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CONTINUITIES AND RUPTURES IN THE STUDY OF AFRICAN CONTEXTS: A PLACE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE PRESENT.

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**‘It was a state job’:**

Malaria workers in Mozambique in the transition from colonialism to independence, c. 1960-1980<sup>1</sup>

*Recent literature on African colonial state employees has stressed the important role they played in the making of colonial Africa. This literature has contributed to moving African history beyond the colonizer/colonized and collaborator/resistor dichotomies. Yet, by focusing mainly on interpreters and clerks, undoubtedly the best-paid African colonial state employees, this literature fails to discuss the roles of lower level state employees and of how they transitioned into the independent period. By examining the work trajectories of a small group of ‘low-level’ state employees who worked on anti-malaria campaigns in Mozambique, this paper seeks to begin to unpack the term intermediary. Specifically, this paper will explore the advantages and limitations of being a state employee in both the late colonial and early postcolonial periods (c.1960-1980). By doing so, this paper will address some of the continuities and ruptures that independence brought about for workers in Mozambique.*

Malaria workers, Mozambique, Colonial/postcolonial.

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper traces the work trajectories of a small group of African men (malaria workers) who worked to implement anti-malaria campaigns in southern Mozambique in the transition from colonialism to independence, c.1960-1980. Specifically, it seeks to explore some of the advantages and limitations of being a state employee in both the late colonial and early postcolonial periods. By doing so, this paper will address some of the continuities and ruptures that independence brought about for these health workers.

Recent literature on African colonial state employees has stressed the important role these workers, or intermediaries as the literature refers to them, played in the making of colonial Africa.<sup>2</sup> Yet little space has been given to discussing the different groups that made up the broader category of intermediary. Intermediaries were not, as the literature itself points out, a homogenous group. Yet, most of the recent literature is concerned with African colonial state employees such as interpreters and clerks who held some of the best paying jobs available to Africans.<sup>3</sup>

It is not my intention to discuss the various sub-groups of colonial state employees in this paper. Rather, I hope that by discussing what having a state job meant for men like the malaria workers and by situating them among other African colonial state employees, namely nurses and teachers, it will become clear that intermediaries were not a homogenous group. Unlike the colonial state employees Andreas Eckert discusses, the malaria workers did not become part of the ruling elite after independence.<sup>4</sup> Yet, given that they went to communities to implement malaria policies during both the colonial and postcolonial periods, they certainly acted as intermediaries for state policies.

Being an African state employee in Mozambique during the colonial period offered certain opportunities, but it was also limiting. In theory having a state job signified that there was a possibility of job advancement. In practice, however, the hope of job advancement was quickly tamed by a colonial state that made it extremely difficult for Africans to advance and virtually impossible for them to hold jobs in which they earned the same or more than whites, and this even if the former had more education and experience than the latter.

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<sup>2</sup> For one of the most recent discussions of African colonial state employees see the collection of essays in Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L. Roberts in *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerk : African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Some exceptions include literature on medical auxiliaries and nurses, but there has been little dialogue between this literature and the more recent literature on intermediaries. What is more, neither literature unpacks the term intermediary.

<sup>4</sup> Andreas Eckert, 'Cultural Commuters: African Employees in Late Colonial Tanzania,' In *Intermediaries, Interpreters and Clerks*, edited by Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L. Roberts (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 248-69.

Indeed, a complex work hierarchy and categorization system ensured that Africans would never advance beyond their white counterparts. Although independence helped to dismantle this unjust work system, which was implemented in a clearly racist manner, this was not sufficient to increase the mobility of the majority of the malaria workers.

This paper begins by briefly exploring who the malaria workers were, the context in which they came to work on anti-malaria campaigns and their educational background. It goes on to discuss the work legislation that regulated state employees in the Portuguese colonies and in Mozambique in particular. Then, it attempts to situate the malaria workers among other colonial state employees in order to begin to unpack the term intermediary. Finally, it examines the malaria workers' transition into the independent period and how they were able to retain their state jobs, though not better their social status.

