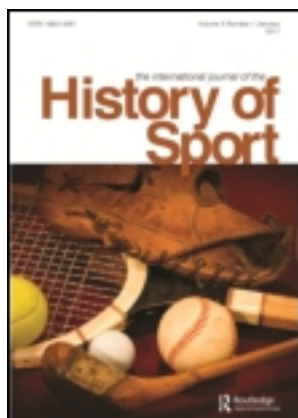


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### Urban football narratives and the colonial process in Lourenço Marques

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## Urban football narratives and the colonial process in Lourenço Marques<sup>1</sup>

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Support for Portuguese football teams, in Mozambique as well as in other former Portuguese colonies, could be interpreted either as a sign of the importance of a cultural colonial heritage in Africa or as a symbol of a perverse and neo-colonial acculturation. This article, focused on Maputo, the capital of Mozambique – formerly called Lourenço Marques – argues that in order to understand contemporary social bonds, it is crucial to research the connection between the colonial process of urbanisation and the rise of urban popular cultures. Despite the existence of social discrimination in colonial Lourenço Marques, deeply present in the spatial organisation of a city divided between a ‘concrete’ centre and the immense periphery, the consumption of football, as part of an emergent popular culture, crossed segregation lines. I argue that football narratives, locally appropriated, became the basis of daily social rituals and encounters, an element of urban sociability and the content of increasingly larger social networks. Therefore, the fact that a Portuguese narrative emerged as the dominant form of popular culture is deeply connected to the growth of an urban community.

**Keywords:** football; Mozambique; Lourenço Marques; colonialism; popular culture; football narratives

Today in Mozambique, as in other former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Portuguese football is a major element in the local urban popular culture. Mozambicans continue to reproduce bonds that were originally created in colonial times. Portuguese league games are broadcast weekly on public television, as well as by the Portuguese TV service for Africa. Club victories are celebrated in the streets of major towns by thousands of enthusiastic fans. In their daily interactions in Maputo, as I had the opportunity to witness, citizens from different backgrounds, mostly male, show a profound knowledge of what might be designated as a ‘Portuguese football narrative’.

By ‘football narrative’, I refer to the structuring of the knowledge originating from regular and recurrent organised competitions, which constitutes a narrative order. Each competition, in defined periods, regularly opposes a number of clubs with their own fan bases. The periodicity of competitions assures temporal

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continuity to the narrative. The narrative boundaries depend on the scale of the competitions, which is usually determined by their geographical dimension: local, regional, national, international. The fan's relationship with these narratives normally depends on his identification with a team that represents and 'places' him in these competitions. This identification creates shared bonds: of friendship, kinship or of a communitarian or spatial nature. The fact that fans share a knowledge produced during the competitions allows them, regardless of their sport affiliations, to partake in a common universe of references, organised by a common narrative. These narratives are manipulated by individuals in daily interactions and become a specific dimension of an urban experience. Individuals use this specific knowledge rhetorically, and create personal narratives focusing on sport events, which can be shared or not, with another group of individuals. The football narratives provide a means of social participation and expression in a complex urban context. They help to reproduce social networks and to fashion new relationships.

In colonial Lourenço Marques, three main 'football narratives' coexisted: the 'downtown narrative', based on settlers' clubs and competitions taking place in the city centre (also known as the 'Cement City'); the 'suburban narrative', based on the competitions organised by clubs in the African neighbourhoods; and the 'metropolitan narrative', that revolved around the metropolitan national league, passionately followed in Lourenço Marques by settlers, but also by a strata of the urban African population. The latter became the 'Portuguese football narrative' after Mozambique gained independence in 1975. Mozambicans know by heart the life of the main clubs that constitute the core of this renewed narrative. They are familiar with the clubs' histories and their latest results and scores, the players' careers, and have highly knowledgeable opinions on the teams' sporting shape, their type of game, and the qualities and problems of both players and managers. This popularity of Portuguese football coincides with a general crisis in Mozambican football, hampered by constant financial difficulties, a lack of infrastructure and an inability to produce new players. The civil war that raged until 1992 is part of the reason for this scenario. Losing the bid to organise the 2010 African Nations Cup to Angola was the latest blow to local football.

The permanence of this 'Portuguese football narrative' can be interpreted as a symbol of a perverse and neo-colonial acculturation.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, from a nostalgic perspective, it can be seen as a symptom of the importance of Portugal's cultural colonial heritage in Africa, an indication of the 'mild' colonialism put in place in Mozambique, now translated into the project of a lusophone community, whose selective perspective of history tends to mask the violence of colonial rule. These explanations, easily turned into instruments of a 'banal nationalism'<sup>3</sup> or 'banal neo-imperialism', simplify the logic of a particular historical process. This article, focused on Maputo, the capital of Mozambique – formerly called Lourenço Marques – argues that in order to understand contemporary social bonds, it is crucial to research the connection between the colonial process of urbanisation and the rise of urban popular cultures. Indeed, football narratives were part of an emergent popular culture in Lourenço Marques and became an element of the culture of the city. Football narratives formed a knowledge shared by networks of urban populations, upon which numerous daily interactions were based, and became a means of social participation. The development of football narratives as elements of popular culture must be interpreted in relation to a new urban sociability.

### The birth of a colonial city

Lourenço Marques became the de facto capital of Mozambique in 1897, although this change would only be officially recognised in 1906. The city represented a new era of Portuguese colonialism in the Southern African territory. In the late nineteenth century, Portugal's sovereignty in the region became clearer, as the borders of its area of influence were defined in the 'Congo Conference', held in Berlin (1884–85), and the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1891. The role of Portugal in this new phase of colonial expansion was inevitably hampered by its structural condition. During the 1890s, unable to effectively mount a local administrative machine, it surrendered a great deal of its Southern African territory to large foreign-owned companies, the *companhias majestáticas*. The new capital, served by an important deep-water port, would become one of the main focuses of a regional economy bolstered by South Africa's precocious industrialisation.

