



Anthropological Places in Mozambique in the Context of Political Conflict

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ANTROPOLOGICKÁ MÍSTA V MOSAMBIKU V KONTEXTU POLITICKÉHO KONFLIKTU

ABSTRAKT Brzy po získání nezávislosti v Mosambiku (1975) se místní toponomy (zeměpisné názvy) změnilы s cílem odstranění názvů z doby kolonialismu. Článek vychází z kapitoly probíhající doktorské práce s názvem „Vliv etnik v politických konfliktech v afrických státech: případová studie Mosambiku (1976-2019)“. Článek si klade za cíl analyzovat užití antropologických míst (lokalit) v kontextu politického konfliktu. Byly položeny tři výzkumné otázky: Jak název lokality ovlivňuje chování lidí, kteří žijí nebo navštěvují danou lokalitu? Jak název přetváří prostor na antropologickou lokalitu, která je sakrální? Jakým způsobem využívá politická moc antropologické lokality? Předběžné výsledky ukazují, že během transformace antropologických míst, mají nové názvy význam místních událostí a osobností; některé názvy mají národní podtón, aby nebyly brány jako záminka pro vznik konfliktů. Přesto politika využívá veřejný prostor víceméně jako nástroj propagandy a vytváří proto prostředí pro politické konflikty. Co se týče metodologie je článek výsledkem literární rešerše. Studie je důležitá, protože přináší vysvětlení, co se děje v rámci antropologie na pozadí konfliktu, ať už je konflikt ozbrojený nebo politický.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA Antropologické lokality; Mosambik; politické konflikty; sakrální; administrativní decentralizace

ABSTRACT Soon after independence in Mozambique (1975), the country's toponymy changed with the aim of decolonizing the past. The article consists of a chapter of an ongoing thesis entitled „The influence of ethnicities in political conflicts in African states: the case study of Mozambique (1976-2019)“. The article aims to analyse the use of anthropological places in a context of political conflict. Three research questions were raised: How does the name of a place shape the behaviour of people living or visiting that place? How does the name transform a space into an anthropological place with a sacral meaning? How does political power use anthropological places? Preliminary results show that, during transformation of anthropological places, the new names have a meaning of local events and figures; there are some names with national impact. Therefore, Anthropological places cannot be seen as a potential for conflict emerging. However, the way politics uses public spaces is more propagandistic. Therefore, it creates an environment of political parties' divisions leading to political conflicts, in addition to other factors. Methodologically, the chapter is a result of a literature review. The study is important because it approaches conflict beyond armed or political ones, but anthropologically.

KEY WORDS Anthropological places; Mozambique; political conflicts; sacrality; administrative decentralization

INTRODUCTION

A name is the first identifying element of everything: people, animals, trees, places, monuments, etc. Some names have a historical meaning whether within a certain family, in a society or in a country, but some other names were imported, simply because they sound good. How does the name of a place shape the behaviour of people living or visiting that

place? How does the name transform a space into an anthropological place with a sacral meaning? Why do people argue against or in favour of designating certain names to a public place. The answers to these questions frame the meaning of the name of a place in an anthropological context.

The nomenclature of streets (toponymy) and monuments were used as a powerful tool of domination during the colonial administration in Mozambique. At that time, the names

of places and streets reflected the geography of Portugal and its political figures. Soon after independence it was necessary to review these names to remove the marks of colonialism.

The article is devoted to studying the transformation of anthropological places in Mozambique and its meaning in each one of the three geographical and ethnic regions within the country. Due to the spatial and temporal limitation, it was not possible to deal with the whole country, hence the community of Mhonguane and the Municipality of Beira, in Gaza and Sofala Provinces respectively were chosen, based on their historical meaning to the country. Locally, it was a transformation of what Augé (1995) called „non-places“¹ to places.

The main goal of this article is to analyse the use of anthropological places in the context of political conflict in Mozambique. To fully achieve this goal, three specific objectives were defined: i. the definition of anthropological place or public space; ii. the description of the origin and transformation of anthropological places, and iii. the identification of politicians' use of public spaces in a political conflict context.