This paper is based on research I conducted for my PhD thesis, which I am currently in the process of writing. It is based on archival sources I collected in Lisbon and Maputo as well as on oral histories I conducted with retired malaria workers in Maputo from March to August 2009. A number of the men I interviewed asked to remain anonymous. As such, I have kept the names of all the informants anonymous and refer to them as Informant A, B, C, until M, throughout this paper.<sup>5</sup>

## THE MALARIA WORKERS

The men I call the malaria workers were a small group of men, no more than a few hundred in total, which were trained in the early 1960s to work on a malaria pre-eradication campaign in a limited area South of the Save River. This malaria programme was part of a bigger effort launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1955 to eradicate malaria worldwide. While sub-Saharan Africa was initially excluded from this ostensibly global campaign, the WHO resolved to include this region in the early 1960s by launching a number of pre-eradication campaigns throughout the continent. Pre-eradication campaigns were different from the eradication programmes launched by the WHO in Latin America, Asia and Europe. While the latter had for their objective the complete elimination of malaria throughout a country, the former sought to attempt eradication in a limited area of a given country.<sup>6</sup> The lack of infrastructure, operational challenges and the fact that sub-Saharan Africa is home to

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<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank all the ex-malaria workers I interviewed in Maputo for taking the time to tell me about their working lives, without their accounts this research would not be possible. I am immensely grateful for their time and patience.

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), *Third African Malaria Conference Corrigendum* (Geneva, 1963), 4-14. Some of the countries where pre-eradication programmes were launched in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1960s include: Cameroon, Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal, Nigeria, Madagascar, Gabon, Sierra, Leon, Togo, Uganda, The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Guinea and Bechuanaland.

the deadliest and most difficult malaria parasites to eradicate (*Plasmodium falciparum*) ultimately made malaria eradication impossible, even in restricted targeted areas.

Nevertheless, this campaign lasted for almost 15 years in Mozambique, that is, from 1961 until 1974. Indeed, in 1961 the Portuguese government launched a *Campanha de Erradicação do Paludismo* (CEP, Malaria Eradication Campaign). Initially under the auspices of the WHO, the Portuguese government decided to carry on with this campaign until independence when the organization pulled-out in 1966 due to political reasons. Even after independence, when eradication was no longer the way forward for malaria, this disease continued to be a priority of the new government, which launched malaria control programmes throughout the country.<sup>7</sup>

While the pre-eradication programme ultimately failed in its objective to eradicate malaria in the area South of the Save region, its implementation had a number of implications. One such implication was the training of a workforce to implement this campaign. Indeed, a number of the men trained to eradicate malaria began working in the field of health as a result of this campaign and carried on in this field until their retirement. In fact, a number of men remained in the area of malaria throughout their careers. It is a part of the working lives of these men that this paper explores today.

The majority of the men who worked on the malaria campaign were from the provinces of Gaza or Inhambane. They came to Lourenço Marques (today Maputo) as teenagers and young men during the 1950s and 1960s in search of work. They worked a number of different and relatively unstable jobs before landing work on the CEP.

It was their education that allowed them to land work on the CEP. Indeed, these men were part of a very small group of Africans who had the opportunity to go to school and finish the 3rd class. While existing literature and available statistics have clearly demonstrated that the formal European style education offered to Africans in Portuguese-speaking colonies was woefully insufficient, with an extremely high rate of illiteracy among Africans at the time of independence, the malaria workers were among the few who were able to go to school at all.<sup>8</sup> Following an argument put forth by Kathleen Sheldon regarding girl's education in

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<sup>7</sup> For more on Frelimo's strategy regarding malária see Boletim a Saúde em Moçambique, 'Estratégia de luta contra a malária,' no.10 25 March, 1977; and Cadernos de Saúde, 'Temas de Saúde Pública: Estratégia de luta contra a malária,' 1 série, no. 2, 25 January 1978.

<sup>8</sup> While it is well established that the literacy rate in Mozambique among Africans was low, the exact rate of illiteracy is difficult to determine. Kathleen Sheldon, according to the last census before independence (in 1970), puts the illiteracy rate among African women at 93% and that of men at 86%. Antoinette Errante, quoting Allen and Barbara Isaacman, states that only about 2% of Mozambique's population was literate at independence. See Kathleen Eddy Sheldon, "'I Studied with the Nuns to Make Blouses': Gender Ideology and Colonial Education in Mozambique,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 31, no. 3 (1998): 625. Antoinette Errante, "'But Sometimes You're not Part of the Story:' Oral Histories and Ways of Remembering and Telling,' *Educational Reader* 29, no. 2 (2000): 17.

colonial Mozambique, I contend that regardless of the infamous inadequacies of the Portuguese colonial education system, having a 3rd class provided the malaria workers with certain opportunities unavailable to their non-educated counterparts.<sup>9</sup>

To be sure, in 1955 there were only 240 813 Africans in Mozambique enrolled in *ensino de adaptação* (schools for Africans) with a mere 5 027 having finished the 3<sup>rd</sup> class.<sup>10</sup> There is little doubt, then, that the malaria workers were part of a privileged group of Africans, however rudimentary their education. It was their ability to read, write and speak Portuguese combined with their basic arithmetic skills that enabled them to work in the field of health and access a state job. Without these basic skills they would have been unable to pass the necessary *concurso* (skills exam) to be hired. Moreover, without this education they would have been unable to do their jobs because it required that the workers be able to write, read and speak Portuguese, as well as basic arithmetic skills.

