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An Historical Perspective from the Colonial Period

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Malyn Newitt
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Transnational Networks and Internal Divisions in Central Mozambique

An Historical Perspective from the Colonial Period

Following the Mozambique general election of December 2004, the new government presented itself as more rurally-oriented than the previous one, in an effort to remove some disparities which reflect well-known political and economic imbalances that modern Mozambique inherited from its recent and less recent history. The north, the centre, and the south of the country are still as disconnected from each other as they were during the first half of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the same areas are structurally and culturally linked to neighbouring territories, which form part of other states, through what are now called “transnational social networks”. Adding to the complexity of this picture, the Mozambican state has also inherited smaller but equally significant internal divisions within each Province, if not within each District, of the country.

The differences between the various regions are, of course, the result of a huge variety of factors, not least the recent history of internal war and the ways in which the new development programmes were conceived and implemented. However, this paper will try to explain how the last phase of colonial rule developed or consolidated local differences in the political economy of the territory, and how this process was linked to the growth and consolidation of the international/“transnational” networks. This analysis, based on the study of labour migration in the 1940s and 1950s in the old District of Beira (corresponding now approximately to the Provinces of Manica and Sofala) will consider how three key factors contributed to, or reflected, the socio-economic differentiation of the territory: the formation of labour-reserve areas, the labour recruitment process and the working conditions in the colonial enterprises, and the structure of internal and outward migration.

Regional Diversity in the History of Mozambique

The frontiers drawn by Portugal and Britain in east-central Africa in May 1891 created an intricate jigsaw which made the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, which thus took shape for the first time, inseparable from its neighbours. In the extreme south Delagoa Bay was situated on a small peninsula surrounded on three sides by the South African Republic (soon to become the British colony of Transvaal), Swaziland and the sea. Portuguese control of the Zambesi valley penetrated three hundred miles into British Africa while the southern portion of Nyasaland was a narrow salient thrust into Mozambique. The new frontiers sliced through regions, which were distinct geographically and which, over time, had acquired cultural, economic and political cohesion¹.

Mozambique occupied a thousand miles of the eastern African seaboard, including the best natural harbour of southern Africa, and effectively made British Central Africa land-locked and dependent on its neighbour for access to the outside world. Moreover Mozambique included the lower reaches of all the major rivers of central and eastern Africa from the Rovuma in the north to the Zambesi, Sabi and Limpopo in the centre and south.

These rivers and ports had for centuries provided doorways to the outside world. The trade and cultural influences of the Indian Ocean had penetrated Central Africa along these routes and regional economies had evolved under the stimulus provided by the export of gold and ivory and the import of Indian textiles, beads, ceramics and metalwork. Each of the main coastal settlements the Ilhas do Cabo Delgado, Mozambique Island, Angoche, the Zambesi towns, Sofala, Chiloane, and Mambone at the mouth of the Sabi, had a hinterland with which it was linked by ties of kinship and on which it depended for trade, food supply, labour and security, and a foreland which attached it to the maritime networks of the Indian Ocean, stretching to Arabia, the Gulf, the west coast of India and beyond (Newitt 1995: chap. 1).

The low veldt regions, below the central African escarpment, did not see large-scale state formation. First, the economic life of the coastal port-towns did not require the control of large territories and populations but was focused on long distance trade. As a result, although the people who lived on the coast became Islamised, Islam did not spread far among the inland populations until the nineteenth century. Second, the disease environment of the low veldt did not allow the development of cattle-based economies and it was principally through the accumulation and distribution of cattle that states were formed and maintained on the southern African

1. For the negotiations leading to the drawing of Mozambique's frontiers, see AXELSON (1967).

high veldt. On the low veldt, the population was organized in small kin-based chieftaincies, which depended economically on agriculture and fishing, and on servicing the long distance trade routes. Climatic instability, which meant that many of these communities were economically marginal, and the smallness of the political units made them vulnerable to sequences of banditry and “warlordism” in which strong men would gather round them groups of followers, acquire women through raiding, and establish new chieftaincies based loosely on tribute, trade, hunting and banditry—a pattern which was exploited by Portuguese adventurers and, in the nineteenth century, by Islamic slave traders (Beach 1980; Newitt 1995: chap. 2-3, 10-11; Rita-Ferreira 1999; Isaacman & Isaacman 2004).

The low veldt people were periodically subject to conquest by the larger states of the high veldt. In the nineteenth century, for example, invasions of cattle-owning Ngoni led to the establishment of three new states—the most important of them being the Gaza kingdom which covered the whole territory of Mozambique from the Zambesi to the Limpopo and which included much of modern Zimbabwe as well.

The part of Africa, which in 1891 became Mozambique, had therefore a certain unity in that its physical geography was typical of the African low veldt and its economy was directly linked to Indian Ocean trading networks. However, the country was divided into distinct regions by its ports and river systems, which constituted corridors of trade and migration leading to the high veldt hinterland and along which cattle-owning invaders periodically descended to reduce the coastal peoples to the status of tribute paying vassals.

Portuguese settlement in eastern Africa had consisted of a series of trading ports each with its own hinterland linked to the long distance trade routes to the interior. The immediate hinterland of the ports usually included some land held by Portuguese or Afro-Portuguese families which produced food for the coastal towns. Africans settled under the protection of these towns or became clients of Portuguese or Afro-Portuguese traders and hunters, a process which led to the creation of distinct ethnic identities². However, the only area of the coast where the respective hinterlands of the ports merged with one another to form a continuous belt of Portuguese-controlled territory was the region from Sofala through the Zambesi delta to the *prazos* north of Quelimane and up the Zambesi to its confluence with the Shire³.

The agreements with Britain for the suppression of the slave trade, the most important of which was the treaty of 1842, in effect recognized Portuguese control over the whole coast from Cape Delgado to Delagoa Bay,

2. The best known example are the Chikunda, see ISAACMAN & ISAACMAN (2004).

3. For the *prazos*, which were large tracts of land, with their resident population, held by Portuguese *senhors* on three-life leases from the Portuguese Crown, see ISAACMAN (1972), NEWITT (1973, 1995: chap. 10), CAPELA (1995).

although sovereignty over the latter had ultimately to be resolved by arbitration in 1875. After 1842 the Portuguese brought the remaining independent Islamic coastal settlements under its control. If this did something to create a unified coastal administration subject to the governor on Mozambique Island, it did little or nothing to unify the interior. The governors of the different ports continued to follow their own local policies and separately developed customary relationships with the African states of the interior. For example, at the height of its power in the 1860s and 1870s, the Gaza kingdom had dealings with the Portuguese authorities in Sena, Sofala, Inhambane and Delagoa Bay and negotiated separately with each of them⁴.

The middle years of the nineteenth century saw the crystallisation of the interior of Mozambique into regions each with its own distinct character. In the far north the migrations of the Yao chiefs towards Lake Malawi promoted the spread inland of Islam. Lake Malawi and the Shire highlands became linked to the coast along caravan routes which not only brought ivory and slaves in exchange for firearms and textiles but promoted the trade in African peasant produce (Alpers 1972; Ishemo 1995). The same years saw the expansion of the Islamic sheikhdoms of the coast, especially those associated with the ruling families of Angoche (Bonate 2003). In the Zambesi valley the *chicunda* ivory hunters and slavers took the *prazo* regime of the Zambesi valley as far as the Kafue confluence, up the Luangwa and into the Manica highlands and the northern regions of Zimbabwe. Here once again was a region, defined by the valleys of the Zambesi and its tributaries but unified by the institution of the *prazo* and the social relations of the *chicunda* with their Afro-Portuguese chieftains (Isaacman & Isaacman 2004).

South of the Zambesi the Ngoni invasions, coinciding with the great drought of the 1820s, devastated the pre-existing African states but resulted after 1840 in the creation of a single Ngoni monarchy, the Gaza kingdom. Although the extent of the territory where the Gaza king could wield effective power fluctuated and the centre of the kingdom was moved twice, once northwards to Mossurize in the Chimanimani area and then in 1889 southwards to the Limpopo, the Gaza kingdom imposed a unity of political control over most of southern Mozambique.