Methodologically, the article was a result of a literature review focusing on the books that deal with the anthropology of places, such as Marc Augé (1995), Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bilu (1997), among others. It is a chapter of an ongoing thesis entitled “The influence of ethnicities in political conflicts in African states: the case study of Mozambique (1976-2019)”. Therefore, its approach is diachronic, observing the milestones in the country's political history.

The article starts by reframing the main concepts, to give a better understanding about their meaning and use with relation to the topic. The second section deals with the transformation of anthropological places in Mozambique according to history. The typical example of the Municipality of Beira illustrates the process during government's decentralization. The third section discusses the political use of public spaces and seeks to find its connection with political conflicts. The last part is a conclusion with a short synthesis.

Whenever we are dealing with a political conflict issue, too much emphasis is given to political and economic power. The novelty of this article lies in its introducing cultural aspects, such as ethnicity, in a discussion of a political conflict resolution.

DEFINITION OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL PLACES

Augé (1995), defines an anthropological place as „the one occupied by the indigenous inhabitants who live in it, cultivate it, defend it, mark its strong points and keep its frontiers under surveillance, but who also detect in it the traces of celestial powers, ancestors, or spirits that populate and animate its private geography“ (p.42).

From this definition, three basic elements could be underlined:

- Anthropological space is occupied by indigenous or *autochthones* people. In other words, most people residing in a certain place must be native to be considered anthropological.
- These inhabitants cultivate and defend the strong points that identify them as people and based on those points or identity, they trace their own frontiers, which do not need to be administratively defined.
- And most importantly, they detect celestial powers or ancestors that populate and animate its private geography. The anthropological space has a spiritual command based on ancestors, which all the inhabitants respect and render sacred. Indeed, sacredness is fundamental in an anthropological space.

According to Ben-Ari and Bilu (1997, 48), anthropological place applies when territory is the basis of important social and strategic resources, but also may be seen in the struggle for control of symbolic dimensions. Therefore, the inhabitants venerate the same saint's shrine, seeing in this an indicator of symbiosis.

In this definition, the territory is seen not only as a physical demarcation but, above all, as a symbolic demarcation. As in the earlier definition, sacrality holds strong importance in anthropological place.

From the above definitions and for the purpose of this article, anthropological place should be understood as a territorial demarcation in which its name and symbolic ties have a strong meaning for its people, and they venerate their ancestors. That is, anthropological places create a bond between nature and culture and power.

It is important to note that modernity broke up cultural frontiers, bringing the freedom to move anywhere, regardless of symbolic ties with such a place. Hence, purely homogeneous communities rarely exist today.

Similarly, modernity brought about the need for a new urban structure with contemporary names unrelated to local historical ties. Therefore, this approach helps to establish a connection between ethnicities and political conflicts departing from the toponymy and the meanings of monuments from each of the three regions in Mozambique.

ORIGIN OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL PLACES

Anthropological places emerge through history connected to the first arrival in the place, or an important event happened through the time which transformed that place into a sacred one. It is mostly connected to sacrality. Sacrality, as a belief, is like beauty: it is ultimately in the eye of the beholder since what is regarded as sacred by one person may not be regarded as such by another. However, here we are talking about what holds a community together, not a single person. Therefore, a social fact can transform a space into an anthropological place.

To clarify the relativism of anthropological places, Coomans et al. compare the beliefs that are considered sacred or not in

1 Non-places according to Augé (1995) is a physical unknown space or with a name without a meaning for a needed content.

different communities, with natural phenomena considered globally as such. They argue that „It is quite possible that certain sites or structures might possess natural powers or qualities, but natural power is not necessarily natural holiness, any more than electricity or magnetism is naturally holy“ (2012, 13).

The sacrality superimposed on a place by one person for one day is clearly different in some way from that superimposed on a place by millions of people over many generations. Therefore, anthropological place should be considered as such by a community, not just a person or a group of people. As Emille Durkheim stated, „Social facts are values, cultural norms, and social structures that transcend the individual and can exercise social control.“ (Martineau 2000, 55)

Terryl Kinder, quoted by Coomans et al. (2012, 14), mentioned that anthropological places emerge not only for religious reasons, but also for political or economic reasons. Putting it in different words, not all sacred places are related to a specific ritual.