#### LIMITATIONS AND ADVANTAGES: BEING AN AFRICAN COLONIAL STATE EMPLOYEE, 1960-1975

When I asked the informants why they sought work on the CEP, they unanimously replied because: 'it was a state job.' Why was having a state job better, I probed: 'because it provided better opportunities, a higher salary.'<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the majority of the informants lamented that their salaries were low and that their work remained unstable because it was extremely difficult for Africans to become permanent workers and enter the *quadro*.<sup>12</sup> This duality requires further examination as it speaks to the contradictory nature of being an African and working for the colonial state. Although the reforms of the early 1960s allowed African workers, at least urban ones, to freely choose and change jobs, a number of mechanisms continued to ensure that African's job mobility was limited.<sup>13</sup>

In 1956, a colossal piece of legislation called: *Estatuto do Funcionalismo Ultramarino* (EFU) was put in place throughout the Portuguese colonies in order to standardize labour

<sup>9</sup> See Sheldon, "'I Studied with the Nuns to Make Blouses,'" 595-625; Sheldon, *Working Women in Beira, Mozambique*. PhD diss, University of California, Los Angeles, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> Figures from James Duffy, *Portugal in Africa* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962), 179.

<sup>11</sup> Interviews Informants A-M, Maputo, Mozambique, March to August 2009.

<sup>12</sup> The word *quadro* is not easily translated into English. I have found no one word in English that has the same meanings as the Portuguese word. In its broadest sense, being part of the *quadro* means being part of the state apparatus. And indeed, being part of the *quadro* is associated with having a state job, but having a state job does not automatically imply entry into the *quadro*. Usually if a worker is of the *quadro* he/she has certain benefits such as a more permanent job, a higher salary and a pension that other workers hired to work for the state do not have, and thus there is a certain pride attached to becoming part of the *quadro*.

<sup>13</sup> Jeanne Penvenne makes this point, though does not elaborate on what these mechanisms were because her study on workers in Lourenço Marques ends just as these reforms were being implemented. See Jeanne Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877-1962* (London: James Currey, 1995), 19.

legislation concerning state employees and establish workers' salaries, fringe benefits and obligations. In a nutshell, the EFU organized workers in three general categories called *quadro comum*, *quadro complementar* and *quadro privativo*. The appointment of state employees to one of these *quadros* was done through nomination, contract or salary (*assalariamento*), with nomination through salary being the least stable appointment. The nomination of Africans into the *quadro* was limited by the fact that few were able to move beyond the position of salaried worker. In fact, it is likely that the majority of low-level African state employees never transitioned into the *quadro* as salaried workers during the colonial period, thus remaining in the very precarious position of potential salaried worker (*assalariado eventual*). To be sure, even though a number of the malaria workers worked for the state for more than 15 years, they were never able to enter the *quadro* during the colonial period. A number did manage to become salaried workers, but only a handful had contract positions at the time of independence.

One of the most important sections of the EFU is article 91, which provides details on the letter categorization of state employees. This article attributes a monthly base salary to each letter of the alphabet, with A being the highest salary and Z" the lowest. Each letter of the alphabet is then associated with jobs that are considered similar or thought to require the same aptitude and thus warrant the same salary. The challenge for the malaria workers was that the vast majority of them were categorized as *serventes* (general workers) even though they did jobs that were clearly outside the realm of *servente*. As a result, the majority of the malaria workers received salaries in the Z to Z" range, which was associated with the title of *serventes* and was the lowest salary a state worker could earn.<sup>14</sup> In other words, despite the fact that the malaria workers did very specific jobs that warranted a different job title they were maintained at the bottom of the pay scale because of their categorization as *serventes*.

