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THE CONTRADICTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT PROMOTION
THROUGH SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Mozambique's Peace and the '7 Million' Initiative

Volume I of I

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Abstract

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Keywords: empowerment, power, peacebuilding, development, social engineering, Mozambique, Angoche, '7 million', local councils.

The concept of 'empowerment' has been widely used among development practitioners since the early 1990s. This thesis aims to contribute to the literature on empowerment by developing an analytical framework that incorporates: (a) the dialectical nature of power, (b) multiple levels of analysis, and (c) the subjectivities of power that different actors have and that affect the way they respond to policies. The model is applied to the analysis of Mozambique's transition to peace and the study of a national initiative called District Development Fund, known as the '7 Million', which aims to promote empowerment by reducing poverty and promoting local participation in the rural districts.

The analysis focuses, on the one hand, on the '7 million' policy formulation, stressing the power struggles that shaped its final outcome and, on the other hand, the policy implementation in the district of Angoche, where I conducted extensive fieldwork. I argue that, even though the '7 million' had some positive aspects – including providing a discourse that underlines the relevance of the districts and the local community in matters of governance – its effects in promoting local empowerment have been far below its potential. One of the reasons for this is to be found in the dynamics of *power-to* and *power-over* that take place at the local level and that partly reflect structural aspects linked to the Mozambique state formation and peacebuilding process. More generally, the case illustrates the limitations and contradictions of policies that aim promoting 'bottom-up' empowerment from the 'top-down'.

Emancipate yourself from mental slavery

None but ourselves can free our minds

(Bob Marley)

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List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
AP	Administrative Post
AWEPA	Association of European Parliamentarians in Africa
CCM	Christian Council of Mozambique
CEDE	Centro de Estudos da Democracia e Desenvolvimento, Center of Democracy and Development Studies
CIP	Centro de Integridade Pública, Centre of Public Integrity
CNE	Comissão Nacional Eleitoral, National Elections Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCC	District Consultative Council
DNEAP	Direção Nacional de Estudos e Análise de Políticas, National Direction of Studies and Analysis of Policies in Mozambique
DNPDR	Direção Nacional de Promoção do Desenvolvimento Rural, National Directorate for the Promotion of Rural Development
DNPO	Direção Nacional do Plano e Orçamento, National Direction of Budget and Planning
DO	Development Observatory
FDD	Fundo Distrital de Desenvolvimento, District Development Fund
FG(s)	Focus Group(s)
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, Mozambique's Liberation Front
FRIDE	Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior, Foundation for International Relations and Foreign Dialogue
GDs	Grupos Dinamizadores, Dynamising Groups
GNU	Government of National Union
GPA	General Peace Agreement
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Mozambican National Institute of Statistics
LC	Local Council

LDCs	Local Development Committees
LOLE	Law of the Local State Organs
MAE	Ministério da Administração Estatal, Ministry of State Administration
MANU	Makonde National Union
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MF	Ministério das Finanças, Ministry of Finance
MPD	Ministério do Plano e Desenvolvimento, Ministry of Planning and Development
MPF	Ministério do Plano e Finanças, Ministry of Planning and Finance
MZN	Metical, Mozambican national currency
NESAM	Núcleo dos Estudantes Secundários Africanos de Moçambique, Nucleus of Mozambican Secondary Students
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OIIL	Orçamento de Investimento de Iniciativa Local, Local Initiative Investment Budget
OJM	Organização da Juventude Moçambicana, Mozambique Youth Movement
OLEs	Órgãos Locais de Estado, Local State Organs
OMM	Organização da Mulher Moçambicana, Organization of the Mozambican Woman
OTM	Organização dos Trabalhadores de Moçambique, Mozambican Workers' Organisation
PARP	Plano de Ação para a Redução da Pobreza, Plan of Action for the Reduction of Poverty
PARPA	Plano de Ação para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta, Plan of Action for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty
PDD	Plano Distrital de Desenvolvimento, District Development Plan
PEDD	Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento do Distrito, District Development Strategic Plan
PES	Plano Económico e Social, Economic and Social Plan
PESOD	Plano Económico e Social e Orçamento Distrital, District Social and Economic Budget Plan
PO	Poverty Observatory
PPFD	Programa de Planificação e Finanças Distrital, Program of Decentralised Planning and Financing
PRA	Participatory Rural Approaches
Renamo	Resistência Nacional de Moçambique, Mozambique's National Resistance

SDAE	Serviços Distritais para Atividades Econômicas, District Services for Economic Activities
TC	Technical Commission of the District
UCODIN	Unidade de Coordenação do Desenvolvimento de Nampula, Development Coordination Unit of Nampula province
Udenamo	União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique, National Democratic Union of Mozambique
UN	United Nations
Unami	União Nacional Africana de Moçambique Independente, National African Union of Independent Mozambique
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNOMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

Chapter 1

Introduction

The famous '7 million'... The '7 million', everybody knows what's going on, but no one has the courage to tell...

(Civil servant, Nampula)

The present research was born out of a personal quest to understand what kinds of changes peace brings to ordinary people, the vast majority of whom live at the margins of the political system and are often unheard and not fully taken into account when a peace accord is signed, when a new state is reshaped and new development policies are designed and implemented. More specifically, this quest has focused on the long-term changes produced by peace related, in particular, to the expansion of people's power to pursue a better life. As such, it was based on the understanding of peacebuilding as a long-term and complex social process not encapsulated in the immediate post-war years or in the life of UN peacebuilding missions.

At the heart of this quest was a more general concern with power and its different manifestations during war and peace. Taking into account that war is a violent expression of power contestation, it seemed relevant to ask the extent to which power changes with peace, and, in particular, if post-war democracy and development policies are indeed vehicles to redistribute power between different actors within a state, or if they constitute mechanisms to prevent the rise of violence whilst maintaining significant social power asymmetries. These questions and my concern with ordinary people led me to the concept of *empowerment* as a vehicle to understand these long-term peace changes.

Empowerment has become a catchword since the early 1990s being progressively incorporated into the language and agendas of international institutions. In its current use, it indicates these institutions' commitment to the

incorporation of the local agents' inputs into their policies mostly through participatory approaches. It also encapsulates the idea of capacity building as a means to increase local people's abilities and power to pursue their own objectives. In this regard, it reflects a soft approach to social engineering aimed at remodelling societies (and states) following general precepts that conform to an abstract model of a liberal democratic state. Yet, before its institutionalisation, the concept of empowerment was mostly linked to social movements and different expressions of contestation of dominant models of social organisation. In this regard, it had a much more solid grassroots base, and a character of 'demand' instead of 'supply'. Thinking of empowerment as a concept in order to understand peace-changes requires the examination of these conceptual transformations and their implications in terms of policy implementation and related outcomes in post-war contexts.

This thesis has three general objectives. First, it aims to explore how the concept of empowerment has been understood in the academic and policy domains. Second, it aims to discuss the analytical usefulness of the concept by rescuing the ontological perspectives of power underneath it and by proposing a multilevel framework of analysis. Third, it aims to analyse how empowerment operates by focusing on a case study. All through the thesis empowerment is discussed through dual lenses: as a policy instrument, on the one hand, and as an analytical concept aimed at understanding change on the other hand.

The choice of Mozambique as a country of study was based on several considerations. First, Mozambique has usually been presented internationally as a successful case of peacebuilding, in particular due to the political stability that endured in the post-war years,¹ but also because of the economic recovery demonstrated by the achievement of good macro-economic indicators. At the

¹ Since 2012, the country has faced some turbulence as the former rebel movement, and main political opposition party, Renamo, has resumed arms and conducted a series of localised attacks in the region of Sofala. A new peace agreement was signed in September 2014 just before the country's general election. At the time of writing, even though hostilities have ceased, there is tension regarding the election results, which have not been accepted by the opposition.

same time, and paradoxically, the country remains one of the poorest in world with very low human development indicators, which shows the limitations of the peace dividend distribution. More fundamentally, because it has been stable for at least 20 years after the signing of the peace agreements, the country provides a good platform to analyse change in the long-term, in particular, the changes in the lives of ordinary people. As such, on the one hand, this thesis examines the macro changes related to the process of democratization and post-war development policies — and their effects on people's empowerment. On the other hand, it takes into account a case study that looks more deeply into the local dimension and daily lives of ordinary people in the rural areas, and which is centred on a national initiative called the District Development Fund (FDD) popularly known as the '7 million'.

The '7 million' started in 2006, as a budget (7 million meticaais at the time — hence the popular name) distributed to each of the 128 districts in Mozambique to be used for credit concession to the poor strata of those economically active in the rural areas, and it soon became one of the most popular policies of President Guebuza. The initiative has a strong empowerment appeal that includes its potential effect in reducing poverty in the rural areas as well as a procedural aspect related to the engagement of local councils in the process that leads to the allocation of the credit. Because of this participatory aspect, the '7 million' is presented as a policy that places the local at the centre of the agenda. Despite of being a relatively small scheme in terms of budget (an average of 2% of the national budget), the '7 million' has gained a strong political appeal, being presented as one of the main tools in the fight against poverty. More generally, the '7 million' is connected to the wider network of institutional changes that have taken place in Mozambique since the peace agreements, and it is portrayed as a further step in the country's process of decentralisation.

Different from other initiatives that aim to promote local empowerment, including several micro-credit schemes, the '7 million' is commonly portrayed as a 'Mozambican model', an expression that highlights the government's claim to national ownership regarding the initiative. In this regard, the analysis of the

case study also provides a basis to assess the extent to which a national (therefore endogenous) initiative is in any way more likely to generate local empowerment than an initiative led by donors.

1.1 Research Overview

The topic of this research crosses two distinct and interrelated fields of knowledge. On the one hand, the thesis is located in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies. The choice of a post-war country and the concern with the long-term effects of peacebuilding and statebuilding processes in Mozambique reflects the primary perspective of this research. On the other hand, and partly because of the relative absence of literature on empowerment in Peace and Conflict Studies, the research draws substantially on the academic and policy material on this issue within the field of Development.

The incorporation of *empowerment* in the development agenda in the early 1990s has contributed to the emergence of a significant literature on the topic. Notably, empowerment has been studied in the arena of gender studies and here is where some of the most important contributions to the concept may be found (Rowlands, 1997; Sen, 1997; Kabeer, 2001; Batliwala, 2007). Next to gender, empowerment has been analysed in the context of poverty reduction and development (Friedmann, 1992; Narayan, 2002; Alsop, 2004; Stern et al., 2005; Alsop et al., 2006; Eyben et al., 2008). As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, with few exceptions, this literature is largely policy-oriented and empowerment is usually perceived as a policy outcome and not necessarily as an analytical conceptual tool. Also, there is a tendency to focus on the micro-level of analysis, where policies are implemented and/or on the institutional aspects of governance as the locus of the sources of disempowerment.

In Peace and Conflict Studies, empowerment has entered the agenda following a general concern with the legitimization of external interventions, notably peacekeeping and peacebuilding related activities (Lederach, 1997; Ramsbotham et al., 2007; Donais, 2009 and 2012; Francis, 2010). In spite of the sporadic use of the word *empowerment*, here the discussion has privileged the term *local ownership*, used as an indicator to stress the extent to which local actors own the reforms promoted after violent conflicts (ibid.; Chandler, 2006;

Richmond, 2011 and 2012; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). Here we may broadly identify two strands of literature that touch on empowerment and ownership. On the one hand, there is the literature on conflict resolution, which tends to emphasise the relevance of participatory *processes* in order to ensure peace from below alongside the more formal and diplomatic channels of peace negotiations (Lederach, 1997 and 2003; Ramsbotham et al., 2007; Papagianni, 2008). The logic behind this is that the way the *process* is designed affects the legitimacy and long-term aspects of peace which include manifold dimensions such as justice, reconciliation, or more generally, cultural peacebuilding (Ramsbotham et al., 2007). On the other hand, there is a strand of literature that addresses the limitations of the liberal peace project. This critical body of literature may be further divided according to the types of critiques they raise, and which, according to Chandler (2011), would be the 'ideas-based' critiques and the 'power-based' critiques. The first group includes more conservative critiques, predominant in International Relations, linked to the problem of the universalising assumptions of the liberal policy discourse and the mechanisms used for statebuilding and peacebuilding policies (e.g., Paris, 2004). Conversely, the 'power-based critiques' include many scholars engaged in Peace and Conflict Studies and take into account the problem of power in the analysis of peacebuilding. Here, the critiques vary from structural neo-Marxist expressions (Cramer, 2006) to Foucauldian approaches (Duffield, 2001 and 2006), to approaches driven by Critical Theory (Pugh et al., 2011) and emancipatory concerns (Richmond, 2005 and 2011).

These 'power-based' approaches are particularly important in this thesis as one of the central problems discussed in the following pages is precisely the need to reflect on power and power dynamics when discussing empowerment as a concept and, especially, in policy making and practice. It is also within this strand that we find the literature on hybridity and the everyday in peacebuilding (Brown et al., 2010; Mac Ginty, 2011; Richmond, 2011; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013), which offers an important platform for the analysis of empowerment as it allows for the exploration of the micro levels of analysis — something usually ignored in the more traditional literature of International Relations. In this regard, this thesis' contribution to the literature in Peace and

Conflict Studies lies precisely in the further exploration of certain aspects present in the 'power-based' critiques, in particular by exploring local power dynamics, while making a bridge with the more detailed literature on empowerment that exists in the field of Development studies.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

According to Phillips and Pugh (1994: 61-62, quoted in Silverman and Marvasti, 2008: 93), originality can mean “making a synthesis that hasn't been made before; using already known material but with a new interpretation, bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue (and) adding to knowledge in a way that hasn't been done before”. Taking this into account, this thesis' value added (Dunleavy, 2003: 31) is twofold. First, the thesis contributes to the existing literature on empowerment. In this regard, it bridges the existing literature in Development Studies with parallel debates in Peace Studies, therefore, contributing to the expansion of the debate in the latter field. Also, different from the dominant literature in Development, this thesis not only assesses empowerment as the (expected) output of a specific policy, but it traces a parallel between *how the policy is formulated*, including what are the assumptions underlying the policy rationale of empowerment, and the policy *implementation* and *effectiveness on the ground*. In this regard, it blends the analysis of the policy discourse — and the extent to which this incorporates general assumptions on empowerment — with analysis of the policy operationalisation at the local level. By doing this, the thesis also rescues the political aspect of empowerment, distancing itself from the mainstream technical approaches to the topic, as discussed in detail in Chapter 2. These aspects are captured in the proposed framework of analysis developed in Chapter 2 and which incorporates aspects that are under-problematised in the literature on empowerment, notably, the consideration of combined multiple levels of analysis, a dialectical perspective of power, and a strong focus on actors' subjectivities. In the case study, these aspects are further analysed taking into account the historical context that led to the policy creation and which also explains part of the limitations of its implementation.

Second, the thesis contributes to the understanding of the initiative examined in the case study by presenting a large amount of new data on a topic that has

been widely referred to in Mozambique but on which very little reliable data is available (see discussion on methodology, below). Indeed, there are only a few studies that provide an in-depth and thorough analysis of the functioning of the '7 million' (Forquilha, 2010; Orre and Forquilha, 2012), and they are, as a rule, restricted to specific districts and refer to the initial years of the policy. Also, and even though the government is presented with trimestral reports from the local levels, more comprehensive and critical national in-depth studies on the matter are also lacking. In spite of this, the policy has been widely publicised, nationally and internationally, as a major success. This study, therefore, is an important instrument of verification of this discourse. Moreover, because the case study is placed within the broader context of state reforms that followed peace in Mozambique, it also contributes to the long-term assessment of peace itself and its (potential) empowering effects in the lives of the ordinary Mozambicans.

According to O'Leary (2004: 116), while a case study may not be generalisable, it can still contribute to knowledge by bringing new variables into light, as well as be used, at a later stage, collectively with other cases to form the basis of a theory. On this, the narrow scope of this project and the selection of a circumscribed case study, while not allowing for generalisations, provide the opportunity to draw some lessons that may be transferable to other cases where similar policies take place. In this regard, the use of the empowerment framework developed in Chapter 2 in the analysis of the case study is expected to highlight the role that specific variables play in the understanding of empowerment as a general phenomenon. As experiments with local councils — which are at the core of the '7 million' functioning — also take place in other African countries, the case study may also contribute to the general assessment of parallel initiatives in similar contexts of post-war governance reforms.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The thesis responds to the following research questions:

1. Considering its empowering ambition and the current Mozambican political and economic context, how aligned with local conditions is the '7 million' initiative?
2. What are the effects of the '7 million' on rural people's empowerment?
3. What lessons can be drawn from the case study that could contribute to the theoretical literature on empowerment and better policy planning for empowerment promotion?

The argument developed in the thesis is that, even though the '7 million' had some positive aspects – including providing a discourse that underlines the relevance of the districts and the local community in matters of governance – its effects in promoting local empowerment have been far below its potential and, at times, even counter-productive. One of the reasons for this is to be found in the dynamics of *power-to* and *power-over* that take place at the local level and that, to a certain extent, reflect structural aspects linked to state formation in Mozambique and the power dynamics that take place at the national/governmental level. In consequence, existing power dynamics at the local level are often reinforced by the '7 million' initiative instead of contributing to their change. These poor results also reflect the misalignment between some basic assumptions about the empowering potential of the policy and the way power dynamics actually operate at the local level. This misalignment, in turn, also reflects power dynamics that take place in the upper levels of the policy spectrum and that reveals important conflicts of interest regarding what the '7 million' should be. More generally, the '7 million' does not address the actual sources of local disempowerment, focusing instead on small scale issues that cannot compensate for the bigger structural problems that cause disempowerment in the districts in the first place. Bringing the case into the wider context, the implementation of '7 million' points towards the contradictions in promoting 'bottom-up' empowerment from the 'top-down'. This, in turn, reflects the limitations of social engineering attempts at social transformation that are not demand-driven.

1.2 Epistemological Perspective

This thesis' epistemological perspective is fundamentally critical and relies largely on the sociological perspective of Pierre Bourdieu and Critical Theory also taking into account insights from Historical Materialism and other post-Marxist writings.

As a starting point, the thesis embraces a strong concern with historical patterns and their effect in present developments. The logic of dialectics is particularly relevant to the extent that it highlights the contradictory aspects of historical processes instead of accepting a supposed linearity towards progress (Sztompka, 1993). The role of tensions inherent in the system and the idea that opposite aspects of phenomena coexist (Holloway, 2010), instead of rejecting each other, is particularly explored in the analysis of power and empowerment as well as in the discussion of the state reforms that followed the Peace Accords in Mozambique, and it helps us understand part of the difficulties of promoting change in post-war contexts. Yet, it should be noted that this thesis does not share the Hegelian perspective of dialectics pointing towards an ultimate *telos*, or a final stage of evolution (Sztompka, 1993). Although there is a concern here with mechanisms for change and means of social improvement towards human betterment (or emancipatory concerns), I disagree that this is an *inevitable* path. Instead, any improvement is here assumed as contingent on historical circumstances and human action that is, in turn, contingent on the way agency and structure interact.

In Critical Theory, the weight attributed to agency and structure in the explanation of events often varies. On the one hand, following Marx, Critical Theory stresses that "society is the product of the activities of its members" (Stirk, 2000: 35). At the same time, it recognises several constraints to action, some of which are not clearly identified by agents, making it difficult for deeper changes to occur. It is relevant, in this context, to uncover the mechanisms that make individuals adapt to their roles in the system and bring them to light and criticism instead of accepting them as 'natural' (ibid.; Horkheimer, 1937). This logic is related to the normative drive of Critical Theory which is the struggle for emancipation (ibid.; Bauman, 2000; Booth, 2007) and the need to overcome 'false consciousness'.

In a similar vein, according to Bourdieu, the task of sociology should be to unveil hidden dimensions of power relations that perpetuate patterns of domination. In the words of Swartz (1997: 10), "Since, according to Bourdieu, it is the misrecognition of those embedded interests that is the necessary condition for the exercise of power, he believes that their public exposure will destroy their legitimacy and open up the possibility for altering existing social arrangements". What is notable in Bourdieu's analysis is his attempt to bridge agency and structure pointing to their dialectical relationship (ibid.). As such, and even though he recognises that every human action is situated, he acknowledges the possibility of change in such a way as to reduce patterns of domination. More fundamentally, he reaches for the origins of the dominant structures that condition actors' behaviours. His theory of practice, in this regard, reflects his effort to understand the dialectics of internalization of externality and of externalization of internality or, as he also refers to, the processes of incorporation and objectification (Bourdieu, 1977: 72).

Bourdieu's (1977: 72) concept of *habitus* captures this complex relationship between agency and structure. Accordingly, habitus is:

. . . a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.

The concept of habitus reinforces the historical dimension of the constitution of social structures and, at the same time, because of Bourdieu's concern with different arenas of social interaction, it is not reduced to the economic domain (capitalism), but it includes the concern with culture and symbolic interests (Bourdieu, 1987: 233). It is, therefore, flexible and comprehensive and may be used to understand different levels of analysis. This perspective is particularly important in order to comprehend empowerment dynamics, and, in particular,

how people in traditional societies react to empowerment promotion policies, which is at the core of this research. In fact, when it comes to empowerment, one of the big challenges for policy-makers is to grasp the symbolic dimension at play in local contexts and how this may interact with new power dynamics that are supposed to be created by these policies. As Bourdieu (1977: 167) says, “what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying”, and that is where things such as informal social practices, local tradition, religion, and culture stand. Focusing on subjectivities, as this thesis does, means, therefore, making an effort to grasp what seems invisible at first sight but which may jeopardise specific policies because of the clashing of different values’ systems.

The concept of habitus is, therefore, particularly relevant in order to understand empowerment, especially actors’ *power subjectivities*, since what agents consider ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’, or what Freire (1996) would call *limit-situations*, stem from habitus (Swartz, 1997: 103). At the same time, while recognising the dimension of structures and their effects in shaping subjectivities, the concept of habitus distances itself from the idea of ‘false consciousness’, which by definition seals the opposition between ‘false’ and ‘true’. Habitus is more flexible in this regard and contains the idea that *all* human action is situated, including academic research, another key aspect to this thesis.

Indeed, this thesis has a critical stand towards positivism and has a strong concern with the subjective aspects of social practices. In line with several critical and post-modern approaches, this thesis rejects positivist claims that a value-free perspective is possible in the first place (Horkheimer, 1937; Stirk, 2000; Delanty and Strydom, 2003; O’Leary, 2004; Grbich, 2007). Instead, it recognises the relevance of the context in which knowledge is produced, and how academic research is, in itself, a result and a source of power. Yet, while acknowledging that a value-free research is ultimately unattainable, the thesis does not embrace the rejection of the truth but assumes that any theoretical model will always only be able to grasp facets of the ‘truth’ and provide partial views of reality. At the same time, the thesis adopts a sceptical stance towards the attainability of the emancipatory project envisaged in Critical Theory — in

particular, its commitment to objectivity — and it acknowledges the problematic understanding of what emancipation entails, especially when it comes to academic research (see discussion in Chapter 2).

Bourdieu's attempt to bridge subjectivism and objectivism is, therefore, key in the analysis presented here. As noted by Bourdieu (1987), focusing only on individuals' accounts may be misleading to understand reality as it fails to grasp the patterns of hierarchy that shape peoples' ways of thinking, which means that human action is situated and has to be understood as such. At the same time, however, because structures are constantly reified by agents' behaviour, it is fundamental to understand the way they think in order to observe where the possibility of change may lie. He stresses, therefore, the dialectical relationship between objectivism and subjectivism (Bourdieu, 1987: 232) and the need to understand both the subjective aspects underlying actors' behaviour as well as the context that influences their thoughts and actions.

Linked to that is Bourdieu's concern with the relational method, which means paying attention to what is invisible at first sight, and the location or positioning of actors in a specific context, that is where they stand in relation to others. When it comes to power, this alerts us to the fact that very often, what is behind people's behaviours is not directly visible because it is the result of a matrix of positions in a specific field. However, if we want to understand choices, we need to grasp this matrix and the way to do this is by understanding the relationship between the material and the symbolic dimensions of social life (Bourdieu, 1987: 233-234; Swartz, 1997: 65).

Different from analytical schemes that assume individuals as rational actors, Bourdieu uses the concept of "strategy" as a central aspect in order to understand agents' behaviour. Strategy is used as a means to emphasise the role of everyday practices. Whereas he acknowledges that every action is interest-oriented, Bourdieu rejects the idea of rational calculation as a driver for actions. Instead, he posits that most choices occur from "practical dispositions that incorporate ambiguities and uncertainties that emerge from acting through time and space" (Swartz, 1997: 100). There is a concern, therefore, with "practical knowledge" (see also Giddens, 1979), which is intimately related to habitus, or "history turned into nature" (Bourdieu, 1977: 78). In other words,

actors act based on previous experiences making rather intuitive estimates of their chances of success based on these reiterated practices, which, in turn, tend to reinforce habitus itself. In Bourdieu words, “The habitus is the universalizing mediation which causes an individual agent’s practices, without either explicit reason or significant intent, to be nonetheless ‘sensible’ and ‘reasonable’” (Bourdieu, 1977: 79).

This interpretation helps us understand why specific structural social patterns tend to endure in time. To a certain extent, the idea of habitus resemble post-Marxist discourses on hegemony and active consensus (Gramsci, 1971; Mouffe, 1979; Holub, 1992); however, it goes beyond it as it extends the problem of domination to the *internal* level of individuals, therefore, transcending the idea that consciousness is the tool to overcome domination (Hernandez, 2012). It is because of this acknowledgement that Bourdieu also engages in an extensive discussion regarding the ethical aspects of academic research and its practical limitations in terms of producing a totally unbiased knowledge.

Indeed, according to Bourdieu, a reflexive practice is imperative in order for an academic to produce good science (Swartz, 1997: 271-274). A reflexive practice means that the researcher needs to be constantly aware of three major biases while conducting research: first, she needs to control the values and practices that she brings from her social background to the object of inquiry; second, she needs to be aware of her field location, that is the position that the researcher holds in her specific field of production; third, she needs to constantly examine her epistemological and social conditions in order to assess her ability to make scientific claims. For Bourdieu, a reflexive practice will not fully eliminate the problem of bias, nevertheless, it may largely reduce the bias as the researcher is placed under critical analysis as much as the object of research (ibid.).

In its original project, this research was fundamentally based on an emancipatory perspective of science based on Critical Theory. The change in the epistemological perspective was the result of a series of reflections during the main fieldwork in 2012, which forced me to confront several of my own biases and realise that by sticking to the previous epistemological framework I

would eventually distort the data by trapping the policy under analysis and the data gathered in a dichotomic emancipatory/oppressive classification. As I progressively reconsidered my stand and tried to understand the positioning of the different types of actors, it became clear that the power dynamics I was observing were far more complex than I had anticipated. As discussed below, as much as possible, I tried to minimise the perceived biases by working with different actors and using different material in the analysis of the case study.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis is based on a case study. According to Yin (2003: 9), a case study strategy is suitable when “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control”. A case study is, accordingly, an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly identified” (ibid.: 13).

The main purpose of the thesis is to provide new insights into the concept of empowerment and how it is operationalized in the context of policy implementation. In addition, empowerment is also used as an analytical tool — not only as a policy objective — in order to explore the different power dynamics observable within this process as well as the actors’ subjectivities and how they affect policy implementation and its potential for social change. The choice of Mozambique and the ‘7 million’, therefore, provides the context in which these analytical aspects are examined. Because the thesis is concerned with *depth* and aims to uncover *subjective* aspects that are not measurable through quantitative analysis, a case study approach focusing on a qualitative analysis presents itself as the most suitable research strategy.

Case studies may serve different purposes in terms of contribution to knowledge. This research offers an *instrumental* case study, which means that “a case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to revise a generalisation. Although the case selected is studied in depth, the main focus is on something else” (Stake, 2000: 436-7, quoted in Silverman and Marvasti, 2008: 164). In this regard, the focus is the contribution to the discussion of

empowerment as an analytical tool as well as to the exploration of the long-term effects of peace in Mozambique.

This case study is based on two main analytical tools. First, it relies on document analysis taking into account the existing regulation on the '7 million' as well as the official reports available on the subject. The objective here is to understand the empowering assumptions behind the initiative as well as the several changes that have taken place since its inception. Other non-official documents are also used as complementary material in the assessment of the initiative (see below). Second, and more fundamentally, the research is based on a critical ethnography (O'Leary, 2004; Grbich, 2007: 46-47). According to O'Leary (2004: 144), an ethnography can be described as "the exploration of cultural groups in a bid to understand, describe and interpret a way of life from the point of view of its participants". A *critical* ethnography "adds a political agenda of exposing inequitable, unjust, or repressive influences that are acting on 'marginalized' cultural groups, in a bid to open up alternate, more liberating possibilities. Critical ethnography works towards conscientization, empowerment, and liberation of the 'marginalized' through in-depth critical analysis of underlying social fabrics" (O'Leary, 2004: 144).

As O'Leary (2004: 145-6) has stated:

Critical ethnography explores and critiques existing systems in a bid to serve the interests of the 'marginalized' groups. There is thus an assumption that the dominant or existing system is indeed repressive or unjust, and needs to be exposed in order to open up possibilities for change. Critical ethnography attempts to expose the political nature of knowledge and unmask the dominant forces that shape our view of the world. By critical examination of worldviews, ideology and power, critical ethnography attempts to contextualize the current situation in a larger socio-historic framework that offers, and encourages others to engage in, critical reflection.

One of the drivers of this research is precisely to understand the dynamics of power embedded in the '7 million' and how they affected its empowering potential regarding the ordinary Mozambicans at the end of this chain — that is,

those who are the official targets of these policies, the very poor in the rural areas. The research is, therefore, based on the assumption that this situation of exclusion and social asymmetry exists and has been produced historically. Nevertheless, the position here taken is that the idea of *conscientisation* should be analysed carefully. As noted in the previous section, opposing this concept to the idea of false consciousness limits the scope of the analysis of empowerment as it traps the discussion into a dichotomic view that does not explain power dynamics in a satisfactory way. Therefore, by using the term 'critical' here, I retain the concern with the unveiling of power dynamics that influence behaviours but that does *not* entail the assumption that a 'solution' exists that may fully lead to a state of emancipation. Instead, *conscientisation* may instead be equated to the constant development of critical awareness — or the increased capacity to question one's position in society (or the habitus) and her/his ability to change things (see Chapter 2). This dimension is explored in the analysis of the '7 million' by taking into account the views of the different types of participants regarding the power dynamics embedded in the initiative and its implementation.

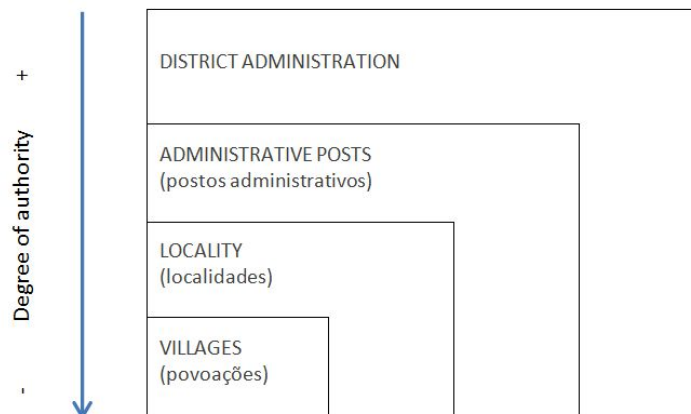
UNITS OF ANALYSIS

One of the crucial issues in the design of a case study is the definition of the unit of analysis. One of the main purposes of this research is precisely to understand empowerment through multiple levels of analysis. In this regard, on the one hand, the thesis discusses several processes that take place at the national level including the '7 million' policy formulation. On the other hand, in order to explore policy implementation, the research focuses on the district level, which is, here, the representation of the local. In the thesis, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 focus predominantly on the national level, namely the central government level, as they explore the historical context that sets the stage for the '7 million' as well as the domain of policy formulation. While focusing on the national level, these chapters also consider the influence of international factors. Chapters 4 and 5 also descend to the provincial level, which may be perceived as an intermediary level between the national and the local. Chapter 6 explores policy implementation at the local level in detail.

Making sense of the 'local'

For the purpose of this thesis, the local level refers to the district and all that is comprised under the district administration authority, including the district sub-units (administrative posts or APs, localities, and villages) as well as its communities. Whereas it is common in current approaches to peacebuilding to oppose the *local* to the *external* (e.g., Manning, 2003; Donais, 2012; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013), making the former sound often homogeneous, by taking the district as the local level of analysis and by considering its sub-units and actors, I am taking a stand that highlights, instead, the *differences within* this unit. As such, whereas the level of analysis is 'local', this thesis considers the existence of a plurality of often very different local actors. This emphasis on heterogeneity derives from one of the drivers of this research, which is precisely to acknowledge the power dynamics *within* each level of analysis, which, in Mozambique (as generally in Africa), are influenced by a mix of formal and informal sources of authority (see Chapter 6; Manning, 2002; Boone, 2003) as well as different aspects related to the predominant local culture.

Figure 1.1: Administrative Structure of the District



In terms of formal administration, each district in Mozambique has four echelons of territorial organization as shown in Figure 1.1. Each of these echelons has a formal government chief, namely the chief of the administrative posts (APs), the chief of the locality, and the chief of the village. It should be noted that, even though the villages (*povoações*) were established as legal territorial

administrative echelons in 2003 (Rep. Moz., Law 8/2003), the rules regarding their governance (in particular, their formal administrative chiefs) were not defined until 2012. Instead, all through these years, the villages were informally governed by local community authorities.² Only in 2012 was a law approved (11/2012) which determined that the chiefs of the villages were to be designated by the provincial government, thus, centralising this level of governance in a similar way to the localities, the APs, and the district administration (Nuvunga, 2013: 44; see also Chapter 5).

The issue of tradition in the Mozambican context is extremely complex and has led to a polarised debate between those who perceive tradition in a 'romanticised way' — something that preceded colonialism — and those who perceive it as something that was distorted by colonialism — thus not the original representation of local culture (Weimer, 1999: 3-4; Buur et al., 2007: 11). The debate was further polarised after the Decree 15/2000, which blurred the distinction between traditional leaders (those that existed before colonialism) and leaders that were created during colonialism (e.g., the *régulos*) or during the first years of Frelimo's rule after independence (e.g., the *secretários de bairro*, originally created within the Frelimo dynamising groups) (Araújo, 2010: 8; Nuvunga, 2013: 44). If we think purely in terms of tradition, in the case of the Makua people — the predominant ethnic group in Nampula province — key social power figures are the *Mwene* (who is the highest male authority) and the *Apwiyamwene* (the most important woman in the village, who exerts the important role of counsellor) (Martínez, 2009: 61-65). Yet, when it comes to governance matters, we find that the *régulos* play a fundamental (perhaps predominant) role, which means that, even though these authorities were framed together in the legislation as 'community authorities', in practice, their origins and functions differ.

² According to Decree 15/2000, approved by the Council of Ministers, and which introduced the term 'community authorities', these would include, among others the *régulos* (see Chapter 3 for the origins of these actors), the *secretários de bairro* (neighbourhood secretaries), and a series of other 'traditional authorities' such as *mambos* and *fumos*. Chapter 5 discusses this issue further.

The way these different sources of authority interact and affect local behaviours is difficult to capture and would require a different kind of research than the one presented here, most probably one based on a long-term ethnography at the level of the village. For the purpose of this thesis, and considering its specific focus on the '7 million' and the concern with a multilevel analysis, I only consider here those actors formally included in the policy's regulation. In this regard, it should be noted that the local councils, a fundamental pillar of the '7 million', should by definition include at least 40% membership of 'community authorities' (Rep. Moz., MAE/MPD, 2009), but, as discussed in Chapter 6, there are several other factors beyond tradition that influence this process. As such, I did not define a priori which kinds of 'community authorities' to interview. Instead, my sample took into account whoever was a member of the local councils (see *Access and Sampling*, below).

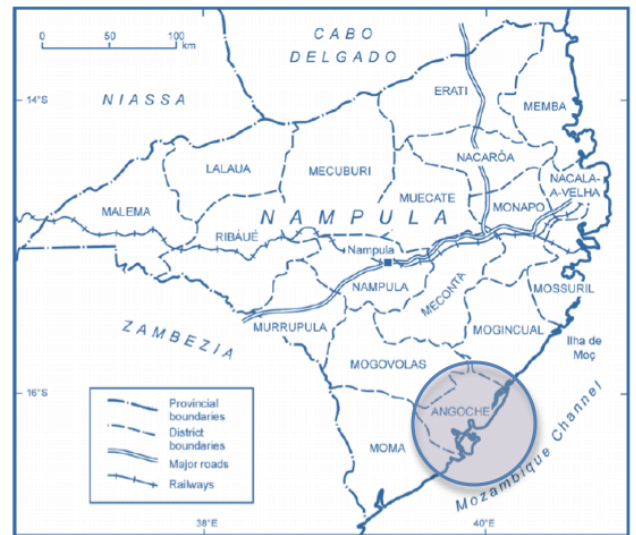
THE SELECTION OF THE DISTRICT OF ANGOCHE

Mozambique has a total of 128 districts³ and 43 municipalities distributed within 11 provinces. The criteria for selection of the district for this research was based on the history of the '7 million' discussed in detail in Chapter 5. First, I selected the province of Nampula due to its history of experiments with decentralised planning that have taken place since the early 1990s. Second, I took into account the districts where some of these earlier experiments had been tested, in particular, during the implementation of the Nampula Local Development Programme led by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and which included the creation of the first district consultative councils. These were the districts of Mecubúri, Malema, and Angoche. Initially, my project contemplated the comparative study of the districts of Mecubúri (in the interior) and Angoche (in the coast). Later, taking into account the limited resources available for the fieldwork, the suggestions of the examiners during my PhD transfer, and the contacts that I had established in Nampula and which tailored

³ In 2013, a new law was passed creating 13 new districts and transforming all provincial capitals in districts. As such, the total number of districts existing at the time of writing is 151 (AIM, 21 Mar. 2013). This number is, nevertheless, not contemplated in the research, as the fieldwork took place before this change.

my accessibility to the districts, I decided to concentrate my efforts in Angoche only. By selecting a district that had a history of participatory planning several years before the '7 million', in a province considered a successful example of participatory governance, I assumed that the chances of success of the '7 million' would be higher and its empowering effects more visible than in other provinces/districts.

Figure 1.2: Nampula Province and its Districts



Source: on the left, based on map by the United Nations Cartographic Section; on the right, map available at ECIAfrica, 2004, p. 3. Selection added.

DATA COLLECTION

This research relies on a variety of primary data which include a series of documents from official and non-official sources related to the '7 million' as well as information obtained in interviews and focus groups conducted during the fieldwork.

The documents used in the analysis include:

- The legislation, presidential discourses, and intra-ministerial documents related to the '7 million' and the functioning of the local councils. Some of

these documents are available online on the Government of Mozambique's website and related Ministries. Others were obtained during the fieldwork directly from the interviewees. They are listed in Chapter 5 in the section that discusses the initiative and its empowerment rationale.

- Reports prepared by civil society organisations (CSOs), development agencies, and consultancy firms. These were taken into account in the assessment of the '7 million' and its history. Some of these were obtained online, while others were gathered through contacts established during the fieldwork. The academic institution *Centro de Estudos da Democracia e Desenvolvimento* (Democracy and Development Studies Centre, CEDE) had some short briefings of field visits related to a monitoring project of '7 million' projects in selected districts (including Angoche), which I photocopied and used as supporting evidence along with my findings. The briefings regarding other districts were used in the final assessment of the initiative in the last chapter.
- Press articles were used in order to discuss selected topics. For the purpose of this research I did not make a detailed analysis of all the articles available in the press about the '7 million'. This could constitute the topic of another thesis as press reports on the matter abound and include both supportive as well as critical opinions. An extensive selection of articles on the matter were reviewed before the fieldwork and the final project design in order to provide a general understanding of how the theme had been discussed in Mozambique. Because of the ethnographic character of this thesis, however, and the large amount of primary data obtained, I decided to leave aside an in-depth analysis of the press using news articles mostly as a complementary source in specific instances.
- District documents regarding the implementation and evaluation of the '7 million' and local councils, obtained directly in the Angoche District Administration. These included several Excel sheets with data related to the amount of money disbursed per projects, lists of distribution of the '7 million' per district sub-units, as well as Word documents containing lists

of members of local councils, reports regarding these bodies' reconstitution, and assessment of some projects funded by the '7 million'.

As will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the quantitative data obtained in the central and district governments, while referred to in the analysis, were not considered reliable due to the problems of definition of variables and the mechanisms of data collection. In fact, the qualitative analysis undertaken in this research helps reveal the limitations behind the evaluations available on the topic by deconstructing the process that led to the development of this data in the first place.

THE FIELDWORK

For the purpose of this research, I went to Mozambique three times. In August 2010, I conducted a two-week pilot trip in order to establish contacts (both in Maputo as well as in Nampula), assess the costs and feasibility of the fieldwork, assess the relevance of the topic in question, and verify any other studies on the subject taking place at the time. The main fieldwork took place between 19 March and 18 June 2012, when I spent one month in Maputo, two weeks in Nampula city, and 6 weeks in the district of Angoche. During this period, I also had the chance to go to the district of Moma, also in Nampula province, where I conducted additional focus groups and interviews with people from Moma and Mogovolas districts in order to have a comparative view of the functioning of the local councils and the '7 million'. Finally, thanks to the opportunity linked to a Marie Curie scholarship,⁴ I went back to Mozambique in April 2013 for a month. This last trip was not initially envisaged in the project; however, it gave me the opportunity to undertake additional interviews and present my preliminary research results and discuss them with some of the participants, including civil servants in Maputo, civil society organisations and civil servants in Nampula, as well as some members of the technical commission of the district administration in Angoche. This process was particularly important in order to validate my results and confirm my previous findings.

⁴ The scholarship was part of the European Union 7th Framework and the SPBUILD Network.

Following customary practices in Mozambique, and in order to ensure my ability to conduct the research in the district, I opted to start my fieldwork from the top-down and then move back to the top. Thanks to the invaluable help of a friend, the first person I met in Maputo in 2012 was the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs who linked me directly with the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Planning and Development and the previous vice-Minister of Planning and Finance. Before heading to Nampula, I had the opportunity to interview the Minister of Planning and Development, Aiuba Cuereneia, who presented me with the official view of the '7 million' and gave me a collection of basic documents related to the latter published in 2009. I also conducted additional interviews in the Ministry of Development and Planning with actors who were engaged in the very early stages of the policy formulation.

Once in Nampula, backed by these first encounters, I divided my research strategy into two. First, I interviewed several civil servants in the provincial government, some of whom had been engaged in the first experiments of participatory practices in the province, including the above-mentioned UNCDF project. Second, I connected with several members of CSOs that worked with different projects in the districts. My connection with CSOs in Nampula was fundamental in facilitating my research in the district.

After reading my research summary, the director of a local NGO called Akilizetho ADS,⁵ Pedro Carvalho, offered this NGO's institutional support during my stay in the province. The work of Akilizetho is well known in Nampula, in particular, due to their political impartiality and active engagement on issues of local governance. Overall, Akilizetho's work consists on promoting local development and training local communities in activities that include participatory practices in the domain of local governance. Since the early 2000s, they have taken over work initially driven by the Dutch NGO SNV⁶ which

⁵ ADS stands for *Associação para Desenvolvimento Sustentável* (Association for Sustainable Development).

⁶ SNV stands for *Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers* (Foundation of Netherlands Volunteers), as established in 1965. Since 1993 its official name is SNV Netherlands Development Organisation.

involved helping with the creation of the so-called local development committees (LDCs)⁷ and fora, which represent the best expression of a local civil society in the rural areas in Nampula. While doing so, they also worked in partnership with several district governments offering capacity development workshops to the local councils in selected locations.

Akilizetho's partnership was crucial to the completion of my research. It was through one of their employees in Angoche that I was formally introduced in the district administration. This medium of introduction was important, as local authorities request credentials from researchers before consenting to their activities in the villages. As Akilizetho had worked with the district government on several occasions, and I was going to have the direct help of its local employee, local authorities felt more comfortable with the idea of having a stranger conducting research in the district.

The top-down character of this process and the need to respect certain scales of authority in the district should not be underestimated. On more than one occasion, when I presented my introduction letter from Bradford University and the NGO credentials, they practically ignored the former. In fact, had I not obtained the institutional support from Akilizetho, I would have needed a letter from the provincial government before being able to start any fieldwork activity. Having the chance of being linked with an NGO had several advantages compared to the other option not least of which was detaching my image from any political project. At the same time, because Akilizetho is well known and positively perceived in the communities, this also facilitated my ability to gain trust from the participants.

At the same time, aware that this would constitute a bias in my fieldwork, I also took several steps in order to minimise this problem. First, I worked with different partners in the district besides Akilizetho. Second, as Akilizetho only works in selected locations of the district, I ensured I was able to visit those places where the NGO was not present and, therefore, where local actors were not familiar with its work.

⁷ In Portuguese, *Comitês de Desenvolvimento Local* (CDL).

Regarding other partners, in 2012, I also relied on the collaboration of a local employee from CEDE (see above). Having worked with CEDE for several years, this person was also very knowledgeable about the '7 million' and knew many beneficiaries and their projects. In 2013, I further relied on a third kind of collaboration. As my previous partner at Akilizetho was not in the district at the time of my fieldwork, she provided another connection to a trusted colleague of hers. This colleague was originally from Angoche, but, as a reformed ex-soldier, he had left the country in the early 1990s having returned at the time of my fieldwork. He was less familiar with the '7 million', but knowledgeable of the region.

In summary, these different collaborations were important in order to minimise any bias related to my formal link with Akilizetho. Also, as each of these individuals had a very different background, they also helped me see the '7 million' from a different angle contributing, therefore, to my ability to constantly question my initial views of the findings and my understanding of local subjectivities. Finally, even though I relied on collaborators in several instances, in particular when it came to convening focus groups, on many occasions, I also worked on my own in the district, in particular, while interviewing members of the district government and members of the local council at the district level but also while interviewing some beneficiaries (as long as they spoke Portuguese).

Access and Sampling

Taking into account the multilevel dimensions of this research and the understanding that the 'local' is also heterogeneous, the activities in the district aimed to cover all types of actors involved in the implementation of the '7 million' and which included the District Administrator, all members of the District Technical Commission (the body in charge of assisting the local councils and monitoring the policy), members of the local councils, direct beneficiaries of the '7 million' (those who obtained the loan), members of the community (indirect beneficiaries), and individuals who tried but did not obtain the loan.

The guiding principle for sampling regarding the beneficiaries, members of the local councils, and communities was the district's geography. Angoche is one of

the 18 districts of Nampula province.⁸ It had a population of 276,471 people in 2007, as of the last census (INE database, access 1 July 2014),⁹ that is 6.9% of the total population of Nampula province,¹⁰ which makes it one of its most populous districts. The district is divided in four APs and 14 localities, which, in turn, contain over 45 villages.

Table 1.1: Angoche: Administrative Posts and Respective Localities

ANGOICHE SEDE	AÚBE	BOILA-NAMETORIA	NAMAPONDA
<i>Angoche Sede</i>	<i>Aúbe Sede</i>	<i>Nametoria Sede</i>	<i>Namaponda Sede</i>
Sangage	Catamoio	Muchepua	Mepapata
<i>Mutucuti</i>	<i>Ciretene</i>	Naiculo	Gelo
		<i>Napruma</i>	
		Parta	

Note: in italics, the localities that I was able to reach.

As much as possible, I tried to cover the four APs. Despite several access limitations (the distances between each AP are very long, the roads available are mostly in bad conditions, public transport is scarce and does not cover all the district, and renting a vehicle is extremely expensive), I was able to reach at least some villages of each AP as well as each AP administrative office location. Figure 1.3 shows the amount of activities per AP and number of locations visited.

The discrepancy in the number of activities per locality is justified by the limitations mentioned above. Besides, as visible in the map, Boila-Nametoria is

⁸ Angoche also contains a municipality that shares territory with the AP of Angoche Sede.

⁹ As of 2012, the estimated population was 311,241 people.

¹⁰ This is not taking into account the three new districts created in Nampula in 2013.

also the biggest AP and has the largest population of the district, therefore, the larger number of activities in this area.

The access limitations highlighted also affected my ability to pre-schedule the interviews and focus groups. Indeed, I was only able to do that in the locations that I accessed mediated by my local partner from Akilizetho, mostly in the APs of Nametoria and Aúbe and, on one occasion, in the AP of Namaponda, thanks to my partner from CEDE. In other cases, activities were carried on ad hoc, reaching the communities directly and inviting people to talk as well as asking about members of the LCs and beneficiaries of the '7 million' and how to locate them. In each AP, before I was able to conduct research, I had first to reach and obtain the authorisation of its respective chief. Once I had crossed this boundary, people were usually extremely open to talk and receptive.

Figure 1.3: Angoche District, Overview of Fieldwork Activities



Source: Map obtained in the district administration. Boxes with activities added by the author. 'LC'= local council; FGs= focus groups.

As much as possible, I conducted separate focus groups for women and men. This was based on the fact that, in the rural areas, women tend not to speak as much in front of men. At times, due to distance and time factors, I had to work with mixed groups, but when this happened, I always took time at the end to speak exclusively with women and offer space for additional comments and questions. Also, as much as possible, I tried to balance gender representation in all activities. This was easier in the case of the focus groups and much less so in the case of the beneficiaries — not least of all because only a small number are women.

Table 1.2 details all activities conducted during the fieldwork per type of actor, including at the central government and provincial level, as well as the activities conducted in the district of Moma. In total, the thesis relies on 23 focus groups (those with the community had between 5 to 15 people each; those with beneficiaries and local council members varied between 3 and 17 participants), 58 interviews,¹¹ and one non-participant observation.

Research Methods

The research methods used in the fieldwork were mainly semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These were used due to the qualitative approach of this research and its aim to understand the subjective aspect of empowerment, i.e., how people perceive their own power and how they perceive the benefits of the '7 million' and of the local councils. Focus groups were used mostly with the communities in order to grasp the collective perspective on empowerment related to the '7 million'.

¹¹ I am considering activities with two participants as interviews; such interviews happened three times.

Table 1.2: Fieldwork Activities per Type of Actor¹²

TYPE OF ACTOR	INTERVIEWS	FOCUS GROUPS	TOTAL N. ACTORS
Central Government (Maputo)	8		9
UNDP advisors	2		2
Nampula Provincial Government	7		7
Angoche District Government	8		9
NGOs/Civil Society members	10		10
People from the community (Angoche)		12	128
Women			62
Men			66
Beneficiaries (Angoche)*	10	8	23
Members of local councils (Angoche)	6	7	21
Women			6
Men			15
Local gov. authorities** (Angoche)	5		5
Non-beneficiaries***	4		4
Interviews with district employees (other districts)	2		2
People from the community (other districts)		2	33
Women		1	12
Men		1	11

* Note that 23 refer to 'beneficiaries' in terms of projects. The total number of individuals amounts to 39 because many were members of the same association and were interviewed in focus groups.

** These authorities (chiefs of PA and localities, the district administrator) are also members of the LCs, but I am placing them in a separate category because of their formal link with the government.

*** This does not include the several non-beneficiaries present in the community focus groups many of whom shared their stories of attempts to obtain the '7 million'.

¹² Note that some participants belonged to different categories of actors. For instance, some members of LCs were also beneficiaries. In this case, in one interview I covered both roles, therefore in the table these actors are placed in both categories.

As noted by Flick (2006), while interviews offer depth, and are not embedded in the community hierarchical structure, enabling the interviewee to speak more freely, the focus groups offer the advantage of bringing part of the community together. In focus groups, opinions are open for 'checks and balances', and it can be easier to assess which elements are more consensual and which ones are not. In other words, if there is a 'community' understanding of empowerment, this is the place where it should be more evident. One disadvantage of focus groups is the reduced degree of control of the process and of the group hierarchies and power relations. It was bearing this in mind that I opted for the separation between men and women.

Focus groups with the community ranged from between 5 to 15 participants. In the case of non-pre-scheduled focus groups, it sometimes happened that I started with 5 individuals and during the process others approached the group and participated or observed. This was inevitable as activities were generally conducted outdoors. When this took place, I took into account only the number of those who actually spoke and actively participated during the interaction time, that is, the number was lowered in order to keep the data validity.

The adoption of semi-structured interviews took into account the possibility that new variables/topics could arise in the interactions that I had not previously considered. Since I was interested in local subjectivities and different perceptions of power, I used my initial interview schedules (previously approved by the Bradford University Ethics Committee) in order to retain the focus on the general subjects I intended to study and main variables related to the empowerment framework, but I also gave plenty of space to let new issues arise and also change/remove certain questions as I realised they did not fulfil the expected purpose.

Besides interviews and focus groups, this research also took into account a non-participant observation of the Provincial Development Observatory in Nampula (see details in Chapter 4), which is a semestral meeting between the provincial government, the district administrators, and several members of civil society; and also relied on several field notes written on a regular basis during

my stay in Mozambique. The fieldwork diary was particularly important in order to keep the analysis on-going all through the process of data collection (see Silverman and Marvasti, 2008: 199). It also allowed me to take notes of interactions with participants that were not captured orally as well as to write down informal interactions, such as talks with people while taking public transport, which I also used in order to understand some community dynamics and subjectivities. Even though the field notes are not directly quoted in the thesis, they have informed the data analysis that followed the fieldwork.

Unfortunately, because of calendar issues, I was not able to take part in any local council meetings. Usually, the ordinary meetings of the district consultative council (DCC) take place early in the year and again at the end around December (although there are extra-ordinary meetings as well). When I arrived in the district, the '7 million' projects had already been approved, and most of the '7 million' issues revolved around the disbursement of the money. Even though there were meetings at the district sub-levels, because of the distance and communication limitations, it was not possible for me to know about them in advance and attend them. I tried to compensate by interviewing several members of councils from different levels in order to get a broad picture of the process as well as all the members of the district Technical Commission, who often participate in these meetings at different levels.

Local Language and Use of Interpreters

Even though Mozambique is officially a Portuguese speaking country, and Portuguese is my mother tongue, at the very local level many people do not speak Portuguese but local languages. In Angoche district (as well as in Nampula province), the predominant language is Macua, except in Angoche Sede in the coast zone, where the dominant population is Coti. Therefore, in order to conduct the focus groups and some of the interviews with beneficiaries and members of the LCs I relied on the help of my partners (see above) who worked as interpreters.

It should be noted that, in most focus groups at least some individuals spoke Portuguese, therefore, often, I had situations where the communication was mixed. As well, often the conversation in Macua used Portuguese words, which

allowed me to at least have an idea of how participants were responding before the translation. Mostly, however, I relied on the ability of the translators who were used to working as interpreters and were, therefore, familiar with the best way to translate certain concepts and words.

This did not completely avoid certain limitations that are inherent to any translation process. Having taken part in several activities of Akilizetho, in their work with the LDCs, and speaking to several of their employees who worked as interpreters, I became aware of several difficulties they faced considering the different nature of and the different vocabulary existent in Portuguese and Macua. For instance, many words did not translate directly, so they had to rephrase the concept. As I became aware of this limitation I rephrased some of my original questions in order to make them easier to translate and more accessible to participants.

Interpreters were not required in the case of all other interviews, including those with civil servants in general (in the district, province, and central government). In these cases, interviews were usually much longer, in some cases up to two hours, as the interviewees were willing to explore the details of their experience, and I was able to ask additional questions in order to clarify some of their answers. In some cases, I was also able to do a follow-up interview, although in this thesis I included follow-up interviews in the same reference, focusing on the actor instead of the number of encounters.

DATA ANALYSIS

The document analysis started long before the fieldwork although it was based initially on a limited number of documents. This first stage of analysis was more superficial and focused on learning the general history of the '7 million' and its architecture. A new analysis of these and additional documents was carried out at a later stage after the fieldwork. At this stage, I focused on the details of the prescriptions regarding the functioning of the local councils and of the '7 million' as well as with tracing the assumptions regarding empowerment promotion both in terms of the initiative's procedural aspects as well as in terms of expected outcomes (see Chapter 5).

Regarding the interviews, the choice of this technique for data collection reflected the concern of the research both with *facts* (how the '7 million' has been implemented) as well as with the different *understandings* of its effects in terms of empowerment outcome. As pointed out by Kvale (2007: 11), the meaning level of interviews is more difficult to grasp as it involves 'reading between the lines'. This depends on the ability of the interviewer to conduct the interview in such a way as to clarify the meanings while the interviewee speaks.

Following the guidelines found in Grbich (2007), I started the preliminary fieldwork data analysis concurrent with the fieldwork. As a general rule, after each interview, I completed a template document recording my first impressions as well as the general context of the activity and any visual information deemed relevant. I also used my interview notes to extract basic information that would help me verify the extent to which the interview schedules were successful or needed amendment, the main information coming out of the interviews and my ability to understand the information and relate it to my research object. I was also able to transcribe some of the recorded interviews in Mozambique, which helped me anticipate any gaps while I was still in the field.

The main data analysis followed the fieldwork. The analysis consisted of the following stages:

1. *Records transcription.* I personally transcribed all recorded focus groups and interviews. Of all the activities, only on seven occasions did participants prefer not to be recorded. One of the main advantages of doing the transcription myself was the opportunity it provided to recapture the moment of the activity and re-check my diary notes as well as the pre-analysis written in each interview template. In rare cases, I did not transcribe the interview in full leaving aside any digression unrelated to the research. However, the vast majority of the interviews were very focused and the answers extremely valuable to the purpose of the thesis. A second advantage was the possibility to use the transcription as a tool for analysis. During this process, I relied extensively on Kvale (2007) and Grbich (2007) taking into account what kind of information I was confronting (perception or fact that needed verification), the answers'

meaning in the context of the research, and also thinking of how I could classify information in analytical terms.

2. *Classification of the data according to 'types of actors' and 'themes identified'*. The following step was a combined approach where I took into account (1) the types of actors interviewed and (2) the sub-themes of each interview. I worked with three column-tables where I identified (a) themes and sub-themes, (b) the related transcription parts, and (c) my comments and interpretation. Some of the themes, in particular the more general ones, had already been pre-determined by the interview questions according to the variables chosen for the analysis of empowerment. Nevertheless, many more appeared during the interviews, as well as several sub-themes, which were added to the table. The division per type of actors was intended to help identify any correlation in terms of subjectivities (e.g., if most civil servants in the provinces had similar opinions about certain topics). This option was also linked with the multilevel framework as each type of actor was classified within a specific level of analysis.
3. *Document analysis, second round*. Once I had analysed all the interviews, I went back to the documents collected. During the reconstitution of the history of the '7 million', I merged the documents' analysis with the interviews. One of the objectives in this process was to understand the very constitution of some of the official documents and their changes. Another objective was to correlate some of these documents (in particular, those assessing the '7 million') with the data obtained in the district fieldwork.

It should be noted that, towards the end of this process, I went back to Mozambique. Having the opportunity to discuss my findings, I produced a 25-page report that I shared with selected actors at all levels (central government, province, and district, as well with CSOs in Nampula). In Nampula, I even presented the report at a meeting with several actors from CSOs and from the provincial government. The overall feedback was very important in order to validate the findings. First, many actors appreciated my feedback and noticed that, even though they 'knew' by experience many of the issues reported, they

acknowledged the lack of documentation on the matter, which made my contribution very relevant. Second, I was also able to verify the existence of different opinions regarding certain aspects of the fund including different interpretations regarding its regulation (see Chapter 5). Finally, there were also reactions that pointed towards the lack of policy recommendations on my side. Even though this was not an intended output of the research, this observation was important and made me reflect on my own epistemological stance and my critical commitment as well as the utility of my research as it relates to policy-making. Following the comments, I made an effort to add some recommendations in the report. Moreover, during the writing-up stage that followed, I made a conscious effort to be not only critical but also more open-minded and grounded and consider the practical potential of the initiative and/or the possibility of concrete alternatives in order to promote local empowerment.

1.4 Ethical Issues

This research takes into consideration the *University of Bradford Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, Data and Tissue* (Sture, 2010) and the principles of good research practice. The fieldwork was conducted after the project's approval by the University Ethics Board Committee in early 2012.

A basic principle taken into account in this research was that of neutrality. Considering its epistemological stand, the thesis openly problematizes the concept of objectivity — a positivist assumption that stems from the idea that it is possible to separate observed and observer — and, instead, embraces subjectivity and the need to acknowledge the pre-existing bias that frames any research. In this process, neutrality represents the constant effort to reflect on one's own bias during the research process as a means to avoid biased conclusions (O'Leary, 2004: 58). Neutrality, in this regard, is understood as the constant commitment to reflexivity and on-going re-evaluation of one's own interpretation of the data.

Perceived in this way, the commitment to neutrality presupposes an acknowledgment and awareness of the different roles played by a researcher during the research process. In the words of Flick (2006: 114):

You as a researcher and your respondent and your communicative competencies are the main 'instruments' of collecting data and of recognition. Because of this, you cannot adopt a neutral role in the field and in your contacts with the persons to be interviewed or observed. Rather you will have to take – or you will be allocated – certain roles and positions (sometimes vicariously and/or unwillingly).

During the fieldwork, I dealt with different groups of people and had to take into account these differences while presenting myself and explaining the basis of my research. In Maputo and Nampula, my main identification was with the University of Bradford. As I contacted the potential participants, I also presented a summary of my research, explaining the topic, who I was, what their participation would consist of, and a consent form (see appendix II). In the district, it soon became evident that this protocol was counter-productive; therefore, as noted above, even though I explained to each and every participant that I was an independent researcher, I had to emphasise my links with Akilizetho. That was also necessary as my access to participants was initially facilitated by the NGO and they related to Akilizetho, whereas, the University of Bradford was something very distant from their realities.

This factor also influenced the issue of informed consent and how I dealt with confidentiality and anonymity. As pointed out by Miller and Bell (2005: 53), "informed' consent is problematic if it is not clear what the participant is consenting to and where 'participation' begins and ends". Despite my personal wish to be fully transparent and clear with all participants about my research, with each group I had to take into account what was the best way to explain my research as well as what would be their incentives to take part in it. In the upper levels (central government and province) as well as within the realm of the district administration, I could usually be very direct and focus on the academic aspect of my research as well as indicate my willingness to maintain contact and give feedback once I had the research results. These issues were mostly addressed in the consent form that I asked the participants to read before the interview. The form also included the option of having the conversation recorded or not. After reading it, the participant would have a few minutes to clarify any doubts and ask additional questions before signing the form. As my

topic was dealing with a national policy that is very popular and also widely criticised, most participants in this group expressed interest in the research, and I currently maintain contact with some of them.

In the lower levels (district and sub-units), these kinds of interactions and the commitment to provide feedback were mostly impossible, not least because in the rural context, the only way to provide feedback is by going back in person. As such, I discussed the basic aspects of the consent form including verifying their willingness to be recorded and clarifying my commitment to anonymity. I further explained that any results of the research would be shared with Akilizetho but that the research was not part of a policy project although the data obtained could be used to improve the information available on the '7 million'. It should be stressed that all activities in the fieldwork were conducted on a voluntary basis and without any kind of reward or payment to participants. In the case of focus groups, I offered beverages and a snack as an expression of gratitude for their time.

Regarding anonymity and confidentiality, as a general practice, I offered both to the participants. The consent form clarified that, unless expressed otherwise, names and means of identification would be suppressed from the thesis. In practice, on the one hand, many participants indicated they were comfortable with the quoting of their names. Notably, official public figures such as the Ministers and the Administrator, spoke as public persons presenting, therefore, what could be termed as 'official views'. On the other hand, some participants preferred to speak without being recorded and only expressed some opinions because of the confidentiality/anonymity accord; therefore, these were important tools in order to gain the participant's trust and increase the chances of having honest responses (Sieber, 1992:45).

In this thesis, as a general rule, names are not quoted, with the exception of the Ministers interviewed and those who explicitly indicated they were comfortable with the use of their names. The basic means of reference is the number of the interview/focus group, which is accompanied by the place and date on which it took place. In the case of the beneficiaries and members of the LCs, in order to facilitate the narrative, I have used pseudonyms in the text. In the case of the focus groups, participants were not identified during the interaction. In sections

of the thesis where the participant could be identified through the interview number, and in connections with other parts of the thesis, I have intentionally deleted the interview reference in the text.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters besides this introduction. Chapter 2 discusses the concept of empowerment. It first considers the emergence of the concept in the international policy discourse in the agendas of development and peacebuilding starting in the early 1990s. Next, it discusses the debate surrounding the concept, in particular, the different ways it may be interpreted — as a radical emancipatory concept, on the one hand, and as a technical instrument linked with capacity building on the other hand. This discussion is, furthermore, connected to the rescue of the different ontological understandings of ‘power’ that underlie the concept. Taking into account the under-discussed features of empowerment in the literature, the chapter concludes by proposing a multilevel framework of analysis that includes a dialectical perspective of power, a concern with power dynamics *between* and *within* the different levels of analysis, and a focus on the relationship between actors’ subjectivities, their actions, and capacity.