Because of its relevance for commercial relations, Lourenço Marques became the centre of one of the region's most important labour markets. Over the years, the Portuguese government signed several labour agreements with neighbouring territories, which became one of the main sources of income for the colonial economy. Thousands of Africans from Mozambique were sent each year to South African mines. This migration flow was mostly composed of underprivileged individuals, especially those whose rural life structure had been shaken by the 'colonial encounter', by tax levying and by forced labour. The economic model prevailing in the Portuguese colonial system, under-industrialised and lagging behind in the employment of capitalist processes,<sup>4</sup> prevented the local growth of an extensive proletariat. When returning from South African mines, many of the workers passed through Lourenço Marques, moving back to their villages, something that contributed to minimise the effects of proletarianisation.<sup>5</sup> Controlling 'native' labour became the main goal of colonial authorities, a policy that conforms to a history of occupation sustained by the commerce and exploitation of slave labour. A disciplinary control model flourished and was implemented through laws imposing identity cards, as well as residency, labour and travel permits for Africans. Failure to abide by these rules justified the infliction of forced labour regimes, locally known as *chibalo*.<sup>6</sup>

The 'civilising mission', which ideologically justified the presence of Portugal in Africa, was based upon a set of laws which introduced a distinction between the *indígena's* ('native') rights and duties and those of the 'civilised', mostly European, populations. Under this colonial regime, a third category of individuals was created. Those who were able to prove they had adapted to European civilisation and 'Portuguese culture', began to enjoy the rights of the 'civilised', and were known as the *assimilados* (assimilated). In Lourenço Marques, the social differentiation between these categories was evident in the way the space was occupied and through the development of daily practices and customs from which the *indígena* population was excluded.<sup>7</sup> The suburbs, or occasionally poor transitional areas such as Alto Maé district or Alto de Maxaquene, were home to the vast majority of Africans who migrated from the rural areas and settled in the capital. Downtown and central Lourenço Marques were dominated by commerce and administration. The industrial area was located west of the city, bounded by the railway. Part of the working population was employed in the latter region, in the railway, the port, the national

press, civil construction, trams or the metalworks. Each residential area reflected class, national origin and ethnic differences.

The military dictatorship instituted in Portugal in 1926, which gave way in 1933 to the *Estado Novo* regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar, updated the previous framework of domination. The civilisational state of the *indigenas* did not entitle them to have constitutional rights, and they were thus subjected to a specific legal regime, based upon local customary law.

### Football in the Cement City

The expansion of specific sporting practices in early twentieth-century Lourenço Marques followed the elective affinities of a ruling class constituted by high-ranking state officials and the Portuguese and foreign colonial bourgeoisie, which explored the business opportunities present in an expanding regional economy. The local British community was instrumental in the introduction and development of sporting practices by promoting, among other sports, cricket, golf, tennis and football.<sup>8</sup> Some evidence shows that football matches were being organised as early as 1904.<sup>9</sup> The crews of ships anchored in Lourenço Marques often formed teams that played against local groups. The growing number of settlers, some already familiar with the sport, contributed towards the local development of football. Near the beginning of the century, several clubs were formed, brief projects that nonetheless expressed a growing associative mindset.<sup>10</sup>

Football matches integrated a set of public shows encouraged by the urban life and leisure activities of a growing community. The Variéta theatre opened in 1912. It had opera and cinema shows, and also included a dance hall. In the following year, Teatro Gil Vicente, which also doubled as a cinema, was inaugurated. In those days, Lourenço Marques already had a dynamic nightlife. During this period several public buildings, commercial establishments, leisure areas, banks and hotels were built. The football fields belonging to the most popular clubs in town were located near the coast. The latter are the dominant clubs in present-day Mozambique: Sporting de Lourenço Marques (established in 1920, presently Maxaquene), Grupo Desportivo de Lourenço Marques (1921) and Clube Ferroviário (1924). Because of their location, these clubs became known as *clubes da baixa* (downtown teams). 1.º de Maio, a club founded in 1917 by a group of railway workers, completed the quartet that for a long period dominated official competitions. The growing importance of football in Lourenço Marques led to the creation, in 1923, of the Associação de Foot-ball da Província de Moçambique (the Mozambique Football Association), renamed Associação de Futebol de Lourenço Marques (AFLM, the Lourenço Marques Football Association) in 1926. The new association was devoted to the promotion of 'football association' as stipulated in the *International Board* norms.

While tennis, sailing or motorsport were the distinguished activities of the capital's colonial bourgeoisie, football became more popular. The growing dissemination of football among the lower strata of the population did not drive away the Portuguese colonial elite from the associative movement. Sponsorship was prestigious to the clubs and the popularity of sport associations improved the reputation of these local notables. The presence of prominent figures such as industrialists, civil servants, traders, lawyers and bankers as heads of sport clubs developed in a way previously identified in other colonial contexts, namely francophone ones.<sup>11</sup>

### *Associations, clubs and players*

The development of football clubs benefited from an associative dynamic which emerged in Lourenço Marques in the first decades of the century. This is particularly true of the period between 1910 and 1926, during the First Portuguese Republic, when class associations, cooperatives, mutualist associations, savings banks and other associations were created. The associative network facilitated the social integration of settlers, many of whom arrived in Africa in a destitute state. Assistance organisations compensated for the lack of a state-oriented social policy. In a different and more impromptu manner, recreational and sport associations enabled settlers to become part of organised networks, which often reproduced a metropolitan sense of belonging, especially of a regional nature. On the other hand, some sporting clubs became delegations of Portugal's main football clubs. Grupo Desportivo de Lourenço Marques was affiliated to Sport Lisboa e Benfica (1904); Sporting de Lourenço Marques was affiliated to Sporting Clube de Portugal (1906). In the following decades, delegations of these clubs would spread throughout the territory.