From a religious point of view, a place becomes sacred because it was intended and consecrated for meetings with the Holy God. The place is not considered sacred due to its gothic architecture or its antiquity but simply due to the purpose for which it was built. However, these two characteristics are important as a business card for cultural and touristic purposes.

Mythological reason

In the mythological view, the emergence of anthropological places is closely related to the arrival of the first person residing in such a place and, simultaneously, with political power. To our research, this form of origin appears to be the most important, as it seeks to connect politics and local symbols. Therefore, much emphasis was put on it.

According to Martineau (2000), in Positive Philosophy, August Comte saw that „The dead govern the living“, meaning that current society makes progress through the accumulated knowledge of those before us. In most African countries, the quote means that the living is under the control of the dead. In other words, the living depends on the dead for their success or failure, so the living must venerate the dead.

In Mozambique, for example, in each province, there is an anthropological place consecrated with a myth regarding the first person to dwell there. These places are used as a contact and communication centre between living and dead people.

In the province of Gaza, the Forest of Chirindzene is a typical example of an anthropological place par excellence from a mythological viewpoint.

According to Mathavele, quoted by Simbine (2013), the sacred Forest of Chirindzene emerged with the arrival of the first man, Tcheri, in the second half of the 19th century. He lived in that forest, where he created his large family. Tcheri became the first leader, and he was buried in the forest with other relatives. When the community became bigger, they decided to leave the forest to live far from the graves. From that moment, the forest was considered sacred so that people, in

traditional rituals, could communicate with the dead to ask for some success or even to request rain during a long drought or to stop an epidemic.

Today the forest of Chirindzene is considered, not only by the local community but also by national government, to be a sacred place. The Mathavele family, from the first settler, Tcheri Mathavele, leads all the traditional ceremonies in the forest of Chirindzene.

In the province of Maputo, the anthropological place, in mythological viewpoint, is located in the district of Magude - *Canhoeiro*² of Magude.

According to Muocha (2020), the history of *Canhoeiro* of Magude dates back to the 18th century, when the first leader of that region, Magudzo Khossa³, used that tree as his usual place to take a rest. After some time, Magudzo buried some money, gold, and silver around that *Canhoeiro* to transform it into a sacred place.

The Portuguese arrived at that place after the death of Magudzo and heard the history of *Canhoeiro*. They ordered the tree to be dug up. Indeed, according to Muocha (2020), they found money, silver, and gold, but surprisingly, the next day, *Canhoeiro* was in the same place as if nothing had happened the day before.

Due to that phenomenon, the Portuguese Administration considered the place to be sacred and it is currently known as *Canhoeiro* square.

In both cases (the forest of Chirindzene and *Canhoeiro* of Magude), the places are mythologically sacred and used to perform traditional ceremonies to evoke spirits, led by the Mathavele family in Chirindzene and Khossa in Magude. The name of the first dweller plays an important role through generations.

From all over the country, in each district or province, there is an anthropological place with a history connected to the first dweller and his power over the whole community.

Political reason

The other way anthropological places emerge is through a political framework. According to Wydra (2015, 2), an emergent tradition of enquiry in anthropology and political theory demonstrates how practices of the sacred have shaped secular political frames. It works on the premise that inviolable and inalienable political frames emerge in transitions between historical configurations. This concept seems to have a transformation in a globalized world. However, historicism prevails in different ways, such as the protection of „real family“. For Monarchic states this tradition is clear as the power must follow a monarchic lineage.

2 *Canhoeiro* is an African tree considered sacred among the Changana and Ronga groups. Its fruit, „*canho*“ is a source to produce a fermented beverage.

3 The name Magude comes from the name of the first leader Magudzo Khossa. With the arrival of the Portuguese in that community, they changed the pronunciation from Magudzo to Magude.

In democracy, although elections play an important role, the political power holders have a symbolism history. Symbols ensure that an ordinary person captures people's minds and hearts in extraordinary situations. Generally, these figures create anthropological places through the history of their life. It can be their place of birth, death, or burial; or it may be where they perform some important political tasks.

From a political point of view, the places of important military battles, are mostly later transformed into anthropological places.