By 1891, therefore, Mozambique was divided into five distinct cultural and political regions—a coastal zone more or less completely under Portuguese control, a northern region where the influence of Islamic chiefs, major participants in long distance trade, was dominant, the central region of the Zambesi valley and its tributaries, the Gaza kingdom, and finally Delagoa Bay with its unique relationship with the southern Ngoni and the Transvaal trekkers.

4. For the Gaza state see the publications of Gerhard Liesegang, especially LIESEGANG (1967, 1983), *HISTÓRIA DE MOÇAMBIQUE* (1983).

The Establishment of Colonial Rule

The drawing of the frontiers of Mozambique in 1891 might have been the moment when a single colonial administration would impose some kind of unity on the region. However, this was not to be the case. The pattern of administration that emerged, if anything, sharpened the separation of the country into regions, which had already been defined geographically and by the socio-cultural development of the past three centuries.

Faced with international demands that it establish effective occupation of its colonies, Portugal decided to create two charter companies to take over the task of pacifying and administering the northern and central sections of Mozambique. The northern sector included the coast north of the Lurio river and the part of the interior that was dominated by the Yao chiefs. The Niassa Company, which assumed responsibility for this area, had a charter, which was to last twenty-five years and which made it administratively independent of the rest of the colony. It had the power to police the territory, to collect taxes and customs dues and to grant land concessions (Neil-Tomlinson 1977; Péliissier 1984: chap. iv; *História de Moçambique* 1983: vol. 2). The Mozambique Company was established in 1891 with a concession that ran from the Zambesi to just south of the Sabi and included the northern part of the still unconquered Gaza kingdom. Through its concession ran the corridor of land between the high veldt and the sea that Cecil Rhodes was anxious to acquire for the British South Africa Company. The Mozambique Company had rights and duties similar to those of the Niassa Company and was also administratively independent of the rest of the colony (Neil-Tomlinson 1987).

Mozambique had, in effect, been divided between three administrations—the areas subject to the governor of Mozambique and those subject to the two charter companies. However, the fragmentation, went further than that. A commission had been appointed in 1888 to make recommendations about the future of the *prazos* of Zambesia. In 1890 this Commission reported and proposed that the *prazos*, of which there were more than one hundred, should be leased as separate concessions to individuals or companies who would be entrusted with the pacification and policing of their concessions and would be obliged to collect tax partly in the form of labour. When the *prazo* leases were auctioned, in 1892, most were taken up by commercial companies, which thus became miniature versions of the two large charter companies. Some of the *prazos* lay within the territory of the Mozambique Company and were thus insulated by two layers of concessionary rights from any direct interference by Portugal (Vail & White 1980).

The other areas of the colony were subject to the direct control of the Governor General, after 1902 based in Lourenço Marques, a city which was virtually an enclave in South Africa. The areas which were the direct

responsibility of the government were separated from one another and remained under the military administration of the *postos militares* until 1907 when a system of civil administration was established which divided the country into *concelhos* and *circunscrições*.

Railways and Roads

With small and unimportant exceptions, Mozambique's railways were built with foreign capital and were planned to link the British colonies to their nearest seaport. The railway from Delagoa Bay to the Transvaal ran only fifty miles through Mozambique's territory to Ressano Garcia and to all intents and purposes was part of the South African rail network (Katzenellenbogen 1982). A second line was built in the 1950s from Rhodesia to Delagoa Bay. A railway from Southern Rhodesia to Beira in the Mozambique Company territory was opened in 1898. This created the famous "Beira corridor" and the line was later supplemented with a road and an oil pipeline. This railway helped to open up the Manica highlands but principally it served to create strong economic links between Rhodesia and Beira and to tie that port-city to the Rhodesian economy. In 1920 Libert Oury proposed a railway to connect Nyasaland to Beira. This was eventually built, with the famous Sena bridge across the Zambesi opening in 1935. A spur line was subsequently built to the Moatize coalfields in the Tete District. This was the only rail development which connected different areas of Mozambique with one another, thereby constituting the beginnings of an internal communications network. However, even here the main purpose of the railway was to join the British colony of Nyasaland with Beira, not to open up the interior of Mozambique itself. Apart from a small local railway serving the plantations north of Quelimane, there was no railway building in the north until a line was engineered from Nacala via Nampula to the Nyasaland border in the 1950s. Again this was an arterial railway from the coast to the British frontier and did little to create an internal network of communications for Mozambique itself⁵.

Road building remained the responsibility of the local authorities and no network was created to link different regions of the colony until the last decade of colonial rule. As late as 1960 there was no good road running from north to south. There was no road bridge crossing the Zambesi and the only practical route by road from the south of the colony to the north used the Tete ferry to cross the Zambesi and then ran through Nyasaland.

5. For a summary of these developments see NEWITT (1995: 393-398). For the Nyasaland railway and the Sena bridge see VAIL (1975).

A Divided Administration

By 1907 Mozambique had become a complicated jigsaw of concessions subject to different responsible authorities. Each of the concessionaires claimed a commercial monopoly and was able to set the conditions for markets and traders. There were differences of tax regime—in the *prazos* the *mussoco*, a head tax, partly paid in labour, was levied, elsewhere the prevalent form of tax was the *palhota* or hut tax. The *cipais*, or police, were raised, paid by, and were answerable to the local concessionaire not the government. Different customs regimes were in force and the chartered concession companies issued their own currency and postage stamps.

The different parts of the colony were also subject to different foreign influences. After the Anglo-German agreement of 1898, German influence had been paramount in the north and the Niassa Company itself was eventually taken over by German financial interests in 1913. The Mozambique Company, on the other hand, was taken over in 1910 by Libert Oury, a South African magnate of Belgian extraction, who worked closely with the British and turned the Mozambique Company into a British enclave. Another British enclave was Sena Sugar, which expanded its *prazo* holdings in the early part of the twentieth century until it controlled much of lower Zambesia on both banks of the river (Vail & White 1980)⁶.

However, it was in the area of labour relations that the administration of Mozambique was most diverse—partly because, for some years, labour was the most easily exploited asset. In 1908, fifteen years after it had been established, the Niassa Company was taken over by Lewis and Marks who used its territory as a recruiting ground for the South African mines. When the recruitment of Africans from “tropical” areas was outlawed in 1913, the Company was sold to German interests. Taken over by the British Union Castle company at the beginning of the First World War, the territory was invaded by the Germans in 1917 and 1918 and, those areas where the government was still able to exercise any form of control, were subject to martial law and enforced carrier recruitment.

The area immediately south of the Lurio river, under direct government administration, was subject to the 1899 labour laws which imposed an obligation on all Africans to work on pain of being forcibly contracted. In these areas *chibalo* (forced labour for the government) could also be required and forced labour was also used as a punishment for breaches of the penal code. In 1923 the High Commissioner, Brito Camacho, signed an agreement with Sena Sugar to supply 3,000 labourers a year for the sugar plantations. Contracts were also made to supply labour to the cocoa *roças* of São Tomé. In the 1930s this was to become an area of forced cotton production, with tracts of land and their inhabitants leased to cotton marketing companies.

6. For forced cotton growing, see PITCHER (1993).

It was from this region that large-scale emigration took place into British Nyasaland where migrants were able to settle as labour tenants on the lands of Yao and Manganja chiefs (Boeder 1984; Isaacman 1996).

Zambesia and much of the Tete District was subject to the labour regime of the *prazos*, but even here the laws were differently applied. By the second decade of the twentieth century there were pockets of intensive plantation cultivation—sugar in Marromeu, copra in Boror, tea in Gurue. Other areas, however, had become, in effect, labour reserves, like Angonia, which was leased by Sena Sugar solely for the recruitment of labour. The perennial need for labour on the plantations forced the companies to compete with the greater attractions of clandestine migration to the Rhodesian farms and South African mines. This competition gradually forced wages to rise and the most hated aspects of forced labour to disappear (Vail & White 1980; Newitt 1995: chap. 18).

