places were melting pots for students, refugees and teachers from different southern African countries and across the globe. It was here that Kachamila and Cabo met Feroza Kahn, Juda Sindi, Joao Batista, and Josina Machel, some of whom would become important figures within Frelimo, and met students from other liberation movements in the Southern African region. In his memoir, Kachamila remembered:

³⁴ In his memoir, Kachamila recounts that he was selected for military training but missed the group’s departure to Algeria.

³⁵ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 517.

³⁶ Siliya, Carlos Jorge, Benigna Zimba, and Páscoa Themba, eds. *Simpósio 50 Anos da Frelimo: 1962-2012 Fontes para a nossa história*, 2012. 172; Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 546.

I lived with other student refugees from African liberation movements, all from the southern region of the continent. Across the road female students and refugees mainly from the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Liberation Organization were accommodated.

In many ways Cabo and Kachamila's political journeys reflect those typical of political youth elsewhere. They were drawn into nationalist politics through family networks, school and exile in neighbouring, independent countries. This was a vastly different trajectory to the militia youth inside Mozambique, through which Cabo and Kachamila were exposed to vastly different sets of ideas about the concept 'youth' itself.

Becoming 'Youth Leaders' at the Komsomol School, USSR

One hot afternoon in August, Cabo and Kachamila were playing football on the campus of Kurasini College, when Joaquim Chissano walked up to them with a list in his hand. "He called us and told us that we had been selected to go to Moscow," Cabo writes in his memoir.

The list contained five names: Francisco Valentino Cabo, John William Kachamila, Judas Sinda, Jorge Fanhana and Alfredo Sigauque. Comrade Chissano told us that we had been selected to take part in a training course in youth leadership at the Central School of the Soviet Communist School (KOMSOMOL). Youth leadership, why?³⁷

Cabo speculates that Pascoal Mocumbi had suggested them to Chissano. Mocumbi was the Vice President of Frelimo's União Nacional dos Estudantes de Moçambique no Exterior (Union for Mozambican Students Abroad, UNEMO) and had coordinated several political debates with a group of Kurasini students, including Cabo and Kachamila.³⁸ In our interview, however, both men admitted to having no insight into what the selection criteria were.³⁹ Beyond UNEMO, neither

³⁷ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 106.

³⁸ Cabo, 107.

³⁹ Francisco Valentino Cabo, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, Mozambique, 22 June 2022; Kachamila speculated that their selection was related to a meeting they attended with the Afro-Shirazi Youth in Zanzibar.

Kachamila nor Cabo had had prior involvement with youth activism in Mgulani or elsewhere, certainly not with the kinds of organized, political youth that existed in Frelimo up to that point (militia youth). Their journey to Moscow set them on a path in a very different direction.

Cabo and Kachamila's stay at the Komsomol school was part of a wider set of transnational solidarity exchanges between the so-called Global East and South. During the 1960s and '70s, scholarships took several hundred Mozambicans for educational stints to countries such as the East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union. On the Soviet side, this initiative was driven by the Komsomol's special Committee of Youth Organisations (KMO), established in 1957 in the context of Khrushchev's shift in Soviet Africa politics. The KMO's mandate was to "strengthen friendship and co-operation between Soviet and foreign youth organisations, and to provide for the 'international education of Soviet youth.'"⁴⁰ Its activities included raising money for African liberation armies, representing the Soviet youth at international organizations and handing out funding to study at Soviet institutions.⁴¹ While the majority of scholarships that Frelimo received were for higher education in Soviet universities, a less well-known form of scholarships targeted the education of 'activists' in political organisations. This included training trade unionists and, from the early 1960s onwards, the specialized training of young Africans in "conducting

Documents in the archive suggest, however, that this meeting only took place after their return from Moscow; John William Kachamila, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, Mozambique, 28 June 2022.

⁴⁰ Robert Hornsby, 'The Post-Stalin Komsomol and the Soviet Fight for Third World Youth'. *Cold War History* 16, no. 1, 2016, 83–100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2015.107831686>; Hornsby highlights the impact of Khrushchev's 1954 speech at the UNESCO in this regard: 'Once the Soviet Union had joined the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) in 1954, Khrushchev began touting his country as a place where young people from across the globe could gain access to highquality higher education, and the first trickle of students from the developing world began to appear.' Robert Hornsby, 'Engineering Friendship? Komsomol Work with Students from the Developing World inside the USSR in the 1950s and 1960s', *Social History*, 2023, 66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071022.2023.2146900>; For more detail on the longer history of the Komsomol's internationalism, see: Matthias Neumann, 'Youthful Internationalism in the Age of "Socialism in One Country": Komsomol'tsy, Pioneers and "World Revolution" in the Interwar Period', *Revolutionary Russia* 31, no. 2, 2018, 279–303, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2018.1541631>.

⁴¹ Hornsby, 'The Post-Stalin Komsomol', 89, 94, 92.

political work with youth.”⁴² Like university education, the youth ‘activist’ training was managed through the KMO. It took place at the Soviet Union’s All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League’s Central School – the Komsomol’s Central School – near Moscow. By 1964, 350 Africans had been trained at the Komsomol school.⁴³ Students from the Portuguese colonies constituted a minority, but between 1963 and 1967, the Komsomol School trained 59 PAIGC militants, 18 Angolans, and 13 Mozambicans, two of whom were John Kachamila and Francisco Cabo.⁴⁴

For the Soviet Union, youth represented an important category, both in its internal political ideology, as well as as part of the cultural front of the global Cold War and its “battle for youth.”⁴⁵ The Komsomol school was founded originally to train Soviet party cadres after the Second World War in “youth media and working with Young Pioneers.”⁴⁶ With the increasing focus on diplomacy and culture, according to Joel Kotek, the 1960s were marked by a war for the ‘hearts and minds’ of Cold War subjects on both sides of the Berlin Wall, as well as throughout the so-called Third World, in particular newly decolonizing states. From the 1960s onwards, the Komsomol School launched courses in ‘Youth Leadership’ that were ten to twelve months long and taught in small seminar groups with impressive teacher student ratios as high as one to five. The students had a busy daily schedule. According to a former Komsomol School teacher: “A typical day started with

⁴² Hornsby, 93.

⁴³ Hornsby, ‘Engineering Friendship?’, 78.

⁴⁴ Hornsby, 78.

⁴⁵ See: Alexander, McGregor, and Tendi, ‘Transnational Histories’; Joël Kotek, ‘Youth Organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War’, *Intelligence and National Security* 18, no. 2, 2003, 168–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684520412331306790>; Grainne Goodwin, ‘Special Journal Issue on “Youth and Internationalism in the Twentieth Century” by Daniel Laqua and Nikolaos Papadogiannis’, *Social History Blog* (blog), 2023.

⁴⁶ Hornsby, ‘Engineering Friendship?’, 78.

a lecture, followed by discussion seminars in the morning, followed by so-called individual ‘consultations’ where students could come and ask questions in the afternoon.”⁴⁷

The educational curriculum comprised a mix of general foundations in Soviet Marxism, the country’s heroic history, culture and progress, as well as in practical skills deemed useful for students’ particular contexts. Class content was broadly tailored to the particular contexts of the students’ countries, as imagined by the Komsomol School. Students were divided into streams for students from capitalist, socialist and developing countries. Included in the latter were students from African, Asian and Latin American anti-colonial movements.⁴⁸ Teachers were encouraged to “use ‘concrete examples’ to ‘expose all the ways by which US imperialism penetrated into Africa’ and imposed ‘new forms of colonial oppression’ and emphasised that the USSR believed it was their ‘internationalist duty to help all peoples fighting for the full eradication of the colonial system.’”⁴⁹ According to Hornsby, in the late 1960s the “themes of study” that constituted the core of the developing country course track included the course “USSR – the country of victorious socialism”, “*fizkul'tura*” (physical education, which included gymnastics, basketball, football, athletics and shooting practice), “Russian language”, “basic problems of scientific communism” and a final subject referred to in documents only as “special discipline.”⁵⁰ The students at the Komsomol school also watched “classic Soviet propaganda movies such as Battleship Potemkin, Chapaev and Lenin in October,”⁵¹ studied documents of the Communist party, including historic

⁴⁷ Moseyko, 2023 interview published in: Natalia Telepneva et al., ‘Deconstructing Moscow as an Anti-Colonial Hub: Power Hierarchies and Solidarity Networks at the Centre of the Socialist Universe’ (forthcoming), 10.

⁴⁸ For a Russian language publication on the Komsomol school’s programmes, see: Vasiliev Mukhamedjanov, ‘History of the Central Komsomol School Prior to the Central Committee of Komsomol 1944-1969’ (PhD diss., Moscow Humanitarian University, 2011). Many thanks to Daria Zelanova, for pointing me to this publication; Hornsby, ‘Engineering Friendship?’, 80.

⁴⁹ Telepneva et al., ‘Deconstructing Moscow as an Anti-Colonial Hub’, 10.

⁵⁰ Hornsby, ‘Engineering Friendship?’, 80.

⁵¹ Hornsby, 80.

congresses, and visited historic sites and museums in and around Moscow where they would hear lectures on topics such as “the struggle of the USSR against the aggressive policy of neo-imperialism”, “Neocolonialism: the main obstacle to the socio-economic progress of African countries” and “Help from socialist states to the developing countries of Africa, and its role in providing them with independent national development.”⁵²

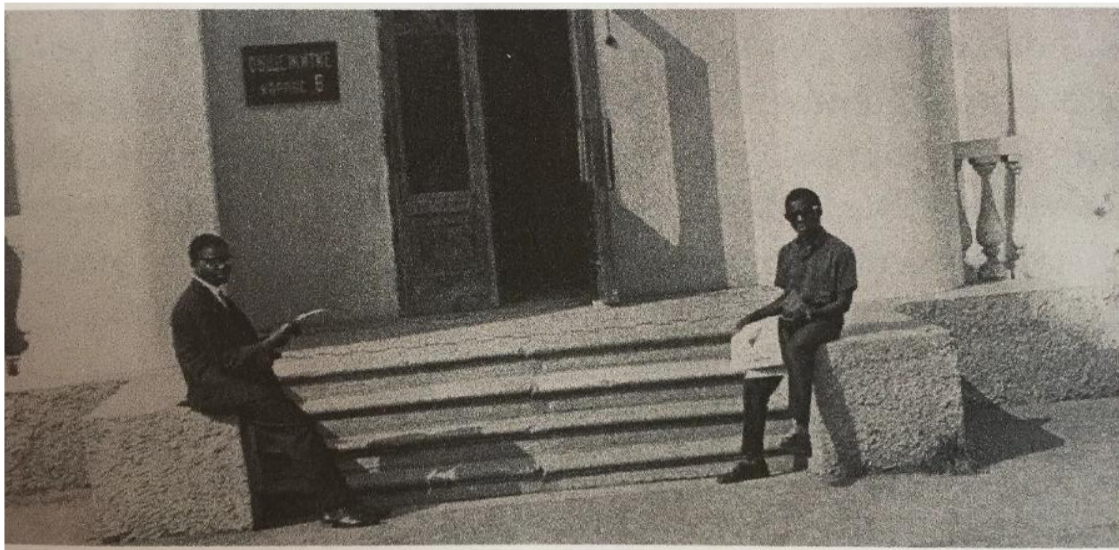


Figure 3: "Moscow, 1964: John Kachamila (right) and Francisco Cabo at the Komsomol youth school," in: Kachamila, Position 580.

As we have seen in the introduction, Soviet ideology and authoritative discourse permeated state institutions in the Soviet Union, especially the Komsomol, who had the explicit mandate to promote the values underpinning this discourse in pedagogical ways. Kachamila and Cabo encountered Soviet discourse on all kinds of matters during their time, but also about the meaning and role of youth in Soviet society, pedagogies and organizational models. For example, the students took courses in “Komsomol and Pioneer work” and “the international youth movement.”

⁵² Hornsby, 80.

Here, discourses were rehearsed that highlighted the historical responsibility of youth in the construction of communism and the importance of the global anti-imperialist movement. Furthermore, Komsomol volunteers at the school were instructed to ensure ample room for exchanging of experiences in working with youth.

Cabo and Kachamila were deeply impressed by Soviet teachings, which they felt were all the more convincing in light of the modern features of Soviet life. In Kachamila's recollection, the power of the ideas communicated in the Komsomol school lay in 'showing' the students convincingly that socialism offered the better future: "I never felt that there was an attempt to clog students up with communism, there wasn't that pressure. I think they always tried to show that the best future would be with a socialist ideology, that was their main thesis."⁵³ The Komsomol School presented itself to the students as the pinnacle of modernity.⁵⁴ Besides academic training, the Komsomol facilities included "football pitches, tennis courts, a swimming lake, a photography laboratory, a fruit garden and greenhouses, a car available for students to learn to drive, and cinema projection halls."⁵⁵ Both Kachamila and Cabo appreciated particularly the photography classes and training for a Soviet driver's license.⁵⁶ In the interview, Kachamila remembered: "It was a very luxurious and very large school, it had practically everything and when you were there you didn't worry about anything[...] it was fantastic."⁵⁷ Their memoirs and interviews show that bound up with impressions of experiencing snow, flying in an airplane and an unfamiliar cold, were impressions of Soviet modernity.⁵⁸ Besides museums and state institutions, visits included trips to ballets, galleries, opera,

⁵³ Kachamila, interview.

⁵⁴ for a similar experience that Southern African military trainees had in the USSR, see: Alexander and McGregor, 'Adelante!'

⁵⁵ Hornsby, 'Engineering Friendship?', 81.

⁵⁶ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 110.

⁵⁷ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 1157.

⁵⁸ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 590; Kachamila, interview.

and facilities, such as “dry-cleaning, a bathhouse, a hairdresser, a polyclinic and a newspaper kiosk all on site.” Of Leningrad, Cabo remembered particularly fondly the Hermitage Museum, which to him “was like being in a dream.”⁵⁹ During a visit to Dushanbe in Tajikistan where the group stayed for a week, Cabo recounts in his memoir visiting industrial businesses, farms, cultural and historical sites of interest. There, he notes “at the time the Soviet Union was a developed country, prosperous, rich and powerful in all domains.”⁶⁰

This impression was carefully curated. Kachamila and Cabo’s time in Moscow was sheltered from critical voices. In this respect, their experience differed starkly from that of most Mozambican students at regular Soviet universities at the same time.⁶¹ Unlike on Soviet university campuses, there was little room for critical debate outside the Komsomol School’s classroom, or for free interaction with Soviet people. Visits and trips were typically strictly supervised to ensure the students did not deviate from the pre-planned paths.⁶² The Komsomol School’s students that Cabo and Kachamila interacted with, Soviet and foreign alike, were handpicked for their party loyalty by the KMO, acting under the auspices of the Komsomol Central Committee. The result was that the graduates of the youth leadership course returned to Mozambique deeply impressed with Soviet modernity and a vision for Mozambican youth that they soon learned found little resonance in the struggle and among the Frelimo leadership.

⁵⁹ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 111.

⁶⁰ Cabo, 114.

⁶¹ Katsakioris, ‘Students from Portuguese Africa in the Soviet Union, 1960–74’; Maxim Matusevich, ‘Expanding the Boundaries of the Black Atlantic: African Students as Soviet Moderns’, *Ab Imperio* 2 (2012): 325–50, <https://doi.org/10.1353/imp.2012.0060>.

⁶² Hornsby, ‘Engineering Friendship?’, 82.

Conceiving the Liga Juvenil da Frelimo

If prior to their journey to Moscow, Kachamila and Cabo felt no particular calling to represent the cause of Mozambique's youth, they had certainly gained a sense of authority and interest in youth politics after their return. Now "credentialed youth leader[s],"⁶³ they became the main proponents of the idea that Frelimo should establish its own youth league, the 'Liga Juvenil da Frelimo.'⁶⁴ After the Komsomol students' return from Moscow,⁶⁵ Kachamila and fellow Komsomol graduate Judas Sindi drafted a statute for the Liga that is stored in the AHM. The document was type-written multiple times and different pages seem to have been written by different typewriters.⁶⁶ The sections of the documents differ in terms of language: while some are written in grammatically correct, long and complex sentences typical of official documents that may have served the author as inspiration, other sections seem to reflect the author's own words or translations, filled with grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. Some sections are word-by-word replicas of the Komsomol statute of 1964, which the authors may have read or received copies of in a course such as "Komsomol and Pioneer work."⁶⁷ Other sections are written in what sounds more like Kachamila's own words but reflect the discourses and organizational structures propagated by the Komsomol at the time.

The youth organization that Cabo and Kachamila envisioned was similar to the Komsomol in structure and mission. Structurally, the Liga mirrored the Komsomol. As its highest organ,

⁶³ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 590.

⁶⁴ Alfredo Sigaúque and George Fanhana reportedly deserted from Kongwa and probably fled to Zambia in 1966. Kachamila, Position 648.

⁶⁵ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 131.

⁶⁶ Proposed statute for the "Juventude da Frelimo (F.Y.L.)", 30 October 1965, Cx. L, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁶⁷ 'Charter of the All-Union Lenin Communist Youth' (Young Guard, Publishing house of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, 1964). Many thanks to Robert Hornsby for sharing a copy of the Komsomol Statute of 1964 with me.

Kachamila envisioned the 'League Congress', convened by the League's Central Committee.⁶⁸ The Congress would hear and approve reports of the Central Committee, revise and amend the programme and statutes of the League, determine the 'line of the League,' elect the Central Committee.⁶⁹ At lower levels, the League would consist of branches, with lower levels of hierarchy below them, and anchored in institutions such as the army, school, and work place as in the Soviet Union. Membership would be open to "any young citizen of Mozambique who accepts the programme and the rules of the League [and] takes an active part in the revolution and carries out all League decisions."⁷⁰ Unlike the Komsomol, there was no age limit in Kachamila's imagined Youth League. Rather, the statute specified that: "In the time of the revolution the age should not be the most retarding [sic] problame [sic] to Leaguemembership [sic]. Agrown [sic] up youth of conscious age is well-comed [sic] to membership."⁷¹ Membership and thus the very idea of Youth that the authors envision was a fluid concept, based primarily on 'consciousness,' and obedience to the Liga's hierarchy.

Like the Komsomol, the Liga's mission was the explicit politicization, education and mobilization of youth for the purpose of the revolution, as defined by the party, its superior. Kachamila envisioned the League's agitational work "to create and develop loyalty to the revolutionary cause, love of the youth to their mother land [...] to arm the youth with the Party (Frelimo) ethics, lines, principles, propaganda slogan, etc. and explain them to the masses."⁷² It would achieve this aim through a series of educational and mobilization activities: the "constant training of the youth... education of the youth" through "specialised seminars, national [and] international." Trained youth

⁶⁸ Proposed statute, 4.

⁶⁹ Proposed statute, 4.

⁷⁰ Proposed statute, 8.

⁷¹ Proposed statute, 10.

⁷² Proposed statute, 6.

would subsequently mobilize others through agitational campaigns, presumably inside Mozambique, described in the statute as: “rally on more youth, carry on agitational and propaganda work among the masses and the youth in particular.”⁷³

Crucially and in most start contrast to the militia youth inside Mozambique, in relation to the liberation struggle, Kachamila envisioned the FYL’s political role to lie in the international and diplomatic sphere of the struggle and attributed little role to youth in the military realms of the struggle. Perhaps inspired by courses, such as “the international youth movement,” Kachamila envisioned the League’s agency to lie in exerting diplomatic pressure on the Portuguese government:

It is the youth that has in the world wide scale, to condemn [in] the strongest terms crimes committed against humanity by the Portuguese Colonialist and Fascist Government, and to proclaim the unity of the nation, of youth and the people of Mozambique above all partisan, ethnic, work [divisions], where by the youth has to remain side by side with its people, arm in arm, until the final victory.⁷⁴

In this regard, the authors viewed international campaigns as the main driver for change, with seminars, conferences, study groups, as their most effective tools:

The youth can play an important role in several campaigns, such as the campaign against economic inequality with already developed countries by keeping themselves better informed about the problame [sic] through international seminars, conferences, study groups and literature available from different sources, and through films and visual aids.⁷⁵

Campaigns would be directed at the “exclusion of Portugal from [the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)] and the immediate termination of United States military assistance to

⁷³ Proposed statute, 5.

⁷⁴ Proposed statute, 13.

⁷⁵ Proposed statute, 14.

Portugal and the elimination of aggressive military blocks.”⁷⁶ Others would have broader goals, such as “urging political leaders to cooperate to [matters] of international understanding, technical progress and the elimination of international inequality.”⁷⁷ Kachamila’s Liga was going to be firmly integrated in the international youth movement:

we consider that for a League to be only alone is of no interest. Our League is to be recognised on the international scale if at-all we come to mutual understanding with other international organisations. There are so many internainao [sic] organisations – political or social, unions, councils, leagues, etc. but it is the the [sic] duty of that or this organisation to come into contact with this or that union. Therefore we have come to dicide [sic] of different youth organisations conferences which tirelessly struggle for the youth unity and international understanding. We would heartly [sic] welcome the establishment of the Pan-African Youth League and her activities, and see to it that the youth of the world will be working [in] unison for the common cause.⁷⁸

This work included advocacy for bi-lateral cooperation between youth groups: “the formation of voluntary organisations concerned with the exchange of cultural, and educational information should be encouraged by our youth league, as the success of the Viet Nam-Japa, Viet Nam-France, etc associations.” When John Kachamila and Francisco Cabo returned from the Komsomol School, they had not only taken up the call to become ‘youth activists’, but also the Komsomol’s vision of what kind of activism they should stimulate within Frelimo. This vision for a FYL resembled a Komsomol in structure and mission, embraced the international youth movement and its aims, and saw youth role as particularly suited to the diplomatic realms of the anti-colonial fight.

⁷⁶ Proposed statute, 10.

⁷⁷ Proposed statute, 18.

⁷⁸ Proposed statute, 9-10.

Diplomacy Youth and Military Youth in Frelimo's Struggle

Following their return to Dar es Salaam, the Frelimo leadership had insisted on sending Kachamila and Cabo through the 'struggle school' before integrating them into the movement's work of liberation. In Frelimo's politico-military training centre Kongwa, it seems that disunity in the leadership over what to do with these credentialled 'youth leaders' had already led to an unusually long and frustrating prolongation of Cabo and Kachamila's stay in Kongwa. After several months, they began working in Frelimo's vice president's office, at the time Uria Simango, as assistants. Here, they also began attending to the *assuntos juvenis* (youth matters) portfolio, which consisted of managing mostly bilateral communications with youth movements from abroad.

Already versed in Soviet discourse about youth internationalism, diplomatic work became central to Kachamila and Cabo's day-to-day practice, the very practical real work of their FYL. They entertained bilateral relations with a host of youth organizations in socialist countries,⁷⁹ and a few left- and liberal youth organizations in the West.⁸⁰ They became versed in the work of youth diplomacy, preparing and giving speeches, at international youth conferences and solidarity seminars,⁸¹ they wrote reports and memoranda,⁸² and negotiated solidarity donations from youth

⁷⁹ Letter to Frelimo Youth League, signed by Horst Schumann (Erster Sekretär, Freie Deutsche Jugend), Berlin, 16 February 1967, Cx. 29 RR, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique,

⁸⁰ "Message of support for FRELIMO on the occasion of Mozambique Freedom Day - 25th September" signed by Douglas Marchans (Chairman Southern Africa Commission of the National League of Young Liberals), 19 September 1968, Cx. 29 E, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique; Letter to the Chairman of the British National League of Young Liberals, signed by Uria T. Simango (Vice-President and Secretary for External Affairs), 02 October 1968, V/31 213/FLM/68, Cx. 29 no letter, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique, 1; Letter to Ake Magnusson (Student Development Fund, Sweden), signed by Uria T. Simango (Vice President and Secretary for Foreign Affairs), 11 October 1968, V/33 225/FLM/68, Cx. 29 no letter, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁸¹ "Speech to the VIIIth FDJ Congress," Berlin, 10 to 13 May 1967, Cx. 29 RR, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique; "Memorandum of the FRELIMO Youth League to the World Federation of Democratic Youth" signed by J. D. M. MacWilliams, Khartoum, 17 January 1969, Cx. 29 E, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁸² "Youth Report on the Kartoum Conference in Support of Peoples of the Portuguese Colonies and Southern Africa 18-20 January, 1969," Dar es Salam, 24 January 1969, Cx. 29 E, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo,

organizations.⁸³ In 1967, Kachamila and Cabo visited Zanzibar, met with the Afro-Shiraz party Youth League, went to East Germany and Bulgaria to attend the congresses of their respective Youth organizations in 1967⁸⁴ and 1969, and attended the Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Movements of the Portuguese Colonies in Guinea-Conakry in 1967,⁸⁵ partook in a hike of Mount Kilimanjaro in symbolic support of the Ujama Declaration jointly with southern African liberation movement's Youth organizations, and attended a conference of the Pan-African Youth Organization in Dar Es Salaam.⁸⁶



Figure 4: “Antonio of the Angolan MPLA, and John Kachamila at the Komsomol Congress in 1966,” in: *Kachamila, Position 652*.

Figure 5: “Kachamila with Matola, at the youth conference in Bulgaria, 1968,” in: *Kachamila, Position 612*.

Mozambique; “Relatorio sobre o Parlamento da Juventude Livre da Alemanha Democrática de 25 a 29 de Maio de 1971,” Cairo, 13 June 1971, Cx. 29 E Correspondências expedidas, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique; “Report on the 1st meeting of the Commission of the P.A.Y.M. for Assistance to the National Liberation Movements,” 04 to 08 January 1969, Cx. 29 E Correspondências expedidas, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁸³ Letter to FRELIMO signed by Vojo Venišnik (Secretary, Commission for International Relations), Belgrade, 25 March 1971, Cx. 29 E Correspondências expedidas, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁸⁴ Letter to unspecified, signed by Marcelino dos Santos, Dar Es Salaam, 05 May 1967, Cx. 29 RR, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁸⁵ Communique signed by P. la Jeunesse du Front de Libération nationale d’Algerie, le Secrétariat du Mouvement Panafricaine de la Jeunesse, la Jeunesse de la Revolution Démocratique Africaine, Conakry, 28 February 1967, Cx. 29 E Correspondências expedidas, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique; Letter to the ambassador of the Guinean Republic, signed by Marcelino dos Santos, Dar Es Salaam, 21 April 1967, DER/C 44/FLM/67, Cx. 29 no letter, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁸⁶ Francisco Cabo quoted in: Siliya, Carlos Jorge, Benigna Zimba, and Páscoa Themba, eds. *Simpósio 50 Anos da Frelimo*, 180.

In 1966, Kachamila returned to the Soviet Union to attend the Komsomol's Congress, in 1967 they attended the Congress of the East German Free German Youth, the Socialist Youth of Bulgaria, the Conferencia de Solidariedade com of Movimentos da Libertação dos Colonias Portugueses in Guinea-Conakry, and a climb of the Kilimanjaro in support of the Arusha Declaration. 1968 and 1969 saw a similar density of activities with pan-African, socialist and anti-colonial youth movements across the globe.⁸⁷ In addition, Cabo and Kachamila exchanged letters, wrote conference reports, requested material aid, negotiated scholarships, wrote and read statements and partook in the drafting and voting on resolutions. All in the name of the FYL.

Youth politics, as Kachamila and Cabo practiced it was therefore grounded almost entirely in the diplomatic realm of the struggle. The FYL leadership had no contact to political youth inside of Mozambique and no ability to represent their interests until recognized formally by Frelimo. To Kachamila's great frustration, the FYL's official foundation kept getting postponed. Shortly after his arrival in Dar es Salaam in 1965 he was asked to write the statutes of the Women's League. In his memoirs he noted: "Although the articles of the Youth League were the first to be concluded, the organization had not been officially created yet."⁸⁸ The problem with the FYL was that: "The articles of the association had been contested [within the Central Committee] under the allegation they were copied from communist youth organizations such as Komsomol."⁸⁹ Following the criticism that their Liga was too closely copied from the Komsomol, Cabo and Kachamila were allowed to visit the Mozambican interior as a way to "maintain contact with the youth and enrich the articles of our association."⁹⁰ And so, in October 1966, the Soviet-trained representatives of

⁸⁷ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 181.

⁸⁸ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 648. P. 51

⁸⁹ Kachamila, Position 648., 51

⁹⁰ Kachamila, Position 699, see also section: 'The Mission to the Cabo Delgado and Niassa War Fronts.'

the unofficial diplomatic youth league encountered for the first time the representatives of the Chairmen-linked unofficial militia youth league.

When Kachamila and Cabo encountered the militia youth their in many ways contrary views of youth did not initially clash. Rather, informed by their Soviet-inspired view on political youth, Kachamila and Cabo were deeply moved by the militia youth. Over the course of two months, the two FYL representatives from Dar es Salaam visited multiple “youth branches” and “youth camps,” held meetings with militia youth and received complaints, instructions and messages that addressed them as representatives and future leaders of the FYL.⁹¹ Their journey began in Mtwara, from where they crossed into Mozambique via Mkunya and travelled via Base Limpopo and Base Beira to Masudi Youth Branch and Provincia Youth Camp.⁹² At Provincia Youth Camp, Kachamila and Cabo were received with a “youth parade in our honor”⁹³ that left a lasting impression: “The scene was really shameful: none of them had a shirt or even a trouser [sic]; girls had torn dresses and on their feet they had no shoes.”⁹⁴

The militia youth in turn used the opportunity to stake claims, informed by the tensions with the DD’s ‘soldiers’ we saw earlier. In a speech they demanded of Cabo and Kachamila, “(1) Why FYL has no Leader, programme, and concrete Organisation; (2) They need guns; (3) they need clothings

⁹¹ In our interview, Francisco Cabo was adamant to note that the Frelimo Youth League, as a structure and arm of Frelimo, should not be associated with Nkavandame in its entirety. According to Cabo, Nkavandame tried to gain control over the Youth League. His power manifested through the administration, through Chairmen and Branches, some of which had young milicianos, individual youths who ran jobs for Nkavandame, but these were not part of the Frelimo Youth League. “Because they too were Youths,” Cabo and Kachamila worked with them too, “giving them correct orientations,” nevertheless, he cared to clarify that “there was a deviation of certain young militiamen who obeyed Lázaro Nkavandame, but it doesn’t mean that it was the Frelimo Youth League that was obeying him.” Cabo, interview. Cabo’s narrative is most certainly shaped by the still powerful myth of Nkavandame’s treason. Nevertheless, how direct the link between each individual Youth camp and branch would have been to Nkavandame is difficult to assess and his words a reminder not to make any such assumptions.

⁹² “Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique,” 2.

⁹³ “Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique.”

⁹⁴ “Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique.”

[sic].” At their next stop in Central Base, on October 23rd, more than 100 “youths from different regions and villages of Diaca”⁹⁵ raised similar demands for “Clothings, guns, and creation of the League.”⁹⁶ In Provincia, a meeting with 200 youth yielded the same results. Finally, during a meeting on November 2nd in Mueda, the “Frelimo YOUTH LEAGUE Mueda Area” handed them the most elaborate list of requests, echoing their predecessors:

(1) [...] ‘we request the youth league leaders to supply us with automatic guns and modern weapons because the Portuguese troops are armed with very modern weapons nowadays, (2) The Youth are fighting with all energy but we lack another thing i.e. clothings [...]’ (3) Here in the interior, people suffer from so many [d]iseases and people die from very small diseases due to the lack of medicines.⁹⁷

Cabo and Kachamila were deeply moved by the needs and grievances communicated to them by the militia youth and committed to communicating them as best as they could to the members of the D.D.⁹⁸ After their return from Cabo Delgado, probably in December 1966, Cabo and Kachamila wrote a report of their journey, in which they detailed the route as well as the outcomes of the meetings. Kachamila also gave a lecture at the Mozambique Institute. “In reality,” Kachamila reflected in the lecture:

we were so much [sic] pleased with the Organisation and revolutionary mentality of the Youth. The Youth United [sic] themselves soon after the [start of the] war into the Camps voluntarily to help in the war. In reality we can say that the Mozambican Youth in the Interior are Organised [sic] and know their destiny.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ “Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique.”

⁹⁶ “Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique.”

⁹⁷ “Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique.”

⁹⁸ “Liga da Juventude da Frelimo (F.Y.L.): Youth report of the talk by the Central Committee of Frelimo,” 28 February 1967, Cx. 29 RR, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

⁹⁹ “Lecture on Youth League in Interior of Mozambique.”



Figure 6: “At one of the camps for young militiamen in 1966, Cabo Delgado, showing Francisco,” in *Cabo, Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 144.

In some ways, Kachamila and Cabo’s Soviet inspired imagination of youth fell onto fruitful ground in the Mozambican battlefield. Despite the vastly different contexts in which they originated and the political and military realities in which they operated, the Soviet vision of youth gave Kachamila and Cabo a lens through which to understand the militia youth as part of a joint and indeed world-wide youth politics.

But their ambitions for merging the different realms of youth politics in Frelimo’s struggle came at a highly inopportune time. When Kachamila submitted the report of their journey, including the Youth League’s claims for arms and clothes, and their other grievances, “President Eduardo Mondlane, [...] became very concerned”¹⁰⁰ and recommended the issue be discussed in by the executive committee (consisting of the most important members of the Central Committee).¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Kachamila, *From the Rift Valley*, Position 918.

¹⁰¹ Kachamila Position 918.

During this meeting on February 11, 1967, Mondlane was absent and Uria Simango stood in for him. Kachamila's memories of the meeting held with Simango and Chissano, Marcelino dos Santos, and Machel are worth quoting here at length:

We expected to be welcomed, but when the three of us, Cabo, Sindi and myself, entered the room, we noticed the reception was a little chilly. The senior person in the room was Vice President Simango, but Samora Machel yelled at us, saying we had brought false information and tried to confuse the fighters. Marcelino dos Santos also followed the same line of attack, but I replied that I could not understand the problem, because the information had been gathered in the field. That was our full report, and we had included some proposals for solutions to the problems we had detected. [...] But Samora Machel was very nervous. He said that we had spread anti-guerilla information, and we were traitors. He added that, I, Kachamila, as the head of the group, should have been *fuzilado* – put in front of a firing squad. As we could not come to a common understanding, we were told the meeting would continue and we should leave the room. The report was not discussed again.¹⁰²

Machel's reaction can be interpreted as a concern for military secrecy at a time when Frelimo was concerned about infiltration, and the tensions in the movement were running high. Reports about fighters' discontent and lack of basic equipment and sustenance could be damaging to Frelimo's image of military prowess. In his memoir, Kachamila writes:

We were innocent kids, and we had no idea that some of the sensitive issues shouldn't be included in the report, like little logistic assistance; lack of food, clothes and boots; lack of guns and other fighting equipment; and lack of medical assistance, which caused some conflicts between the different players.¹⁰³

But it also reflected the tense atmosphere of the meeting. In 1966, Frelimo was on the brink of a crisis that the victors later rewrote as a 'split' between 'revolutionary' and 'reactionary' factions within the movement. The victorious 'revolutionary' faction comprised amongst others Marcelino dos Santos, Samora Machel, Joaquim Chissano, and Armando Guebuza. The 'reactionary' forces

¹⁰² Kachamila Position 918.

¹⁰³ Kachamila Position 918.

were mystified as traitors to the revolution later on, most prominent among them Lazaro Nkavandame, Uria Simango and Mateus Gwenjere. According to Frelimo's own narrative of the liberation struggle, the 'split' was the result of ideological and moral disagreements over a range of issues, most importantly the question of the definition of the enemy (in terms of race or class), the role of women in the war (the women's detachment), civil authority (relying on 'traditional' authorities versus a complete revolution of civil authority), the allocation and use of land and hereditary authority, and ultimately military strategy.¹⁰⁴ Frelimo's Second Congress in July 1968, the story goes, resolved these 'contradictions' by means of the democratic success of the revolutionary line. The 'split,' however, originated also in struggles over organizational, political and, according to Luís de Brito most importantly, military power.¹⁰⁵ As we saw earlier, the militia youth were entangled in this conflict in which the DD and the DOI aligned with the 'revolutionary' and 'reactionary' factions respectively, as Frelimo saw it, while the FYL also occupied a precarious position. Simango, in whose office Cabo and Kachamila worked, was later also accused of aligning with the 'reactionary' faction. While the specificities of this 'split' remain highly contested and constitute a murky territory of historical inquiry, what emerges from the accounts here, is that the proposal to join forces between the diplomatic youth in Dar es Salaam and the militia youth in the Mozambican 'interior' ultimately ran afoul these internal tensions.

The FYL that Kachamila and Cabo had envisioned would not recover from the harsh rejection they received by the executive committee. In a report titled "Liga da Juventude da Frelimo (F.Y.L.) Youth report of the talk with the Central Committee of Frelimo 28/2/67," written several days

¹⁰⁴ Iain Christie, *Machel of Mozambique* (Harare: African Publishing Group, 1988), 54-55.

¹⁰⁵ de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 56.

after the meeting, the author, likely Kachamila, recounts the events in a bitter and disappointed tone:

There was nothing done in connection with the requests in the report. Therefore what we went into the interior for and what we brought with us has not been realised. Therefore the Mozambique Youth League will, probably, benefit nothing from our trip and words.¹⁰⁶

With their hopes for official recognition shattered, the FYL was forced to retreat entirely into the diplomatic spheres of the armed struggle. This is where Kachamila and Cabo were most active during the years representing the FYL from Dar es Salaam. But the conditions inside the movement became difficult for Kachamila and Cabo after the meeting with the executive committee. Ultimately, the executive committee came to the decision that the FYL headquarters, namely Kachamila, needed to move to Mtwara, a choice, he passionately and courageously disagreed with:

I had the courage to tell President Mondlane that I didn't think it was a good decision. President Mondlane said he didn't expect to hear that and asked why. I said that our intention was to expand our activities and Mtwara shouldn't be the place where we should be. [...] he got very angry with me but I told him that I was not going to comply with what had already been decided by the executive committee, which was the party's highest decision-making body. So he said that he would give me two options: I would go to Kongwa to teach [...] or I would look for a scholarship to go and study abroad. So I chose to go and study.¹⁰⁷

Kachamila procured a scholarship through the Yugoslavian embassy in Dar es Salaam and departed to Belgrade in 1967. Judas Sindi followed him a few months later, and Cabo in 1969. Cabo's account of his departure is more conciliatory, but he too, remembers that his departure was "*uma orientação* (an orientation, meaning an order),"¹⁰⁸ rather than a choice.

¹⁰⁶ "Youth report of the talk with the Central Committee."

¹⁰⁷ Kachamila, interview.

¹⁰⁸ Cabo, interview.

Their departure to study abroad was the sure end of any attempts at bringing together the diplomatic realms of Frelimo's youth work and the military realms or developing a shared discourse about youth. Kachamila and Cabo continued to represent the unofficial FYL for several years from Yugoslavia, where they established close relations with the Yugoslavian state youth organisation.¹⁰⁹ As the tensions within Frelimo came to a head, the two felt more and more isolated from developments in Dar Es Salaam and Mozambique. Following Eduardo Mondlane's assassination by parcel bomb, Frelimo's Second Congress, and Uria Simango's expulsion from Frelimo by the Central Committee, letters in the AHM suggest that the new leadership was less invested in Kachamila and Cabo's work.¹¹⁰ It was only after independence that Kachamila and Cabo would return to Mozambique, with hundreds of other Mozambican students based abroad, many of whom entered into high level careers in the state-building process of post-independence Mozambique.

Towards the OJM

When independence came around, both Kachamila and Cabo were thousands of miles away, on university scholarships in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.¹¹¹ They were not called to lead the imminent foundation of the OJM or help design the country's post-independence youth policies. The Frelimo leadership would call them back eventually but assign them jobs based on the qualifications in natural resource management and health that they had obtained since leaving Dar es Salaam.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 154.

¹¹⁰ Letter to Eduardo Coloma (Departamento de Educação e Cultura), signed by Francisco V. Cabo, Belgrade, 05 June 1970, Cx. 29 E Correspondências expedidas, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique, 2.

¹¹¹ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 217.

¹¹² Cabo, 254.

The designers of the post-independence youth policies were a new generation, headed by another young man in his early twenties, called Zacarias Kupela. Kupela was born in Mozambique but raised in Zanzibar, where he attended secondary school and was involved in the work of a Frelimo branch there at the time of Mondlane's death.¹¹³ Upon request of Kuntuwa Kunduma Nkita, Regional Secretary of a Frelimo branch overseeing Zanzibar and Pemba, Kupela was allowed to transfer to Dar es Salaam in 1969, where got involved in the struggle.¹¹⁴ Unlike Kachamila and Cabo, Machel, as new president of Frelimo and leader of the faction that had emerged victorious from the 'split,' kept Kupela close from the start. But like Cabo and Kachamila, Kupela's work with the FYL would stay almost completely limited to the diplomatic realm.