To sum up, not all anthropological places emerged for political reasons; however, politics tries to make use of these places. The next session is about how politics uses anthropological places to strengthen its power.

POLITICAL POWER AND SACRALITY IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PLACES

Political power in any part of the world is regulated by administrative legislation. However, its recognition and local legitimacy require a strong connection between the political power holders and the ancestors of that location. According to Moore (1996, 5), this partnership can be traced back to Durkheim's idea of socially differentiated space⁴, and even earlier, to Lewis Henry Morgan's work on kinship and territory.

Social distinction and ethnic boundaries link the study of political power and places. Birth rites or the rites of youth initiation, rites of death, and ceremonies to evoke spirits (*kuphaxlha*) or even wedding ceremonies are all facets of social organization that differentiate one society from another. Moore (1996, 200) affirms that "the various cultural productions of a society are not necessarily homogeneous; they contain contradictions, and frequently conflict with each other". In fact, political power is one powerful cultural representation, among others, in modern society which is no longer homogeneous.

Conflict is notorious in Mozambican society, which is historically and geographically divided into three regions (South, Centre and North). When an individual from a certain region takes a leadership role in another region, he clashes with the identity of anthropological places.

In practice, this individual is politically qualified, but he lacks the link with local ancestors to combine sacral and legal elements.

Soon after independence in 1975, the new Government, created to replace Portuguese rule, ignored local and traditional authorities under the accusation of their collaboration with

the former colonial administration. According to Lourenço (2009, 119)⁵, after a decade of political alliance to expel the colonial Portuguese, from 1977, FRELIMO's leadership treated the traditional authorities as those who, during colonial rule, took advantage of their role as mediators between the local population and the Portuguese to collect taxes. Therefore, under the scope of government modernization, traditional authorities were totally excluded from the administration.

This strategy weakened and discredited the Government. People felt far from their genuine authority acknowledged for ownership of place.

Consequently, these authorities and their subjects were more likely to join to the army to strengthen the ongoing civil conflict in Mozambique, which lasted 16 years.

In practice, the authority appointed by Central Government had a series of difficulties in performing their leadership role in a place where they were not anthropologically inserted. The solution was to create a symbiosis between Central Government and local communities, which was formally introduced by the Government Decree 15/2000 of June 20⁶.

This Government Decree showed that in certain anthropological places it was not enough to have only political power conferred by the State. It was necessary to have a local authority legitimated by ancestors. While the State's power accomplishes the Government's plan, the local or traditional authority performs those tasks related to evoking spirits, mobilizing people to adhere to Government policies, etc.

It is worth mentioning that in an anthropological place, tradition and ancestral spirits have an important role in the land and population. They are acknowledged as the legitimate authors of natural phenomena such as drought, rains, or floods, and they decide when to start or to stop. Therefore, traditional power with ties to ancestors has the authority to perform ceremonies to call forth rain in times of a long drought. If the phenomenon is particularly bad, it is understood that the ancestors are sad; and in the opposite case, the ancestors are happy about people's behaviour.

There are territorial divisions keeping this pattern alive, specifically the districts in the interior of Mozambique, those located far from the provincial capitals. Indeed, in these districts, not only do political leaders clash with sacred but most of nonnatives as well. Ordinary public servants with no ties to anthropological places suffer a kind of social exclusion and in some cases, they are seen as enemies to native people or stealers of jobs.

4 Durkheim labelled „socially differentiated space“ as a model of classification system in primitive societies, where social life intervenes in social space. Durkheim observed that social space is defined, regardless of the individual manifestation, according to social fact resumed in pre-existing natural laws, social norms and rules that preside over each social organization. Social fact is the main difference between one society, and another located in different spaces.

5 All passages quoted from Portuguese- or French-language sources have been translated by the author, unless it is previously stated.

6 The scope of Decree 15/2000 was to validate the social organization of communities by improving the conditions for their participation in public administration for social development within the process of decentralization, balancing therefore the power of State and the Community authorities.

TRANSFORMATION OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL PLACES

The construction of Mozambique as a Nation-State, as with most African states, was a result of the aggregation of different communities previously established in different regions.