The Tete and Bárue districts, which were directly administered by the government, were also treated as labour reserves. A contract was signed in 1906 with the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau for the recruitment of labour for Rhodesian farms and it was from these regions of the middle Zambesi that clandestine migration took place to the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt and to Southern Rhodesia, which became a transit route for Africans heading for South Africa. Portuguese attempts to apply strict labour controls were circumvented by everyone, white and black, and the Rhodesians even provided lorries, which cruised the roads picking up migrants making their journey laboriously on foot (Newitt 1995: chap. 18).

The Mozambique Company operated its own labour laws. It excluded formal recruitment by South Africa or Rhodesia and tried to retain its labour resources within its own territory. The Company did not require women to be contracted as labourers, but in other respects a pattern emerged similar to that in the Zambesi valley, with certain *circunscrições* being designated as labour reserves while the employment of labour was concentrated in the farms and mines of the Manica highlands, the sugar growing areas of the coast and the port-city of Beira.

South of the Sabi, the WNLA had recruitment rights. Up to 100,000 labourers a year were contracted from this region for the South African mines, in addition to which many made their own way to South Africa. As this was the part of the colony where the Portuguese capital was located, there was intense competition for labour. *Chibalo* and penal labour was extensively used to provide workers for building development in and around Lourenço Marques, while Portuguese entrepreneurs and the government remained at loggerheads over the desirability of foreign labour contracts (Harries 1994; Penvenne 1995).

The New State, which gradually emerged between the military coup of 1926 and the declaration of the new constitution and the Colonial Act in 1933, tried to bring about some kind of unified administration: the *prazo* contracts were ended in 1930 and the Zambesi area was brought under the

same labour laws as the rest of the colony. The Niassa Company's charter was not renewed in 1929 and the Mozambique Company lost its chartered status in 1941. A professional colonial service was introduced with a common system of supervision and reporting. Moreover the whole centre of the country was brought under the compulsory crop-growing regime, which produced rice and cotton. However, by this time the different administrative and labour regimes that had prevailed for forty years after 1891, had etched themselves deeply into Mozambique's development. Certain areas remained, in effect, labour reserves while economic development was concentrated around the ports and on the plantations; the labour contracts with Rhodesia and South Africa continued and the patterns of clandestine and legal migration were relatively unchanged.

Above all, the various regions of Mozambique remained tied to their British neighbours by the railway and port corridors which became arteries of economic activity, by labour migration across the nearest frontiers and by the increasing networks of cross-border contacts created by people seeking education, employment, consumer purchases, land and the maintenance of traditional ties with kin groups.

Forced Labour and Colonial Controls on African Migration in the District of Beira

Sofala, just to the south of the city of Beira, had been the most important port in the fifteenth century linking the coast to the gold fairs held in the interior. With the partition of Africa, this stretch of the Mozambique coast assumed a renewed importance and in 1898 a railway linking the high veldt to the coast led to the creation of Beira, which grew rapidly as the principal port serving the British South Africa Company territories.

The Beira District was formed in 1942 within the Province of Manica e Sofala, when the colonial state took on the government of this Province from the Mozambique Company. It covered the region bounded by the Sabi and Zambesi rivers, which was outside the areas traditionally granted for labour recruitment to South Africa (the provinces south of the 22nd parallel) and Southern Rhodesia (the Tete District).

The territory of the District was divided in *circunscrições* (see Map 1, p. 716), which were further divided in *postos administrativos*, the lowest level of colonial administrative organisation. Finally, the colonial architects tried to fit into this administrative picture an even smaller territorial unit, based on the Portuguese understanding of the traditional structure of the African society: *regedorias* were thus created under the control of traditional chiefs, now known as *regulos* or *regedores*.

With some exceptions, good ecological and environmental conditions favoured a variety of economic activities. In the *circunscrição* of Marromeu (in the northern part of the District) Sena Sugar Estates had large sugar

MAP 1. — *CIRCUNSCRIÇÕES* OF BEIRA DISTRICT

plantations as had the Companhia Colonial do Búzi (CCB) in the *circun-scrição* of Búzi. Also of economic importance were the port of Beira and the Beira Railways, which owned the line connecting Beira to Southern Rhodesia and which passed through Chimoio and Manica. In contrast to these enterprises, the Portuguese farmers of Chimoio remained fairly backward throughout the period and had to rely on the state for the bulk of their African labour-force.

Some companies enjoyed considerable powers in the territory where they operated, and significantly, some officials of the old Mozambique Company were engaged by some big employers to be in charge of the "native affairs". At times this caused friction with the more liberal colonial administrators, who wanted to maintain a check on their powers⁷. In general, however, the colonial administrators connived with the companies, particularly over the implementation of the forced-labour system. This was formally re-introduced in Mozambique by *Circular 818/D-7* issued in 1942 by the Governor General of the colony. *Circular 818/D-7* envisaged that all Mozambican men, who could not prove that they were cultivating as prescribed by the local authorities or that they were working for an employer, could expect to be arrested by the administrators as *vádios* (vagrants), and to be forced to work for a colonial enterprise. In the following years, a number of other circulars, both at central and provincial level, specified the details of how and in what conditions Africans could be forced into contract work.

However, it was less the formal colonial legislation than the effective practice of labour recruitment that shaped the system of forced labour. Contract labour meant that it was always possible that a recruiter or a colonial administrator might exercise coercion either directly or indirectly on an African worker. In practice, there was not any rigid separation between free and unfree labour⁸. The employer paid a recruiter; the recruiter went to the local administrator asking for a certain number of workers; the administrator sent African militia (the *cipais*) to report that number to the *régulo*, and the latter pressed the headmen to provide the workers. The workers were concentrated at the administrative headquarters and then selected by the employers. The colonial actors in this process easily exploited the ambiguity of the colonial legislation where this invited the administrative authorities to prepare a "favourable environment" for the recruiters' activities.

Central to the implementation of forced labour were the restrictions on personal movement under the pass system. *Circular 818/D-7*, and other complementary regulations, reinforced the mechanisms of control over the identification of the African population, their labour and their mobility. In

7. AHM. FGDB, Cx.660. "Relatório do Inspector-Inquiridor, A.S.F. de Castel-Branco, dum processo sobre a Companhia Colonial do Buzi. Beira, 3 de Novembro de 1951."

8. On this, see MURRAY (1995) for the case of the "Crooks' Corner" between Mozambique, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia.

the same year Africans' freedom of movement was restricted to their *circunscrição* of origin by the *Regulamento de Identificação Indígena*⁹. They needed an authorisation from their local administrator for any change of residence or movement beyond that territorial unit. A *caderneta indígena*—native identity card or pass-book—was imposed on all African men of productive age and on adult women in administrative centres or towns to control their mobility and register their work record. These provisions, coupled with the *imposto indígena* (native tax) provided colonial employers with cheap labour and the colonial administration with some revenue: a native found outside his/her *circunscrição* without proper authorisation could be considered a vagrant and thus conscripted for forced labour even if he may have been working for another employer. Apart from a short period between 1946 and 1948¹⁰, freedom of movement in the rural areas of the entire District was formally resumed only in 1959¹¹.

Generally almost every kind of contract labour was considered to be *chibalo*—a term already treated at length in the existing literature on labour relations in the region¹². The same literature has also described the various forms of resistance by the African population. In the Beira District during the 1940s and 1950s, the most effective forms were independent movement within the territory and, above all, clandestine migration to neighbouring countries.

Independent African emigration from central Mozambique was not merely a response to the harsh internal conditions. It also related to the people's need to find the best opportunities for social advance for themselves and for their families, through better paid wage labour, better education facilities, or better social services¹³. Such population movements were considered by the colonial state as "clandestine emigration". Employment abroad was generally a temporary choice for the African workers, although their length of service started to increase in the 1940s¹⁴, and some of them established themselves as permanent workers in the urban areas or even in the labour reserves of the British colonies.