The majority of his time working with Frelimo during the struggle Kupela spent under Marcelino dos Santo's leadership in the Youth Section of the DRE, informal FYL, that Kachamila and Cabo had been leading.¹¹⁵ Upon his arrival at the Dar es Salaam offices, Kupela recalls meeting "his former bosses,"¹¹⁶ who in turn remember working with Kupela for a few days to "handover the Youth portfolio and the work going on at the time."¹¹⁷ Shortly after, Kupela took over the FYL's diplomatic work. As he recalled when we spoke that "during the struggle, I remember an important aspect of the *Juventude da Frelimo* (Frelimo Youth), was the diplomatic part, spreading the word abroad about the development of the armed struggle and the objectives of the struggle."¹¹⁸ Like Kachamila and Cabo, Kupela forged relationships with socialist youth organizations:

We had the opportunity at that time as *Juventude da Frelimo* in Tanzania - through young students who were in Tuduru, in our educational centre - to take groups

¹¹³ Siliya, Carlos Jorge, Benigna Zimba, and Páscoa Themba, eds. *Simpósio 50 Anos da Frelimo*.

¹¹⁴ Letter to Marcelino dos Santos, Dar Es Salaam, signed by Kuntuwa Kunduma Nkita (Regional Secretary Frelimo Zanzibar & Pemba), 09 April 1969, Cx. 29 EE, DRE, Fundo da Frelimo, AHM, Maputo, Mozambique.

¹¹⁵ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 196–97.

¹¹⁶ Zacarias Kupela, interview.

¹¹⁷ Cabo, *Eu e o Meu Sonho*, 217.

¹¹⁸ Zacarias Kupela, interview.

of youths to the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) on summer camps and also in Crimea, on summer camp in the Soviet Union. These were camps where youths and children came from all over the world and we had the time to instruct to the children who we called at the time *continuadores* (literally: those who continue).¹¹⁹

Like Kachamila and Cabo's trip to Moscow, these were formative experiences:

At that time, the Vietnam War was raging, there were many atrocities that America carried out against Vietnam, dropping napalm bombs, forestation and prisons, and even some children described that war. Young people came from Palestine and at that time we learnt about the solidarity we had with Palestine, we met children who came from Israel, it was a very interesting time. At that time, we would look for the Portuguese children and talk to them, and it was an atmosphere of the foundation of human solidarity, of mutual knowledge between continents and between races.¹²⁰

In 1973, Kupela led a delegation of 120 Mozambicans to the 10th World Festival for Student and Youth in East Berlin, through which he too was exposed to the diplomatic youth culture that dominated these transnational spaces, and the Soviet-inspired discourses about historical responsibility and internationalism that dominated in these spaces:

The festival took place and what that festival was, it brought together young people from all continents and all anti-imperialist tendencies. There were tribunals where, for example, you could condemn imperialism and make a series of accusations, atrocities that imperialism was carrying out in the world, as if it were a tribunal. For example, we used to say that NATO's support for the Portuguese is giving them more strength [...] Then we had cultural exchanges, dances, poetry, music, theatre and we exchanged addresses and then corresponded, which is why to this day I have correspondence with living people from that time.¹²¹

When the armed struggle ended in 1974, Kupela received the mission to go to Maputo and help set up the president's office. He was part of a group of educated, young men and women who called themselves '*os atropelados*' (the overrun), and took on assistant tasks in the presidency. It was from this group that the founders of the OJM were drawn and it is this group who designed, wrote

¹¹⁹ Zacarias Kupela, interview.

¹²⁰ Zacarias Kupela, interview.

¹²¹ Zacarias Kupela, interview.

and implemented – under the watchful eye of president Machel and the Department of Information and Propaganda (represented by Nourmomade Mahmood) – the discourses and organizational practices that came to be associated with the revolutionary youth.

Conclusion

The revolutionary discourses and practices that Frelimo engaged young people in after independence have their roots at least in part in the liberation struggle. Unknown to most historians of Mozambique and indeed also Mozambicans, Frelimo had multiple unofficial internal organizations that referred to themselves as the ‘Youth of Frelimo,’ the ‘Liga Juvenil da Frelimo,’ the ‘Frelimo Youth League,’ or simply the ‘*Juventudes*.’ These organizations, of which we find only fractured traces in the archive today, had grown from very different political and historical contexts, pursued different aims, operated under very different organizational structures and not lastly, spoke in very different ways about the role and meaning of ‘youth’ in the liberation struggle. While some youth structures existed that were engaged in military and political activities within Frelimo’s structures and that operated actively in the North of Mozambique (‘militia youth’), others remained largely confined to the Frelimo head quarters in Dar es Salaam and focussed their activities on the diplomatic realm of the struggle (‘diplomatic youth’), attending international youth conferences and forging close bilateral relationships with youth organizations across the globe.

This chapter has explored these different forms of political organizations for youth during the struggle for liberation with a view to understanding the roots of the post-independence OJM. I have argued that unlike most other post-independence youth organizations, the OJM grew out of an organization that played no significant role in relation to political work inside Mozambique. The OJM’s unofficial predecessor was the FYL, an organization that had grown out of two Frelimo students’ journey to the Soviet Komsomol School in Moscow in 1965. Exposed to a model of

organizing and political discourses there that emphasised the historic responsibilities of youth to build a communist future and the importance of the internationalist realm as a space for the youth to unitedly fight imperialism and capitalism, the FYL under John Kachamila and Francisco Cabo was guided by an aspiration to create a small Komsomol in the Mozambican war for liberation. While this vision met little resonance among the Frelimo leadership, they were well trained and versed for active engagement in Frelimo's foreign relations. Before handing over the FYL to Zacarias Kupela, later to become the first Secretary General of the OJM, Kachamila and Cabo built the organizations structures around representing the 'Frelimo youth' towards the growing world of international youth diplomacy.

For most of Kachamila and Cabo's time, the FYL was a tiny organization of one to three loosely connected people who were based in Dar es Salaam. Although they claimed to represent the youth of Frelimo, they had nearly no connection with young people inside Mozambique. In part, this was because Frelimo's activities inside Mozambique needed to be underground for most of its existence and organizing people inside Mozambique was a dangerous and tricky endeavour. But in part, it was also the result of a lack in political will to allow the FYL to forge connections with young people, who fought with Frelimo inside Mozambique, most intuitively, the organized 'militia youth.' This became obvious during an attempted merger of the 'diplomatic' with the 'militia youth' during a trip Kachamila and Cabo took to the liberated zones. While the 'diplomatic youth' saw the militia youth through their Soviet-inspired view as taking historic responsibility, and were rather taken by the bravery of the young people fighting for Mozambican freedom, the leadership saw the militia youth's claims to weapons, uniforms, and medical equipment in relation to the wider tensions inside the movement in the mid-1960s. As a result, the FYL missed its only chance at actually 'representing' young Mozambican's interests and was forced to retreat to its diplomatic activities.

The story of the FYL gives us an insight into the roots of Frelimo's post-independence youth discourses. While the Soviet proposal for a Komsomol-style youth league failed to take hold during the liberation struggle, it lastingly shaped the organizational practices and discourses that the OJM leadership drew on. As we saw in the last section, the OJM's co-founder and first General Secretary Zacarias Kupela had been directly involved with Cabo and Kachamila and ran the FYL for several years before coming to Maputo with Frelimo. Not only the diplomatic relationships he forged during this time accompanied him throughout his leadership of the OJM, but the OJM would also echo most of the practices and discourses first elaborated by the FYL. As we will see in the next chapter, this included an understanding of youth as a political, rather than a demographic or social category, with an active role to play in revolutionary politics, as well as an emphasis on internationalism. While these influences would profoundly shaped the ways that both the OJM leadership as well as the Frelimo leadership would conceptualize and begin to talk about youth, the post-independence construction of youth was also shaped by a political context drastically different from the battlefields in northern Mozambique. This context is what we will turn to next.

3. Writing Youth into the State-Socialist Script (1974-1976)

Introduction

One day in the mid-1970s, José Mateus Kathupa was ‘overrun’ (*atropelado*) by an order. Kathupa had just finished a master’s degree at the University of London in the United Kingdom (UK). Here, he coordinated a group of Mozambican students abroad. That day, they received a high-ranking visitor, Kathupa recalled when we spoke in 2022.¹ Samora Machel, the incoming president himself, passed by London and paid the student group a visit to remind them of their Mozambican roots and responsibilities. As they were all gathered around a table, Machel suddenly got up and asked “Who here is Mateus Kathupa? [...] You must pack your bags at once and return to Mozambique.”²

22-year-old university student Narciso Matos was similarly taken by surprise one day, when he received an invitation to work “in a closed circle”³ behind the scenes to prepare an upcoming session of Frelimo’s Central Committee. As a student at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, he had become involved with the Associação Académica de Moçambique (AAM), and formulated recommendations for the Frelimo leadership on how to counter the unravelling effects of the

¹ José Mateus Kathupa, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel (video call), Maputo/Moscow, June 21, 2022.

² José Mateus Kathupa, interview.

³ Narciso Matos, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 24, 2022.

political changes on the local economy: “I would work on this document,” he recalled when we spoke, “write recommendations and then see what could be done about it. And that’s how we all got to know each other.”⁴

The so-called ‘overrun’ (*os atropelados*), as the group liked to refer to themselves, were a loose group of 8 young men and women who the Frelimo leadership summed to assist the movement in its transition to vanguard party after independence. “It is important to keep in mind that in this time quasi 98% of the population were illiterate,”⁵ Matos recalled in our interview in 2022, “we were called upon, partly because we were university graduates who knew how to write, how to do a synthesis, write up minutes and more, and so this capacity of ours [was] relatively higher than the others in 1975.”⁶ Whenever there was a Central Committee session, a Congress, a *grupo fechado* (group working behind closed doors) or research work to be done for the president to prepare his position for party internal negotiations, this group of educated young men and women was summoned, *atropelado*.⁷ But when Machel had called back Kathupa, he had a specific mission in mind for him. Shortly after Machel’s visit to the UK, Kathupa – surprised and confused by Machel’s order to return to Mozambique just as he was hoping to take up an opportunity for doctoral study – phoned his acquaintance, the rector of Eduardo Mondlane University Fernando Ganhão, to ask what he made of the situation. The foundation of the Organização da Juventude Moçambicana (OJM) is coming up, Ganhão explain to him. Since he had finished his masters, Machel was sending him to

⁴ Narciso Matos, interview.

⁵ Narciso Matos, interview.

⁶ Narciso Matos, interview.

⁷ Narciso Matos, interview; José Mateus Kathupa, interview; Zacarias Kupela, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, July 03, 2022; Angelo Mondlane, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel (video call), Maputo, June 30, 2022.

participate in the foundational conference. “I was recruited, so to speak,” Kathupa recalled years later: “as a member of the Central Committee of the OJM.”⁸

This chapter continues to explore how and why the category youth became politicized in the Mozambican context. As the previous chapter has shown, while there were certainly young, politically active individuals and even groups within Frelimo who called themselves ‘youth,’ and derived meaning from the label to motivate their anti-colonial politics, Frelimo never recognized these groups or their claims to representing ‘the youth.’ In other words, the discourse about the meaning and role of youth in the struggle that these organizations proposed remained largely on the sidelines of Frelimo’s struggle and never entered the movement’s official discourse. In our search for understanding how youth came to be constructed as a political category, the history of the anti-colonial struggle is thus not the primary place to look. Unlike for most other contexts in which youth was politicized, the events and actions of ‘political youth’ during the anti-colonial struggle to free Mozambique never attained a significant degree of public recognition.

This chapter thus turns to the transition to independence, when Frelimo, seemingly out of the blue and despite having long been exposed to the kind of language they employed, started talking about youth in highly political terms. Youth became ‘*a Seiva da Nação* (the sap of the Nation),’ the ‘*estufa* (greenhouse)’ from which the ‘Embryo of the New Man’ would emerge. Through a close analysis of the most important party meetings that took place in the period of the transitional government and the first year of independence (1974-1976), I explore the conditions that enabled and incentivised Frelimo to develop this revolutionary conceptualization of the category youth at this particular juncture. I argue that the most fundamental factor was the decision to create the OJM.

⁸ José Mateus Kathupa, interview.

In the context of the political transition to independence, Frelimo had set course for the construction of a Marxist-Leninist state, with its typical features, including a mass democratic organization for youth. But the party meetings in the transitional government phase also suggest that Frelimo cadres of all levels had begun raising concerns about ‘ideological deviations’ among certain groups within the independence generation and a desire for tightening control. Their suspicions were directed especially against educated students, as well as young revolutionary enthusiasts, both groups, who had risen to new importance after the collapse of Portuguese colonialism.

These lower level cadres not only saw a national organization for youth as a tool for addressing these concerns, but through their debates, discussions and public justifications of the decision to create a mass democratic organization for youth, the party cadres, including the highest leadership, began formulating broader discourses presented as ‘knowledge’ about the essential characteristics, tendencies, meaning and role of youth in the ongoing revolutionary period, that culminated in the formulation of a full ‘theory of youth,’ articulated for the first time by the new president Samora Machel on December 15th, 1976. The foundation of the OJM thus opened an opportunity for Frelimo to ‘write’ its revolutionary conceptualization of youth into the state socialist script, that was at the heart of its authoritarian discourse. Through the December 15th speech, and the party’s subsequent efforts at mobilization, Frelimo’s revolutionary conceptualization of youth entered the party’s authoritative discourse and soon permeated the public and private spheres in Maputo.

This line of inquiry further follows the journey of transnationally conceived ideas, begun in the previous chapter, into the independence era. It highlights the importance of the political contexts for such ideas to take foothold, and the processes of appropriation and adaptation that this accompanied. Furthermore, the chapter contributes to an understanding of Frelimo’s wider, revolutionary ideology. As I noted in the introduction, while scholars have explored the roots and

nature of various concepts at the heart of Frelimo's ideology, including 'modernity,'⁹ 'morality,'¹⁰ 'gender,'¹¹ and 'citizenship,'¹² 'youth' has been largely neglected.

'Ideological Deviations' and Mass Democratic Organizations

Frelimo's Central Committee adopted the decision to create a national-level organization for youth during its 7th session June 1975, shortly before independence, alongside its decision to create other mass democratic organizations. The Central Committee further elaborated on the nature of these organizations during the Central Committee's 8th session in 1976. Four months before the 7th session, however, Frelimo delegates already debated the possibility of a national youth organization during a party meeting in Mocuba, Zambézia in February 1975.

The political context of these meetings was the transition from Portuguese colonial rule to independence, following the collapse of the Estado Novo regime in April 1974. In September the same year, Frelimo and the new Portuguese government signed the Lusaka Accords, which formed the basis for a transfer of power from Portugal to a majority Frelimo transitional government.¹³ It recognized Frelimo as the Mozambican people's (only) legitimate representative and the Mozambican's people's right to complete independence within a year. Almost immediately after the collapse of the Portuguese regime, both support and opposition groups formed in the capital. On September 8th, 1974, a white settlers counter-revolutionary movement called *Dragões da Morte*

⁹ Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*.

¹⁰ Benedito Luís Machava, 'The Morality of the Revolution - Urban Cleanup Campaigns, Reeducation Camps and Cities' (2019).

¹¹ Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain*.

¹² Jason Sumich, 'Tenuous Belonging: Citizenship and Democracy in Mozambique', *Social Analysis* 57, no. 2 (1 January 2013); Helene Maria Kyed and Lars Buur, 'New Sites of Citizenship: Recognition of Traditional Authority and Group-Based Citizenship in Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32, no. 3 (2006): 563–81; Müller, 'The Imaginary of Socialist Citizenship in Mozambique'.

¹³ de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 82.

attempted a coup by seizing the radio station in Lourenço Marques and attacking the newspaper offices of *Tempo* and *Notícias*. Sparked by the unrest and feeding off the Portuguese secret police's colonial propaganda that depicted Frelimo as “white-hating, black nationalists, who were prepared to murder whites once they got into power,”¹⁴ many Portuguese and other white settlers hastily abandoned the country, leaving behind businesses, shops and factories.¹⁵ Maputo's black residents responded in a variety of ways to the developments. Among other things, residents, both independently and on Frelimo orders, formed groups that defended what they perceived as Frelimo's anti-racist and peaceful ways, protecting white or Indian-owned shops from looters, and keeping mobs of retaliators from storming white neighbourhoods.¹⁶

Other groups engaged in spreading Frelimo's message through political education, particularly among circles of the urban intelligentsia and the university.¹⁷ Within the University in Lourenço Marques, for example, the AAM played a prominent role, a largely white and *mestiço* (mixed-race), left-leaning student organization with links to communist Portuguese opposition groups and persuasions “ranging from pro-Soviet to ‘Maoist.’”¹⁸ While some of these pro-nationalist groups came out in full support of Frelimo's ideas, others, advanced ideas that were more critical of Frelimo's handling of the transition and challenged the movement's claim to being the sole ‘authentic’ representative of the Mozambican people.¹⁹ While on the one hand, the collapse of the

¹⁴ Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, 40.

¹⁵ Other factors contributed to the great ‘exodus’ of ca. 90% (ca. 25 000) white settlers from Mozambique, with dramatic economic consequences. See: Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 50; Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, 31–39.

¹⁶ Roberto Júlio Tibana, ‘O “Meu 8 de Março”’, Moçambique Para Todos (blog), 2018, https://macua.blogs.com/moambique_para_todos/2018/03/o-meu-8-de-mar%C3%A7o.html.

¹⁷ de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 79; Luís Gonzalez and Carlos Lopes Pereira, *História da AAM: Associação Académica de Moçambique (1964-1975)* (Calendário de Letras, 2016).

¹⁸ Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 39. See also: Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, *História da AAM*.

¹⁹ Machava, ‘The Road Not Taken’; Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, *História da AAM*, 176; Benedito Luís Machava, ‘Galo amanheceu em Lourenço Marques: O 7 de Setembro e o verso da descolonização de Moçambique’, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 106 (1 May 2015): 53–84, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.5876>; for the role of the Democratas de Moçambique, see especially: de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 87–90.

Portuguese regime had released a wealth of “loose political energy,”²⁰ particularly in the cities, on the other hand, there were vast territories where Mozambicans had had almost no contact with the war or Frelimo, and little understanding of its political programme.

In addition to the political uncertainties, the majority of Portuguese settlers left the country. Some were scared of further racial violence, some saw their capital threatened by Frelimo’s talk of nationalisations, and some left out of ideological conviction, or a combination of the above. Their departure severely shook the Mozambican economy. The colonial economy that Frelimo inherited had been built on a small number of powerful, private companies, the majority of which was built on foreign assets.²¹ Furthermore, the urban professional, administrative, clerical and managerial positions on which this economy rested were occupied mostly by Portuguese settlers.²² The departure of the majority of Portuguese settlers thus meant that Mozambique lost both, its capital investments and nearly all of its skilled workforce. As most holders of foreign capital reacted to the Lusaka Accords by withdrawing their mobile assets (if necessary through smuggling), production ground to a halt, wage bills remained unpaid and factories and farms abandoned. In some cases, departing settlers – themselves opposed to Frelimo on political grounds – deliberately destroyed machineries, factories and other means of production.²³ The departure of highly skilled colonial state employees paralysed the railways, road transport, ports, dams and the national bank – sectors that the former colonial government had controlled or dominated.²⁴ Marketing boards for Mozambique’s main export products (cotton, sugar, cereals) lost their administrators, the

²⁰ Cahen 1993, 51, cited in: Cravinho, ‘Modernizing Mozambique’, 48.

²¹ Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, 28.

²² David Wield, ‘Mozambique-Late Colonialism and Early Problems of Transition’, in *Revolutionary Socialist Development in the Third World*, ed. Gordon White, Robin Murray, and Christine White (Wheatsheaf Books, 1983), 85; Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, 38.

²³ Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, 39.

²⁴ Pitcher, 39.

agricultural ministry lost scientists and technicians. Private companies lost plantation, construction and manufacturing managers. The retail trade left behind empty shops, papermills, jewellery stores and funeral parlours.²⁵

With only a few thousand²⁶ cadres, most of them soldiers, Frelimo “suddenly found itself forced to disperse over the entire national territory and to grapple with an economic and administrative apparatus constructed to serve the colonial regime.”²⁷ Frelimo’s ability to fill the vacancies across the industries and state sectors was extremely compromised. Decades of colonialism had allowed only for an extremely small skilled workforce to evolve among the African population. Africans occupied a small minority in the urban workforce. In 1973, only 40% of Mozambique’s school-age population received primary school education.²⁸ According to Frelimo’s own statistics, 80% of these students were educated in religious institutions.²⁹ Out of a population of ca. 10 million, only a total of 7 400 black students were enrolled in *lycées* (secondary schools) in 1970, while black enrolment in technical secondary schools had started growing in 1960, but by 1970 still only comprised a total of 27 000 black students.³⁰ Among a total of 30 000 university students, Mozambique went into independence with only 12 black students enrolled in Mozambican universities.³¹ While Frelimo ran a school in exile in Tanzania for Mozambican refugees during the liberation struggle, provided a degree of primary-school education in the ‘liberated zones,’³² and

²⁵ Pitcher, 39.

²⁶ According to Hall and Young, roughly 5000 Frelimo militants were stationed across government posts and provincial administrations, with little organizational experience, see: Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 51.

²⁷ Hall and Young, 51. In addition, Frelimo was determined to dismantle the remnants of this apparatus. The Council of Ministers decided in its first session to abolish the colonial *régulo* system, leaving only the unit of the *bairro* (ward/neighbourhood) and the cell in tact.

²⁸ de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 33.

²⁹ “Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes,” *Tempográfica* No. 237, March 1977, 26.

³⁰ de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 33.

³¹ de Brito, 33.

³² Frelimo claimed that over 30 000 Mozambicans had received primary school education and/or literacy classes in the liberated zones. Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 75.

negotiated scholarships for university education abroad for several of these students, their numbers at best amounted to several hundreds.

Towards a Discourse about Youth: The Mocuba Meeting

Frelimo's initial response to prevent the stillstand of the economy, agriculture, commerce and state administration was the creation of an organizational structure they called the *Grupos Dinamizadores* (Dynamising Groups, GDs).³³ Machel had called for their establishment in September 1974, initially to prevent "anti-white violence in the black suburbs, as during the incidents in September and October, and economic sabotage by the remaining settlers."³⁴ In some places, the GDs stepped in for the departing Portuguese. On the eve of independence (February 1975), the Transitional Government passed Decree-Law 16/75, which allowed the state to take control over businesses on the grounds of halting or reducing production, destruction of equipment, disinvestment or abandonment (which was defined as out of operation for more than 90 days), or the threat of worker dismissal.³⁵ Taking over companies, Frelimo formed 'administrative commissions' and GDs, who would closely monitor decision-making and constitute a direct link to the party.

While the GDs were initially "created to fill the political vacuum that had come about until Frelimo had the chance to put party cells into place,"³⁶ they grew into instruments through which Frelimo also divulged a revolutionary program of social, cultural and moral engineering, as Machel phrased

³³ On the GDs, see: de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 102–3; Cravinho, 'Modernizing Mozambique' chapter 4; Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1984), 49–51; Carole Collins, 'Mozambique: Dynamizing the People', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 8, no. 1 (1978): 12–16; Michel Cahen, 'Check on Socialism in Mozambique —What Check? What Socialism?', *Review of African Political Economy* 20, no. 57 (July 1993): 51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056249308704003>.

³⁴ Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 51–52.

³⁵ Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, 37.

³⁶ Cravinho, 'Modernizing Mozambique', 74. Peter Meyns, 'Liberation Ideology and National Development Strategy in Mozambique', *Review of African Political Economy* 8, no. 22 (1981): 56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056248108703476>.

it: “an arm with which the Party reaches and shapes the masses.”³⁷ Frelimo’s political ideology has been described as modernist, socialist, militaristic, Maoist, Fanonian, puritanical and Marxist.³⁸ While I show in the remainder of this chapter, that in engaging these labels it is more helpful to carefully disentangle the ideological influences in relation to particular ideas and concepts, what all of these labels and political ideologies share, is a firm belief in the interconnectedness of economic, political, social and moral revolution through the birth of the New Man. Like Fanon, Mao, Marx and Lenin, Frelimo was “profoundly wedded to the creation of a ‘New Man.’”³⁹ At the onset of independence Frelimo saw themselves, as Benedito Machava argued, “as saviors entitled to deliver the ‘masses’ from darkness, social degeneracy, and cultural alienation.”⁴⁰

It was against this background, that the Mocuba meeting brought together ca. 400 delegates of the *Comités Distritais* (District Committees) representing GDs⁴¹ from across the 110 districts of the country in February 1975.⁴² The meeting was chaired by Joaquim Chissano, at the time member of the Central Committee and the Executive Committee of Frelimo, as well as prime minister of the transitional government, while Machel was out of the country. Over the days of the meeting, the delegates of nine provinces reported on Frelimo’s activities and problems in their provinces. Their presentations, a report of which was reprinted in *Tempo*,⁴³ alongside the final

³⁷ ‘Reunião Nacional sobre Cidades e Bairros Comuns, Resolução sobre a Organização dos Grupos Dinamizadores e Bairros Comuns,’ cited in: Allina, ‘Unimaginable Community’, 92.

³⁸ Thomas H. Henriksen, ‘Remarks on Mozambique’, *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 5, no. 3 (1975): 216, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1167018>.

³⁹ Henriksen, ‘Remarks on Mozambique’, 216; Luis, Solange Evangelista. ‘O Homem Novo nas Literaturas Africanas em Língua Portuguesa pré-independência’. *Revista Cadernos do Ceom* 33, no. 53 (18 December 2020): 62–70; Palermo, Guilherme Lauterbach. ‘A categoria de “Homem Novo” aplicada pela Frente de Libertação de Moçambique : suas expressões nos testemunhos de ex-combatentes da FRELIMO’, 2017; Vieira, Sérgio. ‘O Homem Novo é Um Processo’. *Tempo* 398 (1978): 27–38.

⁴⁰ Machava, 26.

⁴¹ The Mocuba meeting was remembered by some of the participants as a reunion of the GDs. Pelembe, Lutei pela pátria, 166. See also: Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 52–53.

⁴² “Mocuba: Estabelecer o Poder Popular,” *Tempográfica* No. 231, March 1975, 10-18.

⁴³ “Mocuba,” 10-18.

recommendations of the meeting,⁴⁴ focused mostly on the work of the GDs. Delegates discussed the progress and challenges in the realms of literacy, economic production (and settler sabotage), villagization, setting up structures for the provision of educational, health and other social services, as well as ‘conscientizing’ and mobilizing the masses.

The questions that dominated the Frelimo delegates’ discussions at Mocuba were how to deal with opportunists, people challenging or deviating from the official line. Interventions by the delegates of Gaza and Inhambane, for example, were summarized by *Tempo* journalists as follows:

The report [of the delegate from Gaza] began by historicizing the recent mobilization and the initial restructuring of Frelimo, explaining how the working groups established after the fall of fascism gave rise to the first Grupos Dinamizadores. Initially, the Grupos Dinamizadores were elected from among the elements that made up the circle, a criterion adopted due to the lack of political knowledge of the militants and better popular acceptance, pressured as they were by the counter-offensive of the reactionaries. This lack of political knowledge of the cadres allowed the appearance of certain deviations, namely some cases of arrogant behaviour on the part of the elected elements, an error resulting from the inheritance of colonial society.⁴⁵

As Anne Pitcher has pointed out, the largely ad-hoc nature of the creation of the GDs and their nearly unchecked power at the local level had created a situation in which “some GDs clearly wrought havoc with enthusiastic abandon, creating more problems than they solved.”⁴⁶ Purges, denunciations and allegations of enemy ‘infiltration’ were frequent. In this context, one of the main take-aways from the Mocuba meeting was an authoritative definition of what exactly constituted ‘ideological deviations’ as follows:

arrogance in knowledge, spirit of importance and arrogance [...] lack of revolutionary discipline [which] is the sentinel of Frelimo’s political line. All forms of indiscipline, such as the so-called ‘leftism,’ liberalism, lack of respect for hierarchies, fomenting rumour, intrigue, constitute ideological deviations.

⁴⁴ “Reunião Nacional dos Comités Distritais em Mocuba,” *Tempográfica* No. 240, May 1975, 29-40.

⁴⁵ “Mocuba,” 16.

⁴⁶ Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 53.

Also elitism, the defence of a class society, the campaign of discrediting Frelimo officials, criticism outside the Party structures in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism - also constitute deviations from the line.⁴⁷

In this context, the Frelimo delegates noted an issue of particular concern. During the last two days of the meeting, the delegates established working groups for issues to be further discussed. One of these was a working group on “ideological deviations, especially among the youth.”⁴⁸

In the subsequent resolution of this working group, the delegates articulated the problem, and through it, a set of ‘truths’ about this social group that they perceived as ‘the youth’:

The Youth played and still plays a very important role in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism, liberalism and against all reactionary manoeuvres. It was the Youth that contributed and still contributes a lot for the creation of a true Revolution in the urban areas and especially in the educational establishments, where there is struggle in their day to day, with the true Revolutionary spirit, trying to interpret as best they can the Ideological Line of Frelimo. But there are also some negative aspects of this Youth. Let us consider.⁴⁹

Unlike Machel’s and Frelimo’s later conceptualization of youth, the Mocuba delegates used the label to describe primarily urban students, a social constituency rooted in schools, universities and cities. This focus on students is not surprising. Firstly, among the supporting groups, especially in the urban centres, many were drawn from “a radicalised faction of young intellectuals, including a significant number of settlers’ children,”⁵⁰ Luís de Brito noted. “These young people had not taken part in the armed struggle, but they shared the Marxist ideal demanded by Frelimo and, above all, they had the technical skills needed to ensure the functioning of the state apparatus.”⁵¹ Frelimo had long had an uneasy relationship with ‘students,’ particularly during the liberation struggle. During the struggle, the movement ran a school in exile in Tanzania with several hundred

⁴⁷ “Mocuba,” 16.

⁴⁸ “Mocuba,” 16.

⁴⁹ “Mocuba,” 16.

⁵⁰ de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*, 81.

⁵¹ de Brito, 81.

Mozambican students, and also administered scholarships from international donors, mostly through the efforts of Eduardo Mondlane's wife Janet, but also through bilateral relationships with the Soviet Union, East Germany and other socialist states to pay for university study abroad.⁵² The relationship to some of these students, both abroad and in Tanzania soured in 1968, when some groups staged protests against the leadership and refused to obey orders to return to the front.⁵³

Informed by these experiences, as well as Frelimo's wider puritanical ideology, the Mocuba resolutions in their discussions thus formulated a theory about the root causes of the: "negative aspects of this Youth."⁵⁴

In the society we are overthrowing, the Youth were victims of the shock between the traditional education they received from their families and the corrupt and decadent education brought by colonialism. Especially in the big cities, this shock is most clearly interpreted in addiction - drugs, alcoholism, idleness and all the other decadent habits, motivated by the lack of knowledge of the realities of their country. [...] Let's not forget that this youth did not suffer so harshly from exploitation, the *palmatéria*, the loading of the *machila*, the *chibalo* and deportations to S. Tomé as the previous generation. Hence, the wrong ideology of elitism that is born in the student class.⁵⁵

From these points of view, the Mocuba delegates recommended "activating the Revolutionary spirit of the Youth,"⁵⁶ by "pay[ing] special attention to all schools in order to find a platform for the engagement of all students, motivating them to seek experiences with the masses, participating with them more actively in the Revolution and National Reconstruction."⁵⁷ One delegate from

⁵² See chapter two.

⁵³ Michael G. Panzer, 'The Pedagogy of Revolution: Youth, Generational Conflict, and Education in the Development of Mozambican Nationalism and the State, 1962–1970', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (December 2009): 803–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070903313178>; Douglas L. Wheeler, 'A Document for the History of African Nationalism: The Unemo "White Paper" of 1968, a Student Reply to Eduardo Mondlane's 1967 Paper', *African Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (1970): 169–80, <https://doi.org/10.2307/216487>.

⁵⁴ "Mocuba," 16.

⁵⁵ "Reunião Nacional," 30-31.

⁵⁶ "Mocuba," 16.

⁵⁷ "Reunião Nacional," 30-31.

Inhambane, João Pelembe, called for the establishment of a “national level mass democratic organization for youth.”⁵⁸

If Frelimo’s entanglement with the transnational world of organized youth during the liberation struggle was not enough to agree on a common discourse about youth, and establish a youth organization during the struggle, the Mocuba reports give an insight into the political context, in which party delegates did begin speaking about youth as a category of relevance in relation to the movement’s concerns, and political objectives during the transition to independence. Seen from the perspective of Frelimo’s reliance on skilled, loyal cadres on the one hand, and their suspicions against students and revolutionary enthusiasts on the other, the delegates imagined that a youth organization would allow Frelimo to work against ‘ideological deviations’ among ‘the youth.’ In the process, they began formulating knowledge about ‘youth’ its ‘nature,’ ‘origins,’ and ‘problems’ as a category of political, revolutionary significance.

Towards a Marxist-Leninist Organization for Youth

From 1970 onwards, Frelimo had begun referring to itself in increasingly Marxist terms.⁵⁹ By 1975, it was clear that the post-independence government was headed for the construction of a socialist state, in its Leninist variant, a decision that was officially adopted at Frelimo’s Third Party Congress in 1977. During the transition to independence, the party began envisioning the transformation of its structures into those typical of a Leninist state, including the party state (a vanguard party completely intertwined with the state), the central committee with a smaller politbureau above it,

⁵⁸ Pelembe remarked in his memoir that “Inhambane played an important role in the recruitment of young people to perform various tasks for FRELIMO in different places,” but makes no other reference to what motivated his position on the formation of a mass democratic organization, see: Pelembe, *Lutei pela pátria*, 166.

⁵⁹ Henriksen, ‘Remarks on Mozambique’, 213.

the principle of democratic centralism (“speaking in a single voice”⁶⁰), and three mass democratic organizations, respectively for workers, women and youth.⁶¹ How did this Marxist-Leninist political model map onto the concerns and ‘truths’ about youth articulated by the Mocuba delegates?

The establishment of a mass democratic organization for youth was as much a logical part of the process of building a state according to the Marxist-Leninist political model, as it was expected and encouraged by Frelimo’s allies in the socialist world. In the case of the OJM, its establishment had also become a political desire for the people who made up Frelimo’s party bureaucracy. As we saw in the previous chapter, while heading the OJM’s unofficial predecessor organization during the liberation struggle, Kupela had established close relations with youth organizations across the socialist world and to a lesser extent also the West. Relations with the East German Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth, FDJ), for example, reached back to the struggle era, but intensified after the collapse of the Portuguese colonial regime. As we saw in the previous chapter, in 1973, Kupela had led a delegation to attend the Festival of the Child in East Germany,⁶² and in July 1975, he received a delegation of the East German in Mozambique with the mission to: “explore effective forms and possibilities for continued support through the FDJ [...] transfer the FDJ’s experiences, particularly from the era of the antifascist-democratic revolution in the GDR.”⁶³ Reflecting on this process today, Kupela noted:

It was a great dream of mine to take part in the movement to create a Mozambican youth organisation. Seeing the role of youth in the other countries

⁶⁰ Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution - Urban Cleanup Campaigns, Reeducation Camps and Cities’, 79. Machava notes that consensus among the leadership was a tradition not only in Leninist, but also Maoist, Tsonga and Protestant models of (political) decision-making.

⁶¹ On Frelimo’s transformation see: Ottaway, ‘Mozambique: From Symbolic Socialism to Symbolic Reform’, 214.

⁶² Zacarias Kupela, interview. At the time, Kupelas unofficial Frelimo Youth League attended to matters of the youth, as well as the *continuadores*.

⁶³ “Entsendung einer Delegation des Zentralrates der FDJ zu Freundschaftsbesuchen nach Somalia, in die Vereinigte Republik Tansania, nach Moçambique, in die Republik Madagaskar und in die ARÄ in der Zeit vom 17. Juni - 9. Juli 1975,” BArch, DY 24/8658, Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Germany, 31.

where I had been, I had a dream that was realised on 29 November 1977, when the OJM was created.⁶⁴

Kupela was not alone in his desire to belong to this revolutionary world. This was a world, to which Machel too wanted Mozambique and Mozambicans to belong, as he noted in his concluding speech to the 7th Session of the Central Committee: “We say: we want a revolutionary society, [...] We want to put the train on the tracks of the Revolution. We want to be a part of the revolutionary world.”⁶⁵ An adoption of Marxism-Leninism allowed Frelimo to signal its belonging to an “explicitly European and explicitly Soviet form of socialism,”⁶⁶ with all the diplomatic relations and access to foreign aid that opened up. From this point of view a mass democratic organization for youth was certainly a beneficial addition to Mozambican state-building. Not least, because as we saw above youth diplomacy could generate its own set of diplomatic and material exchanges.

But the decision to establish a youth organization, and the political discourse Frelimo would develop in the process of its foundation also reflected concerns previously iterated at the Mocuba meeting. Addressing the Central Committee in the opening speech of the 7th Session, which had decided on the foundation of a mass democratic organization for youth, Machel noted:

Then we have the problem of a shortage of cadres. Colonialism made cadres to serve colonialism and not to serve the Mozambican people. So it is in the youth that we will find future cadres. It is the youth who will assume national responsibility: they will also create, develop and consolidate the Revolution in Mozambique, the New Society of which we are now laying the foundations.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Zacarias Kupela, interview.

⁶⁵ “Discurso de Abertura,” *Tempográfica* No. 248, June 1975, 65.

⁶⁶ Banks, “Socialist Internationalism”, 38. Banks also notes that: “In geopolitical terms, Machel picked Soviet over Sino in spite of the significant military aid China had provided Frelimo during the armed struggle. Machel would maintain ties with China, but in the key realm of political rhetoric, he remained committed to Soviet rhetorical terms.”

⁶⁷ “Discurso de Abertura,” 65.

Marxist-Leninist notions commonly associated with youth in socialist states, such as a ‘national responsibility’ to build a new, revolutionary society,⁶⁸ lent expression to a political concern rooted in the context of independence, namely the shortage of cadres. Indeed, the statutes of the OJM would task the organization with the mobilization “of youths to participate in an active and continuous manner in the increase of production and productivity, in the agricultural, industrial and other fronts of the Economic Struggle;”⁶⁹ And further with the “stimulation of the youth to continuously increase their cultural, technical and scientific knowledge as a form of acquiring a correct understanding of society and nature and in this manner increasing their social activity and fighting [...] reactionary ideologies.”⁷⁰ Indeed, both ‘voluntary’ work in brigades and work collectives, as well as labour recruitment into sectors of the economy most affected by the Portuguese exodus would become activities that the OJM was actively engaged in.⁷¹ In these campaigns, the notion of ‘national responsibility,’ and a duty to ‘serve the revolution,’ played important roles in authorising the recruitment of youth labour.

In relation to the Mocuba delegates’ concern for ‘ideological deviations,’ Machel noted at the meeting:

We want to form that monolithic unity, the ideological unity in our country. We want to feel like Mozambicans, all of us. We want to serve the people. That’s why it’s necessary, imperative, for the People to be organised. Once the People are organised, we will define the tasks for each one, we will define tasks, we will set the timetable, our objectives will be clear. We will have a programme. Not just work. No. You need a programme.⁷²

⁶⁸ See, for example Lenin on youth: “The new generation is confronted with a far more complex task. [...] You have to build up a communist society. [...] The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the younger communist generation must build a communist society. You are faced with the task of construction.” Vladimir Lenin, ‘The Tasks of the Youth Leagues’, in *Collected Works of V. I. Lenin*, vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1920), 283–99.

⁶⁹ “Programa da OJM,” *Tempográfica No. 380*, January 1978, 50-51.

⁷⁰ “Programa da OJM,” 50-51.

⁷¹ See chapter six.

⁷² “Discurso de Abertura,” 65.

Machel's use of the concept of 'organizing' reflected Frelimo's concerns for not only political mobilization, but the achievement of a militaristic degree of complete discipline and control. This sense underpinned also the decision to create the mass democratic organizations. He continued:

The masses are not organised, so they have no tasks; the youth have no tasks because they are not organised; the workers work, work, work, but they are not organised, they have no defined tasks - they have no objectives, essentially: objectives of their work, of their effort. There's no programming. [...] Perhaps because this is still new (*os dias são poucos*) [...] because there is no organised youth in Mozambique, there is no youth organisation in Mozambique, this is a point that deserves our utmost attention. Youth is the sap of the nation. The triumph of the Revolution depends on the youth, on the orientation and engagement of the youth.⁷³

To Machel, achieving 'ideological unity' "require[d] a fight at the level of ideas,"⁷⁴ in which the mass democratic organizations were to be engaged in. The OJM's primary task was to: "promote and organize the political-ideological education of the youth in the heroic tradition of the revolutionary struggle of the Mozambican People and other People, [...] in the spirit of the class struggle – one of the great ideas of Scientific Socialism."⁷⁵ The political education of the youth would become the central work of the OJM. As Zacarias Kupela reflected:

the fundamental role of the OJM [was] to educate young people to take on this tradition of resistance, all for the good of the homeland and the Mozambican people, everything that was negative, that was the essence of the OJM when it was conceived and prepared. To educate young people to be nationalists, patriots, upright, simple, humble, polite and to educate these young people about their Mozambican roots. Of course, assimilating the other positive aspects from outside Mozambique, so that's the essence of the creation of OJM.⁷⁶

⁷³ "Discurso de Abertura," 65.

⁷⁴ "Discurso de Abertura," 65.

⁷⁵ "Programa da OJM," 50-51.