AFLM teams were by and large composed of settlers and other European players, though class ties enabled some players from old *mestiço* families to play in the downtown championship. Within the European community, the spectacle of football was a class practice throughout the first decades of the twentieth century in Lourenço Marques. The search for talent, however, granted opportunities to settlers from lower social groups who arrived in town and gradually integrated into the professional labour system as workmen, especially in the railway, but also in small businesses and in the civil service. The transformation of football into a competitive public spectacle that promotes rivalries led to the clubs' search for the best players. This phenomenon, already noticeable in the 1930s, gradually helped develop a specific market. The continuous arrival of Portuguese settlers heightened the social differences within the European population, as the administration and labour markets became more specialised. The settler population numbered 17,842 inhabitants in 1930, 97,245 in 1960, and reached 200,000 in 1974, a year before independence.<sup>12</sup> Accompanying the city's growth was the advance of new sport associations, which were organised in the settlers' neighbourhoods, establishing an umbilical connection with these places of sociability.

Football became, in the first decades of the century, one of the most popular organised leisure activities in the Cement City. Rivalries between clubs became a favourite subject in the press and helped promote identification and imagination. Matches opposing Lourenço Marques's best players, from AFLM and visiting teams, particularly South African ones such as Northern Transvaal and Southern Transvaal, but also metropolitan, English and Brazilian squads, drew a lot of media attention.<sup>13</sup> Visits from Portuguese teams, quite common after the 1940s, helped renew national bonds and had a festive, nostalgic component to them. These were also opportunities for settlers to demonstrate their vitality before representatives of the empire's ruling centre,<sup>14</sup> especially when a team composed of second-generation settlers born in Mozambique (*os naturais*) was playing. A source of local pride, sport was often used to express a specific conscience which occasionally was pro-nationalist in tone. Perhaps the most persistent call, made public through the press, official interventions and institutional relations, was for the possibility to participate in competitions between teams coming from all the Portuguese colonial territories,

from which settler clubs were excluded.<sup>15</sup> Along with newspapers, the radio would have a decisive role in the dissemination of football.<sup>16</sup> Even though technological evolution would lead to the gradual privatisation of radio frequencies, broadcasts continued to be a meeting opportunity in the public space, not just in the Cement City, but also in the suburbs.

The regularity of downtown competitions created a continuous urban spectacle in Lourenço Marques's Cement City. Every year the AFLM organised regular competitions which drew a growing following and coverage by the local media. The settlers quickly grew loyal to the local clubs, which were also axes of urban sociabilities. Identification with a club became a means of individual and collective recognition. Based on the downtown competitions, namely the AFLM championship, a football narrative emerged due to the dynamism of the settler community. Names of clubs and players, memories of performances and results, informed a narrative of local football activity, a shared knowledge. Popular culture became an important element of urban integration, and football was one of its most dynamic elements. The downtown football narrative not only had a relevant role in the development of local networks and contacts, it also embodied the representation of a community built by the settlers in a foreign land.

Among the settler population, interest in football was not limited to the local clubs. The settlers who arrived in Lourenço Marques and other Mozambican cities reinforced another narrative, present in the territory from early on and connected to the activity of metropolitan football. This 'metropolitan narrative' was fed by Mozambican and Portuguese newspapers, by radio reports and by institutional relations promoted between many AFLM clubs and the main metropolitan clubs. The knowledge intrinsic to this narrative, inscribed in the metropolitan popular culture, also made the settlers' social integration easier, namely the men's, by helping them have access to institutional leisure networks. The metropolitan club-based identity thus helped cement social ties in a colonial urban situation.

### **The suburban narrative**

In the second half of the 1920s, the first references to suburban football matches, or matches opposing African teams, appeared in the newspaper *O Brado Africano*. In all likelihood, however, the game had been played informally, in improvised fields, from the first decade of the century. The game was disseminated by various elements: an emulation of 'downtown' leisure practices, missionary action, school teachers and the military.<sup>17</sup> One of the most important factors in the expansion of the game in the suburbs was South Africa's sport movement. Football had been practised there since the last quarter of the nineteenth century and became, during the first decades of the twentieth century, the most popular sport among the urban black population.<sup>18</sup> The growth of the suburbs of Lourenço Marques during the first decades of the century was strongly linked to the economic, social and cultural relations established by Mozambican workers in South Africa. Suburban football grew between Zixaxa and Lydenburg Roads, which led to the South African mines, and in the Munhuana, Xipamanine and Chamanculo districts. The road to the Transvaal, a passageway for thousands of workers, was one of the foci of transmission of values and new ways of life, new consumer habits and a number of leisure practices.

Fostered by several agents, football became an integral part of the daily life of Lourenço Marques's suburbs. Its original performance arenas were neighbourhood

matches, which became elements of the suburban landscape from the first decades of the century. Played with bare feet and balls made up of socks, these matches generated a sense of spatial belonging. In the neighbourhood, especially through impromptu matches played in deserted fields, football came to be an initial space of local performance, a suburban show played by local performers in front of a non-organised local audience. Although these games were deeply enmeshed in local sociability, from the 1940s and 1950s onwards the names of some district teams (Arsenal, Botafogo, Brazilians) revealed the arrival of other football narratives in the suburb.<sup>19</sup> Despite the fact that these teams were not part of the AFA, as they were mainly informal groups, they were influenced by the 'international football narratives' that competed with the Portuguese influence.

Records show that the oldest club in the suburbs of Lourenço Marques was Mahafil Isslamo, founded in 1915 under the aegis of a welfare and education programme promoted by Anjuman Anuaril Isslamo, an association created by Muslims from the Comoro Islands. The association, created in 1912 in the Xipamanine neighbourhood, served as a contact platform between different Muslim communities, composed of descendants from Indian and Arab traders, whose presence in southern Mozambique was felt since the end of the nineteenth century. Shortly after the club's founding, a football field was erected with money gathered through fundraising in the Kokolwewne-Minkadjuine area, in Zixaxa Road, which connected the poor district of Alto Maé to the Xipamanine market.<sup>20</sup> As in the case of Mahafil, African clubs founded in the suburbs of Lourenço Marques functioned primarily as spaces where interest groups were reproduced, as well as axes for knowledge and solidarity networks.