Chapter 3 explores the historical background of Mozambique, taking into account general dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment that have shaped the constitution of the Mozambican state. The chapter initially discusses the colonial period and its legacy as well as the different manifestations of local resistance that pervaded this period. It then assesses the socialist experiment that followed independence, noticing the contradictions between the Frelimo discourse that privileged emancipation and the traces of authoritarianism that ultimately shaped the party’s policies. Lastly, the chapter discusses the war that followed independence stressing its complex character and its mixed effects in terms of affecting people’s empowerment.

Chapter 4 focuses on the peace that followed the 1992 accords. It pays attention, in particular, to the reforms in the fields of democratization and development and the extent to which these reforms have contributed to people’s empowerment. More generally, the chapter examines the quality of

peace achieved centring on the question ‘what has changed for the ordinary Mozambican after the end of the war?’ In this regard, I argue that, in spite of the several institutional reforms that have taken place technically aimed at redistributing power, in practice, spaces for change have remained limited due to the parallel existence of mechanisms that have helped to maintain the status quo. The chapter, therefore, sets the institutional context for the analysis of the case study in the following two chapters.

Chapter 5 introduces the ‘7 million’ initiative taking into account the upper levels of analysis, in particular, the national level. First, the chapter offers an overview of the process of decentralisation in Mozambique to which the initiative is customarily linked. Second, taking into account official documents and a series of interviews, the chapter recounts the origins of the initiative and its changes over time. Here, particular attention is paid to the power dynamics within the institutional domain of the state and the decision-making process. Also, the empowering rationale of the initiative and its expected outcomes are analysed in detail.

Chapter 6 focuses on the bottom level of analysis, namely, the district of Angoche and its subunits. The focus is, therefore, on policy implementation and its de facto contribution to the empowerment of the local population. This assessment considers, first, the role of the local councils and their representation of local interests; second, the process that leads to the selection of projects that will obtain the ‘7 million’; and, finally, the empowering outcomes resulting from these processes both in their material and subjective aspects. The analysis takes into account the relation between subjectivities, capacity and agency/patency, detailed in the proposed framework of analysis in Chapter 2. The chapter also compares the results of the research in Angoche with available studies on other districts in order to assess the extent to which Angoche was a unique case or whether the limitations encountered there reflect broader problems related to the policy itself and the national context.

Chapter 7 brings the pieces together going back to the research questions and objectives of this research. First, it discusses the empowering effects of the ‘7 million’ considering the two perspectives of empowerment analysed in Chapter 2. Second, it examines the different lenses through which the limitations of the

'7 million' can be assessed pointing, in particular, to the problem of promoting bottom-up empowerment from the top-down. Third, the chapter discusses the lessons learned from the '7 million' regarding empowerment that could be useful in other settings of policy making. Finally, the chapter highlights the contribution of the thesis to the literature on empowerment taking into account the empowerment framework developed and its utility in the case study. The conclusion also acknowledges some limitations as well as future directions arising from this research.

Chapter 2

Disentangling Empowerment

We can legitimately say that in the process of oppression someone oppresses someone else; we cannot say that in the process of revolution someone liberates someone else, nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather that human beings in communion liberate each other.

(Freire, 1996)

Whilst empowerment is often advocated as a liberating process for those involved, it is just as possible to experience it as the reverse.

(Fielding, 1996)

The word 'empowerment' has become a buzzword in the international arena in the last twenty years (Fielding, 1996; Moore, 2001; Alsop, 2004; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; FRIDE; 2006; Batliwala, 2007; Chandler, 2013). The term has been used by virtually all development agencies and is increasingly incorporated into the peacebuilding agenda. More generally, empowerment is part of a global discourse that also includes similar terms, such as participation, bottom-up practices, partnership, and ownership.¹³ This general discourse is

¹³ Note that very often these terms are used interchangeably. However, I concur with the authors that emphasize differences between each of them. Empowerment has to be understood as a change in power. Participation refers to a method or technique that may or may not lead to empowerment. Ownership tends to stress the national control of a process and it is usually linked to the transfer of responsibilities. Bottom-up has a more spatial aspect and stresses the place where the policy is generated. As with participation, there is no guarantee that a bottom-up process will lead to empowerment. For differences and commonalities, see Sen (1997: 5-6); Lopes (2002: 124); Chambers (2005: 210); FRIDE (2006: 5).

based on a consensus that empowerment is *good, needed*, and therefore *it should be promoted*. These assumptions are taken for granted and contribute to a political function, which is to legitimize these policies.

Looking deeply into the discourse, however, it is notable that this general consensus hides a complex range of interpretations regarding *what* empowerment is, *how* it should be promoted, *by whom*, and *who* should be empowered in a specific social setting. It is also the case that very often empowerment is used by international actors without being defined and while still performing an important discursive function.

This chapter discusses the concept of empowerment by emphasising the historical context that has shaped its meaning, as well as by discussing its different theoretical contours. In order to do that, it first traces the origins of the discourse (or discourses) on empowerment, stressing how its dominant meaning has changed over time and why. Second, the chapter explores the theoretical literature on power, pointing to the fundamental differences in those approaches and anticipating how each mode of interpretation may lead to different understandings of the nature of empowerment. The third section takes this reflection forward, by discussing the literature on empowerment and proposing a dual typology of empowerment approaches that helps us understand some of the policy implications related to those different understandings. The fourth section explores three important and yet under-discussed features of empowerment, which will then converge in the final part of the chapter with the proposition of a framework of analysis that will be used in the examination of the case study.

The argument put forward is that the current dominant approach of empowerment is inadequate for policy making because it emphasises its technical character at the expense of a more complex, dialectical approach to power. In practice, this bias tends to produce contradictory effects, often enhancing disempowerment instead of promoting social transformation. Whereas post-modernists could explain that this is so because the actual aim of these policies is not social transformation, and that the discourse is simply a way to legitimate the maintenance of the status quo, I suggest that the power dynamics that shape those policies are far more complex, as the intentions of

policy makers often differ, and, moreover, the results do not necessarily reflect the original intentions or expected outcomes related to policy planning.

The framework proposed in this thesis tries to address this complexity by combining three aspects that are poorly explored in the empowerment literature. First, it offers multiple levels of analysis (global, national, sub-national, community) that include not only the domain of policy *intervention* but also the domain of policy *formulation*. Second, the framework emphasises the power dynamics that exist *within* and *between* each level, portraying power as a *dialectical concept*, where both its conflictual and consensual dimensions play a fundamental role. Finally, the framework stresses the role of the actors' *subjectivities* and how these affect decisions at all levels of policy implementation.

2.1 Empowerment Discourse(s)

The fact that 'empowerment' may translate differently in different languages¹⁴ makes it difficult to precisely locate its origins. A publication from FRIDE (2006: 6), for instance, states that etymologically, the root of the word 'empowerment' dates back to the middle of the 17th century when it referred exclusively to the legal sphere, meaning "giving power to another person who acts as representative; authorise". Batliwala (2007: 557-558), quoting an unpublished briefing from Gaventa, mentions that the term was already used during the Protestant Reformation in Europe reverberating through the centuries in Europe and America via the Quakers, Jeffersonian democracy, early capitalism, and the black-power movement.

A general point of agreement in most of the literature, however, is that the term became popular during the 1970s and 1980s, influenced mostly by the feminist movement and the idea of popular education, the latter developed by Brazilian pedagogue and activist Paulo Freire (Liamzon, 1997: 5-9; FRIDE; 2006; Cornwall and Brock, 2005: 6; Luttrell and Quiroz, 2009: 2-4). Other important influences were the black power movement, the theology of liberation

¹⁴ See several examples and problems related to translation in Luttrell and Quiroz, 2009: 2-3.

developed in Latin America, as well as the alternative development movement and the subsequent development of participatory research (Ibid.; Friedmann, 1992: 1-13).

These social movements did not always use the word 'empowerment', but they stressed the need for change in the way policies were shaped and emphasised the need for popular inclusion in decision-making as well as the review of priorities in national and global politics. They presented a radical and political connotation of empowerment, reflecting a discourse of contestation of dominant power structures at several levels, whether on the basis of patriarchy (gender), race, or economy. As noted by Batliwala (2007: 559), in this early phase, regardless of the differences, "all efforts to conceptualise the term more clearly stressed that empowerment was a *socio-political process*, that the critical operating concept within empowerment was *power*, and that empowerment was about shifts in political, social and economic power between and across *both* individuals *and* social groups". In this regard, the term resembled the Marxist idea of 'emancipation'.

The proximity of 'empowerment' and 'emancipation' in this early phase may raise the question of why the former term became the popular one and not the latter. As will be discussed below, 'emancipation', while also subject to disagreements regarding its definition, is a concept tied to a strong theoretical body of literature that stresses precisely the need to revisit power issues at the systemic level. A possible explanation for the preference for empowerment at this stage could be the fact that 'empowerment' explicitly encapsulated 'power', which was the core issue for many practitioners at the time. Moreover, whereas many social movements came from a Marxist perspective that emphasised capitalism as the root of the social problems they addressed, others highlighted instead other dimensions of power asymmetries, such as gender and race.¹⁵ In this regard, 'empowerment' provided a strong and yet more neutral connotation

¹⁵ The literature on emancipation actually acknowledges the theoretical challenges arising from the recognition of other domains of oppression beyond capitalism and how they push for the redefinition of what emancipation entails. See, e.g., Wood (1988) and Pieterse (1992).

compared to 'emancipation', making it more flexible to be used in fields of knowledge and practice as different as education, psychology and, later on, management.

Regardless of the reasons behind the choice of the terms, empowerment slowly gained ascendance and by 1980 it was frequently used in the academic and policy literature, in particular in the field of gender (women's empowerment), but also in relation to black political empowerment¹⁶ as well as in health studies and public policy (Lincoln et al., 1999).

As these different social movements grew and got stronger, their call for empowerment became louder and also their ability to pressure for change. Ironically, their partial success in influencing the system also contained the seeds of their own demise. In as much as social movements succeeded in influencing the work of international agencies, and the latter started to adopt participatory approaches and pro-empowerment policies, 'empowerment' changed its status — from a contestation concept that denied the status quo, it eventually became an official institutionalised discourse, now part of the status quo (Friedmann, 1992; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Batliwala, 2007; Pieterse, 2010).

Multiple factors contributed to this turn of events. Besides the many efforts of these movements to influence the system, several strategies adopted by development agencies in the 'third world' proved socially catastrophic. The famously intrusive and top-down structural adjustment plans implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank during the 1980s were probably the most infamous ones. Their perverse social effects led to political turmoil in many countries and by the early 1990s it was clear that these institutions needed to find alternative strategies to engage with developing countries (Friedmann, 1992; Rowlands, 1997; Abrahamsen, 2000).

A similar trend happened in the global security arena. With the increase in the number of UN peace operations in the early 1990s, the general dissatisfaction with externally imposed models (in this case, models of state and governance)

¹⁶ Already in the 1970s several academic articles were published using the term 'empowerment' (see examples in Lausch, 2011).

also called into question the methods used by Western countries to promote social transformation in their non-Western counterparts (Krause and Jütersonke, 2005; Chandler, 2006; Duffield, 2007; Donais, 2009 and 2012; Francis, 2010). Increasingly, academics and practitioners started to stress the need to rethink approaches to peace operations, by including more space for dialogue with the 'locals' and consolidating a sustainable peace (ibid., Lederach, 1997; Ramsbotham et al., 2007; Richmond, 2011; Pugh et al., 2011).

The change in the discourse was therefore a response to a series of correlated events and forces coming from different directions. At the same time, the change was not smooth or equal in all agencies. Within the UN system, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was one of the most important agencies to embrace the idea of empowerment and work towards a comprehensive review of the meaning of development itself. In 1990, the agency released the first *Human Development Report* (HDR), a publication that was to become annual and have a significant impact on development policies worldwide. In the report, they formally introduced the concept of 'human development' shifting the focus of development from the state to the human being. Here, and in the following reports, the UNDP stressed that one of the core elements for development was the focus on the expansion of individual's and groups' capabilities (or freedoms), so that development could be not only sustainable but also just (UNDP, 1990, 1995, 1997 and 2000).

The term empowerment appeared regularly in the subsequent reports used either in association with specific domains, e.g. 'women's empowerment' (UNDP, 1995) or more generally linked to poverty and human rights (e.g., UNDP, 1997 and 2000). In the commemorative edition of 20 years of the HDR (UNDP, 2010), empowerment was one of the top concepts, presented as being at the core of development along with equity and sustainability. It was also one of the three components of human development next to well-being and justice. Accordingly, conceptually empowerment is "loosely associated with participation: the possibility for all people, including poor and marginalized people, to have their voices heard and to participate meaningfully in shaping debates that affect their lives" (UNDP, 2010: 115). It is further related to the expansion of people's capabilities, "people's ability to shape their own

destinies”, and entails both agency and “supportive institutional structures” (ibid.: 23).

Looking at the UNDP discourse, it is notable that the radical tone present in the social movements is radically phased down. While recognizing the existence of social asymmetries, the UNDP does not aim at structural economic reforms that may contest neoliberalism in support of alternative models of social welfare. Indeed, the agency works closely with the state and tries to influence its governance structure, but not the economic system or the market. Its emphasis is mostly on governance aspects that are linked to the enhancement of democracy, decentralisation, and social policies.

The UNDP’s approach to empowerment is very influential and captures several aspects that are core to the current mainstream empowerment agenda. However, since the early 2000s the international organisation that has had an even stronger voice in the empowerment debate has been the World Bank. The Bank’s publication of the 2000/2001 World Development Report, entitled *Attacking Poverty* was, in this regard, a watershed, as it had a whole section dedicated to the discussion of empowerment. The report relied on an unprecedented background study called *Voices of the Poor*¹⁷ and pointed to the feelings of powerlessness and voicelessness as a major issue for individuals in this context. Empowerment was one of the concepts addressed in the document along with ‘opportunities’ and ‘security’ (World Bank, 2000/2001). The two chapters that discussed empowerment focused, nonetheless, mostly on the need for institutional reform in order to reduce poverty. Empowerment was therefore depicted as a consequence of institutional reforms, which were perceived as instruments for increasing space for social representation.

In 2002, the Bank released the *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction Sourcebook*. Here empowerment was defined as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (Narayan et al., 2002: xviii). As much as the previous report, the sourcebook highlighted the

¹⁷ This study was based on interviews with participants in 50 countries, inquiring about their own understandings of poverty.

dichotomy of state/society and justified empowerment on the basis of the need for people to get organised in order to put pressure on state institutions and so avoid problems such as corruption and lack of accountability.

In 2004, another release from the Bank, *Power, Rights and Poverty: Concepts and Connections*, edited by Ruth Alsop, discussed the concept even further. Accordingly, empowerment was defined as “the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”, and was portrayed as *dependent* on the interplay between agency and the opportunity structure (Alsop, 2004: 4). This dual framework was theoretically broader, and it was further developed in a 2006 publication (Alsop et al., 2006). Nevertheless, whereas the World Bank’s empowerment team has contributed to the expansion of this debate, the Bank’s policies are still centred on the idea of ‘fixing [national] institutions’, and nowhere is there a discussion that questions the global institutions that also sustain poverty in developing (and developed) countries.

The incorporation of the concepts of empowerment and participation in the World Bank’s agenda was taken by some critics as a symbol of how these terms have actually been corrupted in their meanings. Cornwall and Brock (2005: 6-7), for instance, noted that “What participation had come to mean to the mainstream has less to do with radical shifts in power than engaging communities in sharing the costs, and the burdens, of development” (Cornwall and Brock, 2005: 6-7). Batliwala (2007), more drastically, noted that:

Empowerment was hijacked, in the 1990s, into increasingly bizarre locations, converted from a collective to an individualistic process, and skilfully co-opted by conservative and even reactionary political ideologies in pursuit of their agenda of divesting ‘big government’ (for which we read: the welfare state) of its purported power and control by ‘empowering’ communities to look after their own affairs.

If the idea of radicalism relates to changing the current structure, then, by default, if a concept becomes part of the mainstream it cannot be radical anymore. What makes some commentators disillusioned, however, is the fact that the incorporation of the concept, as well as other demands linked to

alternative development back in the 1980s have not fundamentally changed global economic structures (Friedmann, 1992; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Pieterse, 2010). So there has been no *radical* change, rather a change of meaning of a radical concept. Even worse, the political connotation of empowerment was stripped from it, and now it has become a technical concept (Cornwall and Brock, 2005: 8).

Whereas the empowerment call has been particularly strong in the development sector, it has also pervaded other arenas of policy practice, notably peacebuilding even if on a smaller scale. UN documents and security organs dealing with peacebuilding often use the term although they do not define it.¹⁸ In the academic debate, however, the term has become more popular, and it is often linked to critiques that call for more ownership in peacebuilding processes as well as approaches stressing an emancipatory call (Ramsbotham et al., 2007; Donais, 2009; Richmond, 2009).

In fact, the current use of the term in the peacebuilding context connects less to empowerment and instead connotes the concept of *ownership*. Ownership, like empowerment is also widely used in development discourses. It reflects the general concern with the 'recipient' of the intervention and the minimization of power asymmetries between the 'external intervener' and the 'local'. Nevertheless, the term usually applies to the 'local' as *national*, in particular, national state institutions. As noted by Donais (2012: 1), "local ownership refers to the degree of control that domestic actors wield over domestic political processes; in post-conflict contexts, the notion conveys the common sense wisdom that any peace not embraced by those who have to live with it is likely to fail". Once the concept is fragmented and assessed in the political discourse, however, as in the case of empowerment, many imprecisions come to the surface (ibid.; Richmond, 2012). In particular, issues of control are left

¹⁸ The word empowerment can be found in the UN Peacebuilding Commission's reports (2005-2011) along with concepts such as participation, civil society, and stakeholders. Here, as in many development agencies, empowerment is often linked with specific target groups such as women and youth. In key UN documents reference to empowerment is scantier, although *An Agenda for Peace* (1992, par. 81) also refers to need to promote empowerment via institutional reform.

unaddressed; there is no clear differentiation between the 'local' as 'elite' and the 'local' as the 'marginalised'; and ownership becomes equated with formal participatory practices (Francis, 2010; Donais, 2012; Richmond, 2012).

To a great extent, the preference for 'ownership' in the peacebuilding institutional discourse reflects the primacy of statebuilding practices focused on institutional reforms over the concern with everyday changes in the lives of ordinary people. As such, even though it offers a potential space for the revision and discussion of power issues related to peacebuilding, 'ownership' is still embedded in the idea of 'exporting a specific model of governance', which characterises the mainstream approach to peacebuilding (Fukuyama, 2004; Richmond, 2009; Pugh et al., 2011).

In practice, and despite the existing criticism, the increasing institutionalisation of empowerment (and similar concepts, such as ownership and participation) in mainstream development and peacebuilding agendas brings with it a series of issues that demand a re-examination of its radical aspect. First, this institutional capture of the concept means a *de facto* transfer of a 'right to make demands'; if previously the call was made directly by those who wanted empowerment, now the institutions have absorbed this role putting themselves as mediators between the 'disempowered' and the state (which is held accountable for the 'disempowered'). So now, empowerment is something to be *promoted* and not *demande*d. The second issue worthy of review is how the solutions proposed tend to concentrate on the role played by the institutions themselves; they become primordial actors in the empowerment agenda, and the subjects of empowerment becomes the objects. Underlying this shift is the idea that 'help is needed for empowerment to take place', an assumption which is extremely problematic and that leads to the paradox of a local empowerment produced from the top-down (Turner et al., 2011).

What seems to have been lost in these new mainstream empowerment discourses, is that empowerment is about power: power as a relational dimension that is present in every social interaction; power as the control of the world's resource distribution; and power as the capacity to set agendas and control discourses. Taking this as a starting point, one of the central issues of this thesis is precisely to put power back into the discussion in order to better

understand empowerment as a conceptual tool for social sciences and, as such, as a better tool for policy design. Therefore, before I explore in detail the different conceptual and theoretical approaches to empowerment, I go back to the fundamental concept that precedes it — power.

2.2 Power Theorising

The subject of power has been extensively studied both in philosophy as well as in different disciplines of the social sciences, such as Sociology, Anthropology, and Political Science (e.g., Lukes, 1974; Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1979; Boulding, 1990; Haugaard, 1997 and 2002). The variety of definitions and theories of how power operates makes the task of summarising this debate very challenging. As the main concern of this thesis is the debate on empowerment, I will highlight in this section those dimensions that affect empowerment theorising and empowerment policies more directly.

As a starting point, it is worth noting that in spite of the many differences in these approaches, there is a basic assumption underlying the discussion on power, which is the understanding that power has a potential for transformation (Boulding, 1990: 15). At the most fundamental level, power is the capacity to change something/someone. How power manifests (its sources and forms), how it functions, and how we are able to perceive and measure it are the cornerstones of the debate.

Table 2.1 gives some examples of common elements related to power in the literature reflecting these concerns. As we will see in the next section, the mainstream literature on empowerment, while being structured in a similar way (focusing on contents/sources, behaviours and results), tends to concentrate on some of these elements (e.g., generative power, exchange, creation) while minimising, sometimes ignoring others (zero-sum, domination, separation). Yet, it is precisely these minimised aspects that offer the potential to enrich the concept and its analytical utility.

Table 2.1: Common Features of Power in the Literature¹⁹

Content/source	Action/behaviour	Results
Individual/group	Control	Get what one wants
Inner (agency)/social system (structure)	Influence	Achieve common ends
Love/force	Domination	Expanding boundaries of possibilities
Physical/mental/spiritual	Threat	Creation/destruction
Material/non-material	Exchange	Separation/integration
Limited (zero-sum)/generative (positive sum)	Love/respect	Reification
Knowledge	Resistance	
	Discourse	

Broadly speaking, the debate on power is divided in two strands: on the one hand, there are approaches that highlight the conflictual view of power; on the other hand, there are approaches that focus on its consensual aspect. Conflictual approaches have influenced much of the literature in Political Science and International Relations. Its general feature is the understanding that power relates to a situation characterised by a conflict of interests where one party exerts dominance over the other (power-over). The setting is that of a zero-sum game, where as much as one party increases power, the other will have it reduced. As an exercise, power is perceived as a relation of *domination* or form of influence often exerted coercively. In Political Science, such views have been concentrated in the analysis of political systems and the decision-making processes associated with them, both in its formal setting (e.g., government democratic procedures) (Dahl, 1968), as well as in the form of mobilization of bias (that which happens behind the formal decision-making process) (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). Lukes' (1974) radical approach to power

¹⁹ The table was compiled taking into account the difference sources used in this section.

adds a third dimension to this conflictual quality, which is the capacity to prevent latent conflict to manifest. Accordingly, latent conflict “consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude. The latter may not express or even be conscious of their interests, but . . . the identification of those interests ultimately always rests on empirically supportable and refutable hypotheses” (Lukes, 1974: 24-25). Understanding this dimension of power requires broadening the focus beyond the behavioural dimension and extending it to the system that shapes the existing institutions and behaviours.

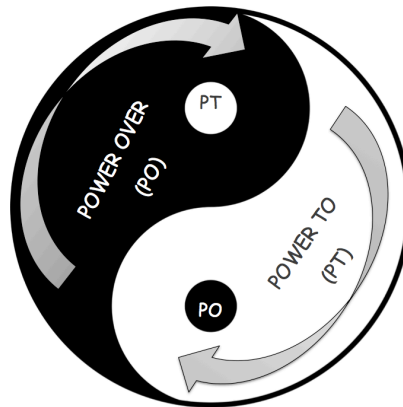
Several thinkers have contested the conflictual views of power. Parsons, Arendt, and Barnes, for instance, are known for linking power with legitimacy and consent (Haugaard, 2002). Their common point of departure is that power is created through social interactions where consent plays a fundamental role. For Parsons power is socially constituted and sustained mostly through legitimacy. Indeed, whenever power is misused, it tends to decrease and vice-versa (Parsons, 1963). Barnes (1988), on the other hand, uses the term ‘social power’ to highlight the fact that no power is possible outside a context of social order. For him, power is a *capacity* (alternatively known as power-to) that is only available *because* social interaction happens within a specific social order that functions through knowledge and self-validation, which is why power is linked to legitimacy and consensus. Seeing power as something generated in society reinforces the idea that power is not scarce; instead, it can be infinitely created or *generated*. The idea of power-with (Rowlands, 1997) may be placed here as well. Power-with is particularly used to understand cooperative processes, as it entails the idea that the whole is greater than the part (ibid.: 13).

In the middle of the continuum between conflict and consent are those authors that emphasise the dual nature of power. Giddens (1979: 91), for example, states that power can be understood both as a transformative capacity (acts conducted by agents and not necessarily in opposition with others’ interests) as well as domination (where opposition and structural constraints prevail). What is central is that power is a *relational* concept and is substantiated in action. The extent to which power will be of one kind or the other depends on a series of factors, including how resources are distributed along the structure and how

they are used. Haugaard (1997: 137) builds on Giddens and states that most times power is *both conflictual and consensual at the same time*, because individual's motives for action are complex and tend to have a dual aspect (goal-oriented and embedded in structural aspects). Boulding (1990) makes a similar point identifying three main types of power: threat power (or destructive power), love power (or integrative power) and exchange power (or productive power). The first can be understood as belonging to the idea of power-over and the conflictual strand of power, whereas love power and exchange power fall into a second category where consensus prevails. However, as he emphasises, none of them exist (or rarely exist) in a pure form. In fact, each of them contains some of the others. For instance, if we understand military force as a form of threat power, its own existence is only possible because at some point there was some kind of exchange power leading to arms production in the first place.

This way of understanding power points to its dialectical aspect. As highlighted in the above debates, it is very common in the literature to separate types of power and take them as detached from the others. This reflects a normative bias where power-over is usually the 'bad power' that we should fight against and power-to (and power with) is the 'good power' that we should promote and legitimate (Holloway, 2010; Pearce, 2013). However, it could be argued that power-over in itself is neither good nor bad, but the way it is created and exercised is what makes it one or the other. Moreover, both types of power are not exclusive. Indeed, moving to a dialectical understanding of power enables us to think that both power-over and power-to are socially generated and that they are inextricably linked. By using the term dialectical I would like to emphasise the aspect of movement and contradiction of social processes and not necessarily the evolutionary and teleological aspects of the term (Sztompka, 1993: 156-157; Holloway, 2010: 120-121). Perhaps a more helpful and less biased frame is the Chinese Taoist approach of nature represented in the popular image of yin and yang, which captures the complementarity of the opposites (Fowler, 2005: 73). In this case we could think of power-over and power-to as inextricably related and in constant movement, not leading to any specific endpoint.

Figure 2.1: Power-To and Power-Over



Seeing power-over and power-to as two sides of the same coin or as yin and yang leads to a different understanding of how to approach social life and, therefore, empowerment. For Holloway (2010: 28), for instance, power-over is, on the one hand, the opposite of power-to as it is only possible when some people “arrogate to themselves the projection-beyond (conception) of the doing and command others to execute what they have conceived”. Concurrently, power-over only exists because of power-to, even though it denies it. As he sees it, power-over is a distortion of power-to, so the solution to abolish the former is to pursue anti-power which is the constant contestation of power-over or an emancipated form of power-to (ibid.: 35-39).

Jenny Pearce (2013) takes a similar stand but acknowledges the role played by *legitimate* power-over, which, along with power-to and power-with, constitute what she calls “non-dominating forms of power”. According to her, non-dominating forms of power play a positive role in society. In fact, while they have the potential to transform themselves into forms of power-over, they can also prevent power-over arising as long as they function effectively.

Holloway and Pearce, whilst recognising the relationship between different forms of power, pose a key question, which is how to avoid one kind of power that is socially more beneficial turning into a kind of power that is not beneficial. Using the yin-yang analogy, the key factor would be the balance between the opposites, in which case, I would posit that a legitimate power-over could exist

as long as it is balanced by an adequate amount of power-to. If power-over prevails over power-to, that is when domination would occur. At the same time, a dialectical perspective places emphasis on the constant movement of this interaction. In policy implementation, having a clear understanding of how these opposing aspects correlate may help avoid contradictory results.

The above views, regardless of their conflictual/consensual/mixed emphasis, share important commonalities. First, they share the belief that it is somehow possible to influence the way power is exercised in society. Second, they have, overall, a normative aspect besides their analytical call. Foucault's analysis of power, instead, transcends this debate and takes it to the level of the discourse. In this regard, it is perhaps the most radical view of all the above as he rejects any idea of truth. His analysis of power is based on the understanding that any given 'truth' is in fact a reflection of power; therefore, knowledge is power. He is not interested in *what* is power or the forms it takes, but focuses on *how* it operates (Foucault, 1994). According to him, "what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions" (ibid.: 340). These assumptions leave no room for any form of 'good' power to manifest. Instead, any form of power is a form of domination. As we will see in the next section, this rules out the very idea of empowerment. Nevertheless, his focus on the discourse may shed light onto the transformation of meaning of the concept described in the first part of this chapter.

In his own fashion, Bourdieu shares some of Foucault's assumptions. Just as Foucault did, he sees power in a fundamentally conflictual way and as a fundamental element of any social practice including culture. However, Bourdieu is particularly focused on the distributive aspects of power (Swartz, 2013: 41). Indeed, he posits that there are instances where power becomes concentrated in specific kinds of resources that he calls 'capitals' and which assume four generic forms: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. According to him, struggles occur both because of these capitals' distribution within specific fields, but also because of the *definition* of the most valuable form of capital, which constitutes a struggle for *symbolic power*. In this regard, Bourdieu

offers an orientation for empirical research, which partially relates to Lukes's concern with invisible power (Bourdieu, 1977; Swartz, 2013).

The following section takes into consideration these power accounts and engages in a systematization of the existing literature on empowerment, taking into account its emphasis on the conflictual and consensual dimensions of power.

2.3 Empowerment Theorising

In contrast to power, empowerment has not been much theorised. As we have seen, whilst the use of the word is not new, efforts towards its conceptualisation and theorisation are much more recent, related to the events of the 1960s and onwards. Much of the literature available is not even academic in nature; it has been produced by or for development agencies and has, therefore, a specific policy target. Also, because of that authorship, articles and reports tend to focus on specific domains of action and more on conceptualisation rather than theorising. Moreover, the concept often remains fuzzy, implicit, and sometimes undefined in policy papers, although it is used as a guideline or expected outcome.

In a study covering several governmental and non-governmental organizations, Scrutton and Luttrell (2007) noted the following kinds of variations in the definitions of empowerment: different emphasis on the process or outcome aspect of empowerment; different scopes (e.g., gender, children, poor, disabled); different emphases on agency and structure, in particular, in the analysis of institutions; different views regarding the role of outsiders in promoting empowerment (e.g., self-help approaches versus the need for external initiatives). They also noted that very often the in-depth discussion provided by some agencies was not reflected in their own projects and that, conversely, many agencies engaged with empowerment promotion even though they did not provide a specific policy document on the matter.

Whereas most of these agencies' documents do not have a *theoretical* concern, it is the case that much of the academic literature on the matter comes from individuals involved in policy activities often in these same development institutions. Other resources on empowerment come from those who are

engaged in strong activism and work for grassroots organizations. This means that even the theoretical literature on empowerment has a very practical aspect often targeting a specific area and thus marking a stark contrast to the literature on power. The following typology of empowerment takes into consideration the predominant literature in development (including gender studies in development), peace studies, and, to a lesser extent, education, social service, and psychology. The objective is to cover as much as possible what has been theorised and what influences current policy practices in development and peacebuilding surrounding the concept of empowerment.

Table 2.2: Approaches to Empowerment

Technical Approaches	Emancipatory Approaches
<u>Agent</u> -centred: The problem is the lack of capabilities of the marginalised	<u>Structure</u> -centred: the problem is the structure that hinders individuals' abilities to become fully human
Increasing <u>power-to</u> is the solution. This is possible via capacity-building and participatory practices that may foster consensus and create more power	One needs to tackle <u>power-over</u> which fosters the disempowerment of the marginalised. Power-over is fostered by structural factors (economic, cultural, political, etc.)
<u>Process</u> -oriented	<u>Outcome</u> is as important as process
<u>Problem-solving</u> : it is possible to accommodate different interests within the current structures	<u>Problem-posing</u> : empowerment means immanent critique (self-consciousness)

Following the discussion on power, I identify two main strands of empowerment theory, as well as their limitations. On the one hand, there are approaches that emphasise the consensual aspects of power and thus empowerment. On the other hand, there are those that focus on the problem of conflict in empowerment promotion. For the sake of simplification, I refer to the former as 'technical approaches' and the latter as 'emancipatory approaches' to empowerment. As with any simplification, these strands should be taken as ideal types as many times one approach may refer to and engage with the

other, but the difference is in the emphasis on each kind of power, as well as the distinct implications for policy practice. Table 2.2 summarizes the main features of each approach. Each one is further discussed in the sections that follow.

TECHNICAL APPROACHES TO EMPOWERMENT

The technical approaches constitute the current dominant perspective of empowerment, developed since the early 1990s and seen in most development agencies frameworks. Its main characteristics are the emphasis on agency and power-to and the general understanding that what causes disempowerment is the lack of capability of the subject to achieve what s/he needs/wants in order to live fully (Fielding, 1996; Moore, 2001; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Chandler, 2013). Agency is generally understood as “the ability of individuals (and indeed groups) to make decisions for themselves, to be responsible for their own actions” (Thompson, 2007: 24) and runs against deterministic theories. It places emphasis on the idea that if the individual is given the right tools and opportunities, s/he will be able to fulfil her/his own needs.

The idea of capabilities relates to Amartya Sen’s (1999) mutually enhancing freedoms (political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security). In this regard, the technical approaches do recognise a structural dimension of empowerment, but this dimension is basically understood as *institutional*, and empowerment is thus linked to a specific set of generally *formal* institutional reforms (which often come under the ‘good governance’ label) that will create the right conditions for individuals to become agents. It presumes therefore that once individuals (rational beings) perceive these opportunities, they will seize agency and exert more power-to.

These features are present in several definitions. Page and Czuba (1999), for instance, define empowerment as “a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, *the capacity to implement*) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important” (emphasis added). For Stern et al. (2005: 85), “Empowerment

requires *that poor people themselves be agents*, that they have choices and be involved in the creation of wealth” (emphasis added). In practice this means increasing participation in different sectors, including the economy, so individuals can increase their own ability to shape their own life (ibid.: 192).

As discussed in section 2.1, the World Bank publications also relate empowerment with individuals and groups’ capacity to make decisions and implement them successfully, a process that is dependent on the interplay between agency and the opportunity structure (Alsop, 2004: 4). As defined in a 2006 publication (Alsop et al. 2006), *agency* is understood as related to the assets one has; the ability to make purposeful choices, whereas the *opportunity structure* refers to “aspects of the *institutional context* within which actors operate that influence their ability to transform agency into action” (ibid.: 10) (emphasis added).

Notably, in this kind of literature disempowerment is related to social exclusion (which clearly denotes power asymmetry), but what is striking is that the *cause* of disempowerment is attributed basically to the *shape* of the institutional arrangements of governance, whereas politically sensitive issues such as the nature of the state as a model for social organization, or the questioning of the economic model, or even more sensitive issues such as culture, are left unquestioned. This provides the basis for the second dominant aspect of the technical views of empowerment, which is the emphasis on its procedural dimension, in particular, participatory processes.

Indeed, by and large most institutions that work with empowerment focus on participatory practices. The rationale for this is based on the principle of equity (Cleaver, 2001: 37) where the beneficiaries are placed at the centre of the process, which enables their voices to be heard and taken into account in policies that will affect their lives (Cooke and Kothari, 2001: 5; Scrutton and Luttrell, 2007). Additionally, focusing on empowerment as a process “draws attention to issues of reversibility” and facilitates policy-making (Eyben et al., 2008: 6).

While the concern with equity and reversibility has its merits, there are several problems with the participatory assumption when it comes to policy practice.

First, this understanding of effectiveness stems from a Westernised perspective of democracy and is based on the premise that, given the chance, people will express what they think and give any required input if this is something that may improve their lives. This view also reflects an economist's interpretation of the individual as a rational utility maximizer which is something not supported by other theoretical and empirical accounts (Giddens, 1979: 55-59; Friedmann, 1992: 32; Cooke, 2001). In addition, current participatory models are strongly based on verbal communication, which has several limitations, not least when it comes to external-local interactions in different cultural contexts (Cleaver, 2001: 44; Mohan, 2001: 161; Millar, 2013).

But perhaps the most perilous aspect of the emphasis on participation as a means to empowerment is that it promotes what *seems* to be a neutral view of the process (Fielding, 1996: 400). It is indeed the emphasis on the procedures that justifies the 'technical' (or *a-political*) aspect of empowerment. By asserting that everyone has the right to express their opinions and that the process allows that to happen, participatory approaches refrain from the responsibility of 'influencing' people with alien inputs of right and wrong or biased external knowledge (except when the agenda is to promote participation itself). However, in line with what Bachrach and Baratz (1962) would say about power, the control of the process is already a power issue. If a local community is called to engage in participatory processes that are alien to their ordinary *modus operandi*, this will influence the way they respond to the process. And even in a context where participatory processes are not 'alien', it is very difficult to ensure that: all parties with different interests are participating; that they are actually expressing their views; and that, having expressed their views they will behave accordingly (Cooke, 2001).

Implicit in the above assumptions is the idea that consensus will eventually take place in a group despite the internal differences that may exist. This reflects a benign view that empowering someone does not necessarily imply reducing someone else's power (Thompson, 2007: 21), or that some individuals would be willing to accept a reduction in their power in favour of an increase for others. However, some situations simply do not offer a win-win solution and

conflict arises precisely because of the fundamental incompatibilities of interests (Fielding, 1996; Lopes and Theisohn, 2003).

Furthermore, quite often the consensus reached during the participatory process is not genuine but reflects merely the new formal arrangement and responds to the expectations generated by these very arrangements. As pointed out by Cleaver (2001: 44), “the mere setting up of formal organizations and the specification of their membership does not necessarily overcome exclusion, subordination or vulnerability. It does not do so because the wider structural factors that shape such conditions and relations are often left untouched”. So verbal consensus does not translate into actual change and does not eradicate the fundamental problem that has caused exclusion in the first place (ibid.; Fielding, 1996).

Finally, the over-emphasis on the process diverts attention from another fundamental aspect of empowerment — its outcomes. Mosse (2001), for instance, shows how participatory practices may be compatible with top-down planning systems, often even accentuating power asymmetries locally, as ‘who is the local’ is usually defined via a compromise with local actors and even what is labelled as ‘local knowledge’ entails complex micro-politics of knowledge that donors are not able to capture or influence. Additionally, the emphasis on the technique often places the concern with the results last (Pijnenburg, 2004: 9-11; Thompson, 2007) as participation becomes, in itself, an indicator of success. At worse, placing the process first at the expense of the outcomes may foster a relationship of dependency on external actors (the ‘providers’ of the technical knowledge), therefore, hindering empowerment instead of promoting it (Thompson, 2007: 31).

EMANCIPATORY APPROACHES TO EMPOWERMENT

The emancipatory approaches to empowerment are so called because of their radical understanding of empowerment. It is the kind of approach that prevailed during the 1970s and 1980s in several grassroots movements and that has tailored many of the feminist writings on the topic. As noted above, these approaches are strongly related to the concept of emancipation, as discussed in Critical Theory, in as much as they focus on the problem of power asymmetries

at the systemic level and how these cause disempowerment of specific groups of people.

A Caveat on 'Emancipation'

It should be noted that 'emancipation', as much as 'empowerment', does not have a fixed meaning, having acquired different connotations over time. In its origins, the concept goes back to the Enlightenment, when it was associated with "a view of progress as a movement towards freedom and equality" (Pieterse, 1992: 7). As noted by Pieterse, at the time emancipation was a unifying theme, which called for the liberation of the most diverse groups of people – the human kind – in the context of modernisation (ibid.).

In time the concept became associated with the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory where, generally speaking, it is related to a deep critique of the status quo and the need for a transformation of the order so as to expand individual freedom (Horkheimer, 1937; Baumann, 2000; Wyn Jones, 2005). The details regarding what emancipation entails, nevertheless, vary significantly.

Marx himself had a very broad understanding of human emancipation, stressing a difference between the former and *political* emancipation, which represented only partial emancipation. As he posited in *On the Jewish Question* (1844):

Only when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a species-being in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognized and organized his "own powers" as social powers, and, consequently, no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of political power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished.

Marx's understanding influenced scholars of the Frankfurt School. In his seminal 1937 essay, Horkheimer equated emancipation with the increased domination of nature, which was, in turn, related to the existing forces of production. In his view, the potential for a better life was present in the forces of production, however its concrete benefits were undermined because of the focus on capital instead of humanity as the main driver of the economy. His critique was, thus, directed to the status quo – namely, capitalism – as the

reason for the unfulfilled potential that could otherwise better serve human beings. Emancipation was directly related to the review of that order.

Horkheimer's view of emancipation was eminently material. The further development of Critical Theory, however, brought other dimensions into play. The work of Habermas, for example, redirected the focus of emancipation into the domain of communication and interaction. "On the Habermasian reading, speech is the location of emancipatory premise and capacity", therefore "the developments that help realize this potential [unconstrained communication and unforced understanding] are considered emancipatory" (Wyn Jones, 2005: 224).

These definitions point to the different ways emancipation may be interpreted and the different analytical and practical implications arising from such understandings. They stress thus the flexible connotation of the term. Indeed, as noted by Bauman (2000), what emancipation entails needs to be contextualised according to its historical setting, which means that Critical Theory needs to be constantly revisited in order to explain the current expression of modernity.

Perhaps because of the complexity underlying the debate on emancipation, the term is often referred to in an all-encompassing way. In *Critical Security Studies*, for instance, Booth (2005: 181) defines emancipation as:

. . . the theory and practice of inventing humanity, with a view of freeing people, as individuals and collectivities, from contingent and structural oppressions. It is a discourse of human self-creation and the politics of trying to bring it about . . . The concept of emancipation shapes strategies and tactics of resistance, offers a theory of progress for society, and gives a politics of hope for common humanity.

Discussing the concept from Marx's perspective, Le Baron (1971: 562) notes that emancipation is "neither destination nor vehicle, but the journey itself, the continuous effort to enlarging freedom and community." Furthermore, emancipation refers not only to the liberation from external chains of oppression, but also to the liberation of individuals from their own intellectual prison, or the realization of self-awareness (ibid.).

Whether the general and all encompassing understanding of emancipation is a strength or a weakness is subject to debate. According to Laclau (1996), the main dimensions of the concept of emancipation (which include its dichotomic character, its holistic dimension, transparency, the pre-existence of oppression, the dimensions of ground and rationality) are *not* a unified whole and *do not* constitute a coherent theoretical structure. In fact, he notes that “the assertion of the classical notion of emancipation in its many variants has evolved the advancement of incompatible logical claims” (Laclau, 1996: 2). Yet, this is *not* a weakness. On the contrary, “by playing within the system of logical incompatibilities of the latter we can open the way to new liberating discourses which are no longer hindered by the antinomies and blind alleys to which the classical notion of emancipation has led” (ibid.).

To a certain extent, a similar argument may be raised in the case of empowerment. The contradictions that appear in the construction and operationalisation of the concept often point to incompatible logics. Yet, as this thesis argues, these contradictions help to shift the analysis from a pattern of linearity to one of dialectics and, at the same time, contribute the constant engagement in immanent critique as the change and movement of the concept needs to be constantly reassessed.

Empowerment as Emancipation

To a great extent, the emancipatory approaches to empowerment are based on the specific work of the activist and pedagogue Paulo Freire (1996) and his work on popular education and *conscientisation*, which is inspired by the Marxist idea of human emancipation.

Freire’s (1996: 84) starting point is the idea of dehumanization, which is central to domination. According to him, the oppressed have been denied their humanity in as much as they have been reduced to ‘things’, transformed from subjects to objects. This domination, however, is only possible as long as the oppressed internalise their condition and accept it as natural. That is why the only solution for true liberation is what he calls *conscientisation*, “the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence” (ibid.: 94-95). *Conscientisation* means being able to expand the boundaries of what one

deems possible, distinguishing between the actual consciousness (the current state) and the potential consciousness of the self (what could be) (ibid.).

However, the *conscientisation* of some means the contestation of the power-over of others. In sharp contrast to the technical approaches, power here is not only conflictual but has a dialectical character. It is conflictual because the awakening of the oppressed will inevitably shake the status quo that benefits the oppressors. It is dialectical because there are no oppressed without oppressors and vice-versa. Consequently, true liberation can only arise in communion, when both the oppressor and the oppressed perceive the problem of domination, and the fact that any individual will only be fully free as long as all humanity is free as well (Freire, 1996).

Whereas both the technical and emancipatory approaches start with the acknowledgment of the existence of disempowerment, the latter goes further and has as its main concern *why* disempowerment exists and what is the force behind it. Therefore, while proponents want to find solutions, their approach is fundamentally problem-posing. This kind of frame derives precisely from the influence of Critical Theory and the radical concept of emancipation.

A Critical perspective on empowerment focuses on the constant movement between the shaping of the structure in which individuals are embedded and its own transformation through agency (Giddens, 1979; Sztompka, 1993; Stirk, 2000). It assumes that, if human beings perceive how social mechanisms work (*conscientisation*), they can actually envisage alternatives and take action to change things. So, whereas agency has a fundamental role, that is so *because* of its potential to change the structures that inhibit agency in the first place.

When it comes to definitions of empowerment, the emancipatory approaches stress different aspects from the technical ones. According to Gita Sen (1997: 2), a leading scholar in gender studies, “Empowerment is, first and foremost, about power; *changing power relations* in favour of those who previously exercised little power over their own lives” (emphasis added). Empowerment is, in this regard, linked to the ability of actors to gain control.

Similarly, Batliwala (1993), also a reference in gender studies, defines empowerment as “a process, and the results of a process, of *transforming the*

relations of power between individuals and social groups” (quoted in Batliwala, 2007: 560, emphasis added). She stresses the radical connotation of the concept, so that empowerment entails a “*process that shifts social power* in three critical ways: by challenging the ideologies that justify social inequality (such as gender and caste), by challenging prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural, and intellectual resources, and by transforming the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain existing power structures (such as the family, state, market, education, and media)” (ibid., emphasis added).

The Colombo Statement of Asian NGOs and the People’s Organisations on People’s Empowerment in Asia²⁰, defines empowerment as a “process by which *people become conscious of the causes of their poverty or exploitation* and then organise to use their collective skills, energies and resources to alter these conditions. It is an internal dynamic within the group, which occurs as a result of the group’s awareness of themselves and experiences in tackling problems” (quoted in Liamzon, 1997: 4, emphasis added).

For Oakley (2001b: 13), the process of empowerment refers to the “relative positions of formal and informal power enjoyed by different socio-economic groups and the consequences of *gross imbalances in the distribution of this power*” (emphasis added). As such empowerment seeks to address this imbalance and “boost the power of those groups relatively ‘powerless’ in relation to the others” (ibid.). Alternatively, for Eyben et al. (2008; 6), “Empowerment happens when individuals and organised groups are able to *imagine their world differently* and to realise that vision by *changing the relations of power* that have been keeping them in poverty” (emphasis added).

What these definitions have in common is the emphasis on (a) the power relations that sustain disempowerment and the need to overcome them, and (b) the need for the disempowered to perceive these issues and be able to see

²⁰ The event that led to the statement was sponsored by IRED (Innovations et Réseaux pour le Développement) a network of local partners from Africa, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific which includes peasant associations, fisherman, NGOs, etc. See official website: <http://www.ired.org/>.

different realities as possible options for their lives. So whether it is possible to change certain institutional aspects in order to foster empowerment, its actualisation is only possible through the self-awareness of the disempowered (see also Solomon, 1974; Fielding, 1996: 405); that is, the process is important, yet it is only effective as long as it reflects a deeper process of self-awareness that entails power redistribution.

The emancipatory views of empowerment have also been subject to criticism as much as the technical approaches. In particular, post-modern scholars, inspired by Foucault's views of power, criticise the emancipatory approaches on an emancipatory account. They point to the totalising tendency of the critical discourse, which is based on the assumption of a common truth applicable everywhere (Fielding, 1996: 408). The question that bothers them is who is to define who is oppressed, and what does it mean to be liberated (Baumann, 2000). The post-modern critique has echoed in post-colonial studies both in Development as well as in Peace Studies. In the former case, the famous participatory rural approaches (PRA), introduced by Robert Chambers in the 1980s (and later adopted by the World Bank) and designed precisely with the intent to listen to the 'oppressed' instead of imposing solutions, is now criticized because of its emphasis on a specific set of techniques (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Mohan, 2001).²¹ In Peace and Conflict Studies, critics have argued that the international emphasis on ownership and empowerment is nothing more than the exercise of power through a discourse that diverts attention away from the actual structural issues that cause underdevelopment in the first place (e.g., Duffield, 2001 and 2007; Chandler, 2006 and 2013). So the main problem becomes not 'how to promote empowerment', but who defines what empowerment is and who needs it. Critics also highlight how this manipulation is only possible because of the positive connotation of the term empowerment, and the pretence of a normative drive behind the initiatives that focus on it (Moore, 2001; Richmond, 2012).

²¹ It is fair to say that Chambers did not aim to impose any set of techniques. However, PRA was eventually 'captured' by many organisations and used nearly as end in itself. As noted by Pijnenburg (2004: 9-16), Chambers frequently warned that the right attitude is more important than the mastery of the technique.

Post-modern critiques point to the need for constant reflexivity in the analysis and theorising of empowerment and to the limitations of the discourse whether technical or radical. However, if taken to the extreme, they may offer a strong epistemological critique but no practical solutions to address the issues of inequality and disempowerment (Friedmann, 1992: 12; Fielding, 1996; Pieterse, 2010: 73).

In this regard, I would like to highlight two main advantages of the emancipatory approaches to empowerment in relation to the technical and post-modern ones. First, a critical approach to empowerment is embedded in the idea of immanent critique. This allows for a constant questioning of the current state of affairs (and current policies rationale) and is more in tune with the constant movement of societies and their values, needs and aspirations. From this perspective, empowerment (as emancipation) should not be trapped into a dead end, but constantly reshaped, in order to fulfil its role of providing an 'ideal', an incentive for action towards change (see Booth, 2007).

The second advantage is the breadth of the discussion on agency and structure underpinning it as well as its relation with power dynamics and change (Giddens, 1979; Sztompka, 1993; Stirk, 2000). Despite the challenges involved in incorporating such a level of abstract discussion into policy design (Cleverly, 2012), this dichotomy allows for a constant reflection on the nature of agency, and possibilities for transformation. It also provides a space to investigate the complex interaction between manifestations of 'power to' and 'power over' in multiple levels of analysis.

Despite the connections between the concept of emancipation and the radical expressions of empowerment, this thesis purposely differentiates between the two concepts based on two main reasons. First, it is important to flag the different backgrounds of each concept, in particular their (dis)connection with a specific set of theories. As noted, 'emancipation' was developed as a concept part of a much broader sociological discussion about modernisation. In contrast, 'empowerment' has been rarely connected to social theory, being used mostly as an expected outcome of coordinated action or policy.

Second, whereas emancipation has been subject to debate, the concept itself has always been understood in the context of some kind of confrontation or power struggle. Regardless of the incompatible logics noted above (Laclau, 1996), emancipation *necessarily* entails that some kind of *oppression* exists. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, that is not necessarily the case with 'empowerment', at least since its co-optation into the mainstream political agenda. Retaining this differentiation is furthermore important in order to optimise the utility of empowerment as an analytical concept and enable a reflexive approach as the concept itself and its use are put under constant critique. Moreover, it also should be noted that the way 'emancipation' influences the radical strand of empowerment does not capture all the different understandings and interpretations that exist within the literature of emancipation²² therefore their direct equation would overlook the complexities permeating both debates.

2.4 The Under-Discussed Features of Empowerment

This section identifies three areas that have been given little attention in the literature on empowerment, both in the technical as well as in the emancipatory approaches. The first issue is the relevance of multiple levels of analysis for understanding the chain of events that lead to disempowerment and possibly to empowerment. Second is the role of power asymmetries and how power dynamics operate within and between these levels. Third is the role played by actors' subjectivities and how they affect empowerment policy design and implementation.

MULTIPLE LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

Most of the literature discussing empowerment and its operationalisation tends to focus on the micro-level or what is often termed 'local' or community level (Friedmann, 1992; Moore, 2001; Pijnenburg, 2004: 21-23; Thompson, 2007: 23;

²² Such critique is also made in the case of Critical Security Studies (CSS). Peoples (2011) for instance, notes that much of the CSS literature adopts a specific interpretation of 'emancipation' that eschews the role that violence may play in promoting emancipation.

Pieterse, 2010; Cleaver, 2012). This logic is influenced by Schumacher's idea that 'small is beautiful' and that small scale initiatives have a better chance of working because they allow for direct engagement with the people, avoid excessive bureaucratization, are less costly, and are in tune with the participatory strategies that are part of the empowerment discourse (Friedmann, 1992: 139-141; Duffield, 2007: 56-59).

However, excessive localism has been criticised on several grounds. For one, what/who is 'local' and even what constitutes a 'community' is not straightforward, especially, when it comes to participatory techniques. If anything, these labels tend to disguise strong heterogeneity as well as intra-group conflict and power asymmetries (Cleaver, 2001: 44; Pijnenburg, 2004: 22; Pieterse, 2010: 68-69). Also, the relationship between individuals and group empowerment, and how the empowerment of some may enhance the empowerment of the rest, is not clear either, and different assumptions may lead to very different policy strategies (Zimmerman, 1990: 169-170). Even more controversial is the quality of the results achieved by local vs. large-scale projects for 'local' empowerment and how sustainable they can be (Friedmann, 1992; Duffield, 2007: 56-59; Cleaver, 2012: 6-7).

In theory, there is no rule stating that empowerment should be circumscribed to one specific level of analysis, neither in terms of policy formulation, nor in terms of policy implementation. Indeed, some scholars have attempted to combine different levels of analysis in their frameworks (e.g., Solomon, 1974; Kabeer, 2001; Alsop et al., 2006). Friedmann (1992), for instance, while placing emphasis on the household as the main focus of empowerment, has noted that the sustainability of any development policy might be severely compromised if there is no state support in the long run. Sen (2000), Lopes (2002), and Green (2008) stress that the state has a fundamental role in empowerment promotion to guarantee the power acquired by the excluded will be sustained in the long term. Moore (2001) and Eyben et al. (2008) further point out, that the state may facilitate empowerment through the enforcement of the rule of law and the promulgation of legal rights as well as by sustaining policies aiming at asset redistribution.

Often these state-related aspects are encapsulated under the label 'structure' or 'structural'. The World Bank, for instance, refers to the 'opportunity structure' as comprising "those institutions that govern people's behaviour and that influence the success or failure of the choices that they make" (Alsop et al., 2006: 13). They define institutions as the "rules of the game" that guide/constrain human interaction and individual choices (ibid.). However, whilst they refer to formal and informal institutions, they avoid 'global institutions'. Instead they suggest *domains* where empowerment may occur (the state, the market, and society) (ibid.: 19), but which are analysed mainly from a national dynamics perspective. In fact, when they refer to *levels* of analysis, they narrow them to the *administrative* boundaries of the state (macro, intermediary, and local) (ibid.: 21).

Moving beyond the local and state levels of analysis, authors such as Duffield and Chandler prefer to focus on the international system and how systemic dynamics influence empowerment discourse and practice. Inspired by Foucault's notion of biopolitics, Duffield (2007) criticizes the emphasis on local and small self-reliance initiatives arguing that they are part of a set of mechanisms that are put in place in order to legitimate the liberal order while containing any possible disruption by those worse off, which is why their (in)efficiency should be understood contextually. Chandler (2013), instead, focuses on the assumptions of the liberal discourse and what he sees as an important change in the last few years, which is the shift from 'freedom' to 'necessity' as a central concept within this agenda. This shift, he says, reflects a necessary review of the techniques of governmentality because 'freedom' has become progressively more contested and flawed. Human-centred approaches, which emphasise capacity-building and empowerment, are, however, constraining human freedom as they place the responsibility of the world's problems onto the individuals and it is, therefore, the individuals who have to adapt to the system and not the system that needs to change (see also Pugh et al., 2011; Cooper et al. 2011). Ultimately, from these perspectives, the empowerment agenda is not really empowering but mostly a form of legitimating a power discourse.

One of the differences between these critiques, besides their epistemological stand, is their general target. Focusing on the global system may be seen as a way to find the fundamental problem that generates all the other practical problems; however, it makes policy-making much more challenging. This thesis defends the idea that understanding empowerment requires navigating through multiple levels of analysis. Even if the aim is to empower a small local constituency, understanding the causes of disempowerment requires moving along the spectrum of global, national, and local power dynamics in order to propose effective policies. This is because the ‘power blocks’ — factors that obstruct the expansion of power-to of a marginalised group (Solomon, 1974: 16-17) — are often located on a different level from the one where disempowerment is visible. At the same time, the framework proposed here does not claim that the causality of local issues resides exclusively or principally in global structural aspects. Instead, it implies being open to the several chains of actions within and between levels. In other words, one needs to focus on power dynamics within and between each level of analysis to understand the chain of effects that lead to disempowerment instead of defining a priori which level of analysis is dominant in that particular situation.

POWER DYNAMICS WITHIN AND BETWEEN LEVELS

Taking into consideration multiple levels of analysis allows us to see power from a new angle and realise that empowerment promotion entails multiple chains of action that involve different power dynamics between various sets of actors, at different moments in time and at different levels. Therefore, it is not just about measuring if the ‘target population’ has become empowered, but how the final result relates to the process as a whole.

At the most macro level of analysis, the global level, there are several domains where power is detectable. The emphasis on the global discourse of empowerment, and how it was re-defined during the 1980s and 1990s, is one example (Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Batliwala, 2007; Duffield, 2007; Chandler, 2013). The definition of the discourse is important because it carries a set of assumptions that, once normalised in the agenda, are rarely questioned and become the basis for new discourses, compounding the *habitus*. The emphasis

on power-to and capacity-building as cornerstones for empowerment, for instance, tends to reify and legitimise the artificial dichotomy 'capacitor/learner' or its alternatives 'donor/beneficiary', 'empowered/ disempowered-powerless', 'developed/developing', and transforms the 'receiver' into a mainly passive actor and the 'helper' into a modern version of a good Samaritan (Freire, 1996; Fielding, 1996; Easterly, 2006; Duffield, 2007). Another derived assumption is the belief in a neutral technical and transferable kind of knowledge; an assumption criticised at many levels in different fields of knowledge (Ibid.; Sen, 1997; Foucault, 2004; Chang, 2006; Francis, 2010; Pugh et al., 2011).

While these approaches point out fundamental features of power, they also stress the structural domain and power-over as the central explanatory dynamic relegating other dynamics as derivative. From this point of view, even if an empowerment promotion policy is successful at the local level, it does not mean that it is successful from a more systemic point of view (Ibid.). Instead, it may be the case that small changes are generated in order to prevent a bigger change happening, and this could be ultimately more disempowering in the long run (Duffield, 2007).

I would like to posit that, whereas, this may be the case in many instances, such a systemic approach may also be as reductionist as focusing exclusively on the micro-level since attributing the 'guilt' of the problems to the structure (e.g., liberalism, capitalism) is also a way to shift responsibility away from the actors within it and ignore parallel power structures that often play an even more important role in some individual's lives. In practice, conflict is always present at different levels of the social system, and even though some discourses are relatively homogeneous at the global level, national decisions differ and social consequences are different between countries and within countries. What generates this heterogeneity is the geometry of power that results from key interactions at each level.

For instance, donors may have a strong voice in specific policy areas of a developing country that is aid-dependent such as Mozambique. However, internal political issues may sometimes prevail and affect the way decisions are taken in the Assembly. This, in turn, may also be influenced by the trend in local elections and the perception of political insecurity of the current government. At

the same time, for the local population in a rural village the main factor that influences their electoral behaviour may not be understood outside their cultural belief system. At each of these levels of interactions, there are power-to/power-over dynamics at play, and the final outcome of a situation is inextricably linked to how these relate to each other at a specific point in time. In some instances donors' influence may prevail, while at other times the government may actually defy donors preferences because internal power dynamics or countervailing global norms (such as sovereignty) take precedence.

Integrating these levels is key to understanding empowerment and requires exploring arenas that have been often marginalised in the empowerment literature (Pieterse, 2010: 7), in particular, the domain of policy-making and the micro-dynamics of power which include the recognition of the role played by both formal and *informal* institutions such as ideology, culture, and tradition (Bourdieu, 1977; Gledhill, 2000; Mosse, 2001; Kothari, 2001; Cleaver, 2012). The latter are particularly important in shaping people's understandings of the world and, therefore, help us comprehend their rationality and behaviour as much as their understanding of their own power. The next section will explore this further by focusing on the idea of subjectivities and its relevance for the empowerment debate.

ACTOR'S SUBJECTIVITIES OF POWER

Empowerment, regardless of how we define it, is based on the implicit assumption that the disempowered want to improve their lives. From the technical perspective, given the right opportunities, these actors will almost naturally take action to improve their life condition. From the point of view of the emancipatory approaches, the subject needs to become conscious of the reasons that lead to that condition of disempowerment, and once this takes place, their actions will also change. Either way, it is taken for granted that the subjects in question want to change their situation, and that change implies agency, which implies action. In summary, the subject is defined by her/his capacity to act.

As obvious as it may seem, this assumption is very problematic. First, it is often the case that when circumstances change, behaviours do not change

accordingly (or not as policy planners expect them to). Second, and more fundamentally, this ontological assumption may be contested from a philosophical perspective. Indeed, according to Reader (2007), the emphasis on ‘persons as agents’ that pervades most of the social sciences is nothing less than a contestable philosophical bias that places those who are passive, dependent, and constrained as ‘counting less’ or being less of a person while valuing those who act (see also Scott, 1985). This is particularly so in the empowerment discourse, where the general aim is to foster action, seen as the main conduit for social change. However, *patiency*, which Reader presents as the opposite of agency (or its passive aspect) is as important as agency to the extent that one does not exist without the other. Therefore, in as much as agency is important, resistance, suffering, and non-action are important elements of the subject and should be given equal value in the analysis of social life.

In the case of empowerment, placing attention on the agency bias may be very helpful as it makes us reconsider the idea that non-agency is necessarily a reflexion of power-over, or that non-action for change equals false consciousness. Instead, it reminds us to dive deep into the frames that shape individual’s actions in order to better understand them and, thus, understand why some kinds of social conditions change more easily while others seem to stagnate over time.

In this thesis I use the term *subjectivities* to refer to the way the subjects see themselves and the world around them. By using the term subjectivities (plural) I intend to separate it from the general connotation linked to subjectivity (singular). The latter is more often related to Foucault’s research on the techniques of the self, that is, “how was the subject established, at different moments and in different institutional contexts, as a possible, desirable, or even indispensable object of knowledge” (Foucault, 2000: 87). This concept is certainly relevant, if we think of the weight that agency has played in this literature, however the Foucauldian approach also bans any possible conception of freedom and emancipation as it states that how the subject sees herself is in itself a product of power-over (Haugaard, 1997: 43-47; Holloway, 2010: 39-40). From this perspective, the very basic notion of empowerment

makes no sense, as here even the idea of freedom is a result of some external technique of social control.

From a Marxist-oriented perspective, subjectivity has a different connotation, one that stands for “the conscious projection beyond that which exists, the ability to negate that which exists and to create something that does not exist yet” and, as such, it encompasses a movement against limits (Holloway, 2010: 25-26; see also Freire, 1996: 32-33; Booth, 2007: 112). In this case, subjectivity relates to liberation and a state of freedom, where the subject rescues their humanity and ceases to be an object (ibid.). This perspective is equally problematic as it implies that the subject is only a subject when she/he is ‘conscious’ without defining how this criterion is met.

Subjectivities (plural) is a more flexible concept. It accepts the existence of diverse sets of values, of “multiple interpretative horizons [that] give actors an ability to adapt to social context and [that] are a source of autonomy” (Haugaard, 1997: 187). Such values influence both the practical and discursive consciousness knowledge of individuals and the way they socialize, and they may often clash (ibid.: 179-187). Practical consciousness knowledge refers to the tacit knowledge that the actor is not able to formulate discursively, whereas, discursive consciousness knowledge implies that they have reflected on it (as the rational actor model assumes) (Giddens, 1979: 56-57). This dichotomy is important as it contests the general assumption of the rational actor that pervades most economics and political science models, including policy-making.