According to Alden (2001), the transformation of pre-colonial societies, previously divided in three regions, into a united nation, never was an easy task. Therefore, the difficulty of connecting regions, in addition to external factors, contributed to the eruption of political conflict after independence.

For the effective establishment of the Mozambican nation from 1975, it was necessary to remove the marks that symbolized colonial power. „The process consisted of a new denomination of places and occupation of public spaces with statues and monuments celebrating national heroes“ (Meneses, 2021, 8).

The joint work of Toponymy (designation of places and streets) and the placing of statues in public spaces should be understood as a transformation of anthropological places, for the purpose of this article.

In this process of the transformation of anthropological places, it is important to mention that the place can also change the meaning of its sacrality, as Coomans (2012, 15) pointed out, „but if a site may be consecrated, may it not also be deconsecrated?“ Therefore, nothing is wrong in transforming or renaming places.

During anthropological transformation, the places and streets were designated by the names of important figures identified during the national war of liberation, and important historical dates. There are important figures or personalities whose role and impact are unquestionable for national history, such as Eduardo Mondlane⁷, Samora Machel⁸, Josina Machel⁹.

During the years immediately after independence, that is, during single party leadership, Toponymy was imposed unchallenged. Therefore, places and streets were attributed names unrelated to each location, based on the premise of national unity. The phenomenon was most widespread in the countryside districts as Alden (2001, 116), notes:

The growing evidence that political culture in the rural areas – where 80 per cent of the population lived – was decidedly undemocratic and rather tradition-bound in relationship to the electoral process, coupled with the obvious dearth of administrative skills needed to manage local government, cast a shadow over efforts to bring democracy to the district level.

7 Eduardo Mondlane (1920-1969) the founder and first President of FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) Mozambican Liberation Front.

8 Samora Moisés Machel (1933-1986), the second president of FRELIMO and first president of the Republic of Mozambique from 1975 to 1986, year of his death in a flight crash.

9 Josina Abiatar Mutemba Machel or simply Josina Machel (1945-1971) was the first lady committed to the national war of liberation and women rights.

Indeed, there was no discussion at the local level on attributing names to each region. Apart from the strong character of central authority, the new government aimed to eliminate local authorities, accusing them of being retrograde and based on obscurantism.

One example, among many others, was the changing of the name of a community located in the former district of Xai-Xai¹⁰, Zongoene Administrative Post, in the Province of Gaza. The community was known as *Mhonguane*, in reference to the first person to dwell in that community and, indeed, the first leader. The community then changed the name from *Mhonguane* to *25 de Junho* -Mozambican independence day.

The transformation of anthropological places was also used as a means of decolonization in Mozambique. For example, Meneses (2021) mentioned the demolition of statues of António de Salazar¹¹ in the main square in Maputo, which were then replaced with the statue of Samora Machel, a month after independence. Indeed, as a process of decolonization, the transformation occurred in many other places, and it resulted in different names to replace any with colonial meaning, such as Lourenço Marques - Maputo; João Belo - Xai-Xai, to name a few.

Therefore, the new Toponymy of colonial transition had a clear political and cultural impact in erasing the memories of almost five centuries of domination and slavery. At a national level, it is possible to see signs of ethnicity in this process and the next section discusses these elements.

Negotiation to rename public spaces

Historical symbolism was, over the time, the main and unquestionable source for naming an anthropological place. However, the names, and the meaning of certain places, were not permanent; they can change with time.

These changes aim to adapt the current reality or to integrate new scholarly discovery. Indeed, these changes affect the weight or anthropological symbolism and sacrality. Questions like the one posted by Coomans (2012) regarding consecration and deconsecration, very often arise in religious contexts. In the public sphere, the changing of names with anthropological meaning raises questions such as, „why“, „when“ and above all, „how“ to negotiate a consensual and representative name. This session describes the way politicians attribute names to a new public space or rename ones that already exist. In America, for example, according to Orvell and Meikle (2009, 22), the decision for designation of a public space should come from the balance of legislative and executive power. In Mozambique the reality is completely different. This role is under responsibility of executive power, and it is overtly or covertly connected to heroism.