Beira District was also characterised by a measure of immigration from the other provinces of Mozambique, given the attraction exerted by its economic activity when compared with many other areas of the country. Finally,

9. Portaria N. 4950, 19 December 1942, art. 9.

10. *Regulamento de Identificação Indígena*: Portaria N. 6490, 15 June 1946, art. 8.

11. AHM. FGDB, Cx.683. "Direcção dos Serviços dos Negócios Indígenas. *Informação Confidencial*, Nº 82/A/54/9, Lourenço Marques, 27 de Agosto de 1959."

12. A few among the many examples are: FIRST (1983), HARRIES (1994), ISAACMAN (1996), O'LAUGHLIN (2000), VAN ONSELEN (1976), PENVENNE (1995).

13. For detailed examples related to emigration to Southern Rhodesia (and then Zimbabwe) from central Mozambique, see DAS NEVES TÊMBE (1998).

14. PRO. DO 35/3710. "Dominion Office and Commonwealth Relations Office: Original Correspondence. Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Chief Native Commissioner, and Director of Native Development, for the Year 1948. Report of the Commissioner of Native Labour for the Year 1948."

there was also the so-called “return immigration” of entire communities in consequence of the growing pressure on foreign Africans in Southern Rhodesia, which started in the late 1940s and grew significantly during the second half of the 1950s.

Internal Divisions and External Networks

The Labour Reserves

Local administrators had to reconcile competitive demands for labour by the employers in the territory. As a consequence, a regional division of labour within the District was renegotiated almost every year, and the institution from 1943 onwards of labour reserve areas made this explicit. The labour reserves system, which allowed for the development of centres of production and colonial activities that could rely on the labour reserves for the recruitment of their work-force, was one of the main factors that consolidated the disparities in the political-economy of the District already under-way in the previous decades.

Initially, the rationale of the labour reserves tended to favour, first the public service and, second the rural activities of Chimoio. In 1944, the *circunscrições* lacking labour (like Chimoio, Búzi, and Cheringoma) could look to other areas reserved for recruitment¹⁵. Significantly, the administrators favouring the labour reserves system were those in charge of *circunscrições* in which the colonial rural activities lacked labour¹⁶. Others, in theory, advocated freedom of recruitment throughout the entire District¹⁷. The interests of the companies and of the private employers eventually prevailed, and the division of the region made in 1944 was repealed in 1947¹⁸. In 1950,

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15. AHM. FGDB, Cx.622. “Provincia de Manica e Sofala. Direcção Provincial de Administração Civil. *Circular N 2651/B/9*, Beira, 17 de Junho de 1944.”
 16. Over the years, the local authorities of the entire Province of Manica e Sofala were consulted by the provincial administration about the best way to foster voluntary labour and to push private employers towards a provision of better labour conditions. The labour reserves were a key element of the local administrators’ answers. See: AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. “Administração da Circunscrição de Chimoio. *Nº 120/B/14*, Vila Pery, 7 de Janeiro de 1947.”
 17. AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. “Administração da Circunscrição de Sofala. *Nº 185/B/14*, Nova Sofala, 8 de Fevereiro de 1947”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. “Administração da Circunscrição de Sena.” *Nº 145/B/14*, “Vila Fontes, 1 de Fevereiro de 1947”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. “Administração da Circunscrição civil de Mossurize. *Nº 113/B/14*, Espungabera, 10 de Fevereiro de 1947”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. “Administração do Concelho de Manica. *Nº 277/B/14*, Vila de Manica, 5 de Fevereiro de 1947”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. “Administração da Circunscrição de Chemba. *Nº 26/B/14*, Chemba, 7 de Janeiro de 1947.”
 18. AHM. FGDB, Cx.639. “Direcção Provincial de Administração Civil de Manica e Sofala. *Circular Nº 7876/B/14*. Beira, 11 de Dezembro de 1947.”

when international pressures against forced labour in the Portuguese colonies were mounting, the system of labour reserves was formally abolished. However, in general, the administrators continued to apportion the labour they could control in their territory to the employers they favoured, for example by denying the Africans the necessary authorisation to leave their *circunscrição*. For instance, the administrator of Chibabava ordered local *régulos* to avoid sending their people to the recruiting agent of the CCB, but to secure a number of them for other employers in the territory¹⁹. In practice, *circunscrições* like Mutarara, Angónia, Sofala, Bárue, Gorongosa and Mossurize remained at the periphery of the economic system of Mozambique, and were considered only as labour-supply areas. Colonial and post-colonial development plans and investments in market infrastructure systematically excluded these areas.

The Recruitment Process and Working Conditions

Significant disparities also characterised the degree of compulsion used against African workers in the various *circunscrições*. This varied according to a number of factors, including the local socio-economic conditions, the particular administrator's own methods and ideology, and the degree to which African reaction influenced the implementation of policies. At one extreme, in Bárue, where the colonial (or state) control over the local population had been historically weak and there had been recurrent revolt, the only effective way of obtaining labour was by violently rounding up the population in the countryside with the help of gangs of *cipais*²⁰. In other parts of the District, however, the administrators and recruiting agents employed less coercive means to attract workers. Some big employers, like the Sena Sugar Estates in Marromeu, even managed to offer significant incentives at the place of recruitment, like clothes or advances on the total wage covering the entire period of the contract²¹. Flexibility also characterised the implementation of the regulations on the movement of people, and some administrators turned a blind eye to the practice of regularising the position of people who had come from outside their area to work for a local employer without proper authorisation or documentation.

Territorial disparities in labour relations were also reflected by the differences in the treatment of workers in the workplace—practices compounded by different cultural constructs and social relations well rooted in

19. AHM. FGDB, Cx.660. "Relatório do Inspector-Inquiridor, A.S.F. de Castel-Branco, dum processo sobre a Companhia Colonial do Buzi. Beira, 3 de Novembro de 1951."

20. AHM. FGDB, Cx.630. "Circunscrição Administrativa do Bárue. *Confidencial* Nº 752/A/42, Vila Gouveia, 13 de Abril de 1961."

21. AHM. FGDB, Cx.639. "Província de Manica e Sofala. Direcção Provincial de Administração Civil. *Circular* Nº 5598/B/14, Beira, 19 de Agosto de 1948."

the colonial and pre-colonial history of this territory. For example, it seems that the southern part of the District, coinciding roughly with the boundaries of the old kingdom of Gaza, was characterised by worse labour relations than the northern side, where some of the best colonial enterprises had been established²².

In the centre-south of the District, the CCB frequently commanded the attention of the colonial administrators²³. Poor food, excessive hours, and generally bad working conditions, together with accusations of ill-treatment, were reported in the CCB as well as among the farmers of Chimoio. In Chimoio and Manica, a workplace that apparently enjoyed the approval of employees was the Beira Railways, especially for the wages paid, the food and the accommodation²⁴. The railway linking Beira to Southern Rhodesia in practice divided the South of the District from the North, where it was easier to find employers like the Sena Sugar Estates in Marromeu or others in Cheringoma, who offered better conditions and the social benefits associated with wage labour. These enterprises were able to attract workers, to have fewer desertions, and to see workers returning after their first contract.

The differences in economic and social conditions within the District, and between this District and the other areas of the country, were also reflected in the wages paid to the African workers. Although wages within the district varied, depending on the employer and on the size and labour strategies of the companies, the official minimum wages, which were pegged to the levels of taxation, clearly reveal these differences. In 1943, in the Beira District, the minimum wage for agricultural work was established at 60\$ per month for work in the *circunscrição* where the contract was made, and 66\$ for work outside; however, in Bárúè, which bordered with Tete District, the two wage rates were 45\$ and 50\$²⁵. In 1945 the Governor General established for Beira District wage rates of 72\$ for agriculture and 100\$ for industry, while workers from Tete employed in Beira were to receive at least 66\$ and 90\$²⁶. In 1950, the minimum wages for Beira District

22. However, a proper analysis on this point is out of the reach of this paper.

23. AHM. FGDB, Cx.659. "Província de Manica e Sofala. Direcção Provincial de Administração Civil. *Informação*, Beira, 20 de Junho de 1944"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.659. "Administração da Circunscrição do Búzi, N.1288/B/15/2, Nova Luzitânia, 7 de Outubro de 1947."