⁷⁶ Zacarias Kupela, interview.

As we will see in the subsequent chapters, the pursuit of ideological unity took on a variety of forms that ranged from a strategic attempt at creating a common way of speaking among OJM members, via a cultural pedagogy to policing young people's behaviours, dress and sexuality.

As Margaret Hall and Tom Young have argued that: "The significance of Frelimo's Marxism is not to be sought in the appropriation of an intellectual and political tradition or the utilisation of a method of socio-political analysis."⁷⁷ Rather, these scholars suggest that the appeal of Marxism, "lay in providing a language to account for the past, a vision of the future and an understanding of the struggle to attain that future, in terms which had the greatest affinity with Frelimo's own political-military experience."⁷⁸ In the case of the revolutionary youth discourse and policies, a severe lack of skilled labour, the personnel demands of transforming from a liberation movement to a vanguard party and a general desire for tightening ideological control, especially over 'ultra-leftist' university students and rogue revolutionary enthusiasts were all dimensions of that experience, to which a Marxist terminology and a Leninist political model give a fitting expression. The result was a desire for a centrally controlled organization with the mission to socialize youth into the values, ideals and language of Frelimo's revolutionary ideology.

A Revolutionary Conceptualization of Youth

The decision to create a mass democratic organization for youth had a range of consequences. As we saw above, one of the consequences was that Frelimo delegates of lower and higher levels articulated, for the first time, a 'knowledge' about the 'nature' of 'the youth,' its relevance in the revolution and the kinds of organizational practices needed to bring about the kind of

⁷⁷ Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 63.

⁷⁸ Hall and Young, 64.

(‘ideologically unified’) ‘youth’ Frelimo envisioned. This knowledge, or rather, the discourse that contained it, was articulated in its fullest on December 15th, 1976. On this day, Machel called a ‘meeting with the youth’ at Josina Machel Secondary School in a central district of Maputo, Polana Cimento A.⁷⁹ According to the newspaper *Tempo*, which published a reprint of the speech a few days later:

More than a thousand young people from all the provinces of the country and all walks of life filled the ballroom of the Josina Machel Secondary School in Maputo to receive from President Samora the tools for analysis and concrete guidelines that the youth need in order to correctly play their historic role in building a socialist society.⁸⁰

Machel delivered the speech from a podium, flanked by Marcelino dos Santos and Jorge Rebelo.

His tone was analytical, giving his performance the air of a school lecture or a research study.

In a manner typical of Machel’s speeches, and reflecting Frelimo’s embrace of Marxist language beyond terminology, the December 15th speech set out its conceptualization of youth in a dualistic manner, between unity and contradiction.⁸¹ As José Luís Cabaço noted:

In his methodology of analysis [Machel...] always started out from the central characterization of the central objective of the struggle at each stage, what he called ‘the definition of the main direction of the struggle.’ [unity] From there, he began to identify the complementary objectives. So that no ambiguities remain, a careful search was imposed for the main contradiction’ which pitted, in an ‘antagonistic’ form, the interests of the struggle against those of the enemy. [contradictions]⁸²

Machel prefaced the search for the main contradiction for the ‘Mozambican youth’ with a lengthy description of the current phase of the worldwide revolution, characterized by “the process of

⁷⁹ “Juventude: O Centro da Batalha, Discurso do Presidente Samora e Inquérito,” *Tempográfica* No. 325, December 1976, 42-60.

⁸⁰ “Juventude: O Centro da Batalha,” 42.

⁸¹ José Luís Cabaço, ‘O Homem Novo: Breve Itinerário de Um Projecto’, in *Samora, Homem Do Povo*, ed. António Sopa (Maputo: Maguezo Editores, 2001).

⁸² Cabaço, 105.

destroying capitalist society and its inevitable replacement by socialist society.”⁸³ Across the globe, Machel saw the “increasingly active participation of the Youth in the struggles for social change, alongside the working classes”⁸⁴ In this sense unified, Machel continued, the youth it finds itself at the centre of the opposing revolutionary and reactionary forces: “Youth is today the centre of the struggle between the forces of progress and the forces of reaction.”⁸⁵

This, Machel noted, is also the case in Mozambique, where the phase of the revolution is the construction of the New Society, which relies on the Youth. After a description along similar lines of the phase of the struggle in Mozambique, Machel concluded:

We have thus seen in summary, the importance of Youth for the triumph of the Revolution. And two questions arise to us. First: What characteristics must the Youth possess who take upon themselves the responsibility for the creation of the new society? Second: Does our Youth already possess all these characteristics?⁸⁶

Machel’s subsequent ‘analysis’ of the ideas characteristics and the current (result of the historical) situation of *a Juventude Mocambicana* (the Mozambican Youth) yielded the main contradiction within this social group, the interests of the revolution against those of the reaction.

In the December 15th speech, he depicted the ideal youth, the ‘youthful creator of the New Society,’ as follows:

The youthful creator of the new society must be dynamic, desirous of change, of transformation, and endowed with a sense of initiative and creativity; he must be disciplined, [...] he must be organized, [...] he must have a great thirst for learning [...] He must be a young person with a profound love of the working-class cause, [...] He must be concerned with enlightening other youngsters, [...]. He must be deeply committed to fight against the vices and the erroneous habits and concepts of the bourgeois society. He must be able to absorb in a critical

⁸³ Machel, *Sobre os Problemas*, 7.

⁸⁴ Machel, 8.

⁸⁵ Machel, 9.

⁸⁶ Machel, 11.

spirit the experiences of progressive youth in other parts of the world, with the ability to distinguish these positive contributions from the manoeuvres set in train by imperialism to turn young people away from revolutionary ideals. These are the essential characteristics of the youthful creator of the socialist society, the embryo of the New Man.⁸⁷

Echoing the full range of intellectual influences and political concerns, from Marxist notions of an emotional attachment to the cause of the class struggle, via militaristic ('organized') and puritanical ('enlightening others') desires, to the Mocuba delegate's concerns about young people's abilities to identify and be vigilant against 'ideological deviation,' Machel's revolutionary youth was not merely an abstract concept, but an imperative.

Furthermore, coining the image of the heroic 'youth of the liberation' – a youth that we saw in the previous chapter was certainly neither recognized nor spoken about in these terms during the struggle itself – through a grand historical narrative, Machel revisited the various tasks of crucial importance that *os jovens* (the youth, the young) carried out in the war for liberation. The "young cadres of Frelimo took part in organizing and mobilizing the mass of the people" forming part of the "vanguard force in the process of class struggle in the liberated areas,"⁸⁸ "distinguish[ing] themselves in their defence of the deepest interests of our people against Portuguese colonialism and against the tendencies and reactionary line of those aspirants to be new exploiters who arose within Frelimo"⁸⁹ in the liberated zones; "on the diplomatic front,"⁹⁰ "in underground work mobilizing our people, distributing pamphlets, copying broadcasts of *The Voice of Frelimo*, organizing study and discussion groups, playing a role in all available forms of propaganda activity"⁹¹ as martyrs and prisoners in the massacres and protests in "Mueda, Xinavane, Machava,

⁸⁷ Machel, 13. (emphasis added)

⁸⁸ Machel, 13.

⁸⁹ Machel, 13.

⁹⁰ Machel, 13.

⁹¹ Machel, 14.

Ibo, and the rail strikes”⁹² or at the hands of the Portuguese secret police. While the ‘youth of the liberation’ may have been a mythical, and retrospectively constructed collective identity, converging heterogenous experiences into one common experience – both literally and metaphorically in narrative – it served to create unity in thinking, and “draw a clear demarcation between the behaviour, habits, language and values of Mozambican patriots and those defended by colonial society.”⁹³

From this narrative of unity then emerged the contradiction at the core of Frelimo’s conceptualization of youth: the tension between the interests of the revolution and the interests of the reaction “on a political and moral level” which *a Juventude* must resolve. Continuing this historical narrative until the present, Machel contented that, while the Youth have demonstrated their enthusiasm and commitment to the revolution, they continue to carry within them “negative and even detrimental tendencies.”⁹⁴ Similarly to the New Man, its embryo was thought to emerge out of an internal struggle against colonial habits. While the adult Mozambican was meant to struggle against traditionalism, racism and regionalism, the youth was conceptualized as struggling against his or her own, specific colonial inheritance, manifesting in behaviours, manoeuvres, habits, language, dress and attitudes:

So the colonialists, taking advantage of young people’s taste for amusement, made great effort to spread entertainment based on drinking, drug-taking, sexual promiscuity, contempt for national culture and bling imitation of the decadent values of the foreign bourgeoisie. [...] so-called ‘free love’, imported directly from the bourgeois democracies and meaning no more than low sexual promiscuity with the most profound disregard for women; the so-called ‘freak’ talk, the slang of misfits that rapidly spread among student youth – expressions such as ‘Hi Joe! Hey chick’ Let’s go and make the scene, but keep it cool.’[...] There were the exaggerated style fads, from ‘Beatle’ shoes to trousers up to the

⁹² Machel, 14.

⁹³ Cabaço, ‘O Homem Novo (Breve Itinerário de Um Projecto)’.

⁹⁴ Machel, *Sobre os Problemas*, 15.

chest, from shirts that didn't reach the navel to military jackets with the insignia of the criminal imperialist armies – US Army, US Air Force [...] The colonialists, by encouraging elitism, arrogance, superiority complexes and contempt for manual work, tried to instil in young people contempt for the mass of the workers and so to isolate the young people from social reality. [...] Banditry, corruption, immorality, pornography, 'machismo', individualism, a know-all attitude are constantly glorified in films, photonovels, magazines records, books and other forms of bourgeois propaganda.⁹⁵

The text's focus on mentality and behaviour echoes again, the Mocuba delegates' concern with 'ideological unity,' as well as Frelimo's wider concerns with morality and purification at independence. The text's focus on fashion: hair, dress, symbols of hippie culture, including speech, sexual practices, and consumption were underlined in the *Tempo* issue that published the December 15th speech by a caricature (see figure below).

The characteristics that Machel identified in the December 15th speech of 'the youthful creator of the New Society' would become the objective of the internal struggle for purification and renewal among Mozambique's youth, against the machinations of "international imperialism, permanent enemy of the Peoples"⁹⁶ trying, forever, to impede and divert youth from their historical responsibilities. This struggle informed both the OJM's later activities, as well as shaping what could be expected of young people beyond the OJM.

⁹⁵ Machel, 16–17.

⁹⁶ Machel, 9.



Figure 7: “Dear god [...] I don’t want to work, nothing interests me, but at the least help me get together 1299 to get these socas (shoes) [...]” In: “Juventude: O Centro da Batalha,” 40.

Most importantly, it served to justify the necessity of an organized youth for the achievement of the revolution’s goals: “Only through organizing the Youth we will succeed in the construction of the New Society (*So organizando a Juventude venceremos na edificação da Nova Sociedade*)” was a message that Machel repeated in various forms throughout the text. The last section of his speech concludes that given this situation of youth’s political potential, importance, and demonstrated dedication in revolutionary struggle, as well as the constant corruption efforts by the enemy, the correct policy is the establishment of a national youth organisation. In Frelimo’s typical style, it finishes with a series of *palavras de ordem* (watchwords) that usually prompted a call-and-response interaction with the audience (Machel: “Longlive the Mozambican Youth (*Viva a Juventude Mocambicana!*)” Audience: “*Viva!*”). Both watchwords and ‘vivas’ were popular elements of Machel’s rhetoric repertoire that

established the “familiarity and sense of common experience that comes with a shared lexicon”⁹⁷ between Machel and his audience. As David Hedges and Colin Darch have pointed out: “By knowing and making the correct response, listeners were able to show that they ‘belonged’ to a group [...] In addition, the exchanges served as disciplinary devices, reinforced support for specific political lines and denounced enemies of the struggle.”⁹⁸

An understanding of the way Frelimo conceptualized ‘youth’ is important for our understanding of the kinds of policies Frelimo would subsequently design. As we will see throughout the next chapters, it was based on this revolutionary conceptualization that Frelimo came to think of youth as a powerful political constituency that needed to be ‘forged,’ and that it derived the kinds of pedagogies, activities and policies from to do this ‘forging.’ But Frelimo’s conceptualization of youth also had a different set of effects through which we can begin to understand how and why, not just Frelimo, but also ordinary Mozambicans came to think of ‘youth’ as a ‘revolutionary word.’

Writing Youth into the State-Socialist Script

As I noted in the introduction, Frelimo had developed over the course of the early years of independence a specific form of political discourse that came to be associated with the realm of the state. Authoritative discourse was an omnipresent feature of the public sphere, which permeated at least urban life during the socialist era considerably. In conceiving and articulating revolutionary ‘knowledge’ about youth, in the context of the decision to create the OJM, Frelimo

⁹⁷ Eric Allina, ‘Unimaginable Community: Watchwords and Frelimo’s Abandoned Nationalism in Independence-Era Mozambique’, *The Journal of African History* 65, no. 1 (2024): 89.

⁹⁸ Colin Darch and David Hedges, ‘Political Rhetoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975’, *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 58.

also wrote this conceptualization of youth into the state-socialist script, that was at the basis of authoritative discourse.

As a result, Frelimo's revolutionary conceptualization of youth was widely disseminated. As a textual document the December 15th speech had a vibrant afterlife. An edited⁹⁹ version of the speech was reprinted in the weekly newspaper *Tempo* days after its iteration under the headline "Juventude: O Centro da Batalha"¹⁰⁰ as well as through *Notícias*. A year later, the Department of Information and Propaganda reprinted it again in full under the title "Sobre os Problemas, Função e Tarefas da Juventude Moçambicana (About the Problems, Function and Roles of the Mozambican Youth)" in its *Estudos e Orientações* publication series.¹⁰¹

Given the extremely high illiteracy rate in Mozambique at independence, the text's significance arose only in part from these publications, but in a greater part from its integration into the agendas of so-called 'study groups' across Grupos Dinamizadores, party cells, committees, OJM branches, schools, and workplaces where literate Mozambicans read or "gave explanations of" (*dar explicações*) of all important Frelimo texts. *Notícias* marked particular sections for such studies, and Frelimo publications and the *Estudos e Orientações* series were considered quintessential. As Euclides Gonçalves has argued, mid-level state officials and party members considered documents, such as Machel's speeches, and the *Estudos e Orientações* series as '*orientações superiores*' (superior guidance) of the highest order, authoritative texts on the party line.¹⁰² Furthermore, '*orientações superiores*,' which

⁹⁹ A comparison between an audio recording and a reprint of a speech that Machel gave in Beira in 1975 showed that reprints were usually heavily edited and 'smoothed' out much of their rhetoric persuasiveness Colin Darch and David Hedges, 'Political Rhetoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975', *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 37.

¹⁰⁰ "Juventude: O Centro da Batalha," 42-60.

¹⁰¹ Machel, *Sobre os Problemas*. This series reprinted selected speeches to serve as authoritative texts on the party line on a selected number of topics (i.e. education, health, development). A fully digitized collection of the series can be found on MHN: <https://www.mozambiquehistory.net/>.

¹⁰² Euclides Gonçalves, 'Orientações Superiores: Time and Bureaucratic Authority in Mozambique', *African Affairs* 112, no. 449 (1 October 2013): 609, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adt045>.

Machel's speeches were naturally part of, had very real impacts on the way the revolution was interpreted and practiced by bureaucrats, state officials and mid- to lower-level party cadres across the country.¹⁰³ As we will see in the next chapter, the December 15th speech soon became a central text that guided OJM 'study groups,' and activities across the provinces.

Furthermore, Machel himself re-iterated sections and certainly ideas and frames developed in the December 15th speech, at different occasions. In the same way that Machel was known to visit workplaces, hospitals and factories to address the 'workers,' he visited schools to address students and the 'youth.'¹⁰⁴ As one David Cossa recalled:

We grew up listening to the voice of President Samora Machel. [...] I knew him, if you allow me, as a student of his, because in 1981 when I was in seventh grade, in the organizational political offensive, which visited many institutions, including schools, he visited [my] high school, where the last class he visited. I was there in seventh 7, among a lot of things he talked about, he did not only talk about the country, he made reference to the situation of youth being the *seiva da Nação*, I feel it was because to this day, I feel it is my modest contribution, as a citizen, to have contributed to the education of other fellow citizens, that is a contribution. Today I am no longer young, but I started as a young man, the sap of the Nation. Sing of the youth, of the development of the Mozambican nation. In my time, a good part of the youth, embraced and enforced this motivational expression of the youth.¹⁰⁵

The impression Machel left on his young audience was in part the result of his energetic and captivating speech performances, that many of my interviewees remembered vividly.¹⁰⁶ But his speeches also reached beyond his immediate audience through their integration in the school curriculum. At the beginning of the school year 1978, Machel gave a speech to a large audience of students and professors during which he warned that "the *orientações* given here do not turn into

¹⁰³ Gonçalves, 608–9.

¹⁰⁴ "Como se implementam nalgumas escolas orientações do Presidente Samora Machel," *Jornal Notícias*, April 13, 1978, 3.

¹⁰⁵ David Cossa, interview by Valdo Congolo, Maputo, July 09, 2021.

¹⁰⁶ See chapters five and six.

dead letters.”¹⁰⁷ Following this speech, *Notícias* reporters visited three schools in Maputo and reported that: “In the first two schools, we were able to see that there are, in fact, initiatives to fulfil the guidelines given. In both schools, the document is currently being studied and analysed.”¹⁰⁸ In the schools Josina Machel and Estrela Vermelha members of the steering committee and the GD confirmed that weekly study sessions were taking place “at class level, and the study of the document is nearing completion.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, it was not just the speech itself through which ‘youth’ came to be written into Frelimo’s state-socialist script, but the entire infrastructure through which the script penetrated Mozambican’s lives that made it an integral part of Frelimo’s authoritative discourse.



Figure 8: Machel’s audience on December 15th, 1976. Behind them the watchword ‘Organizing the Youth Means Consolidating the Revolution.’ In: ‘Juventude: O Centro da Batalha,’ 42.

¹⁰⁷ “Como se implementam nalgumas escolas,” 3.

¹⁰⁸ “Como se implementam nalgumas escolas,” 3.

¹⁰⁹ “Como se implementam nalgumas escolas,” 3.



Figure 9: ‘In the school ‘Estrela Vermelha’ students study the speech delivered by President Samora Machel at the beginning of the school year, under the guidance of a professor,’ in: “Como se implementam nalgumas,” 3.

Finally, features within the December 15th text help understand how the concept ‘youth’ became part and parcel of authoritative discourse, closely associated with the revolution and the realm of the revolutionary state. As Colin Darch and David Hedges have pointed out, Machel had different rhetorical repertoires in which he spoke to his often diverse audiences.¹¹⁰ Among these repertoires, the December 15th speech’s use of certain features of authoritative discourse, signalled to the audience that the speech, and its content, belonged to the discourse of the state, and carried its authoritative weight. The authority of the ‘analysis,’ for example, is underlined linguistically through the orator’s ‘diplacéd agency,’ the avoidance of a personal ‘I’ or verbs that would indicate subjectivity (‘believe’ ‘am of the opinion,’ ‘think’). Rather, Machel spoke in the passive voice of an

¹¹⁰ Darch and Hedges, ‘Political Rhetoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975’.

authoritative analyst (*surgiam*) or uses an abstract ‘*nós*’ (‘we’) that designated distance between himself and his audience (“We saw the youth engaged [...]”). Phrases like the following further underline Machel’s authority as a detached analyst of a social phenomenon: “Such a conclusion would result from a superficial analysis of the problem.”

Speaking of ‘youth’ for the first time and in the language of the state, powerfully forged the category’s association with the revolutionary state. Youth was not the first or the only revolutionary category that Mozambicans saw Frelimo bring to life through speech, since the collapse of the Portuguese regime. As scholars have long noted, Frelimo treated political discourse and the presidential speech as important tools for social engineering during the socialist era. Drawing on Achille Mbembe’s notion of the ‘theologian-state,’ for example, Benedito Machava has described Frelimo’s state as one that is not only occupied with the distribution of power and influence but with “defining for social agents the way they have to see themselves, interpret themselves and interpret the world.”¹¹¹ To this end, others, such as Paolo Israel, drawing on Ernesto Laclau, have pointed out that Frelimo had long been engaged in the politics of “naming” in relation to signifiers, such as the ‘People’ and the ‘Enemy’: “The name that establishes a collective political identity [...] is an empty signifier. ‘People,’ ‘workers,’ etc. are not understandable as having a substantial meaning, but simply as the signifiers that hold together a political identity.”¹¹² The December 15th speech’s work in ‘naming’ youth becomes evident, for example, in the sheer density, with which the terms ‘*a Juventude*’ (the Youth) or variably ‘*os jovens*’ (the youth pl./young people) appear in the text itself. In total, a version of these terms appears 122 times in a speech of only 143 sentences.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution - Urban Cleanup Campaigns, Reeducation Camps and Cities’, 598 citing Mbembe, *Afriques Indociles: Christianisme, Pouvoir et État en Société Post-coloniale* (Paris-Karthala, 1988),.

¹¹² Paolo Israel, ‘The War of Lions: Witch-Hunts, Occult Idioms and Post-Socialism in Northern Mozambique’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070802685627> [fn. 24].

¹¹³ ‘Juventude: O Centro da Batalha,’ 42-60.

Almost every sentence is engaged in signifying work, connecting some sort of adjective, verb or noun to the concept of 'youth.' Like Frelimo had previously named the 'People,' Machel now 'named' the 'youth.'

Having delineated youth as a distinct object of discourse, or an "empty signifier," in Lacau's sense, the December 15th speech subsequently filled it with meaning and embedded it in wider revolutionary orders of discourse that further fomented its association with authoritative discourse and the revolution. The kinds of meaning Machel endowed the concept with, for example, stood in sharp contrast to parallelly existing, every-day discourses, i.e. how ordinary Mozambicans spoke about youth in other contexts. Machel 'named' as youth on the one hand as 'younger than 35' thus as an age-based social category that transcended generations. As typical of authoritative discourse, Machel used a very limited amount of modifiers to imbued the term 'youth' with meaning. These included: 'creative energy' (2x), 'initiatives' (3x), 'enthusiasm' (2x), 'spontaneous,' 'impulsiveness,' 'desire for radical and urgent change,' or 'emotion.' These attributes and characteristics suggested a collective identity on the basis of age, and character traits that transcended generational situatedness, but also delegitimated any other social markers that separated 'youth' from 'childhood' or 'adulthood' in many places in Mozambique, including rites of initiation or marriage. Furthermore, they served to eradicate the very real differences in gender, class (students vs. young peasants, or workers), ethnicity and religion that characterized Mozambican society at independence, constructing Frelimo's revolutionary youth instead as a collective identity open to anyone of a certain age and, more importantly, character traits.

The sense that 'youth' was a revolutionary word and as such part of Frelimo's state-socialist script was further produced by the ways in which Machel strategically embedded the term within the wider state-socialist script, particularly the narrative of the liberation and the ongoing project of revolutionary transformation. This is evident in the density with which the term 'youth' or 'the

young' was linked to nouns such as 'struggle' (4x) or 'national liberation' (2x), 'combat' (4x) or 'our people' (3x). In the same way that authoritarian discourse in general was 'quilted' around the main signifiers (the 'Revolution', the 'New Society' and the 'Enemy'), Machel quilted 'youth' around these same terms. By frequently linking youth to nouns such as 'edification' (8x) - variably of the 'New Society' (3x) or 'the Socialist Society' (3x) - or 'revolutionary process' (5x), 'Revolution' (5x) and 'historical responsibility' (3x), the discourse established a strong relationship between youth and Frelimo's ongoing revolutionary agenda.

This was a relationship of that suggested a position of both privileged (over the masses) and subordinate (to Frelimo). They are (most of the time) active but always related to a higher goal or a higher agent. Verbs such as 'participate' (6x), 'play (a role/task)' (5x), 'contribute' (3x), 'understood' (2x), 'took on' (3x), 'sacrificed' (1x) although grammatically active, suggest a form of agency that portrays young people not as acting in their own capacity, but on behalf of a larger process and other agents. This is underlined by the frequent use of nouns such as 'tasks' (6x) and 'role' (5x) in relation to young people. Like 'engagement' (5x), 'participation' (2x), 'correct orientation' (2x), these nouns serve to underline the nature of the relationship that Frelimo envisioned young people playing within the framework of the revolutionary project: agentive but not independent, mobilized but not leaders. On their side, the relationship is reciprocal through the use of verbs such as 'support,' 'consolidate,' 'preserve,' 'reinforce,' 'dynamize' used when talking about Frelimo or the speaker's abstract 'we.'

Conclusion

One of the central arguments of this thesis is that in Mozambique, like in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent, *Juventude* (youth) is not primarily a concept related to a demographic or social category, but to a political category tied closely to Frelimo's revolutionary project of

building the New Socialist Society. One of the central questions of this study has therefore been how and why this category came to be constructed in this revolutionary manner. I have argued so far that unlike in other contexts of anti-colonial struggles, where the category 'youth' was politicized as a result of the events and actions of politically organized groups who referred to themselves as youth, the Mozambican liberation struggle did not have such an effect. Although individuals and groups existed who were politically active in the struggle and claimed the label 'youth,' a lack of recognition by Frelimo meant that their activities went largely unnoticed, and discourses about the meaning and role of youth in the liberation struggle that animated their political activities never entered Frelimo's political discourse.

Building on this argument, this chapter has shown that rather than in the struggle, the reasons for the politicization of the category youth need to be sought for in the political context of the transition to independence. Despite having been exposed to the kind of Marxist discourses and forms of organization that Frelimo opted for already during the struggle, it was only in the transition to independence that the movement saw political use in them. This chapter has explored this context of independence asking how and why it created the conditions for the politicization of the category youth. I have argued that the most important factor was the decision to create a Leninist mass democratic organization for youth, the OJM. It was in discussing, debating and justifying the necessity for a youth organization that different levels of Frelimo cadres began to formulate 'universal truths' about youth, its characteristics, potentials, roles and responsibilities. When announcing the foundation of the OJM on December 15th, 1976, Machel articulated for the first time in full the party's revolutionary conceptualization of youth, that would come to dominate public discourse.

The emergence of Frelimo's discourse about revolutionary youth in the context of the transition to independence explains in part why Mozambicans came to associate the term with the party, its

revolutionary politics and the OJM. But in another part, the discourse itself played a pivotal role in this process. Through an analysis of the December 15th speech, this chapter has begun exploring another central question of this research, namely what the consequences of Frelimo's construction of youth as a political category were for ordinary Mozambicans or, in other words, why and how Frelimo's revolutionary conceptualization of youth became meaningful to a generation of young men and women. In this respect, I have argued that Frelimo's political discourse about youth itself contained elements that suggested it belonged to a different order of discourse, namely the order of authoritative discourse. Having 'written' youth into the state-socialist script that was at the heart of this authoritative discourse through a firm connection to its other tropes and premises, such as the 'construction of the New Society,' and the 'revolutionary process,' youth became entangled with Frelimo's revolutionary project.

4. The Creation of the Organization for Mozambican Youth (1976-1977)

Introduction¹

Prior to 1976, the readers of the daily newspaper *Notícias* rarely came across the word '*Juventude*' (Youth). The odd commercial for a 'rejuvenating' face cream, or announcements of a sports competition between two soccer-team *Juventudes* are among the only occasions in which they would have encountered the term in the media. In 1976, however, the media's reporting about youth changed drastically. Firstly, this was because of *Notícias*' partisan support of Frelimo's revolutionary politics after independence and the newspaper's general embrace of the new state's revolutionary discourse.² But secondly, it was because Frelimo had recently made youth a central concept of this revolutionary discourse, as we saw in the previous chapter.

By 1976, *Notícias* not only reported in detail on the nascent structures of the Organização da Juventude Moçambicana (OJM) — it did so in the same language that Frelimo used to speak about youth. *Notícias* journalists now wrote about youth as the bearer of "enthusiasm and creative

¹ A previous version of this chapter was published in: Johanna M. Wetzel, "'Juventude, Avante!'" Youth Perspectives on Independence and the Creation of the Organização Da Juventude Moçambicana (1975–1978)', *Comparativ* 34, no. 3 (13 August 2024): 272–95, <https://doi.org/10.26014/j.comp.2024.03.04>.

² The complex relationship between journalists of the main newspapers *Tempo* and *Notícias*, the party and the state in the early independence years is discussed in more detail: Paul Fauvet and Marcelo Mosse, *Carlos Cardoso: Telling the Truth in Mozambique* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2003).

initiative,”³ which needed to be “transformed [...] into a force capable of actively participating in the transformation of the relations of the old society into a new type of social relations.”⁴ The ‘organization’ of youth into the OJM, was “aimed at putting an end to misconceptions, superstition, obscurantism and illiteracy and the consequent creation of a new mentality in our young people.”⁵

But *Notícias* journalists were not the only ones who had become ‘literate’ in the new language about youth. The ‘voices’ of OJM cadres of all levels – parents, teachers, concerned citizens, students and ‘young workers’ – now permeated the media, all echoing in a seemingly unified canon Frelimo’s revolutionary discourse about youth. In the opinion section of the January 3rd issue in 1977, for example, a reader named Afonso Floriano Ubisse, issued a passionate plea against beaded necklaces and other forms of ‘corrupt practices.’ In articulating his frustrations at extravagant young people in his city, he drew inspiration from Frelimo’s new authoritative discourse on youth:

In our sovereign and independent homeland, the youth must be dynamic, revolutionary and a true continuation of the Mozambican Revolution. As we all know, our youth suffered many hardships during the Portuguese colonial rule, which is why today they have many ills and vices inherited from the traditional-colonialist society. Today, in Mozambique, we want to establish a Revolutionary Youth.⁶

In a creative application of Machel’s list of colonial vices, this reader added:

The colonial vices and evils of which our youth are possessed manifest themselves, for example, as follows: In the city of Maputo and in the suburbs, there are many young people of both sexes wearing different necklaces of beads with arms full of bracelets, smoking cigarettes and drinking alcoholic beverages. In the evening, already intoxicated by alcohol, they indulge in other corrupt practices.⁷

³ “Centro Político-Cultural Engaja Juventude na Construção do Socialismo,” *Jornal Notícias*, June 14, 1977, 1.

⁴ “Centro Político-Cultural Engaja,” 1.

⁵ “Brigadas da OJM regressam a Xai-Xai,” *Jornal Notícias*, June 20, 1977, 3.

⁶ “Engajar a Juventude no Processo Revolucionário,” *Jornal Notícias*, January 3, 1977, 2.

⁷ “Engajar a Juventude no Processo Revolucionário,” 2.

As Machel had suggested in his speech on December 15th, 1976, less than a month before the solution that this reader envisioned lay in:

intensified mobilization with a view to engaging these young people in the revolutionary process, getting them to actively participate in the activities of the Organização da Juventude Moçambicana. Only with mobilisation and organisation will there be a large participation of young people in the revolutionary process.⁸

Another *Notícias* reader, named Angelo Miguês Tamela, submitted a similarly passionate plea just a few days later. Reproducing Machel's speech of December 15th almost literally, he commented: "The overwhelming majority of the people of Mozambique are made up of young people. That's why our parents put their trust in the Party's Youth Organisation, because without it the Revolution will not continue."⁹ Like the previous letter writer, Tamela was concerned with the vices he observed among the independence generation:

We know that the majority of young people have been affected by mental colonisation; by Salazar's doctrine. That same doctrine still reigns in the minds of some young people who have not abandoned and refuse to abandon the vices we inherited from the coloniser. We mustn't forget that it is within the youth that the enemy propagates its reactionary ideas, because the enemy, aware that youth is the continuator of the Revolution, seeks to bring it down.¹⁰

Tamela warned, as Machel did, of the "section of youth, which we can call 'Friks' [sic], who say in their reactionary language that they have nothing to do with the committees and Grupos Dinamizadores."¹¹ To encourage the youth to "be vigilant against the enemy's manoeuvres," this reader suggested, in the form of a poem, how the upright youth should reply to such ideological deviants:

I used to be your friend

⁸ "Engajar a Juventude no Processo Revolucionário," 2.

⁹ "A Juventude Alvo do Inimigo," *Jornal Notícias*, January 20, 1977, 3.

¹⁰ "A Juventude Alvo do Inimigo," 3.

¹¹ "A Juventude Alvo do Inimigo," 3.

But you've changed!
I haven't changed!
I'd like to still be your friend
But you've changed!

We went to school together
We grew up together
We fought the colonist enemy together
But you no longer know what you fought for!
I can't. You've changed!
I'd still like to be your friend
But you've changed!

Down with the drug addicts
Down with the corrupted youth
Long live President Samora Moisés Machel
Long live the youth who are committed to the Revolution!
The Struggle Continues!¹²

These readers' opinions do not necessarily reflect a shared consensus among Mozambicans. Like partisan media around the world, *Notícias* carefully hand-picked letters to be published in its opinion section to create the impression of unity and homogeneity among Mozambicans dedicated to the revolutionary cause.¹³ Nevertheless, such letters point to an interesting phenomenon. Over the course of the early years of the socialist era, Mozambicans young and old, had begun articulating their concerns in the language of the state in relation to all kinds of subjects, including youth. Drawing on Frelimo's recently formulated authoritative discourse on youth, readers such as Afonso Ubisse and Angelo Tamela now voiced their views, opinions, complaints, hopes and expectations of Maputo's young residents in the terms suggested by Machel just several weeks earlier. Employing Frelimo's revolutionary categorization, the *Notícias* readers had begun speaking about youth as a

¹² "A Juventude Alvo do Inimigo," 3.

¹³ Fauvet and Mosse, *Carlos Cardoso*, 40–44, 49–59.

powerful force, with historic responsibilities, dangerous tendencies and internalized colonial vestiges to be overcome. How did this happen?

This chapter continues the exploration of the process through which Frelimo's revolutionary youth became meaningful to Mozambicans during the socialist era. In the previous chapter, I showed how in the context of the transition to independence and the decision to create the OJM, Frelimo wrote its revolutionary conceptualization of youth into the Mozambican state's socialist 'script.' In this chapter, I begin to explore how the authoritative discourse came to permeate Mozambican society. I argue that over the course of the early years of independence, some Mozambicans became 'ideologically literate,' meaning they acquired the skill to write, speak and create artworks that reproduced Frelimo's authoritative discourse on youth. In relation to Frelimo's discourse on youth, this was in no small part a consequence of the creation of the OJM. Through an examination of *Notícias*' detailed reports on the OJM's foundation process, I show how the foundation process was guided by Machel's desire to produce 'ideological unity.'

The first phase of the foundation process focussed on establishing unity in the very practical sense of an organizational monopoly, by creating hierarchical organizational structures where none existed and subsuming any independent groups of organized young people in the process. The second phase focussed on the ideological dimension of the process. Through a series of trainings newly (s)elected OJM cadres not only became familiar with Frelimo's state-socialist script on youth but were also trained to *orientar* (guide) youth conferences at lower levels. Such conferences usually involved electing officers, as well as delivering opening and closing speeches, and writing resolutions, all in the canon of Frelimo's authoritative discourse. I show that in relation to youth, Frelimo strategically and in a structured manner used the foundation of the OJM as a way of producing ideological literacy among the youth, a section of society well equipped to catalyse this new way of speaking throughout Mozambican society. Throughout its various campaigns, the OJM

encouraged young people inside the organization and beyond to engage in activities based on praising, quoting, and reproducing the state-socialist script, thereby bolstering its authoritative nature, increasing its exposure and integrating Frelimo's revolutionary conceptualization of youth firmly into the OJM's organizational practices.

This discussion throws a new light onto debates about the kinds of role and functions the mass democratic organizations played. The mass democratic organizations have often been dismissed, given that they had only a very limited degree of independence from the party, and never really attempted to democratically represent their constituencies. While their role as 'arms of the party' is well established, we know little about what exactly that role entailed. The case of the OJM's foundation highlights a so far underappreciated role that discourse and language played in this process, while also showing that the OJM's impact in popularizing Frelimo's revolutionary discourse went far beyond its membership base.

Beyond Frelimo's own writing on the mass democratic organizations, little scholarship is available to date that discusses these organizations. Socialist-era historiography continues to constitute the bulk of the scholarship on Mozambique's mass democratic organizations.¹⁴ These accounts tended to endorse Frelimo's own interpretations of the mass democratic organizations as organs of democratic participation. John Saul's edited volume *A Difficult Road* and Joseph Hanlon's book *Revolution under Fire* for example, both cast the mass democratic organizations as the embodiment of *poder popular* (the People's power), "exercised both by Frelimo as tribute of the people *and* by the

¹⁴ Saul, *Difficult Road*; Hanlon, *Mozambique*; On the OMM, see: Stephanie Urdang, 'The Last Transition? Women and Development in Mozambique', *Review of African Political Economy* 10, no. 27/28 (1983): 8–32; Helena Hansen et al., 'The Organization of Mozambican Women: A Organizacao Mulher Mocambicana (OMM)', *Journal of Eastern African Research & Development* 15 (1985): 230–44; Kruks and Wisner (1984) give a more critical reading of the OMM and its policy impacts on the social relations of production in the South Sonia Kruks and Ben Wisner, 'The State, the Party and the Female Peasantry in Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, no. 1 (1984): 106–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057078408708090>.

people acting directly through popularly based mass organization.”¹⁵ In this reading, through the mass democratic organizations problems of the people would be heard by the party, and the party directives by the people.

That such aspirations fell short of reality was already recognized by contemporary scholars as well as Frelimo’s internal mechanisms for self-criticism.¹⁶ In practice, the mass democratic organizations operated more from the top down than the bottom up.¹⁷ Democratic mechanisms of interest representation from the bases to the higher levels of the party in the form of policy suggestions or initiatives were rather weak, an issue that particularly commentators on the women’s organization found problematic, given the dominance of men in higher party ranks.¹⁸ A later generation of scholars, writing in the context of Frelimo’s turn away from ‘Marxist-Leninism’ towards multi-party democracy and structural adjustment, found more critical words to describe the role and function played by the mass democratic organizations.¹⁹ Rather than merely failing to keep the ‘central democratic’ promise that the mass democratic organizations would act as vehicles through which citizens expressed their desires, these scholars argued that from the beginning the internal structures and orientations of these organizations rendered them “nothing but arms of the party,”²⁰ and an integral part in Frelimo’s repressive and violent revolutionary project. Structurally, the mass democratic organizations were subordinate to the party and not meant to become an “instrument

¹⁵ Cravinho, ‘Modernizing Mozambique’, 38 [fn 20: Saul, 1985: 68] ; Saul, *Difficult Road*, 68.

¹⁶ Kruks & Wisner cite a 1984 quote from FRELIMO’s Committee on Ideological Work: ‘There are few meetings with the masses, especially in the rural areas. Moreover, the few meetings that they hold are often meetings in which the Party member arrives, talks and then goes away. They are not meetings to hear from the people about their problems. They are meetings in which the people only participate as listeners, as observers.’ Kruks and Wisner, ‘The State, the Party and the Female Peasantry in Mozambique’, 110.

¹⁷ Kruks and Wisner, 110.

¹⁸ Kruks and Wisner, 117.

¹⁹ Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 70, 78; de Brito, *A Frelimo, o Marxismo*; Cravinho, ‘Modernizing Mozambique’; Michel Cahen, ‘Etat et pouvoir populaire dans le Mozambique indépendant’, *Politique africaine*, 1985, 36–60; Alice Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Postcolonial Africa: The Case of Mozambique, 1975-1994*, Routledge Studies in Modern History 3 (London: Routledge, 2006), 62.

²⁰ Machava, ‘State Discourse on Internal Security’, 596.

of confrontation [or to...] make demands,”²¹ as Machel made clear at the inauguration of the worker’s organization. Instead of embodying the power *of* the people, Cahen and others viewed this relationship as constitutive of Frelimo’s hold on power *over* the people, by using these organizations “to ensure that these sectors of society were collaborating in the national project that it was creating.”²²

In examining Frelimo’s specific approach to organizing the youth through a close reading of the newspaper *Notícias*³ reporting on the OJM’s activities between 1977 and 1978, I argue here that neither arguments fully capture the complex role played by the OJM in relation to young people’s integration into Frelimo’s realm of influence. While I show that the process of the OJM’s foundation certainly showed some of the authoritarian ambitions that Cahen suggested, I suggest that there was another side to the foundation campaign. This chapter thus builds on the latter scholarship’s arguments, that Frelimo used the mass democratic organizations to establish a degree of control over the Mozambican population, but pushes this literature inquiries further by closely examining how the party-state attempted to achieve this control. I argue that Frelimo used the OJM in an attempt to create ‘ideological unity’ throughout Mozambican society, but not only through establishing a hierarchical organizational structure, but also through attempting to institute a common language. Through an series of seminars, the foundation of the OJM trained its newly elected cadres to become ‘ideological literate’ in the authoritative discourse of the socialist state.

This chapter explores this process in three sections, structured along the phases of the foundational campaign. The first section discusses the establishment of a monopoly on political activities that

²¹ Samora Machel quoted in Bertil Egerö, *Mozambique, a Dream Undone: The Political Economy of Democracy, 1975-84* (Uppsala: Stockholm, Sweden: Nordiska afrikainstitutet; Distributed by Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), 140.