10 Currently the District of Limpopo, created by Decree 3/2016 from May 5, jointly with Districts of Chongoene and Mapai in Gaza Province.

11 Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), was the head of the Portuguese dictatorial Government from 1933 to 1968.

As a departure point, heroism is closely related to the notion of nationalism. In Mozambique, public spaces are mainly designated by important dates in the nation's history and the names of people whose actions were recognized in political, religious, and cultural areas in the construction and consolidation of Mozambican nationalism. Most events that make Toponymy of public spaces happened during the national war of liberation¹². However, there are also new events and names that emerged after independence, which sometimes results in a renaming of existing spaces.

At a national level, the names are discussed by the Commission of Honorific Titles, created under Law 10/2011 of 13th July, in its article 36¹³. The commission discusses and approves proposals for honorific titles, but their confirmation comes from the President of Republic of Mozambique, in accordance with point J)¹⁴, article 159 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (CRM, 2004). The Assembly of the Republic, which represents the Mozambican people, does not interfere in this process.

In the context of revitalization or the creation of a new Toponymy of public spaces, the names come from the list previously established via the Commission of honorific titles.

The history of Mozambique focuses extensively on the South. The Gaza Empire and its central figure, Ngungunhane, ruled in the South, and are well documented in the history of Mozambique, more so than the other empires, such as the Marave from the Center and the Yao from the North.

The majority of names of historical figures in public spaces were a result of the importance, courage and determination of those people during the history of the national war of liberation. Similarly, the war of liberation was largely led by people from the South, such as Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel.

In the history of Mozambique, children are taught from primary school, that some betrayed national interests during the war of liberation were from the Center and the North, such as Joana Simeão (Nampula-North), Priest Mateus Gwenjere (Sofala-Center), Urias Simango (Sofala-Center), and Lázaro Kavandame (Cabo-Delgado-North), among others¹⁵.

Based on the history of construction of Mozambique as an independent nation, there are few names of people from the North or the Centre occupying public spaces across the coun-

try, compared to names of people from the South. This imbalance in the naming of public spaces particularly when politically motivated, could strengthen the cyclical political conflict in Mozambique.

Administrative Decentralization and Anthropological Places

Two characteristics of culture are dynamism and selectivity. Dynamism reflects culture changing over time and during this process of change, some of its features are left to integrate new elements. Thus, it is also selective.

In terms of politics, there was a need to create local government to replace the first, very centralized Mozambican Government created from the years following independence. A historical milestone in the process came in 1997, with the approval of the law 02/1997 on February 18, creating municipalities.

The aforementioned law, in article 2, defines municipalities as a public collective of people with their proper representative organs aiming to fulfil the population's goals with no prejudice of national interests. This autonomy gives a municipality not only the authority to act politically, but also to define local cultural interests.

From the year 1998¹⁶, the cities with statutes of municipality started with a series of transformations based on local interests, reducing therefore, the total dependency on Central Government. Hence, municipalities have discussed, in their political sessions, the integration of local sacred names into the new Toponymy of the city.

Within these transformations, according to Baptista (2016), the Municipality of Beira, the second important city of Mozambique, approved new Toponymy which includes names such as Afonso Dhlakama¹⁷, Daviz Simango¹⁸, and Joaquim Chissano¹⁹, among others.

Therefore, the new Toponymy in Beira is an example, but other municipalities also sought to introduce names with meanings strongly felt locally.

This measure guaranteed that traditional names with a strong sacred power came to occupy public spaces; hence those areas became anthropological places.

12 The national war of liberation was the means to achieve independence for Mozambique from the Portuguese colonial administration. It lasted 10 years (1964-1974). Before this time frame, people resisted colonialism and labor force in different ways, such as demonstrations, sabotage in agriculture, etc., but not necessarily, by armed war.

13 Article 36: This created the National Commission of Honorific and Condecoration Titles Organ, aiming to advise on topics related to the identification of candidates for such designations.

14 j) The President has the competence to attribute, under the law, honorific titles, condecorations and distinctions.

15 Most of them were accused of having tried to create another movement out of FRELIMO.

16 1998 was the first year of implementation of municipality, through local elections.