Bourdieu’s analysis of social representation is particularly helpful in this regard. According to him, “every established order tends to produce the naturalization of its own arbitrariness” (Bourdieu, 1977: 164). This happens through several mechanisms, of which, by far the most important, is the sense of limits (or sense of reality) that each individual has. He uses the term *doxa* to refer to the experience of taking for granted a specific reality or set of rules that govern social action. The *doxa* is fundamental to habitus. It is possible to change a *doxa*, but it is extremely difficult as general patterns of behaviour tend to validate the existing taxonomies that classify people and, therefore, reinforce the *doxa* (ibid.: 169). When a contestation happens, that is when it is possible to

see the *doxa*, not as an absolute reality, but as a discourse that has a competing alternative.

The major difficulty in changing systems of representation is the fact that each individual inhabits a specific social space that tends to reinforce and validate the same practices that sustain that specific structure (Bourdieu, 1987: 233). These positions are linked to the distribution of specific resources, which include material but also cultural and symbolic content and that define that individual's identity (ibid.). Therefore choices are not equal, and the costs associated with change for each individual depends on her/his position in society as much as from her/his feeling of identity. This is in turn what tailor individuals' actions, and leads them to build strategies that take into account their concern with time, uncertainty, and practical consciousness (not rational choice) (Swartz, 1997: 101). That is why in certain cases gaining consciousness (e.g., a more critical view of reality) will not necessarily lead to a different form of action.

It is this perspective of subjectivities, linked with a multilevel framework of empowerment and the idea of power dynamics, that constitutes the basis of the empowerment framework that I propose in this thesis. The next section discusses this model in more detail.

2.5 Understanding Empowerment through a Multilevel Framework of Analysis

One of the widely recognised challenges in the empowerment literature is that of measurement (Sen, 1997; Rowlands, 1997; Oakley 2001a; Kabeer, 2001; Fox, 2004; Holland and Brook, 2004; Alsop, 2006). The multitude of definitions, the variations in scope, and levels of analysis make it hard to determine the common variables that should be included in an empowerment framework. Similarly, the general emphasis on its procedural aspect and the acknowledgment that empowerment includes both tangible as well as intangible aspects contribute to making this task extremely challenging (ibid.).

In the face of such complexity, many models have opted to segregate dimensions of empowerment according to categories such as material/non-

material aspects, economic/political/social and other domains (e.g., Friedmann, 1992; Oakley, 2001a; Alsop, 2006; Eyben et al., 2008), degrees of empowerment (Kabeer, 2001), effects according to the type of power in a specific dimension (personal, contextual, collective) (Rowlands, 1997; Kabeer, 2001), different focuses of the process (contextual, structural, inner) (Rowlands, 1997), and the list could go on (Stern et al., 2005; Luttrell and Quiroz, 2009). The need to fragment the concept into so many categories and variables partially arises from the way policies are evaluated. Indeed, many of these models are designed by practitioners and become references within specific development agencies.

The model proposed below is less concerned with dissecting but more with bridging elements that are often arbitrarily separated. Instead of trying to find a correlation between inputs and outputs, this framework highlights the rationale behind the chosen inputs. Instead of finding degrees of empowerment, it emphasises the dialectical dimension of power. Instead of looking for a specific objective measurement of empowerment, it assesses how the understanding of it changes within and across levels of analysis, and how this influences policy results.

In the context of the different approaches to empowerment, this framework aims to move beyond the idea of empowerment exclusively as a policy outcome or as the overcoming of dynamics of oppression. In this regard, the framework offers comprehensive space to:

- (1) Understand the different ways that empowerment may be understood by considering the domain of policy formulation and policy implementation.
- (2) Aggregate both 'emancipatory' aspects (i.e., the systemic level and the relationship between agency and structure and power dynamics) and the 'technical' aspects of empowerment (i.e., the aspect of actors' capacity, or power-to).
- (3) Consider the critical inputs from post-modern critiques, by stressing the role of subjectivities of the various actors involved in the process.

Consequently, the model allows a policy to be assessed from different perspectives, in particular by considering the aspect of policy coherence (between the logics that sustain the policy and the logics that sustain action at the level where the policy operates) and its actual potential and effectiveness in promoting emancipatory effects regarding the target population. Beyond that, because of the emphasis on a dialectical perspective of power, the framework further problematizes the very emancipatory potential of the policy under analysis, by considering the different power dynamics at play in a specific setting at any given moment.

Conceptually, empowerment is here understood as a dynamic process whereby actors perceive their situation as unfavourable to their interests and change their attitudes in order to transform their situation. It implies, therefore, the idea of questioning or contesting of a current reality and the expansion of the boundaries of what is deemed possible. It also implies the recognition of an individual's personal power, which further entails a change of mental attitude and the reconsideration of an individual's power-to and power-over that s/he exerts or is subject to. The empowerment framework proposed here (Figure 2.2) incorporates the three elements discussed in the previous section. First, it incorporates multiple levels of analysis; second, it focuses on the power dynamics within and between these levels; third, it includes the role of subjectivities alongside capacity and agency.

The recognition of different levels of analysis does not imply the recognition of a hierarchy among them. In practice, as the case study will show, more often than not the boundaries between global/national, national/local, and so forth, are not clear-cut. However, this stratification captures the domain of the formal and informal structures where empowerment policies are designed and implemented as well as their geographical scope. As such, the global system includes actors such as donors (e.g., the UNDP, the World Bank, international NGOs, and donors in general), institutions and discourses that somehow influence the behaviour of the national government (e.g., the international dominant development discourse), and practices that also shape expectations and behaviours of the national actors (e.g., aid expectations and conditionalities).

The national level includes the core state government apparatus (e.g., the Ministry of Development and Planning, the Ministry of Finance, and the president), formal regulations (such as the legislation on state administration and the regulation regarding the '7 million'), informal political practices (e.g., linked with the historical relationship between the main political parties and networks of political patronage), and the civil society in general (e.g., national NGOs, research institutes, the press).

The sub-national level includes all those structures that have a narrower geographical scope than the national one and include, for instance, the provincial and district governments as well as local CSOs. I included this level of analysis in order to differentiate between dynamics of power that have a wide national component from those that take place at the more local-level and yet are not necessarily as local as the community. These intermediary levels are extremely important, as the case study reveals, because they have the potential to affect power, both upwards as well as downwards, connecting the macro-level to the micro one.

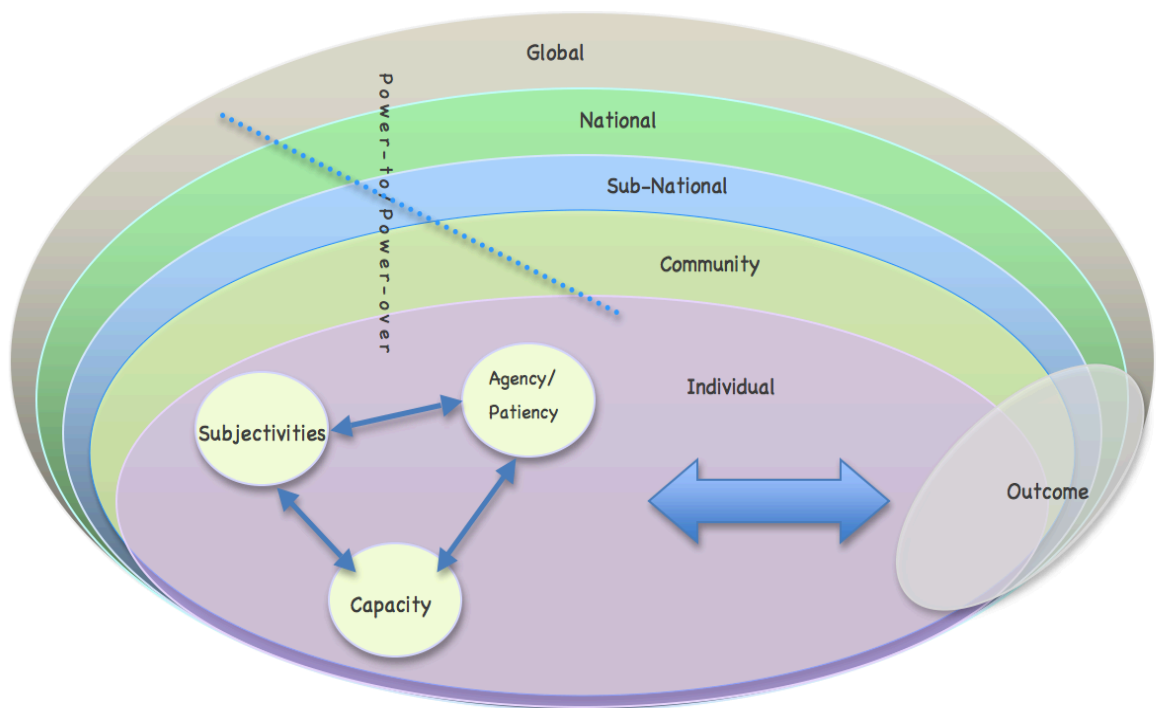
The community-level includes the target group of those to be empowered. In Mozambique, it includes the people living in the rural districts, peasants, local traders, as well as community authorities. The community-level is extremely hybrid and strongly influenced by informal power dynamics linked to tradition and which usually mix with formal domains of state power and sometimes overrule it.

Finally, the individual-level is placed in this figure in order to emphasise what is the smallest unit of analysis when it comes to empowerment. In practice, however, it is impossible to separate it from the community-level, as the way individuals think and behave is inextricably linked to their place in the community. At the same time, placing the individual in focus is also a way to counter the usual emphasis on the group and highlight the heterogeneous effects that empowerment promotion may have in a community.

The three elements in the smaller circles (subjectivities, capacity, agency/patiency) are not exclusive to the individual domain but permeate each level of analysis. Subjectivities refers to the actors' ways of understanding the

world and themselves in it. Agency and patiency relates to the options of taking action or not (or *strategy*). Capacity refers to the actors' material and non-material potential to carry out activities that may lead to a pre-defined objective. It may include, for instance, knowledge, authority, assets, information and freedom. The arrows linking these three elements stress that they are highly related and a change in one of these domains may affect the others in a positive or negative way.

Figure 2.2: Multilevel Framework of Empowerment



Power dynamics pervade all the spectrum of the framework. The dotted line without arrows means that power is not uniform and has no pre-defined direction in the scheme. Instead the way it manifests may be very different at each level and between them, depending on the context and moment in time. The final outcome (expectedly empowerment) is then the result of the combination of these elements and may be transformative or reifying, according to changes in the power configuration.

Theoretically, and taking into account the discussion carried out in the previous sections, this model is based on the following assumptions:

1–Power asymmetries permeate social relations at different levels, and structural aspects (the way social life is organised, including at the global level) are fundamental to understanding what happens at the local level. However, structures are not fixed and can be changed by human agency in different ways.

2–The way actors understand their reality is pivotal to the comprehension of their behaviour, as people act according to how they think. In that sense, they are constantly engaged in creating reality. From this perspective, focusing on the rejection of truth or on ‘false consciousness’ is problematic. Instead, focusing on meaning and interpretation, as much as power distribution, helps us understand the subtler nuances that shape agency. Ultimately, measuring empowerment purely in objective terms runs against the central aspect of the concept itself.

3–Power operates in a dialectical way, and this is reflected in the way empowerment operates. Understanding empowerment as exclusively the increase of power-to is analytically narrow. Acknowledging the relationship between power-over and power-to, as well as the existence of conflicts of interest and power asymmetries at all levels is in fact a prerequisite to understand disempowerment and therefore to formulate policies that are more realistic and in tune with the context where they operate.

4– Empowerment is both a process and an end. It is a process as it is dynamic in nature, as much as power is. It is an end because it is based on the idea that the current circumstances may be improved, so it only makes sense as long as there is a potential change envisioned by the actors.

5– Empowerment does not necessarily need ‘help’ to unfold and sometimes ‘help’ actually curbs empowerment even if it aims to promote it. The emphasis on ‘help’ suits the current dominant approach to empowerment very well, but it runs against the radical connotation of empowerment. As will be discussed in the case study, ‘promoting empowerment’ only makes sense in a context where individuals see themselves as disempowered, and there is congruence between their views and those of the ‘helpers’ regarding the causes of the disempowerment. Unfortunately, this synergy is not the rule.

2.6 Conclusion

From a radical concept that has shaped the course of several grassroots movements in the 1960s and 1970s, empowerment has travelled a long way and today rests comfortably in the agenda of mainstream development institutions such as the World Bank. As a feel-good concept, it has been extensively used alongside most development policies in both developing and developed countries, and it has become part of a general development ethics that places an emphasis on bottom-up participatory approaches. By highlighting two main discourses of empowerment — the technical and emancipatory approaches — one of my objectives was to show that competitive discourses do exist on the matter, and that the prevalence of one over the other has to be understood in light of historical circumstances. By doing so, while not refuting the relevance of the discursive critiques to both approaches, I also pointed out their limitations as explanatory accounts of social change. My second aim was, therefore, to identify in the former approaches areas that still need exploration in order to improve empowerment as a theoretical concept and also as a policy tool. The framework proposed at the end is the result of this effort. By mixing multiple levels of analysis, focusing on power dynamics within and between levels, and placing subjectivities at the centre of the analysis, I am suggesting that we need to move towards a more holistic approach to empowerment that is in tune with the complexities of social change and policy-making.

The remaining chapters of this thesis largely follow the levels of analysis in the framework starting from the top and continuing to the bottom. The following two chapters discuss empowerment focusing predominantly on the national and international levels. Chapter 3 focuses on the historical background of Mozambique, taking into account general dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment that have shaped the constitution of the Mozambican state. Chapter 4 concentrates on the reconstitution of the state apparatus that followed the peace agreements signed in 1992 and discusses the extent to which peace has opened space for more empowering opportunities to those at the margins of the political system. Chapters 5 and 6 turn to the discussion of the '7 million'. First, Chapter 5 focuses on the '7 million' policy formulation and the power dynamics shaping the initiative's existence focusing, in particular, at

the national and provincial levels. Subsequently, Chapter 6 explores the policy implementation, in particular, at the community level contrasting the different local subjectivities regarding the '7 million' as well as how the initiative has influenced local actor's propensity towards agency or patency.

Chapter 3

Colonialism, Independence, and Fragmentation: Dynamics of Empowerment and Disempowerment from a Historical Perspective

The struggle is part of the world's movement for the emancipation of the oppressed peoples, which aims at the total liquidation of colonialism and imperialism, and the construction of a new society free from exploitation of man by man.

(Statement of Frelimo's Second Congress, 1968)

This chapter explores the historical background of what has become a 'peace success-story' Mozambique. It focuses on the power dynamics that have shaped the constitution of the Mozambican state and its society and, more deeply, it points to the fluidity and dialectical dimension of these power dynamics. It argues first, that these dynamics cannot be understood linearly. All through this period, power assumed different forms and shifted often very rapidly. More fundamentally, power was always contested. Second, in spite of many efforts towards change, it is possible to visualise several patterns of continuity, even within change. The persistence of specific patterns highlights how difficult it is to change dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment. Indeed, the historical processes examined in this chapter are crucial to understand important contemporary aspects that characterise Mozambique's state, society, and the functioning and effectiveness of the '7 million' initiative.

The chapter is divided into four sections. First, it discusses the colonial period, in particular, the different policies adopted by the Portuguese that contributed to the systematic disempowerment of the natives while also creating different patterns of stratification. Second, it shows how these policies were constantly resisted, first at the micro-level, then through the creation of the liberation movement, which also contained deep seeds of division. The third section of the chapter discusses the emancipatory call of Frelimo's agenda after

independence and its theoretical and practical contradictions. The final section delves into the power dynamics of the post-independence war highlighting the different forms of power contestation as well as the effects of violence on local dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment.

3.1 Portuguese Colonialism in Mozambique

Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique can be divided into three phases. The first starts with the first Portuguese incursions in the late 15th century and lasted until the end of the 19th century, and it was marked by very limited, if any, control of the colonial territory. The second phase lasted from 1890 until 1930 and was characterised by the entrenching of a colonial system based on concessions and labour export to foreign companies, which fundamentally altered the social and economic landscape of the colonial territory. The final phase, which lasted until independence, reflected the desperate effort of a fascist Portugal to alter the colonial model of exploitation and make the system even more exploitative and authoritarian. Despite the nuances in each phase, the colonial period is overall characterised by the increasing institutionalisation of several mechanisms of disempowerment that affected the majority of the native population as well as by the creation of new forms of social stratification. These effects would have long-term consequences in Mozambique and would eventually influence the political choices of the independence movement.

EARLY COLONIALISM

The Portuguese officially arrived in what is today Mozambique in 1498. Before that, Mozambique was organised into different communities with independent chieftaincies that were governed by land chiefs who often also had religious authority. The chief was the ultimate owner of the land and its spiritual guardian and was entitled to an annual tax either in agricultural produce or labour. This was the main mechanism of social differentiation. Two large state systems, the kingdom of Muenemutapa and the Malawi Confederation, controlled most of central Mozambique. Trade was important in both systems and was dominated by the Swahili network, which extended throughout the Indian Ocean between the Middle East and Asia (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 12-14). The arrival of the Portuguese, along with their own commercial interests, posed a direct threat

to this system. Years of struggle followed, but even after Mozambique was granted colonial status in 1752,²³ Portugal was not yet able to dominate the trade network (ibid.).

In spite of this, the arrival of the settlers profoundly affected the local social system. In 1629 the Portuguese introduced a system of land grants called *prazos*, which lasted until 1930. The *prazo* was a kind of feudal administrative scheme, which granted the settler not only the land, but also the responsibility to secure revenues and the local population's submission to the Portuguese administration (Newitt, 1997: 203; Hanlon, 1984: 15; Cabaço, 2009: 70-71). That meant that the settler had practically unlimited power in his hands.

Initially, the main revenues of the *prazos* came from trade. Then, from the 18th century on, most of the revenues came instead from the slave trade to Brazil and Cuba, which had devastating consequences for Mozambique (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 16; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 15; Newitt, 1997: 232, 248). Overall, it is very likely that over one million Mozambicans were captured and sold as slaves during the nineteenth century (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 17-18). This had a dramatic demographic effect. First, it destroyed the existing village structure, forcing the population to adopt new settling patterns, often damaging their means of livelihood, as they had to move away from the fertile lands where they used to live. Second, it contributed to increased economic disparities and social inequalities because a small class of merchants became increasingly rich in sharp contrast to the majority of the local population. Finally, it promoted cleavages within the African society, in particular, between clans and tribes that were the intermediaries in the slave business (Ibid.; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 15-16). Despite these circumstances, for a long time the Portuguese were not in a position to control the Northern part of Mozambique. On the contrary, the slave trade ultimately weakened the Portuguese hold over Northern and Central Mozambique sparking the resurgence of Muslim sultanates (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 17-18).

²³ Before that, it was administered as part of Portuguese India (Goa).

Things changed after the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885. The renewal of international colonial competition, the 1822 loss of Brazil, and Britain's economic push into Mozambique, led Portugal to employ strong military action in order to gain colonial control (Hall and Young, 1997: 3; MacQueen, 1997: 2), but, with few exceptions, they faced extreme resistance and conflict endured especially in the north (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 22-23; MacQueen, 1997: 6). In 1896, the Portuguese army suffered a defeat in a major offensive against the Makua people who had the support of the sultanates of Angoche, Quitanghona, and Marave. In 1910, armed with 4600 men and heavy artillery, Portugal responded, and, by the end of the year, the Makua surrendered (ibid.). This was followed by the subsequent defeat of Quintaghona and Angoche, which marked the beginning of the Portuguese control in the north of what would become Mozambique.

It is worth noting that, at this stage, the resistance faced by the Portuguese was very fragmented and based on very different agendas that varied according to identity and interests. Moreover, the slave trade had a major role in promoting social differentiation by creating a new social hierarchy which, ultimately, enhanced competition between these groups (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 24).

ENTRENCHING A DEPENDENT COLONIAL SYSTEM

One fundamental characteristic of Portuguese late-colonialism was that, unlike other European colonial powers, Portugal did not use its colonies to feed its industrial revolution (Munslow, 1983: 5; Hanlon, 1984: 15-19). Indeed, Portugal was still a fundamentally agrarian economy when it consolidated its presence in its African colonies. In this context, the colonies became a source of raw materials to be sold and later invested in Portugal. In the case of Mozambique, after the slave trade was prohibited, the settlers looked for new streams of revenue, which consisted of renting out the colony. From then on, most of the colonial profit came from the export of labour and transit fees to the region, in particular to South Africa, which was then undergoing a mineral revolution (ibid.; Hall and Young, 1997: 4). This new phase, which was also marked by the entrenchment of more effective colonial administrative control, had a major

impact in Mozambique. Primarily, there was a change in the geographical pattern of the colony's economy after moving its core from north to south. As a result of this new 'integrated' model, which Frelimo would later call 'shopkeeper colonialism' (Hanlon, 1984: 22), Mozambique became heavily dependent on South Africa (Munslow, 1983: 26; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1997: 17-18; MacQueen, 1997: 7).

The social effects of colonialism in Mozambique were enormous. First, the Portuguese settlers were themselves very poorly educated and poorly trained. Some were actually condemned prisoners who were sent to the colony for their sentence (Newitt, 1995: 404). Furthermore, until 1933, those operating at the most basic administrative level of the colony had absolute power to accuse, apprehend, try, and sentence their subjects often acting with violence and complete impunity (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 29). Second, in order to govern, the Portuguese took measures that profoundly altered the existing social order exerting a proper balkanisation of these societies by dismantling all political-administrative structures that had become a symbol of resistance as well as all centralised societies and lineage systems (Cabaço, 2009: 76).

In order to be able to govern effectively, the Portuguese had to rely on local collaborators and mercenaries. Key to this process were the *régulos*, members of local royal families, who were hired in order to administer parts of the territory called *regedorias* or *regulados*. The *régulos* were exempt from taxation and forced labour, and their work consisted of tax collection, local dispute resolution, and the maintenance of public order (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 29). They also counted on a series of extra-benefits such as the right to use forced labour to increase their own production and selling their crops at a higher price. They wore a uniform set by the government and were entitled to a reward according to the amount of taxes they collected locally (Cabaço, 2009: 78-79). In spite of these privileges, the *régulos* were constantly under assessment. They had to guarantee that local practices would not collide with Portuguese interests, or else they would be immediately punished or replaced (*ibid.*). In the administrative hierarchy, they were at the outer end of the colonial apparatus and the higher level in the indigenous society, having, therefore, a fundamental

mediation role and, at the same time, being the main expression of a dual society (ibid.; Mamdani, 1996).

The second key actors in the colonial local administration were the *sipais* recruited from previous colonial soldiers and sons of loyalist chiefs. The *sipais* worked as guards, civilian soldiers, police, or tax collectors. At times they were even more powerful than the *régulos* because they could arrest African chiefs who failed to pay their taxes (Funada-Classen, 2012: 67). More generally, they were known for their brutality; for as long as they were on good terms with the local chiefs, they could prey upon the rural population (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 29). As such, they were a fundamental instrument of repression and control.

Besides its repressive character, the colonial system was institutionally racist and divisive; it maintained a separate legal system for Europeans and the local, whereby the former lived according to a version of the metropolitan code and the latter were expected to live under the rules of their traditional systems (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 31). This dual system had the purpose of maintaining the privileged position of the Portuguese as well as to guarantee the provision of cheap labour. In fact, even if the local lived under the traditional code, they still had to abide by colonial tax law and labour codes (ibid.). This was necessary for the system to work and compounded what was perhaps the most disempowering aspect of the colonial system, the working conditions to which natives were submitted.

In 1899, the colonial state introduced in the labour code a legal rationale for forced labour called *chibalo*. Accordingly, if workers were unable to comply with their duties, the public authorities would force them to do so. The interpretation of the *chibalo* was very subjective and in the hands of the local administrators (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 34). The *chibalo* was either directly enforced (and a small wage was paid to the worker), or it came in the form of correctional labour which was not paid until 1917 (Newitt, 1997: 361). *Chibalo* workers were not entitled to food or lodging and suffered many physical abuses. Mistreatments, such as severe punishment and the use of *palmatória* (ferule), were the rule, and deaths due to these mistreatments were also numerous (Munslow, 1983: 30).

Because of these conditions, many Mozambicans preferred to circumvent the laws by working in South Africa, where the wages were much higher. This trend eventually led the Portuguese to find new ways to guarantee colonial income. In 1901, the settlers signed an accord with the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the official representative of South African mining industry, whereby they were paid a sum for each worker that was employed in the mines. Half of the worker's salary would be paid in gold directly to the colonial government, which ensured a substantial profit for the colony (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 35). Similar arrangements were made with Southern Rhodesia.

By 1930, a fully dependent colonial system was thus established. Mozambique was rented, and the Mozambicans were institutionally subjected to a series of laws that systematically disempowered the majority and created local divisions in order to sustain colonial rule. The essence of the system would not change after 1930. However, changes that occurred in Portugal would lead to a complete bureaucratic redesign of the colonial service and an even more significant change in the tone of the colonial discourse.

SALAZAR YEARS: THE HEIGHT OF DISEMPOWERMENT

The political turmoil in Portugal, which culminated in a coup d'état in 1926, and the rise of the extreme right government of Salazar, brought several changes in the Portuguese colonial system. First, Salazar discarded decentralisation in favour of a strong and centrally controlled system. Second, he reorganised the colonial economy so that it was more beneficial to Portugal. Finally, due to his Catholic background, he placed the discourse of the *civilising mission* at the heart of Portuguese colonialism (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 39; Newitt, 1997: 390-91). These three guidelines were enshrined in the Colonial Act of 1930 and incorporated in the Portuguese constitution three years later.

In practice, Portuguese colonies now became a unique legal entity within Portugal. The concession's system was revised, and no firm would have any kind of sovereign rights in the colonial territories. Salazar wanted to reshape the colony's economy so that it could address Portugal's internal crisis. To that end, he tried to stimulate the migration of Portuguese peasants to the colonies so as

to increase local production. Economic growth would now be based on a series of export products, which in Mozambique, included rice and cotton in order to feed Portugal's textile industry. Peasants would now be forced to produce such crops (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 43-46; Munslow, 1983: 34-39; Newitt, 1997: 396-397).

These new measures called for extra force to ensure local compliance. So whereas the *chibalo* was formally abolished, it was circumvented, being now implemented "exceptionally" in the case of "penal correction and necessary public work" (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 41; Newitt, 1997: 408). Indeed, a new law was introduced, forcing the majority of African men to work as contract labourers for a state or private enterprise for at least six months to pay their taxes. The peasants who resisted were beaten or had to work extra time much beyond the six months (Hanlon, 1984: 18-19). The terrible working conditions in the fields constituted a strong incentive for Mozambicans to keep leaving to South Africa. However, working conditions in the mines "were still appalling. Between 1936 and 1966, no fewer than 19000 miners (93 per cent of whom were black) died as a result of accidents in the mines, and earlier the toll was even heavier" (Munslow, 1983: 39).

In 1953, the *Statute of the Portuguese Indigenous of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique* was introduced. Following the discourse of *civilising mission*, the document redefined the term 'indigenous', now meaning anyone "of black race" who was born in the colonies and did not yet possess all the "individual and social habits" necessary for the full application of the current public law (Cabaço, 2009: 112). The so-called *Regime do Indigenato* (Indigenous Regime), therefore, divided Africans and mulattos into two different groups. On the one hand, those who could read and write Portuguese, rejected 'tribal' customs, and were employed in the capitalist economy were granted a better category and were called *assimilados* (assimilated). On the other hand, the remaining majority called *indígenas*, were not considered citizens and remained subject to customary law (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 39; MacQueen,

1997: 12-13). In theory, anyone²⁴ could become an *assimilado*, but in practice, the conditions available did not facilitate this transition, so only a small minority actually received this categorization (less than 1% of the population in 1961) (ibid.). Furthermore, the condition was not permanent, and it could be revoked at any time by the competent authority if there was any justifiable reason (Cabaço, 2009: 114).

Ultimately, the *mission civilizatrice* was effectively a mirage. As Salazar was concerned with cutting expenditures, education of the *indígenas* was officially entrusted to the Catholic Church (Hall and Young, 1997: 8). In practice, there were not many schools, access was restricted as teaching was exclusively in Portuguese, and there was an age limit to get in. Failure rates were also very high, and many parents preferred to keep their children at home to help with domestic labour (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 50-51). But perhaps the worst part of this regime was that it played with the possibility of changing people's identities.²⁵ According to Munslow (1983: 63-63), there was indeed an intention to make people deny their African culture and create a class of black Portuguese, which would also create a barrier to possible nationalist movements.

In practice, however, the mechanisms of disempowerment were so blatant that even the *assimilados* were not immune to them. In fact, they were the ones who were mostly exposed to the contrasts of inequality and racial prejudice. Within the cities, segregation was high. Most *assimilados* lived in two communities separated from the European areas and without basic services. Until the 1960s, Africans could not even enter 'white restaurants'. Furthermore, the *assimilados'* salaries were far lower than the Portuguese who also received preferential hiring (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 58). In the rural areas, where over 95% of population still lived by 1962, the situation was even worse. Besides the long-

²⁴ Anyone who fit into the specific requirements: be over 18; speak Portuguese correctly; occupy a profession that pays enough for the person and his/her family's livelihood; adopt 'good behaviour' as well as having acquired the 'habits' necessary for the full application of the current public law; and finally not having deserted or failed to comply with military service (Cabaço, 2009: 113).

²⁵ Cabaço (2009: 117) refers to an attempt of "identity genocide".

term effects of the *chibalo* regime, and the demographic imbalance created by the desperate exodus of young men trying to escape forced labour, the forced production of cotton and rice further led to the decline of food production and increase of debt, famine, disease, and soil degradation (ibid.: 53-55). Consequently, local discontent gradually increased over time.

In 1968, Salazar became incapacitated by a stroke and was substituted by his disciple Marcello Caetano who implemented a series of reforms in order to delink the metropolitan economy from that of the African colonies. In the following years, a series of investments were made that ultimately led to some economic growth. Caetano invested in infrastructure as well in the educational and health sectors (Hall and Young, 1997: 9-10). In December 1972, he promulgated a series of constitutional reforms that transformed Angola and Mozambique into 'states' and no longer 'provinces', enhancing their degree of autonomy (ibid.). These reforms and their results, however, came too late and were not enough to slow the impetus towards independence that had been taking place since the early 1960s. In fact, the increasing grievances provided the basis for what came to be the pursuit of a revolutionary alternative to the colonial system.

3.2 Empowerment as Resistance and Liberation: the Anti-Colonial Struggle

One of the main expressions of empowerment during the colonial period can be found in the many forms of resistance observable all over the Mozambican territory. Resistance happened at different levels from more organised forms of open confrontation to everyday acts of sabotage to resist forced labour. At its height, resistance found expression in the foundation of the national liberation front Frelimo. What is common to these expressions of resistance is that they all opposed the colonial system. Nevertheless, and despite the final emergence of a unique liberation movement, which increased these actors' power-to contest the structure, there were many different interests at play as well as different views of how an alternative to the colonial system should work. These unsolved differences would later feed the contradictions of the new-born country and intensify power contestation.

FROM MANIFOLD FORMS OF RESISTANCE TO A NATIONAL UNION FRONT

All through colonialism there were several manifestations of resistance in Mozambique. However, many of these expressions were not a rejection of the system of exploitation per se but, instead, represented an effort of the traditional ruling class to maintain their own power (Munslow, 1983: 53). The Barué revolt in 1917 was one of the most important acts of resistance seen as a forerunner of modern nationalism. It was sparked after the Portuguese recruitment of local Africans to join the army and fight in the First World War and was led and mobilized by local spiritual mediums lasting for three years. Its main feature was its multi-ethnic composition which expanded its outreach in different communities (ibid.; Newitt, 1997: 366). In spite of this, the revolt still retained a focus on traditionalism and looked more towards the past with the participants having no common long-term objectives (ibid.). Other forms of 'pan-ethnic' resistance happened over time; however, they were more the exception than the rule. More generally, resistance took place at the micro-level in the everyday spaces of the different social strata that lived under the same exploitative system.

In the rural areas, for instance, tax evasion was very common and included a series of creative tactics such as: leaving for the interior soon after receiving a warning that the collector was coming, falsifying age and marital status to decrease the tax burden and for those living in the borders moving back and forth to avoid tax collection (ibid.; Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 62-63). Flight, as a way to permanently escape force labour, was also very common. After escaping, many returned to attack the symbols of their oppression such as the plantations' overseers, tax collectors, the collaborating chiefs, and even the African police (ibid.; Munslow, 1983: 69-70). The withholding of a portion of their labour and mechanisms of sabotage such as the roasting of cottonseeds before planting were also very common (ibid.; Hedges, 1999: 210-211). At times, resistance came into the open such as when seven thousand women organised a strike to reject the cotton seeds distributed by the administrator (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 66). Other strikes took place, but they were severely

repressed often resulting in years of correctional labour (sometimes abroad) as a form of punishment (Hedges, 1999: 214-215).

Urban workers also engaged in several resistance activities even though their number was extremely small and African workers were forbidden to form unions. In 1911, there was an attempt to form a union for all workers in Lourenço Marques (today's Maputo), but it did not succeed. Other attempts followed accompanied by strikes and work stoppages. In particular, the dockworkers engaged in seven major strikes between 1918 and 1921 appealing for better wages (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 69-71). These were immediately and violently repressed by the colonial government. With Salazar, repression became even worse. However, as living conditions were significantly deteriorating for the urban workers, new disturbances took place, in particular, in the case of the railway workers (in 1947) and once more with the dock workers (ibid.; Munslow, 1983: 73; Hedges, 1999: 215-216).

Students also tried to mobilise. Soon after World War II, the *Movement of the Young Democrats of Mozambique* was formed. They aimed to attack Salazar's state policies through pamphlets and clandestine political propaganda, but they were soon suppressed (Hedges, 1999: 202). Resistance manifested also within the migrant community. Workers in the South African mines often refused to work in certain mines, deserted, and formed ethnic, dance, and mutual aid societies (Munslow, 1983: 57). Most of these initiatives were, however, quickly suppressed.

Independent churches also proliferated under colonialism representing a rejection of the Catholic link with the Portuguese regime (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 72). In these separatist spaces, Mozambicans could grieve about their situation and criticise both the colonial government and the Catholic Church. The Protestant missions, in particular, came to be regarded as guardians of African nationalism. They educated many of those neglected by the colonial system, including the future leader of Frelimo, Eduardo Mondlane (Munslow, 1983: 67).

Finally, intellectual and cultural resistance played an important role in spreading the ideals of anti-colonial struggle. Two papers, *O Africano* and its successor *O*

Brado Africano, gave voice to some of the abuses of the *chibalo*, the conditions of the migrants, the lack of educational opportunities for Africans, and so forth. While the paper was silenced under Salazar, other expressions of cultural resistance emerged. Poetry, music, and dance became a widespread means for expressing objection to colonial oppression and rejection of the 'civilising mission' (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 72-78; Hedges, 1999: 222-232).

For a long time all these expressions of resistance were mostly localised and uncoordinated. While there was political and ideological discontent both among the peasants and among the educated stratum of Africans, there was also a huge gulf between these two strata. This division, along with the outflow of workers to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, made it difficult to coordinate a political agenda around a common struggle (Birmingham, 1992: 17; Munslow, 1983: 60). The turning point of resistance came through the students living abroad. In 1948, a Centre for African Studies was inaugurated in Lisbon and attracted several *assimilados* intellectuals. It was these intellectuals who formed the Anti-Colonial Movement in Paris, in 1957, the forerunner of later organisations that would lead to independence (Munslow, 1983: 66; MacQueen, 1997: 18). The link between this intellectual branch and the masses was fostered by the NESAM (the Nucleus of Mozambican Secondary Students) which embraced many of the future leaders of Mozambique's independence including, Eduardo Mondlane, one of its founders (ibid.; Hedges, 1999: 203).

Frelimo, the Revolutionary Front of Mozambique, was created in June 1962 as the fusion between several emerging movements including the Makonde National Union (MANU) from the North, the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (Udenamo) from the south, and the National African Union of Independent Mozambique (Unami), based in central Mozambique (Munslow, 1983: 79-81; MacQueen, 1997: 21-22). Each of these groups was created by people in exile and was, therefore, distanced from substantial internal power bases. But in 1962, under the influence of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, they met in Dar es Salam to form a unique liberation movement. Eduardo Mondlane, an American-educated United Nations official, internally and internationally committed to the national struggle, was its first leader.

Frelimo was an alliance of different classes and strata of society including workers, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie. What bound them together were the common enemy, colonialism, and the will to achieve independence (Munslow, 1983: 82; Egerö, 1992: 23-24). This strategic union, nevertheless, did not prevent a series of internal strains that were visible from the initial days of the front's creation. Disagreements included how to pursue independence (political dialogue vs. armed struggle) and also what kind of country would be constructed afterwards (ibid.; Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 83). In summary, while this alliance was strong enough to start a unified anti-colonial struggle, the major challenge of constructing national unity would still lie ahead.

FROM A UNIQUE FRONT TO A UNIQUE EMANCIPATORY NATIONAL PROJECT

The creation of a national identity in Mozambique was not a smooth project. On the one hand, Frelimo competed with Portugal's last minute efforts to 'integrate' the indigenous population in its own 'national project'. In these last years of colonialism, Portugal made a series of concessions such as abolishing forced labour and investing in schools and health posts (Hanlon, 1984: 37-38). The *Regime do Indigenato* was abolished. As all Mozambicans were now citizens, there was now a universal military service requirement, which was seen as a professional opportunity by many. At the same time, new changes in the economy opened up the possibilities of social progression and stimulated urbanization, so the indigenous population now had more opportunities to improve their livelihoods and be more easily reintegrated into the urban economy (Cabaço, 2009: 250-257). Finally, the colonial regime instituted the so-called *aldeamentos*. Based on the US experience in Vietnam, these were villages where people were brought in order to stay 'protected' from the Frelimo militias and their revolutionary ideas. Originally, the *aldeamentos* were supposed to instigate new development poles (ibid.; Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 100-101). However, no effort was made to explain to the people the benefits of this project, so most of the programme was carried out by coercion facing strong resistance from local actors (Munslow, 1983: 121).

Because these changes came too late and were not entirely successful, they did not constitute a real threat to Frelimo's call for independence. Instead, the biggest challenge Frelimo faced was within itself as there were sharp differences over what a sense of nation entailed. These differences coalesced around *who was perceived as the enemy* at the time of the struggle. For many inside Frelimo, including the chairman, the enemy was the 'white people'; therefore, the anticolonial struggle was a struggle between different races. In sharp contrast, the revolutionary strand inside Frelimo, which included Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel, had an *emancipatory* perspective of the war and thought that the enemy was *colonialism*. Furthermore, they saw the struggle as the possibility of Mozambique's transition to modernity, which clashed with many aspects of local tradition (Isaacman and Isaacman 1983: 86-88; Munslow, 1983: 102-112; Cabaço, 2009: 293).

Another fundamental difference related to the role of the political and military components of Frelimo. Initially, those two areas were separated, and the military wing was not supposed to engage in the political agenda. Over time, however, the central committee started to attack this separation arguing that the fight was not separated and everyone should, therefore, be called to military duty (Egerö, 1992: 27-28). This internal conflict reached its peak in the late 1960s. The anti-colonial war had officially started in September 1964. In the first years, the war was concentrated in the Northern part of the country, in the region of Cabo Delgado, and the Makonde people provided most of the frontline fighters. Lazaro Nkavandame was, then, the head of the Department of Interior Organisation in that Province and part of the moderate wing of the front. Using a tribalist discourse, he accused Frelimo of gathering most of its leaders in the south and, so as a way to 'compensate' for the ethnic balance in the organization, he used his position to appoint chairmen only from within his own ethnic group — the Makonde. By consolidating ethnic traditions, he directly rejected other main topics of Frelimo's agenda such as gender equality; therefore, the liberated areas under his control did not abide by all of Frelimo's radical ideas (Isaacman and Isaacman 1983: 97; Munslow, 1983: 105-107; Hanlon, 1984: 28-34; Hall and Young, 1997: 17).

While having some internal support, Nkavandame's wing was the minority inside Frelimo; so once the front's radical tone was confirmed in the Second Party's Congress in September 1968, he opted for what was to be a final schism with Frelimo. Back in Cabo Delgado, he used his control over the local militias to close the border. However, left unprotected, the population in the liberated zones in the provinces were victims of a strong colonial offense, and Nkavandame lost popular support. In 1969, he was expelled from Frelimo. A few months later, Mondlane, who had just been re-elected as Frelimo's president, was killed in a parcel bomb that arrived at his office in Dar es Salaam. The subsequent choice of Samora Machel as new president, instead of moderate candidate Uria Simango, left no doubt about the revolutionary character of the movement (Munslow, 1983: 110-111; Egerö, 1992: 28-29; Hall and Young, 1997: 18-19).

From 1968 onwards, Frelimo intensified its armed struggle extending it from the north to the centre of Mozambique. The strengthening of Frelimo was accompanied by the progressive incapacity of Portugal to finance several anti-colonial fronts in Africa. In April 1974, a coup took place in Portugal removing Caetano from power (Hall and Young, 1997: 36-37). The feeling of uncertainty and instability that followed influenced the negotiations between Portugal and Frelimo, which resulted in the signing of a ceasefire on September 8, 1974. The ceasefire was preceded by a series of meetings. Officially, Portugal was unwilling to recognise Frelimo as the legitimate representative of the Mozambican people. But a secret meeting in July, in Dar es Salam, confirmed this outcome through the signing of a secret protocol. A subsequent meeting, in August, laid the foundations for the progressive transfer of political and military power to Frelimo and also provided the legal basis for the transition. Final negotiations were settled in Lusaka, in September, when the final accord between Portugal and Frelimo was signed. The official independence day was celebrated on June 25, 1975 (the anniversary of Frelimo's foundation) (ibid.: 42-43; Munslow, 1983: 127).

It should be noted that Frelimo's claim of being the only legitimate representative of Mozambique raised strong opposition not only among white settlers but also among many black Mozambicans and opposition groups who

contested the Portuguese deal with Frelimo. After the coup in Portugal, many of them had gathered together to form the National Coalition Party and called for elections to be held after gaining independence. Once this did not happen, clashes took place before and after the start of the transition government. These were, however, quickly repressed by Frelimo. The opposition leaders were arrested and sent to re-education camps, and Frelimo outlawed any opposition party (Hall and Young, 1997: 44-49; Manning, 2002: 47-48).

EMANCIPATORY EXPERIMENTS DURING THE REVOLUTION

Central to Frelimo's revolutionary agenda was the concern with its cadres' proximity with the masses. This was fundamental in order to spread revolutionary consciousness and build the basis of a new society. During the war, this interaction took place in the 'liberated zones'. It was there where a new popular consciousness would emerge and also where Frelimo would encounter its first big challenges to creating a new Mozambican society.

One of Frelimo's key policies in the liberated areas was the investment in education. The first 'bush schools' were formed in Cabo Delgado by 1965, and within two years, they numbered nearly 100 spread throughout the country and taking care of about 10000 children (Munslow, 1983: 99). By 1970, the number of students had tripled (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 93). In this early experiment, one of the most difficult issues Frelimo had to face was ethnicity and tradition. On the one hand, Frelimo did not want to deny people's origins and their ethno-linguistic affiliation. On the other hand, it opposed tradition believing it could become a divisive factor threatening national unity — what it called tribalism (Cabaço, 2009: 299). In official speeches this aspect often assumed a very radical tone. In 1970, for instance, Samora Machel said:

. . . To unite the Mozambicans, beyond our diverse languages and traditions, requires that in our consciousness the tribe die so the Nation can be born. . . We should acquire a scientific and open attitude, free from all the weight of superstition and dogmatic traditions (quoted in Cabaço, 2009: 300).

As the radical wing of Frelimo saw it, the problem with the chieftaincies was that they were based on a system of entitlements of power, whereas society needed

to move to a system where “sovereignty belonged to the masses as opposed to the ancestors, or the spirits or a lineage” (Sergio Vieira, a Frelimo leader, quoted in Munslow, 1983: 106). This concern was linked to Frelimo’s proposal of creating ‘the new man’ attuned with the paradigm of modernity. In this society, equality was a fundamental aspect and was reflected in Frelimo’s praxis — in the liberated zones, every member of the front, including the intellectuals, had to undertake military training (Cabaço, 2009: 312).

Another big feature of the liberated zones was the democratization of medicine. Frelimo invested especially in preventive medicine for all peasants. In 1966, more than 100,000 peasants were inoculated against smallpox. First-aid stations were opened, and people were instructed about personal hygiene as well as how to build latrines and prevent water pollution (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 94-95). Considering the radical contrast with the colonial system, the expansion of the health system in these areas was proof to the peasants of Frelimo’s concern with their wellbeing (Munslow, 1983: 144).

Economically, the movement invested in the collectivization of work restructuring the whole production system in the liberated zones. By 1966, Frelimo had experimented with a series of cooperative systems. This helped to induce a feeling of common identity and solidarity between the peasants and the army (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 95-96). In fact, as with military training, everyone without exception (including the president and the cadres) was requested to work in the fields (Munslow, 1983: 143).

The economic production of the liberated areas was vital for the revolution to continue. As the militants needed food, centres of agricultural experimentation were introduced in order to avoid plant disease and other problems that could affect production. In time, some liberated zones were able to actually export surplus produce, which was used partly to support other zones and partly to pay for other essential goods that could not be produced internally (Munslow, 1983: 141-142; Egerö, 1992: 33).

The experience of the liberated areas became a major model to be used in the post-independence period. Most of all, it proved to be an efficient testing ground for Frelimo’s future national development policy. However, the reproduction of

this model at the national scale would constitute one of the biggest problems after independence.

3.3 FRELIMO's Emancipatory Project: Vision and Reality

Frelimo's agenda for the new independent country was very radical and had a strong emancipatory appeal. After independence, the ideals that were previously contested inside the movement became the starting point for the national development strategy. Notwithstanding the practical contradictions that underlined these policies, the initial popular support that Frelimo enjoyed made some progress possible. However, in the long run, it became clear that the empowering dimension of the agenda was conditional upon the popular acceptance of a very centralised and top-down bureaucratic system that ultimately was not attuned to the subjective and material needs of the heterogeneous Mozambican society. Within a few years, some of the 'empowering' policies of Frelimo actually fostered new waves of disempowerment. These setbacks would further be reinforced by the intersection of these policies with the extremely unfavourable regional and international context in which Mozambique would find itself at the time.

TRYING TO BUILD A MODERN NATION

The radical agenda pursued by Frelimo was based on the total destruction of the existing system, and the construction of a new institutional basis that would put an end to the 'exploitation of the masses'. The same day Mozambique gained independence, Frelimo nationalised land and, one month later, the social sectors of law, medicine, education, and funeral services (Hall and Young, 1997: 49). People still retained the right to occupy land that was productive, and the means of production and financial services were not included in the nationalisation process (Hanlon, 1984: 46). However, these measures hit hard not only the remaining Portuguese but also many small entrepreneurs who were hoping to stay in Mozambique. By the end of 1976, 90% of the whites had left Mozambique. The exodus was enhanced by the enactment of a law forcing individuals to choose between Mozambican citizenship and expulsion (Hall and Young, 1997: 50).

The economic effects of this exodus were devastating for the new-born country resulting in the abandonment of virtually all existing businesses, the disappearance of most skilled and semi-skilled workers, and the creation of massive unemployment (Hanlon, 1984: 47; Hall and Young, 1997: 50). Facing this pressure, Frelimo opted to seize the abandoned businesses starting a process of state 'intervention' seen as the only way to keep the economy running.

Problems permeated the administrative apparatus also. At the time of independence, there were only about 40 Mozambicans with a degree, and most military cadres had no organisational experience of running a country (Hall and Young, 1997: 51). The administrative challenges were hardened by Frelimo's decision to abolish the *regedorias* and strip the *régulos* of their functions and powers (Orre, 2010: 218-219). All of a sudden, the only state unit that remained operational was that of the village, but even this became confused as the country was divided into liberated and other areas.

A way to partially compensate for the lack of administrative structure was the creation of the *grupos dinamizadores* (dynamising groups, GDs). Created in 1974 during the transitional government, these were the improved versions of the people's committees that previously existed in the liberated areas and were the first instantiation of the people's power (Munslow, 1983: 151). Officially the GDs had the task of implementing the directives of Frelimo and the transitional government and "to exercise vigilance against sabotage by 'agents of colonial reaction'" (Hall and Young, 1997: 51; see also Munslow, 1983: 152; Hanlon, 1984: 49). Moreover, they were expected to mobilize the community in collective activities of an economic, cultural and social nature, being species of 'schools' where the population would learn and practise democratic skills and class unity (ibid., Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 117).

The GDs' most empowering feature was their participatory aspect as well as their role in raising public awareness of the country's on-going issues. Their 'dynamising' function was related to their ability to stimulate people to take initiative including in the economic domain (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 119; Hall and Young, 1997: 51). They were not meant to be permanent structures and, in time, their functions would be taken over by other bodies such

as party committees, people's assemblies, and other organs established by Frelimo (Munslow, 1983: 151). In practice, the GDs had a mixed record of success. Taking into account how soon they were implemented, the lack of skills of many of its members, as well as the inability of the government to have a proper supervision mechanism, many GDs actually provided an opportunity for some members to abuse their power. Still, and in spite of this, they also played an important part in the promotion of national unity (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 122).

But the main achievements of Frelimo in the early independence years were to be found in the social sector. In education, all colonial curricula were replaced by a new nationalised one, which also included political education (Hall and Young, 1997: 55-56). Education was also decoupled from the Church ending mission control of the schools. The new educational system also rejected indigenous forms of educational practice, which were linked with superstition and the hindering of modernization (ibid.). Education became indeed the number one concern of Frelimo, followed by health, and it continued in this manner for years to come.

In health, the emphasis was on primary health care (Hanlon, 1984: 55-62). Frelimo benefitted from the experiences of the liberated zones, and the nurses and health workers trained abroad taught basic skills in first aid and preventive measures to both peasants and guerrillas (ibid.; Hall and Young, 1997: 57). At the time of independence, there were only 30 trained doctors. Within one year, the government had recruited almost 500 medical workers from different countries to help rehabilitate the national health system, which, by then, received between 13% and 15% of the national budget (Hall and Young, 1997: 58). Between 1976 and 1978, a vaccination campaign had reached 95% of the population, and by 1982, there were twice the number of health posts as there were at independence (Hanlon, 1991: 9-10). As much as in education, traditional indigenous practices were treated with some hostility and as non-scientific. Traditional healers were prohibited from charging fees to work, and Frelimo took several measures to, as much as possible, disentangle useful empirical knowledge (such as use of natural remedies) from 'superstition' or any spiritual link to health (Hall and Young, 1997: 58).

In sharp contrast, the sector that was most problematic after independence was the economy, in particular, agricultural production. The sudden abandonment of settlers meant that there was no certainty as to whether Mozambique would be able to export anything or even feed its own people. Between 1974 and 1976, crop exports fell by more than 40%, and maize and cassava production steadily declined (ibid.). The situation was hardened by natural calamities including a draught in 1976, in the north, and flooding, in the south, the following year (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 146). Things got even worse when, in 1976, Frelimo decided to enforce the United Nations sanctions on Rhodesia, which was one of its most important trading partners. The economic situation led Frelimo to rethink its agenda. The Party's Third Congress in 1977 would provide a much more radical response to the crisis reflecting its turn towards an 'official' Marxist-Leninist agenda.

FRELIMO THIRD CONGRESS: RADICALISING THE POLITICAL AGENDA

Frelimo's Third Party Congress took place in February 1977 and marked an important transition whereby Frelimo became officially a Marxist-Leninist party. Several months before the Congress, Frelimo had divulged in the media its 'Seven Theses', which were to be disseminated, especially within the GDs, in order to make people familiar with the ideological foundations of the party (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 121). The main aspect highlighted in the theses was that "The winning of power by the Mozambican working masses [had] intensified the class struggle at the national level and at the same time increased the aggressiveness of imperialism against our country" (Frelimo, 1977). The masses now had "internal enemies" who tried to boycott the successes of Frelimo and at the same time penetrate the state apparatus. These were constituted by the colonial bourgeoisie, the small and middle internal bourgeoisie, as well as "marginal elements from the labouring classes, corrupted by the process and crimes of the colonial war" (ibid.).

Because Frelimo believed these enemies constituted a real danger to the consolidation of a people's democracy, it felt imperative to take a series of measures in order to dismantle this bourgeoisie. These measures included: the full destruction of the capitalist apparatus, the state taking control of the

country's main financial instruments and industries, the nationalisation of land and rented buildings as well as of health and education (Frelimo, 1977). From then on, Mozambique would enter the era of People's Democracy marking its official transition towards socialism.

In an effort to reconcile the tensions between vanguardism and popularly rooted socialism, Frelimo invested in the creation of more cells to expand its popular basis. The process of recruitment was extremely rigorous. New party members needed to be the 'right type', characterized by having 'outstanding political and moral qualities', in order to carry forward the party's agenda (Munslow, 1983: 155). Each candidate was subjected to intense public scrutiny, and, once selected, their behaviour would be observed carefully by others until their membership was fully accepted (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 123; Egerö, 1992: 134).

Despite this rigorousness, Frelimo expanded its base significantly in the following years and the mechanisms used to that end often had an empowering appeal, if not empowering effects. First, the party invested in the creation of mass democratic organizations, including the Organization of the Mozambican Woman (OMM), the Mozambique Youth Movement (OJM), and the Production Councils. These organisations had a dual function. On the one hand, they were indeed mass organizations and created space for dialogue and reflection. The OMM was particularly important in emancipating women by combating their institutionalised oppression (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 126-127; Hanlon, 1984: 142-143; Egerö, 1992: 131-132). On the other hand, they were also instruments to allow the progressive penetration of the party's ideology into the masses.

Frelimo encouraged accountability in the form of scrutiny of its leaders to ensure that the interests of workers and peasants were given due consideration. Any attempts to abuse power were punished leading even long-term party members to be removed from their positions and publicly exposed for improper conduct (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 125). As a way to promote greater popular participation, Frelimo also created the local and municipal people's assemblies where, at the end of 1977, all adult Mozambicans voted for representatives (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 128;

Egerö, 1992: 130-150; Monteiro, 2000: 18-19). By the time the elections were completed, over 2,200 candidates had been rejected including 700 'chiefs' or traditional authorities that had not inspired confidence in the communities or were seen as holding on to power (ibid.).

While this may represent an empowering aspect of society because people gained the confidence to contest what was not beneficial for them and many of the elected were ordinary peasants and workers who were previously voiceless (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 128; Monteiro, 2000:23-24), there were also a series of problems that hindered the efficiency of the assemblies. First, there were not enough resources to guarantee their sustainability (Egerö, 1992: 147; Cahen, 1987: 144). Second, the function of the assemblies and the role of individuals within this format were widely misunderstood (ibid.). Third, as they were strongly linked to the party, representing a fusion of the party and the state at its most basic level (Cahen, 1987: 141), they did not have de facto political autonomy or even clear legislative functions (ibid.; Hanlon, 1984: 144). Finally, notwithstanding their supposedly representative character, in some instances, there were tensions in the election process between local interests and the party's prescribed 'local interests' (especially in the case where people wanted traditional authorities to be part of the assemblies) (Geffray, 1991: 18).

Unfortunately, as Hanlon (1991: 14) admits, "Frelimo adopted a government structure little different from that of the Portuguese". Territorially, the country was separated into ten provinces, 128 districts, and localities that largely corresponded to the territorial lines inherited from the colonial period (Hall and Young, 1997: 72). The system was also highly centralised with the president appointing governors and ministers. Below that, there were also appointed national and provincial directors and district administrators. The same structure was replicated at the provincial and district level, although those in charge at these levels had very little if any administrative experience and received no special training. In addition, Frelimo never defined the role of the provincial and local governments or of the elected provincial and local assemblies. This, together with the centralised budget and planning system, ultimately destroyed local initiative "and replaced it with a hierarchical and differential structure which was totally incapable of carrying out the grand plans" (ibid.). It further enhanced

the top-down system, in spite of the rhetoric of popular representation (Cahen, 1987: 145).

'Democratic centralism', the label used by Frelimo to describe its system, was thus the result of the merging of party and state, but which included, in theory, a constant contact with the base so that popular demands could be attended (Hanlon, 1991: 14). In practice, however, the bodies which were supposed to be the closest to the masses, the assemblies, had, in fact, no autonomy and never met without the presence of some leadership from the party (Hall and Young, 1997: 77). This distance from the masses was further intensified by the increasing bureaucratization of the state/party, which was also linked to the emergence of a new elite that isolated itself from the masses (Egerö, 1992: 134).

On the economic side, the Third Congress focused on the countryside. Frelimo planned to industrialise the country based on an agriculture surplus (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 29). The first pillar of this policy involved investing heavily in state farms – the abandoned land that the state took over after the flight of the Portuguese settlers. This proved extremely problematic. First, whereas the government perceived state farms as symbols of modernization and large-scale production, these were incompatible with the reality of existing rural workers. Indeed, these farms needed skilled and educated workers found among the *assimilados* and more educated urban strata of the population (ibid.: 80). While the state presumed that these lands had been 'abandoned', in fact, in the eyes of many peasants they had been *taken* by the Portuguese, who had deprived families of an ancestral claim several generations ago (ibid.). Furthermore, the discrepancy between the available resources (financial, technological, and human) to run the state farms and the required resources resulted in very low productivity (Finnegan, 1992: 114).

The second pillar of the economic policy was the investment in cooperative schemes along with the project of 'villagisation' — the building of the communal villages. This was also very problematic. Overall, much of what was implemented was very detached from local reality (Cahen, 1987: 150; Finnegan, 1992: 115-116). For one, the very elite of Frelimo had little

awareness of the local tradition of economic planning which was based on the logic of family production (Hanlon, 1984: 95-109; Hall and Young, 1997: 101). Therefore, and even though Frelimo launched a big educational campaign to demonstrate the advantages of the communal villages, many peasants received the news with suspicion and specific groups (e.g., privileged rural peasants) resisted this process (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 154).

This disconnect with the local setting was reinforced by the presence of Soviet and East European state officials and planners (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 29). Practical problems included: undertrained and overworked officials; lack of incentives for the peasants to work collectively; illiteracy; the inappropriateness of the sites for the collective fields often with unfertile land, lack of water, and far from the peasants own houses; and also a very rigid planning system that was based on top directives not adaptable to practical issues on the ground (Isaacman and Isaacman, 1983: 156; Hall and Young, 1997: 101). Furthermore, Frelimo also faced the difficult decision of where to allocate its scarce resources, and political issues often outweighed the needs of the cooperatives.

It is worth noting that the communal villages not only had an economic function but also constituted a means of control over the population (Hall and Young, 1997: 102) replacing the initial lack of state administrative apparatus in the countryside (Geffray, 1991: 21; Nilsson and Abrahamsson, 1995: 80). This was linked to a fear of class differentiation that could take place if villagisation was not fully implemented (*ibid.*). In fact, while there were some villages that were created through the *voluntary* movement of the peasants to new areas, most were created with a high degree of compulsion under the pressure of the war and natural disasters (Hanlon, 1984: 128). From 1978, there were actual cases of forced villagisation. The justification for these operations, which were usually carried out by the military, was the war and the chance of Renamo attacks. However, the mechanisms used were extremely violent including individuals being relocated at gunpoint and having their houses burned (*ibid.*). In the long run, this compounded the crisis of legitimacy that the state would face in the eyes of the peasantry (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 79-82).

In hindsight, and regardless of the efforts to adapt Marxism-Leninism and ground it in local experience, many of the policies carried out by Frelimo were based on an ideology not readily adaptable to the local reality of Mozambique (Cabaço, 1995: 86-87; Hall and Young, 1997: 68). However, the ideological drive caused the party to become more and more coercive in an effort to contain any attempts of contestation of the system. Bureaucratic solutions assumed a life of their own often disrespecting basic freedoms of the population.

One of the most blatant examples of an authoritative bureaucratic exercise was the so-called *Operation Production*, which was led by (current President) Armando Guebuza. At the time, numerous 'marginal' individuals from urban areas were forced by security forces to move to the countryside to engage in productive labour with the major objective of eliminating underdevelopment. That meant, on the one hand, enhancing production in the countryside, and, on the other hand, eliminating social pressure in the urban zones where unemployment was rising (Egerö, 1992: 221; Hall and Young, 1997: 104). This exercise was carried out in such a way that those who did not have a work identity card — and therefore did not have the right to reside in the city — were forcefully removed from their houses and sent to isolated areas to work on the state farms.

In summary, as Frelimo's discourse became more radical, the emancipatory appeal that was at the base of its legitimacy became more and more an abstraction detached from reality. While the ambitious project of social engineering was fading, the party engaged in more coercive means to force the ideal to become reality. Arguing the need to develop class-consciousness, Frelimo made enemies not only with the forces of colonialism but also with the people it was supposed to liberate by neglecting their own subjectivities.

As noted by Hall and Young (1997: 74):

The Frelimo revolution was about freedom in the obvious anti-colonial sense but (like all revolutions) also made claims to provide 'emancipation' in a broader human sense. Yet this process of transformation (like all revolutions?) was to be guided by an elite of

revolutionaries with very clear ideas about the content and direction of this emancipation – ideas that were not to be subject to popular veto, questioning or indeed debate. But precisely because modern revolutions are about ‘emancipation’, the masses must be mobilised around and in support of their ‘universal’ truths – mere compliance is not enough.

The contradictions of the emancipatory discourse could not be wider. As the war approached, people’s hopes of actual empowerment began to fade.

3.4 From Unity to Fragmentation: Power Dynamics during War Times

Mozambique had been independent for just over a year when it suffered the first raids coming from Rhodesia. At the time, these attacks were a response to Mozambique’s decision to apply UN sanctions to that country as well as its support for ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) guerrillas. As it turned out, this was just the start of what would be a brutal and violent protracted conflict that would last until 1992.

One of the main points of disagreement in the analysis of the Mozambican war surrounds the extent to which external and internal factors played a role in both triggering as well as making the war last (e.g., Minter, 1989a; Roesch, 1989/1990; Cahen, 1989/1990; Geffray, 1991; Hanlon, 1991; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995; Saul, 1999; Funada-Classen, 2012). This is a delicate discussion as it is mostly based on the counterfactual ‘what if Rhodesia/South Africa had not created/supported Renamo?’ It is furthermore complicated by the fact that, in a context where internal and external factors are very porous, it seems extremely difficult to clearly weigh or separate each dimension (Chingono, 1996; Nordstrom, 1997). Finally, thinking about the ‘origins’ or ‘roots’ of the war may actually lead us not to the first attacks from Rhodesia, but back to colonial times or the liberation struggle where many of the problems related to Mozambican state formation, and its relationship with South Africa, are to be found (Saul, 1999: 126-132; Funada-Classen, 2012).

In this regard, this thesis is less concerned with the determinant factors that led to the war but more with how these dimensions influenced and interacted with each other and how they affected local dynamics of power.

THE EXTERNAL CONTOURS OF THE WAR

Several aspects of external origins contributed to the inception and maintenance of the war in Mozambique. First, Renamo was born abroad. The origins of the movement go back just before the 1974 coup in Portugal when an agreement was made between the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation and the Portuguese. Renamo was meant to be a fifth column to spy on the ZANU guerrillas based in Mozambique (Finnegan, 1992: 31). Later, its tasks were broadened to include the destruction of infrastructure as a way to discourage Frelimo from providing support to the guerrillas.²⁶

Much of the initial Renamo contingents were “personnel of the elite black units of the Portuguese colonial forces, who fled Mozambique before or immediately after independence” (Hall and Young, 1997: 117; see also Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 59-60). The other parts of the contingent were members of the Flechas unit; a counter-insurgency unit created by Portugal to fight Frelimo and controlled by the Rhodesian Intelligence (ibid.; Venâncio and Chan, 1998: 3). These were later joined by inmates freed from Mozambican re-education camps, former Frelimo soldiers imprisoned for corruption who had guerrilla and military skills, as well as some *régulos* (ibid.).