²² Cahen, ‘Etat et pouvoir populaire dans le Mozambique indépendant’, 49–52.

entailed on the one hand setting up new, hierarchical structures for a youth organization, and on the other hand, subsuming (voluntarily or not) existing organizations that claimed to represent ‘youth.’ The second section then moves on to the trainings in which recently elected, higher level OJM members learned to reproduce the state-socialist script on youth. Finally, the third section shows how ‘ideological literacy’ trickled down the OJM’s hierarchies, but also reached far beyond its membership base, giving us a new understanding of how and why Frelimo’s revolutionary construction of youth became such a dominant feature of the public sphere in Maputo.

Monopolizing Political Activities: Phase I

The ‘organization of the youth’ proceeded in two phases. Both were led by the Secretariado Nacional da Juventude (National Secretariat for Youth), which was founded at the 8th session of the Central Committee²³ and consisted of nine individuals, namely Zacarias Kupela, Nurmomade Abdala Hassamo, Alcinda Abreu, Paulo Ivo Garrido, Gabriel Oriste Nacala, Andira José António, Beleza Fernandes, Arnaldo dos Santos Paris, and António Alfredo Cuna. Most members of this group were drawn from the *atropelados*, who we met in the previous chapter.²⁴ The Secretariado Nacional operated under the Department for Mobilization and Organization (Departamento de Mobilização e Organização) with a mandate for the “mobilisation of the militants and the people and their *enquadramento* (placement) respectively into the structures of FRELIMO and the mass democratic organizations, such as: [...] the Youth Organisation.”²⁵ Their day-to-day practice was

²³ Zacarias Kupela, Notes, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, July 03, 2022.

²⁴ “Nomeado Secretariado Nacional da Organização da Juventude,” *Jornal Notícias*, April 13, 1977, 1.

²⁵ The creation of the Departamento de Mobilização e Organização (DMO) was decided in “Resolução sobre Estruturas do Partido” A.2.1.e: “A criação do Departamento de Mobilização e Organização (D.M.O.), que terá como tarefa a mobilização dos militantes e do povo e seu enquadramento respetivamente nas estruturas da FRELIMO e das Organizações Democráticas de Massas, como: ... Organização da Juventude, in English: “The creation of the Department of Mobilisation and Organisation (D.M.O.), which will have the task of mobilising militants and the people and integrating them respectively into the structures of FRELIMO and the Democratic Mass Organisations,

closely coordinated with Samora Machel's office. The internal archives of the Department or the Secretariado Nacional are not available for public consultation at the time of writing, but detailed accounts of the Secretariado Nacional's activities in the newspaper archives in Maputo allow for a partial reconstruction of the foundation process as viewed by the partisan media, which reported – proudly and in great detail – on the activities of this soon-to-be founded organization.

The Secretariado Nacional followed a 'work plan' with two phases.²⁶ In the first phase, the members of the Secretariado Nacional visited the provincial capitals and some district capitals to establish OJM secretariats and nominate representatives. During these visits, the delegates from the Secretariado Nacional would usually hold *comícios* (literally "councils"), that higher ranking Frelimo representatives, typically from the Department for Information and Propaganda and the Ministry for Education and Culture, local members of the Grupos Dinamizadores (GDs) and sometimes representatives of other mass democratic organizations, such as the Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (OMM), would typically attend alongside members of the local population.²⁷ The *Notícias* reports of the councils usually indicate that they were 'oriented' (guided, led) by a member of the Secretariado Nacional, as well as a provincial-level OJM representative, although the *Notícias* reports did not disclose how and whether this person was (s)elected. During the councils, which reportedly took place in Niassa,²⁸ Gaza,²⁹ Sofala,³⁰ and Tete³¹ mostly between May and August 1977, the attendees nominated district-level secretariats (*secretariado distrital*) and the representative of the

such as: [...] Youth Organisation" published in Departamento de Informação e Propaganda da FRELIMO, *Documentos da 8.a Sessão do Comité Central Frelimo: Maputo 11 a 27 de Fevereiro de 1976*, Maputo, 1976, 59, accessed via MHN.

²⁶ "Como esta a organizar-se a Juventude Moçambicana: Membros do Secretariado Nacional da OJM explicam ofensiva política no seio dos jovens," *Jornal Notícias*, July 18, 1977, 3.

²⁷ See for example: "Juventude Moçambicana Solidariza-se com a luta dos Jovens Sul-Africanos," *Jornal Notícias*, June 20, 1977, 3.

²⁸ "Delegação da Juventude de Visita ao Niassa," *Jornal Notícias*, June 3, 1977, 3.

²⁹ "Juventude Moçambicana Solidariza-se," 3; "Brigadas de jovens no Chibuto," *Jornal Notícias*, July 3, 1977, 1.

³⁰ "Iniciada em Sofala estruturação da OJM," *Jornal Notícias*, July 8, 1977, 3.

³¹ "Sede da OJM inaugurada em Tete," *Jornal Notícias*, July 12, 1977, 2.

Secretariado Nacional imparted specific ‘orientations’ and tasks to implement in their district.³² The newly nominated district secretaries subsequently formed brigades that would travel to the lower administrative units and replicate the same process in the *distritos* (districts), *localidades* (localities), *circulos* (circles), *celulas* (cells), *bairros* (neighbourhoods) and in some cases schools³³ and companies³⁴ within the districts and provinces.³⁵ *Notícias* chronicled such brigade travels in Nampula, through the districts Chemba, Cheringoma, Marrromeu and Caia,³⁶ Sofala,³⁷ and Gaza,³⁸ among other places.

In many places across the country, the ‘organization’ of youth was primarily a process of finding suitable people, as Zacarias Kupela remembered in our interview.³⁹ Local people were not always as enthusiastic as Frelimo liked to depict them:

There are [...] a certain number of people who do not understand the importance of the organization for youth. We can also say that they don’t understand that at this stage each Mozambican citizen has his or her place in the Party structures, whether in the mass organisations like the OJM or OMM, in the future workers’ organisation or in the actual Production Councils. Like the parents, the children also have a role to play in the Revolution.⁴⁰

In rural areas a lack of uptake of the OJM was often attributed to lingering colonial or ‘backward’ mentalities, both among parents and unenlightened youth. A report about a district-level conference by the provincial secretary of the OJM in Nampula illustrates this further:

³² See for example: “Juventude Moçambicana Solidariza-se,” 3.

³³ See: “Iniciada em Sofala estruturação da OJM.”

³⁴ See: “Zambézia Brigada da OJM no Gurué,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 27, 1977, 3.

³⁵ For example, *Notícias* reported that “The brigades travelled in the districts “with the objective to create OJM structures where they do not exist” “Estruturação da OJM em Nampula,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 12, 1977, 3.

³⁶ “Estruturação da OJM em Nampula,” 3.

³⁷ “Secretariados da OJM nos Distritos de Sofala,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 12, 1977, 3.

³⁸ “Brigadas de jovens no Chibuto,” 1.

³⁹ Zacarias Kupela, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, July 03, 2022.

⁴⁰ “Como esta a organizar-se a Juventude Moçambicana: Membros do Secretariado Nacional da OJM explicam ofensiva política no seio dos jovens,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 18, 1977, 3; see also: “O.J.M.: Conferencias Distritais Decorrem em Sofala,” *Jornal Notícias*, September 30, 1977, 3; “Secretariado provincial da O.J.M. analisa Trabalho dos Distritos,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 5, 1977, 2; “Juventude Empenha-se na Preparação da Conferencia Nacional da O.J.M.,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 11, 1977, 2.

there is a tendency among some young people to retain ideas and practices inherited from incorrect traditions and cultivated by colonialism, such as obscurantism, initiation rites, early marriages, sexual corruption and alcoholism. The [Nampula conference report] attributes a large part of the responsibility for the preservation of these evils in some of our young people to the parents, who take a less active part in the problems of the O.J.M., sometimes going so far as to make it difficult for their children to participate in the tasks of the Organization.⁴¹

In urban areas there was a different dynamic. ‘Organizing’ the youth meant subsuming potentially competing groups of student movements, revolutionary enthusiasts or activist groups. In Maputo, such structures were likely numerous, although little research has been conducted on the exact numbers, agendas and alliances of such groups, in part, because Frelimo has worked hard to hide their role in the transition to independence.⁴² Informed by the concerns Frelimo articulated in Mocuba, the centre of the OJM’s attention were groups of students, and religious youth, who had a long tradition of organized anti-colonial resistance, as well as groups of revolutionary enthusiasts (or critics) that had sprung up during the transition to independence.⁴³

These latter groups included that of Roberto Tibana. At age 15, Tibana led a group that referred to themselves as *miúdos* (small ones, kids), during the riots of September 7, 1974. The group tried to keep people from looting and burning shops in the neighbourhood ‘Unidade 5.’ Following this event, the group “solidified itself as a study group that engaged also in cultural and sports activities.”⁴⁴ On the Frelimo-critical platform Macuablogs.com Tibana recounts that: “I was disinterested in the philosophical debates of the elders. In our younger group we started doing very

⁴¹ “O.J.M. inicia campanha de Dinamização para 1a Conferencial Nacional da Organização,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 22, 1977, 3.

⁴² Benedito Machava’s forthcoming research traces the history of ‘roads not taken’ at independence, centring political groups, such as the Partido de Coligação Nacional or the Democratas de Moçambique, that advocated for alternative ‘roads’ to independence, through progressive autonomy, or democratic elections. See: Machava, ‘The Road Not Taken’. Interviews with members of pro-Frelimo activists in the transition to independence can be found in: Aurélio Le Bon, *Mafalala 1974: Memórias do 7 de setembro: a grande operação: a base do povo que resistiu em Lourenço Marques: um livro com memórias do muitos de nós* (Maputo: Movimento Editora, 2015); Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, *História da AAM*. “

⁴³ See chapter three.

⁴⁴ Tibana, ‘O “Meu 8 de Março”’.

practical things like organising neighbourhood clean-ups [...] studying the FRELIMO propaganda leaflets, etc,” activities that the transition government encouraged and that later became established roles for the OJM’s groups. Francisco Moiane joined a similar group at age 16. At first, Moiane was involved with the local Grupo Dinamizador, although he did not remember how the organization started. He recounted that they organized neighbourhood cleaning days, an activity that was encouraged by Frelimo and took place regularly on Saturdays in most neighbourhoods of Maputo. In Chamanculo too, Moiane remembered:

We cleaned the neighbourhoods because there was no municipal council [...] In the afternoon we did political studies, which meant reading the books of Mao Zedong, Karl Marx and so on, it was the initiation into Marxism [...] we also read some books on the revolution, how Frelimo fought.⁴⁵

During this phase, a group of younger men and women started to meet up for separate discussions and political study in an empty school in the neighbourhood: “It was a continuation [of the GD], it was their children (*Era continuação, eram os filhos*). At night, the parents would meet in the Grupo Dinamizador and the youth [would meet separately]”⁴⁶ The group called themselves OJM, even though, the OJM would only be founded two years later:

We said we were OJM because OJM itself was not structured, we only said ‘OJM, ah, the youth,’ from the structural point of view it didn’t exist yet. So young people organised themselves wherever they were and said they were OJM. [...] That was enough, you said [you were] youth, the person just identified you with the OJM, we didn’t have cards, we didn’t have anything.⁴⁷

Groups such as Moiane’s and Tibana’s did not emerge independently of Frelimo or the GDs, but they were not integrated formally into Frelimo’s structures before the foundation of the OJM. Moiane’s group associated closely with Frelimo and the GD. Moiane remembered that they had a

⁴⁵ Francisco Moiane, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 13, 2022.

⁴⁶ Francisco Moiane, Interview.

⁴⁷ Francisco Moiane, Interview.

“*responsável da juventude* (youth authority)” who participated in the GD meetings: “we received *orientações* (guidance) from the GD, so that on Wednesday we couldn’t leave the meetings before the secretariat of meeting of the Party committee (*secretariado da reunião do comité do Partido*), we were there waiting for the *orientações* that [he] would bring.”⁴⁸

As we saw in the previous chapter, these groups were both useful for Frelimo and a cause for concern among Frelimo’s mid- and higher-level cadres who met at Mocuba in February 1975. Moiane’s group soon came into conflict with the city authorities. Their initial engagement in the literacy campaigns turned into a school project that engaged close to 70 volunteer teachers. At first, they gave ‘literacy classes’ for adults and gradually expanded into other subjects for primary school children and later even secondary school children. In this, Moiane recounts that they were inspired by Samora Machel’s discourse: “There was a phrase by Samora, ‘school is a basis for the people to take power,’ so when we took that phrase we said ‘the problem in the end is to educate the people,’ so we opened the school.”⁴⁹ They named it Zinthlathla, after a guerrilla who was a resident in Chamanculo, and themselves the Comunidade de Zinthlathla.

Already prior to the foundation of the OJM, Frelimo was quick to bring such independent groups of youth activists under its control, and integrate (and discipline) their activities to fall within the neatly defined codex of right or wrong ways of ‘building the New Socialist Society.’⁵⁰ Tibana’s group, for example, was side-lined rather than subsumed by Frelimo’s structures. He recounts that at some point, “another group of ‘older’ ones appeared. I don’t know how they appeared, but they

⁴⁸ Francisco Moiane, Interview.

⁴⁹ Francisco Moiane, Interview.

⁵⁰ See discussion on ‘ideological deviations’ in chapter three.

already had FRELIMO ‘authority.’ The group of ‘older ones’ wanted to organized GD and excluded the *muídos*:’

We (in the ‘kids’ group) had visibility and esteem in the population because of what we had done during the ‘7 de April’ riots... But not only were we ‘kids’ (I was 15-16 years old), we also had no connection with FRELIMO, except that we collectively read the propaganda booklets of the organisation.⁵¹

The *muídos* group were incapacitated through a made-up ‘denunciation’ for allegedly planning a ‘state coup.’ The incident escalated into a near-arrest by a ‘*bufo*’ *de alerta* (Frelimo vigilante) and ceased to be active thereafter.

The underlying approach that Frelimo practiced, namely that activism needed to be integrated into Frelimo’s hierarchies and guided by people connected to the party, also guided the ‘organization’ of youth. Shortly after its foundation, the municipal government wanted to take over governance of the school run by Francisco Moiane’s Comunidade de Zinthlathla. The conflict escalated to the point that the Comunidade de Zinthlathla was accused of ‘striking.’ “This caused many problems,” Moiane recalled. “The municipal government said: ‘you saw the politicians there saying ‘you can’t strike.’”⁵² By 1978, the Comunidade Zinthlathla had become part of the OJM, and the school part of the municipality, bringing both under the firm control of the Frelimo party-state.

In this vein, the OJM functioned as a tool for subsuming independent activists who fell into the category ‘youth,’ according to the OJM’s definitions, and disciplining their activities to conform with Machel’s conception of adequate youthful political activism, and remove potential rival organizations. The most famous sphere of activism that the OJM subsumed was the Associação Académica de Moçambique (AAM), a student organization based at the capital’s University of

⁵¹ Tibana, ‘O “Meu 8 de Março”’.

⁵² Francisco Moiane, Interview.

Lourenço Marques, later Eduardo Mondlane University.⁵³ After over a decade of anti-colonial activism, the organization and its journal *O Diálogo* (The Dialogue) closed shortly after independence. The writers of *O Diálogo* portrayed this closure as a natural process that was agreed upon by all those involved:

We have started a new life in Moçambique. We are building a new country in Mozambique [...] The engagement of the students in the tasks of national construction will only be possible if they are organized for that purpose [...] That is why the student organization has to acquire new forms, to correspond to the new functions, the new experiences, which are posed to the students [...] Which forms should be adopted? [...] Who will define these forms? Those who, trained in the correct interpretation of the wishes of the people, have the necessary conditions to guide our work: Frelimo.⁵⁴

In public, former members of the AAM portrayed their take-over by the OJM as a consensual process, described and justified through the rationales of the new, revolutionary conceptualization of youth as a political category that transcended class divisions. According to the authors of the last issue of *O Diálogo*:

In various parts of our country, young people felt the need to unite and, with the enthusiasm and initiative that characterizes them, to resolutely launch the tasks of national reconstruction. In [Mozambique] today the conditions exist for the youth [...] to be integrated into a single organisation, because the young workers, peasants, fighters and students in the city or in the countryside are united by their dedication to the popular cause and the desire to jointly dedicate all their efforts to the development and consolidation of the Mozambican revolution.⁵⁵

Former members of the AAM have recently described the closure of the organization and its replacement by the OJM. In a memoirsque history of the organization, they simply write of “ced[ing] to the nascent OJM [...] dissolv[ing] itself, integrating its members into the new political

⁵³ Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, *História da AAM*; Cravinho, ‘Modernizing Mozambique’, 49.

⁵⁴ *O Diálogo*, no. 16, April 1975, pp. 1 and 2, cited in Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, *História da AAM*, 279 fn 421.

⁵⁵ *O Diálogo*, no. 18, July 1975, pp. 11, cited in Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, 285, fn. 424.

and social reality.”⁵⁶ Their interviewees – mostly former AAM members – largely supported this interpretation, but clarified that the stimulus for closure and integration into the OJM came from Frelimo:

For Álvaro Carmo Vaz, [...] the causes of the decline of associative activities were various: “The role of AAM was declining due to various factors. First, there was a massive abandonment of [University of Lourenco Marques] students; second, Frelimo did not stimulate the continuity of the Association, prioritizing the organization and functioning of the cells and the University’s circle committee; third, with Frelimo’s perspective of creating OJM [...] and [an order] that all activities with the students should move to OJM.”⁵⁷

It was in an interview with a former member of the AAM, who wished to remain anonymous, that I learned that an alternative version to the official story exists. “In that process from ‘74 until ‘77,” this former member of the AAM recalled:

Frelimo inform[ed] all the other youth organisations that they *have to* disappear, we can only have a youth of Frelimo. And that’s how this book [about AAM] ends at the moment when we met to decide that we are going to finish with the academic association. So that there won’t be problems, but we did not agree.⁵⁸

Thus, quite like scholars have argued in their critical reading of the mass democratic organizations, the OJM was established in a top down manner that explicitly involved subsuming and supressing any alternative, and potentially rival, organizational structures. The Secretariado Nacional acted on Machel’s dictum of organizing the youth during the first phase of the work plan by establishing an institutional monopoly on youth activities, particularly if they were of a political nature, in the hands of the OJM. The Secretariado Nacional’s ‘organizing’ took the shape of creating from scratch a hierarchical organizational structure of OJM secretariats across provinces, districts and localities, down to the smallest administrative units, the circles, cells and neighbourhoods. Where no forms

⁵⁶ Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, 285.

⁵⁷ Gonzalez and Lopes Pereira, 280.

⁵⁸ Anonymous informant, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 24, 2022.

of organized activism had existed, the Secretariado Nacional scrambled to find suitable young people to fill such posts. In other places the OJM removed or absorbed pre-existing forms of organized activists in processes that were more or less voluntary. ‘Unity’ among the ‘masses of youth’ was thus a centrally orchestrated phenomenon and the OJM in many ways playing into the authoritative nature of the mass democratic organizations. But there was another side to this process, which has been largely unknown and undertheorized among this literature. This process, I will argue next, involved the construction of ideological unity through the establishment of a common language.

Producing Ideological Literacy: Phase II

The second phase of the work plan focussed on producing the ‘ideological’ side of the ‘unity’ that Machel had spoken about, when he had articulated his vision for the mass democratic organizations.⁵⁹ Between the months of August and November 1977, the Secretariado Nacional travelled to the provinces a second time. This time, they held what *Notícias* called ‘trainings’, or in some places ‘seminars’ or ‘workshops’ for higher ranking OJM functionaries. Over the course of August 1977, such trainings took place at the provincial and district-level in the district headquarters Sede do Distrito de Bilene, Inhambane,⁶⁰ Mocuba in Zambézia Province,⁶¹ Lichinga in Niassa,⁶² and Manjacaze in Gaza.⁶³ In some places, *Noticias* referred to the trainings as ‘courses for youth leaders,’ such as in Cabo Delgado,⁶⁴ Gaza,⁶⁵ and Maputo.⁶⁶ All types of trainings usually

⁵⁹ See chapter three.

⁶⁰ “Seminário da OJM termina em Inhambane,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 2, 1977, 3.

⁶¹ “Reunião Provincial da Juventude iniciou-se ontem em Mocuba,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 21, 1977, 5.

⁶² “Organização da Juventude,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 28, 1977, 3.

⁶³ “Conferência da OJM prepara-se em Manjacaze,” *Jornal Notícias*, September 22, 1977, 3.

⁶⁴ “Plano de Atividades da OJM Desenvolve-se a Nível Nacional,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 16, 1977, 1.

⁶⁵ “OJM Prepara conferências distritais,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 17, 1977, 2.

⁶⁶ “Juventude deve engajar-se,” 1.

took several days and involved the participation of a higher-level party official, and a member of the Secretariado Nacional who “*orientava* (guided)”⁶⁷ the meeting. This, a *Notícias* report from August 16th, 1977 highlighted, constituted the most important task in this second phase of the Secretariado Nacional’s work plan.⁶⁸

According to *Notícias*, the trainings were meant to prepare the newly elected OJM representatives to “*dynamisar* (dynamise/expedite)” the party, government and OJM *orientações* (guidance) among the youth.”⁶⁹ To this end, the trainings centred on the guided ‘study’ of three core texts that together constituted the core of Frelimo’s state-socialist script in relation to youth.⁷⁰ *Notícias* journalists were not always rigorous in reporting the exact title of the documents used in these seminars. Some would refer to the December 15th speech as the “speech from Machel’s meeting with the youth.” But in all likelihood, the Secretariado Nacional used the same three texts throughout. The first text was the speech Machel gave on December 15th, 1976,⁷¹ which I described in detail in chapter three.

⁶⁷ The opening of the 1st Curso Provincial de Actividades da Juventude do Maputo at the Centro de Formação Político-Ideológico de Munhuana in Maputo, for example, was attended by members of the Comité Provincial do Partido, representatives of the provincial OMM and OJM secretariats, and course participants; the course took 15 days, See: “Juventude deve engajar-se,” 1.

⁶⁸ “Plano de Atividades da OJM,” 1.

⁶⁹ “Juventude deve engajar-se,” 1; “Juventude Empenha-se na Preparação da Conferência Nacional da O.J.M.,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 11, 1977, 2.

⁷⁰ The precise documents that the Secretariado Nacional used likely included three core texts, although the *Notícias* journalists called them by different names.

⁷¹ Some examples include: In the district conference in Pemba, Chiure, Ibo and Quissanga, Cabo Delgado Province “President Samora Machel’s speech at the meeting with Mozambican youth last December and the OJM National Secretariat’s appeal for funds to support the organisation’s activities were discussed.” [*foram debatidos o discurso do Presidente Samora Machel na reunião com a Juventude moçambicana em Dezembro último, e o apelo do Secretariado Nacional da OJM sobre a recolha de fundos, para apoiar as actividades da organização.*] “O.J.M. Conferências Distritais em Cabo Delgado,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 12, 1977, 5b; at the district-level conference in Maputo: “[The speech given by President Samora Machel at his meeting with the youth last year, the document of the National Secretariat of OJM, and some documents of the Party will be adopted as the basic documents for the work of this meeting” [*Serão adoptados como documentos de base para os trabalhos deste encontro, o discurso proferido pelo Presidente Samora Machel no seu encontro com a Juventude o ano passado, o documento do Secretariado Nacional da OJM, e ainda alguns documentos do Partido.*] “Conferência da OJM no distrito de Maputo,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 13, 1977, 6; in Aramba in Niassa Province, the groups studied: President Samora Machel’s speech to the youth in December last year.” [*discurso do Presidente Samora Machel dirigido à Juventude em Dezembro do ano passado.*] “Niassa: Conferência da OJM no Distrito da Amaramba,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 18, 1977, 3; in Marracuene in Maputo Province -Marracuene: “The dominant themes were the speech given by President Samora Machel at his meeting with the youth last December.” [*temas dominantes foram o*

The second text was a text that the Secretariado Nacional authored and *Notícias* published on August 22nd, 1977.⁷² It was titled “Let us prepare actively and in an organised way the 1st National Conference of the O.J.M.” and outlined specific *orientações* for youth in relation to the upcoming first OJM conference. The third text was titled “O.J.M. National Secretariat launches fundraising campaign” and published in *Notícias* on October 5th, 1977, although an internal copy may have been used for trainings prior to this date. This document focussed on activities that youth should engage in to financially support the OJM, specifically the first conference.

Rather than unity in thinking, which is difficult to establish or indeed, ever to achieve among a group as heterogenous as a generation, these trainings did produce a new unity in language. During the months following the trainings, provincial-level OJM representatives ‘guided’ conferences and meetings of district-level OJM representatives, who in turn convened meetings with locality-level representatives and so on. At these meetings, the provincial OJM representatives usually gave speeches, coordinated elections and guided the formulation of resolutions. Their interventions demonstrated a new homogeneity with each other, as well as Frelimo’s wider authoritative discourse. They suggest that OJM representatives had become fluent in the language of the state, or more specifically in Frelimo’s authoritative discourse about youth.

Examples of this kind of reproduction are ample. In monolithic form OJM resolutions, conference speeches, and reports echoed the cornerstones of the state-socialist script on youth: its heroic role

discurso proferido pelo Presidente Samora Machel na sua reunião com os jovens em Dezembro último] “Juventude de Marracuene Realizou Conferencias,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 19, 1977, 3.

⁷² An instructor document for District Conference that the Secretariado Nacional published in *Notícias* and circulated, detailed that the participants would: “To study the appeal launched by the [National Secretariat] of the OJM, as well as the theses of the 1st Mozambican Youth Conference.” [*Proceder ao estudo do apelo lançado pelo [Secretariado Nacional] da OJM, bem como das teses da I Conferencia da Juventude moçambicana*] “Conferencias Distritais da Juventude Moçambicana,” *Jornal Notícias*, September 11, 1977, 3; referring to: “Apelo a Juventude Moçambicana,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 21, 1977, 3.

in the struggle, its historic responsibility to build the New Socialist Society, the internal struggle to overcome colonial vestiges, specific to the youth. The resolution of a OJM provincial-level meeting in Chimoio, Manica, for example, read:

The youth of Mozambique played an important and decisive role in the struggle for national liberation. Once Portuguese colonialism is [sic] defeated in Mozambique and our country's independence is [sic] proclaimed, the youth are once again called upon to play their part in the struggle to consolidate our independence, rebuild the country and build the material and ideological basis for the construction of socialism in our country. It is the responsibility of the youth to combat many of the vices and evils inherited from traditional and colonial society.⁷³

Addressing the newly selected members of a local cell-level OJM, the head of the provincial brigade of the OJM in Dondo, Sofala, Nehemias Tomás, clarified that:

It is essentially up to our youth to energise the process underway in the country, which is why it is indispensable to carry out, on an individual level, an internal struggle against the vestiges of the past [which] can only be successful when a tenacious ideological struggle is effectively unleashed, followed by consequent practical actions.⁷⁴

At a district-level conference in Namaacha, Maputo province, *Notícias* reported that:

Participants emphasised the need for the youth to quickly free themselves from the old vestiges of decadent colonial society [...] In the debates held at group level in plenary sessions, it emerged that the youth of Namaacha still harbour vices inherited from the old society such as lobolo, early marriages, prostitution, alcoholism and even a large degree of integration by some of those young people into religious sects.⁷⁵

The iterations and texts that the OJM representatives produced, not only re-produced the authoritative discourse in relation to its underpinning ideas, but also in terms of semantics. Like Frelimo's authoritative discourse, these speeches were impersonal usually described as a certain

⁷³ "No combate pela construção do socialismo cabem grandes responsabilidades a Juventude Salientado em Seminário Provincial," *Jornal Notícias*, December 3, 1976, 2.

⁷⁴ "Matola Seminário Distrital da OJM," *Jornal Notícias*, July 29, 1977, 3.

⁷⁵ "Conferencias Distritais da OJM terminaram nos distritos de Maputo (Vivas a Organização da Juventude Mocambicana!)," *Jornal Notícias*, October 27, 1977, 3.

speaker giving an ‘analysis’ of the situation of the youth in *Notícias* reports.⁷⁶ They employed the same, limited numbers of modifiers and nouns that Samora Machel employed in his initial speeches, such as ‘progressiveness,’ ‘decadence,’ ‘vices,’ and ‘vestigios,’ as well as ‘responsibility,’ ‘the construction of socialism,’ and ‘engaging in tasks.’ They invariably cited, referred to, and quoted Machel, sometimes even with references to the specific publication of the December 15th text. In the province of Maputo, *Notícias* noted a provincial-level OJM representative had “recalled the words of President Samora Machel, stating that ‘Youth is today the centre of the battle’ between revolutionary and reactionary forces.”⁷⁷ The representative was quoted as saying:

[The reaction (*a reaccao*)] seeks at all costs to prevent the progressive action of the youth [...] and to do so it develops a series of manoeuvres, exploiting certain shortcomings of the youth, such as political inexperience, impulsiveness, the desire for radical change and petty-bourgeois ultra-leftism.⁷⁸

Some reused entire textual blocks or modifier-heavy rephrasing of Machel’s ‘analysis’ in the December 15th speech. Phrases such as Machel’s: “The colonialists, taking advantage of young people’s taste for amusement, made great effort to spread entertainment based on drinking, drug-taking, sexual promiscuity,”⁷⁹ for example, were recycled variably into:

colonialism, aware of the strength that our youth represented, tried to lower [the youth], encouraging corruption, drugs, pernicious books, prostitution, pornography, elitism, individualism, in order to distance it from the realities and aspirations of our people.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ For example, *Notícias* described an opening speech as “analysing the activities carried out by youth at District level, carry out a survey of youth problems at District level” [analisar as actividades desenvolvidas pela Juventude a nível do Distrito, Proceder ao levantamento de problemas da Juventude ao nível do Distrito] “Conferencias Distritais da Juventude Moçambicano,” 3.

⁷⁷ “Mobilização da Juventude nos distritos da Maputo a partir deste fim-de-semana,” *Jornal Notícias*, April 14, 1977, 1.

⁷⁸ “Mobilização da Juventude,” 1.

⁷⁹ Machel, *Sobre os Problemas*, 17.

⁸⁰ “Juventude deve engajar-se ativamente em todas as tarefas revolucionárias: Salientado na sessão de abertura do I Curso Provincial de ativistas da Juventude do Maputo,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 14, 1977, 1.

unlike the colonial youth that absorbed and fed the decadent vices of colonialism-fascism the Mozambican revolutionary youth is the vanguard of our revolution.⁸¹

The perhaps most dominant feature of these provincial-level OJM representatives' reproduction of Frelimo's authoritative discourse was the reoccurrence of the phrase "*A Juventude é a seiva da Nação*" (The youth is the sap of the Nation), which became almost mandatory for any OJM meeting.⁸² "In the construction of a socialist society," Central Committee member José Ganâncio's speech at the opening of the '1st Provincial Course for Youth Activists' in Maputo, remarked: "the Youth should assume the most difficult tasks, since they are the *seiva da nação*, the seedbed from which we draw the future cadres of our Revolution - as President Machel teaches us."⁸³ Or upon their return from the provincial-level seminar in Xai-Xai, Gaza, a brigade leader met with his home constituency to relay the events. Reporting on the meeting, Notícias journalists observed: "the provincial head of this democratic mass organisation said that unlike the colonial youth who absorbed and fed the decadent vices of colonialism-fascism, the revolutionary youth of Mozambique are the vanguard of our revolution because, as has already been defined, they are the *Seiva da Nação*."⁸⁴

What these examples show is that the OJM representatives had mastered the language of the state in relation to youth. This is a skill that Alexej Yurchak has also observed among mid-level bureaucrats in the Soviet Union and called 'ideological literacy.' For the producers of authoritative discourse, the speechwriters, journalists and party cadres, "'ideological literacy' came to be treated [...] as the technical skill of reproducing the precise passage and structures of that language in one's

⁸¹ "Juventude Moçambicana Solidariza-se," 3.

⁸² See also the banner behind Machel in the photo taken on December 15th, 1976, chapter three.

⁸³ "Juventude deve engajar-se," 1.

⁸⁴ "Brigadas da OJM regressam," 3.

texts and speeches, paying particular attention to the linguistic form.”⁸⁵ In the Soviet Union, ideological literacy was the consequence of Stalin’s passing. Prior to his death, Yurchak argues, Stalin had long acted as the master of language, himself external to discourse and “presented as possessor of the knowledge of the rule.”⁸⁶ The Soviet state’s authoritative discourse rested on Stalin’s authority and bureaucrats, speech writers and state officials oriented the production of authoritative discourse around him. Following Stalin’s death, the Soviet discursive regime compensated for the loss of the external editor by increasingly ‘normalizing’ itself:

The party secretaries and [Central Committee] speechwriters could only look to one another’s texts to normalize their own. As a result, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, this discourse experienced progressive normalization, with the different texts written in it sounding increasingly like excerpts from one text.⁸⁷

The consequence was the emergence of the same kind of homogeneity among different texts within the authoritative discourse that we saw emerging during the foundation campaign of the OJM. Like in socialist Mozambique, the authors who wrote in the official canon attributed specific ideas no longer to any author or moment, but presented them as always already asserted, and commonly known.⁸⁸ This kind of homogenous discourse relied not only on the kinds of modifiers necessary to establish its belonging to the discursive repertoire of the authoritative discourse, but limited itself only to those,⁸⁹ so much so that texts often included “a precise or near-precise citation of various language ‘blocks’ from one text to the next.”⁹⁰

One could argue here that the kind of normalization Yurchak observes after Stalin’s death in the Soviet Union was already under way during the early days of the socialist era in Mozambique. While

⁸⁵ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 48.

⁸⁶ Lefort 1986, 212-14 and Bhabha 1990, 298 cited in Yurchak, 40.

⁸⁷ Yurchak, 47.

⁸⁸ Yurchak, 61.

⁸⁹ Yurchak, 66.

⁹⁰ Yurchak, 63.

Soviet bureaucrats sought to become ideologically literate as a way of ‘ensuring’ that utterances of new ideas did not deviate from the script that constituted the authoritative discourse when the external editor (Stalin) was no longer around to correct and edit this script, if need be, in the OJM, ‘ideological literacy’ seems to have functioned as an end in itself. As I showed in the introduction, Frelimo valued language as a tool for revolutionary social engineering, especially in the absence of a powerful state or other tools commonly used for producing ‘ideological unity.’ On several occasions, Machel emphasised that unity in vision and thinking went hand in hand with language. During the Central Committees 8th session, for example, Machel argued that:

By working collectively, studying and synthesising our experiences collectively [...] we were able to acquire a common vision, common thinking, a common language.⁹¹

Seen from this perspective, the trainings run by the Secretariado Nacional in the second round of the work plan appear as structured ways of creating an organizational structure that valued ideological unity in relation to common thinking, as much as common language. Ensuring that OJM members acquired ‘ideological literacy,’ from this perspective, was a necessary component to enable them to speak in the common language that marked Mozambicans’ ‘ideological unity.’ Reproducing authoritative discourse became a marker of belonging to the national unit, and its revolutionary vanguard. Like Yurchak argued for the late Soviet Union, adhering to authoritative discourse in form became an important end in itself, except that in Mozambique this end was not upholding a fragile system build on a shared authoritative discourse, but to fundamentally reshape how Mozambicans spoke and in Frelimo’s imagination, consequently thought about youth.

⁹¹ Samora Machel, *Ofensiva Política e Organizacional Generalizada na Frente da Produção (Discurso do Presidente Samora Machel no acto de encerramento da 8ª Sessão do Comité Central)*, DOC. Inf: CDI.B.Mocamb. (40) 08 November 1976, 56, accessed via MHN.

“We prepare actively and in an organized fashion the 1st Conference of Mozambican Youth!”

Trainings in ideological literacy ran through the entirety of the OJM’s hierarchy. Following their initial training, the newly elected provincial and district-level OJM representatives attended district-level conferences that took place between September 15th and October 23rd, 1976,⁹² and provincial-level conferences⁹³ in the subsequent months. These conferences brought together around 50-150 representatives from the newly formed OJM secretariats. They elaborated and approved reports (*relatórios*) to be presented at the next higher level conference, and elected representatives to be sent to these next level conferences.⁹⁴ Like the provincial-level representatives, the delegates spent multiple days in ‘study groups’ centred on the three core texts noted above, and oriented by the previously trained higher-ranking functionaries. In this manner, they were encouraged to replicate their training down the ranks. All over the country and across the different levels, OJM structures “stud[ie]d deeply and collectively the documents to be submitted to the 1st conference.”⁹⁵

⁹² “Mensagem da O.J.M.,” *Jornal Notícias*, September 14, 1977, 6; *Notícias* reported on such conferences taking place in Manjacaze, Gaza (announced for 26-28.09.1977), Dondo in Sofala “Dondo e Chokwé: Conferencias Distritais da OJM em Preparação,” *Jornal Notícias*, September 22, 1977, 3; Beira in Sofala “O.J.M.: Conferencias Distritais Decorrem em Sofala,” *Jornal Notícias*, September 30, 1977, 3; Chockwé in Gaza (announced for 04.10.-06.10). “Conferencia Distrital da OJM Inicial Trabalhos em Chokwé,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 12, 1977, 5; in Cabo Delgado in the districts Pemba, Chiure, Ibo and Quissanga “O.J.M. Conferencias Distritais em Cabo Delgado,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 12, 1977, 5b; Maputo “Conferencia da OJM no distrito de Maputo,” 6; Aramba in Niassa “Niassa: Conferencia da OJM no Distrito da Amaramba,” 3; Marracuene District with 63 delegates “Juventude de Marracuene Realizou Conferencias,” 3; Maputo District including Matola, Matatuine, Magude, Namacha “Conferências da O.J.M. em Distritos de Maputo,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 22, 1977, 2; Attendance varied between 50 and 150 delegates.

⁹³ Inhambane “Juventude dá Início a conferências provinciais,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 9, 1977, 8; Bilene in Gaza, with 130 participants from 10 districts “Juventude dá Início a conferências provinciais,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 9, 1977, 8; Sofala Province “Edificação do Socialismo está confiada á Juventude: João M. Simango na abertura da conferencia provincial de Sofala da OJM,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 23, 1977, 3.

⁹⁴ An instructory document circulated by the Secretariado Nacional makes reference to *relatórios*, see “Conferencias Distritais da Organização da Juventude,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 2, 1977, 3, other examples include conference in Bilene in Gaza Province “Juventude dá Início a conferências provinciais,” 8, where *Notícias* reported of activities to “prepare and approve the report to be presented at the Provincial Conference of Mozambican Youth” [*elaborar e aprovar o relatório a apresentar na Conferencia Provincial da Juventude mocambicana*]

⁹⁵ “Preparemos ativamente.”

Through these study sessions, the normalization of the OJM's discourse on youth trickled down the organization's layers. But the OJM also ran frequent campaigns that aimed at reaching beyond the organization and draw in 'ordinary' young Mozambicans. One example of this is the 'Campaign to support the creation of the OJM' that Frelimo ran, through *Notícias*, just several weeks after the completion of the trainings. One of the texts that the delegates had studied during the training sessions issued a new *palavra de ordem*: "We prepare actively and in an organized fashion the 1st Conference of Mozambican youth!" as guidance to be "assumed and materialized in the concrete circumstances that each youth finds him- or herself in,"⁹⁶ namely factories, firms, communal villages, schools or public office. The text called on all OJM structures to support culturally the 1st conference "by creating and disseminating songs, poems, paintings and drawings, sculptures, games, dances and theatre pieces."⁹⁷

In enthusiastic compliance, young people sent a range of creative outputs to the *Notícias* offices that filled the newspaper's pages over the subsequent weeks. Poems, such as the following authored by Sara Tristeza Manuel, were particularly popular among *Notícias'* young readers:⁹⁸

O *Juventude* moçambicana avante!/ Desperta e surge em teu valor/ Estuda,
trabalha, luta e canta/ Constrói assim a tua Pátria com amor.

É tua esta Pátria/ Deves honorá-la sempre/ Deves torná-la-grande/ E mais
independente.

Se um dia for preciso/ Dar teu sangue por ela/ Será tua própria honra/ Das
graças a mais bela.

⁹⁶ "Preparemos ativa."

⁹⁷ "Preparemos ativa."

⁹⁸ See for example: Alfons Potmos Culhe, "Juventude," *Jornal Notícias*, July 4, 1977, 2; Farida Cassamo, "Jovens," *Jornal Notícias*, October 3, 1977, 2; Paz Jacó, "Eu Jovem estou alegre," *Jornal Notícias*, October 17, 1977, 2.