24. Interview 3/c: Biseque Saize. Distrito de Gondola, Posto de Matsinho, October 2001; AHM. FISANI, Cx.39. "João Mesquita, Relatório das Inspeções Ordinárias às Circunscrições de Chemba, Sena, Marromeu, Gorongosa, Manica e Mossurize, do Distrito da Beira, 1946"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.639. "Administração da Circunscrição de Chimoio, N.º 421/B/9, 6 de Março de 1947"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.627. "Província de Manica e Sofala. Direcção Provincial de Administração Civil. *Informação* N.º 51/B/15, Beira, 17 de Maio de 1952."

25. AHM. FGDB, Cx.658. "Governo da Província de Manica e Sofala. *Ordem Geral* N.º 2, Beira, 13 de Setembro de 1943."

26. AHM. FGDB, Cx.622. "Repartição Central dos Negócios Indígenas. N.2761/B/15/12, 8 de Outubro de 1945."

increased to 100\$ and 130\$²⁷, and it was specified that Africans working in regions with wages higher than those of the area of their origin had to receive the higher of the two²⁸. In practice, once again, the workers who were paid less were those coming from the most disadvantaged areas like Mossurize.

These differences in the levels of wages helped to create, not physically but quite practically, social boundaries between people coming from different areas of the District or of the country. Workers employed in the same company for the same kind of job, could earn different wages, depending on the area from which they came. For example, the Sena Sugar Estates, which had plantations on both sides of the Zambezi, paid different wages according to whether the workers were coming from the Beira District's *circunscrição* of Marromeu, or from the Province of Zambézia²⁹. This difference fostered a clandestine movement of Zambesian people to the south bank plantations, a dynamic similar to the movement of migrants abroad.

Differences between one area and another in the level of wages, as well as in the general labour and recruitment conditions, had consequences for the relations between African labourers working in colonial enterprises. It might mean that African workers from the same area had similar attitudes towards working conditions, or towards desertion, escape and migration. Or, it could happen that in a given workplace Africans received a different consideration and treatment from their employers according to the areas they were coming from.

People's Movements and Migration Structures

The phenomenon of the migration of people from the Province of Zambézia to the District of Beira makes it clear that migrant movements both within and outside Beira District were very common. Internal circulation was always directed at finding a better place of employment but, apart the attraction exercised by the urban centre of Beira, the choices were very limited, and the preferred direction remained towards other colonies. Even so, the structures of outward labour migration were closely linked to the Mozambican internal context and internal movements (see Map 2, p. 723).

The degree of dispossession due to colonial settler schemes was not so widespread in Beira District, and the escape from forced labour and forced crop growing, together with the search for the best livelihood and social

27. AHM. FGDB, Cx.608. "Repartição Central dos Negócios Indígenas. *Circular* N.929/B/15/12, 27 de Março 1950."

28. AHM. FGDB, Cx.658. "Repartição Central dos Negócios Indígenas. *Circular* N.º 1701/B/15/12, Lourenço Marques, 16 de Maio de 1950."

29. AHM. FGDB, Cx.658. "Província de Manica e Sofala. Direcção Provincial da Administração Civil. *Circular* N.º 4343/B/15, Beira, 20 de Junho de 1950."

MAP 2. — MIGRANT ROUTES OF BEIRA DISTRICT

service opportunities, played the major role in determining the circulation of people within the district. A crucial role was also played by the traditional authorities. In general, their influence could determine the decision of an entire group of people regarding its movement from one place to another. In some cases, however, people moved in response to the behaviour of a *régulo vis-à-vis* the colonial directives. For example, in Búzi it was reported that a local chief, who did not exert proper pressure on his community, “an indigenous man without prestige”, produced an influx of people into the territory. When he was substituted by a new one “that from the beginning started to implement colonial instructions on tax collection and on the suppression of vagrancy”, people began to leave the area³⁰.

In Beira District much of internal circulation of people was within a rural context and was “independent” (“clandestine”, in the colonial lexicon). Colonial reports and statistics, although not completely reliable, can nevertheless indicate at least the main trends. A number of factors, such as geographical proximity, attractive social services and working opportunities in one or another of the British colonies, or the existence of migrant routes that had already developed before the establishment of effective Portuguese colonialism, helped to determine the preferences of Africans seeking to emigrate.

A distinction can be drawn between the areas south and north of the Punguè river, or the “corridor” linking Beira to Southern Rhodesia and passing through Chimoio and Manica. According to a famous study of the “traditional forces” conducted in 1967 by the colonial inspector Branquinho, south of this line people generally emigrated to South Africa, while to the north of it they would stop first in Southern Rhodesia. He explained how a religious sect coming from Southern Rhodesia was more diffused in the northern part of the District, while another one, coming from South Africa, was common in the southern areas³¹. Of course, there were more specific patterns. Emigration to South Africa was intensive from Mossurize, Búzi and Sofala. Chimoio, and Manica had mixed patterns. The territories along the Zambesi valley in the north were influenced primarily by emigration to Nyasaland, as a first step to South Africa.

However, even at the level of the single *circunscrições*, there were differences in the pattern of migration. In the north, migration dynamics in the *circunscrição* of Mutarara were among the most complex of the entire District, given that it was a labour reserve and given its peculiar geographical position. It was at the centre of a movement of African migrants from three countries, Mozambique, Nyasaland, and Southern Rhodesia, and these

30. AHM. FGDB, Cx.618. “Administração da Circunscrição do Búzi. N° 3591, Nova Lusitânia, 7 de Dezembro de 1960” (my translation from Portuguese).

31. AHM. SE, “Branquinho José Alberto Gomes de Melo, *Prospecção das forças tradicionais: Manica e Sofala*, Relatório Secreto para os Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações, Província de Moçambique, Lourenço Marques, 1967”.

migrants would often exchange their identification documents to trick the local administrators³². Often, emigrants were helped by clandestine recruiters to reach the recruiting posts of Salima, inside Nyasaland, from where they would be directed by train directly to Southern Rhodesia or even to the Transvaal³³.

In the *circunscrição* of Chemba the majority of people managed to remain and work in their territory, generally cultivating cotton, while a few hundred moved outside looking for work. Moreover, there were migrants from northern areas who entered Chemba crossing the Zambezi and moving south towards Gorongosa and Vila Pery, the urban centre of Chimoio, where they could take the main road or railway to Southern Rhodesia. Others followed the northern migrant routes through Bárue, which led to the region of Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia³⁴.

In spite of living in a labour reserve, the people of Bárue also emigrated, almost entirely to Southern Rhodesia, while a good number also moved independently inside Beira District towards Cheringoma or Beira³⁵. The migrants from Bárue had numerous possibilities to reach Southern Rhodesia: indeed, it was easier to cross the international frontier than to move inside their own District. This fact, combined with older migration structures and socio-cultural traditions, meant that in the 1940s and 1950s the preferences of migrants helped to differentiate this region from other parts of Mozambique. Africans from the centre and south of Bárue (Donde, Macossa) established connections mainly with the Southern Rhodesian region of Umtali: they would cross the river Pungue and pass through Manica, heading for the Southern Rhodesian locality of M'Potese. In the north of the *circunscrição* (Mungari and Mandié), people would be linked mainly with the region of Salisbury, or they would pass through Changara (Tete District) to reach Mtoko in Southern Rhodesia. The intersection between the *circunscrição* of Bárue, the District of Tete and Southern Rhodesia was a crucial point as far as the passage of migrant people was concerned. Significantly, a village located in that corner was known among the population with the English term of "the bridge"³⁶.

32. AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Mutarara (1954)."

33. AHM. FGDB, Cx.639. "Administração da Circunscrição Civil de Mutarara, *Confidencial*, Nº 1140/B/17/1, Mutarara, 17 de Agosto de 1943."

34. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Administração da Circunscrição Civil de Chemba. Nº 620/B/17/1, Chemba, 6 de Agosto de 1947"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.617. "Administração da Circunscrição da Chemba. *Confidencial* Nº 308/B/10, Chemba, 21 de Fevereiro de 1955."

35. AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Bárue (1954-1957)."

36. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Circunscrição do Bárue. *Elementos colhidos em conformidade com o determinado na nota nº 96/1/I.S./H...*, Vila Gouveia, 14 de Setembro de 1947"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Administração da Circunscrição do Bárue. *Confidencial*, Nº 555/B/17/1, Vila Gouveia, 18 de Abril de 1949"; AHM.

Another typical labour-reserve area was the *circunscrição* of Mossurize, in the southern side of the Manica District, separated from the Province of Sul do Save by the river Sabi, and having a border with Southern Rhodesia. The internal conditions were so harsh, and the family and cultural links with the territories, at that time under British administration, were so rooted, that almost all the African male population of Mossurize emigrated abroad³⁷. In spite of the proximity with Southern Rhodesia, emigration from Mossurize was directed mainly to South Africa. This was due to a number of factors. Some migrant routes and social networks with South Africa had certainly developed at the time of the population movements south following the retreat of the Gaza Kingdom led by Gungunhana. This is at least suggested by the reference to the “old and rooted traditions”, the phrase that often appears in the Portuguese reports, where these were not more explicit regarding the role of Gungunhana³⁸. In a report of 1949, the Administrator of Mossurize maintained that:

“[The clandestine recruiters] worked to raise the migratory flow to the mines [...]. However, they didn’t make propaganda for ‘the John’, given that the success of the mines was already consolidated from Gungunhana’s times, when the Vandau headed for the Transvaal not only to enrich themselves, but also to avoid recruitment for the ‘impis’”³⁹.

Equally important was the role of the clandestine recruiters who crossed the famous 22nd parallel (the northern limit of the concession for the recruitment to the Southern African mines) and operated illegally inside Mossurize throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The incidence of labour migration from Mossurize could also easily be deduced from the data about African tax payments, which were made in part in Escudos (the Portuguese currency), in part in South African currency, and in part in Southern Rhodesian pounds⁴⁰.

FGDB, Cx.693. “Administração da Circunscrição do Báruè. N^o 579/B/17/1, Vila Gouveia, 8 de Maio de 1951”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.693. “Administração da Circunscrição do Báruè. N^o 512/B/1771, Vila Gouveia, 31 de Março de 1952”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.693. “Comissariado de Polícia de Tete, *Participação apresentada pelo subchefe de esquadra, Edmundo da Silva Pereira*, Tete, 5 de Março de 1952.”

37. AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. “Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Mossurize (1954-1957).”

38. AHM. FGDB, Cx.628. “Circunscrição de Mossurize, *Resposta ao Questionário...*, Espungabera, 14 de Agosto de 1954”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Concelho de Manica. *Respostas ao questionário...*, Vila de Manica, 5 de Setembro de 1947.”

39. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Administração da Circunscrição de Mossurize, *Confidencial*, N^o 372/B/17/1, Espungabera, 16 de Abril de 1949.”

40. AHM. FISANI, Cx.54. “Inspector Administrativo António A.S. Borges, *Relatório da Inspeção Ordinária à Circunscrição do Mossurize*, 1968.”

Migration from Mossurize to South Africa followed many routes. People could choose to pass from Southern Rhodesia or from the other provinces of Mozambique south of the Sabi river. In the famous corner of Pafúri between Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, they were often recruited under the very general denomination of “*tropicais*”, or as Africans coming from the Mozambican Province Sul do Save (Galha 1952: 226-227; Felgas 1955: 27).

Migration to Southern Rhodesia was particularly intense in the *circunscrição* of Manica, which had a very extended border with the British colony. People from Manica had easy access to employment on the farms, railways, or in the urban areas of Southern Rhodesia, or would trade their produce, buy cheaper goods, or attend the schools there. They did not need to follow any particular route: they simply crossed the border at many points, preferably in the neighbourhood of the rest camps or depots on the Southern Rhodesian side⁴¹. Often, movement across the colonial border was so common and the frontier so permeable that a number of people crossed the border on a daily basis. It may be that they did not interpret their movement exactly as migration⁴². It is significant also that in 1949 the colonial government allowed some groups of long established emigrants to live permanently in the Southern Rhodesian centres of Umtali, Penhalonga and Inyanga, while being registered as residents of Manica⁴³.

The predominant pattern of migration for work in Southern Rhodesia did not preclude that, after some time spent earning an income there, these migrants would choose to move on to South Africa. The colonial documents and reports suggest that in Manica migration to South Africa was more intense in the southern and inland areas of Mavita and Dombe⁴⁴.

The areas of the district where productive colonial activity was more developed had a mixed pattern of employment. In the north, the *circunscrição* of Marromeu had a labour force employed predominantly in the internal activities of Sena Sugar Estates, which attracted, or managed to contract, a lot of people from outside as well, while a couple of thousand

41. Interview 9/e: Amosse Missane Dangaíso. Distrito de Manica, Vila de Manica, November 2001; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Concelho de Manica. *Respostas ao questionário...*, Vila de Manica, 5 de Setembro de 1947”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.683. “Administração do Concelho de Manica, Nº 1761/B/17, Vila de Manica, 24 de Setembro de 1948.”

42. As admitted, for example, by a famous Portuguese colonial inspector: AHM. SE, “Branquinho José Alberto Gomes de Melo, *Prospecção das forças tradicionais: Manica e Sofala*, Relatório Secreto para os Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações, Província de Moçambique, Lourenço Marques, 1967”.

43. AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. “Administração do Concelho de Manica, Nº 496/B/14, Vila de Manica, 28 de Fevereiro de 1949.”

44. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Concelho de Manica. *Respostas ao questionário...*, Vila de Manica, 5 de Setembro de 1947”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Administração do Concelho de Manica. *Confidencial*, Nº 1479/B/17/1, Vila de Manica, 28 de Junho de 1949.”

people preferred to move outside the *circunscrição* for work⁴⁵. Not far from there, in the *circunscrição* of Cheringoma, people employed by local enterprises were equally divided between workers from within the area and workers obtained from outside. A few hundred emigrated abroad or circulated in the district⁴⁶. Similar patterns of employment were reported in the two centres of production south of the river Punguè, the *circunscrições* of Chimoio and Búzi. However, in both there was a higher incidence of people moving outside their area looking for work in other parts of the District, although part of the *circunscrição* of Búzi was characterised by a distinctive dynamic⁴⁷. Emigration from Chimoio included a high number of Africans originating from other areas. Indeed, the European farmers of Chimoio experienced numerous desertions of workers from their farms, and in some cases it was proved that the Africans from other northern areas allowed themselves to be recruited by the farmers' *Grémio* having planned in advance their escape to Southern Rhodesia or South Africa⁴⁸. These people, as well as the locals who refused to work for the Portuguese, would simply make use of the transport available along the road or railway passing through Chimoio and leading to Southern Rhodesia⁴⁹.

Inside Beira District, one of the major attractions for African workers was the urban centre of Beira, given the development of its port and railway, and the opportunities offered by domestic service. According to Schaedel, Beira remained until the end of the colonial period predominantly a city of migratory labour from the countryside, and it absorbed from the other *circunscrições* of the District some 35 per cent of all migrants, who came especially from the southern areas and also from the Zambezi valley. Toward the end of the 1960s, however, the majority came from the regions north of the Zambezi river (Schaedel 2001).

45. AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Marromeu (1954-1958)."

46. AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Cheringoma (1954-1957)."

47. AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Chimoio (1954-1956)"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Búzi (1954-1958)"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.626. "Administração da Circunscrição do Buzi. *Confidencial*, N° 596/D/18, Nova Luzitânia, 29 de Março de 1948"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.626. "Província de Manica e Sofala. Direcção Provincial de Administração Civil. *Confidencial*, N° 2478/B/11, Beira, 8 de Abril de 1948."