Training and small operations in the region of Gorongosa started in 1977, initially from within Rhodesia, and, from 1979, led to joint operations inside Mozambique (Hall and Young, 1997: 119). In 1980, as the Rhodesian war ended and black-ruled Zimbabwe emerged, Frelimo hoped that no further harm

²⁶ It should be noted that, similar to Renamo, the origins of Frelimo were related to the role of external actors such as J. Nyerere and K. Nkruma. Moreover, the military training of the militias was only possible due to their harbour in Algeria and the military cooperation from the Soviet Union and Cuba. Furthermore, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Malawi all sent troops to help Frelimo during the war. In summary, external/regional factors have always played an important role in Mozambique’s history (see Hume, 1994: 20; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995; Nordstrom, 1997: 49).

would come from this front. Nevertheless, internal dynamics in South Africa played a major role in the turn of events. With the rise of the government of Prime Minister P. W. Botha, South Africa entered the phase of the doctrine of Total Strategy. In an effort to pursue an increasingly more aggressive war against the enemies of apartheid — which included Mozambique — an agreement between a South African military commander and his Rhodesian counterpart resulted in the transfer of Renamo to South Africa (Hanlon, 1991: 20-21; Finnegan, 1992: 194; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 42; Hall and Young, 1997: 124).

With South Africa's massive investment, Renamo became a real machine of destabilisation. By 1982 it had destroyed 840 schools, 12 health clinics, 24 maternity clinics, 174 health posts, two centres for the handicapped, and 900 shops as well as kidnapping 52 foreign technicians and killing 12 (Hall and Young, 1997: 129). Renamo also had the support of different groups of Portuguese including those who fled Mozambique at the time of independence, ex-military personnel and many right-wing groups from Europe, the United States, and countries such as Saudi Arabia and Oman (Finnegan, 1992: 33-34; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 60-61).

The intensification of the Cold War with Reagan's election in the United States in 1980 also influenced the war. With the policy of 'constructive engagement' towards South Africa, the United States (US) government initially turned a blind eye to Botha's destabilisation strategy (Hanlon, 1991: 18; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 44). Inside the American Congress, there were supporters of Renamo who saw it as the liberal counterpart to Frelimo (Cohen, 2000: 182). While the US Congress never approved proposals to officially give support to Renamo, ultimately, there was a compromise and, for several years to come, the US would cancel any aid to Mozambique (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 44-45).

Donors' behaviour towards Mozambique during the 1980s constituted one of the main setbacks for the Frelimo regime and actively contributed to the worsening of Mozambique's humanitarian situation. Between 1981 and 1983 a major drought occurred in Southern Africa and Mozambique was highly affected. As the war intensified people got trapped in the flooded region, as

Renamo would kill anyone leaving Frelimo controlled areas. Renamo moreover burned the crops in the fields and destroyed the grain stores (Hanlon, 1991: 20-21). As South Africa kept sending supplies to Renamo' bases, there was limited action that Frelimo could take.

In January 1983, the Mozambican government made its first appeal for food aid in the affected area. Six months later, aid to Mozambique had actually decreased (Hanlon, 1991: 21) because the US position of denying aid to Mozambique influenced several other donors, including UN agencies, to do the same (Hanlon, 1991: 43-53; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 100). Aid eventually arrived nearly a year after the requests, but by then, at least 100,00 people had starved to death (Hanlon, 1991: 29).

Trapped between the war, natural disasters and lack of aid, Frelimo was forced to review its relations with the West. In 1984, Frelimo asked for the rescheduling of its debts but was denied any negotiation unless it joined the World Bank and the IMF. Donors' demands also included the start of peace negotiations with South Africa and the government's guarantee that relief aid could reach the parties in need — which was moreover linked to the creation of a parallel structure of aid controlled by international NGOs (Hanlon, 1991: 29; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 100).

In March 1984, Mozambique and South Africa signed the Nkomati Accord whereby Mozambique committed to stop supporting the anti-apartheid movement African National Congress, and South Africa committed to stop supporting Renamo. South Africa, however, never complied with the accord. Instead, just a few months later, its aid to Renamo had escalated (Hanlon, 1991: 31; Finnegan, 1992: 34). Furthermore, the resumption of aid did not compensate for the major loss in agricultural production (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 103). In urgent need for credit, especially to import food, Mozambique entered the era of stabilization agreeing to its first structural adjustment in 1986 and shifting away from the socialist experiment.

The side effects of aid and adjustment in Mozambique were multiple and included aid dependency, the undermining of the state's legitimacy, and market distortions (Hanlon, 1991 and 1997; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1996). The

long-term effects of these policies will be discussed in the next chapter as they directly affected the country's post-war reconstruction. Suffice to say, here, that the immediate effects of these interferences influenced the war dynamics contributing to the economic hardship faced by the majority of Mozambicans as well as to the spread of violence through the direct support of Renamo. However, the extent of these effects over time was increasingly influenced by the internal dynamics that were also shaped by the nature and implementation of Frelimo's policies.

FEEDING THE WAR: THE INTERNAL FACTORS

One of the central issues that compounded the war from the internal point of view was the complicated and contradictory relationship between the modernizing ideals of Frelimo and the values held by the peasantry. Frelimo's policies were based on Marxist ideologies, but in practice, peasants and revolutionaries had different objectives; the former just wanted their land back, while the latter wanted a new society (Cahen, 1987: 150; Chingono, 1996: 36-39). Furthermore, notwithstanding the policies dedicated to rural areas, Frelimo's main concern and investment went to the urban zones where the actual 'proletariat' (the main potential for industrial transformation) resided (Egerö, 1992: 135).

It should be noted that the rural population was extremely supportive of Frelimo in the initial years of independence. Indeed, the growth in exports from 1977 to 1981 was due in large part to the population's euphoria at independence and its willingness to translate the government's political mobilisation for campaigns and voluntary work into economic momentum (Roesch, 1992: 466; Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 48). This strategy, however, was based on people's self-reliance and became unsustainable in the long run (ibid.; Egerö, 1992: 367).

The way the communal villages were implemented further fuelled the contradiction between ideology and reality. As noted by Geffray (1991) in his study of the district of Eráti in Nampula province, while initially, there was rural support for the implementation of the communal villages (in particular, because of the opportunities provided by the trade cooperatives) as people's

displacement became more coercive this also enhanced local conflict dynamics. This tension was compounded by the fact that land governance was de facto linked with the local authorities — the *régulos* — who, in turn, were stripped of their powers by Frelimo. This created resentment and, in the worst case, led some old *régulos* to support Renamo (Geffray, 1991: 31-36; see also Cahen, 1987: 150).

According to Geffray (1991: 16), one of the fundamental problems of Frelimo was precisely the party's denial of local identities. He blamed Frelimo for "paradoxical blindness" and for treating people as if they were a 'blank page'. Indeed, it was precisely by ignoring the social and historic existence of the rural populations that Frelimo could legitimise its discourse on the basis of reason (communal villages as development poles) and politics (the communal village as an emancipatory project) (ibid.: 53). This attitude ultimately contributed to the increase of local support to Renamo.

Other studies disputed the extent to which Geffray's analysis of Eráti was generalizable to Mozambique as a whole. Roesch (1992: 465), for instance, noted that, differently from Nampula, very few communal villages in Gaza were the result of coercive government actions. Even though he acknowledged the contradictions inherent in Frelimo's policies, he also observed that in many instances there was essentially a compromise between Frelimo and the local leaders so their spiritual beliefs and mysticism was accepted and also used in the war against Renamo (ibid.: 474; see also Orre, 2010: 220). Manning (2002: 64) furthermore showed that not everyone rejected how Frelimo stripped traditional authorities of their power. In many cases, the *régulos* were linked to the colonial abuses and, therefore, in some cases, the population welcomed these changes. O' Laughlin (1992: 32) also noted that locals did not feel intimidated about demonstrating their religious affiliation in the communal villages. Instead, much more than the negation of identity, what fed the war in the rural areas was Frelimo's strategy of accumulation based on wage-sectors. Similarly, according to Chingono (1996: 36), the main problem with Frelimo's policies was that they "undermined the peasants' security by pursuing agrarian policies that reduced the peasantry to poverty and marginalisation", and that was because their policies were based on a Marxist, anti-peasant ideology.

Ultimately, according to him, this is what led to the crisis of legitimacy of the state.

In practice, it seems very difficult to weight dimensions that most probably were interlinked (e.g., socio-economic and identity/cultural aspects). Indeed, Frelimo's economic project was based on a real social and cultural transformation of the Mozambican society, which included, therefore, issues of identity. And it was precisely the contradictions embedded in this big plan that were exploited by Renamo, a movement that for a long time, had no clear ideological agenda of its own besides opposition to Frelimo. But even this identity built on contrast was sufficient for some individuals to change their position and give their support to the rebel movement (Geffray, 1991: 23-24). And indeed, one of the contrasting characteristics that Renamo liked to publicise was precisely its acceptance of the Mozambicans' traditions and beliefs. In fact, Renamo was known for its collaboration with *régulos*, *majubas*, as well as *feiticeiros* and *curandeiros* (traditional healers and witches) (Finnegan, 1992: 15); they were some of the first ones to join the movement (Chingono, 1996: 44).

The role of identity should not be minimised. It was indeed the case that some people interpreted the war as a response to the repression of traditional cults (Geffray, 1991: 27-28). Besides being an issue in the context of the traditional/modern debate, the Mozambican identity also presented an ethnic dimension. While the war in Mozambique was never characterised as ethnic, there was a general complaint that Frelimo's leadership was constituted exclusively of Southerners, *mestiços* (mixed people), and white intellectuals (Hall and Young, 1997: 83; Venâncio and Chan, 1998: 7; Manning, 2002: 44-47). This created an impossible situation for adequately discussing issues related to ethnicity and identity which were, however, very important for part of the population. At the same time, ethnicity was a key issue within Renamo, which accused Frelimo of an ethnic bias even though Renamo itself was predominantly Ndaou (Roesch, 1992).

In summary, although Mozambique's conflict was never characterised as ethnic, identity and culture were important factors that often mingled with the economic setbacks that accompanied the first years of independence. Ultimately, the war

had many complicated facets and issues such as ethnicity and identity often played an important role in the everyday dynamics on the ground — sometimes saving people, sometimes killing them.

THE EVERYDAY AND THE DIALECTICAL DYNAMICS OF THE WAR

Thinking about the war in Mozambique from the external/internal frame overshadows many of its complexities. First, internal and external aspects always intermingle during war and peace times and not least, during revolutionary periods. Second, this dichotomization is biased towards the search for responsibility for the war and misses other aspects of power dynamics such as the social transformation feature of the war, which may also include empowering aspects.

The complexities of the war may be easier to capture if we look at the micro-dimension. In this regard, the first thing that becomes questionable is ‘who is Frelimo?’ and ‘who is Renamo?’ Not only is it the case that these parties were very heterogeneous, but besides them, there was a myriad of different actors that, while clearly influenced by the war between Renamo and Frelimo, behaved according to their own agenda often completely unaligned with the agendas of the main-stage parties. As pointed out by Nordstrom (1997: 46-47), blackmarketeers, predatory bands, ex-militia, mercenaries, not to mention foreigners who were also involved one way or another in the conflict constantly defined the way the war evolved.

When it comes to the everyday and the breakdown of the war, defining parties and interests is far more complicated than when one looks at the main-stage parties. The same applies to the understanding of the empowering and disempowering effects of the war on individuals’ daily lives. On the one hand, the very thought of war brings with it countless images of disempowerment. In Mozambique, the terrorist tactics used by Renamo became infamous for their brutality (Gersony, 1988; Finnegan, 1992; Wilson, 1992; Nordstrom, 1997: 156-173). Besides the immediate physical disempowering effects of violence (destruction of livelihood, homes, and bodies), terror had as a major objective the undermining of social order by destituting individuals of agency (Wilson, 1992). In the words of Nordstrom (1997: 163):

The grotesque calls to the fore the fact that undermining the determinacy of existence is a lethal play of power and politics aimed at alienating the individual from society at large, and thus from a basis for political resistance and change.

Violence was also part of Renamo's recruitment method. Most of Renamo's recruits were abducted and stayed in their camps under threats and extreme psychological pressure (Gersony, 1988; Minter, 1989b; Roesch, 1992: 470-471).²⁷ The punishment for escaping was usually death (ibid.; Geffray, 1991: 73). Also, all those who were captured had to spend several days as captives and testified to terrible acts of violence. The purpose was to make them forget where they came from and adapt to their new reality, which included the psychological certainty that they would never be able to get back to where they came from (ibid.). In summary, violence was mostly used as a means to exert power-over the people and as a way to contest Frelimo's power.²⁸

At the same time, for those who exerted violence, the feeling was often empowering. Many young men were particularly impacted by Frelimo's policy of the communal villages and later by the effects of stabilization. Besides being compelled to brutality, they also faced a serious lack of opportunities to improve their lives socially and economically. Many also faced an identity crisis caught between their traditional lineage and their relative exposure to modernity. For them, joining a militia provided the power and the excitement they would not have had otherwise. Belonging to Renamo, they were not forced to work in the fields; they were also allowed polygamy and carrying a gun suddenly provided them with respect and others' obedience (Geffray, 1991: 74-76; Roesch, 1992: 477-478). This empowering feeling, however, was the result of the exercise of power-over others.

²⁷ But there were also cases of voluntary recruitment or 'arranged kidnapping' and, later on, promises of scholarships abroad for those who joined the movement (see Manning, 2002: 80-89).

²⁸ Extreme violence was also used by Frelimo against civilians in different occasions, although proportionally much less than Renamo (Finnegan, 1992: 224; Venâncio and Chan, 1998; 12).

Perhaps even more remarkable than the use of violence was people's resilience and their ability to move on during the war (Finnegan, 1992: 13). Resilience was often based on the creation of new mechanisms of survival. Chingono (1996: 72), for instance, argues that the war created new empowering opportunities, the main one derived from the emergence of a new "grassroots economy" which transformed pre-capitalist relations of production of kin, clientele, and lineage ties into capitalist relations. This, in turn, had some positive results in the liberation of specific subordinated groups such as the youth from elders and women from men.

This example points to the dialectical aspect of power dynamics developed during the war. As noted by a "barefoot entrepreneur" interviewed by Chingono (1996: 93), "it's suffering that gives us the courage to take risks". Similarly, it was the need to survive the war that made people cross traditional barriers and put women in the markets. And it was also the war that made people "graduate from peasants to capitalists" (ibid.). From this perspective, war should be seen as a context of deep transformation with the potential to disempower but also provide opportunities for empowerment.

Nordstrom (1997: 142-152), from another perspective, shows how Mozambicans "reconfigured violence as an act of resistance *against* violence by developing a series of endogenous mechanisms of conflict resolution, and means of *unmaking* violence". These included a series of rituals and ceremonies aimed at re-socialising those who had been exposed to violence, including those who had been perpetrators. The empowering aspect of these mechanisms relied on their ability to assert "personal agency and political will in the face of intolerable repression" (ibid.: 13-15). More importantly, these mechanisms became a fundamental instrument of peace. In fact, they helped build peace *during* the war (ibid.: 218).

On the other side of the spectrum, some expressions of empowerment during the war pointed to the rescue of tradition and its use to fight violence. That was the case for several resistance movements that took place in the rural areas many of which represented the regaining of agency via spirituality (Wilson, 1992). One such case was the story of Manuel Antonio and his Parama army that became popular in the late 1980s (ibid.; Nordstrom, 1997: 57-62). As the

story goes, Antonio had died at age fourteen of measles but revived, returned from his grave after six days, and decided to free his people from the ravages of the war. His main concern was Renamo. Using his healing powers as *curandeiro* (healer), he used a special vaccine that made his followers invulnerable to bullets and the cuts of machetes. None of Antonio's followers had any military training, and yet by 1990, the Parama had liberated about 150,000 people from Renamo's occupation in the Zambezia region (Nordstrom, 1997: 58).

The symbolism of the Parama army is profound. Even though their focus was the fight against Renamo, they were an *independent* army. They represented the peasantry taking their problems into their own hands empowering themselves. In fact, in the eyes of the population in Zambezia, those responsible for their own safety were the Parama, not the armed forces. Yet even the Parama army was not immune to change. Over time, even their soldiers engaged in the perpetration of violence against civilians. In 1991, they were defeated in a major battle against Renamo. A few months later, Manuel Antonio was killed (Nordstrom, 1997: 62).

Other actions took place that reflected the use of violence to counter violence. In a locality in Gaza province, for instance, some individuals armed themselves to defend their villages from *both* Renamo and Frelimo forces (Chingono, 1996: 54). Passive ideological resistance also played a role. Chingono (1996: 54) observed that in some areas in Manica province, peasants explained natural disasters as an "expression of anger at Renamo's abuse of young girls and married women and its prohibition of the living to bury their dead". After that, negotiations and a ceremony followed with Renamo's soldiers in attendance resulting in the cessation of Renamo's more grotesque actions of brutality.

It was also the case that many grassroots activities during the war went beyond the mere struggle for survival or the resistance to violence. As noted by Chingono (1996: 101), "The collapse of state power and corresponding rise in anarchy offered the bureaucratic and commercial elite unprecedented opportunities of accumulating wealth via the grass-roots war-economy". As the state had no capacity to enforce labour laws, many used this chaos to exploit labour, divert public resources, engage in smuggling, and even the abduction of

children to sell them in Zimbabwe for labour (ibid.: 102-108). Of course, such activities were based on the pre-existence of extensive forms of disempowerment not least of which was the lack of social protection as well as the limited freedom to choose how to earn a living. But as the examples above demonstrate, the dialectical aspects of the war had a profound effect in the everyday.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the main power dynamics that have shaped the formation of the Mozambican state and society. First, it highlighted the role of the colonial period in altering the social and economic forces that existed before the arrival of the Portuguese. Whereas social differentiation existed before colonialism, colonial exploitation significantly contributed to the enhancement of social stratification and, in particular, the consolidation of mechanisms of cumulative and progressive disempowerment of the local constituencies. Second, the chapter explored the different mechanisms of power contestation during colonialism and how they developed into a significantly unified agenda that shaped the independence struggle. As shown, in spite of the apparent cohesiveness of the independence movement, there were significant internal differences regarding how the new country should be run. Partially, these cleavages would later feed the war as future Renamo militants would also include ex-Frelimo members. Third, the chapter described the crisis that followed independence, ignited by the contradictions embedded in the emancipatory discourse of Frelimo and its persistence in applying a foreign theory, developed for industrial Western countries, in a country where over 90% of the population was rural. The effects of these policies, combined with an extremely unfavourable regional and international environment, ultimately led to a protracted violent conflict that lasted nearly two decades. The last part of the chapter explored the war in detail breaking down its different dynamics and effects in terms of empowerment and disempowerment.

Looking backwards, one major aspect that arises in all these phases of Mozambique's history is that power was always contested. Whether during the colonial or Frelimo era, all those individuals who felt disempowered by state

policies found ways to contest and sometimes regain power even if in a different arena. The various forms of resistance were fundamentally attempts of empowerment against a context of imposed disempowerment. The other important observation is that some spontaneous forms of empowerment were more successful than several policies aimed at promoting empowerment. In this regard, the contradiction concerning the emancipatory call of Frelimo is not unique. Looking at many development agencies today as well as many current Frelimo policies, it is possible to observe the same belief in social engineering as the primary mechanism of social change. Ironically, despite the radical emancipatory discourse, which targeted the radical change of the system, Frelimo relied on a very technical promotion of empowerment completely neglecting the newly liberated and ignoring local subjectivities.

Finally, despite so much change, several aspects of continuity and reproduction are visible in Mozambique's history. The tendency towards centralisation, first with the Portuguese and later with Frelimo, is one example. The tendency towards elite creation, first because of deliberate unequal laws during the Portuguese era and later due to the bureaucratic imperatives created by Frelimo, is another. Overall, these observations reinforce the dialectical perspective of power and how it manifests in society, in particular, the constant movement and fragile balance between expressions of power-to and power-over. The next chapter will bring this discussion forward to the period that followed the war stressing, in particular, how peace itself was contested.

Chapter 4

Post-war Mozambique: Designing Peace, (Re)Distributing Power(?)

. . . Our peace is itself a 'paradox of success'. . . The paradox lies precisely in the fact that this peace results from the welding together of the good will of the various social segments and strata and their commitment to the country's development projects, while, on the other hand, in the struggle against absolute poverty, the gulf is growing between a minority which enriches itself at the cost of the poverty of those who remain ever poorer.

(Mazula, 2004)

Mozambique has often been portrayed in the policy and academic literature as a peacebuilding success story (Alden, 2001; Van Den Bergh, 2009; Manning and Malbrough, 2009; Astill-Brown and Weimer, 2010). Its 'success' label has been justified on three main grounds: first, because unlike other African countries, after the peace agreements war never resumed; second, because the previous rebel movement, Renamo, successfully transformed itself into a political party taking part in government; finally, because over the years the country has shown a remarkable level of economic recovery following the recommendations of the international financial institutions (IFIs).

This chapter contests this success story by challenging these assumptions and focusing on what has changed in terms of power redistribution after peace. Indeed, whereas Mozambique never went back to a full-scale war, the quality of the peace achieved has been increasingly put to test culminating most recently (2013-2014) in a series of violent clashes between Renamo and the government with the resumption of a discussion about the peace agreement. These recent events, along with the trends in human development and the political environment in the last twenty years, raise serious questions about

whether some of the most fundamental problems that fed the war have been solved with peace.

This chapter addresses the question 'What has changed for the ordinary Mozambican after the end of the war?' In this regard, it addresses empowerment from a macro perspective taking into account the political and economic institutional changes introduced with peacebuilding, and the extent to which they have affected power distribution in Mozambique. This chapter provides, therefore, the broader context that influenced the creation and implementation of the '7 million'.

The chapter is divided into three sections. First, it discusses the peace process making a distinction between the peace negotiations led by the elite, on the one hand, and the grassroots mechanisms of peace on the other hand. While both domains were equally important for peace to take place, the fact that the formal process was not popularly rooted contributed to the redesigning of a state that became largely distant from the masses. The two sections that follow discuss precisely this aspect, focusing first on the country's development policies and second on the implementation of multiparty democracy. The general argument is that there is a huge gap between what has been promised by institutional reforms and what has been achieved. More specifically, the process of social engineering has been reduced to merely restructuring state institutions with the general expectation that these changes would eventually lead to changes in power dynamics. However, despite these efforts, power dynamics have remained mostly unchanged, instead, reinforcing the dominance of a specific political elite. When it comes to people's empowerment, the persistence of strong structural constraints ultimately reduces any potential space for contestation and systemic change.

4.1 Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peaces

As war represents the violent contestation of power distribution, in theory peace negotiations should provide precisely the locus where a new distribution of power would be discussed and agreed (Addison and Murshed, 2006). In the case of Mozambique, it is often said that peace between Frelimo and Renamo mostly represented the change of location for where to fight their battle; with

peace, politics replaced arms, but the parties were still hoping to win over each other, instead of sharing or renegotiating power (Weimer, 2002; Alden, 2006). Therefore, whereas the end of organised violence was, without a doubt, an important gain for Mozambicans in general, it was not accompanied by a more substantial change in the political setting which remained profoundly elite-centred. Indeed, the design of the new post-war state institutions, and the peace negotiations more generally, were characterised by a considerable popular deficit. So whereas Mozambicans contributed to peace de facto at the everyday level, by engaging into several grassroots peace mechanisms, the popular deficit in the formal domain of peace prevented the creation of more substantial spaces that could promote the empowerment of the ordinary people.

THE ELITE'S PEACE

The peace process in Mozambique was influenced by several factors. At the international level, with the demise of the Cold War, the United States increased its interest in fostering peace in Mozambique, whereas the Soviet Union drastically cut its military support to Frelimo (Hume, 1994: 22; Alden, 2001: 22). Regionally, the progressive end of apartheid paved the way for the end of South Africa's support to Renamo (ibid.; Cohen, 2000: 193). Zimbabwe, on the other hand, the main regional supporter of Frelimo, faced increasing internal contestation of its involvement in its neighbour's war (Alden, 2001: 22). These factors, along with the constant droughts and the social economic effects of structural adjustment, had a major impact on the parties' capacity to pursue war eventually leading to a stalemate (Hume, 1994: 21; Rupiya, 1998: 14). Internally, in 1989, Renamo held its first party congress kick-starting its progressive transformation from an armed faction into a political organization (Venâncio and Chan, 1998: 24; Manning, 2002: 92-93). The same year, Frelimo held its Fifth Party Congress officially calling off the socialist experiment and committing to promulgate a new constitution (Hume, 1994: 22; Synge, 1997: 15-18; Alden, 2001: 24).

Notwithstanding these circumstances, the parties were unwilling to negotiate. It fell to a few members of the Protestant and Catholic churches and several neighbours (Kenya, Zimbabwe, later Botswana and Malawi) to push for an

encounter between them to take place. In June 1989, the first meeting between Renamo and Frelimo representatives took place in Kenya paving the way for peace negotiations (Hume, 1994: 17-18; Venâncio and Chan, 1998: 21; Lundin, 2004: 8). Formal peace talks started in July 1989; they were later mediated by a collective body comprised of four observers from the Church and hosted by the Italian government culminating in a peace agreement in 1992. Donors had a major influence on the process contributing financially as well as with advice to each of the parties (Hume, 1994; Synge, 1997; Cohen, 2000; Manning and Malbrough, 2009; Van den Bergh, 2009).

All through the negotiations, the level of mistrust between Frelimo and Renamo was extremely high as Frelimo was unwilling to recognise Renamo as an equal party, and Renamo contested the Frelimo government's legitimacy and representativeness (Hume, 1994: 25-47; Cohen, 2000: 189; Lundin, 2004: 9; Van den Bergh, 2009: 33-34). By 1992, however, the burden of continuing the war became unbearable for both parties. On the government's side, the effects of structural adjustment contributed to popular discontent (Alden, 2001: 29). The failed coup attempt in June 1991, led by Frelimo hardliners, further suggested the need for a final settlement of the conflict (*ibid.*). On Renamo's side, the effects of the drought and the fact that it did not have access to humanitarian aid, served as major incentives to speed up the conclusion of the agreement. In August 1992, president Chissano and Renamo's leader Dhlakama finally met face to face in Rome and signed a declaration agreeing on a date for completing the negotiations and implementing a cease-fire. The final general peace agreement (GPA) was signed on 4 October 1992 and declared that the UN would be tasked with ensuring its implementation.

The GPA (Rep. Moz., 1992) consisted of seven protocols focused on military, political, and humanitarian issues and included a timetable for the elections and its monitoring mechanisms. Yet, as noted by Rupiya (1998: 15), "not only had many practical elements been insufficiently discussed [in the GPA], but both sides lacked the capacity to set up and operate the complex structures required for implementation". In particular, there had been no serious discussion on practical elements related to military questions, guarantees, and the ceasefire itself (Hume, 1994: 141-148; Synge, 1997: 22). This was not only due to the

sheer level of disagreement between the parties, but also to the inadequate information they had about the deployment of their own forces (ibid.). These issues affected the implementation of the GPA and the effectiveness of the UN mission, UNOMOZ, set up to monitor its implementation.

Critiques of UNOMOZ abound,²⁹ particularly, regarding issues of disarmament, general bureaucratic delays, costs of the mission, and the problematic coordination of the different agencies involved (Synge, 1997; Venâncio, 1998; Manning and Malbrough, 2009; Van Den Bergh, 2009). Despite such criticism, there is also a general consensus that the mission was successful in ensuring the non-resumption of the armed conflict and in establishing a minimum level of trust between the parties in order for elections to take place in a stable environment (ibid.; Cabaço, 1995: 96; Ajello, 2002). What UNOMOZ did *not* accomplish, however, and most probably *could not*, was to actually level the playing field between the parties ensuring a redistribution of power after the war.

Indeed, donors did try to equalize the balance between the two parties, in particular, by financing Renamo's transformation into a political party (Cabaço, 1995: 99; Synge, 1997: 45; Venâncio, 1998: 100-101; Ajello, 2002: 323; Manning and Malbrough, 2009: 89-90). However, this support was not sufficient to guarantee a transition of the guerrilla group into a successful political party. In fact, whereas Frelimo's power foundation was extremely strong and consolidated, Renamo was unable to transition itself into a consolidated party in such a short-term period of time. According to Cabaço (1995: 96), these financial incentives actually blinded Renamo from perceiving its own institutional limitations in the subsequent elections, a situation of which Frelimo took advantage.

The monitoring of the first general elections was placed under the responsibility of UNOMOZ. Besides Renamo and Frelimo, another 14 smaller parties competed in the elections (Synge, 1997: 118-119). In spite of what had been

²⁹ The UN operation was large and complex and will not be discussed in detail in this thesis. Further information may be found in Alden (2001) and Synge (1997). For the discussion on the security aspects related to UNOMOZ, see Lalá (2005).

agreed in the Peace Accords, during the period leading to the elections, donors started to put pressure on Frelimo insisting that it consider a government of national union (GNU). This pressure influenced Dhlakama to also call for change and created tension between Frelimo and donors; however, it did not lead to a change in the agreement (Synge, 1997: 123-125).

The final phase before the election was marked by tensions and several incidents, including threats and allegations of intimidation. One day before the election (set for 27-28 October, 1994), Dhlakama announced a boycott (joined by three small parties) stating that there were several irregularities in the process. However, the National Elections Commission (CNE) decided that the election should go ahead and, at the last minute, extended the process for a third day (Synge, 1997: 127-128; Van Den Bergh, 2009: 82-83). Regardless of the boycott, Mozambicans went to the poles in large numbers. At the end of the second day, Dhlakama lifted the boycott. On 19 November, the official results were released showing Chissano's victory with 53% of the presidential votes against 35% to Dhlakama. In the National Assembly, Frelimo won 129 seats against 12 for Renamo. The elections were considered fair overall by international observers (UNSC, 1994). On 9 December, Chissano was sworn in as president marking the end of the UNOMOZ mandate and the start of its withdrawal (Synge, 1997: 140-141).

In hindsight, it is undeniable that external actors played a fundamental role in the promotion of peace in Mozambique (Cohen, 2000; Manning and Malbrough, 2009). At the same time, UNOMOZ was criticised for its invasive character and lack of flexibility and coordination with the local structures. Synge (1997: 45) referred to its activities as being "invasive and destabilizing to, rather than creative and supportive of, the shaky structures of the Mozambican state and society" (see also Venâncio, 1998: 110; Alden, 2001: 90-91). According to Synge (1997: 149), by installing a parallel administration during the transition phase, the UN undermined state authority that was already weak, spurred corruption, and weakened the capacity of state agencies in the long run.

Despite these different instances of external engagement, it should be noted that both Frelimo and Renamo played a strong role in the negotiation process making explicit their own demands and positions towards the mediators and,

therefore, claiming ownership of the peace process (Van Den Bergh, 2009: 36). Furthermore, Frelimo's ability to retain power was also the result of a set of calculated actions. Indeed, even when under pressure, Frelimo did not make concessions that could undermine its political power. Therefore, the view that peacebuilding was somehow imposed in Mozambique should be viewed cautiously, for interfering in a part of the organisational apparatus of the state is very different from affecting real power redistribution, in particular, between elites. Finally, and even though the peace process relied heavily on the bureaucratic imperatives of the agencies involved in its implementation which largely silenced the voices of ordinary Mozambicans (Synge, 1997: 152, 165), the very success of peace in Mozambique was deeply related to the way that ordinary people dealt with this transition as discussed below.

THE GRASSROOTS' PEACE

Whilst the peace negotiations were discussed mainly at the elite level, peace, *de facto*, in Mozambique was also the result of a series of initiatives that took place in the daily lives of the thousands of victims and perpetrators of violence who made a concrete effort to make peace a reality (Honwana, 1996; Nordstrom, 1997; Lundin, 2004; Van Den Bergh, 2009). These spaces for peace were not only inspired by the negotiations, in fact, quite often they worked *in spite of* the negotiations and even in the midst of violence. As formal peace approached, the vacuum created by the 'uncommitted leadership', the 'weak international mechanisms', and the 'undisciplined armies' created, in turn, more space for 'people's peace' to flourish as no one wanted to risk the resumption of the war (Wilson, 1994; Cabaço, 1995: 97).

People's peace assumed several shapes, but it had one common aspect, which was the recognised need for reconciliation. Different from South Africans, Mozambicans ruled out the option of a truth commission and preferred, instead, to focus on forgiveness and social reintegration (Lundin, 2004: 16-17; Van Den Bergh, 2009: 39-42). The reasoning for this was the general understanding that punishment would only delay peace and probably contribute to a never-ending process as it was very difficult at that stage to clearly separate victims and perpetrators of violence (which also included the state). As such, the law on

amnesty received no objection during the negotiations neither from the Mozambican population nor from the international community (ibid.).

At the national level, the mass organizations played an important role in preparing people for peace. In November 1992, the OMM organized a conference and invited their Angolan counterparts to discuss possible initiatives to involve women in the new democratic space (Van Den Bergh, 2009: 66-70). The OJM organized a national seminar with Norwegian support, and the Mozambican Workers' Organisation (OTM) held a series of events throughout the country in order to prepare the population for the forthcoming elections. Mass organisations also joined the seminars promoted by AWEPA (Association of European Parliamentarians in Africa) and the CCM (Christian Council of Mozambique), which aimed to explain the peace agreement and its implications for the daily lives of citizens (ibid.).

The churches engaged in several activities at the grassroots level before and after the peace agreement. The CCM created a Commission for Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation in 1984. Besides their engagement in humanitarian activities, the churches wanted to contribute to the spread of democratic values and peace (Van Den Bergh, 2009: 27-27). In cooperation with AWEPA, between 1991 and 1993, the CCM developed a nation-wide programme that "created possibilities for people to speak out and to discuss the new situation, but also to be informed about the new political situation, the multi-party democracy and the elections" (ibid.: 29). They also launched a national 'swords for ploughshares' campaign creating opportunities for voluntary disarmament. Similar activities were conducted by the Catholic Church (ibid.: 65).

At the local level, there were reports of 'local peace agreements' even before the GPA was signed. Citing the case of Morrumbala in Northern Zambezia, Wilson (1994) reported that over one month before the signing of the peace agreement, local Renamo units were informing the people/local population about the peace to come. When peace came, the local chiefs informed their constituents about their freedom of movement and ensured that taxation on food was ended. In a parallel effort, the Morrumbala local government made a post-war plan for the district, which envisaged partnerships with NGOs to ensure adequate resources to accommodate the influx of returning refugees

from Malawi. When the peace agreement was signed, Renamo gathered with the local government to discuss peace. By late January 1993, there was a Renamo official residing in Morrumbala and overseeing issues with the administrator. When tensions arose because of the late distribution of humanitarian aid, both the Frelimo district army commander and the Renamo commander undertook a joint operation in order to avoid the escalation of violence and its possible undermining of local peace. All sides further engaged in demining the roads as the UN efforts on this issue were delayed (ibid.).

More generally, at the local level, a series of endogenous initiatives for social reconciliation took place based on spiritual rituals for social reintegration. As the vast majority of the Mozambican population was (and still is) rural, local rituals played a fundamental role in consolidating peace and promoting reconciliation as well as restoring communities and restabilising social order (Honwana, 1996: 345). At this level, one of the major concerns of Mozambicans was the fear of the *Mpfhukwa*, “the spirits of the dead who did not have a proper burial with all the rituals aimed at placing them in their proper positions in the world of the spirits” (ibid.: 351). As unsettled souls, the *Mpfhukwa* were believed to have the capacity to “afflict, provoke maladies and even kill the families of those who killed or mistreated them in life” (ibid.). The way to deal with this was by performing specific rituals in order to exorcise or appease these spirits.

The war further created a major concern locally with the effects of ‘social pollution’ – the contamination that some people get by being exposed to strange environments or being victims of witchcraft and sorcery. In particular, social pollution may arise from one being in contact with blood and death, which was, of course, aggravated during the war. As such, in order for people to be fully reintegrated and be able to resettle in their homelands, they all needed to undergo a cleansing ritual that usually involved the burning of the clothes previously used, as well as vaccinations (incision in the body later filled with medicinal herbs) (Honwana, 1996: 354-355).

Honwana (1996: 357) noted that these rituals were widespread after the war and often a precondition for social reintegration, e.g., for families to accept ex-child-soldiers back home. They were specifically important because they spoke the language of these communities being in line with their social cosmology and

defining their identity and sense of belonging. They also allowed for reconciliation to take place without people having to talk about it as would be the case with a truth commission. In fact, it was believed that speaking of violence would bring the spirit of violence back (Van Den Bergh, 2009: 42).

The fact that the people and several grassroots organizations took the initiative to engage in peace makes the Mozambican case an example of *integrative peace* where people actually owned and designed this process to a large extent. Indeed, these peace actions reflect forms of empowerment, especially in subjective terms, by consolidating an ideal of peace integration. At the same time, when it comes to the formal aspect that shaped the reconstitution of the state, there was a huge disconnect between everyday people's priorities and what the front stage actors focused on. Issues of development, for example, were silenced as a result of the primary concern with politics and security, even though the war was, to a significant extent, fed by the problematic development policies of Frelimo, as well as by the humanitarian issues that stalled economic development. This general disconnection is at the heart of some of the problems faced today in Mozambique, where the polarization of political dissent is accompanied by deep-rooted problems of wealth distribution. This in turn reflects the asymmetrical distribution of the peace dividend and stands at the heart of the problems related to empowerment promotion. The next two sections discuss this issue further by focusing on Mozambique's development and political landscape.

4.2 Post-War Development Landscape: the Mozambican Paradox

One of the main problems of the post-war Mozambican development agenda is the lack of an internal redistribution of the peace dividend. Indeed, whereas the country's development model has been praised for its macro-economic achievements — in particular its annual average growth of 7% and low inflation³⁰ — it has also been criticised for its shortcomings in terms of long-term

³⁰ See indicators at the World Bank Online Database. Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/> (Accessed: 23 March 2014).

sustainability as well as for its limitations in curbing poverty (de Renzio and Hanlon, 2007; Hanlon and Smart, 2008; Hanlon, 2010b; Cunguara, 2012; AEO, 2013; BTI, 2014). As argued in this thesis, initiatives such as the '7 million' are severely affected by the context in which they are implemented. Therefore, understanding the general economic development landscape of Mozambique helps us to identify some of the main structural constraints to this and other policies aimed at empowerment promotion.

MOZAMBIQUE'S MACRO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE SUCCESS STORY?

Mozambique entered the reform period in the late 1980s. Since then, the IFIs and Western donors have significantly influenced the country's economic policies. The period between 1985 and 1995 was particularly severe, as the IMF pushed for structural reforms based on cuts in public expenditure and economic liberalisation which had several negative effects on the Mozambican economy (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 111-130; Hanlon, 1996; de Renzio and Hanlon, 2007).

First, the restrictive economic measures hit the social sector and the state administrative apparatus. As wages were cut, nurses and teachers were pushed below the poverty line, and many skilled people left the public sector in search of better wages in international NGOs and development agencies (Hanlon, 2004; Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 13). Over time, this also fostered petty corruption, since those affected looked for new avenues of income to be able to pay for their daily needs (*ibid.*).

Second, by imposing severe credit restrictions, the reforms hit the agricultural sector and domestic production in general. In some cases the effects were disastrous, creating massive unemployment and the closure of several factories (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 149; Hanlon, 1996: 44-45; Cramer, 2001; Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 13; de Renzio and Hanlon, 2007: 9).

Third, the privatization process was extremely fast paced and did not take into account the social and political aspects that characterised the Mozambican transition (Cramer, 2001 and 2006: 266-269; Pitcher, 2002; de Renzio and Hanlon, 2007). As a state coming out of a socialist experiment, Mozambique did

not have a middle class at the time of transition, so the process offered the opportunity for a small bureaucratic elite to suddenly become the new entrepreneurial class. Therefore, privatization in Mozambique, instead of reducing the state, was marked by a process of “transformation through preservation”, in the sense that these “economic and political reforms have redirected the role of the state in the economy, but they have not led to its withdrawal” (Pitcher, 2002: 6). As the state bureaucracy was fundamentally dominated by Frelimo, the privatization process ultimately contributed to strengthening the party’s power.

In terms of its economic effects, because of the way it was handled, the privatization process gave rise to several inefficient and non-competitive enterprises (Cramer, 2001), many of which soon found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy (de Renzio and Hanlon, 2007: 8). Besides, it also provided the space for growing corruption and rent-seeking in the state machinery and in the private sector (ibid.; Hanlon, 2004). Finally, the transition period, while opening the way for an influx of foreign aid, also made Mozambique one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world bringing along serious problems of accountability, sovereignty, and sustainability (de Renzio and Hanlon, 2007; Hanlon and Smart, 2008).

In the second half of the 1990s, while the IFIs’ pressure eased, the number of foreign investors in Mozambique increased. Progressively, the country’s economy moved towards the phase of the so-called ‘megaprojects’ concentrated mostly in the mineral sector. The megaprojects have been criticised on several grounds, in particular, because the contracted firms have major tax and fiscal exemptions leading to the loss of great potential state revenue. Furthermore, the projects create few jobs, do not contribute to the diversification of the economy, and increase the country’s economic vulnerability (Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 14; AEO, 2010 and 2013; Cunguara, 2012: 161).

So, whereas Mozambique has been recently celebrating the decrease of its aid-dependency, the country is, in fact, far from self-sufficient. First, the reliance on donors’ budget support is still high (33.5% as forecasted in the 2014 national budget) (AIM, 11 Dec. 2013). The country, furthermore, depends on imports for

most of its consumer goods including food, in particular, from South Africa (Weimer et al., 2012: 50-54; AEO, 2013). Moreover, whereas most of the country's workforce is located in the agricultural sector, this sector's weight in the economy has significantly shrunk in the last thirty years consolidating Mozambique as an economy of consumption instead of production (Weimer et al., 2012: 51). Finally, the Mozambican economy has suffered from extremely low international competitiveness, a situation magnified by the lack of adequate infrastructure, the inefficient government bureaucracy, and the poorly educated workforce all of which are worsened by the high levels of corruption (AEO, 2013).

Corruption has indeed become a chronic problem in Mozambique. It manifests in different forms from state capture³¹ to administrative corruption³² and patronage, which affect everyone from the foreign business community to the ordinary rural Mozambican (Hanlon, 2004; Martini, 2012; BTI, 2014: 34). According to Hanlon (2004), donors have actively contributed to the intensification of corruption, both by exerting pressure to speed-up privatization processes in the 1990s and by turning a blind eye to major corruption scandals (see also Cramer, 2001: 270-271). The extent of corruption is a matter of concern as it affects the effectiveness of several sectors of the government, and it is perceived as an obstacle for the business community, in particular, small and medium enterprises (Martini, 2012).

Despite several measures to tackle corruption, there has been no significant improvement especially during the two mandates of president Guebuza (Fael and Cortez, 2013; BTI, 2014: 11-12, 34). The anti-corruption instruments created have been mostly inefficient not least because of the severe weakness of the judiciary (ibid.; Martini, 2012). The Mozambican watchdog Centre of Public Integrity (CIP) noted that the deviation of funds from the state has actually been on the rise since 2005, and the major cases of corruption (linked

³¹ This involves "taking control of the state apparatus in order to extract rents from the state transactions" (Hanlon, 2004: 754).

³² Linked to the implementation of existing laws, usually involves paying of bribes for the accomplishment of services (Hanlon, 2004: 754).

with major political figures) are usually omitted from public reports which favour instead cases of petty corruption usually involving low ranking state employees (Fael and Cortez, 2013).

One of the biggest challenges for fighting corruption in Mozambique is linked to the strong relationship between Frelimo and the overall functioning of the state apparatus, which has become even stronger under President Guebuza. As noted by CIP, in the last ten years, the distinction between the private and the public state sphere has been increasingly blurred as the discovery of mineral resources in the country has created a major rush from several members of the government to create enterprises in order to control part of the extractive sector (Fael and Cortez, 2013; see also Hanlon, 2004 and 2009b; Cunguara, 2012; Weimer et al., 2012: 55-58).

At this point, it could be argued that corruption is an intrinsic phenomena to economic development and not necessarily 'bad' (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995: 157). Hanlon, for instance, argued in 2009 that President Guebuza could be pursuing "a new form of elite development capitalism" (Hanlon, 2009b). According to him, Guebuza is part of a Frelimo faction that is not purely predatory, but it is *also* concerned with the country's development. So, whereas the President's family holds a significant share of the Mozambican private sector, and Guebuza does promote the expansion of businesses in which he has direct interests, "he is also attracting the brightest of the foreign trained younger generation who work hard and want to move quickly, while marginalising the old comrades who are only trying to get rich through 'goatism' and influence, using their family and party links" (ibid.: 6). That would be, somehow, a gain in comparison to the previous administration which belonged to the exclusively predatory elite.

Hanlon himself acknowledged that this alone did not extinguish the traditional predatory elite.³³ However, what seems more problematic in this state of events is that the current development model does *not* fundamentally change the peace dividend problem. So, whereas the country's economy is indeed running, the agricultural sector remains weak, Mozambique still depends on imported

³³ For a critique of Hanlon's argument, see Lalá (2014) and Saul (2011).

food, and over 70% of the population still relies on subsistence agriculture and will not necessarily benefit from the extractive sector. In summary, while it may be the case that *some* of the people have been 'empowered', most experience disempowerment in many dimensions of their lives.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

According to the 2013 Human Development Report (UNDP, 2013), Mozambique scored 0.327 in the Human Development Index (HDI) ranking number 185 above only the Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger. When the Inequality-Adjusted HDI³⁴ was considered, the score fell to 0.22. The report also noted that, according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index,³⁵ 79.3% of the population lived in multidimensional poverty and an additional 9.5% were vulnerable to multiple deprivations.

Whilst the new methodology used for the HDI has been criticised (AIM, 19 Mar. 2013), these different indexes constitute an example of how complicated it is to measure poverty. Indeed, disagreements on statistics about poverty in Mozambique are fairly common and influence the government position about its own progress on development (Cunguara and Hanlon, 2010; de Brito, 2012). The poverty line used by the government, for instance, is MZN 18 per day, which is the equivalent to USD 0.6. If this poverty line is used, then the poverty rate in Mozambique currently stands at 54.7%. However, if the international standard of USD 1 per day is used, then this percentage increases to 60% (AEO, 2013).

Other variations depend on the proxies used to measure poverty. A report published by the National Direction of Studies and Analysis of Policies in

³⁴ According to the report, "The 2010 HDR introduced the Inequality-Adjusted HDI (IHDI), which takes into account inequality in all three dimensions of the HDI by 'discounting' each dimension's average value according to its level of inequality. The HDI can be viewed as an index of 'potential' human development and the IHDI as an index of actual human development."

³⁵ The MPI identifies "multiple deprivations in the same households in education, health and standard of living" (HDR, 2013).

Mozambique³⁶ (DNEAP) (Rep. of Moz., 2010a), for instance, noted that the 2008/09 poverty indicators showed a significant improvement of the non-monetary indicators of poverty, compared to the years 2002/03. These include better access to education and health and were the result of a series of government efforts in providing basic services. At the same time, the report also acknowledged that the rates for consumption poverty have barely changed during the same period at below 55%.³⁷ These findings were also presented in the national 2010 MDG Report (Rep. of Moz., 2010b: 2), which highlighted the “strong supportive environment” existing in Mozambique, which would lead to the achievement of the 2015 poverty reduction target.

In a critical assessment of the DNEAP report, de Brito (2012) noted that, while it could be the case that there had been a *relative* stabilization of poverty, the actual number of poor had actually increased in absolute terms. Furthermore, seven out of the ten provinces had, in fact, become poorer, whereas the others had a significant decrease in the number of poor. More generally, looking over the last 20 years, some authors note that poverty in Mozambique has, in fact, become more complex (Hanlon and Smart, 2008; Fox, 2008). On the one hand, there are several aspects of continuity such as the urban/rural difference (the latter being usually poorer) as well as variation along the north/south axis of Mozambique (the North being the poorest section of the country) (Fox, 2008: 42). On the other hand, several changes have occurred. Firstly, the intensity of poverty has varied, increasing particularly in the urban areas (Fox, 2008: 43-44; Hanlon and Smart, 2008). Secondly, there has been an increase in the levels of vulnerability in the rural areas, due partly to climatic shocks and seasonal income shortfalls (ibid.; AEO, 2013). Additionally, there has been an increasing level of inequality and differentiation, mainly in the rural areas, reducing the possibility of social mobility and creating a category of extremely vulnerable

³⁶ The DNEAP is part of the Ministry of Development and Planning of Mozambique.

³⁷ In 2012, the World Bank published a Policy Research Working Paper criticising the methodology used in the DNEAP report showing its inconsistency with a series of other indicators and discussing some errors that may have produced the non-robust results (Alfani et al., 2012).

people who struggle to be “above the poverty line” but eventually fall “back into poverty” (Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 65).

More generally, and regardless of some improvements, most Mozambicans still lack basic services. The last census, released in November 2009, for instance (referent year 2007), revealed that only 10% of all houses visited had electricity (double the figure of 1997); only 10.1% of the population had piped water (the figure in 1997 was 8.5%) while most of the population still obtained water from unprotected sources. Also, 54.3% of the homes had no sanitation at all not even a simple pit latrine (a figure that was 66% in 1997) (AIM, 18 Nov. 2009).

Considering the intensity of the problem of poverty, it is no surprise that president Guebuza made the issue the cornerstone of his political agenda (Guebuza, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a). This discourse is marked by a general call for action on the part of Mozambicans, so they become the agents of the ‘fight against poverty’ (*luta contra a pobreza*). The fight against poverty has also been at the heart of the government’s relationship with donors which is officially centred on the Action Plans for the Reduction of (Absolute) Poverty, known as PARPAs (*Plano de Ação para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta*), the Mozambican versions of the World Bank/IMF Poverty Strategy Reduction Papers. There have been four versions of this policy since 1999. The last one, covering the period 2011-2014, was renamed PARP (without the last ‘A’ for ‘Absolute’ poverty). The main objective of the PARPAs/PARP is poverty reduction. PARPA I defined a target of reducing absolute poverty from 70% in 1997 to less than 60% by 2005 and less than 50% by the end of the decade. PARPA II redefined the aim as reducing it from 54% in 2003 to 45% by 2009. PARP set the reduction goal from 54.7% (as of 2011) to 42% by 2014 (Rep. of Moz., 2006 and 2011).

The PARPAs/PARP have been criticised on several grounds. First, there has been criticism regarding the lack of clear sequencing and articulation between them as well as incoherencies within each document (de Brito, 2012: 30; Francisco, 2012). Second, the policy actions defined were considered vague, resembling more declarations of intent than concrete policy measures (de Brito, 2012: 31; Castel-Branco, 2012). Third, there is a problem of coordination between important national policy mechanisms in Mozambique. Whereas the

PARP is the most important strategy document *for donors*, there are two key documents guiding Mozambican national policies, namely the Five Year Plan, which is a general outline of policy intervention for the government, and the Economic and Social Plan (PES), which is more specific in terms of policy measures. The Five Year Plan originates from Frelimo and is a document of the executive; whereas the PES is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Development and Planning. In theory, the Five Year Plan should inform the PARP, but critics highlight precisely their lack of connection (BTI, 2012: 26). Besides, the distribution of tasks between governmental institutions and how these are intended to interact in the implementation of the policies is unclear, a factor that also has consequences in the evaluation process of the PARPAs/PARP (ibid.; Francisco, 2012: 3-4).

Moreover, following donors' priorities, the PARPAs have generally focused on the achievement of the MDGs leaving aside aspects such as how productivity (especially agriculture) may affect the former (Cunguara, 2012: 165). The several critiques of this disconnect and the 2008 and 2010 riots in Maputo eventually influenced the last negotiations, and the PARP (2011-2014) finally included both concerns with agricultural production as well as employment promotion in its agenda (Rep. of Moz., 2011; BTI, 2014: 31). Still, according to critics, the topics are mostly disconnected from the concrete discussion of fundamental elements that may affect their development, in particular, the economic chain that links agricultural production and the market (Castel-Branco, 2012: 109; Cunguara, 2012: 167).

These problems have led some authors to ask what the real objectives of the PARPAs/PARP are, and one of the answers is that they exist to mobilize external resources and thus guarantee the political and macroeconomic stability of Mozambique (Francisco, 2012: 5; Castel-Branco, 2012: 112). A second answer is that they work as a *legitimiser* of foreign aid as they are designed in close consultation with local stakeholders reinforcing participatory mechanisms and, therefore, supposedly promoting local *ownership* (Francisco, 2012: 5-7). If that is so, perhaps the PARPA/PARPs have been more successful in the first case because foreign aid, although in decline, keeps pouring into the country.

On the other hand, the matter of ownership, and especially empowerment, is far less a success as discussed below.

THE CASE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OBSERVATORIES

The Development Observatories (DOs), originally called Poverty Observatories (POs), were created in order to help evaluate and monitor the implementation of the PARPAs/PARP. On the one hand, the DOs constitute a *consultative* body expected to support the government in gathering reliable data on policy implementation as well as make suggestions for policy improvement. On the other hand, they also constitute a vehicle to foster accountability between the government and civil society (Francisco and Matter, 2007: 26). DOs are comprised of members of the government apparatus, civil society, and international development partners, and a permanent governmental body is in charge of their organisation (ibid.). The first national PO was launched in April 2003. Since then, national PO/DO meetings were held on an annual basis, and since 2005, they have also taken place at the provincial level.

In 2004, in order to enhance their participation in the POs, CSOs created a platform called G20, which became the official CSO representative at the national level. The G20 started to publish an annual report on poverty that was praised for its good standards and was used as material for discussion in the PO influencing the elaboration of the subsequent PARPAs. In spite of this positive outcome, reports about the efficiency of the POs/DOs and their influence on policy making have been critical overall. A 2007 report by Francisco and Matter concluded that, notwithstanding the DOs potential to instigate citizens' participation, they had been restricted to mere consultative bodies "with no channels for feedback, social accountability, checks and balances and other forms of citizens' empowerment and participation" (Francisco and Matter, 2007: 6). One of the problems in this regard was the lack of interaction between CSOs and the government *between* each annual meeting. In 2011, another report echoed these findings, adding that, as a consequence of its poor results, "an increasing number of CSO activists are disenchanted with the DOs" (Pereira, 2011: 4-5).

The process leading to the PARP was especially criticized. In a 2012 civil society report, Adalima and Nuvunga (2012) noted that civil society participation in that process had been weak and mostly reactive to the government proposals. One of the obstacles for CSOs' participation had been the internal crisis faced by the G20 which was eventually terminated in 2010. Without a cohesive leadership, many CSOs worked on an individualized basis having, therefore, less leverage for action than the government. Another obstacle, however, was the way the *process* of consultation was structured and organized by the government, in particular, the definition of the timetable. Indeed, the government started to work on PARP *before* officially calling/inviting members of civil society. Therefore, in practice, civil society was involved in the process only at the final stage when the most important issues (including the removal of 'A' for *Absolute* poverty and the change in the format of the document structure) had already been defined. Regardless of these problems, the report recognised that there had been improvements in the DOs, especially in the capacity of CSOs to discuss specific topics.

In May 2012, I had the chance to take part in the X Session of the Nampula Provincial DO and observe how some of the above issues manifested during the event. The meeting consisted of representatives of all sectors of the provincial government, as well as all the district administrators, several members of the local councils of the districts, many members of local CSOs and some donors. The discussion was divided in four thematic clusters following the ten-year Province Strategic Plan: (1) economic growth, (2) participative governance, (3) infra-structure and environmental issues, and (4) human capital. In each cluster, first, the government representative presented institutional achievements, and then the debate followed. Lastly, a case study (previously chosen by CSOs) was presented by one of the members of the civil society.

On the positive side, participants seemed generally free to talk. In particular, members of the local councils and local leaders raised their voices to point to practical problems affecting their communities such as the lack of water, the very poor quality of the schools, and the problems related to the construction of roads in their district. However, it was clear that they also lacked a common and

organised voice. Because topics were presented individually and were very specific to their communities, they did not seem to contribute to the concrete proposal of policy measures. As for the CSOs, many expressed very critical comments, but often the voices heard were from the same CSOs while others remained mostly silent (Obs. 51).

On the negative side, it became clear that not all criticism of the government was welcome. While many of the results presented by the government pointed to an evident underachievement compared to the expected outcome the reasons for the underachievement were not made clear. When questions were raised, more often than not, general excuses were given which avoided accountability. For example, there were several complaints about the work on infrastructure and its overall poor quality. The audience complained repeatedly that the constructor was never held responsible for the bad work and some referred to a case in one of the districts as “a real shame”. Facing the criticism, the presenter (from the provincial government) simply replied that they recognised the problem, but “at least the work shows that we are committed with the improvement of the issue” as if this was a satisfactory response from the government regarding public expenditure (Obs. 51).

As some budget values were not addressed clearly in the official presentations, voices in the audience wondered out loud if there may have been cases of fund deviation, and some participants also offered a reminder about the previous session’s recommendation to improve accountability in the use of public spending. To this, the presenter vaguely replied that the power point presentation only had the “highlights”, and later the governor, who was presiding over the session, noted that “audit sessions were being held regularly”. But no further details were given.

But more striking was the government reaction to a case study presented by the CSOs with regards to the 15% taxation for deforestation in the case of exploitation of natural resources. The presenter discussed the case pointing towards the problem of accountability and the fact that the 15% tax should be reverted locally, but the evidence showed that this was not happening; there was no explanation regarding where the money was going. In his response, the government representative harshly criticised the presentation for its “lack of

methodological accuracy and no references” (although the original report had been sent to the government with the full data). After several minutes of critique, he then vaguely mentioned that the money did not necessarily have to go back to the same place where the tax was charged (Obs. 51). The episode was later widely commented on informally by some participants. Some of them used the example to highlight some of the limitations faced by CSOs in terms of influencing policy in Mozambique, and how this kind of exercise could, therefore, be frustrating.

Considering the problems discussed in the Nampula DO, it was surprising that the issue of corruption *never* came to the discussion. Indeed, the problems described above, both in the macroeconomic domain of the economy, as well as from the perspective of human development, suggested that lack of accountability and transparency was strongly present and felt by the people as an element that influences their lives on a daily basis. At the same time, this very element seemed to reflect the central issue of power disparities between a nascent civil society and a strong and extremely politicised government.

DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT?

The considerations above reveal a series of important aspects that affect empowerment promotion policies. First, they show the relevance of the national structural context in which policies are designed and how they may become a form of structural constraint to empowerment promotion. Second, the analysis indicates that poverty, which in itself is an indicator of disempowerment, has several non-economic features that may reinforce its economic domain. As noted by Duncan Green (2008: 7), “Poverty is about much more than a low income . . . It is a sense of powerlessness, frustration, exhaustion, and *exclusion from decision-making*, not to mention the relative lack of access to public services, the financial system, and just about any other source of official support” (emphasis added). The example of the DOs illustrates how difficult it may be to change other power dynamics that may have a direct effect on poverty reduction. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the *political* domain of poverty and, in the Mozambican case in particular, examine how party politics affect the country’s political economy and, therefore, anti-poverty strategies.

The analysis also points towards the problem of corruption and lack of accountability. Although this is a complex relation, and one that varies according to how one defines corruption and poverty, there is evidence suggesting that even if corruption by itself *does not cause* poverty, it has, nevertheless, “direct consequences on economic and governance factors, intermediaries that in turn produce poverty” (Chetwynd et al., 2003: 6). From the economic perspective, corruption reduces economic investment, distorts markets, and increases inequality; whereas from the governance perspective, it erodes the government’s institutional capacity to deliver public services and increases budgetary pressures on the government (ibid.). In both cases, these derivative effects may contribute to an increase in poverty and inequality, which, in turn, affects the distribution of the peace dividend (see also Negin et al., 2010).

Finally, taking into account the long-term effects of these development policies, whereas their empowering effects have been limited, they have indirectly contributed to spontaneous attempts of empowerment. The Maputo riots, for instance, in 2008 and 2010,³⁸ were a response to the rise in the prices of both food and fuel. Whilst they were initially resisted by the government, who stated that the price changes were irreversible, as the riots went on accompanied by episodes of violence, the government then opted to subsidise both food and fuel in an effort to calm the protests (Cunguara, 2012: 167-168). More generally, the riots called attention to the problems of instability that may have been generated by the perceived unsatisfactory levels of socio-economic improvements — that is the problem of perceived disempowerment (see also Astill-Brown and Weimer, 2010).

Manifestations of apparently ad hoc violence in the rural areas also raise questions about the extent to which social stability may be guaranteed as long as life conditions do not improve and individuals are denied their most basic

³⁸ The two and half days of riots resulted in 13 deaths, nearly 300 hundreds injured, and the destruction of public and private good and were organised through mobile phones SMS messages (Hanlon, 2010c).

needs. A regular phenomenon has been the violence related to cholera.³⁹ The violence is usually associated with misinformation regarding the use of chlorine pills to clean the water and has been going on at least since 2001 leading to the deaths of Red Cross workers as well as of community leaders accused of spreading cholera in the water (Hanlon, 2009a; AIM, 07 Jan. 2011). Other episodes of violence are related to beliefs in witchcraft and the role played by community authorities. In 2011, for instance, a community leader had his house burnt to the ground; he was accused of controlling a crocodile that had been killing people in the Limpopo river (AIM, 04 Jan, 2011).

What episodes like these suggest is that communities, facing different kinds of social constraints, transfer the responsibility for these problems to specific actors and, facing the latter's inability to deal with the situation, take their own actions in order to 'solve the problem' or 'make justice'. Recalling some of these sporadic episodes of communal violence, Hanlon (2009a: 129) noted:

In a time of hunger when people see no hope of improvement in their lives, perhaps the passive and violent resistance to putting chlorine in local water supplies should be seen as local people making a desperate attempt to regain some power – as a disempowered group finally taking a stand to defend its very survival.

Unfortunately, because they are sporadic and do not target the structural factors that cause disempowerment, these actions do not seem to change power at a scale big enough to trigger a major change process.

4.3 Democracy, Power (Re)Distribution, and People's Empowerment

Democratization is one of the pillars of current peacebuilding practice especially in the shape of multiparty elections (Manning, 2003; Paris, 2004; Richmond,

³⁹ According to Carlos Serra who made a study of the cholera cases, the protests were led by unemployed youths who saw no future for themselves (quoted in Hanlon, 2009a: 128). Furthermore, most of the local population really believed that the rich and powerful wanted to kill them, and that it would be done by putting chlorine in the water (ibid.).

2011). Arguably, democracy is seen as a vehicle to distribute power as it provides the opportunity for different parties to rule. More generally, democracy is deemed empowering as it gives institutional means to express people's power through participation, in particular, through the possibility of voting, instances of debate, and opportunities for political expression (Sørensen, 1993; Sen, 1999: 55; Welzel and Inglehart, 2008).

It should be noted that democratization in peacebuilding scenarios is made difficult by a set of unfavourable social, economic, and political conditions that affect post-war contexts (Manning, 2002: 4). At the same time, as a tool of conflict resolution, democracy is problematic as it is based on the idea of institutionalised competition between political forces who were previously at war which means that there still is the recognition of often deep divisions between them (ibid.: 16; Weimer, 2002: 64-66).

In Mozambique, the democratization process seems to have become stuck in the still on-going power dispute between Frelimo and Renamo, whereas the more popular dimensions of democracy have been relegated to a subordinate place. In this section, I first look at democracy from the 'top' view, highlighting how Frelimo has managed to maintain power in spite of all the institutional changes since the Peace Accords. Second, I discuss democracy from the 'bottom' view taking into account how ordinary Mozambicans, including organised civil society, have perceived these democratic changes, and the extent to which these have provided spaces for empowerment to occur. I argue that, whilst democratization has changed the institutional design of Mozambican politics, this was not enough to promote a significant change in power distribution especially in such a way as to empower Mozambicans in general. Instead, the structural constraints generated by Frelimo's dominance and the lack of strong political opposition reverberate at the bottom limiting the efficacy of a nascent organised civil society.

POWER AT THE TOP: THE MORE IT CHANGES THE MORE IT STAYS THE SAME

The democratic model agreed on in the peace negotiations presented a series of limitations to the consolidation of democracy in Mozambique. The adopted

model favoured a 'winner-take-all' system with a very strong executive and a weak legislative branch. Here, the president is directly elected by the people in a simple majority vote system, whereas the deputies of the national legislature are elected via a system of proportional representation which includes closed party lists in each of the 11 electoral districts (ten provinces and the capital). The number of seats is proportional to the registered number of voters in each electoral district, and until 2006, there was a clause in the legislation that forbade parties that obtained less than of 5% of the national votes from taking any seat thereby reducing any possibility of small parties being represented in the legislature. The president is head of state and chief executive and appoints the prime minister who is the chief of the cabinet as well as all the governors of the provinces and of Maputo. The President also appoints the cabinet without external consultation with other parties. In summary, the executive has dominant power in the main national decision-making process.

Taking into account the political history of Frelimo and Renamo, it is no wonder that the former was highly privileged by this model. Indeed, some analysts would argue that the peace deal was only possible precisely because Frelimo knew that with such a system, it would be able to retain control of the country's political scene (Carbone, 2005; Morier-Genoud, 2009). As of April 2014, Frelimo has won *all* presidential elections (1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009) as well as the majority of seats in Parliament and most municipal elections (1998, 2003, 2008, and 2013).