The decisive step toward the institutionalisation of football in the suburb was the creation of the African Football Association (AFA) in 1924. Mahomed Sicândar, president of the Victoria da Malanga club, decided to create a competition similar to the South African ones, upon returning from a trip to Johannesburg. He spoke with Samo Matafene, director of Clube Internacional (later renamed Sport Nacional Africano) and with Castigo Miglietti, president of Tigre Gulama (later renamed João Albasini). Together, they created the AFA.<sup>21</sup> In 1925, the first official competition took place and was won by Victoria da Malanga. In 1926, this club changed its name to Primo Rose, a probable derivative of Primrose, a city in the Transvaal with significant mining activity. In 1929, Primo Rose became Beira-Mar, one of the African suburbs' most successful clubs.

Suburban football in Lourenço Marques had become a public spectacle, capable of mobilising people through associations and clubs that brought together individuals and instilled in them new forms of identification and belonging.<sup>22</sup> The first newspaper references to football activities in the suburbs reveal the existence of a close relation with the so-called 'nativist movement', whose main support was Lourenço Marques's Grémio Africano (GALM), an African voluntary association mostly composed of *mestiços*. Clube Desportivo João Albasini, founded in 1920 as Tigre Gulama, had its name changed in homage to the nativist movement's most prominent figure, João Albasini, a *mestiço* who was for a long time the main writer of *O Brado Africano* and a key figure of *Grémio Africano*. The influence of GALM's members was also noticeable in the formation of Grupo Desportivo Beira-Mar (1920). Clube Internacional (1921) was close to Congresso Nacional Africano (African National Congress), GALM's first dissenting faction, inspired by Marcus Garvey's pan-Africanism and linked to *Partido Nacional Africano* (African National



Party), founded in Lisbon in 1921. It was also during this period that Luso-Africano was created, a football club close to the Luso-Africana church, the strongest independent messianic religious organisation active in southern Mozambique, which was also associated with GALM.<sup>23</sup>

On 1 August 1934, the AFA was recognised by the colonial administration, following the approval of its statutes. Three new clubs joined the 1934 season – Alto Mar Nhafoco, from Inhambane (renamed Inhambanense in 1936) and Beirense, from Beira city, both representing the Mozambicans born in the two provinces. S. José de Lhanguene was the Catholic mission's club. Initially not part of the AFA, clubs such as Zambeziano and Victória Gazense, whose members came from, respectively, Zambezia and Gaza provinces, continued playing in the suburbs of Lourenço Marques.

The Portuguese colonial state had the power to supervise the activities implemented by associations, approve their statutes, budgets and administrative bodies, and, if necessary, to close them. Some African clubs were investigated by the administration, namely Grupo Desportivo Beirense and Vitória Gazense.<sup>24</sup> The investigation was driven by fears that some members of these clubs were linked to Protestant churches. Coercive surveillance techniques such as these became a way to complement the mechanism of social control intrinsic to the politics of assimilation, which aimed to divide the African associative movement and play with the ambiguous statute and expectations of African elites. The Governor of the region of Sul do Save was present at the inauguration of Xipamanine and Beira-Mar's fields, in 1935 and 1936 respectively. The attendance of African associations in official ceremonies, though securing a place in 'colonial life' for an 'African *petite bourgeoisie*', limited them to a subordinate position, with little scope for open protest.

The regular presence of members of an associative elite in the leadership of many African football clubs in Lourenço Marques, rather than marking the success of a continuous political action undertaken through the sport movement, emphasised their prominence as local notables. The social basis of this notability reproduced a set of familial, professional, friendship, associative, communitarian and religious relations. Football clubs and associations – 'modern' institutions whose actions required the mastery of bureaucratic instruments and official procedures – became sites in which education, command of the Portuguese language, integration into the labour market, the adoption of a European lifestyle and participation in associations recognised by the colonial power, were valued qualities. The notables were cultural and social transitional elements and links between the centre and peripheries.

### ***Local players and fan culture***

The local sport organisation in Lourenço Marques reflected the political framework of segregation. African clubs were not allowed to play in competitions organised by settlers, and African players were blocked by the *downtown* clubs, though officially nothing forbade their inclusion in European teams. This segregation was particularly evident in football competitions. This situation did not weaken football's strength as a means of communitarian construction. Suburban competitions were an integral part of the community's leisure activities, a spectacle organised by and for the suburb. Newspaper articles from the early 1930s described numerous spectators in Xipamanine, extolling the presence of 'girls, with their new dresses, as well as ladies,

children and gentlemen'.<sup>25</sup> Saide Mogne, who started playing football in the AFA championship in 1940, recalled that some people, in order to sit down, 'brought a box from home', others brought their 'own chair'; whoever brought a chair 'already had some importance'. Kids, he remembered, insistently tried to access the fields and the players, and often brought home boots or towels.<sup>26</sup> According to Hamido Nazimo, a former Mahafil Isslamo player, district fans gathered, organised day trips and travelled to the field where the match took place.<sup>27</sup> The spectators enlivened the spectacle with 'songs, drumming and dances'.<sup>28</sup> The best players became local heroes.

Abiding by the precepts of the 'football association', in a spectacle that was conceived to respect the modern game's rituals, demanded not just that players followed the rules, but also that they presented themselves carefully, with a full kit, including boots or, at least, some kind of footwear. The statutes of some African clubs, aside from introducing a set of administrative and protocol procedures, imposed a strict dress code on athletes and associates when representing the club. This was a symbol of public respectability and of the adoption of European customs, two of the conditions to achieve assimilation status.