17 President of RENAMO, the main opposition party, died in 2019. He was born in Beira.

18 President of Municipality of Beira died in 2020 from COVID19, and he was born in Beira.

19 Joaquim Chissano is the former President of Mozambique from 1986 to 2004.

POLITICAL USE OF PUBLIC SPACES

According to Easton (2002, 45), politics provides the authoritative allocation of values for society. From this definition, we find politics in the centre of what is valuable for society, that is, the scarce resources to fulfil unlimited needs. These values are set by people with the authority to allocate values for society. Authority indicates the legitimacy of the decision maker and simultaneously, authority goes together with power so that the decision made must be effective.

Politics uses public spaces in two different but inter-connected ways, and sometimes it is difficult even to distinguish one from the other.

The first one is clearly related to reviving national history and the meaning or importance of that place, whether named by an individual name or a historical date. This is the way I defend as the most correct since it keeps the national history alive over time and replicated to different generations through annual commemorations.

Names such as „25 de Setembro”²⁰, “3 de Fevereiro”²¹ or “Josina Machel”, are used to name monuments, squares, streets, villages, or cities. Apart from finding the names displayed in public spaces, there is always a specific date defined for commemoration of that place. Politics uses its authority to explain the meaning of the name, place, or date and its commemoration.

The second political use of public spaces is more propagandistic.

In this form, politics seeks an opportunity to exercise power. In other words, it is a mere accomplishment of Machiavelli’s definition of politics as “An exercise of conquer, exercise and maintain power.” (Maquiavelli, 2008, 57)

The government authority and political parties fight for political power by using public spaces. For instance, on 25 September, the national day of the armed forces, it is common to see politicians going to the square, wearing political party clothes, or carrying flyers with political party messages.

This use of public space is a deviation from the purpose for which it was created and creates a potential climate for conflicts. On one side, history favors the ruling party. On the other side, and specifically regarding ethnicity, public spaces all over the country are mostly denominated by southern names. With this trend to take advantage via political exploitation, the commemoration of public spaces is, implicitly, synonymous with the acclamation of southern personalities or actions from the ruling party.

The phrase attributed to Nicolau Machiavelli applies here - “the ends justify the means”²². Politicians use public space for

20 September 25 - The day of the armed forces in reference of the starting date of National War of Liberation (25-09-1964).

21 February 3 - The day of national heroes in reference to the date of Eduardo Mondlane’s death (03-02-1969)

22 The phrase is from ancient Greek, but Machiavelli was prominent in its usage due to the political circumstances he faced during the time he distrusted the clergy and wrote his famous book *The*

a campaign to conquer, exercise and maintain political power. In short, the use of public space in this view creates political and ethnic cleavages that bring about political conflicts in Mozambique.

SUMMARY

In Mozambique the transformation of anthropological places underwent two phases.

The first phase dated from Mozambique independence in 1975. In this phase the aim was to remove colonial marks which were had been established over five centuries of Portuguese rule. The main public spaces, that is, squares, streets, and communities, were identified based on the names of important figures or events highlighted during the history of national war of liberation - national heroes and names of important battles. There were strong signs of divisionism or regionalism during the war of liberation; therefore, the Toponymy was also used as a means of nationalism.

The second phase links the introduction of municipalities in 1997 with the acknowledgment of traditional authorities in 2000. This was the most important phase of transformation of anthropological places, in such a way that the conceived Toponymy sought to integrate local sacred names into public spaces. The municipalities were granted authority to decide about the new Toponymy of the city.

At a national level, the Law 10/2011 of July 13 was passed to deliberate honorific names which may be assigned to public spaces.

In a broad political sense, the process could be seen as encouraging regionalism. However, when it was analysed, we found out that there is, in fact, an integration of names with national meaning along with local sacred names. Nevertheless, the way politics uses public spaces creates a potential environment for conflicts. Public spaces are the places created for sacred activities, commemorating national history but, not for political propaganda.

When politics uses public space for a campaign to conquer, exercise and maintain political power, it ends up causing splits in society as it shows favouritism to a certain ethnic group or political party.

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Prince (1513). The work brought him a reputation as an atheist and an immoral cynic.

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