It should be noted that Frelimo's dominance, per se, would not be anti-democratic, assuming its power represented the actual will of the Mozambican people. Nevertheless, the case is far more complex. First, whereas the presidential and parliamentary elections have been considered free and fair overall, they have, nonetheless, been characterised by various irregularities. The 1999 elections were particularly tense as the results were very narrowly in favour of Frelimo's candidate, then president Joaquim Chissano, with a margin of just over 200 thousand votes, a number by far inferior to the total of invalid votes (500 thousand) (Hanlon, 2000). This prompted Renamo to contest the results and led to a series of protests that ended in clashes with the police. A dramatic episode took place in Montepuez where protestors were violently

suppressed by the police leading to the killing of 40 people and the further death of over 80 people who suffocated in an overcrowded prison (AIM, 5 Dec. 2000; Morier-Genoud, 2009: 159). The 2009 elections were also condemned by national and international observers (Hanlon, 2010a; Freedom House, 2014); however, as Frelimo won by a landslide, it was agreed that the irregularities did not fundamentally affect the results.

Second, Frelimo's position of dominance is enhanced by a series of mechanisms intended to consolidate the party's power in the state machinery. In this regard, the primacy of the party instead of the personal leadership is a key feature that makes Frelimo stronger than Renamo (Carbone, 2005; Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 96-97). By reinforcing a centralised decision-making process, the primacy of the party is also what keeps Frelimo united despite increasing internal fragmentation (ibid.; Weimer et al., 2012: 38-44). Finally, Frelimo's dominance is compounded by the party's control of the economy (see above) and the weak rule of law. In particular, the judiciary lacks independence, which is reinforced by the fact that judges and state attorneys are appointed by the head of state and depend financially on the executive (UNGA, 2001; BTI, 2014: 11; Fael and Cortez, 2013).

Third, there is a problem related to the weakness of the opposition parties and the fragmentation of Renamo. Whereas Renamo has invested in its political wing since the mid-1980s, and more effectively since the peace negotiations (Manning, 2002: 84), in time, it has lost cohesion. This was partly due to Dhlakama's individualistic and authoritarian way of ruling Renamo which has led to the expulsion of important cadres of the party who, in turn, have created or joined new parties or even been co-opted by Frelimo (Carbone, 2005; Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 94-95; Vines, 2013; BTI, 2014: 4, 14). Unfortunately, the new parties are too small to compete with Frelimo (ibid.; Van Den Bergh, 2009: 78, 113), so ultimately, Renamo gets weaker, and Frelimo gets stronger in the political setting.

The current political scenario has led observers to label Mozambique a de facto but not de jure one party state (Weimer et al., 2012: 39) as the aspects highlighted above are perpetuated notwithstanding the formal institutional reconfiguration of the state. Therefore, not only has democratization (elections)

not changed Frelimo's dominance, but also, it may have further legitimated it via the façade of elections. Additionally, the more this becomes consolidated, the more the opposition reacts, and the less attention is given to the grassroots and what changes democracy has brought locally.

More recently, the asymmetrical distribution of the peace dividend between the political elite has led to a new surge of instability that started in 2012 and persists at the time of writing (15 April 2014). Facing the emergence of new and more organised opposition parties, Renamo's leader has resumed violence as the main bargaining mechanism to pursue political negotiations. In April 2012, clashes between Renamo ex-combatants, Dhlakama's 'Presidential Guard' (about 300 men responsible for his security), and the government riot police took place in Nampula, then the residence of Renamo's leader. In October 2012, Dhlakama moved to Gorongosa, where Renamo held its base during the war, making threats of resuming the war and dividing the country in two as well as urging a revision of the Peace Accords (@ Verdade, 18 Oct. 2012).

In 2013, reacting to the electoral law approved in December 2012, Renamo started to engage in a series of activities which included ambushes on cars, lorries, and buses as well as military convoys (AIM, 26 Feb. 2014b); the blocking of one of the main transport arteries of the country; and the boycott of the 2013 municipal elections. Frelimo responded by resorting to military power in order to contain these actions (Canalmoz, 11 Feb. 2014). Yet, and despite this, after months of clashes, Renamo succeeded in changing the electoral law making a much criticised deal with Frelimo that was later endorsed in Parliament and marking a significant setback in the democratic procedures that regulated the National Elections Commission and its executive secretariat (Fauvet, 20 Feb. 2014; AIM, 26 Feb. 2014a; AIM; 06 Mar. 2014).

It is unlikely that these clashes will lead to a resumption of the war as the context that in the past allowed the war to flourish has fundamentally changed. Still, as shown, Renamo can cause substantial disruption to the country's economy and general stability. Whereas many of Renamo's weaknesses are a function of its origins and leadership, the way democracy has developed has much to do with the recent events. Renamo's behaviour is a clear call for a different distribution of the peace dividend. At the same time, it is a protest that

is little concerned with democracy from the perspective of what most Mozambicans want.

DEMOCRACY AND PEOPLE'S POWER

The dynamics highlighted above directly influence Mozambicans' perception about democracy and their country's political system as well as affect their behaviour. This shapes their willingness and ability to act in order to improve or sustain the current system, which, in turn, affects the chances of people's empowerment.

Since 2002, the independent research project Afrobarometer (2009 and 2012; Pereira et al., 2003) has been carrying out surveys across all 10 provinces in Mozambique interviewing samples of respectively 1400 (2002), 1198 (2005), 1200 (2008), and 2400 (2012) individuals/participants to enquire about their views on democracy. In 2005, they asked an open question about what democracy meant, and 33% of the respondents associated it with civil liberties and personal freedoms followed by 15% who associated it with peace. Curiously, only 8% made the link with elections and multiparty democracy, nearly the same percentage as those who related democracy with social and economic development (7%) and equality and justice (6%) (Afrobarometer, 2009: 2). In 2012, however, when asked about the relevance of having a multiparty system, 60% of the respondents 'agreed' or 'agreed very strongly' that "many political parties are needed to make sure that Mozambicans have real choices in who governs them" (ibid.: 19). Furthermore, when asked to choose just one thing as an 'essential' characteristic of democracy, the most frequent responses were: "people choose government leaders in free and fair elections"; "people are free to express their political views openly"; and "*government ensures job opportunities for all*" (emphasis added) (ibid.: 22).

It is interesting to note the striking change in the emphasis of some issues over others. The current concern with multiparty elections seems to reflect the constant repetition of a process that was non-existent before 1994 and a 'learning process' regarding what democracy is/should be. At the same time, the emphasis on 'freedom' and 'job opportunities' also shows that elections are

not sufficient and the responses reflect the dissatisfaction with post-war progress.

These opinions need to be contextualised. On the one hand, they represent the progressive internalisation of liberal values in a post-colonial society. On the other hand, they connect with views that stand in sharp contrast with the same liberal values. For instance, while acknowledging the value of the multiparty system, the general view of the state and its functions is still very paternalistic. As pointed out in the last Afrobarometer (2012: 13), when asked to choose between the two following statements: (1) “The government is like a parent. It should decide which is good for us”, or (2) “The government is like our employee. We are the bosses and should tell government what to do”, 39% of the respondents ‘strongly agreed’ and 20% ‘agreed’ with the first statement. So, on the one hand, there is a will for democracy (as represented by multiparty elections, freedom, and socio-economic improvements). On the other hand, the culture of participation as a means of ‘balancing the state’ or ‘making demands’ and ‘ensuring one’s own rights’ is still very weak, which is reflected in (and a reflection of) the development of civil society.

Since the introduction of the multiparty system, the number of CSOs has grown significantly in Mozambique totalling a registered number of 4457 in 2005 (Francisco, 2009: 62-63).⁴⁰ About one fourth of these organizations operate in the field of law, advocacy, and policies, and, in theory, they benefit from a legal environment that favours their potential lobbying activity (Francisco et al., 2007: 57). Nevertheless, there are many factors constraining their effectiveness.

The first factor is the institutional context where CSOs operate. Whereas there are opportunities for participation, such as the DOs, the *actual* capacity people have to exert power and influence politics is extremely limited as the informal domain of social relations, more often than not, overrides the formality of law. As noted by Francisco et al. (2007: 57), “It is not a formal or legal limitation, but rather constraints and forms of social and psychological intimidation that produce feelings of inhibition, fear of reprisals and emotional unease”. This fear is linked to the strong political competition between Frelimo and Renamo, which

⁴⁰ The article uses the term Non-Profit Institutions (NPI).

translates into different forms of ideological and political intolerance (ibid.). Moreover, there is a strong permeability between politics, the public sphere, and associations in general as many of the CSOs members previously worked for the government or have strong links with Frelimo (AfriMap, 2009: 76). Consequently, there is little pressure from CSOs to try and change the relationship between civil society and the government. Instead, they tend to adapt to the preferences of the latter (ibid.).

My experience in Nampula province corroborates some of these findings. Nampula is one of the provinces where about one fifth of CSOs are concentrated (AfriMap, 2009: 75) and has the reputation of having a strong and active civil society that is, moreover, very coordinated not only among themselves, but also with the provincial government through the Development Coordination Unit of Nampula province (UCODIN). In spite of this, many participants in this research admitted feeling that they are not free to speak their minds.

One interviewee, for instance, while speaking about local CSO employees, expressed the following concern:

. . . Depending on the situation and its convenience, people do or do not 'wear the shirt' of civil society.⁴¹ Because there are people that, in some instances we would expect them to present themselves and speak 'as civil society', but they don't. Even here it happens. Many people don't question things because they don't want to be seen 'badly' (*mal vistas*) . . . You have the privilege of being able to say what's on your mind, but I don't, because I cannot go against my employer (Int. 70).

That is particularly the case when the CSO organization does not have financial autonomy or when their work depends on the good will of the government bureaucracy.

Other interviewees reported examples of governmental pressure to retain control of certain processes such as trying to influence the allocation of

⁴¹ The expression in Portuguese is '*veste a camisola da sociedade civil*' and means 'assume openly the position of civil society'.

resources or exerting pressure in order to avoid public exposure of policy irregularities. A worker at a local CSO that offers funding for small projects, for instance, reported that before the '7 million', administrators tried to prevent them financing projects in regions where the opposition party was more popular and even tried to obtain the funding for their own governmental projects (Int. 48). As this particular CSO did *not* depend on government funding, they never had to compromise. Nevertheless, that is not the position of many CSOs in Mozambique.

In another case, just before my arrival in Nampula in May 2012, a meeting took place between several CSOs and members of the provincial government to assess the recent process of re-election of members of the local councils (see chapter 6). On this occasion, some CSOs who had followed the process decided to invite local individuals who were victims of improper procedures, e.g., were expelled from the councils without any due justification. Once these individuals started to tell their stories, some of the government participants tried to silence them and accused the CSOs of having invited 'external people' to the event without previous consultation. Suddenly, an issue of citizenship became an issue of authority and power relations. The fact was furthermore disturbing for the government as the people *they* had invited had a mostly positive assessment of the same process.

In some cases, the political aspect of the interference is clearly mixed with the personal interests of the individuals. An interviewee, for instance, recalled an episode in 1994, when, while working for an international NGO, he fired a local employee who was caught stealing (Int. 11). He did so by launching a disciplinary process and suing the employee. The latter tried to appeal in court but lost the case. However, during this period, the NGO received state inspections from several departments on a weekly/15 day basis as an indirect mechanism of pressure because the ex-employee had very strong political connections. According to him, cases such as this still happen, although with less frequency than in the past, and constitute a clear example of how bureaucracy becomes an instrument of political power.

A second aspect that has a negative effect on CSO's capacity in Mozambique is the matter of resources (Francisco et al., 2007; AfriMap, 2009). According to

INE, the Mozambican National Institute of Statistics, 70% of CSO funding in 2005 was coming from abroad compared to 25% from private companies and families and 3% from the government (Francisco et al., 2007: 38). As the CSOs are dependent on external funding, that means that, while they are free from internal political pressure, their agendas are often (if not always) influenced by donors' priorities (see Hanlon, 1991). Besides, this dependency also points to the high risk of discontinuity of projects (Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 22-23).

In Nampula I interviewed and had several informal conversations with different individuals from six CSOs including local and international NGOs. At least three local CSOs had a general policy of *not* receiving government funding as a means of ensuring their autonomy and neutrality. However, their reliance on donors often had direct effects on their work even if in varying degrees. In some cases, for instance, they had to slightly 'rephrase' their plans of actions or make small changes in order to satisfy the donor but in ways that still allowed them to pursue their own agenda. In other cases, they had to delay on-going projects as they waited for donors' approval of new budgets. In extreme cases, there were also incidents of discontinuity or radical change of projects especially in the case of international NGOs (Int. 11, 49, 50, 57). In Nampula, a response to these shortcomings was found in the strong cooperation institutionalised in the Provincial Civil Society Platform, which gathers all provincial CSOs together, in an effort to coordinate their work, avoid duplication of activities, and save costs in the case of projects that have common or related targets.

A third kind of problem faced by CSOs in Mozambique is the general political, social, and economic environment in which they operate. The political aspect is very connected to the institutional domain highlighted above and centred on the polarised competition between Frelimo and Renamo. However, it is also worsened by the high levels of corruption present at different levels of social strata, as well as by the high levels of poverty and illiteracy, which results in the absence of a broad popular critical mass (Francisco et al., 2007: 64). This last aspect is particularly important because it is not simply a result of 'bad policies', but a mix of historical factors combined with deep-rooted cultural aspects that are very difficult to change.

My experience in Nampula also supported this explanation. According to a CSO worker in Nampula, for instance, one of the main problems he found in his work was the general lack of knowledge that individuals have about their rights (Int. 48). This is, indeed, a problem generally recognised in the province (and which is by no means exclusive to Mozambique). Not only are the people not aware of their rights, but even when they perceive there is something ‘wrong’ happening, they frequently do not know where to go in order to complain. Indeed, the same interviewee added, “I am not sure whether it is really lack of consciousness about their rights or whether it is a profound mistrust of the judiciary system. It is something in between”. As several examples of the case study will show, this seems to be the case. When justice is hampered through a series of informal networks of power, those who have no resources to push for justice see themselves with no option but to give up or wait for someone to help them.

More generally, this situation seems to reflect a vicious circle where a history of democratic deficit is amplified by the socio-economic situation and vice-versa. As Cabaço (1995: 102) observed, whilst the Rome Accords put an end to the wave of destruction that consumed Mozambique for so many years, they did *not* bring any proposal for the recomposition of Mozambican society. Therefore, the new concepts introduced after peace such as democracy, multiparty elections, and separation of powers were as abstract and distant from the ordinary Mozambican as was the previous concept of democratic centralism and, therefore, did not have a catalysing effect in order to actually change social relations at the local level.

Twenty years later, Cabaço’s reflections are still pertinent and lead us to enquire why these concepts seem so distant from the everyday lives of the majority of the population. In this regard, one aspect that is at the heart of this (lack of) change is the clear imbalance between the (formal) gains of civil liberties in contrast to the material benefits of democracy. Ultimately, especially in the rural areas, daily needs (food, water, hospitals) are the order of the day and often take precedence over other concerns. In fact, often people’s engagement with party politics seems to be driven by these very needs.

An informal comment from a local citizen in Angoche was illustrative in this regard. While he was talking about the general problems of his locality such as

lack of water and hospitals, he mentioned with an exclamatory tone “And we are all Frelimo here!” as if the political affiliation was the factor entitling them to receive these which in reality should be their basic rights. That was not an isolated experience. In many instances, the feeling of citizenship manifested by some individuals was mingled with a sense of ‘belonging to the party’ as if they were two sides of the same coin.

According to an interviewee (Int. 70), this problem is very much enhanced by the current levels of poverty and lack of opportunities. As people do not have many options, they feel the need to get attached to politics or silence criticism for fear of losing what is, in fact, their citizens’ rights. In her view, as the working environment becomes disconnected from the public sector, this fear may diminish and people may feel more entitled to think critically and express their criticism. From this perspective, we may understand that disempowerment, in this case, has a huge structural component that will only be overcome when people decide to take risks and challenge the current power structure. In this context, perhaps the major problem faced by CSOs is precisely changing mentalities (or breaking the *habitus*).

THE DIALECTICS OF EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SOCIAL ENGINEERING

An employee of a local NGO in Nampula spoke to me about the problem of ‘mental poverty’ (Int. 57) saying, “Until people are able to get out of this situation of mental poverty they will lose and become increasingly poorer. We won’t be able to get over the material poverty . . . As you may imagine, changing the mentality of an adult person is not easy. It takes time, a lot of time...” And this is something that a three-year project, or any single project, would not be able to do.

A worker at another local NGO, which works exclusively with capacity building, reported, “I feel that . . . people . . . are more worried about obtaining subsidies and gifts than with obtaining knowledge and as a result many people do not get an adequate capacity-building” (Int. 56). In her view, many people attended the NGO meetings for capacity building precisely because of the food or because they received notebooks and pens, and she thought that if those were not provided probably the attendance would decline sharply. “This is a poverty

situation. There are people who are interested in learning, but others only go to get something [material] and I feel this is a setback, because if people were eager to learn . . . they could slowly develop”.

Similarly, a worker at yet another local NGO noticed that in the districts people have a weak vision of their own development. In his words, they have “a general perception that we are ‘poor ones’ (*uns pobres coitados*) that need help and that what people give is ‘help’, ‘charity’”. According to him there is no agency, initiative to change, but instead a mentality of “waiting for help” (Int. 68).

If the aim is changing mentalities — so that empowerment may take place — then the paradox underneath this aim becomes evident and the question arises, ‘How can empowerment be achieved through a process of social engineering?’ The comments above point to a major problem in the general assessment of CSO’s effectiveness in Mozambique, which is the fact that many still work from the ‘top-down’ instead of from the ‘bottom-up’. First, most development workers I met come from a very Western perspective of development. Many have studied abroad or have been trained by international development agencies both governmental as well as non-governmental. As such, there is a general desire to transform the local society, so they may develop according to what would be the desirable model from a Western development perspective. This presents a natural contradiction where, even though we have local people working locally, the agenda is overall guided by the perceived need for social engineering and the need for transformation and changing mentalities instead of being demand-driven.

This problem is recognised by some CSO employees who presented a very reflective position about their own work. According to one of them, “We don’t have an approach to empowerment that begins from the bottom-up . . . It is always ‘look, governance is this... nutrition is that’ . . . I think that by bringing this knowledge to the community you even create conflict . . . of identity, conflicts of ways of being (*formas de estar*)”. He gave the example of gender equality, and added, “Ultimately the question remains whether we are empowering or bringing more confusion” (Int. 49).

Another interviewee further noted the discrepancy between what people preach and what they do outside their jobs. “Your job tells you that you ‘have to promote participation’. So I go there preaching this as a way to guarantee my own job, not because I think I have to change something in my country” (Int. 70). The different behaviour that individuals have once they get home from their jobs represents a blatant example of how some values are not truly embedded in the agents that are supposed to promote change. In her view, this is a major problem when it comes to the sustainability of these projects. Once the agencies and the funding are gone, the situation reverts.

The question to be asked is whether, in spite of all these problems, these efforts are still worthy and if they bring enough benefits to promote long-term change, or, instead, whether they further enhance the spirit of dependency and reinforce the very mentality they aim to change. An anecdote from a local employee of an international NGO summarises this dilemma. While visiting a village, he asked to speak to the chief of the local committee the organization was working with. While waiting, he overheard the chief saying in Macua, “Let him wait. I am the chief. If it wasn’t for us he wouldn’t have a job” (Int. 68). The story suggests that, perhaps, the mentality has changed but not in the way expected. As CSOs jump to cover areas that the state is not ‘able’ to, they seem to reverse the chain of responsibility. So instead of complaining to the government about the need for schools, water, etc., communities often turn to NGOs or self-mobilization while reinforcing the legitimacy of the government (which may then claim that things have changed for the better) even if the latter is not providing for their needs.

This problem is reflected in the complicated assessment of CSOs’ impact in promoting empowerment and is at the heart of the technical/emancipatory approaches debate. The central issue is how to measure the effects of these interventions in the long term and, especially, to what extent they contribute to the creation of critical consciousness perhaps having an effect beyond the local level. According to some practitioners, there has been an increasing awareness of the people’s rights in the fields they work with, e.g., land rights and human rights (Int. 37, 57). The extent to which this consciousness translates into action, however, is not straightforward, and sometimes, it is not necessarily

captured within the scope of action of the CSO as there are significant variations according to each area and each CSO's experience. As noted by one interviewee, there are changes, but they come very slowly (Int. 70).

In summary, much has changed with the introduction of democracy especially in the formal domain of the Mozambican state. Despite this, substantial changes, especially in terms of power redistribution, have been less visible. The potential of democracy for people's empowerment has been strongly hindered; first, by the problems linked to the strong role of party politics in the country's life and second, by the socio-economic problems inherited since colonial times and compounded by the war. As politics and the economy are inextricably linked, ultimately, it seems very difficult to break what has become a vicious circle of politicization and power reiteration. Nevertheless, there are signs of change, and, as many Mozambicans reminded me, big changes take time.

4.4 Conclusion

Many things have changed, many things... For instance, here we did not have a mill, now we do. There is a school in the other village. In some places there is electricity... (FG 26).

Nothing has changed. It got worse! . . . It was worth during war time. . . . We know that war destroys, kills, but we are all able to find a way. Now you have a part of those who own the world, while you stay there humiliated (Int. 36).

The country is developing, but in the cities . . . Here? We are producing, we are not told what to do (FG 17).

What has changed for the ordinary Mozambican after the end of the war? I asked this question repeatedly in Angoche and was often surprised by the different answers. Many participants highlighted the changes in security — the 'no need to run anymore' (FG 64) — as well as the improved access to basic services that did not exist previously. But some also manifested disillusionment and recognised the inequality of these improvements. A *régulo* even recalled with some nostalgia the colonial times when roads were better and the economy was thriving in the district (FG 66). Responses reflected some of the

issues discussed above, in particular, how the peace dividend has been distributed and the nature of the changes that have occurred with peace.

In this chapter, I have focused on the general institutional changes linked to the peace/statebuilding process. In this regard, first, the chapter highlighted the general disconnect between the 'top' and the 'bottom' levels in the design of peace including the country's policies for development and democracy. The 'top' in this case was represented by the political elite that constituted the state administrative apparatus and, also with varying degrees, the international actors that were also involved in these processes. I would like to reinforce this aspect of variety in the degree of influence when it comes to external actors. Indeed, whether or not donors may have influenced several aspects of the peacebuilding process in Mozambique, internal power dynamics played a fundamental role in shaping the final outcome of peace and directly affected the warring factions willingness to accept or reject external recommendations. More generally, even though donors have strong bargaining power due to the country's aid dependency, this does not translate directly into a form of top-down *power over*. As much as Mozambique needs aid, donors also need the success-case story to sustain similar policies in other places, so they also often compromise.

Instead, a higher degree of power asymmetry seems to exist between the 'top' (the political elite) and the 'bottom' (the ordinary Mozambicans) because of the dire socio-economic conditions that prevail in the country. So, whereas in theory, people have the power to react, protest, try to change things, in practice, personal risks may be too high endangering their very survival. It is here that we may observe the strong structural constraint that exists on people's empowerment. On this, two aspects further consolidate this situation. First, there is a strong link between the socio-economic and the political constraints faced by Mozambicans. In particular, the country's economy has become increasingly linked with the consolidation of the dominant party, so the spaces for change and contestation are reduced. Second, the government has implemented a series of cosmetic measures that are theoretically pro-empowerment but which, instead, reinforce the current state of affairs. Therefore, as people are given spaces to participate, they are led to believe that

things are improving. Nevertheless, the fact that these spaces do not lead to structural changes begs the question of whether the government is not simply postponing de facto empowerment by containing stronger claims and demands for change.

More generally, peacebuilding in Mozambique demonstrates the limitations of social engineering processes in promoting empowerment. Social engineering is based on a linear understanding of progress, while empowerment, as discussed in this thesis, has a dialectical aspect more often than not accompanied by conflicts of interest. The current processes of social engineering in peacebuilding have incorporated the premise that changing processes leads to a change in results. What the Mozambican case illustrates is that processes may be changed but in such a way as to leave specific power dynamics largely unaltered and thus limit the scope for power change. More generally, changes at the 'top' do not necessarily lead to changes at the 'bottom' level. On the contrary, by adapting change mechanisms, it is possible for elites to manipulate the spaces for change at the local level, especially, when the processes are based on fundamental social assumptions that differ from the local context. This particular aspect will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 5

The '7 million' Viewed from the Top

Roberta, decentralisation is becoming re-centralisation! . . . I usually say that our rulers don't feel as if they were Mozambicans; they feel as if they were the owners of Mozambique.

(Interviewee, Nampula)

This chapter discusses the origins, the design, and the empowerment rationale of the '7 million', this thesis' case study. The '7 million' has become, in recent years, one of the main political flags of President Guebuza, and it is presented as a fundamental tool of the 'fight against poverty' as well as an instrument that fosters decentralisation and local empowerment. It represents, in this regard, a synthesis of the post-war changes discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter focuses specifically on how this initiative came into existence, what its purpose is in the Mozambican political agenda, and its empowerment rationale. Central to this discussion is the clash of opinions regarding what the '7 million' should be, how it should operate, and how this is reflected in its transformation, refinement, and operationalization in time.

The chapter concentrates on the upper levels of analysis of the empowerment framework proposed in Chapter 2, in particular the national level, but also taking into account the role of donors and the sub-national provincial level. First, I discuss the general features of decentralisation in Mozambique. Second, I review the origins of the '7 million' by considering both the background experiences that preceded it as well as the political drivers behind it. Third, I examine the regulatory instruments of the initiative detailing its empowering mechanisms and its expected outcomes. Fourth, I consider the views of the central government and provincial actors regarding the achievements of the '7 million'. Finally, I discuss the institutional and methodological limitations related to the initiative and its assessment.

I argue that, whereas the '7 million' was originally inspired by previous successful experiments of decentralised planning, in time, it became a political tool attached to President Guebuza's political agenda. This had the negative effect of narrowing the initiative's empowering potential as (1) political decisions took precedence over technical and practical concerns and (2) the series of problems behind the initiative and its assessment have been silenced in favour of a discourse that highlights its success outcomes.

5.1 Decentralisation in Mozambique

Decentralisation has been at the centre of the institutional reforms pursued by several post-war countries, being perceived as an important mechanism to enhance democracy and development (Baker, 2006: 32; Jackson and Scott, 2007). The argument pro-decentralisation is largely informed by its empowering aspects. First, it is argued that by bringing the government closer to the people, the former will be held more accountable for its performance (UNDP/ECA, 2002: 10; Crook, 2003: 77; Massuanganhe, 2006; Heijke and van den Berg, 2011: 3). Second, decentralisation is perceived as contributing to poverty reduction precisely because resources are allocated at the local level (UNDP/ECA, 2002: 13). Consequently, in theory, decentralisation should redistribute power resources (political and economic) across different layers of society.

In Africa, in particular since the early 1990s, there has been a strong push towards decentralisation. Nevertheless, it is the case that in several instances decentralisation has *not* redistributed power; instead, it has "reinforced the power of local elites and has worsened spatial inequalities" (Olowu and Wunsh, 2004; see also UNDP/ECA, 2002: 13; Boone, 2003; Crook, 2003). Reasons for this include the current conditions that prevail in African states, which cover both practical aspects (e.g., scarce human resources and harsh political and institutional environments) (UNDP/ECA, 2002: 18-19; Olowu and Wunsh, 2004: 13-14), as well as institutional aspects often reflected in the mechanisms of clientelism (ibid.; Zack-Williams and Mohan, 2004: 9). Moreover, the dual nature of the African state points towards a de facto disjuncture between formal rules

and local practices which also contributes to these poor results (Boone, 2003: 4).

Taking this into account, the choice of *which kind* of decentralisation and *how* it will be implemented is a key question to be posed. Broadly speaking, decentralisation may be understood as “those legal acts and administrative measures that initiate a transfer of responsibility (authority), resources (human and financial), accountability, and rules (institutions) from central government to local entities” (Olowu and Wunsh, 2004: 4-5). It is an institutional process that aims to redistribute power within the national context, reinforcing mechanisms of local governance. Due to its complexity, decentralisation is often fragmented or put in place gradually, redistributing only one or few of these aspects.

In Mozambique, decentralisation was introduced in the context of the institutional reforms that followed the Peace Accords of 1992, and it was driven by the need for stabilisation and economic recovery (Reaud and Weimer, 2010). From the perspective of peace, decentralisation was also based on the need to understand more deeply the local aspects that had contributed to the war and, thus, constituted an effort from the government to get closer to the population (Lundin, 2002: 107).

The first law on devolution (3/94), known as the law on municipalities, was passed just before the first multiparty elections in 1994 and called for elections of all the presidents of the municipal councils, the district administrators, and district and municipal assemblies in the country. Elections were scheduled for 1996, but when it came to its implementation Renamo questioned the legislation, and Frelimo found itself torn between pro-reformists and conservatives (Braathen and Jørgensen, 1998; Bornstein, 2008; Weimer, 2012: 86-87) stalling the process. Notwithstanding the internal division, Frelimo was also under the influence of donors who were already supporting several projects of decentralised budgeting in selected provinces (Barnes, 2005; Bornstein, 2008; Reaud and Weimer, 2010: 18). The government furthermore faced practical problems linked to the access to service provision in the districts. As a consequence, a compromise emerged. First in November 1995, the assembly declared the devolution law unconstitutional. Then in 1996, a constitutional amendment was passed (Law 9/1996) which created a parallel

system of local governance, which included the urban *autarquias* (the municipalities) and the *deconcentrated* local state organs (known as OLEs). A further law (10/97), officially designated 33 municipalities.⁴² The OLEs were regulated by Law 8/2003 five years later.

In practice, this parallel structure refers to the different dimensions of power and autonomy in the case of each administrative entity; the actual process of decentralisation is concentrated at the level of the municipalities while the OLEs represent the process of deconcentration (Rep. of Moz., 2005, Art. 3, Par. 1). Therefore, the municipalities have mayors and Municipal Assemblies elected every five years as well as their own revenue system (Reaud and Weimer, 2010), while the OLEs have their main political representatives indicated by a superior administrative echelon, which ultimately reinforces a system where accountability is upwards — to the authorities, not to the citizens (Jackson, 2002: 9).

This system reflects the *gradual* approach to decentralisation, which entails the progressive transformation of the OLEs into municipalities (Weimer, 2012: 77). Gradualism takes into account the ‘lessons learned’ from the process as it is implemented in stages avoiding a ‘shock therapy’ that could have negative effects, especially in the fiscal domain. It also takes into account the local need for capacity building and the actual resources needed to make this process effective (Int. 73). Nevertheless, some analysts interpret this option as the only available compromise inside Frelimo (Soiri, 1996; Weimer, 2012: 78), which seems to explain the process’ pace, in particular, the sudden amendment of the law on devolution. Indeed, the 1994 parliamentary elections showed that Renamo had much more support in the rural areas than Frelimo had expected, therefore many analysts agree that this move was intended to maintain the current power distribution in favour of Frelimo (Meneses and Santos, 2009; Reaud and Weimer, 2010; Weimer, 2012: 87).

In practice, this dual governance system has turned out to be quite complex and contradictory in its operation. For one, the parallel system of sub-national decentralised units leads to constant conflicts of authority between the

⁴² In 2008, another 10 municipalities were created and a further 10 in 2013.

representatives appointed by the government (at the provincial and district level) and the elected mayors in the municipalities that often share the same territory (Soiri, 1999: 24-25; Meneses and Santos, 2009). This level of conflict is further exacerbated by the role played by traditional authorities, and it is intensified where the opposition comes to power through municipal elections and its policies collide with the Frelimo government's agenda (ibid.).

The role of the traditional authorities is, indeed, an important crosscutting issue in Mozambique and that affects the process of decentralisation. As noted in Chapter 3, after independence, Frelimo took a harsh stance on traditional actors. In 2000, recognising the need to review the relationship between these authorities and the state, the Council of Ministers approved a decree (15/2000) introducing the term *community authorities* as a replacement for *traditional authorities*. The idea was to make the latter more inclusive emphasising the legitimacy aspect of the community in recognising the leaders. Also, community authorities would not only include traditional lineage chiefs but also neighbourhood and village secretaries as well as other local leaders recognised by the community (Weimer, 2002: 77).

Whilst this process has been presented as a form of recognition of the local, in practice, several critiques have been raised both regarding the process that led to the recognition of these authorities as well as to the actual function of the decree. In the first case, the question of who was a legitimate traditional authority was far from clear, and the process was highly contested at the local level (Buur and Kyed, 2006). In the second case, and to a great extent because of the former, the process was perceived as a way to further centralise political control. Buur et al. (2007: 13), for instance, noted that "initial drafts of the LOLE [Law of the Local State Organs] law provided for consultative forums comprising appointed and locally 'elected' people's representatives, but these provisions were later removed" on the basis of Decree 15/2000. The decree was further used to justify the non-expansion of local elections to the rural areas (ibid.). The political drive of the initiative was also visible in the fact that the recognised leaders (over four thousand) were overwhelmingly Frelimo members (Buur and Kyed, 2006: 852).

This very complex context of decentralisation sets the scenario for the launch and implementation of the '7 million' and, unsurprisingly, will be reflected in many of the contradictions and limitations of the initiative. The next section discusses the specific background of the '7 million', highlighting its link with the overall process of decentralisation.

5.2 The Origins of The '7 Million'

One of the findings of this research lies in the identification of two different narratives regarding the origins and purposes of the '7 million'. On the one hand, there were actors who understood the origins of the initiative as going far back to the immediate post-war era, if not before, and saw it as the culmination of a series of previous experiments with decentralised budgeting that were taking place in the country in coordination with donors (Int. 1, 2, 71). On the other hand, there were those — especially in the high echelons of the state — who focused on the *open presidencies*⁴³ of Guebuza as the main driver of the initiative. According to this narrative, it was during the President's visits to the countryside that the issue of lack of credit as a major hindrance to development in agriculture became visible (Int. 3, 4, 74).

These two views are not mutually exclusive, nevertheless, they place a different emphasis on what is or should be the most fundamental purpose of the '7 million'. In the first case, the purpose should be to contribute to the on-going process of decentralisation; whereas in the second case, the driver is specifically centred on the provision of credit concessions to the poor strata of rural society. The second view ultimately informed the progressive regulation of what started as a budget and was later transformed into a fund. At the same time, because of these different views, the process that led to the regulation of the '7 million' was also accompanied by a series of tensions inside the government especially between the technocrats on the one hand and the political strata on the other hand.

⁴³ These are annual visits that the President makes in the rural areas, in order to interact directly with the population. During the visits, local people have the chance to publicly speak to the president and raise questions or complains about local issues.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH DISTRICT PLANNING

From the long-term perspective, the origin of the '7 million' is deeply embedded in the immediate post-war context and the recognised need to place the district at the centre of the political agenda (Int. 2, 71). To that end, in 1994, a small budget was allocated to the provinces in order to be distributed to various agencies and district administration departments (Int. 71; *ECIAfrica*, 2004: 14; Barnes, 2005). At the same time, several donor agencies working with rural development in the provinces introduced a series of participative methodologies as components of their projects that, at the time, focused mostly on infrastructure (Barnes, 2005). By 1997, district planning initiatives were taking place in at least five of the ten provinces in Mozambique supported by international aid agencies. It was then that the government ordered an evaluation of these experiments and, based on the results, decided to implement a pilot programme on decentralised planning and finance in Nampula province in 1998 (*ibid.*; *ECIAfrica*, 2004: 14).

What became known as the 'Nampula pilot' (officially, the Local Development Fund Programme in Nampula Province) was built upon a pre-existing United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) project in that province in partnership with the National Direction of Budget and Planning (DNPO, then part of Ministry of Planning and Finance, MPF) and with support from the government of the Netherlands and the UNDP (*ibid.*; Borowczak and Weimer, 2012: 112). In 2002, the project was expanded to the province of Cabo Delgado and, in 2003, the World Bank decided to replicate the experience in four other provinces.

In its origins, the Nampula project was broadly focused on participative planning, community, and capacity development (Int. 6). The idea was to train local citizens so they could progressively become engaged in participatory planning and enhance local accountability. This was a 'soft' approach, in the sense that they were basically experimenting with new participative methodologies and adapting them according to the context (Int. 11; Pijnenburg, 2004: 105-117). At the time, the fund entered the existing budget mechanism (through the provinces), and there were priority areas, in particular, basic

services. The district in consultation with the population decided the specific priorities (Int. 6).

The 'Nampula pilot' is considered by many as a watershed in the Mozambican experience of decentralised planning, in particular, because it was backed by significant resources both in planning and implementation and because it had important upstream effects, including the Program of Decentralised Planning and Financing (PPFD) (ECIAfrica, 2004; Barnes, 2005; Borowczak and Weimer, 2012: 109-114). Other important legacies were the introduction of the District Development Plans (PDD)⁴⁴ and the District Social and Economic Budget Plan (PESOD) (ibid.; Macuane et al., 2012: 244). Furthermore, it was in Nampula where the first versions of the local councils were created (ibid.).

Many elements contributed to the success of the Nampula experience, in particular, the impressive coordination between donors, the provincial government, and the central government (Borowczak and Weimer, 2012: 115-116) as well as the strong coordination with CSOs, which were particularly involved in the constitution of the councils and the implementation of participatory district planning activities (ibid.; Macuane et al., 2012: 246). There were, however, limitations as well. In terms of development outcomes, the Nampula experience did not take into account the development of the local market and private sector even though there were local demands for this (Int. 82). In addition, the participatory mechanisms focused on promoting participation in the *planning* stage, but not in the *implementation* stage (e.g., by hiring local workers to build the new infra-structure), which partially reduced the feeling of ownership in the community (Int. 10). Several of these limitations were later reflected in the implementation of the '7 million'. A central question, however, is 'to what extent did the above experiences influence the design and rationale of the initiative?'

THE BIRTH AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE '7 MILLION'

According to an interviewee who closely followed the birth of the '7 million', the above experiments were indeed a source of inspiration for the creation of the

⁴⁴ These are called Strategic District Development Plans (PEDD) from 2004.

initiative as there was a general perception that they had effectively promoted local empowerment by encouraging participatory planning (Int. 2). At the same time, there was also recognition that these different resources, coordinated by donors and the provincial governments, could be managed more efficiently when directly flowing to the districts. It was in this context that there was a suggestion in the DNPO that all the funds reaching the districts via the provinces should be merged, and the total value split among the number of districts and be sent directly to each one of them. The monetary value at the time (2005) was around USD 300,000 per district or seven billion metical⁴⁵ (Int. 2). The suggestion was incorporated in the national budget approved for 2006 (Rep. of Moz., Law 12/2005) which included, for the first time, a direct allocation of seven billion metical to each of the 128 districts in the country⁴⁶ and was formally called the Local Initiative Investment Budget (*Orçamento de Investimento de Iniciativa Local*, OIIL) later popularised as the '7 million'. Thus, in 2006, the previous projects led by donors and the provinces were substituted by a unique *national* project, and for the first time, all districts became *de facto* (as since 2003 they were already were *de jure*) state budgetary units (Int. 2; Valá, 2010: 37).

At first, the law did not set out specific rules for the use of the budget, but initial instructions coming from Maputo stated it should be channelled to the infrastructure sector (Int. 2; Valá, 2010: 27). Indeed, in many cases the budget was used in infrastructure and other local development activities (ibid.; Int. 74). However, there were also several cases where it was used 'discretionarily' by district administrators who spent it buying luxuries such as cars, new expensive furniture, improving their own houses, the administration building, and even purchasing jacuzzis (Int. 2, 4). Since there were no clear rules attached to budget use, it was even problematic to classify these actions as 'irregular'. In fact, it is often simply acknowledged that 2006 should not be taken into account in the assessment of the '7 million'.

⁴⁵ It later became seven million because in January 2006, the new metical was introduced worth 1000 of the old metical.

⁴⁶ Besides the 128 rural districts, two urban districts were included and in 2008 a further two (Rep. of Moz., MPD, 2009a: 2).

Besides, when the '7 million' was introduced, there were no clear mechanisms of monitoring and accountability. Indeed, it was only during the open presidencies, which started to take place nationally from 2005, that President Guebuza had the chance to see the often problematic use of the '7 million' in the districts. That was also the moment when the initiative moved from a more technical experiment linked with decentralisation to becoming a political flag of his government.

The first attempts to regulate the '7 million' came in April 2006 when a circular from the Ministry of Finance (Rep. of Moz., MF, 37/GM/MF/06) was sent out to all provinces indicating that the budget should be used in local investment initiatives without giving further details on what kinds of activities this included. In May, another circular (Rep. of Moz., MF, 101/GM/MF/2006) was disseminated specifying the 'Methodological Orientations for the Execution of Funds for Local Investment Initiative Expenses', including the '7 million'.⁴⁷ The document included a section on the use of funds for the development of socio-economic infrastructure as well as a section focusing on the promotion of local economic development activities, which included the selection of projects discussed with the local councils. At the time, there were no legal mechanisms to allow the district government to deliver money directly to the beneficiaries; therefore, the orientations also established that the district administration was the intermediary that purchased any material requested.

In August 2006, an expanded meeting with ministers and all district administrators was held, and there were clear instructions that the budget would now have to be used to fund exclusively economic activities aimed at food production, income generation, and job creation (Int. 2, 3; Valá, 2010: 27). This meeting was a crucial landmark in the definition of the '7 million' and was followed by a long and difficult process aimed at regulating and fitting the new instrument into national legislation. The first problem was that, due to the

⁴⁷ I would like to highlight the use of the terms as only in 2009 the '7 million' became a *fund*. The change of terminology often gives rise to confusion as there were already district funds in the past, and today there are other funds in the district besides the '7 million'. I interpret this as one of the signs of the lack of clarity of such instruments since its inception.

different initial instructions, there were already several projects going on that suddenly had to be interrupted (Int. 2). Not finding other means to finish what they had started, many administrators began to pressure the government and contest the decision. In response, the government clarified that the provinces should *not* stop supporting the districts. Additionally, in 2008, it decided that a small part of the district budget (2.3 million meticaís) would be allocated to administrative activities at the local level (Rep. of Moz., MPD, 2009a: 16). Moreover, a differentiation criterion was created constituted by a formula that took into account for each district: (1) the population number (35%), (2) the local poverty index (30%), (3) the district territorial extension (20%), and (4) their capacity to collect public revenue (15%) (Rep. of Moz., MPD, 2009a: 8). At the time these criteria were discussed, there was a suggestion that district performance should also be taken into account in order to stimulate competition and effective use of the resources (Int. 4). This criterion, however, never entered the equation.

In the meantime, all through 2007, the government pushed for a series of training events in order to capacitate the local councils about the use of the '7 million' (Int. 3). Yet in 2008, several problems still persisted, in particular, in the process of budget allocation. One of the problems was the lack of control and transparency in the use of the '7 million'.⁴⁸ A common practice, for instance, was for members of the local administration to offer a certain amount of money or products to the small farmer and ask him to sign the documents as if he was taking double that amount. There were also several problems with district administrators. One, for instance, was caught with USD 80,000 in his personal

⁴⁸ The '7 million' has been a hot topic in the press portrayed as both a miracle and as an initiative with several 'cardinal sins'. The amount and extent of the critique of the initiative depends on the source. *AIM* and *Journal Notícias*, for instance, while acknowledging some problems also note the government's efforts to tackle the issues, which are depicted mostly as problems of implementation at the local level. Other sources, such as *O País*, *Canalmoz*, *Savana*, and blogs such as *macua.blog* offer more in-depth critiques of the initiative often relating what happens locally with structural aspects of the initiative. But they also report stories about people who obtain the fund and run away or stories of politicisation (party bias) in the fund allocation.

account. Others were discovered and face disciplinary processes. But many were never held accountable (Int. 2).

At the heart of the issue was the legal means available to implement what was ultimately a political decision. With the new directives regarding the '7 million', there was a call for the government to enter what was traditionally the private sphere, something it did not have legal competency for. It was here where the tensions became stronger between the government's political wing, on the one hand, and the technocrats on the other hand. However, an order 'came from above',⁴⁹ and it stated that the money should be distributed directly to the people, so, the working group in charge of regulating the OIIL needed to "figure out" a legal basis to make it happen (Int. 2, 83). It was at this juncture that the idea of transforming the OIIL into a fund started to take root. As a budget, the '7 million' needed to be used within each fiscal year, and all the repayments would go back to the state coffers which partially stimulated the mentality of immediate gain. As a fund, the money would remain in the district in the long run and the state could progressively withdraw, as the fund would slowly feed itself through the repayment of the loans (Int. 2, 3).

One crucial matter to define was the fund's administration. The technocrats advocated that the fund needed to be managed autonomously from the district administration by a non-governmental body also responsible for its monitoring (Int. 83). Whilst this was complicated, due to the costs of building such an autonomous structure in the 128 districts (Int. 82), the working group tried to advance such a proposal at the Council of Ministers, but they faced fierce opposition from several lobbies inside the government (Int. 2).

The decree approving the District Development Fund (FDD) — the updated version of the '7 million' — was ultimately passed in December 2009. The 'solution' found by the working group was to make an exception to the role of the councils as stated in the LOLE. In that document, the local councils are merely consultative, whereas the administrator is the one to make decisions

⁴⁹ This expression was used constantly in the interviews with participants in the central government, and stressed the top-down character of several decisions related to the '7 million'. The last section of this chapter discusses this in more detail.

while taking into account the opinions of the councils. Nevertheless, when it comes to the '7 million', the councils assume the position of decision-makers in the choice of the projects to be funded. That was the way to "play with the law" (Int. 2).

As this process was taking place, donors and IFIs started to put pressure on the government by expressing their disagreement with the idea of the state giving credit to people (Int. 2), although this criticism was never made public (Int. 1). There were informal comments that the scheme was a waste of money and it was a political instrument to gain votes during the elections (Int. 4, 73). In spite of this, the government did not reconsider. As noted by the Minister of Finance, "We consider this a Mozambican model . . . Don't other countries subsidise agriculture? We want to do this but differently" (Int. 73). Eventually, this resistance and criticism faded.

It should be noted that, even though the '7 million' was a national initiative, it was only possible because of the huge amount of donors' budget support directed to Mozambique over the years and continuing even today. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that donors could have put enough pressure on the government to make it reconsider the allocation of the '7 million' or push further for the money to be distributed to micro-credit institutions, so these could manage the loans to local entrepreneurs. Yet, donors' option, ultimately, was to stay quiet (Int. 1). There was no clear answer as to why this was so, but a possible interpretation is that there was a strong political pressure for the '7 million' to be implemented and, as its total cost was proportionally low, donors may have simply preferred to keep silent (*ibid.*). At the same time, and even though the credit was to be financed by the state, it still aimed at the development of the private sector, which contributed to the enhancement of the market economy, a goal more in line with donors' preferences.

TRIAL AND ERROR, AND THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE '7 MILLION'

The '7 million' is generally portrayed as a trial and error initiative (*aprender fazendo*) (Int. 2, 4, 6, 73, 74). As explained by several interviewees, the '7 million', when first implemented was experimental, so the 'lack of rules' was not a 'slip', but an intentional aspect (Int. 6, 73, 74). More generally, the instructions

received initially were aimed at minimising any central and provincial government intervention and allowed the districts their own process of procurement (Int. 2). In time, as lessons were learnt, rules were formulated in order to make the instrument clearer.

At the same time, the non-rule rule was also the only solution found in a context where a lot of disagreement existed regarding the details of the initiative (int. 6). At the technical level, there were factions pushing for the broader process of decentralisation since the late 1990s. In 1999, they tried to ensure that the districts would get more autonomy in local planning; however, they faced fierce opposition from other technocrats with close links to the political faction in the Chissano government (Int. 71). And without previous political consensus, it was impossible to advance any proposal, so they had to come up with a less ambitious plan, one that detailed the levels of representation of the district and the local councils.

When the '7 million' became linked with the principle of credit concession, many felt disappointed because they viewed it as a setback to the progressive work of district planning that had taken place. Accordingly, the credit idea clashed with the country's financial law and led to a "shameless process of successive corrections", which further distorted the original intention of the '7 million', which had a series of multiplying effects that were more empowering in the long run (Int. 71). The government's political wing acknowledged this clash of opinions in the interviews. They saw it as a resistance from technocrats to accept the possibility of the state giving money to support local development, as this was not the "usual activity of the state" (Int. 74). Nevertheless, their reasoning was that a change was necessary as the existing mechanisms providing funding for local development (banks and microfinance institutions) were not reaching those most in need, so they needed to find mechanisms to overcome these limitations (Ibid.).

It is precisely in this schism that the political dimension of the decision becomes clear. As shown above, the '7 million' as an idea preceded the '7 million as credit' idea, but a fundamental change in this process was the *ownership* of the discourse now linked to the President. In the words of one interviewee, "Who took the decision was the government at its highest level" (Int. 74). Yet, as

noted by one of his colleagues, “Today, if you mention the ‘7 million’, most people will link it with the President of the republic as if it was *his* program. But in reality it is not *his*. It is part of a historical process” (Int. 2). Still, according to this respondent, President Guebuza legitimately made the initiative his own by linking the ‘7 million’ with key political topics such as ‘the fight against poverty’ and unemployment. That is, however, a benevolent view of the politicisation of the ‘7 million’. Another way to evaluate it is by assessing the initiative’s political utility and how it thrives regardless of its many problems. In fact, not all interviewees agreed with the argument that the ‘7 million’ was *needed*.

One UNDP advisor, for instance, noted that in the 2006 meeting (see above), he openly contested the need to create the ‘7million’ as a credit instrument as there was already a previous regulation that specified the creation of a community development fund which rendered the ‘7 million’ as a credit tool unnecessary (Int. 82). Instead, he suggested that this money should be used in the promotion of local economic development and that 10% of its total should be used in capacity building such as business planning. All district administrators were present at the time, and, according to him, agreed with the proposal. During the break, however, he was informed that the Minister of Planning and Development, who was present, was very unhappy with these comments and that the decision had already been made, and it was political. In the same meeting, as noted by another interviewee (Int. 1), “there was a representative of a micro-credit agency who stood up and almost pleaded with the Minister to hand over the administration of the ‘7 million’ to micro credit agencies as they had the experience to do it. He made a very good case... but ultimately was ignored”.

In practice, the ‘7 million’ has become one of the main political banners of President Guebuza. Despite all its problems — discussed below and in the next chapter — the program is presented as a major success, and it has hugely increased the President’s popularity, not only internally but also internationally. For example, the initiative has been recently praised by the African Peer Review Mechanism and portrayed as an example to be followed by other African countries (AIM, 30 Jan. 2014). In September 2013, Guebuza took part in the Columbia University World Leaders Forum and gave a lecture entitled

Poverty and Inclusive Development: The 7 Million as a New Paradigm for Socio-Economic Development. On this occasion, he referred to the initiative as the “Mozambican economic paradigm” and mentioned its numerous positive results in reducing poverty as well as in promoting the people’s self-esteem (AIM, 26 Sep. 2013).

More generally, the emphasis in the official discourse is on Mozambican ownership of the ‘7 million’ and the fact that it was a *national* solution for a problem that had not been addressed by donors including a response to the weaknesses of the financial system and its limitations for reaching the poor (Int. 4, 73, 74). The extent to which the ‘7 million’ complies with these objectives or whether it is a political instrument is clarified by the analysis of its own regulation to which we now turn.

5.3 The ‘7 Million’ Regulation and its Empowerment Rationale

This section discusses the regulatory framework of the ‘7 million’ taking into account the existing documents as well as the views of some of the actors directly engaged in the initiative’s creation. The aim is to understand the ‘7 million’ empowerment rationale based on its declared objectives and legal instruments. This task needs to be put into context. The ‘7 million’ was originally created as a temporary governmental intervention. Indeed, the very idea of transforming the OIIL into a fund, the FDD, stemmed from this envisaged temporary character; by injecting money into the districts for credit concession, the repayments would later stay within the district and be used again for new projects making it a self-funded activity and allowing for the progressive withdrawal of the central government’s contribution (Int. 2). After eight years, however, the state investment curve has not gone down, and in March 2012, both the Minister of Planning and Development and the Minister of Finance admitted that there was no timeframe for the end of the national disbursement for the ‘7 million’ as the funding was still needed for the completion of its objectives (Int. 3, 73).

This fluid character of the ‘7 million’ is reflected in the series of documents that have been used as the legal basis for its implementation. Many were released ad hoc as mere clarifications and not proper procedure manuals. An actual

manual was compiled in 2011 (Rep. of Moz., MAE/MF/MPD, 2011) and, according to an interviewee, was going to be made public in 2013 after the completion of my fieldwork (Int. 83) which means that the manual was not used as a basis for the implementation of the projects up to that year.

Table 5.1: Regulatory Instruments ('7 Million' and Local Councils)

YEAR	DOCUMENT	CONTENT
2000	Ministerial Diploma 107-A/2000	First defines what LCs are
Mar. 2003	Law 8/2003, LOLE	Law of the Local State Organs, establishing the district as a state unit
June 2003	Community Participation and Consultancy in District Planning. Guide to its Organisation and Functioning.	First guidelines specifying the work of the LCs and other local community institutions
June 2005	Decree 11/2005, RELOLE	Regulation of the 2003 LOLE, it clarifies the functions of the LCs
23 Dec. 2005	Law 12/2005 (state budget for 2006)	Introduces the '7 million' for each district
Apr. 2006	Office 37/GM/MF/06, 11 Apr. 2006 (sent out to the provinces)	Makes clarification on the OIIL's implementation
May 2006	Office 101/GM/MF/2006, 12 May 2006	Gives methodological orientation for the implementation of the '7 million'
Nov. 2007	Circular 002/MPD/GM/2007, 20 Nov. 2007	Provides a form to be filled and sent to the province every 3 months, ref. the implementation of the projects
2009	Ministerial Diploma 67/2009, MAE e MPD	It approves the guide that regulates the LCs, signed in 2008
Apr. 2009	Circular 002/MPD/GM/2009, 16 Abr. 2009	Presents the templates to be used in the implementation and monitoring of the projects
July 2009	A book-collection of the above instruments is launched and sent to the districts	
Dec. 2009	Decree 90/2009	Transforms the OIIL into FDD and specify its rules
Sep. 2011	Fundo Distrital de Desenvolvimento. Manual de Procedimentos (MAE/MF/MPD)	Most recent regulation of the '7 million', concluded in 2011 but only authorised for distribution in 2013

Source: author's compilation.

EMPOWERMENT AS AN OUTCOME: THE '7 MILLION' OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The most appealing aspects of the '7 million' as depicted in the political discourse are its manifold empowering aspects which comprise material and non-material dimensions. More generally, the '7 million' is presented under the umbrella of the 'fight against poverty' and is related to the stimulation of agriculture and food production in the districts (Int. 3). The basic idea is that "the first kind of poverty we need to fight is hunger", and for this to happen, Mozambicans need resources to increase production, which is why credit is so important (ibid.). The focus on food production is also linked to a second concern, which is job creation. In this regard, the fund is perceived as a mechanism that will increase household income and, therefore, allow for the expansion of services and hiring, stimulating the local economy (Int. 74).

These expected results are summarised in the Decree 90/2009, Art. 2 of its introduction which states that "The District Development Fund aims at attaining and managing financial resources in order to instigate development and entrepreneurship as a means to satisfy the basic needs of local communities, by granting reimbursable loans". Article 4 of the regulation contained in the decree states that the fund should finance: (a) actions that aim to stimulate entrepreneurship, at the local level, of poor but economically active people that do *not* have access to bank credit; (b) food production, trade, and job creation (permanent or seasonal) ensuring income generation; (c) other activities that aim to improve life conditions related to community economic and productive activities (Rep. of Moz., 90/2009).

One of the fundamental aspects of the '7 million' is that it targets the poorest strata of the economically active population. As noted by one interviewee, ". . . this initiative is *not* for medium entrepreneurs . . . it is for small entrepreneurs those who do *not* have access to funding from banks" (Int. 74; also Int. 4). This is not unproblematic, and it was not an easy discussion in the design of the instrument, since the choice of the target group has different implications in terms of the type of local development as well as the extent of the collective

benefit. However ‘the orientation’⁵⁰ was to adhere to the premise that those most in need (and economically active) should be the targets of the initiative. This reflects the *inclusive* aspect of the fund.

Several other objectives are also pointed out in the discourse. The 2009 MPD report, for instance, highlights the initiative’s role in injecting resources in the rural areas, thus, contributing to the expansion of financial services and, in the long-term, the attraction of foreign investors to the districts (Rep. of Moz., MPD, 2009a: 5, 14). In the long term, the ‘7 million’ is also seen as a means to make the Mozambican economy more inclusive (Guebuza, 2009b) by facilitating the poorer strata of Mozambican society access to financial resources. In this regard, the benefits of the ‘7 million’ are not restricted to those who get the credit but are seen as benefitting the whole community, increasing household consumption, improving the peoples’ habitat, even allowing leisure, and creating, therefore, a chain effect (*ibid.*).

In addition, the ‘7 million’ is also linked to non-material empowering features such as the “production of capabilities” (Int. 73). As noted by the Minister of Finance, “one of the innovations of this program is to give back responsibility to the local power”, which explains why the ‘7 million’ is not a subsidy but a stimulus for innovation and creative ways of increasing production. More generally, the official discourse also states that the ‘7 million’ represents a contribution to the agenda of decentralisation. According to the 2009 MPD report, for example, the initiative is “the result of the deepening and improvement of the movement towards decentralisation and deconcentration of planning and budget activities, which aims at empowering the levels of governance that are closer to the population instigating, therefore, the country’s local development with the participation of the communities” (Rep. of Moz., MPD, 2009a: 5-6).

⁵⁰ All through the interviews, the use of ‘the decision’, ‘the orientation’, ‘the order’, and similar terms that indicate a top-down connotation of the decision-making process without a clear subject, was very common (e.g., Int. 2, 10, 72, 74, 83). After inquiring about this with some interviewees, it became clear that these refer to the President’s own decision in these matters which are ultimately not contestable.

The local is, indeed, central to the empowering aspect of the initiative. In the words of Guebuza (2009a), “With the ‘7 million’ we started a change in the development paradigm, where the beneficiary is now protagonistic in this process”. Doing so, furthermore, is deemed to represent the rescue and consolidation of local self-esteem (ibid.) that is fundamental in the promotion of good governance (Guebuza, 2009b). In summary, the ‘7 million’ is expected to have a series of indirect effects that will eventually change local subjectivities by making local communities more engaged in local governance, more actively involved in the decisions that will affect their lives, and encouraged to start their own business.

EMPOWERMENT AS A PROCESS: THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF THE LOCAL COUNCILS

One of the crucial legitimising aspects of the ‘7 million’ and its empowering potential is the inclusion of the local councils (LCs)⁵¹ in the decision-making process. As noted by the Minister of Planning and Development, “It is a participatory process; it is an endogenous process where people perceive the problems that their community have. Problems are discussed locally so they may be later solved by the ‘7 million’” (Int. 3). In this regard, the legitimacy of the LCs is linked to the assumption that they represent the local interest. In the words of Guebuza (2006), “the district LCs and local fora, which aggregate personalities that have integrity confirmed by their popular indication to represent the communities’ interests, contribute so that development is more reflective, endogenous, sustainable and led by its first and last beneficiaries”.

General Aspects of the Local Councils

The local council is defined as “an organ of consultancy of the local administration authorities, in search of solutions for fundamental matters that

⁵¹ I will use the terms ‘local council’ and ‘consultative councils’ interchangeably in this thesis. The 2009 regulation on these bodies uses ‘local council’ in its main title. However, in Art. 21 it specifies, “the local councils in the district different echelons are designated ‘consultative councils’ of the district, administrative post, locality, and village”.

affect the lives of the population, their well-being and sustainable development” (Rep. of Moz., 11/2005, Art. 111). They should be comprised of prominent people in the communities, such as “community authorities, representatives of interests groups of an economic, social, and cultural nature chosen by the LCs or forum of a lower echelon in proportion to the population of each territorial rank” (ibid., Art. 118).

The councils have the function of “guaranteeing the communities’ participation in the conception and implementation of the economic, social, and cultural programs that contribute to local development” (Rep. of Moz., MAE/MPD, 2009, Art. 6) and are established at the different levels of the district subunits (ibid., Art. 7). In order to ensure their bottom-up character, LCs are initially constituted at the lower level of the villages. Once selected, there is a further selection process internal to the village LCs in order to choose those who will belong to the immediate upper level (the localities’ LCs). The process is repeated from the locality to the administrative posts (APs) LCs and finally from the APs to the district LC which is the pinnacle of the local representation hierarchy. The idea is to create a chain of communication so that the voices of each and every community may reach the administration.

Table 5.2: Local Councils according to District Levels

DISTRICT SUB-LEVEL	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PRESIDENT
District	30-50	District Administrator
Administrative posts (AP)	20-40	Chief of the AP
Localities	10-20	Chief of the locality
Villages	5-10	Chief of the village

Source: Rep. of Moz., MAE/MPD, 2009.

The LCs represent the procedural aspect of empowerment when it comes to the ‘7 million’ precisely because of how they are designed and the way they are supposed to function. As noted in Article 11 of the councils’ guide, the LC

“should be an institution based on a process through which citizens may participate and influence the decision-making process on development”. In this regard, they can make recommendations to the different structures of the local government regarding community issues, and these should be taken into account by the local authorities (ibid., Art. 12).

Several principles reinforce the LCs’ empowering potential including the requirement for diversity (of gender, culture, occupation, age and class), equality (no discrimination of any kind, including political and ideological), dialogue, transparency, justice (impartiality in treatment), and representativeness. Article 33 further stresses the role of accountability, stating that the councils should have regular meetings with the community in order to update them of on-going plans and discuss any proposal for future plans for that particular territorial echelon.

LCs should have at least two ordinary meetings per year at each territorial echelon, in order to discuss the previous’ year district plans, work on proposals for the coming year, and do any updates of the on-going district plan (Art. 28). Extraordinary meetings may take place at the request of the district administrator or when a third of the members request it (Art. 27). Sessions should be public (Art. 29), conducted in the local language with an interpreter if needed (Art. 30), and their summaries should be publicised locally and sent back to the administration.

Whereas the LCs are referred to as the ‘civil society’ in the districts, in fact, they are a hybrid institution which counts on the presence of a local government representative as their president. This presence is justified by the president’s role as instrument of ‘articulation’ between the community and the local government. S/he is the one who organises the meeting and has the function to hear what the community has to say (Art. 20, Art. 35.2.o). S/he may suggest that influential people in the community should participate in the councils’ meetings but has no right to vote (Art. 36.20).

In practice, how ‘articulation’ operates and how the idea of ‘suggestion’ is perceived locally are far from black and white issues. But this is not the only ambiguous aspect of the guidelines. An important issue that is not even detailed

and that affects the empowering dimension of the LCs is the process that leads to their constitution. Article 36 states that the members of the LCs “are chosen by the local community for a period of four years, after which, a reconfirmation of their legitimacy should be necessarily done by the respective community or social group.” Some rules of representation are specified such as at least 30% of the members should be women, at least 20% should represent the youth, and “as much as possible” at least 40% of the members should be community leaders (ibid.). Yet the details of the *how* are not included. What is clear is that the councils at the higher echelons should be chosen among the members of the echelon immediately below and that at each echelon, there should be a public meeting led by the local government authority to introduce the council members to the community so the latter may evaluate and legitimise the members (Art. 37). Nevertheless, at the lower echelon, the villages, which are the ones closest to the community, there are no specific indications of how the members are chosen. Instead, the article simply points out that the members of the village LCs should be chosen among the local forums, community committees, community authorities, and other interest groups. It does *not* state *who* should choose them and *how*. As will be discussed later, this is a problematic aspect that, in practice, may jeopardise all the other aspects that contribute to the councils’ legitimacy and local empowering potential.

The Local Councils and the ‘7 Million’

Looking at the LCs’ regulation, it becomes clear that their functions are much wider and independent of the ‘7 million’. Article 35 of the guide outlines 17 very general tasks of the LCs, one of which is to “approve proposals of finance concession requests to local initiative projects”. This task should, therefore, be seen in light of the others which include taking into account the district’s economic potential in order to reduce poverty. A clearer link between the district LCs and the ‘7 million’ was established in the decree that created the FDD (90/2009) where Article 7 states that the Council of the Fund is the District Consultative Council (DCC) and Article 8 clarifies that the latter is the fund’s deliberative organ. Article 9 additionally lists all the specific functions of the DCC regarding the FDD, including approving the annual activities plan and respective budget, following and monitoring the financed projects, approving the

schemes for reimbursement of the loans, and guaranteeing that the loans will be reimbursed (Rep. of Moz., 90/2009).