Given that the mobility of the majority of the malaria workers was limited, and that the best many could do was to become a salaried worker, one wonders what the advantages of working for the state were. Prior to working on the CEP, the majority of the informants, and probably the majority of the African workers hired to work on the campaign, did not have a state job. By working on the CEP many of the malaria workers were able to make double the salary they had previously earned. Several informants remembered making 300 escudos or less prior to working on the CEP, while on the CEP they made a base salary of 600 escudos.<sup>15</sup> In addition to this base salary, they also received a number of allowances, namely

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<sup>14</sup> See letter categorization of the malaria workers at independence in Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM), Caixa (Cx.). 37, Repartição de Saúde, Post-75, Comissão de reclassificação do pessoal-diversos, 1975. Also see article 91 of the EFU in *Estatuto do Funcionalismo Ultramarino*, Lourenço Marques: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique, 1956, 1966 and 1970.

<sup>15</sup> See for example interviews with Informants B, D, F, G, H, I and J.

a daily per diem when they worked in the field and a family allowance.<sup>16</sup> These allowances helped to augment their salaries and in some cases helped them better provide for their families. Informant I recalled that he initially received 10 escudos a day as a per diem and usually tried to eat with only 2.50 escudos a day so that he could provide more for his 9 children.<sup>17</sup>

Landing work on the CEP not only meant having a better salary; it also afforded the malaria workers the possibility of becoming part of the *quadro*. Becoming part of the *quadro* was viewed as significant because it offered the opportunity of having a more permanent job and the promise of a pension. Moreover, having a state job also meant working more regular hours. Most of the workers worked from 7am until 1pm, and had at least one day off per week. Finally, working for the state during the colonial period seems to have enabled the malaria workers, perhaps somewhat without their knowing, to become part of the *quadro* at independence, thus ensuring that when they retired they would have a pension.

Several informants also had personal reasons for wanting to work in Lourenço Marques and on the CEP. For some workers, working on the CEP meant the possibility of being closer to family. Informant K recounted that he decided to stop working in the mines in South Africa and applied for work on the CEP because his father was ill and he wanted to be closer to his younger brothers.<sup>18</sup> In the same line, Informant I stated that he also left the mines and began looking for work in the city because he wanted to be closer to his brother who was in prison.<sup>19</sup> In sum, although the mobility of the malaria workers was limited in a number of unjust and clearly racist ways, the informants considered working on the CEP as a form of advancement because it offered a better salary and overall better working conditions than their previous jobs.

## SITUATING THE MALARIA WORKERS AMONGST OTHER AFRICAN COLONIAL STATE EMPLOYEES: THE CASE OF NURSES AND TEACHERS

Now that some of the intricacies of what having a state job meant for the malaria workers have been examined, it is necessary to situate these workers among other African colonial state employees. While there is little doubt that the colonial state and the EFU limited African workers' job mobility by categorizing them in a variety of constraining ways, an examination of how different African state employees were categorized can also begin to reveal some of the differences that existed amongst them. This discussion will focus on

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Informants A-M.

<sup>17</sup> Interview Informant I, Maputo, Mozambique, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Interview Informant K, Maputo, Mozambique, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Interview Informant I.

situating the malaria workers with respect to African nurses and teachers and will use salaries and the workers' capacity to publicly voice their opinions as the main markers to differentiate these groups. At this time, it is only possible to provide detailed information on the evolution of salaries for nurses and the malaria workers during the colonial period.

Nurses by category	1961 Salary of <i>quadros</i> approved by law	1961 Salary of salaried personnel	1968 Salary (note by 1968 there is no longer a distinction between salary of <i>quadros</i> approved by law and salaried personnel)	1970 Salary (note that certain categories seem to cease to exist)
Auxiliary nurses of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> class ( <i>Enfermeiros auxiliares de 3a classe</i> )	2200	1300	2850	Does not exist
Auxiliary nurses of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> class ( <i>Enfermeiros auxiliares de 2a classe</i> )	2700	1800	3200	5250
Auxiliary nurses of the 1 <sup>st</sup> class ( <i>Enfermeiros auxiliares de 1a classe</i> )	2850	2200	4250	5930

**Table 1** - Salaries of auxiliary nurses of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> class, 1961-1970.

Source: Boletim Oficial de Moçambique (BO), série I, 1961, 1968 and 1970, 'Orçamento da receita ordinária e extraordinária.'