O *Juventude* moçambicana avante!/ Desperta e surge em teu valor/ Estuda,
trabalha, luta e canta/Constrói assim a tua Pátria com amor.⁹⁹

These poems not only show an uptake of the OJM's suggestions, but like the provincial-level speeches, a degree of 'ideological literacy.' Like Machel, and like the trained provincial representatives, these young readers of *Notícias* echo in their poetry the tropes central to Frelimo's authoritative discourse on youth: The youth who builds the nation, who makes sacrifices, like the heroes of the liberation struggle did, who will bring greatness to Mozambique by consolidating its independence. ('constructing the Nation,' 'sacrifice'). Or Farida Cassamo's poem titled 'Jovens':

Brother youth/Why do you let yourselves be left behind? /Let's go, let's go
forward./Let's go, brothers and sisters, to rebuild our country/ Mozambique
needs us, the youth/ Let's stand upright/ Let's face our enemies [...]¹⁰⁰

As part of the call to support the foundation of the OJM, *Notícias* also published a call for suggestions for the OJM's hymn and emblem on October 6th, 1977, upon which young people also began sending in drawings and texts to *Notícias*. Like the poems, these texts show a remarkable degree of ideological literacy. Coming from the district of Nakala, for example, a group of young people suggested the following text for the OJM's hymn:

I: The Mozambican youth/ Guided by FRELIMO/ Will grow up free of trace/
Defend the Revolution/ II: By the bourgeoisie/ youth was considered childish/
With FRELIMO it will assume/ National responsibility/ III: With arms in
hand/ It will fight and fight/ Against capitalist exploitation/ It will consolidate
the people's achievements¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ "O Mozambican youth, onwards!/ Wake up and realise your worth/ Study, work, fight and sing/ Build your homeland with love // This homeland is yours/ You must always honour it/ You must make it great/ And more independent // If one day you have to/ Give your blood for her/ It will be your honour/ The most beautiful of graces // O Mozambican youth, onwards!/ Wake up and realise your worth/ Study, work, fight and sing/Build your homeland with love." Sara Tristeza Manuel, "Juventude, Avante!"

¹⁰⁰ Farida Cassamo, "Jovens," 2.

¹⁰¹ "Contribuições para Hino e Emblema da O.J.M.," *Jornal Notícias*, November 11, 1977, 4a.

Echoing tropes and modifiers ('consolidating,' 'defending,' 'fighting for' the revolution) of the authoritative discourse, young people near and far had learned to speak, if not to think, about youth in a new, revolutionary manner.

As Yurchak notes, authoritative discourse was not limited to textual forms. Visually too, the authors of the drawings show a degree of homogeneity that suggests a replication of the visual discourse present at the meetings and emanating from Machel. On various occasions, Machel spoke about the heroic youth of the liberation struggle, "book in one hand, gun in the other,"¹⁰² or "book in one hand and hoe in the other." Or, describing a May 1st parade, for example, Machel commented: "There were the youths, the lifeblood of the nation, the future of our people, the future of our Republic. There were the students with their joy and their book. The youths and the students, bearing on their faces the joy and the certainty of victory."¹⁰³ Reflecting this discourse, several of the drawings that young people submitted to *Notícias* as suggestions for the OJM's emblem combined these visual tropes:



Figure 10: "Contribuições para o emblema e bino da O.J.M.," *Jornal Notícias*, November 15, 1977, 2.

¹⁰² "Intervenção do Presidente Samora Machel ao ser concordado com medalha de ouro Artur Becker," *Jornal Notícias*, Maputo, December 6, 1980.

¹⁰³ "Intervenção do Presidente."

Seeing beyond the OJM's foundation as a process of establishing authoritarian structures through which to enforce campaigns, directives and discipline, and paying close attention to the foundation campaigns actual unfolding, we can thus start to understand another role that the OJM played during Mozambique's socialist era, that has so far gone unnoticed by the historiography. This role, I have shown here, related to the dissemination, normalization and literacy in authoritarian discourse, a process that had much wider effects than the reach that the OJM was ever able to establish only through its structures.

Conclusion

This chapter started with the observation that from 1976 onwards, Mozambicans, young and old, started leaving textual traces in the daily newspaper *Notícias* that suggested not only a familiarity with the new, revolutionary discourse about youth, but an ability to reproduce it and use it to articulate concerns, hopes and expectations of young people. Over the course of the chapter, I have suggested that this 'ideological literacy' was not just an appearance created by the newspaper's editors, but in part the result of the way the foundation of the OJM unfolded.

Aimed at creating 'ideological unity' among the youthful 'masses,' the foundation process had two effects. First, the Secretariado Nacional 'unified' youth in very practical ways. Where youth organizations of any kind existed, the Secretariado Nacional brought them under its control either voluntarily or involuntarily. Where no previous organizational structures existed, the Secretariado Nacional created hierarchical structures from the level of the province, down to the level of the neighbourhood or school and workplace cell. Second, the creation of the OJM also resulted in a strategic attempt at creating unity in thinking, or rather, speaking about youth. Having created the OJM's structures and selected or coordinated the election of higher-level representatives, the Secretariado Nacional organized 'trainings' and seminars. During these sessions, the newly elected

OJM representatives not only familiarized themselves with the core texts that constituted Frelimo's state-socialist script on youth, importantly Samora Machel's December 15th speech, but also 'studied' them with a view to being able to 'guide' (*orientar*) conferences with lower-level OJM delegates in the future. Such conferences usually entailed shared organizational practices, such as elections, but more importantly, were always framed by speeches and resulted in resolutions. As the remarkable homogeneity of speeches given by provincial-level, trained OJM representatives during subsequent events show, the trainings had the desired effect in that their participants mastered the craft of speaking in the language of the Frelimo state, what Yurchak has called achieving 'ideological literacy.' High-level OJM functionaries were not the only ones who achieved a degree of ideological literacy as a result of the foundation of the OJM. Trainings trickled down through the organization's hierarchy, and even beyond the OJM young people engaged in activities that actively encouraged them to master the reproduction of Frelimo's authoritative discourse about youth. During a campaign to support the OJM's 1st conference, young *Notícias* readers submitted poems, hymns and emblem drawings to the daily newspaper that all echoed the official canon on youth.

Turning towards these young people, who joined the official canon not just in writing, but in singing, dancing and performing, the next chapter takes this study's analysis from the purely discursive level to the level of embodied practices, experiences and subjectivities. One of the three foundational texts that OJM members studied suggested activities to financially support the foundational conference. It noted: "As a mass democratic organization whose activities will benefit primarily us youth, it is natural and necessary that the principal support of the organization comes from us."¹⁰⁴ To this end, the document listed specific short and long-term activities that youth were

¹⁰⁴ "Secretariado Nacional da OJM lança campanha de recolha de fundos," *Jornal Notícias*, October 5, 1977, 1.

encouraged to engage in, including the organization of cultural and sporting festivals, movie screenings (“where our personality is affirmed”), cultivating and selling vegetables or small animals, and one-off initiatives such as collecting and selling paper for recycling, helping with the cashew harvest, finding small jobs in factories or construction works and donating the salaries to the OJM.¹⁰⁵ With logistical support and encouragement from various other party organizations, many local OJMs formed “multipurpose cultural and sports groups,”¹⁰⁶ who went on to perform ‘regional dance,’¹⁰⁷ and gymnastics in festivals, and organized football games “in support of the OJM conference.”¹⁰⁸ Others continued to engage in voluntary work, organizing neighbourhood clean-ups¹⁰⁹ (in most neighbourhoods at least in Maputo, these routinely took place on Saturdays) or brigade work in communal farms, local factories or with the police.¹¹⁰ In a discussion of young people’s experiences of so-called ‘cultural activities,’ I next explore how Frelimo’s revolutionary youth discourse became an embodied and emotional experience for young performers.

¹⁰⁵ “Secretariado Nacional da OJM lança,” 1.

¹⁰⁶ “Seminário da OJM no Distrito de Maputo,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 14, 1977, 1.

¹⁰⁷ On 13.02.1977 the “Festival da Juventude” took place in Maputo’s largest arena, the Estádio da Machava. According to the announcement in *Notícias*, it was meant to bring together 7 000 students (primary and secondary from urban and suburban neighbourhoods of the capital. “Em apoio ao 3o Congresso: Festival da Juventude,” *Jornal Notícias*, February 4, 1977, 10, in the “Festival Cultural de Apoio ao III Congresso on 28-29.9.1977 youth groups performed dances: “Grupos representativos dos mercados de Mazambane apresentando ... Makwayela da OMM e Makwayela da Juventude.” “Delegação Pan-Africano da Juventude chegou ontem a Maputo,” *Jornal Notícias*, January 8, 1977, 3.

¹⁰⁸ See for example: “Depois de Amanha, na Machava: Partida de Futebol entre Maputo e Sofala para apoio a Juventude Mocambicana,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 4, 1977, 6; “Torneios Desportivos de Apoio a 1a Conferencia da O.J.M.,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 9, 1977, 5; “Em apoio á Conferencia da O.J.M.: Léguas da Juventude tem lugar esta tarde,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 8, 1977, 5.

¹⁰⁹ See for example in Maputo: “Centenas de Pessoas limpam valas no subúrbios de Maputo Iniciativa da OJM,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 18, 1976, 3.

¹¹⁰ For example in Inhambane: “Inhambane: Juventude trabalha em machamba comunal,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 31, 1977, 3.

5. Performing the Revolution

Introduction

Sitting with me among dusty piles of documents, the archivist Maria Alegria Cuane one day broke out into a song: “*E nekutikutira, malanga ni pera, Josina ni pera, Samora ni pera, e nekutikutira.*”¹ In the winter months of 2022, I went to the archive daily and worked alongside Maria Alegria. On many of these long afternoons, we would speak about my research, and she would share her memories of growing up during the early independence years. Some of her favourite memories were the songs she used to sing in the choral group run by her local branch of Frelimo’s youth organisation, the Organização da Juventude Moçambicana (OJM). She laughed at the memory:

I don’t know what I was saying in that song, but I want to think that the song was elevating President Samora [Machel] and [his combatant wife] Josina Machel, alongside some of the other names that were mentioned. They mentioned Nyerere, [and] they mentioned Kaunda in that song.²

A long-time party member, Maria Alegria was only eight years old when Frelimo came to Maputo. Her father soon became the neighbourhood’s party *secretário* (local party cell leadership position), her older brothers joined the party’s Grupos Dinamizadores (GDs), and her mother a member of

¹ Maria Alegria Cuane, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, May 26, 2022.

² Maria Alegria Cuane, interview.

Frelimo's women's organisation, the Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (OMM). At age 10, it seemed natural for Maria Alegria to get involved in the OJM, which she remembers most vividly through so-called *actividades culturais* (cultural activities):

When I entered the OJM in 1977 [...] I was part of the cultural activities, I was [...] part of a dance group where we danced Chingomana. Chingomana is a dance that is danced mostly in the province of Gaza, where I am from, and my parents are from.³

By 1978, cultural activities had become one of the OJM's most widespread and popular initiatives. Organised in collaboration with schools and the Ministry of Education (MEC), regular 'youth festivals' and 'cultural festivals,' held in support of political events, brought together thousands of young people to perform dances, songs, gymnastics, and theatre plays. Representing the 'revolutionary youth of Mozambique,' they attended rallies, commemorative events or receptions of foreign presidents, to present "their Chingomane" or "the Makwaela of the Youth."⁴ Internationally, youth groups represented Mozambique's 'cultural heritage' through dance performances at the World Festivals for Students and Youth or the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC),⁵ and youth theatre groups 'explained' the "meaning of independence"⁶ to rural, illiterate populations. Through songs, dances and plays, members of the independence generation came to 'perform the revolution,'⁷ and – as we will see – also their duties as revolutionary youth.

³ Maria Alegria Cuane, interview.

⁴ "Festival Cultural de Apoio ao III Congresso," *Jornal Notícias*, January 8, 1977, 3.

⁵ "XI Festival - Delegação Moçambicana encontra-se já em Cuba," *Jornal Notícias*, July 22, 1978, 1; "Delegação moçambicana ao XI Festival marcou honrosa presença cultural," *Jornal Notícias*, August 6, 1978, 1; "Sucesso na FESTAC-77 do Grupo Cultural Moçambicano," *Jornal Notícias*, January 25, 1977, 1.

⁶ Carla Mabote, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 29, 2022.

⁷ The concept of 'performing' is usually associated with Judith Butler, especially in relation to discourse. While I engage with discourse and its ability to enable experiences and subjectivities, I use the term performance in the more literal sense of presenting dance, song or play in front of an audience. In her study of Swahili music performances, Kelly Askew has adopted a similar lens through which she coined the term "performing the nation." While her focus

This chapter takes us further along the OJM's chronology and deeper into exploring young people's encounters with authoritative discourse through an investigation into state-organized cultural activities. Building on the last chapter, it points to another dimension through which the OJM 'catalysed' Frelimo's authoritative discourse among the independent generation. On the one hand, the song lyrics, dance performance aesthetics, and play dialogues represented forms of sonic, visual, and iterated authoritative discourse themselves. Youth were very literally singing, dancing and playing the heroes of the liberation struggle. In this sense, it was an encounter with cultural pedagogy, at the heart of which stood the skill to not only speak but also sing, dance and play in the tunes of Frelimo's authoritative discourse. On the other hand, they promoted another kind of 'ideological literacy' among their participants. The practice of cultural activities was integrated – through the OJM and the MEC – into a system that worked through authority figures giving *orientações* ('guidance') and *explicações* (explanations).

In addition, this chapter brings our understanding of authoritative discourse from the discursive and organizational level further down, to the more nuanced and messier realms of practice and experience. Writing about the social life of authoritative discourse among Komsomol cadres in the Soviet Union, Alexej Yurchak noted that young people balanced performative and constative meanings of reproducing the rituals through which authoritative discourse operated. Through an exploration of the independence generation's memories of song, dance, and theatre in socialist-era Mozambique, this chapter asks what kinds of encounters the medium of culture⁸ enabled with

is on the social relations constituted through performance between audience and performer, through which power, politics and the meaning of the nation were contested and negotiated, my interest here lies with the performers themselves, and the opportunities and constraints that performing in the context of cultural activities provided to them, see: Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 14.

⁸ Like 'performance,' 'culture' is a heavily loaded theoretical concept. I use it here only in reference to its endemic meaning for Mozambicans during the socialist era, where it was shaped by Frelimo's discourse on cultural policy. This discourse, and its relevance in relation to youth, will be explored in full in the next section.

Frelimo's authoritative discourse for members of this particular generation. Seen from the perspectives of their everyday lives, I argue that young people engaged in cultural activities primarily out of a sense of obligation towards parents and party authorities, but also felt genuine excitement for the kinds of things cultural activities enabled them to experience. Among these experiences were, for example, opportunities to travel beyond their immediate neighbourhood, but also opportunities to relate to Frelimo's authoritative discourse in embodied and emotional ways. Practising to perfect their performances of Mozambique's 'cultural heritage,' some participants felt they were paying due service to Machel's call on the youth to build the nation. For those young men and women who cared about living up to the expectations and ideals of the revolutionary youth, cultural performances enabled them to physically be 'at the front lines' of revolutionary progress. As one former participant exclaimed: "I *was* a flower of Machel!" Standing in the front row at a rally, in reach of a foreign president's hand, these performers remembered that in these instances "being a youth was like being the star of the government."⁹

Beyond the immediate question of young people's encounters with Frelimo's revolutionary discourses about youth, the discussion in this chapter also contributes new insights to our understanding of socialist-era cultural politics. Like the mass democratic organizations, Frelimo's cultural politics have received the most scholarly attention in relation to their role in excluding widespread and highly meaningful forms of dance, song, and play that the party deemed 'traditional' or 'obscurantist' from the revolutionary nation.¹⁰ The party held deep discontent for cultural

⁹ Mónica Mucavel, interview by Valdo Congolo, Maputo 11 October 2022.

¹⁰ Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence*, 1st ed. (Ohio University Press, 1997), 85–87; Paolo Israel, *In Step with the Times: Mapiko Masquerades of Mozambique* (Ohio University Press, 2014); Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, *Violent Becomings: State Formation, Sociality, and Power in Mozambique*, vol. 4 (Berghahn Books, 2016); Éric Morier-Genoud, Michel Cahen, and Domingos Manuel do Rosário, eds., *The War within: New Perspectives on the Civil War in Mozambique, 1976-1992* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2018); Lars Buur and Helene Maria Kyed, *State Recognition of Traditional Authority in Mozambique: The Nexus of Community Representation and State Assistance*, vol. 28 (Nordic Africa Institute, 2005).

traditions that held spiritual meanings, particularly initiation rituals and *lobolo* (bridewealth). Frelimo shunned these cultural practices as ‘obscurantist’ and ‘superstitious,’ designed to bring youth and women under the oppressive control of ‘traditional’ authorities and actively repressed them where it could.¹¹ In this context, Frelimo’s cultural politics thus assumed exclusionary, authoritarian, and violent roles of socialist one-party rule.

While these violent dimensions are undeniable and important to understanding socialist-era politics, which I will explore in more detail in the next chapter, this chapter invites the scholarly community to consider a different kind of experience, that Frelimo’s cultural policy made possible, certainly, among the children of Maputo’s educated, black urbanities, who attended public schools and were engaged in neighbourhood party activities. As scholars of state-organized ‘revolutionary fun’ have noted in other contexts, youth-centred cultural activities could also produce considerable ‘resonance’ and ‘integrative powers.’¹² Through a close investigation of Soviet cultural clubs, Gleb Tsipursky argued, for example, that a full understanding of young Soviets’ experiences of the socialist everyday needs to not only consider how they used their room for agency to rebel and resist but also to ‘comply.’ Much engagement with the Soviet state’s organized cultural activities can be understood through this lens. While Soviet youth used their ‘compliant agency’ to “refashion

¹¹ See for example the following articles in *Notícias*: “Gratificação ou reforma do lobolo: Jovens são as principais vítimas,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 26, 1977, 3; “Os ritos de iniciação na província da Zambézia,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 3, 1978, 2; “O lobolo já não vale nada’ - lamentam-se velhos de Mapulanguene,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 10, 1978, 2; “Lobolo tradição reacionária que impede a libertação da mulher,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 11, 1978, 3. “Combater o lobolo até a sua eliminação,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 24, 1978, 3; “Gratificação A Nova Roupagem que o Lobolo Agora 'Vestiu',” *Jornal Notícias*, July 27, 1978, 3.

¹² Scholars of organised youth elsewhere have used the lens of ‘integration’ to understand how democratically meaningless bureaucratic rituals created meaningful experiences for the individuals who participated in them, see: Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 95; The use of ‘integration’ originates in the study of Soviet bureaucracies: J. Arch Getty, ‘Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933–38’, *The Russian Review* 58, no. 1 (1999): 49–70; Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 21-22; Alexi Kojevnikov, ‘Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy circa 1948’, *The Russian Review* 57, no. 1 (1998): 25–52; Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices*, 1999.

the nature and meanings of club cultural offerings to fit their own individual interests,”¹³ the final section of this chapter shows that for young Mozambicans, compliant agency took the form of policing female sexuality in the context of cultural groups’ international travels.

This chapter proceeds in three sections. The first section locates the origins of the OJM’s involvement in cultural activities and the formation of *grupos culturais polivalentes* (polyvalent cultural groups) in Frelimo’s anxiety about the dangers of corruption that supposedly lurked in ‘unstructured leisure time.’ This section shows that the kinds of cultural activities these groups promoted were deeply steeped in Frelimo’s authoritative discourse and cultural pedagogy. The second section then explores former participants’ memories of these activities focusing on how they encountered Frelimo’s authoritative discourse in their everyday lives. The final section delves into an oral history account of two young women who attended the World Festival for Students and Youth in Havana in 1978, to explore how young Mozambicans used their ‘conformist agency.’

Cultural Activities as Encounters with Authoritative Discourse

The integration of cultural activities in Frelimo’s youth politics stemmed from a deep-seated anxiety about a lack of control over young people’s leisure time. Shortly before the OJM’s founding conference, on November 4th, 1977, the partisan newspaper *Notícias* published an article titled “Leisure time: Everyone’s concern, especially of the Youth.”¹⁴ The ‘youth’ quoted in the article supposedly represented youth in ‘the different classes’ of urban society: the ‘worker youth,’ the ‘student youth,’ as well as ‘young professors.’ They all voiced their preoccupation with the importance of collective, organised activities for their peers: “Within their organisation, all young

¹³ Gleb Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun: Youth, Consumption, and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1945-1970*, Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), 9.

¹⁴ “Tempos livres: Preocupação de Todos e Principalmente da Juventude,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 4, 1977, 5.

people should find collective ways to spend their free time,”¹⁵ João Bambo, a young clerk, told *Notícias*. “This would start with a broad, collective discussion that would allow young people to organise.”¹⁶ Ester Maria Mabote, a young factory worker, who told *Notícias* that she would like to join the OJM, added: “I’d like youth to organise excursions, outings, and events with popular music. It would be a good way to spend our time. We’d get to know each other better and develop our culture at the same time.”¹⁷

As we saw in the previous chapter, soon after the December 15th speech, young people began speaking the language of the revolutionary youth and reproducing Frelimo’s authoritative discourse on youth. This discourse included a preoccupation with drinking, partying, and sexual promiscuity. In the context of this debate, these dangers of moral corruption were now seen to dwell in unstructured free time. In the same article, a young schoolteacher called Francisco Antonio Chirindza, warned:

Young people should organise themselves, have a daily, weekly or monthly programme with specific political themes. They should discuss and draw conclusions, but in an organised way. Living disorganised, without defined programmes, they will easily be taken in by vices and a futile life.¹⁸

According to *Notícias* – and the Frelimo leadership more broadly – urban youth, if left to their own devices, would become victims to colonial-imperial attempts to ‘deviate,’ corrupt, and alienate them from the revolution. As one of *Notícias* famous comics of Xiconhoca (a caricature of the internal enemy) illustrated, Frelimo imagined the colonial-imperial agent to be constantly present, waiting

¹⁵ “Tempos livres,” 5.

¹⁶ “Tempos livres,” 5.

¹⁷ “Tempos livres,” 5.

¹⁸ “Tempos livres,” 5.

to ‘spoil the revolutionary crop’ by swaying the youth from its rightful, revolutionary path (see image below).

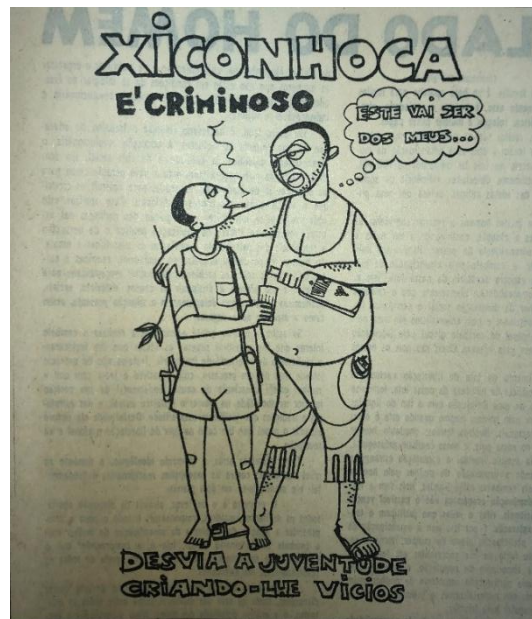


Figure 11: Caption: “Xiconhoca is a criminal, he brings the Youth off the right path (deviates), making them addicts.” In: *Jornal Notícias*, October 24, 1976, 3.

In part, Frelimo responded to this anxiety about leisure time with a heavy hand. Members of the independence generation remember that young people’s (nightly) movement through the city was restricted by movement passes, Frelimo militants were known to harass unmarried lovers, and misbehaving youngsters were sent to rehabilitation camps.¹⁹ Such measures against young people were firmly embedded in Frelimo’s wider campaigns to purify the cities from the moral degradation that it saw as a legacy of Portuguese colonial culture. Nightlife, dress, alcohol, and ‘sexual corruption’ were themes that Machel repeatedly, almost obsessively, returned to during the early

¹⁹ See for example: Francisco Moiane, interview; Carla Mabote, interview; Maria Alegria, interview; Rasmi Laxmane, interview by Michael Jorge Juma, Maputo, July 31, 2022; Amélia Lemos, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 22, 2022.

years of independence (though not just in relation to youth).²⁰ As soon as Frelimo came into the cities, they initiated a series of urban clean-up campaigns during which militants sent alleged prostitutes, anti-socials – and later the unemployed – for political re-education.²¹ Frelimo also attempted to curb the influence of Western cinema culture, by nationalising several cinemas and replacing American and Portuguese films with films produced in the liberation struggle. Between 1975 and 1979, roughly 75% of the films shown in Mozambique were produced in the USSR, Bulgaria, East Germany, Yugoslavia, and Cuba.²²

While Frelimo’s anxieties about the morality of dress, music, and sexual relations paralleled campaigns against ‘indecentry’ by revolutionary regimes across the continent,²³ Frelimo, unlike many other regimes, did not primarily involve its (party) youth as an arm of its police force.²⁴ Rather, as former Secretary General Zacarias Kupela noted after our interview in 2022, the Frelimo leadership envisioned the OJM’s primary role as preventing moral degradation among the youth through pedagogical means, albeit against the constant background of the threat of violent policing.²⁵ During its first conference, Machel had noted:

To destroy capitalism is also to destroy its control over leisure time, over the values that dominated that leisure time. We must restore the concept of

²⁰ Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence*, 1st ed. (Ohio University Press, 1997), 66. The authors point to an ‘astonishing harangue on prostitution’ during a public rally in 1982.

²¹ see Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution’.

²² Aaron Montoya, ‘Performing Citizens and Subjects: Dance and Resistance in Twenty-First Century Mozambique’ (PhD Diss., Santa Cruz, United States, University of California, 2016), 52.

²³ TANU’s 1968 Operation Vijana (Operation Youth), for example, aimed at “defending Tanzania’s culture” by targeting “miniskirts, wigs, women’s bleaches, and tight male trousers,” and was not only “planned and designed by the [TANU Youth League (TYL)], but also enforced by mostly male TYL members.” See: Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar Es Salaam* (Duke University Press, 2011), 60, f. 78. Similarly, the Ghana Young Pioneers were known across Ghana as ‘a small police,’ see: Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*, 106–7.

²⁴ This does not mean, the OJM did not have its part to play in the wider policing regime. According to a former member of the OJM’s Preparatory National Secretariat, the party also relied on the OJM for intelligence and denunciations, see: José Mateus Kathupa, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel (video call), Maputo/Moscow, June 21, 2022. The OJM also disciplined their members and young people beyond their organisation during the weekly meetings’ “critique and self-critique” practices which were handled by the organisation’s Secretariat for Social Affairs, see: José Mateus Kathupa, interview; “Reunião da Juventude no Jardim,” *Jornal Notícias*, March 24, 1976, 3.

²⁵ Zacarias Kupela, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, July 03, 2022.

entertainment to its true human essence [...] it's not enough to ban these recreational activities. That creates a vacuum and doesn't resolve the underlying issue: our youth need to have fun.²⁶

The participants of the OJM's first conference mandated the OJM to "harmoniously combin[e] the political and ideological preparation of youth with the fulfilment of young people's own desire to have fun and spend their free time in an enjoyable way."²⁷ Complementing the bans and policing campaigns, Machel suggested that the OJM should revolutionize entertainment and "study how to transform these activities by giving them new content."²⁸ In this spirit, the resolution on "Culture, Sport and Recreation," adopted at the first conference, mandated:

OJM structures at all levels should draw up cultural development plans, understanding culture in its multiple aspects of dance, singing, theatre, poetry, plastic arts and the valorisation and preservation of moments and places of historical importance, [...] the OJM structures should energise the most diverse forms of recreation with healthy content. [Furthermore,] they should set up study groups to analyse how to recover the positive aspects of the forms of recreation that existed in the old society.²⁹

How exactly one was to go about this recovery and transformation, however, was utterly unclear, at least to the attendants of the OJM's first conference. It was the question of what constituted 'authentic' Mozambican culture that puzzled the delegates most. The ensuing debates over this question pitted a moderate faction – tolerant of various cultural forms, including music genres and dances practised in the bars and alleys of colonial Maputo's red-light districts – against a faction that argued that only a narrowly defined, cultural repertoire rooted in the cultural pedagogy of the Liberation Struggle would be appropriate revolutionary fun.³⁰ The discussion got so heated, that it

²⁶ Secretariado Nacional da OJM, "Resolução sobre a Cultura, Desporto e Recreação," in: *Organizar da Juventude é Consolidar a Revolução: Documentos da I Conferência da Juventude Moçambicana*, October, 1980, accessed via MHN, 61.

²⁷ "Resolução sobre a Cultura, Desporto e Recreação."

²⁸ "Resolução sobre a Cultura, Desporto e Recreação."

²⁹ "Programa da O.J.M.," *Jornal Notícias*, December 18, 1977, 2.

³⁰ "Povo sem Cultura é Povo Sem História: Joaquim Chissano aos participantes da I Conferência da Juventude Mocambicana," *Jornal Notícias*, December 2, 1977, 3.

“provoked the intervention of Joaquim Chissano.”³¹ Interestingly, Chissano sided with the moderate faction, arguing that:

We need to take a good look at this, comrades. [...] Sometimes we destroy our cultural values by calling everything and anything corrupt and superstitious. For some people, for example, culture is just Makwaela and Chingomane and that’s the end of it. But what is culture anyway?³²

Chissano made a case for a careful reconsideration of the cultural heritage of the colonial era, distinguishing authentically Mozambican forms from colonial appropriations. He reasoned, for example, that the colonialists had corrupted Mozambicans’ national heritage by commercialising it. They had appropriated dances such as the Marrabenta, performing them in inauthentic ways with ‘modern’ instruments, such as the violin and guitar, rather than the instruments made from local materials, such as oil canisters. The ‘authentic’ Marrabenta, according to Chissano, was not danced in the bars and alleys of the red-light district, but on the streets of the residential neighbourhoods. Other forms, belonging to the ‘traditional’ realm, should be reformed rather than abandoned. “We now have a motivation that is not obscurantist, a motivation that can continue to take advantage of those [cultural] forms, but [give them a] new content.”³¹

Struggle Culture, Authoritative Discourse and Cultural Pedagogy

Proponents of a narrower definition of the authentically Mozambican cultural repertoire (“Makwaela and Chingomane and that’s the end of it”) argued only in favour of forms of recreation rooted in the liberation struggle. This genre – sometimes called struggle culture – consisted of songs, dances, and theatre pieces heavily steeped in Frelimo’s authoritative discourse. Most of these

³¹ “Povo sem Cultura é Povo Sem História,” *Jornal Notícias*. The report of the first OJM conference also noted the “profoundness with which the affirmations (afirmação) of the particular responsibilities of the youth in the field of culture were discussed,” see: “A Juventude Discutiu sua Vida e Futuro,” *Organizar a Juventude é Consolidar a Revolução*, Secretariado Nacional da OJM, 1980, 6.

³² “Povo sem Cultura é Povo Sem História: Joaquim Chissano aos participantes da I Conferencia da Juventude Mocambicana,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 2, 1977, 3.

cultural forms were written originally for political education in Frelimo's military training camps, most notably Nachingwea. Many of the *hymnos revolucionarios* (revolutionary anthems), for example, that became heavily popularized after independence, shared their origins in the military camps.³³ Similarly to the post-independence cultural groups, soldiers in Nachingwea performed weekly at Nachingwea's famous concerts.³⁴ As Paolo Israel has shown, through the Nachingwea concerts, songs, theatre pieces, and popular dances were "inscribed into ceremonials of power,"³⁵ whose "spatial and temporal organisation represented the new political order: the Leader's speech, the military parade, and on the podium the People's culture."³⁶

Struggle culture reproduced Frelimo's authoritative discourse on matters of national unity, the liberation heroes, or the revolution's enemies. Songs and dances had the explicit purpose of propagating Frelimo's core values and political messages among the soldiers and local populations. This pedagogic potency of the revolutionary hymns lay in their "construction of Frelimo as the sole political leader [...] reduc[ing] the complex history of the country's anti-colonial and nationalist struggles [...] to a narrative of a single, unified struggle."³⁷ Themes were the justness and inevitability of the liberation struggles' victory, its heroes and its enemies (internal and external),³⁸ themes that Frelimo continued to consider crucial for legitimizing also its post-independence claim

³³ Frelimo disseminated the revolutionary hymns after independence. Machel also declared the hymns a compulsory element of citizenship education. In 1967, he ordered the GDs to ensure that "every Mozambican can sing and understand the meaning of the national anthem, the Frelimo anthem, the anthem of the Mozambican woman, the anthem of the Youth and [the Frelimo anthem] 'Ife a Ana Frelimo,'" see: "Sede da Frelimo Divulga Orientações do Presidente Samora Moisés Machel," *Jornal Notícias*, July 13, 1976, 3. Some of the revolutionary hymns received a recent revival through CDs as part of Frelimo's election campaigns. On the origins of the revolutionary hymns, see: Meneses, 'Singing Struggles, Affirming Politics'.

³⁴ Paolo Israel, 'Utopia Live: Singing the Mozambican Struggle for National Liberation', *Kronos* 35 (2009): 30.

³⁵ According to Paolo Israel, the 'concerts' were "inspired by fascist Leninist spectacles, and not very different from their colonial counterparts," see: Israel, 30.

³⁶ Israel, 30.

³⁷ Meneses, 'Singing Struggles, Affirming Politics', 266.

³⁸ Paolo Israel, 'Utopia Live: Singing the Mozambican Struggle for National Liberation', *Kronos* 35 (2009): 98–141.

to political power. Struggle culture introduced a “teleological reading of history”³⁹ as linear progress towards modernity through revolution “where victory and socialism are synonymous and inevitable.”⁴⁰

Also sonically, the composers of the struggle culture underlined Frelimo’s wider discourse about the party’s protestant imagination of modernity and deep-seated anti-traditionalism. Struggle songs were mission-influenced, favouring four-part harmonies – typical of southern protestant mission singing – and regular rhythms over the pentatonic harmonic-melodic patterns – common in the musical traditions of the Northern regions around Nachingwea – and polyrhythmic compositions.⁴¹ When cultural influences of particular styles entered the struggle genre, they were ‘revolutionized’ and turned into national cultural heritage. As the participants of the 1970 Seminar on Education and Culture remarked: “Let’s make the creation of some become of all, men and women, young and old, from North and South, so that a new revolutionary and Mozambican culture may be born from all of us.”⁴² Frelimo’s composers adapted plays, dances, and songs to reflect the movement’s vision of the meaning of the struggle and the revolutionary future it was headed for. Stories were altered to reflect revolutionary messages and opened for participation across gender, linguistic, and religious groups.⁴³ As Frelimo’s journalists noted in *Mozambique Revolution*:

Culture plays an important role in the reinforcement of national unity. The dances which are performed today in the liberated regions are no longer dances of Cabo Delgado, or Tete or Niassa. The militants from other regions there bring their way of living, their dances, their songs, and from this a new culture, national in its form and revolutionary in content, is born.⁴⁴

³⁹ Israel, 35.

⁴⁰ Israel, 35.

⁴¹ Israel, 12.

⁴² *Documentos da FRELIMO/FRELIMO, II Conferência do DEC, Recomendações*, September 1970 cited in: Benedito Luís Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution - Urban Cleanup Campaigns, Reeducation Camps and Cities’ (PhD Diss., Michigan, University of Michigan, 2019), 267.

⁴³ Israel, ‘Utopia Live’, 30.

⁴⁴ “Shaping the Political line,” *Mozambique Revolution* 51, April-June 1972, 22, cited in Israel, 126–27.

In this manner songs, dances, and plays within the struggle genre sought to reimagine cultural heritage in a way that reaffirmed Frelimo's revolutionary ideology through a reproduction of authoritative discourse.

Like textual forms of dissemination of authoritative discourse, cultural forms reproduced Frelimo's messages but were also embedded into a wider system of cultural pedagogy at the heart of which stood the promotion of 'ideological literacy.' While originally directed at soldiers, Frelimo began developing a particular cultural pedagogy directed at youth and children, for its *centros pilotos* (educational centres) after Operation Gordian Knot. In addition to the revolutionary hymns and the Makwaela, the songs composed for these purposes were structured around a recitation of heroes, leaders, dates, and ideological formulas, all of which served "to instil revolutionary values, historical memory and political consciousness"⁴⁵ into the singers and audience alike.

While some hymns conveyed authoritative discourse in unmistakable messages, others required "explanation"⁴⁶ from a Frelimo-sanctioned, ideologically versed educator. Songs were typically in Swahili or Mozambican vernacular languages that many of the singers were unable to understand. Benigna Zimba, who grew up in Zambézia and participated in cultural activities as a young woman, recalled for example that: "the songs they [Frelimo] played were not native to here, but were from languages in the north where the war was intense, but we sang them and some of them we didn't even know what they meant." Yet, as Maria Alegria's recollection at the beginning of the chapter indicated, many still had a sense of the values and messages particular songs conveyed. To recall

⁴⁵ Israel, 39.

⁴⁶ Benigna Zimba, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel (video call), Maputo, May 29, 2022.

her understanding: “I don’t know what they were saying in that song, but I want to think that the song was elevating President Samora and [his combatant wife] Josina Machel.”⁴⁷

Many recalled receiving *explicacoes* (‘explanations’) on the cultural content from authority figures, such as teachers, war veterans or in the case of Benigna Zimba, the *guerilleira* Paulina Mateus: “Comrade Paulina [...] passed on to us the songs, that were Frelimo songs, explained the meaning of the songs, explained how young people took part in the struggle.”⁴⁸ For Benigna Zimba, ‘receiving’ Frelimo’s songs was a deeply moving, memorable experience. Such pedagogical practices were later also adopted by the OJM, as Zacarias Kupela recalled:

the political education of young people, [...] was a very important issue, because the older people would explain and describe the process of the struggle, which was an experience that the young people didn’t have, so the veterans of the struggle were invited to give lectures to explain how the process of the struggle went.⁴⁹

After independence, Frelimo integrated cultural forms of the struggle genre into its wider nationalist cultural politics. Beyond the political education of soldiers and students, culture became about “giving to all the people a knowledge of the national liberation struggle and of colonial aggression, negating through this objective the vestiges of war and of our recent past.”⁵⁰ Increasingly active centres of cultural production that Frelimo began setting up after independence generated newer cultural products in the spirit of the struggle culture, but that were attentive to the political messages and issues that had arisen after independence.⁵¹ Here, struggle veterans and

⁴⁷ Maria Alegria, interview.

⁴⁸ Benigna Zimba, interview.

⁴⁹ Zacarias Kupela, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, July 03, 2022.

⁵⁰ FRELIMO Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico, ‘Resolução sobre o cinema, o livro e o disco,’ *Primeira Conferência Nacional*, Maputo, 1975, 78. Cited in: Marcus Power, ‘Post-Colonial Cinema and the Reconfiguration of Moçambicanidade’, *Lusotopie* 11, no. 1 (2004): 272.

⁵¹ In 1976, the Ministry of Education and Culture created the Direcção Nacional de Cultura in 1976, which in turn funded the Centro de Estudos Culturais (CEC). In 1983, the CEC was replaced by four separate cultural institutions, established with the help of the Soviet Union: the Escola Nacional de Artes Visuais (ENAV), the Escola Nacional de

composers, armed with the traditions of Nachingwea and the *centros pilotos*, worked alongside Portuguese artists who stayed after independence, and *cooperantes* from Cuba, Bulgaria, East Germany, and the Soviet Union,⁵² to jointly develop “a truly Mozambican”⁵³ culture.

At the Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança, for example, members standardized and solidified diverse and localised dances “into set choreographies,”⁵⁴ to serve as ideologically purified epitomes of Mozambique’s regional diversity that could inform Mozambicans’ imagination of a singular, unified national identity and cultural heritage.⁵⁵ Most popular forms were standardized, revolutionized versions of the Chigubo (a dance from Gaza province), the Mapiko ‘of Cabo Delgado,’ and the Makwaela of the southern ‘workers.’



Música (ENM), Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança (CNCD), and Escola Nacional de Dança (END), see: Montoya, ‘Performing Citizens and Subjects’, 60–61.

⁵² Montoya, 60–61.

⁵³ Frelimo Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico, ‘Resolução sobre o cinema, o livro e o disco,’ *Primeira conferência nacional*, Maputo, November, 1975, 78, Cited in: Power, ‘Post-Colonial Cinema’, 272.

⁵⁴ Montoya, ‘Performing Citizens and Subjects’, 56.

⁵⁵ According to Maria Meneses, this was an explicit aim behind Frelimo’s wider cultural pedagogy: “The various groups that inhabited Mozambique knew little about each other, but it was important to create a sense of national unity. Thus, the imposition of a single national project over a landscape of cultural diversity restricted the potential for diversity, although the struggle for self-determination had embodied multiple cultural struggles.” Meneses, ‘Singing Struggles, Affirming Politics’, 266.



Figure 12: “Chigubo” and “Chigubo feminino,” *Tempográfica* No. 336, March 1977, 24-25.

Towards a Youth Cultural Politics

While the debates at the OJM’s first conference concluded that the OJM should “draw up cultural development plans” and “set up study groups to analyse how to recover the positive aspects of the forms of recreation that existed in the old society,”⁵⁶ there are no public records of the development of a youth-specific cultural repertoire. Rather, interviews with former participants suggest that the struggle genre that came to dominate the cultural landscape in post-independence Mozambique, in general also prevailed in the OJM’s subsequent cultural activities. Media reports and interviews suggest that the cultural groups most frequently resorted to performing the Makwaela and Chingomane.⁵⁷ The struggle hymns and Frelimo’s post-independence anthems, such as ‘Somos os

⁵⁶ “Programa da O.J.M.,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 18, 1977, 2.