In this competency, the council should be assisted by a technical commission (TC) whose chief is designated by the administrator. This is a crucial point. The council makes 'the decision' as it is this body that knows the local needs; nevertheless, it needs technical advice as many of its members do not have formal education and/or specific knowledge related to management and business planning (Int. 73, 83). The TC fulfils this role by assessing the projects submitted and advising the DCC about their viability (Int. 83). The commissions also have additional tasks such as giving advice in order to improve the projects viability and organising the managerial aspects of the fund's disbursement (Rep. of Moz., 90/2009, Art. 12).

These procedures have been clarified even further in the FDD 2011 Manual (Rep. of Moz., MAE/MF/MPD, 2011) where the sequential steps highlight that the TCs should give a clear opinion about each project (including document analysis, project viability, community impact analysis, and risk analysis) to the DCCs so they may take such issues into account during the decision process. Aside from this, the DCC is also requested to take into account the congruence of the projects with the District Strategic Development Plan.

The FDD implementation is furthermore assisted by the local District Services for Economic Activities (SDAEs) and other specialised institutions including non-governmental actors that may work in partnership with the government (Rep. of Moz., 90/2009, Art. 12). This technical assistance should ensure the technical improvement of the approved projects and their viability and sustainability. Point 6 of the Article further states that the technical assistance should not add any costs to the fund, which became very problematic in practice.

So we see that, overall, there is a major concern in the regulation to sustain the principle that, even though the LCs are *consultative* when it comes to the '7 million', they are the ones who *decide*. Yet, assuming the limitations of their technical capacity, the regulatory instruments also provide institutional support in order to guarantee a minimum quality assurance as well as follow-up

mechanisms in order to increase the projects' chances of success. So, local empowerment assumes multiple forms in its procedural aspect, notably, by reinforcing the direct interaction between the councils and the communities, the expression of the local interest to the authorities, but also as the opportunities for capacity development of the members themselves regarding governance issues and local development.

Despite this, the regulation has important shortcomings that have the potential to hinder the empowering effects of these initiatives at the community level. One is the fact that there is *no* restriction on members of the councils submitting their own proposals and, therefore, obtaining disbursement from the fund. In theory, this conflict of interest should be monitored by the technical commissions and the SDAEs and should be minimised as long as capacity building takes place (Int. 74). Nevertheless, in practice, there is no clear procedure on the matter, and many LC members have, indeed, become beneficiaries of the fund.

A more general critique is based on the fundamental question of whether the LCs should be the ones to approve these projects. According to one interviewee (Int. 82), his interpretation of the Decree 90/2009 is not that the councils *approve* the projects, the most fundamental criterion is (should be) the projects viability which is assessed by the TC. Looking closely at Article 9(b), the matter is indeed ambiguous as it states that it is up to the LCs to “evaluate and approve the projects *submitted by* the Projects Evaluation and Management Commission”. This could mean that, as the interviewee sees it, the Commission should first do a screening of the projects that are technically viable and submit only these ones. However, the 2011 guidelines leave less room for doubt by specifying the sequencing of the process as well as the *advisory* character of the commission in this regard.

In summary, whereas the ‘7 million’ regulation presents an extensive opportunity for local empowerment promotion, it also leaves important issues unaddressed potentially jeopardizing the initiative’s official intent. Much of its declared empowering potential is furthermore linked to the LCs, portrayed as bodies linked to the initiative, even though their existence officially preceded the

'7 million' and even though they have a much broader work agenda largely detached from the '7 million'.

Regarding its contribution to decentralisation, a thorough reading of the regulation calls into question the discursive optimism regarding the potential of the '7 million' for this process. The very use of 'consultative' attached to the councils leaves no doubt about the limited aspect of this participatory space. In addition, the role of local government figures in this process may be interpreted as an attempt to retain power instead of delegating it to the communities, and perhaps, this is the reason why in the official discourse the effects of the '7 million' are mostly portrayed as extremely positive, despite the many problems that exist in its implementation.

5.4 How the 'Top' Perceives the Results

The '7 million' has been widely publicised in the government's official discourse. In his 2009 state of the nation address, President Guebuza (2009a) affirmed:

The '7 million' has brought visible changes in the districts. In some areas where there was hunger, now our hard working people ask for marketplaces so they can exchange their surpluses. They ask for financial institutions [banks] where they may deposit their savings or look for financial resources to expand their business. In certain areas, bicycles and motor-bicycles are not a novelty anymore. Not even the shops where these vehicles are repaired. What is new is the shop where they sell accessories. Mozambique has marched at a fast pace. Poverty has withdrawn considerably.

In the presidential discourse, the '7 million' is often portrayed as a panacea thanks to which local development has taken place, food production has increased, local communities have been integrated with the national market, jobs have been created, and poverty has been reduced (ibid.; Guebuza, 2009b). It is indeed impressive how such a relatively small budget seems to have had miraculous effects. In fact, besides these material effects, the empowering results of the '7 million' are extended also to the domain of local governance. First, the initiative is directly linked with the role of the LCs, which are represented as the manifestation of local civil society (Guebuza, 2006;

2009b). In the President's words, these organs constitute "schools of consensus building" and have a main role in fostering accountability which makes the '7 million' a "school of good governance" (Guebuza, 2009b) that also tackles corruption (Guebuza, 2011). Besides, as the LCs contribute to enhance the people's freedom and self-expression, the '7 million' also contributes to improve their self-esteem (ibid.).

Whilst the government recognises some challenges regarding the '7 million', the official view is that its benefits by far exceed its problems. The next subsections critically discuss this general success story by taking into account the views of the central government as well as the government and civil society of Nampula province.

THE VIEWS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Since its inception, the '7 million' has been poorly assessed in terms of its effects and, in particular, its empowering outcome.⁵² Official national assessments, in particular, have been scanty. The first national report from the government was released in February 2009 and discussed the initiative's results from 2006 to 2009. In August 2009, a consultancy firm delivered an evaluation report commended by the MPD (Métier, 2009) on the latter.⁵³ By May 2013, there were trimestral reports presented regularly in the Council of Ministers⁵⁴ and, according to an interviewee, a national assessment was to be

⁵² The main exceptions are specific academic articles (Forquilha, 2010; Sande, 2010; Forquilha and Orre, 2012).

⁵³ This section focuses on the official discourse, so I will not discuss the report in question. It is worth mentioning though that, while recognising positive aspects such as the progressive improvement of the instrument and its effect in sparking democratic participation, the report also stressed several weaknesses of the OIIL, in particular, in the field of its institutional capacity which paved the way for several other implementation problems (Métier, 2009).

⁵⁴ These reports were/are not available online. Thanks to one of the interviewees I had access to one of them referring to two trimesters of 2011. These are descriptive briefings reporting numbers related to the fund's disbursement per province and giving

concluded in 2013 that should be the basis of a new national report (Int. 83). However, at the time of writing, such a report, if completed, has not been available in the respective Ministries' websites.

The MPD 2009 report was particularly benevolent regarding the effects of the '7 million'. It presented it as an advance on the previous experiments in district planning due to its focus on private economic activities (Rep. of Moz., MPD, 2009a: 4). According to the report, "the OIIL is, without a doubt, a preponderant factor of mitigation [of the world food prices crisis' effects in Mozambique] and of development with emphasis on the rural area" (ibid.: 5). The report further stated that the role of the LCs had been "positively surprising" as they constituted a central vehicle for the interaction between government and the communities (ibid.: 11). In this regard, the '7 million' had instigated "dynamics without precedence" in these interactions promoting "profound debates" regarding the objectives and mechanisms of the fund (ibid.).

The report also acknowledged some "constraints and challenges" including the non-integral fulfilment of the government's recommendations on the use the budget, the lack of proper monitoring of the implemented projects, the limited capacity of the bodies involved in the selection of the projects, the need to adjust the interest rates charged, the reduced capacity of recipients to pay back loans, the lack of involvement from the councils in the monitoring of the projects, and the lack of attention to the synergy between the projects approved and the local production chain (ibid.: 15-16).

Notwithstanding these problems, the report agreed that "the positive results [of the '7 million'] are by far superior to its negative aspects" (ibid.: 19) This statement was followed by seven pages with impressive numbers of projects and job posts created in each province. Accordingly, between 2006 and 2009, 25,943 projects were created all across the country generating 107,950 new jobs (both temporary and fixed-term) (ibid.: 24). The report concluded by noticing that "not all the reports sent by the provinces answered what was asked" by the central government (ibid.: 26). Nevertheless, although it

some examples of projects financed with a brief assessment of the results and pictures of the selected businesses.

recognises the need to address these issues, it did not raise the matter of how problematic the methodology was for the very assessment presented in the previous pages.

The tone of the 2009 report expresses the official view of the '7 million'. Indeed, the majority of interviewees in the central government recognised the challenges regarding the initiative, but they also expressed that its benefits clearly outweighed its limitations. Different from the report, however, they often ignored or minimised the methodological aspects of the data collection and, instead, cited the data as if it was reliable adding reference to their personal experiences visiting projects in order to corroborate the assertion of success. In addition, many respondents also emphasised that the benefits of the '7 million' should be measured beyond the financial aspect as it has helped to strengthen the private sector, in particular, in those areas where other agents (e.g., banks, micro-credit institutions) would not go (Int. 2, 4, 73).

Participants also highlighted a series of non-material benefits of the '7 million'. The promotion of entrepreneurship, for instance, was perceived as not only producing economic benefits but as part of a deeper social process of 'shaking up' the Mozambican social fabric, taking a step away from the state of lethargy that had prevailed since colonial times (Int. 4). Moreover, the '7 million' was perceived as having put in motion a new space for citizenship as most people now discussed the topic (Int. 74, 2).

These aspects were all understood as linked to the empowering potential of the fund. According to the Minister of Finance, for instance, one way the initiative produced empowerment was through the provision of local capacity for the district to run its own economy without relying on external actors (Int. 73). Enabling local people to realise their potential was, in this regard, the crucial point and was linked with the goal of bringing back the people's self-esteem and belief in themselves and their capacity. It was about providing opportunities that did not exist previously and moving beyond subsistence (ibid.). From this perspective, the '7 million' acted as a driver to expand the people's possibilities (see also Guebuza, 2009b).

Regarding the initiative's limitations, most interviewees stressed the very reduced repayment rate as a central challenge to be addressed. Yet, respondents also noted that many projects have a different timeframe (e.g., raising cattle takes up to three years to give a proper return) and, therefore, noted that the emphasis on the return rate could be misleading when assessing the success of the fund (Int. 3, 72, 73; see also Guebuza, 2009b). Whether or not this may be the case, it is also true that the low rates of repayment affect the fund's sustainability and may further foster a culture of non-compliance.⁵⁵ A second challenge reported was the lack of local capacity (both from the LCs to approve viable projects as well as from local beneficiaries and even the TCs) perceived as also hindering the success rate of the projects (Int. 74).

In spite of these acknowledged limitations, some participants in Maputo also stressed the pedagogic aspect of the '7 million' which reinforced the 'doing and learning' discourse. From this perspective, whatever the challenges encountered, they did not remove the merit of the initiative, which is to invest in a local model instead of only abiding to donor-driven programs (Int. 82). Moreover, even the 'new problems' generated by the '7 million' were described as proof of its effectiveness in changing things as well as being a catalyst that made important problems come to the surface (Int. 4, 74).

Harsher critiques of the '7 million' were extremely rare in the central government. Critical views focused mostly on the implementation process arguing that, if properly implemented, the initiative could have produced much better results (Int. 74, 83). This reasoning turned out to be the best way to put the responsibilities for any failures on the lower echelons while emphasising the merit and the broader principles of the initiative.

⁵⁵ Technically, there are sanctions foreseen in the FDD regulation. According to the contract that should be used (according to the Circular 002/MPD/GM/2009), in case the beneficiary does not abide to its duties (e.g., implement the project according to what was presented and approved and does not return repay accordingly), two sanctions should be applied: 1) the immediate suspension of the remaining parcels of the loan, and 2) the seizure of the assets obtained (Rep. of Moz., 2009b). Yet in practice, this seems to be rarely, if ever, applied (see next chapter).

NAMPULA VIEWS

As much as in Maputo, the general perspective within the Nampula provincial government was that the results of the '7 million' were "notable" and its "impact was evident" (Int. 5, 7, 9, 47). The increased number of jobs, the increase in the amount of bicycles circulating in the districts, the reduction of the rural exodus, more food in the districts, more trade, the building of improved houses, and even access to electricity were some of the issues linked with the empowering effects of the initiative. Additionally, it was often observed that the most important effects of the '7 million' were *qualitative* rather than *quantitative*. In fact, according to some interviewees, now people felt that they had an active voice, that they could negotiate their own priorities with the government, and even women had more space to express their priorities and the chance to start their own business (Int. 5). Thus, the '7 million' had a psychological and moral empowering effect which was not only extended to these participatory spaces but also to an acknowledgment that having a business is not a simple task (Int. 6). Echoing President Guebuza, the '7 million' was portrayed as a school of governance because the very problems generated by the '7 million' in the first year also stimulated local discussion, led to the removal of some administrators, and showed, therefore, the need to place more emphasis on mechanisms of social control (ibid.).

Regardless of this optimism, the link between the '7 million' and these results were often unsubstantiated. Indeed, many of these improvements could be related to other processes such as the expansion of infrastructure in the previous years, the stability of the economy, as well as the parallel work of several NGOs and donors in the province. However, many interviewees placed the merit of these improvements fundamentally on the '7 million' (Int. 5, 7, 9), as this initiative was perceived as the main driver of other changes.

As for the challenges, one central issue recognised in the provincial government was the existing limitations in terms of monitoring activities and capacity building, in particular, in the case of the beneficiaries and their ability to present a repayment plan as well as thinking long-term in their projects (Int. 7, 9, 47). One of the explanations for this limitation was the over-reliance on donors for the continuity of these activities. At the time of the interviews, for

instance, one participant reported that the recent crisis in Spain had led to a reduction in that country's aid which, in turn, meant fewer technocrats, meetings, and visits to the districts causing a delay in the provincial evaluation of the districts (Int. 7).

Overall, most statements highlighted the technical view of the challenges faced by the '7 million', technical assistance being perceived as key to its success. This view was presented along with the 'trial and error' discourse. Interestingly, here, some interviewees expressed that the '7 million' should be understood as a kind of a subsidy precisely to finance these "marketization experiments"; therefore, a direct financial return of these experiments should not be expected as this was *not* the point (Int. 5, 6).

Another mark in the provincial perspective was the reference to challenges related to local culture and history. Some respondents referred, for example, to the local tendency towards short-term thinking as a heritage from the war and its 'emergency-mode', a major challenge to the promotion of an 'entrepreneurial mentality' (Int. 5, 6). More generally, the historical legacy also explained the difficulty of changing a mentality of centralism in favour of decentralisation. As noted, until recently "the local levels were mail boxes that collected raw data and never analysing it" (Int. 6).

Regarding the cultural aspects, participants stressed specific features linked with tradition and the belief in witchcraft (Int. 6, 10). They mentioned, for instance, that when someone gets more prosperous than others in a community, this often causes envy and may lead to the use of witchcraft against the person. This possibility instils fear in many people who prefer to stick to their status, even if it is less prosperous. This, in turn, makes development a much slower process. Another problem highlighted was the perpetuation of traditional hierarchies, in particular, the exclusion of women and the youth from important decisions in the community, which, in turn, limited the implementation of new development models (ibid.).

Members of CSOs in Nampula made similar remarks (Int. 8, 11), yet they also expressed harsher critiques of the '7 million'. A common criticism was related to the effects of the '7 million' on the LCs (ibid.; Int. 48). Accordingly, the problem

was that the councils should be discussing development in the broad sense, in particular, the strategic dimension of local development policies. Whereas this work had been gradually conducted in Nampula province in the past, when the '7 million' came in, the agenda suddenly changed and became again focused on immediate gains to the detriment of long-term strategic planning (ibid.). In the words of a participant, "What was really important in the process — the de facto empowerment of the communities, the prioritization, implementation, and monitoring of the district planning — all that the pioneering experiments in Nampula had privileged became second place" (Int. 11). Instead, the technocratic dimension of the process has prevailed over the participatory concern that guided the previous experiences. As for the councils, they were now all focusing on the 'easy money' available.

Another interviewee noted that the introduction of the '7 million' also harmed the work of the CSO where he works which focuses on the concession of small grants for local development projects. In his words, "the corruption practices that accompany the '7 million' has created a general perception that aid money is just to spend, indiscriminately, and not to produce . . . All you need is a godfather, then you will get this money and don't have to worry about the work you should do" (Int. 48). This trend shifted individuals' behaviour, so all of a sudden, those requesting this CSO's help started to invent unrealistic and overpriced project budgets, often tripling the costs in order to get more money. Eventually, the CSO was forced to take a stronger role in the process in order to retain transparency as well as introduce the rule of co-financing so that those wanting help now needed to provide for part of the costs themselves.

This type of harsh criticism was often accompanied by a major critique regarding the political aspect behind the initiative (see also Forquilha, 2010 and Forquilha and Orre, 2012). Some interviewees among CSOs noted, in particular, that since Guebuza came to power in 2005, there had been a retrocession in the country's political flexibility (Int. 11). Ultimately, and in spite of the good will of many technocrats in the government, it is the political linkages that determine policy outcomes in general including the good will of local administrators (Int. 48). And this is not just a local phenomenon, in fact at the province level major decisions need the consensus of the Frelimo Provincial

Committee (which is the organ that indicates names of administrators and key political figures in the province) (ibid.).

If we look at the '7 million' this way, then, in effect, the problem is not the '7 million' per se, but its political instrumentalisation (Int. 8, 10, 50). If that is the case, two questions should be posed. First, what is the balance between the pros and cons of the '7 million'? As seen above, some participants within CSOs had very negative views about the initiative in Nampula. Besides the consequences in the local mentality, they did not see economic results that justified the intervention and gave several examples of non-functioning projects around the province (Int. 11, 14, 48). Others offered a more nuanced view. Looking backwards, and whilst acknowledging the limitations of the LCs (e.g., the quality of participation), they recognise that what happened marked a significant step towards the expansion of participation nation-wide (Int. 8, 50).

CSO's interviewees also recognised some technical problems and the need for more capacity building in the implementation of the '7 million' (Int. 8, 50). But the extent to which this was a politically neutral issue remained an open question. As noted by one participant, "It is interesting, in the context of a market economy in Mozambique, to say that a *government* team may train entrepreneurs. I have doubts about that!" (Int. 8). So why does it happen this way? This leads us to the second question: should not a good policy instrument take into account the extent to which it could be manipulated and distorted? And if this question was posed, was not the actual purpose of the '7 million' to be used as a political tool more than a development tool (the argument of Orre and Forquilha, 2012)?

The decision-making process discussed above, and the way the '7 million' has been used in the political discourse point towards this direction. However, before resuming this question, I would like to highlight other elements that may clarify the current state of the '7 million'. Some of these issues were not directly pointed to as 'problems' in the interviews, but the analysis suggests that they have strongly contributed to the limitations of the initiative in promoting local empowerment.

5.5 Institutional and Methodological Constraints on the ‘7 Million’

In this section, I discuss two major problems detected in the interviews’ analyses and that, I argue, significantly affected both the effectiveness of the ‘7 million’ and existing opinions on the matter. The first problem relates to the institutional changes that took place in the central government since the start of the ‘7 million’. When the ‘7 million’ was introduced in 2006, it was placed under the responsibility of the MPD under the National Directorate for the Promotion of Rural Development (DNPDR). In 2010, however, the DNPDR was transferred to MAE, which is responsible for the agenda of decentralisation. As noted by an interviewee in that Ministry, “the truth is that we as an institution were caught by surprise by the presidential decree” (Int. 72). The explanation they were given was that, as President Guebuza had placed poverty at the centre of the political agenda, poverty was now not only a ‘development’ issue, but a ‘state’ issue. Since the MAE is responsible for the government institutions at the local state levels, then, it should be up to MAE to handle the rural development agenda (ibid.). Employees of the DNPDR were also caught by surprise by these changes and were given no information regarding the reasons for it, with one interviewee saying, “We just got the information that on a certain date we would be relocated, but why? . . . I personally think we were better placed in the MPD” (Int. 83).

This change had several implications for the program. First, the split, and the fact that some people remained in the MPD, instead of moving to MAE, meant that some of those who had been engaged with the whole process since its inception would no longer deal with it. Second, this move contributed to the politicisation of the ‘7 million’. Indeed, according to an interviewee at MAE, part of the argument that justified this change was that, as the district administrator is directly accountable to that Ministry, this facilitates a ‘direct command’ which, in turn, would avoid a lack of local commitment to important national priorities (Int. 72). In this interviewee’s opinion, this was positive because it compensated for the lack of preparation and capacity of some of the locally appointed leaders (ibid.). This, however, could also be interpreted as an institutional means to centralise governance while retaining the discourse on decentralisation. Indeed,

the way the decision to relocate the DNPDR was taken points to an evident top-down politically driven action. As noted by the same interviewee, “These kinds of things are not discussed here. . . The government macro structure is not even discussed in the Assembly. *It is decided*. It is a topic exclusive to the President and his cohort”, so the function of the MAE is simply to understand the decision and implement it (Int. 72).

The extent to which these changes affected the ‘7 million’ was also compounded by the already complicated institutional coordination between national institutions. So, for instance, whereas the ‘7 million’ may be seen (arguably) as an initiative related to state administration, its efficacy in the long term is also dependent on coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and its ability to deliver the necessary services so that local rural entrepreneurs may fully implement their projects. This integration, however, is not there (Int. 4, 72).

A third implication of this change for the ‘7 million’ was the reduction of funds for the monitoring of the initiative. Indeed, the MPD had more funds that could be (and were) utilised in the monitoring of the ‘7 million’, which is not the case in the MAE, and which explains why regular monitoring from the central government has been drastically reduced since 2009 (Int. 82, 83). In fact, as of April 2013, there had been no national monitoring visits for two years (Int. 83). Compounding this problem is the quality of the data presented by the districts and provinces to the DNPDR concerning the ‘7 million’. This leads us to the second problem considered in this section that is the methodological weaknesses of this process.

The key aspect to highlight here is the inconsistency that, even though there is a recognition of some methodological problems with the data gathering in the case of the ‘7 million’, there is no fundamental questioning in the government regarding the validity of the data. This aspect raises, once more, the question of political intent regarding the initiative; as long as the data remains favourable to the government, it serves the political purpose of legitimising the program.

The data that reaches Maputo is provided by the provincial governments, which, in turn, get the information from the districts. The provinces have the double function of organising the data and also regularly conducting monitoring

visits to the districts. The basic matrix used to monitor the projects includes a series of indicators (e.g., the amount of money disbursed for each project, the repayment plan, the interest rate). The problem is that not all provinces are able to send to Maputo the complete matrix. As noted in the DNPDR, a lot of data is lacking, so, there is no way to make a proper assessment of the '7 million' (Int. 83). In particular, a lot of data related to the first years is unavailable, and several projects do not even exist on paper which raises the question of how these reports were compiled in the first place if there is no proper way to follow the projects (ibid.).

Another problem noted was the discrepancy between numbers that do not match. For example, at times there is a mismatch between the numbers provided by the provinces and those for the sectoral reports from the government. At other times, mismatches are found in monitoring visits. In a central monitoring visit to a district, for instance, it was found that up to 90% of the 'existing' projects actually did not exist anymore (Int. 83). This means that many reports, including the 2009 report, could be questioned on the basis of methodology (e.g., 'Do those jobs created still exist?').

The extent of the methodological problems in the assessment of the '7 million' becomes even clearer when we reach the provincial level. First, there are problems of resources that limit the provincial capacity to make regular visits and collect data. As visits become less frequent, much of the evaluation is made by phone calls to the district staff (Int. 7), which naturally compromises the quality of the monitoring. Second, the way the monitoring visits are conducted is very politically sensitive and resembles more a 'visit' than a 'monitoring' process. As explained in the provincial government:

We first send a document saying that we are about to come. When we arrive, we automatically present ourselves to the district government . . . Then they tell us [the number of projects, and general data] because *they* know, we don't. They indicate to us a few technicians from the local administration to work with us. *They* tell us, 'go to the locality 'x', see beneficiaries 'a', 'b', 'c', then we go to the localities. Once we get to the locality, we also present ourselves to the local authorities of the locality, of the administrative posts and, if it is the case, of the village, if we get

there. It is a matter of ethic, of protocol. I cannot get to *your house*, start messing with your stuff before interacting with you first, it's not like thatThen we present ourselves to the beneficiary or the association. We speak to them, we listen, take notes, then we also give our point of view. We never just say 'this is bad'. We give our opinion, but in a way . . . we want to show that they can do better if they try other ways (Int. 9).

What this report suggests is that the respect for local power hierarchies is primordial and comes first. The fact that the village is compared to someone's house, indicates how the definition of public and private spaces is unclear. The concern with the way the 'critiques' are going to be expressed does not seem to follow the logic of a 'monitoring', and even less of an organised capacity building mechanism. The idea that all they give is 'advice' – as any decision is and shall remain exclusively local — is problematic. On the one hand, it is based on the idea that local ownership is key to this process which is in tune with the empowering appeal of the '7 million'. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it would be expected that a monitoring visit would be a tool to ensure that whatever practices take place in a specific matter do so according to the law and its respective regulation and not following political or personal priorities. It would also entail the assurance that those to be empowered are those with less power rather than those who already have more power at the local level. Leaving the choice of places and projects to visit to the district administration is a way to bias the process as there is no way to control that the projects selected for visits are not chosen solely because of their high degree of success.

Additionally, the fact that many of the problems encountered locally (see next chapter) did not resonate in the interviews in the province could plausibly be a reflection of the lack of public denunciation of these cases which, in turn, affect their consideration as 'irregular' from a statistical point of view. As people refrain from making accusations, even a monitoring process is limited in its ability to capture some irregularities.

These methodological problems are further compounded by the indicators used to assess the '7 million'. An interviewee in Maputo, for instance, noted that there needs to be a general change regarding what a 'job' is, so that 'self-employment' is included in the label 'jobs created' (Int. 74). Accordingly, self-

employment has been highly promoted by the '7 million' and makes a concrete difference in peoples' lives. However, when asked if they have a job, many of these self-employed individuals do not recognise it as such (ibid.). A more critical view regarding the measurement was found in Nampula. One interviewee, for example, posed a fundamental question, "What are we measuring?" (Int. 6). In his view, what should be measured was the 'sustainability' of the projects financed by the '7 million' and how many jobs created were sustainable in the long run. However, as noted by one of his colleagues, what they have so far is nominal data that does not capture the idea of 'impact' (Int. 7). So 'numbers' are there, but what they mean is at best fuzzy.

The above considerations suggest that the success story of the '7 million' highlighted in the discourse is not based on solid analysis. At the same time, the fact that the methodological problems have been pointed out *inside* the government raises questions regarding the intentions behind what seems a deliberate disregard for these problems. How this affects the empowering potential of the '7 million', however, needs further analysis at the level of the district which is the topic of the next chapter.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed both the origins and the transformations of the '7 million' emphasising its empowering potential. Key questions raised were *why* the '7 million' was created and *how* it was designed and operationalised from the point of view of the upper levels of analysis (in particular, the national and provincial levels). In this regard, the analysis pointed to several initial conclusions. First, there is a remarkable difference in the way the '7 million' is depicted both in terms of its origins and in terms of its main objectives. From the point of view of those involved in previous experiments of decentralised planning, the '7 million' is the continuation of a long-term and gradual process of decentralisation — sometimes perceived as a setback to previous experiments. From the political perspective, it is a presidential initiative that indeed contributes to the process of decentralisation but that was conceptualised through the specific lens of the expansion of credit in the rural areas in order to

stimulate economic activities — it is to a certain extent an *evolution* of existing processes.

A detailed analysis of the initiative's birth and its transformation shows that the second discourse reflects, in fact, a gradual process of politicisation of the '7 million' leading to a change of ownership of the idea in order to directly link it with President Guebuza. This politicisation was further evident in the processes leading to the instrument's regulation and the disregard at the central level of serious problems related to the policy's implementation and monitoring reflected in the lack of resources for the latter. The political use of the '7 million' as a 'success story' also reinforces the observed tendency to minimise some of its major problems. In fact, as shown, there is no denial that problems exist, but the emphasis is instead on the technical features of these problems and on the far more important successes of the '7 million'. In this regard, one of the fundamental aspects that legitimises the '7 million' is its empowering appeal related to its procedural aspect linked to LCs. This empowering rationale, nevertheless, is based on a technical perspective of empowerment as discussed in the second chapter. It is process-driven; it is apolitical and takes for granted individual agency. The next chapter will explore in detail the problems of these assumptions when it comes to the initiative's implementation at the local level.

Chapter 6

The '7 million' Viewed from the Bottom

To be economically excluded is, for all practical purposes, to be politically excluded.

(Friedmann, 1992)

. . . People don't react because of the bread. They can't complain because of the bread. So one day they'll know that this bread is our right.

(Tradesman, Angoche)

One of the challenges of empowerment promotion resides in the translation of the policies' rationale into practical actions that are in tune with local contexts. As discussed in the previous chapter, the empowerment logic of the '7 million' is fundamentally linked to the LCs and based on technical premises that privilege participation as the means to increase the people's power-to-speak/discuss/jointly decide what is the best for their own communities. This chapter explores the bottom level of analysis of the empowerment framework presented in Chapter 2, including the triad (i) subjectivities, (ii) capacity, and (iii) agency/patiency, in an effort to understand how the '7 million' has been implemented and interpreted in the district of Angoche, and to what extent it has generated local empowerment.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first two discuss the procedural aspect of empowerment in the implementation of the '7 million'. In the first section, I critically assess the representativeness of the LCs vis-à-vis the rural communities taking into account these bodies' constitution and the way they function in Angoche. The second section analyses specifically the process that leads to the selection of the '7 million' projects and the power dynamics underneath it. The third section examines the empowering outcomes of the

fund, considering its material and non-material domains, as well as the specific contextual aspects that influence these outcomes.

I argue that the empowering logic that sustains the '7 million' is overridden by pre-existing power dynamics that shape local behaviours and which are aligned with a series of formal and informal relations of authority that fundamentally clash with the idea of horizontality that justifies the constitution of the local councils. These procedural limitations affect the empowering effects of the '7 million' as they shape which projects will be selected, the values distributed, as well as local actors' subjectivities regarding the initiative and their own power in the local context.

6.1 Empowerment as a Process I: the LCs vis-à-vis the Local Communities

Before getting into the analysis of the process that leads to the allocation of the '7 million', it is important to assess what is portrayed as its main legitimising feature — the LCs and their representativeness. This section discusses this aspect taking into account, first, the process that led to the constitution of these bodies, and, second, the way they relate to the communities they are supposed to represent.

THE LOCAL COUNCILS' CONSTITUTION

As noted in the previous chapter, it was in Nampula province where the first versions of the LCs were implemented back in 1998/1999. These early experiments covered selected districts, including Angoche, and were fairly top-down as, before approaching the communities, the teams in charge of creating the LCs needed to turn to the local authorities who would, in turn, call and conduct the meetings in which the LC members would be selected (Int. 5, 10). With the introduction of the national legislation for the OLEs, the existing LCs in Nampula had to be reconstituted, a process that took place between 2006 and 2007, carried out by several teams in all the APs of all the Nampula districts (Int. 5, 50). Despite this, these new councils did not necessarily represent the full expression of a bottom-up process. Indeed, some early LC members admitted that, at that stage, they were not *voted* on by the community, instead,

they were *chosen* (FG 34), indicated by community authorities such as religious leaders (Int. 38).

In 2011, a major process of reconstitution of the LCs took place nationally largely driven by the recognised need to improve these bodies' representativeness and inclusiveness. In Angoche, this 'revitalisation' was organised and monitored by the district's technical commission (TC). As a rule, the TC sent a warning about a week before the event to the chiefs of the APs so these could inform the localities, the *régulos*, and the village chiefs about the process. When the TC arrived in the communities, people were gathered waiting, then, first, the communities would choose the LC members at the village level, and then, these would proceed to the locality level where some of them would be selected to the LCs at the upper levels (Int. 55). Despite the concern to make this process as transparent and inclusive as possible, the evidence from the fieldwork showed that the revitalisation process had several problems that affected the LCs' legitimacy, inclusiveness and representativeness vis-à-vis the local communities.

As a general rule, while describing the process, the new LC members frequently used the words 'elected', 'voted', and 'chosen', often interchangeably, to describe how they had been selected. Usually they stated that they "were chosen" by the community (Int. 21, 43, 75; FG 24), then — normally after more questions — they would explain how the process actually took place. As it turned out this 'choosing process' had different meanings including aspects of voting, invitation/indication, and volunteering sometimes mixed in different orders.

Ms Alzira, for instance, explained that she 'was chosen' by the community when the TC visited her village (Int. 43). Mr José also said he 'was chosen' by the people, but after more questions, he explained that first he was called by the *secretário do bairro* who asked him if he wanted to be part of the LC, and only *after* that, he followed the procedures of 'elections' competing with other people for the LCs at the upper levels (Int. 21). Mr Domingos reported a similar situation (FG 66). Ms Luiza, on the contrary, stated having *volunteered* for the job after a general call from the *secretário do bairro* in her village for members of the LC (Int. 81). In the AP of Angoche Sede, the process was led by the

district administrator in a public meeting. Members of the LC selected in that occasion reported that the voting process was open, and they had their names called by the people at that time (FG 34).

A term widely used in the interviews, 'the community', needs clarification. Most members were unanimous in stressing that they were chosen by 'the community' and that 'the community' was fully aware that the selection process was taking place. If by 'the community', we understand the everyday people living in the villages, it was never clear what proportion of villagers were present during these processes. Reports from the TC refer to participation numbers ranging from 17 to 239 at each locality, which are very reduced numbers if we take into account the district population of 276,471 people (INE, 10 Aug. 2012) and its 14 localities. Moreover, these nominal values say little about the quality of participation and the general dynamics that *preceded* the presence of the TC. Indeed, several accounts revealed that key to the selection of the LC members was the role played by the *régulos* and the *secretários de bairro* who first received the information from the administration regarding the reconstitution and then pre-selected specific members of the community so these could be 'voted' later among the population when the TC came to the villages (Int. 21; FG 65, 66, 19).

A central issue here is, therefore, how the communities perceived this process and the extent to which they took part of it. In one focus group, for instance, participants stated that "the leaders know better who are the people in the community that may participate better" (FG 65). Yet, in several focus groups, many individuals were simply not aware of the reconstitution of the LCs, most answers ranging from a very vague "I've heard about it" (FG 29, 27, 69; Int. 76, 77, 78), generally followed by "but I did not vote" (FG, 26, 27) or "I was not invited/not informed" (FG 69; Int. 36, 76), to a simple "I don't know" (FG 23, 64; Int. 80). Also, in many cases, those who were aware of the process had very critical views about it. Participants in one focus group, for instance, expressed that in the LCs "they are only chosen within the structure" and only later they are presented to the population, so they did not see it as a real choosing process (FG 22). Others stated, "they don't want us to participate because they

know we are going to complain” (FG 26). Another group further mentioned that the LC members “elected themselves” to the AP (they referred to the continuity of old members) (FG 64); therefore, in their view it was not a participatory process.

This last observation points to an ambiguous aspect of the revitalisation that is the continuity of old members in the renewed bodies. According to some of the members who had their mandate renewed, before the start of the process, there was an internal discussion where it was decided that some old members *needed to stay* in the councils because they had experience and previous training. Yet, while all of them emphasised they had been “re-elected” (FG 34, 46; Int. 38, 39), *how* this procedure took place was less clear. Mr Hassan, for instance, recalled that old members were assessed by their performance and the people in the community were given the choice to keep them in the LCs (Int. 39). In a more detailed account, however, Ms Joana admitted that those who remained were not re-elected in the community, but *internally*, inside the council (Int. 38), and only the new members were selected in the communities. Accounts like these reinforce the questionable participatory aspect of the reconstitution, in particular, its inclusiveness. Indeed, besides the problem of selectivity, the fieldwork revealed that the process also had a strong gender bias, as there was a huge gap between the levels of participation of women and men (FG 23, 27, 29).

TC members had mixed views about the reconstitution process. On the one hand, some members highlighted the positive aspects of this process, in particular, its transparency and the fact that the new bodies were mostly literate, differently from the former ones (Int. 25, 53, 54, 55). On the other hand, there were harsh critiques regarding certain aspects of the process. First, and confirming the findings from the focus groups, some members recognised the lack of control of the processes that *preceded* the arrival of the TC in the villages and localities. As the visits were pre-scheduled, when the team arrived, everything was set up and some had the feeling that people had been pre-selected, even though that was not the original agenda (Int. 40, 53). Also, when the time came for the voting of the positions of secretaries and assistants within

the LCs, there were indications that these also had already been pre-determined. One interviewee admitted feeling that they went there basically to legitimate the process and not to make it happen (Int. 40).

A second observation was related to the political aspect of the process. One TC member noticed that, when they arrived in the villages, they called for everyone to participate including members of other political parties (non-Frelimo). However, they were told by the local leaders on several occasions that members of the opposition did not want to participate. He sensed that the *régulos* had become linked to the party, in the view of the population, curbing the willingness of other parties to take part of the process (Int. 63).⁵⁶ Unfortunately, most of the time, the TC did not verify this further. Only in one village did they actually schedule a new voting process so opposition parties could participate. Why this verification was *not* made comprehensively is a crucial question. One could hypothesize that the process was, indeed, a mere legitimization of local power politics in favour of Frelimo as some authors have argued in other case studies (Forquilha, 2010; Forquilha and Orre, 2012). Indeed, one of the TC members noticed that most of the people chosen for the LC were trusted members of the party (Int. 40). A proper assessment of this hypothesis, however, would have required more time and means to investigate. Nevertheless, the data gathered from the fieldwork showed that selectivity was indeed an issue, and, taking into account the national context discussed in previous chapters, it is plausible to consider this a valid hypothesis.

⁵⁶ As noted by Nuvunga (2013: 43-45), even though the LOLE (2003) and its regulation (2005) defined the village as the lowest level of the district unit, they did not define its formal authority representative, so the villages were ruled by the different traditional leaders later designated as community authorities. In 2012, however, a decree was approved which centralised the designation of the chiefs of the village, so they were to be indicated by the provincial government (just as the chiefs of the localities and AP). According to Nuvunga, this was a political strategy as in several villages — namely in Angoche — there were many sympathisers of Renamo. The government, therefore, wanted to have time to co-opt those leaders (which it did through the legal institution of the communities authorities) and, therefore, be able to further centralise the party at the local level.

LOCAL COUNCILS' INTERNAL DYNAMICS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITIES

According to the LC members, LC meetings had been very frequent, particularly at the AP and district levels, most members having attended far more than two meetings in the previous six months before the interview (FG 30, 34, 46; Int., 20, 38, 39, 41, 43, 81). As a general rule, it was the president of the LC who called the meetings and organised the agenda (Int. 38). Even though members are technically allowed to propose a meeting to the president, in practice, this kind of initiative was only reported in one case (FG 19) while the usual was for members to wait for the 'convocation note' sent by the president a few days before the meeting (Int. 20).

This posture of waiting for instructions coming from the top was reinforced by some members' lack of knowledge of their potential for proposing and mobilising meetings. Also, it was rare to find reports of members referring to meetings with the community in general. Mr José (Int. 21), for instance, a new LC member, seemed quite puzzled when I asked him if he had any meetings with the community. His response was, "No, because we were never *authorised* to do that". He added that if they did so, and "got caught" it would look bad. If he was told so, he thought it would be a good thing to do. He also noticed that, up to that moment, a village LC meeting had never taken place. In contrast, Mr José had been to a total of ten meetings in the LC upper levels. Mr José's report reinforces another observation, which was the fact that some village LCs did not seem to properly operate or even exist anymore even if they had been created in 2011 (FG 15, 17). As the village is the level closest to the majority of the population in the district, and the localities are often very distant from most villages, this constitutes a serious setback to what should be the deepening of the 'bottom-up' aspect of the LCs.

Regarding the meetings, overall, the LC members interviewed agreed that participants talk a lot and that they feel really free to express their opinions (Int. 21, 43; FG 44, 46). Members' views were, in general, very positive regarding their own participation in the meetings, but their statements also revealed that often this 'participation' was not proactive and critical, instead, more an

expression of 'pleas' and/or 'approval' of propositions. Besides, some participants also noted that speaking was of no practical use, for example, stating, "We are really *authorised* to speak freely. Only, sometimes we speak in vain, it is worth nothing. We only give our opinion . . . But it doesn't work. We only live to talk..." (FG 44).

An aspect that seemed to significantly influence the internal dynamics of the LCs was the presence of 'guests of honour' invited by the presidents of the LCs. These could include, among others, the chiefs of the locality, traditional leaders, school directors, and the chief of the police (FG 19, 46; Int. 28). Mr José and Mr Amade explained that these guests were invited so they could share their knowledge about specific topics discussed in the meetings (FG 19). When I asked how they felt about having external guests, first, they said that this was a "decision taken" that they were not consulted about it. They admitted feeling a bit constrained by their presence at times, but they also expressed feeling comfortable not to agree with everything they suggested. As they saw it, these people were there to make suggestions because they *knew better* about some issues.

What seems problematic, here, is not that there are guests, but who the guests are and how things are portrayed. Indeed, the reason why the LCs came into existence, officially, was because they were seen as representing the local interests, therefore, *they* knew better what they needed. Yet, there are guests who seem to 'know better' about some issues, so they have an important influence. LC members in a focus group (FG 46), for instance, commented that the presence of these special guests made a difference to the outcome of meetings in the sense of promoting action. As an example, they spoke about the mobilization regarding the '7 million' repayment. The fact that the leaders were there to explain the details of how to make the repayment somehow gave the instructions a different weight which would, in turn, promote more action by the LC members than if they had not been there.

Regarding the relationship between the LC and the communities, one of the main findings of this fieldwork was precisely the very weak interaction between the communities and the LCs, which contrasts to the LC members' positive

assessment of their representative role. In this regard, it should be stressed that, while providing several details regarding the LC meetings at the different levels, the existing regulation misses the opportunity to provide detailed mechanisms of communication between the LC members and the communities. While members are aware that LC meetings should take place periodically, their most important duty — the community interaction front — becomes a less rigid commitment more often than not based on irregular and informal means of interaction (Int. 38; FG 34; FG 44). There is, in fact, a predominant idea between LC members that “people *know* who the LC members are”, therefore, they understand that, when needed, people reach the members of the LCs in order to present their issues (FG 30, 34).

Remarkably, none of the LC members questioned their ability to represent the community. Yet, the information gathered in the communities showed a much more problematic picture. First, most of the participants interviewed had a very mixed understanding of what the LCs were and their general functions. Most of them would say that they “heard about” the LCs, but when they were asked about details about their functions, answers varied sharply. Some respondents linked them exclusively with the ‘7 million’ (FG 27), others, especially women, were unsure about how they worked (FG 19, 23). Some mentioned not knowing anyone in the community who was part of an LC (FG 29). Interestingly, of the four focus groups where people expressed clear knowledge about these bodies, three of them had members of Local Development Commissions (LDCs) that had regular capacity building sessions with NGOs that included information about the LCs (FG 64, 65, 66).

Second, the general view of the LCs and their work was often critical. In one focus group, for instance, someone referred to the councils as a “*montagem*” (mise-en-scène) (FG 15). They explained that, even though there existed councils in the villages and localities, ultimately, what counted was what took place in the AP and district administration because it is not “just anyone” who reaches the LC at district level but only “the most influential people of the chiefs” (ibid.). This view of separation also came up in other groups. On one occasion, the participants explained that they simply did not speak to the LC because the LC members think of them (the community) as “people from a

lower level” (FG 22), so they felt they were not heard. Some communities reported interacting with the councils, but, even in these cases, they pointed to the lack of initiative of the LCs to promote interaction with the community (FG 64) and the lack of any action/feedback regarding the concerns brought to them (ibid.; FG 66).

Curiously, the views of the beneficiaries of the ‘7 million’ regarding the LCs were not necessarily more positive. While some reported attending some LC meetings, especially after obtaining the loan (Int. 42, 77, 78; FG 46), many admitted not having any regular interaction with them (FG 26, 31, 69; Int. 35), and some actually expressed a very critical view of these bodies and their effectiveness. First, there were beneficiaries who had been victims of irregularities where LC members played an active role (Int. 35, 78; FG 16). Second, some believed that the LC actually had no power to do much for the community or for local development (FG 67, 69; Int. 80). Mr Pedro, for instance, while expressing appreciation for the work of the LCs, also admitted that when the community brings some of the local problems and requests to them, the members themselves say that the solutions belong to the “maximum ones” — people who have real decision power (Int. 42). Similarly, Mr Armando noted that there is, indeed, a lot of discussion in the LCs, but no concrete results (Int. 77). According to Mr Luis, one of the problems is precisely the kind of people that belong to the LCs as well as the general environment that hinders critical discussion. He remarked, “They put there [in the LC] people who don’t know what development is. Yes, they put an old man there, who lives far away. . . . What is he going to discuss? Even the chief of the AP will not discuss anything. Even though he sees things here are not well, he won’t be able to speak, he is afraid” (FG 69).

Yet, there is one thing that the LCs have been doing fairly effectively, that is mobilising beneficiaries to repay their loans. That was in fact the main, sometimes only, interaction that most beneficiaries interviewed had with the LCs (FG 26; Int. 36, 76, 77, 78, 79), which shows that, different from the past, the repayment of the ‘7 million’ has become a number one topic in the local government agenda. At the same time, because of the LCs increasing

engagement in the reclaiming of the loans, in the eyes of the beneficiaries, these bodies are becoming predominantly associated *with the government*, and *not with the community*. Indeed, many beneficiaries interviewed admitted to never having been asked by the LC members about their difficulties or problems in project implementation (FG 31, Int. 35, 36). So, we see here the 'top-down' dimension prevailing on the 'bottom-up' aspect of the LCs, and the latter being perceived mostly as a 'debt collector'.

A final important observation refers to the aspect of gender. The fieldwork revealed that the link between the LCs and the women in the communities was particularly weak. More generally, there was a huge asymmetry between men and women regarding their knowledge of the LCs as well as their interaction with LC members. Additionally, the focus groups showed a strong disconnect between the female members of the LCs and the women in the communities. Indeed, even when the women interviewed knew that there should be women in the LCs, many could not identify any women they knew that belonged there (FG 18, 65, 66). In some cases, they knew a female member but this was not accompanied by any kind of interaction that could foster women's interests in the district (FG 23, 27, 29, 64).

More generally, as this fieldwork took place only about six months after the reconstitution of the LCs, it was too soon to analyse the changes that may have arisen from this process. At that time, there were different opinions about the effects and potential effects of the recent changes, but it was difficult to find evidence to support any of them. Regarding the communities, many participants expressed a sensation of 'sameness' (FG 15, 24, 65). Another aspect that was difficult to assess was the difference in terms of training and knowledge that the LC members had regarding their own functions. At the time of the fieldwork, many of the new members of the LCs had *not* received any formal training. Yet, as noted, they already had several meetings and had also selected the '7 million' project proposals (FG 19, 30; Int. 21, 43). One participant noted that he was expecting training to be given, but interestingly, he was not waiting for the government to do that, but for Akilizetho (see also FG 44).

To a large extent, all these aspects influence the implementation and effectiveness of the '7 million', in particular, its local empowerment potential. In practical terms, the (lack of) communication between the LCs and the communities will furthermore influence the selection of for the '7 million', which, in turn, will affect this initiative contribution for local development. The next section explains this procedural aspect in more detail.

6.2 Empowerment as a Process II: Applying to and Obtaining the '7 million'

Before detailing the procedural aspects of the '7 million' at the local level, it should be noted that even though the '7 million' is one of the most popular national policies in Mozambique, the degree of information that people had about it in Angoche as well as their understanding of its mechanism varied sharply. One of the most common answers in the communities regarding their knowledge of the '7 million' was that they had "heard about it" (FG 17, 23, 29, 62, 64, 65), but whatever came after this quote was very heterogeneous. Some individuals, for instance, knew that it was a credit obtained from the government (FG 27, 62, 64, 65). Others, especially the women, did not know exactly what it was (FG 23, 29), and some simply knew nothing about it (FG 18).

Among those who were familiar with the initiative, a common observation was that there was a *mystery* regarding the procedures in order to obtain the fund (FG 64, 65, 66). One participant explained, "It's like going hunting. Each one goes, one gets a gazelle, another one a rabbit, but it's difficult to get the secret . . . to get the gazelle". It was also remarkable that, most of the time, people had heard of the '7 million' not through the LCs, but by other means such as informal talks in the community (Int. 36, 42, 75, 79), local government channels (FG 17, 69; Int. 77), the radio, and even provincial visits (FG 23).

This brief context shows that, even though the LC is central to the process that leads to the allocation of the '7 million', there had been no coordinated efforts from these bodies to spread the information about the fund, at least according to the communities. This may explain some of the misconceptions about the process as well as the ambiguous way some individuals view '7 million'.

OVERVIEW OF THE SUBMISSION/APPROVAL PROCESS

According to the '7 million' regulation, the projects submitted should be approved at the level of the district consultative council (DCC). It is at this level that the TC has a central role in advising the LC members of the viability of the proposed projects before the final decision. This means that, in theory, any project could be rejected at the district level taking into account the basic evaluation criteria (viability, community impact, and risk). In practice, the interviews revealed that the main level where projects are selected is at the localities. According to the district administrator, the projects are *collected* in the villages, *approved* at the locality, *confirmed* in the AP and *homologated/ratified* in the district (Int. 54). He explained that these steps are based on the understanding that "local people know better what they need", so it should *not* be up to the DCC to reject any proposal. The chiefs of the AP also repeated this discourse which fundamentally highlighted the bottom-up aspect of the '7 million' and the minimum interference of the upper levels in the decision-making process (Int. 13, 41).

In practice, what takes place is less linear than the picture described. First, most of the beneficiaries interviewed did not deliver the proposals to the LCs but directly to the local government (locality, AP, or administration). This means that, in theory, several of these projects should go down to the locality level in order to be approved before going up again. According to one AP chief, the projects, in fact, go back to the village level, so they may be verified before the approval (Int. 13). In practice, it is extremely difficult to verify the dynamics between these levels not least of all because the documents' transition from one place to the other is not clearly documented. As reported by the beneficiaries, once they delivered their project proposals, they were not given any receipt or even a copy of the project. This also makes it difficult to calculate the actual amount of projects submitted per village and compare them to the final numbers of approved projects. The data obtained in the district administration only shows the number of approved projects. Some interviewees gave a general idea of the number of projects submitted in 2011.

Table 6.1: Examples of Projects Submitted and Approved

LC LEVEL	SUBMITTED	APPROVED
Locality (FG 19)	25	8
Locality (FG 46)	78	12
Locality (Int. 28)	38	8
Locality (FG 30)	20	8
Village (FG 24)	4	1

What follows the delivery of the proposals is also not a homogeneous process. In theory, inspection visits should take place *before* the approval of the proposals, so the LC members can verify the feasibility of the projects submitted. In practice, there seems to be confusion between the idea of confirming the aptitude of the applicant and the idea of inspection to assess the project's potential. Indeed, only on two occasions did members of the LC describe having made an inspection visit before the project's approval (FG 19, 30). One of the reasons for this seems to be the understanding that, as long as the LC members know the applicants and their background, this somehow represents a certain assurance regarding the project's viability (Int. 21, 38). Reports from the beneficiaries confirm that, as a general rule, visits only take place *after* approval when the implementation has already started (Int. 76, 77, 78); the contrary is the exception (FG 16).

Internally, as described by LC members, the selection process starts with all members reading the proposals after which they take into account the types of projects (e.g., trade, food production), the applicant's capacity to implement the project (e.g., if s/he already has the business in question, and the resources/capacity to make the business viable), the expected impact, and the geographical distribution of the projects (e.g., which villages do not have projects yet) (FG 30, 34, 46; Int. 21, 28). The general concern with "growth", "jobs creation", and "eradicating absolute poverty" was also mentioned (Int. 21,

FG 34). Notwithstanding these objective criteria, LC members admitted facing a major dilemma. On the one hand, they expressed the need to make the money available to as many people as possible; on the other hand, they were concerned about the sustainability of projects, which required more money to be allocated to each project.

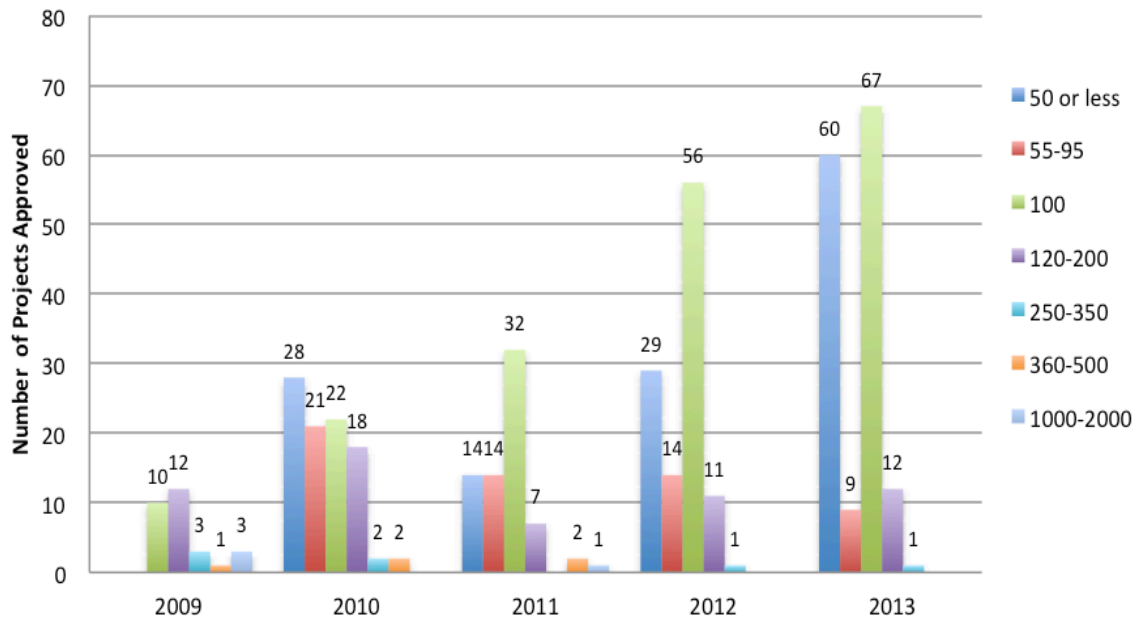
Each year, as soon as the district administration knows how much money they will have available for the '7 million', they make a division per AP and per locality based on the population number in each subdivision (Int. 54). Consequently, before the LCs discuss the projects, they already know the total they have to take into account for the fund's distribution. In 2012, the average budget available for each locality was MTZ600,000 with the exceptions of the most densely populated areas of Angoche Sede and Nametoria Sede which got more than double this amount (Int. 39). If we consider this amount (approximately £11,300), and further consider that this money will be split among an average of six to eight projects, it becomes clear that it is not much, especially if the purpose is to create jobs.

Speaking about the selection of projects for 2012, Ms Ana explained:

We discussed this. Each person that asks the money, they know that if they ask this specific amount they will be able to do one thing. But we agreed that the fund is too small and the projects too many, that's why we discussed and reduced. If the person asked 300,000 we gave them 150,000. It is not convenient to give 600,000 to one person only . . . We need to be inclusive (FG 34).

As shown in graph 6.1, there has been indeed a tendency to approve many projects of very small value across the years. And even though the total amount available for the fund in the district has increased since 2007, there has been a parallel increase in the number of projects, as seen in table 6.2.

**Graph 6.1: Number of Projects per Value Disbursed
(Thousands of Meticais)**



Source: Excel sheets obtained in the Division of Local Development and Planning, Angoche District Government.

In this regard, the fieldwork revealed a contradiction between the data obtained and the general 'orientation' identified in the discourse. According to several interviewees, in 2012, there had been an instruction in the administration to finance projects with a minimum of MTZ100,000. This instruction, however, came half way through the process and as many projects worth less than that had already been approved they had to move back to the AP and locality levels in order to be re-approved with a higher value. As these adjustments clashed with the total budget available per locality, several projects had to be postponed until the following year (Int. 21, 41, 43; FG 19, 46). In spite of this, according to a list obtained in the district administration, there were still 49 projects worth less than MTZ100,000 (approximately £1,880) approved in 2012, and of those, 29 were worth MTZ50,000 (approximately £940) or less. Moreover, the following year, the number of small projects increased significantly, 60 of them (over 40% of the total) worth MTZ50,000. As shown in the graph, most projects

stand within the threshold between MTZ50,000 and MTZ100,000. The only occasions where projects were paid over a million meticaï is was in the case of the three tractors acquired in each AP and in the case of a project of mechanization in 2009 and 2011.

Table 6.2: '7 Million' Total Disbursement and Number of Projects per Year, Angoche District

(Thousands of Meticaï s)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of projects per year	18	59	66	29	93	70	111	149
Total Amount Disbursed	7,000 (£133th)	7,000	8,613 (£163th)	8,175.3 (£155th)	9,083.8 (£172th)	8,677.4 (£164th)	10,532.9 (£200th)	12,267.9* (£233th)

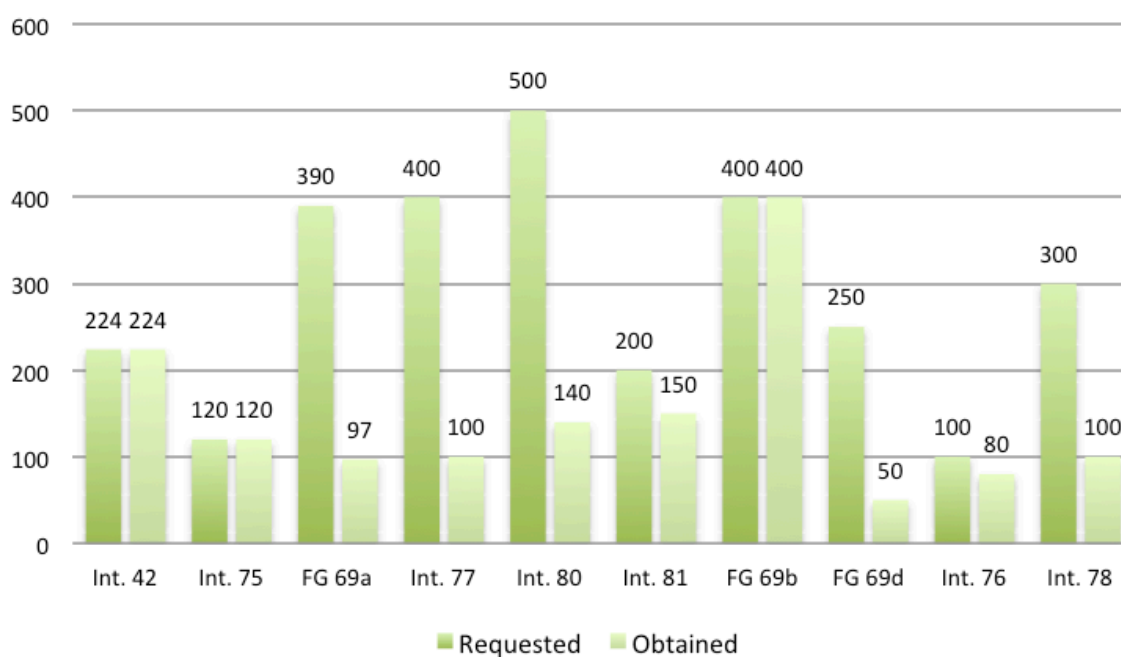
* Value approved by the LC, of which MTZ11,879,000 were formally sent to the district, and MTZ388,900 were going to be taken from the repayment account.

Source: Excel sheets obtained in the Division of Local Development and Planning, Angoche District Government.

According to one member of one LC, the tendency to avoid financing proposals with high values is partly related to the risk factor and the fear of disbursing a high amount of money for a project that may not work (Int. 75). The problem, nevertheless, seems to be precisely the contrary, that is, the lower the value disbursed, the higher the chances of no completion of the project. In fact, another central issue in the selection process was precisely the gap between the values requested in the proposals and the values obtained for the projects' completion. As noted in graph 6.2, many of the beneficiaries interviewed received substantially less than what they had asked for.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Reports from CEDE regarding their monitoring of the '7 million' Angoche confirm similar findings, that is, a huge gap between values requested and disbursed in several projects (CEDE, 2010c and 2011a).

**Graph 6.2: Values Requested and Obtained
Examples from 2010-2011**



The decision regarding the values approved poses a central problem that touches the bottom-up/top-down dynamics of the scheme. On the one hand, there is a deliberate policy of the local authorities not to interfere in the decisions taken by the LC members. Similarly, the members of the TC do not interfere in the LC's decisions. As explained by one of the TC members, their main task in the project's approval process comes in the final stage before the final decision of the DCC. At this stage, very often they detect limitations in the projects and suggest corrections most of which point towards the need to increase the project's costs. When this happens, the project goes back to the lower levels in order to be approved again, now with a different value. As this process ultimately affects the total budget available, often these corrected projects are postponed until the following year (Int. 53). On the other hand, and in spite of this advice and the internal discussions, the LCs tend to prioritise aspects of distribution instead of sustainability of the projects. Part of the reason for this seems to be the social pressure derived from the many people who send projects. Besides this, however, the power dynamics during this process suggests that there are other issues at stake that ultimately influence the final outcome.

POWER DYNAMICS DURING THE PROCESS

The first observation when it comes to power in the allocation of the '7 million' is about the control of the process. In theory, it is the collective body of the LC that decides which projects will be approved, each member having an equal say. In practice, however, there are many subtle aspects that influence the final outcome and that are transversal to the LC discussions. One main aspect is the relationship between applicants and members of the LCs and/or local authorities, which include bribes, gifts, and promises of a certain percentage of the value to be obtained. The interviews revealed that these practices were extremely common, regardless of time and space, 14 of the 23 beneficiaries interviewed reporting such problems. More generally, the format of the irregularity changed after 2009 with the removal of then administrator José Carlos Amade from office as well as the transformation of the OIIL into the FDD. In fact, during the first years of the '7 million', most irregularities were directly linked with the figure of the administrator — first, Arthur Barraca, then, Carlos Amade.

Mr Barraca's name was one of the most quoted in the interviews, linked with several irregularities. Under his administration, as the '7 million' was still disbursed in goods and not money, the predominant scheme was to force beneficiaries to buy overpriced products in a specific store that had a previous agreement with Mr Barraca. As the beneficiaries were not given any receipt, they could not even verify the products' value. This happened, for instance, with Mr Asim, a tradesman who was forced to buy overpriced products that were not even requested in his business plan at a local Indian store (Int. 36).

Other beneficiaries shared similar stories. In 2006, for instance, members of a fishing association made a request of MTZ300,000 in order to buy fishing material and conservation equipment. Instead, they received only nets and other incomplete fishing material, valued at MTZ160,000 but without any receipt (FG 31). In 2008, a farmers' association applied for a loan of MTZ215,000 in order to buy a mill and construction material. They were surprised when the mill was delivered (without receipt) as they never had the chance to present an invoice for the products required. They were also given only part of the material requested and were asked to go to the same Indian store (Int. 79).

In an extreme case, a farmers' association became indebted even though it had never requested a loan (FG 29). They explained that, in 2007, their village received a visit from the First Lady. Impressed by their association and the community's organisation, she decided to make a series of donations, specifically a mill to the association, and a school and a health centre to their village. The school and the health centre were never built, but the mill arrived a few months later. A few months after that, the farmers received a visit from Mr Barraca who 'explained' to them that the mill was not a donation but part of the '7 million'. He brought the documents for them to sign and they felt unable to contest the situation assuming, therefore, a debt of MTZ205,000.

Mr Barraca left office in 2008, but his replacement, José Carlos Amade, continued his legacy. In fact, Mr Amade became famous in the press because within a year of his mandate, during the open presidency in Angoche, several people openly complained about his abuses and the disrespect of the law including the undue charge of fines and commissions regarding the '7 million' (O País, 05 May 2009). In May 2009, he was dismissed from his post, and in 2012, after an investigation, he was finally jailed in Nampula (AIM, 27 May 2009).