Hilário da Conceição, a former AFA player who subsequently had a career in Portugal playing for the Portuguese national squad in the 1966 World Cup, never saw a 'white man playing in the suburb'.<sup>29</sup> Abissinia Ali, an Atlético Mahometano player and one of the first African sport journalists at the *Lourenço Marques Guardian*, assured that, except for Mahafil, there were no discriminatory practices, even in clubs with religious ties, such as Atlético Mahometano and S. José: 'socially, everyone was accepted'.<sup>30</sup> However the need for a kit, especially some footwear, was a way to limit the selection of players. In 1943, Beira-Mar's players' jobs revealed, in this context, a moderately privileged professional condition: five were printers and one a newspaper binder; five worked as locksmiths, most of them in the railway; and there was also one driver, one shop worker, one working in a pharmacy, one bookbinder, one upholsterer and one typist.<sup>31</sup> Saide Mogne confirmed that 'not everyone could play football'. Most of the players had 'parents with their own houses or businesses'. Almost everyone had a job; 'there were masons', but most belonged to relatively stable families, which allowed them to 'buy a pair of sheepskin boots, knee pads, shorts'. It was only 'rarely, very rarely', he adds, 'that a destitute individual showed up'.<sup>32</sup> Some of the poorer saw their talents rewarded by being sponsored by a trader or a club owner. Possession of footwear marked the transition from neighbourhood matches to AFA matches, a promotion that required talent but also money. In the local football game, clothes were also a crucial symbol of status and social demarcation. The obligation to play in boots, as pointed out by Augusto Matine, a former player from Chamanculo neighbourhood, was a problem for some players, who were used to playing barefoot and never got used to wearing them: 'many were lost, great football players who were lost'.<sup>33</sup>

AFA players came from a varied set of social conditions that characterized Lourenço Marques's diverse and unorganised professional structure. Grupo Desportivo Beirense's founders, for instance, despite having stable jobs, mostly in proletarianised services, were far from the professional standing of a local elite, predominantly composed of civil servants, traders, printers, specialised labourers, qualified and semi-qualified workers in the railway and other public and private companies.<sup>34</sup> Among Beirense's founding members, there was one fish trader, two shop workers, three drivers, seven attendants, one lifeguard, one dockworker, one

collector and five servants.<sup>35</sup> It is probable that Beirense's players shared a similar social background with its founders and directors, something that probably also happened in other clubs.

Hilário da Conceição talks of suburban football players as 'guys who lived in the districts, in huts, shall we say, wooden and zinc houses' and worked in 'factories or petrol stations, in the docks or the railway'.<sup>36</sup> The AFA championship, run by local elites, namely by *assimilados*, also included semi-qualified workers, carpenters, shoemakers and in a few cases even workers from low-paid jobs, such as masons, stevedores or construction workers. The ones who played were those who, with greater or lesser professional stability, with or without the club's or some benefactor's help, satisfied the minimum requirements to play football. Some clubs maintained rigid selection policies, whilst others, searching for talented players, were open to individuals from lower social ranks.

In neighbourhood matches, played barefoot in deserted fields, there was greater social diversity among players. Matine remembers that in these matches, especially in the poorer districts, which had populations from Lourenço Marques's surrounding regions, there were a lot of 'carpenters, masons and various apprentices, some who ironed clothes in a family's house, some who washed clothes in the suburb, in the river [...] some who were cotton pickers'.<sup>37</sup>

#### ***A local popular culture and the communitarian construction***

The clubs in the suburban districts were agents that stimulated communitarian life and the local popular culture. Among other activities, they regularly organised different kinds of parties, whose nature varied depending on their social and cultural context. The parties of *Vasco da Gama* adopted European precepts, influenced by the exclusive balls promoted by English clubs. Gala balls with formal suits and dresses, where jazz bands played, reproduced the spirit of the time in a cosmopolitan city, in which bars and nightclubs abounded. The teams from lower social groups, on the other hand, opted for street parties, in which western musical genres were played alongside traditional drumming and dances. Organised in a relatively informal way, these parties took place near the *cantinas* (canteens), nuclear spaces in the suburb, where alcohol was sold alongside other commercial products.<sup>38</sup>

The more solemn festivities, usually to celebrate an association's anniversary, often culminated in a tournament with South Africa teams. At night, after the match, remembers Saide Mogne, a ball was organised. Several girls went round with a box to collect donations and gathered an amount of money.<sup>39</sup> In the same way as football in the Cement City, the suburb also developed, regularly and starting in the 1930s, a number of contacts with South African associations and teams. Paradoxically, long before it was a nation, Mozambique, through football, competed in matches, in the suburb and downtown, known as 'internationals'. In the AFA, this exchange was limited to relations with South African associations and clubs. Indeed, the AFA developed a close relationship with the Transvaal African Football Association (TAFA) and the Johannesburg African Football Association (JAFA) and with their clubs, and even had a representative in the region. Beira-Mar may have been the first African club to 'become international', by visiting South Africa in 1933. In 1936, Johannesburg's All-Blacks Football Club, composed of mine workers, and a member of the Witwatersrand District Native Football Association, played against a selection of AFA players.<sup>40</sup> The development of a team of local performers,

contemplated in the association's regulation, strengthened the identity of 'African football'. Discussions regarding the selection criteria of the best local players were filled with accusations of favouritism. These arguments, revealing the importance of racial, district and religious identities, ended up legitimising a communitarian conscience. *O Brado Africano's* coverage of those debates reinforced this collective process. When AFA teams travelled to South Africa, groups of fans gathered and, with an official permission, followed their team in a bus. These matches were privileged moments to compare match styles and evaluate the local clubs' abilities before public and press.

The regular competitions that opposed several teams helped reproduce family, regional or religious bonds. They also helped to create strong district identities, which often overlapped with other ways of social identification. The suburban narrative promoted an inclusive vision of the suburbs of Lourenço Marques and proved that there was a football community, based on a suburban community, which contrasted with the Cement City's universe.

### Colonial bonds

The worldview presented by the downtown and metropolitan football narratives in Lourenço Marques was not limited to the Cement City. The suburban fans, especially those who were physically, socially and culturally in the border between the suburb and the European city, had access to the narratives that came from the centre. From early on, a few suburban inhabitants had access to the three dominant football narratives. A triple identification, originally limited to a number of individuals who lived in the vicinity of the Cement City, gradually spread.