⁵⁷ For example: “Diversos grupos culturais participam no festival em apoio ao III Congresso da FRELIMO,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 13, 1976, 1; “Grupos representativos dos mercados de Mazambane apresentando [...] Makwayela da OMM e Makwayela da Juventude,” in: “Festival Cultural de Apoio ao III Congresso,” *Jornal Notícias*, January 8, 1977, 3.

Continuadores' permeated public events, as well as former participants' memories. Fifty years after independence, members of the independence generation would break into song during our interviews, singing revolutionary hymns such as "Frelimo hawina muxo,"⁵⁸ "Tiyende Pamodzi,"⁵⁹ or "Moçambique Hoe."⁶⁰ One participant recalled that his neighbourhood, OJM tried to include musical forms outside of the struggle genre but without much success. As a musician who had learned to play the violin during colonialism, he recalled:

We had [problems in our neighbourhood] because [...] I ended up getting together with other people on Saturdays. I would teach them to play the viola, but this activity of playing the viola wasn't well received, because to play music, it had to be to accompany traditional music, not Western music [...] it had to be revolutionary music because there were songs that Frelimo played and those other songs shouldn't be played.⁶¹

Thus, firmly grounded in Frelimo's wider cultural pedagogy, the OJM's efforts to reinscribe leisure time with the 'true essence of fun' materialised into a narrow set of cultural forms steeped in Frelimo's authoritative discourse. The songs and theatre plays propagated Frelimo's revolutionary pedagogy in unmistakable terms, both in relation to the wider authoritative discourse and Frelimo's specific script on the revolutionary youth. In 1976, for example, a youth theatre group toured the country with a play called *A Juventude*. The play rehearsed the story of the oppression of youth by the colonial-feudal society, the vices of colonial urban life (alcoholism, drugs, prostitution), and the harmful impact of youthful indiscipline and liberalism on revolutionary progress.⁶² It was interspersed with dances and revolutionary poems.

One report described the scenes of the play:

⁵⁸ Lídia Furvela, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, 27 May, 2022.

⁵⁹ Francisco Moiane, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, 13 June, 2022.

⁶⁰ Arlindo Cuane, interview.

⁶¹ Francisco Moiane, interview.

⁶² "Crítica a Comportamentos Errados em Espetáculo promovido pela O.J.M.," *Jornal Notícias*, December 5, 1976, 3.

coming from the mines of South Africa, the father reunites the family, to whom he makes known his decision, meaning ‘order’ which must be followed during his absence. When the woman and the children protest against his wishes to marry one of the daughters to ‘someone’ who is his acquaintance and *de inteira confiança*, he exalts himself (*exalta mais uma vez*) once again to let the family know that he is the one who gives orders (*manda*). That is why, his orders must be followed without any contestation.⁶³

Another scene showed a “‘party’ that a middle-aged petty bourgeois [and] ‘friend’ of young people organises in his house” According to the journalist, the performance also depicted a school in the city where “indiscipline reigned.” In the play, when a student “arrives late to class, disrespects the professor and his peers, employs ‘freak’ language and refuses (*recusa*) criticism,” he is “finds himself supported by the liberalism of the head teacher who categorically shies away from resolving disciplinary problems, resorting to the comfortable position of ‘don’t let it happen again.’”⁶⁴

The OJM integrated cultural activities from as early as the organization’s foundation campaign. During the National Secretariat’s initial travels to the provinces OJM brigades not only established hierarchical organizational structures but reportedly also “dynamiz[ed] cultural activities”⁶⁵ and “form[ed] polyvalent cultural groups.”⁶⁶ During the organization’s first conference, Machel urged the OJM to expand on: “the formation of multi-purpose cultural groups that develop cultural activities, such as dance [...] music, theatre, plastic arts and handicrafts [and...] organise other forms of recreation such as parties, get-togethers, excursions and study visits.”⁶⁷ Echoing

⁶³ “A Crítica como Arma de Transformação Evidenciada na Peca Teatral ‘a Juventude,’” *Jornal Notícias*, December 20, 1976.

⁶⁴ “A Crítica como Arma de Transformação.”

⁶⁵ “uma brigada deslocou-se ontem á localidade de Murregue, para dinamizar atividades culturais e recreativas no âmbito dos programas traçados pela OJM.” See: “Conferências Provinciais da OJM em Inhambane e Cabo Delgado,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 25, 1977, 1; “Alunos do centro piloto ‘Luanda,’ nas áreas liberadas de Mueda, Província de Cabo Delgado abriram uma machamba de mandioca e de milho e realizaram diversas actividades culturais e de artesanato preparando a primeira Conferência da OJM que se irá realizar em Dezembro próximo.” See: “Em Todo o País: Juventude Prepara 1a Conferência da OJM,” *Jornal Notícias*.

⁶⁶ “Em Nampula: Grupos culturais polivalentes da OJM serão formados em todos os bairros,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 14, 1977, 3.

⁶⁷ “I Conferência da Juventude Moçambicana: Presidente Samora Machel Define Tarefas da O.J.M.,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 30, 1977, 6. This was reaffirmed again in the programme and conference resolutions.

Chissano's earlier remarks, as well as colonial anxieties about ballet dancers' dress, Machel encouraged adopting other 'modern' cultural forms too: "not just [Ch]igubo and Makwaela, but also orchestral dance [ballet] as long as it is not used for pornography, prostitution, drugs, etc [...] We have to be vigilant."⁶⁸

Both, through the OJM, but also beyond the organization, youth cultural activities came to permeate public life in Maputo. 'Youth Festivals' and 'Cultural Festivals' became obligatory features of party congresses, political rallies, and commemorative dates.⁶⁹ In December 1976, leading up to Frelimo's 3rd congress, for example, the Sede Provincial do Partido (provincial party headquarters) organised a "Cultural Festival in support of the III FRELIMO Congress."⁷⁰ The festival brought together cultural groups affiliated with the OMM and the OJM from different provinces, who performed the Makwaela and the Chingomana. The festival took place in the Machava Stadium and, according to *Notícias*, gathered "7000 students (primary and secondary) from urban and suburban neighbourhoods of the capital,"⁷¹ who were brought to the stadium in busses and trains, organized through the Direção Nacional de Educação Física e de Desportes (National Directory for Physical Education and Sports). According to a *Notícias* journalist, the performances entailed:

⁶⁸ "I Conferencia da Juventude Moçambicana: Presidente Samora Machel Define Tarefas da O.J.M.," *Jornal Notícias*, November 30, 1977, 6. This was reaffirmed again in the programme and conference resolutions.

⁶⁹ See for example: "Espetáculo Cultural da Juventude da FRELIMO," *Jornal Notícias*, December 3, 1976, 3; "Crítica a Comportamentos Errados em Espetáculo promovido pela O.J.M.," *Jornal Notícias*, December 5, 1976, 3; "Diversos grupos culturais participam no festival em apoio ao III Congresso da FRELIMO," *Jornal Notícias*, December 13, 1976, 1; "Chegou ontem a Maputo Grupo de Canto e Dança Soviético," *Jornal Notícias*, December 14, 1976, 3; "Juventude da FRELIMO promove espetáculo cultural," *Jornal Notícias*, December 2, 1976, 1. "A Crítica como Arma de Transformação Evidenciada na Peca Teatral 'a Juventude,'" *Jornal Notícias*, December 20, 1976; "Festival Cultural de Apoio ao III Congresso," *Jornal Notícias*, January 8, 1977, 3; "Sucesso na FESTAC-77 do Grupo Cultural Moçambicano," *Jornal Notícias*, January 25, 1977, 1; "Festival da Juventude terá lugar no dia 13: Reunião esta tarde," *Jornal Notícias*, February 2, 1977, 7; "Em apoio ao 3o Congresso: Festival da Juventude," *Jornal Notícias*, February 4, 1977, 10.

⁷⁰ "Diversos grupos culturais participam no festival em apoio ao III Congresso da FRELIMO," *Jornal Notícias*, December 13, 1976, 1.

⁷¹ "Em apoio ao 3o Congresso: Festival da Juventude," *Jornal Notícias*, February 4, 1977, 10.

gymnastics numbers; educational and corrective gymnastics; Mozambican culture; watchwords alluding to the political moment our country is going through; games and sporting activities; leapfrogging; exercises and a long series of other events culminating in a final speech.⁷²

Reporting from the time on youth cultural activities highlighted their political and pedagogical roles, casting them as part of Frelimo's sonic and visual authoritative discourse. A *Notícias* journalist, for example, wrote of the above festival that through "perform[ing] with a great liveliness, the various groups [of youth] demonstrat[ed] the pride that the people feel in their culture, which for centuries has been trampled underfoot and considered to be "of savage peoples' by the colonialists [...] It should be emphasised that this initiative is of great importance because through cultural activities the people will be able to interpret and better understand the true meaning of the Third Congress."⁷³ Similarly, a commemorative performance on September 25th, 1976 was described as "the day on which youth in the District of Maputo, organised by FRELIMO, presents the effort to revalue our culture, which has been trampled underfoot for centuries,"⁷⁴ and "a political act, which demonstrates the concern of the *militantes da Juventude* [Youth activists] to comply with the guidelines handed down by the FRELIMO Directorate."⁷⁵

In the same vein, sportive activities too, were deeply infused with ideological meaning. Similar to cultural festivals, OJM branches regularly organised football teams and tournaments between neighbourhoods in support of political events and commemorative occasions.⁷⁶ Competitive mass gymnastics, fashionable across the socialist world and taught to young Mozambicans with the help of Korean and East German *cooperantes*,⁷⁷ were a popular sight at the cultural and youth festivals

⁷² "Em apoio," *Jornal Notícias*. February 4, 1977, 10.

⁷³ "Diversos grupos," *Jornal Notícias*, 1.

⁷⁴ "Mensagem da Juventude da Frelimo," *Jornal Notícias*, September 26, 1976, 8.

⁷⁵ "Mensagem da Juventude," *Jornal Notícias*, 8.

⁷⁶ "Em apoio á Conferencia da O.J.M.: Légua da Juventude tem lugar esta tarde," *Jornal Notícias*, December 8, 1977, 5; "No próximo Domingo Légua da Juventude Promovida pela O.J.M.," *Jornal Notícias*, April 3, 1978

⁷⁷ Carla Mabote remembered being trained by North Korean professors in preparation of a performance using colour cards at the independence celebrations, Carla Mabote, interview.

across Mozambique.⁷⁸ “This was athletic sport, official sport,” one former participant remembered “not this kind of sport in whatever fashion (*de qualquer maneira*).”⁷⁹

Finally, performances of youth cultural activities were staged in the partisan media as visual symbols of Frelimo’s state-socialist authoritative discourse on youth.⁸⁰ Photographs show children and young people performing dances and gymnastics on the field in formations that indicate a shared aesthetic repertoire with performance spectacles all over the socialist world. Children and young people are featured in highly symbolic terms, such as in the picture: “*Dois continuadores acendendo a pira*” (Two *continuadores* light the fire; *continuadores* are continuators of the revolution, Frelimo’s term for children and youth). The composition of the picture is filled with socialist visual icons – the lightening of the fire, the guerilla fighter alongside the children, the collectivity of the action – which all symbolize what Alise Tifentale has called ‘historic optimism,’ a key organizing feature of socialist realism.⁸¹ In the newspaper’s description of the photo, the two young people lightening the fire cease to be individuals as they become transformed into *continuadores*.

⁷⁸ See photos of independence celebrations: “Os continuadores sao a garantia da recuperacao da nossa cultura e demonstram-no bem durante o festival,” *Tempográfica* No. 248, June 1975.

⁷⁹ Mónica Mucavel, interview.

⁸⁰ See a discussion of Notícias images below.

⁸¹ Alise Tifentale cited in: Juliane Brauer, *Zeitgeföhle - Wie die DDR ihre Zukunft besang: Eine Emotionsgeschichte*, 1st ed. (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2020).

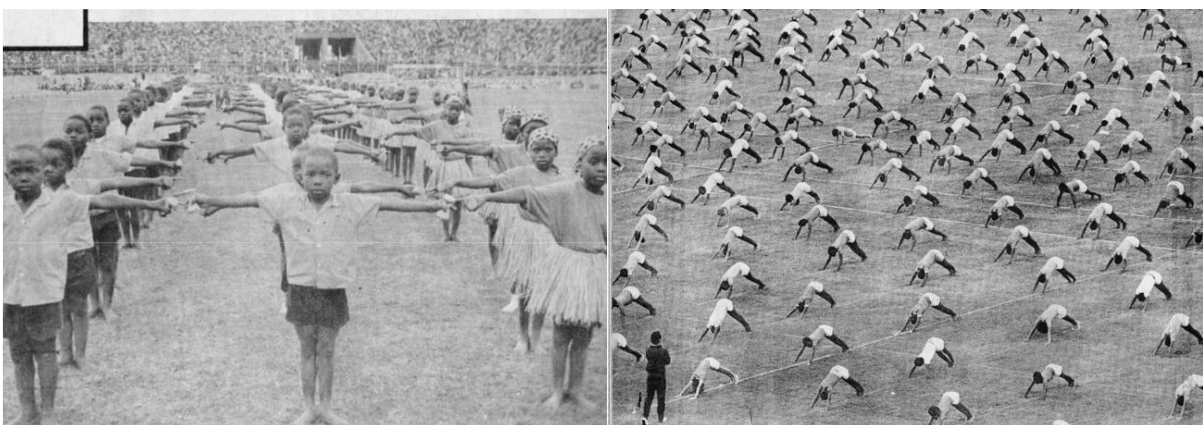


Figure 13: "Dois continuadores acendendo a pira." In: *Tempográfica* No. 248, June 1975.

Such was the general overtone of youth and cultural festivals, intra-provincial dance competitions, “Jogos Escolares (school games),”⁸² political rallies, and commemorative events. They were steeped in sonic, visual, and interactive forms of authoritative discourse. For thousands of young men and women who lived in Maputo, members of the OJM, and students, these events were monthly – if not weekly – encounters with Frelimo’s conceptualizations of the most important ideological tropes, including the concept of revolutionary youth. Some members of the independence generation, such as Maria Alegria, who we met at the beginning of this chapter, spent most of their weekends training and performing in inter-neighbourhood dance competitions. Others have vague memories of being picked up from school by busses and driven in large groups to Machava stadium to do gymnastics, perform theatre pieces, or hold up coloured placards to form watchwords or *vivas* across the auditory ranks of the stadium.⁸³ And a few spent months travelling the globe to represent Mozambique in international competitions and youth festivals. It is their memories to which we will turn next, asking how authoritative discourses provided young people with a new, although, narrow means of fashioning their lives.

“Being a Youth was like being the star of the government”

Scholars of “contexts dominated by unchallengeable authoritative discourse”⁸⁴ have understood people’s reproductions of such discourse through a range of ways. As Alexej Yurchak notes, common approaches to such reproductions stress dimensions of “mimicry and dissimulation” involved in the relations of people to authoritative discourses.⁸⁵ Such theories, Yurchak notes,

⁸² “I Festival Nacional dos Jogos Escolares,” *Jornal Notícias*, January 8, 1978, 7.

⁸³ Francisco Moiane, interview; Carla Mabote, interview.

⁸⁴ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 16.

⁸⁵ Lisa Judith Wedeen, “The politics of spectacle: Discipline, resistance, and national community in Syria” (PhD diss., Los Angeles, Berkeley, Irvine, United States, University of California, 1995), 132, ProQuest: 9621415.

suggest that people act ‘as if’ they believe the ideological rituals and texts (for instrumental reasons) while privately believing something different. But the binary view of truth and lie, reality and mask, revealing and dissimulating, he argues, fails to accurately capture the complex relationship to ideological discourse that the late Soviet generation had. “The uniqueness of the late-socialist context,” Yurchak argues:

lay in the fact that those who ran the Komsomol and party meetings and procedures themselves understood perfectly well that the constative dimension of most ritualized acts and texts had become reinterpreted from its original meaning. They therefore emphasised the centrality of the performative dimension of this discourse in the reproduction of social norm, positions, relations and institutions. [...] this does not mean either that these ritualized acts become meaningless and empty or that other meanings in public life were diminished or becoming totally constrained. On the contrary, the performative reproduction of the form of rituals and speech acts actually *enabled* the emergence of diverse, multiple, and unpredictably meanings in everyday life, including those that did not correspond to the constative meanings of authoritative discourse.⁸⁶

How did this manifest in relation to the cultural activities? When reproducing the authoritative discourse, how did these acts of speaking, playing, dancing or singing balance performative and constative dimensions? And what kinds of unpredictable meanings arose?

To Francisco Moiane (born in 1959), Carla Mabote (1960), Amélia Lemos (1961), Lídia Furvela (1962), Benigna Zimba (1962), Mónica Mucaval (1964), Maria Alegria Cuane (1967), her brother Arlindo (1965), and Odete King Kazamila (1968), all of whom devotedly – and indeed, enthusiastically – attended the cultural activities, organised through their local OJM or schools, engaging in authoritative discourse fulfilled a range of performative functions.

⁸⁶ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, 25.

From early on, these young people dedicated most of their leisure time to the OJM's cultural and volunteering activities.⁸⁷ Odete King Kazamila, for example recalled:

We grew up in the party cell, when we would go to the cell there were doing these dances there, they put us in the Chingomana [dance group], there was a lot going on. Our [party] cell was an exemplary cell, the young people there danced a lot and played a lot of sport, we had a football team that was the best team in the neighbourhood.⁸⁸

Practices and performances took place weekly. In the neighbourhood Mincadaine, practice was on Saturdays and Sundays were reserved for performances at competitions or other occasions across the city. Similar weekly rhythms seem to have existed across the city.

For this small group of people, participation in OJM activities was motivated in part by obedience and respect for party and parental authority. Carla Mabote, for example, remembered that:

We started to get involved very early in the activities of the neighbourhoods where we lived, in the OJM groups that were set up. We were part of the cultural groups. In the meetings that were set up, we were euphoric about what it meant and what it was going to be. And we gave it our all.⁸⁹

As I discussed in the introduction, and will return to in the conclusion, many factors rooted in the present, rather than the past, influence the independence generation's memory of cultural activities today. Importantly, many members of this generation share a deep sense of nostalgia for the years following independence. They lament how the individualistic character of contemporary society prevents real, economic development and an apathetic, disrespectful youth.⁹⁰ Notions of the 'euphoria of independence' (*euforia da independência*) or the respect the youth once used to have of elders and leaders are common tropes in contemporary public and private discourse. But even less

⁸⁷ Except for Benigna Zimba and Amélia Lemos, who spent parts of their childhood in Zambézia and Nampula.

⁸⁸ Odete King Kazamila, interview by Valdo Congolo, Maputo, August 2, 2022.

⁸⁹ Carla Mabote, interview.

⁹⁰ See conclusion chapter of this thesis.

nostalgic members of this generation highlighted how their generation's respect for parental and state authorities meant that they seldomly questioned what was expected of them.⁹¹

The young men and women I interviewed here, such as Carla Mabote, mostly came from families who had a positive disposition towards Frelimo's revolutionary politics and often expected their children to participate in cultural activities:

I remember that [...] I'd come home [from school] and my biggest concern was running to the *Grupo Dinamizador* to find out if we had a party meeting, if we had a rehearsal, and that's how our life was until a long time after independence. We were very respectful young people, we listened a lot, both to our parents and to our party leaders. [...] But it was never a sacrifice, we did it with pleasure.⁹²

The party, its local representatives, and, in many cases, parents expected young people to take part in cultural activities, in part, because they were afraid of what might happen to them if left with unstructured leisure time, in part, because they were aware of the disciplinary regime for young people who stepped out of line. Among my interviewees, several had siblings, friends or relatives who had been detained in re-education camps for 'indiscipline,' a common 'offense' that headstrong young people could be charged with.

In another part, however, reproducing authoritative discourse by participating in cultural activities also opened up new opportunities for this group of young people. For example, by participating in cultural activities, some youngsters were able to venture into parts of the country that they otherwise had no opportunities to travel to. Cultural groups frequently performed in different neighbourhoods of Maputo and in some cases different provinces and even continents.⁹³ In this way, they made travel and encounters possible for the independence generation that would have

⁹¹ For more dramatic examples of this, see chapter six.

⁹² Carla Mabote, interview.

⁹³ Carla Mabote, interview.

been unthinkable to their parents' generation.⁹⁴ This was true for residents of Maputo, but perhaps especially meaningful for participants from more isolated, rural areas. Benigna Zimba who grew up in Zambézia remembered that “in those [...] groups of *continuadores*, who danced and sang, they were well known in Zambezia, we went out to perform, they paid for accommodation, food [...] and a large part of us were really excited [about this].”⁹⁵ As we will see later, Benigna Zimba and Alcinda Abreu, *Secretario Adjunto* (Deputy Secretary) of the OJM at the time, were among the very small group of young people who attained an opportunity to travel abroad through their cultural groups. In a delegation of youth representatives, their cultural group travelled across the globe to attend the 11th World Festival for Students and Youth in Havana, Cuba in 1978. “It was through this that I got to know other cultures in Mozambique,” Benigna Zimba remembered. “There were delegations from all over the country, when we met during mealtime, there were opportunities to get to know each other through debates.”⁹⁶

The majority of young men and women, who were unable to travel themselves were likely still aware of such possibilities and aspired to them. The media reported frequently on visits by foreign delegations and Mozambican groups performing abroad. As the OJM became more established and young people began understanding its role in ‘identifying and selecting’ suitable cadres for higher tasks within the party, parents and young people alike increasingly began understanding their active participation in the cultural activities as opportunities for accessing higher positions and privileges within the Frelimo system. As the cultural activities, organized through the OJM or other parts of the Frelimo party-state became a regular feature in thousands of urban young men and

⁹⁴ Carla Mabote, interview.

⁹⁵ Benigna Zimba, interview.

⁹⁶ Benigna Zimba, interview.

women's lives, practising, travelling, and performing, the independence generation encountered Frelimo's authoritative discourse in structured, ritualistic ways.

Emotional and Embodied Encounters with Authoritative Discourse

But beyond the performative dimensions of engaging in cultural activities, Frelimo's authoritative discourse about youth also gave those young people who participated in the OJM's cultural activities a new, if narrow, means for creating substantive meanings in the fast-changing material and social realities of socialist era Maputo. During our interviews, former participants in youth cultural activities often recalled instances where through the cultural activities, abstract ideals of Frelimo's authoritative discourse – such as the end of racial discrimination, or the new national identity – materialised into concrete emotional and embodied experiences, which in turn allowed them to participate in an idealised collective notion of revolutionary citizenship. To illustrate, let us return once more to Carla Mabote's oral history. Having gone to a mostly white primary school as the only black student in her class, she remembered that before independence:

I took part in a lot of [cultural] activities, but they were European school activities, celebrating Portugal Day. [...For example, they decided] 'you'll be an angel,' but where we went to school there were no black angels. Everyone pulled my hair to see what I looked like.⁹⁷

For the Independence Day celebrations, she joined the GD's youth cultural group in her home neighbourhood and practised dances to be performed on the night of independence.

These were traditional dances. We danced with *palbas* (straw skirts) [...] So, knowing that we were going to become independent, wearing those straw skirts, were moments of great euphoria for us, taking part in that historic moment. [...] This was a wow moment. [...] I realised that I was being valued by my people, and we really identified with our culture, our traditions.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Carla Mabote, interview.

⁹⁸ Carla Mabote, interview.

For Carla Mabote, the abstract notion of independence, the promised end of racial discrimination, and the dawn of a new, revolutionary age all became tangible emotional experiences through wearing *palhas* and dancing traditional dances.

Other participants too experienced a sense of national identity and national unity through the cultural activities. The suggestion, implicit in Frelimo's cultural pedagogy, that dances, songs and plays represented distinct ethnic communities then brought together through independence under one national culture, resonated deeply with former members I spoke to. Maria Alegria's older brother Arlindo, for example, led a youth dance group in his neighbourhood Mincaduine, and reflected on his experience learning and teaching dances:

We became familiar with the various dances, for example, we learned the meaning of the dance Chigubo from Matatuine, there's a dance from Inhambane where the *mamas* (ladies) "shake their hips" and the dance Makuaela is a dance typical from Gaza and if we go to the *terra* (land) of the Makondes we have the Mapiko dance. People from Cabo Delgado came to introduce these dances to us, once the country was free, these people were able to move around freely. And it was easy for us, as students and children, to adapt to this. There was this awareness that dance was a form of national identity.⁹⁹

For Arlindo, encounters with dancers and dances of far-away provinces gave the promises and possibilities for national unity a tangible meaning.

As noted above, such meaning was produced on the one hand through the cultural forms themselves, which were steeped in Frelimo's ideological discourse visually and sonically, as well as the wider system of cultural pedagogy they were embedded within. Through melodies, texts, but also tangible items, such as costumes, and embodied practices, like movement, participants experienced the meaning of the authoritative discourses' otherwise abstract ideals. But it was through another set of features that cultural activities also created opportunities for young people

⁹⁹ Arlindo Couane, interview.

to experience the authoritative discourse's notion of the ideal revolutionary youth. Among the young men and women with whom I spoke, there was a keen awareness that performing cultural activities was a primary way for the youth to make their due contribution to the construction of the New Society. In the neighbourhood Mincaduine, for example, Maria Alegria remembered that meetings in her cultural group were more than just rehearsals – they had a distinct political character. During their weekly reunions, the participants discussed questions of culture alongside the politics of the day and rules around morality and behaviour:

We discussed the future of young people. How should we behave towards people? How did we have to talk to people? How did we have to prepare for the upcoming festivals and where were we going? Where was the next festival going to be held? [...] President Samora could be holding a rally here in the City Council, a group of young people from each neighbourhood had to go out, to go and represent a particular dance. [...] And we also discussed the future of the Youth themselves. What were the young people's ideas? What did each young person think? Each young person had to bring their idea to this meeting, had to bring their contribution to this meeting. Another aspect that was discussed at this meeting was the question of culture itself. How we have to realise these dances of ours?¹⁰⁰

Her brother Arlindo who led a dance group was also aware that by engaging in Chingomane practice, he bore the responsibility of not only representing Frelimo's authoritative notions of national unity but communicating it to his audiences: "I saw that the activities were important because we represented the expression of the country through dance, music and poetry, expressing the meaning of Mozambique. [...] That was the objective, to explain the Mozambican culture."¹⁰¹ Thus, for Arlindo, perfecting dances representing different regions of Mozambique became an important means of excelling, and making his due contribution – as a youth – to the revolution: "As a youth, the responsibility was to make culture more alive, more present [...] As head of culture

¹⁰⁰ Maria Alegria Cuane, interview.

¹⁰¹ Arlindo Couane, interview.

in the Micadzine neighbourhood, my great responsibility was to keep this group alive and kicking everywhere.”¹⁰²

Such experiences generated deep emotions in the participants. As Arlindo further recalled:

When they invited youth from the Mincaduine neighbourhood, it made me even prouder. I remember an event that took place at the Polana Secondary School, it was a school event, they invited the youth from the Mincaduine neighbourhood and the Aeroporto neighbourhood, and we asked ourselves at the time, ‘Who are we here at a school event that only invited our neighbourhoods?’, but it was the kind of culture we were presenting, because not many neighbourhoods practised our dance, in the specific case of Chigubo, not just any neighbourhood practised this kind of dance, just like Tofo, which comes from Nampula. And as a youth, there was this sense of fighting to be the best, and we fought for that.¹⁰³

As Arlindo’s recollections already suggest, besides materialising abstract identities and concepts in Frelimo’s nationalist discourse, the cultural activities provided a new means for feeling pride and historic responsibility, emotions associated with the roles and tasks assigned through Frelimo’s authoritative discourse to the youth.

Pride at being a youth came up in former participants’ memories regularly. When recounting her theatre performance to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the armed struggle in 1984, for example, Mónica Mucaval noted: “Being a youth was a great source of pride at that time, you were like a star in the government.”¹⁰⁴ In Mónica Mucaval’s memory of her theatre performance, the metaphorical, literal, and theatrical ‘fronts’ that Machel called the youth to, became blurred. This gave deep emotional meaning to the notion that Mozambique’s youth was to be at the ‘front line’ of revolutionary progress and the consolidation of the nation’s independence:

¹⁰² Arlindo Couane, interview.

¹⁰³ Arlindo Couane, interview.

¹⁰⁴ Mónica Mucaval, interview.

In the days of President Samora's rallies, the youth had to be *on the front line*. For example, in 1984 when [we celebrated] twenty years since the armed struggle, he had a big rally on 25 September. He asked all the young people born in '64 to be *on the front line*, [...] then he gave a demonstration of the team that fought for ten years, the whole war team, we were the team *at the front lines* as young people, so that was a source of pride.¹⁰⁵

Embodying in this way Machel's 'call to the front,' metaphorically and physically through performance, Mónica Mucaval experienced her role as a revolutionary youth in an embodied way, filling the shoes of the heavily mythicized, heroic 'youth of the liberation struggle.'¹⁰⁶

For some participants, experiences of embodying Machel's metaphorical discourse went even further. Referring to the watchword "Children are the *Flores que Nunca Murcham*" (Flowers that Never Wither) – a frequent motif in Machel's speeches – Odete King Kazamila exclaimed: "I *was* a flower of Machel! Yes, because I took part in the school games right there at Maxaquene secondary school, at the industrial school, I took part in the school games!"¹⁰⁷ Participating in rallies, school games and performances for both Mónica Mucával and Odete King Kazamila cemented an imagined special bond between the youth and Machel. Cultural activities thus gave these young people an opportunity to emotionally and physically experience this otherwise imagined closeness and privileged place in Machel's heart.

Finally, as the OJM leadership had already articulated during the foundational campaign, Frelimo viewed youth not only as consumers but also as producers of cultural pedagogy themselves, vis-à-vis older generations, including their own social elders and superiors. In Maputo, Frelimo opened an OJM Centro-Político Cultural in August 1976 intending to "transform the enthusiasm and creative initiative of youth into a force capable of actively participating in the transformation of the

¹⁰⁵ Mónica Mucaval, interview.

¹⁰⁶ For more detail on the myth of the 'youth of the liberation' see chapter six.

¹⁰⁷ Odete King Kazamila, interview.

relations of the old society into a new type of social relations.”¹⁰⁸ Cultural activities, such as “poetry, song and theatre” were thought to function as the vehicles for this development. During a meeting between the head of the Ministry for Education and Culture, Graca Machel, and the National Secretariat of the OJM, the participants further discussed: “the role that falls to the OJM in educational centres so that our youth fully assume their historic responsibility for defending the revolutionary conquests and for building the Socialist Society.”¹⁰⁹ In public discourse, young people were regularly encouraged to act on the authority they held through their revolutionary education and confront or better yet, enlighten, their biological and social elders. This was framed as part of the youth’s duty to mobilise uneducated members of their communities (see comic).

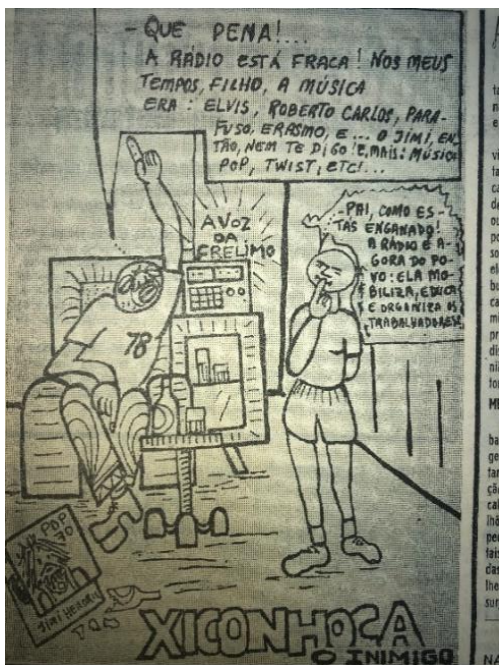


Figure 14:

Xiconhoca: 'What a shame! In my day, son, the music was: Elvis, Roberto Carlos, Oarafuso, Erasmo and ... and Jimi, I won't even tell you! Plus: pop music, twist, etc!...' 'Son: 'Dad, you're wrong! Radio now belongs to the people, it mobilises, educates and organises the workers!'

In: "Que Pena! Xiconhoca O Inimigo," Jornal Notícias, January 5, 1978.

Engaging in cultural activities enabled young people to imagine themselves fulfilling the expectations levelled at them in Frelimo’s authoritative discourse, literally performing the ideal revolutionary youth. Carla Mabote’s memories of being part of a theatre group are particularly

¹⁰⁸ “Centro Politico-Cultural Engaja Juventude na Construção do Socialismo,” *Jornal Notícias*, June 14, 1977, 1.

¹⁰⁹ “M.E.C. e O.J.M. coordenam atividades no seio dos estudantes,” *Jornal Notícias*, June 22, 1977, 1.

illustrative. Her theatre group travelled the country to perform in front of rural, and presumably largely illiterate audiences “to explain to people about independence [...] show what we thought independence would be like.” She recalled:

Just before independence, I remember that we went out, we went to a neighbourhood outside the city, there was a meeting, we could go there and put on a play and in that play, we tried to show some attitudes that were not compatible with the revolution, we showed that you couldn’t drink, that you had to work, that the husband at home couldn’t beat his wife, that he couldn’t have more than one wife, we showed that everything would be different, that everyone would have the right to a school, everyone would have the right to health, equal opportunities for everyone. The dream of the youth was that everyone would be well, that we could have everything and do everything. [...] These are some of the plays that made a big impression on me.¹¹⁰

Through their association with the OJM’s cultural groups, young people experienced holding themselves pedagogical authority. Their audiences were people their own age, but also elders, parents, and people of higher social status than themselves. In one of the reports, the journalist described also the public’s reaction: “Several passages of the show were repeatedly applauded by the large audience, most of whom were young, which shows that young people have realised the reality of the problems being addressed.”¹¹¹ Armed with Frelimo’s cultural pedagogy, cultural activities gave these young people an opportunity to experience the kind of social elevation that Machel preached to them in his discourses.

“At the end of the festival, we didn’t have a single pregnancy”

So far, young people’s experiences of cultural activities have born considerable similarities to the ‘revolutionary fun’¹¹² of Soviet youth described by Tsipursky or Juliane Fürst. While Fürst has

¹¹⁰ Carla Mabote, interview.

¹¹¹ “A Crítica como Arma de Transformação Evidenciada na Peca Teatral ‘a Juventude,’” *Jornal Notícias*, December 20, 1976.

¹¹² Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

argued that ritualistic encounters with the state-socialist bureaucracy could produce ‘integrative’ powers, Tsipursky’s argument has highlighted young people’s agency to engage in these activities in ways that were ‘conformist,’ but nonetheless allowed them to adjust state-organized cultural activities in ways that suited their tastes. In this last section, I turn to the accounts of two young women, Benigna Zimba and Alcinda Abreu of about their attendance of the 11th World Festival for Student and Youth in Havana 1978 to argue that in the Mozambican case, some young people used their conformist agency not to appropriate or creatively adjust what cultural activities offered to them, but to address deep-seeded anxieties about female sexuality, that permeated Mozambican society. In this sense, their story reveals some of the unspoken but underlying gendered dimensions of Frelimo’s authoritative discourse about youth.

Frelimo began preparing a delegation for the 11th World Festival for Students and Youth in February 1978.¹¹³ The festivals, according to Frelimo’s Central Committee “symbolize the internationalist character of the struggle of the youth of the entire world and their desire to create a world in peace, democracy, and progress for all humankind.”¹¹⁴ The Central Committee established a National Committee for the Preparation of the 11th World Festival, which included several high-ranking party members, as well as the OJM leadership.¹¹⁵ Over the next few months, the media reported weekly, sometimes several times per week, on the preparatory works for the

¹¹³ “Decorrem preparativos em Cuba para o XI Festival da Juventude,” *Jornal Notícias*, February 2, 1978.

¹¹⁴ “Jovens e estudantes Mocambicanos participam no XI Festival Mundial,” *Jornal Notícias*, February 3, 1978, 1.

¹¹⁵ “no dia 1 de Fevereiro de 1978, O Comite Nacional Preparatorio Do Xi Festival Mundial Da Juventude E Dos Estudantes; com a seguinte constitucao: 1 Camarada José Oscar Monteiro, Graca Machel, José Luis Cabaco, Sergio Vieira, Zacarias Kupela, Alcinda Abreu, Francisco Zimba, Helena Tefanias, Joaquim Chigogoro, Carlos Jorge Silva, Manuel Morais, Antomio Marmelo, Celino Costa, Jorge Veramota, Bernado Mavanga, Terodosio Mbanze, Arlindo Lopes, Leite Vasconcelos, Alfredo Macamo, Carlos Bonnee, Fernando Rangel, Raul Alvaro Freia.” In “Jovens e Estudantes,” *Jornal Notícias*.

festival. This included the collection of funds, film screenings,¹¹⁶ football competitions, and a “mini youth festival” in Maputo, that involved the kinds of activities discussed throughout this chapter.¹¹⁷

The delegation itself was prepared for their travel to Cuba culturally, ideologically, and diplomatically as well. Benigna Zimba was 14 years old when she was selected to join the delegation.

In 1978 the delegation was formed to go to Cuba, but first we went to Maputo, although I was the youngest, I was appointed head of the delegation, [...] After that, they started holding activity meetings, because there was a theatre group, a music group, poetry, all the founders of the OJM, for preparation, civic education and sport, we were prepared in sport to keep fit.

In addition to ideological preparation and practices, however, Benigna Zimba’s oral account of the preparation also highlights an additional anxiety that underpinned the participation of sixty mixed-gender, under-age youngsters, travelling abroad on their own:

Before leaving Quelimane we were well prepared, they said: you’re going to be with a lot of people, know how to behave and we don’t want anyone to come back pregnant, don’t get involved in any way.¹¹⁸

As Benigna recalled, parents’ anxieties were not entirely unfounded, as the World Festivals for Students and Youth were renowned globally for producing ‘festival babies.’ Unsupervised by parents, young men and women like Benigna Zimba experienced a sense of youthful community for the first time, that, among other things, also forged a strong sense of national identity for her:

it was from then on that I began to get to know other cultures in Mozambique, because there were delegations from all over, so we came across our food, then there was always the opportunity to get to know each other through debates, then.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ “OJM continua projeccao de filmes para apoio ao XI festival muncial,” *Jornal Noticias*, April 25, 1978, 3.

¹¹⁷ “Mini-festival da Juventude continua a decorrer no Maputo,” *Jornal Noticias*, August 1, 1978, 2.

¹¹⁸ Benigna Zimba, interview.

¹¹⁹ Benigna Zimba, interview.

The group travelled to East Germany, where they received further politico-cultural preparation for the festival and the East German youth organization Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ) was equally concerned with young women's sexuality:

the second hardest part was preparing the itinerary, the trip was paid for by Germany, we passed through Berlin, we had the support of the Freie Jugend, they helped with the accommodation, the speech was the same, they told us to know how to preserve ourselves because we were there representing the country, our concern should be with culture.¹²⁰

Gendered anxieties about young women's sexuality underpinned the preparatory meetings that the OJM held with the delegates. But it also permeated the festival itself. Here, Alcinda Abreu recalled:

In terms of behaviour, there was a lot of vigilance to prevent any pregnancies at the end of the festival and we didn't have any pregnant girls. [...] I was the head of the delegation. I was frightened when they called me at the party to inform me that I was the head of the delegation, it was a lot of responsibility because I was taking with me children from the age of seven and an old man who was sixty.¹²¹

The importance that the leadership of the delegation, but also the festival leadership and indeed, Machel himself personally placed on the delegates' behavioural and moral comportment became obvious upon their return.

Alcinda Abreu, who was the OJM's Secretariado Adjunto in 1978 and led the delegation, recalled her surprise at the honours they received upon their arrival back in Maputo:

Samora Machel distinguished us as the group with the best behaviour throughout the festival and the greatest participation throughout the activity. [...] on the way back, Fidel Castro told President Samora that the group from Mozambique had been the best at the festival and at the same time had behaved impeccably.¹²²

¹²⁰ Benigna Zimba, interview.

¹²¹ Alcinda Abreu, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel (video call), Maputo, June 16, 2022.

¹²² Alcinda Abreu, interview.

To reward their impeccable behaviour, the delegation received a surprise at the airport, honouring them upon their return:

We were received by President Joaquim Chissano, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Armando Guebuza and other big names. So, when we left, I saw all those Frelimo leaders, I was scared and happy and they said that the president had sent them to receive us because we had honoured Mozambique. There was a military band, a red carpet and I took on the role of a military man and it was very nice. During the talks, we said that this was the achievement of all of us, those who had been in sport, debates, theatre.¹²³

Alcinda Abreu's and Benigna Zimba's accounts of the Havana festival bring together the themes of this chapter: Cultural activities were deeply reflective of Frelimo's authoritative discourse, both in terms of the values and messages they carried, as well as in terms of what it meant for young people to participate in them as 'youth.' These activities enabled a host of embodied and emotional experiences that shaped how members of the independence generation who engaged in them related to Frelimo's authoritative discourse. They also highlight that although Frelimo's original aim was to use cultural activities to counter the 'vices' they feared urban youth could fall victim to if left with too much unstructured leisure time (like drinking, partying and sexual promiscuity), they soon realized that the activities themselves were beyond their control. These new anxieties, particularly over women's sexuality, can be seen reflected in how the Havana delegation was prepared and rewarded for their 'moral' comportment.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a deep exploration of another dimension through which some members of the independence generation acquired 'ideological literacy' of Frelimo's authoritative discourse

¹²³ Alcinda Abreu, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel (video call), Maputo, June 16, 2022.

about youth, as well as other revolutionary concepts, such as national unity, the liberation struggle and the socialist modernity that Frelimo imagined Mozambique was heading towards in the future.