Since his removal from office, there have been fewer complaints regarding the role of the district administration in the case of the '7 million'. Nevertheless, this has not diminished the occurrence of irregularities. Instead, the interviews suggest that this has simply led to the concentration of irregularities at the lower echelons of the local government as well as in the LCs. Indeed, several beneficiaries admitted having disbursed different amounts of money in advance both to LC members as well as to "people in the AP" or chiefs of the localities in order to have their proposals approved for the loan (FG 16, 69; Int. 78). The amounts mentioned ranged from MTZ600 (approximately £11) to larger sums such as MTZ6,000 (approximately £113) but some preferred not mentioning values. At times the 'gift' was not money but goats or chickens or a mix of both. In other cases, there were requests for a "promise", so the beneficiary did not pay in advance but was requested to pay later a percentage of the amount requested once s/he obtained it (Int. 81).

As explained in a focus group with beneficiaries, there are different stages when one needs to negotiate the loan. First, there is the incentive given when the documents are being prepared. At this stage, the request is not openly declared. Instead, local authorities would insist that the documents presented are “not correct” until the applicant offers them something. After that stage, however, “you have to confirm”, that is the applicant has to promise to give something back when s/he finally obtains the fund. According to them, this usually happens in the AP and locality levels but never in the district administration (FG 69). Other participants confirmed similar procedures (FG 16, Int. 78, 81).

Another common story was the exchange of names and projects in order to change the values allocated to specific beneficiaries. Ms Sofia (Int. 35), for instance, applied to the ‘7 million’ just before administrator Barraca left office. She submitted a proposal asking for MTZ300,000, and the project was approved for MTZ140,000. After a few months, seeing no signs of the money, she discovered that her project had been exchanged with another individual’s who had originally asked for MTZ55,000 but who promised to pay to the LC MTZ20,000 so the projects could be exchanged. How she came to know about these details reveals an interesting aspect of the internal dynamics of the LC. In fact, the MTZ20,000 paid to the LC was supposed to be split between the members. As one of them was left out, he decided to tell Ms Sofia what had happened.

A similar story happened to Mr Latifo (Int. 32), who applied for the ‘7 million’ in 2007. Unlike Ms Sofia, his project was not approved. Yet, in 2010, he came to know that his name was in the list of the AP along many beneficiaries who had not repaid their loans. Puzzled, Mr Latifo started to investigate the story and discovered that his name and project had been used back then to give money to another person who died one year later.

An important aspect to highlight in the accounts of Ms Sofia and Mr Latifo is the political dimension that shaped their stories. Mr Latifo had his project rejected in 2007 because he “was accused” by the chief of the AP of “being Renamo”, which he denied. Ms Sofia, despite being a member of Frelimo, was reprehended by LC members for not going to the party meetings as frequently

as she should. The political (party) dimension of the LCs and the '7 million' is a very delicate topic, and yet, very difficult to assess. Evidence about this link was presented in a study by Forquilha (2010). His evidence was based on an in-depth qualitative study in the district of Gorongosa where he used local informants in order to identify the parties of the LC members and of the beneficiaries. Due to the different circumstances of my fieldwork, I was not able to trace the party of each LC member. In fact, the party issue did not come naturally as a topic in the interviews with the exception of those cases where the projects had been refused and interviewees justified the matter by focusing on party discrimination. But in these cases, it was difficult to get concrete evidence to support the claim of political bias.

Two examples were illustrative in this regard. Mr Ricardo, a member of Renamo, told me that he submitted a project in 2011 but that he was not allowed to receive the money because he was a "non-moderate Renamist" (Int. 37). He came to know through some members of the LC that one of the secretaries had opposed his project on a party basis. However, after further questioning, it became clear that other factors had influenced his case. Indeed, aware of the political sensitivities in Angoche, Mr Ricardo decided to propose a project together with a colleague who is a Frelimo member. They asked for MTZ600,000 but got a response that they could only receive MTZ250,000. He replied that this amount was far below what he needed to implement the project, so he refused it. His colleague then decided to try alone and was later granted MTZ100,000. Mr Ricardo stressed the political dimension of the episode, nevertheless, from his own report it becomes evident that other factors, in particular the large amount of money requested, also influenced the outcome.

Mr Osias, a well-educated member of Renamo with a graduate certificate and a successful businessman, told me that in 2011 the administrator invited him to submit a project proposal aiming at job creation. He did so and initially made a proposal asking for MTZ600,000 which was later amended to MTZ300,000. He explained that he followed all the stages of the process and that the project had been approved at all levels of the LCs. Nevertheless, when the time came to receive the money, he was informed that, "unfortunately, at the last minute, it

wasn't possible anymore" (Int. 33). He was not given any explanation even though, until that time, he was in constant contact with the chief of the locality who had ensured him that his project had been approved. Mr Osias explained that the project had been approved regarding its viability. He was there when the document was signed in the economic sector before going back to the DCC for final approval. In his view, the reason for the last minute change was some opposition possibly from some 'guest of honour' usually invited to the LC meetings. He explained it as a 'party' issue.

A few days after this interview, I had the chance to hear from some LC members about Mr Osias' case. They explained that in their meeting, the project was actually rejected based on the fact that Mr Osias was already a successful businessman, so they agreed that the money should go to "those who do not have it" (FG 34). But they also mentioned that he "had been promised" because there was a lady in the LC that was pressing for his project to be approved. This comment was followed by several complaints by the participants regarding the dynamics of the LC meetings and the projects' approval. Mr Victor, for instance, said that ultimately, they (the members of the LC) do not have much power to decide anything, "it's them who decide" (Ibid.). He and his colleagues noticed that there are many important people who want to have their friends' projects approved, and this puts the members in a difficult position. Besides, they also feel pressure outside the LC as people who do not have their projects approved often find someone to blame (ibid.).

So, whereas the party issue may be an element at stake in these dynamics, it seems difficult to capture the extent to which it is so as it is methodologically difficult to isolate the 'party' variable. In fact, several of the problematic/irregular cases observed involved beneficiaries who were members of Frelimo. Therefore, what seems to matter is not only the party element, but also the personal networks of relationships that each one has and how this can be used to maximise benefit at the individual level as well as each actor's position in the field at stake.

In this regard, one important observation made by some members of the DCC was precisely their lack of control over whatever follows the discussion of the projects, including the elaboration of the final list of projects approved, which

stays in the hands of the TC. As noted, the DCC members make a list of the projects approved in the meeting but that is not the one that is later attached to the public administration wall. Some DCC members recalled having asked the TC to make a copy of the list they compile in the meeting, “but they don’t do it”, and the LC has no means to enforce anything because “the technical team has more power than us” (FG 34). And part of this power is exercised through the writing up of the final list before making it public (Ibid.; Int. 38).⁵⁸

The stories told by some LC members show that power often manifests precisely in these spaces between the different stages of the process of the ‘7 million’ projects’ approval. Indeed, in the final stage before the list becomes public, many things happen that escape their control and knowledge. Ms Joana, for instance, a member of the DCC since its first constitution, admits that many times, new names appeared on the final list that were not previously there, and vice-versa, in many cases, names that were approved in the meeting disappeared (Int. 38). Mr Victor, a new member, gave the example of a beneficiary in the village that had just received the money from the fund, but his name was not on the original list approved by the DCC (FG 34). After double-checking the list, Mr Victor asked the beneficiary about it, but the latter replied with a threatening “*Eh pah*, you don’t try to find it out!” Another example of irregularities highlighted by DCC members was the use of fake names by people in the local government in order to obtain the fund. They said they eventually know about this because sometimes the person whose name was used does not get anything in return, and then, they tell the truth to the LC members (FG 34).

As the LC members see these problems taking place, some of them feel that they should do something, yet taking action is not an easy option. On the one hand, LC members reported looking bad in the eyes of the community — e.g., when they say a project was approved and the name disappears from the list they look like liars — so this creates an incentive to take action. On the other

⁵⁸ The view that the TC has more power than the LC also came up in a focus group (FG 67). In fact, some in the group could not make a clear distinction between the LC and the TC as they saw both as practically mingled.

hand, many feel that there is no space where they can take concrete action precisely because they have no control over the process (FG 34; Int. 38). Some pointed out, for instance, that at that stage (May 2012), many people had not received the money yet, even though their projects had been approved a long time before. However, they, as members of the LC, had no way to verify what was going on. They were concerned as only 15 people had received the money, and this delay could seriously damage the projects especially those focused on agriculture because of the seasons. They further showed suspicion, as these 15 were “people from the chiefs”, so they felt that their only option was to speak to the higher authorities, e.g., people from the provincial government or during the open presidencies. But then, as they also admitted, it is very late to make any difference to those affected by these problems (FG. 34).

Angoche’s history, nevertheless, shows that speaking out may make a difference as the removal of administrator Amade illustrates. Mr Hassan was one of those who had the privilege to speak in one of the open presidencies. He reported different problems at the time, such as the generalised non-repayment of the loans, the problem of overpriced material, or of the mills with missing pieces that were bought directly by the director of economic activities (Int. 39). According to him, problems still happen, and he gave a recent example of a situation where he directly interfered, which involved the use of the name of an applicant by a local employee in the district accounting department (ibid.). The applicant submitted a project for the ‘7 million’ but never got a reply regarding its approval. Yet, one day he received a call from the chief of accounting in the district administration who asked for his bank account number. He thought it was because he got the credit. Instead, the chief later asked him to transfer the money to his own account and did this repeatedly. The applicant then consulted the LC members and realised his projects had *not* been approved which meant the chief was using his account to receive money for his own personal business. More money entered the account, but then, Mr Hassan advised him to hold the money and go to the police, which he did. The case was still being resolved at the time of the interview.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

One of the reasons why it is difficult to clearly assess the power dynamics behind the allocation process of the '7 million' is the unclear chain of responsibility that exists behind it. As noted above, several LC members recognised the existence of irregular activities in the process, yet, they often felt unable to take action in order to change things because they did not know where to go if not to the higher scale of government authorities. At the same time, many beneficiaries or individuals who have attempted to obtain the fund and had to deal with LC members' requests also did not know where to complain or feared to do so because of the possibility of retaliation in the future. Their reports, therefore, point towards the lack of a mechanism for complaint, redress, and accountability.

The interviews with the members of the TC and the administrator were enlightening in this regard. First, when asked about eventual irregularities in the case of the '7 million', there was a tendency to deny such cases existed (Int. 12, 53). As one TC member explained, this may be because people complain directly in the administration as the TC has no formal capacity to do anything about it (Int. 53). According to the administrator, nevertheless, while complaints were common, that was not the case for irregularities. But then he added, "There may be irregularities *in the base*. Here we only homologate the projects, they are approved in the base" (Int. 54).

The chief of the TC noted that they had received complaints about illicit charges for the projects or political favouritism in the past, but stressed that situations like these had become less common in recent years (Int. 25). Other members noted that the problems were usually linked with the associations and the misuse of the money received (Int. 12). The administrator further denied any existence of political favouritism, highlighting that they had three projects approved recently from members of the opposition and adding that there was a misperception among member of the opposition regarding the '7 million' which led many of them to refrain from submitting proposals (Int. 54).

A central problem in these accounts is that there seems to be no space where people can actually go and safely denounce illicit actions regarding the '7

million'. First, even though the TC is the body responsible for monitoring and evaluation, it is not in charge of imposing corrective or punitive measures. One member, for instance, recalled two episodes where he was approached for advice regarding irregular actions (Int. 63). One case referred to a mismatch between the value obtained by an association and the value that appeared in the invoice it received. The other was a complaint about a *régulo* who denied a project to someone because the person did not agree to pay him part of any fund awarded. In both cases, the TC member gave general advice. Respectively, for the association to pay only what they actually received and find out who received the rest of the money; for the second person, he was advised to go and speak to the *régulo* (the same one who asked for the payment) and try again the following year. The problem, according to the interviewee, is that the TC is not there to solve problems. Their competency is limited to an advisory role to the LCs, so in cases like these, only the 'big chiefs' (i.e., the administrator) can do something about it.

In practice, as discussed in the next section, this type of procedure limits the access that people have to justice and allows irregularities to continue reducing the potential positive effects of the '7 million'. Furthermore, it reinforces the primacy of *authority* at the expense of *accountability* as a principle of governance at the local level. One example was the story of Mr Paulino, an elderly farmer who applied for the fund in 2010 (Int. 80). After requesting MTZ500,000 for an agriculture project, he got his project approved for MTZ150,000, just enough for him to buy a mill. Aware of his plans, the administrator told him he had a friend in Nampula who was selling a mill for MTZ140,000. Finding himself in a delicate position, Mr Paulino accepted the deal. A few days later, he received the mill, which, nevertheless, came with several pieces missing including the engine. In order to make the mill operate, Mr Paulino had to sell four head of cattle and borrow additional money spending an extra MTZ40,000 not covered by the fund. Meanwhile, Mr Paulino went to the administration to explain the situation. He spoke to the chief of the TC and the administrator himself who told him to go to Nampula and complain to the person who sold him the mill. After a while, Mr Paulino gave up trying to fix the situation. As his case involved a friend of the administrator, no one would do

anything that might somehow implicate his involvement in the projects' outcome. "Here is different from there, in your land. Here you are threatened, that's it, there's no way. A ruler (*dirigente*) is a ruler. No one can be above him", Mr Paulino said, laughing.

At the lower echelons, participants reported similar episodes. One of the few projects worth over a million meticaís was the case of a tractor bought in one of the APs. Mr Ronaldo, one of the members of a farmers' association, explained that they had submitted a project proposal asking for MTZ280,000 in order to buy animals and other farming material. Instead, they "were given" a tractor worth over one million (FG 46). According to the LC members who 'approved the project', this happened because the AP needed a tractor, so they thought that Mr Ronaldo's association was the more trustful and efficient recipient. The problem was that Mr Ronaldo himself did not want the tractor, nevertheless, he felt obliged to accept the deal and a much bigger debt.

These two cases point towards the grey zone into which many '7 million' projects fall. In both cases the beneficiary accepted a proposal because it was posed by people who were in a different position of authority, and they felt they had to say yes. In itself, this does not constitute an irregularity, but it does reflect a perverse expression of *power over* that is extremely difficult to resist or contest. Also, because of that, it is a situation that will not be questioned once it is done.

In summary, by looking at these procedural aspects, we may start to understand some of the issues that directly affect the empowering results of the '7 million'. Indeed, if we think in terms of empowerment as a process, we find that the linear idea that promoting participation will result in the participant's empowerment (or the empowerment of those who they represent) does not necessarily apply here. On the contrary, there are several formal and informal networks of power that fundamentally affect the functioning of the local councils and how members relate to each other as well as how they relate to external actors. This, in turn, directly affects the project's approval. The spaces between each phase of the process and the lack of a clear chain of accountability, furthermore, provide opportunities for these informal expressions of power to

operate, sometimes enhancing power asymmetries instead of contributing to local empowerment.

6.3 Empowerment as an Outcome

This section discusses the empowering effects of the '7 million' taking into account both its material and non-material dimensions. The section also addresses some of the contextual issues that have influenced these results and the problems related to the monitoring and evaluation of the initiative.

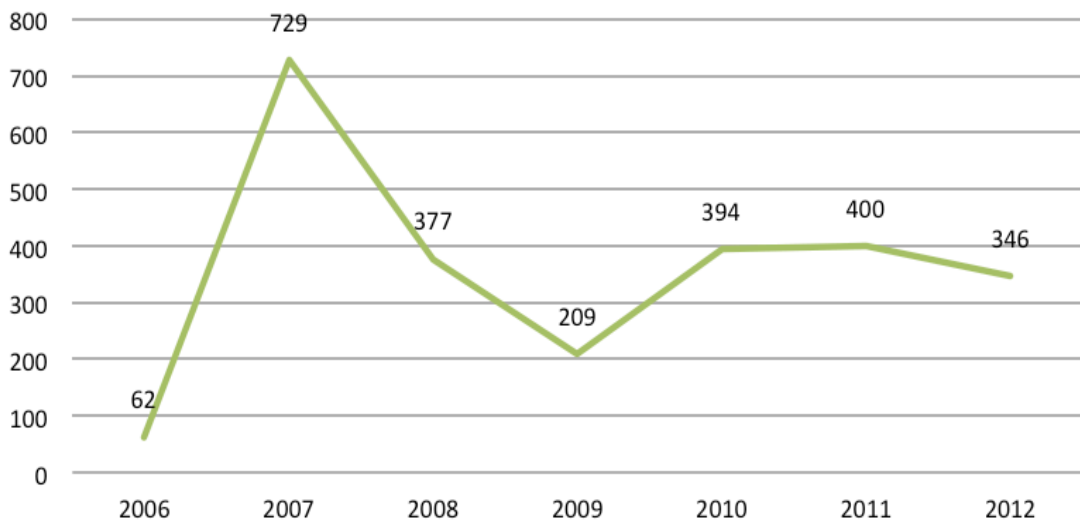
INCREASE OF SOCIAL WELFARE?

According to the Angoche district's administrator, the '7 million' had several positive and empowering results related, in particular, to its effects in promoting economic growth and an increased circulation of currency at the local level (Int. 54). Within the administration, the '7 million' was even referred to as a "part of the peace that people now have" (Int. 25), an instrument that allows them to change their own situation as they feel supported by the government. The initial data obtained in the district government's administration was particularly positive regarding the results in terms of job creation as shown in graph 6.3. The numbers also referred to a significant amount of food production between 2006 and 2012 including 450.2 tons of "different products", 56 heads of cows, and 436 heads of goats (District Gov. of Angoche, Excel sheets).

Notwithstanding this initial positive assessment of the initiative, further data gathered in the administration revealed a much more critical scenario regarding the effects of the '7 million'. First, some members of the TC believed that the '7 million' had contributed to "something" but mostly small changes (e.g., the shortening of the distances to buy basic products, an increase in trade especially informal trade) that did not fundamentally have any impact on the district's development, not even on the number of jobs (Int. 12, 53, 63). Second, a monitoring report obtained a while later, dated from March 2010 and covering visits to 17 projects financed by the '7 million' (approved between 2007 and 2009), showed that 11 of the projects had not produced anything sustainable (District Gov. of Angoche, 2010b). In fact, many projects did not exist anymore, and some beneficiaries had moved to other districts not leaving any information

about their whereabouts. In many cases of associations, members had simply split the money obtained and nothing had been built. Ironically, two of the five cases where some success was reported referred to beneficiaries who I interviewed in 2012 and that painted a very different picture from the notes in the report. In another short report (District Gov. of Angoche, 2012), written a few days before my arrival in the district in 2012, it was noted that the tractor of the AP of Namaponda, worth two million meticaís as approved in 2011, was never used and was, therefore, not providing any benefit to the community not even to the association that obtained it.

Graph 6.3: '7 Million': Jobs Created per Year, Angoche District



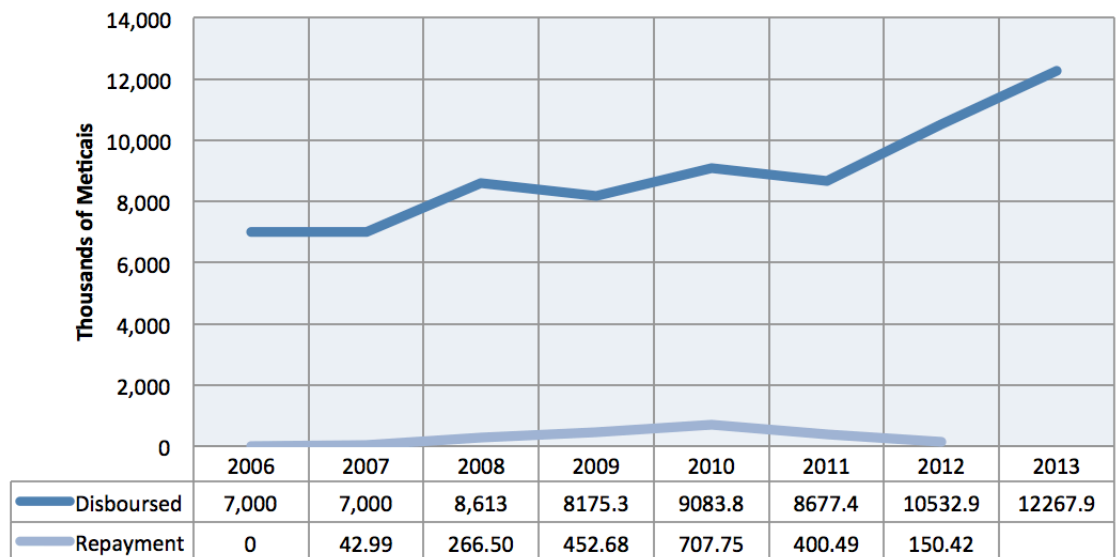
Source: Excel sheets obtained in the Division of Local Development and Planning, Angoche District Government.

There are many reasons that explain such outcomes, and the main ones will be discussed below. Yet, it is worth noting that in the view of the TC members and most local authorities, the key problem of the initiative was related to the “behaviour of the beneficiaries”, and to the low rate of repayment (Int. 12, 13, 25, 41, 54). Indeed, sometimes the beneficiaries were portrayed as misinterpreting the ‘7 million’ and taking it as a grant that did not need to be repaid (Int. 25, 55). Other times, they were accused of acting in “bad faith” (Int.

12). At times, other factors were pointed out such as the gap between the value requested and the value disbursed per project (Int. 12, 63) and changes of the original projects without asking for advice (Int. 55). Contextual factors, such as the weather in the case of agriculture and the lack of preparation to run a business were also mentioned (Int. 28, 54), but these factors were, however, given less significance than the idea of the ‘spirit of non-repayment’, which seemed to be the predominant explanatory framework.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the low repayment rate is, indeed, a big issue that affects the sustainability of the ‘7 million’. In Angoche, if we take into account the period 2006-2011, only 3.85% of the total amount invested was repaid. If we ignore 2006 (as the government does), even so, there is only a return rate of 4.5% in five years. Even if we consider that some projects, such as cattle raising, take a long time to generate profit, the percentage is still extremely low.

Graph 6.4: ‘7 million’ in Angoche: Total Disbursed and Repayment per Year*



* Note that the value for 2012 only refers to the first trimester. I did not have access to the full amount for 2012 and 2013.

Source: Excel sheets obtained in the Division of Local Development and Planning, Angoche District Government.

The interviews revealed that a fundamental problem regarding the ‘7 million’ is actually the low success rate of the projects which may be explained by several

factors. First, the vast majority of applicants develop the projects by themselves with no help and with no previous experience of how to make a business plan. Of those interviewed, only two reported having had previous training and/or help from one or more NGOs (FG 16; Int. 75). Notably, they were also the ones who reported the highest level of satisfaction with their projects noting improvements in the level of production, optimization of the soil, and describing plans for future investment. They also had solid associations, which kept the same membership over time.

The general rule, however, was very different. For one, most of the applicants were not used to long-term planning and many never had much money in their hands at once. Despite this, the only 'help' many of them got was the suggestions of corrections from the TC during the approval process. But then, the other problem was that often the corrections pointed towards the need to increase the project value, which, in turn, clashed with the LCs tendency to approve projects with a far lower budget than originally requested. And here lies the second reason for the lack of success of many projects.

Because the values obtained were reduced, it was very common to find beneficiaries that had slightly, or fundamentally, changed their initial plan. Some, for instance, were able to follow only part of the plan, e.g. only buying seeds and giving up buying animals (FG 16), investing in retail instead of wholesale (Int. 76), or buying four head of cattle instead of 10-15 (Int. 77). Others completely changed plan (Int. 81). Mr Salimo, a tradesman who received a third of what he asked for in his plan (Int. 78), noted that the problem was that when they reduced the budget requested they cut the window that allows recipients to make a profit, "But since it is something 'given', it is not an obligation, I thanked those [MTZ]100,000, but that was not my will". Ms Ana made a similar point (Int. 81). Having changed her plan due to the reduced value obtained, she, nevertheless, was able to produce 35 sacks of rice as well as peanuts, which she sold in order to be able to start the repayment. The problem was that she did not make enough profit to reinvest, so all she got went back to the fund, as repayment.

Besides the reduced values obtained, some beneficiaries also reported contextual problems that negatively affected their business. Mr Adelino was one

of the few beneficiaries interviewed who obtained the full amount requested (MTZ400,000), which he used to buy fifty 250L containers in order to transport fuel and become a fuel supplier (FG 69). Unfortunately, he was able to do this only twice, as just a few months after he obtained the loan, Petromoc (the Mozambican petroleum agency) changed the rule regarding the transport of fuel, and he could no longer use those containers. In the case of agriculture, there were reports of how the bad weather and/or plagues had affected production seriously damaging the beneficiaries' prospects of profit (FG 46).

Unsurprisingly, the most problematic cases were those from the first years where the beneficiaries received the overpriced or unsolicited material. Many reported being worse off and wished they had not received the '7 million' because they got stuck with a debt without having any benefit (FG 26, 31; Int. 35). The mill 'donated by the First Lady', for instance, was broken at the time of the interview, and it was not the first time (FG 26). They explained that they did not have any money to pay for its fixing and that, even when it worked, the mill did not pay enough in order for them to make a profit. Furthermore, whatever they obtained was being used for repayment of the loan. Ms Sofia, a tradeswoman, and the members of a fishing association, victims of similar problems, shared the same feeling of being stuck/paralysed (Int. 35; FG 31).

As for the tractor allocated to Mr Ronaldo's association (FG 46), it also became a source of dissatisfaction. The tractor was of bad quality and needed new (and expensive) pieces in order to function properly. The association could not afford to buy these pieces, and besides, as they had to repay the loan, they barely used the tractor for themselves. Instead, they rented it out to the community.

Considering the stories above and going back to the estimates of jobs created, there seems to be a contradiction between the numbers and the accounts given in interviews. In fact, of the beneficiaries interviewed, only a minority reported having created new jobs with their projects (Int. 75, 77). The vast majority tried to maximize the use the resources by working on their own. One member of the TC later clarified this contradiction, "We are being a little optimistic. If the project says it will employ 'x' number of people, then when we go into the field and see that the project is taking place; it is presumed that it works", and so they take into account the number of jobs stated in the original project (Int. 53). More

critically, another member expressed the disagreements inside the team regarding 'what is a job' and a 'job created'. In his view, there was a difference between 'being a beneficiary' — which presumes that the job already exists and the loan will be an investment in this job — and 'creating a new job'. However, some of his colleagues considered the beneficiaries as 'new jobs', that is, if an association of ten people obtained the loan, they would be counted as ten new jobs. In spite of the internal discussion, he admitted, "the last word is from the chief".

The accounts above suggest that the materially empowering results of the '7 million' are therefore very limited. First, not all the beneficiaries have improved their financial situation or the sustainability of their business — many feeling worse off because of the debt. Second, the community dimension of its empowering potential is reduced when it comes to the projects' capacity to generate jobs.

From the communities' standpoint, the benefits of the '7 million' had been mixed. Some communities highlighted the increase in trade and the reduction of the distance to buy basic products (FG 65). Some people also referred to mills and tractors (FG 15, 24), but the actual benefit from these projects depended on the quality of the equipment and, as noted, there were cases where these were broken with no prospect of them being fixed. Other participants expressed critical views of the projects and the beneficiaries stating that many just made the money disappear and increased their number of wives not employing anyone in the community or even that the money had been split among the LC members (FG 15, 17, 22). More generally, there was a widespread complaint that there were few projects approved in each village, so the benefits were naturally asymmetrical (FG 24, 65). In fact, I also visited communities that did not feel any effect of the '7 million' as there were no projects near their villages (FG 64).

CHANGING LOCAL SUBJECTIVITIES AND PROMOTING AGENCY?

Crucial to the subjective dimension of empowerment is the actors' increased feeling of *power-to*. In the analysis of the '7 million' we may look at this taking into account the different groups of actors involved in the initiative. The LC

members, for example, by being directly engaged in the projects' approval might be expected to feel more empowered. Their views regarding their own power, however, varied significantly not least because of their own understanding of what 'power' entails. Mr José, for example, noted that, as members of the LC do not have any wage, there is no difference in power between them and any member of the community in this regard (Int. 21). Despite this, he acknowledged that as an LC member, he had more space to influence certain topics that affected the community.

Other members also felt that they could somehow "help the community" by being in the LC and "make a difference" (Int. 43, 75, FG 44). There were different opinions, however, regarding *what kind of difference*. Mr Artur, for example, felt that the LCs had very limited capacity to bring about significant changes in the communities, especially, in terms of development and local welfare. He attested, "We need enterprises here, in order for things to change, investment, to make a difference!" (FG 30). As a member of the LC, he thought there was very little he could do on that front. As for community work, he explained that these are tiny things that do not bring actual change, the change they need. "We don't have here an enterprise employing 500, 1000 people. Without this, poverty will not diminish. We need things from outside, the enterprises!"

In another village Ms Alice and Mr Ali expressed a similar view. They felt that they made a difference by taking the lead on mobilisation tasks, such as cleaning the main roads or promoting hygiene in the village. But besides this, they felt it was difficult to contest and change things that are more political in nature (FG 44). For instance, I asked them if they would feel comfortable to complain if a local government official was not performing his job well, so he could, perhaps, be removed; they said that was impossible as "they are really authorities". Ms Alice, in particular, felt disheartened as her village never obtained a project from the '7 million' no matter how much she pleaded for it in the LC meetings. She expressed feeling "condemned" by her community because of that and that her village felt discriminated by the AP. As a member, she felt there was nothing she could do, perhaps because she was a woman,

she reasoned. But even Mr Ali, a man, agreed. When I asked whether there was anything they felt they could do in order to change the situation he replied:

Mamá, impossible, 'cause things get stuck in the authorities, and even though we're members, *epah...*, no, we don't have [the power]. Maybe by lying they can say that these people have power, but at the end of the day we, as members of the LC we don't have power in its totality. Sometimes when we speak, the chiefs, yeah, they may agree, but when they get out of there, they invalidate that (FG 44).

Regarding the beneficiaries, an initial expectation of this research was to find a correlation between the level of success of the projects and their feelings of empowerment. As noted above, the rate of success of the projects was low and even those beneficiaries who reported a certain level of satisfaction with the '7 million' still had several complaints regarding the way forward pointing towards structural problems such as the lack of infra-structure and market issues as obstacles to the sustainability of their businesses in the long run.

Mr Pedro (Int. 42) and his two associates, for instance, obtained a loan to build a guesthouse in one of the district's APs. Whereas he was thankful to the '7 million', he also admitted that movement in the region was extremely slow, as the road to reach the AP was in terrible conditions, and there was no electricity there which limited any other services he could provide in order to attract guests. He noticed that these and other complaints were constantly presented in the LC meetings, but there was nothing that they (LC or members of the community) could do about it, except wait. Therefore, aside from the question of whether the project had been adequately assessed before its approval regarding its economic viability, Mr Pedro's interview showed the contradiction between the feeling of empowerment initially arising from the '7 million' and the project's sustainability, which depended on factors he could not influence.

Like him, the successful farmers' association mentioned above (Int. 75) also faced limitations on their business related to structural aspects that they felt they could not influence. In their specific case, however, what made the difference was their connection with several CSOs, which gave them access to

different kinds of knowledge and opportunities, including extra funding for their activities.

Sadly, the vast majority of the cases analysed showed a very different picture. In particular, several of the cases featuring irregularities unleashed a chain of disempowering effects where the beneficiary felt trapped with an unfulfilled project, a huge debt, and the fear and pressure linked to the repayment obligation. First, particularly in the early years, many beneficiaries accepted the credit in material aware that it was not going to benefit them but feeling constrained to accept the products (FG 31, 46). In the words of Mr Asim (Int. 36), “How can a person, when she asked... she cannot deny what she is given, right? . . . But when I received all those things not related to my plan, what could I do? I needed to sell that anyway”. Secondly, when what is at stake is cash and not goods, even though the beneficiary is aware that the amount is insufficient, in a context of (often extreme) poverty, the tendency is to thank the government and not complain (Int. 75, 78, 79).

The idea of accepting whatever comes is tricky to comprehend in the context of empowerment. On the one hand, it may be seen as a ‘better than nothing position’, and this was indeed the case in many of these situations. On the other hand, it shows a tendency towards acceptance that mixes general respect for the authorities with the fear of possible reactions to any complaint. Depending on which aspect prevails, the feeling of empowerment may be the opposite.

In this regard, the issue of fear was a recurrent theme in the interviews. Mr Asim, for instance, tried to complain about the requirement of buying the products in the Indian store, but once he realised there was no negotiation on that matter, he gave up. He told me, “In your land people complain because they have information. But here, people have guns, and if there is a revolt, people will shoot”. The farmers’ association that got the mill from the First Lady, on the other hand, did not even dare to question their situation. They signed the loan form and started to make a monthly deposit. Later, they went to the district administration to explain their case, but it was useless. They were told by CSOs *not* to pay back the debt, but they admitted, “We are afraid of going to jail” (FG 26). They also felt pressured by the LC members who had threatened to take away the mill if they did not pay the ‘loan’. Fear also prevented many

beneficiaries from denouncing the bribe culture of which they were victims. “The problem when you do this is that you will never get anything else”, explained Mr Salimo (Int. 78). And as everything needs to be approved at the local level (village, locality) before reaching the district, potential beneficiaries need to abide by the local authorities’ requests.

It is worth noting that the fear beneficiaries have is not only of local authorities, but it applies to social relations in the community in general. Indeed, I heard many stories within associations where one or more members ran away with part of the money leaving the project unaccomplished, but in all cases, no one took action to report the problem. Part of the reason was because they believed that reporting would not solve the problem. More generally, however, they understood that such actions could somehow be ‘revenged’ later on. For instance, if they complained during an official visit from Nampula or Maputo, later on, if they went to the hospital, they would not be treated. Or, once the government authorities left they could go to jail but not because they spoke but because there would be another situation that would be used as an excuse (FG 69).

Fear is of course not a *result* of the ‘7 million’, but a factor that precedes it and that may be enhanced with it as the initiative brings in new elements that may be used as tools of power. At the same time, depending on the attitude of each individual, fear and injustice may also provide the window of opportunity for empowerment reinforcing its dialectical aspect. Ms Ana, for example, sent her project to the same locality as Mr Salimo, and, like him, she was charged an amount by the chief of the locality in order to have her project approved. Whereas Mr Salimo paid and stayed quiet in fear of future retaliation, Ms Ana (Int. 81) — feeling more fearful of the debt and her ability to pay back — expressed her agency by rejecting the loan and later denouncing the chief. Her action ultimately led to the removal of the latter from his post. In this case, agency proved key to change power; once the power-over exercised by the chief was contested Ms Ana not only obtained the loan, but later became a member of the LC enhancing her own feeling of power-to and belief in her ability to change things.

Ms Ana's case exemplifies a successful case of agency. However, other examples point towards different outcomes. Ms Sofia, for instance, remembered several occasions when she tried to solve her case (the exchange of values/projects inside the LC) and how useless each of these attempts turned out to be (Int. 35). One of her attempts included a letter written to the district administration explaining the case. The problem, in her view, is that there are people "in the structure" that do not pass the information on. Instead, they withhold these problems from the district administrator. Therefore, as she and other interviewees recalled, while trying to follow the hierarchal procedures (e.g., first speaking to the people in the administration's subdivisions and only speaking to the administrator as a last resort), they were always told that the problem would be solved, but it never was. Besides, every time they tried to reach the administrator, they were bureaucratically prevented from doing so as even to reach the room where his secretary stays and to be able to make an appointment one needs to have previous authorization from one of the administrative subdivisions. This means that if anyone in these divisions has any reason for not wanting someone to have access to the administrator, this access most probably will never take place.

Eventually, Ms Sofia came to speak to the administrator during one of his visits to the villages. She explained her case, he told her he had never received her letter and then invited her to go speak to him in his office. However, when the day came, she went there and he was not in. She went several other times but was repeatedly told that he was busy. Other participants shared similar stories (Int. 35, 80). Taking these events into account, it is not surprising to hear participants saying that they got tired of trying to fix their problems. What they expressed could be pictured as a case of *frustrated agency* that, instead of empowering actually reinforces a situation of disempowerment; instead of expanding the boundaries of possibilities, it reinforces the feeling of incapacity to change things and, therefore, acceptance of what is. It makes people express more *patience* than agency in the long term.

It is important to highlight here the different waves of empowerment/disempowerment taking place at the same time and how these waves operate in different dimensions of empowerment. For instance, in some cases where

irregularities took place, and even though the beneficiaries knew that the situation did not favour them, they did not initially have the awareness that what was taking place was against the law. In some cases, they only became aware of it thanks to the interference of CSOs (FG 26, 31, Int. 32). It is also important to note that being aware has not necessarily changed their behaviour. In fact, above all, these participants were also aware of the difference between what the law dictates and the practices that take place in their country/district, that is, they were aware of the existent local power asymmetries. This indicates how complex the link between subjectivities, capacity, and agency/patency is.

Related to this, another important element that emerged in the interviews was the strong over-reliance of some respondents on external actors (mainly donors, but also individuals like myself) in order to help them change things. As participants in a focus group mentioned, “We don’t have any way [to change things]. We only want this situation to change” (FG 26). When asked if there was anything they could do for change, they replied, “Only if helped” (see also, FG 30, 69). What these statements point to is the understanding that meaningful change will only be possible if some external actor (or internal, e.g., an authority from the province or the President) comes to their rescue as their position is mostly constrained by structural aspects that they feel incapable of changing even if they try. That is, there is a general idea that the expansion of the boundaries of possibilities may only come from outside, not from within.

The communities’ statements echoed the beneficiaries’. The fear of complaining about perceived injustices was a factor in several focus groups (FG 15, 22, 23, 65). “If you complain, then when you need a document they won’t give it to you!” one group member said (FG 15). Others also referred to possible retaliations within the community if someone was blamed for something (FG 65). One participant explained, “In order to complain, you need to make contact with the structure, *be together*”, because as a simple member of the community “you’re watched” and risk being accused of belonging to the opposition and then jailed (FG 22).

The constant reference to ‘the structure’ was indeed a key element that pointed to a clear understanding of *separation* and *hierarchy* that defined those who have power and those who do not. Not belonging to the structure constituted, in

itself, a limitation in terms of actions and possibilities. Furthermore, opposing the structure was perceived as an insurmountable task that they had no capacity to achieve as the costs were simply too high. As noted by one participant speaking about corruption, when someone comes from Maputo to monitor, they have the power from the higher level of the structure. However, when the issue is circumscribed to the district level, there is no way to change because “there is a network already settled” (FG 15). ‘Complaining’ means ‘contesting’; those who complain are considered ‘rebels’, and this has local consequences. That is why any action for change needs to come from outside.

The idea of lack of capacity to change was repeated over and over with expression such as, “We don’t have the possibilities” (FG 17), or “We feel *impossibilitated*” (FG 22), or “There is nothing we can do” (FG 29), “We have no means” (FG 64), often followed by the expressed need for an outside form of action such as “you donors need to bring things directly to us” (FG 23), or suggesting that people like myself could maybe advise the government to change its attitude (FG 15). If anything, these statements reinforce an idea not of empowerment, but of dependency, not of emancipation, but of acceptance of one’s own limitations. And here is where the aspect of the multidimensionality of empowerment comes into play; these subjectivities are not restricted to the ‘7 million’, instead, they reflect deep structural aspects that pervade the general functioning of the Mozambican state including the state reforms that followed the Peace Accords, the direct and indirect influences of external actors in national, and local dynamics as well as the micro dynamics that also depend on cultural traces of the societies in question. Some of these issues have been discussed in previous chapters from the macro-perspective. The next section focuses on some institutional aspects from the perspective of the district as well as some community dynamics that also impact on the policy results.

CONTEXTUAL LIMITATIONS OF THE ‘7 MILLION’

To a great extent, the poor empowering effects of the ‘7 million’ in Angoche are a reflection of the way decentralisation has been taking place in Mozambique and the way it keeps the districts entrenched in a hierarchical top-down governance mentality. Despite the rhetoric that stresses participation, and the

institutionalisation of the LCs, the local tendency is to abide by the rules that have been in place for decades and that privilege ‘accountability in the reverse’, that is, from the bottom to the top. In this regard, the participatory and empowering appeal of the ‘7 million’s clashes with the current environment that exists locally.

At the same time, the initiative’s ambitious character is not in tandem with the institutional capacity that the districts have to implement it. First, in Angoche, resources for training and capacity building have been insufficient to guarantee the adequate coverage of all the existing councils. Ideally, the TC should meet the LCs at all levels on a regular basis. Yet, as of May 2012, the new members of the LCs had not had the adequate training they needed to carry out their expected functions. According to the district administration, this was due to a delay in the funds available to pay for transport of the TC to the villages (Int. 25).

The district government’s lack of funding for such activities is often compensated by the support and direct work of NGOs portrayed as “partners” and “support instruments” (Int. 25, 54). This reliance on NGOs to accomplish what should be a local government duty has pros and cons. On the one hand, it seems positive to have a civil society body training what should be another civil society body (the LCs). Because of their nature and commitment to the principles of good governance, gender equality, and participation — and taking into account the high quality of many NGOs in Nampula province — their engagement in these processes contributes to the depoliticization of these activities which, in the Mozambican context, is a very important aspect to be nurtured. On the other hand, this over-reliance presents a series of problems. First, as NGOs have a fluctuating budget and rely on donors, they cannot guarantee the provision of these services in the long term or even the full coverage of the districts. Second, this reliance also creates a dependency in terms of the format of the training, so where the NGOs are not present, the district government faces difficulty in reproducing the same kind (and quality) of capacity building (Int. 25).

Lack of resources also affects the monitoring and evaluation of the '7 million'. In Angoche, monitoring visits only started in 2010. Until then, there was no information available regarding the status of implementation and effectiveness of the projects (Int. 63). As of 2012, field visits did take place, but the interviews revealed that their frequency was irregular. According to the TC chief, there were three basic visits every year centred on the discussion of the district plan with the councils and the discussion of the '7 million' project proposals (Int. 25). *Monitoring* visits, on the other hand, were fairly irregular. One TC member reported that the team would make about five to six field visits per year, which were far from sufficient to cover the over 400 on-going projects (Int. 55).

Apart from time constraints (as most members of the TC are employees in other sectors of the local government), material means — especially transport for all members of the team — also constituted a limitation (Int. 52, 53, 55). Consequently, in order to save time and cover as many projects as possible — and taking into account the distances between the villages — visits tended to be short and focused on the verification of the project's existence, implementation, and repayment (Int. 53). I could not verify the totality of reports available of these visits. When I asked for reports in the administration, I was given only two, referred to above, as well as reports related to the LC reconstitution process. It should be noted that the term 'report' does not characterise adequately these documents. One was a large table with brief notes on each project visited in 2010. The other one was a document of four pages where three did not add any new information regarding the fund's implementation, and only one project was covered with very little information.

Besides the difficulty in keeping up with the monitoring, several pre-2009 issues remained pending. According to one TC member, they still had to make several updates and calculations regarding the projects that involved the delivery of goods instead of money (Int. 55). These efforts, however, were limited by several practicalities such as the lack of invoices and the change of interest rates (that initially did not exist). Accordingly, all these cases needed to be reassessed; however, there was no specific policy for that at the time.

Another issue, partly related to the problem of institutional capacity, and also a major constraint to the effectiveness of the '7 million', was the lack of

mechanisms of accountability. In a nutshell, if anything goes wrong, it is never clear who is responsible and this, in turn, makes it difficult to enforce the search for solutions and corrections in order to improve policy implementation. This applies to several types of actors. The TC, as noted, is a counselling body and cannot enforce decisions or even penalties in cases where there has been misuse of the fund or misbehaviour by LC members. The administrator and other executive actors could do this, but there is a tendency to *not interfere*, “Unfortunately many people don’t understand that the solution is *not* with the administrator, but there [at the base]” (Int. 54). Conversely, as noted in previous sections, the local view is that the only people who can change things are the highest authorities; thus, if the administrator has the posture of delegating responsibility to the lower echelons, there is a limbo where no one is, in fact, in charge of anything. Instead, this reinforces a tendency of delegating power but not responsibility.

The responses to the few irregular cases acknowledged by the TC reinforce this observation. Accordingly, if they noticed anything irregular in the monitoring visits, e.g., if they were told that an LC member requested a bribe in order to approve a project, their general response would be to *talk* to the LC and *advise/request* they not do so and invite them to *reflect* on it giving “constructive criticism” (Int. 25, 55). The language used had a strong pedagogic character and at no point was there reference to the possibility of reprisals.

Whereas some respondents were optimistic about this posture as a mechanism of behavioural change (Int. 63), the matter would require further research. More generally, however, this ‘soft’ approach seemed to reinforce the problem of accountability and directly influence the general views that, if something needs to change, it has to be brought about either by external pressure or by top-down reform. In fact, even members of the TC admitted that the only way to improve things is by having more frequent and serious monitoring preferably with individuals from the province (Int. 12).

Besides these institutional aspects, my fieldwork has also revealed a series of community issues that also affected the empowering results of the ‘7 million’. First, participants revealed several problems with the dynamics within associations that obtained the loan. In some cases, some members took the

money and ran away (FG 69); in other cases, members shared the value instead of making a collective investment (ibid.); in others, the president of the associations took advantage of their position and deceived the other members (FG 31, 64). As observed by a TC member, in the beginning of the '7 million', it was very common for ad hoc associations to be created just to obtain the loan (Int. 63). Since 2011, any association applying for the fund needs to be first recognised by law, so it is more difficult for this to take place. Yet, the effects of these situations are long lasting as those who remained responsible for the loans feel the burden of the non-completion of the project and the pressure to repay. Also, as much as in the case of the irregularities, there was a tendency for those harmed to not complain or denounce those who deceived the other members. In one of the cases, the ones who remained in business were still bothered by the ex-member who sometimes went to his market stand to steal fish (FG 69). Even though they could report the case, they tried to speak to the family of the person instead and said that things "have improved" although it still happened. In other cases, the members did not take any confrontational action in an effort to avoid conflict (FG 31, 64). Only in one case did a big fight take place along with a death threat that ended up involving the police. But at the end, the members decided to invest in the common business (opening a butchery) but working separately inside the store (FG 69).

A second community dynamic related to the aspect of inclusiveness of the '7 million' refers to gender. Women are disadvantaged from the start when it comes to the '7 million' simply because of their position in the family and community structure. Even though they are the ones who work the most in the fields, they are not the ones who own (by tradition, not by law) the right to take care of the household income. In fact, they depend economically on men, which is one major reason why they need to get married (FG 27, 29, 64, 65). Several women complained about the distribution of money within the household acknowledging that they worked as much as their husbands but did not have the autonomy to spend their share of the income according to their own priorities (FG 27, 29). Some also accused men of spending money with other women and on alcohol and often also spending money that was meant for the household's needs (FG 64). Furthermore, they shared the view that many men

when they receive more money or feel unhappy simply left and then failed to take any responsibility for their children (FG 29, 65).

These household dynamics reflect the general position of women in this context. Many participants expressed the view that they did not have a voice in their communities. “A woman is just to obey”, one said (FG 18). Some complained about not having any help, not even from their husbands, but they also explained that this was not because their husbands did not want to help them; it happened because they were poor (FG 23). Yet others highlighted that ultimately, the man is ‘the chief’ and that they did not have the means to contest this even though they often complained about their unhappiness to their husbands (FG 29). The only way they felt they had some power was as a community of women through mutual solidarity (FG 27).

Given the cultural context, and the power asymmetries defined by gender, it is not surprising that most beneficiaries of the ‘7 million’ are male. As discussed in the previous section, this reflects a different kind of knowledge and access to information that is entrenched in the way the community system works and that places women in a less privileged position from the start. That does not mean that there are no women beneficiaries, but the proportion is much lower reflecting, therefore, an asymmetry between the power-to that these women have and the power-over to which they are submitted.

6.4 Assessing the ‘7 Million’ Beyond Angoche

If we compare the implementation of the ‘7 million’ in Angoche with other districts, we find that several of the problems discussed above also took place elsewhere, albeit to a different extent. During my fieldwork, for instance, while following the work of Akilizetho, I had the chance to conduct two focus groups (one with 11 men, the other with 12 women) with several members of LDCs from the districts of Moma and Mogovolas, also in Nampula province, as well as interviewing the administrator of Moma and a member of the TC of Mogovolas. I also had access to a very informative district report from Mogovolas assessing the implementation of the ‘7 million’ in that district between 2006 and 2010.

Regarding the focus groups, participants reported several stories that reflect a series of limitations of both the ‘7 million’ and the LCs as tools of empowerment

promotion. Concerning the LCs revitalisation process in their district, for instance, some noted several problems that, similar to Angoche, call into question the representativeness of these bodies. According to one participant, in his village, the announcement about the meeting with the TC came very late, just one day before the event; therefore, at the time of the selection of the new members of LCs, there were very few people in the community (FG 58). Other participants from this same village also noted that the TC members had to work with the local authorities and, therefore, instead of ensuring that the event was inclusive, they trusted the words of the leaders who told them that the local voting had already occurred. Although the TC members suggested that a new voting process should be scheduled so more people could be present, the local chiefs told them that was not needed, so they never came back. As a result, many of the new LC members selected were relatives of the chiefs, not people chosen by the community. Although the participants did not see this process as correct, they did not speak out at the time because “one person alone is worth nothing” (FG 58). Also, when I asked if they considered speaking to the higher authorities in the districts, they noted that it is simply useless because the “*LCs are linked to the government, and so we cannot complain to the government*” (ibid.). “If we speak, *they think we are trying to steal their power*”, one participant further explained.

The member of the TC of Mogovolas also referred to the problem of the low rate of community participation during the reconstitution process. According to him (Int. 61), the percentage of the community present in most locations was below the minimum of 5% required, with the exception of one AP. He also confirmed that they should have re-scheduled the process in several instances, but they were only able to do so in a few cases. It should be noted that the TC in Mogovolas has only two people, compared to eight in Angoche, which clearly affects their capacity to cover the district and also monitor the projects’ implementation (ibid.; Mogovolas Dist. Gov., 2010). Additionally, according to the TC member, to do their job, they need to “borrow motorbikes” and “repay” their owners by leaving two litres of fuel when the job is done which reflects the scarce resources available for their work. In fact, in 2011, the district of Mogovolas had no resources to do any evaluation regarding the ‘7 million’. As

for the training of the members, as in Angoche, Mogovolas relied on the help of Akilizetho and other CSOs.

As in Angoche, several participants in the focus group also had critical views about the LCs and their work. Many of them referred to the fact that the LC only discusses the '7 million' but none of the other community issues (FG 58). As they saw it, the members say they will do things but never put it into action. Some also noticed that most people in their villages were not aware of the work of the LCs; the participants were aware because they were also members of the LDCs, but, in general, there was no interaction between the LCs and the communities. One of the women in the focus group also reported an episode that reflected the complicated power dynamics within the LC. As reported, she was already a member of the LC, but also later became a member of a LDC, where she had a series of capacity building workshops from Akilizetho. As she recalled, once the other members noted she had become "smarter", she was arbitrarily removed from the LC even before finishing her mandate. She was told by one of the LC members, who was a member up at the district level, that she was not a member anymore. She never took action to complain or question the decision, one of the reasons being the fact that the member who expelled her was also member on a higher echelon of the LC.

Also, as in Angoche, the issue of 'the party' did not directly arise in the discussion. As noted, there were clear indications of separateness (us vs. them) in the reference to the LCs. Additionally, several examples were given of how difficult, if not impossible, it was to contest "the authorities" as well as how the LC was linked to the government. Despite the lack of direct connection between Frelimo and the LCs, it is the case that the 'authorities', in particular, the presidents of the LCs are Frelimo by default.

As discussed in Chapter 6, it is very difficult to capture empirically the extent to which party politics influence the functioning of the LCs and the '7 million'. The fact that party issues are almost naturalised in the everyday seems to be one of the factors that makes this issue nearly invisible at first sight. Approaching it with direct questions is furthermore problematic as it may raise both suspicion as well as sympathy, either way reinforcing biases in the research. Precisely because of these complexities, more studies on this connection are required in

order to deepen understanding of the way 'party-power' operate at the local level in Mozambique.

Regarding the '7 million' and its effects, several of the problems encountered in Angoche were also reported in the case of Moma and Mogovolas. As in Angoche, there was a gap between the official data and the views of the communities and non-official reports. The administrator of Moma, for instance, expressed a similar view to his counterpart in Angoche regarding the '7 million' and the LCs. In particular, he emphasised the bottom-up aspect of the initiative highlighting that the selection of the projects occurs at the lower echelons, whilst the district LC only "confirms and homologates" the results (Int. 60). Following the general national discourse, he agreed that "the '7 million' is "revolutionising the concept of development making it operational" (ibid.). He also referred to the increase of production and formal trade as well as the reduction of Moma's dependency on Nampula city in order to have access to several basic products. Finally, regarding any irregularities, his emphasis was on the "misperceived information" at the beginning of the '7 million' when individuals thought they did not have to pay funds back as well as problems with associations and the lack of the beneficiaries' capacity to manage a business plan. He also added that transparency was key, and "it should start *at the base*", that is, localities and APs; a point also made by his Angochean counterpart.

Remarkably, the district report from Mogovolas reported several problems surrounding the initiative, in particular, from 2006 and 2009. During this period, as noted, the projects directed to the '7 million' were not sufficiently discussed within the realm of the LCs. In fact, the members' knowledge of the rules regarding the approval of these projects was insufficient. Accordingly, several of the projects approved during this period did not reflect the knowledge and involvement of the communities (Mogovolas Dist. Gov., 2010: 4). Thus, several measures were taken from 2009 onwards in order to reorganise the councils and improve the implementation of the '7 million'. Also, a process of monitoring took place, thanks to which, the district government identified a series of problems (e.g., misuse of the fund by some beneficiaries) but also good practices that were later shared among associations and even among different

locations of the district in order to improve the results of the initiative (ibid.). Different from Angoche, the report also stated that in some cases, the LCs also took “corrective measures”, specifically, they took back from certain associations the financed tractors and gave them back to the fund due to the “associations’ mismanagement”. As for the return rate, according to the report, Mogovolas presented better results than Angoche having in 2010, a return rate of 7.41%, which reflected an improvement of 5.8% between 2006 and 2009.

In spite of this, non-official sources revealed a more critical view of the results of the initiative. One of the problems reported in the focus groups of men, for instance, was the delay in the delivery of money once a loan was approved which is particularly damaging in the case of agriculture (FG 58) (also reported in Angoche). Another problem highlighted was the very reduced value disbursed to the projects approved (ibid.). As in Angoche, this seems to be a key issue in several other districts. Reports from the CSO CEDE on the districts of Maganja da Costa (Zambezia province) and Marromeu (Sofala province) confirm that the asymmetry between the values requested and the values obtained are often gigantic, seriously compromising the beneficiaries’ ability to implement the original project proposals (CEDE, 2010a, 2010b and 2011b). This is indeed one of the reasons why beneficiaries often change their plans (and not necessarily report the change back to the district) (ibid.; FG 59). It also contributes to the situation where everything the beneficiary earns goes back to the repayment, and he/she returns to the starting point without having any profit to reinvest in the business (ibid.).

A final important point of similarity between Angoche and other districts relates to the issue of gender. The women from Moma and Mogovolas reported feeling discriminated against in the attribution of the ‘7 million’ (FG 59; see also reports from CEDE). They said they are depicted as “not knowing how to manage money” (FG 59) and, therefore, rarely get access to the fund. Also, in cases where some women obtained the fund by being part of mixed associations, they were discriminated against internally within these associations. One of them, for instance, who was also a member of the LC, recalled having created an association with other colleagues in 2007 in order to apply for the fund. When they obtained the loan, all the money was designated to only one person who

was a man. Besides the issue that the association was created within the LC of the AP, reflecting the conflict of interests not addressed in the regulation of the FDD, being a woman put her in a subordinate position and she had nowhere to complain and never benefitted from the loan. Another participant reported a similar case from 2010. One of the reports from CEDE (2010a) also showed a major discrepancy between the number of projects approved for male and female beneficiaries in the district of Mangaja da Costa.

This brief look at other districts shows that the findings of this research significantly relate to what takes place elsewhere in Mozambique. That was also the view of a program officer at CEDE who has been leading this CSO monitoring of the '7 million'. According to him, there are "some good cases", particularly in other provinces, but problems abound (Int. 14). In particular, even if the project works, there are still problems related to the market and the difficulty of selling what is produced. In his opinion, one of the factors that make a positive difference is political pressure. He gave an example of a district in Inhambane where the administrator faced threats of losing support inside the party and, therefore, had a more committed attitude towards the '7 million' implementation. The problem is that such a posture reinforces what is, in fact, one of the main problems underlying the '7 million'— the upward chain of accountability, despite the propaganda to the contrary.

Indeed, looking back, the LCs may be partly compared to the people's assemblies and committees that proliferated during the first years of independence (see Chapter 3); while they contain certain aspects that enhance participation and *may* foster empowerment, they are also intimately linked with the country's political structure. And that is why they also have the potential to become nothing more than just a *formal* expression of bottom-up participatory processes while, in fact, they are contributing to the lack of questioning of deeper power asymmetries that contribute to poverty in the first place. In summary, the '7 million' and the LCs are like a double-edged sword that may be used for empowering purposes but also as a tool to consolidate power asymmetries at the local level.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the bottom-up view of the '7 million' implementation taking into account both the procedural aspects of the policy's empowering potential as well as its results in the district of Angoche. In this regard, one of the general issues that the findings revealed was that the empowering logic prescribed in the official discourse and the fund's regulation is fundamentally affected by local dynamics that often clash with the former. Consequently, and first of all, whereas the LCs are officially represented as the legitimising pillar of the '7 million', the constitution of these bodies and the way they function showed that their representativeness is directly influenced by local power dynamics that involve pre-existing relations of authority and that are at odds with the idea of horizontality that justifies these participatory practices in the first place. Moreover, even though the LCs should be an organ of articulation and representation of the communities' interests, in practice, they have become more accountable to the government than to the communities and interact more with the former than with the latter. Hence, the councils' top-down dynamics tend to prevail over its bottom-up potential.

These dynamics, in turn, affect the way the '7 million' is distributed and its effectiveness. One crucial aspect, in this regard, is the control of the process that leads to the projects' allocation. As shown, regardless of the discourse that emphasises an option of 'non-interference' in the councils' decisions, there are several manifestations of direct and indirect interferences that affect which projects will be approved as well as the values distributed. In practice, the '7 million' creates a new space where pre-existing power relations may be consolidated or new ones created depending on the different positions that actors find themselves in. The lack of mechanisms of accountability and the informality that prevails in the different stages of this process further reinforces the initiative's potential to be used as a mechanism to increase the *power-over* of selected individuals over others instead of the community's *power-to* vis-à-vis the local government. Although this may foster the empowerment of some people, it is clearly not consistent with an emancipatory perspective of empowerment.

The empowering effects of the initiative ultimately reflect these issues. From the material perspective, the low rate of success of the projects affects the sustainability of the financed activities as well as of the fund itself. From the subjective perspective of empowerment, the interviews revealed that the '7 million' and the LCs alone do not override more fundamental traces of local behaviour and structural constraints that come from history and culture, including the role played by fear of contestation and confrontation with 'the structure'. This, in turn, reinforces the understanding that change and empowerment are somehow linked with the intervention of outside forces — whether in the shape of higher authorities or NGOs/donors.

In summary, even though the '7 million' has been presented as a mechanism to strengthen local empowerment by promoting a bottom-up process, it has been caught up in a top-down rationale that is related, on the one hand, to the more general aspects of post-war state reform that has limited de facto power distribution — including by keeping the districts as deconcentrated (not decentralised) units and, on the other hand, the structural constraints that exist at the local level and that include both traces of culture as well as informal networks of authority that mingle with the hierarchical trace of the state. This general trend did not exclude some cases of success, or even expressions of agency, in order to contest power. Nevertheless, the balance is still more towards the entrenchment of the structure instead of its contestation.

Chapter 7

The Contradictions of Empowerment Promotion through Social Engineering

My summary of the '7 million' in a nutshell is that technically it's been a complete disaster but politically it's been a huge success.

(UNDP advisor, Maputo)

This chapter brings us back to the objectives and questions at the heart of this research. As noted in the introduction, this thesis had three main objectives. First, it intended to explore the concept of empowerment in the academic and policy domains. Second, it aimed to discuss the utility of empowerment as an analytical tool that helps understand how power operates in a given social context. For this specific purpose, I proposed an analytical framework that included multiple levels of analysis and a triad encompassing subjectivities, capacity, and agency/patiency as sub-components of empowerment. Third, the thesis aimed to explore empowerment in its operationalization taking into account two lenses of analysis; on the one hand, understanding empowerment as a policy goal, and on the other hand, using it as an analytical concept in order to understand change. Whereas Chapter 2 covered the first two objectives, Chapters 3 to 6 focused extensively on the third aim by exploring the case of Mozambique's peace and the '7 million'.

This concluding chapter brings these elements together and goes back to the research questions, specifically:

1. Considering its empowering ambition and the current Mozambican political and economic context, how aligned with local reality is the '7 million' initiative?
2. What are the effects of the '7 million' on rural people's empowerment?

3. What lessons can be drawn from the case study that could contribute to the theoretical literature on empowerment and better policy planning for empowerment promotion?

The first two questions, which are closely related, are discussed in the first section of this chapter, while the remaining sections explore in depth the third question. The second section discusses the limitations of the policy in delivering better results by contrasting technical and political explanations for such outcomes, as well as by discussing the contradictions embedded in the idea of promoting bottom-up empowerment from the top-down. The third section addresses the lessons learned from the case study in terms of policy planning and implementation. The fourth section goes back to empowerment theorising, and discusses the contribution of the multilevel framework of analysis and the case study to the theoretical literature on empowerment. The conclusion resumes a discussion of the research hypothesis presented in the introduction, acknowledging the limitations of this research as well as pointing to new research directions arising from it.

7.1 The Empowering Effects of the ‘7 Million’

The extent to which the ‘7 million’ had empowering results, and the extent to which the initiative is aligned with local reality may be easier to understand if we think in dialectical terms, exploring the dichotomic and opposing aspects underneath it. In this regard, by looking at the ‘7 million’ and the case of Angoche, the first dichotomy we find is the complex *liberal/non-liberal* character of the ‘7 million’ making it a hybrid initiative. On the one hand, the ‘7 million’ takes into account a series of liberal assumptions such as the promotion of entrepreneurship (thus the private sector) through credit concession, the relevance of civil society engagement in local governance (through the LCs), and decentralisation (see Chapter 5). On the other hand, different from most micro-credit initiatives, the ‘7 million’ is provided by the state resembling, in this regard, a state development bank with a different outfit (see Hanlon and Smart, 2008: 183). And yet, different from other state-bank initiatives, the state is not only the provider of the fund, but it is present in the process that leads to the fund allocation in the person of the respective presidents of the LCs — the local

government officials in each district territorial echelon. The presence of such authorities, even if they are not formally authorised to make decisions regarding the fund, mingles with several other dichotomies that are also at the heart of the '7 million' and that ultimately affect its empowering potential.

One such dichotomy is *tradition/modernity*, which has been at the centre of Frelimo's political agenda since soon after independence (see Chapter 3) and still is an important issue in contemporary Mozambique. Some of the fundamental assumptions regarding the '7 million' and the LCs are based on the existence of a modern state with functional institutions. At the same time, as noted in Chapter 6, several of the factors that influence the people's behaviour regarding the LCs and the '7 million' are only understandable within the context of local culture, history, and tradition — that is, through the customary and informal practices that regulate social relations at the very local level. The respect for local traditional hierarchies, the different roles attributed to gender, the fear of witchcraft, all this conforms to pre-established values that, so far, have remained vastly unchanged regardless of the introduction of formal rules that emphasise different, sometimes opposite values, such as gender equality.

This dichotomy is, furthermore, linked to two others, respectively, *formality/informality* and *verticality/horizontality*. Tradition is based on informality, whereas the modern state is based on a series of formal contracts that include its constitution and national legislation. In current democratic states — the staple of the 'modern state' — these legal bases also favour a high degree of formal horizontality based on the principle of equality. This, in turn, clashes with the traditional principles that sustain an important hierarchical chain of authorities that are key to regulating local social spaces in these societies. This leads us to another dichotomy, discussed further below, which is the *top-down/bottom-up* dynamics of social processes. Ideally, liberal democracies should privilege bottom-up processes, as they should reflect what the masses want. In the case of Mozambique, not only tradition but also history (see Chapter 3) has consolidated a system where top-down dynamics override bottom-up ones.

The dichotomies above explain to a large extent the limitations of the '7 million' in promoting local empowerment, pointing to the lack of alignment between the

logics that sustain the policy and the dynamics that sustain social organization at the local level. Ultimately, the rationale of the policy is based on a technical perspective of empowerment: it is presumed that by emphasising capacity building and by providing participatory spaces for debate and decision-making local people will be able to increase their ability to empower themselves both materially (thanks to the projects and their expected outcome) as well as non-materially (by creating a space where people can raise their voices and by slowly expanding the boundaries of what they deem possible).