The existence of two football associations, the AFLM and AFA, axes of the two local narratives, reflected the strength of the *indigenato's* mechanism of segregation. The creation of the downtown football narrative and the existence of the metropolitan narrative express the logic of settler occupation, the instrument of an associative dynamic in which football was a central element. The relation between the suburb and the two narratives created by the settlers came to express the ambiguities of the Portuguese assimilation system. The circulation channels linking suburban to downtown football and, later, to metropolitan football, allowed a small number of non-white players to play in the AFLM competition. The suburb was tentatively represented in the empire's football narratives. This possibility, which became an unusual mechanism within the context of experiences of social mobility in the Portuguese colonial territories, benefited from the semi-professionalisation of football and from the resulting search for talent by 'downtown' and metropolitan clubs.

The downtown narrative's presence in the suburb during the first decades of the twentieth century depended on the elements of a local *petite bourgeoisie* that followed the AFLM competitions. In this period, the number of players who moved from the AFA to the AFLM was insignificant: Guilherme de Haan, Barata, Jorge Américo, Mário Coluna and few others. Many fine AFA athletes could not prove their value in the AFLM championship, prevented from doing so by the existing racial barrier. However, the presence of these few players in downtown football raised expectations in the suburb. These athletes had grown up on Xipamanine's field, they were local performers who still lived in the suburb and played in neighbourhood games and in AFA games. With their talent, they represented the suburb in the Cement City football. The opportunities presented by the football

market during the 1950s defied the inequalities associated with the *indigenato* system, that still remained almost intact, even before the changes brought by the post-war period. In 1952, the *mestiço* teams Vasco da Gama and Atlético de Lourenço Marques were included in the AFLM, a move intended to integrate the educated and assimilated elites.<sup>41</sup> This inclusion definitely relocated the club-based identification of many *mestiço* fans from the suburb to downtown. At this time, the integration of black teams was not even considered.

The signing of Mozambican players by metropolitan clubs had a dramatic effect on the local structure of fandom. After Júlio Cernadas Pereira, known as Juca, whose parents were settlers, and a *mestiço* Mozambican named Mário Wilson, travelled by boat from Lourenço Marques to Lisbon in 1949, an imperial job market was finally opened between Mozambique and the metropole, following some previous experiences. The biggest leap was, however, undertaken by Matateu. Born Sebastião Lucas da Fonseca and raised in the poor district of Alto Maé, he started playing football in the João Albasini team, part of the AFA league. In 1947, he moved to 1° de Maio, securing a job as a locksmith in the construction sector. When, in 1951, he came to Lisbon to play for Belenenses, a club to which 1° de Maio was affiliated, Matateu signed a contract, with a monthly income. By then, he was coveted by several clubs in the metropole. After Matateu, his brother Vicente, as well as Coluna, Hilário and the famous Eusébio, also moved to Lisbon. Thanks to their talents, these players quickly became growing symbols of a metropolitan popular culture, something that had a deep impact in the Lourenço Marques suburbs.<sup>42</sup>

### Narratives as interaction materials

The development of sport competitions and the importance of football in an emerging set of urban leisure practices interacted with the process of change in the city's economic and political organisation. Originally reliant on commercial networks and labour transfers to South Africa's neighbouring regions, Lourenço Marques's economic organisation gradually changed during the 1950s, when metropolitan investment increased.<sup>43</sup> Economic activities required suburban labour for both less and more qualified activities. As living conditions in the suburbs improved, the population increased, and so did the number of intra-urban mobility paths. These urban flows were also promoted by the abolition of the *indigenato* in 1961, a late answer from Portuguese authorities to the new international equilibrium that followed the Second World War and to the pressure put upon Portugal by the African decolonisation process.

Within the context of the suburban labour market, football had a unique role as mediator in the employment process, as the talent became an important resource to have access to jobs in the Cement City. The success of suburban players in downtown and metropolitan football gave a greater impetus to the search for talents. The growing presence of suburban inhabitants in the labour market of the Cement City – some of them thanks to their footballing ability – was a crucial factor in the expansion of networks supporting the development of the three dominant football narratives in Lourenço Marques. It was in this context that knowledge of the downtown and metropolitan narratives accumulated by some suburban inhabitants became a resource used to facilitate the interactional confrontation in the settlers' world. The downtown narrative, and especially the metropolitan narrative, became privileged instruments of social bonding.

On some occasions the actual settlers were the ones introducing football as an interactional device. Ângelo Gomes Silva, who lived in the suburbs and had a football career in Clube Ferroviário, remembers that black men and *mestiços*, in their jobs, talked with 'colleagues who had come from the metropole and who supported their own clubs. The black men and *mestiços* had to be known, had to fit in.'<sup>44</sup> The metropolitan Portuguese would ask: "'So, which club do you support?'" 'I have no club.' "'You don't, then you have to support Sporting?'" 'Choosing a club was a matter of honour: 'So you are a man, how come you don't support a club? It must be Portugal's Sporting. Don't you support the local Sporting?'" Many of these suburban individuals, 'who had never listened to radio reports, also started liking the clubs in this way'.<sup>45</sup> In other cases, the identifications were already established since school and were constantly reproduced in daily interactions.

The diversification of social relations between the various groups who lived in the city, a consequence of the social division of labour and of growing mobility despite ongoing discrimination, gave football the role of common denominator, a social idiom of communication and contact, an interaction material.<sup>46</sup> Inscribed as a local practice in the suburban social reality, but also as a vehicle for representation of the community in the world, through the players who shone in downtown fields, in the metropole and throughout Europe, football was a door to city life, an effective resource as much in the local context as beyond the frontier of discrimination. This specific knowledge gave the individuals who had little or no interactional rights the possibility to give their opinions, to argue and even to disagree, without outraging the structures of domination present in the daily interaction order. These individuals knew about the lives of metropolitan clubs and their players with some detail, or quickly learned their story. This information was constantly supplied by the media. Through the players who had grown in Xipamanine's field and become celebrities in European football, the suburb was represented in this narrative at the highest level.