48. AHM. FGDB, Cx.667. "Administração da Circunscrição de Chimoio. N° 3732/B/15/2, Vila Pery, 4 de Dezembro de 1951."

49. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Administração da Circunscrição de Chimoio. *Relatório incluso à N° 4171/B/17/1*, Vila Pery, 11 de Setembro de 1947"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.693. "Administração da Circunscrição de Chimoio. N° 1662/B/17/1, Vila Pery, 14 de Maio de 1954."

The Case of Machaze, Machanga, and Chibabava

That migration patterns created differentiation at the level of single *circunscrições* is particularly clear in the case of Mossurize, Búzi and Sofala. In all of them, old migrant routes, cultural and family links, and colonial labour policies, helped determine the migrants' preferred destination abroad. Furthermore, while the transnational links between some communities and their destinations abroad were developed or consolidated, a corresponding division of the territory between villages and countryside was equally reinforced.

Sofala could be considered a *circunscrição* supplying labour to other areas, the majority working for private employers in other *circunscrições*, those from the coast in Beira and those from the internal areas, the so-called "old lands", in Búzi. A good number of people also emigrated abroad, especially towards South Africa and especially from the inland area of Machanga⁵⁰. People from the main villages of Búzi either contracted for the local employers, the major one being the CCB, or emigrated abroad passing through Beira. Migration to South Africa was much more intense in the internal area Chibabava⁵¹. This pattern, setting apart the main villages and administrative centres where people in general either contracted for local activities or managed to go to Southern Rhodesia, from the more rural inland areas, where people migrated en masse to South Africa, was replicated in Mossurize and even in Manica. Machaze in the former, and, as has already been noted, Mavita and Dombe in the latter, represented points of departure for those going predominantly to South Africa⁵².

The inland areas of Búzi (Chibabava), Sofala (Machanga) and Mossurize (Machaze) formed a sort of homogeneous area where people, followed the old migrant routes leading to South Africa, which had developed before the establishment of Portuguese colonial rule, and which the latter may have consolidated. It was reported, for example, that people from these territories, working together in the CCB, after a while influenced each other to desert

50. AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Sofala (1954-1958)"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.626. "Circunscrição de Sofala. N.º 1882/B/11, Nova Sofala, 6 de Novembro de 1943"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.622. "Circunscrição de Sofala. N.º 1902/B/9, Nova Sofala, 10 de Novembro de 1943"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.683. "Administração da Circunscrição de Sofala. N.º 1388/B/17, Nova Sofala, 21 de Agosto de 1946"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Administração da Circunscrição de Sofala. N.º 992/B/17/1, Nova Sofala, 17 de Junho de 1947."
51. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Administração da Circunscrição do Buzi. N.º 1152/B/17/1, Nova Luzitânia, 4 de Setembro de 1947"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.641. "Mapas das Disponibilidades de mão de obra indígena: Búzi (1/1954, 11/1956, 4/1957, 7/1958)"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.627. "Circunscrição do Búzi, Exp./288/B/11, Ano de 1961."
52. AHM. SE, "Branquinho José Alberto Gomes de Melo, *Prospecção das forças tradicionais: Manica e Sofala*, Relatório Secreto para os Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações, Província de Moçambique, Lourenço Marques, 1967."

the Portuguese company and take to the road as migrants⁵³. These rural areas represent roughly the borderlands reached by the political and territorial dominion of the old Gaza kingdom before the latter was defeated by the Portuguese in the 1890s⁵⁴, and it seems that their population remained particularly hostile to the control of the colonial state⁵⁵.

In the 1950s this big area generated sporadic uprisings against the labour recruitment campaigns, and in 1953 Machanga and Mambone were the theatre of a famous revolt that was later regarded as one of the early nationalist rebellions against the colonial empire⁵⁶. In the following years, the colonial administration ordered a wholesale replacement of the traditional authorities. This caused the emigration abroad of a number of these *chefes* who took their communities with them⁵⁷. Clearly, the particularly hostile relationship between the state and the people in this area, as well as in Machaze and Chibabava, which had roots even before the effective penetration of the Portuguese colonialism, influenced the particularly high rate of emigration to South Africa recorded in these areas. Machaze, Chibabava and Machanga were often regarded in the 1940s and 1950s as a unique region, at times called “the old lands”⁵⁸, and their inhabitants were known as “*os do interior*”—“those from the interior”:

“The interior was and it is still today for indigenous people the entire strip of land going from Alto Buzi to the margins of the river Save, and penetrating into Chibabava and Mossurize”⁵⁹.

53. AHM. SE, “Branquinho José Alberto Gomes de Melo, *Prospecção das forças tradicionais: Manica e Sofala*, Relatório Secreto para os Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações, Província de Moçambique, Lourenço Marques, 1967”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Administração da Circunscrição de Sofala. *Elementos para base de trabalho de que anda incumbido o Excelentíssimo Senhor Inspector Administrativo...*, Nova Sofala, 19 de Setembro de 1947.”
54. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Administração da Circunscrição de Mossurize. *Confidencial*, Nº 372/B/17/1, Espungabera, 16 de Abril de 1949”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Concelho de Manica. *Respostas ao questionário...*, Vila de Manica, 5 de Setembro de 1947.”
55. AHM. SE, “Branquinho José Alberto Gomes de Melo, *Prospecção das forças tradicionais: Manica e Sofala*, Relatório Secreto para os Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações, Província de Moçambique, Lourenço Marques, 1967.”
56. AHM. FGDB, Cx.626. “Bispado da Beira, *Confidencial*, Nº 32, Beira, 7 de Fevereiro de 1951”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.626. “Administração da Circunscrição de Sofala, *Confidencial*, Nº 354/B/11, Nova Sofala, 9 de Março de 1951”; AHM. FGDB, Cx.618. “*Sixpence Simango, Nucleo Negrófilo de Manica e Sofala, ao Administrador da Circunscrição de Sofala*, Beira, 1 de Maio de 1953.”
57. Interview 1/b: Manuel Mbaimbai. Distrito de Gondola, Posto de Cafumpe, 26 de outubro 2001; AHM. FGDB, Cx.617. “Administração do Concelho de Lourenço Marques, *Confidencial* Nº 3845/B/8, de 7 de Agosto de 1955.”
58. AHM. FGDB, Cx.626. “Circunscrição de Sofala. Nº 1882/B/11, Nova Sofala, 6 de Novembro de 1943.”
59. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. “Administração da Circunscrição de Sofala, *Elementos para base de trabalho de que anda incumbido o Excelentíssimo Senhor Inspector Administrativo...*, Nova Sofala, 19 de Setembro de 1947.”

Foreign influences like Zionism were widely diffused there, and represented a peculiar characteristic differentiating these territories from their administrative centres⁶⁰.

Bargaining Power Over Borders and People's Movement

Another factor influenced the simultaneous consolidation of transnational networks and internal divisions: the degree to which colonial controls on migrants' internal movements reinforced internal boundaries within the District. As suggested by the contrasting views expressed by those interviewed in Manica and Chimoio, colonial controls in Beira District were perceived by Africans as hard and cruel, but also as fragile, depending on occasion and location. At times, the internal boundaries between the *circunscrições* resembled the external boundaries with Southern Rhodesia, and they offered a relative freedom of movement to Africans⁶¹. In other contexts and at other times controls were applied with much more severity, and people recall being conscripted for contract labour because they had tried to move without proper authorization or documentation issued by their local administrator⁶². The crucial point is to decide how a boundary's strength is measured: either as a physical barrier to people's movement, or as a virtual separation between areas where life and labour relations were different.