In practice, however, the in-depth analysis of the initiative's operationalisation shows that local behaviour may be better understood from a dialectical perspective, where aspects of opposition exist concomitantly, affecting people's ability and willingness to behave in certain ways, often in opposition to what would be expected from the policy's perspective. The results of the '7 million' in terms of empowerment are therefore a reflection of such contradictions.

THE '7 MILLION' EFFECTS IN ENHANCING POWER-TO

If we assess the '7 million' from the perspective of the technical approaches to empowerment, one of the expected outcomes would be the increase of local actors' power-to. As discussed in Chapter 5, key to the initiative is the increase of material well-being, through the creation of jobs and increase in food production. At the same time, the policy also foresees non-material empowering features, related to the spaces of representation created at the level of the local councils. Moreover, as declared in several instances by President Guebuza, the '7 Million' also targets a change of mentality, not least of all by consolidating people's self-esteem, another way to enhance power-to.

All these objectives may be analysed looking at the triad that is at the centre of the proposed framework of analysis in Chapter 2 – capacity, agency/patiency and subjectivities – all of which reflect important aspects of power-to. Taking into account the variable *capacity*, we have seen that the material benefits of the fund have been poor overall from the perspective of its direct and indirect beneficiaries. The problem of the low values disbursed linked with the poor capacity to design and implement a business plan have largely contributed to these poor results. Yet, in some cases, the '7 million' also increased the

capacity of some individuals of surviving in the short term or, in the most successful cases, also providing the beneficiaries the opportunities to expand their businesses. Additionally, if we consider the high rates of bribes being reported, it is also the case that some actors (not necessarily the expected beneficiaries) have gained something out of this process. In this regard, the case study showed a significance degree of variance in relation to the effects of the '7 million' in increasing actors' power-to through an expansion of material assets.

From the non-material perspective of capacity, the effects have also been mixed. Being a member of the LCs, for instance, has not necessarily converted into more *power-to as control*, yet it has provided some *power-to decide* which proposals will be selected in the district to receive the loan, at least to a selected group of people. Additionally, as noticed by some beneficiaries, some LC members actually have benefitted financially by demanding bribes during the process, in this case, exercising *power-over* the applicants by using their position as members of the LC – that is, their power-to came as a result of their power-over others.

The collective empowering potential of both the LCs and the '7 million', on the other hand, have been much smaller. As discussed, the LCs have not significantly influenced the community's involvement in access to local governance or even enhanced a local feeling of citizenship. Instead, in many cases, it has reinforced a sense of separateness between the 'ordinary Mozambican' and those who are closer to power (in this case, the LCs perceived as closer to the local government authorities).

From the technical perspective, *agency* is key to empowerment, as it is through agency that power-to is expressed. One of the indicators of the success of the '7 million' would be, in this regard, the extent to which it has fostered agency – whether by leading to an increase in requests for the loan or through the participation of local actors in the local councils.

Regarding the local councils, the first thing to note here is the limited scope of their member's agency: as discussed in Chapter 5, even though the LCs may determine which project proposals will be approved, their role in other regards is

exclusively consultative, which limits their ability to act and make things happen in other domains beyond the selection of proposals. As observed in the interviews, members are very aware of their role, and this in turn affects the way they perceive their own capacity, that is, it affects their own *subjectivities* of power.

If agency is interpreted here as 'participating' in the meetings, it is indeed the case that the creation of local councils has helped increase local agency – and perhaps even more so the introduction of the '7 million', since it creates a major stimulus for actors to go to the meetings. At the same time, the interviews also showed that it is quite rare for LC members to spontaneously take the initiative to propose meetings and reach the community, usually waiting for the 'convocation note'.

If we expand the idea of agency to include the willingness to speak one's voice, the assessment becomes more complex. As discussed in Chapter 6, most members expressed feeling comfortable to speak their minds, but that does not mean that their voices will be heard. This means that the effects of speaking out and generating further action and change will not necessarily correspond to the desires of the speaker. The fact that many members noticed this gap between speaking out and influencing decisions shows the limitations of the empowering potential of being a member of the LCs, as well as of the '7 million' in attending to local needs.

Regarding the local community and the beneficiaries, the '7 million' undoubtedly had an effect in terms of encouraging people to apply for the fund and start a new business or invest in an on-going one. Yet, agency has also varied according to groups of actors and over time. First, and even though there are women beneficiaries of the fund, the research found that many of them have little knowledge of the '7 million' and thus are less prone to ask for a loan. Second, in some cases where there have been irregularities, the '7 million' has actually reduced people's capacity for action, by fostering instead a posture of patience instead of agency.

The '7 million' effects on local agency are directly linked with its influence (or lack of) in shaping local *subjectivities*, in particular people's perceptions about

their own power. This particular aspect will be discussed in more detail in the following section, from an emancipatory perspective, but I would like to refer here to a basic tenet of the presidential discourse, which is the '7 million' as a vehicle to consolidate people's self-esteem, which, in turn, would foster good governance (see Chapter 5). The fieldwork showed no substantial evidence that the '7 million' has improved people's self-esteem. Perhaps the closest to such an effect was the acknowledgement of some members of the LCs that they felt honoured to be members of these bodies and that they were in a position where they could make some difference. However, this declaration was rarely followed by a recollection of examples where 'making a difference' actually happened. On the contrary, in many instances LC members stressed the limitations they faced in terms of pursuing change or simply following more closely the different stages of the '7 million' procedures. Similarly, the testimonies from the communities and beneficiaries did not indicate any significant perception of improved self-esteem arising from the '7 million'. On the contrary, where irregularities took place they contributed to the reverse.

In summary, if we assess the empowering effects of the '7 million' from the technical perspectives that informed its rationale, and focus on the policy effects in terms of increasing local actors' power-to, we note that, despite a significant degree of variance across actors, the overall results are very much below the intended outcome. Whether some actors did observe an increase in their power-to, especially by obtaining the loan, these positive effects were offset by the many limitations discussed in detail in Chapter 6. We may summarise these effects as: (1) little change in terms of promoting capacity (material and non-material), (2) limited scope for change regarding agency and (3) meagre effects in the domain of changing subjectivities of power (as of perceived increase of power-to).

THE EMANCIPATORY EFFECTS OF THE '7 MILLION'

Looking at the empowering effects of the '7 million' from an emancipatory perspective requires two fundamental questions to be addressed: first, 'To what extent has this policy changed power relations?' and, second, 'To what extent has it contributed to the creation of local critical awareness and the expansion

of the boundaries of what is deemed possible?' These questions are intimately related and they also relate to the three variables at the heart of the framework (capacity, agency/patency, subjectivities). Besides, they also require the parallel consideration of the different levels of analysis indicated in the framework.

Regarding the first question, the potential of the '7 million' to contribute to a change in power relations may be assessed from two different perspectives. First, if people's capacity increases thanks to the effectiveness of the policy, then there exists a potential for reduction of social power asymmetries and increased social welfare. Second, assuming the material benefits of the '7 million' were not positive, it could still be the case that, thanks to the participatory procedures embedded in the policy and the promotion of agency, people could feel more confident to express criticism, contest perceived injustices, and, thus, push for change.

Considering the first perspective, as noted above, the material benefits of the '7 million' were not significant enough to promote change in the societal distribution of material power. That is, its ability to reduce poverty and tackle inequality has been limited by the way the process of allocation of resources has been carried out. The lack of sustainability of the projects, the problems related to repayment and debt are examples of such limitations. Also, in many cases, the '7 million' has (through irregularities) benefitted intermediary actors and not necessarily those envisaged in the policy; as such, in these cases, it has increased the power of those already in a privileged position instead of redistributing resources to those most in need.

As for the second perspective, which implies that the policy had strong effects in terms of promoting agency and people's ability to push for changes and claim for what they believe is their rights, the case study showed that such effects were also very limited. As discussed, in some cases, agency proved able to alter power to a certain extent when exercised as a contestation of some perceived injustice. Yet, other times, in similar situations, agency became counter-productive, or 'frustrated', reinforcing the view that any effort to change things was useless. In contrast, some actors who 'played by the rules', e.g., paying a bribe to have access to the loan by accepting things as they were

became more 'satisfied' as they received what they expected, which was still better than not having any loan.

These variances should be perceived not only as the result of different behaviours but also as the reflection of the different positions in which actors found themselves at the time they acted. In this regard, the increase or not of an actor's power was largely related to his/her ability to use this position strategically taking a risk and betting on his/her chances of success. This, in turn, was largely related to his/her own perception of his/her own power, that is, his/her *subjectivities*. For example, members of the LCs, even though they complained about their limited power to change things, still acknowledged some ability to influence decisions, especially in the case of the projects, as well as leading community work and mobilisation to bring some improvements to their villages. More generally, they acknowledged that they were in a different position than the rest of the community. The common villagers, on the other hand, mostly pointed to their inability to change things especially those that matter to them — basic social services and infrastructure — and the feeling of *fear* (both of the 'structure' and of the community's reactions) in the case of contesting things. Women, in particular, found themselves in an even more limited position, as their power was perceived as naturally smaller than the power of men. As for the beneficiaries, there was a significant contrast in terms of their power subjectivities, mostly related to the way they obtained their loan and whether or not they had been victims of irregularities as well as who was involved in the case of the irregularities (e.g., high ranking local authorities or members of the LC).

These variations bring us back to Bourdieu and the concept of strategy (see Introduction), that is, decision-making based on practical considerations of an actor's position in society and which takes into account perceived risks and uncertainties. These, in turn, are framed by *habitus*, which, in this case, can be perceived from a dual perspective. On the one hand, there is the *habitus* related to tradition particularly strong at the very local level. On the other hand, there is the *habitus* related to the historical constitution of the Mozambican state including colonialism and the socialist experiment. While different, both dimensions are ultimately characterised by a strong 'top-down' mentality, which

persists despite the formal change of the political framework that shapes the post-war Mozambican state.

This brings us to the second question, that is, 'to what extent has the '7 million' contributed to the creation of local critical awareness and the expansion of the boundaries of what is deemed possible? Here a distinction needs to be made between having critical awareness and the expansion of the boundaries of what is deemed possible. As noted in the case study, many participants did show critical awareness regarding not only the '7 million', but also towards the political and economic system they are subject to. Yet, this awareness did not necessarily imply that they felt able to change things. Therefore there is not necessarily a correlation between critical awareness and expansion of the boundaries of what is deemed possible.

Indeed, as shown in the case study, the instances of contestation (the questioning of the power structure) have been rare precisely because of the *habitus* in which these communities are immersed where fear of contestation and the feeling of powerlessness to change things still dominate. That is, whilst there is often a manifested desire for things to change, there is also scepticism that this will take place, at least in the short term. In this regard, the '7 million' has not fundamentally altered people's subjectivities to the point of instigating change. On the contrary, the force of pre-existing dynamics has, in several instances, reinforced crucial aspects of the local *habitus* that persists despite several formal and institutional changes occurring not only in the domain of the '7 million' and the LCs but more generally in Mozambique since the Peace Accords.

This leads us once more to Bourdieu and the dialectical relationship between objectivism and subjectivism. As long as subjects think the way they do, they will not change attitude. At the same time, as long as the practical conditions that surround them (in this case, the informal patterns of social behaviour that affect their everyday) remain, they will lack the stimulus to dare to change. Therefore, perhaps one of the crucial questions in this case study is 'What does it take for subjects to change their mind-sets?' (Assuming this is a desirable outcome, which, in the context of extreme disempowerment, it is assumed here to be). This question is, furthermore, linked to a more general question which is

whether social engineering – here, clearly promoted from the top-down – is an efficient means for social change. These interrogations will be resumed in the section below, but what I would like to emphasise here is that, underneath any empowerment promotion policy, and clearly in the case of the ‘7 million’ and the several reforms that took place in Mozambique after the war, the conflict between those who want change and those who want to resist change is a crucial matter.

In the case of the ‘7 million’, this conflict needs to be assessed taking into account multiple levels of analysis. As discussed in Chapter 5, the very design of the ‘7 million’ and of the LCs reflected different understandings regarding what kind of changes they were supposed to bring about. And these different kinds of changes had different implications regarding these instruments’ social effects and emancipatory potential. The policy outcome has clearly privileged a setting that has retained a strong political component of the policy without accountability mechanisms despite its claim to the contrary. In fact, to a large extent, and resembling the very process of decentralisation in Mozambique, the ‘7 million’ and the LCs constitute *a change that does not fundamentally change power* and is therefore non-emancipatory. More generally, this outcome reflects one of the downsides of top-down policies aiming at promoting ‘bottom-up’ empowerment: their very nature is linked to the maintenance of the status quo – a fact that also explains the natural preference for a technical approach to empowerment. The section below discusses this aspect in more depth.

7.2 Problematising the ‘7 Million’s Limitations

The analysis of the ‘7 million’ and its implementation in the district of Angoche, and the acknowledgement that many of the problems encountered there were also found in other districts, raise a series of questions regarding the nature of the policy as well as its limitations. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, civil servants at all levels of the governance spectrum (central government, province, district) strongly pointed out that one of the main challenges of the ‘7 million’ was that it relied on the provision of capacity building, targeting a wide spectrum of actors, including the beneficiaries of the fund, the members of the LCs, as well as the members of the districts’ TCs. This perspective stems from

the understanding that the '7 million' is good policy in its intent, design and empowering potential, but its efficiency depends upon its optimum implementation, which includes the expansion of technical capacity at the lower echelons of the state.

As shown, the lack of technical capacity (or lack of power-to) is, indeed, a problem, one that is recognised by the beneficiaries and members of LCs themselves. Yet, if lack of technical capacity is an issue, lack of capacity (in particular, financial resources) *to provide capacity* seems even more problematic and reflects a more fundamental problem that is the inadequacy of the policy in matching what is clearly an ambitious plan with an unrealistic budget and which, in turn, leads to a significant loss of resources into failed projects.

Why such capacity building is lacking is a central question to be asked. The argument of trial and error, often repeated to explain the limitations of the '7 million', whilst appealing is not convincing considering the extensive previous experience with participatory planning in several provinces in the 1990s. While these previous projects did not relate to credit provision, they were based on participatory planning which included, in the case of Nampula, the role of consultative councils. These previous experiments had, furthermore, been assessed before the inception of the '7 million' and offered a series of lessons learned, which included the need for technical capacity and a functioning system of monitoring and accountability (see, e.g., ECI*Africa*, 2004; Métier, 2006). Also, besides the reports, several participants in these first experiments, who are still working in or with the government, were very aware of some aspects that needed improvement in these processes including the need to address the problem related to the horizontal/vertical dichotomy discussed above in the case of the LCs (Int. 10, 50). Despite this background, these problems persisted and were often not adequately addressed in the policy instruments that followed. On the contrary, the LC regulation left several ambiguities that did not ensure the aspect of horizontality in the process of the body's constitution. Also, it did not provide a clear mechanism of accountability. 'Why were these lessons not fully incorporated into the '7 million'?' is a central

question to be asked, as it touches directly on the intent of the policy regarding its empowering objective.

The political aspect of the '7 million' has been discussed by some academics (Forquilha, 2010; Orre and Forquilha, 2012) and also referred to by several interviewees from CSOs in Nampula. Their argument was that the '7 million' has been used as a political instrument which means that it was not that its *implementation* has gone wrong, but that the very purpose of the initiative was political in nature. Accordingly, the '7 million' is part of a neopatrimonial dynamic that is present across spectrum of the Mozambican state (ibid.; Sande, 2010). This perspective offers important insights regarding the power dynamics that have taken place at the political level, in particular, surrounding the definition of the legal instruments and the nature of the '7 million'. As discussed in Chapter 5 there is substantial evidence that indicates that the origins of the '7 million' were clearly linked with the political agenda of President Guebuza. The discursive use of the initiative, despite its several problems is, in this regard, an indicator of its political utility. The arguments become even more compelling if we examine the contextual background of decentralisation in Mozambique and the process that led to the regulation of the traditional authorities in Mozambique.

Contrary to the technical analysis of the limitations of '7 million', this political interpretation brings power-over to the heart of the analysis, in particular, the power-over exercised by the dominant party in order to retain its control of the country. This perspective assumes there is no empowering potential arising from the '7 million' as the latter is perceived as designed precisely as a tool to maintain and reinforce the status quo.

While more convincing than the 'lack of technical capacity' argument, there are two aspects that need to be further problematized in the case of the '7 million'. The variance in behaviour that takes place at the local level is an indicator that, despite the strength of the political power-over that takes place in Mozambique, there are other dimensions that affect how this power will mingle with local dynamics. Local culture and socio-economic aspects may indeed reinforce this top-down power, but they do not respond linearly and may, in fact, in unexpected ways, contribute to the creation of windows of opportunity for change. In this regard, local behaviours may also be affected by parallel events.

In Angoche, for instance, there was a notable difference in attitudes between members of LDCs who had some kind of regular interactions with specific CSOs in comparison to those who did not. This sometimes led to a certain degree of conflict between the LCs and LDCs as the former saw the latter as “challenging their authority”.⁵⁹

While it is important to acknowledge the often very asymmetrical waves of power-over that descend from one level of analysis to the other, it is equally important to consider the several deviations that these waves may encounter until they reach the bottom layers. Ultimately, what influences local behaviour is a specific combination of powers that affects each individual differently according to where he/she stands in that particular moment. In this regard, some people may feel power-over more intensely (e.g., women), whilst others may use this power wave as a trampoline to increase their own power-to (e.g., whoever has money to pay a bribe and obtain a loan). Consequently, while it may be the case that many people are under similar constraints, due to *habitus* and because of their similar position in that social context, it is also the case that deviant behaviours may have an influence and be reproduced by others at a later stage.

Therefore, assuming the ‘7 million’ was indeed created with the aim of enhancing Frelimo’s power and popularity at the local level, this alone would not eliminate the possibility that the policy could (even if ‘accidentally’) lead to some kind of emancipatory outcome. As noted by an employee in Nampula who had a very positive view about the policy, even if people were complaining about the problems of irregularities, lack of enough funds, etc., it was still a positive outcome that they were talking about it as this kind of discussion was something that did not happen a few years before (Int. 5). The point made was that, even if the ‘7 million’ did not work as expected, it helped to make people more critical about current events and therefore more engaged in matters that affected their daily lives. I agree with the comment to a certain extent, not least because critical awareness is indeed a pre-requisite for empowerment (as an

⁵⁹ This was an issue that came up in the bi-district conference of Akilizetho in Moma in which I took part in May 2012.

emancipatory outcome) to take place. Nevertheless, I disagree that this should be understood as a *merit* of the '7 million' as a policy. On the contrary, such an outcome would be precisely the result of the policy's ineffectiveness both in promoting empowerment (from a technical perspective) and in strengthening the legitimacy of the current status quo (in particular the legitimacy of the local government). Ultimately, as discussed below, a crucial aspect that explain the limitations of the '7 million' – and of many other policies targeting local empowerment – is its very top-down nature.

THE PROBLEMS OF PROMOTING BOTTOM-UP EMPOWERMENT FROM THE TOP-DOWN

Different from other programs of micro-credit, mostly run by non-governmental (often international) actors, the '7 million' was a *national* and *governmental* initiative. This means that the '7 million' was, to a large extent, endogenous and this is in fact the appeal behind its image — the '7 million' is 'a Mozambican initiative'. That being the case, it would be expected that the initiative would be more attuned to local idiosyncrasies and respond better to the local demands. Indeed, officially, the '7 million' was a response to local demands. As noted in the official discourse, "It was by listening to people's complaints about their lack of resources to run their businesses that President Guebuza *responded* by providing the '7 million'" (Int. 3). Provided this perspective was unproblematic – which, as discussed in Chapter 5, is not the case – several problems still remained at the heart of the initiative that compromise its supposed 'demand-driven' character.

If we take into the account its procedural aspect, for instance, specifically, the role of the LCs, despite the claim that these are the expression of a bottom-up process, it is also the case that they are embedded in top-down dynamics. First, they are linked to the formal administrative structure of the district – which is also responsible for setting the meetings and their agendas. Second, with the exception of the selection of the projects, the LCs have no decision power, but are merely consultative (that is, the one who takes decisions locally is still the administrator who is directly linked to the Frelimo party and the provincial government). Third, in practice, as shown, the LCs have been largely

constituted from the top-down from the local point of view (that is, there was very often a pre-selection of its members by community authorities). Fourth, as an intermediary channel between the communities and the government, the LCs have mostly shown a deficit of interaction with the community. This was reflected in the popular view that the LCs were linked to the government. Additionally, from the perspective of several LC members even their power to decide which projects should be selected is largely restricted by the TC and other employees in the administration, who de facto control what comes after the meetings.

Perhaps a key question here is 'who is the local' to which the 'bottom-up' refers to? There is no doubt that the institutional reforms carried after the Peace Accords have given more autonomy to the district as a state unit. But who is the district? Which people in the district are being empowered as a result of these changes? From the macro perspective, it is a fact that more money has been poured locally, that more responsibilities have been delegated to the district government and even to the LCs. From the perspective of the everyday rural Mozambican, nevertheless, these changes are still very limited. The fact that local people are not entitled to choose the local administrator is a major hindrance to the promotion of a bottom-up channel of representation in the districts. The consultative status of the LCs further shows the limitations of this process.

Besides, looking at the '7 million', and regardless of its bottom-up appeal, it is not that clear that the fund was a *response* to local demand. Indeed, every time I asked local people what they most wanted that could improve their lives, the top answers were (1) access to improved basic services and infrastructure, and (2) jobs. And by 'jobs', they meant formal jobs with social security and a regular salary. And even though the '7 million' has as one of its main purposes job creation, it is, at best, unclear, the way it can actually promote this goal at a significant scale, at least in the current way it has been implemented. In fact, to a significant extent, the '7 million' is based on a logic of stimulating self-reliance at the local level which is at the core of the idea of entrepreneurship promoted by President Guebuza.

And here is where we find a contrast between what people want and what the ‘7 million’ is promoting. People want secure jobs (which often, in their minds, also means a job provided by the state), whereas the government wants to promote the private sector at the local level. In this regard, the ‘7 million’ asks for a radical change in mentality, a mentality that targets production and self-employment. But if that is the purpose, and even if it could be justifiable from the point of view of economic development and even material empowerment, it also means that it is not demand-driven but, instead, a process of social engineering.

As seen in Chapter 3, this attempt to transform mentalities via social engineering is not a new event in Mozambique. After independence, Frelimo’s socialist program was also based on a widely publicised and radical intent to transform Mozambican society, focusing on the very idea of emancipation (as linked with the path towards modernity). Perhaps more than anything this project showed the key problem embedded in the very idea of emancipation, that is, who is to decide what emancipation is? As of today, the empowerment agenda suffers from the same problem, as what is empowerment tends to be predefined. In Mozambique today, whereas Frelimo has set a series of channels of dialogue with the local population, there are clearly defined boundaries that may not be crossed when it comes to change, particularly in the domain of political change. A major difference between now and the early years of independence is the acceptance and incorporation of the traditional authorities (now ‘community authorities’) in this process of dialogue. Back then, social transformation was more coercive and based on the exclusion of those who did not abide by the modern ideal; whereas today, it is based mostly (although not exclusively) on incentives and the inclusion (or co-opting) of those who could oppose transformation. At the same time, the incorporation of community authorities in this process — highlighted in the LCs’ regulation which mentions that “preferably” at least 40%” of the LC members should be community authorities — does not necessarily translate into the enhancement of the bottom-up character of these bodies, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Another problematic aspect related to the ‘bottom-up’ promoted from the ‘top-down’, in this case, refers to the chain of accountability. As the government

creates these spaces for participation, the only clear channel of accountability seems to be the one between the administrator and his superiors (e.g., the provincial government). Therefore, the administrator and the district employees need to ensure that their work will be positively assessed in the eyes of their superiors which is why the open presidencies and provincial visits are deemed the only safe place to complain in the eyes of the population (and even according to some TC members). That is an expression that the ordinary people are not actually being empowered to exercise their rights, but they still strongly feel the need to access the higher echelons of authority to have any local problem solved.

This brings us to a crucial aspect that is central to the contrast between empowerment that is demand-driven and supply-driven (Easterly, 2006; Turner et al., 2011). The first is usually the result of the previous understanding that power (in whichever shape it is manifested) is a *right*; whereas in the second case, it is perceived as a *concession* if not even an act of kindness from whoever is 'providing' this power — which, in this case, is expressed through the participatory spaces in the LCs or even the money that people may obtain through the '7 million.' As shown in the comments shared by the beneficiaries of the '7 million', the 'gift/favour' perception is very common which is why very often, and even in the face of several problems linked to the fund, many beneficiaries still expressed gratitude for it. Thinking in terms of the different approaches to empowerment, the idea of 'concession' or 'enabling' relates to the technical approaches to empowerment, whereas the emancipatory view, based on critical awareness, links directly to the idea of 'rights' and 'demand'.

As noted in Chapter 4, several of the problems discussed here are not exclusive to the '7 million'. The paternal view of the state revealed in the Afrobarometer survey, the very slow-paced development of civil society, and the fear of contestation of authority are some of the examples related to the obstacles to the consolidation of local empowerment and, more generally, to the entrenchment of citizenship as an intrinsic right of any individual within the Mozambican state. It is no wonder that, in this context, so often the hope for change lies *outside*, for instance in the hands of donors, NGOs, or even higher authorities, and not within. This, in turn, reinforces the idea that empowerment

needs help to take place from outside/above, instead of instigating agency for change.

7.3 The '7 Million': Lessons Learned

Whilst the '7 million' is a Mozambican experiment, which means that it is unique in this very format, it also has many features that are common to other policies in different countries. First, the policy was designed in the context of decentralisation and promotion of local governance, a common agenda in many post-conflict settings (Brinkerhoff, 2005 and 2011; Kauzya, 2005; Europe Aid, 2007; Heijke and van den Berg, 2011). Second, many of the features of the '7 million' resemble practices of micro-credit initiatives, also extremely common in developing countries and which also have a strong empowering appeal placing participatory practices at their centre (e.g., Rankin, 2001; Mahmud, 2003; Parmar, 2003; Muhumuza, 2005). The '7 million' assessment can thus not only highlight certain aspects that may be common to other initiatives, but also bring to the surface alternative courses of action that may increase the effectiveness of similar policies.

Below I list and comment on key aspects that had a major influence on the current outcome of the '7 million', and which also offer the locus for improvement — not only in the case of the '7 million', but also in other policies that aim at promoting local empowerment.

- *Clarity of objectives and connection with the country's political economy agenda*

One of the central problems of the '7 million' has been its excessively mutant character. Whereas it is important that any policy retains a significant aspect of flexibility, adapting to social, economic and political changes that inevitably occur in any social context, excessive changes bring confusion and inconsistencies that may potentially affect the expected outcome.

Having a clear objective also means that the policy needs to be consistent with broader national development and economic policies. The dilemma at the local level between 'giving a big grant' *versus* 'giving

more but smaller loans' reflects his lack of clarity in the case of the '7 million', and points to the different expectations regarding what the policy may generate. In this regard, clarity is needed so at all levels of policy implementation there is no doubt about what is to be expected from the policy in question.

- *Ambition versus capacity*

As discussed extensively in Chapter 6, there was a big mismatch between the ambitious character of the '7 million' and the existing means to effectively implement it. Having functional local councils at different levels of all the over 130 districts in Mozambique with members minimally trained to discuss business projects, members of the TCs capable and with resources to do regular monitoring visits and enough resources to invest in viable projects entails a large amount of investment, far beyond that which has been allocated.

In the absence of such resources, a more modest policy, focusing, for example, on the poorest districts only or on a reduced number of projects per district could perhaps show more effective results.

- *Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)*

From the perspective of local empowerment, M&E is primordial in order (1) to ensure that the resources are used in an optimal way and (2) to ensure that implementation problems may be detected as soon as possible. The absence of a regular monitoring practice, and the lack of an accurate methodological mechanism of assessment have to a great extent fostered the perpetuation of weak/failed projects in the case of the '7 million'. As discussed in Chapter 5, the reasons for the perpetuation of weak M&E processes in this case require an in depth analysis of the political aspects linked to it, in particular, the maintenance of a discourse of 'success'. Nonetheless, lack of capacity, in particular resources, was also a major obstacle. Increasing the allocation of resources for M&E, even if that meant taking a percentage away from the projects would most likely increase the effectiveness of the initiative, in particular if at

the same time better mechanisms of accountability were put in place (see below).

- *Chain of accountability*

The lack of a clear chain of accountability is perhaps one of the most problematic aspects of the '7 million', as without it there is no way that problems may be solved in time (or at all) to make the policy functional. Many of the problems of irregularities discussed in Chapter 6 were reproduced largely because of the absence of such a chain: as noted, there was a lack of clarity regarding who is responsible for what and an absence of proper channels of public accountability — that is, there was no assurance that those at the bottom could check and follow up how and if the problems they encountered were actually being solved. Instead of only beneficiaries being held accountable for their loans, local authorities should be held responsible for their performance on a regular basis.

- *The need to discuss power issues, politics and the nature of the state*

In the context of Mozambique, and of any country with a strong history of centralism and dominant party, any policy aimed at promoting local empowerment should take into account power and politics and how people respond to this. It is not enough that legally Mozambicans have the right to belong to any party without suffering any kind of discrimination. While local authorities officially state that no party discrimination should exist in the allocation of the loans, in practice there are no clear mechanisms to ensure that such discourse become praxis. This problem is largely related to the aspect of accountability highlighted above.

More generally, however, there is a need to acknowledge the political aspects that shape *any* policy and move away from the technical perspective that shapes policy projects while incorporating aspects of power struggle that will ultimately affect how the policy is implemented. This is particularly the case in post-colonial states, where tradition and modernity co-exist and directly affect people's responses to policies (e.g.:

how incorporating community authorities in the LCs affect the functioning, representativeness and effectiveness of such bodies and the decisions related to the '7 million'?' and 'how local government authorities are responding to the new spaces of power created thanks to deconcentration?').

- Ensure that the policy does reflect a bottom-up approach

The challenges and contradictions of promoting bottom-up empowerment from the top-down have been discussed extensively in the previous section. The question that arises here is whether such contradiction ultimately means that any such attempt is doomed to failure. There is no clear-cut answer to this question. On the one hand, because of the very nature of such policies, it is doubtful that they could produce *emancipatory* effects to the extent of significantly shifting power. On the other hand, as formal spaces for participation emerge and resources are poured into different locations of power, they may contribute to a progressive enhancement of the power-to of the marginalised and, eventually, in the long term, enable a more profound change that could have emancipatory consequences.

In practical terms, one of the main challenges of such policies is to ensure that they reflect the voices of the target population. Which specific techniques are needed for this to take place should be considered according to the very specific context in which the policy is supposed to operate. In the case of the '7 million', engaging different clusters of actors (e.g., besides the LC also the LCDs and other local movements), for example, could be a way to achieve this goal.

Whereas some of the aspects above are not novel when it comes to policy assessment, I would like to stress that looking at each of them from the multilevel perspective offered by the empowerment framework here proposed helps in broadening the ways in which they could be addressed. For instance, improving the chain of accountability requires not only formal mechanisms, but its success is highly dependent on local subjectivities and whether local people will take action and indeed use such mechanisms to complain and claim their

rights (that is, it is dependent on the change in local subjectivities). In this regard, the framework places emphasis on the constant connection between variables at these different levels as well as the contradictory aspects that are often present in the social context under analysis.

More generally, the framework contributes to policy evaluation because it brings power dynamics into the analysis, facilitating the identification of different interests and power relations across the different levels of analysis. By bringing power in, it naturally moves the focus from a technical view of empowerment and considers the possible emancipatory outcomes of the policy. Finally, by connecting multiple levels of analysis, namely the domain of policy-making and policy implementation, it facilitates the analysis of policy coherence.

7.4 Back to Empowerment Theorising

One of the propositions of this thesis is that empowerment can be a useful concept in order to understand social change including peacebuilding processes and peace sustainability in the long run. This means, on the one hand, moving slightly away from empowerment as a policy outcome and focusing instead on empowerment as a representation of the *movement of power* in a given social context. This, in turn, means diving deeper into the complex debate on power whilst discussing empowerment.

The model proposed in Chapter 2 did so by opting for a framework that incorporated a dialectical perspective of power centred on the relationship between power-to and power-over. This choice was based on the understanding that, in any given context where empowerment policies are required or implemented, there exist significant asymmetries of power between actors, across different fields, which often entail conflict around power. As policies aiming at promoting empowerment (a specific group's power-to) are implemented, they may often interfere in these dynamics (in particular, power-over dynamics that may have caused or contributed to the lack of that group's power-to), possibly intensifying conflict and/or creating resistance or forms of policy distortion, interfering in the expected outcome. Therefore, the sooner the identification of conflict dynamics are identified, the more realistic the policy can be.

An important aspect here is that conflict is not deemed necessarily socially harmful, neither is it related necessarily with dynamics of oppression. The idea of understanding the relationship between power-over and power-to from a dialectical perspective is, in this regard, an effort to emphasise the constant movement and the intrinsic relation of one kind of power over the other. Indeed, the same could apply to the dichotomy of emancipation/oppression — one only makes sense in relation to the other. In the context of social relations, and thinking in terms of positive peace and life welfare (Pugh et al., 2011), the central issue is how balanced these two extremes are in different fields of social life. Indeed, the recognition that empowerment needs to be promoted stems from the understanding that the power-to of a specific group is extremely unbalanced.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, it is this assumption that is at the base of empowerment as a necessary policy. Nevertheless, what differs is the way this lacking or imbalance is understood. From the technical perspective, it is often due to the lack of clear regulatory frameworks related to state governance which, in turn, affect the access to 'capacity', both technical capacity (knowledge, education) as well as material assets (including access to basic social services). According to the emancipatory perspectives, the central issue is systemic instead and relates to the nature of the system that regulates social relations and which is inherently oppressive (based on power-over). These different foci also point towards different levels of analysis as explanatory fields. The technical approaches emphasise the national level — where good governance is the focus — and the local level — where the 'recipients' of the policies are located. Conversely, the emancipatory approaches move upwards to the global level in their analysis taking a more systemic approach where fundamental assumptions of social organisation and their values are called into question. Each approach furthermore tends to highlight different aspects of power: the technical approaches focus on the increase of power-to, whereas the emancipatory approaches concentrate on overcoming power-over.

If we take into account the case study discussed here, we may see that each approach reveals certain aspects of the '7 million'. However, by focusing on each of them exclusively, many dynamics of power would be ignored, or

underestimated. From the technical perspective, the analysis of the '7 million' could take into account, for example, the ambiguities in the legislation, the lack of funding to invest in capacity building, possibly the effects of corruption (lack of good governance and accountability) as factors that contributed to the various problems related to the implementation of the '7 million'. An emancipatory perspective on the matter could focus, for example, on the effects of the initiative regarding the more structural dimension of the country's economy and wealth distribution. Also, research focused on gender and the '7 million' would certainly reveal more subtle issues of power that could also be assessed from a gender emancipatory perspective. The challenge addressed in this thesis was to open up the possibility to see these and other factors combined and how they interact with and influence each other. It reflected, in this regard, the concern with a holistic approach also flexible enough to consider that any of these factors could have a different weight at a different point in time and space, thus, having a different influence in terms of policy outcome.

It is this holistic concern that ultimately justifies the option of not focusing exclusively on emancipation as an analytical concept. While emancipation clearly concentrates on power and conflict, allowing the identification of important power dynamics, ultimately it places emphasis on a systemic approach and the vertical axis of power (i.e., how systemic forces condition local and individual behaviour) to the detriment of the possible micro-systems of power (e.g., localised cultural and traditional patterns) and the horizontal dynamics of power (within the same level). While it may be the case that systemic power dynamics may overlap with local ones, there is no guarantee that they will always be predominant. It is also not a given that power dynamics in each level will respond similarly to the systemic context.

The choice of a model that included multiple levels of analysis was a way to enhance this holistic aspect by expanding the possibility to understand the different vertical and horizontal waves of power that contribute to the results of the policy. It is this multilevel framework that also allows us to understand, not only the policy implementation, but the policy formulation, and the power dynamics that shape the latter and, consequently, also affect the intention and

outcome of the policy in question. In the case of the '7 million', it became clear that the way the policy was designed was the result of a series of clashes of opinion at the national level which ultimately affected the very nature of the initiative. At the same time, whereas at this level, the political power exercised by the executive was decisive for the final outcome, in the policy's operationalization across the lower levels, other factors started to play a role, that is, more power waves interfered in the policy's implementation. These included, among others, local formal and informal chains of authority (traditional and non-traditional), socio-economic factors, as well as the role of parallel actors, including CSOs and their work in different locations of the district. These factors combined with the different positions of actors in this context largely affected the way actors perceived their own power (their subjectivities), and, therefore, the way they acted regarding the policy.

The focus on subjectivities was another important aspect of the framework proposed in this thesis. As observed in the case study, the way individuals perceive their own and others' power is the result of a complex geometry of factors that is not visible at first and that was not fully captured in the policy design. In particular, the different manifestations of fear not only of 'the structure' (the government power) but also of the local mechanisms of social regulation highly influenced actors' willingness to speak or remain silent, criticize or approve, and try or not to obtain the loan. Fear was particularly important to explain the non-linear connection between access to information (e.g., capacity building regarding the LCs and the '7 million') and behaviour. More generally, it became evident how complex the relationship between subjectivities, capacity, and agency is, and, therefore, how difficult it is to promote empowerment that is not demand-driven. In fact, even when some material results were visible thanks to the '7 million', it was not necessarily the case that this had implied a change of mentality such as raising people's ability to question the power of the structures that have kept them in poverty. On the contrary, as shown, in several instances, as the implementation of the '7 million' has incorporated other kinds of problems that had been taking place for a long time (e.g., corruption, power abuse); it is plausible to argue that, to a certain extent, it may have reinforced the *habitus* (e.g., by reinforcing the idea that it is

good to be linked to the structure to obtain things including the fund and that one should not contest the authorities as reprisals may take place and nothing will change). At the same time, even when mentality (or the understanding of things) changed, this did not necessarily convert into a different action.

In summary, the model proposed here, due to its holistic and multidimensional character, allows us to pay attention to multiple domains where power dynamics take place, at the same time, expanding the discussion on empowerment to include not only a policy's expected outcome but its formulation, and the power dynamics behind its formulation, as well as the different factors that influence power dynamics at the different levels where the policy operates. Additionally, and especially because it is concerned with subjectivities of power, it also allows us to perceive variance, e.g., why some actors respond differently to the same situation or why some situations may be perceived as both problems as well as windows of opportunity for change. This, in turn, facilitates the understanding of how *habitus* operates in a given social context and the potential spaces for change; or, conversely, what are the factors that more strongly hinder the possibility for change.

Even though the empowerment framework has been used in this thesis mostly to assess the '7 million', its utility is by no means restricted to development policy analysis. As seen in Chapter 4, this framework is also helpful in the analysis of peacebuilding by highlighting the difference between peace as institutional reforms — which concentrates on the national level — and peace as people's empowerment — that is, the perceived effects of these reforms from the point of view of those who should be its beneficiaries. In this regard, bringing empowerment into the analysis of peacebuilding adds to the discussion of hybridity and contributes to the exploration of the everyday changes in post-war contexts (Brown et al., 2010; Mac Ginty, 2011; Richmond, 2011; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). In particular, it provides the space to address power by taking into account not only the external/internal divide that often prevails in these debates but also by addressing how the 'internal' or the 'local' itself is diversified. Moreover, it stresses how the 'local' is also subject to power asymmetries that may facilitate the production of either resistance and

contestation or alignment with peacebuilding policies implemented in post-war scenarios, such as democratisation and decentralisation.

In Mozambique, as shown, peacebuilding reforms have not been able to change fundamental dynamics of power that still operate at the local level. Indeed, and despite the labelling of this country as a peacebuilding success due to its embrace of externally-led reforms, in practice, especially at the local level, peace is much more hybrid than liberal. While this is so, the correlation of forces that have led to today's Mozambique can be understood by looking at the way power has operated within and between these different levels of analysis.

7.5 Conclusion

The hypothesis presented in the introduction of this thesis was that, even though the '7 million' had some positive aspects – including promoting a discourse at the national level that underlines the relevance of the districts and the local community in matters of governance – its effects in promoting local empowerment have been far below its potential and, at times, also counter-productive.

The analysis of the case study has confirmed that this was, indeed, the case. As hypothesised, one of the reasons for this poor outcome was the dynamics of power encountered at the local level which, to a great extent, reflect structural problems related to the constitution of the Mozambican state as well as the peace/state building reforms that followed the 1992 Peace Accords. At the same time, part of these dynamics are more fundamentally linked to local aspects related to culture and tradition which, nevertheless, also tend to reinforce the top-down character that prevails in this social context.

A second factor for these poor results, as stated in the hypothesis, was the misalignment between some basic assumptions behind the empowering potential of the policy and the way power dynamics operate at the local level. As discussed in this chapter, there are indeed several dichotomies that reflect this misalignment. However, a key point that emerged in the research, and that was not initially contemplated, was why this misalignment existed in the first place. As noted, this misalignment needs to be understood along with the

conflict of interests that led to the policy formulation and where political factors outweighed the technical experience that preceded the '7 million'.

More generally, the thesis has confirmed that the '7 million' does not address the actual sources of local disempowerment focusing, instead, on small scale issues that cannot compensate for the bigger structural problems that cause disempowerment in the districts in the first place. Indeed, the publicity of the '7 million' is disproportionately large in relation to its potential effect. Even more disproportional is the propaganda of its results, which dismisses several methodological problems behind its evaluation as discussed in the previous chapters.

Finally, the thesis has shown that one of the fundamental problems behind the limitations of the '7 million' relies on the more general contradiction of promoting 'bottom-up' empowerment from the 'top-down'. This contradiction further points towards the limitations of social engineering attempts of social transformation that are not demand-driven and how these may create spaces where power can be more easily manipulated by those who find themselves in a better strategic position instead of promoting the empowerment of the most marginalised.

As this thesis comes to an end, a question that arises is whether the '7 million', regardless of all its problems, was still better than no '7 million' at all. The answers to this would be based on counterfactuals, but may shed a different light on the policy and its relevance. On the one hand, no '7 million' would mean less money in the districts and less money in the hands of many poor people. Indeed, even if it is the case that the '7 million' could have been more effective if used in a different or more accountable way, it is undeniable that some people, at least for a certain amount of time, benefitted from it and often survived because of it. On the other hand, taking into account the problems behind the initiative including power abuse, bribes, and overall lack of accountability, the question remains whether this initiative has not contributed to the actual enhancement of these problems and the consolidation of *habitus*, reinforcing people's beliefs that things are as they are and most probably will not change. This counterfactual analysis, which open up the discussion of the long-term effects of the '7 million', could be facilitated by the existence of more quality research on the '7 million' and the LCs which, at this stage, are still scarce.

While this research has contributed to partly filling this gap and advancing more questions regarding the long-term effects of the '7 million', I would also like to acknowledge some of its limitations. First, whereas the fieldwork was successful in gathering information from a wide range of actors at all levels of analysis, in particular, listening to several voices from the very bottom of rural society, it is also the case that a more in-depth analysis of the local would have required a much longer stay in the district. Indeed, certain 'invisible' aspects such as the influence of tradition and culture on everyday behaviour would have required a stay of at least six months even up to one year in the same place in order to gain the confidence of the local people and be able to observe details that in a short visit, especially for someone exogenous like myself, are not immediately visible. In fact, I only started to be able to observe some of these aspects at the very end of my stay largely thanks to my contact with some people that had lived in the region for a long time and were open to informally sharing this kind of information with me. Undoubtedly, such an anthropological research would pose additional challenges in analytical terms, especially in my ability to connect the different levels of analysis. Yet it would certainly bring new elements into the understanding of local behaviour and its relationship with the LCs as well as the '7 million'.

A second limitation that is inherent to this kind of ethnographic research is that, no matter how much I tried to diversify my sources, my ability in terms of the control of the information was always conditional to my external relationship with the context where I was and the stories that I was listening to. Unfortunately, there is no way to guarantee that participants will tell their stories in full either because of issues of trust or because they want to show only a specific view of their narratives. While conducting fieldwork, I did whatever was possible to overcome this challenge by double-checking the information shared and also by comparing the same events as narrated in different interviews. Certainly, any mechanisms, in this regard, could not fully resolve this problem, but they reflected my continuous commitment to a reflexive practice and my personal posture of being open to reconsider the data obtained as new data was collected. In this regard, the follow-up trip in 2013 was precisely an effort to do this, especially by sharing my initial interpretation of the 2012 findings and

continuing to capture new data that, ultimately, corroborated the previous findings.

Finally, due to space limitation, a significant amount of information obtained in the fieldwork was not directly used in, or was actually excluded from, the analysis in this thesis, in particular the kind of information that opened up new directions for future research and was not deemed fundamental in order to respond to the thesis objectives and research questions. These included: (1) the information surrounding the development and functioning of the LDCs and their relationship with the LCs, a theme also linked to the challenges of creating a more local civil society in Mozambique; and (2) the local perceptions regarding the changes arising from peace in people's daily lives, as well as of the non-changes. Both topics open new avenues of research that may also contribute to the deepening of the discussion on empowerment and peace.

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Appendix I

Research Information Sheet

(this was translated into Portuguese and presented to participants)

Greetings!

I would like to invite you to take part on a research study. Before you decide whether to participate or not, I would like to share with you some brief information about the nature of this study and what your participation would entail.

Please read the summary below and feel free to contact me for any additional information you may require.

Thanks for taking the time to consider this.

RESEARCH TITLE

A Multilevel Analysis of Empowerment in Mozambique: the Case of the District Development Fund

RESEARCH SUMMARY

This research is part of a PhD project in Peace Studies, conducted by Roberta Holanda Maschietto, under the supervision of Dr. Neil Cooper, at the School of International and Social Studies, University of Bradford, United Kingdom.

The research aims to: (1) discuss the concept of empowerment vis-à-vis in the peace and development agendas; (2) analyse current patterns of empowerment and disempowerment in Mozambique and (3) the effects of the District Development Fund (DDF, also known as the '7 million') in promoting local empowerment.

The project focuses on the district of Angoche, in the province of Nampula, and the role played by the Local Consultative Councils in the use of the DDF.

This is an independent research and the researcher has no direct link with any political party, development organization, NGO and/or institution in Mozambique or in the UK, apart from the University of Bradford.

RESEARCH
OUTCOMES

The results of this research will constitute part of a PhD thesis in Peace Studies, at the University of Bradford. The research further contemplates the publication of articles in academic journals. In terms of content, the research aims to contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of empowerment and, thus, how policies aiming at promoting local empowerment can be improved.

TARGET
POPULATION

Participants in this research shall include: local people in Angoche, members of the Local Consultative Councils in Angoche, beneficiaries of the DDF, government officials in Angoche, Nampula and Maputo involved in the implementation of the DDF, members of civil society organisations in Nampula and Maputo and employees within development agencies that have been following the implementation of the DDF.

YOUR
PARTICIPATION

Participants in this research are recruited exclusively on a voluntary basis. If, for any reason, after deciding to participate, you change your mind, you are absolutely free to withdraw from the research and also withdraw any statement already given.

Participation will be based on face to face interviews, which, **if you allow**, will be audio recorded. The timing of the interview will depend on the participant availability, but the ideal estimate is at least one hour. The place shall be negotiated between the participant and researcher, according to what is feasible and allowing for a minimum of privacy during the interview.

GUARANTEEING
YOUR PRIVACY

The information you give will be treated confidentially: your name and any other identification will not be shared at any time in the output of the research (**unless you explicitly request so**). The only person dealing with the information you will give is the researcher (myself) and nobody else. Any recording will be saved in password-protected digital files only accessed by the researcher. Any direct quotes will be used only in the absence of any possible link to its author. If you have any queries about this process, do not hesitate to ask.

ABOUT THE
RESEARCHER

My name is Roberta Holanda Maschietto. I have obtained a Bachelor and a Masters degree in International Relations, both from the University of Brasília (Brazil). Before joining the PhD program at Bradford University I

was a lecturer in International Relations in Brazil for nearly five years. I further worked in several academic researches and developed course content both in International Relations as well as in Peace Studies. I am also co-editor of the online academic Journal of Peace, Conflict & Development (<http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/>).

UNIVERSITY OF
BRADFORD
APPROVAL

This research project has been assessed and approved by the University of Bradford Ethics Committee and therefore abides by the ethical principles of that institution. If you would like to verify the reliability of the researcher, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr. Neil Cooper, at R.N.Cooper@Bradford.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you will be interested in taking part of this research.

If you have any doubts and/or enquiries, please contact me at R.HolandaMaschietto@Student.Bradford.ac.uk or roberta_africa@yahoo.com.br.

Best wishes

Roberta Holanda Maschietto

Doctoral researcher in Peace Studies

University of Bradford, UK

Appendix II



Consent Form

(this was translated into Portuguese)

RESEARCH TITLE

A Multilevel Analysis of Empowerment in Mozambique: the Case of the District Development Fund

RESEARCHER

Roberta Holanda Maschietto, Doctoral Researcher in Peace Studies, University of Bradford, UK

Please read the following statements and mark whether you agree or not. If you have doubts while reading this, please feel free to ask the necessary clarifications.

	YES	NO
I have received a copy of this research information sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had the chance to ask questions and clarifications about the research and my participation in it and I agree with the conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am taking part in this research voluntarily and I understand that I can withdraw from this interview at any moment without giving any justification.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I can withdraw any statement made, even after the interview is completed, if I wish so. In this case, the information will be discarded and not used in this research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I agree that this interview will be audio recorded and the only person who will have access to it is the interviewer herself.

I understand that, **unless I explicitly state my wish to the contrary**, my name and identification will not be exposed in the study, neither associated with the information I am sharing during the interview.

I agree with the use of anonymised quotes of this interview in this study.

I would like the interviewer to keep me informed about the study and ask any clarification regarding statements I give during the interview.

Name of participant: _____

Place and date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

1| FOCUS GROUPS

Participants: local people in the districts

Estimated time: 2 hours

Purposes:

1. Obtain the participants' *understanding* of power, (dis)empowerment and power dynamics within the community
2. Obtain the participants' view of the LCC, its role and representativeness
3. Understand the participants' priorities and if they think the latter are taken into account by the LCC
4. Obtain their knowledge/view on the '7 million' and its results
5. Obtain the participant's reflection on what has changed for her/him/the community since the end of the war.

Questions

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
GENERAL SUBJECTIVITIES AND PRIORITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN RELATION TO THE COMMUNITY		
1. How would you describe your current life condition in your community? What do you like and what do you dislike?	[Complement, if needed] Do you have access to the things you need? Are you happy? Do you feel safe? Do you feel free to do/say what you want? Why is it so? Can you give an example of this kind of situation?	Identify main life values for each individual as well as dimensions of empowerment (power to and agency)
DYNAMICS OF POWER IN THE COMMUNITY, UNDERSTANDINGS OF 'POWER TO' AND 'POWER OVER'		
2. Do you think everybody is equal in your community?	[If needed, specify] Have people access to similar opportunities (health, education, jobs, etc.)? Does everybody have the	Subjectivities ref. power dynamics in the community

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
	same representativeness and are listened the same way by the authorities?	
3. Do you think everybody <i>should</i> be equal or is it good/necessary some level of inequality?	Why? Could you give any example?	Values of equality and authority (power over)
4. Who is/are the most powerful person/people in your community?	Why are they more powerful? Do you think you are powerful in the community?	Subjectivities ref. power dynamics in the community and understanding of own power (power over)
5. What do you think are the main needs of the people in this community?		Subjectivities on disempowerment
VIEW OF THE LCC		
6. What is your opinion about the LCC?	[Specify, if needed] Do you know how the LCC works? Do you think it works well? Does it deliver what you expect it to? Do you think it is representative? Why? Can you give some example?	Subjectivities on the LCC
7. Did you ever bring a specific issue to be discussed in the LCC?	[If no] Why not? [If yes] Can you tell me more about it (what issue, how it was treated, what happened in the end)?	Empowerment through participation
KNOWLEDGE/OPINION ABOUT THE '7 MILLION' AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION		
8. Are you familiar with the DDF (7 million)?	[If yes] What do you know about it? Could you describe what it is and how it works?	
9. Have you ever applied for a loan from the DDF?	[If not] Why not? [If yes] Can you tell me how it was (the process, the result, etc.)?	Use of opportunities (power to)

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
10. Do you think the '7 million' makes a difference in your community?	Why? In which areas?	Subjectivities on community empowerment
11. What are the weakness and strengths of the '7 million'?	Why? [Ask for details] Do you think the 7 million has contributed to the community in general or mostly to some people?	Evaluation of the 7 million
REFLECTION ON WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR HER/HIM/THE COMMUNITY SINCE THE END OF THE WAR.		
12. If you think about your community 20 years ago and today, do you think things have improved?	[If needed, specify] Why? In which area? Can you give some examples? Do you think people have more power today than in the past? Which kind of power?	General social changes in time and power dynamics in the community
13. What do you think has NOT changed and should have changed?		Subjectivities of what 'ought to be'

2| SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Participants: key figures in the Government of Mozambique (Ministries in Maputo)

Estimated time: 1 hour

Purposes:

1. Obtain background information about the '7 million' (its origins, rationale and design)
2. Obtain factual information about the '7 million' implementation
3. Obtain the participant evaluation of the '7 million' ref. its empowering effects
4. Obtain the participant *understanding* of power and empowerment
5. Understand the structural dimensions underpinning the 7 million

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
BACKGROUND AND FACTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE '7 MILLION' AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION		
1. Could you give a brief overview of the origins of	[Get names of	Background.

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
<p>the '7 million' (where has the idea come from, who pushed it forward, its rationale, etc.)?</p>	<p>people/ministries/organisations involved]</p> <p>Would you say this was a purely national initiative or was there some kind of consultation or engagement with donors?</p> <p>Was there any local demand for this kind of initiative? E.g., did people in the districts call for a local budget or was this more of a central government initiative?</p>	<p>National/international influence (structural dimension)</p> <p>Where did the 'empowerment' concern come from (bottom-up or top-down)?</p>
<p>2. Putting the 7 million in the broader context of the national development policy, what was the role that the '7 million' was expected to play?</p>	<p>When it was designed was there a concern in aligning it with other policies, e.g., in the area of privatisation, banking system? Conversely, was there any contradiction between the DDF and other national policies?</p> <p>[If it does not come up] Some argue that the '7 million' hinders another important pillar in the development of the rural areas, which is the expansion of the banks, as it creates a competitive platform for people to get credit. How would you respond to that?</p>	<p>Rationale of the DDF (structural dimension)</p>
<p>3. Since it started, there were changes in the recommendations on the use of the fund. Could you talk about this, in particular what drove these changes?</p>	<p>Was there any systematic consultation with local people and/or systematic assessment of the fund before the changes were recommended?</p>	<p>“</p>
<p>4. What were/are the main obstacles in the implementation of the '7 million', in your opinion?</p>	<p>[Identify/ask about structural issues]</p>	<p>Process of implementation</p>
<p>EVALUATION OF THE '7 MILLION' REF. ITS EMPOWERING EFFECTS AND SUBJECTIVITIES ON EMPOWERMENT</p>		

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
5. One of the main purposes of the '7 million' is to create local empowerment. How would you describe the understanding of 'empowerment' embedded in its perspective?		How empowerment is understood
6. Do you think the '7 million' has succeeded in this regard?	Why? In which areas? Can you give more details, examples?	Evaluation of the '7 million'
7. Do you think the communities in the district have benefitted more or less 'equally' from the fund?	Is there any ongoing study from the government on this? Don't you think sometimes the fund may actually increase local inequalities as the fund goes to specific individuals and not community projects?	". Focus on local inequalities
8. Thinking at the national level, and considering the differences between the districts, is there any government assessment of which districts have had better results?	[If yes] What do you think are the reasons behind different performances? Is there any factor related to (1) the design of the initiative and/or (2) its relation with other national policies?	". Focus on national inequalities
9. One of the criticism on the '7 million' is the low rate of return? Could you comment on that?	Isn't this an indicator that it is not working as expected?	Evaluation of the '7 million'
10. How can the '7 million' be improved in your opinion?		"

3| SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Participant: donors, NGOs, local government officials

Estimated time: 1 hour

Purposes:

1. Understand the participant's subjectivities on empowerment and disempowerment in the district
2. Obtain information about the '7 million' implementation

3. Obtain the participant's evaluation of the '7 million' ref. its empowering effects
4. Understand the structural dimensions underpinning the 7 million

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
SUBJECTIVITES ON DYNAMICS OF EMPOWERMENT AND DISEMPOWERMENT IN THE DISTRICT		
1. In your opinion, what have been the main problems faced by the district?	[Ask for details and concrete examples in areas such as economy, security, health, education, etc.]	Understanding of disempowerment and its long term patterns in the district
2. If you think about the last 5-10 years [if possible, last 20 years), what would you say has improved and what has got worse?	Do you think that inequality is a problem here? Why?	“ Subjectivities on dynamics of power
THE '7 MILLION': IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION		
3. Do you think the '7 million' has addressed the problems you have pointed out?	What do you think about the rationale of the initiative?	Assessing the rationale of the DDF
4. In terms of the implementation process, how would you evaluate the '7 million'?	What were the main obstacles? f you think about the DDF in light of other national policies for development, do you see any contradiction? Or do they complement each other?	Info on the implementation of the DDF and its structural dimensions
5. How would you assess the role of the LCC on this matter?	Is there any internal conflict on the allocation of the budget, e.g., different priorities from the point of view of its members? Do you think the LCC tends to represent the general interest of the community? [Ask for detailed examples]	Power dynamics at the local level
6. [Question for donors] What was the initial reaction of your organisation when President Guebuza launched the '7 million'?	[Identify cooperation/conflict]	Dynamics of power and structural dimension
7. [Question for local official] Before the launch of the DDF,	[If the case] Was there any	Bottom-up x top-down

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
were there other local initiatives centred on the use of public funds?	local demand for this kind of initiative? E.g., did people in the districts call for a local budget or was this more of a central government initiative?	empowerment
8. Do you think the DDF has affected the dynamics within the LCC?	E.g., has created more 'conflict', or has centred the discussion around the fund while minimising other issues?	
9. Since it started, there were changes in the recommendations on the use of the fund. Could you talk about this, e.g., what drove these changes, which were the changes, etc.?	Was there any systematic consultation with local people and/or systematic assessment of the fund before the changes were recommended?	"
10. Do you think the '7 million' has promoted local empowerment?	Why? In which areas? Can you give more details, examples?	Evaluation of the '7 million'
11. How can the '7 million' be improved in your opinion?		"

4| SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Participant: members of the Local Consultative Council, rural district

Estimated time: 1,5 hour

Purposes:

1. Obtain factual information about the '7 million' and its implementation
2. Obtain the participant evaluation of the '7 million' ref. its empowering effects
3. Capture the participant's view of power dynamics and patterns of empowerment and disempowerment in the community
4. Obtain the participant *understanding* of power and empowerment
5. Obtain the participant's reflection on what has changed for her/him/the community since the end of the war.

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
FACTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE LCC, THE '7 MILLION' AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION		

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
1. When and how did you become a member of the LCC?	[If applicable] Was there a 'competitive process' or were you appointed?	Understand the process that leads to the formation of the LCC and the criteria for the membership.
2. Can you tell me about your activities in the community before becoming a member of the LCC?		
3. How much time per week/month do you spend in your work for the LCC?	What are you other main activities (job/work)? Are you happy being a member of the LCC? Why?	How the LLC function and member's understanding of his/her role in the community
4. Can you describe how the LCC works?	[Specify, if needed]: how often do you meet? Does every participant usually attend? How long do meetings last? Are there many controversies or do people usually agree on the issues?	
5. Can you describe the process that leads to the loans of the fund?	Do many people apply for the loan? How do you decide who will get the funding? Can you give an example?	
EVALUATION OF THE '7 MILLION' REF. ITS EMPOWERING EFFECTS		
6. Do you think the '7 million' makes a difference in your community?	Why? In which areas? Do you think the 7 million has contributed to the community in general or mostly to some people? [If only some people] Do you think this is a problem or is still beneficial?	Subjectivities ref. the 7 million and empowerment
7. What are the weakness and strengths of the '7 million'?	Why? [Ask for details]	
UNDERSTANDING OF POWER AND EMPOWERMENT, AND ITS DYNAMICS IN THE COMMUNITY		

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
8. Do you think there is a high level of inequality within your community?	[If needed, clarify] Inequality of resources and opportunities.	Subjectivities ref. power dynamics in the community
9. Who is/are the most powerful person/people in your community?	Why are they more powerful? How do you see yourself in the community? Do you think you have more power than other people? Why?	Subjectivities ref. power dynamics in the community Understanding of his/her own power
10. Do you think is good/bad that people have different degrees of power?		Subjectivities ref. power over
11. What do you think are the main needs of the people in this community?		Subjectivities ref. disempowerment
12. Do you think people here are free to do what they want?	Why? [If no] What do you think is missing so they feel free?	Subjectivities ref. power to
REFLECTION ON WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR HER/HIM/THE COMMUNITY SINCE THE END OF THE WAR.		
13. If you think about your community 20 years ago and today, do you think things have improved?	Why? In which area? Can you give some examples? Do you think people have more power to do what they want, comparing to 20 years ago? Which kind of power? Power to do what?	Social and power changes in time
14. What do you think has NOT changed and should have changed?		Subjectivities of what 'ought to be'

5| SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Participants: direct beneficiaries of the DDF

Estimated time: 1,5 hour

Purposes:

1. Obtain the participants' *understanding* of power, (dis)empowerment and power dynamics within the community
2. Obtain information about the process leading to the loan
3. Obtain the participants' view of the LCC, its role and representativeness
4. Obtain the beneficiary assessment of the initiative
5. Obtain the participant's reflection on what has changed for her/him/the community thanks to the DDF
6. Obtain the participant's reflections about general changes in the district since the end of the war.

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
GENERAL SUBJECTIVITIES AND PRIORITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN RELATION TO THE COMMUNITY		
1. How would you describe your current life condition in your community? What do you like and what do you dislike?	[Complement, if needed] Do you have access to the things you need? Are you happy? Do you feel free to do/say what you want in your community? Do you feel safe? [If no] Why? [If the case] Can you give an example of this kind of situation?	Identify main life values and dimensions of 'power to'
DYNAMICS OF POWER IN THE COMMUNITY, UNDERSTANDINGS OF 'POWER TO' AND 'POWER OVER'		
2. Do you think everybody is equal in your community?	[If needed, specify] Have people access to similar opportunities (health, education, jobs, etc.)? Does everybody have the same representativeness and are listened the same way by the authorities?	Subjectivities ref. power dynamics in the community
3. Do you think everybody <i>should</i> be equal or is it good/necessary some level of inequality?	Why? Could you give any example?	Values of equality and authority (power over)
4. Who is/are the most powerful person/people in your community?	Why are they more powerful? Do you think <i>you</i> have more power than other people? Why?	Subjectivities ref. power dynamics in the community (power over)

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
		Understanding of his/her own power
5. What do you think are the main needs of the people in this community?		Subjectivities on disempowerment
BENEFITTING FROM THE '7 MILLION': PROCESS AND RESULTS		
6. When and how did you first hear about the '7 million'?		Info about the implementation
7. Can you describe the process that lead to your loan from the DDF?	[Ask details accordingly: how long did it take, how much, how it was paid, etc.] Did you have any difficulty in this process? Did you know exactly what to do? Did anyone give you support to apply for the fund?	"
8. Once you got the loan, what did you do?	[Ask details about how the money was invested]	Empowerment as agency and power to
9. Would you say things have improved for you once you had access to the DDF?	If there was no DDF, how do you think your life would be right now?	Subjectivities on empowerment: the idea of 'limit-possibility'
WHOSE EMPOWERMENT?		
10. Do you think that <i>you</i> getting access to the fund has benefitted other people in the community?	How? Can you give an example?	Subjectivities on community empowerment
11. Do you think everybody in the community (including women) has the same chance as you to get a loan from the fund?	[If not] Why?	Understanding of power distribution (opportunities) in the community
12. What are the weakness and strengths of the '7 million'?	Why? [Ask for details]	Evaluation of the 7 million
13. Do you think the 7 million has contributed to the community in general or mostly to some people?	[If only some people] Do you think this is a problem or is still beneficial?	Subjectivities of power distribution and the 7 million

Question	Instructions	Variables/purpose
REFLECTION ON WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR HER/HIM/THE COMMUNITY SINCE THE END OF THE WAR.		
14. If you think about your community 20 years ago and today, do you think things have improved?	<p>Why? In which area? Can you give some examples?</p> <p>Do you think people have more power to do what they want? Which kind of power? Power to do what?</p>	Social and power changes in time
15. What do you think has NOT changed and should have changed?		Subjectivities of what 'ought to be'