### **The end of AFA**

The subordination of the 'suburban' narrative had yet another crucial reason. In 1959, the colonial administration decided to abolish the AFA, while integrating some of its clubs in the third division of the AFLM, created specifically for this purpose.<sup>47</sup> In the same year, African clubs had to remove from their statutes words that hinted at any type of racial discrimination, although some of those expressions, like 'African', had become common as a reaction to colonial racism. In this evolving context, the conditions that defined football's relation with Lourenço Marques's urban popular culture considerably limited the reproduction of the narrative sustained by the suburban game. The decision to close down the AFA was a powerful blow to the institutional organisation of suburban football. The African clubs' transition to AFLM's third division institutionalised a hierarchy already established by media discourse.

In the third division, the games took place on the downtown clubs' fields, during leisure hours, almost always early in the morning. The strong relationship between organised competitions and the suburban community, with its own space, its references and its rituals, diminished. Outside the communitarian space that preserved them, without their competitions, the AFA clubs withered away. This circumstance made it easier for the AFLM and metropolitan narratives to become hegemonic. The suburban game became progressively dissociated from its expression

as part of a mediated urban popular culture, dominated by the downtown and metropolitan narratives. The greater number of social and spatial mobilities in Lourenço Marques increased the effectiveness of these narratives as idioms of social contact during daily meetings.

This integration aimed to put an end to various situations that gradually revealed the hypocrisy of the Portuguese assimilation system.<sup>48</sup> In a secondary division, African football lost the possibility, already considerably weakened, of representing an alternative community to the one defined by the colonial power. The integration served both to unite and to subordinate. When, following the end of the *indigenato*, many of the best African players moved to AFLM clubs, the downtown narrative definitely imposed itself in the suburb.

### **The historical permanence of the metropolitan narrative in independent Mozambique**

Matine explained that the football fan in the suburb ‘wanted to know everything, devours everything associated with that club’; his goal, he argued, is to ‘master his area, namely in his district, he tries to be the master of the club he loves’.<sup>49</sup> To master this knowledge, the fan needed to ‘master his area’, his social space of encounters, within the district’s daily life. After almost forty years, the old metropolitan narrative, enmeshed in the capital’s urban popular culture, continues to be important for someone who wants to ‘master its area’. Presently, says Matine, ‘in the districts, [Lisbon’s] Benfica and Sporting are still discussed. If we go to the district where I grew up, as soon as we enter, you’ll see, people will start talking about football.’ Issufo Batata, who played and has coached teams in the suburbs since the 1950s, confirms this idea: ‘Today, Portuguese football is more spoken of and discussed than Mozambican football.’<sup>50</sup>

The durability of the metropolitan narrative, which is presently the Portuguese narrative, as one of the elements of Mozambican popular culture, is even more meaningful considering that, after independence, some of its basic ways of reproduction were broken. In 1975 the new political structure promoted the nationalisation of local football, and the AFLM teams, which were delegations of metropolitan clubs, changed their names.<sup>51</sup> The transfer of players to the former metropole ended, and with it the presence of Mozambicans in Portuguese competitions. Moreover, the mass departure of settlers and the change in media ownership eliminated the main nuclei for the promotion of the narrative. Despite all these circumstances, a poll conducted in Maputo twenty years after the country’s independence showed that only 15% of the local population preferred the Mozambican teams to the Portuguese ones.<sup>52</sup>

The hegemony of the metropolitan narrative in Lourenço Marques was intrinsically linked to colonial politics, namely to the ambiguous Portuguese intention to integrate African populations, which led to the end of the AFA, the basic structure of a once-strong suburban narrative. However, the durability of these bonds cannot be reduced to the logic of a political history. Football narratives specifically emerged from an urban social organisation and became the city’s culture; they were disseminated, appropriated and reproduced, they became the content of urban encounters and social rituals and helped define new urban relations; as a social habit, they became a dimension of a generic urban *habitus*.

The ‘Portuguese narrative’ was the product of the dynamics of a specific process, dependent on the changes imposed by colonialism, but also relatively autonomous in

terms of its social effects and of the meanings it produced, only understandable within the logic of the urban social factory. In the late colonial period, it mediated the relations between many Africans and other aspects of the urban social life. Reproduced by the individuals and transmitted through the family, and in schools and workplaces during leisure times, the metropolitan narrative was institutionalised as a principle that sustained ritualised encounters, integrated in daily routines. The metropolitan narrative is mostly a structure that enables practices, more than a simple means of national or colonial imagination or identification.

Portuguese football does not appear to be something that evokes a colonial past, whose importance is remembered ceremoniously. The mastery of the Portuguese narrative, which is quite obvious in younger generations, does not have a nostalgic component for an old political order. Therefore, more than a mnemonic process that reflects a simply cognitive and conscious memory, based in discourses about the past, it turned into what Paul Connerton has termed bodily social memory.<sup>53</sup> This particular condition as a social form allowed it to survive the end of Portuguese rule in Mozambique. Today, after a terrible civil war and in a dramatic social situation, the Portuguese narrative, alongside other cosmopolitan popular culture narratives, is still a local instrument of sociability that allows individuals to engage in social interactions, to gather in public places, as a means to make arguments, to discuss but also to be connected to a larger world.