By investigating these popular activities that young people engaged in through the OJM, schools, and other public institutions, I have shown that so-called cultural activities practised by ‘polyvalent cultural groups’ were deeply steeped in Frelimo’s authoritative discourse. Songs heralded the heroes of the liberation struggle, dances forged national unity, and theatre performances re-enacted youth’s ‘negative tendencies’, such as ‘partying,’ ‘freak-talk’, and ‘arrogance.’ Through engaging young people in these kinds of activities, the OJM promoted young people’s familiarity, but also mastery of Frelimo’s authoritative discourse. Unlike reading texts, singing, dancing and playing allowed Mozambican youth to engage with the discourse in more meaningful ways that involved and produced bodies and emotions.

In addition, this chapter asked what kinds of experiences such encounters with Frelimo’s authoritative discourse produced. Drawing on oral accounts of several former participants, I have argued that cultural activities enabled youth to relate to Frelimo’s discourse in deeper, more meaningful ways. Through dancing dances that they attributed to ‘their’ region or ‘another Mozambican’s region,’ some former participants developed an emotional understanding of the abstract concept of national unity. And performing in plays about the liberation struggle, others experienced a literal embodiment of the ideal of the ‘heroic youth of the liberation.’ Finally, because both Frelimo and young people themselves conceived of youth as not only consumers of cultural pedagogy but also producers of it, engaging in cultural activities enabled some participants to feel that they were performing the duties of the revolutionary youth.

What these calls to duty entailed and how young people experienced authoritative discourse when it made demands that went beyond what they were happy to give, will be the subject of the last, and final chapter of this study.

6. Serving the Revolution

Introduction

Amélia Lemos' coming of age was profoundly altered by two "very impactful moments."¹ The first was a small student revolt at her secondary school, which led to a brief, but impressionable few days in a re-education camp, an instance we return to later in this chapter. The second was a Tuesday in March, 1977. On this Tuesday, president Samora Machel gave a lecture to six thousand students, professors and functionaries in the education services. He explained what would come to be known as the March 8th decision, that the last two years of secondary school would not take place in the school year of 1977. Instead, all 600 students who be assigned employment in 'diverse sectors of activities,'² most importantly in primary education, technical sectors and the army. Some would take up their jobs right away, while others stopped over for a brief training period at the newly established Centro 8 de Março in Maputo.

The following year, Amélia Lemos received her placement in primary school teaching. Although becoming a primary school teacher had not been her chosen career path, she felt that she had little choice but to leave her family home in Nampula to attend the Centro 8 de

¹ Amélia Lemos, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, June 22, 2022.

² "Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes," *Tempográfica* No. 337, March 1977, 16-35.

Março. “It was like a call to the fatherland (*chamamento para a pátria*),”³ she remembered forty-three years later, when we spoke in 2021.

At the time we didn’t even choose the subject. It was all: see where there were vacancies and put [us] there. [...] By that I mean, I don’t know if young people today would accept everything we accepted, because now things are different. They’ve changed. People are more demanding of their rights. But back then, we accepted everything, without complaining too much. Whatever we were told to do, we did without too much complaint.⁴

The March 8th directive was one of many instances in which the Frelimo government issued a ‘call to the fatherland’ on the independence generation. Like the cultural activities, that were the subject of the previous chapter, these calls were instances during which the independence generation encountered Frelimo’s authoritative discourse about youth, albeit in ways very different to the singing, dancing and playing discussed previously.

Unlike the cultural activities, calls to serve the revolution were of an obligatory nature, demanding young people to make ‘sacrifices’ of various kinds. The March 8th directives that Amélia Lemos was recruited for were the first large scale call of this kind. They demanded young people to put aside their individual career aspirations for the benefit of the People’s national reconstruction efforts. Others followed suit: ‘volunteer brigades’ were often only voluntary in name, as students who refused to work the fields of collective farms during annual ‘*actividades das férias*’ (school holiday activities) were aware that such refusal could lead to harsh punishment. And in 1978, Frelimo introduced a two-year obligatory military service (Serviço Militar Obrigatório, SMO) through which thousands of young Mozambicans risked their lives in the on-going war against Renamo.⁵

³ Amélia Lemos, interview.

⁴ Amélia Lemos, interview.

⁵ “Lei do Serviço Militar Obrigatório,” *Tempográfica* No. 391, April 1978, 36-41.

This chapter explores how members of the independence generation related to Frelimo's authoritative discourse of the revolutionary youth in a context where it was used to make demands and impose new constraints on their careers, physical labour, comfort, personal safety and even lives. Drawing on oral history accounts from young people who came of age during the socialist era in Maputo, alongside media sources, I ask whether and how the independence generation related to the ideals of the revolutionary youth differently in such instances when acting on these ideals was less aligned with their tastes and interests as individuals. I focus in particular on the March 8th directives, with reference also to school holiday work and the SMO, to argue that in the contexts of the calls to service, young people attributed great authority to Frelimo's revolutionary youth discourse, while making use of the unintended new opportunities that opened up for them by responding to 'calls to service.' In this manner, they were able to uphold their sense of self as living up to the ideal, revolutionary youth, an end to which the 'sacrifice' of one's career choice seemed reasonable. In relation to other calls to service, this calculus seems to have lost a balance that young people deemed reasonable. As the 1970s came to an end, the war with Renamo intensified and Frelimo became increasingly obsessed with moral policing, Frelimo's authoritative discourse became an instrument in Mozambique's wider system of discipline and authoritarian rule.

Calling the Youth to Service

If cultural activities had become a wide-spread context through which many young people in the urban areas encountered Frelimo's authoritative discourse, a similar state-socialist popular ritual were Frelimo's collective labour activities. Party cells, for example, regularly organized so-called *jornadas da limpeza* (neighbourhood cleaning days), during which citizens took to sweeping the streets. Like the cultural activities, such ritualistic events were steeped in

authoritative discourse. A typical *jornada da limpeza* could entail speeches, referring to or quoting Samora Machel, ‘*vivas*,’ singing of revolutionary hymns or the recitation of *palavras de ordem* (watchwords).⁶ Sometimes, *jornadas* were accompanied by a *Notícias* journalist who would report not only on the activities performed, but also on the educational, purifying meaning of these deeply political, revolutionary acts. In relation to the revolutionary ideals on gender equality, for instance, an activist commented to a *Notícias* journalist:

Here we have ladies working side by side with men. Previously, discrimination was not only tribal but also sexual. Today, in the cleaning brigades, women work just like men. They have the same hours, [...] there’s simply no possibility of [separation].⁷

In the second half of the 1970s, *Notícias* proudly reported that *jornadas da limpeza* were now often organised and led by the nascent OJM structures, instances that according to the journalists showcased the exemplary participation of the youth in the national reconstruction effort.⁸ The young participants on their end, did not miss these opportunities to frame their engagement in the collective voluntary work as evidence that the youth had indeed understood their revolutionary assignment and were embodying the party’s ideals. Addressing a crown of youth volunteers after a successful *jornada*, and evidently aware that such a conversation required speaking in the language of the state, an OJM member thanked: “the chamber of workers for creating the necessary conditions for us to fulfil our duty.”⁹ He added: “What we

⁶ Vivas (call and response interactions with the audience) and watchwords were common features of Frelimo’s authoritative discourse, see chapter five. See also: Eric Allina, ‘Unimaginable Community: Watchwords and Frelimo’s Abandoned Nationalism in Independence-Era Mozambique’, *The Journal of African History* 65, no. 1 (2024): 85–103; Colin Darch and David Hedges, ‘Samora Machel: The Beira Speech’, *African Yearbook of Rhetoric* 2, no. 3 (2011): 67–83.

⁷ Neves Afonso, quoted in: “Preocupamo-nos em melhorar limpeza da cidade,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 17, 1976, 2.

⁸ “Juventude participa em jornada de limpeza,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 16, 1976, 1; “Centenas de Pessoas limpam valas nos subúrbios de Maputo Iniciativa da OJM,” *Jornal Notícias*, October 18, 1976, 3; “Preocupamo-nos em melhorar limpeza da cidade,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 17, 1976, 2; “Juventude da Frelimo realiza Campanha de Limpeza,” *Jornal Notícias*, January 21, 1977, 2.

⁹ “Centenas de Pessoas.”

did today was one of the tasks entrusted to us by the Nation, now that the youth in Mozambique is defined as the *Seiva da Nação* (the Sap of the Nation).¹⁰

March 8th Directives

While *jornadas da limpeza* were volunteer activities that young people could for the most part opt-in and out freely, other ‘calls to serve the revolution’ were of a more compulsory nature. Through the prism of these ‘calls to service’ Frelimo recruited youth labour to fill the drastic shortage left behind by the departure of the Portuguese settlers.¹¹ The March 8th decision we learned about above were one of the first large-scale call of such sort. A majority of March 8th recruits went into primary school teaching, like Amélia Lemos. Another large group replaced professionals across industry, administration, and secondary school education. Some members of both groups received short, specialized training at the Centro 8 de Março, a politico-educational training centre that Frelimo had built for this purpose.¹² By mid-1977, the Centro housed 217 students, who attended propaedeutic courses in Arts and Sciences, and secondary school teacher training in Maths, Physics, Chemistry, History, Biology and Geography.¹³ A first group of 37 students had graduated from three months courses in accounting and production management (*mestres de oficina*) in the fields of electricity and mechanics, and were now “distributed across various provinces of the country.”¹⁴ A final group of high school students of an unknown number was mandated to join the country’s nascent defence structures, including the army, marines and *forças populares* (army).¹⁵

¹⁰ “Centenas de Pessoas.”

¹¹ See chapter three.

¹² “Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes,” *Tempográfica* No. 337, March 1977, 16-35.

¹³ “Centro 8 de Março: nova forja de quadros para a reconstrução nacional,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 14, 1977, 5.

¹⁴ “Centro 8 de Março,” 5.

¹⁵ “Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes,” 16-35.

For the young people who formed part of the March 8th generation, this constituted not only a drastic change in their lives, but one that the Frelimo party-state justified through the revolutionary discourse about the meaning and role of the youth: a historic responsibility towards ‘continuing’ the revolution, the heroic youth of the liberation, and a rejection of individualism and opportunism. During his lecture on March 8th, Machel explained:

It’s not [about] what I want, what you want, but what we want. Not [about] what I want, what you want, but what the People want. The demands of our People. [...] in order to truly continue the Revolution, you must realise the profound meaning of your mission as students. You have to realise that the school where you study is the fruit of the blood and sacrifice of our People. The stones, the walls and the ceiling are the result of sweat mixed with cement and sand [...] Our students [...] must understand that, as the fruit of our People’s struggle, schools exist to serve the People. [...] your priority task is to study, to study in order to better serve the People and not to use your knowledge for personal gain and against the interests of the people. You are at school to fulfil a task that the People have entrusted to you, not to fulfil your individual desires. That is why it is up to the Party and the State, which represent the interests of the People, to decide on your fate as students.¹⁶

Furthermore, authoritative discourse also permeated the activities at the Centro 8 de Março themselves. The Centro was modelled on Frelimo’s *centros pilotos* (pilot centres) that the movement developed in the liberated zones as holistic political-educational schools. Like the struggle culture, these were spheres steeped in Frelimo’s pedagogy and authoritative discourse. Students at the Centro engaged the typical ‘guided study’ of Frelimo’s texts. One former student at the Centro recalled that their studies included, for example, the Central Committee Report to Frelimo’s III Congress.¹⁷ Within these documents, the student explained to a *Notícias* journalist: “we search primarily for aspects that are related to our lives, the importance of

¹⁶ “Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes,” 26.

¹⁷ “Centro 8 de Marco,” 5.

Education in the present moment. In this spirit, we conduct a guided study (*estudo orientado*) with debates and other forms of analysis.”¹⁸

Beyond specialized academic and political study, the students also attended politico-military training, which involved military-style morning routines, like marching, exercise, collective labour and singing revolutionary hymns under the instruction of a militant trained in the liberated zones, as Amélia Lemos remembered:

For us, who were at the [centro] 8 de Marco and other centres, one of the first things we learned was military training. We had to get up at 4am in the morning, make our beds, go march, come back, take off the uniform, wash, run down to have breakfast and go to class. We left the classrooms after the morning classes, had lunch, and afterwards we had to go to the fields or care for the animals. The idea was to change our way of being. In the revolution, the motto was creating the New Man, and this New Man needed to be different.¹⁹

Frelimo had long cultivated a belief in the pedagogical and purifying abilities of manual labour not only in relation to youth. From the military training centre in Nachingwea to the Frelimo schools (*centros pilotos*), manual and particularly agricultural labour played an important pedagogical role in forging the New Man during the liberation struggle. Continuing his address to the student audience on March 8th, Machel explained:

you should produce so that you don't forget your class origins, so that you learn to always link theory to practice, which is the basis of scientific knowledge. Produce for the school to be self-sufficient. [...] You must take care to preserve your school. In this way, you will be worthy of the sacrifices made by the People so that you can study, so that you are defending, consolidating and enhancing the achievements of the Revolution.²⁰

¹⁸ “Centro 8 de Marco,” 5.

¹⁹ Amélia Lemos, interview.

²⁰ “Discurso do Presidente Samora, na Reunião com os Estudantes,” 34.

Manual labour, as the students of the Centro practiced it, but also as the OJM promoted it through its collective labour activities were thus, like the cultural activities, instances where Frelimo's discourse on revolutionary youth became tied to embodied practices and experiences.

And like during the OJM foundation campaign and the cultural activities, students typically emerged from the Centro at least literate (even if perhaps not convinced) in Frelimo's authoritative discourse on the meaning and role of youth in the revolution. When, in January 1978, the first group of 92 students at the Centro 8 de Março had concluded their training as secondary school teachers, for example, they wrote a public message in which they affirmed: "their willingness to proceed with the fulfilment of the tasks given, demonstrating in this manner, that [they] had assumed the true meaning of the creation of these courses after the abolition of the tenth and eleventh grade."²¹

Unlike the cultural activities, however, the labour activities, through Frelimo's authoritative discourse, made drastically different demands on the independence generation. Embodying the *Seiva da Nacao* (Sap of the Nation) did not mean receiving invitations to perform dance choreographies at high-level state events. Rather it meant conceding career prospects, physical hardships and risking bodily harm or even their lives. In the March 8th directives, for one, it meant that students, who would have otherwise had a chance at attending university, were asked to abandon or at least stagnated this path. The 600 students who attended the last two years of secondary school in 1977 had been part of the small group that had gained access to schooling prior to 1975. This part of Mozambican society valued (higher) education as a path

²¹ "Estudantes do 8 de Marco Concluem Curso de Formacao," *Jornal Noticias*, January 9, 1978, 1.

for social upward mobility.²² Through the March 8th directives, they lost the opportunity to attend university by entering the professional life with just a high school degree, or, worse still, lost the opportunity at any professional life if selected to serve as soldiers.

The March 8th directive were of a compulsory nature, leaving young people, and their parents little room to opt out of them. The prospect that their children should sacrifice their chance at receiving secondary or tertiary education worried even those families that were otherwise loyal and enthusiastic about Frelimo's revolutionary plans. For another part of the independence generation, however, Frelimo's premises failed to convincingly account for the sacrifices demanded of them. Across the media, archives and oral accounts, traces of resistance to the labour recruitment policies are plenty. Among the March 8th generation, parents seem to have tried different strategies to mitigate the effects on their children's careers. Reportedly, parents who wanted university degrees for their children tried to move them into the Centro 8 de Março, where they would at least receive some higher education. Others wanted their children's work placements to be closer to home, rather than in faraway provinces that they had no family networks in and had never been to. Carla Mabote's father for example, "didn't accept" her placement in Magude in the province of Gaza. Using his contacts to the city administration, Carla recalled: "he managed that I was allocated to a secondary school in Matola."²³ In general, the decision-making process through which the students were selected into the respective groups or allocated placements was not known to my interviewees. Consequently, rumours circulated about the selection process. Rasmi Laxmane, for example,

²² Parents and students alike were well aware of the paths taken by Frelimo founder Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique's first PhD graduate, and the Frelimo-recruits who had been sent abroad for higher education and now occupied high positions in government. The examples are manifold, to give an illustration: José Matheus Kathupa was called back from a UK university to serve as high-ranking OJM official, John Kachamila was called back from university in Yugoslavia into a minister position.

²³ Carla Mabote, interview with Johanna Wetzel, Maputo, June 29, 2022.

whose parents were of Indian descent, believed that her racial heritage (“*a tradição dos meus pais*”) was a crucial obstacle to her attending the Centro. Instead, she was selected into the group who went to begin teaching directly (“*sem formação*”) in her former primary school. Others believed that bribery did the trick. According to one teacher, it was often the children of poorer parents with less financial and social capital, who ended up in the army.²⁴

Collective Labour through Volunteer Work

Other calls to service made demands of a different nature on the revolutionary youth, but in a similarly compulsory fashion. Over the course of the 1970s, the party built a substantial youth volunteering infrastructure through the OJM and schools. Youth ‘volunteers’ showed up ad-hoc when needed, for example when a crucial rice harvest on the state-run farms of the Limpopo Valley was threatened in 1978. Due to the inexperienced use of excessive use of fertilizer and an unusually strong wind, much of the crop had grown in ways that made it impossible to harvest using machines.²⁵ In a mass-mobilisation effort, Frelimo brought “busloads”²⁶ of volunteers, including youth volunteer brigades,²⁷ to hand-scythe this year’s crop on Chokwe’s rice fields. Frelimo also set up more structured programmes for youth volunteers. Through the OJM, “brigades” of youth volunteers ventured into Mozambique’s rural areas to build sanitary facilities,²⁸ playgrounds,²⁹ and work on collective farms.³⁰ Youth volunteer brigades organized

²⁴ Anonymous teacher, interview by Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo 27, 2022.

²⁵ “Brigadas de jovens de Maputo na Ceifa do arroz em Chokwé,” *Jornal Notícias*, June 10, 1978.

²⁶ “Mozambique: Changing the Tune,” *Africa Confidential* 19, no. 20, October 6, 1978, accessed via MHN.

²⁷ “Brigadas de jovens de Maputo,”

²⁸ “Encontro de estudantes programa brigada de férias,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 11, 1976, 3.

²⁹ “Encontro de estudantes,” 3.

³⁰ “Inhambane: Juventude trabalha em machamba comunal,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 31, 1977, 3; “Brigadas da OJM em Sofala,” *Jornal Notícias*, January 2, 1978, 4; “Tete - Brigada da O.J.M. visita Aleidas Comunais,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 29, 1978, 3; “Gaza - Brigada Nacional da O.J.M. visitou Distrito de Chibuto,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 19, 1978, 3.

adult literacy classes³¹ and worked in factories for short periods of time.³² Some OJM branches established Departments of Voluntary Work,³³ and organized their own collective farms.³⁴ Yet others were engaged in large scale development projects, such as the construction of an OJM school in Moatize in a joint effort with youth volunteer brigades from across the socialist world. Besides the OJM, schools started organising ‘*brigadas das férias*’ (school holiday brigades) in 1976, which took students to work on collective farms for several weeks during annual school and university holidays.³⁵ In exceptional cases, school holiday brigades also worked in factories.³⁶

In a similar vein to the practice of collective, manual labour at the Centro 8 de Março, the OJM also thought of youth labour as a pedagogical activity in relation to Frelimo’s wider discourse about youth. The authors of the OJM’s programme noted, for example:

Voluntary work is one of the best ways of demonstrating the engagement of the youth in the revolutionary process. In dedicating part of one’s leisure time to diverse tasks of National Reconstruction, our Youth affirms in practice their identification with the interests of the Mozambican working classes, their desire to participate actively in the construction of socialism.³⁷

As a result, as we saw above, these kinds of labour became opportunities for young people to demonstrate and embody their commitment to the revolutionary values.

Volunteer work in the context of the school holiday brigades (*brigadas das férias*) demanded young people to give up comforts of a more physical nature. As school holiday brigades and

³¹ “Machambas da OJM em Zavala,” *Jornal Notícias*, April 5, 1978, 3.

³² “Plano de Atividades da OJM Desenvolve-se a Nível Nacional,” *Jornal Notícias*, August 16, 1977, 1.

³³ “Jovens Preparam Primeira Conferência Nacional,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 3, 1977, 5b.

³⁴ “Actividades da OJM em Mecúfi,” *Jornal Notícias*, April 3, 1978, “Machambas da OJM em Zavala,” 3.

³⁵ “Encontro de estudante,” 3; “Atividades de Férias,” *Jornal Notícias*, November 11, 1976, 3.

³⁶ “Última fase das actividades de férias leva estudantes às unidades fabris,” *Jornal Notícias*, February 1, 1978, 3.

³⁷ “Resoluções Especiais da I Conferencia Nacional da Juventude Moçambicana,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 10, 1977, 7.

volunteer brigades worked in factories, but more often on farms or in clean up brigades, they engaged in tasks that this same part of society had long viewed as social degradation, rather than elevation. But the manual labour also bore real dangers and physical discomforts, and strains on the body. Practically, young people were often taken to remote locations with rudimentary food, health and sanitation facilities. Participants could incur physical injuries from the work, or catch diseases.³⁸ José Mateus Katupha, who was a high-ranking member of the OJM at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, remembered an instance during the *Actividades de Julho* (July Activities) the equivalent to the school holiday brigades (*brigadas das férias*) for university students, where a student got injured during the work:

I remember when we went to Niassa with some colleagues to cut bamboo, there was a colleague [...] I don't remember exactly, he was white. He had 10 bamboos on his shoulder and when he got to the unloading point, he was all red with blood, poor guy, but that's what was done at the time.³⁹

Reports of OJM meetings are filled with complaints about parents who kept their children away from “spontaneously engaging in the work of national reconstruction.”⁴⁰

Serviço Militar Obrigatório

The by far most drastic demands that ‘calls to service’ made on young people were through the SMO. Military life was characterised by hardships unknown to most young people. Furthermore, as Frelimo began supporting the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) in their military campaigns against the Rhodesian regime, conscripts were sent to the war fronts across the country, where they risked physical injury and even losing their lives.⁴¹ As the war

³⁸ Amélia Lemos, interview with Johanna Wetzel, Maputo, June 22, 2022.

³⁹ José Mateus Kathupa, interview with Johanna Wetzel (video call), Maputo-Moscow, June 21, 2022.

⁴⁰ “Consciencializar País do Papel dos Jovens na Sociedade,” *Jornal Notícias*, February 9, 1976, 2.

⁴¹ Clinarete Victoria Luis Munguambe, ‘Nationalism and Exile in an Age of Solidarity: Frelimo-ZANU Relations in Mozambique (1975-1980)’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 161–78, <https://doi.org/0.1080/03057070.2017.1273537>.

against Renamo intensified after 1979 and reached its peak in 1983, this risk became ever greater.

Like other calls on the south, the SMO was framed within the authoritative discourse on the role and meaning of youth in the revolution. In a speech of December 1982, for example, Machel drew parallels to the heroic, if mythical 'youth of the liberation' and their sacrifices:

The day before yesterday we were fighting against colonialism, for the liberation of the land and of men. [...] Young people played an important role in the liberation of our land. Many of them sacrificed themselves so that Mozambique would be free. Then they saw the racists from Rhodesia. That was the war we fought yesterday. In this war too, young people once again gave their all to uncompromisingly defend our sovereignty, to defend our territorial integrity, sparing no effort or sacrifice, including the sacrifice of their own lives. And they did all this to consolidate the Revolution, democracy, peace and progress. [...] Today we have the war against the armed bandits.⁴²

While it is difficult to gauge how wide-spread defections from the military were, attempts to avoid recruitment were likely most widespread among military conscripts. The law for military conscription itself alluded to some common strategies. It prohibited, for example, that men and women above the age of 17, who had not enrolled in the *recenseamento* yet should be allowed to leave the country.⁴³ To avoid recruitment, young men and women seem to have frequently left their home neighbourhoods and moved to different parts of the city, where they could maintain a higher degree of anonymity and avoid conscription. By 1984, the matter had come to the attention of the news readership. In a letter to the editors of the weekly newspaper *Tempo*, for example, one Alfredo Joaquim Faztudo reported a conversation with a young man from Catémbe, the other side of Maputo Bay. Asking why he does not want to live there

⁴² "Os jovens são os fazedores da vitória: Presidente Samora Machel no Dia da Juventude Moçambicana," *Jornal Notícias*, 12 December 1982, 5.

⁴³ "Lei do Serviço Militar Obrigatório," 36-41.

anymore, Alfredo reported that the young man answered that it was “because of this situation with the army.” He explained further: “that’s why I avoid living in my neighbourhood, because all the structures of my neighbourhood know every house that has youths.” Shocked, Alfredo asked “the dear readers whether this type of behaviour from our Youth is correct”⁴⁴ and recommended alarming the authorities. That it was not uncommon for military recruits to attempt to circumvent the law was also reflected in my interviews. Some, who were recruited, recalled inventing strategies to be released from military service as soon as they were stationed. One interviewee for example, remembered: “When the War of 16 years [...] started, I had to invent a disease to return to Maputo.”⁴⁵ Others deserted from their bases and fled across the Zimbabwean border.

The calls to service thus differed fundamentally in their nature from other kinds of activities and opportunities that the revolutionary youth discourse and organizational practice offered the members of the independence generation. While these calls too created encounters with this discourse, the context they provided was one in which this same discourse made drastic demands on young people, in ways that were not voluntary but imposed obligations.

Revolutionary Ideals in the Face of Sacrifice

What did it mean for young people to be the subjects of demands with such drastic implications for their lives? And how did the context of the labour recruitment policies shape how they related to the ideals and expectations in Frelimo’s discourse about revolutionary youth?

⁴⁴ Alfredo Joaquim Faztudo, “Porque os nossos jovens têm medo do SMO?” *Tempográfica*, January 1984, accessed via MHN.

⁴⁵ Martins Zunguza, interview by Ana Chongo, Maputo, July 11, 2022.

To investigate these questions, the next sections hone in particularly on the oral historical accounts of members of the March 8th generation. This generation represents a small age-cohort within the larger independence generation, whose experience coming of age was shaped by the demands made on them through the March 8th directives. Today, the March 8th generation has become a general term under which the ‘sacrifices’ that the independence generation made for the sake of the national reconstruction efforts are broadly summarized. Among this self-styled generation, many of my Maputo-based interviewees voices regrets at the opportunities they missed. Those who changed their career as a result of the March 8th directives often tried to reverse the stalling effects on their educational journeys later. They completed their high school education in after-work classes and part-time university courses, to be able to “catch up” with their colleagues, or simply because it was of personal value to them to hold a university degree. Carla Mabote, for example, went back to studying biology, the discipline she had felt drawn to as a young woman, ten years later at university, but chose a pedagogical degree that allowed her to focus on teaching rather than practicing biology-related subjects. Similarly, Rasmi Laxmane and Carlos Lauxande completed their high school degrees, and Carlos went on to get an undergraduate degree and then graduate degree abroad.⁴⁶

These same people recall, however, that the real costs of the March 8th directives had only become clear to them years later. Francisco Moiane, for example, who was placed as a primary school teacher without the chance to attend the Centro 8 de Marco, and through it obtain a university degree, noted when we spoke in 2022:

At the time [...], we felt it was a mission, we only saw afterwards that ‘oh, it seems that those who went [to the Centro] had more to gain than those

⁴⁶ Rasmi Laxmane, interview with Michael-Jorge Juma, Maputo July 31, 2022; Carlos Lauxande, interview with Michael-Jorge Juma, Maputo, July 31, 2022.

of us who stayed.’ And it was this comparison that brought about a feeling of having wasted time as a young person - those who returned from the training courses are already being called ‘doctor,’ C’mon, what about me? I’m contributing, but I don’t have a degree!⁴⁷

At the time, people like Francisco Moiane and Amélia Lemos recalled having “accepted everything, without too much complaint.”

In response to Amélia Lemos’ question, I argue below that in part, young people accepted the demands and constraints imposed through the March 8th directives because they attributed great authority to Frelimo’s revolutionary youth discourse. In another part, they also made use of the unintended new opportunities that opened up for them through the ‘calls to service.’ Both factors enabled the recruits to fashion a sense of self as living up to the ideal, revolutionary youth.

The March 8th directives initially also bore some unintended perks and opportunities that were very appealing for young men and women in the short run. For several former participants, the ‘call from the Nation’ allowed them to escape other structures of authority and control. As students were moved to boarding-school style professional training centres, such as the Centro 8 de Março or teacher accommodations in remote locations across the country, sons and especially daughter recalled enjoying their newfound freedom from parental control. David Cossa, for example, recalled: “it was an extraordinary experience, because of the model, the lifestyle, is to live in a boarding school. It’s a new experience, and I also started studying away from my family, I started having to take care of myself without my family being around.”⁴⁸ Some young women, such as Carla Mabote, who attended a teacher training centre, traded

⁴⁷ Francisco Moiane, interview.

⁴⁸ David Cossa, interview with Valdo Congolo, Maputo, July 09, 2021.

their final years of high school quite happily against the new degree of every-day autonomy from parental control:

It was the first time I'd been away from home. I arrived at the students' home, all that euphoria, firstly, because I was away from home, away from my parents' control. I saw there a freedom to be able to transform myself a little, to be someone else, to follow other rules and not those rules at home.⁴⁹

By providing an opportunity to escape parental control, if only to render oneself subject to the Frelimo state's revolutionary control and career planning in the long run, the recruitment campaigns also altered some young people's ability to choose their own trajectories. Alberto Quepiso, for example, signed up for an educational stay in Cuba to escape a life in rural Gaza, for which Frelimo recruited students alongside the March 8th decisions. He recalled doing so explicitly without his parents' approval:

I didn't even ask my parents. I signed up and after I had signed up, I went to tell them that I had been selected to go to Cuba. My parents didn't like it and tried to stop me travelling to Cuba, but the new regime was strict in terms of fulfilling its plans. That's why, in 1977, I ended up travelling to Cuba.⁵⁰

Conscious of the revolutionary system of governance, Alberto Quepiso made use of Frelimo's call on the youth to escape parental control and a life in farming.⁵¹ Alberto Quepiso's and other's memories highlight one the one hand that young people moved between complex systems of authority and control, of which Frelimo's labour recruitment infrastructure was only one. In exchange for a degree of freedom from parental control, young people, in some cases, accepted Frelimo's norm of serving the revolution rather happily.

⁴⁹ Carla Mabote, interview.

⁵⁰ Alberto Quepiso, interview with Michael-Jorge Juma, Maputo, September 7, 2022.

⁵¹ Alberto Quepiso, interview.

But in another part, some of the participants had also genuinely accepted the authority of the revolutionary discourse, and perhaps more importantly, Frelimo and president Machel, and drew on it to make sense of the demands and hardships that were asked of them. Reflecting further on his choice, Alberto Quepiso added:

Let's say that in my time, young people ended up being influenced by the winds of the revolution. The new winds of the revolution ended up transforming young people into what they [Frelimo] wanted Mozambican society to be.⁵²

To others, such as Carlos Lauxande, Machel's ideals translated similarly into a sense of social responsibility, that rendered an otherwise involuntary career change following March 8th meaningful. Initially wanting to become a chemical engineer, Carlos Lauxande explained that "due to the lack of teachers and the government's decision to turn us into teachers,"⁵³ his expectations for his own life trajectory changed. When probed a bit further on what the March 8th decision meant to him at the time, he added:

There was a bit of a mix of social responsibility, expectation from society, knowing that this is what I was going to do was very useful for society given the narrative that existed in the country, of the revolution. So, we engaged in this revolutionary process, and this revolutionary process shaped our way of thinking. We began to think that the expectations of serving the people were more important than our individual expectations.⁵⁴

And further:

This [March 8] group all came together at first with the idea of serving the People. They were young idealists; they were looking for something [to do] and a historic mission came up. The comparison we made [was this]: if there was a group for 64, for the post-independence period it was our group that was responsible for trying to shape society according to these socialist expectations within the framework of the idea of serving the people. That

⁵² Alberto Quepiso, interview.

⁵³ Carlos Lauxande, interview.

⁵⁴ Carlos Lauxande, interview.

was the narrative, that was the ideal. To what extent that ideal was realized in reality was another matter.⁵⁵

For Carlos Lauxande, the notion that the youth had a duty to ‘serve’ the revolution provided meaning to the demands made on him through the March 8th directives. Having accepted Frelimo’s authority, ‘serving’ the revolution allowed him to uphold a sense of self as belonging to the group of revolutionary minded, progressive forces, that Frelimo’s authoritative discourse painted the youth as.

Like Carlos, other labour recruits had also accepted Frelimo’s premise of the authoritative discourse that the revolutionary vanguard had the authority to guide and direct the youth, and that it was the youth’s role let themselves be guided by the revolutionary vanguard. Another young man, David Cossa, who was ‘re-oriented’ as a teacher (as late as 1986), reaffirmed this: “The model, the one of the state and government of Mozambique, was the one that the state guided. Not the citizen, not to make his own choice, to be able to follow the area of preference.”⁵⁶ Similarly, Martins Zunguza, who was recruited to receive professional training in East Germany noted: “Youth were the driving force of the country, they worked in all the areas that were needed. We were taught both at school and at home that youth should get involved in [these] activities without questioning [them].”⁵⁷

For these and others, Machel’s authority and an imagined special bond with them as ‘youth’ reflected on the March 8th directives. Most March 8th students recalled vividly the settings in which they received their mission to serve the revolution from Machel. Some, such as Carla

⁵⁵ Carlos Lauxande, interview.

⁵⁶ Beyond the decision of March 8th ‘reorientations,’ as they were referred to at the time, seem to have taken place in different shapes. David Cossa, for example, was ‘reorientated’ into becoming a teacher as late as 1986.

⁵⁶ David Cossa, interview.

⁵⁷ Martins Zunguza, interview.

Mabote, recalled listening to Machel's announcement of the March 8th measures with their school and university classes, when:

he explained to us the country's need to train cadres (*quadros*), Mozambique was already independent, and that many Portuguese cadres (*quadros*) were leaving the country and the main areas were education, others defence and others health, and the resulting necessity to recruit all students in the final years of high school into education and defence. So, at that point it was decided that there would no longer be a 12th class, so we all went to the training centre.⁵⁸

Machel's discourse, his engaging and charismatic performances, and the cult of personality that developed around him, left profound impressions on his young audience and gave meaning to their experiences during the March 8th sacrifices.⁵⁹ In response to her own question, Amélia Lemos responded:

[we accepted these things] also because we had a president who demanded a lot but he had a very clear vision of what he wanted for the country, he was very correct and he said that the only people who could hold the country together were the youth. He said if you don't hold this together, we won't succeed. So, at that time there was a mobilisation and all those who were part of the Centro 8 de Março knew that we had to study to hold the country together. There was a shortage of teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, there was a shortage of everything. If the cadres that exist today and are about to retire, if there hadn't been that mobilisation, I believe they wouldn't exist.⁶⁰

Thus, profoundly impacted by Machel's discourse on the subject, some students made sense of their experiences and hardships during the March 8th directives through the parameters of the discourse. In the context of the calls to service, young people thus encountered Frelimo's discourse on revolutionary youth as an authoritative framework through which their 'sacrifices'

⁵⁸ Carla Mabote, interview.

⁵⁹ On Machel's charismatic performances, see introduction and Colin Darch and David Hedges, 'Political Rhetoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975', *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 10–19.

⁶⁰ Amélia Lemos, interview.

attained a wider meaning and allowed them to fashion a sense of self as making their ‘due contribution.’

Conjuring the *Pidezinho*: Violence and Excitable Speech

In relation to other calls to service, such as manual holiday work and especially the SMO, this calculus seems to have gone out of balance. As we saw above, particularly deflection from the SMO was wide-spread and increasingly became a problem for Frelimo’s army. The independence generation’s refusal to engage in the labour activities meant not only a further strain on the labour market but also endangered the project of forging the New Man. Losing the youth, meant losing the future. In response, Frelimo conjured a new figure into the authoritative discourse on youth, and with it a direct threat of violence that had so far been absent from it. Through the figure of the *Pidezinho*, Frelimo’s script on revolutionary youth became another tool in its unfolding system of social engineering through violent policing, and re-education.

During his address to the students on March 8th, Machel had developed a discourse that equated a failure to enthusiastically take up the labour policies with the actions of a youthful ‘traitor.’ Prior to March 8th, traitors featured in Machel’s addresses to the youth as *Xiconhocas*, dodgy figures who came out to prey on innocent youths in Maputo’s bars and dance locales, to seduce them into drinking and to implant ‘bourgeoise’ tastes and ideas into their heads.⁶¹ Newspapers caricatures parents as *Xiconhocas* who deviate their children from fulfilling their historic missions as part of the national reconstruction efforts. Published shortly after March

⁶¹ Maria Paula Meneses, ‘Xiconhoca, o inimigo: Narrativas de violência sobre a construção da nação em Moçambique’, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 106 (2015): 09–52.

8th, 1977, one comic (see below), for example, depicted a Xiconhoca, who exclaims: “National interest, *nada!* No one will tell ME what my son will become!! I’M the one who PAYS! I’M the one who KNOWS!!!”



Figure 15: “Xiconhoca o Inimigo (8 de Março),” *Jornal Notícias*, March 13, 1977, 3.

Unlike the *Xiconhocas*, the traitor figure who Machel conjured in relation to the labour recruitment was himself a youth, the *pidexito* or *pidexinbo*. This youthful traitor figure arose out of a re-interpretation of the student revolt at the Mozambique Institute that also informed the March 8th decisions:

The little agents of the ‘enemy! [The enemy] infiltrated children to grow up within FRELIMO and to be able to argue FRELIMO’s policy. In order to get to know FRELIMO’s education system, these *pidexitos* had the central task of creating indiscipline in the schools, creating liberalism in the schools, creating confusion in the schools, creating tribalism in the schools, fostering

corruption in the schools, in short, spreading the enemy's ideology among the pupils, using FRELIMO's schools.⁶²

Drawing a link to the present, he continued:

So, when we see certain types of indiscipline in our schools today, especially in the cities, we recognise that this is part of the old tactic [...] The students who refuse [Frelimo's] policy are, once again, the little *pidezitos*. They dirty their desks, and we say to them again that they're *pidezinhos* again. Write on the walls, in the toilets, and we'll say that there are the little *pidezinhos*.⁶³

In Machel's logic, it was no far fetch from an undisciplined student, who "refuse[d] the policy," to a *pidezito*. Refusal of Frelimo's directives, or worse, refusal to engage in manual and collective work, indicated the colonial-capitalist mentality of the enemy: "the elements imbued with the capitalist mentality are characterised by a systematic refusal to accept our guidelines, by a refusal to fight against their inner tendencies (internally). They are individualists, they reject collective work and the exchange of experiences." Driving the point home further, Machel engaged the March 8th audience in his typical call-response-style:

An unruly pupil at school reveals what? [audience: traces! (*vestigios*)]. A pupil who disobeys his teachers reveals what? [audience: traces! (*vestigios*)]. He carries the enemy's central base [in his head]. He transports (*Ele transporta*). We look at him and say that the head is the enemy's central base and he carries it. *Vestigios*. A student who refuses to take part in our People's dances shows an inferiority complex. A pupil who refuses to take part in a school meeting to discuss the life of the school shows *vestigios*. He represents the head of a PIDE. Has the head of a reactionary. The pupil who refuses manual labour shows traces. 'Get my hands dirty? I've got a servant (*moleque*) at home!' The pupil who refuses to keep the school clean shows *vestigios* and is the enemy's centrepiece. A reactionary's head that carries the enemy's ideas. He's a transport.⁶⁴

Words, such as 'enemy,' transport and '*pidezito*' were more than polemics. They were rhetoric threats that were "central to [Frelimo's] theatrics of violence."⁶⁵ By 1977, a "politics of

⁶² "Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes," 24.

⁶³ "Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes," 24.

⁶⁴ "Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes," 21.

⁶⁵ Igreja, 'Frelimo's Political Ruling'.

purification”⁶⁶ was well under way in socialist Mozambique. It targeted individuals who supposedly showed ‘traces’ of a ‘colonial-capitalist’ mindset, including acts such as “sabotage,” “indiscipline,” and “refusal to obey orders.”⁶⁷ Traitors were denounced through an elaborate network of ever-vigilant party officials, neighbours and superiors and often spent years in re-education camps in Niassa without trial and sometimes even without knowing who had denounced them and for what offence. As Benedito Machava’s study of the re-education system has shown, the inability of the overburdened justice administrators to give due process to the accused gave particularly party members and the well-connected disproportionate powers to denounce anyone unwilling to accept their power and orders.⁶⁸ Denunciation, deportation and ‘re-education’ also awaited many of those who were reluctant to render their labour to the *aldeias comunais* (communal villages) and other ‘national reconstruction’ efforts, and as we will see, also young people who refused to come to the service of the revolution.