1961 Categorization by title	Salary 1961	1968-1970 Categorization by title	Salary 1968	Salary 1970
<i>Serventes</i> (sprayers, blood collectors, mosquito capturers)	600	<i>Serventes</i> 2nd class (mainly sprayers)	800	1300
Brigade chief	800	<i>Serventes</i> 1st class	1150	1700
Auxiliary driver of the 1 <sup>st</sup> class	1800	Auxiliary Entomological Prospector	1150	1700
		Auxiliary microscopists	1150	1700
		Mechanic 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	1500	1900
		Mechanic 1 <sup>st</sup> class	1800	2650
		Auxiliary drivers 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	1800	2650
		Auxiliary drivers 1 <sup>st</sup> class	2850	3550
		Epidemiological Prospectors (contracted workers)	2200(plus complementary)	5250
		Auxiliary entomologist (contracted workers)	2200(plus complementary)	5250

**Table 2** - Salaries of the malaria workers overtime, 1961-1970.

Salaries in this table were compiled using the following sources: Boletim Oficial de Moçambique (BO), série II, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1961; and Portaria 23 133 in BO série I, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1968; and Interviews Informants A-M.



A number of points can be made upon examination of Tables 3 and 4. Clearly, auxiliary nurses of all classes had a higher salary than almost all of the malaria workers except workers who entered the CEP as auxiliary drivers of the 1<sup>st</sup> class in 1961. By 1970, the drivers that were still working on the CEP had managed to enter the *quadro* as contracted workers and had a salary equivalent to auxiliary nurses of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class. There is also a noticeable increase in the salaries of workers in both groups from 1968 to 1970. This increase was probably due to sharp inflation that began in the early 1970s.<sup>20</sup>

If information gathered about the salaries of African elementary schoolteacher's is added to the discussion, it can be concluded that they had lower salaries than nurses. From 1961-1962, teachers made anywhere between 500-900 escudos and this despite the fact that they had completed 4<sup>th</sup> class, and thus had more education than a number of the malaria workers. Elementary schoolteachers who managed to make it into the *quadro* (only 8) during this period received a bit more with 1150 escudos.<sup>21</sup> Their salaries, then, were much closer to those of the malaria workers categorized as *serventes*. Also, very few teachers, compared to nurses, were part of the contracted *quadro* in 1961. There were 175 auxiliary nurses that were part of the contracted *quadro* (109 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class, 41 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class and 25 of the 1<sup>st</sup> class) compared to 8 rudimentary schoolteachers.<sup>22</sup> It is impossible to provide data regarding the salaries of teachers for the years 1968 and 1970, but it is doubtful that they suddenly began to peak above those of nurses.

If salary alone is used to determine which of the three jobs offered Africans the best monetary opportunities, nursing was definitely the best option. What is more, nurses seem to have been better able to voice their discontent with regards to their working conditions. In the mid-1960s, for example, a series of articles were published in newspapers in Lourenço Marques in which African nurses denounced the fact that their salaries were lower than white nurses doing the same job, complained of their auxiliary status and pointed out that many nurses were leaving the profession for administrative positions that paid more.<sup>23</sup> Nurses, then, were able to voice their discontent regarding their working conditions to the colonial government in an open manner to a literate public.

Teachers, on the other hand, were less likely to openly state their dissatisfaction with their working conditions. To be sure, Alda Romão Saúte shows that concerns regarding the

<sup>20</sup> See discussion in Philip Raikes, 'Food Policy and Production in Mozambique since Independence.' *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 29 (1984): 95-107.

<sup>21</sup> Boletim Oficial de Moçambique (BO), série I, December 1961 'Orçamento da receita ordinária e extraordinária para o ano económico de 1962,' 1925.

<sup>22</sup> BO série I, December 1961 'Orçamento da receita ordinária e extraordinária para o ano económico de 1962,' 1986-1989.

<sup>23</sup> See newspaper clippings in Arquivo Torre Tombo (ATT), SCCIM/A/6/9, SCCIM no.86, 'Serviços de saúde e assistência.'

departure of teachers from the profession were voiced, but this was done in the annual reports of missions. She makes no mention of teachers openly voicing their discontent during the colonial period in newspapers. What Saúte suggests is that teachers showed their discontent by moving into other state jobs.<sup>24</sup>

When I asked the informants if they complained about their working conditions or asked for an increase in their salary, either individually or as a group, they unanimously replied no. They all stated that they complained to each other, but were unwilling to risk making an official complaint.<sup>25</sup> Given that only three African malaria workers were contracted workers at the time of independence, fear of losing their job was probably a factor in their silence. Although it is difficult to determine with certainty how many malaria workers looked for other state jobs, the fact that 50 per cent or more of the malaria workers worked on the campaign for more than five years suggests that: 1) perhaps it was difficult for these workers to move into other jobs; 2) they thought working on the CEP was the best they could do given their level of education; 3) they did not have the necessary contacts to move into other jobs.<sup>26</sup>