### Notes on contributor

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### Notes

1. This article is the result of research conducted for my PhD thesis ('Football in Colonial Lourenço Marques: Bodily Practices and Social Rituals', SOAS, University of London, 2009). The research was based on archival work in Lisbon and Maputo and includes a number of interviews with former football players, coaches and journalists based in Maputo and Lisbon. Some of those interviewed are quoted in the article.
2. See, for instance, the opinion of João Craveirinha, journalist, and son of the most important Mozambican poet, José Craveirinha. [http://macua.blogs.com/moambique\\_para\\_todos/joo\\_craveirinha\\_diversos/](http://macua.blogs.com/moambique_para_todos/joo_craveirinha_diversos/) (accessed August 15, 2011).
3. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*.
4. Torres, *O Império Português*, 58–9.
5. Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*, 198.
6. Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism*, 4.
7. See Zamparoni, 'Entre Narras e Mulungos', 250–360, and Henriques, 'A Sociedade Colonial em África', 216–74.
8. Domingos, 'Football and Colonialism', 483.
9. Jorge, 'L'éducation physique et le sport', 8.
10. In 1905, Sport Clube Português was formed; in 1910, Grupo Lusitano; in 1912, Grupo Desportivo Francisco Lázaro and Club Internacional de Futebol.
11. Deville-Danthu, *Le Sport en Noir et Blanc*, 52.
12. See Hedges, *História de Moçambique*, 165 and Newitt, *History of Mozambique*, 467.
13. The following foreign teams visited Lourenço Marques during the colonial period: Aberdeen (1937), Newcastle (1952), Dundee United (1953), Djurgardens, with Stanley Matthews, (1955), Dinamo de Praga (1956), Ajax (1958), Portuguesa de Santos (1959), and Ferroviário de Araraquara (1960).



14. The following metropolitan teams visited Lourenço Marques during the colonial period: Académica de Coimbra (1939 and 1951), Marítimo (1950), Benfica (1950 and 1962) Atlético (1951) Sporting (1954), F.C. Porto (1958), and Belenenses (1960).
15. Domingos, 'Football in Colonial Lourenço Marques', 49.
16. In 1922, the first specialised newspaper, *A Semana Desportiva*, was published in Lourenço Marques, lasting only one year and briefly returning in 1932. The first successful sport newspaper, *Eco dos Sports*, was founded in 1938.
17. Domingos, 'Football and Colonialism', 481–3.
18. See Nauright, *Sports, Cultures and Identities*, 102–4 and Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics*, 15–8.
19. Domingos, 'Football in Colonial Lourenço Marques', 53–4.
20. Zamparoni, 'Monhés, Baneanes, Chunas e Afro-maometanos', 214–5.
21. Arquivo do Conselho Provincial de Educação Física de Moçambique (Archive of the Physical Education Provincial Council of Mozambique), Processo do Grupo Desportivo Beira-Mar (no. 177), 'Discurso proferido no Acto de Apresentação dos nossos trabalhos em 29 de Março de 1970'.
22. Similar processes were the subjects of excellent studies in colonial Brazzaville and Zanzibar, respectively by Martin, *Leisure and Society*, and Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*.
23. Rocha, *Associativismo e Nativismo em Moçambique*, 225.
24. Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (Historical Archive of Mozambique) DSAC, secção A, administração, Administração Civil, Agremiações regionais de recreio, defesa, desporto e estudo, Associações Desportivas, Recreativas e Culturais 1934–1971, Caixa 16, Processo no. 27/97, Grupo Desportivo Beirense, 1936–1950, Informação da DSAC, April 29, 1940.
25. *O Brado Africano*, May 6, 1933, 2.
26. Saide Mogne, interviewed by the author in Maputo, April 15, 2006.
27. Hamido Nizamo, interviewed by the author in Maputo, May 2, 2006.
28. Ibid.
29. Hilário da Conceição, interviewed by the author in Lisbon, December 11, 2007.
30. Abissínia Ali, interviewed by the author in Maputo, June 2, 2006.
31. *O Brado Africano*, July 10, 1943, 5.
32. Saide Mogne, interviewed by the author in Maputo, April 15, 2006.
33. Augusto Matine, interviewed by the author in Lisbon, December 13, 2007.
34. Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (Historical Archive of Mozambique) DSAC, secção A, administração, Administração Civil, Agremiações regionais de recreio, defesa, desporto e estudo, Associações Desportivas, Recreativas e Culturais 1934–1971, Caixa 16, Processo no. 27/97, Grupo Desportivo Beirense, 1936–1950, Carta do Governador da Província, em 7 de Setembro de 1940, à DSAC transcrevendo uma nota do Administrador do Concelho de Lourenço Marques.
35. Ibid.
36. Hilário da Conceição, interviewed by the author in Lisbon, December 11, 2007.
37. Augusto Matine, interviewed by the author in Lisbon, December 13, 2007.
38. Zamparoni, 'Entre Narros e Mulungos', 334–64.
39. Saide Mogne, interviewed by the author in Maputo, April 15, 2006.
40. *O Brado Africano* announced the first match between Lourenço Marques and Johannesburg on July 12, 1930. In 1934, the Nova Aliança went to Johannesburg to play against the Bantu Men's Social Centre, one of the oldest black clubs in South Africa (*O Brado Africano*, September 29, 1934, 2), founded in 1924 by the missionary Ray Philips. See Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics*, 42.
41. Domingos, 'Football in Colonial Lourenço Marques', 187.
42. Ibid., 220–225.
43. Mendes, *Maputo Antes da Independência*, 34–6.
44. Ângelo Gomes da Silva, interviewed by the author in Maputo, April 25, 2006.
45. Ibid.
46. Erving Goffman, 'The interaction order', 1–17.
47. Arquivo do Conselho Provincial de Educação Física de Moçambique (Archive of the Physical Education Provincial Council of Mozambique), Actas das reuniões do Conselho Provincial de Educação Física de Moçambique, Livro 225/3/1960.

48. In 1955, within a population of 5,764,362 individuals, only 117,405 were considered to be 'civilised', including only 4,554 black African: see *Anuário de Moçambique*, 1958, 20.
49. Augusto Matine, interviewed by the author in Lisbon, December 13, 2007.
50. Issufo Batata, interviewed by the author in Maputo, May 22, 2006.
51. Sporting Club de Lourenço Marques became Maxaquene and Benfica de Lourenço Marques turned to Costa do Sol. The new regime stopped players' transfers to Portugal, a measure that was only reversed in 1987.
52. *BBC Focus on Africa*, January–March, 1996, 47, cited in Darby, 'African Football Labour Migration', 426.
53. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 1–5.

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