Against this background of deportation, re-education and arbitrary law enforcement that could deprive people of their freedom by evicting them to the most remote locations in northern Mozambique. Machel’s creation of the *pideziinho* was more than an innocent, if mythical story. It was a threat to use violence against those who refused to follow Frelimo’s policies, as Victor Igreja put it, it was “excitable speech.”⁶⁹ Addressing now the *pidezitos* in the audience’s ‘midst:

Why didn’t you leave with your bosses? They’re here, listening to me, at this point, and they say ‘let’s not go!’ But we’re saying: we’re going to evict them, we’re going to evict them by force, these *pideziinhos*, agents of the enemy, who are mediocre agents.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Darch and Israel, ‘Mozambique’s “Teachers of the Negative”’.

⁶⁷ Machava, ‘The Morality of the Revolution.’

⁶⁸ Machava.

⁶⁹ Igreja, ‘Frelimo’s Political Ruling’ borrowing from Judith Butler, 795.

⁷⁰ “Discurso do Presidente Samora na Reunião com os Estudantes,” 24.

According to Igreja, drawing on Judith Butler, excitable speech is “a sovereign speech act, a speech act with the power to do what it says.”⁷¹ As such, it is a speech act that can do more than symbolic harm, it can threaten the body’s existence. According to Igreja, Machel employed this kind of speech at various occasions, including during a meeting with so-called compromised (*comprometidos*), men and women accused of having collaborated with the colonial regime.

The threat of violence shines yet another light on the workings of ideology and ideals in the face of actual sacrifices, and on the labour recruitment policies. It also brings us back to the beginning of this chapter: Amélia Lemos’s question why young people accepted “all this.” Machel’s discourse about the *pidezito* points to the fact that behind the question of compliance or resistance to Frelimo’s policies lay a careful risk calculation in relation to Frelimo’s ability to arbitrarily arrest, deport and violently punish young men and women who were accused of “get their hands dirty” or engage in manual labour.

The possibility of re-education existed not just in theory for the independence generation, but in was very much a lived experience. Accounts of re-education were not shared with me liberally. But even among the few people I spoke to, many had had close encounters with re-education. Maria Alegria, for example, recalled that her brother was detained for indiscipline in school.⁷² Other interviewee’s shared similar stories of siblings, cousins or friends.⁷³ One person noted: “re-education was the constant fear.”⁷⁴ As Machava’s study showed, the security services certainly were not hesitant to send school-age children as young as 10 years old to re-

⁷¹ Butler, ‘Excitable speech,’ 77, cited in Igreja, 795.

⁷² Maria Alegria, interview.

⁷³ Lydia Furvela, interview.

⁷⁴ Anonymous teacher, interview by Johanna M. Wetzels, Maputo 27, 2022.

education camps. Instances, such as Amélia Lemos's brief stint further show, that some militants employed collective agricultural work as re-education measures and collective punishment for entire classes, even where there were no re-education centres:

I remember when I was 16 there was a small uprising at the high school I was attending, [of] some students, I don't know why, I didn't understand it. That same week lorries arrived in front of the school [...] and they took all the students who were inside the school grounds and took them to a place outside the city and we stayed there for a week. We woke up early, only had rudimentary breakfast, as if it were military life. It was a form of punishment for that revolt. That was a defining moment in my life, but we faced life with a little more responsibility.⁷⁵

Since decisions about punishments were not always coherently applied or well-coordinated between officials and schools or parents, they only made the arbitrariness with which resistance could be punished more acute. When parents at Amélia Lemos' school found out their children had been taken to a re-education centre, local Frelimo administrators were as shocked as they had been. As she recalled:

Of course, our parents didn't like the idea of taking us out of the city, we were supposed to stay there for a month, but when the governor of the province found out, he ordered us to return because he didn't know, because it had been a decision by some military people and there was a bit of a problem between them because of that [...] That [the parents] didn't like, because it was dangerous. Nobody liked that. Many of us came back with a bad case of dysentery, we ate any way and anything.⁷⁶

In relation to the labour recruitment policies, the threats that Frelimo issued to the youth on March 8th did not remain empty either. A teacher in Inhambane, for example, recounted an incident where a group of students who had missed an inauguration ceremony at a collective farm, which involved 'volunteer' work, were punished with disciplinary measures:

⁷⁵ Amélia Lemos, interview.

⁷⁶ Amélia Lemos, interview.

It was the inauguration of a *Machamba* [a collective farm]. So, that weekend I went to a beach and I didn't even know there was this opening and when I came back on Monday I was told that all those who didn't go to the opening of the *Machamba* had to go to the government because the governor wanted to talk to us. So, they knew who hadn't gone to the opening from our school, so we were called to the government, and we were punished by going to *Machamba* the following weekend, as a form of punishment [...] A lot of control. So some students were included in this punishment and this control mechanism, and some didn't like it [...] Those unruly students were the ones who were taken to the re-education camps.

Luís Mussana, who was recruited for SMO in 1986 recounted “It was a bit like ‘Xibalo.’ They saw me walking in the street and said ‘hey militar, come here,’ When I stopped they said ‘you look like you’re the right fit to be a soldier.’ I said no, but they told me to get in the car”⁷⁷

Thus, when the calculus shifted between what an identity as a revolutionary youth could offer in terms of sense of self and opportunities in the socialist era world and what Frelimo demanded through it from the independence generation, Frelimo began resorting increasingly to violent and coercive means.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored a second context in which members of the independence generation encountered Frelimo's discourse about the ideal revolutionary youth, bearer of a special historic responsibility to ‘build the New Socialist Nation.’ While the previous chapter investigated how young people related to this discourse through the medium of cultural activities, this chapter has turned to a context, in which acting on the ideals of the revolutionary youth demanded more generally displeasurable things than choral singing or theatre play. Through a close investigation of three ‘calls to serve the nation,’ this chapter has explored

⁷⁷ Luís Mussana, interview by Reginaldo Taímo, Maputo Province, June 16, 2022.

instances in which Frelimo drew on the revolutionary youth discourse to justify recruiting young people's labour for state-building purposes.

The March 8th directives, school holiday 'volunteer' work and the SMO were all instances in which Frelimo 'called' the youth to 'serve the revolution' through extracting different forms of labour from them in a compulsory manner. During the March 8th directives, Frelimo took two cohorts of students out of high school and placed them into different sectors of employment; during school holidays, students had to join centrally organized work brigades to labour on state-owned or collective farms and military service was made obligatory in 1978. Like the cultural activities, calls to serve the revolution were instances in which young people encountered Frelimo's authoritative discourse. Students at the Centro 8 de Marco engaged in political study during their preparation for employment and volunteer work was a highly politicized activity that constituted part of Frelimo's revolutionary pedagogy. But unlike the cultural activities, however, the calls to service made very different kinds of demands on young people.

In this way, the calls to service were thus able to give an insight into the kinds of experiences that encounters with Frelimo's discourse in such different contexts made possible. Focussing on the March 8th directives, I argue that in such encounters, young people related to the revolutionary discourse about primarily as holding legitimate power over aspects of their lives related to labour. Through the figure of Samora Machel, and the notion of 'service' and 'sacrifice,' these young people made sense of the demands and hardships imposed on them. In this way, they were able to uphold their sense of control over their lives and themselves as living up to the ideal, revolutionary youth.

In relation to other calls to service, young people's calculus seems to have tipped more often against the Frelimo party. As deflection from military service and refusal to attend volunteer collective labour became widespread, Frelimo conjured a new figure into its revolutionary script on youth that conveyed an unmistakable threat of violence to rebellious youth: the *Pidezinbo*.

Both, Benedito Machava and Victor Igreja argue that while violence and the threat of re-education had deterring effects on the population that enabled Frelimo's rule in the first place, it also "seriously endangered [Frelimo's] political project and brought great suffering to the people."⁷⁸ According to Igreja, the violence employed in the 'meeting of the *comprometidos*' – a rather failed attempt by Machel to showcase how 'traitors' could purify themselves through testimony – showed "the fractures and increasing disarray of Frelimo's revolutionary project and fostered Machel's own political and moral collapse."⁷⁹

In the calls to service, and particular Frelimo's response to them in the face of resistance from young people, we can see a similar tension emerging between the party and its most cherished 'crop.' As the revolution faltered, so did the powerful stories that Frelimo told about the revolutionary youth of Mozambique.

⁷⁸ Igreja, 'Frelimo's Political Ruling', 781.

⁷⁹ Igreja, 781.

7. Conclusion

On 19 October 1986, Samora Machel's airplane crashed mysteriously on its way to Maputo, near the South African village of Mbuzini, Mpumalanga.¹ Machel's death is remembered today as the death of Mozambique's 'socialist experiment,' even though that experiment had already been quietly abandoned before 1986, just as the OJM had quietly abandoned much of its ambitious vision in the early 1980s.

Over the course of Machel's presidency, the OJM faced a series of challenges that it would never surmount. "Despite the great participation of [young people] in the different sectors of social life," Miguel Buendia Gomez remarked in his study of the education system, the OJM "as an organisation faced many difficulties in 'integrating' and 'organising' youth."² For Gomez, the organization's "excessively formal style and the rigid and sometimes bureaucratic method that characterise[d] the organisation's work did not galvanise mass adherence from young people."³ Furthermore, the East German ambassador to Mozambique, who had had close relations to the OJM throughout, remarked in 1984 that in the face of Renamo's advance towards the south, the OJM had lost nearly all capacity to run its activities beyond Maputo and

¹ What led to the crash is still disputed, see Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara S. Isaacman, *Mozambique's Samora Machel: A Life Cut Short* (Ohio University Press, 2020) see chapter 8: 'Who Killed Samora?'

² Miguel Buendia Gomez, *Educação moçambicana: história de um processo, 1962-1984* (Livraria Universitária, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1999), 292.

³ Gomez, 292.

a few urban centres. This was exacerbated by the fact that the OJM had narrowed its membership by imposing standards “of vigour and selection that were used to select Party members.”⁴ As Frelimo’s moral revolution turned increasingly on itself, the party became more and more suspicious of its own members sabotaging and collaborating with the enemy, against whom Frelimo was fighting what would become a sixteen year long war.

Consequently, the East German ambassador lamented, a severe lack of cadres at the leadership level had incapacitated the OJM in 1984 and was likely to be “one of the main obstacles to the development of the OJM’s activities for a long time to come.”⁵ The consequences, she warned, could already be seen among the young people. As the central management of the OJM failed to:

create a system of political and ideological education among its members [...] This has opened the door to the increasing influence of bourgeois ideology and hostile propaganda, especially among the youth, which is reflected in the increase in the illegal emigration of young people to South Africa and the increased evasion of compulsory military service in the armed forces. For some time now, there have also been efforts among the student youth to create an independent organisation alongside the OJM, similar to the former colonial organisational structure. The political-ideological work of the OJM in the army, its most important area of activity alongside education, is in principle non-existent due to a lack of guidance from the political commissariats.⁶

⁴ Gomez, 292.

⁵ Brigitte Schmidt, II. Sekretär, “Entwicklungstendenzen in der Organisation der Moçambiquanischen Jugend,” Botschaft Maputo, Politische Abteilung, Maputo, 07.06.1984, BArch, DY-24, 3.

⁶ Brigitte Schmidt, II. Sekretär, “Entwicklungstendenzen.”

Overall, Central Committee member Jorge Rebelo remarked pessimistically in 1984: “The majority of youth in our country behave absolutely indifferently vis-à-vis the OJM and its initiatives.”⁷

While the slow death of the OJM went nearly unnoticed, Machel’s death sent shock waves through not only the OJM but an entire generation of Mozambicans who had come of age during his presidency. As we have seen throughout this study, this generation had cultivated a close, if imagined, relationship with ‘Papa Samora,’ who they felt had a special ‘love’ for the children and youth of his country, as I was repeatedly told during my interviews with members of this generation. “He was a historic, dynamic, and good president,” Elias Massingue, born in 1972, recalled, “who knew how to respect other peoples; he created literacy schools, for counting, and introduced a quota for women to form part of the government.” He continued:

For me, Samora Machel was a president chosen by the Mozambican nation. He was a Mozambican national, the first black man to lead the country. He loved children and was an open person who encouraged the youth and helped the poorest people; *Flores que Nunca Murcham* (Flowers That Never Wither), *O Amanbecer do Amanhã* (The Dawn Of Tomorrow), *Amor Entre os Homens e liberdade Entre os povos* (Love Between Men And Freedom Between Peoples.)⁸

Like Elias Massingue, many members of his generation today associate Machel with not only the nationalist, socialist and revolutionary project that characterised his presidency, but a special relationship to ‘the youth,’ a category that they embraced and felt they belonged to.

And like Elias, many remember Machel, and his relationship to this category through a specific kind of language: “*Flores que Nunca Murcham, O Amanbecer do Amanhã, Amor Entre os Homens e*

⁷ Jorge Rebelo, cited in: Zentralrat der FDJ, Abteilung Internationale Verbindungen, “Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation der Moçambiquanischen Jugend und zur Organisation der Moçambiquanischen Jugend (OJM),” Berlin, Dezember 1986, BArch, DY-24, 2.

⁸ Elias Massingue, interview with Ana Chongo, Maputo, 11.07.2022

liberdade Entre os povos.”⁹ In relation to youth, the *palavra de ordem* (watchword): ‘*A Juventude é a Seiva da Nação* (The Youth is the Sap of the Nation),’ was Machel’s most widely known invention. For the Mozambicans who experienced Machel’s presidency, it captures the entirety of the values, ideals and expectations of ‘the youth’ during the socialist era, along with the vivid memories of the practices, and the emotional and embodied experiences that Mozambicans of the independence generation associate with being a youth until today. José Paulino Mavui, for example, recalled in relation to the watchword ‘*A Juventude é a Seiva da Nação:*’

For me, this was Machel’s best watchword.[...] I remember starting to hear it in 1983. We all left - students from all the secondary schools - we left [our school campuses] and experienced very emotional moments. We were organised [according to schools]: Northwest 1 and 2, Polana, Estrela Vermelha. We went there, to 24 de Julho [square], to salute the 4th Congress. We stayed outside, singing and cheering. President Samora Machel came out of the palace, came over to us, and broke protocol. Even though they didn’t want us near, he said, ‘Come closer,’ and we all gathered there. [José starts singing: *We are the continuers of the Mozambican revolution.*] We sang with Samora Machel. Then, as a man of speeches, he began shouting, ‘*Juventude, Seiva da Nação!*’ And it stuck - it kept being repeated, even to this day, because people realised it had a lasting significance. In ‘83, I was about 12 years old.¹⁰

Although Machel has long passed away and the OJM is no longer the bearer of “the mighty task of patriotic and socialist education of future generations,”¹¹ the language that Machel coined during the era of socialist youth politics still remains vivid in the memories of the independence generation. For some, such as José Paulino Mavui, it had a “lasting significance,” for others, such as Odete King Kazamila, who we met in previous chapters, Machel’s language

⁹ Elias Massingue interview.

¹⁰ José Paulino Mavui, interview with Valdo Congolo, Maputo, June 25, 2022

¹¹ “Programa da OJM,” *Tempográfica* No. 380, January 1978, 50-51.

finds resonance in how she makes sense of her contemporary realities, and particularly the situation of generations of young people today:

Because he [Machel, always said] children are the *Flores que Nunca Murcham* and youth are the *Seiva da Nação*: the youth that Machel said were the sap of the Nation were the youth who had to give continuity to Frelimo and give continuity to a better Mozambique. But today that youth who wanted to make a better Mozambique doesn't exist. There are so many [youths now] who are going astray because of the frustration of life. Machel wanted [things] at the beginning, but things haven't gone in this direction. [...] The sap of the nation, as Machel used to say, is being left behind, here in the *bairros* (neighbourhoods).¹²

The central questions of this thesis began with my own curiosity about the strange and unusual ways in which contemporary Mozambicans – young and old – thought and spoke about youth, which stood in contrast to how academic literature had described discourses about youth elsewhere. While experiencing similar material hardships and disenfranchisement as young people elsewhere, I noticed that residents in Maputo made sense of these frustrations as real obstacles to their personal development towards a sense of ‘self-mastery’ on the one hand, but on the other hand, also through a set of expectations and ideals about how ‘youth,’ like themselves, should overcome and in fact remove such structural barriers to Development writ large. As we saw in the prologue, young people who struggled to access jobs or housing in central Maputo argued that ‘youth’ must “solve this themselves,”¹³ by fighting for better social services in the suburbs, where land was abundant, but services were scarce, creating a better road infrastructure to enable a functioning public transport system during rush hour, or getting young people to stop using drugs and become creative entrepreneurs. After all, “youth are the

¹² Odete King Kazamila, 1968, Interview with Valdo Congola, Maputo, August 2, 2022

¹³ Jacinto, group interview with Johanna M. Wetzel, Matola-Rio, July 27, 2018.

ones who make a difference,”¹⁴ who “look for something to make [their] country better,”¹⁵ the *Seiva da Nação*.

This study has argued that our understanding of how young people today relate to, identify as and experience being a ‘youth’ in urban Maputo, would be incomplete without an understanding of the historical processes that have shaped the meaning of this category over the course of the last fifty years. This process, I have argued, involved a strategic and highly coordinated effort on behalf of the new Frelimo government, led by Samora Machel, to construct ‘youth’ as a political category in relation to the revolutionary project of building a New Socialist Society. The success of the Mozambican revolution, Machel would remind his audiences wherever he went, depended on the correct socialization of the youth to embrace Frelimo’s revolutionary values: “They are the nursery,” he would tell his audiences, old and young, “from which the chosen plant will grow that will make the revolution triumph once and for all.”¹⁶ The ‘youthful creator of the Socialist Society’ was characterized by ‘initiative and creativity,’ a ‘desire for change,’ and a deep commitment “to fight against the vices” of the colonial and bourgeois society, the enemy of the revolution of the world. “It is the *Seiva da Nação* that strengthens the tree of national unity,” he would say, “that knows how to create true friendship between peoples, that knows how to establish the indestructible bridge of internationalist solidarity.”¹⁷

Over the course of this study, I have investigated closely how, why and with what effects the Frelimo party engaged in this fundamental (re)construction of youth as a revolutionary political

¹⁴ Valdo Congolo, group interview with Johanna M. Wetzel (video call), Johannesburg/ Maputo, April 24, 2021.

¹⁵ Ana Chongo, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel (phone), Johannesburg/Maputo, April 3, 2021.

¹⁶ Samora Machel, “Educar o Homem para vencer a guerra,” *Estudos & Orientações*, 1970, 11-12.

¹⁷ “Intervenção do Presidente Samora Machel ao ser concordado com medalha de ouro Artur Becker,” *Jornal Notícias*, Maputo, December 6, 1980, accessed via MHN.

category. In concluding the present study, I will revisit my arguments in relation to these questions in turn.

‘Ideological Unity’ and the ‘Embryo of the New Man’

One of the main arguments of this study is that the process which motivated and drove the shift in Frelimo’s discourse about youth during the socialist era needs to be understood in relation to Frelimo’s decision to create a mass democratic organization for youth, the OJM, shortly after independence.

To begin with, this sets the Mozambican case apart from other post-colonial African contexts, where the category ‘youth’ attained a political meaning during and through events linked to nationalist struggles. In South Africa, for example, scholars of youth have argued that youth was “a political rather than a sociological or demographic construct.”¹⁸ According to Jeremy Seekings, this was most importantly the result of the Soweto Uprisings in 1976, in which both ordinary young people and organized groups who referred to themselves as ‘youths’ played a pivotal role.¹⁹ One of the consequences of the uprising was that commentators began attributing what Seekings calls ‘liberatory stereotypes’ to the category ‘youth.’ This stereotype offers a contrast to parallel ‘apocalyptic stereotypes’ of youth, and shaped how youth were talked about in South Africa at the time and in the decades thereafter.²⁰ Connections between

¹⁸ Jeremy Seekings, *Heroes or Villains? Youth Politics in the 1980s* (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1993), xi.

¹⁹ Seekings, xiii, 49–85; For a perspective on women’s involvement in youth politics, see: Emily Bridger, *Young Women against Apartheid: Gender, Youth and South Africa’s Liberation Struggle*, Cambridge Core (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2021).

²⁰ Seekings, *Heroes of Villains?*, xi.

nationalist ideas of youth and post-independence ideas were common in other movements too.²¹

In Mozambique, the politicization of the category ‘youth’ was not primarily the result of the nationalist or armed liberation struggle, although Frelimo would later write the figure of the ‘heroic youth of the liberation’ into its authoritative discourse about the history of the liberation war, a discourse that Joao Borges Coelho has called the Liberation Script.²² Rather than a coherent political discourse about youth, the Mozambican liberation struggle produced a range of very different youth discourses, tied to a range of very different ‘youth organizations’ during the struggle. While they all courted the Frelimo leadership in search of official recognition, none of them ended up succeeding. Chapter two of this thesis set out an assessment of these organizations. Drawing on a body of so-far unexamined archival source material from the Fundo da Frelimo at the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM), as well as memoirs and oral history interviews with the leading figures of these organizations, I found traces of multiple organizational structures that called themselves ‘Youth of Frelimo,’ the ‘Liga Juvenil da Frelimo,’ the ‘Frelimo Youth League,’ or simply the ‘Juventudes’ (Youths) in the archives. Each grew from distinct political-military circumstances and acted in distinct realms of the struggle. They led nearly completely independent existences.

Although they only left highly fractured traces in the archive, the ‘Juventudes’ or ‘Youth Leagues,’ seem to have had their roots in Frelimo’s predecessor nationalist movement the Mozambique African National Union (MANU) in Cabo Delgado, which mirrored the

²¹ See introduction.

²² João Paulo Borges Coelho, ‘Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes’, *Kronos* 20–31 (2013): 21.

structures of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and other Congress movements in the region, including branches, chairmen and youth leagues or wings. When MANU merged with other movements into Frelimo, Frelimo began training a military in exile. When Frelimo's first cohort of Algeria-trained soldiers returned, they sidelined the youth leagues in Cabo Delgado, placing them in support roles, such as carrying war material and sustaining the fronts. Frustrated at their loss of status, these 'militia youth' strove to unite into a centrally coordinated and officially recognized Youth League with a central leadership and representative capacities vis-à-vis the Frelimo leadership.

The other realm of the struggle in which youth structures existed was that of international diplomacy and foreign relations. This somewhat more formal and official organization called itself 'Frelimo Youth League (FYL)' or in Portuguese 'Liga Juvenil da Frelimo,' and was the organization that the future Secretary General of the OJM, Zacarias Kupela, spent the first years of his party career leading. Prior to Kupela, two former Mozambican students of the Afro-American Institute (AAI) in Dar es Salaam ran the FYL's activities, John Kachamila and Francisco Cabo. This youth organization had not grown from the clandestine nationalist networks inside Mozambique, but the political biographies of these two students. Most important was their 9-month-stint at the Soviet Komsomol's cadre school in Moscow. They were exposed during this 'Youth Leadership' course to Soviet discourses about youth as bearers of historic responsibilities, creators of communism, and progressive, internationalist forces. Cabo and Kachamila lobbied the Frelimo leadership for the official recognition of the FYL and proposed a statute and programme for the organization quite similar to the Komsomol, and in fact also the later OJM.

Both youth organizations' demands for official recognition from the Frelimo leadership of their work as organizations and of the important roles they envisioned for the 'youth' to play

during Mozambique's struggle for liberation, ran afoul of the increasing tensions within the Frelimo leadership in the mid-1960s. Following a trip to Cabo Delgado, where the 'diplomatic youth' encountered the 'militia youth' for the first time, Kachamila and Cabo were deeply moved by their grievances and frustrations. In a report to the Central Committee, they advocated for the cause of the 'Mozambican youth within Frelimo,' who were fighting at the frontlines without adequate supplies and provisions. Their proposal, however, came at a time of extreme tensions inside the movement, where revelations of material shortages at the front lines could easily be interpreted as an attempt to sabotage the movement, by demoralising soldiers or weakening Frelimo's image internally and externally. Particularly the 'militia youth' but also Kachamila and Cabo's close relationships to individuals deemed 'reactionaries' by the later victorious factions of the 1968-'split,' also did not help their cause. As a result, both organizations were dismantled or significantly sidelined. While the 'revolutionary' leadership around Samora Machel and Marcelino dos Santos relegated the militia youth to the 'reactionary' side of the split and they were consequently silenced in Frelimo's Liberation Script, the Central Committee ushered the 'diplomatic youth' back into the diplomatic realm. Kachamila himself received an order to go abroad, and Cabo followed shortly after.

Neither organization subsequently made it into Frelimo's official accounts of the struggle or shaped in any significant way how and why the liberation movement talked about youth in subsequent years. When Machel referred to the 'youth of the liberation' after independence, he retrospectively ascribed the ideals and expectations of post-independence youth to a broad group of actors inside Frelimo, himself included. The 'youth of the liberation' that Machel conjured up then, were the courageous soldiers who sacrificed their blood for the liberation of the Nation, while liberating the Mozambican population from the grip of colonialism and

tradition alike. With a “book in one hand, hoe in the other,”²³ the young peasants in the liberated zones studied and farmed collectively, becoming New Men in the liberated zones and the Mozambican battlefields.

Thus, in Mozambique, youth did not come to be constructed as a political category as a result of and during the struggle for liberation. Rather, the Frelimo leadership only developed an explicit political discourse about youth during the transition to independence, and it is here that we need to look if we want to understand how and why the liberation movement, now turning vanguard party, opted for this choice. During this period, the most important factor that motivated and shaped the construction of youth as a political, revolutionary category, was Frelimo’s decision to create the OJM, a Leninist mass democratic organization for youth. This decision provided the political backdrop for lower and higher party cadres to develop a particular conceptualization of youth. By tracing three meetings (the Mocuba Meeting in February 1975, and the 7th and 8th sessions of the Frelimo Central Committee in June 1975 and February 1976), during which party officials discussed and decided on the foundation of the OJM, I showed in chapter three that it was through debating, discussing and justifying the necessity of a national organization for youth that Frelimo cadres first formulated ‘knowledge’ or ‘universal truths’ about ‘youth.’ These ‘truths’ reflected a bricolage of different intellectual influences – ranging from colonial, to Leninist, Maoist, puritanical and Fanonian – through which the delegates, and Machel himself, made sense of the political concerns that occupied Frelimo during the transition to independence.

²³ “Intervenção do Presidente Samora Machel.”

Paramount among the political concerns that occupied Frelimo in the transition to independence was a desire to contain 'ideological deviations' among groups of enthusiastic Frelimo supporters in the urban areas. Some of these groups belonged to a small 'bourgeois' student elite that Frelimo had long been suspicious of, while others galvanized hard-to-control political energies in the urban neighbourhoods. Furthermore, because of the drastic shortage in skilled labour that Frelimo faced after the exodus of most of Mozambique's settler population, who had occupied central positions in the state bureaucracy and economy, the movement's ambitious revolutionary plans were especially dependent on the mobilization and political socialization of large numbers of new cadres. In this context, the Leninist model of a mass democratic organization for youth not only appealed to Frelimo's leadership as an organizational model, but Marxist notions of 'youth' and its 'organization' also provided a political language to express how Frelimo envisioned containing 'ideological deviations' and establishing 'ideological unity' among 'the masses.'

In a creative bricolage of all of its intellectual influences, Frelimo thus came to conceive of the need to socialize young people into an understanding of themselves as 'continutors of the revolution,' bearers of the historic responsibility to 'construct' the better, freer, truly independent New Socialist Society, '*O Amanecer do Amanha*' ('The Dawn of Tomorrow'), '*A Seiva da Nação*' (The Sap of the Nation). At the heart of this understanding of the revolutionary, youthful self, Frelimo's leaders placed an embrace of all the 'positive attitudes' of the youth, such as 'creative energy,' 'progressiveness,' and a 'desire for change,' and an equally important rejection of the 'negative tendencies,' such as 'arrogance,' 'elitism,' 'sexual promiscuity,' 'drinking,' 'freak-talk,' and 'hippie-dress.' Frelimo's revolutionary youth was a category that was simultaneously full of initiative but always only in relation to Frelimo's revolutionary goals, its status elevated above the rest of society but always led and guided by the vanguard.

Authoritative Discourse and the State-Socialist Script

If the revolutionary youth of Mozambique was primarily an intellectual child of Machel, born at the dawn of independence, and cradled through the OJM, how and why did Mozambicans of the independence era come to remember it in the emotional ways we have seen? This seems especially surprising since the OJM faced very real difficulties actually integrating a majority of young men and women in the independence generation into its structures.

Throughout the latter chapters of this thesis, I explored the question of the consequences and effects of Frelimo's construction of the revolutionary youth discourse, particularly for the young men and women, who fell into this category. I have argued that an understanding of the OJM's role in the politics of the early independence years as a catalyser of Frelimo's authoritative discourse can most fruitfully yield answers to this question. In chapter three, I showed how Frelimo's understanding of 'ideological unity' was grounded in an understanding that commonality in thinking went hand in hand with commonality in language. In this sense, Frelimo's mode of bringing about revolutionary change relied to a significant degree on a kind of discourse that Mikhail Bakhtin has called 'authoritative discourse,' a particular form of political discourse that is characterised by its clear demarcation from other discourses that may circulate in every-day life, and which is perceived as immutable and endowed with state power. Authoritative discourse is, in other words, the language through which revolutionary states like the Frelimo party-state articulated their visions, based on a state-socialist script. In Mozambique, as in the Soviet Union, this discourse permeated the public realm, and its bureaucrats as well as its citizens needed to articulate themselves in this discourse to be heard by the state.

Thus, when Frelimo conceived of the concept of the revolutionary youth, and at the latest when Machel announced the OJM to the public on December 15th, 1976 and first articulated

its full meaning, he ‘wrote’ youth into the state-socialist script that underpinned the Mozambican state’s authoritative discourse. Flanked by Marcelino dos Santos and Jorge Rebelo, he delivered the speech in front of a hand-painted banner with the watchword: ‘*A Juventude e a Seiva da Nação*’ (see figure below) and it was here that an audience of roughly a thousand young men and women from all over the country were first called the ‘constructors of the socialist society.’ In ways typical of authoritative discourse, the December 15th speech became a widely circulated text, reproduced by the main newspaper outlets, as well as in a publication series that state bureaucrats and Frelimo supporters across the country considered the ‘definite authority’ on Frelimo’s political line.²⁴ In this manner, the OJM played a significant role in relation to Frelimo’s youth politics. Through the process of its foundation, Frelimo not only began thinking and speaking internally about youth in political and revolutionary terms but the OJM began to enable Frelimo to integrate the term into its wider revolutionary vocabulary, with far reaching consequences.

²⁴ Narciso Matos, interview with Johanna M. Wetzel, Maputo, 24.06.2022.



Figure 16+17: Machel and his audience on December 15th, surrounded by watchwords. In: 'Juventude: O Centro da Batalha, Discurso do Presidente Samora e Inquérito,' Tempográfica No. 325, December 1976, 42-60.

Seen through the lens of its role in a wider system permeated by authoritative discourse, we can understand another way in which the OJM played a significant role in catalysing Frelimo's revolutionary conceptualization of youth. As I showed in chapter four through an in-depth analysis of *Notícias*' detailed reports on the OJM's foundational campaign, one consequence of the campaign was that it produced not only a hierarchical organizational structure, but also a large number of 'ideologically literate' cadres. After having subsumed any already existing structures of political youth outside and inside of Frelimo, including the 'revolutionary enthusiasts' and the 'bourgeois' students that Frelimo delegates had worried about during the transition to independence, the founding body of the OJM embarked on a series of trainings for newly elected youth representatives. During these training sessions, the representatives studied Machel's December 15th speech alongside two other documents with the purpose of learning to *orientar* (guide) other youngsters in its interpretation. In other words, higher level OJM cadres familiarized themselves with the language of the Frelimo party-state on youth and learned to 'speak' in this language. Alexej Yurchak has called the skill of reproducing authoritative discourse 'ideological literacy,' a skill that he observed among bureaucrats in the Soviet state-youth organization Komsomol, with which, as we saw above, the founders of the OJM, namely Kupela, had intimate familiarity.

In reports of the district-level conferences that these now trained OJM cadres 'guided' in the course of the foundation campaign, it becomes evident that this was a rather successful endeavour. The opening and closing of speeches, reports, and resolutions from these conferences are filled with the tropes and metaphors of the new authoritative discourse on youth. Provincial representatives made reference to the "responsibility of the youth to combat

many of the vices and evils inherited from traditional and colonial society,”²⁵ and noted that “it is essentially up to our youth to energise the process underway in the country.”²⁶ Several reports and resolutions noted that “the revolutionary youth of Mozambique are the vanguard of our revolution, because, as has already been defined, they are the *Seiva da Nação*.”²⁷

The foundation of the OJM therefore produced not only a hierarchical structure, but also a potentially much more significant effect, namely several thousands of people with an ability and mandate to *dinamizar* (literally: dynamise, meaning to energize or catalyse) Frelimo’s authoritative discourse of the revolutionary youth among OJM members and the wider population throughout the country. Just how far reaching these ‘catalysations’ were is evident in the fact that soon after the OJM leadership initiated the foundation campaign, Frelimo’s revolutionary conceptualization of youth started to permeate the media, where not only journalists, but also readers took up the authoritative discourse to issue passionate calls against ‘beaded necklaces’ and ‘bracelets,’ and for the ‘active participation of the youth in the revolutionary process.’ While *Notícias* generally reproduced the party-line, poems, lyrics and drawing sent in by young people’s during the campaign “We prepare actively and in an organized fashion the 1st Conference of Mozambican Youth!” nevertheless show that a substantial amount of young people had mastered the skill to speak in the language of Frelimo’s revolutionary youth. While the reach of the OJM may have been limited in terms of its organizational capacity, the organization thus played an important role in relation to the conception, dissemination and normalization of Frelimo’s authoritative discourse on youth.

²⁵ “No combate pela construção do socialismo cabem grandes responsabilidades a Juventude Salientado em Seminário Provincial,” *Jornal Notícias*, December 3, 1976, 2.

²⁶ “Matola Seminário Distrital da OJM,” *Jornal Notícias*, July 29, 1977, 3.

²⁷ “Brigadas da OJM regressam a Xai-Xai,” *Jornal Notícias*, June 20, 1977, 3.

Emotional and Embodied Experiences of the Revolutionary Youth

How did the young men and women who encountered Frelimo's discourse relate to it? What kinds of experiences and subjectivities did it enable? What kinds of demands or constraints did it impose? The last two chapters of this study turned towards the memories of members of the independence generation to explore the contexts in which young people encountered Frelimo's authoritative discourse in their everyday lives, and the meaning that these encounters took on in those contexts. As I noted in the introduction, the independence generation was a highly heterogeneous group of people in ways that shaped and reflected on their experience of Frelimo's revolutionary discourse on youth. Rather than attempting to capture the most widely shared experience of this group, the last two chapters have focussed on specific kinds of widely spread activities through which encounters with Frelimo's revolutionary youth discourse were mediated and investigated what kinds of experiences they made possible in the first place: so-called cultural activities and voluntary labour.

I have argued that both types of activities enabled a new set of emotional and embodied experiences. Cultural activities, discussed in chapter five, provided opportunities for their participants to relate abstract ideals and concepts in Frelimo's authoritative discourse (such as 'independence,' national unity,' or the heroic 'youth of the liberation struggle') to concrete, embodied activities, such as singing, dancing, or playing a role in a theatre piece. Through these activities, abstracts became deeply meaningful, generating a host of emotions, such as pride and an imagination that the youth held a special place in Machel's heart. Standing literally and metaphorically 'at the front line' of Machel's revolutionary struggle, participants felt that they were the 'star of the government.'

Furthermore, as performers in highly pedagogical theatre pieces about the fight against the 'colonial vestiges' among the youth, 'arrogant attitudes' and the dangers of 'parties' or 'freak

talk,' young people who participated in cultural activities not only became yet more familiar with the tropes of Frelimo's authoritative discourse on youth, they also furthered the OJM's project of creating ideological literacy, in the visual and sonic dimensions of the authoritative discourse. Through engaging in the reproduction of authoritative discourse, as producers of cultural pedagogy, participants could relate their own identities to the ideal revolutionary youth. Touring the country as Chingomane dancers or theatre performers, they conceived of themselves as acting on their responsibilities as youth, to contribute to the consolidation of the revolution's achievements and build the new society. In the context of culture being viewed as a means of revolutionary state- and nation-building, cultural activities thus opened opportunities for young people to feel that they were literally performing their duties as revolutionary youth.

Labour activities on the other hand, often came framed as the party calling on the youth to come to the 'service' of the revolution, as one former participant phrased it, a 'call to the fatherland.' Such calls, that were the subject of chapter six, provided very different contexts to the cultural activities through which members of the independence generation encountered Frelimo's discourses about revolutionary youth in the previous chapter. In the examples this chapter investigated, namely the March 8th directives, 'volunteer' work, and the obligatory military service, bearing the historic responsibilities of constructing the New Socialist Nation, or embodying the *Seiva da Nação*' did not mean dancing the Chingomane at a youth festival in Cuba, but ploughing fields of a collective farm in rural Gaza or giving up dreams of studying at university. How did this context change young people's relationships to the ideals of the revolutionary youth?

Focussing on the March 8th directives, this chapter showed that young people attributed great authority to Frelimo's revolutionary discourse about youth, and the party. In the context of

the call to service, they drew on this discourse to make sense of Frelimo's demands on their labour. Through the revolutionary youth discourse, young people were able to see themselves not as giving up career prospects, but as making a necessary 'sacrifice' for the greater good of revolutionary progress, just as the youth of the liberation had previously. Engaging Frelimo's revolutionary youth discourse in this manner allowed them to uphold a sense of self as living up to the ideals of the revolutionary youth, rather than as giving up valuable opportunities for personal and intellectual development.

In relation to other kinds of labour activities, the revolutionary youth discourse seems to have not been sufficient to maintain this delicate balance between demands and meaning. Attempts at avoiding manual labour, and deflections from military service became widespread, especially as the war against Renamo intensified and Frelimo's promises for a better future became increasingly unbelievable. In this context, the party resorted to coercion and increasingly also violence in an attempt at 'enforcing' their revolutionary vision. In relation to the youth labour activities, a new addition to the revolutionary script on youth transformed the discourse into 'excitable speech,' language with the capacity to issue threats on the body. This addition was the figure of the *Pidezinho*, a youth-equivalent to *Xiconhoca*, agent of the enemy who lived among the independence generation and who once 'denounced' lost all rights in Mozambique's socialist era society. Thus, against the background of the *pidezinho*, young people lived under the constant threat of being 'denounced' and forcibly moved to re-education centres, making Frelimo's revolutionary youth discourse an effective tool in the party's wider authoritarian system of discipline and policing.

The Dawn of Tomorrow

As I conclude writing this thesis, protests, targeted killings, and police violence have shaken the Mozambican capital for the past four months. Following the elections of October 2024, from which Frelimo's presidential candidate Daniel Chapo has claimed victory, the ruling party of nearly 50 years faced serious allegations of electoral fraud.²⁸ When opposition candidate Venâncio Mondlane's lawyers Elvino Dias and Paulo Guambe announced they would file legal claims against Frelimo they were brutally murdered in plain sight of Maputo's central districts. Thousands of Mozambicans took to the streets. In ferocious clashes with the state security forces, some people on social media predicted: "In the more or less near future, the youth will have to come out and promote a new armed revolution" (see figure below).



Figure 18: "The Youth will have to [...] promote a new armed revolution" @photo_in_Moz

²⁸ Isaac Kaledzi, "Wahl in Mosambik: Daniel Chapo ist neuer Präsident," *Deutsche Welle*, October 28, 2024, accessed on 06 January 2025, <https://www.dw.com/de/wahl-in-mosambik-daniel-chapo-neuer-präsident-herausforderer-venancio-mondlane/a-70620397>

As these protests unfold and the opposition candidate gathers support particularly among younger generations, youth politics are already playing a significant role. And as the above post shows so do discourses about the ‘armed revolution,’ linking present-day protests to the politically potent narrative of the liberation-struggle.

But in understanding how young people today mobilize imaginations of the ‘liberation struggle,’ or discourses about the youth’s role and responsibility to bring about change on the national level, this study has argued that we would be missing crucial pieces of the puzzle without an understanding of the fundamental shifts in the ways the state and Mozambicans themselves talked about youth. It was in this era, that the narrative of the ‘youth of the liberation’ took on particular meanings, was drawn on to justify sacrifices and calls on the youth to serve the nation; was performed, felt and embodied; and today can provide access to a host of memories and associations that feed into its contemporary usage. Thus, it is the entire weight of this history that hangs in the air when the late Mozambican rapper Azagaia in his 2007 song *As Verdades*, turned to his audience of mostly young Mozambicans in a call to face the lack of infrastructure, social policy and economic development with all their energy and creativity, as he asks: “*São, ou não são jovens seiva da nação?* (Are they, or are they not, the Sap of the Nation?)”

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