In sum, both in terms of salary and voice African nurses were better off than teachers and the malaria workers during the colonial period. They were undoubtedly the highest in the hierarchy within these three groups, and teachers often looked at them as having much better working conditions than their own. During the colonial period, teachers seem to have been closer in terms of salary and voice to the malaria workers than to nurses. After independence, however, teachers experienced a rapprochement to nurses, while the malaria workers seem to have stagnated.

## INDEPENDENCE AND STATE EMPLOYMENT: ADVANCEMENT AND STAGNATION, 1975-1980

Frelimo's (Mozambican Liberation Front) accession to power in 1975 marked an important historical moment. The colonial state had oppressed Africans with policies that continually kept them in a position of subordination to whites and denied the majority of their political and social rights. The new government was eager to change this situation by ending colonial racism, oppression and injustices. In order to do so, Frelimo proclaimed social change in the form of a complete rupture with colonial policies.

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<sup>24</sup> Alda Romão Saúte, *Escola de Habilitação de Professores Indígenas «José Cabral», Manhíça-Alvor: 1926-1974* (Maputo: Promédia, 2004), 75-85.

<sup>25</sup> Interview Informants A-M.

<sup>26</sup> Compare the work files found in AHM, Cx. 37, Repartição de Saúde, Post-75, Comissão de reclassificação do pessoal-diversos, 1975 and the names of the workers hired to work after independence in AHM, Cx,38, Repartição de Saúde, Post-75, Convocatórias, 1975-76.

This desire for rupture began immediately after independence when Frelimo began large-scale nationalizations of sectors such as health, education and housing.<sup>27</sup> The nationalization of these sectors and Frelimo's commitment to social justice for all was undoubtedly revolutionary compared to the policies that had existed during the colonial period. Frelimo's socialist political orientation was novel and brought about great hope for revolutionary change.<sup>28</sup> And indeed, the informants recalled independence as a moment of important social change and they had high hopes that the advent of the new government would ameliorate their working conditions. While the workers did indeed experience changes in their work categorization and conditions, these were ultimately insufficient to meet their hopes of upward mobility.<sup>29</sup>

One of the most important changes the informants recalled was the end of colonial racism. For the first time, they did not feel that their opportunities were limited by the fact that they were African.<sup>30</sup> Another positive change was the greater inclusion of the malaria workers in work meetings. Prior to independence, the informants lamented that meetings rarely included workers that did not have supervisory positions. After independence, the informants recalled that all the workers met regularly to discuss the campaign and its implementation, thus allowing the workers to have more voice with regards to the functioning of the campaign.<sup>31</sup> This being said, they were still very much aware of their place in the work hierarchy. Informant I's constant juxtaposition of the group he considered himself a part of as *pequenos* (the small guys) with his superiors whom he referred to as *os grandes* (the big guys), exemplifies this point.<sup>32</sup>

In terms of work categorization, independence brought about a number of changes for the malaria workers. Already prior to independence, during the period of the transitional government, concern was voiced regarding the categorization of workers as *serventes*.

<sup>27</sup> See Malyn, Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (London: C. Hurst, 1995), 551.

<sup>28</sup> For examples of academic literature that view the advent of Frelimo to power as a catalyst for change see for example Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1982*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1983): especially the last three chapters; Barry Munslow, *Mozambique: The Revolution and its Origins*, (London: Longman, 1983). For a critique of this type of literature see Jeanne Penvenne, 'Review: A Luta Continua! Recent Literature on Mozambique,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 18 no.1 (1985): 109-138. For a selection of Samora Machel's speeches discussing the need to break away from the colonial past see for example Barry Munslow editor, *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary Selected Speeches and Writings* (London, Zed Books Ltd, 1985). For more on recent revisions in Mozambican history regarding Frelimo political platform see for example Michel Cahen, *Mozambique, la révolution implosée: études sur 12 ans d'indépendance, 1975-1994* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 1987); Luis de Brito, 'Une relecture nécessaire: la genèse du parti-état Frelimo,' *Politique africaine* 29 (1988): 15-27; Yussuf Adam, *Escapar aos Dentes do Crocodilo e Cair na Boca do Leopardo: Trajectória de Moçambique Pós-Colonial (1975-1990)* (Maputo: Promédia, 2006); Alice Dinerman, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Post-Colonial Africa: The Case of Mozambique, 1975-1994* (London: Routledge, 2006); and Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> Interview Informants A-M.