If we consider the impact of borders on the labour relations and social life of the people who moved across them, it is clear that the international frontier between Mozambique and the British colonies separated two completely different traditions of socio-economic development, which in turn created two different traditions of labour relations. Although the treatment of workers and the enforcement of labour provisions were not uniform inside the Beira District, the regime of forced labour was a constant threat for Africans everywhere in the District. On the other hand, if the border is considered as a physical barrier to people's movement, then it can be seen that Africans in Beira District never met major obstacles in their independent migrations across the frontier with Southern Rhodesia. This international boundary generated over time a real "cartographic anxiety" on the

60. AHM. SE, "Branquinho José Alberto Gomes de Melo, *Prospecção das forças tradicionais: Manica e Sofala*, Relatório Secreto para os Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações, Província de Moçambique, Lourenço Marques, 1967."

61. For example: Interview 4/b: Fumo Luís Seda. Distrito de Gondola, Posto de Matsinho, October 2001; Interview 6/b: Joami Chipoiá. Distrito de Sussundenga, Sede, October 2001; Interview 7/d: Zacaria Sabonete Mutsica. Distrito de Sussundenga, Sede, October 2001.

62. For example: Interview 9/d: João Careca. Distrito de Manica, Vila de Manica, November 2001; Interview 6/c: Elias Chiposse. Distrito de Sussundenga, Sede, October 2001.

part of the European authorities on the two sides. Nonetheless, it remained extremely difficult to control. Moreover, in Southern Rhodesia, the authorities often favoured undocumented migrants entering the British colony, and regularised them when they signed a contract with a Rhodesian employer: their regularisation meant cheap labour for the Southern Rhodesian economy and taxes in valuable foreign currency for the Portuguese authorities⁶³. That border represented the ideal conditions for what today would be called transnationalism⁶⁴, and some communities, as has been argued, may not have interpreted their movement as migration.

From this point of view, the international border between Beira District and Southern Rhodesia was weaker than the internal boundaries that developed between the *circunscrições* and between the areas where the economic development was different. Along these internal borders, colonial controls were often more effective in capturing people for forced contract labour. There was a colonial rationale for this situation. People migrating abroad could earn foreign currency that the colonial state, through taxation, could transform into valuable revenue. By contrast, Africans circulating for work inside Beira District, when found in a *circunscrição* without a proper pass or authorization, were liable to be considered vagrants and then condemned to *trabalho correcional* or recruited for public or private employers, that is they could be forced to work for low wages or for nothing⁶⁵. These two facts reinforced transnational migration and social networks on the one hand and the consolidation of the internal barriers on the other.

63. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Repartição Central dos Negócios Indígenas. N° 137/B/17/1, Lourenço Marques, 15 de Janeiro de 1948"; FDSNI, Cx.108. "Relatório da Curadoria dos Indígenas Portugueses na Rodésia do Sul, 1941-48"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.640. "Administração do Concelho de Manica. N° 496/B/14, Vila de Manica, 28 de Fevereiro de 1949."

64. Interview 8/b: Silvestre Chabai. Distrito de Manica, Vila de Manica, November 2001; AHM. FGDB, Cx.628. "Circunscrição de Mossurize. Resposta ao Questionário anexo à Circular n° 3885/B/11, de 20-VI-1947, da Direcção de Administração Civil de Manica e Sofala, Espungabera, 14 de Agosto de 1954"; AHM. SE, "Branquinho José Alberto Gomes de Melo, Prospecção das forças tradicionais: Manica e Sofala, Relatório Secreto para os Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações, Província de Moçambique, Lourenço Marques, 1967."

65. AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Administração do Concelho da Beira, Relação dos indígenas que foram encontrados na area deste Concelho sem autorização, Vila de Manica, 28 de Abril de 1948"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.692. "Província de Manica e Sofala, Direcção Provincial de Administração Civil, Informação N° 22/B/17/1, Beira, 29 de Abril de 1948"; AHM. FGDB, Cx.683. "Direcção dos Serviços dos Negócios Indígenas. Informação Confidencial, N° 82/A/54/9, Lourenço Marques, 27 de Agosto de 1959."

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Salazar's phase of colonial rule in the Beira District of Mozambique both consolidated and altered past trends regarding people's relations with the state and the territory. The enforcement of the forced-labour regime was aided by limitations on people's mobility and by the institution of labour reserves. The development of socio-economic distortions in labour relations between the majority of the African workforce and the colonial state was paralleled by a consolidation of the imbalances in the political-economy of the territory. People's migration patterns and routes were a structural element of this picture: on the one side the internal divisions between the underdeveloped labour-reserves and the centres of production, separated by internal colonial boundaries which were used by the Portuguese authorities to enforce the forced labour provisions, and on the other the transnational connections established by migrants, mutually reinforced themselves over time.

In addition to the regional divisions characteristic of Mozambique as a whole, Districts like that of Beira were divided by structural differences which set apart the labour-reserve areas, like the *circunscrições* of Mossurize, Sofala, and Báruè, that remained on the periphery of the socio-economic system, and the centres of production, like Búzi, Chimoio, Cheringoma and Marromeu, which saw significant economic activity. These differences were reflected in the internal colonial division of labour between the different economic interests, in the different patterns of employment and treatment of the African workers and in the different way Africans were contracted for labour in the colonial enterprises. In addition, this territorial differentiation corresponded to the different choice of migrant destinations and the transnational networks of African migrant workers. Even within the *circunscrições* there were divisions between those areas served by infrastructure like roads and shops, usually the main administrative centres, and areas more isolated in the countryside. In the first, people either contracted for local activities, or moved inside the District in search of better labour opportunities, or migrated abroad. In the second, people emigrated abroad in mass, predominantly to South Africa. This pattern was particularly clear in the southern *circunscrições* of Mossurize, Búzi and Sofala, where their more rural areas (Machaze, Chibabava and Machanga) were considered as areas from which people migrated to South Africa and foreign influences were uniformly spread, while people living in the administrative centres either remained working for a local employer, or emigrated toward Southern Rhodesia.

In the end, the mutual relationship between the transnational links of the people and the colonial policies on forced labour, shows how local differences depended on the interplay between the political economic strategies of the state and the people's individual or collective responses.

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ABSTRACT

From 1890 to the 1930s the Portuguese colony of Mozambique developed as a number of institutionally and economically separate regions. The rule of concession companies and the economic ties that developed with neighbouring British colonies meant that internal relations between region and region were often non-existent. After 1930 colonial rule in the Beira District of Mozambique both consolidated and altered people's relations with the state and the territory. The forced-labour regime was reinforced by limitations on people's mobility and by the institution of labour reserves, which in turn consolidated the imbalances in the political-economy and created internal boundaries that were often more difficult to cross than those met with on the traditional labour migration routes. These differences were reflected in the internal colonial division of labour between the different economic interests, in the different patterns of employment and treatment of the African workers and in the different way Africans were contracted for labour in the colonial enterprises.

RÉSUMÉ

Réseaux transnationaux et divisions internes dans le centre du Mozambique. Perspective historique de la période coloniale. — De 1890 aux années 1930, la colonie portugaise du Mozambique s'est développée comme un ensemble de régions institutionnellement et économiquement distinctes. Du fait de la domination des compagnies concessionnaires et des liens économiques tissés avec les colonies britanniques avoisinantes, les relations entre les régions au sein du pays étaient souvent non existantes. Après 1930, dans le district de Beira, le régime colonial est parvenu à consolider et modifier les liens entre la population d'une part et l'État et le territoire d'autre part. Au régime du travail forcé vinrent s'ajouter des restrictions de mouvement et la mise en place de réserves de main-d'œuvre accentuant à leur tour les déséquilibres dans l'économie politique et créant ainsi des « frontières intérieures » qui étaient souvent plus difficiles à franchir que celles rencontrées sur les parcours traditionnels de la main-d'œuvre migrante. Cette séparation était visible dans la division coloniale interne du travail entre les différents intérêts économiques, dans les types d'emplois réservés aux travailleurs africains, et enfin dans le statut différent des Africains dans les entreprises coloniales.

Keywords/Mots-clés: Mozambique, Beira district, colonial period, concession companies, forced labour, internal boundaries, labour reserves, migration, transnational networks/Mozambique, district de Beira, période coloniale, compagnies concessionnaires, travail forcé, frontières intérieures, réserves de main-d'œuvre, migration, réseaux transnationaux.