<sup>30</sup> Interview Informants A-M.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Interview Informant I.

During a work trip to northern Mozambique, António Joaquim Paulino the Minister of Health and Social Affairs, noted that a number of workers categorized as *serventes* were in fact doing jobs that were much more specific and outside the realm of the category *servente*.<sup>33</sup> As a result, he suggested that the categorization system of workers had to be rectified and that *serventes* had to be re-classified in order to reflect the work that they actually did. As such, a number of workers moved out of the category of *servente* and the title *servente* was reserved for those men and women who actually practiced this function.

These changes eventually gave way to the drafting of new legislation pertaining to the categorization of workers. On 21 October 1975, Decree-Law no. 28/75 was passed stipulating that all workers with the letter category Z" would transition to the letter Z, thereby abolishing the former category. While this legislation was passed in 1975, it took some time to be implemented. It is only in 1977-78 that the informants recall that their title and categorization came to reflect what was stipulated in the Decree. Several of the informants went from the letter category Z" or Z' to the category Z or higher. This meant that a worker categorized as Z' (the case of informants D, F, H and F, for example) making 1700 escudos before independence made at least 3500 escudos by 1977-78.<sup>34</sup> What is more, after independence all of the informants and probably the vast majority of the malaria workers transitioned into the *quadro*. This was significant because it helped to ensure that they would receive a pension at retirement.

According to the informants, however, they were not better off monetarily in the post-independence period. When I asked the informants to compare their life, only in economic terms, during the colonial and postcolonial period they unanimously replied that they were economically better off during the former. To be sure, the majority of the informants lamented that they were not sufficiently paid during the colonial period. Yet, they also mentioned that life during the colonial period was less expensive and that they could afford more goods and food. They all gave two main reasons for this. First, they mentioned that food was much cheaper. For example, there were categories of rice (first, second and third class), which meant that Africans could afford to buy rice, though this classification is clearly problematic.<sup>35</sup> Second, food and goods could be bought on loan in small shops (*cantinas*), that is, items could be brought home and paid for later. According to the informants neither scenario existed after independence.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See AHM, Cx 35, Repartição de Saúde, post-75, R-9=25, 'Governo de Transição, 1975. Despacho no. 14/RG/75 Ministro da Saúde e Assuntos Sociais: António Joaquim Paulino L-M 27 de Janeiro de 1975; and AHM, Cx 35 post-75, Despacho no 31/RG/75 BO série I, no. 37, 27 March 1975.

<sup>34</sup> Please note that escudos were used until 1980 when the currency became metical.

<sup>35</sup> For more on categories of rice see for example Interview Informants, C, F, I and J.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

So while the malaria workers earned more after independence their purchasing power decreased. This was due to the fact that food production began to stagnate and decline after independence while demand, especially in urban areas, began to increase thereby creating food shortages despite the increase in cereal imports.<sup>37</sup> The informants remember that even if they had more money there was nothing to buy, a situation that worsened significantly during the civil war that began in the early 1980s.

Independence, then, did bring about changes for the malaria workers. However, these were not sufficient to propel them out of their category as low-level state employees. Shortly after independence, in an attempt to improve the conditions of the urban workforce, Frelimo, launched a house redistribution programme inside the *cidade de cimento* (cement city, which usually refers to Maputo city) where prior to independence the majority of dwellers were Portuguese. This programme helped urban workers because the state controlled rents at low rates.<sup>38</sup> Yet, only one informant (Informant A who was a contracted worker at independence) was able to benefit from this programme. In fact, when I asked the other informants if they had benefited from this programme they all seemed somewhat amused by the question and replied no, no, no.<sup>39</sup> So if this programme was meant to help the urban workforce, it certainly was not meant for all urban workers. And indeed, the nationalization of property in urban cities was mainly meant for Frelimo party members and supporters.<sup>40</sup>

The majority of the informants, then, continued to live in the same houses they had prior to independence in neighbourhoods (*bairros*) that made up, and continue to make up, the outskirts of Maputo. Independence allowed them to transform their zinc and thatched roof houses (*casas de caniço*) into cement houses, but never to acquire more property or a more valuable house in the city.<sup>41</sup> I had the opportunity to visit three informants in their homes and my impression was that they were relatively well off in their community, but poor compared to teachers and nurses living in the city.

While in Maputo, I also had the opportunity to visit the house of two schoolteachers, to meet a schoolteacher during my early morning jogs and was in contact with a nurse, all of whom did these jobs during the colonial period. They all live or have property that they rent inside the cement city and seemed much better off than the malaria workers. The schoolteacher couple lives in an apartment near Polana Shopping, a rather affluent part of town, because they were able to benefit from Frelimo's house redistribution programme after

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<sup>37</sup> Raikes, 'Food Policy and Production in Mozambique since Independence,' 95.

<sup>38</sup> Anne Pitcher, 'Forgetting from above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique.' *Africa* 76, no. 1 (2006): 93.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Informants B-M.

<sup>40</sup> Pitcher, 'Forgetting from above and Memory from Below,' 92.

<sup>41</sup> Most informants said that they were only able to build cement houses after independence.

independence. The schoolteacher I met on my morning jogs around Repinga Park has travelled outside the continent various times and has a sister living in Canada. Finally, the nurse I met has an apartment in the city that he obtained through the house redistribution programme and that he rents to augment his salary. He also published a book after completing his BA at Eduardo Mondlane University and kindly gave me a lift home in his car.<sup>42</sup>

Conversely, none of the informants I interviewed in their homes had a second apartment/house that they could rent to increase their income and none had had the opportunity to travel for leisure. Instead, Informants that had been outside Mozambique went to South Africa to work in the mines. Moreover, while Informant A had a car during the colonial period, none of the other informants were ever able to afford one. Evidently, the gap between the malaria workers and teachers/nurses widened during the postcolonial period. Certainly, there was already a distance between these different groups of workers during the colonial period, but schoolteachers and nurses seem to have had more opportunities to become part of a group of urban professionals while the malaria workers continued to be low-state employees.

In addition to being better off monetarily, a number of nurses and schoolteachers were able to transition into jobs with more political power after independence. In the early years of independence, people who had been trained in nursing during the colonial period filled a number of the new government posts or were part of important restructuring commissions.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, a number of the schoolteachers Saúte interviewed left their teaching jobs (during or after independence) and now hold high positions in various Ministries or Institutes.<sup>44</sup> None of the informants were able to do so.

## CONCLUSION

The malaria workers were a small group of urban African public service workers who dedicated a significant portion of their working lives implementing health policies in Mozambique in both the colonial and postcolonial periods. The formal basic education they received during the colonial period, however deficient, allowed them to access jobs unavailable to many of their African counterparts. It was the education and training they

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<sup>42</sup> See Lucas Languê Gulube, *Organização da Rede Sanitária Colonial no Sul do Save (1960-1974)* (Maputo: Promédia, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> See AHM, Cx. 41, Repartição de Saúde, Post-75, CNCS, 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, August 1977; and AHM Cx. 19, Repartição de Saúde, Post-75, 'Problemas médicos e documentos Presidencial da Frelimo'; and Interview Abraão Jalane, Maputo, Mozambique, August 2006.

<sup>44</sup> See list in Saúte, *Escola de habilitação de professores*, 94-95.

received during the colonial period that enabled them to transition into the postcolonial period with a state job.

During the colonial period, an intricate categorization system maintained the majority of the malaria workers in the lowest paying jobs, thereby ensuring that they would never rise above their white counterparts and this in spite of the fact that the former were sometimes more educated and/or qualified than the latter. Despite these limitations on African mobility, the malaria workers considered working for the state a form of advancement because it offered better opportunities than their previous jobs and the possibility of entering the *quadro*.

While the mobility of all African state employees was constrained by Portuguese work legislation, Africans working for the colonial state did not constitute a homogenous group. To be sure, they all shared the experience of having their mobility barred, but amongst African state employees there was an internal hierarchy that differentiated these workers in terms of economic and social power. While these differences were present during the colonial period, they seem to have become increasingly marked after independence. Indeed, the mass exodus of Portuguese health care workers after independence made the experience and knowledge of the malaria workers an important asset to the Frelimo government. This was not, however, enough to push the malaria workers out of their category as low-level state employees, despite the workers hopes that it would. Their knowledge ensured that they would have a state job at independence and that they would finally be able to enter the *quadro*, but they did not benefit from the upward mobility that nurses and teachers seem to have experienced after independence.

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